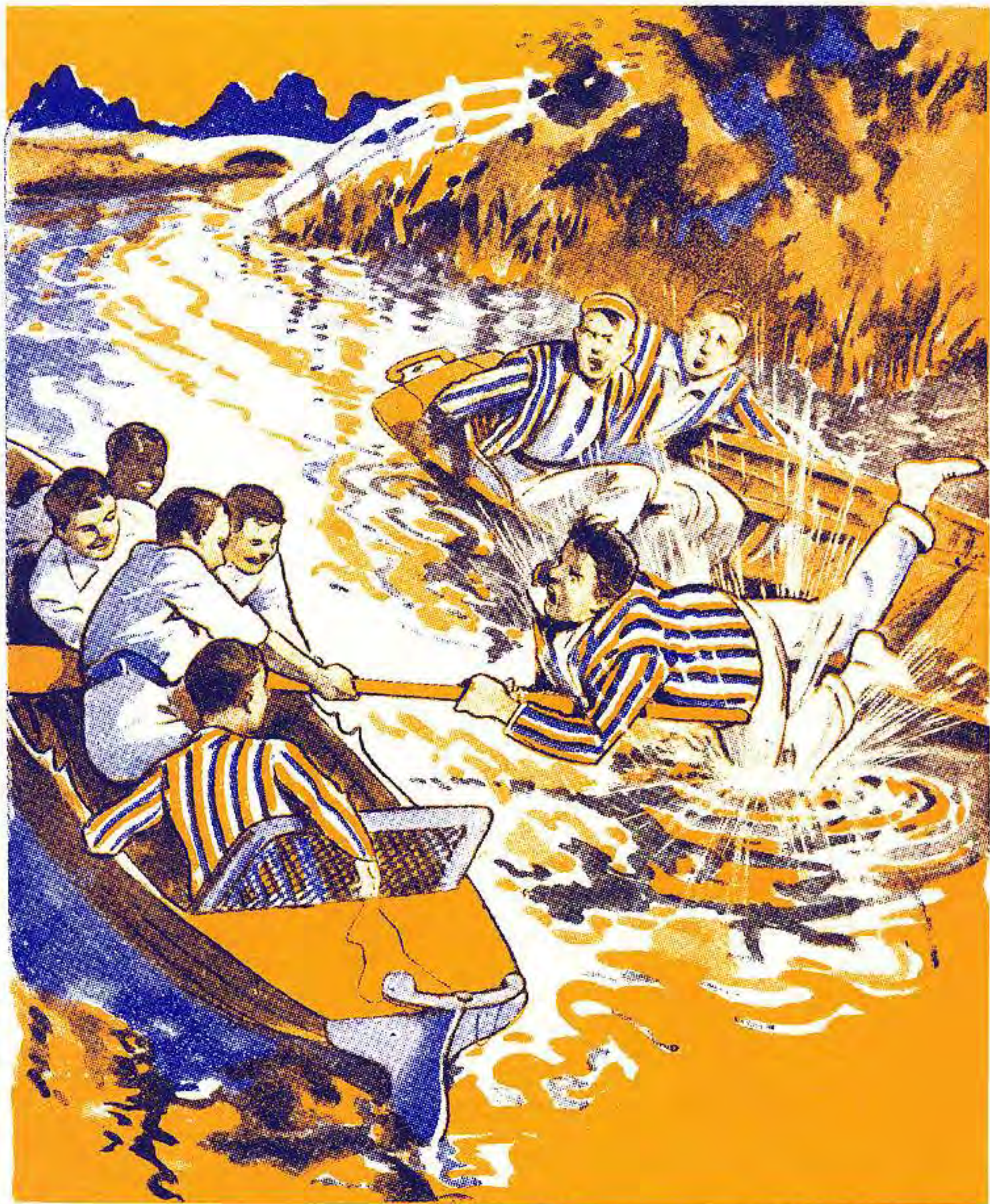


"THE BOUNDER'S GOOD TURN!" Extra-Special School Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.

The **MAGNET**^{2^D}





BY

Frank Richards

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Wingate Minor is Wanted!

GEORGE WINGATE, captain of Greyfriars School, looked out of his study window into the sunny quadrangle with a frown on his brow.

Classes were over at Greyfriars, and there were plenty of fellows in the quad. Like Moses of old, Wingate looked this way, and looked that way, but he did not seem to spot the fellow he wanted. And he called to a Remove junior who was sauntering, with his hands in his pockets, and his straw hat on the back of a mop of flaxen hair.

"Cherry!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry glanced round and came towards the Sixth-Former's window.

"Seen my minor?" rapped Wingate.

Bob shook his head.

Wingate's young brother was in the Third Form. Such small fry as Third Form fags were, of course, beneath the lofty notice of a Remove man. Robert Cherry, of the Remove, could not be expected to know anything about him, or even to remember his existence. However, Bob did not explain all that to the captain of the school. He just shook his head.

