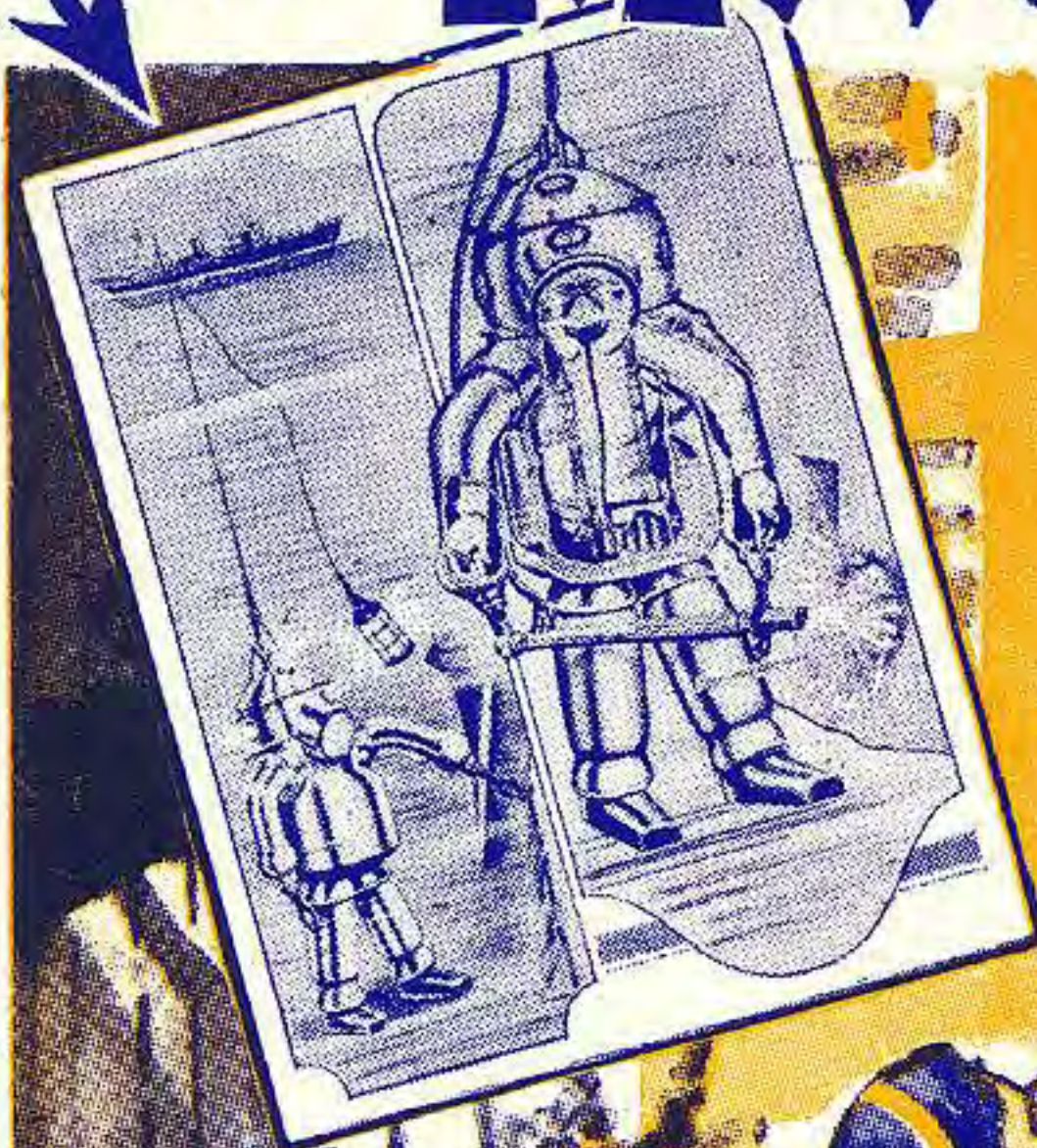


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The **MAGNET²**



**THE
KIDNAPPED
MASTER!**



BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Check!

LARRY'S late!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"Let's hope he'll be later!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"The lateness of the esteemed Larry is a boonful blessing," concurred Hurrce Jamset Ram Singh.

It was third school at Greyfriars, and the lesson for the Remove that morning was geometry, with Mr. Lascelles, the mathematics master.

"Larry" Lascelles was seldom late for a class, but on this special occasion he was late—and the Remove fellows did not mind in the very least.

Most of them liked Larry, but few of them liked geometry.

Something seemed to have delayed Mr. Lascelles, and the Removites cheerfully hoped that that something would go on delaying him.

They had come into Mr. Lascelles' class-room after break, expecting to find him there. But he was not there. And they were in no hurry to see him.

"Old Prout's caught him for a jaw, perhaps," remarked Johnny Bull. "More power to his elbow if he has."

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Bunter knows why he's late, of course," he said. "Bunter knows everything, except his lessons. Why is Larry late, Bunter?"

"He's on the telephone," grinned Bunter. "I heard the bell ringing in his study like anything. He was scowling when he went to answer it—scowling

like—like—like a demon—like Smithy after he had his flogging the other day—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat owl!" growled Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy! You know you looked like a demon in a pantomime, after the Head had finished whopping you," said Bunter, blinking at the Bounder of Greyfriars through his big spectacles. "I say, you fellows, Lascelles is in a fearful temper this morning! Better look out when he comes in."

"Rot!" said Frank Nugent.

"Larry's never in a temper," said Harry Wharton. "He doesn't get waxy even when you ask him how many sides there are to a square."

"Oh, really, Wharton—" protested the fat Owl—even Billy Bunter knew how many sides there were to a square.

"Well, he's late, anyhow," said Bob Cherry. "What about a game of leap-frog till he comes?"

"Fathead! You can't rag Larry!"

Most of the juniors took their places in quite an orderly manner. Had it been a French class, no doubt they would have filled in the time with leap-frog till Mossos arrived. But Mr. Lascelles was quite a different proposition. He was a kind and good-tempered man, liked by nearly everybody at Greyfriars—but he was not to be trifled with. Had he arrived and found leap-frog going on, there would have been distinctly painful consequences for the leap-froggers. It was not good enough.

Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged to the blackboard, which was standing ready for use. He picked up the chalk and

seemed to meditate. Two or three warning voices called to him.

"Chuck it, Smithy!"

"No larks on Larry—'tain't safe!"

"You'll get six!"

"Don't be a goat, Smithy!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars did not heed. He began to draw on the blackboard with the chalk. Smithy was by no means an artist, but he could draw, and the juniors watched the figures grow under his rapid fingers. Some of them grinned, others looked uneasy. The Bounder's chum, Tom Redwing, called to him anxiously.

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, chuck it!"

"Rub it out, you duffer!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Larry may be here any minute, Smithy," said Peter Todd. "Don't let him see that rot!"

Still the Bounder did not heed.

He was depicting a pugilistic scene on the blackboard—two bruisers, in boxing rig, punching one another. Dabs of chalk indicated the roped ring and the spectators. Under one of them Smithy scrawled "The Game Chicken," under the other "The Greyfriars Pug." The Remove watched him almost breathlessly now.

All the fellows knew that Larry Lascelles had boxed in the ring for a living before he obtained a post at Greyfriars School. But that, of course, was over and done with when he became a Greyfriars master. Larry was not ashamed of it—there was nothing in it to be ashamed of—but such things were out of keeping with the position of a master in a Public school. But of late there had been rumours in the school that

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Larry was mixed up in professional boxing again. Vernon-Smith declared that he knew it for a fact. Nobody else regarded it as a fact. Still, there had been a good deal of talk on the subject—not agreeable to Mr. Lascelles. Now the Bounder, by the drawing on the blackboard, was rubbing it in.

Having completed that work of art, the Bounder lounged to his place and sat down. At the same time, there was a sound of quick footsteps in the passage. The maths master was coming at last.

"Oh, you ass, Smithy!" muttered Redwing.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "It means six!" said Redwing.

"What's the good, you ass?"

"How's he goin' to guess I did it?" drawled the Bounder.

"He knows that you loathe him, and he knows you're the only fellow in the Form reckless ass enough to insult him!"

The Bounder's lip curled. There had been a time when he had rather liked Lascelles, who was games master as well as maths master. Smithy—one of the best cricketers in the Remove, had picked up many valuable tips from Larry. But, as Redwing said, he loathed him now. Caught out of bounds at night by Lascelles, and reported to the Head, Smithy had been flogged—and since that date Smithy had been on the warpath.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, Larry will be wild when he sees that! He will guess it was Smithy——"

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed Bob Cherry, as the tall, athletic figure of the games and maths master appeared in the open doorway.

The Remove fellows looked rather curiously at Mr. Lascelles. There was a slight flush in his handsome face, a glint in his eyes. Certainly he was not, as Billy Bunter had said, scowling like a demon. But it was easy to guess that he had been annoyed by his talk on the telephone. He came quickly into the class-room.

The blackboard was facing the class, and Mr. Lascelles did not immediately see what was chalked on it. But he saw the breathless interest with which the juniors regarded him, and knew at once that something was "on."

"I am sorry I am a few minutes late," said Mr. Lascelles, in his pleasant voice. "We will now——"

He broke off as he saw the blackboard.

His eyes fixed on the chalked drawing there. The juniors watched him in tense, suppressed excitement. They wondered what Larry would do about it. He had all the Remove to choose from if he wanted to find the perpetrator, and nobody, of course, was likely to give Smithy away. But he was as keen as mustard, and most of the fellows expected him to nail the offender.

Having gazed at the pugilistic scene on the blackboard for several seconds, which seemed like long minutes to the Remove, Mr. Lascelles turned to the class. His lips were set, and there was a glint in his eyes that even the cool, iron-nerved Bounder did not like.

"Who has done this?" inquired Mr. Lascelles.

No reply.

The keen, searching eyes of the maths master passed from face to face. Billy Bunter blinked at him uneasily, in terror of being suspected as the culprit. Skinner looked uneasy—he was known to be clever at drawing, and as full of tricks as a monkey. The Bounder's face

was absolutely unconscious. But it was upon the Bounder's face that Larry's penetrating glance rested at last.

"Vernon-Smith!" he rapped. "Stand out before the class!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Going Through It!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH drew a quick, deep breath.

He was "up against" Larry—he hated the man—or, at all events, fancied that he did. And he was not afraid of him—the Bounder was afraid of nobody. It was not uncommon for the Bounder to have a feud on with somebody or other—his headstrong temper and arrogant nature often made him enemies. Even with his loyal chum, Redwing, he had quarrelled more than once.

At present Larry Lascelles was the object of the Bounder's bitterness, and seldom or never had he felt so bitter. He had been reported for a flogging by a man who, as he believed, was deceiving the headmaster who trusted him.

He felt that he had had injustice—and Smithy was the last man at Greyfriars to submit to injustice patiently. He had made Larry, and his supposed boxing stunts, the talk of the school—rubbing it in as hard as he could. But as the young master's eyes fixed on him,

The Bounder of Greyfriars was Larry Lascelles' sworn enemy. Yet when Larry was kidnapped, the Bounder turned out to be a friend in need!

and the sharp voice rapped out his name, Smithy rather wished that he had left the blackboard unadorned. He realised that he had given Lascelles a chance at him—if the "beak" could bring it home to him.

Slowly the Bounder left his place and lounged out before the class. He managed to infuse a great deal of impertinence into his manner. The Remove watched in silence.

Mr. Lascelles pointed to the drawing.

"You did this, I think, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly.

"If I did, sir, is a fellow bound to convict himself?" drawled the Bounder, with cool insolence.

"Will you answer my question?"

"No, sir!"

"You refuse to answer me?" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles, while the Remove almost gasped at the Bounder's nerve.

"Oh, no, sir," said Smithy, with perfect coolness. "I'll answer with pleasure—I mean no, sir, in answer to your question."

"You deny having put this insulting drawing on the blackboard?"

"Oh, quite!" said the Bounder, carelessly.

It was hardly a lie, for the Bounder did not expect to be believed—or, indeed, want to be believed. It was up to Lascelles to prove that he had done it if he wanted to punish him—and the Bounder's idea was that he was not going to help him.

"Very well," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "How do you account for the smudge of chalk on your fingers, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder started. Wary as he

was, he had not thought of that. Mr. Lascelles had!

He glanced down hastily at his fingers. A keen eye was needed to detect the traces of the chalk there. But Larry's eyes were known to be very keen. A black, sullen look came over the Bounder's hard face. His lip curved in a sneer.

"You've got me!" he said sulkily. "You know I did it—and I'm not sorry. What I've drawn there is the truth, and you know it!"

The gleam that came into the maths master's eyes as Vernon-Smith made that insolent answer caused the Bounder to make a backward step. But Mr. Lascelles kept his temper. For a moment he breathed very hard. The Remove were quite breathless now. There was a brief pause, and then Mr. Lascelles spoke, calmly and quietly.

"For some days, Vernon-Smith, there has been a great deal of talk connected with me, which has come to my ears. I think I am not mistaken in attributing it to you."

"I've mentioned to some fellows what I know, sir," answered the Bounder, coolly. "I saw no reason for keeping it a secret."

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Smithy's the man to ask for it, and no jolly old mistake."

"As this foolish tattle has begun in the Remove, and spread in the School from this Form, I shall take this opportunity of explaining the matter," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "Most of you are aware that at one time I was a boxer. A certain man whose business is promoting glove-fights desired me to appear in the ring again. He telephoned me at the school while I was absent—and a foolish boy played a trick in answering the telephone——"

"Oh lor'!" murmured Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"It happened that Bunter, of this Form, was in my study, and with almost incredible foolishness and impertinence he answered the telephone in my name," said Mr. Lascelles. "This led to a misunderstanding which caused the man Valence to believe that I had acceded to his proposition. I have had great difficulty in convincing him that he was deceived by a foolish and impertinent schoolboy. Under that delusion he wrote me a letter which Vernon-Smith most unscrupulously purloined in my study and read. That is the whole matter in a nutshell, and there is no foundation whatever for the tattle Vernon-Smith has been industriously spreading through the school."

"We all knew there was nothing in it, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Thank you, Wharton! I have explained the matter in order that it may be cleared up, and this annoying tattle cease," said Mr. Lascelles. He turned to the Bounder. "You have heard me, Vernon-Smith?"

"I've heard, sir," said the Bounder.

"You understand now that there is nothing in your foolish and impertinent suspicions?"

"No, sir!" said the Bounder, grimly.

"Smithy, you ass!" exclaimed Redwing.

"You want me to answer truthfully, I suppose, sir?" said the Bounder, his eyes mockingly on the maths master's face.

"Certainly!" snapped Mr. Lascelles.

"Very well, then," said Vernon-Smith, with icy coolness. "I don't believe a word of it. I believe exactly as I did before."

A deep silence followed that. For

some moments a pin might have been heard to drop in the class-room. The Bounder of Greyfriars had given a master the lie! It was the limit, even for the reckless Bounder. The juniors gazed at them spellbound. It seemed an age, though it was only a few moments, before Mr. Lascelles spoke again.

"Take the duster and clean the black-board, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, certainly!"

Smithy took the duster and wiped out the drawing.

"Now," said Larry Lascelles, in a deep voice, "I will give you a last opportunity, Vernon-Smith. I am unwilling to deal hardly with you. On a certain night last week, when I discovered you out of bounds, I was attacked by a ruffian who believed, as you did, that I was engaged to fight a man he backed. You intervened to warn me of danger, otherwise I might never have discovered you out of bounds."

"I had no choice but to report you, as you would realise if you reflected reasonably on the matter. But this, I have no doubt, is the cause of the unthinking resentment you have displayed. Because of that service I desire to deal with you leniently. If you will express regret for your impertinence, and promise that there shall be no more of it, I will let the matter pass, and say nothing more about it."

The Bounder did not speak.

It was a chance—if he would have taken it.

But the Bounder was too savagely bitter and resentful for that. He had saved Lascelles from a cracked head, and Lascelles had reported him to Dr. Locke. The man affected a strict sense of duty, while he was deceiving his headmaster—deceiving the whole school—playing a part, and leading a double life. That was the Bounder's belief, and there was scorn, as well as bitter dislike, in his look at the games master.

"Answer me, Vernon-Smith!"

"I'm not goin' to apologise, if that's what you mean, sir," answered the Bounder stubbornly, "and I'm not goin' to keep secrets for you."

Mr. Lascelles' face flushed with anger.

"That will do," he said. "You leave me only one way of dealing with you, Vernon-Smith." He picked up a cane from his desk. "Bend over that chair!"

For a moment the Bounder hesitated, his eyes gleaming and his fists clenched. It seemed as if the reckless scapegrace of Greyfriars was thinking of resistance. Mr. Lascelles pointed to the chair with the cane—but the Bounder did not stir.

"Understand me, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Lascelles, quietly but grimly. "A few days ago, when you purloined the letter from my study and took it to Dr. Locke, you would have been expelled—but I begged the Head to give you another chance, and he acceded. You may have misunderstood my motives, but I shall now leave you no room for misunderstanding. If you do not immediately obey me I shall take you to your headmaster and place the matter in his hands. That will mean expulsion! Take your choice!"

For an instant longer the Bounder hesitated. Then, as Mr. Lascelles made a movement he bent over the chair. It was that or the sack, if Lascelles meant what he said—and on that point there could hardly be a doubt. With savage

rage and bitterness in his heart, Herbert Vernon-Smith bent over to take his punishment.

It was not a light one. Lascelles hardly ever used the cane, but when he did he used it effectively. Six strokes came down, hard and fast, and every one rang like a pistol-shot. That the Bounder had asked for it, over and over again, all the Remove knew—but they could not help sympathising with a fellow undergoing that swiping "six." Few fellows could have taken it in silence, but the Bounder of Greyfriars did not utter a sound.

There was a gasp of relief in the Remove when Mr. Lascelles laid down the cane at last.

"You may go to your place, Vernon-Smith," said the master quietly.

In silence, with a white face and burning eyes, the Bounder went to his place.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Smithy's Chance!

"**R**EALLY—" said Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Really—" said Prout, master of the Fifth.

"Really—" murmured mild Mr. Capper, the Fourth Form beak.

The three masters all uttered that ejaculation together as they came out of their studies in Masters' Passage. In another study—that of Mr. Lascelles—the telephone bell was ringing. It was ringing hard and fast. That afternoon was a half-holiday at Greyfriars—and Form masters, relieved of their Forms, naturally wanted a little quiet repose. But that shrill, raucous, insistent buzzing in Lascelles' study was rather disturbing. There was altogether too much of it.

How often Mr. Lascelles' telephone had rung during the past few days, hardly anyone could have computed. Someone was determined to get through to Lascelles, that was clear—someone who was not to be denied. It was quite a persecution. The other beaks did not like it. Apparently some persistent person, with whom Lascelles did not want to get into touch, wanted to get into touch with Lascelles. The opinion of the other beaks was that Lascelles ought to put a stop to it, somehow.

Quelch had retired to his study to get on with his celebrated history of Greyfriars. Prout had retired to smoke one of his big, black cigars, gaze at the antlers and guns on his study wall, and dream of the days when he had been a mighty hunter, and able to see his knees. Capper had gone to his den to correct papers for the Fourth. The ring of a telephone bell was one of those necessary evils of modern life, which a man had to tolerate somehow. But this persistent, endless, incessant, ringing was not to be tolerated.

The three beaks all said "Really," but they looked as if their feelings were stronger than their words. Had they been Greyfriars boys instead of Greyfriars masters, they would have said that it was a thumping nuisance, that it was the giddy limit, and that they were fed-up to the back teeth. That was what they felt like.

Buzzzz! came again from Lascelles' study. Somebody wanted him, and the exchange was dutifully trying to get him. The three beaks wished that the exchange would not be quite so dutiful. Mr. Twigg opened his study door and looked out. The Second Form beak said "Really," just like the other beaks. Buzzzz!

Trotter, the House page, seemed tired of coming up to tell the importunate man on the phone that Mr. Lascelles could not attend to him. At all events Trotter did not come. Buzz, buzz, buzz! Lascelles evidently was not in his study—the athletic games master was seldom indoors when he could get out of doors. He had not reached the age when an armchair has an irresistible appeal. Besides, as games master, he was in charge of games practice that afternoon, and was no doubt somewhere with the Sixth Form cricket men.

"This," said Mr. Quelch, "is annoying."

"Excessively!" said Prout.

"Where is Lascelles?" asked Mr. Capper.

"I believe I saw him in the quadrangle from my window," said Mr. Twigg. "I think he had better be called."

"Undoubtedly!" said Prout.

Mr. Quelch whisked back into his study, and crossed to the open window. That window, like most study windows, was wide open, to let in the sunshine and fresh air of a glorious June afternoon. Quelch put his head out, and, like Moses of old, looked this way, and looked that way. The games master was visible in the distance, talking to Wingate and Gwynne and Loder of the Sixth, who were in flannels. But he was too far away to hear Quelch call—too far to hear the raucous buzz that streamed from the open window of his study.

Fellows nearer at hand heard it. Billy Bunter was blinking at Lascelles' window through his big spectacles. Vernon-Smith, who was slouching with his hands in his pockets, and a scowl on his face, heard it, and he glanced in the direction of the sound with a sneering grin. Smithy, at least, had no doubt that it was some pugilistic acquaintance of Larry's, who was so keen to get through to him. Tom Redwing, who was with his chum, glanced round as Mr. Quelch called his name.

"Redwing!"

"Yes, sir!" Tom came up to his Form master's window.

"Please go across to Mr. Lascelles, and tell him that the telephone bell has been ringing for some time in his study."

"Certainly, sir."

Redwing cut across the quad at a run. Mr. Quelch popped back, and rejoined the other masters in the passage. By that time Mr. Wiggins, master of the Third, had come out, looking very cross. Wiggins had been awakened from an after-lunch nap by that persistent buzz. Five irritated beaks were now waiting in the passage for Lascelles to come in.

