

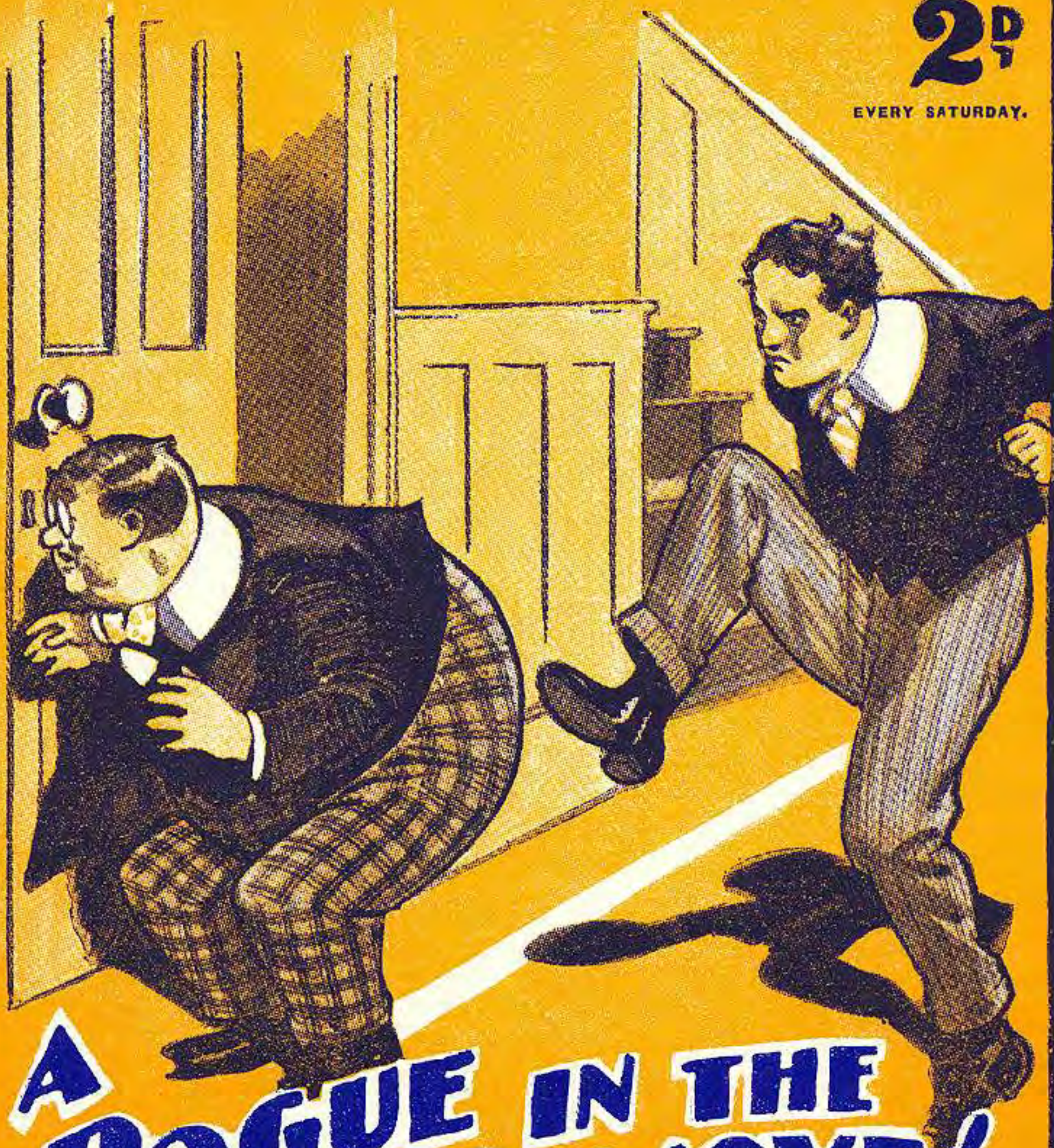
BOYS! ASK FOR THE "MAGNET"!

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The **MAGNET**

2^D

EVERY SATURDAY.



A ROGUE IN THE REMOVE!

A SHOCK IN STORE FOR BILLY BUNTER!

Peeping in at keyholes is a favourite pastime of William George Bunter's, but it's a pastime that often ends disastrously for the Paul Pry of the Remove! (See the rousing long school story of Greyfriars' inside.)



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to
c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

I HAPPENED to be walking through a certain seaport town the other day, and I saw two fellows whom I knew to be readers of the MAGNET, because both of them had the current issue peeping from their pockets. They were discussing an old salt who was leaning up against the sea wall.

"That's the fifth old sailor I've seen wearing ear-rings," said one of the boys,

"WHY DO SAILORS WEAR EAR-RINGS?"

He seemed very puzzled, and unfortunately, I hadn't time to put him wise. Nor has he bothered to write to me to ask the answer to his question, but, as I overheard it, I'll answer it now.

Sailors, as you know, are a superstitious lot, and one of the things that is essential at sea is keen eyesight. Years and years ago—no one knew how the legend started—it was believed by sailors that if they had their ears pierced it would increase their powers of sight, and also act as a charm against possible blindness. Of course, it's only a superstition, but it is still believed to this day in some parts of the country. And some sailors, even though they don't know the reason, continue to have their ears pierced and wear ear-rings, simply because it is a custom that dates back so far.

Quite a change for me this week! There's no one trying to pull my leg, and no one "hauling me over the coals." Instead of that, my postbag seems full of most congratulatory letters. The reason is that, as I write this little chat of mine several weeks before you read it, I am writing at the time when you have all got your aeroplanes in working order, and you are writing in to thank me for that wonderful gift. Well, stick to the MAGNET, you fellows, and you'll find you can't go wrong. When we give away a free gift, it's something worth having. But, apart from that, if you can show me a better collection of authors and artists than we have writing and sketching for us—well, I'd like to see them, that's all!

Here is

A BOUQUET FOR YOUR EDITOR

in the shape of a letter from a reader who says: "'Come into the Office, Boys!' is excellent. I always turn to that first, and am glad to see that it sometimes fills a page." Well, so long as you fellows like to read it, I will always like to write it. Incidentally, my chum asks if we can have a "Greyfriars Herald" item now and then and a special one for the Christmas and New Year number.

Phew! Fancy mentioning Christmas when I am sitting in my shirt sleeves, with the temperature at umpteen in the shade, and the mercury trying to knock a hole out of the top of the thermometer! However, I can tell my reader that it is quite possible that we shall have some more "Greyfriars Herald" items, so keep your eyes open for them!

Now let me have a breather, while you laugh at this joke, for which Dennis

Mawson, of 52, Cotton Hill, Shrewsbury, gets a penknife this week:

The much-married man had been dining at his bachelor friend's new flat. After dinner he examined the place, which was very tastefully decorated.



"Ah, old chap," he said, "I wish I could afford a place like this."

"Yes," was the friend's reply; "you married men may have better halves, but we bachelors usually have better quarters!"



Finished laughing? Right. Let's get on with the esteemed and ludicrous washing, as Inky might say. Here are

A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS

which one of my readers wants me to answer. The first is: "Why don't the Rolls Royce people enter for such races as the Belfast T.T.?" Because they have no need to do so. The Rolls Royce is known all over the world, and is built for a certain class of customer—the people who can afford to pay for a really good car, and who know exactly of what the Rolls Royce is capable. There's no need to experiment further with the Rolls Royce, for its name is sufficient guarantee.

THE second question refers to BAD HABITS.

Can they be broken off? a reader wants to know. They can, if a fellow will only take the trouble to persevere. There's nothing like athletic exercises and plenty of open air to break down bad habits. Don't keep to yourself too much—get out amongst people, and go in for walking tours. You'll find that when you've got plenty of healthy amusements to keep you busy you'll forget all about bad habits. Set your mind to the task of breaking away from bad habits, and you'll do so—if you stick it! Many years ago there used to be a popular music hall catch phrase which was: "Stick it, Jerry!" You might do worse than take this as a motto, using your own name instead of "Jerry." "Stick it, Jack!"—or Bob, or Bill, or whatever your name happens to be—is a motto that will prove useful to you, if you live up to it.

But I mustn't get too serious in this chat of mine. You remember me telling you about a certain sub-editor on my staff—a fellow with a forehead like the dome of St. Paul's? He and I went to a variety show the other evening, and I must admit that a conjurer there puzzled me completely. But do you think he puzzled the sub? Not a bit of it! After the show I mentioned one or two tricks, and the sub said airily: "Oh, that's quite easy! I'll tell you

HOW IT'S DONE!

And he did too! Well, it struck me that some of you fellows might have been

puzzled by conjurers and illusionists at some time or other, and you might be keen on finding out the secret of certain tricks and illusions. So I've made arrangements with—let's call him "X," because he's an unknown quantity—to tell you the secrets. If you're puzzled, drop me a line and I'll get "X" to explain whatever it is that has got you guessing.

I haven't space this week to reveal some of the mysteries which he laid bare, but I'll tell you about one or two of them next week. In the meantime—Limericks forward! Here's one that earns a pocket wallet for Miss Eva Weightman, of 5, Helen's Terrace, Finsbury Street, Fountain Road, Hull.

If ever Bob Cherry you meet,
And chance to remark on his feet,
Don't await a reply,
Or he might "dot" your eye,
If you're wise, you'll beat a retreat!

Now then, you fellows, don't be beaten by the ladies! Pile in with your efforts and let them see what you can do. These handy pocket wallets are well worth winning and I've got heaps of them in stock.

Norman Johnstone, of Bishop Auckland, wants to know something about

CITIES UNDER THE SEA.

Some time ago I mentioned how it was possible to sail over the remains of Carthage and peer down into the depths, where the ruins can still be seen on a calm day. But Norman might be interested to know that many towns and cities of our own country have been swallowed up by the sea at different times. On the coast of Suffolk there is a tiny village called Dunwich. At one time this was a flourishing town which boasted no less than fifty-two churches. Gradually the sea encroached on the land, and the last of old Dunwich was swallowed up in December, 1739. Several miles out to sea, at the mouth of the Humber, lie the remains of another "drowned town"—the town of Ravenspur—and both Hornsea and Withernsea are modern towns which were built after the original towns of that name had been overwhelmed by the sea.

Other "new" towns which were built after the original ones disappeared into the sea include Brighton, Shoreham, Skegness, and others too, numerous to mention.

Now listen in! Your Editor calling! Next week we're to have another first rate programme in which all your favourite authors will be at the top of their form. First comes Frank Richards with a yarn that's going to hold your interest without flagging for a single second. The yarn is entitled:

"THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE!"

and it's one of the best—which is saying something! Very close to your favourite author's contribution comes George E. Rochester, with another exciting instalment of

"THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE!"

while Dicky Nugent isn't far behind with a side splitting effort—the third and last yarn in his "Jipsy" series, entitled:

"'GAINST FEARFUL ODDS!"

Those three yarns, a special article on flying, written in our special contributor's most interesting style, and your Editor's weekly chat, complete a programme that you would have to go far to equal. So jump to it, lad, and hurry around to your nearest newsagent to tell him to reserve a copy of next week's issue for you!

Your Editor.

A COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY OF A1 QUALITY!

A ROGUE IN THE REMOVE!



A Superb New School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the famous chums of Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bad for Bunter!

"SMITHY!"
"Buzz off, Bunter!"
"You're wanted."
"Rats!"
"Quelch's study."
"Oh blow!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, uttered that ejaculation with emphasis.

Billy Bunter grinned.

But the seven juniors who were about to leave the House, when Bunter arrived with the message, did not grin.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a sunny autumn day. Smithy and his chum Redwing, and the Famous Five of the Remove, were going up to Hawkscliff that afternoon. It was a long walk by the cliffs to Hawkscliff, and the party had arranged to start early. Then Billy Bunter happened along.

"What does he want?" grunted the Bounder.

"Well, he didn't say," grinned Bunter. "But I fancy it's a licking."

"You fat ass!"

"He looks ratty!" said Bunter. "Fierce, in fact! What have you been up to, Smithy? He, he, he!"

Smithy made a movement with his foot, and Bunter backed away rather hastily.

"Better cut off, Smithy," said Tom Redwing. "Quelch doesn't like being kept waiting."

The Bounder grunted again.

"Look here, you men, let's cut off," he said. "We were just going to start, anyhow—"

"Can't, now you've got Quelch's message," said Harry Wharton. "Go and see what he wants, and we'll wait."

"If it's a row, I may not get off," growled the Bounder. "We'd better cut. Bunter can go back and tell Quelch we were already gone."

Tom Redwing coloured uncomfortably, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Smithy very expressively.

"Bunter can't do anything of the sort," said Bob Cherry curtly.

"Certainly not," said Bunter warmly. "I hope you don't think I'm capable of telling a lie, Smithy."

"I know you're not capable of telling the truth!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Look here, you beast—"

"Cut it out, Smithy," said Johnny Bull. "Go and see what Quelch wants, and don't waste time talking out of your neck!"

"Asking a chap to tell a lie!" said Billy Bunter, with thrilling indignation. "I'm surprised at you, Smithy! Shocked! If you asked one of these fellows it would be different. But me—"

When a fellow practises writing his own signature in secret, indications are that he is either a bit weak in the head or else has some deep game on. Arthur Durance certainly isn't weak in the head. What's his game?

"You fat chump!" said Frank Nugent. "Oh, really, Nugent—"

"I'll stand you half-a-crown, you fat freak!" said the Bounder contemptuously.

"I hope you don't think I'm the fellow to accept half-a-crown from you, Smithy," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "Of course, if you mean it as a loan, that's a different matter."

The Bounder felt in his pocket. Tom Redwing looked more discomfited, and the looks of Harry Wharton & Co. grew more and more expressive.

"Look here—" began Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed Smithy—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I tell you—" began Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, shut up!" said Bunter. "It's all right! I don't mind

doing a good turn for a pal like Smithy."

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"My esteemed and disgusting Bunter is—"

"Do shut up!" urged Bunter. "The sooner Smithy gets off the better, and you're wasting time. Rely on me to stuff up the beak, Smithy, old chap. It's easy enough to stuff Quelch."

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed Bob Cherry, as he sighted a tall, angular figure bearing down from the direction of Masters' passage.

"Shan't!" said Bunter independently. As he had his back to the approaching figure of Mr. Quelch, Bunter naturally did not see him; and he was not disposed to shut up. Shutting up was really not in Billy Bunter's line. "Leave it to me, Smithy!" cried Bunter.

"Old Quelch is rather an ass, anyhow, and— What are you fellows making faces at me for?"

The juniors did not explain what they were making faces at Bunter for.

They stood in horrified silence as Henry Samuel Quelch approached. The expression on the Remove master's face showed that he had heard Billy Bunter's cheery remark.

Vernon-Smith's hand came out of his pocket—empty. Bunter blinked at him anxiously.

"I tell you, it's all right, Smithy! Anybody could stuff an old donkey like Quelch—"

"BUNTER!"

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter spun round like a teetotum at the sound of that deep voice behind him.

He blinked at Mr. Quelch in horror, his little round eyes almost bulging through his big spectacles.

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"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on Bunter's fat face like a pair of gimlets. His voice, when he spoke again, was like that of the Great Huge Bear.

"Bunter, what did you say?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Did you apply an opprobrious expression to your Form master?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"I heard you utter the word 'donkey,' Bunter!"

"I—I—I was speaking of some other donkey, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"Not you, sir! Oh, no, sir! Q-q-q- quite another donkey, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I wouldn't dream of calling you a donkey, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I'm much too respectful to say what I think of my Form master, sir."

"Bunter!"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir."

"Go to my study at once!"

"Oh lor!"

Billy Bunter rolled away dismally towards Masters' passage. Mr. Quelch turned his gimlet-eyes on the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith, has Bunter given you my message?"

"Yes, sir!" muttered the Bounder.

"Very well. I desire you to perform a service for me this afternoon, Vernon-Smith. Please follow me to my study."

Mr. Quelch turned and walked away; and the Bounder, after a moment's hesitation, followed him. There was no help for it now, and the Bounder had to make the best of it.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Smithy is Not Taking Any!

"YOW-OW-OW-OW! Wow!"

Mr. Quelch laid down his cane.

"You may go, Bunter."

"Wow! Wow!"

"Kindly do not make those ridiculous noises in my study, Bunter."

"Whooh-hooh—oooooh!"

The Remove master picked up the cane again.

Billy Bunter promptly faded out of the study. The door closed on him and Bunter continued the ridiculous noises in the passage.

The Remove master turned to Vernon-Smith. The Bounder stood with a somewhat sullen face. As the Form master had stated that he desired Smithy to perform a service for him that afternoon, it evidently was not a "row." But Smithy had no desire whatever to perform services for Mr. Quelch, or anybody else, that afternoon. It was a half-holiday and he wanted it for himself.

"I trust, Vernon-Smith, that you are not unwilling to oblige me," said Mr. Quelch, in a rather deep voice.

"I was going out, sir," muttered Smithy. "We've arranged to go up to Hawkscliff this afternoon—"

"I am sorry!" said Mr. Quelch. "A new boy is coming to Greyfriars this afternoon, Vernon-Smith, to enter the Remove. I desire you to meet him at Courtfield Junction."

The Bounder compressed his lips.

This, as he would have expressed it had he uttered his thoughts, put the lid on it.

The Bounder was about the last fellow at Greyfriars to bother his head about a new kid.

"Really, sir—" he began.

"Well?" rapped the Remove master.

"Some other fellow, sir—lots of fellows wouldn't mind going—"

"No other boy would do," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry to find you in this disobliging humour, Vernon-Smith. Had I asked one of your companions I am assured that his answer would have been very different."

"Why not ask one of them, sir?" said the Bounder coolly.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I should have done so, Vernon-Smith, but for a particular reason. You are acquainted with the boy who is coming to the school this afternoon."

The Bounder started a little.

"His name," said Mr. Quelch, "is Durance—Arthur Durance. No doubt you remember the name."

"I've heard it," said Vernon-Smith.

"I have received a letter from your father," went on the Remove master. "Mr. Vernon-Smith tells me that Arthur Durance is the son of a man he knows and esteems, and he has asked that Durance may be, if possible, placed in your study. He desires you to become friends."

"I hardly know the fellow," said the Bounder. "I met him once at a holiday place in Devonshire, more that a year ago. That's all I know of him. I saw him for a couple of days, and haven't remembered him or given him a thought since."

"You will be able to improve your acquaintance with him at Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder made no reply to that. But his look showed that he had not the slightest desire to improve his acquaintance with Arthur Durance.

"Your father's wish will, of course, be a command to you," said Mr. Quelch.

"Of course, sir," said the Bounder sarcastically. Smithy was not much accustomed to regarding anybody's wishes but his own.

"The express reaches Courtfield Junction at three o'clock," went on the Form-master, taking no notice of Smithy's tone. "Durance was seen into the train in London, and it is a non-stop express to Courtfield. I desire you to meet him at Courtfield, and accompany him to the school."

"He could find his way to the school, sir, without my assistance," suggested the Bounder.

"What?"

"I don't remember this fellow, Durance, very clearly, as I hardly know him at all, but from what I remember of him he's got sense enough to walk out of a railway station and call a taxi, sir."

Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on the Bounder, with a glint in them. His hand strayed to his cane.

But he repressed his anger. Quelch was a good deal of a Tartar, but he was a considerate gentleman in his way, and, after all, he was taking up the junior's half-holiday with this unwelcome task.

So he passed over the Bounder's impertinence without comment.

"What you say is quite correct, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly, "but your father desires you to show some attention to this new boy, who is the son of an old friend of his. I may add that Durance comes from a very great distance—from Devonshire, and is a complete stranger in this part of the country; also, that his father has been called away on business to South America, and may not return for years; that he has lost his mother, and is therefore in the position of an orphan. He has hitherto had a tutor in his father's home, and public school life will be entirely new to him. A little kindness to a lad in such a situation can hardly be out of place."

The Bounder's lip curled.

Smithy was not without kind feelings, as his steady and loyal friendship with

Tom Redwing showed. But he was not the fellow to sympathise very deeply with a "lame duck." As for having a lame duck landed on him, that idea only made him smile sardonically. If Quelch thought he was going to be "soppy," Quelch was making a mistake. That was how the Bounder put it to himself.

"Arrangements for Durance to be placed at Greyfriars were made somewhat hastily," went on Mr. Quelch, "owing to the rather sudden departure of his father. It appears that he has stayed the night at your father's house in London, and Mr. Vernon-Smith is seeing him into the train for Greyfriars to-day. He has, I believe, no relation in England now, and it will be some relief to him, doubtless, to find a boy at Greyfriars whom he already knows."

"He doesn't know me, sir," answered the Bounder coolly. "I met him casually for a couple of days, that's all, and forgot him the next."

The Remove master's mouth tightened.

"I think I need say no more, Vernon-Smith," he said coldly. "You will proceed to Courtfield Junction, wait there for the three o'clock express to come in, meet Durance, and bring him to the school."

"But, sir—"

"I have told you what you are to do, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master, in his iciest tones. "You may now leave my study."

The Bounder opened his lips—and closed them again. He was intensely irritated and full of resentment, but he could see that he had already tried the Remove master's patience to the limit. Another word of impertinence and Mr. Quelch's cane would have come into action.

So Smithy left the study in silence.

He closed the door, and walked down the passage, with a scowling brow. At the corner of the passage Billy Bunter met him. Bunter was still wriggling, but he had lingered to see Smithy, for a reason that was important—to Bunter.

"I say, Smithy, old chap—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"But it's important," said the Owl of the Remove.

"Will you run away and boil yourself, you fat frog!" shouted the Bounder.

"What about that half-crown?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I say, old chap—"

"Rats!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder walked on. Evidently there was to be no half-crown for Bunter.

Vernon-Smith, with a black brow, swung out of the House, and joined Redwing and Harry Wharton & Co., who were waiting in the quad.

"Come on!" he said abruptly.

"All serene?" asked Tom Redwing, with a rather anxious glance at the Bounder's moody face.

"Yes, ass, come on."

"What did Quelch want?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Only some of his rot."

The Bounder obviously was not in a communicative mood. The seven juniors walked down to the gates together, the Bounder still scowling. Outside the gates Vernon-Smith hesitated for a moment. To the right lay the road to Courtfield, the path of duty. To the left lay Friardale Lane, the way to Hawkscliff.

The Bounder's hesitation was only momentary. It was to the left he turned.

When the new boy arrived at Courtfield Junction at three o'clock he was not likely to see anything of Herbert Vernon-Smith!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wet!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. tramped away cheerfully down Friardale Lane, took the short cut through the wood, and headed for the cliffs. The Famous Five were merry and bright that afternoon. It was not usual for them to spend a half-holiday in company with Herbert Vernon-Smith; but they pulled fairly well with the Bounder, and they liked Tom Redwing heartily.

