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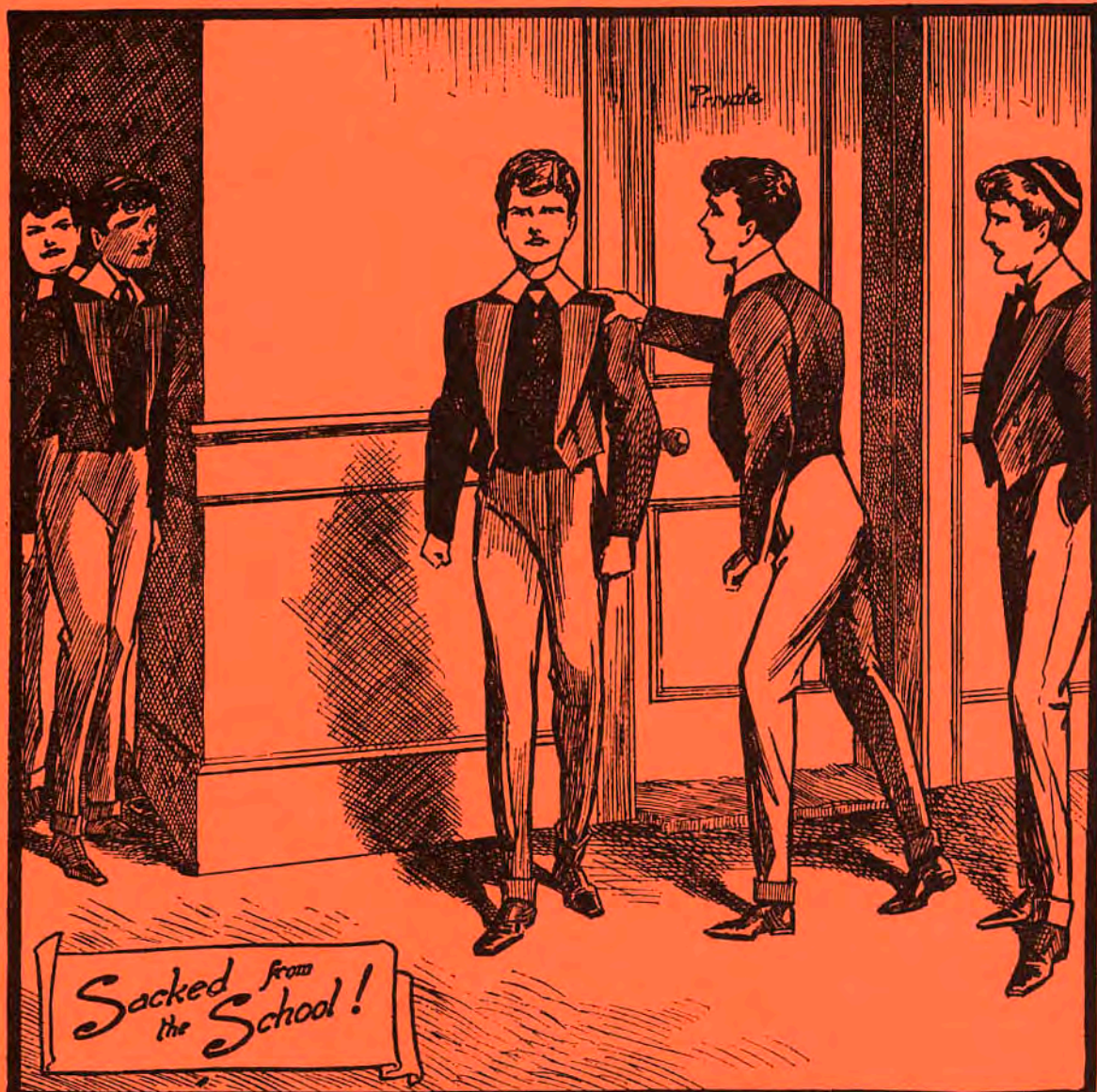
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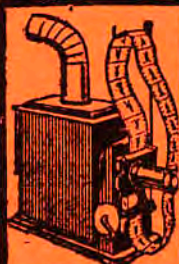
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The Head's door opened at last and Nugent came out. He was deadly pale, and walked unsteadily. He seemed dazed. Harry Wharton clapped him on the shoulder. "Frank! What's happened! What's the verdict?" Frank Nugent looked at him dazedly. "Sacked!" he said. "Sacked from the school!"



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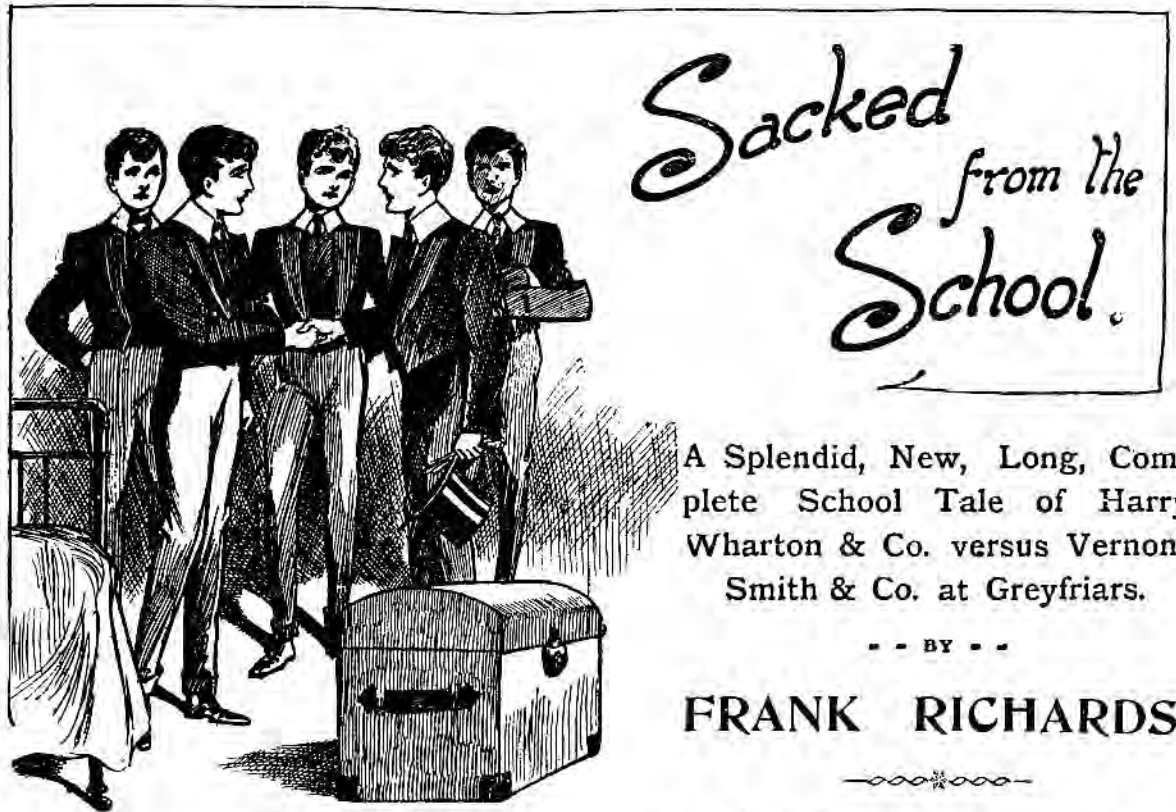
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- - BY - -

**FRANK RICHARDS.**

#### THE FIRST CHAPTER. Trouble in the Form-room.

**F**RANK NUGENT hurried along the Form-room passage at Greyfriars.

It was five minutes since the bell had rung for third lesson, and the Remove were all in their places in the Form-room, with the exception of Frank Nugent.

Nugent was late!

Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, was punctuality itself, and he expected as much of his boys. Needless to say, his expectations were frequently disappointed. But his disappointments were generally turned out more painful to the delinquents than to himself. Nugent knew what to expect as he pushed open the heavy oaken door of the Form-room.

The Removites were all at their desks, and they all turned their heads as Frank Nugent came in. Harry Wharton, his study-mate and chum, gave him an anxious look, and signed to him to hurry. Mr. Quelch was at his desk, bending over it in search of a book; and there was just a chance that Nugent might slip into his place unnoticed.

"Buck up, Franky!" breathed Bob Cherry inaudibly. Frank hurried to his place. He had reached the desk, and was just sitting down when Mr. Quelch turned round.

The Remove-master fixed his eyes upon Nugent. Mr. Quelch's eyes were popularly compared, in the Remove, to gimlets, from their penetrating qualities. Never had they seemed so much like gimlets as at the present moment.

"Nugent!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Nugent stood up again.

"Yes, sir."

"You are late!"

"Yes, sir."

"You were late for first lesson also."

"I am sorry, sir."

"I excused your unpunctuality at first lesson, Nugent."

"Yes, sir. You were very kind," faltered Nugent.

"It appears, however, that my kindness was wasted," said Mr. Quelch sarcastically. "I think I pointed out to you, Nugent, that a Form-room was not a place to stroll into in a haphazard way at any time you feel inclined."

"Yes, sir."

"You are five minutes late. Did you not hear the bell?"  
 "Yes, sir."  
 "Then why are you late?"  
 "I—I was delayed, sir."  
 "Indeed. And what was the cause of your delay?"  
 "I—I—I—" Nugent stammered, and paused.  
 "I am waiting for your answer, Nugent!" said Mr. Quelch, with quiet grimace.

"I was talking to my minor, sir."  
 "And your conversation with your minor, Nugent—very important, I have no doubt—kept you from appearing here at the proper time?"

"Ye-es, sir."  
 "I am afraid, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, with crushing sarcasm, "that I cannot admit that as a sufficient explanation. Even your conversations with your minor cannot be allowed to interfere with your attendance at classes. I am sorry, Nugent, for I have no doubt that your conversations with your minor are very interesting and instructive."

The Remove grinned, as in duty bound. When a Form-master condescends to make a little joke, it is "up" to his Form to smile. But Mr. Quelch's little joke did not mean that he was placated. Mr. Quelch was most dangerous when he was most humorous, as the Remove had learned by many sad experiences. When Mr. Quelch was humorous, the Removes were very much upon their guard: like that gentleman of ancient times who feared the Greeks when they came with gifts in their hands.

"I—I hope you will excuse me, sir," faltered Nugent.  
 "I fear that I am bound to disappoint that hope, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch. "I have already excused you once this morning, apparently without effect. You will take a hundred lines."

"Yes, sir," said Frank quietly.  
 "As it is a half-holiday this afternoon, you will have ample time to write out a hundred lines, without interfering, I hope, with further interesting conversations with your minor, Nugent."

"Yes, sir."  
 "We will now resume," said Mr. Quelch. And having wasted as much time in sarcasm as Nugent had wasted by being late, Mr. Quelch started the lesson.

The Removes construed with unusual care that lesson. Nugent having started Mr. Quelch on the warpath, there was no telling when and where the Form-master would break out next; and every fellow in the Remove was naturally anxious not to attract his special attention.

Even Billy Bunter succeeded in blundering through some Virgilian verses without making too many "howlers," and Bolsover major, who sometimes amused himself by construing with especial badness, just to watch the expression on his master's face, was very, very careful not to amuse himself in that way on this occasion. Even Harry Wharton, who was almost the best classical scholar in the Form, felt nervous as he rose to construe; but he came through the ordeal without trouble; and Vernon-Smith even received a word of praise.

Mark Linley, whose taste—considered in the Lower School as being something exceedingly extraordinary—led him to read Virgil for pleasure as well as profit, came through with flying colours; and good humour returned to the countenance of Mr. Quelch, and the Remove breathed more freely.

But the Remove-master had his eye upon Nugent all the time. Johnny Bull whispered to Nugent to keep his eyes open, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Banipur, whispered into his other ear that the Teacher-Sahib was playing with him cat-and-mousefully.

Hurree Singh's English was peculiar, but his meaning was clear. And Nugent, who had not prepared his lesson the previous evening, sat upon tenterhooks. He hoped against hope that the Form-master's eye would pass him over. He might as well have hoped for the deluge.

"Nugent!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.  
 Nugent rose with a heavy heart.

"Buck up, old chap!" whispered Bob Cherry. "It's the beastly shipwreck biznai!"

"Cherry!"  
 Bob Cherry jumped.

"Ye-es, sir."  
 "Are you unaware, Cherry, that chattering during lessons is forbidden?"

"Nun—no, sir."  
 "You were talking to Nugent?"

"Ye-es, sir."  
 "If Nugent is not prepared to construe, Cherry, it is not your business to help him. What did you say to Nugent?"

"I—I only said, sir—" stammered Bob.  
 "Well?"

"That—that it was the beastly shipwreck biznai, sir."

"What!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "The—the beastly shipwreck biznai, Cherry! That is how you describe one of the most beautiful and sublime passages in the greatest of the Latin poets, Cherry!"

"Yes, sir—no, sir—that is, I—I didn't mean—"

"You will take fifty lines, Cherry, and learn not to talk in class."

"Yes, sir," groaned the unhappy Bob.  
 Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet eyes upon Nugent.

"You will construe, Nugent," he said. "Pray go on at *Talia jactanti stridens*, and I trust, Nugent, that you will commit no errors."

Mr. Quelch's voice hinted very plainly what would happen if Nugent did.

Nugent turned very red, and blinked at his book.

"I am waiting, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, with dangerous snavity. "The whole class is waiting. You are wasting the time of the Form, Nugent."

"*Talia jactanti stridens Aquilone*," stammered Nugent.

"*Procella*!"

"Well?"

"*Velum adversa ferit, fluctusque ad sidera tollit*—"

"Will you have the great goodness, Nugent, to render the English?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a patient sarcasm which was quite enough to disconcert a fellow who knew Virgil as well as he knew the rules of soccer.

"The howling eagle—" stammered Nugent.

Mr. Quelch jumped quite clear of the Form-room floor.

"The—the what?" he shouted.

"The howling eagle strikes against the sail," said Nugent.

"Oh, crumbs," murmured Vernon-Smith, "somebody's going to catch it!"

Somebody was, certainly!

If Nugent had not been in a very confused state of mind, he would not have mixed up *aquilo*, the north wind, with *aquila*, an eagle, but between the ragging he was receiving from Mr. Quelch, and another trouble that lay heavy upon his mind, the unfortunate junior hardly knew what he was saying.

Mr. Quelch gave Nugent a simply terrific look.

"The howling eagle!" he said faintly. "Oh, dear! Nugent, did you do your preparation last night?"

"No, sir."

"Ah! But even that is no excuse. Nugent, you will stay in this afternoon and write out that passage in Virgil a hundred times—from *Talia jactanti* to *furit aestus arenis*."

Nugent started.

"This afternoon, sir?" he repeated.

"Yes. You may sit down."

"But I—I can't stay in this afternoon, sir," said Nugent.

Mr. Quelch gave him a look that Medusa might have envied.

"What did you say, Nugent?" he asked, scarcely able to believe his ears.

"I can't stay in this afternoon, sir."

"You—cannot—stay—in—this—afternoon!" repeated Mr. Quelch in measured tones.

"No, sir," said Nugent, his handsome face pale and almost haggard. "I—I can't, sir."

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Bob Cherry, at the risk of being caught again. "Don't jaw Quelch, you awful duffer! Sit down!"

Hurree Singh drew Nugent down into his seat.

Mr. Quelch came close up to the desk.

"You will stay in the whole of the afternoon, from dinner-time till tea-time, Nugent," he said in a grinding voice.

"I shall keep an eye on you all the time, in case you should be inclined to play truant. Now, silence!"

"But, sir—"

"Silence!" thundered the Form-master.

Nugent moved his lips, but he did not speak again. He knew that it was useless. He sat silent while the lesson proceeded; and Mr. Quelch did not even glance at him again.

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The Remove-master switched on the electric light, and Nugent paused, dazzled, half-blinded by the sudden glare. In the full light he was easily seen and recognised. "Nugent!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. (See chapter 12.)

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Straight from the Shoulder.

**H**ARRY WHARTON slipped his arm in Nugent's as the Remove came out of the Form-room after third lesson. Nugent was looking pale and troubled, and Wharton was very much concerned about his chin.

"What's the matter, Franky, old man?" he asked. "Why were you late for third lesson?"

"You heard me tell Quelch."

"Yes, I know. But what the dickens did you want to stop talking to your minor for? Surely, Franky, you could have waited a bit?"

"You don't understand," muttered Nugent.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Is Dicky in some trouble again?" he asked.

"Yes."

"The young waster!"

"It isn't his fault," said Nugent, prompt to defend his minor. "I believe he's been led into it by another chap—an older chap."

"Who, then?"

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY: **"THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE!"**

"Can't you guess whom?" said Nugent bitterly. "Who is it that's caused all the trouble we've had for a long time—who's a rotter right through to the marrow of his bones, and a liar and a cad and a blackguard?"

"The Bounder?" said Wharton at once.

Nugent nodded.

"Yes; Vernon-Smith, the Bounder."

"You don't mean to say that Vernon-Smith has taken up your minor, a fag in the Second Form?" Wharton exclaimed in amazement.

"Yes, I do."

"The awful rotter!" said Bob Cherry.

"They've got something on for this afternoon," said Frank gloomily. "I don't know what it is, but I know there's something on. I've got to keep an eye on Dicky. I promised the mater to look after the young ass and keep him out of trouble, and I'm going to do it, if I have to wing his neck!"

"You can't look after him this afternoon," said Harry. "You're detained."

Nugent's jaw seemed to grow squarer.

"I'm not staying in," he said briefly.

Another Splendid Complete Tale  
of Vernon-Smith v. Harry Wharton.

"You must!"

"I won't."

"But Quelch is going to keep his eye on you, he said."

"Quelch can go and eat coke!"

"Look here, Franky," said Wharton seriously. "You can't back up against the Form-master. It's not good enough. If you cleared out when he's expressly ordered you to stay in, it means a flogging from the Head."

"I don't care. He shouldn't have detained me."

"Look here—"

"It's no good talking," said Frank; "I've made up my mind. Blow Virgil and his rotten storms at sea. I missed my prep. last evening over young Dick. The young ass! He's always getting into some trouble or other; but this is going to be serious if I don't stop him."

"We could keep an eye on the young ass," said Wharton, with a perplexed look; "only we're playing the Shell this afternoon. If any of us cut the match, it would give the Bouncer and his set a handle against us."

"We can't cut the match," said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"Impossible!" said Johnny Bull. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his head solemnly, and remarked that the impossibility was terrific.

"I know you can't," said Nugent. "I shall have to stand out, anyway, as I am detained. You can play young Penfold in my place. He's a good man. I don't feel up to footer, anyway; I'm too bothered."

"You've got to stay in this afternoon," said Harry. "You must do it, Franky. But we'll see young Dicky, and jaw him."

"I've jawed him," said Nugent hopelessly.

"And what does he say?"

"Says I am a silly ass, and he can look after himself all right without my interfering."

Wharton set his teeth.

"It's that cad Smith," he said. "He can twist anybody round his finger, when he tries. It's no wonder he can work round a fatheaded young fag. Look here, we'll see Smithy instead, and talk to him."

"And lick him if necessary," said Bob Cherry.

Perhaps Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, guessed that that interview was coming. He kept his friends about him when he left the School House and sauntered out into the Close. Bolsover major, and Snoop, and Stott, and Trevor, and Hazeldene, and Elliott, all the choice spirits of the Remove, were with the Bouncer when Harry Wharton & Co. sought him out. It was some time since the Bouncer had started his campaign against No. 1 Study; and the Famous Four, who had disdained to enter into the lists against him at first, had to admit that he had gone a long way on the road to success. Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove, but his position was not nearly so secure as it had been, and quite a crowd of fellows in the Form were backing up the Bouncer. Vernon-Smith was not troubled with scruples of any kind, and that gave him a big advantage over fellows who always played the game, even when dealing with unscrupulous adversaries.

The Bouncer was chatting with Bolsover major and the rest of the new Co. when the Famous Four came up. He affected not to see them, and went on talking to Bolsover, till Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Growing short-sighted in your old age, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith looked round.

"Hallo!" he said. "What do you want? Looking for somebody to play in Nugent's place in the Form eleven this afternoon?"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"If I were doing that, I shouldn't come to a gang of the worst wasters and rotters in the whole school," he said.

The Bouncer grinned.

"Always so nice and pleasant and polite," he remarked.

"But I suppose you didn't come along simply to pay us compliments. What do you want?"

"Go it, Franky!"

Nugent turned a wrathful glare upon the Bouncer.

"I want to speak to you, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"You're going out with my young brother this afternoon?"

"Not at all!"

"What! Dicky told me so!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Then he's mistaken."

"Oh! You're not, then?"

"Certainly not! I'm taking him along with me," said Vernon-Smith loftily. "That's a very different thing. I'm not in the habit of going out with Second-Form fags. But I'm letting Dicky come out with me for a little run—out of kindness."

"My minor doesn't want any of your kindness!" said Nugent hotly. "You're not the kind of fellow for Dicky—or any decent chap—to go out with. You know you're The Magnet Library.—No. 250."

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going to get him into mischief, because it will be one up against us. Look here, Dicky's not going out with you! Understand that?"

The Bouncer yawned.

"You'd better tell him so," he said.

"I have told him so. But—"

"But he doesn't take any notice," said the Bouncer, with a chuckle. "Well, I'm not surprised. He's rather an obstinate young beggar, Nugent minor."

Nugent clenched his hands.

"You're not going to take him out!" he said.

"Who's going to stop it?"

"I am!" exclaimed Frank fiercely.

