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The **MAGNET** 2^D



LIKE A CHAT? THEN—



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., The Electricity House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

AS mentioned in my last week's Chat quite a number of MAGNET readers have requested me to publish further yarns featuring the popular character

DR. BIRCHEMALL, OF ST. SAM'S.

Well, as these short complete yarns by young Dicky Nugent, of the Second Form, proved so popular, coupled with the fact that I always endeavour to give my readers what they want, I have arranged to re-introduce Dr. Birchmall in our next "Greyfriars Herald" Supplement. Harry Wharton, the editor-in-chief, is quite keen on the idea. You will find Dr. Birchmall funnier than ever in this ribtickling masterpiece by Dicky. Watch out for it next week, chums.

Meanwhile, you can smile at the following amusing joke for which Raymond Lofthouse, of 33, Jackson Street, Sunderland, Co. Durham, will receive one of our handsome Sheffield steel penknives.



Kind Lady:
"So you were an actor once! What was your favourite role?"



Hungry Tramp: "De one wi' de sausage in de middle, lady!"

Not bad, is it? What about you having a shot at winning one of these useful prizes now? You can write your effort on a postcard:

ON several occasions I have passed on to you some interesting information under the heading of "Things you'd hardly believe."

Well, here is a really amazing piece of information—but it is vouched for by the American National Geographic Society, so you can rely upon the truth of it. Would you believe that

AN ATLANTIC LINER WEIGHS LESS ON A MOONLIGHT NIGHT

than it does when there is no moon? This is because the moon exerts an attraction upon everything on the earth. If it wasn't for the force of gravity, everything on earth would be pulled up to the moon! But there is no need to worry about that ever happening, for the force of gravity is ten million times the attraction of the moon. Still, with a ship of the size of the Majestic, the pull of the moon is equal to ten or twelve pounds—which means that the ship is much lighter when the moon is shining down upon it!

Talking of the moon, one of my Leamington chums has been reading a story concerning a journey to the moon, and he asks me if it will ever be possible

TO TRAVEL TO THE MOON?

You may be interested to know that many Continental scientists have been

studying this matter fully, and they are of the opinion that, at some future date, it will be possible. Many theories have been advanced as to the kind of vehicle which could undertake such a journey, but they have all proved useless, because, in order to leave the force of gravity behind, such a vehicle would have to travel at a speed of seven miles per second!

This is an astounding speed, but when we remember that planes can already travel at 350 miles per hour, it seems feasible that, in years to come, inventors will probably evolve rocket-driven space-planes that will attain the terrific speed required, and bring journey to the moon within the bounds of possibility!

THIS brings me to a question which has been sent in by Frank Cook, of Monkswaton. I wonder how many of you have heard of "Big Bertha," which was the name our "Tommyes" gave to

THE BIGGEST GUN IN THE WORLD,

which was used by the Germans to shell Paris during the Great War? Frank wants to know if I can give him some information concerning that monster. Well, here goes:

It was 118 feet long from breech to muzzle, and fired a shell weighing 264 pounds. The shell alone, standing on end, was 64 feet high, and left the muzzle at a velocity of a mile a second. The gun could fire at a range of 76 miles. To reach this distance, it had to be fired upwards in the air, and at the highest point of its curve it went as far as 24 miles above the earth! It was first constructed to fire 8.27 inch shells, and after it was worn out, it was rebored to take 9.45 inch shells.

Altogether "Big Bertha" fired more than twice as far as the most powerful gun of the present day can fire. The latest 16 inch battleship guns can only fire as far as 24 miles. The Germans built seven of these super guns during the War, and there were three more being built at the time of the armistice.

Now comes a query from Harry Taylor, of Birmingham. He asks:

WHERE IS THE SARGASSO SEA?

This is the only sea in the world which has no shore! It is situated between the Gulf Stream and a current which runs down the east coast of the United States—roughly about Latitude 30 degrees North, and Longitude 70 degrees West. But, as the currents which surround it fluctuate somewhat, so does the position of the Sargasso. It is a vast tract of "dead water" that is not disturbed by currents, and therefore the growth of the strong, brown Sargasso weed is unchecked. Driftwood, and flotsam and jetsam, are found there in abundance owing to the

rotary motion of the currents which surround the Sargasso.

In the old days of sailing ships, it had a bad reputation, for if the wind failed the ship remained motionless, as there were no currents that could be made use of. But nowadays steamships cut right through it—in fact, in my younger days, I passed through the Sargasso Sea on many occasions.

A splendid prize goes this week to James B. Barrett, of 5, Spencer Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, I.F.S., in return for the following limerick:

Greyfriars

At Study No. 4 Bunter called:
But on Smithy his company palled,
For he quickly withdrew
With the aid of a shoe.
And "Beast!" through the keyhole
he bawled!

Just to finish up with, here are a few more

RAPID FIRE REPLIES.

The World's Champion Egg-Layer: (M. J. M., of Wembley): This distinction belongs to the Queen Bee, which produces as many as a hundred thousand eggs per season.

How fine is a Spider's Web? (John Gibbs, of Hexham): A spider's web exudes from the insect in liquid form, but dries upon contact with the air. It is so fine that one ounce of it would reach from London to New York. One pound of spider's web would go round the world twice!

Does smoke remain in the air for ever? (H. W., of Cardiff): No. Smoke is composed of tiny particles of carbon, which must, because of their weight, come back to earth again eventually. Even on the stillest day, when smoke appears to vanish right into the skies, it does not do so.

Where do the bubbles in lemonade come from? (J. N., of Whitby): You'll be surprised when I tell you they come from coke! Coke is burned to form carbon dioxide gas, which, after further treatment, is used to charge "gassy" drinks!

THERE is a topping long complete Greyfriars yarn in store for you next week, chums! It's called:

"COKE'S CRICKET CRAZE!"

By Frank Richards.

and you'll revel in every line of it. If you haven't already done so, place a regular order with your newsagent, and make sure of getting the MAGNET every week.

And don't forget that there will be

MORE FREE COUPONS FOR YOU!

The prizes which I am offering for coupon-collecting are really well worth trying for, and there is certain to be some good-natured rivalry between you and your chums as to which of you can collect the most coupons. You'll be wise not to "trust to luck" to get your MAGNET. The fellow who comes out top in this contest is going to be the one who orders his copy of the MAGNET—and the companion papers—in advance!

Another fine instalment of our thrilling serial, a rib-tickling "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, and the usual shorter features, will make next week's issue one that you should not miss on any account!

YOUR EDITOR.



SAVING HIS ENEMY!

An Amazing New Complete Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Some Scheme!

BILLY BUNTER was grinning. Bunter seemed amused. His little round eyes twinkled behind his big, round spectacles. He grinned widely. His mouth, which was of considerable extent at the best of times, now extended almost from one fat ear to the other.

Morning break was nearly over at Greyfriars. Fellows were coming into the Form-rooms. Harry Wharton & Co., arriving at the door of the Remove-room, found Billy Bunter already there—which was unusual. Generally, Bunter was the last to arrive after the bell had ceased to ring, and often he was late. Now, for once, the fat Owl of the Remove was first in the field. His podgy figure leaned on the Form-room door, and his fat face was irradiated by the widest of grins.

Harry Wharton & Co. could not help noticing that grin. It was more noticeable than the grin of the famous Cheshire Cat. It leaped to the eye.

What there was to grin at was not so obvious. There was nobody in the passage but Bunter when the Famous Five came along. Mr. Quelch had not yet arrived to open the Form-room door for his class. Only Bunter was there—and unless Bunter was grinning at himself, it was rather difficult to see what he was grinning at.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life, old fat bean?" asked Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!" cacknated Bunter. "What's the jolly old joke?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!"

"The jokefulness appears to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, staring at the fat junior.

"Give it a name, Bunter!" suggested Frank Nugent.

"What have you been up to?" asked Harry Wharton. "Playing some trick in the Form-room, you fat duffer?" He noticed that there was chalk on Bunter's fat fingers, and a smear of chalk on his well-filled waistcoat.

"Yes! I mean, no! I don't know anything about it!" explained Bunter. "If Smithy gets a licking, serve him jolly well right! He kicked me this morning. For nothing, you know! I told him I was sorry I voted for such a rotter in the Form election, and he kicked me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The way that fellow throws his weight about since he's been captain of the Remove is simply sickening," said Billy Bunter. "I've thought several times of giving him a jolly good whop-ping, but—"

"But the whopfulness might be a boot on the other leg!" suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I'm not going to lay hands on the fellow!" said Billy Bunter loftily. "But he's jolly well not going to kick me, you know! If Quelch gives him six, serve him jolly well right!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. Evidently he had been in the Form-room, and had been using the chalk on the blackboard, and apparently he expected the result to be a caning for Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. It was quite mysterious.

There was no doubt that Smithy had "thrown his weight about," as Bunter expressed it, since he had become captain of the Remove, and there was no love lost between him and the Famous Five. Still less love was lost between Smithy and Billy Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter had, or fancied he had, many grievances against the new captain of the Form, and he had told all the Remove that he was

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The last person the hard-natured Bounder of Greyfriars ever expected to help him when he was in a "hole" was Harry Wharton, his bitter enemy. Yet Wharton was the fellow who saved the Bounder from certain expulsion.

"Oh! No! I haven't been in the Form-room, you fellows!" said Bunter hastily. "Nothing of the sort! If there's anything chalked on the blackboard, I don't know anything about it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, don't get making out that I've been in the Form-room in break," said Bunter anxiously. "If Quelch heard you, he might think it was me!"

"He might think what was you?"

"Oh! Nothing!"

"He might think nothing was you?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

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going to make Smithy "sit up." Now it looked as if he had been getting on with it, though in what way it was difficult to guess.

Leaning on the Form-room door, Billy Bunter grinned at Harry Wharton & Co. expansively.

"Look here, you fat Owl," said Harry, "if you've been larking in the Form-room—"

"Not at all, old chap!"

"Well, what are you grinning at?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Your features, old bean," answered Bunter affably.

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Bob.

"He, he, he!"

"You cheeky fat chump—"

"Here comes Quelch!" murmured Frank Nugent.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, appeared in the office. There was a surrying of feet as the rest of the Remove came up. All the Form were there by the time Mr. Quelch arrived. Billy Bunter blinked at Vernon-Smith through his big spectacles, still grinning. The Bouncer gave him a surly stare.

Mr. Quelch opened the Form-room door, and the Remove marched in. The Form master went to his high desk, the Remove went to their places. The blackboard was on the easel facing the class, so Mr. Quelch, for the moment, did not see what was chalked on it. But the juniors, as they took their places, saw.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Every fellow in the Form stared at the blackboard, and there was a chortle all through the Remove. Billy Bunter grinned more extensively than ever. Chalked on the blackboard was the following remarkable inscription, in large capital letters:

"MR. QUELCH IS A BEEST!"

"Sined,

"H. Vernon-Smith."

Herbert Vernon-Smith stared blankly at that extraordinary inscription. Had Smithy chalked a cheeky message to his Form master on the blackboard it was certain that he would not have signed his name. The Bouncer was famous for his nerve, but he had not quite enough nerve for that. And certainly Smithy would not have spelt it so remarkably. There was only one fellow in the Remove who was capable of spelling "beest" with a double E. And the name of that fellow was William George Bunter!

"Great pip!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh, you frabjous ass, Bunter!" breathed Peter Todd. "You—you—your burbling bandersnatch!"

"Oh, really, Toddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch was rustling papers at his high desk. But that irrepressible chortle in the Remove drew his gimlet eyes upon his Form at once. A glint came into those gimlet eyes, and he compressed his lips. Something, apparently, was amusing the Remove, but the Form-room was not a place for amusement. Mr. Quelch picked up his cane and came towards his Form.

"What—?" he began.

Every eye was on the blackboard, and Mr. Quelch's eyes followed the same direction. He gave a sort of convulsive jump as he read what was written there. The chortling in the Remove died away. The expression on the speaking countenance of Henry Samuel Quelch told that there was no time to chortle. Only

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Billy Bunter still grinned. And Bunter ceased to grin quite suddenly, as Mr. Quelch turned from the blackboard, and rapped out: "Bunter!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bad for Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep.

Bunter jumped.

The expansive grin vanished from his fat face as if wiped off by a duster.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter, in surprise and alarm.

"Stand out before the class, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. Bunter had not expected to be called out. Every other fellow in the Remove had expected it; but Bunter hadn't.

"I—I say, sir, you—you mean Smithy!" gasped Bunter.

"Come here, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

There was not a vestige of a grin about Bunter as he rolled out before the class. His fat face was alarmed. It was the Bouncer's turn to grin—and he grinned.

Mr. Quelch pointed to the blackboard with his cane.

"Did you write those absurd and impudent words, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I haven't been in the Form-room in break!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never dodged in after you went to your study, sir! I wasn't keeping an eye on you at all. I—"

"There is chalk on your fingers, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

"There is chalk on your waistcoat, Bunter."

"Oh crumbs!"

"You have been handling chalk since second lesson, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Mr. Quelch's eyes had often been compared to gimlets by his pupils, for their penetrating qualities. There was little that escaped those gimlet eyes in the Remove Form-room. Evidently the chalky traces about the fat Owl had not escaped them.

"From the spelling, Bunter, I should have suspected you of having written those words!"

"Tho—the spelling!" gasped Bunter.

Billy Bunter could see no clue in the spelling.

"And as you have had chalk in your hands in the last few minutes—"

"Oh! No, sir! Not at all!" gasped Bunter.

"You have written these words—"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I don't think you're a beast, sir! Smithy thinks you're a beast, sir, but I don't!" groaned Bunter. "I—I've often told the fellows that you're not such a beast as you look, sir."

"Ha, he, ha!"

"What!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean—"

"You have written these impudent words, Bunter, and signed the name of one of your Form-fellows! Your object, apparently, was to cause me to suppose that Vernon-Smith had written them. Your object, Bunter, must have been to induce me to punish Vernon-Smith—to cause me, sir, to commit an act of injustice!" said Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice.

"Oh lor! Tho—the fact is—"

"Your unscrupulousness, Bunter, is only equalled by your stupidity—your crass obtuseness!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I shall cane you, Bunter!"

"You—you mean Smithy, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not mean Vernon-Smith, Bunter! I mean what I say! You will bend over that chair, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked at his Form master in horror and dismay. Only a few minutes ago he had been grinning, in anticipatory enjoyment of what was going to happen when Quelch saw that inscription on the blackboard. But what was going to happen was not, evidently, of an enjoyable nature. Something had gone wrong with Billy Bunter's little scheme for vengeance on the Bouncer. Which was quite unexpected—to Bunter—who had laid that little scheme with great cunning.

It was not going to be six for Smithy! It was going to be six for Bunter! Never had a schemer been so utterly dismayed by the outcome of his scheming!

"But—but I never did it, sir!" gasped Bunter, as Mr. Quelch swished the cane. "I—I don't know anything about it, sir! I—I never even thought of getting Smithy six because he kicked me, sir! He—he didn't kick me, sir, and—and so I never wanted to make him sit up! I—I wouldn't dream of calling you a beast, sir! I—I'm much too respectful to tell you what I think, sir!"

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a voice resembling that of the Great Huge Bear.

"Oh lor!"

Billy Bunter bent his ample form over the chair. The cane swished, and descended upon tight trousers.

"Whooop!"

"Whooack!" roared Bunter. "Whack, whack, whack, whack! It was a full six—and every one of the six was laid on as if Mr. Quelch fancied that he was beating carpet. And every whack was followed by a fearful yell from Billy Bunter."

"Now, Bunter—"

"Yarooooooh!"

"Go to your place—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"And be silent!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Whooooo-hoooooo!"

Billy Bunter crawled to his place. Mr. Quelch took a duster and wiped the blackboard. Then he cast a glinting eye over his hilarious Form.

"The next boy who laughs will be caned!" he rapped.

And in silent gravity, third lesson commenced in the Remove Form-room.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Dropped from the Eleven!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH pushed back tea-cups and plates, and cleared a corner of the table in Study No. 4 in the Remove, and spread thereon a crumpled sheet of paper. He wetted the tip of a pencil, and wrinkled his brows with an air of deep thought over the names scribbled on the paper. Tom Redwing, his chum and study-mate, stood watching him, with a rather worried look. There was silence in the study, which Redwing broke at last.

"That's the list you're making up for the St. Jim's match, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith looked up, and nodded.

"Your name's goin' down, old son!" he said.

Redwing did not look so pleased as might have been expected. Every cricketer in the Greyfriars Remove was eager and anxious to see his name in

the team for the St. Jim's match; and Redwing assuredly was as keen as any other fellow. But his face clouded, all the same.

"Not keen on it, old bean?" asked the Bouncer sarcastically.

"I'm keen enough, Smithy! You know that! But keenness isn't everything. I made a rather poor show in the Redclyffe match last week; and lots of the fellows think I ought not to be in the eleven to play St. Jim's."

"You're goin' in."

The Bouncer spoke in a tone of finality.

"You never had a chance while Wharton was captain of the Form, or hardly ever," he went on. "Well, now

the Remove, Wharton will never play in the matches again. I was lookin' for a chance to chuck him—and he's given me one! After the rotten trick he played on me last Wednesday—"

"He did not, Smithy! Nobody else in the Remove believes that he did!" said Redwing earnestly. "It's because you're up against the chap that you think so. He's incapable of it."

"Who was it, then?" sneered the Bouncer. "Somebody used my father's name on the telephone, just before the Redclyffe match last Wednesday. Quelch believed that it was my father phoning to him, and he told me I was wanted at home urgently. I had to clear off just before the game—and

"Be reasonable, old chap," urged Redwing. "Wharton was on Little Side with a crowd of fellows at the very time the call was put through to Quelch."

"I know that! He was jolly careful to keep up appearances! I never supposed that he did the phoning himself—Quelch might have known his voice if he had. But he put up the man who did it."

Redwing shook his head.

"When a crime's committed a detective's first job is to look for the motive," said Vernon-Smith. "Find the man who did it—a motive, and you find the man who did it—as a rule. Well, who had a motive for dishing me over the cricket match? Who gained by my being called away



"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Smithy! I—I haven't shipped your study, old chap! I—I—I just came in, and—and saw it!" "By gad! Why, I—I—I'll—" The Bouncer's fist clenched, and he made a rush at Bunter.

I'm skipper I'm givin' you a chance. I'm not leavin' my best pal out."

"That's hardly cricket, Smithy! Friendship has nothing to do with it. If I'm not played on my form, I'd rather not play at all."

"Oh, your form's all right," said Smithy carelessly. "You're not exactly a rabbit, old bean. You're too jolly modest." His lip curled. "Wharton generally left Nugent out of the big fixtures—but I'm not followin' his giddy example."

"You might do worse, Smithy! I'm not claimin'—"

"Oh, rats! You're goin' in, and that's that! But I've got another place to fill," said the Bouncer thoughtfully. "That's what I'm thinkin' of. As Wharton won't be playin'—"

"You can't leave him out, Smithy—the best bat in the Remove!"

"Can't I?" sneered the Bouncer. "You'll see! So long as I'm captain of

Wharton captained the team and brought off a win. That was his game all along—nobody else could, or would, have done it—"

The Bouncer's brows darkened, as he spoke, with savage bitterness.

Who had played that trick on the telephone on the day of the Redclyffe match was still unknown. Certainly the Remove master had believed that it was Mr. Vernon-Smith who had phoned; and he had been astonished, and very angry, when he learned that he had been tricked.

The Remove fellows were still puzzled about it—except the Bouncer. Smithy had made up his mind at once that it was his rival and enemy who had tricked him away from the school just before the game started. Perhaps the wish was father to the thought, but, to do the Bouncer justice, he had no doubts—he was absolutely convinced on the subject,

to London for the day? Who captained the side while I was gone?"

"I know. But—"

"And if it was not Wharton, who was it?"

"Nobody knows. But—"

"I'm up against the whole gang of them," said the Bouncer. "But you won't suggest that it was Bob Cherry—that fathead—or Nugent, or Bull, or Inky—"

"I know it wasn't."

"Well, who was it, then?"