In the quad the Bounder lounged by the windows, watching his chum cut across and speak to the games master. He saw the flush that mounted into Lascelles' face, and saw him leave the Sixth Form men, and start for the House with rapid strides. Redwing came to Smithy, with a faint smile on his face.

"Larry seems rather shirty," he remarked.

"His sporting pals don't give him much rest," sneered the Bounder. "He makes out that I'm the cause of the talk about him; but that sportsman on the phone has done his bit."

"It's queer," said Redwing. "No business of ours, though. Are you coming down to games practice, Smithy? Wharton's gone already."

The Bounder's eyes glinted.

"Last week I was using Quelch's phone, and Lascelles heard me through the open window," he said, in a low

voice. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I'm goin' to hear what he says to his sporting pal. Come on, Reddy!"

Redwing coloured hotly.

"Smithy, you can't— For goodness' sake, don't think of playing the eavesdropper, like Bunter!"

"Rats!"

Vernon-Smith backed till he was close to the wall at the side of Lascelles' study window. Redwing gave him one look, and walked away. He, at least, had no desire or intention of hearing what was said on the phone in that study. The Bounder had no such scruples. It was war between him and Larry—war to the knife. And the

"Your telephone, Mr. Lascelles," said Quelch frigidly.

"Really, sir—" boomed Prout.

"It is so very continuous—" said Mr. Capper.

"I have been awakened," said Mr. Wiggins. "I was asleep in my arm-chair, and I have been awakened—"

"You will realise, my dear Lascelles—" began Twigg.

All the five opened fire on the games master at once. Lascelles' handsome face was already flushed; now it was nearly crimson.

"I am sorry you have been disturbed," he said. "But—"

Buzzzz! came from the study.

"Surely, sir, whoever is ringing you up may be dissuaded from doing so, if

"Who is there?"

"Larry!" came a voice over the wires. "You know me—Archie. Sorry you've been bothered, as they say at the exchange; but I've got to see you!"

"Listen to me, Archie Valence!" Mr. Lascelles' clear, concentrated voice was perfectly audible to the junior standing below his window outside, and the Bounder listened intently. "I've warned you again and again not to ring me up at the school—"

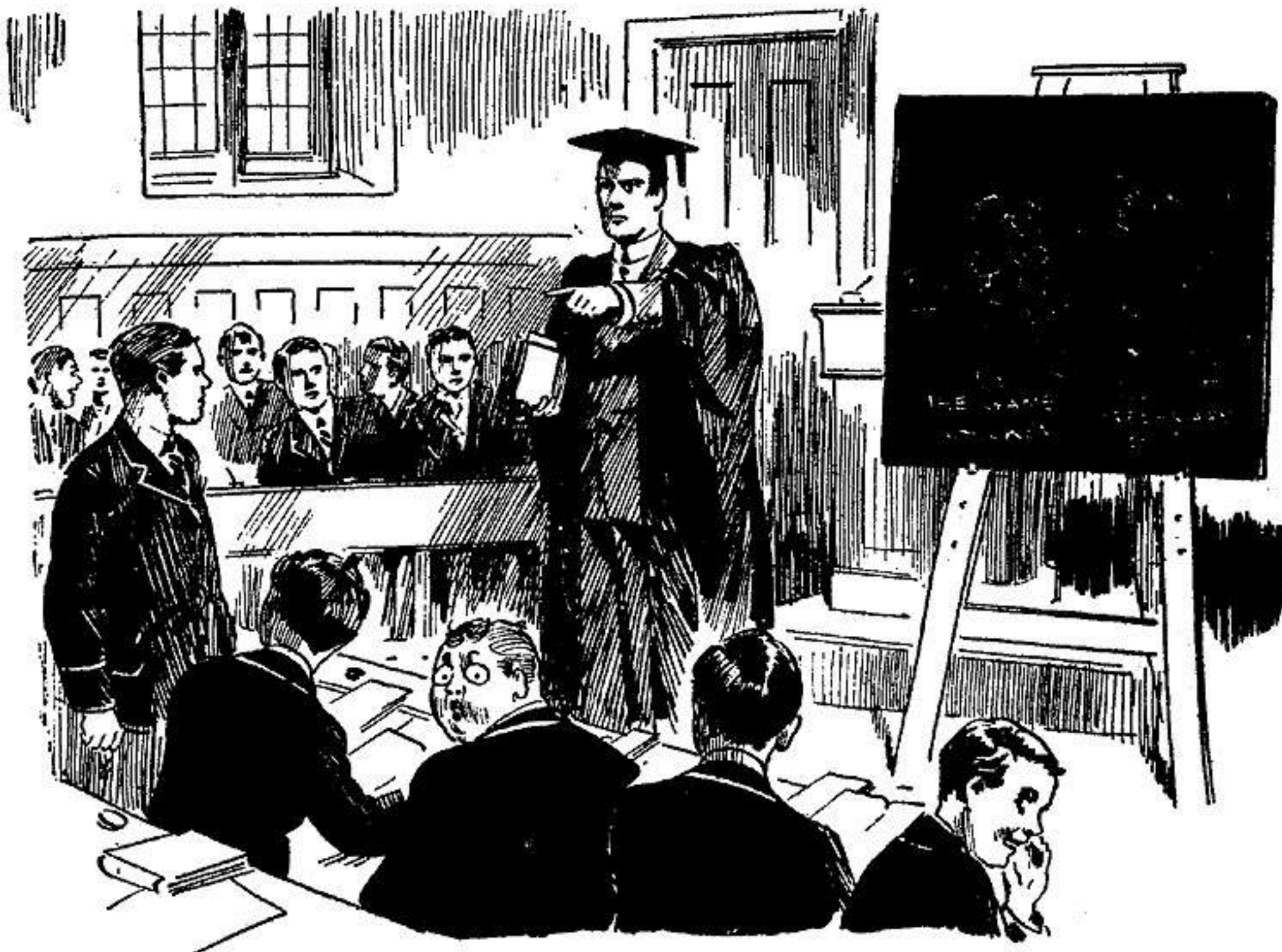
"I've got to see you!"

"You shall see me!" Lascelles' face was grim as he made that answer. "I shall come over this afternoon."

"Good man!"

"Where are you speaking from?"

"Lantham! Thatch End. You'll find



Having gazed at the pugilistic scene on the blackboard, Mr. Lascelles turned to the class, his lips set, his eyes glinting. "Who has done this?" he inquired. There was no reply. The keen, searching eyes of the maths master passed from face to face, resting at last upon the Bounder. "Vernon-Smith!" he rapped. "Stand out before the class!"

Bounder's doctrine was that all was fair in war. It was by chance that Lascelles had heard him at Quelch's phone a few days since. It was not by chance that the Bounder was going to overhear Lascelles. But that made no difference to Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was absolutely without scruple when his back was up. He stood leaning on the ivy on the wall in a careless attitude of idleness; but his ear was keenly alert for a voice from the study. From within he could not be seen, unless the games master put his head out of the window and glanced round, which was unlikely, when Lascelles was hurrying to the telephone. Quietly the Bounder waited.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lascelles, with a flushed face and a glinting eye, had reached Master's Passage. There he found no fewer than five irritated beaks waiting to see him.

you do not desire to speak to him," said Quelch acidly.

"I shall make it a point to dissuade him," said Mr. Lascelles, with a grim tightening of the lips. "But I must mention, sir, that the man's persistence is due to a misapprehension, caused by the trick played by a boy in your Form last week."

Quelch barely repressed a snort.

"Possibly, sir," he replied. "Bunter was caned for his impertinence. It is very singular that a misapprehension caused by a foolish schoolboy's prank, should cause this incessant, this endless annoyance, this—"

"I shall put a stop to it without delay," said Mr. Lascelles.

And he passed on and went into his study, and shut the door.

His brow was thunderous as he strode across to the telephone, grabbed the receiver from the hooks, and spoke.

the place easily enough—just outside Lantham on your side."

"Thatch End," repeated Mr. Lascelles. "Is that the name of the house?"

"That's it."

"Expect me in a couple of hours."

"Good!"

Lascelles replaced the receiver. He left the study. It did not even occur to him to glance from the window, and he remained in complete ignorance of the fact that the Bounder was outside and had heard every word he had uttered. The telephone-bell did not ring again. Archie Valence, at Thatch End, Lantham, was satisfied. He had forced the games master of Greyfriars to consent to come over and see him—though had he guessed with what intentions Mr. Lascelles was coming, probably Archie would not have felt so satisfied.

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Smithy moved quickly away; he did not want Lascelles to spot him there when he came out of the House again. Larry was not long in coming—he was already in flannels, ready to go down to Big Side with the Sixth Form cricketers. Loafing by the elms in the quad, Smithy saw him join the seniors and walk down to the cricket ground with them. Evidently Larry was going through his duties as games master before he started for Lantham. As he had a motor-bike, the run of ten miles would not take him long—and he had said that he would arrive at Thatch End in a couple of hours, so he had plenty of time for the cricket.

The Bounder stood looking after him as he went, with a dark shade of thought on his brow, thinking deeply. He knew the name of Archie Valence—he had heard it from "Pug," the bruiser, who had assailed Mr. Lascelles. According to what Pug had said, Archie was the fights promoter who was putting up Larry to meet the "Game Chicken." Now Lascelles was going over to see the man. What did it look like?

A clap on the shoulder startled the Bounder from his reverie.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as he spun round, with a gasp. "Enjoying life, old bean?"

"You silly ass!" growled the Bounder.

"Same to you, and many of them!" said the cheery Bob. "Forgotten games practice, old bean?"

"Hang games practice!"

"Steady, the Buffs!" grinned Bob. "It's not long to the Highcliffe match now, old tulip, and you want to keep up your form. Larry's going to take us in hand when he's through with the seniors."

"Hang Larry!"

"Bow-wow! You're up against old Larry—but you can wash that out as far as cricket's concerned, Smithy. There isn't a better coach than Larry in the jolly old wide world—and you know it as well as I do!"

The Bounder sneered.

"Larry won't be bothering about the Remove this afternoon," he said. "He's got an engagement after he's through with the Sixth."

"How the thump do you know?" asked Bob, with a stare.

"You'll find it's so," sneered the Bounder. "He's got to see a man about fixing up a fight."

"For goodness' sake, chuck it, Smithy!" grunted Bob. "You had six this morning for that rot! Can't you take the man's word?"

"No fear!"

"Then you're a silly ass! Anyhow, Larry or no Larry, you're coming down to the cricket, I suppose?"

"Not to-day. I've got another engagement, as well as Larry!" sneered the Bounder.

Bob gave an impatient grunt.

"Cut it out, Smithy, and don't be a goat!" he said. "Come down to the cricket—Wharton's expecting you—"

"Bother Wharton!"

"Look here, fathead—"

"Rats!"

The Bounder walked away; and Bob, with another grunt, went to join the cricketers. Smithy was thinking hard—but he was not thinking of cricket. He had quite other plans for that afternoon.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Spy!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH was sending down a few to Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, when the Bounder strolled on Little Side about ten minutes later.

He was not in flannels, and did not look as if he had come there for cricket. He looked on till Wharton left the wicket and the nabob was bowling to Bob Cherry, and then called to Harry.

"Why aren't you changed?" asked Wharton, coming over to him. "I'd like you to send me a few, Smithy; you're our second best bowler, you know."

"I want to speak to you."

"Go ahead!" said Harry, with one eye on the practice.

"Come away a bit, then."

"Oh, all right!" Wharton moved off out of hearing of the other fellows, not very patiently. He did not want to hear any secrets from the scapegrace of Greyfriars, and he wanted to keep his eye on his duties.

"You're expecting Lascelles to come along after he's finished with the big guns," said Smithy in a low voice. "Well, he won't! You'll get a message—"

"I've had it already. Lascelles is called away, or something; he won't be able to give us any time this afternoon," answered Harry. "What about it?"

TO READERS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE.

Readers in the Irish Free State are requested to note that when free gifts are offered with this publication, they can only be supplied when the article is of a non-dutiable character.

"I know where he's going—and why."

"No bizney of yours, is it?" asked Wharton, with a stare.

"I think it's any fellow's bizney to show up a rotten humbug who's pulling the headmaster's leg!" answered Smithy, with a virtuous air that did not become him very well.

"A fat lot you care about the headmaster, and whether anybody pulls his leg or not!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Look here, Smithy, if you're going to slang Larry, I don't want to hear it!"

"You can cut the games practice this afternoon," said Smithy.

"What the thump—"

"And come out with me—"

"Mad?" asked Wharton.

"You could do it if you liked."

"I suppose I could if I liked—but I jolly well don't like! What the merry thump are you driving at, Smithy?" exclaimed Wharton impatiently.

"I've spotted where Lascelles is going after he's through with the Sixth. He's going to see a boxing promoter to fix up a fight."

"Rubbish!"

"I know it for a fact! I've ears, and I've used them! I suppose you admit that if Lascelles is taking the Head in, and engaging in prize-fights, and telling lies about it, he ought to be shown up?" sneered the Bounder.

"I suppose so. But it's no business of ours. Besides, it's not true!"

"That's easily proved—and I'm going to prove it! I'm going to have an eye

on Lascelles when he goes over to Lantham this afternoon. Will you come with me?"

"Wha-a-at?" Wharton jumped.

"Everybody knows I'm up against the rotter, and may not believe what I say about it," sneered Vernon-Smith. "But if you're with me, that settles it. Your word would be taken if mine wouldn't."

Wharton reddened.

"You howling ass!" he exclaimed. "You want me to spy on a man and try to nose out his private business—to find out something that I know isn't true! You must be potty to suggest such a thing!"

"Will you come?"

"No, I won't!"

And with that direct answer the captain of the Remove turned his back on Herbert Vernon-Smith and walked back to the cricketers.

The Bounder set his lips. He walked away in the other direction. He would have been glad of Wharton's company on his peculiar excursion, but he had had little expectation that the captain of the Remove would join up. He expected to make discoveries in Lantham, and he would have been glad of the presence of a credible witness—more credible than himself. It was only too likely that whatever he might say would be set down to his bitter antipathy towards the games master, and it was only too well known that when Smithy had a "feud" on he was not particular in his methods. With a shrug of the shoulders Vernon-Smith left the cricket field and walked down to the bikeshed.

It was likely to be a good hour yet before Lascelles started for Lantham on his motor-bike. The Bounder had plenty of time to get there ahead of him.

He wheeled out his machine, and rode away by the lane into the Redclyffe road—the way to Lantham.

He bent over his handlebars, going at a racing speed. The Bounder was keen on cricket, as keen as any man in the Remove; but the cricketers on Little Side were not likely to see anything of him that afternoon. Few of them, if they wondered why he did not turn up, were likely to guess how he was occupied.

Lantham came in sight at last, in the June sunshine, rising into view over the green woods. Smithy did not keep on as far as the town. He knew where Thatch End was—a mile out of Lantham on the Greyfriars side. More than once he had passed the place on his bike, though without taking any interest in it, or noting it particularly.

But he knew that it was an old farmhouse, a prosperous place till the hard times came; but since then taxes and tithes had knocked out the farmer, the ploughland was given up to pasture, and the farmhouse itself was deserted, let occasionally to visitors in the summer.

It was, the Bounder was well aware, just the secluded spot which boxing-men might select for training—and he had no doubt that it was for that purpose that Archie Valence had become its tenant.

And why had the sporting-man fixed his headquarters within a few miles of Greyfriars, except to keep in touch with Larry Lascelles? There was no doubt in the Bounder's suspicious mind.

Thatch End lay off the road, at a distance, a dusty and rutty lane leading to it through a beech wood.

The Bounder dismounted there, and wheeled his bike down the lane, till the old slate roofs of the farmhouse were

in sight. Then he wheeled his machine among the trees, and left it concealed, and proceeded on foot.

He kept in cover of the trees as he approached the rather lonely building. He did not want to be seen by the occupants. He was there to spy—though in his own mind he found a less unpleasant name for his actions.

A high fence surrounded the garden, and the gate was shut. Seated on the gate, watching the lane, was a young man of about thirty-five, smoking a cigar. Keeping out of sight, in the trees, the Bounder regarded him with keen curiosity. He wondered whether this was "Archie."

The young man had a bowler hat on one side of his head, a fancy waistcoat, and a tie of brilliant hue. He sat idly on the gate, swinging his legs, evidently with nothing to do that sunny afternoon but to smoke cigars and watch the lane—for an expected visitor! Smithy knew what visitor he was expecting.

On one side of the lane leading up to the gate was a high hawthorn hedge, thick and untrimmed.

Smithy dropped on his hands and knees and crawled behind the hedge till he was close to the fence. Through the interstices of the hedge he could see the young man sitting on the gate, and the face of a man who had joined him there, looking over.

The Bounder grinned sourly at the sight of that face—scarred, with a flattened nose—the face of a bruiser. He needed no more proof that Thatch End was the headquarters of boxing-men.

"He ain't coming, Mr. Valence, sir!" said the man, looking over the gate, in a deep, growling voice.

"Hardly time yet!" answered the young man with the cigar. "He's coming all right, Bunchy!"

A third man appeared, staring over the gate down the dusty lane. The Bounder was glad that he had been so cautious in his approach. Certainly three pairs of eyes would have spotted him had he walked up the lane.

The two bruisers stared over the gate for a few minutes, and then lounged away. Archie Valence continued to sit and smoke his cigar. It was evident that Larry Lascelles' arrival was keenly expected by the denizens of Thatch End.

In the distance the sound of a motor-bike floated at last on the air. Archie Valence—Smithy knew now that the young man was Valence—threw away the stump of his cigar. He slipped down from the gate on the inner side, and Vernon-Smith heard him call out:

"He's coming! You bring him in, Ted!"

Smithy did not hear the answer. He waited and watched, his heart beating rather fast. There was a cloud of dust in the lane, as a motor-bike came chugging up.

Mr. Lascelles, games master of Greyfriars, was mounted on it. Through the hedge Smithy watched him, with a sneering grin. How many times, he wondered, had Lascelles visited that place—for boxing training with the two bruisers there, of course! Next week, he knew, Larry Lascelles was booked to go away on leave for three days, to play in a county cricket match. Was he only going to play cricket while he was away? Was he going to play cricket at all? Wasn't his cricketing a cover for his real occupation—punching for a purse in the ring? There was little doubt of it in the Bounder's mind



LOOKING for fresh worlds to conquer" has become a catch-phrase now that the North and South Poles have been reached by explorers and flying men have mapped out parts of the earth that once upon a time were unknown blanks on the map. There's nothing left in the world to explore, they say. Isn't there! Did you know that about three-quarters of the surface of the earth is under water—the fresh water of vast lakes or the salt water of the sea? Three-quarters, mind! How much do we know of all that below-water territory? Very little indeed. There, then, is a fresh "world" to conquer and explore—a fascinating and dangerous job for our marvellously equipped and up-to-date divers.

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Roughly, of that below-water three-quarters of the earth's surface, about 9,000,000 square miles are less than 300 feet deep. And a diver equipped as you see in this week's photogravure plate can walk about—and do things—at a depth of 360 feet. So now there's 9,000,000 square miles of unexplored territory at his feet! Perhaps one day, divers will be still more wonderfully equipped, enabling them to walk over the really deep ocean beds—with the prospect of tumbling into one of the very deep holes that pit the ocean floor—like the lately discovered hole in the floor of the Atlantic, which is estimated to extend nearly nine miles down!

In his all-metal suit, the modern diver can breathe comfortably for long periods, and he does not have to expose

**NEXT WEEK'S SPLENDID FREE PHOTO-PLATE is shown—
in miniature—on page 17.**

The man Ted opened the gate, greeting Mr. Lascelles with great civility. Lascelles gave him barely a nod in reply, and ran his motor-bike in, and the gate shut again—shutting him off from the Bounder's view.

Smithy would have given a great deal to be able to follow him in, and see and hear more. But that was impossible, and he had already discovered all that he had hoped to discover. A party of pugilists were camped at Thatch End—Larry Lascelles came there to visit them—for what, unless it was training for a fight?

It was proof enough to satisfy the Bounder—and he would soon be in possession of proof to satisfy others! The self-constituted detective was feeling pleased with his progress as he crawled back to the spot where he had parked his bicycle. But as he rode back to Greyfriars the Bounder little dreamed

Marvellously equipped in his safe rig-out, there's thrilling work ahead of

THE DREADNOUGHT DIVER

who forms the subject of this week's fine photogravure plate.

even his hands, for his elaborate diving suit is furnished with steel claws which he can open and shut from inside—to grab up sunken treasure or anything else. A modern deep-sea diver can do valuable work in the salving of wrecks, and if he is required to cut away parts of the wreck, he can do so with an amazing oxy-acetylene torch which produces below water a flame of such terrific heat, that with it he can slice through steel as though it were warm butter.

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He carries his own supply of oxygen with him, inside his big metal helmet, so there are no air-lines to become fouled in wreckage or weeds, as was the case of the old-time diver whose constant dread it was that his life would be ended by such an accident. He is simply lowered over the side of the diving-ship on the end of a steel rope attached to a crane, and he is able to talk to the crew on the ship, and to receive orders therefrom, by means of a telephone, the earpiece and mouth-piece of which are inside his helmet.

Some divers carry in or on their helmets a powerful electric light which sends a searching beam as a guide to their footsteps.

In this comfortable and safe rig-out, he can work not only at a greater depth than the old-style diver, in the leather suit, but for a much longer time, and without the subsequent ill-effects such as bleeding at the nose and terrific headaches. There is no end to the possibilities of useful work before the modern diver—including salving sunken treasure, with which the floors of the Seven Seas are littered, and the full tremendous value of which no man can even begin to estimate. The Dreadnought Diver suit is indeed a marvel of modern engineering!

of what was going on at Thatch End—which, if he had only known it, would have knocked all his suspicions and theories sky-high!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Fight Against Odds!