It was a long walk up to Hawkscliff, by cliffs overlooking a wide, blue sea, and enjoyable so long as the weather kept fine. The party were to have tea at Redwing's cottage in the fishing village—unoccupied now that Tom's father was away on a voyage. After tea a long tramp back to the school by a different route—or perhaps a lift in a country cart part of the way, and a lift on the Redclyffe motor-bus another part, if they felt tired.

That was quite a pleasant programme for the afternoon so far as the Famous Five were concerned; and Redwing shared their views, and if the Bounder would have liked something a little more exciting he did not say so. If he did not care much for rambling over cliffs, at least he liked the company of his chum.

But there was a cloud on the Bounder's face now. Harry Wharton & Co., chatting cheerily as they pursued their way, did not notice it at first and would not have heeded it much if they had noticed it. The Bounder was a fellow of rather uncertain temper, and it was not uncommon for him to look moody or sulky. But Redwing eyed his chum curiously for a time, and then uneasily. He could see that the interview with Mr. Quelch had disturbed Smithy somehow, and he was wondering what the Form master had wanted. Quelch had said, in the hearing of the juniors, that he desired Vernon-Smith to perform some service for him that afternoon. Whatever service it was, Smithy was obviously not performing it.

The Bounder dropped a little behind the Famous Five; in his present mood their cheery talk rather jarred on him. Redwing dropped back with him.

"Anything up, Smithy?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Nothing."

"You're not looking very chippy."

"What rot!"

"Did Quelch rag you?"

"No."

Redwing paused.

"Look here, Smithy, what did Quelch want?" he asked. "I can see there's something up. Are you playing the giddy ox?"

"Yes."

"Smithy, old man—"

"You asked me, and I've told you," said the Bounder moodily. "Quelch wanted to bag my half-holiday. I wasn't taking any. I suppose you'd call that playing the giddy ox?"

"What did he want, then?"

"There's a silly new kid coming to Greyfriars this afternoon, and Quelch wanted me to buzz off to Courtfield to meet him at the station," grunted the Bounder.

"But you didn't refuse," exclaimed Redwing, opening his eyes wide.

The Bounder grinned.

"How could I refuse, fathead? You can't refuse a Form master, even when he's asking what he's no right to ask. Quelch thinks I've gone to Courtfield."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Tom, aghast.

"And I haven't—and I'm not going!" said the Bounder deliberately. "My half-holiday's my own, and I'm not going to have it bagged."

"There'll be a row."

"I know."

Redwing walked on in silence. They had reached the cliffs now, and the wide sunny sea stretched before their eyes. On the cliffs and the shore and the waters of the bay lay the sunlight; but farther out to sea was a dark, thick cloud, which was slowly spreading landward.

"Looks rather like rain," remarked Bob Cherry, with a glance at the shadowed sky over the sea. "Still, I dare say we'll get in at Hawkscliff before it comes on. Leg it!"

By the cliff path, overlooking the beach and the village of Pegg, the juniors proceeded on their way. The Bounder was still scowling. He had acted on an angry, sulky impulse in disregarding Mr. Quelch's instructions; but once having done so nothing would have induced him to turn back. He

"Oh! That does it!" he said.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you kids confabbing about?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round. "You look as serious as boiled owls."

"Only Reddy giving me one of his sermons," said the Bounder flippantly. "He's got to seventhly—he'll be finished soon."

"There's still a chance, Smithy," muttered Redwing. "If you hurried back to the school now you might run into the new kid before he turns up at Greyfriars."

"Catch me!"

"Quelch must have had some reason for asking you to meet him," said Tom. "It's rather rotten, Smithy."

"Quelch ought to know by this time that I'm not the fellow to take moon-faced new kids under my wing," sneered the Bounder. "If there's a row, I can stand it. Let's get on."



"Look here——" panted Durance. "I told you to be silent," said the spectacled man in a low menacing tone. "You have nothing to fear. I am not going to hurt you. But if you give me trouble—look out!" The man's grip tightened on the schoolboy; and Durance sat helpless, while a black cloth was drawn across his eyes, and knotted at the back of his head. (See Chapter 4.)

would not admit to himself that he "funked" keeping on as he had started. But he was feeling uneasy. Mr. Quelch was not a man to be trifled with. There was trouble to come if the Form master learned of his conduct, as he could scarcely fail to do. Smithy had refused to have his half-holiday "bagged"; but in his present mood he was not likely to enjoy it much.

"Look here, Smithy," said Tom Redwing, breaking a long silence, "this won't do, old man!"

"Won't it?" jeered the Bounder.

"No. What's the good of asking for trouble like this? Look here, the other fellows won't mind giving up the excursion—they wouldn't want you to land in trouble. Let's turn back and cut across to Courtfield——"

"Rats!"

"Smithy, old man, listen to reason——"

"You listen to common sense," drawled the Bounder. "The new kid's train gets in at three. Look at your watch."

Redwing glanced at his watch, and uttered an exclamation. It was already a few minutes past three o'clock.

"But——"

"Oh, put it on! You can see it's going to rain—and we don't want to be caught in it on these cliffs."

The Bounder hurried on after the Famous Five, and Redwing, giving up the argument, followed him. But his face was clouded now. Once more his wayward chum was asking for trouble; it seemed impossible for the Bounder of Greyfriars to steer clear of trouble for long.

Redwing was thinking only of the consequences to his chum. That there might be other consequences of Smithy's reckless action did not occur to him, or to the Bounder. Neither had any doubt that the new kid, arriving at Courtfield Junction, would find his way to Greyfriars without accident, as any number of new kids had done before him. That the Bounder's act of reckless disobedience was to have far-reaching and unlooked-for consequences did not cross Tom's mind, or Vernon-Smith's. Not that the latter, in his present mood, would have cared much.

"Here comes the rain!" said Harry Wharton.

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"The rainfulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "is going to be terrific, my esteemed chums."

"Rotten!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, who cares for a little rain?" said Bob Cherry, with undiminished cheerfulness.

"There's going to be a lot," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Well, who cares for a lot of rain?" said Bob, with a grin.

The black cloud had rolled over the shore, and heavy drops were falling. That sunny autumn afternoon was turning out a delusion and a snare, as so many sunny afternoons did. The sea was hidden in a rainy mist, and the chalky paths on the cliffs were slippery with wet. In dry weather it was a delightful if somewhat energetic walk, but in wet weather it was more like hard work. And the Greyfriars party, deluded by the bright sunshine of the early afternoon, had not brought even a raincoat, and there was not a single umbrella in the party. As the rain came down harder on the unsheltered cliffs, the enjoyment of that walk speedily evaporated.

"Nice!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The niceness is terrific," mumbled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as the rain-drops trickled down his dusky neck.

"How much farther to Hawkscliff, Reddy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"A good four miles!" answered Redwing.

"Oh, my hat! Four miles in this!"

"Can't be helped!" said Bob Cherry. "After all, we can't get much wetter. That's a comfort!"

"Fathead!"

Redwing halted.

"Look here, you men, we'd better find shelter," he said. "We shall be half drowned before we get to Hawkscliff, at this rate!"

"But where's the giddy shelter?" asked Bob. "There's nothing on these giddy cliffs."

Redwing smiled. The Greyfriars fellows were far out of their usual beat by this time; but the sailorman's son knew every inch of the coast between Hawkscliff and Greyfriars.

"That's all right," he said. "We shall have to cut inland—we're not a quarter of a mile from a house. We

can cut across a couple of fields and get to a good shelter. The Old Red House—"

"What the dickens is the Old Red House?" grunted the Bounder.

The rain that had stopped the excursion had not improved Smithy's temper. He realised, as a matter of fact, that he would have been rather better off at Courtfield Junction, or at Greyfriars, than standing under torrents of rain on the slippery cliffs.

"It's a place that's let to visitors in the summer," said Tom. "It will be empty now—nobody ever there at this time of the year."

"Well, it will be locked up, I suppose?"

"Of course; but there are sheds and a big porch. We can get out of the rain."

"Oh, all right!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"This way!" said Redwing, taking no notice of the Bounder's ill-humour.

The juniors followed him, and the cliffs were left behind, and they struck across a wide field—pasture-land weeping with rain. From the field they reached a lane—pleasant enough in the summer, but now thick with mud and running with water.

They tramped through mud and rain, following Redwing's guidance; Harry Wharton & Co. keeping as cheerful as they could, and the Bounder scowling blackly in undisguised bad temper.

The rain was coming down thicker and thicker. Redwing, who knew every sign of the weather, told them that it would not last long; but while it lasted it was undoubtedly very wet and very uncomfortable. The juniors were glad when Redwing opened a gate at last, and they followed him up a weedy gravel-path, and found shelter in a wide, deep porch. It was something to get out of the downpour. Outside, the rain was coming down in sheets.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped!

"COURTFIELD JUNCTION! Change for Friardale, Redclyffe, and Woodend!"

Arthur Durance laid down his book, and looked out of the carriage

window as the train clattered to a halt and the sing-song of the porter reached his ears.

The new boy for Greyfriars gathered up a rug and a bag, and stepped out of the train.

Durance was a rather sturdy lad, with a good-looking, good-humoured face, and pleasant blue eyes. He stood amid the hurrying passengers looking up and down the platform. He rather expected to see Herbert Vernon-Smith there. He knew the Bounder very little, and had not, as a matter of fact, liked him very much on the occasion when they had been thrown together; but he would have been glad to see now any face that was at all familiar.

He had come up from Devonshire the day before, had stayed a night in London, and Mr. Vernon-Smith had put him into the train for Courtfield, telling him that Herbert would meet him on his arrival. So far as he remembered Herbert he did not remember him as a particularly kind or obliging fellow; but any face that was not wholly strange would have been welcome to the boy who was in a part of the country quite new to him, where he knew nobody.

But there was no sign of Herbert Vernon-Smith on the platform. It was long since he had seen him, but he knew that he would know the strongly-marked features of the Bounder if he saw him again. His eyes were keen enough; and a glance up and down the platform showed him that Herbert Vernon-Smith was not there.

But as he stood by the train a man in chauffeur's uniform came across to him and touched his cap.

"Master Durance?" he asked.

The new boy looked at him.

"That's my name," he answered.

"Dr. Locke has sent a car to take you to the school, sir. Will you please follow me?"

"Thank you!" said Durance.

The man took his bag and rug, and led the way. Durance followed him out of the station.

They crossed the pavement to a waiting car.

The chauffeur opened the door, and Durance stepped in; rather to his surprise finding that the car was already occupied. A man with a heavy beard and horn-rimmed spectacles was seated there.

"This gentleman is also going to Greyfriars, sir," said the chauffeur; and Arthur nodded, and sat down beside the spectacled gentleman.

The chauffeur placed rug and bag inside, and closed the door. Durance looked out to see his box placed on the car. Then the chauffeur stepped into his seat, and the car glided away down Courtfield High Street.

In which direction Greyfriars lay Durance had no idea; and he did not heed, therefore, when the car turned from the High Street, glided swiftly through several streets, one after another, and turned into the Redclyffe road.

There it put on speed.

Durance settled back in his seat and glanced at the man beside him. His fellow-passenger had not spoken, or even seemed to look at him. The new junior wondered whether he was a Greyfriars master.

As the man did not speak, Durance broke the silence himself.

"Is it far to Greyfriars, sir?" he asked.

"Not very!"

The spectacled gentleman's manner was dry and abrupt, and did not invite conversation.

Arthur turned his face to the window again. He was looking for the first time



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Bunter's precarious position has caused him to drop his HOLIDAY ANNUAL. But he won't leave it there. Oh, no! Neither would you, for that wonderful budget of ripping school yarns and thrilling adventure stories is much too valuable to be lost. All the favourite schoolboy characters of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood Schools are here to entertain you with their amazing adventures. There are also interesting articles, colour plates and many clever drawings. Be sure you get

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on the beautiful scenery of Kent, and he found it interesting enough. But he was a little puzzled as the car ate up mile after mile. He did not know where Greyfriars was, precisely; but he had understood that it was only two or three miles from Courtfield. The car had already covered at least six miles, and showed no sign of coming to a stop.

It turned at last from the highway into a lane that ran between thick woods, thinned of their leaves now in the late autumn. The lane was narrow and rutty, and the car bumped and jolted a good deal. Arthur concluded that it was a short cut; and he was surprised when the car turned from the lane into a mere cart-track that led into the woods.

He glanced again at the spectacled gentleman.

"I suppose the driver knows the way to Greyfriars, sir?" he asked, with a slight feeling of uneasiness.

"No doubt!" came the answer, in the same dry tone.

"We seem to be going a long way."

"We are almost there now."

Durance looked from the window again. So far as he could see, there was no sign of a human habitation anywhere—nothing but endless trees met the view. He was puzzled and perplexed; but it had not occurred to him to feel alarmed.

The car came to a sudden halt. Another car was standing on the track—an ordinary looking taxi, with no driver to be seen. In the taxi sat a boy of about Arthur's own age, who was watching the car as it came up, and who leaned out as it halted.

"What are we stopping here for?" asked Arthur.

"You will soon learn!"

The chauffeur dismounted, opened the door of the car, and lifted out Arthur's bag and rug. These he transferred to the taxi. Arthur watched that proceeding with blank astonishment. Next his box was transferred to the taxi.

"What does all this mean?" he exclaimed. "Are we changing cars, or what?"

He rose from his seat, vaguely alarmed now, though more perplexed than alarmed.

A hand that seemed of iron fell on his shoulder.

"Sit down!"

"But what—"

"Sit down!"

That iron grasp on his shoulder forced the boy back into his seat. Arthur Durance stared blankly at the spectacled, bearded man by his side.

"Look here—" he gasped.

"Be silent!"

"But—but what does this mean?" stammered Durance. "I—"

"Silence! You will not be hurt—you need not be alarmed. But hold your tongue, and do not think of resistance."

"But I—I—" stammered Durance, in utter bewilderment.

"That will do."

The grasp was still on the junior's shoulder—the grasp of a man in whose hands he would have been a mere infant. Resistance was impossible; and Arthur could only sit where he was and wonder whether he was dreaming.

The chauffeur came to the car. There was a faint grin on his face, as he glanced at the bewildered schoolboy.

"Blindfold him!" said the spectacled man.

"Look here—" panted Arthur.

"I have told you to be silent! I repeat that you are not going to be hurt, and that you have nothing to fear," said the spectacled man, in a low, menacing tone. "But if you give us trouble—look out!"

His grip tightened on the schoolboy; and Arthur Durance sat helpless while a black cloth was drawn across his eyes and knotted at the back of his head.

He could see no more; but he could hear.

"That will do, Smiley," said the spectacled man. "Go through his pockets! Leave nothing!"

Arthur felt thievish hands searching him. Everything that his pockets contained was taken. Yet he knew that he had not been brought there for robbery. He had not more than thirty shillings in his possession, including a pound note that Mr. Vernon-Smith had bestowed on him at parting. The money was taken; but with it were taken several letters and small articles of no value whatever to anyone but himself. Why the thieves wanted them was a mystery to him. He realised, by this time, that the car had not come from Greyfriars to fetch him to the school; that he was in the hands of some lawless gang utterly unknown to the Head of Greyfriars. But what their object could be was a mystery to him. It was plain enough that they did not intend to harm him; but his heart was beating uncomfortably fast.

"That will do, Smiley!" repeated the

WHO'S READY FOR A LAUGH

at this amusing joke? Which earns for Master R. Odwell, of 55, Cricklewood Lane, London, N.W. 2, one of our useful pocket-knives.

An American, on entering London for the first time, engaged a taxi.

At sight of the Thames he called out to the driver:

"Say, buddy, what do you call that drop of stuff over there?"

The driver, who had had experience of American "big talk," looked round, and then shouted to his fare:

"Well, bust me, if my tank ain't leaking again!"

Now then, you fellows, get busy with pen and paper and try your hand at winning one of these useful prizes!

spectacled man. Still holding Arthur by the shoulder, he leaned from the car. "Ulick!"

"Here, father!" came a boy's voice.

Arthur knew it must be the voice of the boy he had seen sitting in the taxi.

"It's all clear now, Ulick! No need to say anything more—you understand perfectly."

"Bet your life!" was the answer.

"The sooner you drop expressions like that, the better, Ulick! They will not do—where you are going."

"Don't you worry, old bean!" was the answer. "Think I was born yesterday?"

"Well, take care!" snapped the spectacled man.

"Leave it to me!" was the confident reply.

There was a murmuring of words that Durance did not catch, and then he heard the sounds of an engine, and rolling wheels.

The taxi was driving away.

There was no further sound of voices, and Arthur could guess that Smiley, the chauffeur had driven the taxi away with Ulick in it; and all Durance's own possessions also.

He was left alone with the spectacled

man, whose grip was still on his shoulder like a vice. The man's deep voice reached him.

"I am going to secure you—but you have nothing to fear. Make no resistance, for your own good."

A cord was run round the schoolboy's wrists, and knotted. Another was knotted round his ankles. Then he was lifted from the seat and laid in the bottom of the car, and a rug thrown over him. The deep voice reached him again.

"Make a single movement, or utter a sound, and I shall deal with you—promptly! If you value your life, do as you are told, and no harm will come to you."

The door slammed, and the engine started. The car jolted away over the rough track.

Arthur Durance lay under the enveloping rug. The spectacled man was driving; but not, as the schoolboy knew, to Greyfriars. Where was the man taking him? What was it that he intended? It seemed like an evil dream to the boy as he lay bound hand and foot, hidden under the rug on the floor of the car.

The car soon ran more smoothly, and he knew that he was on a highway. How long it lasted he could not tell; but suddenly the car began jolting roughly again. He could hear, too, the heavy sound of pelting rain, and was aware that the sunshine of the afternoon had given place to storm. The car jolted on, and stopped at last. The schoolboy strained his ears to listen; and he caught the heavy creaking of a gate as it was opened. The car moved again, grinding on gravel. They had reached some habitation—but certainly not Greyfriars. In a few minutes the car stopped and the door was opened. The rug was tossed aside, and Arthur Durance was lifted out of the car in strong arms. He felt the cord released from his feet, though his arms still remained bound.

"Walk!"

A heavy hand on his shoulder propelled him.

He stumbled over a step, and was jerked onward; and felt a wooden floor beneath his feet. There was a heavy slam of a large door. It was as the sound of a knell to the kidnapped schoolboy.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

No Admittance!

"THIS," said Bob Cherry, "is nice!"

Even Bob was looking a little less cheerful than usual.

That afternoon's excursion could not be called a success.

The rain came down in sheets. The deep porch in front of the door of the Old Red House gave the hapless juniors a good deal of protection. But it was cold and clammy and chilly; and the wind from the sea beat the rain in upon them. And they were, by this time, almost wet to the skin.

"Look here, this isn't good enough!" growled the Bouncer. "Let's get into the house. We can light a fire and dry ourselves."

"Locked!" said Bob.

"I dare say we can get in somehow."

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "We can't force a way into a house like that."

"Where's the harm, when it's unoccupied!" snapped the Bouncer. "I don't see staying here and getting drenched."

"My esteemed chums," murmured

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Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "perhaps the esteemed habitation is not unoccupied."

"It's a holiday place," said Redwing. "It was taken in the summer, as usual; but the people left in September. It's been empty since."

"Looked empty enough, anyhow, when we came up," said Nugent.

The Old Red House had a desolate and deserted look. It was one of the many buildings along the coast that swarmed with life in the summer, when the holiday-makers were there, and was shut up, silent and dismal, in the winter. The gardens were untidy and weedy; grass grew among the gravel of the drive, and all the lower windows were shuttered with wooden shutters. No smoke rose from the chimney; and there was no sound or sign of life about the place.

It had not occurred to any of the juniors that it might, after all, be occupied, until the nabob of Bhanipur made the suggestion.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh pointed a dusky finger to the untidy drive, by which the juniors had reached the old stone porch.

"Look, my esteemed and absurd chums!" he said. "Some person has very lately been here."

"My hat! That's so!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he stared at the tracks of motor-tyres in the wet, grassy gravel. "Some johnny's been here in a car."

"And is still here, my esteemed Bob."

"How do you know that, Inky?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Because the tyre marks come up from one gate, my esteemed chum, and do not go back to the other."

"That's so," said Bob.

There was a semi-circular drive before the Old Red House, with two wide, wooden, green-painted gates, one at either end.

The tyre tracks showed that a car had entered by the gate the juniors had entered by. They reached the porch, and then passed on towards the slated building at the left of the house—apparently a garage. On the return drive, there was no recent sign of tyres. It was obvious that the nabob was right, the car had come to the Old Red House, and had not gone away again. The inference was that it was in the garage; the further inference, that whoever had driven it, was now within the Old Red House itself.

As that dawned upon them, the Greyfriars fellows brightened up considerably.

If that lonely house was, after all, inhabited, the occupant could scarcely refuse them shelter from the rain.

At all events, it was worth while making the request. The Bounder turned at once to the door, and knocked heavily with the old-fashioned iron knocker.

The sound boomed through the house.

But it brought no footsteps to the door. They heard the heavy sound booming and echoing, but that was all.

"Confound the fellow!" growled the Bounder irritably. "Whoever he is, he might come to the door, at least."

"We'll jolly well make him!" said Bob Cherry.

Tom Redwing was looking puzzled.

"Blessed if I can make this out," he said. "I passed this house last week, and it wasn't taken then. I've never heard of one of these holiday places being taken in the winter. There's no way here except by car—and the road's

awful for a car in bad weather—chalk and stones and pot-holes."

"Well, there's somebody here, anyhow," growled the Bounder. "Some ass with a fancy for a seaside cottage in the winter. Whoever he is, we're going to make him hear."

Bang! bang! bang!

The Bounder plied the iron knocker, till the door almost shook. The sound thundered through the house.

"Chuck it, Smithy," said Frank Nugent, at last. "If they don't want to let us in, they won't."

"I'll make them hear, at any rate!" said the Bounder obstinately.

Bang! bang! bang! bang!

The Bounder's persistence had its effect. There was a sound of footsteps within the house at last.

"He's coming!" said Vernon-Smith grimly.

A lock was turned, and there was a clink of a chain as the door opened a few inches. The chain prevented it from opening further.

A face with a thick beard and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles looked out from the narrow aperture. Under bushy brows, two sharp eyes glinted angrily at the group in the porch.

"Who are you? What do you want?" snapped a voice.

Harry Wharton, who was nearest to the speaker, raised his cap politely as he answered.

"We're schoolboys—caught in the storm! Would you be kind enough to give us shelter till it blows over?"

"I can see you are schoolboys—a cheeky set of young rascals, to kick up such a hullabaloo at a man's door!" snapped the man in the horn-rimmed glasses. "Take yourselves off at once."

"You can see how it's raining—"

"This is not a shelter for vagrants."

"Oh, my hat!"

Slam! The door closed again, and the lock snapped shut.

The juniors looked at one another.

They had not felt at all sure that they would receive hospitality, but such inhospitality as this took them by surprise. Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Well, of all the rotters—" he said.

"The rotterfulness is terrific."

"What sort of a blighter is that merchant?" said Frank Nugent. "My hat! I'd like to punch his nose."

The Bounder grasped the knocker again. His face was black with anger.