"I can't imagine," said Redwing. "It may not have been a Greyfriars fellow at all. A trick like that is in Ponsonby's line—that Highcliffe cad—"

"Rubbish! What would he know about our matches? It was a Remove man—and it was Wharton!" The Bouncer gritted his teeth. "I can't prove it—he was too jolly cunning for that. He got some man to telephone

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while he showed up on Little Side to make it plain that he had nothin' to do with it. He's got all the fellows fooled—but not me! I've said out plain that I believe it was Wharton, and that he's out of the cricket so long as I'm skipper. I'm not playing a man who tricks his captain away from a match and butts into his place—

"I can't possibly believe—"

The Bouncer rose to his feet, crumpled his cricket list, and jammed it into his pocket.

His mind was quite made up on the subject, and contradiction only irritated and angered him.

He strode out of Study No. 4, and slammed the door after him. Tom Redwing was left with a troubled face. The feud between the new captain of the Remove and the former captain had been bitter enough for a long time; but since the incident of the Reddify match it had been more bitter than ever. When the Bouncer of Greyfriars was engaged in a row he was more often than not in the wrong; but on the present occasion he at least believed that he was in the right. Right or wrong, it was futile to argue with the arrogant, self-willed Bouncer.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gathered about the door of Study No. 1, as Vernon-Smith came towards the stairs. The Bouncer would have passed them without a word or a glance; but Wharton stepped in his way.

"Hold on a minute, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"I've nothin' to say to you!" snapped the Bouncer. "I've told you that I bar you. Do you want to hear it again?"

"You can bar me as much as you like," answered Wharton, his lip curling. "The less I see of you, the better. But as you happen to be captain of the Form, I must see you about the cricket."

"Not at all necessary!" The Bouncer spoke with bitter coolness. "You can read the notices about games practices, I suppose. No need for me to tell you when to turn up, or to mention that I shall round you up if you slack—you know that without bein' told. As for matches, you have nothing to do with them."

"That's what I've got to speak about. You seem to have got a silly idea into your head that I was responsible for the trick that was played on you last Wednesday—"

"I know you did it, if that's what you mean," interrupted Vernon-Smith. "You dished me, and got me away from the match, and captained the side in my place. I know I can't prove it—you were too deep for that. But I've chucked you out of the eleven, and you're stayin' out. No plottin' traitor is wanted in the Remove team."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Bob Cherry. Wharton clenched his hands.

"It's no use telling you that I knew nothing whatever about it, and know nothing whatever about it now?" he asked.

"Not the least."

"Look here, Smithy—" began Frank Nugent.

"Oh, Smithy can't help it!" said Johnny Bull, with a snort of contempt. "He's that sort of a scheming cad himself—it's just the trick he would play on a fellow he disliked. He can't help judging others by himself."

Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

"So you fellows are backing up Wharton—after what he's done?" he exclaimed.

"Of course we are, you silly ass!" snapped Bob. "He's done nothing! He knew no more about that spoof on the phone than I did."

"The knowlfulness was not terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Smithy!" urged Hurrey Jamset Ram Singh.

Who did it, then? sneered the Bouncer.

"How should we know?" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "Somebody outside Greyfriars, more likely than not."

"You'd like to get away with that, no doubt!" jeered the Bouncer. "Well, I can tell you fellows this—I've seen Quelch about it, and he's inquired at the telephone exchange. They can't tell him who phoned, of course, but they've told him that there was no trunk call for him that day, and that when he was rung up the call was made on one of the school phones. Quelch knows now that he was rung up from inside Greyfriars."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"It was a Greyfriars man," said the Bouncer. "That means that it was a Remove man—no fellow in any other Form cares twopenny about our matches. And who wanted to dish me over the match, except the fellow who took my place when I was called away?"

The Famous Five were silent. Certainly the Co. were not likely to believe that Harry Wharton had played such a trick. But they were as puzzled as Wharton himself.

Vernon-Smith gave them a mocking, sarcastic look.

"What!" he said. "Only this—that you're making a fool of yourself," said Bob Cherry. "And you can't chuck Wharton out of the cricket on a silly suspicion."

"I've chucked him out! I believe he did it, and I shall go on believing he did it unless it turns out that somebody else did it. If you can suggest anybody else I'll be glad to hear you."

"I haven't the foggiest. But—" "It was not I, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

"Rats!"

"You won't take my word?"

"No," said the Bouncer, coolly. "I won't!"

"You rotter!" Wharton's hands were clenched hard. "You rotter! I've a jolly good mind—"

The Bouncer laughed contemptuously.

"If you're pinin' for a scrap, you can fix any time you like, with or without gloves," he jeered. "But you won't punch your way back into the Remove eleven, my pippin! You're out of the cricket so long as I'm skipper—and I'll tell the reason to anyone who wants to know. I'm postin' the list for the St. Jim's match to-morrow. Your name won't be in it. And you can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

With that the Bouncer swung on towards the stairs. Wharton, his eyes blazing, made a stride towards him.

Frank Nugent caught his chum by the arm.

"That's no good, old chap," he said hastily.

Wharton nodded, and unclenched his hands. His anger was deep, but he realised that it was not a matter that could be settled by punching Smithy's head—much as he yearned to punch it. The Bouncer went down the Remove staircase, leaving the Co. frowning.

"Well, that's that!" said Bob. "Look here, if Smithy's going to take this line I'm fed-up for one! What about the lot of us standing out of the cricket till he chucks playing the goat?"

Wharton shook his head.

"That would mean chucking matches

away, and we don't want to do that," he said. "Smithy's within his rights, believing as he does; but he wouldn't believe anything of the sort if he wasn't a rank outsider. No good trying to make him understand that, though."

"Nummo!" Bob Cherry grinned.

"Not quite."

"But," said Frank Nugent, "who the dickens was it played that trick? It looks as if it was a Remove man, as Smithy says. But who?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Anyhow, Smithy's not getting away with this!" said Johnny Bull. "Wharton's got to play in the St. Jim's match—and even if Smithy's skipper he's not a little tin god, that I know of. And the sooner he gets that into his head, the better. Now let's go and get some cricket."

And the Famous Five went down to Little Side, and for the time, at least, dismissed the disagreeable topic from their minds.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

BILLY BUNTER finished the last of the jam-tarts, and wiped his extensive mouth with his sleeve, which was one of Billy Bunter's elegant ways. Bunter was jannny and sticky; but the fat junior was generally more or less sticky, and he did not waste his valuable time in thinking about such trifles. An undue regard for personal cleanliness had never been one of Billy Bunter's weaknesses.

"Good!" said Bunter. "Any more, Peter?"

"You've scoffed the lot!" grunted Peter Todd.

Billy Bunter gave a blink through his big spectacles round the tea-table in Study No. 7. There was nothing of an edible nature to be seen, and the fat junior grunted, and rose to his feet.

"Not much of a tea!" he remarked. "Luckily, I had tea in Hall before I came up. I was going to stand rather a spread this time, Toddy, only I've been disappointed about a postal order. I say, Toddy, squint out of the window, will you, and see whether Smithy is at the cricket?"

"Blow Smithy!"

"You know I'm rather short-sighted, old chap."

"I know you're as blind as a boiled owl, if that's what you mean," grunted Peter. "What the thump does it matter whether Smithy's at the cricket or not?"

"Oh! Nothing! I wasn't thinking of going along to his study while he's out, or anything of that kind," said Bunter hastily.

"You fat chump!" said Peter Todd. "You'd better let Smithy's study alone, and leave Smithy alone, if you know what's good for you."

"He kicked me after third school," said the Owl of the Remove. "You know Quelch made out that I wrote that message on the blackboard, Toddy—though Smithy's name was signed to it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! That's the sort of justice we get here!" said Bunter bitterly. "I get a licking from Quelch, and a kicking from Smithy—and all a fellow in my own study can do is to cackle. I say, Toddy, you could lick Smithy! You're rather a freak in some ways—"

"What?"

"Rather a freak in some ways, but

(Continued on page 8.)

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SAVING HIS ENEMY!

(Continued from page 6.)

"you can box," said Bunter, blinking seriously at his study-mate. "My belief is that you could lick Smithy, if you went all out. Of course, you'd get a bit damaged; but, after all, what's that! Why not try it on?"

"Fathead!"

"I don't think you ought to funk Smithy, Peter. Think of the honour of the study, and all that. Even if you get licked, you'd do a lot of damage first. Might black his eye. I'd like to see Smithy's eye blacked, Toddy."

"Go ahead and black it for him!" suggested Toddy.

Billy Bunter did not heed that suggestion. Desirable as it was to see the new captain of the Remove with a black eye, Billy Bunter was not considering bestowing that adornment on Smithy with his own fat hands. The result would have been too painful—though not to Smithy.

"The fellow's an absolute rotter!" went on Bunter. "You know I bagged his study, Toddy, because he was late back this term—and, of course, I supposed he would be pleased to have me there. And Quelch made me change back to this study, because Smithy made out I'd pinched his pie—"

"You did pinch his pie, you fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Toddy! It's pretty thick, that a fellow always thinks of me if there's a pie or anything missing," said Bunter warmly. "Making out, you know, that I'm the sort of fellow to bag another fellow's tuck."

"And you're not!" said Toddy, with deep sarcasm.

"No, old fellow. Of course, I never had the pie. It wasn't much of a pie, either—hardly any gravy in it. I say, Toddy, you'd jolly well lick Smithy, if you knew what he'd been saying about you."

"Eh?"

"Awful things, you know," said Bunter. "He says that you're a bony freak, old chap, and that you've got a face that would crack a looking-glass. He says—Yarooocoooh!"

A cushion, hurled with deadly aim, landed on Bunter's extensive equator, and cut short his remarks quite suddenly.

He sat down with a bump that almost shook the study.

"Whoocoo!" roared Bunter.

"Go on!" said Peter Todd genially. "Tell me some more funny things. I've got another cushion here."

"Ow!" yelled Bunter. "Beast!"

The fat Owl scrambled up, and dodged out of Study No. 7. He did not want the other cushion. The door of No. 7 slammed after him.

In the Remove passage, Billy Bunter blinked this way and that way, like Moses of old. Like Moses, he saw no man. Having ascertained that the coast was clear, he rolled along to Study No. 4.

Tea was over in the Remove studies, and it was most probable that Vernon-Smith and Redwing had gone out. But Bunter was cautious. Only too often, of late, he had felt the weight of Smithy's foot—and he had found that foot hard and heavy. He tapped at the door of Study No. 4, opened it and blinked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

But there was no one in the study. Billy Bunter rolled in, and shut the door hastily after him.

He grinned.

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Bunter was on the warpath. With Smithy and Redwing safely off the scene, it was, so far as the fat Owl could see, absolutely safe.

His little scheme that morning, in the Form-room, had been a failure; owing to Quelch somehow spotting him. But Bunter was a stickler. He was up against the new captain of the Remove, and he was going to make Smithy sit up. "Shipping" the fellow's study was Bunter's idea—and he set to work swiftly.

Books and papers were pitched all over the room. The table was up-ended, the chairs stacked on it, and the carpet draped over the upturned legs of the chairs.

"Ho, he, he!"

A little breathless after these exertions, Billy Bunter chuckled spasmodically.

He blinked gleefully at the scene of wreckage. A surprise awaited Herbert Vernon-Smith when he came in.

The Bounder was likely to be wrathful, as well as surprised; but that did not matter, as he would not know that Bunter had done it. Bunter, of course, was going to keep that very dark.

He was not done yet. He picked up an inkpot, and proceeded to stream ink round the floor.

He had plenty of time before Smithy came in, if Smithy had gone down to the cricket field.

Having disposed of the ink, Bunter discovered a bottle of gum. Gum streamed over the floor of the study, mixing with the ink.

"He, he, he!"

Bunter had done well, so far—quite well. Smithy's study was in a shocking state. But, like Alexander of old, who sighed for fresh worlds to conquer, Bunter blinked round the study for something more to add to the havoc he had wrought.

"Perhaps that beast will be sorry for turning a fellow out of the study," murmured Bunter. "Perhaps he'll be sorry for kicking a fellow. Perhaps—"

The fat junior broke off suddenly.

Footsteps came along the Remove passage. The handle of the door turned, and the door opened; Billy Bunter spinning round towards it in utter horror. He had taken it for granted that Smithy had gone down to the cricket, in which case he was safe for some time. Apparently he had taken too much for granted. Smithy was not in flannels—and evidently he was not on the cricket ground—for he was here, staring in at the doorway of Study No. 4, with eyes bulging in astonishment at what he saw.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"W-what—" stammered Smithy.

"Oh crickey!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I—I say, Smithy! I—I haven't shipped your study, old chap. I—I—I just came in, and—and saw it!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—was—was surprised—"

"By gad! Why, I—I—I—I'll—"

The Bounder strode in. Billy Bunter made a rush to escape. Smithy was in the way, and in sheer desperation, Billy Bunter lowered his head and butted.

Thud!

Crash!

"Ooocooooogh!"

That sudden and desperate charge took the Bounder by surprise. Bunter's bullet head thudded on his waistcoat like a battering-ram. The Bounder went over gurgling.

A moment more, and Bunter was out of the study, fleeing for his fat life.

The fat Owl vanished into space.

"Urrrrrggh!"

Horrid sounds came from Herbert Vernon-Smith, as he sprawled on his study floor in gum and ink. Bunter had butted not wisely but too well. Smithy was winded, and he struggled frantically for breath.

"What the dickens—" Skinner looked into the study. "What—"

"Ooocooooogh!"

"Smithy, what—"

"Yurrrrgggh!"

Skinner came in and helped the Bounder to his feet. Smithy leaned on him, gurgling for breath.

"Who—what—" ejaculated Skinner.

"Ooocogh! Wurrrggh! Yurrrrggh!"

"What the jolly old thump—"

"Urrrrrrrggh!"

It was several minutes before the Bounder was in a state for action. Then, still gasping, he sorted a fives bat out of the wreck in his study, and went to look for Billy Bunter.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

No Luck for Bunter!

"HARRY, old chap—"

Harry Wharton jumped. He had fancied that he was alone in Study No. 1, till that fat whisper fell on his ears.

It was not yet time for prep. Wharton had lines to do, and he had come up to Study No. 1 to do them, after an hour at cricket. He sat at the study table, with Virgil propped open against the instand, transcribing lines from the great Mantuan, and thinking of anything but William George Bunter.

He was not thinking wholly of the lines he was scribbling, however. His recent interview with the new captain of the Remove was in his mind. The feud between the rivals of the Remove was now open warfare—for which Wharton would have cared little, but for the cricket.

In all the Form Smithy was the only man who believed that his rival had played that mysterious trick on the telephone on the day of the Redclyffe match. Even Skinner & Co., who backed up the Bounder against his old rival, hardly affected to believe as Smithy did.

But the belief was firmly fixed in Vernon-Smith's mind, and he had announced that, so long as he was captain of the Form, the fellow who had played that trick should never play in the Remove team again.

Every cricketer in the Remove was against him on that point, and it was evident that pressure would be brought to bear on the Bounder; and, self-willed and arrogant as he was, it was probable that he would have to yield. As Johnny Bull had put it, Smithy was not, as he appeared to suppose, a "little tin god." But a state of strife and bitter ill-will in the eleven did not make for good cricket, and Wharton was deeply troubled over the affair.

Wharton was giving more thought to that troublesome matter than to Virgil, as he scribbled his lines. But he ceased to give thought to either, as a sudden whisper from behind him made him jump.

He stared round.

There was an old screen in the corner of the study, and from behind that screen a fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked out at him.

Wharton stared at the Owl of the Remove.

"You fat duffer! What the thump are you doing there?" he exclaimed.



"Stop, you fat rotter!" panted Vernon-Smith, armed with a fives bat, and chasing Bunter along the passage. "Yaroooooh!" yelled Bunter, as he fled for his life. "Wow!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Loud laughter followed pursued and pursuer as they disappeared down the passage, both going strong.

"Hush!"

"What the dickens—"

"Smithy might hear you!" gasped Bunter. "He looked in here once, just before you came up. Luckily, he didn't look behind this screen. I say, Harry, old chap, where's Smithy now?"

"Blessed if I know—or care!" snapped Wharton. "What have you been up to, you howling ass?"

"Nothing, old fellow—nothing at all! Haven't you seen Smithy?"

"I saw him in the passage when I came up."

"Did—did he have a fives bat?"

"Yes."

"Oh lor!"

There was a step in the Remove passage. Billy Bunter popped back behind the screen, like a tortoise jerking in its head. But the step passed on, and Bunter's fat face came into view again, Harry Wharton staring at him blankly.

"I say, Harry old chap, if—if Smithy comes barging into this study, you'll handle him, won't you?" asked Bunter anxiously. "I—I haven't done anything, you know. As far as I can make out, somebody has been shipping Smithy's study, and—and he thinks it was me."

"You fat chump!"

"You know what a suspicious beast he is!" groaned Bunter. "You know how he made out that I had his pie! Well, now he's making out that I've shipped his study, and he's looking for me, with a fives bat!"

"I—I told him that I hadn't done it, when he came in and found me there. Besides, I thought he had gone down to the cricket, you know, and there was lots of time. It's all Toddy's fault, really—I asked him to squint out of the window and see whether Smithy was on

the cricket field. Of course, I thought he was, or I wouldn't have gone to his study."

"Not that I did anything, you know. I was—was quite surprised when I saw that his study had been shipped. It—it struck me all of a—heap! Smithy didn't believe me, old chap—"

"You burbling, blathering bander-snatch—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I know you take my word, of course—as we're pals. Look here, you go and find Smithy, and—tell him I never did it. Besides, I really did it on your account, you know! I—I thought I'd make him sit up for—for chucking you out of the cricket, old chap. See?"

Footsteps passed the door again. Again Bunter popped out of sight behind the screen.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I—I say, old fellow—" Bunter reappeared. "I say—"

"If you've shipped Smithy's study, you fat chump, you'd better go and take your bating, and get it over," said Harry.

"You see, I—I don't want to be batted," explained Bunter. "Look here, if you'll tackle Smithy—"

"Fathead!"

"Well, after all I've done for you, you know!" urged Bunter. "That beast is going to whop me with that fives bat! I—I could see it in his eye, when he looked into this study ten minutes ago. You whopped him last term, old chap—and you whopped him in the hols. You could do it again. I—I think you ought to stand by a pal."

"Ass!"

Harry Wharton resumed his lines.

"I say, old fellow—"

"Shut up! I've got fifty lines to do."

"Blow your lines!" snorted Bunter. "Talk about Pontius Pilate fiddling while Birmingham was burning—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You—you see, I shall have to show up for prep!" groaned Bunter. "That beast is in an awful temper."

"No wonder, if you've shipped his study."

"I—I haven't, old chap! Besides, he kicked me, you know—hard, too. Look here, old chap, you tackle Smithy, and—and whop him, and—and I'll stand by you in the cricket, see? Smithy's going to leave you out of the St. Jim's match. Well, I jolly well know how to put the stopper on that!"

Wharton stared.

"You benighted ass—"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter, blinking earnestly at the astonished junior. "I can fix that all right. I know how."

"Off your rocker?" asked Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, I tell you I can work it!" urged Bunter. "Of course, I'm telling you this in confidence—strict confidence! I know you wouldn't give a chap away! You're as honourable as I am—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wharton. "A little more, I hope!"

"Well, you keep it dark, old fellow, and I'll tell you!" said Bunter. "Mind, I'm relying on you—there would be an awful row if it got out. Quelch would be on my track at once."

"Quelch!" repeated Wharton blankly.

"Well, of course, Quelch was waxy about it," explained Bunter. "But it's all right so long as you keep it dark. See? Smithy makes out that you're not going to play in the St. Jim's match. Well, suppose Smithy isn't on the spot when St. Jim's come over—"

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"Why shouldn't he be, you howling ass?" asked Wharton, mystified.

"Well, suppose he was called away, and—"

"Called away?"

"Yes, old chap, like he was on Red-dyffe day—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Then the fellows would make you captain the team, same as before. Instead of you being left out, Smithy would be left out, see? Serve him jolly well right, what? I can get at Frout's telephone again, same as I did before, and ring up Quelch—"

"Ring up Quelch!" gasped Wharton.