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear chap," he said, "I'm not going to do your minor any harm. I've simply picked him up because I want a fag to carry my bag. I'm going to stand him some ginger-pop for his trouble."

"Liar!" said Nugent grimly.

Even the Bouncer reddened at that; but he kept perfectly cool.

"Well, if that's how you look at it, there's no more to be said," he remarked.

"There's this to be said," replied Nugent, between his teeth. "I'm looking after my young brother, whether he likes it or not, and he's not going out with you! He's not going to have anything to do with you! You're not going to teach him to smoke, and to smuggle cigarettes into the school, and tell lies to the prefects, and to break bounds of a night! If you want to take a fag with you, take Bolsover minor—if Bolsover major will let you!"

"Well, Bolsover wouldn't object—"

"Shouldn't I?" said Bolsover major grimly. "You're jolly well not going to take my minor out, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bouncer flushed. Bolsover major was one of his staunchest backers, but it was evident that Bolsover drew the line somewhere.

"And you're not going to take my minor!" said Nugent.

"Look here!" said the Bouncer, gritting his teeth. "I've told your minor that I'll take him with me this afternoon, and I'm going to do it. You can't stop me. As it happens, you're detained, but you couldn't stop me, anyway! Go and eat coke!"

Nugent did not reply in words. He clenched his fist, and struck the Bouncer full in the face, and Vernon-Smith, with a yell, rolled over on the grass.

There was a sharp sound as a window was flung up, and a sharp voice called out:

"Nugent! How dare you!"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Quite in the Wrong.

THE juniors swung round.

Mr. Quelch was standing at his open study window, his face dark with anger.

The group of juniors had been standing near the window, in full view of the Form-master, when Nugent struck that hasty blow. Nugent was thinking of anything but Mr. Quelch.

The Form-master had heard nothing through the closed window, but he had seen the blow struck, and that was enough for him.

Vernon-Smith had been about to spring up, but at the sound of Mr. Quelch's voice he remained lying in the grass, groaning.

"Nugent!"

"Yes, sir?" said Nugent.

"Come here!"

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Frank crossed over to the study window. His chums stood in dismay. It was unlucky that the scene had taken place under the eyes of the Remove-master. It placed Nugent utterly in the wrong, so far as appearances went.

The strife between No. 1 Study and the Bounder & Co. was not unknown to the Form-master; it had been very much in evidence of late, and it had caused a good deal of disturbance in the Remove studies. Mr. Quelch did not know the rights of the matter; but the Bounder had always been very careful of appearances, and he generally contrived to make himself appear the injured party, however much he was in the wrong.

"Are you hurt, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Form-master, turning his glance upon the sprawling Bounder.

Vernon-Smith groaned again. Bolsover major stooped and gave him a hand up, and the Bounder staggered to his feet.

"N-no, sir," gasped Vernon-Smith—"that is, not much, sir! It's all right!"

"It is not all right!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "Nugent, how dare you strike Vernon-Smith in that brutal way—utterly unprovoked, so far as I could see!"

Nugent trembled with anger.

"It wasn't unprovoked, sir," he said; "and I'll do it again, if he provokes me again in the same way!"

"Nugent! Silence! How dare you speak to me like that!"

Wharton grasped his chum's arm.

"Are you dotty, Frank?" he whispered. "Mind what you say! Shut up!"

Nugent set his teeth, and was silent.

"What is this trouble about?" said the Remove-master. "You explain to me, Vernon-Smith. I cannot trust Nugent to speak with proper respect!"

"It's about nothing, sir," said the Bounder, with an air of reluctance. "Nugent's young brother is going out with me this afternoon. I've taken up botany, sir, and young Nugent is going to carry some things for me. Nugent doesn't want him to. I'm not on good terms with Nugent, sir—I don't think it's my fault. All the fellows know that I've tried to be friendly."

"You've tried to be a snake in the grass!" said Nugent. "Silence, Nugent! Why should you object to your minor going out on a botanical expedition with Vernon-Smith?"

Nugent opened his lips, and closed them again. His tongue was tied by many considerations—considerations which Mr. Quelch did not understand. It was against all rules for one junior to betray another; and although all the Remove knew Vernon-Smith's character, it was very strictly forbidden to lay information against him to a master. And in this case Nugent could not betray the Bounder without betraying his minor, too.

"Well, Nugent?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Vernon-Smith's not a fit chap for a kid to associate with, sir," said Nugent at last. "I object to my young brother having anything to do with him!"

"That is a very serious accusation to make against your Form-fellow, Nugent, and it must not be made without proof! What do you object to in Vernon-Smith's conduct?"

As Nugent could not reply to that question without incurring the odium of "sneaking," he remained silent.

"Do you mean to say that Vernon-Smith is likely to act in a disgraceful way, and that that renders him unfit for your minor to know?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

Nugent did not speak.

"You do well to remain silent!" said Mr. Quelch. "If you made such a statement, I should call upon you for the fullest and completest proof of it!"

Frank bit his lip. He was not likely to allow himself to be put into the position of an informer, supplying evidence upon which the Bounder might be expelled from the school. That the Bounder deserved such a punishment was nothing to the purpose. It was not his Form-fellow's duty to bring it upon him.

"As you have nothing more to say, Nugent, I must conclude that you have allowed your personal dislike of Vernon-Smith to hurry you into a hasty accusation," said the Remove-master. "That is bad enough. But you struck him, and without giving him an opportunity to defend himself. Your conduct is disgraceful!"

Nugent bit his lip harder. But he did not speak.

"Unless you have some tangible reason for objecting to Vernon-Smith," went on Mr. Quelch, "you have no right to object to your minor's associating with him. It is very kind of a Remove boy to take a boy of a lower Form out with him on a botanical expedition, and I am very glad to see such useful and harmless pursuits taken up in my Form. You will come to my study, Nugent, and I shall see you!"

"If you please, sir," said Vernon-Smith, "may I say a word?"

"Certainly, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch graciously.

"Nugent is making a mistake, sir," said the Bounder. "He lost his temper when he lit out at me, and I don't bear any malice, sir. If you don't think it's a check on my part

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ONE  
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to ask you, sir, I should like you to let him off. Of course, it's just as you think best, sir," added the Bounder, very respectfully.

Mr. Quelch hesitated.

"Nugent, if anything could make you feel ashamed of your conduct, I should think Vernon-Smith's request would do so!" he exclaimed.

"I don't want his interference!" exclaimed Nugent passionately. "I'd rather be caned than begged off by that rotten cad!"

"Silence!"

"It's a shame to waste your time, sir," said Vernon-Smith, "but if you'd send for Nugent minor, and ask him what he's going out with me for, perhaps Nugent would be satisfied. You could ask him without my speaking to him first."

"Shall I call him, sir?" asked Bolsover major. "He's just over by the elms, sir."

"Do!" said Mr. Quelch.

Nugent minor came over when he was called. He was with Myers and Gatty, of the Second Form, watching the scene from a distance. He came over rather reluctantly, as if expecting trouble.

"You are going out with Vernon-Smith this afternoon, Nugent minor?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Dicky timidly.

"What are you going out for?"

"Botany, sir. Vernon-Smith is going to show me some wrinkles, sir. He's given me a jolly good book about it."

Frank Nugent sniffed.

"Have you any other reason for going out with Vernon-Smith, Nugent minor?"

"No, sir."

"You give me your word to that effect."

"Honour bright—I mean, yes, sir!"

"Very good; you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And Dicky Nugent marched off.

"Are you satisfied now, Nugent?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir."

"You do not believe your minor's statement?"

Nugent hesitated. He did not care to say that.

"It appears to me, Nugent, that you are in a very unreasonable temper," said Mr. Quelch. "And it is quite in keeping with your late conduct—being late for lessons, and failing to prepare your work. I warn you to be careful, Nugent. You have had a good record hitherto, and you have deserved my good opinion, but you are going the right way to forfeit it now. As Vernon-Smith has asked me to pardon you, I will do so, if you will beg his pardon at once."

Nugent's teeth set hard.

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "I don't want that, sir! I'd much rather Nugent didn't say he was sorry, unless he feels sorry, sir!" added the Bounder, with a virtuous expression that the famous Eric himself might have envied.

"Oh, you deep rotter!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What did you say, Cherry?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, who seemed to have ears as sharp as his eyes that afternoon.

Bob Cherry turned crimson.

"I, sir!" he stammered.

"Yes, you! What did you say?"

"I—I said Smithy was a deep rotter, sir."

"I thought so! You will take fifty lines for using such an expression, Cherry. Nugent, you will beg Vernon-Smith's pardon at once."

Nugent did not speak.

"Do you hear me?" said Mr. Quelch ominously.

"Yes, sir."

"Then obey me."

"I cannot, sir."

"What!"

"I cannot beg that cad's pardon, sir, when he is in the wrong."

"Franky!" murmured Bob.

Mr. Quelch's face was like a thundercloud.

"Do you understand, Nugent, that this is disrespect to me—that you are refusing to obey your Form-master's orders?" he exclaimed.

"I am sorry, sir. I do not mean to be disrespectful."

"Then beg Vernon-Smith's pardon at once, or come into my study and take your caning."

"I will take the caning, sir."

Nugent turned away, and entered the School House. Mr. Quelch was ready for him, cane in hand, when he came into the study. And Nugent was caned then and there, with a severity that was quite unusual with Mr. Quelch.

He left the study pale and furious.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

## War to the Knife.

HARRY WHARTON wore a worried look during dinner that day.

He was very much troubled in his mind about his chum.

Knowing Vernon-Smith as he did, he understood Frank's uneasiness at the discovery that his minor had been taken up by the Bouncer. The Bouncer's influence could only be for harm. There was more than one fellow at Greyfriars who had fallen under the Bouncer's spell, and had suffered for it. Hazeldene of the Remove was an example. The Famous Four had done their best to stick to Hazeldene, for his sister's sake, for Marjorie Hazeldene, of Cliff House School, was their best chum. But it had been useless. Hazeldene had deserted his old friends, and he was one of the Bouncer's most faithful followers now. Bolsover major was another example. Bolsover was a bully, though he had his good qualities. But under the Bouncer's influence only his bad qualities seemed to see the light. It was as if the Bouncer were another Mephistopheles, with an influence boundless, but only for evil. And a reckless young rascal like Dicky Nugent was not likely to learn any good in the company of the black sheep of the Remove. The Bouncer's friendship with Dicky was one more move in his attack upon No. 1 Study—Wharton knew that. The worst of it was, that he did not know how it was to be met. Dicky Nugent was a good little fellow in his way, but he was wilful and reckless, and very much opposed to being ruled by his major in anything. That Frank wanted him to go one way, was generally regarded by Dicky as a sufficient reason for going another.

Frank Nugent kept his eyes upon his plate. Mr. Quelch, who was at the head of the Remove table, glanced at him once or twice. He saw the Bouncer pass Nugent things in the politest way in the world, as if quite forgetful of the ugly bruise upon his face, and the angry blow that had caused it. He saw Nugent either refuse what was offered, or accept without a word of thanks; and Mr. Quelch frowned more than once. Frank Nugent was getting very deep into his master's black books.

After dinner the juniors trooped out into the Close. It was time now for Nugent to go into the Form-room for his afternoon's detention; but he made no move in that direction. Wharton reminded him, and Nugent's face set grimly.

"I'm not going to be detained," he said.

"What are you going to do, Frank?"

"I'm going to look after my minor."

"Frank, old man—"

"It's no good talking. I know what my duty is, and I'm going to do it. If Vernon-Smith tries to take my minor out this afternoon, I'll smash him, if I'm flogged for it the next minute."

And Nugent walked away to look for Dicky. Harry Wharton stood with his brow deeply wrinkled in thought. He was busy that afternoon himself, having to captain the Remove eleven in a Form match with Hobson & Co., of the Shell. And since Vernon-Smith had set up as his rival in football matters, as well as in everything else, it behoved the Remove captain not to be neglectful of his footer duties. But Wharton could not help thinking more just then of his chum than of the Form match. The other fellows were going down to the ground already—afternoon matches had to start early in November. Mark Linley tapped the Remove captain on the shoulder as he stood in thought, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets.

"The chaps are getting ready for the match, Wharton," the Lancashire junior said.

"Yes, I know. You might tell young Penfold I want him to play, will you?"

"Yes; but you—"

"I'm going to speak to Vernon-Smith," said Wharton. "What do you think of the idea? I'm thinking of making an appeal to him."

Mark Linley stared.

"An appeal to the Bouncer?" he exclaimed.

"Yes. Dash it all, the chap must have some rag of decency left in him somewhere," said Wharton. "I'm thinking of making an appeal to him—to play the game, you know, and keep the quarrel in our own Form, without dragging the fags into it."

"It won't be much good with Smithy, I'm afraid," said Mark. "But you might as well try. It needn't do any harm, only don't let him provoke you into hitting out. You don't want to get detained and have the match mucked up."

"I'll be careful of that."

Vernon-Smith came out of the House as Wharton spoke. He nodded to Mark, and crossed over towards the Bouncer. The latter stopped, with a polite air that meant mischief.

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"I want to speak to you, Smithy," said Wharton, trying to control the dislike and scorn that could hardly be kept out of his voice. "I want to make an appeal to you."

"Right-ho!" said the Bouncer, putting his hand into his pocket. "How much?"

"How much! What do you mean?" said Harry.

"Oh! I thought you meant money!"

"I don't mean money," said Wharton, his eyes beginning to gleam, in spite of his determination to keep his temper. "It's about Nugent minor."

The Bouncer yawned.

"We're on bad terms," said Harry, "I know that. You've set yourself up in opposition to No. 1 Study—"

"No. 1 Study has set itself up in opposition to me, you mean."

"Put it whichever way you like. We're on bad terms, and there will always be trouble between us, I suppose. But I appeal to you, as a decent chap, to let that be all—not to carry it outside the Remove. Nugent minor has done nothing to you; he's only a kid, and a silly, reckless kid at that. Why can't you leave him alone?"

"Why should you suppose that I'm going to do him any harm?"

"No good arguing about that. You know what you've done for Hazeldene; he was getting into jolly good form, and we'd made a good goalkeeper of him, and now what is he? A rotten slacker, hanging round with his hands in his pockets instead of playing in matches, and smoking rotten cigarettes with his study door locked."

"Good. I'll tell him your opinion of him."

Wharton bit his lip.

"You can tell him what you like," he said. "But that's not what I want to speak about. I want to ask you, as a decent chap, to let Nugent minor off. Go for us as much as you like but don't drag a kid of the Second Form into the row."

The Bouncer glanced round. There were some fellows looking towards them, wondering if there was going to be trouble; but no one was within hearing.

"I want to speak to you, too," said the Bouncer, in a low voice. "I've got something to say as well. You say I'm up against No. 1 Study. Well, I am! And I mean business—business all the time! I'm going to be top dog in the Remove, and I'm going to down No. 1 Study. If you want to make peace, I'm willing to grant conditions."

"And what are the conditions?" asked Wharton, with a curl of the lip.

"In the first place, you'll have to resign the captaincy of the Remove, and recommend me as your successor and vote for me at the election."

Wharton burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Good! Anything else, as good as that?" he asked.

"Yes; you'll have to stop interfering with me and my friends, keep your eyes shut if a fellow gets out of the dormitory of a night, and generally mind your own business, and keep your finger out of other fellow's pies. You'll have to leave off chumming with the Cliff House girls; Marjorie Hazeldene is going to be my chum, not yours. I think that's about all."

"It isn't enough," said Wharton, with bitter sarcasm.

"You're too moderate. Wouldn't you like me to fag for you—to clean your boots, and make your toast in the study?"

"No," said the Bouncer coolly. "Nugent minor's going to do that."

Wharton clenched his hands.

"If you agree to my conditions," the Bouncer drawled lazily, "it can be peace between us. You're not up to my weight, anyway, and I'm wasting my time in a tussle with you. I'd rather get about my business. I'm simply crushing your set, to get you out of my way, because you give me trouble. If you give in, and toe the line, I'll let you alone. If you don't—"

"Yes, if I don't—"

"If you don't, I'll make you sorry for it. I'll bring you down so low that you'll never get up again—and I'll drive you out of Greyfriars."

Wharton laughed again.

"Drive us out of Greyfriars!" he said. "That's rather a big order, isn't it?"

"You'll see that I can do it, if you make me take the trouble."

"I don't think you could, but if you could get me sacked from the school, Smithy, I wouldn't toe the line, as you call it. I'm captain of the Remove, and I'm sticking to it. I'm going to see that no chap breaks bounds of a night from the Remove dormitory, without taking a licking or giving me one. I don't know that I want the captain's job, particularly; but I know that it's every decent chap's duty to keep



"Then it's war!" said the Bounder. "War to the knife, if you prefer to put it melodramatically. And I'll keep my word—I'll drive you and all your pals out of the school. If you won't knuckle under, I'll drive you out."  
(See chapter 4.)

a fellow like you from getting influence in the Form. And I'm against you, tooth and nail, all the time."

The Bounder nodded.

"Then it's war!" he said.

"Yes; war to the knife, if you like!"

"Good! War to the knife, if you prefer to put it melodramatically," said Vernon-Smith. "And I'll keep my word—I'll drive you and all your pals out of the school. If you won't knuckle under, I'll clear you out!"

"How are you going to do it?"

"That's my business!"

"If you've finished gassing, what about Nugent minor? Will you let him alone, and keep the row in your own Form?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then there'll be trouble. You know that Nugent is detained this afternoon, and he can't stop you. But when you come back here, you'll have to stand up to him."

"I'll stand up to him, with or without gloves, at any time he chooses!"

And with a shrug of the shoulders the Bounder walked on. Voices were calling to Harry Wharton from the football-field now. The other fellows had changed, and the Remove players were waiting for their captain. Wharton hesitated a moment; he was thinking of Nugent. But the footballers shouted to him impatiently, and he hurried at last down to the field.

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

**"THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE!"**

Another Splendid Complete Tale  
of Vernon-Smith v. Harry Wharton.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Dicky Nugent Has His Own Way.

"I THINK it's rot!"

Thus Gatty of the Second.

Gatty was seated upon a desk in the Second Form-room, swinging his legs. Myers was leaning against the desk, frowning. Nugent minor was standing before them, a frown upon his handsome face, too. An argument was proceeding between the chums of the Second, and it was waxing warm on both sides.

"Rot!" repeated Gatty emphatically.

"Piffle!" said Myers.

"Bosh!" added Gatty.

"Tosh!" said Myers.

"Who wants to go botanising?" growled Gatty. "Mugging after filthy grasses and filthy herbs and things! Boo!"

"Collecting up rotten specimens of rotten flowers and things, like a rotten schoolgirl!" said Myers, with great disrespect for the fair sex. "It's all very well for girls and noodles, like young Banthorpe of the Remove. But for one of us—"

"Oh, it's too rotten for anything!" said Gatty.

"Look here," said Dicky Nugent. "I'm going out this afternoon with Vernon-Smith. It's jolly decent of him to take me. He's going to stand me a ripping tea at that place on the river, and we're coming home by boat. He's rolling in money."

"Crawling up to a Remov cad for his money!" sniffed Gatty.

Dicky Nugent flushed.

"It's not that!" he said. "But why shouldn't I go?"

"Smithy's only doing it to worry your major, you know that!" said Myers.

"Oh, blow my major!"

"Besides, Smithy's not a giddy botanist. He's got his faults, I know; but that ain't one of them. He don't care nupence for all the botanical specimens that ever—ever spessed!" said Gatty, inventing a new verb in his indignation. "He's simply having you on—pulling your silly leg, my son!"

"If he likes to pull my leg by standing me a big tea, he can pull my leg till he's tired!" said Dicky, with a chuckle.

"Blow his big tea! Ain't we going to have tea in the Form-room?"

Nugent minor gave a contemptuous snort.

"Shrimp paste, and fag-ends of toast cribbed from the seniors' studies," he said. "Thanks; you can keep it!"

"Look here," roared Gatty. "If you're going back on your old chums for the sake of a beastly Removite—"

"I'm not!" said Dicky. "Look here, Smithy's offered me a half-crown if I find him the specimens he wants for his collection. We're going on the Pike, and he says I can climb and dodge about better than he can. I can, too! When I bag that half-crown, I'm going to stand a feed to our pals!"

Gatty and Myers changed their expressions.

"Why couldn't you say that before, you silly ass?" growled Gatty. "Of course, I'm not saying that Vernon-Smith is really a bad chap."

"And botany is all right in its way," said Myers thoughtfully. "Lot of silly rot, of course, but you get the fresh air, and—and exercise!"

"Of course you do," said Dicky cheerfully. "Not that I care twopence for the fresh air, or the exercise, or the botany either, as far as that goes. But Smithy is very chummy, and a half-dollar is a half-dollar, when it comes to tea-time."

"When will you be back?" asked Gatty. "We'll borrow Wingate's spirit-stove—he's going to be out this afternoon—and have a regular brew in the box-room. We can have Coker's tin kettle—I know where he keeps it!"

"Back before six, anyway," said Dicky. "Now—Hallo! Oh, you asses, you've kept me here jawing, and now here's my major come to jaw!"

The Form-room door had opened. Frank Nugent came in, with a serious look upon his face which only too well bore out his minor's foreboding that he had come to "jaw."

Gatty and Myers exchanged sympathetic glances with Nugent minor, and strolled out of the Form-room. They hadn't any majors themselves, but they knew from observation what it was like. Dicky Nugent made a movement to follow them, but Frank interposed.

"I want to speak to you, Dicky," he said.

Dicky groaned.

"Get it over quick, then," he said; "what a fellow you are for sermonizing, Frank. Blessed if I know why I stand it!"