Bang! bang! bang! bang!

"Better chuck it, Smithy. You won't make him let us in, if he doesn't choose to," said Redwing.

"I know that! But I'll make the surly brute sit up a little," said Vernon-Smith.

With angry persistence the Bounder thundered with the knocker. The house boomed and rang with the sound of it. The other fellows looked on in silence. They were wet and dismal and irritated, but only the Bounder felt disposed to blow off steam, as it were, by making a terrific noise at the door. However, if it drew the horn-rimmed gentleman to the door again, the juniors were in a mood to tell him what they thought of him.

But the noise, irritating as it must have been to the man in the Old Red House, failed to draw him. No sound was heard again from within the building.

The Bounder desisted at last, scowling and muttering to himself. Silence followed the din of the knocker.

From the shadowed, rainy sky, there came a gleam of sunshine. The rain was easing off at last.

"Reddy was right," said Bob Cherry.

"It's not lasting. We shall be able to get going soon."

"Too late to go to Hawkscliff," snarled the Bounder. "We've about time to get back to school for call-over."

"Well, that's something," said Bob. "It looked like having to swim back! These jolly little accidents will happen."

For half an hour longer the juniors waited in the porch. By that time, only a light drizzle was falling, and they decided to chance it. From the house there had not come another sound. They emerged from the porch, and tramped down the wet drive to the gate. There they paused to look back at the building. From its looks, no one would have supposed that it was tenanted. Shutters covered the lower windows, and curtains the upper, and the chimney was innocent of smoke. On that cold and rainy day, there was obviously no fire burning in the house, not even a kitchen fire. Probably, however, the kitchen was provided with an oil-cooker, like many of the furnished houses along the cliffs that were let to summer visitors. These isolated buildings were far beyond the radius of gas and electricity.

"Nobody would think there was anybody living there!" remarked Bob Cherry, staring across at the lifeless-looking building.

"Come on!" grunted the Bounder.

Turning their backs on the Old Red House, the juniors tramped away by the muddy lane. The rain was still falling, though lightly, and the lane was a sea of mud and chalk. It was a relief, at last, to reach the Redclyffe road, where the going was easier. And there fortune befriended the hapless juniors at last, for they sighted the motor-bus that ran once in two hours from Redclyffe to Courtfield. And a dismal and draggled party of wet schoolboys crowded into the motor-bus, and rolled a little more cheerily on their way home.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A New Arrival!

"BEASTS!"

William George Bunter, adorning the steps of the House with his fat person, and blinking out into the quad through his big spectacles, made that remark, in suppressed but expressive tones.

Bunter was not feeling pleased.

It was a half-holiday, and Bunter was at a loose end.

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone for a long tramp to Hawkscliff. Bunter had not the slightest desire to tramp with them. Had it been a picnic, or tea at Cliff House, or a visit to Uncle Clegg's tuck-shop at Friardale, Bunter would have hooked on, and would have been extremely difficult to unhook. But the Owl of the Remove would not have walked to Hawkscliff for any possible inducement that could have been offered. So the Famous Five had not been favoured with his society that afternoon.

Nobody else seemed to want to be favoured with it. Bunter, as he was well aware, was a fascinating fellow; but quite a number of Greyfriars men were able to resist his fascinations.

Worst of all, Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity. He was expecting a postal order, but—as happened too often with Bunter's expected remittances—it had not arrived. The school shop was open—but it might as well have been closed, so far as Bunter was concerned. Mrs. Mumble knew him too well for "tick."

Bunter's accounts had a way of becoming what he called "old accounts," and old accounts, in Bunter's opinion, were accounts that were not to be paid.

Bunter was feeling injured. The least those beasts could have done, he considered, was to make him a small loan before they started. And they hadn't. Even the half-crown from Smithy had not materialised. Only a licking from Quelch had materialised. And that was no use to Bunter. He had one solace. It was looking like rain now; and those beasts might get drenched on the cliffs. Apart from that Bunter had no consolation. There was no balm in Gilead.

The sight of a taxi turning in at the gates, and coming up the drive caught Bunter's attention. As it stopped outside the House, he discerned that a boy in Etons sat in it.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles.

The boy in the taxi could only be a new boy, coming rather late in the term. From his age it was obvious that he was a junior. He might be coming into the Remove. Very likely he was. As he stepped from the taxi Bunter could see that he was well dressed. And, anyhow, a new fellow was likely to have cash in his pockets—the parting tips of relatives. Bunter felt his spirits rise.

New boys were Bunter's regular prey. Almost every junior at Greyfriars, who had come since Bunter, had cashed his celebrated postal order for him at least once. Bunter liked to see new faces. In the Remove his famous postal order was a little too well known. It had, as Shakespeare would say, an ancient and fish-like smell. But a new fellow had never even heard of it.

Bunter blinked eagerly at the stranger.

He did not much like the fellow's face. It had a sharpness of expression, and there was a keen, penetrating look in the brown eyes that gave the impression that this fellow knew uncommonly well how to look after himself.

But hope springs eternal in the human breast. Nothing was to be lost, at all events, by making himself agreeable to the newcomer, in the role of an old hand who was kind to new kids. Bunter had tried that game before, and found it pay.

So he rolled down the steps with his most agreeable grin on his fat features. There was nobody else at hand for the moment, except Gosling the porter. Bunter cast a hasty blink at the box Gosling was taking down, and read on it "A. Durance." Evidently A. Durance was this new kid. Bunter had never heard of him before. But he was prepared to welcome him like a long-lost brother.

"Hallo, kid!" said Bunter affably.

The sharp-featured boy was speaking in a low tone to the chauffeur; but he ceased abruptly as Bunter came near, and turned to look at the fat junior. He did not seem much impressed by Bunter.

"New kid?" said Bunter pleasantly. The sharp, brown eyes scrutinised him.

"Did you guess that?"

The new fellow's voice was as sharp as his eyes and his features.

"Eh?" said Bunter, rather taken aback. "Yes."

"What a brain!" said the new fellow.

"Oh, really, you know—"

The new fellow stood looking at the many-windowed front of the old School House of Greyfriars. He seemed to be taking stock of his surroundings in a perfectly cool way. His self-possession was complete. There was not the remotest trace of shyness or diffidence



A lock was turned, and there was the clink of a chain as the door opened a few inches. Then a face with a thick beard and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles looked out from the narrow aperture, and two sharp eyes glinted angrily at the group of juniors in the porch. "Who are you?" snapped a voice. "What do you want?" (See Chapter 5.)

about him. And yet Bunter had the impression that he had never been to a school like Greyfriars before. There was, in fact, something like a lurking impudence in his cool self-possession.

"I'm Bunter," said the Owl of the Remove, by way of drawing this rather unusual new fellow's attention to himself.

The sharp eyes looked at him.

"Oh, you're Bunter!"

"Yes. Are you Durance?"

"How the thump do you know, fatty?"

"That's the name on your box."

"You're not such a blind ass as you look."

With that polite rejoinder the new fellow went up the steps into the House. The taxi moved away.

Billy Bunter breathed hard as he followed him in. He did not like the looks of this new kid, and he liked his manners still less. He could have kicked him with pleasure.

"I say, Durance—"

"Well, fatty?"

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. Plenty of fellows at Greyfriars addressed him as "fatty." But it was rather hard to bear from a new kid who had only just stepped into the House.

But again Billy Bunter controlled his rising wrath. Bunter was after the loaves and fishes. And kicking this unpleasant new kid would not produce anything in that line.

"You coming into the Remove?" he asked.

"What's that?"

"The Lower Fourth—my Form," explained Bunter.

"Your Form? I hope not."

"Look here—"

"Oh, can it!"

The new fellow walked towards Trotter, who had just appeared. He gave him a sharp look, and spoke in a sharp voice.

"Take me to Mr. Quelch."

"Yes, sir," said Trotter.

"And look sharp!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Trotter, the House page, was conscious of the same feeling as Bunter of the Remove—of irritation and dislike. It was true that Trotter's movements were distinctly leisurely. But there was no need for the new fellow to tell him to look sharp, in so unpleasant a tone.

"This way, sir!" said Trotter sulkily.

Bunter rolled on.

"It's all right, Trotter. I'll take the kid to Mr. Quelch," he said. "You come along with me, Durance."

"Are you a servant here, Bunter?" asked the new fellow.

"What?" gasped Bunter.

"If not, don't butt in."

"Look here—"

"This way, sir," said Trotter again; and he led the way to Masters' passage.

The new fellow followed him. Bunter stood blinking after him, his very spectacles glistening with wrath.

He had been polite and kind and attentive to this new tick—with ulterior motives, it was true. Still, he had been kind and polite and attentive. And the tick had responded with absolute incivility. Rotten bad manners, and an evident enjoyment in making himself disagreeable. Possibly, being an extremely keen fellow, he had seen at a glance that Bunter was nobody, and not worth making friends with. That was quite probable. Still, it was no

excuse for his impudence—especially in the eyes of William George Bunter.

Bunter had seen all sorts of new fellows in his time, but never one quite like this. And he had never seen one whom he disliked so much.

As the new fellow, following Trotter, turned into Masters' passage, Bunter made up his fat mind. There was nothing to be got from the new cad; he was already a cad in Bunter's opinion. It followed that there was nothing to be lost by kicking him. Bunter pursued the new fellow into Master's passage, rushed in suddenly, and delivered a kick, which ought to have hurled the "tick" headlong into Trotter's back.

But the new fellow seemed to have eyes in the back of his head. At all events, he was not taken by surprise as Bunter expected.

He jumped out of the way of the lunging foot, whirled round, and caught hold of a fat ankle before Bunter could recover his balance.

He jerked that ankle upwards.

"Ow!" squeaked Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

Bump!

Bunter sat down with a loud and heavy concussion. The unpleasant new fellow grinned down at him.

"Sold again!" he remarked.

And he walked on after Trotter, leaving Bunter sitting in the passage, with a big ache in his fat person, spluttering for breath.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "The beast! Wow! The cad! This is what comes of wasting kindness on a new kid. Yow-ow! The rotter! Oh, the sneaking tick! Wow! Ow!"

And Billy Bunter picked himself up, spluttering, and rolled dismally away. He was no longer thinking of asking that new kid to cash his celebrated postal order. He had already realised that the fellow was about the last fellow in the wide world to oblige him in that way, or in any other way.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter; and he dismissed the disagreeable new fellow from his mind, and rolled away in quest of some easier victim.

When he blinked into the quad again the rain was falling. It was damp, and it was dismal; but there was consolation in the thought of the drenching that was probably falling to the lot of the beasts who had gone off for the afternoon and forgotten all about Bunter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The New Boy!

MR. QUELCH rose from his chair as Trotter announced Arthur Durance, and the new boy entered his study. Trotter closed the door and retired, leaving the new fellow with his Form master. Henry Samuel Quelch scanned him with his usual penetrating look, and the new fellow met his gaze with perfect calmness, giving him look for look. Mr. Quelch frowned slightly. There was no actual reason why Arthur Durance should not be cool and self-possessed, so far as that went. But a little more modest diffidence would have been becoming in a new boy entering his Form master's presence for the first time.

"Durance?" asked the Remove master coldly.

"Yes, sir."

"You are somewhat late in arriving, Durance. I understand that your train reached Courtfield Junction at three o'clock."

"I think so, sir."

"It is now"—Mr. Quelch glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece—"almost four, Durance."

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"I was delayed a little getting a taxi, sir."

The new boy's manner was respectful enough, and yet there was something in his ways that irritated Mr. Quelch vaguely. The boy was giving him a look as keen as his own. Mr. Quelch was accustomed to transfixing juniors with a gimlet-eye. But for Mr. Quelch himself to be transfixed in a similar way was quite another matter.

"You were delayed getting a taxi?" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"But you were met at the station, were you not?"

The new boy started.

"Met at the station, sir," he repeated, and his voice faltered. His cool, impudent self-possession seemed to have had a shock.

"Certainly. I sent a member of my Form to meet you at Courtfield Junction."

Mr. Quelch stared at the new junior.

Why that statement should startle Arthur Durance, and cause the colour to waver in his cheeks was a mystery. But it certainly did. For a second there was terror in the sharp, brown eyes.

But the new junior recovered himself immediately.

"I—I'm sorry, sir! I—I never saw anybody. I didn't know I was to be met at the station, and—and I—I hope I haven't done wrong, sir."

"Not at all, Durance," said Mr. Quelch reassuringly, considerably placated by the boy's sudden new humility. "If you did not see the boy I sent to meet you, it was quite natural for you to come on to the school by yourself; and doubtless your being strange to this locality accounts for the delay. But it is very strange that Vernon-Smith did not meet you, as I directed him."

"He may not have known me, sir," suggested the new junior. "I—I certainly was not met at the station."

"He would know you if he saw you, of course," said Mr. Quelch. "You did not see him at Courtfield at all?"

"I don't know, sir, but if you'd tell me what he is like—"

"What? You know him by sight, I presume."

The junior caught his breath.

"I do not understand you, Durance," said Mr. Quelch testily. "I understood from Vernon-Smith's father that you were acquainted with his son."

"D-did you, sir?"

"Certainly."

"One meets so many fellows, sir," mumbled the new junior. "I—I may have forgotten him."

"It is possible, of course; I remember Vernon-Smith stating that he had met you only for a couple of days, about a year ago," assented Mr. Quelch. "He does not I, think, remember you very clearly." Mr. Quelch was puzzled by the involuntary relief that leaped into the sharp, brown eyes, and he stared harder at the new junior. "But the name, at least, must be familiar to you, Durance, as it was Mr. Vernon-Smith who gave you a night's lodging in London and placed you in your train to-day."

"Oh, yes, sir," answered the new junior, with more assurance. "Of course I know Mr. Vernon-Smith quite well."

"Did he not tell you that his son would meet you at Courtfield?"

"I do not recall his doing so, sir."

"Certainly he wrote to me, and asked me to send his son to meet you," said the Remove master. "I sent Vernon-Smith; and it is very remarkable that he did not see you, or you him. It would be very odd indeed if each of you had totally forgotten the other's appearance."

The new junior stood silent.

Mr. Quelch was silent, too, reflecting, and a hard look came over his face. It came into his mind that Herbert Vernon-Smith had not gone to the station at all. He was well aware that the Bounder had been unwilling to go; but not till this moment had it crossed his mind that even the most reckless junior in the Remove might disobey his instructions.

"I shall inquire further into this," said the Remove master, at last, and his lips set in a tight line. "However, we need not go into that now. You had a good journey, I hope?"

"Quite, sir."

"You have brought the usual medical certificate?"

"It is here, sir."

"Dr. Locke has informed me that you will enter my Form," said Mr. Quelch. "But it will be necessary for you to go through a brief examination. I understand that you have studied with a tutor in your father's house, hitherto."

"That is so, sir."

"You have not been to school before?"

"No, sir."

"You are of an age to take your place in the Remove, and I am informed that you are fitted to do so," said Mr. Quelch. "However, we shall see. I will now give you a word of advice, Durance."

"Thank you, sir."

"With your life before you came here, while you were in your parents' charge, I have nothing to do," said the Remove master. "But at Greyfriars there are certain rules to which all boys must conform. No boy here is allowed to smoke."

The new junior started a little.

"I understand that, sir. I do not smoke."

"It will be better, Durance, to be frank, and to speak the exact truth," said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "I mention the matter because I have noticed, what I could not help noticing, that your fingers are stained with tobacco. I imagine that you not only smoke, but that you have smoked to excess; and I am assured that you have smoked to-day."

"I—I—a man in the train gave me a cigarette, sir!" stammered the new junior. "I—I did not like to refuse."

"I repeat, Durance," said Mr. Quelch, with emphasis, "that I expect truth and frankness from my boys. One cigarette would not stain your finger-tips as they are stained. I will say nothing further on the subject, except to warn you that the rule is very strict, and that any boy transgressing it must expect severe punishment. I will now take you to the house-dame."

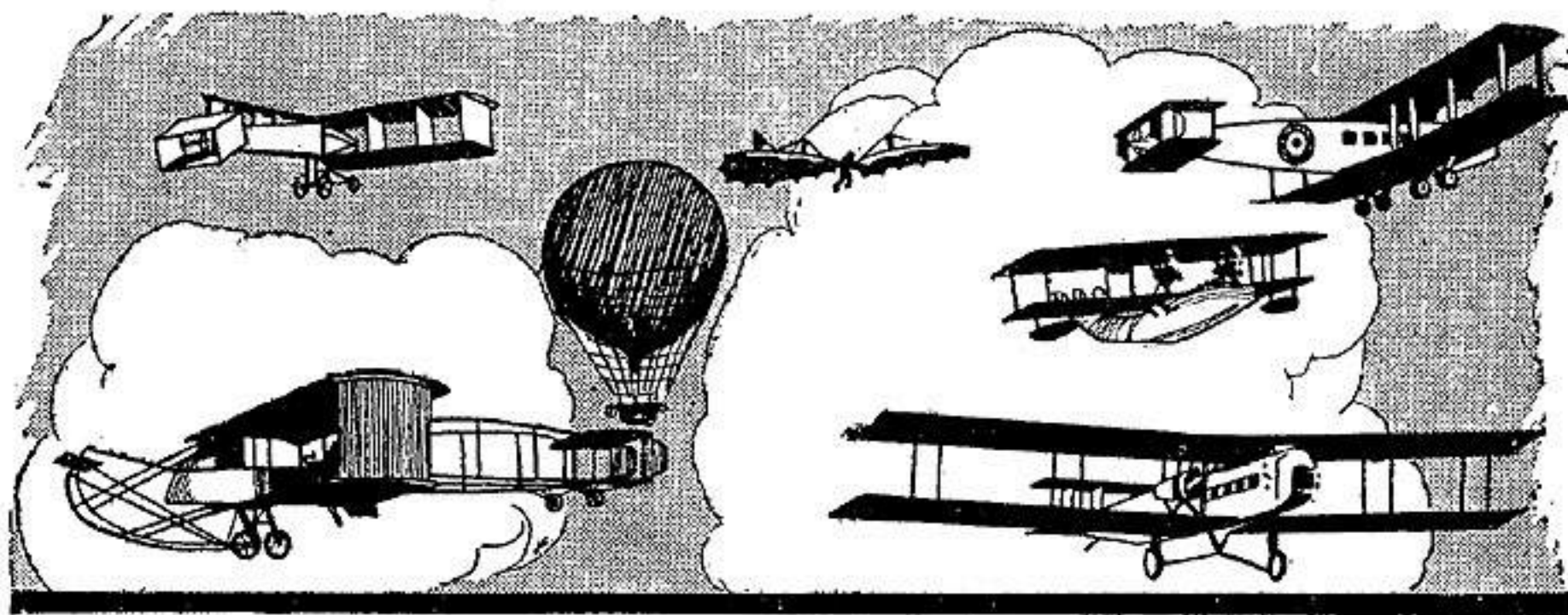
The new junior followed Mr. Quelch from the study.

After leaving the new junior with Mrs. Kibble, the Remove master proceeded to inquire after Herbert Vernon-Smith. He soon learned that the Bounder was not in the House. The rain had driven in a crowd of fellows, but Vernon-Smith was not among them. He further elicited that Vernon-Smith had been seen to leave the school, early in the afternoon, with half a dozen other fellows. Mr. Quelch returned to his study with compressed lips and a baleful eye. Manifestly, the Bounder had not carried out his instructions; he had gone off on his excursion with his friends, leaving those instructions totally disregarded.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had a reputation for recklessness, but rarely had that trait led him to such lengths as this.

The look in Mr. Quelch's eye indicated that trouble awaited the Bounder when he returned to the school.

(Continued on page 12.)



LEARNING to FLY!

Tragic was the fate of many intrepid airmen in the infancy of aviation ; but these daredevil pioneers all contributed their share to the present day conquest of the air !

THAT tremendously thrilling first aeroplane flight, made on the morning of December 17th, 1903, in America, meant that at last the age of the flying machine had really come. The brothers Wright, who on that historic day each made two short flights, had succeeded where other daredevil men through very many centuries had failed.

But the toll of life in the air was not at an end by any means. We had still to learn to control aeroplanes. At first the flying men went up with a strong hope that they would come down again alive and whole—but there was absolutely no certainty about it at all. Now you are as safe in the air as in a railway train—and vastly safer than on a main road used by motor traffic!

There were many fatalities in those early days through the wind toppling the machines sideways and causing them to crash. There were others—mysterious disappearances of aviators—which even now have not been explained.

But the very first disappearance in the air occurred long before the Wrights made that first successful flight. It was a balloon that featured in this incident, and that balloon was going to try to fly to Spitzbergen—right across the frozen Arctic. Aboard the balloon were Professor Andree and members of his Polar Expedition.

Secrets for All Time!

It was the biggest balloon that had ever been built, and was splendidly equipped—with carrier pigeons aboard to take back messages to civilization, for there was no such thing then as wireless. One of those pigeons got back two days later, with a message of cheer from the three bold explorers, and after that the balloon and its party just drifted into oblivion. It and they passed out of existence as though they had never been.

One of the greatest of the early aviators, Gustav Hamel, left Paris shortly before the outbreak of the Great War in an aeroplane, intending to land in London. They saw his racing plane crossing the Channel in this direction, and watched it till it faded from sight. As it faded in the distance so it passed beyond the ken of man. Nothing was ever seen of the plane again.

For over a month the world wondered what had become of pilot and plane, and then the mystery of Hamel's disappearance was solved by the crew of a French fishing smack. They found his body in the North Sea. But what had happened to cause this tragedy? What catastrophe had overwhelmed the plane? It is a secret of the air that is never likely now to be explained.

Costly Experiments!

The Channel had been successfully crossed by aeroplane five years before—by Bleriot, the first aviator to make the crossing in a heavier-than-air flying machine. It was

only a 25 horse-power monoplane, but it flew from Les Baraques, near Calais, to Dover in thirty-seven minutes. And the world was amazed at this immense feat, which won for Louis Bleriot a prize of £1,000 awarded by the "Daily Mail."

A monument now marks the landing-place, on Swingate Down, Dover, in honour of the great air-pilot and his little one-man plane. Bleriot is still hard at work, controlling the destinies of a big aircraft works in France.

They knew nothing then, these air pioneers, of looping-the-loop, and the other astounding tricks which present-day air-gymnasts freeze our blood with. Those tricks had to be learned very slowly, at the cost of many lives.

Strange as it may seem, it was the Great War that taught airmen the beginnings of their tricks—the more "slippery" was the pilot of a fighting plane the longer were his anticipations of life. And in the War those anticipations were not much—just a very few weeks at the most.

One of the most famous air acrobats so far known could fly upside down, whizz giddily from the clouds like a falling leaf—do anything almost. And yet death came to him, not in the air, but whilst he was taxi-ing his machine along the ground!

He collided head-on with another plane just landing, and both machines blazed up immediately. The pilot of one machine got clear without injury, but Lieut. Fronval, the great air acrobat, was burned to death.