LARRY, old bean!" Archie's manner was cheery and effusive, and he met the games master of Greyfriars with outstretched hand, as Mr. Lascelles entered the old, oak-beamed parlour of the farmhouse.

Behind his effusiveness, however, there was a half-hidden uneasiness and anxiety.

He had fairly persecuted the games master into making that visit at Thatch

End. He hoped that Larry was going to see reason at last, as he regarded it. But he had lingering doubts as to the intentions of Larry Lascelles in coming to Thatch End at last.

Mr. Lascelles took no notice of the outstretched hand, and it dropped slowly to Archie's side.

His face was cold and grim.

"Take a pew, old fellow!" said Archie, rather feebly.

Lascelles stood erect, looking at him.

"I'm here for a few minutes, and a few words, Archie," he said. "You're my cousin, though I'm not proud of the connection. We had dealings together in the old days, when I was a boxing-man. For the sake of the relationship, and for old times' sake, I've been easy with you. I've told you, again and again, that boxing in the ring is a thing of the past for me—that in my present position I could not take it up again if I wished to. You've chosen to look on that as so much wind."

"How much do you make teachin' in a school?" sneered Archie. "You're good for five hundred pounds if you knock out the Game Chicken."

"Very likely; but money's not my object. I've told you that my chief would never permit anything of the kind—"

"Any need to tell him?"

"And you can't understand that I cannot deceive a man who trusts me. Now all this has got to stop!"

Archie's manner of effusive pleasantness had quite faded already. His rather fat and flushed face hardened, and a glitter came into his eyes.

"Please yourself whether you stick to schoolmastering, or make a fortune in the ring, as you might," he said. "But you can't let me down over this scrap. You agreed on the telephone—"

"I have already explained to you that I never got your call that time, and that a silly schoolboy answered the phone in my name, playing a foolish trick. You were the bigger fool of the two to be taken in. You might have known I should never consent to do as you asked."

"Trick or not, I took it as the goods!" answered Archie sullenly. "I put you up—and I stand to lose if you let me down. Everything's fixed except your own signature—"

"Cut it out! I'm not here to talk balderdash!" interrupted Mr. Lascelles. "I'm here to put the stopper on your persecution. You've rung me up a hundred times at the school—it's become the talk of the place—and it's going to end! Several times I've told you over the phone that if you did not leave me in peace I would make you! I'm here to make you!"

Archie jumped.

"What the thump do you mean?"

"You can guess what I mean," answered Larry Lascelles grimly. "I've warned you, time and again, to leave me alone. I've warned you that if you kept on worrying me on the phone I would come over and see you, and give you the thrashing you've been begging for. I'm here to do it!"

Archie gazed at him.

Mr. Lascelles pushed back his cuffs.

"Will you have it here, or step into the yard?" he asked.

"Gad!" gasped Archie. "Oh gad!"

"I'm sorry for it!" said Mr. Lascelles. "But it's the only way—all you've left me! If I let you off, you'll begin on the phone again as soon as I get back to the school. You won't believe I'm in earnest till you're feeling

your nose to find out whether it's been pushed through the back of your head. Are you ready?"

"Gad!" repeated Archie.

"Here, or outside?" asked Lascelles calmly.

It was clear that the games master of Greyfriars was in deadly earnest. As he had said, it was the only resource Archie had left him. He was there on business—grim business.

"You rotter!" said Archie at last.

"You double-crossin' rotter!" He almost spat out the words. "I don't believe it was a trick on the phone that day. I believe you took me up, and let me down, like a rotten cur! But whether you phoned or not, it's your look-out if you let a schoolboy play tricks in your name! You've got to stand for it!"

"Are you ready?"

"Step outside!" said Archie, and he brushed rudely past the games master of Greyfriars, and went into the yard.

Mr. Lascelles followed him out.

"Ted!" yelled Archie. "Bunchy!"

The two bruisers, both in boxing kit, as if they had expected Larry to want them for sparring, came running up.

The games master smiled contemptuously.

"Now, you cur!" said Archie. "I knew you might come here intending to tell me that you were stickin' to lettin' me down! And I never meant you to get by with it—see? You're here—and you're stayin' here! Got that? They can whistle for you at Greyfriars. I've got a room here, fixed up with a barred window, ready for you, Larry Lascelles, and you're going into that room, neck and crop, and staying there till you give your word, honour bright, and sign it, too, to meet the Chicken!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Larry Lascelles, staring at him.

"Did you think I'd let you double-cross me?" snarled Archie. "Forget it, if you did! There's too much at stake for that! Did you think I wanted you over here just for the pleasure of looking at you? Hardly! You're here to stay!"

Mr. Lascelles stared at him blankly for a few moments; and then he burst into a laugh.

"Kidnapping—what?" he asked.

"Call it that if you like!" spat out Archie. "I've got you, and I'm keepin' you! Don't spin me a yarn that anybody at Greyfriars knows where to look for you! You wouldn't tell them anything about this game. You'll just disappear—"

"My hat!"

"And I'll see that a telephone-call is put through, letting them know at the school that you're in the ring again," added Archie. "Then they'll know why you went—see?"

"You've got it all cut and dried, I see!" said Mr. Lascelles, his face wreathed with smiles of genuine amusement.

"I've had time to cut it and dry it while you've been fooling about!" snapped Archie. "I fancy you never guessed anything of the kind when you butted in here, Larry."

"Quite—it never crossed my mind for a moment! I came here, not to be kidnapped—ha, ha!—but to give you the thrashing you've been begging for! If you're ready I'll get on with it!"

"Brag's a good dog!" sneered Archie.

"You're a good man with the mittens, Larry, and a good man without them—but you can't handle two tough propositions like Bunchy and Ted together, with me to lend a hand!"

"Not 'arf!" grinned Bunchy.

"I don't think!" chuckled Ted.

Mr. Lascelles, however, did not seem alarmed. He stepped back a little to keep the three in front of him. That was all.

"You're here, and you stop!" said Archie. "I've thought it out and fixed it up! Your room's all ready! Will you walk into it, or be carried?"

"Archie, old man, you're funnier than you think!" said Mr. Lascelles, laughing. "You're no great shakes as a fights promoter; but you're still less good as a film villain! But I've no time to waste listening to your jokes. Take off your coat—or are you going to scrap with it on?"

Archie threw away his cigar.

"Nail him!" he said briefly. "I'll lend you a hand if you need it!"

Bunchy and Ted advanced on Mr. Lascelles with their hands up and their eyes watchful. Both of them were bigger than the games master, sturdy as he was; both much heavier, and they were experienced "pugs." But Larry Lascelles faced them with cool imperturbability. Indeed, there was rather a joyous gleam in his eyes—a fighting gleam!

Mr. Lascelles, games and mathematics master of Greyfriars, had had to renounce the ring, and say a long farewell to the excitement of his old life.

Not for worlds would he have figured in the roped space again, with the Game Chicken to knock-out! But it was very likely that a taste of the old fighting life was by no means unwelcome to him—so long as he could enjoy it with a clear conscience! Now he had to fight, and he went into it with a zest. Mr. Lascelles disappeared entirely, and gave place to Larry the boxer!

"You will 'ave it?" inquired Bunchy.

"All you can give me!" answered Mr. Lascelles good-humouredly.

"'Ere goes, then!"

And the two bruisers came on. Archie watched them, with a grin on his face—a grin that slowly faded as he continued to watch!

For, two to one as they were, the hefty bruisers made little impression on Larry Lascelles! They closed on him resolutely and grimly, and Larry was hard pressed.

But he was equal to it. His guard was wonderful—his quickness on his feet amazing—he side-stepped like lightning—his movements were almost too swift for the eye to follow. And his right flashed out suddenly, and caught Ted on the point of the chin, and the bruiser went spinning over backwards, to crash down in the yard. He lay where he had fallen, moaning.

The fight had not lasted three minutes, and one of the bruisers was already knocked out!

Archie gritted his teeth.

He threw off his coat, and rushed to the help of Bunchy. Bunchy had Lascelles at close quarters now, and heavy punishment was being given and taken. Archie, with a spring, landed on Lascelles, grappling him round the neck and dragging him over.

"Now—!" he panted.

Bunchy flung himself on the games master of Greyfriars. Lascelles was down!

But it was only for a moment!

Archie gave a gurgling howl, as something that seemed like a kick of a mule landed on his nose. He rolled over on the earth, squealing.

Larry Lascelles struggled up, grappling with Bunchy, and fighting every inch. Ted was still on his back, knocked to the wide, Archie was gurgling and squealing, unable to get on his feet—and Bunchy suddenly found

himself lifted by an upper-cut, that seemed like lifting his head off. He went crashing over, stuttering.

Mr. Lascelles, breathing rather hard, dabbed his nose with a handkerchief, dabbing away the oozing red, and then dusted his clothes with it. He was still quite cool and calm—a contrast to the gasping, groaning three that lay about the yard.

Having finished dusting himself, the games master glanced at them with an amused smile.

"I think that will do for you, Archie!" he said. "I've no doubt you're convinced by this time that I'm better left alone! But if you ring me up at the school again, I'll come along and give you the rest. Good-bye!"

With cheery coolness he walked over to his motor-bike, opened the gate, and ran the jigger out.

Archie sat up dizzily, leaning weakly on the wall.

"Gad!" he said. "Oh gad!"

Groan, from Bunchy! Ted sat up.

"My word!" he said. "My word! What a man for the ring—and wasting his time as a schoolmaster! Why, he'd just eat the Chicken! My word!"

Bunchy groaned again! He was too far gone even to admire the prowess of the man who had knocked him out.

Archie sat and gasped dismally. The chug-chugging of the motor-bike died away down the lane towards the Lantham road. Larry Lascelles was gone—destined not, after all, to be an inmate of that room with a barred window that Archie had all ready for him! Archie had had it all cut and dried, but it was only too clear that he had to cut it and dry it over again!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something Like Evidence!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter put his head in at the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove, his little round eyes glistening with excitement behind his big round spectacles.

Harry Wharton & Co. were there. The Famous Five of the Remove had finished tea when Herbert Vernon-Smith came in, after his ride back from Lantham.

What the Bouncer had to say caused a general frowning in Study No. 1. They did not want to hear anything against Larry, they did not believe a word of what Smithy believed, and they loathed the idea of a fellow spying on anyone. And they were beginning to tell Smithy what they thought of him, when Bunter butted in.

Bunter, evidently, had news.

"I say, you fellows, Larry's been fighting!" trilled Bunter.

"What?" exclaimed Wharton.

"He's just come in," grinned Bunter. "You should see his nose—like a raspberry—a ripe raspberry! Somebody's punched it! He, he, he!"

"What rot!" said Bob Cherry; while the Bouncer grinned sarcastically.

Bunter's news certainly seemed to bear out what he had been telling the chums of the Remove.

"The rotfulness is terrific," declared Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, you go to his study for something, and look at his nose!" said Bunter—"fairly smashed! Must have had an awful cosh! I say, you fellows, do you think he's been at a prize-fight this afternoon?"

"You silly owl!" snapped Frank Nugent.

(Continued on next page.)

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THE RIGBY "SUPER" MODEL AEROPLANE FOR 4½d.

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Dimensions:

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"Oh, really, Nugent! He's been wrapping with somebody," said Bunter, positively. "Skinner says he thinks Smithy's right, after all. I say, Coker of the Fifth asked him if he'd had an accident—I heard him."

"Oh, my hat! And what did Larry say?" asked Johnny Bull.

"He said he'd had a knock," said Bunter. "I heard him! And I heard Coker say to Potter and Greene that he could jolly well guess what it was that he had knocked it on—a set of knuckles! He, he, he!"

The Famous Five looked uncomfortable. According to the Bounder, he had tracked Lascelles that afternoon to a secluded farmhouse, where a party of bruisers were camped, and where, he was convinced, Lascelles was going for the usual training before a fight. Now, it seemed, Larry had come back looking as if he had been through some hard sparring. It began to look as if there was something in Smithy's suspicions.

Not that the chums of the Remove would have thought any the worse of Larry had he, for reasons good to himself, taken up the old game again for once. It was not that. But they knew that if he was taking it up he was deceiving Dr. Locke on the subject. That was the serious aspect of the matter. It was impossible to believe Larry capable of a lying deception. And yet, what did it look like?

"I say, Nugent, you've got some geometry for Lascelles," said Bunter. "Cut along to his study and have a squint at his nose! He, he, he!"

"Do you think I'm going to spy on him?" snapped Nugent—a remark that made the Bounder's eyes glitter.

"I can jolly well tell you his nose is worth seeing," declared Bunter. "I fancy he's going to doctor it—you'll find him at it! He, he, he!"

"Where's my compasses?" asked Nugent, looking round.

"Don't stop to do your geometry first, you ass!" said Bunter. "Just cut off and speak to him about it—that'll be an excuse for going."

"I don't want my compasses for geometry," answered Frank. "I want them to stick into a fat, tattling owl!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He vanished from the doorway of Study No. 1 like a fat ghost at cock-crow, and travelled farther up the passage to spread his interesting news in other studies.

The Bounder regarded the Famous Five with sardonic mockery.

"Well, what do you think of your precious Larry now?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Same as before," said Harry Wharton steadily. "Larry explained how there was a misunderstanding owing to that fat ass Bunter playing tricks on his phone. I dare say that man Valence is worrying him, and he went to see him to clear up the matter, or something."

"And got his nose knocked while he was having a friendly chat?" asked the Bounder.

"I dare say Bunter's piled it on—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Fishy!" Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, passed the open doorway of the study, with a grin on his bony face. Fishy, it seemed, was amused about something.

"Seen Larry, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish looked into the study.

"Yep," he answered—"I guess so! That big boy's a sight for sore eyes! I'm telling you!"

"Anything happened to him?" asked Harry.

Fishy chuckled.

"I'll say so," he answered. "Yep! I should smile! He came in with a nose like it had been kicked by a mule. I'll say it was some nose! You could see it as far off as the Statue of Liberty at New York! Yep! I guess some guy has been hitting that nose all he knew how, and a few over, and then some! I'll say it's the bee's knee and the elephant's side-whiskers!"

And Fishy went grinning on his way.

"Do you believe it now?" asked the grinning Bounder. "Doesn't it begin to look as if Lascelles has been boxing at that den of bruisers?"

"Might have—and no harm done," said Bob Cherry. "I box a little myself sometimes—I think I shall do some soon if you don't leave off gassing about poor old Larry!"

"You know as well as I do that he has been sparring, in training for a fight," said the Bounder, coolly and deliberately. "I wondered whether he'd show any marks when he came back—and he seems to have shown enough to make half Greyfriars sit up and take notice. That's the beak who's so jolly dutiful that he had to report me to the Head, though I saved him from a cracked nut! I can stand it from Quelch—Quelch plays the game! But not from that lying rotter! His jolly old sense of duty made him hand me over for a flogging—but it doesn't keep him from fooling the Head and telling strings of barefaced lies to the old donkey! I'm not takin' an overdose of duty from a liar and a hypocrite!"

"Larry's neither!" snapped Wharton.

"You know he is now, as well as I do! And I'll show him up yet!" said the Bounder savagely. "He's booked for a fight—and I'll land him on that, and it will be the boot for him!"

"You hadn't much luck last time, when you pinched his letter and showed it to the Head!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"You've admitted yourself that the Beak would have sacked you for it if Larry hadn't asked him to go easy."

"And do you think I don't know his reason?" exclaimed the Bounder, scornfully. "If I was turfed out of Greyfriars on his account my father would take it up fast enough—and it would all come out! The Head would have to believe it when it was proved—and I should jolly well come back, and Lascelles would have to go! That was his reason."

"Rot!" said Bob.

"Terrific rot, my esteemed Smithy!"

"You mean you won't believe anything against your precious Larry!" sneered the Bounder. "Well, I'll make you—when I nail him on the fight he's trainin' for! He makes out that he's goin' away on Tuesday to play for Loamshire against Surrey! I know what he's goin' for—and if I don't nail him you can use my head for a football!"

"Anybody got any use for a wooden football?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You utter ass, Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton. "We shall see it in the papers that Larry's at the Loamshire ground. His name will be mentioned with the rest."

"Possibly—but they won't mention what he's doin' all the time! And if the county game interferes with his fightin' arrangements he'll work up some excuse and cut it! You'll see!"

"Fathead!"

The Famous Five made that reply with one voice. And Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh added that the fatfulness of Smithy's head was terrific. The idea of the games master getting leave to play in a county cricket match, as a screen for his boxing engagements, made the chums of the Remove laugh. Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders and went out of the study, convinced himself, and nothing doubting that the other fellows would be convinced before long.

"Silly ass!" said Bob, when he was gone; and with that Smithy and his suspicions were dismissed in Study No. 1.

But in other studies they seemed to be given more heed. There was a good deal of talk and surmise on the subject of Larry's damaged nose. After all, it

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was extremely unusual for a Greyfriars master to come in with his nose looking as if it had been punched hard. Plenty of fellows were curious to see Larry and look at that damage. Perhaps the Famous Five were a little curious, strong as was their faith in the games master.

Lascelles was seen in Hall that evening, and almost every eye at Greyfriars was turned on him—and his nose. Probably he had doctored it a little, for it was not showing so red and raw as when it had first been spotted. But there was no doubt that it was red and swollen—that fact leaped to the eye. Prout, like Coker of his Form, was heard to ask Lascelles if he had had an accident.

"Dangerous things—those motor-cycles," Prout was heard to say.

But if Prout fancied that Larry's nose had been damaged owing to his

motor-bike, Prout was alone in that fancy. Very nearly all the school decided that Larry's nose had been punched, and wondered who had punched it.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Tries It On!

"**Q**UELCH might let us off—" "Fathead!" "Well, dash it all, even a crusty old bird like Quelch ought to be proud of a Greyfriars beak playing for his county!" said Bob Cherry. "Not to the extent of letting fellows off class to see him off!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "What about asking him?" "Ass!" "I say, you fellows, it's a jolly good

idea!" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly. "We might get off a whole class—" "Who wants to get off a class?" bawled Bob. "Eh? You do, don't you?" demanded Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "Ain't you proposing to get off school, to see that fathead Lascelles off?"

"Oh, kick him!" said Bob. "Beast!"

It was Tuesday. Mr. Lascelles was leaving the school, booked to play for his county in a match beginning the next day, during the afternoon. All Greyfriars were keen about it, from the Sixth to the Second Form. Every fellow would have liked to see Larry off—a sort of conquering hero in anticipation! Lascelles, however, who did not love the limelight, was catching a train in the afternoon, while the fellows were

(Continued on next page.)



Readers who want any knotty cricket problem solved should write, without delay, to "Umpire," c/o The MAGNET,

The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The more difficult the problem the better he likes it!

THE "BLACK BRADMAN."

IN first-class cricket this season we have the players from the West Indies as what might be called an "item of interest" outside the County programme. Most of these West Indies players realise that they are only yet in the "learning" stage, but I must say that when I have talked to them I have been struck by their keenness to learn. If it is eventually proved—as it probably will be—that their cricket in general is not quite up to the English standard so far as Test matches are concerned, they will certainly show us that they are very alert.

One man on whom our visitors are depending for a lot of runs is George Headley, the fine batsman who has been called the "Black Bradman," because of the consistent way in which he has made big scores. I was keenly interested, when I had a chat with Headley the other day, to learn that he includes table tennis—or ping-pong if you like—among the games he plays regularly. He told me that he considered table tennis a game which was helpful to the eye of the cricketer—quicken it. I pass on the tip for what it is worth, because, of course, so far as the batting side of cricket is concerned, the eye is a most important factor.

Indeed, I am convinced that, in a general sense, it is true to say that the difference between the ordinary batsman and the genius is often a matter of eyesight. How soon do you see the ball when it has left the hand of the bowler?

I don't suppose many of my readers would be able to answer that question. It is obvious, however, that the sooner you see the ball the greater the length of time you have to make up your mind what sort of ball it is likely to be, and consequently how it should be played. Anything which helps to quicken the eye is useful to the player who would make a successful batsman.

A COMMON ERROR IN BATTING!

MENTION of watching the ball reminds me to give one or two answers to letters I have received from MAGNET readers framed on these lines: "I don't get as many runs as I would like to get. Can you give some golden rules of batting?" Obviously I can't give all the golden rules of batting in one chat. But we can talk for a minute or two on what can be called the most common faults in young players. I am quite sure that one of the main reasons for quick dismissal of young players in a great number of matches is that they do not, strictly speaking, watch the ball.

By that I don't mean that they don't try to see the ball as soon as possible. What I do suggest is that there is a real difference between seeing the ball and watching it. Don't you often make up your mind what you are going to do with a particular delivery before the ball has actually left the bowler's hand? I have an idea that if you would give a frank answer to that question it would be in the affirmative. I know just how you feel. There is a fellow bowling who is keeping a most consistent length. Four balls, perhaps five of the over, you have played most carefully. In fact, those four or five balls have been so good that they merited careful play.

You haven't scored any runs from those good balls. So what do you do? Probably get impatient because the runs are not coming and decide that you are going to score off the next one. That is a fatal attitude of mind, because that next ball, off which you have decided to score, may be the best of the lot.

I remember, in this connection, a chat I had with "Wally" Hammond, the wonder-batsman of Gloucester, about his youthful days.

"Often, in my early days," he said, "I found myself back in the pavilion because I had made up my mind to 'have a dip' before the ball

was delivered. It was not until I had learned to treat every ball on its merits that I began to make much bigger scores."

By referring to that hint given to me by Hammond I think I have illustrated, very clearly, the differences between seeing the ball and watching it. I have also pointed to one of the most common errors in batting. Of course, you want to get runs when you are at the wicket. We all want to do that. But don't make up your mind that you are going to hit a particular delivery out of the ground before you know what sort of delivery it is. That is really taking the shortest cut back to the pavilion. There will be more batting hints in succeeding weeks of the MAGNET, and some hints for bowlers, too.