"I don't want to sermonise, Dick. You know the mater expects me to look after you," said Frank.

Dicky frowned resentfully.

"I don't want looking after," he said. "I'm not a baby, I suppose. My aunt! I shall have you coming and tying a bib to me next. Why can't you let me alone? As for the mater, maters are all the same. I don't want the mater worrying over me! I'm all right! Blessed if she didn't send me down a big comforter she knitted herself for me, the other day! Nice guy I should have looked in it. I traded it off to a pedlar for some crackers in time for the Fifth, so it was all right, as it happened. But I'm not going to have you looking after me! I won't stand it!"

"I don't want to interfere with you, Dicky—"

"You're jolly well not going to!"

"But I want you to chuck up Vernon-Smith!"

Dicky gave a snort of disgust.

"Vernon-Smith again! Vernon-Smith this morning before classes, Vernon-Smith before third lesson—Vernon-Smith in the afternoon! Great Scott! He isn't going to eat me! Do you think he's going to take me out to teach me to be a highwayman?"

"What is he taking you out for?"

"Botany!"

"Rubbish! Vernon-Smith isn't a botanist!"

"He knows all about it," said Dicky. "I've heard him jawing it with old Capper of the Upper Fourth. He knows it all by heart!"

"He knows lots of things," said the junior. "I know he's clever, the rotten cad—too clever. But he means you no good, Dicky!"

"Rot!"

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"THE PENNY POPULAR" EVERY FRIDAY, "THE GEM" LIBRARY EVERY WEDNESDAY, are our two COMPANION PAPERS.

"You know what he's done for Hazeldene of the Remov. He has fellows to smoke in his study. He got Hazel into debt, and if Wharton hadn't found the money to pay it, Hazel would have been shown up and sacked from the school!"

"Well, he's not going to get me into debt. I suppose you don't think they'd let a Second Form fag in to the card-parties at the Cross Keys, do you?" said Dicky sarcastically.

"What about smoking?"

"Well, I've smoked cigarettes without him—made 'em out of packing-paper!" said Dicky cheerfully.

"You young rascal!"

"I haven't done it lately," said Dicky, in self-defence. "You gave me your knife with two blades if I'd promise never to smoke. I keep my word, don't I?"

"Look here, Dicky, Smith doesn't want you—he wants to score off me by getting you into trouble," said Nugent earnestly. "Is he the kind of fellow to go on a botanizing expedition? You know he isn't! He's going to lead you into mischief!"

"I suppose you can trust me to look after myself?"

"No, I can't, you young ass!"

"Well, if I'm a young ass, it's no good advising me!" said Dicky sulkily. "I'm too much of an ass to take advice, so you can save your breath. You got into such a row with Quelch to-day for interfering. Mind your own business, old chap, and don't be such a blessed meddling old grandmother!"

Frank reddened.

"Blessed if I hadn't better let you go to the dickens your own way!" he exclaimed.

"Much better!" said Dicky promptly.

"You mustn't go out with Smithy, Dicky. Even if he keeps off the grass this afternoon, it's only a beginning to get into your confidence. Then he'll show the cloven foot!"

"Well, when he shows the cloven foot, I'll jump on it, and cleave it a bit more!" said Dicky humorously. "Leave me alone till then!"

"Won't you give it up, Dicky, when I ask you?"

"I've promised Smithy."

"Well, if you promise to have nothing to do with him after to-day—"

"I jolly well won't!"

"Do you want to be sacked, Dicky?"

"Oh, rot!"

"Smithy would have got Hazeldene sacked, if Wharton hadn't saved him!"

"More fool Wharton; he wasn't worth it!" said Dicky coolly. "But I'm not a spooney like Hazel. I'm all there, you can bet!"

"You young ass!" said Frank angrily.

"Thanks! If you've done, I'll get out!"

The Removite compressed his lips.

"You're going out with Vernon-Smith, then, Dicky?"

"What-ho!"

"Against my wishes?"

"Blow your wishes!" said Dicky disrespectfully. "Your fault is that you're too much of an old fogey, Franky. S'pose I told you not to go out with Wharton or Johnny Bull, because it was against my wishes. You'd only snigger."

"That's different—"

"Oh, rot! Do shut up preaching and talking out of the back of your neck, Franky. Get out of the way and let me pass. Smithy's waiting for me."

"He can wait!" said Frank, between his teeth. "You're not going. If you won't take any notice of my wishes, I'll order you. You're my minor, and you've jolly well got to do as I tell you!"

"Oh, have I?" exclaimed Dicky, eyeing his major in a very belligerent way.

"Yes, you have. I don't rag you as Bel-over does his minor, for instance; but you've got to toe the line. You're not going out with Smithy, do you hear?"

"I will go!" roared Dicky. "Who's going to stop me?"

"I will!"

"I'll punch your head—I'll—"

"Stand where you are," said Nugent, as his minor tried to push past him. "Dicky, I don't want to lick you, but you'll make me."

"Lemme pass!"

"You sha'n't pass!"

Dick glared, and made a rush to escape from the Form-room. Frank Nugent, his patience at an end, caught him

# ANSWERS

by the collar and swung him back. He put more force than he intended into the swing, and Dicky went reeling across the Form-room, and fell at full length upon the floor with a loud bump and a yell of anguish.

"Nugent!" Everything seemed to be going wrong with Frank Nugent that day; and it seemed just his luck that Mr. Quelch should look into the room in search of him at that moment. "Nugent! How dare you! I have been looking for you—you should be in the Remove-room now! Bullying your minor, I see! Nugent, you had better be careful!"

Nugent panted.

"Go to your Form-room at once, and write out your imposition!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Remove did not move.

Mr. Quelch pointed to the door.

"If you do not obey me this instant, Nugent, I will take you before the Head and request him to administer a public flogging!" he said.

Nugent choked back the hot words that rose to his lips and went. Mr. Quelch followed him to the Remove Form-room, and watched him in grim silence as he sat down at his desk and took out his books. When he had started work, the Remove-master left the Form-room, closing the door behind him and looking it on the outside.

Dicky Nugent, gasping with rage, hurried out of the School House and joined the Bounder of Greyfriars in the Close; and they sauntered out of the school gates together.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Match with the Shell.

HARRY WHARTON did not enjoy the match that afternoon. He was a keen footballer, and a match with the Shell called forth all his powers; but instead of the usual keen enjoyment, the game was a weariness to him.

He was thinking of Nugent major shut up glumly in the Form-room, grinding out weary lines; and Nugent minor out with the Bounder—where? That they were going out on an innocent botanical excursion was incredible. The pretence of botany was merely to cover up some design of the Bounder's—that was certain. Wharton was out of patience with Dicky Nugent, and would probably have left him to go his own obstinate way without concern; but he was worried on Nugent's account. Nugent was very fond of his young brother, and that was not all—he was responsible for him. Mrs. Nugent had confided that troublesome minor to Frank when he was sent to Greyfriars, without specifying how Frank was to keep the obstinate young rascal in order. If any harm came to Dicky, Frank would have to face a scene with his mother; all the blame would be laid upon him.

Frank's affection for his mother was deep and sincere, and many times he had been wounded by her preference for the younger brother. To be defied by Dicky on the one hand, and blamed by his mother on the other hand, seemed to be Nugent's fate. It was all the fault of the Bounder; and Wharton's feelings towards his rival in the Remove were very bitter now. If the fellow had only played the game—if he would hit only above the belt—his enmity would have been of little account. But how was one to deal with a fellow to whom unscrupulous treachery came as naturally as swimming to a duck?

With such thoughts racing in his worried mind, Wharton was not at his best on the footer-field. Hobson, the captain of the Shell, scored two goals in the first half, against nil for the Remove; and the Removes looked rather blue in the interval.

Removes round the field, watching the match, jeered the players. Vernon-Smith's friends had mustered there. Vernon-Smith had lately started a rival eleven, and he claimed that it was as much entitled to play Form matches as Wharton's team. And, indeed, it looked as if Wharton's eleven had very little more chance of beating the Shell than the Bounder's team would have had.

"We've got to play up, Harry!" said Bob Cherry anxiously. "You don't seem to be in your usual form to-day, old son!"

Wharton made an angry gesture.

"I'm not," he said. "I'm worried."

"Play footer now, and worry after the match," suggested Tom Brown. "No good worrying while the match is on."

"You don't understand."

"I understand that the Shell are beating us," said the New Zealand junior ruefully. "You let Hoskins get the ball away from you—that awful ass Hoskins!"

"Hobson's scored twice!" said Russell dolefully.

"And we haven't broken our giddy duck!" said Bulstrode. "It's too rotten! If you ain't fit, Wharton, you might have stood out and let another chap captain the team."

"Yourself, I suppose, you mean," grunted Wharton.

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"Well, I couldn't have done much worse than you're doing, I must say," said Bulstrode tartly.

"Peace, my children, peace!" said Bob Cherry, with a wave of the hand. "Goals will go to the enemy sometimes, you know—we can't bag 'em all!"

"We want to bag some, I suppose!" growled Micky Desmond. "Faith, the Shell say it's like our cheek to play them. They'll be crowing no end now."

"We're beaten," said Morgan. "May as well crawl home now."

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton irritably. "The game isn't lost till it's won, anyway! Buck up, and we'll beat them in the second half."

"Buck up yourself, then," said Bulstrode. "The team's all right, if the skipper was all right."

"Look here—"

"You look here, too—"

"Let there be peacefulness, my worthy chums!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, looking quite distressed. "The ragfulness is terrific. Let us beat the Shell, instead of jawfully ragging one another. Let us buck up before we are beaten. A timely stitch saves ninepence, as your English proverb says."

The juniors grinned at the English proverb, and the call to play came before the argument could proceed further.

The Shell fellows started the second half with great confidence. Hobson had remarked to his followers that it was all over bar shouting.

But it wasn't! Harry Wharton pulled himself together, and the Remove eleven played up in splendid style.

Newland, in goal, was on his mettle; and he stopped many dangerous shots from the Shell shooting-men; and the Remove forwards got a chance at last, and brought the leather up to the Shell goal.

Bob Cherry had the ball almost on the touchline, and as the backs rushed him down, he centred right across to Wharton, and the Remove captain found a clear space before him, with only the goalie to beat.

He sent in a shot that would have puzzled a good many League goalies, and drove it right into the net, the custodian springing after it and sprawling full length in his vain efforts to save.

There was a shout for the Remove at last.

"Goal! Hurrah!"

"Time, too!" grunted Bolsover major. "Remove footer is going to the dogs. That's my opinion. There's new blood wanted in the team."

"I should jolly well say so!" growled Snoop.

"I say, you fellows, I quite agree with you!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "I'm a ripping centre-forward myself, but Wharton never thinks of putting me in! Why, do you think?"

"Too fat?" suggested Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Too clumsy, then?"

"Look here—"

"Too stupid, perhaps?"

Billy Bunter snorted, and rolled away in disgust. He never could get sympathy for his great wrongs in being passed over every time the Form team was fresh selected.

The teams had lined up again, and the Removes were going strong now. The aspect of the match had changed, and the Shell fellows had plenty to do to keep back the sweeping attacks upon their goal. But Bolsover major was pessimistic. As a matter of fact, he would not have been sorry to see his Form licked, for the sake of lowering Harry Wharton's prestige.

"It's always the same," he said. "Now, if I were playing back—"

"If I were playing half—" said Elliott.

"If I were in goal—" said Hazeldene.

"Oh, we shan't get in so long as Wharton's skipper!" said Stott. "It was the same with old Skinner—you remember Skinner, who was sacked. He was a ripping half—but Wharton didn't like him, and wouldn't play him."

"Rotten favouritism!" said Bolsover major. "This match is being chucked away— Oh!"

A goal from the foot of Bob Cherry interrupted Bolsover's remarks.

The score was level now; the Remove had equalised. But they seemed to have no chance of doing more. Hobson & Co. were putting forth great efforts, and Newland in the Remove goal was called upon to save again and again. The Remove got away at last, and there was a hot attack on the Shell citadel; but the whistle went before the Removes had a chance to make anything of it.

The Form match had ended in a draw.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

## The Famous Five.

**H**ARRY WHARTON piled up the fire in No. 1 Study. The November dusk was closing in over the Close of Greyfriars, and the leafless old elms were growing dim and indistinct. Bob Cherry brought a little parcel from the tuckshop, and opened it upon the table. John Bull sliced huge slices from a loaf for making toast. The chums of the Remove were getting ready for Nugent's release from his detention.

The door of the Remove-room was locked upon the unfortunate junior, and Mr. Quelch had the key, and he did not intend to unlock the door until half-past five. Frank was still grinding away endless repetitions of that famous shipwreck scene in the *Æneid*, and perhaps its sublimities had dawned upon his mind by this time. More probably they hadn't.

Grinding out lines by the hundred was not the way to appreciate their poetic beauty. But, at all events, Nugent would probably remember that passage to the end of his days, and would never be at a loss to construe it. Harry Wharton & Co. thought of their chum shut up in the lonely Form-room, and as they could not help him, they prepared an extra special feed for him when he was released at last by Mr. Quelch.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came into the study with a smile upon his face. He brought a pot of jam under one arm and a jar of preserved fruits under the other.

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "You're a giddy prince, Inky."

"The good-eggfulness is terrific," said the nabob, as he set down his burden. "I am going now to fetch the honourable pickles and the esteemed tomatoes."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "And don't forget some esteemed mustard, and an honourable loaf."

The nabob chuckled, and quitted the study. He crossed the Close in the dusk towards the little tuck-shop behind the elms, where Mrs. Mimble dispensed good things to the Greyfriars fellows. He passed a fag coming out of the tuck-shop—it was Nugent's minor. The Bounder and his companion had evidently returned from their afternoon's excursion. Dicky Nugent had a parcel under his arm, and a cheerful grin on his face.

"You have come backfully, you esteemed young rascal!" said the nabob.

Dicky nodded and grinned.

"Yes; and now we're going to have a feed. You can come if you like, Inky; we're having a regular brew in No. 6 box-room!"

"Thank you, my worthy kid, but I am feeding in No. 1 Study with your esteemed major."

Dicky grunted.

"Blow my esteemed major!" he said disrespectfully, and marched on with his parcel.

The nabob entered the tuck-shop. Vernon-Smith was there, with Bolsover major, and they were drinking hot home-made lemonade—a very pleasant drink on a cold day. The Bounder nodded to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh most cordially; and the nabob, who was polite to everybody, bowed to the Bounder graciously.

Vernon-Smith remembered, and practised, the ancient maxim, divide et impera. To detach Harry Wharton's followers, one by one, and turn them against their leader—by any means of flattery or trickery—that was the Bounder's plan. With Hazeldene they had succeeded fully, and the nabob seemed a much simpler fellow to deal with than Hazeldene. But, as a matter of fact, the nabob's polite urbanity covered much more keenness than was generally suspected.

"I hear you saved the match this afternoon, Inky," Vernon-Smith remarked affably.

The nabob grinned.

"Feeling pretty peckish after the footer, I suppose?"

"The peckishfulness is terrific!"

"Come and have a feed with us in my study," said Vernon-Smith hospitably. "We're having a rather decent spread—aren't we, Bolsover?"

"Ripping!" said Bolsover. "My minor's getting it ready now, Inky. Only study in the Remove where you have a fag to wait on you."

"Yes, do come, Inky," said the Bounder. "We want you to tell us about the Durbar, too. The fact is, Inky, you ought to have your eyes opened about those chaps in No. 1."

"My honourable eyes are quite open, thank you."

"You know, you used to be one of the Famous Four; as the silly asses call themselves, before Johnny Bull came to Greyfriars," pursued the Bounder. "Now you've got pushed out, and Johnny Bull is in your place. I wouldn't stand it."

"I wouldn't, either," said Bolsover.

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"It's mean, going back on an old chum, for the sake of a new chap," said Vernon-Smith, shaking his head with virtuous indignation.

"Caddish!" said Bolsover major.

"Inky is such a patient chap," continued the Bounder, encouraged by the polite smiles of the nabob, "he will stand anything from chaps who are going back on him all the time, and pushing him out. Look here, Inky, it's time you stood up for yourself, you know. Come and have a feed with me for the start, and show those chaps that you're not hung up on a nail for them, to be taken down just when they choose."

"Good idea," said Bolsover.

The nabob collected up his parcels with a thoughtful air. He fixed his dark eyes upon Vernon-Smith, and seemed to ponder.

"The esteemed Bounder considers that I am treated badly by my friends?" he asked.

"Yes, rather—very badly indeed."

"Rottenly!" said Bolsover.

"They do not stand by me as worthy chums should, in the esteemed Bounder's opinion?"

"That's just what I think."

"And my honourable friend Vernon-Smith would advise me to break off with them?" purred the nabob gently.

"That's about the best thing you could do, Inky," said the Bounder eagerly.

"And then the august Bounder would receive me into his esteemed friendship?"

"Yes, rather—gladly!"

"And I could help him to back up against the esteemed Wharton, and to put No. 1 Study down, and give the Famous Four the esteemed kybosh?" said Inky thoughtfully.

"Exactly!"

"The idea is rippingful!"

"Then come along!" said Vernon-Smith, slipping his arm through the nabob's.

The nabob shook it off, and gathered up his parcels.

"The idea is rippingful for the esteemed Bounder," he remarked. "It is not so rippingful for my worthy self."

"But look here—"

"If I break off with the esteemed Wharton, and join with the respectable and august Bounder, I shall be changing a good friend for a badful one, which will be badful business," said the nabob, with a shake of the head. "Besides, I could not merit the friendship of the honourable Bounder."

"Yes, that's all right. I assure you—"

Hurree Singh shook his dusky head again.

"Impossible, my esteemed friend. I could not be the chum of the worthy Bounder unless I became like him—a rotter and an esteemed liar and a worthy cad! I could not be cadful enough and liarful enough to please the esteemed Bounder!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bowed politely to the Bounder, and walked out of the tuck-shop with his parcels.

Vernon-Smith stood pale with anger. Bolsover major burst into a chuckle. The calm and polite Indian had been pulling the Bounder's leg, but his last words left no doubt of his real opinion of Vernon-Smith.

"What are you cackling at, you silly chump?" demanded Vernon-Smith, glaring at his companion.

Bolsover yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm cackling at you. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!"

"Never saw a chap's leg so beautifully pulled!" grinned Bolsover.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And the Bounder stalked away wrathfully.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chuckled softly to himself as he entered the School House, and made his way up to No. 1 Study. There was a pleasant smell in the study of hot toast and frying ham. Hurree Singh deposited his parcels on the table, still grinning.

"Wherefore that cackle?" asked Bob Cherry, who was industriously lading out jam from a jar into a soap-dish.

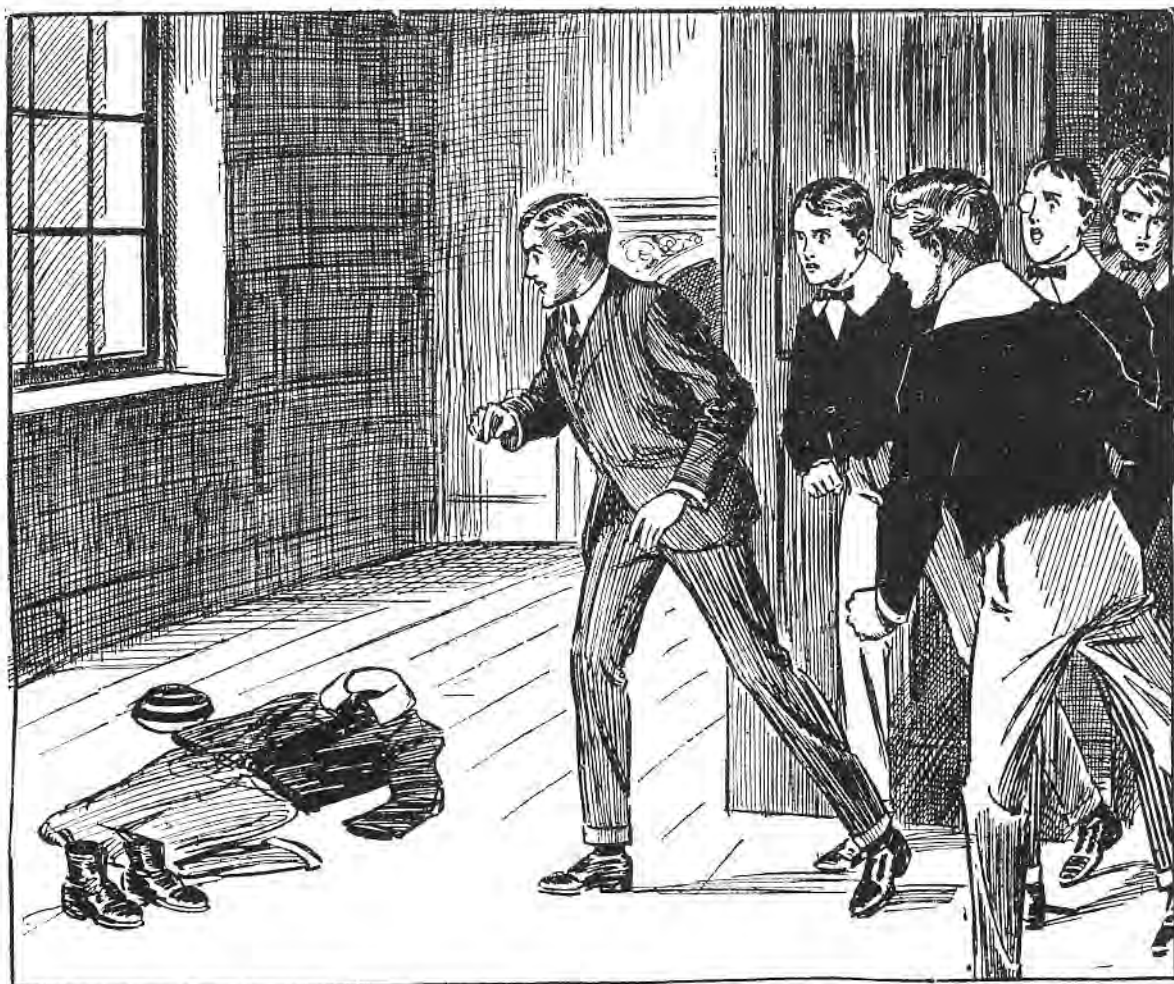
"I have just seen the honourable Bounder," explained Inky. "He's come back. He pointed out to me that I am not being treated goodfully by my esteemed chums, and that I should be wise to throw over this honourable study, and join his party."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"It's his old dodge," he said. "Divide and conquer! It's served him all right with Hazel and Ogilvy and some of the others. But he must be a silly ass to try it on you, Inky."