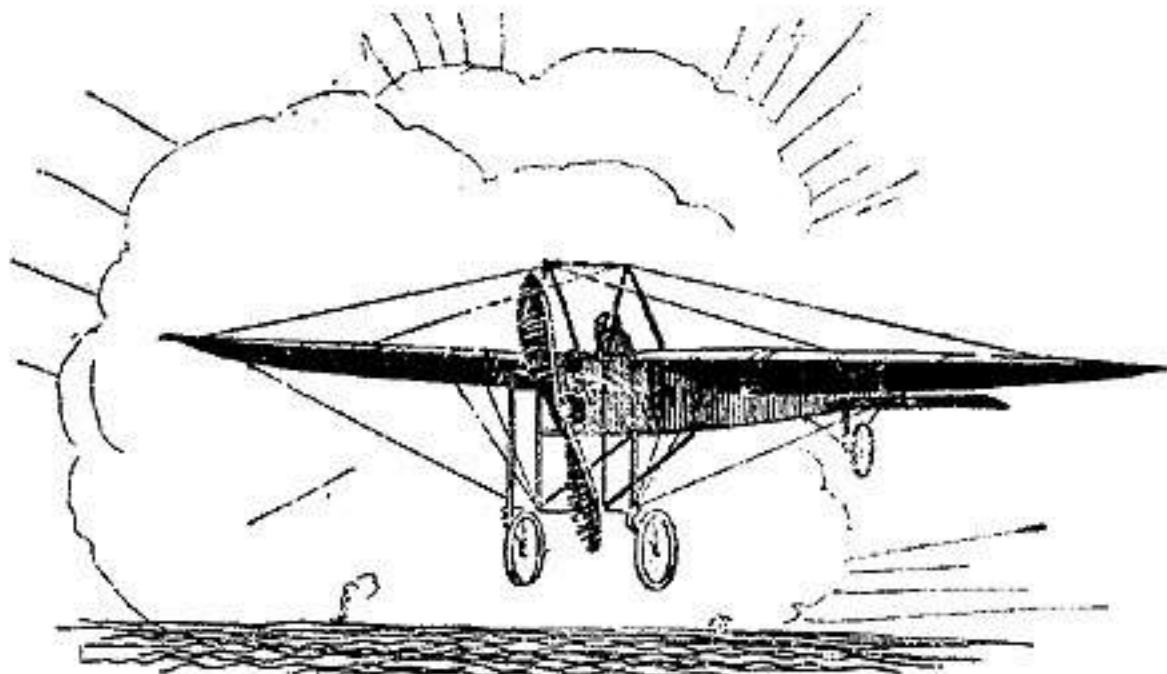
He once looped-the-loop 1,160 times in one flight, establishing a record. Another airman has done the same trick 1,093 times in the one flight, and he stopped doing it only because his last drop of petrol had run out!

Stunts to Order!

Similar stunts and others in which the pilot of one plane calmly steps from the wings of his machine to the wings of another—both thousands of feet in the air—are common enough on the films, and you will probably be surprised to know that these are not in any way faked.

There is a recognised schedule of prices for that sort of enterprise, the cinema magnates engaged on the making of films featuring air-stunts of particular breathlessness having no difficulty in getting skilled air-acrobats to accept their prices for risking every bone in their bodies.

The prices are low—absurdly low—but that is because the supply of daredevil aeronauts is so very plentiful. The control of their machines and of their nerves is second-nature to them, as it is to our own R.A.F. pilots. Which is simply amazing when you realise that the very first heavier-than-air flight had not been made in Europe until 1906, when Santos Dumont, a young Brazilian, covered himself with glory by achieving it.



The sight of the Bleriot monoplane nearing the white cliffs of Dover on its never-to-be-forgotten flight from France in 1909 brought home to the most sceptical the fact that the conquest of the air was a possibility and not a madman's delusion.

A ROGUE IN THE REMOVE!

(Continued from page 10.)

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Six for Smithy!

"**H**E, he, he!" Thus William George Bunter, as seven rather bedraggled-looking juniors trailed into the House just before calling-over.

Harry Wharton & Co. had returned, and they did not look as if they had enjoyed their walk that afternoon. Evidently they had been caught in the rain-storm.

Six members of the party were more or less cheerful, but Vernon-Smith was scowling blackly. The afternoon's excursion had been a dismal frost, and the penalty had still to be paid. It really had not been worth while asking for trouble with Quelch for the sake of getting a thorough drenching on the cliffs. But it was too late for repentance—not that the Bounder was in a repentant mood. He was in a mood of sullen anger and irritation and resentment. He was feeling disposed to add impertinence to disobedience when he came before Quelch; and he was feeling decidedly inimical towards the new fellow Durance, whom he regarded as being the cause of the trouble.

Whatever wishes his father might have expressed the Bounder was bitterly determined that the new "tick" should not be landed on him. If the fellow presumed in the slightest on that brief acquaintanceship of a year ago, the Bounder was ready to repulse him in the most ruthless manner.

The juniors changed their damp clothes in time for call-over in Big Hall. Smithy was still scowling as he went in with the rest of the Remove.

"Had a good time, Smithy?" murmured Skinner, nudging him in Hall.

"Go and eat coke," was the Bounder's reply.

"You've come back in a good temper, old bean."

"Oh, rats!"

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter. "I say, you fellows, did you get wet? He, he, he!"

"The wetfulness was terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter," said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh amiably. "But as the proverb says, what cannot be cured must go longest to the well."

"I say, you fellows, there's a new beast in the Remove," said Bunter. "An absolute cad."

Vernon-Smith glanced round as he heard that.

"A new kid?" said Bob Cherry. "Blown in to-day?"

"Yes; an utter rotter, a beast named Durance."

"He got in all right, anyhow, Smithy," remarked Tom Redwing.

"He would. I suppose," growled the Bounder. "He didn't need me to meet him at the station and hold his hand while he called a taxi. I'm for it, all the same, though."

"How's that?" asked Harry Wharton. "Did you know anything about the new kid, Smithy?"

"Quelch told me to meet him at the station," snapped the Bounder.

"Oh, my hat!"

"And you didn't?" asked Nugent.

"How could I, fathead, when we were going to Hawkscliff?"

"Well, you're a silly ass!"

"So that was what Quelch wanted?" said Harry.

"That was it."

"You ought to have gone, Smithy,"

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said the captain of the Remove quietly. "You've played the goat."

"I know that!" sneered the Bounder. "But you needn't give me a sermon on the subject; I shall get that from Quelch."

"I say, you fellows, the new kid's here," said Bunter. "He's in the Remove. That's the brute, over there by Newland."

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth, as Mr. Quelch came in to take the roll.

The Remove master called the names, and there was a special emphasis in his tones when he came to Vernon-Smith. The Bounder answered "adsum" with perfect coolness, and smiled as he caught the gleaming eyes of his Form master fixed on him for a moment. Mr. Quelch noted the smile and added to the Bounder's account, as it were.

After call-over, when the fellows marched out of Hall, Vernon-Smith was told by a prefect to go to his Form master's study, and wait there. With a scowling brow he went. Tom Redwing, with a rather anxious brow, followed him to the door.

"Don't cheek Quelchy, old man," said Tom. "That won't improve matters, you know."

"Do you want me to thank him for bagging my half-holiday, and licking me because I wouldn't stand it?" sneered Smithy.

"No good making matters worse, Smithy."

"Oh, rats!"

Vernon-Smith stamped into the study, and Redwing went away to the Remove quarters, rather troubled in his mind. Owing to the misadventures of the afternoon the party had had no tea, and they had all come in very hungry. Redwing went to No. 4 in the Remove, which he shared with the Bounder, to get tea ready while Smithy was interviewing his Form master. He sagely considered that a good meal might have a mollifying effect on his chum's irritated temper.

In Mr. Quelch's study Vernon-Smith threw himself into the Form master's own special armchair. He had been told to wait, and he did not see why he should not make himself comfortable while he waited. As a matter of fact, he had rather a long time to wait, for Quelch, on his way to the study, was buttonholed by Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, who was in one of his chatty moods. It was ten minutes before the Remove master was able to escape Prout.

When he arrived at the study he opened the door rather suddenly and came in before the Bounder had time to rise from the armchair. Smithy was on his feet the next moment, however.

Mr. Quelch made no comment. He crossed to his table and picked up the cane that lay there. The Bounder's hard face set sullenly.

"Vernon-Smith!" The Form master's voice was very deep. "I gave you instructions to meet a new boy at Courtfield Junction this afternoon."

"I remember, sir."

"The boy, Durance, has arrived at the school and it appears that he saw nothing of you at the station."

"Yes, sir."

"Did you, or did you not go to Courtfield Junction at three o'clock, as I instructed you, Vernon-Smith?"

"I did not, sir."

"Have you any excuse to give?"

"It was a half-holiday, sir, and I had already made my arrangements for the afternoon," said the Bounder coolly.

"Is that an excuse?"

"I think so, sir."

"You express no regret for having disobeyed distinct instructions given you by

your Form master?" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder was sullenly silent.

"You are aware, Vernon-Smith, that it was your father's desire that you should show some attention to this new boy, Durance?"

"You told me so, sir."

"And you have no regard for your father's wishes?"

The Bounder winced a little. As a matter of fact, hard as he was, he was an affectionate son, and had a very deep regard indeed for Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. But in his sullen irritation he had given that aspect of the matter no thought.

"I don't suppose my father cared much one way or the other, sir," he answered. "I don't see why he should."

"He stated as much in a letter to me, as I informed you."

"Well, yes, but it couldn't have mattered," said the Bounder uneasily. "I suppose Mr. Durance knew he had a son here, and spoke to him about it, and the pater said he'd tell me about the kid. That's all, I'm sure."

"Possibly; but your father expressed a wish which it was your duty to carry out, apart from your duty of obedience to your Form master."

"I'm sorry if I've neglected my father's wishes," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't suppose he cares two straws about it. Still, I'm sorry about that."

Mr. Quelch's eyes glittered. It was quite right and proper for Vernon-Smith to express his regret; but in doing so he made it quite clear that his regret was only on his father's account. For his disobedience he carefully expressed no regret whatever.

"I fear, Vernon-Smith, that you are accessible to no argument but that of the cane," said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"I expected a licking," said the Bounder, with a sneer.

Mr. Quelch's face grew grimmer.

"You will not be disappointed," he said. "Bend over that chair, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder sullenly obeyed. The cane whished in the air and came down hard.

The Bounder was hard as nails, tough as hickory; and he prided himself on being able to take a licking without a murmur. But the licking he received now was rather out of the common. Any fellow who had passed the Remove master's study just then might have fancied that Mr. Quelch was at pistol practice. Each lash that descended on the Bounder rang like a shot. There were six in all; but a "six" could vary considerably in severity. One cut that the Bounder received now was as severe as a whole six from a prefect.

Tough as he was, the Bounder grew quite pale under the castigation, and he had to set his teeth hard to keep back a cry. Not a sound escaped him; he would have died rather than have uttered a sound under the cane. But all his strength and self-control were needed to keep silent.

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane at last. The Bounder—white, with glittering eyes—rose to his feet.

"You may go, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

Without a word the Bounder went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

No Recognition!

TOM REDWING stared a little as he came into Study No. 4 in the Remove. As his study-mate was downstairs in the Form master's study he had expected to find Study No. 4 empty. But it was not empty.

A youth with a rather sallow face was sprawled in the armchair, and he turned an extremely sharp pair of brown eyes on Redwing as he came in. There was a cigarette in the junior's mouth, but it was not lighted. The warning he had received from Mr. Quelch had had effect on him to that extent.

"Oh!" said Redwing. "You're the new kid, I suppose?"

"That's me," assented the other.

"Durance, I think your name is?"

"Yes."

Redwing looked at him rather hard. Bunter had described the new fellow as an absolute cad; but Bunter's opinion was not likely to weigh with Redwing, or anyone else. But on the fellow's own looks Tom did not like him. There was something repellent in the bright brown eyes that seemed as keen and penetrating as those of a hawk.

The new junior was watching him keenly, sharply, almost furtively. Redwing could not help having an impression that the fellow was trying to find something out.

"This is your study, I suppose?" asked the new junior.

"Yes."

"Mine, too."

"Oh!" said Redwing. "Quelch has put you in here?" He understood now why the new junior was in Study No. 4.

"That's it."

"So we're going to be study-mates," said Redwing. "Well, I hope we shall pull together, Durance."

"Oh, we'll pull together all right!" said the new junior. "We don't know one another very well yet. But that will improve with time, what? My pater would like us to be friends."

Redwing stared again.

"Yours, too," said the new junior. "I suppose you've nearly forgotten me by this time, Vernon-Smith."

Redwing smiled. He understood that the new fellow was taking him for his study-mate. No doubt Durance knew that Study No. 4 was Vernon-Smith's study, and took it for granted that it was Vernon-Smith who had come in.

"It's over a year since we met, and then it was only for a couple of days, I think," went on the new junior, with the same stealthy, searching look at Redwing's face.

Redwing laughed.

"We've never met before, Durance," he answered. "You're making a little mistake."

The thin lips of the new junior came hard together.

"What do you mean?" he asked sharply. "Our fathers are friends, and we met for a couple of days once—"

"You're mistaking me for Vernon-Smith—"

The new junior started.

"Aren't you Vernon-Smith?" he exclaimed.

"No; I'm Redwing."

"Redwing?" repeated the new junior blankly.

"Vernon-Smith's study-mate," explained Tom. "We dig together in this study, you see, Smithy and I."

"Oh!" The new fellow bit his lip. "Oh! I—I see! As this is Vernon-Smith's study, I thought—" He broke off. "Where's Vernon-Smith, then?"

"He'll be up here soon," said Tom. "I'm going to get tea ready for him. We had a trip on this afternoon, and it turned out rather a muck-up, and we've missed our tea. Had yours?"

"Oh, yes! The old frump downstairs stood me a good tea."

"The old frump?" repeated Redwing.

"House dame, Quelch called her."

"We all like Mrs. Kebble here," said Redwing rather stiffly. "She's a good old soul."

"I dare say. Looks a priceless old frump, doesn't she?"

"Not in my opinion," answered Tom still more stiffly. He had felt at first sight that he did not like this fellow, and the description of kind old Mrs. Kebble as a priceless old frump added to the feeling. He was quite sure that the House dame had been kindness itself to the new boy, as she always was. This, apparently, was Durance's way of acknowledging kindness.

"Well, I'll be glad to see Vernon-Smith," said the new junior, changing the subject. "Will he be long?"

"May come in any minute now."

Redwing eyed the new junior curiously. "I didn't know you'd met him before."

"A couple of days, over a year ago. I dare say I've forgotten his face; one meets such a lot of people."



As the new fellow turned into Masters' passage, Bunter rushed in suddenly, and delivered a kick which ought to have hurled the junior into Trotter's back. But the new fellow was not to be taken by surprise, for he whirled round suddenly and caught hold of Bunter's fat ankle. "Yaroooh!" he roared. (See Chapter 6.)

"Well, you must have forgotten him pretty completely to take me for him," said Tom. "We're not the least bit alike."

"I never did remember faces much," said the new junior. "Still, I shall know him all right when I see him."

The door of Study No. 4 opened, and Bob Cherry put a cheery, ruddy face into the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ready for tea, Reddy, old bean?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom, with a smile.

"That the new kid?" asked Bob, with a glance at the sprawling figure in the chair.

"Yes, that's Durance."

The new fellow rose to his feet.

"How do you do, kid?" said Bob amiably. "Hope you'll like Greyfriars."

"Glad to see you again, Vernon-Smith," said the new junior. "Remember our last meeting?"

Bob stared.

"Eh? What?" he ejaculated.

"You haven't forgotten me?" asked the new junior. "I took this chap for you for a minute; but as soon as I saw your face, of course, I knew you at once."

"You knew me at once?" gasped Bob.

"Mean to say that I look anything like Smithy?"

Redwing chuckled.

"That's Bob Cherry of the Remove, Durance," he said.

"Bob Cherry?" repeated the new junior.

"Ha, ha! Yes! Nothing like Smithy to look at; you've forgotten Smithy pretty completely."

"But you said—" The new fellow checked himself, biting his lip.

"My dear man," grinned Bob, "I suppose you didn't mean to insult me, so I'll look over it. Tell Smithy you took me for him, and he'll take it as a compliment. He will fancy he's good-looking, after all!"

"Fathead!" said Redwing, laughing.

"Well, I looked in to ask you to come to the jolly old festive board, Reddy,"

said Bob. "Study No. 13—and all the happy family there. Bring Smithy—and the new kid if you like. Glad if you'll join us, Durance."

"I've had my tea, thanks," muttered the new junior.

"Well, you coming, Reddy?"

"I'm waiting for Smithy; he's with Quelch," said Tom. "Thanks all the same, old chap; I think we won't come. Smithy mayn't be in a mood for company after—"

"After Quelch's got through?" said Bob. "Very likely! Well, if you change your mind, roll along."

And Bob Cherry went on his cheery way.

The new junior sat down again, with a sullen expression on his face.

Tom Redwing smiled as he set about preparations for tea in Study No. 4. It was obvious that if the new junior really had ever seen Vernon-Smith before he had totally forgotten him, though he seemed to be anxious to appear not to have done so. First, he had taken Redwing for the Bounder, then Bob Cherry; and neither was in the least like Smithy in appearance.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

The new fellow was annoyed and irritated by his mistakes, and he did not seem in the habit of controlling or concealing bad temper.

The Bounder's step was heard in the passage at last. Vernon-Smith kicked open the door of the study, swung in, and kicked the door shut behind him, with a black scowl on his face.

"Tea's ready, Smithy," said Redwing quietly.

"Hang tea!"

"Had it bad, old man?"

"Did you think Quelch would let me off lightly?" growled Smithy.

"Well, no!"

"Of course, you think he was quite right to take it out of me!" sneered the Bounder. "You would?"

Redwing made no reply to that. Smithy was in a mood to quarrel with friend or foe; and Tom exercised the patience he was accustomed to exercise at such times. Any fellow who desired to keep on friendly terms with the Bounder had to know how to be patient.

The new junior had risen again from his chair. The name of Smithy, uttered by Redwing, was enough to tell him that it was Vernon-Smith who had entered this time, whether he recognised him or not.

He stepped towards the Bounder.

"I've been waiting to see you, Vernon-Smith," he said. "I wonder if you remember me. I knew you at once."

The Bounder stared at him.

"Who the dickens are you?" he asked ungraciously.

"It's Durance, the new kid," said Redwing anxiously. "Quelch's put him in this study."

Tom was rather worried at the idea of the Bounder wreaking his bitter temper on a new fellow, who had been only a few hours in the school.

"Durance?" repeated Smithy.

"You don't remember me?" asked the new junior, breathing a little hard.

"No, I don't."

"Smithy!" muttered Redwing.

"I don't remember the fellow, to recognise him, and I don't want to," said the Bounder deliberately. "He's caused me enough trouble to-day, and he can go and eat coke."

"You might be civil to a new chap," said Redwing, rather sharply. "It's not his fault you got into a row with Quelch."

"Isn't it?" sneered Smithy. "Well, I think it is; and I think it was like Quelch's cheek to shove him into this study. I don't want him here."

"Thanks!" said the new junior; and he sat down again.

Smithy gave him another look.

"I don't recognise you, and don't know you," he said. "Anyhow, I saw you only for a couple of days, in Devonshire, more than a year ago. We weren't so jolly friendly that you would expect me to keep you in mind."

"Not at all!" agreed the new junior.

"To tell the truth, I hardly knew you again—I'd forgotten all about you."

"Then we're quits!" grunted the Bounder. "If you're stuck in this

study, it can't be helped; but I'm not the fellow to have a fatheaded new kid landed on him. Redwing's that sort of ass; I'm not. So you can leave me alone."

"Pleasure!" answered the new junior. "I remember you had bad manners when I saw you before; and they haven't improved the least little bit. Go and eat coke!"

And he walked out of the study, leaving Redwing, flushed and uncomfortable, alone with the scowling Bounder.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Helps!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. tea'd in No. 13, Bob Cherry's study; a late but cheery tea, which had the effect of restoring their equanimity after the disconcerting events of the afternoon. Then Wharton and Nugent came along the passage to their own study, and found the new junior lounging in the Remove passage near the stairs. He glanced at them, and seemed disposed to speak; and Wharton came over to him as Nugent went into No. 1. As head of the Form, it was up to Wharton to give any assistance he could to a new boy in the Form; and, anyhow, he would have extended a helping hand to a stranger within the gates. He gave the junior a cheery nod, and stopped to speak.

"You're Durance?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I'm Wharton, of your Form—captain of the Form, as a matter of fact," said Harry.

"Captain of the Form?" repeated the new junior. "No end of a big gun, what?"

Wharton gave him a rather sharp look. There was a hint of a sneer in the fellow's tone; and it was not pleasant to the ear.

"I don't know about that," said Wharton quietly. "I just mentioned it. Is there anything I can do for you, as you're new here?"

Wharton had the same impression of the fellow that others had already had. He did not like him, and rather wished that he had not spoken to him.

"You've got your study?" he asked.

"Yes; I'm in No. 4."

"Then you'll be with Smithy and Redwing," said Harry. "You've met them?"

"Yes."

"You'll like Redwing."

"Shall I?"

"Well, everybody in the Remove does," said Harry; "and Smithy's a good chap, in his own way."

"Quite his own way, then, I fancy," said the new junior.

Harry Wharton smiled.

"I dare say Smithy is a bit edgewise at present—he's had a row with Quelch," he said. "It seems that Quelch told him to meet you at the station, and he didn't do it."

"No reason why he should—and I'm not sorry I missed him. I hardly remember the fellow, and he doesn't seem to remember me at all."

"Oh, you've met Smithy before?"

"A couple of days, in holiday-time, in Devonshire," answered the new junior carelessly. "Can't say I liked him, then—and I like him still less now. Manners of a pig."

Wharton refrained from passing any comment on that. Just after his interview with Mr. Quelch, it was probable that Vernon-Smith's manners had not been polished.

"I suppose that was why Quelch sent Smithy to meet you, as you happen to know him," he remarked.

"I suppose so. Vernon-Smith did not go to Courtfield Station at all, did he?" asked the new junior, his bright eyes fixed very keenly on the captain of the Remove.

"No; he had an excursion on, and he went nowhere near Courtfield," answered Wharton. "As it turned out, the excursion was a frost, and we were drenched with rain, and had to turn back. You got to the school all right, anyhow."

"Yes, I got a taxi, and came along," answered the new junior. "Look here, I want to telephone. Is there a telephone in the place that a fellow can use?"

"Certainly. Quelch would let you use his phone, to let your people know you got here safe."

"It isn't that! It's a friend."

"Well, if you ask Quelch—"

"I don't want to ask Quelch; I don't want a Form master butting into my business."

"Well, you'd have to ask him, if you wanted to use his phone," said Wharton, "unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Well," said Harry, with a smile, "fellows sometimes borrow a phone without asking leave, when a master happens to be out. Two or three of the masters have telephones in their studies, here."