"And give him a message from old Smith to young Smith—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And send the beast off home, you know, same as on Reddyffe day."

"You—" gasped Wharton.

He understood now.

The mystery of that mysterious telephone trick was a mystery no longer.

"You—you—you fat scoundrel!" gasped Wharton. "It was you, and you've been letting Smithy believe it was me all this time!"

"That's all right, old chap. So long as Smithy believes it was you he won't guess that it was me," explained Bunter.

"It couldn't really have happened better, could it?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well, I'll do the same thing over again on St. Jim's day, and dish him again if you stand by me now, old chap," said Bunter. "I mean it, old fellow. I'll see you through. With Smithy cleared off, every man in the eleven will want you to captain the side. You know that! Smithy can spend the day in railway trains, like he did before, while you're playing cricket. Better than being chucked out of the team, what?"

"You fat rascal!" roared Wharton.

"Eh?"

"You—you pernicious porpoise!" Wharton jumped from his chair. "So it was you! Why, I—I—I'll—"

"I say, old chap, what are you getting waxy about?" gasped Bunter. "I'm offering to do you a good turn—"

Here, keep off! Wharrer marrer? Yaroooh!"

The screen went over with a crash, and Bunter dodged round the study table.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!" he roared. "Why, you're a worse beast than Smithy. I say, old chap—Keep off, you rotter! Dear old fellow—Beast!"

Why Wharton was "waxy" Bunter did not know. But he could see that he was waxy. There was no doubt about that—no shadow of doubt.

He rushed round the table after Bunter.

With a squeak of alarm, the fat Owl rushed for the door.

He tore the door open and leapt out.

A foot caught him as he leaped, and Billy Bunter went into the Remove passage with a wild roar.

"Yaroooh!"

"Whoop!"

There was a shout from the Remove landing.

"Here he is!"

"Here's Bunter!"

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter, scrambling up in wild alarm.

Vernon-Smith, fives bat in hand, was coming along the passage at a run.

"Stop, you fat rotter!" panted the Bounder.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter fled for his life. After him rushed the Bounder. Loud laughter

followed them as they disappeared down the passage, both going strong.

And the fearful yells that awoke every echo of the Remove passage a minute later told that Billy Bunter was getting that for which he had asked.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Keep It Dark!

"AFTER prep," said Bob Cherry. Bob's ruddy face looked into Study No. 1, with a cheery grin on it. Harry Wharton looked at him.

"What's after prep?" he asked.

"In the Rag," said Bob. "Come down when you've finished, old bean. We're all putting it up to Smithy—about the cricket, you know. I've been jawing with the men, and I can tell you every man in the Form is going to talk to Smithy."

"Oh!" said Harry.

Bob nodded and grinned and tramped away up the passage to his own study, followed by Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh. Frank Nugent came into Study No. 1 with a cheery expression on his face. Since the sudden exodus of Billy Bunter from that study Wharton had been writing lines, and now it was the hour of evening prep for the Remove. While he had been busy with his lines his friends had been busy, evidently, on other matters.

"I fancy it will be all right, Harry," Nugent remarked, as he sat down to the table. "Smithy can't get away with this, you know. He can't stand out against all the Form."

"I fancy not," agreed Wharton.

"But I wish the fellow would get the rotten idea out of his silly head. He has no right to suspect me."

"Well, you were the fellow who benefited, in a way, by his being called away last Wednesday," said Frank.

"It's utter rot, of course. But you captained the side and got a lot of kudos by beating Reddyffe without Smithy's help, and Smithy thinks that that was the motive. Utter rot! But the fact is, nobody else had any motive at all, so far as anybody can make out. It was a queer business."

Harry Wharton opened his lips, but he did not speak.

"It would be a lot more satisfactory, if we could find out who played that trick on Smithy," went on Nugent.

"That would clear the air. I rather expected that Quelch would nose the fellow out, but he seems to be beaten. And he's a downy old bird! Looks as if the rotter will never be found out now."

Wharton was silent, thinking.

The mystery that puzzled all the Remove, and their Form master also, was no longer a mystery to him. Billy Bunter had let the secret out in that study half an hour ago.

Wharton's natural impulse was to tell Nugent at once what he knew and to let all the Remove know without delay.

But he was in a difficult position.

Billy Bunter, in his fatuous folly, had told Wharton, but he had told him in confidence, relying upon his "keeping it dark."

Certainly, Wharton would never willingly have received such "confidence" from the fat and fatuous Owl.

He had not the faintest idea of what Bunter was going to tell him.

But Bunter, stipulating that it was to be "kept dark," had told him, and it was scarcely possible, in the circumstances, for him to give the obtuse Owl away.

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Bunter was far from realising the seriousness of what he had done, as was proved by his fatuous offer to play the same trick over again for Wharton's benefit on St. Jim's day. But it was an extremely serious matter; all the more so because Mr. Quelch was deeply indignant, and was certain to make an example of the trickster if discovered.

Mr. Quelch had been deceived by a "spoof" telephone message. He had sent Vernon-Smith home for the day in the belief that his father had urgently requested it, and he had found out subsequently that some unknown person had been tricking him. That was more than enough to rouse the Remove master's deepest ire. Bunter, if he was found out, was booked for dire punishment. Obviously he realised that himself, for, loquacious as he was, he had kept the secret carefully, and certainly suspicion had never turned on the Owl of the Remove.

Only the Bounder suspected Wharton, and Harry despised his suspicions too much to worry unduly on the subject. But he would have been glad to force Smithy to own up that he was wrong. But after thinking the matter over he realised that he could not give Bunter away. Unless the fat Owl babbled out the secret himself it would be kept.

It was unpleasant and irritating enough, but it could not be helped. Wharton had made up his mind to say nothing.

But low that he knew the facts, and was prevented from mentioning what he knew, he disliked discussing the subject. He made no rejoinder to Frank's remarks, and plunged into prep.

The two juniors settled down to work. Prep was not yet over when the door of Study No. 1 opened and a fat face looked in.

Harry Wharton bestowed a glare on Billy Bunter.

"Cut, you fat ass!" he snapped.

"Oh, really, Wharton?"
Bunter did not cut. He wriggled into the study. Judging by his wriggling, Smithy had put in some hefty work with the sixes bat. Probably Bunter repented him by that time of having "shipped" the Bounder's study.

"What do you want, you silly chump?" exclaimed Wharton. "We've got prep to do if you haven't."

"Oh, blow prep!" grunted Bunter. "I say, old chap—" He paused and blinked at Nugent, who was staring at him. "Look here, Nugent, you clear out while I speak to Wharton, will you?"

"What the thump?"

Harry Wharton picked up the inkpot. He did not want any more confidential communications from Billy Bunter.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"Beast!"
"Bunter, apparently, did not want it anywhere. He wriggled hurriedly out of the study again, and slammed the door."

"What has that fat owl got into his silly noodle now?" asked Nugent, in astonishment. "You've got no secrets with Bunter, I suppose?"

"The silly chump wants kicking!" growled Wharton.

And prep was resumed.

Preparation was over at last, and a heavy tramp of feet in the passage announced the arrival of Bob Cherry. The door of Study No. 1 was hurled open.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob. "You men finished? Come on down to the Rag!"

And Bob tramped on to the stairs. A large pair of spectacles glimmered in at the door when he was gone.

"I say, Harry, old chap—" "Oh, get out, you fat frump!" snapped Wharton.

"Look here, I jolly well want to speak to you, and it's jolly important!" hooted Bunter. "You clear off, Nugent!"

"Coming down, Harry?" asked Frank. "Yes! I'll follow you in a minute!"

"Oh! All right!"

Nugent left the study, and Bunter rolled in and shut the door. Wharton gave him a far from amicable glare.

"Now, you fat owl, cut it short!"

"Beast! I—I want to warn you not to jaw about what I told you!" said Bunter. "I made you an offer—a generous offer! That offer's still good, if you'd like me to dish Smithy—"

"Do you want me to bang your silly head on that door?" asked Harry in tones of concentrated wrath.

A PRIZE OF A TOPPING POCKET-KNIFE

has been forwarded to Leslie Hardiker, of 2, Larch Street, Southport, Lancs, in exchange for the amusing storyette herewith:



Old Lady (interested in flying): "Are those air trips safe?"

Pilot: "Safest on earth, ma'am!"

Note: All Jokes and Greyfriars Limericks should be sent to: "Limericks and Jokes" c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

"Eh? No!"

"Then shut up!"

"That's all very well!" said the fat Owl, blinking at him. "But I want you to bear in mind that what I told you, I told you in confidence—strict confidence. Quelch would be after me like a tiger if it got out! He doesn't like having his leg pulled! And—and that beast Smithy—"

"I've a jolly good mind to give you a bating, you fat freak, for telling me about it!" snapped Wharton. "But I'm not going to give you away, you frabjous owl!"

"Oh, well that's all right then!" said Bunter in great relief. "Of course, I knew you wouldn't give a man away, old chap, but you know what a silly ass you are, you know! I was feeling rather anxious!"

"You fat villain! What did you play such an idiotic trick for?" exclaimed Wharton. "You've got nothing to do with the cricket—what the thump did

it matter to you whether Smithy played in the match against Redclyffe or not last Wednesday?"

"Well, he played a rotten trick on me, and I jolly well played a trick on him!" grinned Bunter. "He's jolly well not going to kick a fellow! But it's all right, if you keep it dark!"

"Look here, Bunter! The best thing you can do is to own up—"

"Eh?"

"Can't you see the rotten position you've placed me in?" exclaimed Wharton. "I don't feel that I can give you away, as you babbled it out thinking that I should keep it a secret, but—"

"Catch me owning up!" said Bunter. "Why, the fellows would scrag me—and Smithy would be like a tiger! And Quelch—it would get to Quelch, and it would mean a flogging! Don't be a silly ass!"

"Look here—"

"Besides, I never did it!" added Bunter, as a sort of afterthought.

"What?" roared Wharton.

"I—I know nothing about it, you know! If anybody telephoned to Quelch and used old Smithy's name last Wednesday—it wasn't me! I—I was in my study at the time. All the time! I mean, I was on the cricket ground! Lots of fellows saw me there! I never went to old Prout's study! I never knew that Prout had gone out for a walk! I never knew anything about it till—till afterwards! My mind was an absolute blank! Here, keep off, you beast!"

Billy Bunter tore the study door open, and dodged out into the passage just in time to escape a smite.

But, like the ancient mariners who escaped the rocks of Scylla only to fall into the whirlpool of Charybdis, the hapless Owl found his last state worse than his first.

Crash!

Vernon-Smith was passing the study on his way to the stairs, and Billy Bunter crashed into him headlong.

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder. "What—"

"He staggered across the passage."

"Ow! Keep off! Yooooooop!"

"You fat chump! Take that—and that—and that—"

"Yaroooh! Whooooop!"

"And that—"

"Yarooooooop!"

"How many kicks the Bounder got in before he escaped, Bunter never knew. He did not stop to count them.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"HERE he is!"
"Now then, Smithy—" Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged into the Rag, with his hands in his pockets. There was a far from pleasant expression on his hard face.

He had a hint—more than a hint—of what was coming. And, obstinate as he was, arrogant as he was, the Bounder was feeling a little dubious.

Tom Redwing gave him an anxious glance.

In this matter he was against Smithy. Like every other cricketer in the Form. He had told him so quite plainly, and urged him to do the sensible thing. It was good advice, but good advice, as a rule, was wasted on the Bounder. Right or wrong, he was not the fellow to yield if he could help it. And this time the Bounder was firmly convinced that he was right.

Nearly all the Remove were there—

every man who played cricket in the Remove had turned up. They were all of the same opinion, and they all meant to put it plainly to Herbert Vernon-Smith. And as he looked round sourly at the crowd of faces, the new captain of the Remove realised that his position was trembling in the balance. His eyes glinted for a moment at Harry Wharton, who stood there with the Co.

Wharton did not look at him, however; his face was indifferent. Neither did any member of the Co. address the Bouncer. It was left to the other fellows to "put it to him," and they were ready enough. Squiff of the Remove was spokesman.

"Well, here you are, Smithy, old bean!" said the Australian junior amicably. "Now, we want to have this thing out!"

"Can't Wharton speak for himself?" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"I'm speaking as a friend of both parties!" explained Squiff. "We've talked it over, and we want you to act like a sensible chap. Your personal rows with Wharton have nothing to do with the Form games—"

"I know that!"

"Well, then, this stunt of chucking Wharton out of the cricket—"

"I've given my reasons!" said the Bouncer calmly. "You all know what happened last Wednesday!"

"We all know that Wharton had nothing to do with that!"

"I believe he had!"

"Then you're a silly ass!" exclaimed Squiff. "You're the only man in the Remove who thinks so. Are you setting up your opinion against all the Form? Are you taking yourself for a jolly old infallible oracle, or what?"

"Have a little sense, Smithy!" urged Peter Todd. "If Wharton played that rotten trick, you'd be justified in chucking him out of the eleven—and every fellow here would say the same. But we all know he didn't. You'd know it, too, if you hadn't got your silly back up to such an extent!"

The Bouncer's lips set.

"Who did it, if Wharton did not?" he demanded.

"That's not the point!" said Tom Brown. "Nobody knows who did it, but we all know that Wharton did not!"

"I know he did!"

"Oh, don't be a thumping ass!" exclaimed Russell. "You don't know any more about it than any other fellow does!"

"I know that I was called away from the Redclyffe match, and that Wharton captained the side in my place—"

"We've had all that!" interrupted Ogilvy. "Give us a rest!"

"You've no right to suspect any fellow, without an atom of proof, Smithy!" said Dick Penfold. "Wharton's word is good enough for all the Remove!"

"It's not good enough for me!"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed at that remark, but he did not speak. But a dozen voices answered for him.

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Don't be a fool!"

"Don't be a rotter!"

"You know jolly well—"

"You needn't all speak at once!" sneered the Bouncer. "And you needn't shout; I'm not deaf."

"Leave it to me, you men," said Squiff. "We've got to have it settled here and now."

"Go it, Squiff!"

"Nobody knows who played that rotten trick on the telephone," went on Squiff. "I don't fancy myself that it

was a Remove man at all. But never mind that. We all know Wharton, and we can all take his word. And if you refuse to take it, Smithy, nobody will think any the better of you. You're bound to take it, like the rest of us."

There was a pause.

Perhaps for the moment a doubt came into the Bouncer's own mind; perhaps he realised that his belief was coloured by his own bitter rancour.

At all events, he could not fail to see that he was utterly alone in his belief, and that the other fellows, so far from sharing it, scorned him for believing as he did. In spite of himself, he wavered.

He had said that Wharton's word was not good enough for him, but at the bottom of his heart he knew that he could hardly doubt it. He could not "see" Wharton standing up before the whole Form with a lie on his lips.

"Now, old bean!" Squiff was quick to see the faint sign of wavering in the Bouncer's face, and he was anxious to get the matter settled peacefully.

"Now, you know, the same as we do, that Wharton's as square as a die. And he's ready to give his word. That's so, Wharton?"

"Quite!" said Harry.

"It's up to you now, Smithy!"

The Bouncer fixed his eyes on Wharton.

Was he, after all, mistaken? He had had no doubt—not a vestige of doubt—and yet—

Nothing had been said of what would be the outcome if Smithy persisted in the attitude he had taken up. But he could guess. The Remove cricketers had no use for a captain who carried his private feuds on to the cricket field. That consideration alone would not have moved Smithy. But he could not help wondering a little whether, after all, he was right and every other fellow wrong. He drew a deep breath.

"Let's have this clear," he said quietly. "I've never accused Wharton of having done the actual telephoning. I know he was on Little Side at the time Quelch got that call that he believed came from my father. I believe that he put somebody else up to doing it for him. That was clear to me all along. But—"

He paused.

"If you men think I ought to take his word on the subject, I'm willing to let it go at that," he said at last. "But I want it plain. If Wharton denies that he telephoned to Quelch, he's denying what he was never accused of. He's not getting by with that!"

"Put it how you like," said Squiff.

"Very well!" The Bouncer realised that there was no help for it, and he made up his mind to it. "You give your word, Wharton—not only to me, but to the whole Form—that you never had anything to do with that trick on the telephone last Wednesday, and know no more about it than any other fellow present?"

It was Wharton's turn to pause.

A few hours since he could have answered with an unhesitating affirmative.

Now he could not.

"I give my word," he said quietly, "that I had nothing whatever to do with it, and was as surprised as anybody else when I heard about it."

"That's that!" said Squiff.

The Bouncer's eyes flashed. He was quick to see an opening.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "That won't do! That's not an answer."

"Don't you understand plain English?" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Quite!" said the Bouncer, with a

bitter sneer. "And I'm asking for plain English, and not gettin' it. I know that Wharton never did the phoning. I want to know whether he knows who did. That's the point."

"He's answered you!" snapped Nugent.

"I think not. If he has, let him answer again a bit more plainly." The Bouncer's eyes burned at his rival. Even into his obstinate and bitter mind a doubt had crept, but it was banished now. His belief, shaken for a moment, came back stronger than ever.

"Smithy, old man—" began Redwing.

"Let Wharton answer—and without hedgin'!" snapped the Bouncer. "Put it plain, Wharton! Nobody accuses you of havin' phoned to Quelch yourself that day. You're accused of knowin' who did! Yes or no?"

Wharton did not answer.

Every eye was turned on him now. His silence caused surprised looks on all sides.

To his own intense annoyance, he felt the red coming into his cheeks. The Bouncer's look was fairly gloating. He felt that he had his enemy on the hip.

"You're not in a hurry to answer!" he said with bitter sarcasm. "Take your time! Think it out!"

"Cough it up, old man!" said Johnny Bull, with a puzzled stare at his chum. "Why don't you answer the cad?"

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

"Look here, Wharton," exclaimed Squiff, "Smithy's asked you a plain question. Can't you answer yes or no?"

Wharton's face was crimson with annoyance and mortification. He could read the doubt that was coming into other faces. His own chums were eyeing him oddly, puzzled and perplexed by his silence.

"Will you answer Smithy, Wharton?" asked Squiff, and his look and tone were growing grim.

Wharton breathed hard.

"I've said that I knew nothing about the matter, and that I had no hand in it," he said at last. "That's good enough. As it happens, I've learned since you played that rotten trick—and only a few hours ago."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

The Bouncer laughed scoffingly.

"You know who it was? You knew all along—because you put him up to it! You've only just found out, have you? Well, give us the name, and we'll put it to the fellow himself! His name?"

"Who was it, Wharton?" asked Peter Todd, with a very curious look at Harry's flushed and harassed face. "If you know, you're bound to tell us. Whoever it was, he's going to be jolly well ragged if we spot him!"

"Cough up the name, Wharton," said Squiff gruffly.

"I can't!"

"What the thump do you mean?"

"Harry, old man—" muttered Bob Cherry.

"I can't!" repeated Wharton. "The fellow—never mind his name—the fellow let it out, and I've said that I won't give him away."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Too thin!" said Skinner, shaking his head.

"You'd no right to say anything of the kind," said Squiff grimly. "So it comes to this—that you know who played that rotten trick on Redclyffe day—after telling us all that you knew no more than any other fellow."

"When I said that it was true. I've



"You know who played that rotten trick on me on the day of the Redclyffe match, and you won't tell me his name?" "No, I won't!" said Wharton. "I suppose he'd give you away if you did, eh?" scoffed the Bounder. "Then own up that you put him up to the trick!" "No!" answered Wharton firmly. "But you can think so if you like!"

told you that I knew nothing until a few hours ago—"

"And you won't give the fellow's name!" scoffed the Bounder.

"No, I won't."

"Because if you did, he would give you away—own up that you put him up to the trick?"

"No!" said Wharton between his teeth. "No! But you can think so if you like, you rotter!"

"I fancy I'm not the only fellow here who thinks so," said the Bounder. "I leave it to all the men present."

"You've nothing more to say, Wharton?" asked Peter Todd.

"No!"