The nabob grinned gleefully.

"He says that my honourable place as a member of the Famous Four has been taken up by the esteemed Johnny Bull," he said; "and he suggests that I should stand upfully for my rights. It is very kind of the esteemed Bounder."



Kildare looked at the heap of clothes. Back into his mind came the weird legend of the monks. Had some unseen power spirited the unhappy junior away? (The above incident is taken from the splendid, extra-long story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "NOBODY'S STUDY," which is published in this week's Grand Double Number of "The Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday. Price 2d.).

"The rotter!" growled Johnny Bull. "He was trying the same rot on me the other day—suggesting that No. 1 Study had been cock of the walk long enough, and that it was up to Cherry and me to stand up for our own study."

"I don't think he'll ever succeed in setting us by the ears," said Bob Cherry. "There are five of us who will stick together all the time, and we'll be a match for the Bounder in the long run. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Franky!"

Frank Nugent came into the study.

"Let out at last, old son!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Old Quelch has just let me out," said Frank, compressing his lips. "How did the match go, Harry?"

"We drew with the Shell."

"Have you seen my minor?"

"Yes; he has come back," said the nabob. "Likewise the esteemed Bounder."

Nugent set his teeth.

"Good!" he said. "I'm going to see the Bounder after tea. I've got something to say to him. Do you think I could lick Vernon-Smith, you chaps?"

"Well, you'd have a jolly good chance," said Bob Cherry. "But, if you don't mind my saying it, I could handle him a bit better than you could. Let me do it."

Nugent shook his head.

"You can't!" he said. "It's my business to look after my minor. I'm going to lick Smithy—or else he's going to lick me."

"We'll call on him after tea," said Harry Wharton, "and we'll all come round to the gym and back you up, anyway. Tea's ready!"

The juniors sat down to tea. It was really a ripping spread, and they enjoyed it. Bob Cherry wore a thoughtful expression upon his face, and presently he rose to his feet and raised his hand for attention.

"Gentlemen!" he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull. "Pass the jam!"

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific."

"Gentlemen—"

"What's the little game?" asked Nugent.

"I have a proposal to make—"

"Go it!"

"I suggest that the title of this honourable and esteemed society, instead of the Famous Four, shall be changed into the Famous Five!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And I call upon all gentlemen present to drink a toast to the Famous Five!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith is Quite Ready.

BOFF!

Crash! Bolsover major sat down upon the floor of Vernon-Smith's study, in a state of great surprise.

The Bounder stepped back, and smiled.

The two juniors had the gloves on, and the study furniture had been pushed back out of the way. Vernon-Smith knew what he had to expect from Frank Nugent, and he was indulging in a little boxing practice as a preliminary. Bolsover major had offered to have the gloves on with him for a few rounds, but he had not expected this result. He

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looked far from pleased as he sat on the floor. Snoop, who was sitting on the table in the corner, gave a sudden giggle.

Bolsover major looked round.

"What are you cackling at, Snoopy?" he asked.

Snoop suddenly became very grave. He did not like the expression upon the face of the bully of the Remove.

"N-n-nothing!" he replied.

Bolsover picked himself up.

"You'd better get out of the habit of cackling at nothing," he said. "It's liable to get you a thick ear or two, Snoopy."

"Have another round?" asked the Bounder.

Bolsover nodded.

"Yes, rather. You're coming on very well, Smithy. I never expected you to get in an upper-cut like that. It would have hurt me if you hadn't had the gloves on."

It had hurt Bolsover major, in spite of the gloves, but he was not inclined to admit it. But although it was supposed to be only a friendly spar, Bolsover's look showed that he meant Smithy to be hurt in the next round.

The Bounder stepped up confidently enough. He was a clever boxer, and he had plenty of nerve, and he had done a great deal of practice lately. He knew that he could not be long upon the warpath against No. 1 Study without a personal encounter resulting, and he wanted to be ready for it. A fellow who was afraid of a fight was not likely to keep much influence in the Greyfriars Remove. The Remove prided themselves upon being a fighting Form. Vernon-Smith felt that if he could stand up to the burly Bolsover he need not be afraid of anybody in No. 1 Study. Bob Cherry was the only fellow in the Remove who could lick Bolsover without getting thoroughly knocked out in the process. And there were not more than three others who could stand up to the bully of the Remove at all on anything like equal terms. Bolsover was Vernon-Smith's backer, but he was not at all pleased at seeing the Bounder defend himself so well. And he intended that this friendly spar should have the result of putting Vernon-Smith back into the place he seemed to be emerging from.

But Bolsover major did not have it all his own way. Vernon-Smith was splendid in defence, and he stopped the burly Removite's heavy drives again and again. After a couple of minutes of scientific boxing on the part of the Bounder, and brute strength displayed by Bolsover, Vernon-Smith slipped in that upper-cut with his left which had astonished Bolsover before. And Bolsover failed to guard in time, and he went staggering back with a shock to his jaw that seemed to loosen every tooth in his head. He staggered back to the table, and if the table had not been there he would have fallen to the floor. He bumped against Snoop, and even in the confusion of the moment contrived to drive his elbow into Snoop's ribs with a force that elicited a fearful yell from the streak of the Remove.

Bolsover straightened up again, blinking rather dazedly. He put one hand to his jaw, and glared at the Bounder. The latter smiled.

"I hope I didn't hit too hard," he said agreeably. "You said we needn't be too careful about a hard knock or two, you know."

"My hat!" gasped Bolsover. "I never thought you had it in you! I've a jolly good mind to make you have it right out with me in the gym."

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"I'm not going to fight you, Bolsover," he said. "You would lick me, and we've got nothing to fight about. How do you think I shall handle Nugent, if he goes on the warpath?"

Bolsover's face cleared.

"You'll handle him all right," he said. "You couldn't tackle Bob Cherry, but if you get in a few of those upper-cuts on Nugent he will crumple up."

"No doubt about that!" said Snoop. "He, he, he!"

There was a knock at the door.

"Talk of angels!" grinned Bolsover.

The study door opened, and five juniors looked in together. They were the Famous Five. Harry Wharton noted the gloves on the hands of Bolsover and the Bounder, and he smiled grimly. He understood that the Bounder had been preparing for the wrath to come.

"Hullo!" said the Bounder, peeling off the gloves. "The whole family, I see!"

"Yes, the whole family," said Bob Cherry, stepping into the study. "Franky, old man, it's your move."

Nugent faced the Bounder.

"I want you to step into the gym with me, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"Anything going on there?" asked Vernon-Smith easily.

"You are going to fight me?"

"I don't mind, but what for?"

"You know very well what for. Either you are going to lick me, or I'm going to lick you; and, which ever way it

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goes, you'll have a fight on your hands every time you have anything to do with my young brother."

The Bounder yawned.

"Are you ready?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, yes; I don't mind."

"Then follow us."

"Right!"

The coolness of the Bounder rather nonplussed Harry Wharton & Co. They had not expected their enemy to accept the challenge so readily and cheerfully. Bob Cherry wrinkled his brows in thought as they made their way to the gymnasium.

"I wish you'd let me take this on, Franky," he said persuasively.

"Rot!" said Nugent.

"The Bounder's got a rod in pickle for you," said Bob. "He wouldn't have taken the challenge if he hadn't. He's been lying low. Bolsover has been putting him through his paces, and they expect to win, Franky, old man."

"If he wins, he will get hurt in the process."

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"Then it's all right. I suppose he'll never be able to lick me without getting hurt, and he'll get tired of that in the long run. It's the only way I can keep Dicky out of his hands, and I'm going to try it."

The juniors entered the gym. There were a good many fellows there, and the news that there was to be a fight seemed to have spread. Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, called to the Famous Five as they came in.

"Gloves on, mind," he said.

"Right!" said Harry Wharton.

"There's no harm in a mill, if you don't carry it too far," said the Greyfriars captain. "But I shall keep an eye on you."

Nugent compressed his lips.

"Look here, you chaps: I don't want the gloves on with the Bounder," he said. "This is going to be a fight, not fooling."

"Must stick to the rules, Franky. If you want a mill without gloves, you must leave it to the daylight, and have it out behind the chapel," said Wharton. "It's no good starting it here, and having the prefects down on us."

"The no-goodfulness is terrific."

Nugent nodded impatiently.

"Well, a licking with the gloves on is a licking all the same, and the next time there needn't be any gloves," he said.

Bob Cherry shook his head dubiously. Nugent was a good boxer, and a sturdy lad, and he had plenty of pluck, but Bob Cherry could not help having a secret misgiving as to the result of that encounter. He felt that the Bounder was too cunning to have allowed himself to be drawn into it unless he felt that he had a good prospect of victory. And Nugent was too angry and excited to be at his best, too. The Bounder's prestige in the Form would be immensely increased if he could defeat a member of Harry Wharton's Co., and in Nugent he had chosen the most vulnerable of the Four. Wharton himself, or Bob Cherry or Johnny Bull would have given him a harder fight.

Vernon-Smith sauntered into the gym with Bolsover major and Snoop, and Stott, and Hazeldene, and one or two more of his friends. They came over to where the Co. were awaiting them. The Bounder stripped off his jacket, and handed it to Hazeldene, who reddened a little, and avoided the eyes of his former chums.

Nugent stripped, and took the gloves from Bob Cherry. The expression on his face showed that there would be some hard hitting, gloves or no gloves. Wingate of the Sixth strolled over towards the circle of juniors.

"I'm going to keep an eye on this," he remarked. "You can have a mill, if you like, but if there is any bad feeling shown I shall stop it at once."

Frank Nugent grunted; but he did not reply to the captain of Greyfriars. Wingate's word was law.

Coker of the Fifth came into the ring and took out a big silver watch. The Removites glared at Coker rather aggressively.

"What do you want?" demanded Tom Brown.

"I'm timekeeper," said Coker.

"Good!" said Vernon-Smith. "Better have a chap from outside the Form to keep time. There are some in the Remove I couldn't trust."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob Cherry. "If there's any foul play, it will come from your side; and you know that as well as I do."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm ready!" he remarked.

"So am I," said Nugent.

"Time!" said Coker. "Shake hands, and pile in."

THE NINTH CHAPTER.  
The Bounder Wins.

"TIME!"

The Bounder and his adversary faced one another; foot and eye opposed, their hands up.

The Bounder was cool and determined—cool as an iceberg, determined and relentless. Frank Nugent was not in his best form. He was hot and excited, and evidently longing to get at his enemy, and thinking of nothing but hammering him.

In spite of Coker's good advice, the adversaries did not shake hands. Vernon-Smith held out his hand, and Nugent waved it away.

"Enough of that foolery," he growled out. "You can humbug the Form, but you can't humbug me, you cad!"

"You can shut up that kind of talk, Nugent," said Wingate, frowning.

"You don't know the cad!" said Frank bitterly.

"If this is a fight, and not a gassing match, I'm ready," said the Bounder sarcastically.

"Time!" repeated Coker.

And the fight started.

Frank Nugent had lost all his usual coolness. He attacked hotly at the start, and the Bounder gave ground, and retreated right round the ring, with Nugent slogging after him, piling heavy blows that never reached the mark. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged hopeless looks. Nugent was not going the way to win.

Horace Coker had his eye on his watch. Just before the call of time the Bounder ceased to retreat, and rushed in with sudden force. His attack was wild and whirling; Nugent was taken quite by surprise, and he reeled back before a "postman's knock" that took effect on his jaw, and fell heavily.

Bump!

"Time!" said Coker.

Wharton picked Nugent up, and gave him a rest upon his knee. Bob Cherry fanned his heated face; Johnny Bull dabbed it with a wet sponge. Nugent breathed heavily. Every tooth in his head was aching.

"Go slow, Franky!" said Wharton, in a low voice. "The Bounder's trying to draw you on—he wants to wind you."

Nugent nodded.

"Don't force the fighting—make him attack!" said Bob Cherry.

"And look out for his left!" said Tom Brown. The experienced eye of the New Zealand junior had already noted the Bounder's strong point.

"Time!"

Nugent stepped up to his adversary again.

He understood the value of Wharton's advice, and he tried to keep cool and fight with more caution.

But the mocking face of the Bounder was before him, and his temper was at boiling-point.

He let himself go again, and pressed the attack hard, and again, as before, the Bounder gave ground before his slogging.

Nugent pumped himself out in attack, and as he paused from sheer want of breath the Bounder "sailed in."

Rap! rap! came the hard gloves on Nugent's jaw, rap-rap—on his chin and his nose—rap-rap-rap! He staggered back, dazzled by the heavy blows in the face, and then—rap, rap—and he was on his back again, with a crash.

Only the call of time saved him from being counted out.

"Well, of all the rotten shows, I think this is about the rottenest," said Bolsover major, as he fanned his principal. "You might as well be fighting a kid in the Second Form, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"I fancy the thing's as good as over," he remarked.

"All over bar shouting," said Snoop.

That was the opinion of others as well as Vernon-Smith's friends. Harry Wharton & Co. did their best for Nugent, and gave him good advice. He listened to it impatiently. He wanted to get at his enemy, and hammer him—a very natural desire, but one very difficult to carry out.

"Better chuck it, Franky," said the voice of Nugent minor from the crowded ring of onlookers. "You're not up to it, old man. I could make a better show than that."

There was a laugh from some of the fellows. Frank Nugent turned a furious look upon his minor.

"There's some coming for you after this is over, you young rotter," he said.

Dicky sniggered.

"You won't be able to whop a black beetle after Smithy is finished with you, Franky," he said. "My advice to you is to chuck it."

"Hold your tongue!"

"Nice, polite major I've got, haven't I?" said Dicky, looking round with an aggrieved air. "Hammering Smithy because he took me out on a botanical tramp, as if there's any harm in blessed botany. No more harm in it than there is sense."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

"THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE!"

Another Splendid Complete Tale  
of Vernon-Smith v. Harry Wharton.

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"Why don't you chuck it, Franky? Ow!"

Nugent minor roared as Bob Cherry compressed his ear between a strong finger and thumb.

"You shut up, kid!" said Bob. "You're too humorous."

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Shut up, then!"

"Time!"

The Third round started. Nugent minor scooted round the ring out of reach of Bob Cherry, with Gatty and Myers. There was no doubt that the sympathy of the Second-Formers was with the Bounder; especially Dicky Nugent's. Nugent major's concern for his minor was not appreciated by Dicky; and his affectionate regard did not seem to be reciprocated, either. Dicky's point of view was that he didn't want to be bothered; and the anxious affection and concern of his major seemed to him simply absurd interference with his rights and liberties as a free and independent fag.

"Franky's getting it in the neck," Dicky remarked to Gatty and Myers, as the third round proceeded. "I'm sorry for him. It's rotten having a major at the same school; but a chap doesn't like to see his major licked. Why can't he draw out?"

"Got no sense," opined Gatty. "Not much in the family, is there?" At which Dicky glared; and there was very nearly a diversion in the proceedings by a Second-Form conflict.

The third round ended, to the advantage of the Bounder. Vernon-Smith seemed to be in the pink of condition; and he looked as fresh as paint. Frank Nugent was gasping almost painfully as he sank upon Wharton's knee for a rest. Vernon-Smith did not seem to need a rest. He stood in a careless attitude, chatting with Bolsover and Snoop as he waited for the call of time.

Harry Wharton looked doubtfully at his chum. Nugent caught his look, and frowned irritably. Nugent was well known for his kind and amiable temper; but it seemed to be quite gone now.

"I suppose you think I'm getting licked?" he muttered.

"I wish you'd be more careful, Franky."

"The rotter irritates me—I want to punch that grin off his face," said Nugent savagely.

"Yes, I know; but the only way to do it is to go slow. It's no good throwing yourself on his knuckles."

"I'll settle the cad in the next round."

"Make him do the fighting," said Bob Cherry. "You'll get a chance then. Make him attack you, Franky."

"All right!"

But in the fourth round Frank did not remember his good intentions. Vernon-Smith drew him with ease, and punished him severely. But for the gloves, Nugent's punishment would have been very heavy. As it was, his left eye was closing, and his mouth was bleeding. At the end of the round the Bounder played his upper-cut with the left, and Nugent went down like a log, and lay half-stunned.

When the call of time came for the fifth round, Nugent was staggering as he went forward to meet his foe. Wingate raised his hand.

"That's enough," he said. "Stop!"

"I'm not done yet," said Nugent.

"You are done!" said Wingate sharply. "This isn't a prize fight, and you're damaged enough. I say the fight is to stop."

"Look here——"

"Enough said; clear out, all of you!"

The Bounder peeled off the gloves.

"Just as you say, Wingate," he said. "I'm ready to go on, and I don't claim a victory, if that's any satisfaction to Nugent."

"The victory's yours, whether you claim it or not," said the Greyfriars captain. "You're licked, Nugent—you're an ass if you can't see it."

"I'm not licked!" shouted Nugent furiously.

"Licked or not, this fight is over," said Wingate frowning, "and it's not to start again; do you hear?"

Nugent gritted his teeth.

"You understand me," said Wingate angrily. "You've fought it out quite far enough, and it's not to start again. If I catch you two hammering one another again, there will be trouble, I warn you."

"I sha'n't start it again," said the Bounder, "I give you my word, Wingate. I didn't want to fight with Nugent now, but he forced it on me; he will admit that."

"You never do want to fight," said Nugent bitterly. "You prefer to dig a fellow in the back, and take cowardly advantages."

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"I wish you'd let us finish, Wingate," he said.

"You have finished," said the prefect curtly. "Nugent's

licked, whether he likes to own it or not. Why, you young ass, you can hardly stand on your pins, as it is."

"I can stand long enough to lick that cad!" growled Nugent.

"Take those gloves off!"

Nugent hurled the gloves upon the floor.

"Easy does it, Franky," murmured Bob Cherry, in perplexity and concern. "Don't fall foul of old Wingate, for goodness' sake."

"And don't let this begin again," said Wingate, his brow very dark as he saw Frank's passionate action. "Vernon-Smith has given me his word, Nugent. Give me yours."

Nugent set his teeth.

"Do you hear me, Nugent?"

"Yes, I hear you," said the junior sullenly.

"Then do as I tell you."

"I can't give you my word not to tackle Smithy. I'm going to tackle him every time he says a word to my young brother," said Nugent.

Wingate's brow was like thunder.

"What do you mean? Do you mean that Smith has been bullying your young brother?"

"No, not that!"

"He hasn't?" piped out Nugent minor. "It's a good chap. He took me out this afternoon to do botany, and my major is interfering. My major's a silly ass!"

There was a laugh.

"Your minor seems to be satisfied with Vernon-Smith, Nugent," said Wingate. "If he's got nothing to complain of, what are you interfering for?"

"Because Vernon-Smith's a low cad, and I won't have my brother mixed up with him," said Frank fiercely.

"Rats!" yelled Nugent minor.

"It seems to me that your minor has a right to please himself about that, Nugent," said Wingate. "He doesn't seem to want you to interfere."

"I've told him so, millions of times," said Nugent minor, with some exaggeration.

"You hear that, Nugent?"

"Yes, I hear it."

"Well, what do you say?"

"I say that my minor is a young fool, and Vernon-Smith's a rotten cad, and I won't have them mixed up in anything together."

"You just see!" howled Nugent minor.

"Well, you can settle that with your minor," said Wingate, in some perplexity. "But there's going to be no more of this. The best thing you two fellows can do is to shake hands and be friends. It's the first time I ever heard of a chap quarrelling with another chap for taking notice of his minor."

"I'm willing to shake hands," said Vernon-Smith, holding out his hand as he spoke. "I don't want to be on bad terms with anybody, and I'd like to be as friendly with Nugent as I am with his brother."

"That's well said!" exclaimed Wingate. "Now, shake

hands with him, Nugent, and let there be no more of this endless rowing."

Nugent put his hands behind him.

"You won't?" asked Wingate, frowning.

"I'd sooner shake hands with a reptile."

Vernon-Smith withdrew his hand.

"Well, I've done my best," he said.

"And Nugent has done his worst," said Wingate. "If there's any more of this, Nugent, I shall know who's to blame, and you'll hear from me. Now, clear out, all of you."

Nugent was about to make a hot reply, but Bob Cherry grasped him and dragged him away by main force. Wharton put Nugent's jacket on him, and they left the gym, together. Nugent's face was pale and furious.

"You can't jaw old Wingate, Franky," said Bob Cherry. "Dash it all! You can't jaw the head prefect of the giddy school, you know."

"Hang Wingate!"

"Ahem!"