"That's better. Any master out now, do you know?"

"'Fraid not; but you could find out. I know Quelch is in; but Prout—he would most likely be in Common-room just now. You might be able to bag his phone if he is. Of course, it's a risk—if he came in and spotted you there would be a row."

"I'll chance that, if you'll tell me where to find his study."

Wharton paused a moment or two.

"It's rather important," said the new junior. "I told the friend I'm speaking of that I'd phone, if I could. I'd be obliged if you could help me out."

"Come on, then," said Harry.

The new junior followed him down the stairs. Wharton led the way to the corner of Masters' passage, and pointed out the door of Mr. Prout's study in the distance.

"That's the room," he said. "Tap at the door, and if Prout's there, make some excuse. If he's not there he's still in Common-room, and if he's got his chin going, he won't leave off while there's anybody left to listen."

The new junior grinned.

"Thanks!" he said.

Wharton left him, and returned to the Remove quarters. The new junior watched him out of sight, and then walked along Masters' passage to Mr. Prout's door, and tapped.

He opened the door immediately after tapping, and stepped in. Mr. Prout's study, to his relief, was empty. The Fifth Form master was still in Common-room; doubtless with his plump chin getting its usual amount of exercise.

The new junior shut the door, crossed the study quickly, and picked up the receiver of the telephone.

"Number, please!"

"Redclyffe two-four," answered the junior.

And he waited impatiently for his call.

Harry Wharton had gone back to Study No. 1, and was sitting down to prep there with Nugent. He was not thinking of the new junior, and was quite indifferent to his proceedings, feeling no curiosity whatever as to what call he wanted to make on Prout's phone. But certainly he would have been interested and considerably surprised, had he

known that the new junior was calling Redclyffe 24, and that Redclyffe 24 was the number of the Old Red House!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Carry On!

"WHO is speaking?"

"Ulick!"

"You young fool!" came the voice over the wires.

"What are you taking this risk for?"

"All serene, old bean! There's nobody to hear me here," answered the new junior into the transmitter.

"Has anything happened?"

"Yes."

"Not—"

"That's all right! It all went off as easy as winking. You've got the other fellow all right?"

"Of course."

"All serene at your end, then?"

"Yes; but what's happened? I told you to try to get through to me if anything went wrong; but—"

"There's a fellow here who knows—the other fellow!"

There was the mutter of an oath on the wires.

"Who is it?"

"His name's Vernon-Smith."

"Vernon-Smith! A son of old Vernon-Smith, do you mean—the boy's father's friend?"

"Yes; I suppose so."

"What vile luck! I never heard that the old blighter had a son at the school. Never knew that he had a son at all."

"Well, he has, and the fellow's here."

Another oath!

"I'm put in his study," went on the new junior; "I've met him."

"What has happened?"

"Only that! He didn't recognise me; but it seems that he only met the Other Fellow once, a year ago, for a couple of days. From what I can make out he never felt friendly towards him. He's already told me that he wants to have nothing to do with me."

The junior detected a breath of relief from the other end.

"That's good, at least. Keep him at a distance; in fact, get on unfriendly terms with him, Ulick. The less you see of him the better; and you must not, on any account, meet his father, if the old fool should come down to the school."

"I know that, old bean. Leave it to me to keep my head out of a rat-trap!" said Ulick derisively.

"He has no suspicion?"

"None."

"He merely fails to recognise you as the—the Other Fellow?"

"That's it."

"It's unfortunate, but if it's no worse than that—"

"I fancy that will be all right; but I thought I'd better put you wise to it. Vernon-Smith was sent to meet the Other Fellow at the station this afternoon—"

"What!"

Ulick chuckled.

"Don't be alarmed, father. He never went; he seems to be an independent sort of merchant, and he jibbed, and cleared off on some excursion instead."

"Oh, good! If he had gone—"

"All the fat would be in the fire—what?" chuckled Ulick.

"I should have found some other way," snapped the voice on the telephone from the Old Red House; "but it would have made it difficult. What sort of a boy is this Vernon-Smith?"

"An ill-tempered, sneering, bad-mannered sort of a rotter, from what I've seen of him. He seemed to fancy

he was going to be bothered with a troublesome new kid to look after; and he's told me plainly to leave him alone."

"That's good! Take him at his word."

"Bet your life!"

"And he has shown no suspicion so far?"

"Not a teeny weeny bit! But I've only seen him once—and he looks as if he has his wits about him. He may tumble to something later. That's why I'm putting you wise."

"Take care what you say; you know that talk can be overheard on the telephone."

"I'm not going to recite the whole piece from the beginning, old bean. But I had to ask you for a pointer or two. It took the wind out of my sails when I first heard of the brute. Suppose he tumbles to something—"

"You must be guided by circumstances. Keep him at a distance as much as you can. It's unfortunate that he is at the school at all—that was not allowed for in our plans. He will naturally ask you about many things; but if you keep on bad terms with him you can stall him off. He has given you an excuse by being unfriendly at the start."

"That's so. Then I'm to carry on?"

"Carry on, certainly. There's too much at stake to give the thing up now. Carry on!"

"I'm game!" said Ulick.

"Keep me posted," went on the voice from the Old Red House, with an anxious tone in it. "After all, I can trust you to take care of yourself, Ulick."

"Bet your sweet life on that!"

"How do you like the place?"

"Rotten! Sleepy old show, after what I've been used to. Masters solemn as owls, think they know everything in the wide world; but I could teach them a few things, I fancy."

"Don't try to do it. You're a school-boy now, and you're going to carry on exactly like any other schoolboy."

"What a life! But leave it to me; I'm game! Take care of the Other Fellow at your end, that's all."

"You can rely on that. Better cut off now; I'm glad you've put me wise, Ulick; but the least said the soonest mended. You know how to communicate with me. Don't phone unless it's absolutely necessary."

"I get you."

"Just one word more—"

"Cut off; somebody's coming!"

Ulick hung up the receiver, and stepped quickly away from the telephone. He was standing on the other side of the study when the door opened, and Mr. Prout stepped in.

Prout rolled ponderously into the study, and had sat down in his arm-chair before he noticed that he was not alone.

Then he blinked in surprise at the new junior.

"Dear me!" said the Fifth Form master. "Who are you, and what are you doing in this room, pray?"

"Isn't this Mr. Quelch's study, sir?" asked the new junior.

"Certainly not; it is my study."

"Oh! I'm sorry sir! I'm a new boy to-day, sir, and—and—I thought this was my Form master's study—"

"Nothing of the sort. What Form are you in?" asked Prout testily.

"Remove, sir."

"Then Mr. Quelch is your Form master. His study is further along the passage, towards the staircase."

"Thank you, sir. I thought—"

"You may go!" said the Fifth Form master, with a wave of a fat hand.

The new junior left the study, closing the door after him. He went along Masters' passage but he did not stop at Mr. Quelch's study. He walked on to the stairs. There was a grin on his face as he went. Falsehoods evidently cost this peculiar new junior very little.

He loitered for some minutes in the Remove passage, and then looked in at Study No. 1, where Wharton and Nugent were at prep.

The captain of the Remove glanced up at him.

"Did you get your call?" he asked.

"Couldn't get through, as it happens," said the new junior calmly.

"Can't be helped. I say, would you mind telling a fellow—"

"Go ahead."

"That chap Vernon-Smith has picked trouble with me already, goodness knows why," said the new junior. "It's a bit awkward being in his study, with the fellow glowering at me like a tiger. Can a fellow change his study here?"

"You can ask Quelch," said Harry.

"If he thinks you've got a good reason, he may do it."

"Well, I'd rather keep clear of that chap Vernon-Smith, in the circumstances. I don't want a scrap on my hands."

"That's all right," said Frank laughing. "Smithy will be all serene when he's got over his licking."

"I'd give him a trial, if I were you," said Harry. "You'll find Smithy all right, as a rule, and Redwing's a really pleasant fellow."

"Well, I'd rather change my study, if I could."

"Ask Quelch, then."

"Can't it be done without that?"

"Well, yes, if any fellow liked to ask you into their study. But you

(Continued on next page.)

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don't know anybody here excepting Smithy."

"You don't feel disposed to ask me into this study?"

Wharton looked at him.

"Sorry to seem inhospitable," he replied. "But I don't. We've had one new chap landed in here this term, but he left. We're not looking for another, if it's all the same to you."

"Please yourself," grunted the new junior, and he walked away.

Wharton and Nugent exchanged a glance.

"Cool!" remarked Frank.

"Cheek!" said Harry.

And they dismissed the new fellow from their minds, and resumed prep.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Barred!

TOM REDWING smiled faintly. Tea in Study No. 4 had restored the Bounder's temper a little, added to the effect of the licking wearing off somewhat. Redwing and Smithy had settled down to prep, and during prep, Smithy's bitter temper ameliorated still more. Little as he cared for the opinion of others, Smithy was not exactly a boor, and when he let his temper go upon an unoffending object, it was not uncommon for him to regret it afterwards.

Now that he was calm, no longer tired and hungry, no longer feeling so severely the effect of Mr. Quelch's cane, the Bounder realised that his temper had led him astray as usual. The new fellow was, in a way, the cause of his trouble, but an unknowing and unintentional cause, and obviously undeserving of the way the Bounder had spoken to him. In the Bounder's hard face, Redwing could read the signs, and that was the cause of his smile. Smithy's bark, after all, was worse than his bite.

Several times Smithy looked up from his books, and seemed about to speak. Each time he changed his mind and resumed prep.

But when prep was over, he threw his books aside, and came to the subject at last.

"I suppose I was a bit rough on that kid, Reddy," he remarked.

"Just a bit," agreed Tom.

"By that, you mean I acted like a pig."

"I shouldn't have said so."

"But you thought it."

"Yes, if you'd like me to be frank."

"Well, I was wild," said Smithy.

"Quelch fairly let himself go over that six! My hat! I've been through it before—but I don't remember a dose quite so stiff. I fancy he's been doing physical jerks this afternoon, to get his muscle up ready for me."

Redwing laughed.

"I suppose he was pretty waxy," he said.

"Ferocious!" answered the Bounder. "Come to think of it, I gave him some reason for getting his jolly old rag out."

"You did!"

"Anyhow, I'm rather sorry I ragged that new kid. I can't say I like him, on his looks, and I don't seem to remember his face either, though I've usually a good memory for faces. But there was no need to drop on him like a ton of coke."

"None at all," agreed Redwing.

"I don't want him in the study, as I told him, but it's not his fault that goat Quelch put him here—I dare say

the old bean thought it a good arrangement, as I know the chap. I—I think my pater asked him," added Smithy, rather shamefacedly, "and—and I haven't seen the pater this term yet, I'd like to ask the new kid how he looked when he left him—but—" Smithy broke off, colouring.

"No great harm done," said Tom. "A few civil words will set the matter right. The chap knows you'd just had a licking, and he will make allowances for that, if he's got any sense."

"He hasn't come back to the study."

"Well, he's no prep to do first night—I dare say we shall find him in the Rag."

The two juniors left Study No. 4, and went downstairs. The Bounder, rather ashamed of his display of temper towards a stranger, was in a conciliatory mood, and prepared to be unusually civil to the new fellow as a consequence. After all, there was, as Redwing said, no great harm done, manners were never very polished in the Lower Fourth. If the new fellow had taken offence, as was likely enough, a little civility would set the matter right; and if he persisted in keeping his back up, it did not matter much to the Bounder, the fellow could sulk if he wanted to.

They found the new junior in the Rag.

Most of the fellows were still at prep, and there were not half a dozen in the Rag. The new fellow stood at the window by himself, looking out into the dusk of the quad. Rain was falling again, pattering lightly on the panes.

"There he is, Smithy," said Tom.

The Bounder grinned ruefully.

"Come on, and get it over," he said.

They crossed over to the window, where the new junior stood, and he glanced round as they came.

The Bounder, about to speak, checked himself, and instead, fixed eyes on the sallow face with its bright, bird-like brown eyes. His look was searching.

It was as if something about the new fellow's face had struck the Bounder.

"Smithy wants to speak to you, Durance," said Redwing, breaking the silence, as Vernon-Smith did not speak.

"He can save himself the trouble," said the new junior coolly. "I don't want him to."

"I've got a few words to say," said the Bounder quietly. "I was ratty when I saw you in my study—I'd just had a corker of a licking—and I'm sorry I jumped on you as I did."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes, that's about all."

"Good; leave it at that, then."

The new junior turned away to the window again, his back to the chums of Study No. 4.

The Bounder's face crimsoned with anger. It was seldom that Smithy uttered anything like an apology; and to have his apology received in this manner was intensely irritating to him.

"Look here, Durance—" began Redwing.

"That's enough."

"We're going to be together this term in the same study," said Tom. "No need to begin by being on bad terms."

"That's not my fault. Vernon-Smith chose to quarrel with me, over nothing! I don't want to have anything to do with him."

"You won't, whether you want to or not," said the Bounder savagely. "I didn't like your looks when I saw you in the study, and I like them less than ever now."

"Exactly what I feel about it," said the new junior, over his shoulder. "Let it drop."

"That's all rot, you know," said Redwing uneasily. "Smithy was in

fault, but he's owned up and said he's sorry. There's nothing to have you back up about now, Durance."

"I'm fed-up with him."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Your father is Smithy's father's friend, I understand," said Tom. "That's a good reason for not bickering."

"What rot!"

"Smithy's father put you up in London last night, I think," said Tom, "and he saw you into your train to-day. Smithy would like to ask you about him, as he's not seen him since the holidays."

"Smithy can ask what he likes, but I shan't answer him," said the new junior deliberately. "He's insulted me once for nothing, and I don't want him to speak to me. I'm not the kind of fellow to be slanged by a chap when he's in a bad temper, and buttered again when he's in a good one. So long as I'm here I shall bar Vernon-Smith, and he can do the same with me."

"It's rather fatheaded to bear a grudge for a few hasty words," urged Tom.

"Is that your opinion?"

"Yes, it is!" said Tom sharply.

"You're welcome to it; but keep it to yourself! I'm not interested."

Tom coloured with vexation.

"Very well, Durance; if that's the line you take, you can bar Smithy and me, too!"

"Pleased!" drawled the new junior. "Both of you let me alone—that's all I ask."

Redwing slipped his arm through Vernon-Smith's and drew him away. It was time, for the Bounder's eyes were burning and his fists clenching. Tom was almost as angry as Smithy now, but he did not desire the dispute to develop into a fight; it was not worth while, apart from the bad form of scrapping with a fellow on his first day in the school.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard and deep as he moved away with his friend.

"Well, what do you think of the fellow yourself?" he asked, when they stopped at a distance.

"Can't say I like him," confessed Tom.

"A fellow ought not to bear a grudge like that. Still, we needn't have anything to do with him. It's rather unfortunate that he's put in our study, as it turns out."

"The pater wanted me to be friends with him, according to Quelch," muttered the Bounder. "I expect I shall hear from him on the subject."

"You ought to have remembered that a little earlier, old chap. Still, in point of fact, I don't think that chap's got a friendly nature. It mightn't have worked, anyhow."

"A fellow likes to do as his father wants," mumbled Smithy.

Redwing suppressed a smile. Smithy's concern for his father's wishes was certainly manifesting itself rather late in the day. But that was just like the Bounder.

"If it wasn't for that, he could go and eat coke and be hanged to him!" snapped Smithy. "But—"

"Let him rip," said Tom. "You can speak to him again to-morrow, and give him another chance to come round. After all, you were rather—hem—rather plain-spoken at your first meeting, you know."

The Bounder looked across the room at the new junior, a puzzled expression on his face.

"I can't understand it," he said.

"What can't you understand?"

"Durance! Of course, I hardly know the chap; it's a year or more since I saw him. We were thrown together for a couple of days on a holiday, owing to our paters meeting. I don't know him much. But—"

"But what?" asked Redwing, perplexed.

"Well, it's odd! Durance, so far as I remember him, was a good-tempered, good-natured chap—a bit too much so, I remember thinking at the time. Not the kind of chap to bear a grudge, even for a real injury."

Redwing stared.

"My hat! He's changed a lot, then, in a year," he said.

"I remember him taking an awful lot of trouble to help a cat that had fallen into a pond," said Vernon-Smith. "He made his clothes frightfully muddy, and kept me hanging about, and I called him a fool. Does that kid yonder strike you as that sort of chap?"

"Not in the slightest," said Redwing in astonishment. "Not the least bit in the world."

"And his looks, too—he's different—"

"But didn't you say that you hardly remember his looks?"

"Yes, yes; but"—the Bounder wrinkled his brows—"but—but his eyes are different. You noticed their colour?"

"Yes; brown, and jolly sharp," said Tom, with a smile.

I met in Devonshire a year ago. It beats me hollow."

And in the Bounder's face, as he stared across the room at the new junior, there was a vague suspicion.

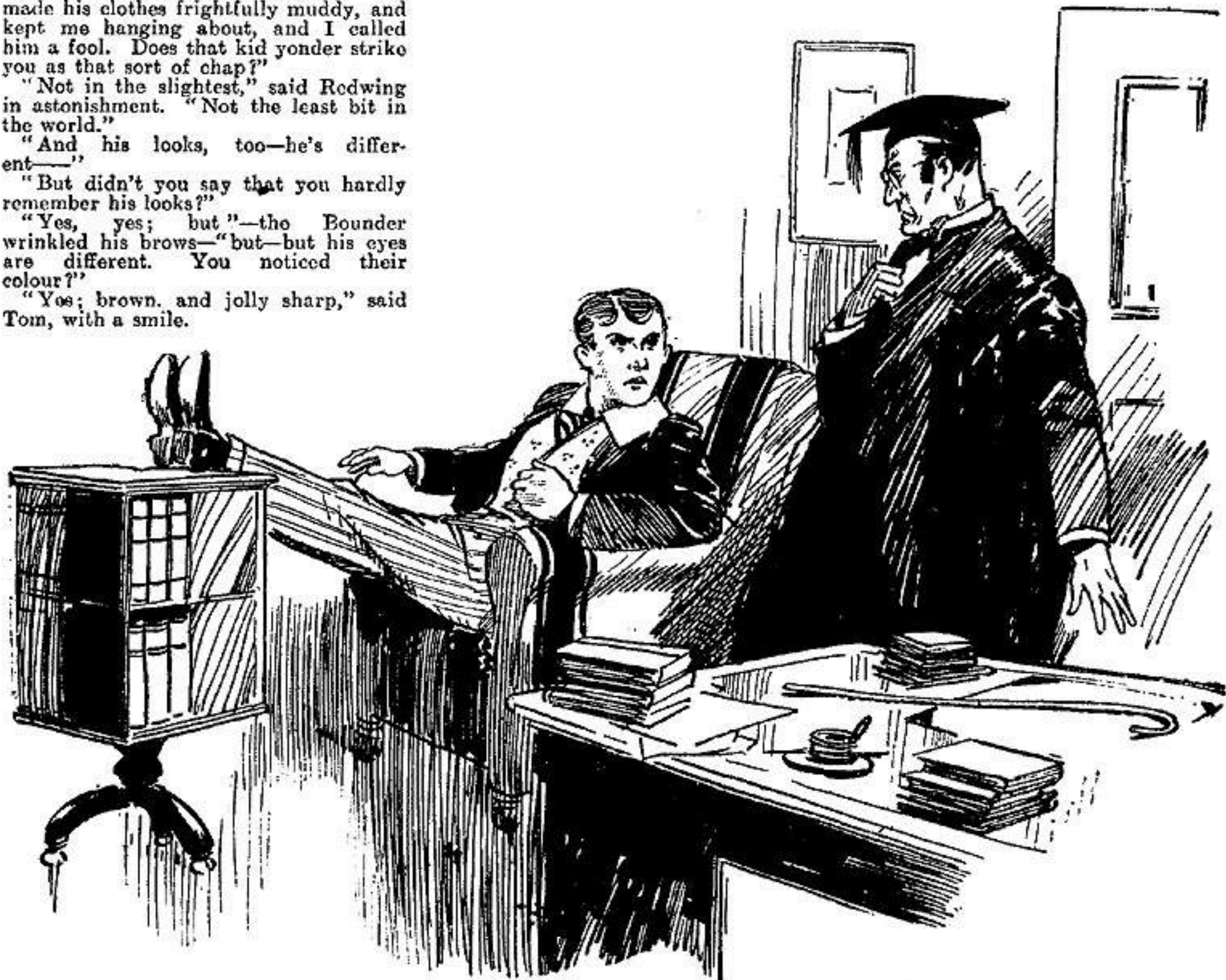
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The Famous Five came cheerily into the Rag, and the subject was dropped. The new junior strolled out of the room, and was not seen again till bed-time. When the Remove went to their dormitory the Bounder eyed him again, curiously, suspiciously. If the new

junior rolled along to No. 4, and turned the handle of the door. But the door did not open. It was locked inside.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

Evidently, Smithy's new study-mate was there. Bunter had known that he might be there, but he did not mind; he had already observed the terms Durance was on with his study-mates, so he did not expect any trouble from Durance. From what he had seen of the new junior, Bunter opined that he would be rather entertained than otherwise at



Mr. Quelch opened the door of his study rather suddenly and entered, before Vernon-Smith had time to rise from the arm-chair. "Vernon-Smith!" The Form master's voice was very deep. "The new boy I gave you instructions to meet at the station has arrived, and it appears that he saw nothing of you. Did you, or did you not, carry out my instructions?" "I did not, sir!" answered the Bounder coolly. (See Chapter 8.)

"Well, when I saw him in Devonshire, a year ago, he had blue eyes."

"Smithy!"

"I didn't think of it at fist—but he had," said Vernon-Smith; "and nothing sharp about them, either. That fellow looks at you like a hawk. A year ago he did nothing of the kind. He had a healthy complexion, too; and now he looks pasty, as if he smoked himself sick. I'll swear that he had blue eyes, Reddy."

"Well, eyes do change their colour, you know," said the astonished Redwing. "Little kids often have blue eyes, that change later to brown."

"But at his age—"

"I suppose it would be unusual. But—are you sure?"

"I'm quite sure."

"Then it's jolly queer," said Redwing.

"It's queer—dashed queer, and I can't make the fellow out," said Vernon-Smith slowly. "I don't like his looks; I don't like his ways; and I don't remember him in the least as the chap

junior noted it, he gave it no heed. He carefully took no notice whatever of the Bounder; and when Redwing called out a conciliatory "Good-night, Durance!" he did not answer. Evidently it was the new junior's intention to keep his study-mates at arm's length; and that, perhaps, added to the vague, half-formed doubt and suspicion that grew in the Bounder's mind.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants to Know!

BILLY BUNTER stared.

It was the following day, and classes were over. There was a burst of fine weather after the rain, and most of the Removites were out of the House. Billy Bunter, however, had business inside the House. Having seen Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing go out on their bicycles, Bunter was making a strategic advance on Study No. 4 in the Remove. The fat

seeing Smithy's tuck raided. But the locked door was a "facer." Why the new beast wanted to lock the door was a mystery to Bunter.