"This won't do, Wharton!" said Squiff quietly.

"I've nothing more to say."

With that Harry Wharton walked across to the door and left the Rag.

He left the crowd of Remove fellows in a buzz behind him.

His chums had little to say, but the other fellows had plenty—and they said it. Before that meeting in the Rag the Bounder had been alone in his belief. He was far from alone in it now. Feeling had veered round completely in favour of the new captain of the Remove. It was the unexpected that had happened, and what had looked like a defeat had turned into a triumph for the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Unavoidably Postponed!

BILLY BUNTER was worried. There was a deep wrinkle in his podgy brow as he blinked through his big spectacles at a little group in the Greyfriars quad. It was the following day, after class.

In the bright May sunshine the Famous Five of the Remove were standing in a little group, and Billy Bunter could see that a warm argument was in progress.

Four members of the Co. had changed for cricket. Harry Wharton had not changed. He stood with his friends, with a sombre expression on his face, and they were all speaking at once, and he listened almost without speaking himself.

Bunter could not hear what was said, but he could guess what the topic was. And he was worried, and looked it.

Bunter's conscience was worrying him.

Few fellows in the Remove would have believed that William George Bunter had a conscience at all. Certainly in matters of tuck his fat conscience was remarkably easy-going. Nevertheless, the item of a conscience had not been entirely left out of the fat Owl's composition.

The trick he had played on the Bounder on Redclyffe day did not worry him. His view was that it served the beast right! It was the result to Harry Wharton that gave Bunter some twinges.

Wharton was now definitely out of the cricket. The scene in the Rag the previous evening had settled that.

Every man in the Remove had been prepared to stand by him and bring the new skipper to reason. But out of his own mouth he had been condemned.

He was, of course, from Bunter's point of view, a silly ass! Every Remove man would have taken his word—even the Bounder, at the last pinch, would have had to take it. All the chap had to do, therefore, was to deny knowing anything about the mysterious affair of Redclyffe day. Why a fellow

couldn't tell a "whopper," when a single whopper would have seen him through, was a mystery to Billy Bunter. He could only account for it by the supposition that Wharton was a silly ass.

Feeling in the Remove had turned completely round. Wharton admitted that he knew who had played that miserable trick, and refused to say who it was. If that did not mean that he had put the fellow up to it, what did it mean, the Removites wanted to know.

Bunter could have told them; but though his fat conscience worried him, it did not worry him to the extent of making him own up. A ragging in the Remove, and a flogging in Quelch's study, had no attractions for Bunter. He was sorry for Wharton—and he felt that he was a kind-hearted and benevolent sort of chap to think about Wharton at all. But it was better for Wharton to get the trouble than for Bunter to get it! The fat Owl had no doubt whatever about that.

Still, he was worried. He rather liked Wharton, and he loathed the Bounder. And the result of his trickery had been to give the Bounder a complete triumph over Wharton. That was the unkindest cut of all. Bunter would have done anything to alter that—anything but land his own precious self in trouble. That resource, of course, was quite impossible.

He rolled towards the group at last. Bob Cherry was speaking as he came up. Bob's voice was rather wrathful.

"I think you're a fool! It was a dirty trick, and if you know who did it you're bound to speak."

"The boundfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Wharton," said (Continued on page 16.)

Nerve Tonic Wanted!

Can any reader recommend a really good nerve tonic? Advertiser must have it before 3.30 next Wednesday, when he is interviewing Coker's aunt with respect to Coker's mid-term report. Successful applicant will be well rewarded by "P.P.P., Masters' Common-room.

Greyfriars Herald

No. 98.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

Edited by
HARRY
WHARTON,
F.G.R.

**LATEST
EXTRA
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May 21st, 1932.

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Jentleman with time on his hands offers his services entirely free of charge, as Trezzurer and Casheer to any sports club or other skool organisation. Must have sole control of the munney. Apply, "JENNEROUS JENT," Study No. 7, Remove Passage.

CHINESE MASCOT'S PECULIAR POWERS

GOOD LUCK FOR ALL

Nobody can accuse us of being superstitious. But we can't help saying that the good luck brought to purchasers of the popular new Chinese mascot, Chinky Blinky, takes a lot of explaining.

Loder of the Sixth bought one. Immediately afterwards he put some money on Bouncing Boy, in the Swindleborough Selling Place. Bouncing Boy won the race.

Mr. Cherry, after buying Chinky Blinky, slid down the banisters and knocked Mr. Quelch flying at the bottom. Mr. Quelch got up smiling, and told Bob that it was a pleasure to see such a display of youthful spirits.

Dutton, the hard-of-hearing specialist, invested most of his pocket-money in one. He distinctly heard Skinner call him a "silly ass," soon after.

Bunter borrowed a Chinky Blinky from Mauleverer, while Mauleverer was looking. By the next post he received a hamper and half a dozen postal orders from tilted relations.

Skinner won ten pounds in a Crossword Puzzle Competition last week. It transpired that he owned a Chinky Blinky.

Trevor is bottom but one in the Form. He bought a Chinky Blinky last Tuesday, and within half an hour had been given an extra holiday for merit in class-work.

Chinky Blinky also did Coker a good turn. As soon as Wingate spotted it he gave Coker a place in the First Eleven cricket team. Coker promptly scored a century.

It really does seem remarkable that a manufactured mascot should be thought to possess supernatural powers. But there's no getting away from facts, is there?

By the way, we almost forgot to tell you that Chinky Blinky is on sale at the Editorial Office. All the profits go to the Remove Cricket Club.

We suggest all Greyfriars juniors buy one at once, and share in the general good luck!

JUSTICE FOR COKER

An anonymous correspondent writes expressing the opinion that Coker doesn't bath himself enough. We don't agree. Our experience is that Coker is nearly always in hot water!

DIDN'T KNOW MEANING OF "REMOVE"

New Boys' Ignorance

AMUSEMENT GUIDE . . . Hints for the Pleasure-Seeker

Bob Cherry will wake up Bunter with a wet sponge every morning next week. To those who have not seen it before, this show is well worth a visit.

On Monday morning, after prayers, Bolsover major will receive a swishing in the Head's study. Reserved seats, in the trees outside the School House, should be booked without delay. It should be awfully funny!

Later in the day, Coker intends to stop Carne of the Sixth in the quad and give him one on the boko. This treat should not be missed.

In the evening, anonymous juniors may leave banana-skins scattered about the House steps, just before Mr. Quelch takes his evening stroll. Spectators are warned to keep away from the man-eating tiger.

On Tuesday afternoon the Fourth will don topplers, and go for a Form walk

with Mr. Capper. The best position for watching this impressive spectacle will probably be in Friaride, where it is hoped that village boys will fling rude remarks and vegetables at the procession.

On Wednesday evening, Coker will receive a slanderous letter from the Remove. He will immediately afterwards elarge into the Rag, and two seconds later be thrown out on his neck.

On Thursday afternoon, Hoskins of the Shell will attend Compulsory Cricket Practice. You are advised to book early for this highly-diverting comedy.

On Friday, Mr. Prout will deliver a lecture on "Hunting in the Rookies," in the Fifth Form room. Pleasure-seekers can stand near the woodshed and pull faces at the audience through the open windows.

That's all we can tell you about next week's amusements!

"ALL-MAINS" SYSTEM AT GREYFRIARS

NEW GOVERNOR'S WILD PROPOSALS

Welcome to Professor Putrid, who has just joined the Board of Governors! This famous scientist was elected to the Board only a week ago, but he is already making his influence felt.

The professor, who is an enthusiastic student of electricity, is a familiar figure in County society. He wears spring-aided boots, cotton-wool in his ears, smoked glasses, a cape over his shoulders, and mittens on his hands; speaks through his nose, eats spaghetti for breakfast, and has a nervous habit of tugging at his eyebrows while he speaks. His dominating personality, as will be readily appreciated, is felt wherever he goes.

The professor takes up his governorship, we understand, with the fixed determination of modernising Greyfriars. In the course of a speech to his fellow-governors last week, he remarked that electrical labour-saving methods could transform Greyfriars into a different school altogether.

He suggested, for instance, that the antiquated rising-bell should be abolished. In its place, new bells, controlled by electricity, should be installed with a switch in the porter's

lodge. One press on the switch and the entire school would then be hurled out of bed by the force of electricity!

Another brilliant idea of the professor's is that we all "clock on" in



the evening, instead of wasting time at Calling Over. Then again, he thinks it absurd to send prefects round, herding

juniors to bed. A Rest Man, worked in conjunction with a clockwork clock, and containing a loud-speaker apparatus broadcasting the phrase: "Bed-time, you kids! We'd save a lot of trouble."

Everything at Greyfriars is badly in need of organising, according to Professor Putrid. As regards the fag habit of frying bangers on pen-holders as the last word in barbarism, and recommends the installation of an electric herring-frier in the use of fags.

Ten in studies is another matter to which he has made reference. Why should scores of fellows boil scores of kettles for tea, when electric boilers could be fitted up at the end of every passage?

The worthy professor even questions the existing method of cricket practice. He has an idea that electrically-controlled automatic bowler and batting machines could be fixed up at the nets to offer perfect machine-made opposition to players at net-practice!

By the look of things at present, we can only say that the school is in for a really "shocking" time!

STOP PRESS: At today's meeting of the Board of Governors, it was revealed that Professor Putrid is Sales Organisation for the local electricity company. He was very, but firmly, asked to resign, and drove away in a taxi, muttering into his beard and tugging furiously at his eyebrows. We breathe freely once more!

DENTIST EXTRACTS TEETH

Bunter Extracts Amusement

LESSON IN BRAVERY

The monthly inspection by the visiting dentist resulted in several casualties in the Remove, last week.

Kippa, Rake and Stott were informed by Mr. Quelch that they were to have molars extracted.

The three juniors in question all displayed a complete lack of enthusiasm. They were apparently under the impression that they might be hurt.

Fortunately, consolation rolled up in the shape of W. G. Bunter. Bunter did not seem to share their fears. He was grinning, anyway!

"I say, you fellows, you look as if you're going to a giddy funeral!" he remarked, sympathetically. "Cheer up, you know! He, he, he!"

Groan!

"After all, it won't last long!" Bunter chortled comfortingly. "Not longer than half an hour or so, anyway. Of course, you're bound to feel it. Nobody denies that. He, he, he!"

Groan!

"What you should do is to pull

yourself together, and make up your minds to go through with it like men. Be brave, you know—like me!"

"Box-rooms—rooms set apart for boxing."

"WUN LUNG.—What healthy people have two!"

"THE HALL.—The proceeds of a burglary; commonly known as 'Swag'."

"FISH.—Is good for eating, if well cooked."

"REMOVE FORE.—Take away that form!"

"THE HEAD.—That's left after you've cut off the limbs and neck."

"THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS.—The table in Masters' Common-room."

"MORNING BRUSH.—Sunrise."

"CALLING OVER.—The opposite of Calling Under."

"FUCK-SHOP.—A place where tucks and pleats are made."

"TAXIDERMIST.—Mr. Prout."

"GYM.—Short for 'James.'"

These things were actually held to be true by the misguided infant!

FORM MASTER'S BIRTHDAY

Disappointing Sequel

"Anyone told you that it's Quelch's birthday to-day?" Skinner asked last Tuesday, in the Rag.

Nobody had. But it gave Wharton an idea.

"The very thing we've been waiting for!" he said. "This gives us an opportunity of giving him a present!"

"There was a yell."

"Give him a present, after he's detained us for the next halfer!" snorted Johnny Bull. "I'd watch it!"

Wharton grinned.

"You don't quite understand, old bean. My idea is, that if we give him a birthday-present, he may get a pang of remorse, wipe a tear from his eye, and follow it up by wiping out that detention!"

"Oh!"

"Nothing like trying it, anyway!" was Russell's opinion. "I'll put up a bob, to start the ball rolling."

Most of us followed suit. Times were hard, but it was in a noble cause.

We mustered up twenty-five bob between us.

Wharton buzzed down to the village and bought a classy-looking fob, suitable for wearing on a watch-chain. Back at the school, he led a deputation to the hero of the hour.

Mr. Quelch was engaged in marking-up

exam papers. He looked up with a glare.

"Well, Wharton?"

"Many happy returns of the day, sir!"

Wharton said.

"What!"

"Many happy returns of the day, sir!"

We all joined in the cry.

"We've bought you a little present between us, sir!" Wharton went on, producing the fob. "It's nothing much—just a token of our esteem!"

Quelch looked at the fob. Then he looked at us.

"Presumably this is some sort of a practical joke—a 'jape,' I believe you call it!" he rasped. "Allow me to tell you, Wharton, that the article is useless to me; I wear a wristwatch!"

"Oh!"

"Furthermore, it is not my birthday!"

Quelch added. "You will each take fifty pence for impertinence! Go!"

We went—pronto!

"Didn't you say it was Quelch's birthday?" we howled at Skinner, in unison, when we ran into that cheery youth again.

Skinner looked surprised.

"Certainly not!"

"But you said—"

"I asked you whether anyone had told you it was Quelch's birthday," explained Skinner. "I just wondered whether it might be—that's all!"

"Yes—yes—"

We fell on Skinner. We smote him hip and thigh.

And even now we feel that he's had the better of it!

Groan!

"Everybody has to suffer at times," Bunter explained. "I dare say you'll have to endure the most intense pain. It'll be like giddy torture, while it lasts. Stands to reason a fellow can't have whacking great molars tugged out of his head by steel forceps without knowing it!"

Groan!

"Just keep a stiff upper lip," advised Bunter. "But when you're in your place! If Quelch'd told me I had to have a tooth out, I'd show my British pluck and smile, and make up my mind not to yell however much it hurt. He, he, he!"

Kippa, Rake and Stott had no time to say more than that before they were hustled into Mr. Quelch's study, which served as a dental surgery on such occasions.

Bunter and a small crowd waited to hear the yell. But they were disappointed. Kippa and Rake and Stott eventually came out again, holding their faces, but smiling. The extractions had been painless.

Mr. Quelch followed them out. He made a sign to Bunter.

Ah, Bunter! I had forgotten to mention to you that you and I are on the list for an extraction this morning."

A peculiar expression suddenly appeared on Bunter's face.

"W-w-w-h-a-a-t?" he stammered.

"You are to have a back tooth out, Bunter. Come into my study!"

Bunter, of course, promptly displayed his British pluck and endurance. He did it on somewhat unusual lines by emitting an ear-splitting howl.

"Yaroooooh! Lemme alone! I forgot to tell you before, sir, that I've got a weak knee!" The doctor said I mustn't have teeth out! Ow! And, anyway, you've made a mistake; the dentist means my minor—not me! Whooooop!

Mr. Quelch might have been expected to show admiration for Bunter's remarkable fortitude. But he didn't. He grabbed Bunter by the ear instead!

"Kindly stop talking nonsense, Bunter!" he said severely. "This way!"

The door closed behind Bunter. The crowd, listening from the passage, heard Bunter go through his ordeal in great pain.

exception of the following trivial utterances:

"Yarooooop! Whooooop! Ow-wow-ow! Gurrroff my chest! Lemme alone! Yooop! Ooooooh! Ow! Whoooooooooow!"

After that, the door opened again and Bunter staggered out, holding his jaw and yelling with stoical indifference.

Kippa and Rake and Stott promptly offered their congratulations on his remarkable heroism.

Bunter didn't seem to appreciate them.

The natural modesty of a hero, we presume.





SAVING HIS ENEMY!

(Continued from page 13.)

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh in his weird and wonderful English.

"Oh, let it drop!" said Wharton irritably.

"Can't let it drop!" said Johnny Bull.

"You know what it looks like—"

"I don't care a straw what it looks like."

"Then you jolly well ought to care!" grunted Johnny.

"Was it a Remove man, Harry?" asked Frank Nugent quietly.

Wharton compressed his lips.

Since he had discovered that the trickster was Billy Bunter, he rather wondered that he had not guessed it before, and wondered that the other fellows did not guess.

Bunter's "feud" with the Bounder had excited the hilarity of the whole Form, and the intense annoyance of Smithy himself, who felt that it was ridiculous to have such an enemy as the egregious Owl. Really, the fellows might have guessed.

But the fact was that they were thinking only of cricketing fellows, of whom Bunter certainly was not one. Bunter had nothing to do with cricket, except on "compulsory" days, when he rolled reluctantly down to the field.

Moreover, the fellows agreed that whoever it was that had "spoofed" Quelch had a terrific nerve. Bunter assuredly was not supposed to have the necessary nerve! The fellows forgot the old adage, that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

It was certain, at all events, that no one suspected Bunter, or dreamed of suspecting him. Wharton himself, though he had thought the matter over a good deal, had never thought of the fat Owl, until Bunter had let the secret out to him.

But he realised that if he said anything on the subject he might as well give Bunter away at once. The merest hint would be sufficient to turn suspicion in the right direction.

And he could not give Bunter away! The fatuous Owl had had no right to tell him such a thing in confidence; but he had done so, relying on Wharton not to give him away. It was impossible to betray him.

Wharton remained silent, leaving Nugent's question unanswered.

The Co. exchanged uncomfortable looks.

They had been deeply indignant at the Bounder's suspicion of their chum; but they had to admit now that there were grounds for it. They were very well aware of the view taken by most of the Remove.

"Well," growled Johnny Bull, "you've asked for it, Wharton! If you had nothing to do with that dirty trick—"

"If!" repeated Wharton, his eyes flashing.

"If you had nothing to do with it," said Johnny in his slow, stolid way, "you're making all the fellows think

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you had. You've no right to keep the rotter's secret."

"He spoke in confidence—"

"You shouldn't have listened to such a confidence."

I did not know what he was going to say, till he got it out!" snapped Wharton.

"Do you think I wanted to hear anything of the sort?"

"Why did he tell you, then?" asked Bob quietly.

Wharton did not answer.

If he had answered what was the truth, that the fellow in question was a babbling ass, who did not understand the seriousness of what he had done, he might as well have given Bunter's name.

"Nothing to say?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Nothing!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, you can't blame Smithy for chucking you out of the eleven in the cires!" said Johnny Bull. "Any skipper would."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, roll away, Bunter!" snapped Bob Cherry. He was in no mood for the fat Owl's chatter.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Kick that fat idiot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith came out of the House in flannels, with his bat under his arm. The Bounder's face was very cheery. Matters were going well for the new captain of the Remove.

"Come on, you fellows!" he called out, as he passed the group. "You're wanted, you four."

He ignored Wharton. Wharton was not wanted, and it pleased the Bounder to make that clear.

He walked on, and the group broke up.

"Better get along," said Bob, and the four juniors followed Vernon-Smith to the cricket field, leaving Wharton alone.

Wharton looked after them, with a sombre brow. A fat thumb poked him in the ribs.

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

"You fat scoundrel!" said Wharton savagely.

"Oh, really, old fellow! I say, I'm sorry for you, poor old chap!" said Bunter. "Really sorry, you know! I wish I hadn't told you about it now—only I wanted to do you a good turn, you know."

"You frabjous owl!" Wharton turned away, and then he turned back.

"Look here, Bunter, can't you do the decent thing for once? You see the rotten position you've put me in. You'll be bowled out sooner or later—you're fool enough to give yourself away any time. Go to Quelch and own up. You'll get off easier by telling the truth."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Can't you see that it's up to you?" asked Harry patiently. "It was rotten enough when only that cad Smithy suspected me. Now all the fellows have got the same idea into their heads. Even my own friends don't know what to think. You can't leave it at that. Be decent—for once!"

"It means a whopping, you silly ass—"

"You can stand a whopping, you fat chump! Can't you see that it's up to you?" snapped Wharton.

"But—but I don't want to be whipped!" wailed Bunter.

"Oh, go and eat cake!"

"I—I say, old chap, don't be waxy, you know. Of course, I'm not afraid of a whopping. But—but, after all, Quelch might let off a fellow lightly if—"

if he owned up in a frank and

manly way—what?" Bunter blinked anxiously at Wharton. "And—and the fellows would think it pretty decent, too."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Wharton.