"And hang you, too, Bob Cherry, if you interfere with me," said Nugent passionately.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Hang me as much as you like, old chap; I don't mind. So long as you only go for me, and don't go for the prefects, I don't mind."

"Take it easy, Franky," said Johnny Ball.

"Oh, rats!"

And Nugent swung away by himself, leaving his chums in a state of great perplexity and anxiety. There was no doubt at all that there was more trouble to come; and they felt, with only too much reason, that the trouble would be for Frank Nugent, and not for his adversary.

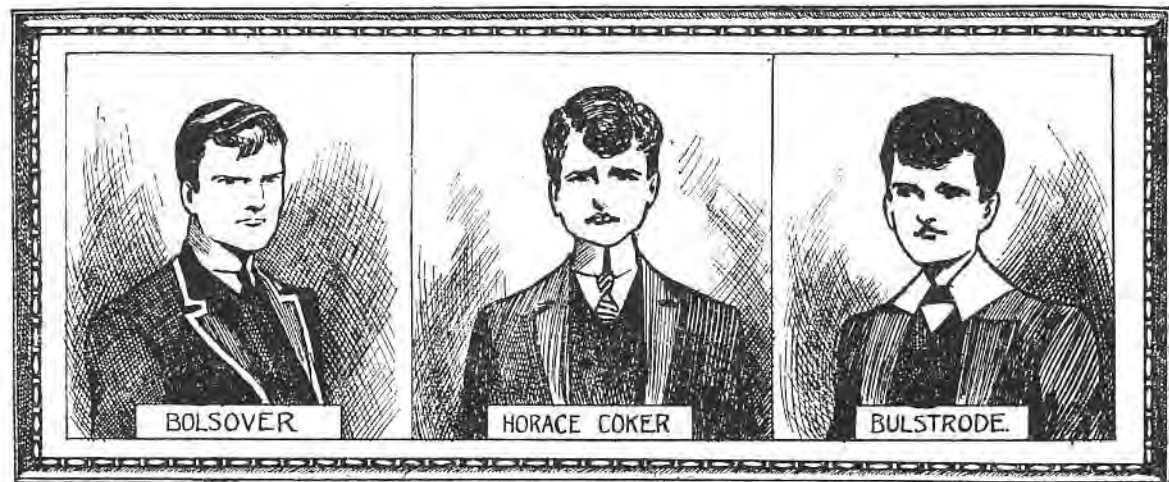
## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Under Suspicion.

WINGATE called the Bounder into his study later in the evening. The captain of Greyfriars had been thinking, and he wanted an explanation with the Bounder. Vernon-Smith came in cheerfully and respectfully. The Bounder could be very respectful when he chose. As a matter of fact, the Bounder respected nobody. His cynical contempt for everybody, and everything, included Wingate himself, and even the reverend Head of Greyfriars. But the Bounder was wise in his generation. He knew how much appearance counted for, and in his struggle with No. 1 Study he knew the necessity of appearing, at least, to be in the right. The Bounder had changed very much, in outward seeming, from the Bounder of old, and he had won golden opinions from masters and prefects, and he was growing very popular with the fellows generally. Schoolboys are not apt to look very far below the surface of things, and most of the Greyfriars fellows were far from suspecting the hidden depths of the Bounder's peculiar nature.

"What's all this trouble between you and No. 1 Study?"

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## No. 5.—MARK LINLEY: FISHER T. FISH: MICKY DESMOND.

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When the call of time came for the fifth round, Nugent was staggering as he went to meet his foe. Wingate raised his hand. "You are done!" he said. "I say the fight is to stop!" "Look here——" began Nugent. (See chapter 19.)

Wingate asked abruptly. "It seems that there's never going to be any peace and quietness in the Remove."

"I'm sorry," said Vernon-Smith.

"But what's it about?"

"Well, it's hardly any good to ask me, as I'm an interested party," said Vernon-Smith. "But a lot of the fellows think that Wharton and his friends are too high-handed, and they're standing out against it. Wharton & Co. want to run the Form, and the Form don't want to be run. That's the matter in a nutshell."

"Nugent used to be a very good-tempered kid," said the captain of Greyfriars. "I can't understand his breaking out on this way. Why does he object to your taking notice of his minor?"

"I fancy it's just rot, and nothing else. I don't see why he should think I'd do the kid any harm. I know there was a time when I had the prefects down on me, and got into trouble with the Head, owing to some scrapes I got into," said Vernon-Smith. "No. 1 Study are keeping that old story alive, and making the most of it. But since I gave my word to the Head that I meant to keep straight, I defy anybody to say that I haven't kept it. I know I was a bit wild when I first came to Greyfriars. It's through being the son of a millionaire, and having my own way too much at home, I suppose. But a term here was enough to teach me sense, and I've rodd the line since then. Nobody outside No. 1 Study has complained about me. As for Nugent's minor, I took an interest in the kid. As a matter of fact, I thought I might get on better terms with No. 1 Study through him."

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But as his major has cut up so rusty about it, I shall drop him. I don't want to make trouble between brothers."

Wingate nodded.

"That's a very sensible decision," he said. "I must say you seem to be doing your best to keep the peace, Smith, and the fault seems to be on the other side."

"I dare say there are faults on both sides," said the Bounder modestly. "But I and my friends want to have a show in the Form footer, and other things; and there won't be any peace till we get it, I think. As for Nugent——" He paused.

"Well, what about Nugent?"

"I'd rather not say. It's not my business to sneak about a chap in my Form. Only I'm sorry to see a fellow like Nugent going to the dogs."

"Going to the dogs!" repeated Wingate.

"I can't say any more; it would be sneaking," said Vernon-Smith, with a troubled look. "I'd rather hold my tongue, if you don't mind."

"You've said rather too much for that," said Wingate grimly. "What has Frank Nugent been doing?"

The Bounder was silent.

"You've got to answer that question, Smith. I will keep to myself what you tell me. I can hardly believe that Nugent has done anything very wrong; but if he's getting off the track, I'd like to keep an eye on him."

"Well, I fancy he's under some not very good influence," said the Bounder. "Some influence outside Greyfriars, I mean."

Wingate started.

"Tell me plainly what you mean?" he exclaimed.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"I can't," he said obstinately. "It would be sneaking. Besides, I'm not certain. It's no business of mine, only I'm sorry, as I said, to see Nugent going that way. Look here, Wingate, I wish you wouldn't question me. It places me in a rotten position. It's not fair to me to make me the cause, perhaps, of a chap in my Form being expelled."

"Expelled!" exclaimed Wingate.

"I can't say any more."

"What has Nugent done?"

The Bounder's lips set obstinately.

"Well, perhaps it's not quite fair to ask you," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But I'll keep an eye on him. You can get out."

The Bounder got out.

Wingate remained in deep thought. Courtney of the Sixth came into the study, and he glanced in surprise at the Greyfriars' captain's thoughtful and troubled face.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Wingate. "Have you noticed young Nugent lately—Nugent of the Remove, I mean?"

"Can't say I have. His Form-master isn't satisfied with him, I believe," said the prefect. "That's all I know."

"You remember what you told me the other day about seeing a chap in a Greyfriars cap scuttle out of the back way of the Cross Keys?" said Wingate.

"Yes; some junior. I thought I'd better tell you."

"Might it have been Nugent?"

"It might have been, of course," said Courtney. "I hardly think so. Nugent isn't that kind of a chap. More likely Vernon-Smith; he was jolly nearly expelled for something of the sort soon after he came to Greyfriars."

"But he's been all right since then."

"Yes, unless he's spoofing us."

"H'm!" said Wingate thoughtfully. "I'm going to keep my eyes open. Nugent has been acting very queerly. I shall keep an eye on him, I think."

And the subject dropped. But Wingate did not forget it.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Vernon-Smith is Very Good.

"I—I SAY, you chaps, I'm sorry I was ratty," said Frank Nugent, as he joined Harry Wharton & Co. in the junior common-room before bed-time. "Don't mind me. I was upset."

"We don't mind you, old son," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Don't mench."

Nugent smiled.

"It wasn't pleasant to get licked," he said. "And I suppose I must admit that I was licked. Not that I don't think I could lick the Bounder on fair terms."

"Of course you could," said Johnny Bull comfortingly, and the Nabob of Bhampur chimed in that the of-coursefulness was terrific.

"I was too wild to do my best," said Frank. "That cad Smith has set my young brother against me, and we're at daggers drawn now. Dicky won't listen to a word from me."

"Give him a hiding," suggested Johnny Bull.

Nugent laughed ruefully.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do any good," he said. "I'll keep that for the Bounder."

"You remember what Wingate said," remarked Wharton.

Nugent's face clouded again.

"I can't help it, Harry. You know what a blackguard Smithy is. He's more careful about appearances than he used to be; but he's the same rotter underneath. It would be one of his rotten tricks to teach young Dicky to make an ass of himself—smoking, and playing cards, and all that. And if it all came out, and Dicky was to get sacked, the Bounder wouldn't suffer; he'd be too deep for that. You remember how it was with Hazeldene?"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I know," he said. "But if Dicky is determined to keep on with Smithy, Frank, I don't see what you can do."

"Only hammer Smithy! I shall have better luck next time."

"But Wingate—"

"Blow Wingate!"

"Thank you, Nugent!" said Wingate, looking in at the door. "It's bed-time, you kids. Buzz off!"

Nugent turned crimson.

The arrival of the prefect at that moment to see the Remove off to their dormitory was most unfortunate for him.

"I—I say, Wingate," he stammered, "I didn't—didn't—mean—"

Wingate cut him short.

"You didn't mean me to heat you," he said. "I understand that."

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"N-no. I didn't mean—"

"I sha'n't take any notice of what I heard by accident. It's that's what you mean," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But I warn you to be careful, Nugent. I may as well tell you that I've got my eye on you specially."

"I don't see why you should," said Frank.

"I hope you don't! Get off to bed!"

"But look here, Wingate—"

"That's enough. Get off!"

The Removites streamed out of the common-room, Frank Nugent went with a flushed and angry face. He was in Wingate's black books, as well as those of his Form-master, now; and there seemed no way of setting himself right with the Greyfriars captain. He looked very moody as he came into the Remove dormitory, and sat down on his bed to kick his boots off.

Vernon-Smith came over to him.

"Nugent, old fellow—" he began.

Frank gave him a savage look.

"Don't call me old fellow, confound you!" he exclaimed hotly. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I won't, then," said the Bounder pacifically. "But I wanted to speak a word—"

"Well, I don't want you to. The less you talk to me the better I shall like it!" growled Nugent. "Keep away from me; that's all I want."

"I don't bear any malice for that scrap in the gym," said the Bounder. "If you do—"

"Who says I do?"

"Well, if you don't, you might be civil to a chap," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm not gloating over licking you. I know you weren't in top form."

"You didn't lick me!"

"Well, I didn't, then," said the Bounder, with wonderful patience. "Have it as you like. But I was going to tell you—"

"Get off, and let me alone, can't you?"

"It's about your minor."

"My minor's got nothing to do with you; you needn't talk to me about him!" flashed out Nugent. "If you don't want more trouble, you'd better not speak to me."

"My dear chap—"

Nugent jumped off the bed.

"Will you clear off?" he exclaimed.

"But I tell you—"

"Why can't you shut up?" exclaimed Bob Cherry angrily. "You're simply trying to rag Franky into a row, to get him into trouble with the skipper."

"But I want to tell him that I've decided to drop his minor, as he makes such a fuss about it," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't want to take up the young ragamuffin, anyway; and I thought I should please Nugent by taking some notice of him."

"That's a lie!" said Frank.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, anyway, there need not be any more trouble on that score," he said. "You can say what you like, Nugent. I'm not going to quarrel with you. I've given Wingate my word. And as for your minor, he can go and eat roke. I sha'n't speak to him again!"

"I don't believe you," said Frank. "This is another of your lies. I'm going to watch you. I wouldn't take your word."

"Well, I can't help that," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm doing my best. But if you're determined to row with me, I suppose you'll have to have your way. But I think you might be a bit more reasonable."

"Oh, rats!"

"Say what you like; you know you're safe, after my promise to Wingate," said the Bounder. "But it would be more decent to be civil. But I suppose it's not much good expecting that of you chaps—"

"Snack!"

Nugent's open palm came across the Bounder's cheek with a loud crack that rang through the dormitory.

"Now, shut up, or put up your hands," said Nugent.

Vernon-Smith started back.

He clenched his hands, and seemed about to spring on Nugent; but he controlled himself, and his hands dropped to his sides.

"I'm going to keep my word," he said, and he turned away.

"Bah!"

"Shame!" yelled Snoop. "You know he's not afraid of you, Nugent, after he licked you in the gym. Shame!"

"Shame!" howled Bolsover.

Nugent crimsoned.

He had regretted the blow as soon as it was struck; but he would not say so. Besides, he knew, what the other fellows did not know, that the Bounder was playing a part. Promises to the Bounder were less than nothing, unless it suited him

to keep them. He had deliberately provoked Nugent to break the peace in order that he might play the part of the famous Eric to the life. He had proved in the gym that he was not afraid of Nugent; his patience under the insult, therefore, could only be ascribed to his regard for the word he had passed to the Greyfriars captain. That was how the Removites looked at it, and half the Form echoed Snoop's yell:

"Shame!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent and dismayed. They regretted their chum's action, but they understood it. Wingate came into the dormitory to see lights out, and frowned as he found the juniors had hardly begun to undress.

"Tumble in!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean? Do you want to keep me up here all night, you young sweeps. Hallo! Is that another row?"

"No, it's all right," said Vernon-Smith.

"Have you been fighting with Nugent again?" demanded Wingate.

"I told you I wouldn't."

"Have you kept your word?"

"The other fellows can tell you whether I have or not."

"Yes, he has!" yelled Snoop. "Nugent's smacked his face, and he hasn't hit back. I suppose that's keeping his word, ain't it?"

Wingate strode towards Nugent.

"Is that true?" he exclaimed. "Did you strike Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then you acted like a cad," said Wingate, "and I hope the other fellows will let you know what they think of it. It was rotten of you."

"You don't know—"

"I know that you will get into serious trouble if you don't mend your ways, you youngascal," said the Greyfriars captain. "There's no excuse for you; you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Don't talk to me. Go to bed."

Nugent, trembling with anger, went to bed.

The rest of the Remove turned in, and Wingate, with a grim warning as to what would happen if he heard any noise from the dormitory, extinguished the lights, and retired.

There was a buzz of voices; and every voice that spoke spoke in condemnation of Frank Nugent. The junior lay silent and unhappy; he condemned himself, for that matter.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. For once, Vernon-Smith & Co. had matters all their own way; and for once, too, they were taking the greater part of the Form with them.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Knows Something.

FRANK NUGENT'S handsome face was clouded the next day.

He was in too troubled a state of mind to be in good form for his work, and he had some sharp passages with Mr. Quelch in the Form-room during the morning.

Mr. Quelch had not forgotten the "howling eagle." He made references to that bird during morning lessons, and the Removites grinned at Nugent's discomfort.

The unfortunate junior was reprimanded for carelessness in his lessons, and given a hundred lines to write out; and his face was more clouded than ever when the Remove were dismissed after third lesson.

"Buck up, Franky!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll all lend a hand with the lines."

"Oh, blow the lines!" said Nugent. "I don't mind the lines. Everything seems to be going wrong at once. I always got on well with old Quelch till lately. Now he's got his knife into me, and so has Wingate—and the fellows are all looking down their noses at me."

"That's because you punched Smithy last night in the dorm," said Johnny Bull. "It was a silly thing to do, old man—though I know you couldn't help it. If ever a fellow ought to be punched, kicked, squashed, and jumped on, it's Smithy!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "But the rotter always works it round so that he's in the right, and somebody else is in the wrong. We shall have to be awfully careful of the beast. He's dangerous!"

Nugent grunted.

"Hammering him is the only way," he said. "As for his promise to Wingate, he'd break that whenever it suited him. It saves him from having to fight; that's why he made it. He'd rather beat us by trickery."

"Well, he's letting your minor alone now, so you can keep clear of him," said Tom Brown.

"Rot!"

"Thanks!" said the Colonial junior. "I must say you're getting jolly polite in your old age, Nugent."

Nugent coloured.

"Dash it—I'm sorry!" he said. "Only I feel rotten. Smithy was only lying, as usual. What do you think he took my minor up at all for?"

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"Blessed if I know!" said Tom Brown. "I wouldn't take the young rotter up with a pair of tongs, I know that!"

"Look here, Brown—" said Bob Cherry. "For goodness' sake, don't let the Old Firm start rowing! Order! Likewise, shut up!"

Bob Cherry's determined good humour was like oil on the troubled waters.

"Well, he took my minor up to score over us," said Nugent. "If he drops him now, he won't have scored. He was lying. I'm going to watch him; and if I find him talking to Dicky—"

Nugent flourished a clenched fist to complete the sentence, and walked out into the quadrangle.

"Looks as if Nugent is determined to have trouble," said Bulstrode. "I don't see why he can't take Smithy's word."

"What's Smithy's word worth?" said Harry Wharton.

"Well, it looks as if his word's worth something, when he let Nugent smack his face last night without hitting back."

"He was only acting, the rotter!" growled Bob Cherry. "He gets up these blessed scenes to take in mugs. There never was a chap less like good Little Eric; and I jolly well don't believe in the Bouncer when he begins the 'Little by Little' bizna!"

"Oh, you chaps are so awfully deep, ain't you?" yawned Bulstrode. "I don't see why Smithy's word can't be taken. What should he want with a grimy little rag out of the Second, anyway? He just trotted the little ruffian out for kindness, I should say; and he's dropped him now to save trouble. Seems to me that Smithy is being remarkably peaceful. I know I wouldn't let Nugent slap my face without hearing something drop!"

"Same here!" said Russell. "I think Smithy's been badly treated, if you ask me."

"We didn't ask you," growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, you're welcome to my opinion, all the same. I think there's been too much of this being down on old Smithy; he doesn't seem half such a bad sort, to my mind."

"Faith, and I must say I was thinking the same!" remarked Micky Desmond. "Sure, and there's such a thing as being too suspicious, you know!"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob.

Whereat Micky Desmond sniffed and walked away.

Bob Cherry gave a comical groan.

"Queer, isn't it?" he said. "The part of Little Eric was about the last I ever expected to see Smithy play; but now he's taken it on, he's taking in the whole giddy Form with it. We shall have him giving up smoking next, and speaking of ha'penny nap as sinful, and preaching sermons in the Rag. My hat! If he did, I believe he'd be able to get these mugs to swallow it whole! I wonder how he does it?"

"I say, you fellows, where's Nugent?"

"Never mind where Nugent is, Bunt, my son!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You're not going to relieve him of his spare cash; so buzz off!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at Bob Cherry through his big spectacles. Bunter was always indignant at a hint that he was a borrower.

"Oh, really, Cherry—" he began.

"Hasn't your postal-order come?" inquired Bob Cherry sarcastically. "Don't you want a chap to advance you five bob, merely till this evening?"

"Now you speak of it, Cherry, I shouldn't object to a little loan. I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I knew it was coming!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! As I was saying, I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"And you'll be disappointed about the loan, too, my son," said Bob Cherry genially.

"Simply till this evening—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The postal-order's for five bob—from a titled friend of mine. I will hand you the postal-order immediately it comes—"

"In the sweet by-and-by," sang Bob Cherry softly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who wants your beastly money, anyway?" demanded Billy Bunter angrily.

"Ha, ha! You do, Bunter!"

"I can always get a loan from Smithy when I want one," said Bunter. "Smithy knows how to treat a chap decently. I've had more feeds from Smithy than I ever had from you!"

"Is he going to get a prize at Christmas?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

"A prize?" repeated Billy Bunter. "What for?"

"Fattening a pig!"

"Oh, really—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Bunter blinked at them wrathfully.

"Well, I was going to tell Nugent about his giddy minor," he said. "Now I won't! He can be caught by the prefects and sacked from the school, for all I care! Poof!"

The fat junior was rolling away when Harry Wharton caught him by the shoulder and swung him back. Bunter rolled back like an up-ended cask.

"Ow!" he exclaimed. "What do you want, Bull—?"

"It's me, you silly ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—?"

"What's that about Nugent's minor?"

"Oh, nothing! Ow, ow! Don't shake me, you ass—ow!"

"Tell me what you were going to say about young Nugent, then."

Bunter jerked himself away, and set his spectacles straight upon his fat little nose. He blinked angrily at Wharton.

"He's jolly well going to break bounds, and get caught and sacked—and serve him right!" he said. "That's all!"

"How do you know?"

"I happened to hear—ahem!"

"Happened to be at a keyhole somewhere—eh?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No; I happened to hear a fellow say so. I believe it's true. He's just the young rotter to do it. I was going to warn Nugent major; but I won't now. Yah!"

"I expect it's all rot," said Wharton, frowning.

"Is it all rot?" said Bunter promptly. "Perhaps you don't know that Nugent minor plays cards with fellows at the Cross Keys in Friardale? I do."

"Who told you?" demanded Wharton, again seizing the fat junior by the shoulder.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Give me the name of the chap you got it from," said Harry, "or I'll biff your head against the wall. I'm not going to have Frank stuffed up with your rotten yarns founded on nothing."

"My minor told me. Ow?"

"Where is he?"

"In the Close. Yow!"

Wharton released the Owl of the Remove, and the chums walked out into the Close in search of Sammy Bunter—the minor of Billy. Wharton wanted to see whether there was anything in Bunter's story before it came to Frank's ears. He knew how such a rumour would start Frank worrying about Dicky again.