WAS HE RUN OUT, OR—?

MEANTIME, I must answer an interesting question which has just reached me. Here are the circumstances. A young batsman played a ball just a little way down the pitch—a yard or two. As the wicket-keeper was standing well back, the player who had hit the ball thought there was a chance of a run. He started, but the batsman at the other end sent him back. In turning, the batsman accidentally kicked the ball, and it went into his wicket while he was still out of his crease.

Two questions arise out of this incident. In the first place, was the batsman out, and in the second place, if he was out, how should the incident be recorded in the score-book?

The batsman who kicked the ball into his wicket was certainly out. That was the decision of the umpire when the incident actually occurred, and it was the correct one. In the score-book the note was made that the batsman was run out.

Well, some people might think this the correct decision, but I am not so sure. How could a batsman be run out if no fielder had touched the ball? Giving the matter my careful consideration, I think the safest way of marking the score-book was to use the word "bowled." If the batsman had played the ball on to his foot, and it had gone into his wicket, bowled would have been the decision. And if the circumstances were not quite like that in the case sent to me, I think it might be left to the umpire to decide such border-line cases.

"UMPIRE."

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in class. Most of Greyfriars would have enjoyed marching down to the station with him in a cheering mob; but certainly Larry himself would not have enjoyed it.

"Why couldn't the duffer start before class?" growled Bob Cherry. "Then we could at least have given him a yell when he went."

"Might prefer to go without the yell," suggested Nugent.

"I've a jolly good mind to ask Quelch for leave," grunted Bob. "But I suppose there's nothing doing."

"I dare say Lascelles would rather nobody went to the station with him," put in the Bouncer, with a sneering grin.

"Why not?" grunted Bob.

"He may not be takin' a ticket for Loamchester. His boxing engagement can't be there."

"You silly ass!" said Harry Wharton, in measured tones. "Everybody knows that Larry's putting up at the County Hotel at Loamchester to-night, to be near the county ground."

"Perhaps!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Fellows are getting fed-up with your rot on that subject, Smithy! You'd better ring up the County Hotel to-morrow, and ask if he's there."

"Quite a good suggestion," said Vernon-Smith. "I will!"

"You howling ass, I didn't mean—"

"I do!"

"Jevver see such an obstinate ass?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the Bouncer walked away. "Smithy will get kicked if he goes on at this rate!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"I say, though, what about asking Quelch for leave?" urged Bunter. "We needn't let him know that it's cutting class we're thinking of—"

"It isn't!" shrieked Bob.

"Oh, don't be an ass! We can pile it on about cricket, and—and pull his leg, you know, and ten to one he will believe that we're frightfully keen on Lascelles, and may give us leave—"

"Kick him!"

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

Mr. Lascelles was not to be seen when the Greyfriars fellows went to the Form-rooms that afternoon. Probably he was packing for his journey, and still more probably, did not want the enthusiastic juniors to give him a yell.

The Remove went in—Bob still with a lingering idea at the back of his mind of asking Quelch for leave. But one glance at Quelch's grim face was enough to banish that idea from his mind, and Bob took his place with the rest.

Not so Billy Bunter!

William George Bunter did not care two straws, or one, about Larry Lascelles, with the rest of the Loamshire team thrown in. But he cared very much indeed about getting off a class. Bunter was prepared to work up any amount of enthusiasm about cricket, or anything else, if it would get him off a class.

Bunter thought it a jolly good idea, and he was going to try it on. That lesson, too, was Latin grammar—a subject that Bunter loathed from the bottom of his podgy heart. Bunter's first proceeding, when he sat down, was to whisper to Bob Cherry—and as Bob was several places away, Bunter's whisper was heard nearly all over the Form-room. Mr. Quelch, who was sorting out a book at his desk, glanced round.

"I say, Bob, ain't you going to ask him?" whispered Bunter.

"Shut up, ass!" breathed Bob.

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"But, look here! It was your idea, you know—"

"Quiet, fathead! Quelch's looking at you!"

"That's all very well; but—"

"Silence in class!" rapped out Mr. Quelch, in an acid voice. "Bunter, you are talking!"

"Oh, no, sir! I never opened my mouth! I only said to Cherry—"

"Silence!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Bob with an irritated blink. It was a jolly good idea—but Bunter would have preferred some other fellow to carry it out! With Quelch, you never could tell. He was liable to bite a fellow's head off for no reason—at all events, no reason that Bunter could see. But as Bob was not taking any, Bunter resolved to make the plunge. Up rose Bunter, as Mr. Quelch came away from his desk with a book in his hand—a book packed with the horrors of Latin grammar!

"If you please, sir—"

"You may sit down, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! Thank you, sir! But I was going to say—leave off kicking me, Nugent, you silly beast—"

"What?"

"I mean, I was going to say—shut up, Toddy—"

"Bunter!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"If you please, sir, I'd like leave this afternoon—leave from class, sir—not because I want to get out of class, of course—that idea never crossed my mind," explained Bunter. "I like class, sir—especially Latin grammar; but Larry—"

"What? Who?"

"I mean Lascelles, sir—Mr. Lascelles—he's going to catch a train, and we should like to see him off, sir! I—I think it would buck him up, sir, if some fellows saw him off. We're fearfully keen on cricket, sir, and—and Lascelles is going to play for Surrey—"

"Against Surrey, you born idiot!" marmured Peter Todd.

"I mean against Surrey, sir. We thought we ought to give him a send-off, sir. It would please him, and—and—"

"That will do, Bunter!"

"M-m-may I go, sir?" asked Bunter hopefully.

"No, Bunter, you may not go! You may sit down! I doubt very much whether Mr. Lascelles would be pleased at such a proceeding on your part."

"Oh, I'm sure he would, sir!" gasped Bunter. "And—and we're all fearfully fond of Lascelles, sir, and—and love to please him."

"I am glad to hear it, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "If you really desire to please Mr. Lascelles—"

"Oh, yes, sir, awfully!"

"Then you may do so—"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"By paying a little more attention to the instruction you receive from him—"

"Eh?"

"When he takes this Form in geometry."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

There was a chuckle in the Remove. This was Quelch's "sarc." Certainly Bunter, howsoever strong his desire to please Mr. Lascelles, was not likely to adopt Quelch's suggestion.

"And now," said Mr. Quelch, "we will proceed."

"But, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Be silent, Bunter!"

"But Lascelles will be starting soon, and—"

"Will you be silent?"

"Oh, certainly, sir! But if you would give us leave from class to see him off, we should get out of Latin grammar—I mean we—we—we—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will take fifty lines, Bunter! If you speak again I will double it!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"A hundred lines, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Oh crikey!"

"Two hundred lines, Bunter!"

Bunter gasped! But he did not speak again. He closed up like an oyster. Quelch looked as if he might have progressed to five hundred lines, or a thousand. Evidently there was nothing doing, and Larry Lascelles was not going to have the pleasure—or otherwise—of a send-off from William George Bunter.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Held by the Enemy!

THE covered van had been standing at the corner of the lane, by Courtfield Common, for hours that day. The horses had been released from the shafts, and were feeding on the grassy common close at hand.

On one of the wheels a man dressed like a carter sat smoking a black pipe, looking half asleep, but with a very keen eye occasionally searching the road in the direction of Greyfriars School. Any passer-by heard no sound from within the van, and would have supposed that it was empty. The thick, canvas cover effectually hid four hefty men who lolled there on a heap of straw, waiting, and with them a rather fat, flushed-faced man with an unlighted cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth—Mr. Archie Valence.

Every now and then Mr. Valence peered through a slit in the cover, into the brilliant June sunshine outside, and muttered impatiently. Archie was waiting, and he had waited long, and he was feverishly impatient.

But everything comes to him who waits. And in the golden summer's afternoon a tall and athletic figure appeared in sight at last, coming up the road from the school with long, springy strides. It was Mr. Lawrence Lascelles, games master of Greyfriars, with a cricket bag in his hand, heading for Courtfield and the station.

The sleepy-looking carter sitting on the wheel gave a low whistle. Instantly there was alertness inside the van. Archie peered through the slit in the cover again. His rather fishy eyes gleamed at the sight of Larry in the distance, coming on without a suspicion of the trap laid for him on the Courtfield road.

"By gad! He's comin'!" breathed Archie. "Luck at last! Walkin' it, too! I was afraid he might take a taxi, though we'd have had him out of the taxi fast enough if he had. But this is pie!"

Archie rubbed his plump hands.

"We've got him!" he said. "Get ready!"

"We're ready, boss!" grunted Bunchy.

He gave his stubby chin a reminiscent rub. It had not yet quite recovered from Larry's upper-cut.

"Pile on him as soon as Charley gets him talking!" said Archie, in a low voice. "All at once, and don't give him a chance! Don't hurt him, if you can help it. We don't want him hurt. But if you have to hit him, it can't be helped. Anyhow, get him!"

"You bet!"

They waited.

Larry Lascelles came swinging on. His handsome face was cheery and careless. He had plenty of time for his train, and was enjoying the walk across the green common. He was thinking of the county match to come, an enjoyable prospect to the young master. And if



On reaching Masters' Passage, Mr. Lascelles found five irritated beaks waiting to see him. "Your telephone, Mr. Lascelles——" said Quelch frigidly. "Really, sir——" boomed Prout. "It's continuous——" said Mr. Capper. "I have been awakened——" remarked Mr. Wiggins. "You will realise——" began Twigg. The five opened fire on the games master at once.

he had not forgotten the existence of Archie & Co., he certainly was not thinking of them at that moment. He glanced carelessly at the halted van as he came up, and the man who looked like a carter rose from his seat on the wheel, and touched his hat, and spoke.

"Skuse me, sir! If you'll stop a minute——"

Mr. Lascelles stopped. The man was a stranger to him, but his keen eyes dwelt on the stubbly face rather curiously. That face looked like a "pug's," though the man was dressed as a country carter.

"Yes, my man. What is it?" asked Mr. Lascelles good-naturedly.

"P'r'aps you could tell me the time, sir?"

Mr. Lascelles smiled.

"Certainly!" he answered; and he glanced at his wrist-watch. "It is half-past three! Oh!"

He went backwards, taken utterly by surprise as the carter leaped at him and shoved. It was a hefty shove, and the games master of Greyfriars staggered a couple of paces, and nearly fell. He would have recovered without falling, however, had he had a second. But at the same moment Bunchy leaped from the van and pounced on him. Before Lascelles could recover, Bunchy was on him, backed up by the carter, and Mr. Lascelles, in blank amazement and anger, was struggling with the two. The two of them would not have held him many seconds; but the covered van was now disgorging its occupants fast. Three more burly men, one after another, dropped out and jumped into the fray. Last came Archie, grinning.

"Quick!" rapped out Archie.

He stared up and down the road anxiously, while five men struggled with the resisting games master.

Five to one as they were, they did not have it all their own way.

The odds were too heavy, even for Larry Lascelles; but he was putting up a terrific fight, and all the five had to go all out.

Archie grinned as he jumped from the van, but his grin was quickly replaced by a look of anxiety. It was a public highway, well frequented. A cart could be seen in the distance; motor-cars might have passed at any moment. It was necessary to be rapid. Archie had had no choice about the place; he had to catch his man on his way to Courtfield. But it was an anxious moment for Archie.

"Quick!" he repeated.

Scuffling, panting, gasping, the bruisers struggled with Larry Lascelles. They had him down, swarming over him.

Strong hands grasped him by arms and legs and collar, even by his hair, and he was dragged to the back of the van. With a combined effort the gang of bruisers lifted him, and flung him bodily in. They piled in after him, sprawling over him inside the van, and pinning him down in the straw.

Honk, honk! A car came whizzing by. But Lascelles was already in the van, and the motorist noted nothing.

Archie gasped with relief, and clambered in, closing the canvas flap at the back. Deep in the straw, pinned by his swarming assailants, Mr. Lascelles was

still resisting. But it was a hopeless resistance. He was overpowered.

"Got him!" said Archie. "Stick something in his mouth, and tie his hands. Here, let me get at him!"

Larry Lascelles' eyes blazed up at Archie in the dusky interior of the van. The sudden and unexpected attack had utterly amazed him; but the sight of Archie enlightened him as to the cause. Archie had failed at Thatch End, but this time he had taken care not to fail.

While the bruisers held the games master fast, Archie bent over him and thrust a gag into his mouth, and tied and knotted a strong cord round the sinewy wrists that were held together.

Then Lascelles was released.

The panting bruisers left him lying in the straw, securely bound; and they were glad that it was over. Every man in the gang had damage to show. The one-time champion of the ring had not had much chance; but he had put in a few hefty ones.

"Get going, Charley!" said Archie Valence.

The man dressed as a carter dropped from the van, and went for the horses. Lascelles lay with his chest heaving, and his eyes gleaming.

"I score this time, Larry," said Archie with a grin.

Lascelles made a strenuous effort to break loose. But the knotted cord round his wrists was too strong for him. Archie chuckled.

"You won't get your fins loose in a hurry, Larry," he said. "You do too much damage with them, old bean."

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(Continued from page 13.)

Not till you're ready to go into training for the fight with the Chicken—savvy?"

A stare of scorn was Lascelles' only answer.

There was a clinking of harness as the horses were put to the van. Then Charley mounted to the driver's seat, and the big, heavy vehicle lumbered away.

Plenty of eyes fell on that van as it lumbered by country road and lane through the June afternoon. But there was nothing suspicious in its outward appearance; the cover hid the kidnapped games master, and the men who watched him.

Not till it lumbered up the rutty lane from the Lantham road to the gate of Thatch End did Archie remove the gag from the prisoner's mouth.

"You can yell now if you like, old bean," he grinned.

"Loud as you like, Larry," chuckled Bunchy.

Mr. Lascelles breathed hard.

"What does this foolery mean, Archie?" he asked quietly.

"You'll find it pretty serious foolery, old thing," answered Archie. "I've got you, and I'm keepin' you. I told you there was a room all ready for you at Thatch End last week. You declined my hospitality at that time. You won't decline it now—what?"

There was a chuckle from the bruisers.

"Do you fancy, for a moment, that you can keep me a prisoner?" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles contemptuously.

"Sort of," agreed Archie. "How are you goin' to quit? You're some puncher, Larry, but you can't punch a way out with tied fins, through a barred door, and a barred window. You won't be missed at the school for three days. I know all about your county fixture with Loamshire. Think anybody at Greyfriars will guess what's become of you?"

Mr. Lascelles was silent. The van rumbled into the yard, and the gate was closed and locked. Two or three pairs of hands assisted the bound games master to the ground, and he was led into the house. Bound as he was, two of the bruisers held him fast, one by either arm. They could not be too careful with such a prisoner.

"Now," said Archie, "let's have a little talk, Larry. You're here, where we want you. I want you as a friend, not as an enemy. You're booked to meet the Game Chicken—and you're goin' to meet him and beat him. Give me your word to play up, and I'll trust you. Can't say fairer than that."

"You rascal!"

"It will mean five hundred of the best to you—"

"That's enough!"

"More than that to me," continued Archie calmly. "This is goin' to set me on my feet again. Play up, Larry. You owe it to me. You say I was having my leg pulled when I rang you up and thought you had agreed to meet the Chicken. I'll take your word for it."

that if you like, but you can't leave me in the soup. If you let practical jokers play tricks on your telephone you will have to stand the racket. Play up, old man!"

"Will you release me?"

"I fancy not!" said Archie, laughing. "What's the good of bein' obstinate, Larry? You know I mean business. I've got you backed, and you're goin' to win money for me. Give me your word—"

"Don't be a fool!"

Archie scowled.

"Keep that up as long as you like," he said. "You'll get tamed in a few days, I dare say."

"You fool—you rotter!" breathed Mr. Lascelles. "I'm to play for Loamshire to-morrow! I can't let my county down—"

"Give me your word to meet the Chicken, and you can start for Loamshire as soon as you like."

"You'll go to prison for this, Archie!" said Mr. Lascelles in a low, concentrated voice. "I shall not let you off because you're my cousin. If I miss the Loamshire match with Surrey I shall see that you get all that the law can give you!"

"I'm chancin' that! I don't see how you're goin' to set the jolly old law in motion while you're enjoyin' my hospitality in this secluded abode," said Archie. "You've let me down, Larry, and you can let down a dashed cricket match, too! They may wonder at Loamchester why you don't turn up; but I dare say they'll hear a rumour that you've chucked schoolmasterin' and cricketin', to take up the old game in the ring again, what?"

Mr. Lascelles' eyes glittered.

He realised that he was absolutely in the sporting man's hands; not only his liberty, but his good name, at the mercy of the scheming rascal.

"You can't get away with this, Archie!" he said at last.

Archie shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm goin' to try," he answered. "Now, Larry, old bean, be a good little man and give me your word—"

"Never!"

"Never's a long time," said Archie. "Stick him in his room, Bunchy."

"This 'ere way, Larry, sir!" grinned Bunchy.

The games master was led down a passage into a room. The room had a window on the garden, but it was thickly and strongly barred. A hundred feet away was the high fence that enclosed the garden; beyond that, as Lascelles knew, beech woods and pasture land. The bruisers pushed him into the room, grinning, and closed the door on him. He heard a key turn in a lock, and two bars placed in position outside the door.

It did not look as if the games master of Greyfriars would be playing cricket in the county match, after all!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bumps for the Bounder!

"VERNON-SMITH!"

Wingate of the Sixth rapped out the name as he came into the prefects' room at Greyfriars.

The Bounder was standing at the telephone there, with the receiver to his ear.

He started and turned. It was rather a risky business for a junior to dodge into the prefects' room and borrow the instrument installed there for the use of the high and mighty men of the Sixth

Form. Smithy had waited and watched for half an hour or more before he found the room empty, and dodged in. And now he was caught!

Wingate came across to him, frowning.

"You cheeky young sweep—" he began. "Put up that receiver at once!"

The Bounder meekly obeyed. He had made his call before he was caught, and was about to ring off when the Greyfriars captain entered. Wingate glanced round for a cane.

"Sorry, Wingate!" said the Bounder, with unaccustomed meekness. "But we all wanted to know if Lascelles had got to Loamchester all right."

Wingate, about to pick up a cane, paused. That explanation rather disarmed him.

"You've been asking about Lascelles?" he inquired.

"Yes. I was on to the County Hotel, at Loamchester."

"Well, you young ass, there was no need to ring up to ask if Larry was there! Did you think he might have fallen out of a train window?" asked Wingate good-humouredly. "He must have got there hours ago; he left quite early in the afternoon. I'll let you off this time, Vernon-Smith, if that was all you wanted on the phone. But don't butt in here again without asking leave."

"Right!" said the Bounder, and he moved towards the door. There was a rather curious expression on his face, which Wingate noted. Wingate knew nothing of Smithy's "feud" with the games master. The great men of the Sixth moved in a lofty world, far from the affairs of the juniors. He naturally concluded that Smithy's action was simply that of one of Larry's innumerable admirers. But the curious expression on the Bounder's face struck him, and he called to him as he was going.

"You didn't get on to Lascelles himself, did you?"

"No."

"Who answered you?"

"The bureau clerk at the hotel."

"I suppose he told you Larry was there."

"No."

"No?" repeated Wingate, in surprise.

"No. He said that Mr. Lascelles had not yet arrived," answered the Bounder. "His room is bein' kept for him, but he hasn't turned up yet."

"That's queer!" said Wingate. "I suppose he's gone to the county ground first. Well, you can cut."

The Bounder cut.

There was a sardonic grin on his face as he went down the passage. It was nine o'clock, and prep was over in the Remove. Larry Lascelles was supposed to have caught the 3.55 from Courtfield. That should have landed him at Loamchester at six. Vernon-Smith had looked out the trains in the time-table.

Lascelles, if he had carried out his programme as supposed, should have been in Loamchester three hours by this time. It was likely enough that he might have joined up with cricketing friends there—perhaps dined with one of them. But it was odd, at least, that he had not even called at the hotel where his room was booked, even to leave his bag.

Was he in Loamchester at all? Was that cricketing engagement, as the Bounder had half suspected, a screen to hide his real object in leaving the school? It looked like it now.

The Bounder strolled into the Rag with a feeling of elation. Bitter animosity and revenge had spurred him on, but his motives were by no means

all bad. Stern justice from a beak was a thing a fellow had to stand, and could stand. But stern justice from a man who was playing a double part, in a morass of lying and deception, was quite a different matter. A man who was up to his neck in lying and deception could very well have overlooked the much milder offence for which Lascelles had reported the Bounder and caused his flogging. That flogging was going to be paid for—if Larry Lascelles was the unscrupulous spoofer that Vernon-Smith believed him to be. And what else was he to believe now that the call to Loamchester had proved that Lascelles had not gone there?

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Dropped a bob and found a quid?" asked Bob Cherry, as the Bounder came into the Rag with a smile on his face.

"What's up, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton. He could see by the look on the Bounder's face and the dancing light in his eyes that there was something "on."

"I've taken your tip, old bean, and rung up to see if Larry had got in safe," grinned the Bounder.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, and has he?" asked Bob.

"He hasn't," drawled the Bounder. "His train got in at six, but at nine o'clock the County Hotel had seen nothing of him."

"That's queer!" said Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, I wonder if he's gone off for a boxing stunt, after all?" said Billy Banter. "That man Lascelles is rather a bad hat, you know. He gave me extra geometry last week."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's gone off on a prize-fightin' stunt, and no rot about that!" said the Bounder deliberately. "I fancied that he had—and now I've proved it! He's not gone to Loamchester at all."

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "If he cuts the Loamshire-Surrey match it will be in all the papers! Think he could keep it dark?"

"He's an amateur—not a pro putting in a job for a screw! He can cut if he likes—if he hands over a good excuse! And a good liar like Lascelles won't find it hard to make one up."

"Oh, can it!" growled Squiff. "Look here, Smithy, if you call Larry names like that you'll get your head jolly well punched."

"Who'll punch it?" sneered the Bounder.