"Blessed if I don't!" said Bunter, with a burst of courage. "Dash it all, what's a whopping? I'm not soft, you know, not like some fellows! I'm not the fellow to let the fellows think it was another fellow when it was me! I'm not going to let you down, old chap! I'm going to Quelch."

"That's the tune!" said Wharton encouragingly.

"Dash it all, a fellow can stand the racket, you know!" said Bunter recklessly. "All it needs is pluck. Well, pluck's my long suit."

"Oh, my hat—I mean, right as rain! Get on with it!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter, his fat mind quite made up now. "I'm going!"

Billy Bunter marched into the House, with resolution in his fat face. Harry Wharton followed him. He would not betray Bunter; but undoubtedly it was up to the fat Owl to own up to what he had done, now that suspicion was fastened on the wrong shoulders. And Bunter—for the moment, at least—quite fancied himself in the role of a frank, manly fellow who wasn't afraid to own up to beard the lion in his den, as it were, and pay the piper after calling the tune.

His fat chin was held up and his eyes gleamed behind his spectacles as he marched away to Masters' studies.

"You wait here, old chap!" he said, at the corner of the passage. "I'm going straight in to Quelch! I shall say: 'It was I! Flog me, if you like! I can stand it! I did it! See?'"

"Go ahead!" said Harry.

"I shall face him like—like Ajax defying the laundress!" said Bunter valourously. "Rely on me, old chap! Facing him with perfect coolness, I shall say: 'I did it! Just like that!'"

"Go it!"

Billy Bunter marched valiantly down the passage. He arrived at Mr. Quelch's door and raised a fat hand to tap.

Right up to that moment Billy Bunter's courage had upheld him. In his mind's eye, he saw himself facing the Remove master like Ajax defying the lightning, owning up in a manly way, and taking his punishment with iron fortitude. It was an attractive picture. But as he stood at the Remove master's door that mental picture seemed suddenly to lose its attractiveness.

Bunter's hand was raised to tap—but he did not tap. His fat paw remained, like Mohammed's coffin, suspended in midair.

He lowered it again—without tapping.

It was borne in upon Billy Bunter's fat mind that he was not, after all, the fellow to beard the lion in his den.

His fat legs, which he had intended to carry him into Mr. Quelch's study, seemed endued with a volition of their own—they walked away with Bunter, back to the corner of the passage where he had left Wharton!

"I—I say, old chap," stammered Bunter. "I—I—I think—I—I rather think I'll leave it till—till—till tomorrow—I mean, till the day after tomorrow—or—or—or perhaps next week, or— Yaroooooooh!"

Bang!

Billy Bunter's bullet head smote the wall. Then he sat down, hard. He roared.

Harry Wharton walked out of the House and left him roaring.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Hand of the Enemy!

"**N**UGENT!" Frank Nugent looked round as the Bounder called to him. The Remove fellows were coming off the field after practice. "You'll be wanted on Saturday!" said Vernon-Smith.

"On Saturday?" repeated Frank. "Yes. In the St. Jim's game." "Oh!" ejaculated Nugent. The Bounder walked away without anything further. Frank Nugent looked after him, and looked at his comrades. Frank's expression was a mingling of elation and dubiousness.

The former captain of the Remove—Frank's best chum—had seldom or never played him in a really hard game. Frank was a good and a keen cricketer, and perhaps he did not always wholly agree with Wharton that there were better men to be found in the Remove. But he had always loyally acquiesced, and never thought of grousing.

Certainly he would never have desired his captain to act against his own judgment on grounds of friendship. Still, if the new captain of the Remove had a different opinion, Nugent was naturally quite willing to believe that he was right. The Bounder had been watching him at games practice, and seemed satisfied that he was good enough to put up against Tom Merry & Co. when they came over from St. Jim's. Frank could not help feeling pleased.

All that worried him was the fact that he was given Wharton's place. But if Wharton was definitely out of the game, the place had to be given to somebody.

Johnny Bull gave a grunt. "Glad on your account, Franky," he said. "But Wharton ought to be playing. It's asking for a whopping to leave him out on Saturday."

"Well, that's settled now," said Frank.

"Time it was unsettled again, then!" grunted Johnny. "Wharton seems to be playing the giddy ox; but that's no reason for chucking away the first big fixture of the season."

Frank Nugent coloured. "I'm not going all out to get duck's eggs if I play St. Jim's!" he said, with a touch of sarcasm. "I shall make a feeble sort of attempt to keep my sticks up!"

"Frank will put up a good game," said Bob Cherry hastily, "and, in the circumstances, Smithy can't be expected to play Wharton."

"The expectfulness is not terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull opened his lips—and closed them again. He was about to say that, if Wharton was left out, the next best man should be selected. But even Johnny, who was not famous for tact, realised that it would be wiser not to make that remark to Frank Nugent.

The chums of the Remove walked back to the House in silence. Nugent went up to the study to look for his chum. He found Harry Wharton there, not looking in his usual cheerful mood. It was rather a new experience for Wharton to be left out of games, treated as a fellow of no more importance than Skinner or Snoop or Fisher T. Fish or Billy Bunter. He had no doubt that that had been the Bounder's intention all along if it could be worked, and he had played into his enemy's hands and given him his chance. And there seemed no help for it, unless he gave Bunter away, which was impossible, or unless Bunter owned up, which was extremely improbable.

"Ready for tea, old chap?" said

Harry, as Nugent came in, cheery and flushed after the cricket. "I've got it ready, as I had time on my hands."

There was a trace of bitterness in his tone, of which he was unconscious.

"Look here, Harry," said Nugent, "this is all rot! You know jolly well that you ought to be in the eleven on Saturday."

"That's for Smithy to settle." "If you'd clear up that rotten affair—"

"I can't. Let it drop."

"Well, so long as the fellows think what they do, it means that you can't play for the Remove," said Frank. "Smithy's acting within his rights, and all the men back him up."

"He's got away with it," assented Wharton. "He was watching for the

chance, and he's jumped at it with both feet. No good talking. My place will be filled on Saturday—I rather wonder by whom. Smithy's already put his pal Redwing in. If he had another friend, he would put him in, whether he could play cricket or not. Luckily for the side, he hasn't. So I suppose he will pick out a cricketer."

Nugent looked at his chum rather oddly.

"What man would you pick out in the cires?" he asked.

"Smithy's not likely to ask my advice!" said Wharton, with a laugh. "Still, I'd like to know."

"Well, there are plenty of good men in the Remove," Wharton looked thoughtful. It was easy to see that, whether he was in the eleven or not, he

(Continued on next page.)



GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 28.

This week our special Greyfriars Rhymester selects for his target **JOHNNY BULL**, whose hero is, like Johnny himself, a brave young gallant.

No thoughts of death disturb the bold Sir Francis
As he stands there and calmly views the foe!

And, first of all, he finishes his pastime
(Ten thousand ships would not make him refrain!),

"On with the game!" he cries; then, for the last time,
He pits himself against the might of Spain!

With fireships and with desperate bravado,
He makes the Spaniards stop and put about.

Then comes a howling gale, a great tornado,
Which leaves defeat a panic-stricken rout;

Battered by mighty seas, appalled by thunder,
Rent by the tempest, swamped by many a wave,

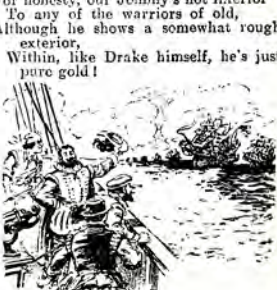
Sank the Armada, and, with it, torn asunder,
The Spanish grandeur found a watery grave!

Brave Sir Francis Drake, whose cool nonchalance
Gains admiration from each British son,

Your hero-worshippers are bold young gallants,
Of whom blunt-spoken Johnny Bull is one!

For honesty, our Johnny's not inferior
To any of the warriors of old,

Although he shows a somewhat rough exterior,
Within, like Drake himself, he's just pure gold!



FOR once we'll take a glance into the pages
Of history—the days of Good Queen Bess;

The great adventures of the Middle Ages;

The men who rescued England from distress;

The Spanish Inquisition; Torquemada;

The treasure ships that sailed upon the Main;

And, lastly, the Invincible Armada,
The peak of all the grandeur that was Spain!

Was ever such a fleet upon the ocean?
A hundred ships there were, and twenty-nine!

The guns set up a thunderous commotion
From sixty-five huge warships of the line!

No single man of thousands who were present
Had ever seen a like array of ships;

They sailed to England in a mighty crescent,
Which boasted seven full miles between its tips!

And what had England waiting there to meet them?

Eighty small ships—and some were out of gear!

Could these encounter such a fleet and beat them?

The Spanish scamen laughed at the idea!

But never beats the British heart so stoutly
As when the country's honour's at the stake,

And never men loved honour more devoutly
Than Howard, Hawkins, Frobiher, and Drake!

The great Armada, stiff with pride, advances,

And Drake is playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe;

was as keen as ever on seeing the Remove win. "Let's see! Who's in the team, so far as we know? Smithy, Bob, Inky, Johnny, Toddy, Redwing, Squiff, Brown, Linley, Penfold—a good crowd. I shouldn't play Redwing; he's not up to St. Jim's form. But it wouldn't be any use telling Smithy that; he knows it as well as I do. I should pick Ogilvy for eleventh man."

"Ogilvy!" said Frank slowly.
 "Yes. He's the best reserve man."
 "That's a good man," agreed Frank. "Still, there are other men in the Form who can play cricket."
 "Russell?" asked Wharton. "Hardly so good as Ogilvy. Hazel's a good man at times, but too jolly unreliable. And Monty Newland—"

"I play cricket myself, after a fashion!" said Frank Nugent, with a distinct touch of sarcasm.

"I'd rather have played you than any man in the Remove, when I was skipper, as you know," said Harry, "and if Ogilvy wasn't available, and I had the place to fill, I fancy I should put you in, Frank. But Smithy isn't likely to do it."

"He's done it!" said Frank abruptly.

"What?"

"Smithy's told me I shall be wanted on Saturday."

"To play St. Jim's?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, he didn't say he wanted me to score!" said Nugent, still more sarcastic. "I took him to mean that he wanted me to play—astonishing as it seems to you."

"Blessed if I thought for a moment that Smithy would put in a pal of mine!" exclaimed Wharton. "I believe he would be glad to chuck the others—Bob and Inky and Johnny—if the team could spare them—but he doesn't want to bag a hopeless licking from St. Jim's. I don't catch on to this, Frank—Smithy's a good bit of a rotter, but he's no fool; and he knows that if I stand out, Oggy ought to leave the place. I know it, and he knows it! Blessed if I catch on to his game."

Frank Nugent compressed his lips.
 He was Wharton's oldest and best chum; and their friendship, often put to the test, had always stood the strain. But Wharton seemed to forget that entirely when he was speaking of cricket.

In that connection, he judged Frank purely and simply from the point of view of the game—as he would have judged any man, friend or foe.

That, of course, was quite right and proper; and, indeed, a matter of duty when he was skipper. But right and proper as it was, it had not always been quite agreeable or gratifying.

Nugent had never grumbled; but sometimes he had not been quite convinced, and it was only human nature, perhaps, for Frank to think that Smithy, after all, probably knew what he was doing.

"Blessed if I see his game!" repeated Wharton, following his own line of thought, and unconscious of Frank's hardening face.

"After all, Smithy's skipper now," said Nugent. "He's supposed to know something about a man's form. He may be right, you know."

Wharton shook his head.

"He isn't—and he knows he isn't!" he said. "There's precious few things in which I agree with Smithy; but picking out a man for a match is one of the few. I think he's a rotten captain for the Form—but he can select a team as well as any man in the Remove, if he chooses. In this case, he doesn't choose—blessed if I know why."

"Oh, rot!"

Wharton started.
 He stared at Nugent's face, which was growing crimson; and smiled.

"My dear chap, I'm jolly glad you're playing," he said, "but speaking purely as a cricketer, you know—"

"Smithy's supposed to be a cricketer of sorts," said Frank tartly. "And he doesn't seem to think me a hopeless dud."

"You're not; or anything like it."

"I never grumbled when you left me out; I suppose you don't expect me to begin grouching because Vernon-Smith's put me in."

"Of course not, ass! But—"

"Even if I'm the rottenest man in the eleven—"

Nugent's tone was decidedly acid.

"You're not that, either! You're a better man than Redwing."

"That's some comfort," said Frank sarcastically. "I'm glad to know that you don't think me the rottenest cricketer ever, anyhow."

Wharton did not answer that. He gave Nugent a keen, steady look.

Frank went on:

"I've got your place! You know I don't want it! I'm not making out that I've got it on my form—I know you could play my head off. But you're standing out of the team, anyhow—you've made it impossible for Smithy to play you, by your own obstinacy. If you like to act like a sensible fellow, it's not too late now—I'd stand out like a shot to make room for you again. You know that, or you ought to know it."

"I do know it, Frank. That's not the point—"

"Well, then, if Smithy thinks fit to give me a chance, that you never thought of giving me, I don't see that you need make out that he's a fool or a rotter or a rogue. I think you might give him credit for knowing something about the game, and something about his job. After all, the fellows elected him captain—and I don't see, for one, that he's a rotten skipper because he doesn't see eye to eye with you."

"Look here, Frank—"

"Oh, we needn't jaw about it," said Nugent. "Smithy's asked me to play on Saturday; and that's that! You can come along and count the duck's eggs, if you like, and after afterwards that you said so."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

He had wondered why Smithy had put his best pal into the team. It was not to please him, that was certain; and not because Frank was the best man available. He guessed the reason now. "Divide and conquer" was the maxim the Bounder was acting on. He was playing Nugent because Wharton, in his place, would not have played him—and by so doing, he had thrown an apple of discord into Study No. 1.

"The rotter!" muttered Wharton, as that suspicion came into his mind. "The rotten outsider!"

"And all because I'm given a chance in a good match!" said Nugent bitterly.

"Well, I've heard you say that it's a man's duty to back up his skipper—and I'm going to do it. And if you want to call Smithy names for giving me a chance, you can find somebody else to listen to it."

"Frank, old chap—"

Nugent left the study without answering. He seemed to have forgotten that he had come up to tea. The door closed after him—hard.

Harry Wharton stared rather blankly at the study door. His face set, and his brows knitted. The temptation was strong upon him to walk along to the Bounder's study and plant a clenched

fat in Herbert Vernon-Smith's mocking face. That, however, would not have improved matters. He waited for Nugent to come back—but he did not come.

But a few minutes later, the door opened.

"I say, old chap—"

"Oh, get out, you fat idiot!" growled Wharton, with a glare at the fat face of William George Bunter.

"Oh, really, Wharton! As Nugent's teasing with Smithy, I thought you'd like me to drop in—"

"Is Nugent teasing with Smithy?"

"Yes, old chap—not a thing I'd do myself; I bar that rotter Smithy. So I've come—"

Bunter rolled in. Harry Wharton gave him a glare, and walked out of the study. Bunter blinked after him.

"I say, old chap, where are you going—with tea on the table? I say, shall I begin, old fellow? I say—"

But answer there came none. Wharton seemed to have forgotten tea—which was quite inexplicable to Billy Bunter. Bunter decided to begin—and having begun, he finished; and certainly nothing that had been laid in for tea in Study No. 1 was wasted; Bunter saw to that. So the state of affairs in Study No. 1 was satisfactory, at least, to William George Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Tries Again!

"THE rottenfulness is terrific!"
 Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh made that remark.

Billy Bunter, ensconced in a deep armchair in the Rag, blinked round through his big spectacles.

Four members of the Famous Five were standing near him; taking no heed of the fat Owl in the armchair.

"It's rotten enough," said Bob Cherry. "Still, I'm glad that old Franky is in the eleven for Saturday. That's all to the good, in a way."

"Right as rain, as far as that goes!" said Johnny Bull. "But, well, after all, Smithy's skipper, and it's up to him. As Nugent's pals, we're bound to be glad—but—"

Harry Wharton's brow was clouded.

"Smithy means this to cause trouble," he said quietly. "But we don't want to play into that rotter's hands, and get Frank's back up."

"It's all your fault!" grunted Johnny Bull. "You ought to be in the team, and you'd be in it, if you hadn't given Smithy the chance he was watching for. You've played into his hands already."

"Oh, let that drop!" said Wharton irritably. "If you knew how the matter stood, you wouldn't blame me. Let it drop."

"Well, I jolly well told me—"
 "My dear chap, you've told me what you think about it, not once, but a dozen times, at least. I know it by heart now."

"Look here—"

"Oh, rot!"

Wharton left the group of juniors, and walked out of the Rag. Johnny Bull stared after him grimly.

"Better let it drop, old chap," said Bob uncomfortably. "It's not much use arguing with Wharton."

Snort from Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed chums," murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, "the ragfulness is not the proper caper. Let us cultivate the soft answer which turns away a bird in the bush from going longest to the well, as the esteemed proverb says."



Harry Wharton watched Billy Bunter march valiantly up to Mr. Quelch's door and raise a fat hand to tap. But Bunter lowered it again without tapping. "I—I say, old chap!" he stammered. "I—I—I think I'll leave it till—till—till to-morrow—I mean, till the day after to-morrow or—or—perhaps next week!"

Billy Bunter detached himself from the armchair, and rolled out of the Rag, unnoticed by the three.

There was a worried wrinkle in Bunter's fat brow.

Seldom as Billy Bunter's fat conscience troubled him, there was no doubt that it troubled him now.

Several times the fat junior had thought of owning up, and setting Harry Wharton right with the Form. But he had never got any farther than thinking about it.

That, as a matter of fact, Bunter was never likely to do. Owning up and taking his gruel was not in Bunter's line.

But he would gladly have done anything he could—anything that would not have brought painful consequences to his fat self.

Bunter had been thinking again now. And his footsteps took him to the Bounder's study in the Remove passage. Frank Nugent was leaving the study as he arrived there. He had evidently stayed for a chat after tea. He called back a cheery word to Smythy as he went, and walked down the passage to the stairs without glancing at Bunter.

Bunter paused outside the door. He heard a laugh in the study—the Bounder's sardonic laugh. Tom Redwing's quiet voice followed:

"I don't like this, Smythy. Of course, if you think Nugent's the best man available, I suppose you're bound to play him on Saturday. But giving Wharton's place to his best chum—especially as Wharton never thought him good enough for a match like St. Jim's—"

"You think it might cause trouble in the happy family?"

Bunter's fat ear was to the keyhole, and he heard the Bounder's words.

"Well, I'm afraid it may."

"That would be too bad, Reddy. Of course, I should hate anything of the sort," said the Bounder gravely.

"I hope that's true, Smythy," said Redwing, with a touch of sharpness in his voice.

"What a hopeful nature!" said Smythy.

"Oh, rats!"

Bunter heard Redwing coming to the door and jumped away. Redwing left the study, and the Bounder laughed again. Billy Bunter blinked after Tom Redwing, and then into the study at the grinning face of the Bounder.

"I say, Smythy—"

"Get out, you fat freak!"

Bunter rolled in.

Vernon-Smith looked round him, evidently in search of a missile. The fat Owl eyed him warily.

"Look here, Smythy," he said, "I've jolly well got something to tell you. It wasn't Wharton did that phoning trick on Redclyffe day."

The Bounder, who had picked up a cushion, let it drop again, and stared at Billy Bunter in blank astonishment.

"What do you mean, you fat owl?" he demanded. "What the thump do you know about it, anyhow?"

"That's telling," answered Bunter. "I'm not going to tell you who it was. But I jolly well know it wasn't Wharton. He never had anything to do with it. I—I know who it was."

"Who was it, then?"

"It was a—a—a chap," stammered Bunter. "I—I'm not going to give him away. I—I've got a special reason for not giving him away. But—but I jolly well know who it was. I—I saw him."

"I—I saw him going into Prout's study that day to use the phone," said Bunter. "In fact, I heard every word he said on the phone. Wharton had nothing to do with it—see?"

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"You're just the prying, spying rotter that would nose it out!" he exclaimed. "I've wondered and wondered who it was. If I could spot him, I'd make him own up that Wharton put him up to it, and show that cur up, and not leave him a leg to stand on. Who was it phoned that day?"