Sammy Bunter was in the Close, talking to little Hop Hi, the Chinese, and evidently trying to extort a loan from him, when the Removites came up. Little Hop Hi scuttled off, only too pleased to be relieved of Bunter minor as the Removites surrounded the fat fag. Sammy looked alarmed.

"Hallo!" he growled. "What do you want?"

"You've been yarning to Billy about young Nugent breaking bounds," said Harry Wharton directly.

"I only said what I'd heard somebody say," replied Sammy.

"Did Nugent minor tell you?"

Sammy chuckled.

"Oh, no fear! He's keeping it awfully dark. I asked him if it was true."

"And what did he say?"

"Told me to go and chop chips," said Sammy Bunter in an aggrieved tone. "I told him I hoped the prefects would catch him dodging in at the Cross Keys—and so I do! There!"

"What rot!" said Johnny Bull. "Cobb and those rotters at the Cross Keys are on the look-out for mugs, but they don't want a fag in the Second Form! Dicky Nugent's got no fun, and they certainly don't want him for the pleasure of his society!"

"Well, that's all I know," said Sammy. "Leanne alone!"

And the fat fag escaped.

Harry Wharton wrinkled his brow. He did not attach any importance to the idle tattle of the two Bunters himself; but he knew that it might have a very different effect upon Frank Nugent. In his anxiety for his minor, and his belief that the Bounder was seeking to lead the reckless fag into wrong paths, Nugent was in a mood to believe anything. As soon as this story reached Frank Nugent's ears there would be fresh trouble, and Wharton wondered if the Bounder was at the bottom of this, as he seemed to be of everything that went wrong with Study No. 1.

"Let's see Dick," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Yes; that's not a bad idea!"

The Famous Firo looked for Nugent minor. They found him at the tuck-shop, vainly striving to obtain credit for a twopenny tart from Mrs. Mumble. Mrs. Mumble was firm.

"You owe me three shillings and twopenny already, Master Dicky," she said.

"Make it an even four bob, then," said Dicky Nugent, feeling that he was making a very business-like suggestion.

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Mrs. Mumble shook her head.

Harry Wharton laid twopenny on the counter.

"I'll stand you the tart if you like, Dicky," he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Dicky cheerfully. "You're a giddy prince! I say, make it two, and I'll take one round to Gatty. I shall have to give him a bite at this, and Gatty takes such jolly big bites."

Wharton laughed, and laid two more pennies down. Nugent minor took the two twopenny tarts in a paper bag, and, with a nod to the Removites, quitted the tuck-shop. The juniors followed him out. Wharton tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hold on, Dicky!" he said. "What is this yarn about your breaking bounds, or something of the sort, and going on the razzle?"

Dicky chuckled.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "Sammy Bunter asked me about it to-day, and it was the first I'd heard of it."

Wharton felt relieved.

"Then there's nothing in it?" he asked.

"Of course there isn't, ass!" said Dicky irritably. "Do you think I'm that kind of silly jossor? No fear!"

"What did you do when you were out with Vernon-Smith yesterday afternoon?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Botanized."

"Nothing else?"

"No; only collected up filthy plants and things for Vernon-Smith's collection. He stood me half-a-dollar for helping him, and I call it jolly decent of him! He was going to do the same again on Saturday, but my major's crabbed that!" said Dicky savagely. "Smithy says he thinks he'd better give me a wide berth as my major makes such a fuss about his knowing me. Blessed if I know how you chaps stand Frank—I can't!"

"You're jolly lucky to have a major like Frank, you ungrateful young sweep!" said Harry Wharton indignantly.

Dicky snorted.

"Any other kid in the Second is welcome to him," he said. "I'd swap him with Bolsover major any day, or Hop Hi's major, for that matter, though he's a heathen Chinese. I'm fed up with my major, and I'm not going to stand him! I've told him so. I'm fed up!"

And Dicky Nugent rushed away, with his jam-tarts, in search of Gatty, and a few minutes later the two fags might have been seen devouring the tarts in a corner of the Close.

"There's nothing in it, you see," Harry Wharton remarked. "Bunter's always got hold of some giddy yarn, and this is another of 'em."

"That's all it is," agreed Bob Cherry.

But when the chums came upon Nugent at dinner-time, they saw that Frank had heard the report, and that he had taken it more seriously.

"You've heard Bunter's silly gas about your minor?" Wharton asked, as he caught the expression upon Nugent's face.

Frank nodded.

"I've seen Dicky," said Wharton. "He says there's nothing in it, and I know he's telling the truth, Frank."

"I hope he is," said Frank, compressing his lips. "But it's so exactly what I expected that I can't help feeling there's something in it. After all, there's no smoke without fire. Bunter wouldn't have started such a yarn for nothing."

"Oh, you know Bunter!"

"Well, I'm going to keep an eye on Dicky," Nugent clenched his hands. "It's just what I expected would be the Bounder's game. He doesn't care what harm he does to a young fool of a fag so long as he scores over us. But if I find that he has brought Dicky into contact with that gang at the Cross Keys—"

Nugent paused, gritting his teeth.

"I think there's nothing in it, Frank."

"I hope there isn't," said Nugent. "We shall see."

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Caught!

FRANK NUGENT watched the Bounder when the Removites went to bed that night. What he had heard about his minor was weighing upon Frank's mind. It was useless to ask Dicky, he knew that. Dicky would tell him nothing. Dicky had taken to dodging his major. The sight of Frank coming was enough to make him scuttle off. But if Dicky Nugent was going to break bounds after lights out, as Frank suspected, it was more than probable that the Bounder was going with him. If the Bounder left the Remove dormitory, Frank Nugent meant to be aware of it.

And the actions of the Bounder were suspicious. He had brought a cap into the dormitory, and he threw it on his washstand. He did not fully undress when he went to bed, either. Frank noted those circumstances, which pointed to

the probability that Vernon-Smith meant to rise again before rising-bell next morning. It was a long time since the Bounder had broken bounds at night. For one reason, Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, put his foot down very heavily upon anything of the sort. For another reason, the Bounder was playing a part of late—a part which required carefully-regulated conduct, and a careful regard for appearances. If appearances, indeed, could have been trusted, the Bounder of Greyfriars had given up his bad old ways.

Nugent did not join in the chatter of the juniors before lights-out, but he did not sleep.

One by one the Removites dropped into slumber; but Frank Nugent remained awake, with wide, watchful eyes, in the darkness.

Eleven o'clock tolled out from the tower of Greyfriars, and then there was a movement in the Remove dormitory.

Frank Nugent, sleepless and alert, heard the sound of a junior getting out of bed, and he started up in his own bed.

"Is that you, Smith?"

"Yes," said the voice of the Bounder coolly.

"I knew it, you cad!"

"What's the matter?" asked Vernon-Smith calmly, his voice coming quite evenly through the gloom of the dormitory.

Frank sat up in bed.

"You know what the matter is. You were going out!"

"Out of bed—yes."

"Out of the dorm—out of the school!"

"Not at all," said the Bounder. "I can't sleep, and I'm going to walk up and down the dorm. a bit till I feel sleepy, that's all."

"I don't believe you!"

"Thanks!"

"You were going to take my minor out?" said Nugent. "I've heard all about it to-day. Sammy Bunter got hold of it."

"What rot!"

"Rot or not, you're not going to the Second Form dorm. for my brother!" said Nugent. "You are not going to leave

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this dorm, either! If you try it, I'll stop you, if I wake the whole school doing it!"

The Bounder laughed softly.

"If I wanted to go you couldn't stop me," he said.

"We shall see. Try it!" said Frank.

"I don't want to try it. I've given up that kind of game long ago. I'm going to walk up and down the dorm. till I get sleepy, that's all. I don't suppose it will make any difference to your minor's plans, whether I go to the Second Form dorm. or not."

Nugent started. The Bounder's words sent his thoughts off on a new tack, as Vernon-Smith fully intended they should.

"Do you mean that my minor is going without you if you don't join him?" he exclaimed.

"I don't mean anything of the kind. I haven't the slightest idea of what your minor may or may not intend to do."

"I don't believe you!"

"Then it's not much good talking, is it?"

The Bounder moved up and down the dormitory as if he had spoken in good faith. He might have told the truth—that he had got out of bed because he was suffering from insomnia; but Nugent knew him too well to take his word. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry had been awakened by the sound of voices, and they sat up in bed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" asked Bob Cherry drowsily.

"Smithy's up," said Nugent.

"What for?"

"Some caddish game!" said Nugent. "I believe he's fixed it with my minor to break bounds to-night, and now he can't get out of the dorm. because I'm awake. But if that young fool Dicky should go out without him—"

"Were you going to take Dicky out, Vernon-Smith?" exclaimed Harry Wharton sharply.

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"Nugent says so!" said the Bounder sarcastically. "He seems to know my intentions better than I know them myself."

"Will you give me a plain answer?"

"Will you take my word if I do?" was the Bounder's counter-question.

Wharton hesitated.

"That depends!" he said.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Then don't ask me questions, if you can't believe the answers I give you. I won't say a word."

Nugent slipped out of bed.

"Where are you going, Franky?" asked Bob.

"I'm going to see if Dick is still in bed."

"You'll wake up the fags."

"I can't help it."

"Franky, old man, suppose a prefect should nail you outside the dorm—"

"I'll be careful!"

"Mind, you can't explain what you're out for, without giving Dicky away, if he happens to be out of his dorm," said Wharton.

"I shouldn't explain."

"Then you may get into trouble yourself."

"I shall be all right."

Vernon-Smith went back to bed and drew the bedclothes over him.

"My advice to you is to get back to bed," said the Bounder. "I know that the prefects have been very suspicious lately. A fellow in a Greyfriars cap was seen coming away from the Cross Keys the other day, and they know it was a junior. You'd better be careful, Nugent."

"I've nothing to be afraid of; I've never done any of your blackguardly pub-haunting!" said Nugent disdainfully.

The Bounder made no rejoinder. Wharton and Bob Cherry remained in a state of uneasiness as Nugent crossed to the door of the dormitory, and opened it softly. They understood his anxiety for his brother, especially with their knowledge of the harm that had come to Hazeldene under the influence of the Bounder. But what Nugent was doing now was very risky. He was in bad odour lately with masters and prefects, and if he were caught outside his dormitory, within three-quarters of an hour of midnight, it would look bad enough—and it might go hard with him. Nugent was thinking of his minor, not of himself, as he quitted the Remove quarters, and made his way towards the door of the Second Form dormitory.

He knew which was his minor's bed in the Second Form-room, and he thought he would be able to ascertain whether Dicky was in bed, without striking a light or alarming the other fags. But whatever happened, he meant to satisfy himself upon the point.

The dormitory passage was dark and gloomy.

Nugent moved along quickly, however; and he had reached the turning of the passage when he fairly ran into an invisible form in the darkness.

He started back with a sudden cry, startled by the sudden contact.

But before he could escape, a hand reached out of the darkness and seized him.

"Who is that?"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch.

Nugent shivered.

By the very worst of ill-luck, it was his Form-master who had caught him.

"Who is it?" repeated Mr. Quelch, his grasp tightening upon Nugent's shoulder.

Nugent's heart thumped hard. He was already in Mr. Quelch's black books, and the Remove-master would be predisposed to take the most severe view of his action. And he could not give his reason for being out of the Remove dormitory without betraying Dicky. If his minor were really absent from the Second Form dormitory, his punishment would be severe if his absence were discovered—and Frank could not be the one to bring disgrace and punishment upon him.

He would have to be silent—and suffer. These thoughts raced through his brain in a second.

The next second he had wrenched himself from Mr. Quelch's detaining hold, and was tearing down the passage.

It was a hasty action—too hasty! By running away he had made it hopeless to explain, if he were caught.

He did not mean to be caught. He ran hard in the dark, and he heard Mr. Quelch's hard breathing after him in the gloomy passage.

But the Form-master did not need to depend upon speed to catch him. Frank Nugent, in his excitement, had not thought of all the possibilities. He had trusted to speed to save him, and the darkness to hide him from recognition. But Mr. Quelch did not depend upon speed to catch him. The

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Remove-master strode after him, only as far as the switch of the electric light. There he halted, and switched on the light, and the passage was flooded with brilliant illumination from end to end.

Nugent paused, dazzled, half-blinded, by the sudden glare. In the full light of the electricity he was plainly to be seen, and easily recognised.

"Nugent!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out his name from up the passage. Nugent made a forward step, and then stopped. It was useless to run now. He was recognised.

"Nugent!"

The junior turned round.

"Yes, sir," he said hopelessly.

"Stop!"

"Yes, sir!"

And Frank Nugent stopped, and waited miserably enough for the Form-master to come up.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### More than Suspected.

MR. QUELCH was panting as he came up the dormitory passage towards Nugent. The sudden encounter in the darkness had startled him, as well as Nugent. The junior stood silent, waiting for the storm to burst.

He was outside his dormitory in the middle of the night, and he had made explanation hopeless by attempting to escape. He waited for the vials of Mr. Quelch's wrath to be poured upon his head. He did not have to wait long.

"Nugent!" Mr. Quelch was breathing hard. His eyes seemed more like gimlets than ever as they were fastened upon the junior's grimace. "So it is you!"

"Yes, sir, it is I!" said Frank.

"You are out of your dormitory, at"—Mr. Quelch consulted his watch—"at half-past eleven, Nugent!"

"Yes, sir."

"You ran away when I caught you."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Where were you going?"

Nugent was silent.

"This passage leads to the Second and First dormitories, and to the box-room stairs," said Mr. Quelch. "You were not, I suppose, going to visit the Second or First dormitories at this hour? If you were going to the box-room stairs, it must have been to leave the house by the staircase window—the window by which Skinner used to break bounds, I believe, before he was expelled."

"I was not going to break bounds, sir."

"Indeed! Where were you going, then?"

No answer.

"Why did you leave your dormitory, Nugent?"

"For no harm, sir."

"What was your reason?"

Silence!

"You had a reason, I suppose, Nugent, for coming to this distance from your dormitory?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that reason?"

No reply.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon Nugent's face. The junior was crimson; but his glance did not falter before the Form-master's. Nugent was in an awkward position, but he had a clear conscience, at all events.

"Listen to me, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, after a pause. "The faults for which Vernon-Smith was, at one time, nearly expelled from the school, and for which Skinner was actually expelled, have been revived—by some person unknown. A Greyfriars junior—not recognised—has been seen to leave the Cross Keys public-house by the back way. The Head, and I myself, have determined that that rascally lad shall be found, and expelled from Greyfriars before he has had an opportunity of corrupting better boys. Do you understand?"

"I know nothing of him, sir."

"For that reason," pursued Mr. Quelch, "I have made a round every night, of the passage, two or three times before going to bed, and the prefects have also been on the watch. Sooner or later the young rascal will be caught. I have caught you, Nugent, about from your bed, and out of your dormitory, at half an hour before midnight. Can you not see that there is only one conclusion I can come to, unless you give me some reasonable explanation?"

"Wharton and Bob Cherry know I came out, sir," said Nugent desperately. "They know I wasn't going to break bounds."

"Indeed! I will question them," said Mr. Quelch. "Follow me!"

He entered the Remove dormitory and switched on the light. There was a sound of steady breathing, mingled with

snore, from the Remove beds. The juniors did not mean to be caught out by their Form-master.

"Wharton! Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch.

Snore! Snore!

"Speak up, you chaps," said Nugent.

"Oh!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ah!" said Harry Wharton.

Mr. Quelch smiled slightly. Wharton and Bob Cherry sat up in bed, blinking in the light. Two or three other fellows were awake now, and they looked on with interest and curiosity.

"Nugent tells me that you two knew he was out of the dormitory," said Mr. Quelch.

"That's quite true, sir."

"Did he go out to break bounds?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Then why did he go?"

"Ah! Hasn't he told you, sir?"

"No."

"I—I—I—I can't tell you, sir," said Wharton.

"It's Nugent's business, sir."

"Are you sure, in your own mind, that he did not go out to break bounds, Wharton?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Is it some practical joke—some raid on another dormitory?" asked Mr. Quelch. "If it was, you may tell me freely, and I will pardon it."

"It—it wasn't that, sir."

"Then what was it?"

Silence.

"Does any other boy here know why Nugent went out?" asked Mr. Quelch, looking round the dormitory.

No answer.

"Was any other boy awake at the time?"

"I was awake, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"Do you know Nugent's reason?"

"I know what he said his reason was, sir."

"What did he say his reason was?"

Nugent gave the Bounder a furious look, and clenched his hands. The Bounder glanced at him calmly.

"I cannot refuse to answer Mr. Quelch, Nugent. You ought to tell him yourself—not that he is likely to believe you, for that matter."

"I am waiting for an answer," said Mr. Quelch.

"I was going to see my young brother, sir," said Nugent, seeing that if he did not speak out the Bounder would do so.

"Your minor?" said Mr. Quelch, in surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"For what reason?"

"To—to see if he's all right."

"Is he unwell?"

"Not that I know of, sir."

"Then why, in the name of all that is absurd, should you wish to see him at this hour of the night?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, with a strong air of incredulity.

Nugent reddened.

"It's about his connection with the Bounder—with Vernon-Smith, sir," he said. "I don't know what the young ass may do under Smith's influence. I—I wanted to make sure that he was safe and sound in bed, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him fixedly.

"Have you any reason to suppose that your minor is not in bed at this hour, Nugent?" he asked.

Nugent was silent. If Dicky Nugent was not in bed, Nugent wanted to keep the Form-master from making the discovery.

"Well, no, sir," he faltered.

"Then your excuse is a very lame one."

"It's true, sir!" said Harry Wharton eagerly. "We knew what Nugent was going for, sir."

"We both knew," said Bob Cherry.

"Then I can only conclude that there is some reason to suppose that Nugent's minor may have left his dormitory," said Mr. Quelch, "and I shall certainly proceed at once to his dormitory and ascertain."

Nugent caught his breath in alarm.

"Oh, sir, it—it's not necessary. I—I hadn't any real reason to think anything of the sort. I—I— If you will punish me for being out of the dormitory, sir, I don't mind."

"I intend to know the facts," said Mr. Quelch.

"But, sir, I—I—"

"I shall return in a few minutes," said Mr. Quelch. And he quitted the Remove dormitory.

The Remove were all awake now, and they looked at one another in dismay. Mr. Quelch was evidently on the war-path, and either Nugent major or minor was booked for serious trouble. Frank Nugent turned a savage look upon the Bounder.

"You cad!" he muttered. "You sneaking cad! If Dicky gets into trouble—"

The Bounder laughed.

"Dicky won't get into trouble," he said. "Dicky is fast asleep in bed; I know that. It's you that will get into"

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trouble for not making up a better yarn when you're caught breaking bounds."

"Breaking bounds!" exclaimed Nugent, staring. "What do you mean? You know well enough why I left the dorm!"

"Yes, I know; and I know it wasn't the reason you gave," said the Bounder. "What's the good of fibbing among ourselves, Nugent? You know as well as I do what junior it was that was seen leaving the Cross Keys. You'd better not let Mr. Quelch know—"

"You cad!" shouted Nugent, rushing towards the Bounder's bed.

"Nugent!"

Mr. Quelch's voice rapped out sharply.

The junior halted.

"Quiet, Franky, old man!" Bob Cherry whispered anxiously.

Mr. Quelch frowned severely at Nugent. He had seen his hostile rush towards the Bounder, which he had entered only just in time to stop.

"I have been to the Second-Form dormitory," he exclaimed; "I have seen your minor, Nugent. He was in bed, and fast asleep."

Nugent drew a deep, deep breath of relief.

"Very well, sir," he said.

"Do you repeat to me now, Nugent, that it was anxiety concerning your minor that led you to leave your dormitory this night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I shall not refuse to take your word, Nugent. But your conduct is suspicious—most suspicious. I shall keep an eye on you, Nugent; and I warn you to be very, very careful."

And with that solemn warning Mr. Quelch extinguished the light, and withdrew from the dormitory.

Bob Cherry whispered softly.

"You're well out of that, Franky," he said.

"And I'm under suspicion!" said Nugent bitterly. "Under suspicion of breaking bounds to visit a pub! My hat!"

"Why not?" said the Bounder.

"Oh, shut up!"

The Bounder chuckled, and then there was silence in the Remove dormitory.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Dog with a Bad Name.

ALL Greyfriars knew on the morrow what had happened in the Remove dormitory. They did not know the story quite rightly. All kinds of reports were spread, especially in the lower Forms. Billy Bunter and his minor were the chief newsmongers in the Lower School, and news seldom lost anything in their repetitions. Probably the Bunters were responsible for the story that both the Nugents had been caught in the act of breaking bounds, and dragged back by main force. Another story was that only Frank Nugent had broken bounds; but, according to one version, he had got as far as the Cross Keys, in Friar-dale, before he was recaptured. When the story had had time to amplify a little, it appeared that Nugent had been brought back to Greyfriars decidedly the worse for drink. What to believe, and what to discredit, in the stories the fellows hardly knew—even the Remove did not know wholly. Nugent himself, when applied to, showed bad temper, and told the inquirers to go and eat coke. Vernon-Smith & Co. held the opinion—and made no secret of it—that Nugent had really intended to leave the School House if he had not been caught by Mr. Quelch. Nugent heard that the Bounder had expressed that opinion, and he ground his teeth. He knew that the Bounder did not believe anything of the sort. But the Bounder was entitled to express an opinion, and he had expressed it. And Nugent had expressed his opinion of Vernon-Smith often enough, and plainly enough, to have created a precedent of very plain speaking.