He rattled the handle.

"Who's there?" called out the sharp voice of the new junior.

"Me!" answered the Owl of the Remove.

"Who's 'me' ass?"

"Bunter."

"Well, go and eat coke, Bunter!"

"I say, what have you got the door locked for, Durance?"

"Find out!"

"If you're smoking, you'll jolly well get into a row," said Bunter. "Smithy smokes in the study sometimes; but Reddy doesn't like it. And I can jolly well tell you he won't stand it from you."

No reply.

"I say, Durance, let a chap in, and gimme a fag," said Bunter. "I rather like a smoke sometimes, old fellow."

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Silence.

"Look here, you beast, you've no right to lock me out of this study!" howled Bunter. "My belief is that you're bagging Smithy's cake. I know there's a cake in the cupboard. I saw Smithy getting it at the shop. Look here, let me in, and we'll go halves."

"Clear off, you fat fool!"

"I'll tell Smithy you had his cake!" hooted Bunter.

"Shut up, and clear."

"Open this door, you beast!"

"If I open that door," came a concentrated voice, "I'll step out and wipe up the passage with you! Get out!"

Bunter ceased to rattle the door-handle. He did not want the new junior to step out and wipe up the Remove passage with his fat person. But he did not go.

In the first place he was curious to know why the new fellow kept the door locked. Curiosity being Bunter's besetting sin. In the second place he suspected him of being engaged in bagging the cake in the study cupboard—the cake upon which Bunter's heart was set. Durance was, in Bunter's opinion, just the mean sort of rotter to bag a fellow's cake while a fellow's back was turned.

So, having glanced up and down the passage, and ascertained that no one was in the offing, Bunter stooped outside the door, and applied his eye to the keyhole. Keyhole work was exactly in Bunter's line. There was hardly a keyhole at Greyfriars to which he had not applied an eye or an ear. The number of kickings he had earned by such practices was countless. But kickings had no effect on William George Bunter—or only a temporary, passing effect.

Any fellow who had passed while Bunter had his eye to the keyhole of No. 4 Study would undoubtedly have bestowed a kick upon him. But there was nobody in the passage at present, save Bunter. And he blinked into the study at his ease.

As it happened the study table was in a direct line with the door. Bunter's eye picked up, first of all, the study table, then the new junior sitting at it. He was not smoking, neither was he eating a cake. He had a pen in his hand, and appeared to be at work.

Bunter blinked. Why a fellow should lock the study door before he sat down to an exercise, or to write an impot was a mystery. The obvious explanation was that Durance was not engaged upon either an impot or an exercise, but upon something that he did not desire other eyes to see—some letter, perhaps, that was against the rules, or something of the kind. Bunter wanted to know, chiefly because it did not concern him.

What he saw farther, from his vantage-point of the keyhole, was really surprising. Propped up against the inkstand, in front of the seated junior, was a fragment of paper. Something was written on it, but what it was Bunter could not discern.

But that the new junior was copying what was on the paper was clear from his actions.

Every time he wrote a few words he would raise his eyes from the foolscap before him, and look sharply at the paper propped against the inkstand.

Plainly he was working from a copy, yet the piece of paper at the inkstand was not large enough to contain much in the way of writing. It followed that the new junior was copying over and over again whatever it contained.

His occupation, in fact, looked exactly like that of a fellow who was copying a picture. But it was not a

picture he was drawing. He was writing line after line.

If Billy Bunter had been curious before, he was burning with curiosity now.

What on earth was Durance copying from that fragment of paper, over and over again, covering sheets of foolscap with the copy?

Bunter saw him detach the top sheet from the sheaf of foolscap, and crumple it in his hand and throw it aside, and start on the next sheet. He must have written the thing fifty times over at least, whatever it was. But what the thump was it?

Bunter was breathless with inquisitiveness. Never had his short sight seemed such a handicap to the Owl of the Remove. He blinked almost in agony at the paper propped against the inkstand, but all he could make out was that it contained only two words. He fancied he could make out a capital A at the beginning of the first word, and a capital D at the beginning of the second, but he could not be sure.

Whatever those two mysterious words were, the new junior was copying them out over and over again.

He finished the second sheet, and lifted it from the table, and examined it with his hawk-like eyes. Bunter almost gasped with relief; for by that action the new junior had lifted the

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but—"Biff!"
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With a soft, juicy squelch,
And caused a most horrible
"niff."

Sent in by P. Hunter, of
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sheet he had covered with writing into the range of Bunter's vision.

Bunter fairly jumped.

"Arthur Durance."

That was what was written on the foolscap. Over and over again, covering the sheet, with those two words incessantly repeated.

Whatever Bunter had expected, he had not expected that. He began to wonder whether the new fellow was in his right mind.

Obviously, now, the paper propped against the inkstand bore the name of Arthur Durance. That was the copy that the fellow was reproducing again and again.

Had it been some other fellow's name that he was copying with such patient pains, Bunter might have suspected him of getting a little practice in forgery, though his object would still have been a mystery.

But it was his own name. Why on earth should a fellow set up a copy of his own name, and reproduce it on sheet after sheet of paper?

He was copying it down again and again, with infinite care, just as if it was some other fellow's name he wanted to be able to write without detection.

Bunter heard the new junior give a grunt, as if not satisfied with his efforts. He sat down again and started on a fresh sheet of foolscap.

Bunter's further observations were suddenly stopped. In his intense interest in the new junior's mysterious proceeding, the Owl of the Remove had

forgotten that he was rather a conspicuous object, stooping at the study door, if any fellow came into the passage. And he did not hear, or heed, footsteps approaching. He was suddenly made aware of the arrival of Bob Cherry on the spot by a kick that sent him rolling away from the door of the study, to sprawl, gasping, along the floor.

"Ow!" spluttered Bunter.

Bob glared down at him.

"You fat rotter!"

"Yow-ow! Beast! Wow! I wasn't looking through the keyhole!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! Wow! You suspicious beast! Ow!"

Bob Cherry thumped at the door.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo, Smithy!" he bawled.

"Vernon-Smith's not here," came back a sour voice.

Bob turned the handle of the door.

"It's locked!" gasped Bunter.

"What the thump is it locked for?" Bob shook the handle. "Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! You there, Reddy?"

"Redwing's not here."

"What the dickens have you locked the door for, Durance?"

"No bizney of yours."

"Oh, quite!" said Bob. "But you'd better learn to answer a bit more civilly, if you don't want a thick ear, you surly worm!"

"I'm at work. I don't want to be interrupted," answered the new junior, more civilly. "That's all."

"Oh, all right! Bunter seems jolly interested in your work—that's what I was going to tip you."

Bob swung on down the passage. There was a sound in the study of a fellow jumping up and springing to the door. Billy Bunter squirmed to his feet and scudded after Bob, and was gone before an angry face looked out of the study. The new junior scowled along the passage, shut the door again, and locked it once more.

"I say, Bob, old chap!" gasped Bunter, overtaking Bob Cherry on the Remove staircase.

"Want another kick?" asked Bob.

"Beast!"

"There's a lot more ready, if you want them—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, that fellow's mad!" said Bunter impressively.

"Eh, who?" asked Bob, startled.

"That man Durance—mad as a hatter! Look here, I'll tell you what he was up to—"

"Rats!" answered Bob; and he swung away down the staircase, not in the least interested in learning what Durance might have been up to, leaving Bunter with his startling information bottled up, as it were.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suspicion!

VERNON-SMITH picked up a loaf from the tea-table and prepared to take aim at a fat face that blinked in at the door.

Tom Redwing laughed. The two had come in to tea, and they had the study to themselves. The new junior had left it before they came in, and was not apparently teasing in the study himself. He had already made it clear that he did not intend to use the study, if he could help it, while the Bunder was there, so his study-mates were not likely to see him in Study No. 4 except for prep.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter, with a wary blink at the Bunder and the loaf suspended in his hand.

"Where will you have it?" asked Smithy.

"I say, I've got something to tell you—"

"Tell somebody else," suggested Redwing.

"Oh, really, you know! If you fellows like having a balmy lunatic in the study—"

"Are you going?"

"I came here to give you the tip," said Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you he's mad!"

"Who?" demanded the Bounder, in astonishment.

"Durance."

"Fathead!" said Redwing.

"Well, if you knew what he was up to in this study, while you fellows were out—"

"Rubbish!" said Redwing.

But the Bounder lowered the loaf to the table, which Bunter took as a sign that he might enter in safety. He rolled in.

"Shut the door!" said Smithy curtly.

Bunter shut the door.

"Now what's this about Durance?"

"Look here, Smithy, you don't want to hear Bunter tattle about a chap," remonstrated Redwing.

"I do!" answered the Bounder coolly. "Durance is rather too queer a fellow for my taste. If he's been up to anything in this study, I want to know."

"Well, he hasn't, and can't have been."

"Let's hear it, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith. "Let that cake alone, you fat cormorant!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Cough it up! You can bag the cake afterwards."

"Oh, all right!" Bunter crammed cake into his mouth as a preliminary and then proceeded with a somewhat impeded utterance: "I say, I came here, and he had the door locked. I didn't come after this cake, you know. I was just going to drop in and—ask you how you were, you know. Well, he had the door locked, and I saw him—"

"How the thump did you see him if he had the door locked?" demanded Tom Redwing.

"That's nothing to Bunter," grinned the Bounder. "Bunter will always know what goes on in a study so long as they make keyholes to doors."

Redwing made a grimace of disgust. Certainly he had no desire to learn what Bunter had discovered by such methods. The Bounder was less scrupulous in such matters; and besides, he was vaguely suspicious of his new study-mate, and disliked him keenly. He had made one more attempt that day to approach the new fellow on friendly terms, and had been repulsed without ceremony. That was more than enough for the Bounder.

Billy Bunter filled his capacious mouth again with cake. Then he proceeded with his story.

Vernon-Smith certainly was keen to hear anything to the discredit of the fellow he disliked, and who had snubbed him. But he had not expected to hear anything like this, and he was amazed. Redwing listened with equal amazement.

That strange occupation of the new junior, behind a locked study door, was enough to surprise any fellow. Redwing regarded the Owl of the Remove suspiciously.

"I suppose it's all gammon," he said at last. "Why should the chap be copying out his own name? It's all rot. Anyhow, I don't see any harm in it."

"Well, it shows he's cracked," said Bunter, still busy with the cake. "I thought I'd warn you fellows that he's

cracked. Would a chap sit down for hours writing his own name over and over again, from a copy if he wasn't cracked?"

"Not without a jolly good reason," said the Bounder. "There was a wrinkle of deep thought in Smithy's brow, and his eyes gleamed strangely. 'You're sure of what you're saying, Bunter?'"

"I watched him—"

"He had a paper stuck up, with the name Arthur Durance on it, and was copying out the name over and over again?"

"That's it! As it's his own name it shows he's potty."

"As it's his own name!" repeated the Bounder, in a tone that made Redwing stare at him, though Bunter was too busy with the cake to heed. "Yes, a fellow who copies out his own name over and over again for nothing must be pretty well cracked. Does Durance strike you as being cracked, Reddy?"

"Not in the least."

"Nor me," assented the Bounder. "What did he do with the papers afterwards, Bunter?"

"I don't know. That beast Cherry came along and kicked me—"

"Good!" said Redwing.

"Beast!"

"If you've finished with that cake, Bunter, you can cut."

"I haven't finished."

"Well, get on with it and blow away."

Bunter was not finished with the cake till the cake was finished. Tea in Study No. 4 being over by that time, there was no further inducement to the Owl of the Remove to remain in the study, and he rolled away.

The Bounder remained for some time buried in deep thought. Tom Redwing glanced at him several times uneasily.

"Look here, Smithy," he said at last.

"This is no business of ours, even if Durance acted as queerly as Bunter

says. What have you got in your head now?"

"I'm thinking, old bean," said the Bounder quietly, "and I'd jolly well like to see those sheets of foolscap that Durance was writing on."

He rose from his chair and picked up the waste-paper basket, and searched through the odds and ends in it. Redwing watched him with uneasiness and distaste in his looks.

"Nothing here," said the Bounder. "He's jolly careful. There's been a fire in the study—he burned the papers afterwards, of course."

"I don't see why he should take the trouble."

"You wouldn't," agreed the Bounder.

He crossed to the grate. The fire was burning; the October day was cold. In the fender were two or three scraps of burnt paper, but they were only tiny fragments.

"Nothing—except that it shows that somebody has been burning papers here," remarked the Bounder. "That fellow will never leave a clue behind him—he's too deep for that. Deep as he is, he never counted on Bunter and his keyhole stunts." He turned to Redwing, with a curious smile on his face. "You don't see anything in this, Reddy?"

"Nothing at all. I can't understand why you're taking any interest in it."

"Although I told you yesterday that Arthur Durance had blue eyes when I knew him a year ago in Devonshire."

Redwing stared.

"What on earth has the colour of his eyes to do with it?" he ejaculated.

"Lots, perhaps!"

"You're talking in riddles, Smithy."

"Every riddle has an answer," said Vernon-Smith. "Durance is rather a riddle and I'm going to get the solution, if I can. Think a minute, Reddy—it's

(Continued on next page.)

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not much in your line, but think a minute! When a fellow sticks up a signature and copies it over and over again, what does it mean?"

"If it was somebody else's signature it would look as if he was practising forgery, of course," said Redwing. "But if it was his own I suppose it would mean that he could find nothing better to do—or that he was cracked."

"Exactly. And he could find a lot of things better to do, if he liked, and he's not cracked."

Redwing laughed impatiently. "Do you think he was practising to forge his own signature, then?"

"Perhaps!" said the Bounder coolly. "Durance has changed so much since I saw him a year ago that his signature may have changed, too, and he may be trying to get back to the original."

Tom Redwing looked at him hard.

"That sounds as if you're cracked yourself, Smithy; or else you're trying to pull my leg."

"We shall see!"

"Look here, Smithy, you've got something on your mind—what is it?" exclaimed Redwing uneasily.

"I'll tell you after prep."

"Why after prep?"

"Because we shall see Durance at

prep. He can't keep away from the study then."

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Thunderbolt!

HARRY WHARTON was standing in the doorway of Study No. 1, waiting for Nugent to come in to prep, when the Bounder came up the Remove staircase and stopped to speak. Wharton noted that he gave a swift glance up and down the passage, evidently to ascertain that there was no one within hearing, and wondered why.

"Going in to prep?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, when Frank comes up."

"Think you could cut it a bit short this evening?"

"Eh, why?"

"I want you to drop into my study before prep's finished."

"Do you mean that there's something on?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is it?" asked Wharton.

"I want you to come in while Durance is there."

Harry Wharton stared.

FLOATING FACTORIES!

In the "good old days" catching whales and bringing them back to port was a tedious and lengthy job. Nowadays, however, the modern whaler is a veritable floating factory, whose hands work at top speed to extract the oil and other valuable substances from the monsters of the deep.

Weird Craft.

MANY fellows would promptly plump on the naval aircraft carriers as the queerest ships afloat. Others would declare the dilapidated Chinese junks that swarm thickly on that country's turgid streams to take the palm for general weirdness. Both guesses would be wrong.

The fellow who keeps right up-to-date with things appertaining to the sea knows that the strangest craft to-day are the huge whaling ships which have doors, or ports, eighteen feet across, either in the bows or the stern, through which eighty-foot long whales are hauled bodily!

They are building a whole fleet of these floating factories, for use by the Norwegian whale-catchers. One of them, a 20,000 tonner, cost £275,000 to construct. But she will speedily earn back her cost, plus some fat profits for her owners.

All Aboard!

The strange doors of these ships make the transformation of captured whales into hard cash a very much more simple matter than it used to be. In the old days the shot whales had to be blown up with air—like colossal balloons—so that they should float. Then the boat with its catch got back as quickly as possible to its "flagship" and handed over the mass of animal that it was towing.

The flagship took all the captured animals, fastened them to her stern, and then steamed back to her home port, where the factory happened to be situated. There the monsters were skinned and the blubber boiled down to extract the valuable oil—about seventy barrels of which can be secured from quite a moderate-sized whale.

That meant loss of time, and time to the whale-hunters means money. Hence these new craft which have appeared on the scene. Now, as the boats, armed

with harpoon guns, gather their catch, so the whales are towed back to the ship which is waiting, with open doors, to take the great creatures aboard.

The big factory ship grabs the dead and inflated ocean monster by the tail and draws it into the interior—the entire eighty feet or so of it, by means of derricks and winches which can hoist thirty or forty tons at a time.

1,500 Barrels of Oil Per Day!

There are about 200 men aboard one of these queer ships, and those not actually employed in working the vessel have the job of tending the huge steam-heated boilers on the decks. Into these boilers the chopped-up whale blubber goes, until all the oil is extracted. The residue is simply blown overboard by means of steam and compressed air, and the next batch of blubber is started on.

The floating oil-factories can each deal with about fifteen full-sized whales a day, getting from them 1,500 barrels of oil. The bones are not wasted—there is even a profitable use for these, and that means still more money.

Another product is spermacetti, used in making ointments, which is got from the whale's head by the bucketful. Sometimes there is also a lucky find in the whale's intestines, in the form of very valuable ambergris. As much as £4,000 worth of this has been secured from one whale.

The Shell Harpoon.

There is little chance for any whale when the modern shell harpoon is used against it. Once they chased whales on the hit-or-miss principle, with the old hand harpoon. Now their weapon is ever so more deadly.

It is fired from a gun on deck, and when the shell harpoon hits the whale it explodes in its body. So there is no struggling and fighting now. Once hit, the whale is a goner. It only remains to haul it up to the ever-open door of the factory ship and start boiling it almost at once.

"I can't say I specially want to see the chap," he said.

"Very likely, but I want you to be present."

"If it's a row, Smithy, I'd rather keep on the outside of it, if you'll excuse me," said Wharton rather dryly.

"It's not a row. I just want you to drop in and stay a few minutes, while Durance is there. I've got a reason."

"I don't see why you can't tell me the reason, then."

The Bounder grunted.

"If you won't, you won't," he said, "but I've asked you to, and you might as well do as I ask."

"Oh, I'll come," said Harry, "but you're jolly mysterious."

"I'll expect you, then."

And the Bounder went along the Remove passage, leaving Wharton perplexed and not quite satisfied.

Vernon-Smith went into No. 4. Redwing was there, getting out his books, but the new junior had not yet come in. When he came in, a little later, the Bounder was at work, and he did not look up or heed his entrance in any way.

The three juniors worked in silence. Redwing, in his good-natured way, would have given the new fellow assistance, but it was plain from his manner that he wanted to be left alone, and Tom left him alone.

Prep in Study No. 4 was not yet finished when Harry Wharton came in.

The Bounder looked up with a smile.

"Take a pew, old bean, till we're done."

Wharton straddled a chair, his arms leaning on the back of it, and waited for the three to finish. He was puzzled, and not feeling quite comfortable. All the Remove knew that there was mutual hostility in Study No. 4, and nobody, naturally, wanted to be mixed up in it. If a "row" was coming the captain of the Remove intended to clear as soon as he saw signs of it. But, so far, there did not seem to be any cloud on the horizon.

The new junior was the first to rise from the table. But the Bounder immediately left his books.

"Hold on a minute, Durance," he said quietly.

The new junior looked at him.

"I think I've said already that I prefer you not to speak to me, Vernon-Smith!" he said.

"Quite!"

"I'd like you to remember it."

With that the new junior moved towards the door.

"Hold on a minute, all the same," said Vernon-Smith, unmoved. "You can keep to yourself as much as you like, Durance, but you can't expect to keep something that belongs to me."

The new junior turned quickly.

"What do you mean? I've got nothing of yours that I know of."

"You've forgotten?" asked the Bounder sarcastically. "Well, a year is rather a long time to remember a trifle."

The new junior drew in his breath quickly.

"If you'll explain what you mean—" he began.

"I'm speaking of my fountain-pen."

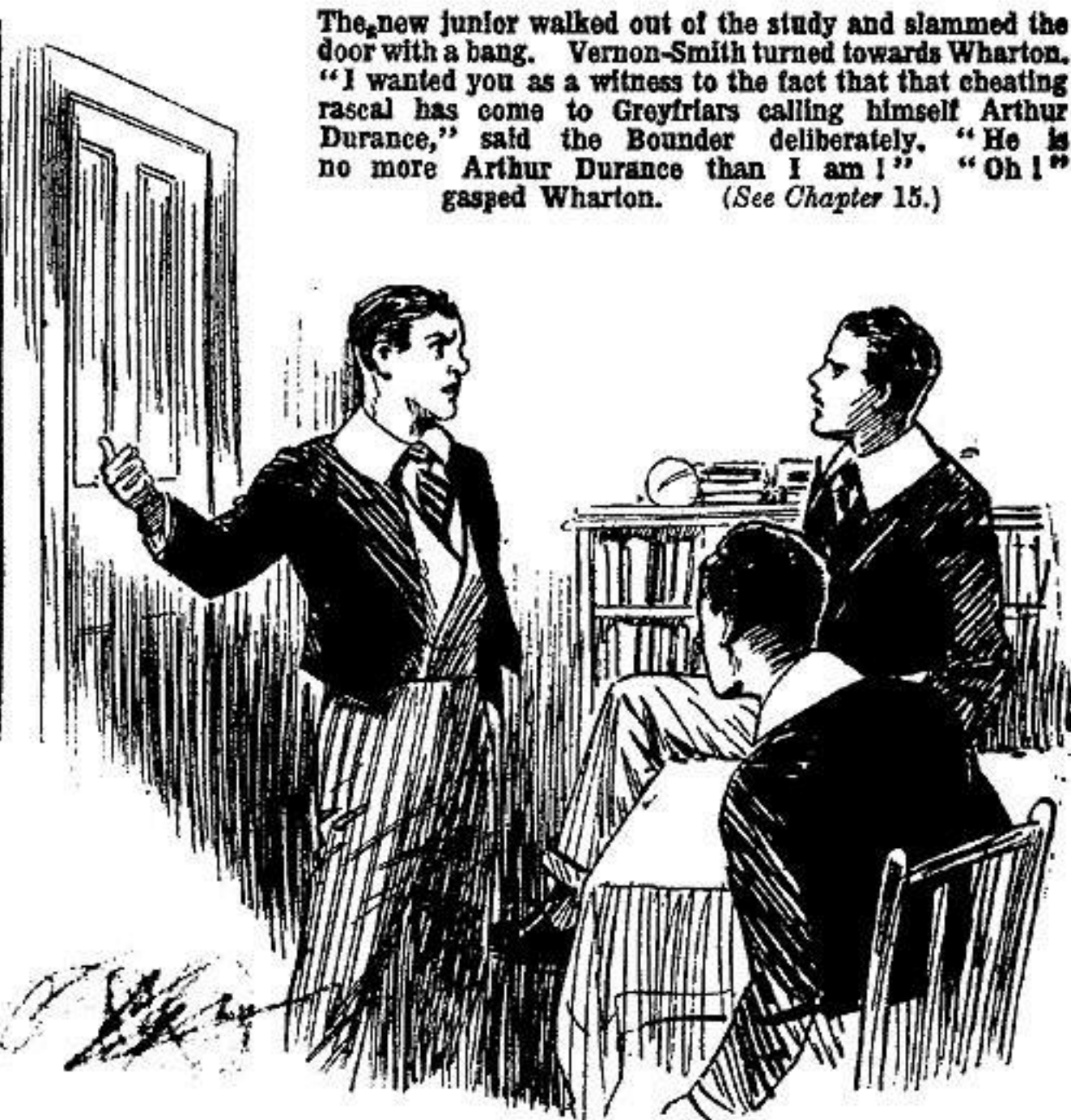
"Your fountain-pen," repeated the new junior, staring.