"That's telling," answered Bunter cautiously. "I jolly well know who it was, but—but I'm not giving him away—for a—a very special reason."

"Why not, you burbling bandersnatch?"

"Well, he's a fellow I like," said Bunter. "In fact, he's the fellow I like best in all the school."

"Blessed if I'd ever thought you liked anybody but your own podgy self!" said the Bounder contemptuously.

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat owl?"

"Oh, nothing! But, look here, Smythy. I know all about it, you see, and you can take my word for it that Wharton never—"

"Oh, ring off, fathead!"

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Vernon-Smith's hand strayed to the cushion again.

"You see, it ain't fair on Wharton," said Bunter, blinking at him. "You've made this an excuse to squeeze him out of the cricket. Well, it's rather rotten for me letting him down like this, you know. I came jolly near going to Quelch yesterday and telling him the whole thing."

The Bounder eyed Billy Bunter keenly.

"Look here, Bunter, if you've found out who it was—"

"He, he, he!"

"Give me the chap's name. Once I know who did the trick, I shall be able to pin Wharton down."

"I tell you Wharton never—"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" The Bounder rose to his feet. "You've said you know who did that phoning trick. Well, if you know, you're going to tell me. Who was it?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Billy Bunter made a strategic movement towards the door. With a jump the Bounder interposed.

"Now, then—"

"Here, keep off, you beast!" exclaimed Bunter in alarm, as the cushion was lifted.

He backed round the table.

Bunter's fat conscience had brought him to Study No. 4. He had hoped to convince the Bounder, but certainly without telling him who had played that trick on Prout's telephone. That secret was to remain hermetically sealed in Bunter's own podgy breast. But the fat Owl wished now that he hadn't called. He blinked at Smithy in alarm across the table.

"I'm going to make you tell me, if you know," said the Bounder grimly. "Now, then—"

"I—I say, old chap," stammered Bunter. "The—the fact is, I—I don't know anything about it, and I say—Whoop!"

The cushion whizzed across the table and landed on a well-filled waistcoat. There was a bump as Bunter sat down. "Yaroooh!"

"Now, then, you fat frog—"

Smithy came round the table.

"Yow-ow! Leave off kicking me, you beast!" yelled Bunter, scrambling wildly for the door. "I don't know anything—Yaroooh! I only came here to say—Whoop! Whoop! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter hardly knew how he got out of the study. A final kick sped the parting guest, and Bunter yelled and vanished along the passage.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Tip from Bunter!

FRANK NUGENT laid down his pen, pushed back his books, and rose from the table in Study No. 1. He moved to the door, without speaking, and Harry Wharton glanced after him. Hardly a word had been spoken during prep. There was a strained atmosphere in the study. Wharton compressed his lips as Nugent put his hand on the door. His own temper was not always reliable, and it had been sorely tried of late.

"Look here, Frank—"

Nugent glanced back at him.

"For goodness' sake, don't play the goat!" said Wharton. "You're letting that cad Smithy pull your leg!"

"I'd rather not hear you calling Smithy names, if you don't mind," said Nugent coolly. "I'm not going to believe a fellow a cad because he picks me out to play for Greyfriars, if that's what you mean."

"I'm jolly glad you're in the eleven," said Harry.

"Yes, you seemed glad when I told you about it," said Frank sarcastically.

"Look here, old chap—"

"Sorry I can't stop!"

"Why can't you stop, you ass?"

"I told Smithy I'd see him in the Rag, after prep!" answered Nugent—and, with that, he left the study.

Wharton remained seated at the table, his face setting hard. He was not angry with his chum, but his anger against the Bounder was deep and intense. Matters were not going on the even tenor of their way in the usually happy and united circle of the famous

Co.; and it was the hand of his enemy that was pulling the strings.

He was defeated all along the line by his unscrupulous rival; and the Bounder's only justification was his belief that Wharton had played a dastardly trick on him. But even that was no justification, for a decent fellow would never have entertained that suspicion.

It was only by trickery that the Bounder had ever gained his present position, which he was using so ruthlessly in furthering his private enmities. Indeed, it was only by cunning, combined with luck, that he was at Greyfriars at all—he had earned the "sack" a dozen times over.

Even now that he was captain of the Remove, he had not, as Wharton was quite sure, given up the shady blackguardism that was a part of his character. Any day the beaks might spot him, and he would be bunked from the school; it might happen any day, even before Saturday, when the St. Jim's match was coming off. And that was the fellow who had defeated him, and turned the Form against him.

Wharton could have found it in his heart to wish that the beaks would learn what a dozen fellows in the Remove could have told them, and that the gates of Greyfriars would close behind his enemy.

The study door opened, and Billy Bunter came in, and shut the door carefully behind him.

"I say, old chap—"

Bunter.

There was a sort of surreptitious mysteriousness about the fat Owl. It did not impress Wharton, however—he was in no mood for Bunter's antics.

"Buzz off, for goodness' sake!" he snapped.

"We've got him!" whispered Bunter.

"Eh? Who?"

"That rotter Smithy!"

"What on earth do you mean, ass?"

"We've got him—got him where we want him!" said Bunter, his little round eyes gleaming behind his big, round spectacles. "I say, old chap, you know how that rotter's treated me—"

"Fathead!"

"And how he's treated you, old fellow! That's what I'm thinking about—entirely about you, old chap."

"Idiot!"

"And now we've got him!" Bunter's fat voice was a deep and mysterious whisper. "I say, suppose he was sacked—what?"

Harry Wharton started. That thought had been vaguely in his own mind; he had been thinking that it would be a good thing for the Remove and the school if the Bounder got what he had asked for so often.

"What on earth are you driving at?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean that Smithy has been spotted at last?"

"Not yet, old chap! But he's going to be!" grinned Bunter. "We're going to get him spotted, old fellow! See? I heard him talking to Redwing—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Redwing was jawing him, because he's going out of bounds to-night," breathed Bunter. "Smithy only laughed at Redwing—he never takes any notice of his pi-jaw, you know. He's getting out of the dorm to-night to go down to the Cross Keys."

"The dirty rotter!" growled Wharton. "No bizney of mine, or of yours either, you fat fraud—mind your own business!"

"Can't you see what a chance it is?" breathed Bunter. "Smithy's getting out at the box-room window—you know the way he goes out. Well, suppose the

THE MAN THE POLICE COULDN'T CATCH!

FOLLOWING HIS USUAL DARING CUSTOM, THE MYSTERY MAN OF MAYFAIR CHEEKILY WARNED THE POLICE BEFOREHAND THAT HE INTENDED TO BREAK INTO A BANK... HOW HE CARRIED OUT THIS ASTONISHING RAID AND THE SIMPLE METHOD HE USED IS TOLD IN GRIPPING STYLE IN THE ALL-THRILLING STORY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST AND CLEVEREST CRIMINAL WHICH APPEARS IN THIS WEEK'S

RANGER

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window was fastened when he came back?"

Harry Wharton laughed, a rather hard laugh. If some watchful prefect or dutiful beak shut the Bouncer out, and the whole story of his dingy black-guardism came to light, it meant the "sack" for him, and Wharton could not have felt sorry. And every time the black sheep of the Remove defied the rules of the school he took such chances.

"Serve him right, wouldn't it?" asked Bunter.

"Serve him jolly well right!" assented Wharton. "Smithy will take a chance too often, one of these days, and then the chopper will come down."

"You'd be captain of the Remove again, old chap, if that beast was turned out of Greyfriars."

"Oh, shut up!"

"You'd be in the St. Jim's match on Saturday—" urged Bunter. "And it would be a jolly good thing all round. I say, old chap, you simply can't lose a chance like this!"

"You howling ass!" said Harry. "What have I got to do with it? You're not suggesting that I should sneak about the fellow, are you?"

"If anybody found that window unfastened, after Smithy was gone, he would fasten it," argued Bunter. "Wingate might spot it, or Gwynne, or old Quelch—but in case they don't, you know, you could slip out of the dorm."

"What?"

"And—and fasten the box-room window."

Wharton stared.

"See?" chuckled Bunter. "The beast would be shut out! He couldn't get in till morning! It would be a show-up! Quelch wouldn't be sorry for a chance to get shut of him—all the fellows know that! He would take him to the Head at once to be expelled! Early train home for Smithy—what?"

"You fat villain!" gasped Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap! I'm not suggesting this because the beast kicked me, you know! I'm thinking of you—entirely of you! And—and the Form, you know—Smithy's a rotten captain! Look here, you slip out of the dorm to-night and shut him out, and his goose is cooked! What?"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

He would have had little regret if the Bouncer had been spotted and kicked out of the school. He was not at all sure whether Smithy, in his place, would not have taken the hint from Bunter, and fallen in with the fat Owl's suggestion. But Harry Wharton, certainly, was not the fellow to fall in with it.

"You're on, old chap?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"You fat rascal!" said Wharton—and he grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar. "I suppose you don't understand what a little fat scoundrel you are—"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"But I'll try to make you understand!"

Bang!

Bunter's head smote the study door.

"Yaroooooh!"

"That's for listening at Smithy's key-hole!"

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

Bang!

"That's for suggesting to me to play a dirty trick!"

"Whoooooop!"

Bang!

"And that's one for luck! Now get out!"

"Whoooooooooop!" roared Bunter.

"Ow! Beast! Help! Whooop! I say, you rotter, yaroooooooooh!"

The study door opened. Herbert Vernon-Smith looked in, with an unpleasant expression on his face.

"Stop that bullying, Wharton!" he snapped.

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Leave Bunter alone! Stop that at once!"

"You cheeky cad!"

"I think I've heard you say that it's a Form captain's duty to put a stop to bullying!" drawled the Bouncer.

"Perhaps you've changed your views since you were turfed out of the captaincy! Let go Bunter's collar at once!"

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter.

He jerked his collar away from Wharton, and dodged round the Bouncer and fled. Wharton stood with clenched hands, his eyes gleaming at the Bouncer. The new captain of the Remove gave him a sneering grin, and walked on to the stairs. A minute later, Billy Bunter's spectacle's glimmered in at the door again.

"I—I say, old chap, d-d-don't you tell Smithy what I was saying—he would be fearfully waxy! I say, you beast, don't you chuck that ink at me! Ooooooh!"

Bunter departed again, taking the ink with him.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Shut Out!

"SILLY ASS!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, was addressing himself. There were no other ears to hear.

It was midnight—a fine, clear, starry May night. Every man at Greyfriars was—or was supposed to be—fast asleep in bed at that hour. The last door had closed, the last light had been turned off.

But there was one Greyfriars man, at least, who was not asleep, and not in bed. As midnight chimed, Herbert Vernon-Smith was clambering over the wall at the end of the lonely Cloisters and dropping within.

Dark shadows were round him under the old stone arches; save for the light fall of his own feet there was no sound.

But the Bouncer stopped to listen, with bent head, before he went on his way. The last strokes of midnight boomed away into silence.

As he stood there, with a glimmer of starlight on his hard face, Smithy had a tired, almost haggard, look. He was feeling the effects of unhealthy excitement in a stuffy atmosphere; he was tired and dispirited and sullen tempered, and there was a sneer on his lips at his own folly.

"Silly ass!" he repeated. "Askin' for it—after one narrow escape this term! If Quelch gets another chance at me, I'm done—and I'm offerin' him one! Pah!"

He shrugged his shoulders angrily.

He was at the top of the ladder now in his Form. Captain of the Remove, his rival down and out. Looking forward to a series of triumphs as the matches came along, and he was risking it all, all that he had won, for what? The game was not worth the candle—that was the reflection that often occurred to the Bouncer on his way back from a reckless excursion after lights out. What a fool, what a black-guard he was! That was his thought as he stood there in the faint glimmer of the stars.

He had won all that he wanted, and he was risking it, and his school career along with it—through that ineradicable kink of dingy black-guardism in his

nature. If a prefect happened to be suspicious—if his Form master paid an unexpected visit to the dormitory—as sometimes happened—what then? Then the game would be up, with a vengeance! A fellow found to be out of bounds at midnight was "for it," short and sharp! A brief interview with his headmaster and the train home—that would be the sudden finish to his career at Greyfriars School.

And Quelch had an eye on him, he knew that. His escape once already that term, had been a narrow one. Quelch would not let him escape a second time, with a clear case against him. His luck had always been phenomenal; but fortune, tempted too often, must fail him at last.

He moved away from the wall at last, and picked his way quietly along the dark Cloisters.

The House was dark and silent. Not a single light gleamed from a window into the May night.

Silently the Bouncer reached the back of the building, and climbed to the flat leads under the window of the Remove box-room.

That window was shut. He had shut it after leaving; but he had, of course, left it unfastened. It was easy to push up the lower sash—unless some watchful master, making his rounds, had chanced to look into the remote room and discover that the catch was not closed. That, however, was a remote contingency.

Standing on the leads below the window-sill, the Bouncer pushed at the sash of the little window.

He gave a start, and a thrill ran through him as he found that the sash did not move.

He pushed harder. Generally the window moved easily enough, and the Bouncer had often used it. Now it did not move at all.

"By gad!" breathed the Bouncer.

He knew now that the catch within had been snapped shut. Otherwise the window would have opened.

His heart throbbed.

"Caught!" he muttered.

He leaned on the window-sill, and passed his hand over his brow. His fingers came away wet with perspiration.

The window was fastened within, and he was shut out of the House. There was no other way in. He was shut out till the House opened in the morning. The game was up!

What might have happened a score of times had happened at last. He had tempted Fate once too often.

For several long minutes Vernon-Smith stood there, leaning on the sill, with a feeling almost of sickness in his heart.

But he roused himself at last.

After the first shock, his thoughts raced. The game was not up yet. The window was fastened—but his absence had not been discovered. Had that been the case, had Mr. Quelch learned that he was out of the House at that hour, the Remove master would not have merely closed the window and shut him out for the night. It was certain that Quelch would have stayed up for him—waited for him to come in, and a light would have been burning. As soon as he thought the matter out coolly, the Bouncer realised that.

Nothing was known—yet! The window had been fastened by someone who had noticed that the catch was back—but without any suspicion that a breaker of bounds was outside the House.

The Bouncer breathed more freely.

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There was a chance yet, if he could get into the House somehow and get back to the Remove dormitory. If that was impossible, he was done for; but he was not the fellow to leave a chance untried.

Quietly, coolly, he climbed on the window-sill, and knelt there, and opened his penknife.

The sashes of the old window were by no means tightly fitting. There was easy space to push a blade between.

The catch was a common one. It was possible, or might be possible, to push it back with the blade of a penknife from outside.

With the blade pressed against the catch, the Bouncer exerted a steady pressure.

But the catch did not stir.

Snup!

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

It was the blade that had snapped from the penknife. A strong pocket-knife would have done it, but the little penknife snapped.

"Hang it!"

He opened the second blade. It was smaller than the other, and he knew that it was useless. But he tried it. There was another snap.

With a black and bitter face, the Bouncer of Greyfriars dropped the broken penknife back into his pocket.

There was nothing doing—and the game was up!

He had the choice of remaining out all night, or of knocking up the House—and the result, in either case, was the "sack" in the morning. He would see the sun rise on Greyfriars, but he would not see it set. He would go, leaving everything in the hands of his defeated rival—a thought that was maddening to him.

If he had only listened to Redwing—if he had only been a decent fellow—if he had had the sense of a bunny rabbit—

With black and bitter thoughts, he stared through the glass into the shadowy box-room, knowing that all was up, yet unwilling to believe it—and suddenly he gave a start as he caught sight of a shadowy figure moving in the darkness within.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Saved From the "Chopper!"

HARRY WHARTON stirred in his sleep and opened his eyes. Something had awakened him—and had awakened two or three other fellows. He heard a sleepy voice in the darkness of the dormitory.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's that out of bed?"

Wharton sat up.

Someone was moving in the dormitory and had blundered into a bed in the darkness. That was what had awakened him.

Wharton remembered what Bunter had told him. His first thought was that it was the Bouncer returning from his "night out." He had no doubt that the black sheep of the Remove had gone out, though he had been asleep and had heard and seen nothing.

"Who the dooce is that?" came the sleepy voice of Lord Mauleverer. "Is that a jolly old burglar?"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"It's that fat idiot Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull. "What are you up to, you howling ass? Can't you let a fellow sleep?"

"I say, you fellows, I'm not out of bed!" stammered Bunter.

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A bed was heard to creak, as the fat Owl's considerable weight was deposited in it. Five or six fellows were awake now, peering towards Bunter's bed in the dark.

"What have you been up to, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"Nothing, old chap! I—I haven't been out of bed at all. I—I mean, I—I got out to—to blow my nose!"

"If you don't shut up, and let a fellow sleep, I'll get out and take my bolster to you, Bunter!" came a growl from Bolsover major.

Bunter's bed creaked again as the fat Owl settled down. The fellows who had been awakened settled down to sleep again—with one exception. Harry Wharton did not close his eyes.

In a few minutes the deep and unmelodious snore of William George Bunter mingled with the regular breathing of the other sleepers.

Wharton laid his head on the pillow, but he lifted it again. He was thinking of the Bouncer.

Billy Bunter had been out of bed at that late hour—and only a very powerful reason could have drawn Bunter from a comfortable bed before rising-bell in the morning. Wharton fancied that he could guess what the reason was.

He had not acted on that "tip" from Bunter; and he very strongly suspected that the fat Owl, having failed to find a cat paw, had taken the trouble of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire himself. Billy Bunter had been down to the Remove box-room, to fasten the window and shut the Bouncer out of the House. Wharton had hardly a doubt of it.

It was no business of his! The black-guard of the Remove had asked for it, and he could take what was coming to him.

Wharton remembered the scene in Study No. 1, his lip curling bitterly. The new captain of the Remove had affected to believe that he was "bullying" Bunter when he banged the fat Owl's head for suggesting that he should play this very trick! Certainly, Smithy had had no suspicion why Bunter's head was banged! He had jumped at the chance of making himself unpleasant, and "throwing his weight about." It was not for Wharton to intervene—the captain of the Remove could look out for himself!

Again Wharton laid his head on the pillow, resolving to mind his own business, and leave matters to take their course. His unscrupulous enemy deserved nothing at his hands—and Greyfriars would be well rid of him. But Wharton's eyes did not close.

He lay sleepless—thinking.

In his mind's eye he could see the dingy roosterer returning, clambering over a wall, climbing to the window he had left unfastened, and he could imagine the fellow's feelings when he found that window fastened. He could not sleep.

The deep strokes of midnight boomed through the silent night. They fell on Wharton's wakeful ears.

Midnight!

Very likely the fellow had returned by this time and found that he was shut out of the House! Wharton could imagine his rage and terror and helpless fury. Shut out—waiting for the morning and certain discovery—and the "sack."

Wharton sat up again.

The fellow was his enemy—his unscrupulous and bitter enemy. But it had not always been so. They had never been friends, but they had been friendly enough, till Wharton's own passionate temper, at an unlucky moment, had

started the trouble. The first fault had been his, though he could say, with a clear conscience, that he had done his best to heal the breach, and that every subsequent fault had been the Bouncer's. He knew that he could not leave the fellow to take what was coming to him—richly as he deserved it.

If the fatuous Owl had fastened the window—and Wharton had no doubt of it—Smithy was done for, unless somebody let him in. He was done for, unless the fellow he had traduced and injured should save him. The last stroke of midnight had died away, and Wharton slipped from his bed.

Quietly, but quickly, he drew on some clothes and a pair of slippers, and stepped softly towards the door.

He let himself silently out of the dormitory. The closing door shut off the deep snore of Billy Bunter.

With a grim face, Wharton trod softly along the corridor to the stairs. The House was silent and still; but he knew the risk he was taking—a fellow who let in a breaker of bounds at midnight would be judged with that fellow, if he was discovered and taken before the Head. But he did not hesitate.

He picked his way through the darkness to the Remove passage, and reached the box-room at the end. He opened the door and stepped in, and his gaze, fixing on the window, discerned the shape of a head-and-shoulders blotting the starlight.

The Bouncer was there!

Wharton crossed the room towards the window.