"I will, if you keep on asking for it!" exclaimed the Australian junior hotly. "I'm fed-up with your rot about as decent a man as any beak at Greyfriars! You'd know Larry was all right—if you weren't just packed with malice like a cat with cream!"

"Heard, heard!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Bounder crimsoned. Squiff's words came straight from the shoulder, as it were, and they made him wince a little. He could not help being aware that bitterness had coloured his opinion of Lascelles. Yet surely it was not all malice—surely there was something to "go upon"! If evidence was evidence, there was a stack of evidence up against the man!

Smithy looked round, and read in many faces that the fellows agreed with Squiff. He set his lips hard.

"You'll sing to a different tune when Lascelles is booted out by the Head!" he snarled. "A rotten liar and spoofer and prizefighter—"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Squiff. "Shut it and give us a rest!"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed Smithy!"

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, chuck it!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't expect fellows who like and admire a man like Larry to take that sort of stuff quietly! Let it drop, old bean!"

"I'll say what I like!" snarled the Bounder. "And nobody here shall shut me up! Lascelles is a liar and a spoofer—"

"Shut up!"

"Sorag him!"

"Bump him!"

"Boot him!"

A dozen angry fellows closed round the Bounder. It was really "too thick," in the general opinion.

Every cricketer fellow admired Larry—some of the more enthusiastic

carried it to the point of hero-worship—and they were thinking of him getting centuries for his county against Surrey, eager to read the first news of the big game at Loamchester!

And in that mood they heard the Bounder's suspicions and surmises, and his detraction of their hero, with growing impatience and anger.

A dozen hands were laid on Herbert Vernon-Smith, and he was lifted from his feet, and bumped, face downwards, on the floor of the Rag.

Bump!

"You rotters!" yelled the Bounder, mad with fury.

"Give him another!"

(Continued on next page.)

Our Next Photogravure Plate

(a small reproduction of which appears below)

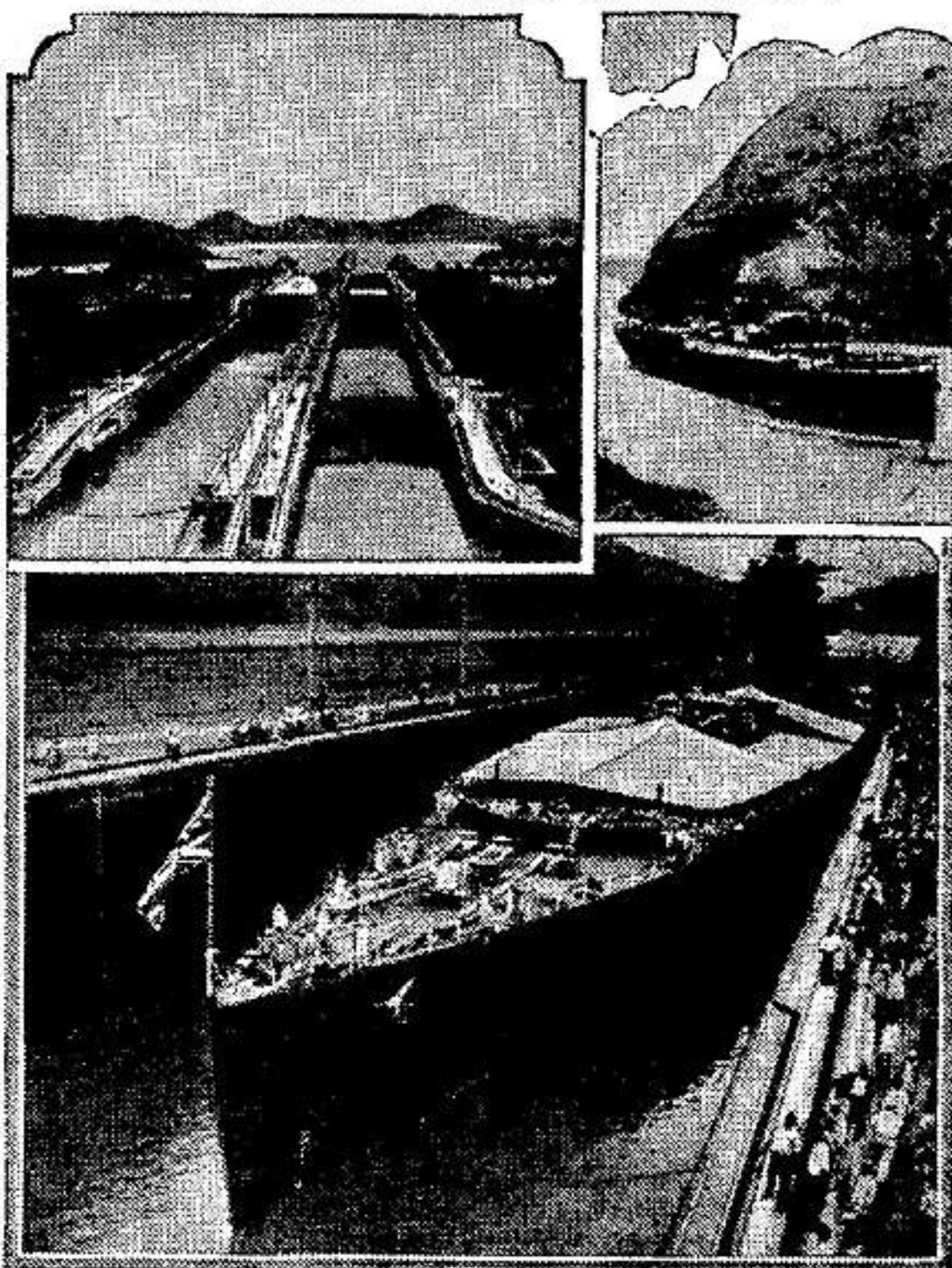
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"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a furious wrench, Vernon-Smith tore himself free. He leaped to the wall, set his back against it, and put up his clenched fists, his eyes blazing over them. He was ready to fight the whole Remove; but Harry Wharton stepped between as the fellows closed in.

"Chuck it!" he said. "Look here, Smithy, you've seen what fellows think of your rot—that's enough! Now leave him alone, you men! Smithy's a good chap, though he does get a bee in his bonnet at times."

The Bounder panted.

"Fools! Idiots! Fatheads!" he snarled. "To-morrow all the school will know that Lascelles is cutting the Loamshire game. And I can tell the school why!"

"My hat! He's beginning again!" exclaimed Squiff. "Bump him!"

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper!"

"Give him another!"

"And I'll prove it!" yelled the Bounder furiously. "If he's not at Loamchester, I know where he is, and I'll prove it to all Greyfriars! I'll show up the rotter in his true colours! I'll—"

The Bounder got no farther. Wharton could not hold back the angry juniors, and the Bounder was grasped again and bumped once more on the floor. After which he was dropped outside the door—and he was not seen in the Rag again that evening.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the Famous Five, in the quad, the following morning.

The juniors were waiting for the bell for class; and, in the meantime, discussing what they were going to do with the afternoon, which was a half-holiday. Bunter rolled up with his fat face indicating news.

"I say, you fellows, it's a jolly queer thing!" said Bunter. "Awfully queer!"

"Talking about yourself, as usual?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, what is it now?" asked Harry Wharton. "I wonder whether Larry's batting to-day?" he added, without waiting for a reply. "We shall see in the evening paper, if we get one."

"If Loamshire go in first, Larry will give Surrey some leather-hunting," said Bob. "But he's as good with the leather as the willow, bless his little heart! Bet you a doughnut that if Surrey bat to-day, they'll be all down by tea-time."

"Um!" said Wharton.

As Harry Wharton belonged to the great county of Surrey himself, his sympathies were a little divided.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, ring off, Bunter!"

"But it's jolly queer!" persisted Bunter. "Looks as if there's something in what Smithy says—"

"What do you mean, fathead?"

"Well, if Lascelles is with the Loamshire men, why should a telegram come for him here?" argued Bunter.

"Has a telegram come for him?"

"Yes, rather. I saw Trotter taking it to the Head. It was for Lascelles—"

"Well, fathead, Larry must know lots of people who don't happen to know

that he's away," answered Wharton. "Why shouldn't one of them send him a wire, ass?"

"But it's from a man named Lester—"

"Lester! That's the name of the Loamshire captain," said Bob. "But there are lots of Lesters. And how do you know, anyhow, Paul Pry?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I couldn't help hearing what the Head said to Quelch, could I? If they don't want a chap to hear, they shouldn't speak while he's tying up his shoelace—"

The chums of the Remove began to take notice. If there was a telegram for Larry from the Loamshire cricket captain, it certainly did look, as the fat Owl declared, a queer thing. Lester of Loamshire could hardly be telegraphing to a man who was with him at the moment!

"You see, I was in the passage—"

said Bunter.

"Prying—" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I was in the passage, after Trotter took the telegram in to the Head, and old Locke looked out, and asked me to send Quelch to him. 'Tell Quelch I want him, and tell him to look slippy!' was what the Haid said to me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not exactly those words," said Bunter hastily. "But that was what he meant. What he said was, 'Kindly request Mr. Quelch to come to my study without delay.' Same thing!"

"Oh, quite!" said Bob, with a chuckle.

"Well, I told Quelch, and he hiked along," said Bunter. "As it happened, my shoelace was loose, and I stooped down to tie it, quite near the Head's door, after Quelch had gone in—quite by chance, of course—"

"You fat, prying, spying, eavesdropping oyster!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You fellows know I wouldn't listen," said Bunter, with dignity. "But, quite by chance, I caught what the Beak said, through the keyhole. As Lascelles was gone, he consulted Quelch about opening the telegram and sending it on to him—and Quelch agreed that he'd better. And when the Beak opened it he said 'Great pip!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean he said 'Good gracious!' He said it was extraordinary—a wire from the Loamshire captain, Lester, asking Larry Lascelles not to be late, as stumps were pitched at ten. Ain't that queer?"

"Queer enough—if true!" said Harry Wharton, staring blankly at the fat Owl. "But it can't be true! Larry's at Loamchester now, getting ready to play."

"Well, that's what the Head said," asserted Bunter. "He was surprised, and Quelch said that it beat him hollow—beat him to a frazzle—"

"Yes—I can hear Quelch saying that!"

"Well, something of the kind, I mean. Old Locke was going to send a wire to Lester, saying that Lascelles left yesterday for Loamshire, but Quelch suggested the telephone. He said he could find the number, and they could get through to Lester and save time. They seem to think that some accident must have happened to Lascelles on his way there yesterday! I wonder if he's been killed in a railway accident?" added Bunter brightly. "That would be awful, wouldn't it? I say, you fellows, if Lascelles has been killed in a railway

accident that means no more maths till they get a new beak—"

"You podgy piffler!" roared Bob Cherry. "Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"There's been no railway accident," said Wharton. "We should have heard of it before this; it would have been in the morning papers. But if Larry's not with the Loamshire men, where on earth is he?"

"I say, you fellows, you know what Smithy says—"

"Blow Smithy! Shut up, fathead!"

"Well, it jolly well looks—"

said Bunter. "You fat owl, if Larry was cutting the match he would let the Loamshire skipper know—no need for Lester to telegraph here!"

"Looks as if he's let him down," said Bunter. "He jolly well never went to Loamshire yesterday; Smithy found that out last night, as he told us in the Rag. I wonder what he's up to?"

"Something must have happened to Larry, if this is true," said Wharton. "But what the dickens could have happened? More likely that fat duffer's got it all wrong."

"Kick him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter departed in haste, un-kicked. He went to spread his surprising news among other fellows—meeting with very little credence, however. Few fellows thought it possible that Larry Lascelles could have gone off on his own affairs and let his county captain down without warning. The thing was simply impossible. Only the Bounder believed it. And even the Bounder was puzzled to guess why Lascelles had not let his skipper know in time, as he might easily have done if the Bounder's surmises were right. Smithy, at all events, was certain that Larry Lascelles was not at Loamchester that day—he swallowed Bunter's story whole, without a doubt.

As it happened, Bunter had got it right; and that fact was made clear to the Remove by Smithy himself. When the Lower Fourth went into the Form-room it was noticed that Mr. Quelch had a grave look, and plenty of the fellows wondered whether it was caused by some jot or tittle of fact in Bunter's strange tale.

Twice during the morning Mr. Quelch was called out of the Form-room; the second time just before the Remove was dismissed for break. Each time he came back looking very grave.

The Remove fellows could not help wondering whether this was in connection with Bunter's tale of a telegram from Loamshire. Only the Bounder had nerve enough to ask him. But the Bounder had nerve enough for anything. When the bell rang for break Vernon-Smith coolly addressed the Remove master as the Form were about to march out.

"Excuse me, sir!" said Smithy, in his meekest and silkiest tones. "We're all very keen to hear about Mr. Lascelles, sir! Would you mind telling us whether he's been heard from? We should like to know, sir, whether he's batting to-day."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

The whole Form hung on his reply. They were all deeply interested in Larry, though from different motives from Vernon-Smith's.

"I believe the match began at ten, sir," went on Smithy, while Mr. Quelch paused before replying. "We should like to know whether Surrey or Loamshire is takin' the first knock."

"There has been communication on the telephone," answered Mr. Quelch.



As Mr. Quelch came away from his desk with a Latin grammar in his hand, Bunter rose from his seat. "If you please, sir, I'd like leave this afternoon," he said, "not because I want to get out of class, of course—but Larry, I mean Lascelles, sir, is going to catch a train, and we thought we ought to give him a good send-off." "Wha-a-at!"

"I understand that Surrey are batting first, Vernon-Smith. The match is now in progress."

"And Mr. Lascelles, sir—"

"I have no news of Mr. Lascelles."

"But he's such a topping bowler, sir," said the Bounder, with the innocence of a cooing dove. "They're certain to have put him on to bowl! We're all expectin' to hear that he's put up the hat trick, sir!"

Mr. Quelch paused again.

He had no suspicion of the Bounder's motives in asking him these questions. He put it down to the keen enthusiasm of a junior cricketer, proud of a games master who was playing for his county. But, in the peculiar circumstances, the questions were a little difficult to answer.

Unaware that the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars had already spread the story of the telegram from Loamshire all over the Lower School, Mr. Quelch was unwilling to let the extraordinary conduct of the games master become the talk of the juniors. Yet he could hardly refuse to reply.

"Nothing has been heard with regard to Mr. Lascelles having bowled for his side, Vernon-Smith," he said at last.

"Perhaps he's made some catches in the field, sir?" said the Bounder. "We're all very keen to know how he's getting on, sir."

Mr. Quelch showed signs of impatience.

"Quite so, quite so, Vernon-Smith," he said. "But there has been no news of Mr. Lascelles at all since he left Greyfriars yesterday, so I cannot answer your questions. Dismiss!"

But the Bounder was not finished yet. He wanted to make clear to all the Remove what was quite clear to himself.

"I hope nothing's happened to Mr. Lascelles, sir!" he said.

Mr. Quelch gave him a very sharp look.

"Why should you suppose anything of the kind, Vernon-Smith?" he asked, quite snappishly.

"You said there had been telephoning from Loamshire," answered the Bounder. "I suppose it would be about Mr. Lascelles."

That was a natural enough supposition, as Mr. Lascelles formed the only connection between Greyfriars and the Loamshire county match. Indeed, it was hard to guess why anyone should have telephoned from Loamshire, except to let Larry's friends at the school know what he was doing there, or to inquire why he hadn't turned up. Obviously it was not for the former reason. It was growing clear that it was for the latter.

Quelch, however, did not intend to say so.

"We have no news of Mr. Lascelles at all, so far," he said. "Dismiss!"

Even the Bounder "chucked it" at that. But he had done enough. The Remove went out of their Form-room with the knowledge that Billy Bunter had "got it right," and that Larry Lascelles was not in Loamshire playing for his county, as he certainly should have been that morning. Smithy went out with a grin on his face.

He tapped Harry Wharton on the arm in the passage.

"What do you think now?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

He simply did not know what to think; but he was less inclined than ever to agree with the Bounder's suspicious surmises.

"Do you believe now that Lascelles is in Loamshire?" sneered Smithy.

"Looks as if he isn't!"

"Where is he, then?"

"That's his business, not mine! Or yours, either."

"I'll tell you where he is," grinned the Bounder. "Not many miles from

Greyfriars, I fancy—forgettin' all about cricket, and doin' sparrin' with bruisers in trainin' for a fight."

"Oh, shut up!"

Wharton turned his back and walked away, leaving the Bounder laughing. The captain of the Remove could not, and would not, believe that the Bounder was right; but how to account for the fact that Larry Lascelles had not arrived at his destination was beyond him.

Any accident to the games master on his journey was not only unlikely in itself, but would certainly have been heard of by now if it had happened. Yet Larry, who had left the school the day before to travel to Loamshire, had evidently not arrived there, and the county game had started without him—doubtless with a substitute in the field in his place. Some unaccountable delay had taken place—how and why was a mystery!

It was no mystery to the Bounder! He knew, or fancied that he knew! And he told himself that he had the man now in the hollow of his hand! He knew—at least he felt sure—where the games master was, and how he was engaged! And he was going to prove it! And the Bounder gloated.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Bid for Liberty!

MR. LAWRENCE LASCELLES rose from his seat on the edge of a bed as the bars at his door were removed, and stood, with gleaming eyes, looking at the door as it opened.

The prison-room at Thatch End was hot and stuffy in the warmth of the sunny June afternoon. The little window was open, and a faint breath of fresh air came in. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,322.

air came through the strong iron bars. The games master of Greyfriars was pale with anger; and it was well for the bruisers at Thatch End that his hands were secure when the door opened and Bunchy and Charley grinned in at him.

Archie Valence was behind them, with a cigar in his mouth.

"Gettin' fed-up, old bean?" asked Archie amiably.

Mr. Lascelles did not answer. He made a wrench at the cords on his wrists, that was all. But it was unavailing.

Archie laughed.

"We've got you safe, old bean! You're not gettin' a chance of knockin' my teeth down the back of my neck!"

"Not 'arf!" grinned Bunchy.

"You scoundrel!" said Larry Lascelles. "How long do you fancy you can keep me here?"

"Only till you give your word to meet the Game Chicken."

"That will be never."

"Sleep well last night?" asked Archie blandly. "Bit restless with your fins tied—what? Can't be helped in the cirs, old bean."

Larry Lascelles breathed hard.

"You rascal!" he said. "You rotter! They're missing me at Loamchester—the county match must have started—without me—"

"Quite!" agreed Archie. "Your own look-out! Say the word and you're a free man—and I'll rush you across to Lantham Station in the car, and you can get the next train for Loamshire."

"You know that I cannot do what you ask."

"Not at all! You can do it on your head, if you like! You can meet the Chicken—and beat the Chicken—"

"Not without resigning my position

at Greyfriars," said Mr. Lascelles, forcing himself to speak calmly and patiently. "Can't you see that?"

"You can keep it dark! The old schoolmaster doesn't read the boxing news, I suppose?"

"Do you think I can deceive him, you rascal?"

"Easily," answered Archie, coolly; and Bunchy chuckled. "Think it over, Larry—make the best of it. You're not too late to play against Surrey in Loamshire, if you like—"

"That's too late now—the stumps were pitched at ten—it's now two!"

Larry gritted his teeth.

"I've had the latest news from Loamshire by phone, because I thought it would interest you," said Archie.

"Don't say I'm not treatin' you kindly. I've been on to a newspaper man I know there. Surrey went in to bat first, and at lunch they were one down for twenty. Looks as if their innings will last all day. Loamshire are putting a substitute in the field in your place—expectin' you to turn up any minute. They can't make out why you haven't come."

"Oh, you villain!" breathed Lascelles.

"That means that they're keeping your place for you if you turn up—at least, as long as the Surrey knock lasts," said Archie, "and so long as you're in time for last man in the Loamshire innings you'll be able to play. They're losin' your bowlin', of course. Lots of time for you to make up your mind to do the sensible thing, and hike off to Loamshire to play bat an' ball!" He chuckled.

"Let me out of this, even now, Archie, and I'll forgive you everything!" said Larry Lascelles earnestly.

"Give me your word to meet the Chicken—"

"Oh, hold your tongue!" roared Lascelles, his rage breaking out. "By gad, if I had my hands loose—"

"You haven't—and won't!" grinned Archie. "Well, if you want longer to think it over, take your time. I'm in no hurry if you're not. Bring in my dear cousin's lunch, Ted! We're not starvin' him."

The man Ted came in with a well-spread tray, grinning. He placed it on the table.

"You'll have to manage to eat with your hands tied, old thing," said Archie. "Can't trust you with them loose, laddie."

"You cur—"

"See that his fins are safe, Ted."

Ted stepped towards the games master of Greyfriars. Lascelles' eyes glittered at him. The man examined his bonds—they were safe enough. There were marks of teeth on the thick, strong cord, but that attempt during the night to get loose had been quite in vain. Cord on cord, hard and strong, was knotted round the sinewy wrists, holding the hands like manacles, and leaving the prisoner little more than the use of his fingers.

"He's been a-bitin' of 'em!" said Ted.

"Let him bite!" said Archie good-humouredly. "Bite all you like, Larry—chew away! If you begin to make any progress I'll get a pair of steel handcuffs for you! But I think you're all right—what?"

"Will you let me loose, you scoundrel?" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles. "There's still time to get to Loamshire and play! What will they think of me if I let them down without a word?"

"Any old thing they like," drawled Archie. "You're mighty particular about lettin' down a cricket match! You've made no bones about lettin' me down—"

"I've never let you down! I've never consented—"

"Well, you're goin' to consent—I'm keepin' you here till you do! I'll look in this evenin' and let you know how the Loamshire match is gettin' on—latest news at close of the day's play!" grinned Archie. "I dare say by that time you'll be glad even of my company—what? Sure you won't change your mind before I lock you in again?"