Wharton made an uneasy movement.

"It's all right, Wharton," said the Bounder reassuringly. "It's not a row. Durance doesn't want to keep another chap's fountain-pen." He looked at the new junior again. "I've got another fountain-pen, Durance, and it's not an important matter, but all the same, you may as well return the one I lent you."

"I don't remember—" began the new junior hesitatingly.

"I suppose you remember the day we



The new junior walked out of the study and slammed the door with a bang. Vernon-Smith turned towards Wharton. "I wanted you as a witness to the fact that that cheating rascal has come to Greyfriars calling himself Arthur Durance," said the Bounder deliberately. "He is no more Arthur Durance than I am!" "Oh!" gasped Wharton. (See Chapter 15.)

had at Bideford, when we stopped at the Ship to write picture postcards?"

"What about that?"

"Only I lent you my fountain-pen to write them, and you never returned it to me. If you've still got it I want it, that's all."

"I fancy I returned it at the time," answered the new junior.

"And I fancy you didn't," said Vernon-Smith. "I was called away while you were writing your cards, and left you using it. I suppose you remember that your father left for Exeter the next day, and you went with him, and I saw you only for a minute."

"I remember that, of course. But I'd forgotten all about the fountain-pen—it's a long time ago—"

"I daresay, but you haven't forgotten that I lent it to you now I remind you of it."

"Of course not, and if I can find it anywhere I'll return it to you," snapped the new junior. "And if I can't, I'll buy you a new one."

"I don't want a new one," said the Bounder coolly. "I want the same one. You know I told you it was given me by my Uncle Richard."

"I know all about that."

"Well, what have you done with it?" asked the Bounder.

"I lost it some time afterwards. It may turn up again—if not, I'll—I'll buy you a new one, as I said. And that's all I want to hear about it."

And the new junior walked out of the study and slammed the door after him.

There was silence in Study No. 4. The peculiar smile on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face caused both Redwing and Wharton to stare at him. Harry Wharton rose from his chair.

"Well, I'm blessed if I see what you wanted me here for, Smithy," he said. "I'll cut along."

"Wait a minute! I wanted you as a witness."

"A witness!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Just that!"

"A witness to what?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"A witness to the fact that some cheating rascal has come to Greyfriars calling himself Arthur Durance, when he is not Arthur Durance at all!" said the Bounder deliberately.

A pin might have been heard to drop in Study No. 4 for some moments after the Bounder had spoken. Wharton and Redwing gazed at him almost in stupefaction.

"What?" gasped Wharton at last. "Smithy! What do you mean?"

"I mean precisely what I say," answered Vernon-Smith, with icy cool-

ness. "That fellow calls himself Arthur Durance; he is no more Arthur Durance than I am."

"You must be potty!" said Wharton blankly.

"I've just proved it."

"Proved it?" repeated Redwing.

"You heard me!"

"What utter rot!" said Redwing.

"You spoke about something that happened while you were with the chap in Devonshire, and he remembered it all clearly."

"I spoke about something that did not happen."

"Wha-a-at?"

"He remembered," said the Bounder sardonically, "how we stopped to write picture postcards at the Ship Hotel in Bideford; how I lent him a fountain-pen my Uncle Richard had given me; how he left next day for Exeter with his father—"

"Well?" said Wharton.

"Well," said the Bounder, with the same cool deliberation, "when I was in Devonshire that time with Arthur Durance we never went near Bideford; I never lent him a fountain-pen; we never wrote any picture postcards; I have no uncle named Richard, and his father never went to Exeter at all."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"I was laying a trap to catch him if he was an impostor," said the Bounder.

"He walked right into it. It's his cue to pretend to remember anything that happened to Durance, as he's pretending to be Durance. He's dodging danger by keeping on bad terms with me—to keep from any discussion of the time I knew him. His eyes are brown, and Durance's eyes were blue a year ago. He's spent hours copying the signature of Arthur Durance from a fragment of paper, which he must have got off Durance. And he's no more Durance than he's the Head of Greyfriars."

There was another long silence in Study No. 4.

"You—you're sure, Smithy?" stammered Redwing.

"There's no doubt whatever."

"But—if he's not Durance—it seems impossible—how could he get here—spoofing the Head—"

"He's got Durance's things, and he's taken Durance's name. But he's not Arthur Durance."

"But," Wharton gasped, "if he's not, then where is Durance?"

"That young villain knows."

"Good heavens!" muttered Wharton. Again there was a silence. The Bounder broke it.

"I've proved it—to myself, at least. I've made it clear to you fellows. But I'm not saying that it's clear enough for Quelch or the Head! It's too steep a story to be taken to the Head without something more substantial to go on. But that fellow is an impostor—and the Arthur Durance I knew in Devonshire has been put away somewhere where he can't interfere. That's how the matter stands."

"But—" said Wharton, and broke off again. His mind was almost in a whirl.

"You don't think I've got it right?" asked Smithy sarcastically.

"Well, it sounds frightfully steep."

"I know that! Nothing's going to be said outside this study till I've got it clear. But"—the Bounder set his lips, and his face hardened like iron, "Arthur Durance, the fellow I knew, has disappeared, and this fellow has come here in his name. Durance is going to be found, and this rascal is going to be shown up to all Greyfriars as an impostor and a cheat—and I'm going to do it—somehow!"

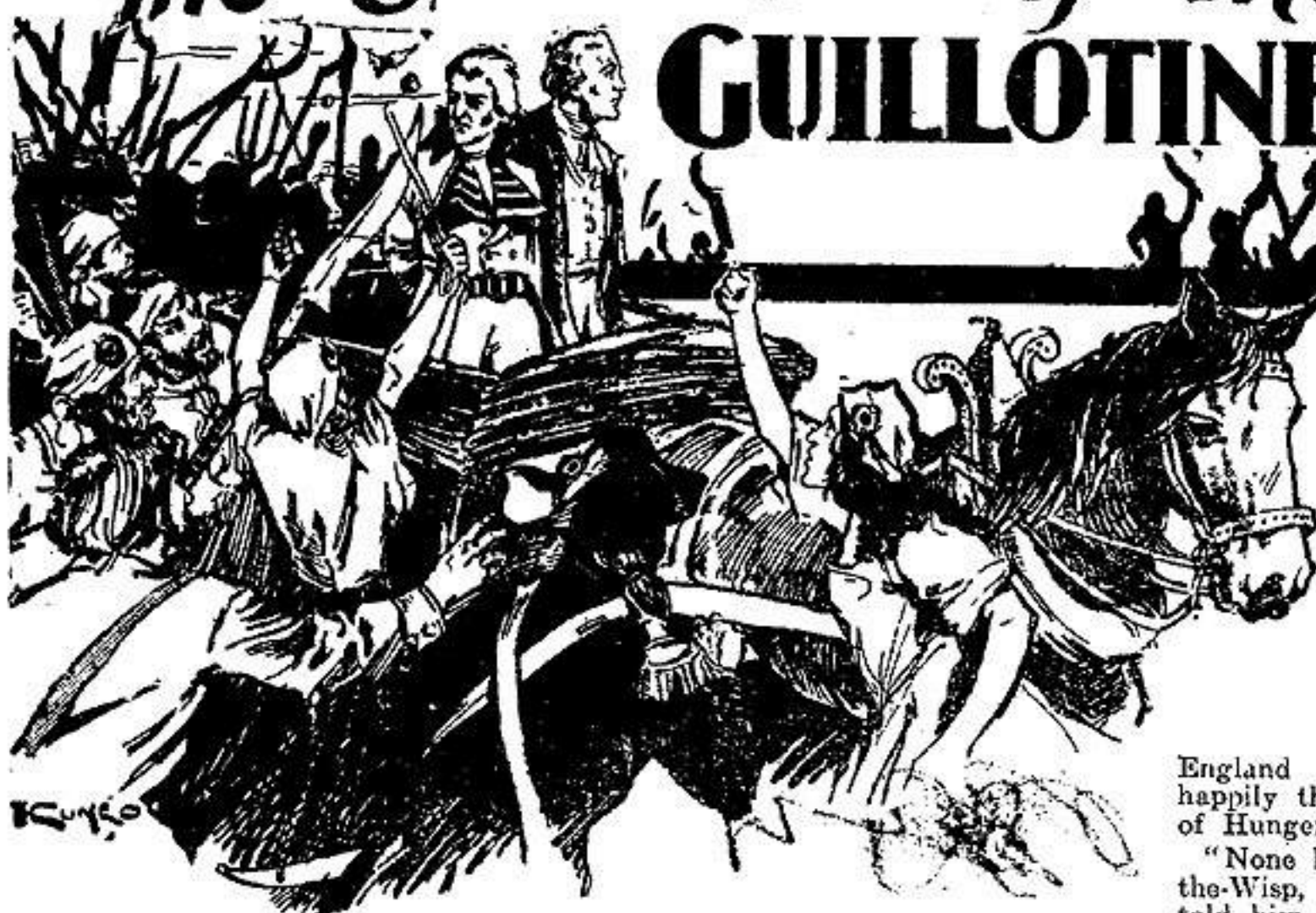
THE END.

(When Vernon-Smith declares he's going to fathom something out, you can bet your sweet life he'll do it! Look out, then, for a rattling fine story in: "THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE!" which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,130.

YOU'VE NEVER READ A STORY MORE THRILLING THAN THIS!

The SHADOW of the GUILLOTINE!



By
GEO. E. ROCHESTER.

(Introduction on
next page.)

At Hungerford Manor!

DESCENDING the winding, uneven road, Paul Dare and Dick Kenton came at length to the massive iron gates which opened on to the wide avenue leading up to Hungerford Manor. Both were silent as they rode up to the old-fashioned portico where a groom came hastening round from the stables to hold their horses.

"Help see to the horses, Dick," said Paul, dismounting.

"I will, Master Hungerford," replied Dick, and promptly switched his gaze to the staring groom to see what he thought of that.

Then, as the horses were being led away, Paul, with strangely beating heart, mounted the wide, low steps to the great open front door.

In response to his knock, it was opened by a serving man who stared at him questioning.

"Is Sir Crispin Hungerford at home?" asked Paul, scarce knowing what else to say.

"Yes, sir," replied the man civilly.

"I should like to see him, please."

"I will tell him, sir," replied the man. "What name shall I give?"

Paul hesitated.

"It does not matter about my name," he replied slowly. "Tell him I am from France and have news for him."

"Very good, sir," replied the servant, and withdrew.

In a few moments he returned.

"Will you please to come this way," he said.

Paul followed the man along a wide hallway to a door which the servant opened. Standing aside, he ushered Paul into a large and comfortably-furnished library, and then withdrew, quietly closing the door behind him.

A tall, white-haired man, with fine aquiline features, rose from the arm-chair in which he was seated and turned towards the boy.

"You—you are Sir Crispin Hungerford?" stammered Paul.

"Yes," replied the other, his voice grave and kindly. "I understand you wished to see me?"

Paul advanced a step, striving desperately to keep a grip on himself.

"Sir," he said huskily, "I am your son—Paul!"

At that moment the rays of the setting sun shone in through the library windows full on the boy's pale features and staring eyes.

Sir Crispin started, with sharp intake of breath. Then he sprang forward, his fingers gripping vice-like on the boy's shoulders, his eyes peering hungrily into the boy's face. For a long moment thus he stood, then, in a voice broken by a sob, he whispered:

The shadow of the guillotine stretches even to the shores of England. For in hiding there is Malliard, the famous French spy. And Malliard's job it is to bring back Paul Dare to the fate he has once so narrowly escaped!

"Her eyes—her features—your own dear mother—"

Next instant Paul was enfolded in close embrace, and, with eyes aswim with sudden tears, Sir Crispin was murmuring:

"My boy! My boy!"

And thus Paul Hungerford came home.

Paul and his father sat long that night, for they had much to say to each other. Paul told of his early days spent in the little hamlet of Fontnoy; of how he had been sent to Paris before the Revolution came; and of how, on the eve of his execution, he had learned the secret of his birth from the lips of Sansarge.

He told of his rescue by the mysterious Englishman, Will-o'-the-Wisp, and of his subsequent journey to

England which had terminated so happily that evening beneath the roof of Hungerford Manor.

"None knows the identity of Will-o'-the-Wisp, sir," he said. "But when I told him that I was Paul Hungerford he seemed strangely moved and said he knew you well."

"He did, eh?" exclaimed Sir Crispin. "I wonder now who he could be? Describe him, lad."

"I am afraid that is rather difficult, sir," replied Paul, "for he was always in some disguise or other. But he was tall and lithe of build, tanned of feature, and with thin-lipped mouth and blue eyes."

Sir Crispin shook his head.

"Ah, I know a full dozen who answer that description," he said, "and every one of them would be moved to learn you were Paul Hungerford."

"He did not appear to doubt that I was your son, sir," said Paul slowly. "And although I knew, myself, that Sansarge was not lying when he told me of my birth, yet I have often wondered on my journey here how I would be received. For apart from the word of Sansarge I carried no proof that I was your son."

"You are wrong there, Paul," replied Sir Crispin gently, "for in yourself you carried every proof. Your mother died some little time after you were born, but you have her eyes, her every feature. Ah, lad, how like her you have grown—I should have known you anywhere."

Sir Crispin sat silent a few moments, and then went on:

"But now that you are home we must help you to forget the unhappy past. Here, in the peace and security of this sheltered spot, you will find much with which to occupy your time. You are young, and ugly memories will soon die!"

"Nothing would make me happier than the thought that I could remain here all my life," replied Paul sombrely, staring into the fire. "Yet the day may come when I must return to France."

"Why, lad, what do you mean?" exclaimed Sir Crispin.

"I mean," replied Paul, "that I am

pledged to return to France should Will-o'-the-Wisp ever have need of me."

"But surely your life is forfeit if you set foot again in France?" questioned Sir Crispin in dismay.

"Yes," replied Paul; "but if a summons comes I must go. Sir, you would not have me refuse?"

"Nay," responded Sir Crispin; "for he is doing a noble work and you have given your word. But I am human enough to pray God that now you are safe home again such a summons will never come."

The two were interrupted then by the entrance of Sir Giles Loder, a bluff and hearty English country gentleman.

"I make no apology for the lateness of the hour, Crispin," he cried. "That rascal, Dick Kenton, rode over with the great news and I came at once. So this is Master Paul, is it?" he went on, gripping Paul by the shoulders and gazing down good-humouredly into the boy's face. "Egad, young sir, if half of what Dick has told me is true then you've been through stirring times. But Hungerford stock was bound to come out on top—bound to come out on top. It's the best stock in England—I've always said so!"

And then, when Sir Giles had been comfortably ensconced in a chair with a great glass of fine old claret at his elbow, Paul had to tell once again of his adventures to which Sir Giles listened with much astonishment and many ejaculations of wonderment and amazement.

But at length, so worn out with the excitement of the day that he could scarce keep his eyes open any longer, Paul bade his father and Sir Giles "Good-night!" And after promising to ride over to Loder Court on the first opportunity he went up to his room.

He stood a few moments by his bedroom window, looking out across the moon-bathed landscape and the distant, silver waters of the bay. Nothing broke the stillness, and the all-pervading hush which seemed to enfold the grand old manor brought a fuller realisation to the weary boy that he had indeed at long last emerged from storm and stress to safe and peaceful harbourage.

The days which followed slipped quickly by for Paul. He spent hours in the saddle, riding round the vast Hungerford estate with his father, and time and again he was deeply touched by the kindly and sincere welcome which was accorded him by everyone, from cottager to landowner. Then there were occasional visits to Loder Court and Hedlicott and other mansions owned by neighbours and friends of Sir Crispin. So many invitations did Paul receive that had he accepted a fraction of them he would have spent few nights at Hungerford Manor.

He was supremely happy—happier than he had ever been before. And yet there were times when, like a shadow on his soul, sad scenes came back to him with stark and terrible vividness; times when he heard again the creak of the tumbrils, the roar of the mob, and the thud of the falling knife.

He had been at Hungerford Manor about a fortnight, when one morning he descended to the breakfast-room to find a somewhat foppish, dissipated-looking young gentleman lounging in front of the fire with his shoulders against the mantelpiece.

"Good-morning, sir," said Paul, thinking the fellow must be some neighbour, whom he had not yet met, paying an early call.

"Ah, good-morning, brother!"

returned the other, holding out a well-manicured, if somewhat shaky, hand. "Faith, don't stare, man; I am your brother!"

"My—my brother?" stammered Paul.

"Yes, your—your brother," mimicked the stranger. "But, maybe, you were unaware until this moment that you had a brother. Our respected parent, in his wisdom, may have refrained from mentioning me. Ah, bitter blow!"

"You are Eustace, then?" said Paul slowly. "Yes, father has told me of you."

"And has said little to my credit, I'll be bound!" drawled the other.

"He has said nothing against you!" retorted Paul sharply.

"No, but has left you to infer it, I suppose?" sneered Eustace.

Paul was silent. Only once had his father spoken of Eustace, Paul's elder brother. He had said little except to remark that Eustace preferred the gaiety of London and Bath to the quietness of Hungerford Manor. But there had been a sadness in his eyes which had told its own tale of disappointment in his wayward son; and Paul, realising his father's unhappiness, had forborne to question or pursue the subject further.

And this was Eustace; this weedy, pallid-faced fop, whose trembling hands told of late sittings with wine and cards. With a reluctance of which he felt ashamed, Paul took the outstretched hand, and it was limp and unhealthily moist in his grasp.

"There, that's better," said Eustace. "Brothers should be friends, you know. But let's have a look at you. I've ridden all the way from Bath specially to see you. Faith, everyone in Bath is talking about you. You must come back with me and you'll find yourself the hero of the hour."

"Thanks," replied Paul; "but I am staying here."

"Oh, rubbish!" drawled Eustace. "You must come to Bath with me. There's a score or more of wagers waiting to be settled, and we're depending on you!"

"I do not understand."

"Oh, lud!" sighed Eustace wearily. "Must I explain? Well, it's this way. We all know you've come from France and all that, but there seems to be an element of doubt as to which side you were really on over there. Some say you were for the aristocrats and others say you were for the people. I've been taking bets that you were on the side of the aristocrats, and if by some foul chance you weren't, you'd better say you were, else I stand to lose five hundred sovereigns—"

INTRODUCTION.

It is the year 1792, when the long-threatened revolution in France has burst into flame. Paul Dare, a peasant lad, is made Commissioner of the Revolutionary Tribunal, but for saving his boyhood friend, Armande de St. Clair, from the fate which has befallen so many of the hated aristocrats, he is himself sentenced to the guillotine. In the condemned cell, Paul learns from his friend Sansarge that he is not French but English. His real name is Paul Hungerford, and his father, Sir Crispin Hungerford, from whom he was kidnapped when only a few months old, mourns him as dead. The lad despairs of ever seeing his father again, but rescue comes at the eleventh hour. Together with the Comte D'Espany, Paul is saved from death by Will-o'-the-Wisp, a mysterious Englishman, whose daring and resource had aided many aristocrats. The fugitives escape to England, where, in an old tavern at Dover, Paul and Armande are at last reunited. Early the next morning, Paul sets out on the journey to his home in Dorset, accompanied by Dick Kenton, a Dorset man, as servant and guide.

(Now read on.)

"So that's what you've come here for?" cut in Paul bitterly. "You contemptible hound!"

Eustace laughed weakly.

"Don't be so plaguy melodramatic, I beg of you!" he said, with an attempt at an air. "I'm pleased to see you, naturally, but you don't imagine, I hope, that I've come here specially to fall on your neck and embrace you as my long-lost brother. In our set we'll wager on anything, and you must admit that these wagers about which side you were on are exceedingly droll and uncommon."

Exceedingly droll and uncommon! Thus the drink-sodden heir of Hungerford Manor could speak of the utterly callous and despicable wagers made by him and his friends. It was not to extend to Paul any hand of welcome that he had ridden from Bath, not to bring about what should have been the happiest of reunions—but to settle a wager, the very nature of which proved the depths to which Eustace Hungerford had sunk.

Without a word, Paul turned away, and, drawing up his chair, seated himself at the breakfast table.

"Sulking, eh?" sneered Eustace. Then, with sudden peevish anger: "I suppose you have associated so long with clods that you have yet to learn the manners befitting a gentleman!"

Paul laughed with genuine amusement.

"Then I shall come to you, brother Eustace," he replied. "I vow I could have no better mentor!"

The reply of Eustace took the form of a growling mutter in which the words "impertinence" and "unlicked cubs" appeared to predominate. But the entrance of Sir Crispin at that moment caused him to wipe the scowl from his face and replace it with a weak, ingratiating smile.

"Why, Eustace!" exclaimed Sir Crispin, advancing with outstretched hand. "I am very glad to see you here, my boy!"

"I received your letter, sir," replied Eustace, taking his father's hand, "informing me that Paul had returned home, and I have come as soon as possible."

Sir Crispin sighed. It was ten days or more ago since he had written to Eustace telling him of Paul's return. And as far as the importance of Eustace's engagements were concerned he could, had he wished, have visited Hungerford Manor long before this.

And it seemed as though Eustace saw what was passing in his father's mind, for he added earnestly:

"Believe me, sir, I would have come earlier had it been at all possible. But Algy Loder, with whom I was sharing rooms, was on the point of leaving for London when I received your letter, and the stubborn fellow insisted upon holding me to a promise I had made to accompany him. I did my best to put him off, but there was no gainsaying him."

"I see," said Sir Crispin gravely. "Well, now that you are here I hope you will be staying some time."

Eustace, however, did not commit himself, adroitly turning the question aside by an inquiry as to his father's health. The quietness of Hungerford Manor soon palled upon him, and, privately, he meant to be off again as soon as was commensurate with politeness and good grace.

During breakfast he made himself wonderfully affable and agreeable, for it was no policy of his to offend his father. He plied Paul with questions as to his

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doings in France, and listened solicitously to the boy's answers, receiving them with a medley of ejaculations of anger, astonishment, and amazement. Then, with a somewhat satirical humour, he treated Sir Crispin and Paul to the latest gossip and scandal of town, a subject which interested neither of his hearers one whit, but which he himself found vastly entertaining. Altogether, thought Paul, as he covertly took stock of him, an amusing, likeable enough fellow when it suited him to be so.