He could see that the face outside was pressed to a pane; the Bouncer had seen him in the shadowy interior of the room. The face was withdrawn as Wharton reached the window; the Bouncer stood on the leads, with his hands resting on the window-sill.

Wharton groped for the catch and pushed it back. He pushed up the lower sash.

The Bouncer's eyes gleamed at him, like a cat's. Wharton realised that Smithy could not have recognised him, in the darkness within the room; no doubt he supposed that it was a master who had arrived on the spot.

"You can come in!" said Harry, quietly and contemptuously.

He heard a startled gasp.

"Is that—Wharton?"

"Yes."

"Gad! I fancied it was Quelch!"

"I suppose you did!"

Wharton stepped back from the window. The Bouncer clambered swiftly in, dropped inside, and shut and fastened the window. He turned towards Wharton, who was already at the door.

"Hold on, Wharton!"

"Well?"

"How did you know—"

"Find out!"

"Hold on, I tell you! Nobody but Redwing knew—" The Bouncer peered at Wharton in the gloom. Reddy never told you—how did you know?"

"I've told you to find out."

"I suppose you woke up and found I was gone—" The Bouncer was puzzled, but his eyes suddenly glinted.

"By gad! Did you come down and shut me out—and change your mind afterwards—"

"Think so if you like!"

"You know the game would have been up for me, here, if you hadn't let me in! Why—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm going back to bed," he said,

"But why—"

Wharton was gone.



"Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" Billy Bunter's imitation of Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice was really life-like. "Hallo, Hallo! Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" "I am here!" said a deep voice behind Bunter. The fat junior jumped away from the telephone and whirled round like a fat humming-top. "Oh crikey!" he gasped, and collapsed.

The Bouncer stood quite still for some moments, puzzled, perplexed, angry, irritated. He left the box-room at last and crept silently to the Remove dormitory. Wharton was already in bed, and the Bouncer stepped to his bedside and looked down at him.

"It would have been the sack for me!" he said, in a low voice.

"Serve you right if it had been!"

"Is that all you've got to say?"

"That's all!"

"Go and eat coke, then!"

And the Bouncer turned into bed.

"That's the ancient history, old chap!" "It's rotten for old Frank, too! He's got your place, and he doesn't want it, and he's got his back up because he knows you think he oughtn't to have it—"

"That's that cad Smithy's game!" said Wharton. "It's one of his amusements to make trouble among decent fellows."

"Thanks!" said a sarcastic voice at Wharton's elbow.

Wharton looked round at the Bouncer.

"Did you hear me?" he said contemptuously. "You're welcome!" The Bouncer smiled.

"I'm not looking for a row, old bean," he said. "I want a word with you, Wharton—just a word."

"The Co. moved away."

"Cut it short, then," said Harry.

"The less I have to say to you, the better, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, quite!" agreed the Bouncer. "I feel just the same! But you did me a good turn the other night—you saved me from the chopper. Why, I don't know—but you did it. I'm not the man to remain under an obligation, if I can help it. I'd like to make it quits!"

"What the dickens are you driving at?" asked Wharton restively.

The Bouncer looked at him curiously. Why Wharton had intervened, to save him from the "chopper," on his night out of bounds, the Bouncer did not know, and could hardly understand. He was well aware that in his rival's place he would have done nothing of the kind.

Indeed, he had wondered at first whether it was Wharton who had fastened the window to shut him out,

and then, feeling that such an act of treachery was too thick, had relented and let him in.

But he had not been long in getting at the truth. In the morning Billy Bunter's goggle-eyed amazement at finding the Bouncer in the dormitory had given him the clue.

But having guessed how matters really stood, the Bouncer was more and more puzzled by Wharton's action. Helping a pal was one thing, but helping an enemy out of a deadly scrape was quite another.

It was irksome enough to the Bouncer. He disliked being under an obligation to anybody, most of all to his enemy. And Wharton's unconcealed contempt did not make the obligation any the pleasanter.

"I'll tell you what I'm driving at," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "You've done me a good turn—why, I don't know. If you'd like to play in the St. Jim's match to-day I'll put you in—and make it quits."

That he was keen to play in the fixture with St. Jim's was no secret, and it was a big concession for the new captain of the Remove to make. But Wharton had not the slightest idea of accepting it.

His lip curled.

"Is that what you call cricket?" he asked.

"An odd 'un deserves another," said Vernon-Smith. "Between ourselves—as there's nobody to hear—you know that I've aimed to chuck you out of the Form games, and you've played into my hands by that dirty trick on Redclyffe day—"

"You can't understand that I have."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Day of the Match!

SATURDAY dawned bright and sunny. It was a glorious May morning, and every fellow who was to play cricket that day looked forward to it keenly. Among them Harry Wharton was not included. He came out with his friends in morning break—the only member of the Famous Five who was to go in to third school, while the others went down to the cricket.

The Famous Five were not quite so merry and bright that sunny morning, as they were wont. Nugent was very silent, and rather moody, and he strolled away from his friends when they came out of the House.

He looked for the Bouncer, with whom he had been unusually friendly since he had been picked to play for the Remove. But Smithy was not looking for him.

"It's rotten, you know!" grunted Bob Cherry. "You ought to be playing to-day, Harry—"

nothing to do with that?" said Wharton scornfully.

"Still keeping that up?" smiled the Bounder. "Well, don't let's argue. I'm offering you a place in the eleven to-day, which means that I'm giving away a good deal—undoing a lot of what I've done. I've used the cricket, and everything else that came handy, to put you where I wanted you. You know that! Well, it's no good sayin' that I'm grateful for what you did the other night—I haven't a grateful nature. You don't want any soft stuff from me. But you got me out of a scrape, and I hate being under a favour. Play to-day, if you like."

"I don't like," said Wharton, curtly. "It's a big chance for you," said the Bounder, coolly. "You'll put up a big game, and help to beat Tom Merry's lot. It will give you a leg-up in the Form if you make a big score—and you need it. You're pretty thoroughly down and out at present. I'm givin' you a chance—against myself. I'm a fool to do it, but, as I said, I want to be quits!"

"And you call that cricket?" "My dear man, don't give me any high-falutin' stuff—you know I've no use for it," said the Bounder, shrugging his shoulders. "You're the best bat in the Form, and you'll be useful in the team."

"And you've left the best bat in the Form out of the toughest match in the season on account of a private feud," said Harry.

"Exactly. Now I'm offerin' to put him in again."

"Well, your offer's not accepted! What about Nugent?" asked Wharton angrily. "You've given my place to my best chum, and put his back up. Are you going to drop him like a hot potato, on the very day of the match?"

"Never mind Nugent—"

"He's my friend, if he's not yours—though it's suited you to pull his leg," said Wharton, setting his lips. "Now you propose to chuck him, not because you want a better man in the team, but because of a matter that has nothing whatever to do with cricket. You're a pretty thorough rotter, Vernon-Smith."

"Will you play to-day?"

"No, I won't!" snapped Wharton. "If you want me to play—which you don't—I'll play on condition that you admit to all the Form that I never had anything to do with that trick on Redcliffe day, and apologise for having supposed so, and on condition that you leave out the weakest player in the team to make room for me—and that's your part!"

The Bounder laughed scoffingly.

"You're not an easy man to deal with, Wharton," he said. "If I play you I leave out Nugent. He's not wanted, anyhow—and between ourselves you know jolly well that I only put him in to pull his silly leg, and put his back up against you—"

"You cur!" came a passionate voice—and the Bounder fairly spun round, and even his hard, sardonic face was disconcerted as he stared at Frank Nugent's flaming face.

Nugent had been looking for the Bounder, and he had found him. He came up—to hear Vernon-Smith's words as he came.

His face was crimson.

"You cur! You rotter! You—" Nugent clenched his fists, and came at the Bounder.

"Stand back, you fool!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton interposed quickly. He pushed Nugent back.

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"Hold on, old chap!" he said hastily. Nugent panted.

"The rotter! The rotter!" he exclaimed. "You were right, Harry, and I was a fool! You can find another man to fill my place to-day, Vernon-Smith! I resign from the team!"

"Look here!" muttered the Bounder. "Don't talk to me, you cad!"

Frank Nugent turned his back on the Bounder, and walked away to the House. Smithy stared after him blankly.

"Oh gad!" he said. Then he shrugged his shoulders. "Well, that's that! There's a place open for you in the team now, Wharton, if you want it."

"Go and eat coke!" Harry Wharton followed his chum.

"Last time of askin'!" drawled the Bounder. "As they say in the advertisements, it's an offer we can't afford to repeat."

Wharton did not answer, or turn his head. The Bounder, with another shrug, walked away, and, coming on Billy Bunter in the quad, found some solace for his annoyance in kicking that fat youth.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Once Too Often!

BILLY BUNTER blinked cautiously into Master's passage, hurried along to the door of Mr. Prout's study, and dodged into that apartment, and closed the door.

Then he grinned breathlessly.

The Fifth Form master had gone for a walk, as he often did in morning break. So the coast was clear—for a fat and fatuous youth who wanted to borrow a telephone.

Billy Bunter was at it again!

It was like Bunter.

The previous week he had "dished" Vernon-Smith over the Redcliffe match by telephoning to Mr. Quelch in his father's name. That trick had worked successfully. Now Bunter was about to repeat the performance.

It did not occur to Bunter's fat brain that Mr. Quelch, having been deluded once in that manner, was likely to be very much on his guard, and not at all likely to be deluded twice.

Mr. Quelch was still anxious to find the unknown person who had tricked him on that occasion, and if he received another telephone call in Mr. Vernon-Smith's name, asking for Herbert to be sent home for the day, it was absolutely certain that Mr. Quelch would be very wary. But that did not occur to Billy Bunter's powerful intellect.

He was going to make that beast Smithy sit up. He was more than ever up against the new captain of the Remove. Since Smithy had guessed who had shut him out at night, Billy Bunter's fat career had been punctuated by kickings. He was going to punish Smithy, as he had punished him before, and he could not punish him more severely than by dishing him over the St. Jim's match, as he had dished him on Redcliffe day.

With a grinning, fat face, Bunter rolled over to Mr. Prout's telephone, lifted the receiver, and gave Mr. Quelch's number.

The Remove master's voice came through.

"Hallo!"

"Mr. Vernon-Smith speaking," said Bunter into the transmitter, with a remarkably good imitation of the millionaire's voice. "Is that Mr. Quelch?"

"Oh!" Bunter heard a sort of gasp over the wires. "Yes!"

"Good-morning, Mr. Quelch! I am sorry to interrupt you, but I desire Herbert to come home to-day, for a very urgent reason."

"Oh!"

There was a moment's pause.

"Please hold on for a moment!" came the Remove master's voice.

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch."

Billy Bunter held on.

He little knew!

In the Remove master's study Mr. Quelch quietly laid down the receiver and picked up a cane.

The expression on the countenance of Henry Samuel Quelch would have terrified Billy Bunter had he seen it.

Mr. Quelch had been taken in once by a "spoof" telephone call. But once bitten was twice shy!

Keen inquiry after the previous occasion had revealed the fact that the "spoof" call had come from the school itself. It was known that some Greyfriars fellow must have used one of the school telephones.

It had not been difficult to ascertain which phone had been used. Mr. Prout's habit of taking a walk in "break" left his phone at the mercy of a trickster.

Came in hand, Mr. Quelch left his study.

He headed for Prout's study.

It was possible, of course, that the call was a genuine one this time, for which reason Mr. Quelch had asked his interlocutor to hold on—while he glanced into Prout's study.

Quietly the Remove master stepped along the passage. Quietly he opened the door of Prout's study.

He looked in. His eyes glinted.

Prout's study should have been empty while the Fifth Form master was taking his walks abroad. But it was not empty! A fat figure stood at the telephone, with a podgy back turned towards Mr. Quelch as he stood in the doorway.

Mr. Quelch gazed at it. His gaze resembled that of the fabled basilisk. Even as he gazed Billy Bunter spoke into the instrument again.

"Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" The fat junior's imitation of Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice was really life-like. "Hallo, hallo! Are you there, Mr. Quelch?"

"I am here!" said a deep voice behind Bunter.

"Ooooh!" squeaked Bunter.

The receiver dropped from his fat hand. He jumped away from the telephone, whirled round like a fat humming-top, and his eyes almost popped through his spectacles as he saw his Form master.

"Oh crickey!"

"Bunter—"

"Oh, it—it wasn't me, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'm not here, sir. I—I mean, I—I never phoned, sir. I—I wasn't pulling your leg, sir. I—I—"

"Bunter you have dared to play a trick on your Form master. You have dared to deceive me—to delude me—"

"Oh lor!"

"It was you, Bunter, who played this same wretched trick last week!"

"Oh crickey!"

"I have discovered you now, Bunter! You are caught in the very act! Last week, Bunter, you deluded me into believing that Mr. Vernon-Smith had telephoned for his son to be sent home!"

"Oh scissors!"

"This time, sir, I was on my guard. I have discovered you, Bunter! Your punishment will be exemplary!"

"Ow!"
 "Follow me to my study, Bunter!"
 "Wow!"

Billy Bunter's fat knees knocked together as he followed his Form master. From the bottom of his podgy heart he wished that he had never thought of playing that trick a second time. He realised that a downy bird like Quelch was not likely to be caught twice with the same chaff. Unfortunately, that reflection came too late for the hapless Owl. He limped after Mr. Quelch to his study.

"Now, Bunter—"
 "Oh lor! I—I say, sir. I—I—I didn't—
 I wasn't—I never—" babbled Bunter.
 "I mean, it—it was only a j-j-joke, sir!
 J-j-j-just a j-j-j-joke, sir! A jig-jig-jig—"

"What?"
 "A jig-jig-jig-joke on Smithy, sir," groaned Bunter. "It wasn't me last time, sir! I wasn't there when I did it!"
 "I shall cane you with the greatest severity, Bunter!"

"Ow!"
 "Bend over that chair!"
 "Ooooooh!"
 The next few minutes were awful for Bunter.

Mr. Quelch considered it his duty to make the punishment severe. He was the man to do his duty and to do it thoroughly.

The cane rose and fell with terrific vim, and the dust rose from Billy Bunter's tight trousers.

Every boy was followed by a fearful yell which awoke most of the echoes of Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch did not leave off till he was tired. Bunter was more than tired by that time. He was quite worn out!
 "Now, Bunter, you may leave my study. I trust that this will be a warning to you. Go!"

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Wow!"
 "Go!" thundered Mr. Quelch.
 And Bunter groaned and went.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Burying the Hatchet!

"SMITHY!"
 "Here, Smithy!"
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
 "Smithy!" roared Bob Cherry.
 The Bounder started.
 He had been down to the cricket ground to look at the pitch. He came back towards the House and found a mob of the Remove gathered round a dismal object in the quad—a fat junior, who, like the young man of Hythe who was shaved with a sythe, did nothing but wriggle and writhe.

Billy Bunter was suffering for his sins. It was likely to be a long time before he forgot that licking, and longer still before he played any more tricks on the telephone with Quelch as the victim.

Sympathy would not have been very useful to Bunter, but, useful or not, he did not receive any. Indeed, when the Removites learned why Bunter had been "whopped" they would have given him some more but for the obvious fact that Quelch had already given him enough, and perhaps a little over.

Bunter writhed and wriggled, and moaned and groaned, and blinked dismally through his big spectacles. Smithy stared at him.

"What—?" he began.
 "It's out now," said Bob Cherry. "It was Bunter."

"What was Bunter?" snapped the Bounder. "What the thump do you mean?"

"Bunter played that trick on Redcliffe day," said Johnny Bull.

The Bounder started.

"Bunter? Rot!"
 "You silly ass!" said Bob. "He's told us now—Quelch caught him at it again, and seems to have nearly skinned him."

"The skinfulness has been terrific!"
 "Ow! Wow! Wow!" contributed Bunter. Evidently the skinfulness had been rather terrific. "Oh crickey! Oh lor! Wow!"

Harry Wharton fixed his eyes on the Bounder's startled face, coldly and contemptuously.

"Are you satisfied now, you rotter?" he asked.

Vernon-Smith set his lips.
 "Bunter—it was Bunter!" he muttered.

He understood now.
 He realised, too, that he might have guessed as much, from what Bunter had said to him in his study, had he not been so malignantly determined to believe that his enemy was the guilty party.

"Ow! Wow!" moaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Ow! Wow!"

"So it was Bunter! And who put him up to it?" sneered the Bounder.
 Wharton's eyes flashed.

A USEFUL LEATHER POCKET WALLET

goes to: David Harper, of 19, Clermont Road, Preston Park, Brighton, who submitted the following Greyfriars limerick:

At cricket Coker thinks he's hot stuff;
 Yet the easiest catch he would bluff.
 He'll wangle and scheme
 To get into a team,
 But gets many a nasty rebuff.

Try your skill at writing these limericks, boys! It's a fascinating pastime and the prizes offered for winning efforts are well worth having.

"You rotter! Do you mean—"

"You knew it was Bunter, at all events," said the Bounder. "You've admitted you knew who it was—"

"Yes," said Wharton. "The fat ass told me—and I could not give him away. He let it out, like the silly idiot he is. And now it's come out, I'll tell you why he told me."

"And why?" sneered Vernon-Smith.
 "Because he was idiot enough to think I'd be willing to let him play the same trick over again, to take your place in the St. Jim's match."

"Oh!" ejaculated the Bounder.
 "I kicked him out of my study; but I could not give the howling as away. But it seems that he has been idiot enough to try it on again, after all, and Quelch has caught him."

The Bounder bit his lip.
 "Well, it's out now!" said Peter Todd. "I never dreamed it was Bunter; but we know now—and now it's up to you, Smithy."

The Bounder stood silent.
 He knew now that his suspicion was unfounded—that his accusation was false. He knew it, and all the fellows knew it.

He had made it the reason, or at least the pretext, for turning his rival out of the Remove Eleven. That pretext was gone now.

Now that the facts were known, the

ground was cut from under his feet; he was left without a leg to stand on.

But the Bounder, hard and unscrupulous as he was, was by no means all bad. There was something of the sportsman in Smithy.

For the moment his feeling was one of sheer bitterness—a sense of defeat. But that feeling passed. His face cleared, and he made a step towards Harry Wharton.

"I'm sorry, Wharton." The words came slowly, but they came. "I—I believed it was you—and—and—well, it looked like it, to me. I know now I made a mistake—and I'm sorry. You take your old place in the eleven, of course—you'll play to-day. And—"
 The Bounder grinned, his old sardonic grin. "Let's try to forget, for to-day, that we're enemies, and play up and beat St. Jim's."

"Done!" said Harry.
 "Hear! hear!" said Bob Cherry.
 "The hear-hearfulness is terrific."
 "And now," added the Bounder, "I'll kick Bunter—"
 "Yaroo!"

Billy Bunter fled in time.

Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, put up a great game at Greyfriars that day. But the Remove Eleven put up a rather better game.

Whether the Bounder was glad, or sorry, that the truth had come to light, and that he had been proved to be in the wrong, he hardly knew himself. But that he was glad that Harry Wharton was in the team, as the day wore on, there was no doubt at all.

Once he was on the cricket-field, playing the game, the Bounder forgot all his scheming, all his cunning and duplicity, and was a sportsman and a cricketer. And when the Greyfriars men came off the field, after a hard-fought match, winners with a wicket in hand, Smithy gave his old rival a smack on the shoulder.

"Look here, Wharton—" he said.
 Wharton looked at him.

"I've been rather a rotter to you," said the Bounder, "and—and—rather more of a rotter to Nugent. Look here, I'm sorry! And—and—if you're willing, I'd be glad to wash it all out."
 He spoke frankly and sincerely.

"We shall never be friends, I suppose; but we needn't be enemies," went on Smithy. "It was you started the row—you've owned up to it—and I've been to blame since—I own up to that. What about washing it all out and starting fresh?"

Wharton smiled.
 "Cricket does you good, Smithy," he said.

The Bounder laughed.
 "Perhaps it does. Anyway, I mean it—is it a go?"

"It's a go!" said Wharton, at once.
 "Then—that's that!" said the Bounder.