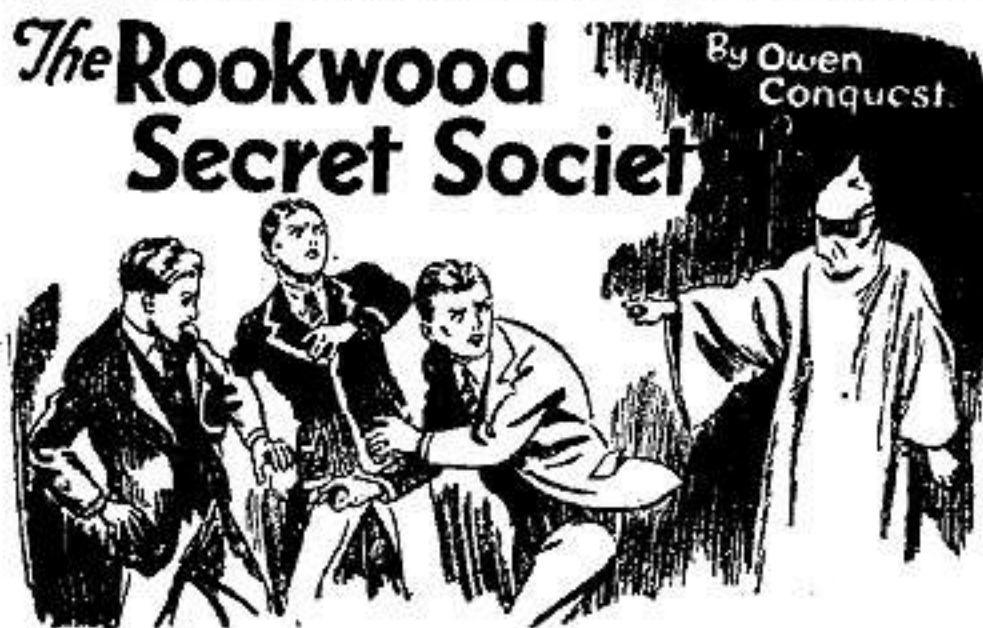
"Ave a little sense, Larry, sir!" urged Bunchy. "Wastin' your time school-masterin' when it's in your 'ands to be the champion of England! 'Ave a little 'oss-sense!"

Larry did not heed him. There were three bruisers in the narrow passage outside his room, as well as Archie. Likely enough there are others in the old farmhouse. And his hands were bound. But he was desperate. The door was open—it was about to be shut and barred again, to remain shut and barred till night. Slim as the chance was, it was all the chance he had—and the games master of Greyfriars made up his mind to it.

Suddenly, with a tiger-like spring, he leaped from where he stood into the doorway. His shoulder struck Ted and sent him sprawling. He crashed into Bunchy and laid that gentleman on his back. His bound hands crashed together at Archie, sending him staggering across the passage. It all happened almost in the twinkling of an eye, and only one man stood between Lascelles and liberty. And the man Charley jumped away as Lascelles came at him with blazing eyes.

Archie gave a panting, enraged, gasping yell.

"Stop him! Oh, stop him!"



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Charley went over with a bump as Lascelles rushed right into him. But he grabbed the games master as he went down and held on tenaciously. Lascelles tore frantically to loosen his grip, dashing his bound hands in the bruiser's face. Charley roared and let go—but as he did so Ted and Bunchy were up, jumping on the games master. They grabbed him by the shoulders and dragged him back.

"Get him!" screamed Archie. "Get him! Hold him!"

"We've got 'im!" panted Bunchy.

Larry Lascelles went down with a crash. Archie's fat hands fastened in his collar. Archie's grinning amiability was gone now—his fat face was distorted with rage. He dragged the sprawling games master savagely back towards the room he had escaped from. The three bruisers piled on him like dogs on a stag. Had his hands been free, even then, with four to one against him, Larry Lascelles would have fought his way out. But his hands were bound—and he had no chance. Still he resisted desperately as he was dragged back into the prison-room.

They hurled him in, sprawling across the floor. He lay panting, his eyes blazing with rage. Archie glared in at him from the doorway.

Hopeless as the desperate attempt had seemed, it had come near success. But for Charley's grab at him as he rushed down the passage Larry would have got clear. No one else had been drawn to the spot by the struggle, so he knew that no one else was in the house. It had been a close thing. It had been so close that Archie Valence spluttered with rage as he glared in at the panting prisoner.

"My eye!" gasped Bunchy. "He's game—he is that! My eye! He'd make rings round the Chicken! He's a game bird, is Larry!"

"You rotter!" screamed Archie. "You'd give me the slip, would you? Try that on again and I'll get steel handcuffs and leg-irons for you, you hound! Now stick where you are, hang you!"

He slammed the door, and locked it on the outside. The bars rattled into the sockets. Larry Lascelles was a prisoner again. He dragged himself, panting to his feet. With a set, savage face he stared through the bars of the little window. Outside, the unkempt, weedy garden, thick with weeds, furze, and ragged shrubberies, extended a hundred feet to a high fence—that, and blue sky was all he could see.

There was no chance—no hope—of help—not the remotest chance that his hiding-place would be found, even if he was searched for. Even when they began to wonder why he had not turned up in Loamshire, and later why he did not return to Greyfriars, who was to guess that he was a prisoner in the farmhouse eight or nine miles from the school? No one! Something like despair began to invade the games master's heart.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Means Business!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! That's Smithy!"

Five juniors were pedalling cheery along the sunny road for Lantham. Ahead of them, going in the same direction, they sighted a single cyclist—and Bob Cherry spotted that it was the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Let's ask him to join up," said

Frank Nugent. "I dare say he's heading for the same show."

"Let's!" agreed Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five of the Remove were bound for Lantham, to look in at a cricket match on the Ramblers ground there, and at the Pagoda later for tea. They had had some rather warm words of late on the subject of Larry. But nobody wanted a "row" with Smithy on that subject, or any other, and this seemed a good opportunity of offering the olive-branch. So they put on speed to overtake the Bounder.

Herbert Vernon-Smith rode on at a leisurely pace, without looking back. He had laid his plans for that afternoon—plans quite unsuspected by the cheery chums of the Remove. A pair of field-glasses were slung in a leather case over his shoulder, and the juniors behind, when they observed it, supposed that Smithy was taking his glasses for the cricket. He remained unaware of their proximity till Bob's powerful voice hailed him, as the quintette came within hail.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smithy!" roared Bob.

Vernon-Smith started, and glanced round. He stared a moment at the Famous Five, and then slowed down to let them draw level.

"Here we are again, old bean," said Bob affably. "All bound for the same jolly old port!"

"The ridiculousness in your esteemed and ridiculous company will be a terrific pleasure, my idiotic Smithy!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"As we're going to the same show——" said Harry.

"You are?" exclaimed the Bounder, with a stare.

"Yes. I suppose you're bound for the same place, on this road," said the captain of the Remove.

"Like our company?" grinned Bob. "It's rather nice—much sought after, and all that!"

"I'd be jolly glad if you'd join up, if you mean it," said Vernon-Smith. "I'd have asked you, if I'd thought you'd come. I asked Redwing, and he told me to go and eat coke."

"Eh—why?" asked Johnny Bull. "It will be worth seeing."

"Quite!" agreed the Bounder. "And if you fellows see it along with me, so much the better. We shall have to be a bit careful."

"Careful?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes. We don't want to get spotted by——"

"That's all right—we have leave as far as Lantham on half-holidays."

"I'm not talking of the beaks, fat-head—I'm talking about the bruisers," answered the Bounder impatiently.

"The—the—the what?"

"Bruisers! There are three of them at least, there!"

"Bruisers—on the Ramblers' cricket ground at Lantham!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in utter wonder. "What on earth are you talking about?"

Vernon-Smith stared at him.

"You silly ass!" he hooted. "Are you going to cricket at Lantham?"

"Yes. Aren't you?"

"Fathead!"

Evidently the chums of the Remove had made a little mistake. Vernon-Smith was on the same road; but he was not, after all, bound for the same destination.

"Where the dickens are you going, then?" asked Bob. "This road leads to Lantham, and nowhere else—unless you're putting in another twenty miles or so to see the jolly old cathedral at Canterbury."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped the Bounder. "Look here! I'd be glad if

you'd come! You're reliable witnesses. I'm turning off when we get to the lane to Thatch End."

"Thatch End!" repeated Bob. "That's the farm where they ducked the auctioneer who came to sell them up for tithes. But there's nobody there now, Smithy—the place is to let, I've heard."

"It's let—to a party of boxing men—and Larry Lascelles is there with them, trainin' for a fight!" said the Bounder coolly.

Harry Wharton's brow darkened. Johnny Bull gave a snort, and a jam at his pedals, and rode on ahead. He had heard enough on that subject from the Bounder. The other fellows shared his feelings. Nugent and Hurree Singh rode after Johnny, and Bob followed them, without answering.

The Bounder sneered.

"Not comin'?" he asked.

Harry Wharton had followed his comrades. But he slowed down again, and rode beside the Bounder. His face was grave.

"Look here, Smithy!" he said. "Why don't you take a friend's advice, and chuck that silly rot? You've had trouble with Lascelles—but he's as straight a man as ever breathed. He would no more tell lies than he would pinch watches."

"He's told a good many," jeered the Bounder. "He's taken in the Head, and told lies right and left, and I'm goin' to prove it!"

"You're a silly ass!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "The truth is that you can't get over that flogging. You've been reported to the Head before, by beaks and prefects, too, and flogged! Why the dickens can't you get over it and wash it out of your mind?"

"So I would—if Lascelles was the straight man you fancy! If I get it in the neck from Quelch, or Wingate of the Sixth, or Gwynne, it's all in the game—and a fellow can stand it! But a strict sense of duty from a man up to his neck in lies and trickery is rather too thick!"

"Larry's nothing of the kind."

"I'm goin' to prove that he is!"

"And how?" demanded Wharton.

"Where is he now?" sneered the Bounder. "He was expected in Loamshire to play cricket for his county—he never turned up there. He never took any train at Courtfield yesterday. I've been to the station and asked. He would be remembered—every man there knows Lascelles, the man whose name figures in the big cricket news! He wasn't seen at Courtfield Station yesterday, and he never took a train!"

"My hat!" breathed Wharton.

He had no doubt that the Bounder had found out the facts, so far as that went. And that piece of information was rather staggering. Certainly it seemed to bear out the Bounder's belief.

"I told you that a few days ago I watched him going into a place near Lantham, where a gang of bruisers met him," continued the Bounder. "Well, that place was Thatch End. It's perfectly plain that he left Greyfriars yesterday pretendin' that he was catchin' a train for Loamshire—never went anywhere near the station, but walked across to Thatch End to put up with Archie Valence and the bruisers there! What does it look like?"

Wharton did not answer.

He knew what it looked like. Nevertheless, his loyal faith in Larry did not falter. There was a catch in it somewhere!

"I know he's there—consorting with a party of bruisers in trainin' for his fight

with the Game Chicken!" sneered the Bounder. "If he isn't there, where is he? Dissolved into thin air?"

"Goodness knows; but—"

"He's there—and I'm goin' to spot him there!" said the Bounder deliberately. "And when I've seen him there with my own eyes, all Greyfriars is goin' to know where he is, and what he's up to! He crawled out of it last time, when I thought I had him fixed. He won't crawl out of it this time! Once I've seen him there, I'll get a crowd of fellows to go over and see him, too—I'll make the place the show-place of the neighbourhood! I'll—"

"Oh, chuck it!" exclaimed Wharton. "I can't make it all out—but I know this, Larry is square as a die, and you've got it all wrong! Anyhow, you've no right to spy on a man!"

"I don't call it that! I—"

"That's what it is, whether you call it that or not! Look here, Smithy, Chuck it, and come on with us to Lantham."

"Rats!"

"Well, you're a rotter—"

"And you're a fool!"

Wharton compressed his lips. But he controlled his anger, and rode on after his friends. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. To his keen, suspicious mind, the thing was as clear as daylight, and he could not understand loyal faith, firm in the face of the clearest evidence. That faith was going to be shaken, however, if the Bounder made the discovery he expected to make at Thatch End that afternoon.

The Famous Five were disappearing in the direction of Lantham, when Vernon-Smith reached the corner of the lane that led off to Thatch End. There he dismounted, and wheeled his bicycle into the beeches. Harry Wharton, glancing back, had a last glimpse of him as he did so, and knitted his brows.

But the Bounder was his own master, and had to be left to it, and Wharton was assured, at least, that he would make no discovery to the discredit of Larry Lascelles. And the Famous Five rode on to Lantham, and soon forgot all about the Bounder and his peculiar occupation.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

HIGH in a thick beech tree, astride of a branch, the Bounder of Greyfriars clapped the field-glasses to his eyes.

Beyond the edge of the beech wood, open ground extended to the fences of Thatch End, with here and there hawthorn hedges, and patches of bush and bramble. There was plenty of cover for approach up to the fence; but the Bounder was taking a survey from a safe distance.

From the high beech, he overlooked the fence and the low-built farmhouse; and the field-glasses brought it all so near that he could make out every slightest detail—the little old windows with untended creepers clambering over them, the ragged furze and shrubs in the neglected gardens, with vegetables run to seed—the old wooden porch in front, where two men sat smoking pipes. He had seen both of them before—they were Bunchy and Ted. Another man came out past them, and strolled in the garden, idly, his hands in his pockets, a cigarette in his mouth. Smithy had never seen him before; but he was clearly of the same type as the others—some sort of a pugilist. But he could see no more.

The Bounder remained patiently in

his perch, the glasses fixed on Thatch End, watching. If Larry Lascelles was there, he had hoped, and half expected, to see him outside the house, on a warm June afternoon—perhaps even engaged in sparring in the open air. Nothing was to be seen of him, however.

Lascelles was not a man to stay indoors, especially in fine weather, if he could help it. But it was unlikely, Smithy considered, that he would leave the precincts of Thatch End—his occupation there was to be kept a secret. Within the high surrounding fence, he was safe from observation—outside it, he might have been seen and recognised; which would hardly have suited the "boxing beak," as he was supposed to be nowhere near Greyfriars. Smithy could see past the house on either side—but not, of course, the back of it, as it faced the lane where he hung in the beech tree. Possibly Lascelles was in the garden at the back—a waste space of neglected land, uncared for since Thatch End had ceased to be farmed. Or perhaps he was in the house and might emerge at any moment by the porch.

The Bounder watched—but he was growing impatient. Inaction did not suit his nature—and he grew more and more impatient. He might watch all the afternoon, at this rate, and see nothing—and all the time Lascelles might be in the back garden. With cool, keen, searching eyes, Vernon-Smith picked up all the details of the place that he could see. Then, after a vain half-hour of watching, he closed the glasses and replaced them in the case. He clambered down the tree, and standing in cover of the beeches, scanned the approaches to the farmhouse. The high fence now hid the place from him—but he was also hidden from the men within. He bent low, and keeping under cover of ragged hawthorns and brambles, crept closer till he touched the fence.

Silently, as cautiously as a Red Indian almost, Smithy crept round the fence, till he was at the back of the enclosure.

Had the fence been of open palings, he could now have seen all that he needed. But it was a close wooden fence, completely shutting off the view. He searched along it for some interstice, and finding a crevice in the old wood, opened his pocket-knife to enlarge it for a spy-hole. He gave a cautious glance over his shoulder before beginning—behind him was open pasture land, with cattle grazing in the distance; beyond them, a stretch of woods, and then the smoke of Lantham. He was quite safe from observation, unless from within the enclosure. Quietly, with a steady hand, he sliced splinters from the little crevice, and when it was large enough, applied his eye to it.

Now he had a view of the back of the low farmhouse. He saw an open shed, evidently used as a garage, for a small car stood in it. There was a kitchen door, and kitchen windows; and a large window, probably of a dining-room; and beyond that, a little window surrounded by thick Virginia creeper, which had bars across it. It was the only barred window he had seen, and he wondered idly for a moment, why it was barred. Certainly the reason did not cross his mind for a moment.

But there was no sign of Lascelles—no sign of sparring going on—no sign of life at all. He felt a twinge of disappointment. Was it possible that Lascelles had gone out for the afternoon? Yet it was unlikely—he was sure to keep close, so near to Greyfriars, with such a secret to keep. Idling indoors on a hot June day—it was not

like the keen, energetic games master of Greyfriars. Taking a rest, perhaps, after a boxing bout with one of the bruisers—that seemed likely!

Smithy gave a sudden start; a man came in sight at last. He knew the plump, flushed-faced Archie, with his hat on the side of his head, and his cigar sticking out of his mouth. The sporting man came strolling round the house, his hands in his pockets; and Smithy, his eye to the spy-hole in the fence, watched him curiously.

Archie walked along to the barred window, and stopped there. His back was towards Smithy, as he stood at the window. It seemed to the Bounder that he was speaking to someone within through the bars. He was too far off to hear; but he fancied that a murmur of a voice came to him. Then, to his surprise, he saw Archie take his hands from his pockets and run them over the bars—as if to make sure that they were secure. Then the sporting man walked on, and strolled round the other side of the house, and disappeared—apparently going to join the three men in the front garden.

The place was deserted again.

Vernon-Smith grunted with impatience.

All he had learned, so far, was that the boxing men were still there; he had seen Archie and the three bruisers, in none of whom was he particularly interested. Where was Lascelles? Was it Lascelles that Archie had been speaking to through the barred window? Was he there at all? If he was there, it was odd enough that he remained invisible, when the other occupants of the place obviously preferred the open air. The bare idea that he might be mistaken; that he was on the wrong track, wasting his time and making a fool of himself was intensely irritating to the Bounder of Greyfriars. He was not likely to admit that possibility till he was driven to it.

He resolved to take a chance at last. No one was in sight at the back of the house—and there was ample cover in the bushy, brambly garden. Unless he was seen from a back window, it was easy enough—and there was no sign of life at any window. When he acted, he acted promptly. With a spring, he caught the top of the fence in his hands—and it was the work of a split second to swing himself over and drop inside.

Close at hand was a bank of laurels; and in a moment the Bounder was crouching in cover of them, his heart beating rather hard, though his head was as cool as ever.

He was trespassing now; and the bruisers were not likely to stand on ceremony with a trespasser if they spotted him.

For full five minutes he waited there, crouching in cover, till it was clear that he had not been seen from a window; no one looked out or came into the garden.

Then he crept forward on hands and knees, using the cover of the wild growths in the neglected garden, with all the skill of a first-class scout.

He reached the building. Close to the walls, the cover failed him, and he had to risk it. But the place appeared deserted. There was no sound, save every now and then some faint echo of a voice speaking in the garden in front of the house. The kitchen door stood half open—and the Bounder ventured to peer in—and saw that the room was empty. He stood beside the doorway, thinking hard.

Whatever happened to him, whatever the consequences, he was going to find out if the games master of Greyfriars was there—or rather, he was going to



"I'll say what I like!" snarled the Bounder. "Lascelles is a liar and a spoofer—" "Shut up!" "Scrag him!" "Bump him!" "Boot him!" A dozen hands were laid on Vernon-Smith, and he was lifted from his feet and bumped, face downwards, on the floor of the Rag. Bump! "You rotters!" yelled the Bounder, mad with fury.

prove that he was there. If necessary, he was ready to take the risk of entering, and the chance of meeting with Archie or the bruisers within. But that risk was rather too great to be taken if it could be avoided. He moved away from the kitchen door, and crept along the creeper-clad wall, towards the little barred window where Archie had stood half an hour ago. Looking in at the downstairs windows was safer than entering the building—and Smithy was almost certain that Archie had been speaking to somebody through those bars.

He reached the barred window. He stood beside it, his heart thumping. To look in, he had to show his face at the window—and if anyone was within, he would be seen at once. If it was Lascelles, he did not care—he cared not a straw if the games master knew that he had found him out. But if it was some other party, his game would be up. Once he was spotted, he would have no chance of continuing his investigations. He hesitated long.

A sound from the room reached him. The window within the bars was wide open. He heard the sound of feet pacing the floor—irregular, uneasy pacing. The room was certainly occupied. If it was Larry Lascelles one glimpse would be enough—was it Lascelles? Why should he be pacing the room like a tiger in a cage? And then, suddenly, unexpectedly, all the Bounder's doubts and hesitations were resolved for him, by the sound of a voice within—a sharp ejaculation, in tones of angry impatience.

"Good gad! How long's this going to last?"

The Bounder started, and then he grinned. It was the voice of the games

master of Greyfriars! He stepped before the windows, pressed his face to the opening between two bars, and stared in. The man who was pacing the room turned towards him, as Smithy's shadow darkened the sunshine—and the Bounder of Greyfriars was face to face with Larry Lascelles!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

From Friend to Foe!

MR. LAWRENCE LASCELLES stared blankly at the face at the window.

He was utterly amazed.

Half an hour or more ago Archie had stood there speaking to him, and had examined the bars. When the Bounder's shadow fell into the room he had turned to the window, expecting to see the sporting man again. In dumbfounded amazement he stared at Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Greyfriars Remove.

Smithy grinned.

He was gloating now.

It had worked like a charm! He had the proof he wanted! Lascelles was there—under his eyes! He had heard his voice, and now he saw his face! It was all that Smithy wanted—and this was the moment of his triumph.

"Vernon-Smith!" gasped Mr. Lascelles.

The Bounder's eyes danced.

"Little me!" he answered. "Little me, Mr. Lascelles—and I've run you down at last! You beat me last time, Mr. Larry Prize-Fighter Lascelles—but you won't spoof the Head again! I've got you!"

Lascelles stared.

"Are you mad?" he said. "How dare you speak to a master in such terms, Vernon-Smith! How dare you!"

The Bounder chuckled.