Later in the morning Eustace expressed his intention of going for a ride, and, forestalling the suggestion which it was obvious Sir Crispin was about to make, invited Paul to accompany him.

Consequently, horses were saddled and brought round to the front of the house. Mounting, Paul and Eustace waved cheery farewell to Sir Crispin and jogged their horses into motion. Once outside the gates of the avenue they broke into a canter, riding for some time in silence.

Suddenly Eustace reined in his horse. "You see that inn yonder?" he said, pointing with his riding-crop towards a bleak, square building standing in grey and dismal solitude a mile or more away and some little distance inland from the coast.

Paul had seen the place often enough before, and had learned from his father that it bore a reputation as unsavoury as its name, which was Gallows Inn. It was owned by a dirty, one-eyed rascal who rejoiced in the high-sounding soubriquet of Jamaica Joe; a name which he had most probably earned by his fondness for the rum which came

from that distant island. Be that as it may, Gallows Inn—so it was whispered—was the haunt of smugglers and worse, and no honest man who valued either his throat or his purse would venture there after nightfall.

"Well, do you see it?" snapped Eustace impatiently.

"Yes," replied Paul.

"Then, Sir Prig," said Eustace, taking his horse short by the head, "being cursed with a mortal thirst, I'll race you there for a guinea—and a brandy thrown in!"

With that, he clapped spurs to his horse and set off towards the inn at a reckless, break-neck gallop.

Paul hesitated a moment, then touching his horse with the whip, followed more leisurely. The taunting epithet which Eustace had used had neither disturbed nor angered him a jot. But whilst admitting their probable appeal to the sporting proclivities of Eustace, races to inns for stakes of brandies and guineas left Paul cold.

Reaching the inn, over the weather-beaten door of which hung a creaking sign bearing a crude replica of a gallows, Paul found Eustace, who had dismounted, waiting for him.

"You didn't race!" greeted Eustace angrily.

"No," replied Paul.

"Frightened of your precious neck, I suppose?"

"No."

"And now," snarled Eustace, "I suppose you're going to wait until I've gone inside and then gallop home and tell father that I'm drinking?"

"I certainly am not!" retorted Paul sharply. "I imagine he's sufficiently disgusted with you as it is."

Sudden passion blazed in the eyes of Eustace, and he took a menacing step forward, riding-crop upraised. Then, as though thinking better of it, he turned on his heel, with an oath, and strode into the inn.

Paul, sliding from the saddle, took the reins of Eustace's mount and commenced to walk the two horses up and down. And as he did so it became slowly borne in upon him that someone was watching him.

Raising his eyes, he saw a white face pressed against the dirty pane of a window on the first floor. He had only a fleeting glimpse, for instantly the watcher withdrew.

Vaguely troubled and uneasy, Paul moved on. There had been something about that face which was elusively familiar. Suddenly the boy halted; his hands tightening convulsively on the reins he held.

Malliard!

That was of whom the face had reminded him. Malliard! The murderous spy of the Committee of Public Safety. But no, it was impossible—incredible—that Malliard could be here.

With sudden determination, Paul slipped the reins of both mounts through a rusty hitching-ring in the wall by the door and entered the inn.

Jamaica Joe!

A LITTLE, undersized rat of a man was Jamaica Joe, capable of any amount of fawning servility or snarling viciousness, as the occasion might demand. Over his greasy, raven-black locks he wore a dirty, gaudily-coloured handkerchief, knotted at the back; and from the lobes of his ears hung heavy golden ear-rings.

A black patch covered one eye, leaving the other bloodshot optic to do the work of both. Which it did remarkably well, despite the fact that it was cursed with a slight squint. His face was sallow and invariably unshaven. When he grinned he displayed broken and tobacco-stained teeth in a loose-lipped and leering mouth. He carried a knife in the belt about his waist; an ugly weapon, with—if rumour did not lie—an ugly history. Altogether, Jamaica Joe looked a villainous, unprepossessing sort of fellow.

He was standing in front of a smoky fire of coal and driftwood, a glass in his hand, when Paul entered the low-ceilinged bar-parlour. Of Eustace there was no sign.

"Where is my brother?" demanded Paul.

"Your brother?" repeated Jamaica Joe, fixing the boy with his one good eye.

"Yes, he came in here a few minutes ago," replied Paul sharply. "Where is he?"

A sudden grin gave token that enlightenment had dawned on Jamaica Joe.

"Oh, it's Mister Eustace what you're meaning," he remarked. "Why, now, he's just stepped out at the back for to have a word wi' Nippyspurs!"

"With who?" exclaimed Paul.

Jamaica Joe's grin widened into a leer.

"Nippyspurs," he repeated. "You'll have heard tell o' Nippyspurs, surely?"

"No, I haven't!"

"What?" exclaimed Jamaica Joe in astonishment. "Hasn't Mister Eustace ever told you about Nippyspurs, the finest little fighting gamecock what



"I understand you wished to see me," said Sir Crispin Hungerford, his voice grave and kindly. Paul advanced a step, striving desperately to keep a grip on himself. "Yes, sir," he said huskily. "I am your son—Paul!" Sir Crispin started, with a sharp intake of breath. (See page 24.)

ever wore a spur? Many's the guinea what Mister Eustace has won over him. But perhaps you'd like to see the little feller, young sir, now as you're here?"

"No, I wouldn't!" returned Paul shortly.

Cock-fighting was a sport—if sport the ignoble pastime of pitting two birds against each other could be called—which filled him with repugnance. But this unlooked-for absence of Eustace from the room provided him with an opportunity of questioning Jamaica Joe as to the inmates of the inn—and one in particular.

He decided to come to the point at once, without any beating about the bush.

"Who have you got staying here?" he demanded.

"Who have I got staying here?" repeated Jamaica Joe, staring at him. "Why, no one. I haven't any accommodation for guests, and if I had I wouldn't get any here at this time o' the year."

"I thought," replied Paul steadily, "that I saw a man I know at an upstairs window."

"You probably did—if you know the pot-boy!" retorted Jamaica Joe roughly. "There's none but him and me here."

The man was annoyed, and he showed it by his tone. For he was not accustomed to having his precious Nippy-spurs dismissed from the conversation in such cavalier fashion.

"The man I saw was not your pot-boy!" said Paul sharply. "And don't you speak to me in that manner!"

For one fleeting instant it seemed as though Jamaica Joe was going to flare up and voice the snarl which was trembling on his lips. But, instead, he stifled his rage and became almost at once cringingly servile. Perhaps it was the knowledge that this boy was a son of Sir Crispin Hungerford, who had a short way with rogues, which caused his sudden change of tune.

"I meant no offence, young sir!" he whined. "But there is none here except me and the boy. I swear there isn't. Why should I lie?"

Why, indeed? thought Paul. If Malliard was in the inn, then, unless he had taken Jamaica Joe into his confidence, Jamaica Joe would have said so. And it was scarcely conceivable that Malliard would have made a confidant of an English innkeeper—even if the innkeeper were such a rascally specimen as Jamaica Joe. The risk would be too great.

Thus reasoned Paul, as he stood dubiously eyeing the cringing Joe.

One thing was certain, anyway. He could question as much as he liked and he would get nothing further out of mine one-eyed host of Gallows Inn. To attempt it would be but a waste of both time and breath; so, half convinced that he had been mistaken, after all, in thinking it was Malliard whom he had seen, Paul turned on his heel and quitted the room.

Outside the inn, a few minutes later, he was joined by Eustace.

"Joe says you've been inside asking him if he's got anyone staying here," remarked Eustace inquisitively. "Who do you imagine is staying here?"

"Oh, no one you know," replied Paul shortly. "Come on, let's be going."

"I want to know who you had in mind!" said Eustace querulously. "Who d'you think's staying here?"

"I thought I saw the face of a man whom I know to be a French spy," explained Paul. "But apparently I was mistaken."

With that he turned his horse's head



Paul, who was walking the horses up and down, halted suddenly as he became aware of the fact that someone was watching him. Raising his eyes, he saw a white face pressed against the dirty pane of the inn window—a face which was elusively familiar! (See page 26.)

and set off in the direction of home at an easy jog-trot.

With an exclamation, Eustace swung himself up into his own saddle and, touching his horse with the whip, set off in pursuit.

"What would a French spy want around these parts?" he demanded, ranging his mount alongside that of Paul's.

"I cannot say," replied the boy slowly, "unless he's after me."

"You?"

"Yes, me," replied Paul grimly. "I escaped from the guillotine, but my life is forfeit, and the arm of the Committee of Public Safety is long."

"You mean that they might send someone to—to murder you or kidnap you or something?"

"Yes."

"Oh lud!" gasped Eustace.

They reached the summit of the rising ground up which they were riding, and as the sea came into view Paul suddenly reined in his horse and sat motionless in the saddle, staring at a small schooner which was anchored in the bay.

It was the Firefly.

The Man Upstairs!

JAMAICA JOE, having seen his two visitors safely away from the premises, hastened from the window of the bar-parlour and ascended the rickety wooden staircase which led to the upper floor.

"Enter!" called a voice harshly, as he knocked on a door which faced on to a bare and shadowy landing.

Opening the door, Jamaica Joe entered a small and dingy room sparsely furnished with a table, one or two stiff-backed wooden chairs and a low bed. The table was littered with dirty dishes and the remains of a meal.

A man, slight of build, and clad in sombre black, was standing by the side of the window.

"Well?" he inquired curtly.

"A near thing, friend Malliard," replied Jamaica Joe, with leering familiarity. "Who would have thought of the cub turning up here? He came with that drunken set of a brother of his, of course. But you should keep your door locked. I don't know what I'd have done if the whelp had taken it into his head to search the place."

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"Search the place?" echoed Malliard sharply. "He saw me, then?"

"Well, he did, and he didn't," explained Jamaica Joe. "It was like this. He comes marching into the bar-parlour and says, 'Who the devil have you got staying here, my man?' Well, I was sort of shook for the moment, but I ups and says, 'Nobody, young sir.' He looks down his nose when he hears that, and says, 'I saw a man I know standing at an upstairs window. Come on now, no lies! Who have you got staying here?'"

"Well, I swear there's nobody but me and the pot-boy, and I convinces him at last that it must have been the boy what he saw. But it was a hard job, mind you, and"—slyly—"worth a couple of extra guineas, eh?"

"You'll get guineas in plenty when my mission here is completed," replied Malliard coldly. "He did not mention me by name?"

"No, but I reckon it was you he was meaning when he asked me them questions. You should keep away from that window when folks is about. It's dangerous."

"Be silent!" snarled Malliard, with sudden venom.

He fell then to pacing the floor, with head bent and hands clasped behind his back.

"Look at it any way you like," he said suddenly, coming to a halt. "It is cursed unfortunate that he should have seen me. No matter what you have said to him there are bound to be lingering suspicions in his mind. He may leave the district. He may have the inn raided—"

"What?" exclaimed Jamaica Joe in alarm.

"We do not know what he might do," went on Malliard coldly, "when he has had time to think things over. I tell you, if he has the slightest lingering suspicion that you have lied to him, and that I am here, then he will act. For his safety's sake he dare not do otherwise."

"Then what are you going to do?" demanded the innkeeper.

"Nothing!" replied Malliard shortly. "Let them raid the inn. It will be the best thing that can happen. There is more than one secret passage here, known only to you and your smuggler friends. I can hide in one of those. If the inn is raided they won't find me; and Paul Hungerford will then be bound to conclude that he was mistaken in thinking he saw me. Then we can carry out our original plan."

"All right; then, you'd better get into one of them secret passages right away!" exclaimed Jamaica Joe hastily. "That old devil Hungerford will have me hanged if he catches you on my premises!"

He was thoroughly alarmed. When this Malliard had shown up at the inn under cover of darkness one night, and had started to flash his golden guineas about, honest Joe had welcomed him with lavish hospitality; had given him the best room in the inn—this room. And he had gone even farther than that; had actually entered into a plot with this dirty, snivelling Frenchman to kidnap the Hungerford whelp—an innocent lad who hadn't even done anybody any harm.

It was sheer good-nature—nothing else—which had induced Joe to approach Cap'n Stoop and suggest to him that some dark night he should lend his smuggling outfit for the transportation

of the Hungerford brat—poor, innocent lad!—across to France.

Further, it was sheer good-nature which had induced him, on behalf of this skinny Frenchman, to expend a whole bottle of rum in persuading those cursed cut-throats, Crake and Marling, to take on the job of dogging the Hungerford cub—poor, harmless lad!—with a view to dragging him from the saddle and knocking him on the head when opportunity offered.

And now came this disquietening talk of a raid upon the inn.

"If you'd only kept away from the winder," snarled Joe, "this wouldn't have happened!"

With one stride, Malliard reached him, gripping him by the wrist.

"That is enough from you!" he said gratingly. "Don't you use that tone to me! Now get out!"

"But—but aren't you going to hide?" began Joe quaveringly.

He could hold his own with any man—with any of the rough customers with whom he came in contact. But there was some latent force in this Malliard which, when it showed in his blazing eyes, frightened him.

"No, I am not going to hide!" retorted Malliard roughly. "I will do so should the need arise. Get out!"

Jamaica Joe got out. But on the other side of the closed door he paused a moment to shake a dirty fist at the panels and whisper hoarsely:

"Hang you! I wish I'd never seen you—you toad!"

(The net of Malliard, the super-spy, is tightening round Paul Hungerford! Will Paul fall a victim to the relentless schemer, or—But you'll read all about it in next week's gripping instalment.)



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JOLLY'S WONDERFUL WEEZIE!

SENSATION AT ST. SAM'S! HEADMASTERS' DAUGHTER KIDNAPPED!

Schoolboys on Trail: Sensational Developments.



DICKY NUGENT.

NY news of Miss Molly, sir?"

Form at St. Sam's, poked his head round the door of the Head's study and asked that question.

Dr. Birchmell, who was tucking in to his breakfast of porridge and kippers, paused to wipe a tear from his eye.

"A lass, Jolly! My darter is still missing," he answered, sadly. "Inspector Sloothound of Muggleton has put his earnestest men on the job, but so far, without result."

"Do you trust the police to do the work effectively, sir?" asked Jolly, devilishly.

"Most one-sidedly!" replied the Head, as he vigorously hacked off a huge piece of fish.

"But what about the likely places?" "That, Jolly, I cannot answer for, but I feel sure that the worthy inspector will leave no stone or even brick, unturned, in his efforts to rescue my darter to me."

"Have they searched the jipsey encampment?" asked Jack. "You remember we suspected that she had been kidnapped by jipsies."

A deep groan escaped the hips of the Head—a groan that seemed to come from the very bottom of his heart.

"My poor Molly! What the merry dickens can have happened to her, I wonder?" He wiped his eyes on the corner of the tablecloth, skiffed the remaining kipper, then, in a horse whisper, phlegmily asked the inspector: "Do—do you think it possible, Mr. Sloothound, that she went fishing on the River Rippie and got drowned?"

"That is quite possible, of course, sir," "He—he the river been dragged?" asked the Head, beads of inspiration standing out on his forehead at the bear thought of his darter drowning in the treacherous depths of the River Rippie.

"No, sir; the river has not been dragged. We did think of doing so, but we didn't know where to drag it to!" At this point, Jack Jolly thought it was about time he stepped in.

"Have you searched the jipsey encampment on Muggleton Moor?" he asked, with a keen glance at Inspector Sloothound.

"Yes, rather," replied the inspector, giving the kaplin of the Fourth a sarkastick look. "I hope you are not presuming to teach the police their bizness, young shaver?"

"No need to get your rag out, sir!" he ventured. Ignoring Jolly's advice, Inspector Sloothound got out his handkerchief and blew his nose violently.

"If you take my tip, you'll keep quiet, my ladd!" he snorted. Turning to Dr. Birchmell, he said: "You can exempt my word for it, sir, that the jipsey camp was thoroughly investigated by my subordinates. They turned over all the rubbish heaps of sections, but found no trace of the young lady."

"Did they search the caravans?" asked Jack Jolly, who didn't intend to be put off the scent by a neck-need, cross-eyed, lop-eared inspector of the police.

Inspector Sloothound grunted. "No, they did not! But the jipsies gave my men their solemn word of honour that they hadn't kidnapped Miss Birchmell!"

"Grate pip!" gasped Jack Jolly. "And they exempted it?"

The police-inspector flushed to the roots of the hair he hadn't got. "Sir, this boy is becoming rood," he cried, addressing the Head. "He is delaying the majesty of the Law, and poking out his tongue at the dignity of the

to treat this old buffer with respect, you're going to be disappointed!"

"En?" roared Dr. Birchmell. "My opinion is that he has made a mess of the job," said the kaplin of the Fourth, fearlessly. "I'm going to search for Miss Molly in my own way now, and if I don't find her before Inspector Sloothound, I'll eat my best Sunday topper!"

With those wringing words, the unconquered junior turned on his heel and knitted the Head's study.

II.

AFTER morning lessons that day, a really wonderful weeze occurred to Jack Jolly.

"Got it!" he cried, bursting into his study in the Fourth passage, where Merry and Bright and Fearless were discussing soccer.

"Got what?" asked Bright. "If you mean that half-crown I lent you last term—"

Jack Jolly flung his mercenary pal a scornful glance which Bright was only just in time to dodge.

"Ass!" he cried. "Who cares about paltry half-crowns while Miss Molly is at stake?"

"Has she been found, then?" asked Merry.

"Unfortunately, no." "But you just said she was at stake, Duzzant that mean she's ekoffing her dinner?"

"Of course not, you home idiot! When I say Miss Molly is at stake, I mean that or life is at stake—in the balance, you know. Savvy?"

"The grate problem is, how to confirm our suspicions that she is the prisoner of the jipsies. That's where my idea comes in."

"Off it up, then, old bean!" "My weeze is to disguise myself as a girl and go for a walk near the jipsey camp," explained Jack. "If the jipsies are not in the habit of kidnapping girls, nothing will happen. But if they are, then it's ten to one in documents they'll kidnap me. See?"

"If they do kidnap me they'll take me back to the camp. Then I shall keep my eyes peeled, find out where Miss Molly is concealed, and rescue her. See the idea?"

"Grate pip!" "What do you think of it?" asked Jack. "It's a stunning weeze, old chap," said Frank Fearless, orthodoxytically.

"Ripping, by Jove!" roared Merry and Bright.

"Thought you'd like it!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Well, there's no time to lose. I suggest that we turn out some of the props belonging to the Fourth Dramatic Society, and I'll don the disguises at once."

So saying, the kaplin of the Fourth led the way up to the box-room where the Dramatic Society props were stored.

Half-an-hour later a definitely-dressed young lady came tripping down the stairs, followed by three juniors who were grinning all over their faces.

Nobody would have guessed to look at the daintily-dressed young lady that she was Jack Jolly of the Fourth. Yet such was the case.

Arriving at the bottom of the stairs, the little person ran into the Head, who had just come in from a little egg-peddle at the tuckshop.

At the site of the young lady, Dr. Birchmell hastily wiped a smear of jam from his face and doffed his mortar-board politely.

"Good morning, miss! Nice weather we're having!" he remarked affably. "Or at any rate, it would be nice if it wasn't for the rain and hail and sleet!"

If Dr. Birchmell's egg-peddle had his amiable reputation to win a gracious smile from the fair visitor, he was doomed to bitter disappointment.

As a matter of fact, Jack Jolly was still smothering from his recent smothering flogging, and he was only too willing to seize the opportunity of telling the Head one or two home truths. So instead of smiling green-ously, the "young lady" frowned severely.

"Dear me! What an ugly old gentleman!" she remarked. "Please take him away. His face gives me a pain!"

"Ho, ha, ha!" roared Merry and Bright and Fearless.

The Head blushed scarlet and bit his lips with vexation.

"Tut-tut!" he said. "Surely you must be mistaken, my dear young lady. Most of my friends have told me at various times that I am exceedingly handsome!"

"Then your friends must be inmates of an institution for the blind!" said the young lady blantly. "Just look at your nose! Is it a nose or is it just a growth?"

"Ho, ha, ha!"

"And the way you dress, too!"

"Fancy wearing a long bundle of rags down your chest—"

"Yaroooo! Stop it!" shrieked the Head, as the young lady tugged at his beard with terrific force.

"Dear me! Then it's a beard! I thought it was a bundle of rags!" eggs-claimed the young lady in surprise.

"Look here, miss—"

"Can't it hurt too much!"

"If you make any more disrespectful remarks about my fazz, I'll order you off the premises!"

"Dear me! The ugly old gentleman is threatening me!" murmured the young lady. "In that case, perhaps I had better give him a bash on the boko with my broly."

And Jack Jolly did so—with such good effect that the Head fairly yelled with pain.

"Yoooooop! Yow-ow-ow! Wooooop!" "Now run away and don't dare speak to me again, you ugly old gentleman!" cried the young lady.

The Head was only too glad to run away. He fled towards his sanctum like a champion on the cinder-track, followed by a roar of laughter from the historical Fourth-Fourms.

"And now for bizness!" said Jack Jolly, becoming serious again. "I'll leave you claps now and take a stroll into the country. If I don't turn up for afternoon lessons, you'll know that I've been kidnapped."

"And then shall we come to the rescue?" asked Frank Fearless eagerly.

"I fancy there won't be any need for that. I hope to be able to manhandle the jipsies myself," said Jolly. "Well, good-bye, you fellows!"

And the kaplin of the Fourth set out on his jermy.

During the next hour, a daintily-dressed young lady might have been seen tripping across the countryside near St. Sam's. Not only into she have been seen; as a matter of fact, she was seen.

Two villainous-looking jipsies spotted her in the distance.

In a couple of seconds they had overpowered her. Needless to say, there would have been a different story to tell if Jack Jolly had been out for a scrap.

But as they were, they wouldn't have stood an earthly against the champion boxer of the Fourth at St. Sam's, if Jack hadn't been inclined to go for them. But he didn't go for them. It wasn't a matter of being merciful to the skondroids; it was simply that he wanted to be keptured.

The two ruffians bound their captive hand and foot, then grigged him. After that, they carried him in a sack back to their encampment. It was an uncommonly fortible jermy. Several times the carolless skondroids dropped their burden, and Jack Jolly soon stood in every him. But our hero was prepared to put up with a lot worse for Miss Molly's sake.

At last they arrived at the camp. Here, Jack was taken out of the sack and flung with terrific force into the corner of a dingy caravan. Other fellows would have yelled with pain at the fearful concussion. No so Jack Jolly; he merely laughed. Or, anyway, he would have laughed, if he hadn't been gagged.

Meanwhile, at St. Sam's, afternoon lessons were proceeding without the cheery presence of the kaplin of the Fourth. Jack Jolly didn't put in an appearance for tea and missed calling-over. When bedtime came, there was still no sign of him.

In the Lower School dormitories that night there was only one question discussed. That question was: Where is Jack Jolly?

THE END.

(The third and last yarn in this amusing "Jipsey" series is entitled: "Gates Fearful Odds!" You can only make sure of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy *Well In Advance!*)

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