Nugent was annoyed and exasperated over the whole affair. Everything he did of late seemed to draw more odium and suspicion upon him from the powers that were. In his own mind, he traced it all to the Bounder; but he would have found it very difficult to prove anything of the sort.

Nugent was showing up in a bad light; there was no doubt about that. His chums stood by him manfully, but they could not stem the tide. If the Bounder had broken bounds, it was only what one would have expected of him, and he had never pretended to be better than he was. But Nugent was one of the best set in the Remove—one of the fellows who had always held themselves above the Bounder and his reckless ways—and now it was Nugent, Frank

Nugent of the Remove, Nugent the immaculate, who had been bowled out!

It was useless for Harry Wharton & Co. to repeat that he had not been bowled out, that there was nothing to bowl out. The fellows opined that there was no smoke without fire; and Nugent's ungracious replies to inquiries incensed a good many of them.

They did not understand the lad's high and proud spirit, and the humiliation it was to him to be even suspected of unworthy conduct.

That day Nugent had evidence enough that he was regarded with deep distrust by the masters and the prefects. He asked Wingate for a pass to go down to Friardale, and was refused in the bluntest way. He only wanted to see about a football he was purchasing, but he could not get the pass out, and he had to entrust the mission to Bob Cherry. Even Bob did not easily get permission to leave the school. It seemed as if the shadow of Frank Nugent's supposed delinquencies had fallen upon his intimate associates. Indeed, some of the fellows did not seem very much at their ease in speaking to him; and the Bounder & Co. held themselves ostentatiously aloof.

Give a dog a bad name, and hang him, is an old saying. Nugent was becoming a dog with a bad name. Without a fault on his side, excepting some sallies of hasty temper and over-anxiety for his minor, he had thrown himself into his enemies' hands, and they were taking every advantage of it to lay the mine which was to shatter his prospects; to carry out that apparently reckless threat of the Bounder—that he would drive his rivals, one by one, from the School.

Whatever accusation might be brought against Frank Nugent now, it was certain to find ready and credulous believers.

Wingate stopped him and spoke to him as the Remove came out of the Form-room after lessons that Friday afternoon.

"You asked me for a pass out of gates to-day, Nugent?" he said.

"Yes," said Frank.

"You are not to go out of gates at all; you're not to ask for a pass again—either from me or any other prefect! You're gated till further notice! Do you understand?"

"What for?" he exclaimed. "What have I done?"

"You know best what you've done!" said Wingate drily. "There's no proof against you, but it's clear enough to satisfy most people!"

"You think that I was going to break bounds last night, then?" said Nugent bitterly.

"I think it looks exceedingly like it. You yourself seem to have suspected your minor of it, if your account was true. Well, your minor is much less under suspicion than you are. This order about gating comes from the Head, not from me; but I've got to see that it's obeyed. It's for your good; if you have been fool enough and rotter enough to get mixed up with those rascals at Friardale, the sooner you're stopped the better. It may save you from getting sacked from the school."

Nugent bit his lip.

"I suppose it's no good my talking," he said. "You can gate me if you like. I don't want to go out of gates specially that I know of."

"Keep inside them, and it will be all right!" said the captain of Greyfriars, and he passed on.

Nugent's chums had paused while the captain was talking to Frank. The junior glanced at them with a bitter smile.

"This is getting rather thick, isn't it?" he said. "I'm gated now!"

"I wish you'd stayed in the dorm. last night, Frank," said Harry Wharton uncomfortably. "You can hardly blame Mr. Quelch for being suspicious, especially as he knows that a Greyfriars junior has been seen at the Cross Keys."

Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I don't care!" he said recklessly. "I'm getting fed-up with this. It all comes from the Bounder, and I'll make him smart for it!"

Nugent went out into the Close.

The early November evening had set in, and deep dusk was creeping over the leafless old elms and the grey school buildings.

Most of the fellows preferred to remain indoors, in their studies, or the lighted passages, or in the cheerful common-room with its bright fire.

Nugent tramped in the Close, over the fallen leaves, with his hands deep in his pockets, and a gloomy frown upon his usually sunny brow.

In the dusk of the Close a fag passed Nugent, going towards the gates. Nugent recognised his minor, and ran after the fag, and caught him by the shoulder.

"Are you going out?" he asked.

Dick Nugent had his cap and coat on, and it was evident that he was going out.

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"Yes, I am!" said Dicky defiantly.

"It's locking-up at dark," said Frank.

"I've got a pass."

"A pass! From whom?"

"Loder, of the Sixth."

Frank set his teeth. Loder, the black sheep of the Sixth, was on the best of terms with Vernon-Smith. Loder found the millionaire's son very useful when he was in want of a loan; and Vernon-Smith was quite well aware how useful the friendship of a prefect was to him.

At a hint from the Bounder, Loder would have given Dicky a pass. Perhaps Frank was growing over-suspicious—certainly he seemed to see the hand of the Bounder in everything.

"Where are you going, Dick?" he asked, as gently as he could.

"Down to Friardale."

"What for?"

"Fetch a paper for Smithy."

"Oh, Smithy! It is Smithy!" said Frank fiercely.

"Yes, it is!"

"What does Smithy want an evening paper for?"

"He's got a relation in the Balkans, where the fighting's going on."

"Is that all you're going for, Dicky?"

"Of course it is!"

"No tobacco or cigarettes for Smithy—"

"Of course not!"

"No message to the Cross Keys—"

"No!" growled Dicky. "Dash it all, can't you take my word, Frank?"

"Not since you've chummed with Smithy!" said Frank quietly. "I remember how he made Hazel reel out strings of lies, Dick. A chap seems to lose all his decency when he gets under the Bounder's thumb!"

"That's enough!" said Dicky.

And he shook off his brother's hand, and walked away.

Frank made a movement after him, and paused. He had no power to stop the fag, when he was going out with a prefect's pass. But to let him go—unwatched! Frank felt morally certain that the fag was concealing something. Was it likely that Vernon-Smith had sent him to the village, and troubled to get a pass from Loder, simply to get a newspaper? The idea was absurd on the face of it. There was something more than that in it. Either on his own account, or on Vernon-Smith's, Dicky had some other mission; and Frank remembered that a Greyfriars junior had been seen hanging about the Cross Keys. He felt that, if his eyes could have followed Dicky through the November mists as far as he went, he would have seen him halt at the Cross Keys, and sneak in at the side path, either on a message from Vernon-Smith, or on his own business.

That Vernon-Smith had set out to bring the reckless fag to ruin, as a score over the Famous Four, Frank was convinced. Was he to stand by and see it done without interference? And if Dicky were caught at the public-house—

Frank knew that the Bounder would think nothing of abandoning his victim—leaving him to face the music alone, as he had done before with Hazeldene. The Bounder would go scot-free. Dicky would be sent home—spared expulsion, perhaps, on account of his tender years; but certainly sent away from Greyfriars. Frank thought of his father's dismay and anger, his mother's tears and reproaches—reproaches, for she would say and think that he might have saved his minor if he had taken better care of him! That thought spurred Frank Nugent on, as he hurried down to the gates a few minutes after his minor.

He had been gated, but he did not think of that now. He would be back before calling-over. The gates would be locked, but he could get in over the wall, and escape notice—at least, so he hoped. At all events, if there were punishment to face he would face it for his brother's and his mother's sake.

Gosling, the porter, was coming down to the gates in the dusk to lock up as Frank hurried out. The Remove paused in the road, and looked round for his minor. Dicky had vanished. Probably the fag had known or guessed that his brother would follow him, and as soon as he was outside the school he had run for it.

Frank tramped down towards the village with a moody brow till he saw the signboard of the Cross Keys, in a flare of light, on the outskirts of the village of Friardale. Beside the public-house was a dark alleyway that led to the garden at the rear.

If Dicky Nugent had gone there, he would come back that way; he would never dare to use the front entrance. Frank Nugent drew into the shadows of the narrow lane, under a thick tree, and waited. From the public-house came the sound of voices raised in a raucous chorus as the Greyfriars junior stood there in the silence and gloom, waiting and watching.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Caught!

"**W**HERE is Nugent?"

Wingate asked the question as he looked into No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton was there, and Bob Cherry and Mark Linley and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had dropped in to speak to him.

Wingate's brow was stern, and boded trouble.

"I don't know," said Harry. "Do you want him particularly, Wingate?"

"Yes, I do. He's been gated, and I suspect that he's gone out, all the same." I told him specially not to go out, and I think he's gone."

"He wouldn't go out after that," said Wharton uneasily.

"That's what I'm going to find out."

Wingate went frowningly along the Remove passage, inquiring for Nugent. No one had seen him. Vernon-Smith suggested that he might have gone with his minor, who had a pass to go down to Friardale.

Wingate frowned, and decided to wait for Nugent minor to come in. Dicky came to Vernon-Smith's study with the paper while Wingate was there, and the captain of Greyfriars questioned him.

Dicky shook his head. Frank certainly hadn't gone out with him. He had passed his major in the Close as he went out. He had run most of the way to Friardale, and most of the way back, and hadn't seen Frank since passing him in the Close.

"Very well," said Wingate grimly.

He went down, and put on his coat and cap. Courtney of the Sixth, similarly arrayed, joined him. Mr. Quelch met them as they were going out, and looked inquiringly.

"We are going to look for Nugent, sir," said Wingate.

"He seems to have gone out—at all events, he can't be found, and he was specially gated by order of the Head!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Where are you thinking of looking for him, Wingate?"

"Where a junior was seen skulking the other day, sir."

"At the Cross Keys?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very well; that should settle the matter once and for all," said the Remove-master. "Wait a moment, Wingate, and I will join you!"

Mr. Quelch donned coat and hat, and left the School House with the two prefects. They walked down the dark lane together in grim silence.

The flare of lights from the windows of the Cross Keys fell across the lane, amid the shadows of the high trees. The signboard creaked in the winter wind. The Remove-master and the two prefects paused at the open gateway that gave admittance to the side-lane beside the public-house.

"Will you enter, sir?" Wingate asked.

"Most decidedly!" said Mr. Quelch. "If a Greyfriars boy is there, Cobb will hardly dare to deny it. Ah!"

"Ha!"

Wingate made a sudden spring into the shadows.

He reappeared, dragging a junior by the collar.

"Nugent," thundered Mr. Quelch, "why are you here?"

Frank was silent. For all he knew, his minor was at that very moment within the walls of the Cross Keys—and not a word of his should betray him.

"Have you nothing to say, Nugent?"

"No, sir—excepting that I am innocent of wrong-doing."

"Why are you here, then?"

Silence!

Mr. Quelch waited for a moment or two, for the answer that did not come, and then turned to the prefects.

"Bring him to the school!" he said.

And he strode away towards Greyfriars.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Sacked!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. saw Nugent come in. He walked between the two prefects, and Mr. Quelch brought up the rear, as if to guard against the possibility of escape. Harry Wharton ran forward as he saw him.

"Frank, what is it? What has happened?"

"Nugent has broken bounds, and has been discovered secretly leaving the Cross Keys!" said Mr. Quelch. "Nugent, follow me to the Head!"

Nugent followed him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were left horror-stricken.

"It's not true!" exclaimed Bob Cherry fiercely. "There's some rotten mistake!"

"Some ghastly mistake!" said Johnny Bull.

The Famous Four waited in anxiety and dismay for Nugent to come out of the Head's study.

The Head's door opened at last, and Nugent came out. He was deadly pale, and he walked unsteadily. He seemed dazed. Harry Wharton clapped him on the shoulder.

"Frank, what's happened? What's the verdict?"

Frank looked at him dazedly.

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PENNY.

"Sacked!" he said.

"Sacked!"

"Yes; sacked from the school!"

"Frank!"

"I'm sorry," said Nugent huskily. "I—I'm sorry to leave you—and the fellows—and the old school, Harry! It can't be helped! I—I've got to go! Harry!" He sank his voice. "The Bounder's done this—you remember he said he would drive us all from the school, one by one—I'm the first to go! He planned all this—he played on my anxiety about my minor, and I fell into the trap. Harry, when I'm gone, you'll keep an eye on Dicky, won't you?"

"Yes, yes! But—"

"He's a troublesome young cub, but mother—you understand? Keep an eye on him, and don't let the Bounder make a rotter of him like Hazel."

"Frank, you shan't go. I'll see the Head! I'll explain."

Nugent caught his arm.

"Useless, Harry! I've explained all I can. You can't alter the fact that I went out after I was gated, and they caught me hanging round that pub. That's settled me, Harry, and I owe it all to that Bounder. Harry, be on your guard when I'm gone—he's dangerous—and you may be the next!"

"Nugent," said Mr. Quelch's hard voice, "pack your box at once! You have to leave Greyfriars in half an hour to catch the train. I shall take you to the station!"

"Yes, sir!" said Frank dully.

"Mr. Quelch," exclaimed Harry, "Nugent is innocent."

"The matter is closed, Wharton. The Head has decided!"

Mr. Quelch swung away. The chums of the Remove, white and miserable, went with Frank to the dormitory, and helped him pack his box. There was no help for it, they might hope in the future; in the present there was no hope; the fiat had gone forth, and Frank Nugent had to leave Greyfriars!

Dicky Nugent, looking very white and scared, crept into the dormitory. Frank looked round him with a bitter smile.

"Frank," gasped Dicky, "is it—is it true—you're sacked?"

"Yes!"

"Great Scott! What will they say at home?" gasped Dicky. "Franky, I'm awfully sorry!"

"You've caused it," said Frank. "I went to the Cross Keys to see if you were there—"

Dicky began to blubber.

"B-b-but I've never been there, Frank!" he said. "Honour bright, I've never!"

Nugent nodded.

"I take your word for it, Dicky, now! The Bounder has played me for a duffer all along—he knew how anxious I was, and played on it. He's too deep for me; I've been beaten all along the line. Don't blub, Dicky; it's not your fault—it's my own as much as anybody's! Don't blub, kid!"

Mr. Quelch looked into the dormitory.

"Are you ready, Nugent?"

"Yes, sir!"

It seemed like some evil dream to Harry Wharton & Co. The last good-bye was said, there was a sound of hoofs, a grinding of wheels, on the gravel path!

Frank Nugent was gone!

Harry Wharton went up to his study—that study that had been so cosy and comfortable, and that would be so lonely now without his chum!

Frank Nugent was gone—expelled—sacked! He could scarcely believe it yet! But realisation forced itself into his mind, and as he sat, staring into the dying fire, the tears welled up into his eyes, seldom so wetted—tears for the staunch chum who had always been faithful, loyal, and true; and who was now Sacked from the School!

(Next Monday's splendid school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., is entitled "THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE," by Martin Clifford. Order a copy of "The Magnet Library" in advance—Price 1d.)

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Nathan Gore, jewel collector and multi-millionaire, Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

## THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?"

The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and bring back my diamond." He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and for five months pursues Nathan Gore through Europe, New Zealand, Teneriffe, and back to London, never once being able to catch him up. While in London, he hears that Nathan Gore has bought from the Dutch a remote island named Galpin. Lord immediately purchases an island four miles south of Gore's, christening it Ching-Lung. Learning that Gore is fortifying his island, and has actually fitted out warships for his own use, Ferrers Lord arranges a hurried expedition, and in a few hours the whole party are aboard the Lord of the Deep, bound for the island of Ching-Lung. When they arrive they discover that the island is protected by forts, and that the only possible landing-place is patrolled by a small submarine, and has a chain stretched from shore to shore to stop any other ship approaching. Ferrers Lord captures this submarine, and, with Ching-Lung and Rupert Thurston, makes a journey into the harbour. "The thing is," he says, "where can we land? We ought to be able to run her close under the quay where those lighters are."

(Now go on with the story.)

### In Goretown—Pursued.

"And supposing there are men on the lighters?"

"Trust to luck!" said Ferrers Lord.

Ching-Lung, standing with his head and shoulders above the manhole, and his keen eyes strained, gave instructions in whispers.

It was an anxious moment as they stole past the second cruiser, and crept towards the winking lights of the mushroom town.

"Hard-a-port!" said the prince hoarsely.

They grazed a rowing-boat. It was empty, and had probably broken adrift.

"Stop her! Stop her! Here's the very thing we want!"

Ching-Lung let the little anchor slip. The submarine, which was barely moving, came up with a jar and a jerk.

Ching-Lung could just make out the boat astern. He swiftly undressed, and entered the water. A few swift strokes brought him to the boat. There were oars in it. He pulled back to the submarine, dried himself as best he could, and put on his clothes.

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"This is a real slice of luck," said Ferrers Lord. "Much more than I hoped for. I believe you are a kind of mascot, Ching; you always bring good fortune."

"If you'd talk less, and help a fellow to wring the salt water out of his pigtail, I'd like you better. My hair's all out of curl! Give it a twist, sir. Ow! Don't screw my head off! You're as rough as a file when you start!"

"Don't waste time, lads!"

The millionaire took the oars and rowed for the dark quay. After listening intently and hearing no sound, they made fast to a lighter that was floating beside the steps.

Scrambling over the timber with which she was loaded, they set foot on Nathan Gore's island.

"What's the time?" asked Rupert.

"Not nine o'clock."

"They won't be in bed in Goretown. Oh, sweet, tuneful name!" said Ching-Lung. "I feel as safe as a house! Strange faces must be pretty common with tramp steamers coming in and going out! Pipity! Don't we do things in our village! Spot the electric light!"

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The road wound under the cliff, and as they reached the turning they saw the main street and rows of spluttering arc-lamps. It was as yet only a town of wooden buildings. There was a large store, and a larger drinking-saloon. There were many men in the street, and more in the saloon; but they did not see a woman. Malays, Chinese, and negroes were plentiful, and they heard a dozen different languages spoken. Here and there a man with a rifle was posted to keep order.

"A pretty warm place this, I'll wager!" said Ching-Lung. "I expect they fight like cats when they get drunk! If these chaps aren't the scum of the earth, tell me what they are! I never saw a nicer sample of cut-throats! Let us go into the saloon."

It was a large wooden building, with a sawdust-strewn floor. The electric lamps hung from the naked wires.

An unplanned counter ran from end to end, guarded by a wire screen like those seen in banks. The drinks were pushed through the hole by brawny barmen.

Each of the barmen had a revolver at his hip. The place was filled with men of many nationalities.

The screen and the revolvers were enough to show the lawlessness of Goretown. No coinage was refused—American dollars, English silver and gold, French francs, German marks, and Chinese yen were swept into the till. The uproar was tremendous.

Ching-Lung paid half-a-sovereign for three cocktails, and they took a seat at one of the tables to watch the scene. Sure itself could not have shown such a mingling of races.

Why had Nathan Gore brought this motley crowd together? "A queer scene," said Ferrers Lord.

"His millions won't go far if he pays all those fellows," said Ching-Lung.

"He must pay them all except the crews of the cargo-vessels," said the millionaire. "Men will not work for nothing. He did not build these forts on credit. Come away, lads, it is too noisy."

They went into the street again. Higher up was a casino. They went in boldly. It was a much more pretentious place than the other, with frescos and gilding. Faro, banker, euchre, poker were being played. Armed attendants were moving about watching the players, and from behind the curtain came the click of roulette-balls.

Again they entered the street. "A motor, by Jingo!" said Ching-Lung. The car was puffing up the hill. It was a powerful one, and came swiftly up the sharp ascent.

The millionaire pulled Ching-Lung and Rupert into the shadow.

"There's our man."

Nathan Gore was sitting beside the chauffeur. The car whizzed past.

"We'll follow it," said Ferrers Lord. "He cannot be going very far."

Ching-Lung whistled to himself as he hurried after the millionaire. They soon lost sight of the lights of the motor-car, but they came into view again. In five minutes they had come to the end of the shanties. The road had only been newly made. It turned sharply. The two lights were far ahead, and farther ahead still other lights shone.

"That's his house for certain," said Ching-Lung. "They've stopped."

"And we'd better stop, too, I fancy," said Rupert.

They made out a sentry-box. The motor's lamp was throwing its glare full upon it, and a sentry was speaking to Nathan Gore. Another sentry came out of the gloom and joined the first. They crouched behind a bush as the car turned. It only contained the driver. Nathan Gore had left it.

"I've got a bit of keenness to see where he hangs out," said Ching-Lung, "and it's going to take more than a couple of wall-eyed sentries to stop me. There's sure to be a way round."

"Hush!"

They could hear the voices of the men, and then their approaching footsteps, and a loud laugh. Presently the voices grew more distinct, and at last the words were intelligible.

"Hang the old fool! He's getting madder every day! What does he want two of us for? I'll toss ye, Brodie, which of us slopes. Let me go to-night and you to-morrow."

"I don't mind," answered the other man. "I'll walk with you to the corner."

The footfalls became fainter.

"Now's the time to make hay," muttered Ching-Lung.

"Forward, my conspirators!"

"Quick, Rupert!" said Ferrers Lord.

The way was clear. A few moments later they were peering through the ironwork of a massive gate at a pretty bungalow. It stood in a garden surrounded by a high wall.

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which was guarded by iron spikes. The gate was locked and chained.

"I'm over," said Ching-Lung. "Take care of your little selves."

He climbed the gate like a monkey, and darted into the shrubbery. There were lights in two windows. Hoping that there was no dog to scent him, the prince crept up to the house. Behind the glass of the first window was an iron grating. The blind was not lowered, and, lifting his eyes over the sill, Ching-Lung looked in.

"By the ghost of McGinty at the bottom of the sea," gasped the prince, "what have I struck? Is it Barnum's, or the Zoo?"

Rubbing first one eye and then the other, he stared through the bars. The rubbing failed to banish the vision. Two great tigers lay blinking sleepily at each other on the floor of a square room.