"Do you think you can come the beak over me now?" he sneered. "Forget it, Mister Bruiser Lascelles! I'm going straight back to Greyfriars, to tell the whole school where you are and what you're up to. You'll find that the Head knows when you get back. Do you think you'll be a master at Greyfriars after to-day? You went to catch a train for Loamshire yesterday, did you? You spoofed the Head into givin' you leave to play in a county cricket match—so that you could trot across here for sparrin' practice with the bruisers, gettin' ready for a prize-fight! And the Head's goin' to know! It was your jolly old duty to report me for a floggin'. It's my painful duty to report you for the sack!"

And the Bounder laughed in sheer enjoyment.

Larry Lascelles stared at him hard—and harder. It seemed a little difficult for him to grasp the Bounder's words. But as he understood a flush of deep anger came over his handsome face.

"You young rascal!" he said.

"I don't think I'm the rascal here!" grinned Smithy. "I don't think Dr. Locke will think so, either, when he knows!"

"So you have been spying, Vernon-Smith?" said the games master coldly and contemptuously.

"Call it that if you like. I've spotted you and found you out!" said the Bounder exultantly. "It's up to you to explain to the Head what you're

doin' here with a gang of bruisers, when he gave you three days' leave to go over to Loamshire to play cricket. I fancy you won't find it easy to stuff him this time, as you did before."

"Lower your voice, or you will be heard—"

"What do I care?" jeered the Bounder. "Call your bruiser pals as soon as you like; I shall get clear before they can lay their paws on me. Anyhow, you can't prevent me from telling all Greyfriars what I've found out!"

To the Bounder's surprise, a faint smile dawned on the handsome face of the games master.

"You seem to be a young fool as well as a young rascal," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "But I will forgive you your absurd suspicions and the ridiculous mistake you have made and your foolish insolence if you will—"

"If I'll keep it dark?" grinned the Bounder. "No fear! Did you keep it dark when you spotted me out of bounds?"

"I did my duty then as a Greyfriars master, Vernon-Smith."

"And I'm goin' to do my duty now!" grinned Smithy. "I'm a whale on duty when it suits me!"

"You young rascal!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Cannot you see that you have made an absurd mistake—though it may turn out a fortunate one for me? Cannot you see that I am a prisoner here?"

"A prisoner!" snapped Mr. Lascelles. He held up his bound hands as he spoke, and the Bounder stared at them dumbfounded. "Why do you think the bars are at that window, you stupid boy?"

The Bounder could only stare, his eyes wide open in amazement. That explanation of Larry Lascelles' presence at Thatch End had never even remotely crossed his mind. In almost bemused astonishment he stared at the bonds on the man within.

Mr. Lascelles smiled—he could not help it, so utterly flabbergasted was the Bounder's look. He fairly gaped. But the games master's face became serious again at once. The unexpected appearance of the Bounder at the barred window meant hope, when all hope seemed gone. It mattered little what motive—mistaken and malicious—had brought him there: he was there, and it meant freedom for the prisoner in the barred room, if there was time to act before Archie & Co. took the alarm.

Stepping close to the window, the games master pushed his bound wrists through the bars.

"Have you a pocket-knife?" he rapped.

Vernon-Smith was still staring, dumb. He simply could not get this into his head. From step to step he had gone on, accumulating more and more evidence that he was right—till at the finish he found that he was utterly and absurdly wrong! It was a "facer" for Smithy, and it fairly knocked him out. Still silent, he fumbled in his pocket for a knife; he seemed unable to speak.

"Cut that cord, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "Lose no time! If you should be seen here the chance will be gone. Quick, my boy!"

With fumbling fingers the Bounder opened his pocket-knife. He was blinking quite dazedly at the prisoner of Thatch End.

"I—I—" He found his voice at last. "I—I never dreamed—I—I can't get it yet! You a prisoner—"

"These rogues kidnapped me on my way to Courtfield Station yesterday," answered Mr. Lascelles. "As you have pryed into so much of my affairs,

Vernon-Smith, you are aware that the man Valence desires me to enter into a glove-fight he has arranged; and if you had been a little less suspicious and malicious you would be aware that I had refused. And this kidnapping is the outcome."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the Bounder.

"Quick with that knife! We may be interrupted!"

Mechanically Smithy sawed at the hard, tight, knotted cords round the games master's wrists. His brain was still in a whirl. He had come there to "spot" the boxing beak—to find him out—to show him up—And he found himself setting him free! He had come as an enemy—and he found himself acting as a friend in need! It was rather hard to assimilate.

Cord after cord parted under the sawing knife. Larry Lascelles' eyes were gleaming. Once his hands were free—it was not yet too late to get to Loamshire; Surrey would not be out yet; he might yet be in time to bowl a few overs for his side. His heart was beating.

The cut cords fell away. Larry Lascelles chafed his stiffened, numbed wrists. The Bounder stared at him through the bars.

There was no alarm so far. Archie and his bruisers, in front of the farmhouse, had not the faintest suspicion of what was going on behind the building. They had never heard of the Bounder's existence, and little dreamed how that youth, totally unknown to them, was butting in and marring their plans.

Smithy was pulling himself together now.

"You're locked in, I suppose, sir?" he said. Mr. Lascelles was "sir" again now! Smithy had got it down at last that he had been utterly mistaken and self-deluded—that Larry Lascelles was not going to be "sacked" from his post at Greyfriars—that, on the other hand, it was Smithy who was likely to be sacked, if Lascelles chose to report his insolence to the headmaster.

"Yes, locked and barred."

"I can get into the house at the back. I'll chance it!" said Smithy. "If I get your door open—"

"By gad! If you could do that—" breathed Larry Lascelles.

The Bounder grinned.

"I've made a fool of myself, sir. I see that now! But it's a bit of luck for you, as it turns out. Are you goin' to wash it out?"

Larry Lascelles looked at him steadily.

"I shall make no terms with you, Vernon-Smith, if that is what you mean. But you have done—and are doing—me a great service—"

"I did you a service that night I was out of bounds, when you'd have had your head cracked but for me—but you reported me to the Head, all the same!" sneered Smithy.

"That was my duty, Vernon-Smith, as you were breaking the rules of the school. But it is not my duty to report your insolence to me, as that is a personal offence that I can overlook."

"Oh!" said Smithy, rather taken aback. "I—I see. I—I—I've been rather a cheeky ass, sir. I'd be glad if you'd forget all about it. But, whatever you do, I'm standin' by you now. I'll say nothing more, sir. Leave it to me to get you out of that—"

"One moment! If they see you—" Mr. Lascelles' face was anxious. "Perhaps it would be better for you to slip away in safety, and I will wait here till they visit the room. Once they open the door I can deal with them. I cannot allow you to risk violence—"

"I'm not afraid! That's all right!"

"But—"

"No time to lose, sir!" said the Bounder coolly; and without waiting for the games master to say more, he cut away from the window.

Mr. Lascelles was left waiting very anxiously in the prison-room.

Vernon-Smith cut back to the kitchen door. The room was still empty, and he crept quietly in. On the farther side was a door on a passage. He crept across to it and looked out.

The passage led through the farmhouse to the door at the front, which was open on the porch. He saw the sunny front garden and the back of a man's head who sat in the porch, smoking. He had a glimpse of Archie strolling in the garden. As soon as he stepped into the passage he would risk being seen.

Standing where he was, he scanned the several doors that opened on the passage. One, near at hand, was shut, and there were two bars across it, and a key in the outside of the lock. Smithy did not need telling that that was the prison-room.

He drew a deep, hard breath. If the man in the porch turned his head he would be seen. But he had to risk it.

On tiptoe he crept into the passage. Cautious as he was, the old boards creaked under his feet.

He reached the barred door—and, at the same moment, Bunchy in the porch, turned his head and glanced into the house.

There was a startled gasp from Bunchy.

"Who's that? My eye! Wot—" The bruiser leaped to his feet.

Vernon-Smith's hand was on the door-key! He turned it back, in hot haste, unlocking the door. He grabbed one bar and dragged it from its sockets. With a roar, Bunchy came speeding up the passage towards him. Behind him, in the porch, appeared Archie Valence, and Ted and Charley, drawn by his startled roar.

Smithy grabbed at the second bar. But Bunchy was upon him before he could touch it.

The bruiser grabbed at him.

The bar he had already removed was in the Bounder's hand. He did not hesitate for a second. As Bunchy grabbed at his shoulder, the Bounder crashed the bar at him, and Bunchy, with a fearful yell, staggered back as he caught it across his face.

In another second he would have been at the Bounder again. But in that second Vernon-Smith tore the second bar from its place.

"Larry—quick!" he yelled.

Bunchy was on him. The Bounder crumpled in the grasp of the bruiser. The three men in the porch came racing up the passage. At the same moment the door of the prison-room flew open, and Larry Lascelles bounded out.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well!

LARRY LASCELLES, his hands free, and his fists clenched, leaped into the midst of the bruisers. His face was hard-set—his eyes glinted like steel. He came on Archie & Co. like a thunderclap.

Smithy went sprawling, as Bunchy hurled him away. He crashed on the floor and lay breathless and dazed. He could not have helped the games master in the fight that followed if he had been

needed. But he was not needed. Larry was equal to his job.

Archie, almost gibbering in his amazement as his prisoner leaped through the doorway, met a clenched fist with his chin, and was lifted fairly off his feet and dropped at quite a distance—knocked out and nearly senseless.

Bunchy, Ted, and Charley piled on the games master desperately—and the one-time champion of the ring met them with left and right. Now that he could use his hands, the fighting-schoolmaster needed no aid.

They grasped at him, they grabbed at him, they struck at him—he hardly heeded. His right came like a lump of lead between Bunchy's eyes, and Bunchy went down like an ox, and stayed down. Then the games master of Greyfriars was struggling, with the other two clinging to him like cats.

But the struggle was brief. A body-blow laid Charlie on the floor, gurgling. And Ted found himself whirling along the passage, to sprawl headlong over Archie, and collapse on that hapless sporting gentleman. What breath was left in Archie was completely knocked out of him.

The Bouncer sat up, panting.

"Oh gad!" he gasped.

Mr. Lascelles gave him a hand up.

"Hurt, my boy?"

His voice was anxious.

"Only a bump or two—nothin'. But, my hat!" The Bouncer gave a breathless chuckle. "You can punch, sir! No wonder they wanted to get you back into the ring—I should be sorry for the Game Chicken if you went for him."

Mr. Lascelles laughed.

"I think it's all clear now," he said.

It was all clear! Two of the bruisers were half-senseless; Archie was groaning for wind; and the other man was scuttling out of the house, eager to get to a safe distance. No hand was likely to be lifted again against the games master of Greyfriars, now that his fists were free.

The Bouncer was, as a matter of fact, rather damaged by Bunchy's grip, and his crash on the floor. But he did not care. He had thoroughly enjoyed the sight of that brief and strenuous scrap. At that moment Smithy was as keen an admirer of Larry Lascelles as Harry Wharton or any other fellow at Greyfriars.

"All clear!" he chuckled. "Nothin' to do but walk out. These sportsmen won't give any more trouble. They're too jolly busy groanin'!"

Mr. Lascelles glanced at his watch.

"My bag's here somewhere," he said. "I shall have to cut into Lantham and get the first train—"

"There's a car in the shed, sir," said the Bouncer. "Why not borrow it and save time?"

Mr. Lascelles glanced at him and smiled.

"A good suggestion," he said. "Archie owes me the loan of his car, at least, after wasting so much of my time. With the car, I can get the four o'clock express at Courtfield."

"I know how to handle a car, sir—I'll get it goin', while you hunt for your bag."

"Good!"

The Bouncer ran out of the house. Mr. Lascelles searched for his belongings, and was not long in finding them. Archie & Co., groaning in the passage, hardly looked at him.

By the time Mr. Lascelles emerged, bag in hand, the Bouncer had the car started, and had run it round the house, and had the gates open.

"Good man!" said Mr. Lascelles.

He gave a last glance back into the farmhouse.

"Good-bye, Archie! I'll leave your car at Courtfield Garage. Call for it there, and get away in it. If you're here to-morrow, expect the police."

He jumped into the driving seat. The Bouncer sat beside him. The car rocked out of the gateway, and down the rutty lane for the Lantham road.

"Drop me at the corner, sir," said Smithy. "My bike's in the trees there."

Mr. Lascelles nodded. He stopped, and Smithy jumped out. Before starting again the games master held out his hand to the Bouncer with a smile on his face.

"Thank you, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "You are rather a young rascal, but you've done me no end of a good turn. Of course, I shall forget everything but that, and I hope we shall be better friends."

He shook hands with the Bouncer, and the car flew on again. Herbert Vernon-Smith watched it disappear up the Lantham road in a cloud of dust.

"Well, my hat!" said Smithy.

He went into the trees for his bike, and wheeled it out. He mounted it, and rode in the direction of Lantham. His face was thoughtful as he rode. His adventure that afternoon had turned out in an utterly unexpected manner. And he was glad of it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry.

"Smithy—"

Harry Wharton & Co. were coming out of the Ramblers' ground at Lantham, to head for the Pagoda and tea, when they met the Bouncer. He seemed to be looking for them.

"Oh, here you are!" said Smithy. "If you're teeing I'll join up. I've got some news for you."

"If it's about Larry—" said Wharton, frowning.

"Just that."

"Then chuck it! We don't want any more of it."

"The morefulness would be infuriating, my esteemed and idiotic Smithy," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bouncer laughed.

"But it's rather good news," he answered. "I fancy it would interest you."

Wharton looked at him keenly.

"You never found Larry at Thatch End," he said.

"I did!"

"You did!" exclaimed all the Famous Five together.

"Exactly!"

"I don't believe it," growled Johnny Bull. "What was he doing there if you found him there?"

"Roamin' up and down a room with a barred window, with his hands tied!" said the Bouncer, with a grin.

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"And I got him out—"

"You—you—you got him out!" stut-tered Nugent.

"And he's gone; lit out for Courtfield and the jolly old express, and he's half-way to Loamshire by this time."

"Are you trying to pull our leg, or what?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Not at all. Sober fact," said Smithy. "I was right—and wrong. Larry was there, as I thought. But he was a jolly old kidnapped prisoner—as I certainly never dreamed of thinkin'. They'd bagged him to keep him in clink till he came round to their game—fightin' the Game Chicken. That's where he disappeared to yesterday."

"Oh, my only hat!" said Harry blankly.

"And if you'd seen him when he got loose!" said the Bouncer, with glistening eyes. "There were four of them to handle—and Larry handled them."

The chums of the Remove gazed at Smithy. The fellow who had had a feud on with Larry Lascelles seemed to have changed into an enthusiastic admirer of the games master.

"Ho's some lad!" said Smithy. "I wish you'd seen him. But come along and have a bun with me, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Well, this beats it," said Bob Cherry.

"The beatfulness is terrific."

Over tea at the Pagoda the Bouncer told the tale. Harry Wharton & Co. listened to it with the keenest interest. After tea they rode back together to Greyfriars—the Bouncer and the Famous Five on the best of terms. Billy Bunter met them when they came in—with the important air of a fellow who had exclusive news.

"I say, you fellows, there's news of Lascelles!" exclaimed Bunter.

"You don't say so!" said the Bouncer, with a chuckle.

"Oh, really, Smithy! You fellows never hear anything," said Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you that Quelch was in Courtfield this afternoon, and met Lascelles. He came in a car to catch the four o'clock train. He's playing cricket in Loamshire, after all. He was kept back somehow. I don't know how—"

"But we do," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ancient history, old fat bean!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

And the juniors went in, leaving Billy Bunter blinking.

That evening there was news on the telephone from Loamshire. Greyfriars fellows made the rafters ring with cheers, when the news was given out that Larry Lascelles had performed the "hat trick" against Surrey, and that that famous side were unexpectedly "out" before the close of the day's play. And the next day came news of Larry's big innings. That day Archie & Co. were seeking the open spaces, glad to disappear. And Thatch End was once more deserted. But nobody bothered about Archie & Co. When Mr. Lascelles came back to Greyfriars on the Friday evening the quad was packed with fellows who cheered him as he came in, and as loud a voice as any was that of the Bouncer.

THE END.

Now Look Out For:—

"THE WORST BOY IN THE SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards

In Next Week's Free Gift Issue of the MAGNET!

ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!

By JOHN BREARLEY!



"Well done, Bill!"

IT was no use, however. Even as Bill prepared to bowl his first ball, he knew it was going to be a dud—knew it, and could do nothing to better it!

It was just his luck, too, that Forbes, of all the Avonshire batsmen, should be his first opponent.

Usually, when Bill meant business, he took four quick, springy steps up to the crease, and then his arm swung over with the ease and grace of a natural bowler. Now, however, his feet seemed leaden, his arm felt as dead as a stick of firewood, while, as for that first ball—

Bill groaned as it left his hand.

Horrors! Instead of pitching on the treacherous bare spot, as intended, it was a simple half-volley—almost a full toss—on the leg side. Even Forbes, who had been prepared for something hotter from Bill, looked surprised as he watched it. No need for him to jump out and smother any dangerous break. All he had to do was to sling his left leg forward and clump the gift hard.

He did.

Crack!

The merest glimpse of the ball was all Bill saw as it left the bat and came streaking back towards him, a few inches above the turf. Then all at once he found himself falling, pitching over sideways, as though someone had given him a hearty shove. Cricketing instinct made him shoot out his right arm. Something hit against his hand, stung like fury, but stuck there. As he rolled over, eyes tight shut and legs in the air, a confused roaring beat upon his ears like an explosion.

"Well held, kid! Oh, well held!"

Amid frantic uproar Bill turned a half-somersault, then sat up and stared owlily at the ball—fast in his grip! Somehow or other a miracle had happened, for he had caught it—caught and bowled Forbes, Avondale's steadiest bat! He had taken his first "pro" wicket with his first ball!

Honestly bewildered, he continued to sit on the grass and frown at the ball until eager team-mates came clustering round him, shouting congratulations. Joyful hands helped him up, others smote him lustily on the back.

"My giddy aunt! Some catch, Bill! I never even saw the ball go, myself!"

"You cunning blighter! Poor old Forbes fell into that trap like a lamb!"

"Trap?" Startled, Bill blinked at the last speaker. "I—I—that was the rottenest ball I've ever bowled," he confessed slowly. "How the dickens Forbes came to lift it, instead of driving it along the carpet goodness only knows. It was just blind luck!"

But the others only smiled, thinking he was pulling their legs, as usual.

Terry clapped him hard on the back again.

"Luck or not, old bean, you keep it up. Maybe it's an omen, Bill!" he chuckled meaningly.

And, abruptly, Bill laughed, too.

Terry was right; it must be an omen! He had tossed up an awful ball, made the jammiest of catches, and dismissed the best batsman in Avonshire! Beyond all doubt, his luck must be in!

The thought acted on the volatile Bill like a spur.

It was as though a great weight had lifted suddenly from his shoulders. The

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Simon Allison, once part-owner of the great Allison Motor Works, invents a powerful supercharger, but fails through lack of funds to put it on the market. An attempt on the part of his rascally nephew, Len Allison—"boss" of the works and a "big noise" in the county cricket team—to terrify the old man into parting with his supercharger at a low price fails. Shortly after this, Bill Allison, Simon's son, is playing for his school against Avonshire Club and Ground when he is knocked out by one of his vengeful cousin's express deliveries. Regaining consciousness, he returns to the fray, determined to give of his best before asking to be taken on as an Avonshire county professional.

(Now read on.)

attack of nervous funk vanished in a second, leaving him cool, alert—ready to bowl for his life.

Why this should be he could not say, he only knew that it was so. As Conway, the next Avonshire batsman, came in, Bill spun the ball blithely with his long, supple fingers, making it spin like a top. Then he grinned, beamed broadly with sudden exuberance, and returned to his mark.

Almost impatiently he waited for the county man to take guard. Conway was another of Avonshire's old stagers—a dour, stolid batsman, whose rock-like defence had broken many a bowler's heart.

"But you ain't breaking mine, Connie, old boy!" vowed Bill, and sprang forward at the word "Play!" William Allison was himself again.

There was no clumsy shuffling this time, no weak control or lack of spin. Three bouncy strides, a hop, and Bill's arm swished over cleanly, wrist well arched, ball practically hidden from the batsman by the back of his hand.

Straight for Conway's off-stump it started, in a slow, guileless curve; and then, as the "heart-breaker" stepped across confidently to play it, the ball took a sudden, uncannily sharp swerve to leg. Landing plumb on the worn patch, it broke back into the wicket like lightning.

In the nick of time only, Conway got his bat to it, edged it on to his pads, smothering the spin. As he did so, his underlip shot out in a comical expression of disgust.

"Hoi! That's enough of that stuff, young Bill!" he said severely, though his eyes twinkled.

Walking out, he patted the tricky patch with some care. He'd have to watch that—and the bowler, too. The kid was good!

Also, "the kid" was wise—too wise to put down the same ball again.

Having just failed to surprise Conway with it, Bill, for the rest of the over, concentrated on getting his length and the "feel" of the pitch.

Another burst of clapping rewarded him in the end when he had bowled an accurate maiden.

One for eight! The School's prospects were looking up!

Off Bromley's second over, Jerry Tempest, playing very cautiously after the early loss of Forbes, scored three—a late cut for two and a single off the last ball, which took him to the other wicket, to face Bill. And there the veteran County captain also paid thoughtful attention to that worn patch. He hadn't liked the look of Bill's bowling to Conway the least bit.

He liked it even less when the youngster started his accurate and wily attack again. For this time Bill opened his box of tricks in real earnest.

The Grammarian star was no longer smiling—no longer troubled by the ache in his bruised head, either. Excitement and rigid determination seemed suddenly to have dulled the pain. All his energies were concentrated now on beating the experienced batsmen arrayed against him. He had no time to feel anything else.

Lightly, gracefully, the tall left-hander danced up to the crease, his arm whirling over in a perfect circle. Jerry Tempest played the first ball gingerly—and was all at sea to the next, which, humming with finger-spin, nipped across and missed the bails by a hairs-breadth. The veteran clicked his tongue reprovingly, then lunged well forward to "kill" the third! And that was fatal.