"The young sweep!" growled Wingate. "I told him to come to my study after class."

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Bob grinned.

Judging by the frown on Wingate's face, the minor's visit to the captain's study would not have been of an enjoyable nature. Probably Wingate of the Sixth was going to give Wingate minor of the Third one of those elder-brotherly "jaws" which were useful and beneficial, but not enjoyable. Which was perhaps the reason why the fag had not turned up!

"Well, look here, find him and send him to me!" said Wingate.

And he stepped away from the window.

"Um!" said Bob.

Had he received that command from any other man in the Sixth Form, Bob Cherry would probably have pointed out the undoubted fact that the Remove, or Lower Fourth, did not fag. But almost anybody at Greyfriars was willing to do anything for old Wingate. Instead, therefore, of pointing out that a Remove man could not, properly speaking, be sent on messages, Bob Cherry proceeded in search of Wingate minor.

That youth was not to be seen in the quad, and Bob went to the House door. A fat junior, adorned with a pair of spectacles, came rolling out, and Bob clapped him on the shoulder, to draw his attention.

"Ow!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Wow! You silly ass, what are you thumping me for? Wow!"

"Where's Wingate minor?" asked Bob.

"You silly chump!" howled Bunter. "How the thump should I know where Wingate minor is? Blow Wingate minor! I've got nothing to do with Wingate minor, have I, you ass?"

"But you always know everything that you've got nothing to do with," said Bob cheerily. "Mean to say you've been minding your own business for once?"

"Beast!"

Bunter, like the deep and dark blue ocean in Byron, rolled on! Bob went into the House. Four Remove fellows met him as he came in—Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh. They stopped him.

"Oh, here you are!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on, we're getting the boat out before tea."

"Can't!" said Bob.

"Why not, ass?" asked Nugent. "What is it—lines for Quelch, or what?"

"Lines for Quelch could wait. I'm looking for Wingate minor."

"Bother Wingate minor!" said all the Co. together.

"Just what I was thinking myself!" agreed Bob. "Bother him and blow him! But his major wants him in his study. Seen the little beast?"

"I saw him going up to the Remove," said Johnny Bull.

"What the thump has he gone up to the Remove for?"

"I didn't ask him."

"Oh, blow!" said Bob. "Wait for me on the raft. I'll cut down and join you as soon as I've hunted him up."

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton & Co. started for the river, while Bob Cherry went up the stairs. He arrived in the Remove passage and found some of the Lower Fourth there. But no Third Form fag was to be seen.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob. "Seen a fag hanging about here, Smithy?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was lounging in the doorway of his study.

"If you mean young Wingate—" he answered.

"The very identical article! Seen the little sweep?"

"He went up to Fishy's study."

"My only hat! What the thump did he want in Fishy's study? I'll jolly well kick him when I find him!" growled Bob, and he started to walk the length of the Remove passage, Fisher T. Fish's study being Study No. 14, at the end farthest from the stairs.

Why Wingate minor of the Third had come up to the Remove studies at all was rather a mystery. The Third had no business there. Why he wanted to see Fishy, the American junior, was another mystery. Nobody ever wanted to see Fishy. These mysteries were rather irritating to a fellow whose friends were waiting for him to go on the river. Bob Cherry tramped up the passage, rather inclined to start Jack Wingate on his way to his major's study with a hefty kick.

The door of Study No. 14 was open. From that study floated the nasal voice of Fisher T. Fish.

"Nope! Nothing doing! Beat it, kid!"

"But look here, Fishy!" Jack Wingate's voice answered, as Bob came along. "Look here, it's only a pound, and—"

"Aw, can it!"

"Tubb told me that you lent him some money. Look here, you're always lending fellows money."

"Yep! And what do I get?" said Fisher T. Fish, indignantly. "That dog-goned brother of yours gets to hear of it, and he puts it up to Wharton, and what does Wharton do? Burns my pesky account-books and sets the guys kicking me along this hyer passage! I guess I've rung off on it, young Wingate! I'll say it ain't good enough!"

Bob Cherry chuckled. He knew now why Jack Wingate had visited Study No. 14 in the Remove; and it was also clear that Fishy's recent drastic lesson had cured the shylock of Greyfriars—for the time, at least—of his money.

tending propensities. A Form kicking had impressed Fishy with the error of his ways. He realised that it was not good enough.

"But look here," urged the fag. "I want that pound badly—"

"Better ask your brother for it!" jeered Fishy. "Anyhow, can it, young shaver, and absquatulate. I guess my time's valuable."

"But, say—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry into the doorway. "Your major wants you in his study, young Wingate."

The fag gave a jump and spun round, startled. Bob looked at him rather curiously. There was a worried and harassed expression on the fag's rather chubby face. He gave Bob an angry stare.