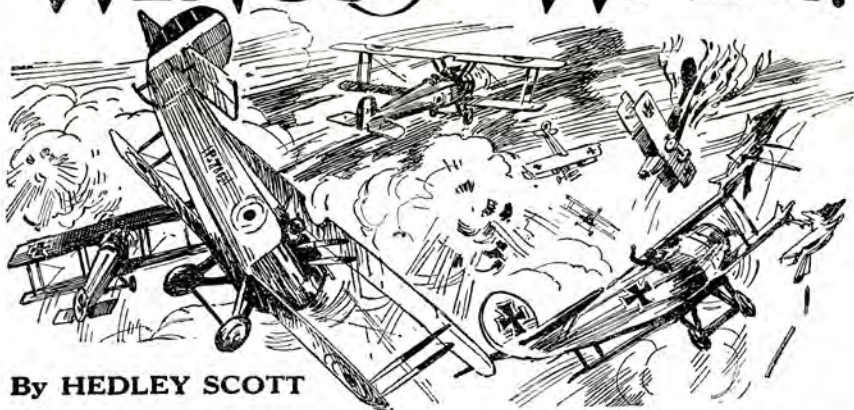
"And 'that' was 'that.' There was a study supper in Study No. 4 that night, to celebrate the victory, and rather to the surprise of the Remove, the Famous Five were the Bounder's guests, and it seemed that the hatchet was buried. And most of the Remove hoped that it would never be dug up again.

THE END.

(Frank Richards is better than ever in next week's humorous yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "COKER'S CRICKET CRAZE!" Make a point of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

OUR POWERFUL FLYING STORY OF ENDLESS THRILLS.

WINGS OF WAR!



By HEDLEY SCOTT

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

MAJOR FERRERS LOCKE—A SECRET SERVICE AGENT—IS PUT IN CHARGE OF 256 SQUADRON, R.F.C., A BRISTOL FIGHTER SQUADRON OF GREAT REPUTE STATIONED "SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE." JIM DANIELS, RON GLYNN, AND BRUCE THORBURN, THREE STAUNCH GUYS, ARE LOCKE'S MOST COMPETENT FLYING OFFICERS. LOCKE'S SUSPICIONS ARE SOON AROUSED BY THE STRANGE CONDUCT OF SERGEANT WILKINS, WHO IS, IN REALITY, "R. ONE," ONE OF THE SMARTEST SPIES IN THE SERVICE OF GERMANY. LATER, A CARRIER PIGEON USED BY THE ENEMY FALLS INTO THORBURN'S HANDS, WHEREUPON LOCKE HITS UPON THE IDEA OF RELEASING IT AND TRACING IT TO ITS HOME. EVENTUALLY THE BIRD ALIGHTS ON THE SURFACE OF A STREAM WHICH WENDS ITS WAY UNDER AN ESTAMINET OWNED BY PIERRE MARMOT. LEAVING THORBURN TO KEEP WATCH ABOVE, LOCKE, UNAWARE THAT HE HAS INTERRUPTED A SECRET TALK BETWEEN MARMOT AND WILKINS, IS INSPECTING THE UNDERGROUND CELLARS OF THE ESTAMINET WHEN HE IS KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS. AT WILKINS' COMMAND, MARMOT SHUFFLES UPSTAIRS AND INFORMS THE WAITING THORBURN THAT LOCKE REQUESTS HIS PRESENCE BELOW.

An Hour to Live!

THORNBURN hesitated. He had a feeling that something untoward had happened to his commanding officer. Half-way down the stairs he stopped.

"Major?" His fresh young voice echoed round the cellar. "Major? Do you want me?"

For a second—a second that seemed an age—there was complete silence. Thornburn's heart leapt. The major had met with foul play.

"Stand still, you dog!" he commanded. "Stand still, or I'll put a dose of lead into you!"

His revolver was held grimly at Pierre Marmot's back. But Thornburn was not prepared for what happened next. Suddenly a blinding glare of light flashed across his eyes, momentarily blinding him. Simultaneously with it Pierre Marmot stooped, grabbed the youngster savagely by the legs, and then tucked hard. Thornburn's revolver spun out of his hand; he felt himself falling, thrust out his hands to get hold of something, and knew no more as his head struck the stone floor with crashing force.

In that first moment of unconsciousness he did not hear Sergeant Wilkins' throaty chuckle of triumph.

"Ach! The pig dog was easy to snare!" grunted Wilkins. "The torchlight was exceedingly useful."

He spurned Thornburn's prone figure with his boot, then turned on Marmot.

"Bind them!" he rapped out. "They must not leave here alive!"

"Why not shoot them and have done?" suggested Marmot, with a leer.

"You dolt!" exclaimed his companion. "Would you tell everyone our business by firing shots that can be heard for yards around? No, mein friend! We must think this out."

His coarse face wrinkled in thought, what time Pierre Marmot bound and gagged the two Britishers with a thoroughness that left nothing to chance.

When he had finished that task Marmot realised, for the first time, that his days as the keeper of a village estaminet were finished.

"R. One," he whispered in a sudden access of fright, "do you understand what this means? I must go! I must fly—"

"Quiet!" growled R. One. "It seems that these interfering swine have come here unbeknown to the others at the aerodrome. That must be so, otherwise they would have brought a squad with them—"

"But, monsieur, plenty will have seen them enter here."

"Ach! That is true!" grunted R. One.

"You cannot stay here, that is certain! By to-morrow you would be under arrest. By to-morrow—" He broke

off, and an evil glitter stole his eyes in cruelty. "By to-morrow I shall be back in my beloved Fatherland."

"But, monsieur," pleaded Marmot, "you will take me with you to-night?"

R. One frowned. That did not suit his plan at all. While he hesitated Pierre Marmot broke in again.

"But you must! You must! I shall be shot if I stay here!"

"Now, look here, my friend," said Wilkins soothingly, "you just look after to-night's plan. To-morrow—you won't be here!"

Pierre Marmot's face lit up with joy and relief.

"You mean you will take me back with you—to safety?" he exclaimed.

"Ah! Merci, merci! A thousand thanks! A million!" he added grandiloquently. "But I knew so great a man as the celebrated R. One would not desert a comrade, lowly as that comrade is, compared with the magnificent R. One."

A leer settled on the sergeant's features. If Pierre Marmot could have read what was passing in his companion's mind he would have spared himself those thanks. It was necessary that R. One should have an accomplice that night, for there was much to be done. Added to that, he could not drive a car, and Pierre Marmot could. And there was a quarter of an hour's furious driving to be done before Schloss and

his waiting plane could be reached. After that— The leet returned to R. One's face as he pondered. After that—well, Pierre Marmot would be useless!

As these pleasant reflections came and went R. One turned his thoughts to the two Britishers lying on his feet. He was tempted to shoot them, even as Marmot had suggested. But that would mean unnecessary noise—the possible risk of discovery. And, besides, it was much too merciful. Still, there were other ways.

It was Pierre Marmot who suggested the ideal method.

"Monsieur, why not flood the cellar?" His eyes were bright with a mixture of relief that his own precious skin would be safe and hate that these two meddling Britishers had rendered his flight necessary.

"The best thing you've said yet!" granted his companion. "Open the sluices, then make yourself scarce until the time appointed."

Sergeant Wilkins' heavy tread sounded up the stairway as he began to depart. But before he had reached the upper rooms the noise of gushing water assailed his ears, while ever and anon rose the fiendish chuckle of Pierre Marmot.

Locke and Thorburn were showing signs of coming round. Their eyes flickered in the darkness and their limbs shuddered as consciousness reacted on them.

Pierre Marmot picked up the torch and pointed it at them in turn.

"You swinehounds!" he croaked. "You will pay for your meddling with your lives! Ah, but it will be a pleasant sign when the water reaches up to your necks! Hah!"

As he spoke volumes of water were pouring in through a sluice gate, or trap, let into the floor of the cellar.

Pierre Marmot, regardless of the water, which was now covering the floor to the depth of an inch, danced about them.

"Pigs! Swine!" he screeched. "In less than an hour you will be—poof!" He cracked his fingers in a sickening fashion. "But so will your comrades! They, poor fools, will be blown to atoms! They will feel nothing—know nothing! You, for your cleverness, will suffer an hour's torture!"

He sprang towards Locke and dragged him to his feet. Bound as he was, the major had the greatest difficulty in standing. He reeled, then recovered his balance. And his spirits, which had soared with some measure of hope, dropped to zero when he felt another form backed against him.

It was Thorburn.

The crack on the head the youngster had received had left him sick and dizzy, and he shuddered involuntarily as the full meaning of the splashing water and Marmot's words went home.

Again the glare of the torch beamed in his face.

"You will stand so!" gloated Marmot. "Much better than lying down—yes? You will think—you will hope—oh, yes, you will hope for rescue! But there will be no rescue. Inch by inch the water will creep up. You will think of Pierre Marmot with kindness—yes? Merci, messieurs!"

His fiendish laugh rang out again, making eerie music with the splashing water.

Locke's head was clearing rapidly. He was accustomed to danger—he had lived with it, so to speak, as his constant companion. But he knew that he—not only he, but young Thorburn as well—was very near to a horrible death.

Pierre Marmot, torch in hand, backed to the far side of the cellar nearest the steps. Some afterthought prompted him to place the torch in a crevice high up in the wall.

"You will be grateful for the light. Bon soir, messieurs! Bon soir!"

He turned, disappeared up the steps, and the only sound that came back to the helpless Britishers was a faint, mocking laugh.

The water gushed into the cellar.

The minutes passed. The water rose. Now it was up to the knees of the two Britishers. That much the strong glare from the torch revealed. Five minutes later it revealed Major Locke biting through the last threads of the improvised gag that had been thrust into his mouth, and as Thorburn heard the major speak his heart leaped high with hope.

"That's better!" panted Locke, working his jaws up and down. "Now I'll try the strength of my teeth on your bonds."

These teeth were strong and sharp, albeit, a precious quarter of an hour elapsed before they parted the cord that bound Thorburn's wrists together. Locke's mouth was flecked with crimson as the blood spurted from his torn lips and lacerated gums, but his heart was beating with renewed hope.

Thorburn's nimble fingers would soon be at work.

"Ah!" A full sigh of relief left



Thorburn as he freed himself of the gag, but he nearly pitched over in his haste, forgetful for the moment that his ankles were tightly bound together.

"Careful, young 'un!" advised Locke. "Don't fall, or you will be in danger of drowning, after all!"

The words steadied Thorburn like a tonic. He reached for, and found, his jack-knife—a service "ration" that had been served out to him as a cadet, and for which until now he had never found any use. In his haste to open the blade he broke his nail, and swore softly. A second attempt, however, was more successful. The blade sprang back with a jerk.

"Get your legs free first," advised Locke. "Quickly! We haven't much time. But you'll have to be a diver to do the trick."

The major grinned in the half-light.

"Cut yourself free and then drag me over to the steps," he continued. "We shall have plenty of time to get out then."

Thorburn was shivering with excitement and the coldness of the water. He saw the wisdom of Locke's advice, however, and, taking a deep breath, bent, and plunged under the water, jack-knife in hand. He had to make three attempts before the cords parted, and, dripping but triumphant, he announced that he was free.

The water was up to his chest now, but safety in the form of the steps that wound their way to the ground-floor level lay but a couple of yards away. Exerting himself, Thorburn dragged his

companion to the steps, and hauled him to a high level.

"Good for you, young 'un," breathed Locke gratefully. "I had a fear that you would lose the knife under water if you had tried to cut me free where we were standing. We should have been in a mess then, for I haven't a knife on me."

While he was speaking, the cords binding him were quickly falling apart under the knife Thorburn wielded with vigour. As the last strand parted Locke rose to his feet, and stretched himself.

"Shake, young 'un!" His hand went out and seized that of Thorburn in an iron grip. "You're a swell fellow to have by one in times of trouble. Now let us get out!"

He glanced ruefully at his wrist-watch. The water had got into it and stopped it. The same fate had overtaken Thorburn's watch.

"How long have we been here—since friend Pierre left us, I mean?" asked Locke.

"I should reckon about three quarters of an hour," replied Thorburn. "The wretch told us that we had an hour to live." He looked at the steadily rising water which was now up to a level with where their necks would have been had the two not gained the steps.

"He told us something else, too," said Major Locke quietly, "that was likely to happen within the hour."

"Oh!" Thorburn whistled. "The boys—they're going to be blown up!"

His face blanched with horror. Instinctively he quickened his steps, and, with Locke beside him, he halted at the big oak door that barred further progress. The major's strong wrist jerked hard at the ring bolt, yet the door remained fast. His face set grimly. Pierre Marmot was thoroughness exemplified, for he had very effectually sealed the exit from the cellar.

"The door's barred on the other side!" breathed Locke. "Stand aside, young 'un!"

Bang!

With all his weight behind it Locke charged the door. It shook to the blow, but remained firmly barred for all that. Again and again he charged until his shoulders were black and blue, but the door mocked his efforts. While he took a respite Thorburn plied his youthful weight at the barrier in the same fashion.

"It's no go, sir," he said in horror-stricken tones. "We couldn't charge this door down in a week. Look—the water!"

He pointed a trembling hand at the water. It had risen to within a foot of them, and was swirling round the steps in miniature whirlpools.

"Young 'un," breathed Locke quietly, "we started to congratulate ourselves too soon!"

Before the words had died away he was charging at the door again. It shook, and the echoes of the charge came back time and again, but it remained fast. Suddenly Thorburn's hand fell excitedly on Locke's shoulder.

"Major—" Locke felt the jack-knife thrust into his hands. "Can't we unscrew the hinges?"

Locke's face lit up. The half-light in the cellar revealed two long iron hinges, old and rusty, but the sight of them gave him fresh hope. Four screws in each hinge held the door fast. In a moment Locke was trying to operate on these screw heads with his improvised screw-driver.

The minutes passed; the water rose inch by inch.

The blades had broken, but the "ration" jack-knife was doing yeoman service for all that. Two rusted screws already had been withdrawn from the stout oak door. A powerful wrench of the hinge did the rest as Locke tore it away literally from the door, breaking off the screws short.

"Number one!" he breathed.

Without a pause he started on the second hinge. It was long, tedious work, for the screws were old; but the major succeeded in his task.

Crash!

The door fell outwards to Thorburn's vigorous push, and the next moment the two were treading the ground-floor of Pierre Marmot's estaminet and heading for the main door.

Locke did not waste time. He was through that main door and racing up the road, closely attended by Thorburn, in less than a minute. While he ran he gasped out instructions.

"Young 'un," he panted. "Listen to your orders. Warn all the company, officers and men, that the aerodrome is to be blown up—"

"Pray Heaven we are in time!"

"Tell them to get into the trenches, and to stay there until I give further orders—"

Thorburn jerked out an affirmative. In the trenches which lay outside every met and hangar at 256 aerodrome the men would be safe, or fairly safe, from any explosion. That was why the trenches had been dug—to afford shelter in the event of a bombardment from the air.

"And what about you, sir?" ventured Thorburn as he pelted along in the darkness.

"Never mind about me, young 'un," gasped the major. "I'm going to look for Wilkins. Obviously he is in league with Pierre Marmot. I see it all now. If Marmot spoke correctly this is a wholesale attempt to blow up the entire squadron."

"Oh!"

They raced on, and soon the twinkling lights of the aerodrome huts came into view. Both breathed with relief when they saw that nothing so far had happened.

Used to the darkness, Locke's eyes scanned the aerodrome anxiously for

any signs of danger. What was that slight suggestion of movement by the farthestmost hangar? He strained his eyes afresh, and told himself that something, or someone, was moving there.

"Race on, young 'un—run for your life!" panted Locke. "Get them in the trenches—then turn on the searchlight—sweep the drome—"

He was darting off at a tangent, even as he gave the commands, but Thorburn understood.

In a frenzy of excitement and anxiety, he rushed into the mess and gave the warning.

"Into the trenches for your lives!" he bawled. "Quick! Not a second to lose!"

His drenched and bedraggled appearance, and his earnestness had the desired effect. In times of war men did not stop to ask questions.

The officers poured out of the mess in a body, warned the men, and shepherded them into the trenches.

With Jim and Ron beside him, Thorburn hastily switched on the miniature searchlight and swept a dazzling beam of light across the drome in the direction which he knew Major Locke had gone.

In that same moment there was an ear-splitting roar, a blinding sheet of flame, and the farthestmost hangar on the aerodrome at the northern end was blown heavenwards in fragments, whilst all around the earth was thrown up, just as if a battery of artillery had concentrated a barrage on it.

With racing strides, Major Locke made towards the far hangar. He was certain now that his eyes had not deceived him. A figure, dim, but a figure for all that, was there.

And that figure answered to the name of Sergeant Wilkins, alias R. One.

There was a fiendish expression on his face that told of complete satisfaction in what he contemplated doing.

The darkness was his best friend.

Under the cover of it he had stolen into every hangar, and with great care had placed a stick of dynamite in a favourable position. And to the head of each stick of dynamite was equally carefully fixed a strand of wire, which he unwound freely as he retraced his steps towards a position near the far hangar—the scene of his major operations.

He had just fixed the last stick of

dynamite, unwound the drum of wire, and reached the far hangar, when he heard drumming footsteps.

He peered about him in the gloom, shivered, and chided himself.

"My friend, is this the time to lose your nerve? Ach! Take heart! The All-Highest will make you a general for this night's work!"

He smiled gloatingly to himself, and busied himself with a small box-like contraption of wires and terminals. To the terminals he began to fit the loose ends of the various wires that led from the dynamite. Gleaning dully was the knife switch with which he would complete his fell work. Once all the wires were gathered to the terminals and made fast, just a slight movement of the switch would send enough electrical current surging along them to fire the dynamite.

It was ridiculously easy, R. One told himself. Close at hand was Pierre Marmot, ready with the car; not very far distant would be the good Schloss and his trusty plane.

But close at hand, too, was Ferrera Locke!

R. One saw him even as he made the final adjustment to the nearest wire which connected with the dynamite in the far hangar. Half crouching over his battery box, he stared into the darkness at the rapidly approaching figure, hardly able to believe that his eyes were not playing him false. Major Locke—impossible! He was a fast prisoner in the cellar—should be dead by now.

While these reflections chased through R. One's mind Major Locke, in the flesh, was upon him.

The advantage of a surprise attack was with the major, for he was certainly the very last person R. One had expected to see just then. Even as he rose and grabbed hastily for his revolver lying close handy, Locke's fist thudded home against his jaw.

Wilkins went down in a smother of arms and legs. One of his groping hands jabbed hard against the battery box, and his weight threw the switch over until it made full contact. And in that split second it seemed that all the forces of destruction had been let loose.

(Watch out for further thrilling chapters of this popular flying story in next week's MAGNET, chums.)

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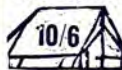
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"You know who played that rotten trick on me on the day of the Redclyffe match, and you won't tell me his name?"
"No, I won't!" said Wharton. "I suppose he'd give you away if you did, eh?" scoffed the Bounder. "Then own up that you put him up to the trick!" "No!" answered Wharton firmly. "But you can think so if you like!"



Harry Wharton watched Billy Bunter march valiantly up to Mr. Quelch's door and raise a fat hand to tap. But Bunter lowered it again without tapping. "I—I say, old chap!" he stammered. "I—I—I think I'll leave it till—till—till to-morrow—I mean, till the day after to-morrow or—or—or perhaps next week!"



"Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" Billy Bunter's imitation of Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice was really life-like. "Hallo, Hallo! Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" "I am here!" said a deep voice behind Bunter. The fat junior jumped away from the telephone and whirled round like a fat humming-top. "Oh crikey!" he gasped, and collapsed.



"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Smithy! I—I haven't shipped your study, old chap! I—I—I just came in, and—and saw it!" "By gad! Why, I—I—I'll—" The Bounder's fist clenched, and he made a rush at Bunter.



"Stop, you fat rotter!" panted Vernon-Smith, armed with a lives bat, and chasing Bunter along the passage. "Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter, as he fled for his life. "Wow!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Loud laughter followed pursued and pursuer as they disappeared down the passage, both going strong.



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