It was Bill's uncanny swerve in the air again that baffled his opponent. At the very last second the ball wobbled sharply and curled past the swinging bat. There followed the faintest of clicks, and then:

"Bowled him!" exploded the tense onlookers as Jerry Tempest's leg stump quivered, and Cooper, the wicket-keeper, caught bail and ball together.

Up rose the joyous school supporters then, yelling their heads off with glee, what time Mr. Tempest came slowly down the pitch, pulling off his gloves and pursing his lips thoughtfully.

"By gad!" he mused. "This youngster's better than last year! If he keeps improving like this—Good ball, Bill! Too good for an old 'un!" cried the genial sportsman aloud.

Bill smiled his thanks, and then, dodging a playful poke from the batsman, he glanced at the scoreboard.

"Two for eight! And his own analysis—two for none! Of course, that was much too good to last for long. And yet—"

"Keep it going, Bill!" shrilled some Grammarian Fourth-Formers.

Bill nodded as if in answer.

The C. & G.'s next man in was another amateur, a hard-hitting performer who had made a name in local club cricket, but had yet to play for the County.

To test him, Bill tossed up a curly off-break, and smiled placidly as the newcomer stepped back right in front of his sticks, and slashed the leather past cover-point for a spanking four. Twenty seconds later, however, the club man, too, was wending his way sadly back to the pavilion, plumb lbw. to a top-spinner which did not curl an inch, but fizzed straight through and hit him slap on the pads.

Three for twelve! Against the Club and Ground!

By now the celebrated visitors were beginning to look serious. With 133 still to get, three good men out already, and a real, first-rate left-hander spinning the ball at the top of his form,

their apparently-easy task had gone distinctly sour.

On the other hand, the Grammarian players could scarcely contain themselves as they gathered in a bunch round Bill, the only cool one amongst them. The amazing run of swift successes set his chums alight; while the delighted clapping of the crowd—waiting eagerly for batsman No. 5 to appear—was almost deafening in its enthusiasm.

Thus, the abrupt hush that fell when the next man did appear was all the more marked by contrast.

For the next man in was Len Allison. And from the way he strode on to the field it was obvious to all that Len was out for his cousin's scalp once more!

Amid stony silence, he arrived at the crease, passing Bill without a glance. As ever, his pads were as snowy-white as the rest of his gear, and the gleaming, well-oiled bat he carried was only one of the half-dozen he had ordered that season from one of the most famous and expensive makers in England.

A dark blue Avonshire cap covered his sleek hair, and he had knotted a handkerchief round his neck—a sure sign that he felt confident of playing a long knock. All told, Len Allison looked an athlete to admire—had it not been for the slight curl of his lips and the sneer lurking in his dark eyes.

In any case, the only thing Bill admired about his cousin was Len's powerful and pretty batting once he was set. Steel-wristed, quick on his feet, and a dashing hitter all round the wicket, Len was capable of rattling up a century in dangerously quick time—and

"COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!"

BY this time, chums, your "Marvels of Modern Engineering" Album will be looking real swell—especially after you have added the handsome photogravure plate which I am presenting with this issue of the old paper. You should have eight photo-plates towards your collection now, which leave four more still to come. The subject of next week's grand plate is

"LINKING UP TWO OCEANS,"

and shows how this truly remarkable feat was accomplished by the ingenuity of man. If you haven't already placed a regular order for the MAGNET, don't delay! Do it now—for you'll be terribly disappointed should you not be able to complete this series of Free Photo-plates showing "Marvels of Modern Engineering."

About our aeroplane offer! Are you going to take advantage of it? You'll be sorry if you don't! Start collecting the tokens now—you only want three—then follow out the instructions given on page 9 of this issue, and the plane will be yours!

Ready now for next week's programme? Good! First comes Frank Richards' topping yarn.

"THE WORST BOY IN THE SCHOOL!"

And I can promise you that it's tip-top. These yarns get better and better, and I can tell you that I've got some real treats in store for you in the near future. There'll be further thrilling chapters of our great cricket story and more interesting tit-bits of information concerning Harry Wharton & Co. in the "Greyfriars Herald," not forgetting "Umpire's" interesting answers to readers' cricket queries. Make sure of your copy by ordering it NOW!

YOUR EDITOR.

of knocking any bowler off his length while he was doing so.

Bill eyed his cousin narrowly, taking a firmer grip on himself than ever. Somehow, too, the atmosphere seemed to have become suddenly charged with electricity.

All eyes were on the two Allisons, the spectators waiting with bated breath for the duel to begin afresh. Tom Janes' crisp voice, as he gave Len "middle and leg," sounded weirdly loud in the silence.

Tapping the blockhole, Len hitched up his flannels, gave his bat a twirl, and took a long, leisurely look round the field. So languid were his actions, indeed, that the locals grew restive at once.

"What are you lookin' for, ducky? Place to lie down in when you're out?" inquired one sardonic humorist—at which Len scowled and the fieldsmen stared woodenly at their feet. Then:

"Play!" barked Umpire Janes.

Next instant the Allison duel was on again.

A Sad Downfall!

MOVED by a common impulse, the crowd leaned forward in their places, then became very quiet once more. "Stiffy" Cooper, the Grammarian stumper, tugged nervously at his gloves.

Quite calmly, however, Bill danced forward to bowl the last of that over, Len watching his left hand as a cat watches a mouse. The ball, cunningly flighted, swerved to leg again, just missed the fatal patch, but broke viciously, nevertheless.

Len Allison made not the slightest attempt to play it. Instead, he half turned, laid his bat carelessly over his shoulder, and then, deliberately bending his knees, met the spinning ball with his pads. At that the local barrackers gave vent to their feelings.

To their idea, intentional pad-play might be all right in first-class cricket, but in club or school games it was definitely "not done."

"Goal!" roared the humorist. "Jolly well kicked, sir!"

"Hey, what's your bat for? 'Fraid o' spoilin' it?"

Len Allison touched his cap to them mockingly.

"Charming lot of sportsmen at this school!" he said loudly, for the benefit of the fieldsmen as they crossed.

Terry Mason reddened with quiet anger. He knew quite well that none of the school had joined in the barracking, but that only made Len's sarcasm sting the more.

"Nice little pet! Bundle the rotter out quickly, Bill, for the love of Pete!" he begged, when he joined his chum in the slips.

Bill only grinned soberly.

Alec Bromley's next over was a good 'un; so steady that Conway, a helpless spectator all this while, was forced to play every ball warily. Anxious to break his duck, however, the professional drove the last one for an easy single, and promptly ran. To his own chagrin, and everyone's surprise, Len just as promptly sent him back.

"No! Stay there!" he called nonchalantly; and Conway, after hesitating, halted, and, finally turning back, scrambled home barely in time to escape being run out.

"Gosh! What's the matter with him? Blighter wants to hog the kid's bowling, I guess!" growled the disgruntled pro to Tom Janes, while the

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crowd awarded Len another round of "applause."

But Len, sullen and defiant, cared nothing for their derision now. All he wanted was the chance to flog Bill's "slow tripe," as he called it. To the first of his cousin's third over he came skipping out of his crease in a flash, caught the ball before it pitched, and pulled it beautifully over mid-on for a boundary.

Smiling bleakly, he did the same to the next one, only this time it was a rousing carpet-drive which cover-point fielded magnificently. Undeterred, Len had another "go"; and then, as the third ball went like a bullet to the bowling-screen, the Grammarians exchanged uneasy glances.

"Golly! Wake up, Bill, the beggar's got you taped!" groaned Terry inwardly, and gave his star bowler an imploring grimace.

Len was openly laughing now. But Bill's rugged, brown face remained impassive.

Imperturbably the young left-hander started his quick, short run again, and, without any change of action, flicked up his fourth ball. It looked exactly the same; same pace, same length—if anything, a little higher.

Again Len came jumping out to meet it, his bat flashing in the sun as he swung it back. On twinkling feet he pattered down the pitch, steadied himself, and tossed the bat higher. Then, grunting with the effort, he put all his weight and impetus into one terrific drive.

What happened after that only Bill—who had bowled that simple "dolly" from six inches behind the crease—really knew.

Certainly Len did not. All he realised in the next brief, all-dismaying instant was that the ball was dipping, dropping short, with bewildering abruptness—and that Bill, tricking him all ends up, had lured him out to his downfall.

Desperately Len tried to check his forward lunge then—but too late! Missing the flighty ball completely, he lost his bat and footing at the same time, and then, unable to stop himself, toppled over helplessly, and sprawled face down on the turf.

Simultaneously "Stiffy" Cooper gathered the ball, whipped both bails high into the air, and flung back his head in a raucous, triumphant appeal.

"Haa-zatt?"

Hiding a furtive grin, the square-leg umpire solemnly raised his finger.

Len was out—out by a yard; stumped Cooper, bowled Allison, 8!

The uproar of cheers and clapping that greeted Bill's successful bowling-trap showed only too clearly which of the Allison's was the favourite with the crowd.

The older onlookers shouted and stamped, the Grammarians forgot their manners for once and became such rabid partisans that Terry Mason frowned and waved his arm sternly. Then, in the midst of the excitement, Bill, who was half-way up the pitch already, picked up Len's bat and held it out gravely.

That tore it!

The action was a perfectly natural one. Bill did it without thinking—certainly without any intention of "rubbing it in." But, coming on top of his inglorious fall and the cheering, that little act of courtesy made Len see red.

"You—you swaggering young ape!"

Savagely he snatched at the bat and swished it so suggestively, that Bill's eyes hardened instantly and narrowed to slits. For a moment he honestly thought that his raging cousin would hit him, and mechanically he braced himself for a sidestep.

Just in time, however, Len succeeded in controlling his temper; brought to his senses as much by Bill's warlike glare as by the sudden shocked hush that fell upon the ground. A muttered oath bursting from his lips, he stalked away, tearing off his gloves. Not even the locals made another sound until he had vanished into the pavilion.

Once in the dressing-room on his own, Len Allison gave free rein to all the rage and disappointment seething in his heart.

Crash!

His bat flew across the room, the gloves followed. With fingers that trembled violently, he wrenched off his pads, slammed them to the floor, and then stamped on them. In that moment of weak, blind passion, Len Allison would willingly have trampled on Bill also.

"The cunning, tricky young hound!"

Flinging himself down on a bench, he lowered his face between his hands, rocking to and fro in an agony of mortification and spite.

Pampered from boyhood, placed in charge of a huge motor firm whilst still a mere youth, Len Allison had had things all his own way too long. He was not the sort to take a licking with a grin. The fact that Bill, whom he

despised even more than he did old Simon Allison, should have been the one to administer the licking, only rubbed salt in the wound to his pride.

Whichever way his overweening ambition turned lately, either at cricket or business, his uncle and cousin seemed to loom up as stumbling-blocks. A deep, rasping breath, almost a sob, shook his athletic frame at last. There was a baleful, resolute glitter in his eyes when he suddenly jumped up again and made a grab for his blazer.

He had had enough of cricket, and the Avonport Grammar crowd for one day. Something else—a certain decision he had just formed—had to be seen to at once!

Five minutes later, with his street clothes and gear jammed haphazard into his bag, he stamped out of the pavilion, paying no heed to the cool glances of his team-mates leaning on the rail. Only at the corner of the building did he halt briefly to watch Bill, who was still pegging Conway down with his perfect-length spinners.

Len smiled then—a slow, queer smile that puckered the corners of his mouth, yet left his eyes cold as granite. But, as he strode away to where he had parked his long, speedy car beside Mr. Tempest's little two-seater, the smile changed suddenly to an equally bitter scowl.

Lolling in the back of the Allison Straight-Eight, with his tawny, heavy-lidded eyes half-closed, and the inevitable Turkish cigarette drooping from sardonic lips, sat "Corsica" Phil Valetti, his new partner.

The swarthy foreigner, it seemed, had been waiting and watching the play for some time. He was utterly bored, too, and looked it.

At sight of Len, however, he cocked an eyebrow, then gave his friend a satirical leer.

"Hallo, pard!" he drawled lazily. "Saw your li'l acrobatic stunt just now. Looked like that gay cousin o' yours made a monkey outa you again, huh?"

Len's face was as black as thunder as he tossed his bag into the car and then jumped in himself.

(Len Allison's dander is fairly up now, and Bill will need to keep his weather-eye open! Don't miss the follow-up of this thrilling story in next Saturday's MAGNET, which will also contain another handsome Free Photographic Plate.)

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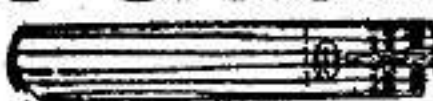
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YOUR POCKET MONEY!
Why risk losing it to gangsters, hold-up men, and confidence tricksters? Come to me instead! I'll look after it for you! Whoopie! FISH'S BANK OF HONESTY, Strong Room Dept., Study No. 14, Remove.

P.S.—Any guy who says my bank's bust is talking stuff. That was the last bank I ran! F.T.P.

THE NEW Official's Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

No. 37 (New Series).

June 17th, 1933.

STOP BLUSHING!
Young gents wishing to cure themselves of the embarrassing habit of blushing should paint their cheeks with MIMBLE'S Lilywhite Paint. Sold in convenient tins for carrying about in the weskit pocket, price sixpence each. —Apply, Mr. MIMBLE, The Woodshed.

BLADES OPPOSE SUMMER TIME

Threats of Direct Action
The Gay Dogs and Bold Bad Blades are up in arms, for several weeks they've been in a state of seething rebellion, and now the storm has burst!

"Down with Summer Time!" is their slogan, and they don't intend to sheath the sword until Daylight Saving and the annual custom of putting the Clock Forward are things of the past.

At a secret meeting of blades, held behind the school chapel yesterday, dark threats of direct action were made. The meeting, which was fully representative of the Grayfriars Gay Dogs, was under the distinguished chairmanship of Captain Hilton of the Fifth, who aroused frenzied enthusiasm among his listeners by his scathing denunciation of Summer Time.

In an inspired speech, Hilton declared that Daylight Saving was obviously an invention of their enemies, the Feckshirts and Grundys, who were always trying to stop fellows from going out on the tiles. When it didn't get dark till eleven at night, how the thing could be a slap out of his dorm and across the quad without being seen? The thing was impossible, and that very fact made it self-evident that Summer Time was the result of a sinister plot on the part of the heads! (One of "Down with 'em!") Of course, one could wait till midnight, but where the blump could one go after midnight in this dead-an-alive district?

Angel of the Fourth suggested that they should deliver an anonymous ultimatum to the Head, demanding an immediate reversion to Greenwich Time. Failing acceptance, Angel suggested that they took it upon themselves to put back all the clocks in the school and to keep on putting them back until complete chaos reigned.

The idea was hailed with enthusiasm and adopted unanimously.

There's only one drawback to it. No member of the Bad Lads' Brigade has enough pluck to draw up the ultimatum, let alone start on the school clocks!

The chances are that Summer Time will go on, despite their opposition!

MODEL PLANE'S AMAZING CAPTURE!



The Annual Display of the Junior Model Aeroplane Club last week should have been the most successful on record. But we regret to inform our readers that it wasn't. On the contrary, it ended in complete disaster!

Right up to the last event on the programme everything in the garden was lovely. The display was held on the lawn between the Head's house and the school buildings, and as a large number of entries had been made, and the weather was perfect for flying, quite a big crowd assembled to watch the sport.

The last item on the programme was a distance test for planes of all classes, and competitors had to start their machines from the hedge that borders the Head's garden. On the word "Go!" a dozen trim-looking models were launched on the air, and started humming off towards the School House according to plan. But there was also a thirteenth belonging to Tom Brown.

Brown's model, owing to a technical fault, went off on a circular trip and vanished over the hedge into the Head's garden.

When it returned, the spectators gasped.

Hanging to the undercarriage,

FEARFUL SHOCK FOR GOVERNOR

of all things in the world, was a man's wig!

We wondered how on earth it had got there at first. But we didn't wonder long. Just as Brown's model descended to earth, a bald-headed jockey, with a complexion reminiscent of a ripe tomato, looked over the hedge and gave a blood-curdling howl.

"My wig! Whisked off my head, by gad! Give it me before I thrash the hides off you, you young scoundrels!"

It was Colonel Blazemont, a distant relative of the Head, a retired Indian officer, and a Governor of the School—and, to make matters worse, the accident had happened just as Mrs. Locke came out of the house and walked down the garden towards the guest!

The plane, by a freakish piece of bad luck, must have skimmed just over the old colonel's head and jerked his wig neatly off the bald pate on which it reposed!

We leave you to guess the rest. All we can say is that more spinning records were broken back to the House than any man would have thought possible in one afternoon!

The Junior Model Aeroplane Club has temporarily dissolved!

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Monty Newland
By Donald Ogden

At this period of history, when, in some parts of the world, persecution against the Jews has broken out on a fearful scale, I'm jolly pleased to have the chance of singing the praise of one Jew I know very well—Monty Newland.

As Mr. Quetch has often remarked in the Form-room, it has been the Jew's unhappy lot from time immemorial to be treated harshly and unjustly; and Newland and bravely than he; and the fact that he has now slanted his one-time enemies and shed the Goodwill and friendship of the majority of the Remove, completely justifies the high opinion I've always had of him.

Is jealousy at the bottom of the anti-Jewish feeling? In thinking of a chap like Newland, one can't help wondering. Monty has the brilliant and penetrating brain and ready wit that so many Jews possess, and one can hardly be surprised at less gifted fellows feeling a bit resentful over it sometimes.

Let me say, by the way, so that you're left with no wrong impressions, that his intelligence has never been used to gain a mean advantage over less intelligent fellows, nor his wit to score at the expense of one who can't answer back.

Monty's verbal arrows are used against those who are strong enough to bear the brunt of them; to the weak he would seldom be other than a helper and defender.

A real good fellow is Monty.

SENSATIONAL SPY TRIAL

Stern Lesson for Traitor

That truth is often stranger than fiction was never more clearly shown than last Tuesday when a spy drama was enacted in the Remove.

The central figure in the amazing story was William George Bunter, whose outward appearance of honesty and respectability was torn aside to reveal a treacherous viper beneath!

(Here we will pause for a moment to enable the gallery to hiss!)

The Public Prosecutor, outlining his case before the Supreme Court of the Remove, said that his task had been made easy by the prisoner's confessing everything. He then produced a document signed by the prisoner, in which Bunter confessed to being guilty of sabotage, espionage, and counter-revolution.

Information he picked up to the Upper Fourth. As a result of the betrayal, Temple and Co., of the Fourth made special preparations for the raid that had been planned on their dormitory, and routed the Remove when the raid came off.

Judge Wharton: My hat! If that's what he did, the fat rotter ought to be seeregged!

What's the defence?

Bunter, who conducted his own defence, rose amid loud booing, in which the Judge joined heartily. When the noise had died down, Bunter said that he denied having signed the alleged confession. Alternatively, if he had signed it, he had done it because of the Third Degree methods that had been used to extort it from him.

The Secret Police had put him to unendurable torture, and as a result of his visit to their headquarters he had sustained a broken collar-bone, a dislocated spine, a fractured knee, and a sprained ankle.

Public Prosecutor: He's talking out of the back of his neck, your Lordship. All we did was to offer him a bag of jam-jars, and he signed the confession immediately. (Loud laughter.)

Judge Wharton: I don't think we need trouble to hear anything more for the defence. Sit down, Bunter! Have you anything more to say, Smithy?

Public Prosecutor: Only that I demand the extreme penalty, your Lordship. Let the prisoner be boiled in oil, flayed alive, and hung, drawn, and quartered, as a warning to others who may be inclined to follow his example! (Pronounced applause.)

Judge Wharton, summing up,



Tonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—During the economic upheaval of such unprecedented magnitude as the contemporary example, one would have anticipated inevitable repercussions in the shape of a tendency to secretions of gravity of demeanour among juvenility. But such is not the case. On the contrary, dear Editor, the only problems with which my juvenile acquaintances concern themselves, while civilisation effects chaotic rotative motion in a maelstrom of calamitous incidents, are problems connected with a recreative activity primarily concerned with the propitiation of a spheroidal object through the atmosphere by an instrument designed of wood expressly for that purpose and generally known as cricket.

The psychological incongruity of the phenomenon utterly eludes my comprehension!

Unappreciatively yours,
Alonsoz Todd.

(Tonzy's latest grouch is apparently over our preference for cricket instead of politics. All we can say, "Tonzy," is that to blame us for such a natural choice is hardly cricket!—Ed.)

FREE! FREE! FREE!

Batling Bolsover, having become a philanthropist in his old age, invites all and sundry to come to the Gym every Saturday evening, when he will make a Grand Free Distribution of Thick Bars and Black Eyes to all who ask for them.

RISE ABOVE YOUR FELLOWS

Why be content to look up to others when we can show you how to tower above the rest? No good monkeying about with the problem. Write to us for the solution instead!—The King Kong Kollege of Konfidence. Study No. 11.

TUCKSHOP RIOT

Casual visitors to the School one day last week received the impression that there was a fire or a rebellion or an earthquake when two hundred fellows tore out of the School House, raced across the quad, and started struggling furiously to get into a little doorway in the corner building under the elms.

But there was no need to worry. Mrs. Mimbles' first batch of strawberries and cream was just in, and the news had leaked out!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

When Inspector Sharp, of the Dorsetshire police, called at Greyfriars, Bunter hid under the study table. It transpired that he had "bagged" a cake from the pantry, and teased about!

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Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

Fellows are asking me why I was grinding a barrel-organ for a street musician in Courfield one day last week.

The explanation is simple. I have just joined the Wolf Kube, and I was doing my "good turn" for the day!

Rumour Denied

The rumour that Fitzgerald of the Fifth walked off the cricket pitch to complain about some legs who were barrelling him is indignantly denied by Fitzgerald.

He says that, on the contrary, as a cricketer, he leaves no "grounds" for complaint!