"I shall wake up soon and find Yard-of-Tape's cat on the bed," thought Ching-Lung. "Tigers, by the artichokes of Jerusalem! Pity they don't take old Gore for a bone and chew him up! I wonder where the monkey-house is? Is it next door?"

Ching-Lung, fully convinced that Nathan Gore was the maddest man on earth, moved towards the next window. He saw a pretty room, plainly but tastefully furnished, with a fire burning in the grate.

The door opened, and Nathan Gore came in. The old man wore a long, dark-coloured dressing-gown that reached down to his heels. He sat down at the table, his back to the window. He seemed to be reading something. After a time he rose and threw a log on the fire.

The wild, mad-brained idea of kidnapping him and ending the wearisome man-hunt seized Ching-Lung; but, like the other, the window was strongly barred.

Ching-Lung made a complete tour of the bungalow. In the kitchen of the little place a couple of men were playing cards.

The prince noticed a couple of unusual kitchen ornaments—two rifles—leaning against the wall. He took another peep at the tigers.

"Now, what is the old chap doing?" he murmured. "I can't tear myself away without one last, long, lingering look at that sweet countenance! Eating, by Jove!"

A tray covered with a white cloth had been brought, and a servant was in the act of uncorking a bottle of wine.

He bent, with the bottle gripped between his knees. Instead of pulling the cork, he remained in that attitude.

"Don't start, sir; look at the mirror."

The gold-framed mirror was in front of the table. Nathan Gore raised his head. The mirror reflected the barred window and a portion of the room.

Pressed against the bars was a human face.

"Uncork the wine," said Nathan Gore, "and fill my glass. Spill some on the cloth—confound you for a clumsy fool!"

He leapt to his feet as the wine gushed over the cloth, and shook his fist at the servant; then he made a flying kick at the man, who fled.

The action brought the millionaire close to the mantelpiece.

Nathan Gore seized a silken bell-pull, and gave a tug.

A crashing sound to the left, and two fierce roars made Ching-Lung start back.

As he realised his peril, he snatched out his revolver. The tug at the pull-bell opened the grating of the other window, and freed the tigers.

Like a hare Ching-Lung ran for the gate. Two flashes of tawny grey caught his backward glance as the two brutes sprang into the garden.

No doubt they prowled there every night. They scented him at once, and came bounding after him.

He reached the gate, and gained the top. It shivered as one of the tigers hurled itself crashing against it, pitching the prince headlong into the road.

Clang, clang, clang, clang!

The reverberating notes of a bell mingled with the fierce snarling of the baffled tigers. There was a shout and the report of a rifle. A little dazed, Ching-Lung got upon his feet. The sentry was rushing forward with upraised bayonet. A figure shot from behind the sentry-box, and Ferrers Lord's leg was thrust forward. The sentry almost turned a somersault.

"Run for it—run for it!" cried the millionaire, picking up the rifle.

THE GRAND XMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF OUR COMPANION PAPER, "THE GEM" LIBRARY, OUT ON WEDNESDAY. DON'T MISS IT!

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE!"

Another Splendid Complete Tale of Vernon-Smith v. Harry Wharton.

They dashed down the dark road towards the town. The bell stopped ringing.

"We're well out of that," said Rupert. "What a mess you made of it, Ching!"

"Don't talk to me!" growled Ching-Lung. "I've got no skin on my knees or on my nose. I left that place in a dicken's of a hurry! Bap! What a flop I came! You wouldn't have waited, I'll bet! I had to refuse that pressing invitation to be present at supper. I was to be the supper. Tigers, my boy, and two of 'em!"

"Tigers!"

"You bet on it. Those are the watch-dogs the pig keeps." "Great Scott!" said Rupert. "I repeat, we are well out of it!"

"Don't be so sure," said Ferrers Lord quietly. "Gore would not be a Yankee if he had not got a telephone. We'll strike across country, for we are likely to be intercepted if we keep to the road. Get the searchlights in a line with each other. Now, straight away!"

They turned off the road, through thick grass and low bushes. The millionaire warned them to look out for pitfalls. Galloping hoofs drummed up from the direction of the town.

"That means a telephone or telegraph," said Ferrers Lord. "But those fellows will cause us no trouble. It is the getting out of the bay I am afraid of."

"It's the getting into it that worries me," said Ching-Lung. "Once aboard the lugger and the gal is mine. If we can slip into the meat-can unseen, we are what you refer to as salubrious. They won't shoot at her."

There was good, sound sense in the remark; but there was certain odds against them. The greatest was the chance that a warning might be flashed to the submarine. No answer would be forthcoming, and, consequently, suspicions would be aroused which might lead to the discovery that the vessel was deserted.

"Faster—faster!" urged the millionaire.

The bay was in sight, far below them. As yet there was nothing to indicate that the alarm had reached any of the vessels anchored there. They descended by a twisting, precipitous path, and ran for the quay. Down the steps they scrambled, and, floundering across the wherry, got into the boat.

"Not so exciting as I expected," said Ching-Lung; "but oh, my knees and nose! I don't like tigers. I broke records when I hopped over that gate, and nearly created one record by breaking my neck. Tigers are off—nasty, snarly brutes! Pull for the shore, brothers, pull for the shore!"

If anything, the darkness had increased. The phosphorescence shone in brilliant streaks as the oars cut the water. Kneeling in the prow, Ching-Lung searched for the low-lying craft.

"We've overshot the mark," he said. "What a nuisance we had to unstep the flagpole! It's like looking for a sixpence in a barrel of tar. We're too much to the left."

"To the right, I think, Ching," put in Rupert. "I think we are too far forward," said the millionaire. "Listen a minute."

"Did you hear something, then?"

"S-sh! I hear it!"

It was a splashing of oars. A boat, hidden by the darkness, was not far away. Ahead of them burned the solitary light of a cruiser. A voice broke the silence:

"Aho!"

"Aho! What's up, mate?"

"Dunno! Somebody's ashore that the boss don't like. They tried to break into the house. Orders are to warn you to keep your eyes open. Nice thing to take a man away from his drink, the old fool! Mad old idiot, he's got it on the brain that somebody wants to knife him. Good-night!"

The invisible boat turned shorewards. There was a burst of laughter from the cruiser. Apparently even Nathan Gore's hirelings thought their leader insane. Nevertheless, orders were orders.

"She's signalling to the other vessel," said Ching-Lung, pointing to a winking electric bulb. "If she starts peering about with her searchlights, we shall have a mournful time. Get a move on, old chap. Where is our wandering boat to-night? I believe—I fancy—I—"

A thud and a bump followed. They had blundered into the submarine. Ching-Lung had been standing up, but he failed to keep his balance, and his already injured nose suffered again, as it hit the submarine's iron deck.

#### The Escape.

With a groan Ching-Lung clawed his way to the manhole, the two men close after him. Before they could descend, the beams of the cruiser's searchlights swept over the bay, and rested on the submarine. They showed up his figure as clearly and vividly as the limelight flung upon a darkened stage shows up an actor. And then an amazed voice yelled:

"By thunder, it's Ferrers Lord! Shoot—shoot!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 250.

The millionaire leapt down, wondering who it was that had recognised him. He worked strenuously at the screw lever. As the cover shut down they heard the impact of a bullet against the plates. The vessel sank, and the danger was averted for a moment.

But they were far from safe.

"Why don't you set her going?"

"Because, my dear fellow," said Ferrers Lord, with one of his quiet smiles, "the vessel has many weak points. For instance, we cannot raise the anchor from the inside. I was trying to lift it when unfortunately I was seen. Frankly, we have seldom been in a tighter hole."

"Oh!"

Ching-Lung began to roll a cigarette. Rupert paled a little, and loaded his revolver. Then there was dead silence.

They all realised the situation only too well. Here they were, in a poky, stuffy manhole, a fathom or more below the surface, and anchored fast. Above them was a swarm of eager foes. As they had pirated the submarine, the enemy was perfectly justified in shooting them down if they attempted to escape. How long would the air last? Perhaps half an hour. And after that?

"Please don't smoke, Ching. We have no oxygen to waste."

The prince nodded, and put away his matchbox.

"Old chap," he said, "this is not all beer and ninepins."

"It is the very reverse," answered Ferrers Lord. "The thought of surrender is hateful—awful. We have played right into Gore's hands. He will accuse us of piracy, and we have no hope of refuting the charge. Great as my influence is, the fact remains that we have outraged national law, and the British Government can only wash its hands of us. Our trial will be the sensation of the century."

"But we can charge the brute with stealing the diamond."

"True!"

"And of attempting to murder us."

"No, Ching. That charge would be outside the jurisdiction of the court. When I hint at a trial for piracy, I am talking of a possibility, not a probability. I do not think the man dare do it. But he is master here—to frame his own laws, to pardon, to punish. He may imprison us in some filthy den, and torture us. He has the power. He might even hang or shoot us."

"He'll catch us first," said Ching-Lung, between his teeth. "If it's only imprisoning us, I don't mind. Thomas Prout & Co. will do some thinking, some talking, and then some acting. They'll blow his ferts to smithereens, and his ships to tin-tack metal!"

The millionaire smiled.

"Granting all that," he said, "it would be hateful to allow ourselves to be captured by the man."

"Disgusting," said Rupert. "Pouf! I'm beginning to choke!"

"What's wrong with the floor?" yelled Ching-Lung. "Oh, con—"

A sudden lurch of the vessel threw them violently together. She had tossed down her nose like a sounding wale. She righted again, and, with a cry of delight, Ferrers Lord set the engines going. She swung from side to side for a second or two, and then straightened.

"What is it?" asked Rupert.

"I think we're moving," said the millionaire quickly, as he watched the compass. "One of the cruisers can clean into our hawser. She seems to have dragged us into deeper water, where the anchor does not drag. Unless we collide with one of the ships—"

"I'm strangling," said Rupert hoarsely.

"For five minutes more, Rupert—only five minutes!"

Was the submarine moving? They could not tell. They could only hope. Thurston's breath came in gasps, and his throat scorched him.

(Another long instalment of this grand serial in next Monday's issue of "The Magnet.")

### WONDERFUL MECHANICAL NOVELTY

—The Fortune-Teller's Wheel—

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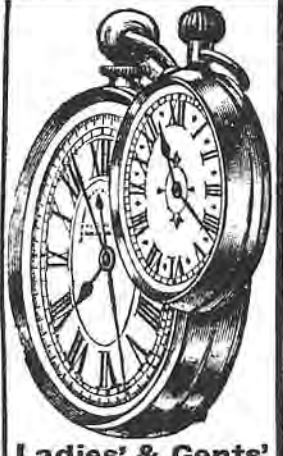
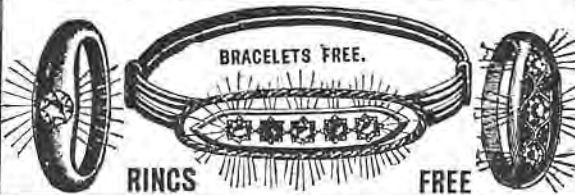
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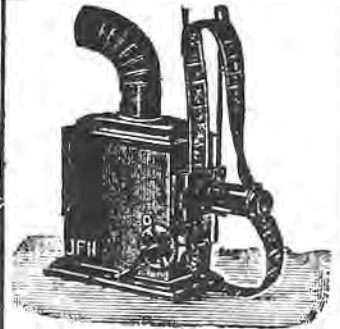
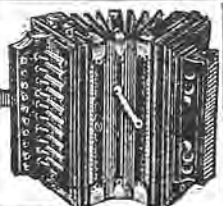
Simply to introduce our new range of beautiful Christmas and New Year Cards, etc., we give every reader of this paper a Magnificent Present **ABSOLUTELY FREE**. The Presents we are giving away for selling our cards include Ladies' and Gents' Watches, Scouts' Outfits, Telescopes, Phonographs, Cameras, Accordions, Boxes of Toys and Games, Skates, Auto Harps, Umbrellas, Rings, etc., etc. Even if you only sell 12 cards we give you a splendid **FREE** present. **SEND NO MONEY. WE TRUST YOU.** Send your name and address. We will send the Christmas and New Year Cards, etc., including lovely gold mounted cards, folding cards tied with silk, comic cards, etc., by return of post. Sell or use the cards at 1d. each within 28 days and send us the money obtained, and we will reward you according to the Special Free Prize List sent with the cards. There are hundreds of different kinds of Free Gifts to choose from in the List. **EVEN IF YOU ONLY SELL OR USE 12 CARDS YOU WILL RECEIVE A HANDSOME PRIZE JUST THE SAME.** We are giving a box of toys and games for selling 12 cards.

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## My Readers' Page.



OUR TWO  
COMPANION PAPERS  
**"THE GEM" LIBRARY**  
EVERY WEDNESDAY  
AND  
**"THE PENNY POPULAR"**  
EVERY FRIDAY.

### FOR NEXT MONDAY.

#### "THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE!"

By Frank Richards.

In this splendid, long, complete school tale, Vernon Smith, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, continues his campaign against the leaders of the Form, Harry Wharton & Co.

His latest masterstroke is to secure the defection of Bulstrode, formerly Form captain, to his own side. Bulstrode, who has long kept steady and straight as an associate of Harry Wharton & Co., is won over to the enemy, and the acquisition of

#### "THE SCHOOLBOY RENEGADE"

to their side causes Vernon-Smith & Co. great rejoicing.

### BUMPER NUMBER OF OUR GRAND COMPANION PAPER!

On Wednesday of this week, Magnetites will be able to obtain perhaps the finest budget of complete stories ever offered by a popular weekly story-paper, namely,

#### THE GRAND CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF "THE GEM" LIBRARY.

This grand issue—the finest and most eagerly looked for number of "The Gem" Library of the whole year—contains a perfect feast of good things, foremost amongst which must be reckoned the magnificent double-length tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled:

#### "NOBODY'S STUDY,"

By Martin Clifford.

This powerful, mysterious, and "Christmassy" school story will prove a real treat to all who appreciate really good school tales.

#### "THE HOUND OF THE MOOR,"

a long, complete tale of Frank Kingston, detective, and

#### "THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL'S TRIUMPH."

an exciting and amusing story of the famous chums of Rylcombe Grammar School, are two more grand tales that will appeal irresistibly to all readers.

Profuse illustrations and seasonable sketches, in addition to a grand instalment of the wonderful Nelson Lee serial,

#### "BIRDS OF PREY,"

By Maxwell Scott,

complete the programme of one of the finest Christmas Double Numbers ever issued!

### "PENNY POPULAR," FRIDAY!

It is seldom, indeed, that a new paper "catches on" in the way our new companion paper, "The Penny Popular," has done! Its fame has spread literally like wildfire, and it is true to say that practically

### EVERYBODY'S READING IT!

The three complete stories—of Tom Merry & Co, Jack, Sam and Pete, and Sexton Blake respectively—contained in next Friday's issue are powerful tales of particular interest, and form a splendid combination of first-class reading matter for the week-end.

No Magnetite should fail to read this week's splendid number of our latest success,

#### "THE PENNY POPULAR."

On sale everywhere next Friday.

### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

R. Merrick (Auckland).—Thanks for letter and picture postcard you enclosed.

R. H. T. (Southsea).—The name Nugent is pronounced with a long "u" and soft "g."

S. W. (Bolton).—A good cure for knock-knees is to repeat the following exercise every night until the legs have become straightened. Stand erect, with feet together, and hips and shoulders well braced back, and chest forward. Then separate the knees by a side-movement without shifting the feet. Keep springing the knees outwards and back again until you get tired.

James B. (Barrhead), "Athlete" (Liverpool), and others. —You can get a book dealing very fully with the art of ball-punching from Messrs. Spalding Bros., 29a, Haymarket, London, for 6d., or 7½d. by post.

### SOME HINTS ON STAMP-COLLECTING.

For the beginner it is decidedly better to purchase, in the first place, a small, cheap album, because, as is generally the case, his collection to commence with is small, and will, therefore, look better in a more compact album than in one where the stamps would be spread over a large number of pages. From the point of view of reference and study a small album is best as a stamp is more easily located.

Having purchased the necessary things wherewith to start the collection,

#### Preparing the Stamps for Mounting

in the album should be the next item considered. Unless each stamp is cleaned perfectly and mounted neatly upon the space set apart for it, the whole value of the album is likely to be lessened.

There are three methods by which the beginner may get them ready for mounting. The first is by floating the stamp, face-upwards, upon luke-warm water, and allowing it to soak until the paper to which it is stuck can be removed; the second, and considered by some philatelists the best way, is to hold the stamp—with the tweezers, of course—over boiling water, so that the steam plays upon the paper at the back, and so removes it; and the third is to place the stamp between two damp sheets of blotting-paper.

After the stamps have been cleaned, they have, of course, to be dried in such a manner as to leave as much of the gum on the back as possible. This can be done in two ways. The first is to place the stamp face downwards on to a piece of blotting-paper and allow it to stand undisturbed until it is dry; the second is to obtain a photographer's glazing-sheet, and place the stamps—this time face upwards—on to the plate and leave to dry. When the stamps are thoroughly dry they will peel off easily, and on examination will be found to still retain all the gum which remained after the washing, and, what is more, if any part of any stamp has lost its first backing during the cleaning operation, it will take on a slight gloss from the sheet, which will improve its appearance. This done, the stamps are ready for

#### Mounting.

Having bought the hinges, the next thing to do is to fold them a third of the way down, and stick the short arm on to the stamp near the top. Now stick the long arm on to the page in the album which is to receive the stamp, and notice that the stamp is mounted squarely and evenly.

Once a stamp has been mounted it should not be removed, except for some special reason. This is a great fault with young collectors—their stamps are removed too often. Every time a stamp is taken from the album, it loses some of its back, and, in time, if the collector still persists in changing the position of his stamps, he will find that they have worn thin, and consequently lost in value.

THE EDITOR.

## WAT-ER JOKE !



1. "I'll bet you the price of a pork pie that I can stay under water for five minutes," said the aquatic enthusiast in the water.



2. Then he put his head under water; but it was a pity his wig came off, because the chap on the bank went after it, thinking he was walking along under water.

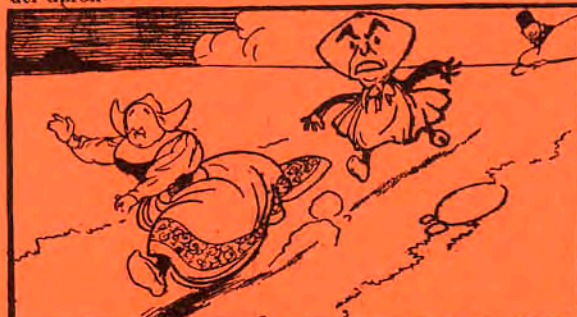
## A FAGER FOR MA.



1. Hans and Gretchen were getting on very well, thank you, when they saw mamma coming along. "Vot vos to be did?" said Hans.

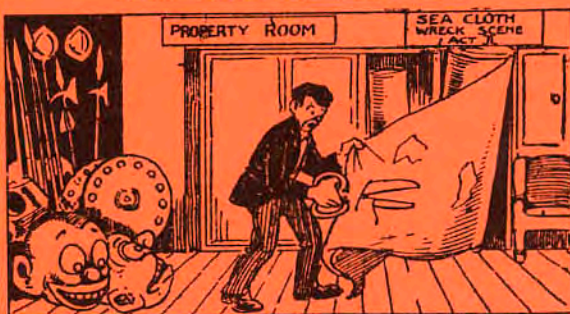


2. "It vos so goot!" replied pretty little Gretchen. "I haf some jokes got ready to frighten mamma! You see mit der apron—"



3. "I makes der horrible ghostliness and frightens dear mamma out of it, ain't it?" Clever little people these Dutch girls and boys!

## HARD LUCK ON THE HERO.



1. Sam, the scene-shifter, had been sacked. "All right," thought he. "I'll teach them!" And he cut a few holes in the cloth that was used to represent waves.



2. Well, the curtain went up on the great shipwreck scene. "Aha!" cried the hero. "I am the only one saved from the wreck!"



3. And then the heads of the supers appeared, and spoilt the show somewhat. "Ha, ha! I am revenged!" laughed the sacked one.

## AND SO THE POOR CAT HAD NONE.



1. "Oh, what a lovely piece of meat!" warbled the cat. "Yes, isn't it?" said the dog, as he gave pussy a little shove.

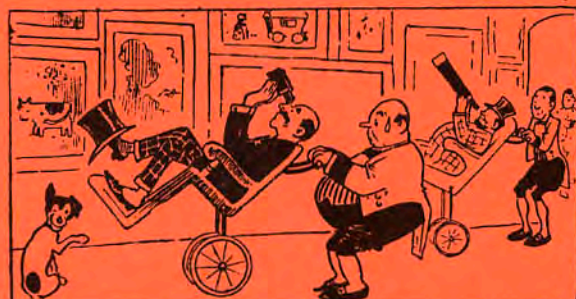


2. Which precipitated her right smack on to the tray on the butcher boy's headpiece.



3. So that the nice juicy joint shot up into the dog's clutches, and so the poor cat had none.

## PATENT APPLIED FOR.



1. Why not adopt this method of inspecting the picture galleries?



2. Or this. It saves getting pains in the neck. Only 3d extra, too.

## SHE WAS CARRIED AWAY BY MUSIC.



1. You be off!" said the old Growser to the man with the tin whistle. "I don't want any of your noise out here! Clear off, and look sharp about it!"



2. But the old Growser didn't know that he had no ordinary musician to deal with. No; the serenader had arranged to clope with the old man's daughter, and—



3. And that big trumpet made an excellent travelling disguise and method of transit for the sweet young thing.