"You silly ass!" he snapped. "What do you want to make a fellow jump for, bellowing like a mad bull?"

"Like me to kick you as far as the stairs?" asked Bob affably. "You've only to go on being cheeky, if you do."

"Oh, shut up!"

Bob Cherry's face grew grim. This was not really the sort of answer that a Remove man could take patiently from a fag of the Third. But Bob controlled his wrath. Wingate minor seemed to be in a state of distress. Indeed, he must have been desperately hard up, as he had come to Fisher T. Fish as a last resource. Bob magnanimously forgave him.

"Well, I've told you," he said quietly. "Your major's waiting for you, and sent me to tell you."

"Bother him! I don't want his jaw."

Bob made no rejoinder to that. He was not interested in the concerns of the Wingate family. He turned and left the study.

Jack Wingate turned to Fishy again. His youthful face was deeply and darkly troubled.

"Look here, Fishy—" he recommenced.

"Shut the door after you!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Wingate minor stamped out of the study and slammed the door after him. He ran down the passage and tapped Cherry on the arm. Bob glanced round at him.

"Look here, Cherry!" muttered the fag. "I know it's a cheek to ask you, but could you lend me a quid?"

"It's a cheek, and no mistake," agreed Bob, with a grin, "and it's not much use, either, as I've only fourpence."

There was a chuckle from the doorway of Study No. 4. The Bounder, standing there, had heard what was said, and he seemed to be amused.

Jack Wingate scowled round at him.

"What's the trouble, kid?" grinned Smithy. "Have you been looking on the wine when it is red, or the billiards-table when it is green?"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Bob, rather sharply, and he walked on to the stairs.

Wingate minor, with another scowl at the Bounder, followed him, leaving Herbert Vernon-Smith laughing.

"Look here, kid," said Bob, as they went down the Remove staircase together. "If you're hard up, your brother will help you out. Wingate's the dearest chap at Greyfriars—you ought to know that!"

"He would want to know what it was for!" muttered the fag.

Bob stared at him.

"Well, you could tell him, couldn't you?" he asked.

Jack Wingate made no reply to that.

He scudded down the stairs and disappeared. Bob stared after him.

"What the thump's up with the kid?" he ejaculated.

And then Bob went along to join his friends waiting on the school raft, and forgot Wingate minor's existence.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Splash for Smithy!

"HOLD on, you men!"

The Famous Five were in their boat, rocking by the school raft.

It was a glorious July afternoon, and a pull on the shining river, after class, seemed a good idea to the chums of the Remove. The same idea occurred to a good many other fellows, for there were quite a number of boats and skiffs out, and a crowd of fellows on the raft and towpath.

Coker and Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, had just barged off, Coker catching crabs in great style; and Harry Wharton & Co. were watching Coker, with smiling faces, when Vernon-Smith came across the raft hailing them. They looked round at the Bounder of Greyfriars, and Bob Cherry, who was about to shove off, paused.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Want anything?" asked Bob.

In his own whimsical way, Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, does an irresponsible fag in the Third Form a good turn—and lands himself in deep disgrace as a result! But though expulsion stares the Bounder in the face, he doesn't whine—he's tough!

"Yes, if you're going up the river—a lift," answered the Bounder.

"All serene! Jump in!" said Harry Wharton.

"Get your skiff out, and call Redwing, and we'll race you as far as Popper's Island!" suggested Bob.

"Too jolly hot!"

"Slacker!"

The Bounder laughed, and stepped into the boat. He stood up as the chums of the Remove pushed off, glancing at the bank.

Near the school boathouse Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stood in conversation with Mr. Lascelles, the maths and games master. Mr. Quelch was doubtless interested in his conversation with Lascelles; but his keen eyes were on the Bounder, as Smithy very well knew, and as the juniors in the boat noticed. Johnny Bull remarked on it.

"Quelch's got a gimlet eye on you, Smithy," he said.

"Oh, quite!" agreed the Bounder. "He's honoured me with his very special attention, ever since the night Lascelles caught me out of bounds. That's rather made the old bean suspicious."

"Well, it would!" remarked Nugent.

"Naturally! That's why I've dropped in your boat. Seeing me in such excellent company, Quelch can hardly fancy that I'm going out to paint the town red."

The Famous Five laughed. The Bounder's words were well founded. Mr. Quelch's eyes followed him till he entered the boat, and then the Remove master gave him no further heed. If he

suspected the scapegrace of the Remove of some intended escapade, he was satisfied when he saw him join the Famous Five.

Those five fellows were not model youths, by any means—they had their faults. But they were not the fellows to be mixed up in anything shady, as their Form master was well aware. Having seen Smithy start in such company Mr. Quelch dismissed him from mind.

There was a sarcastic grin on the Bounder's face as he sat in the stern beside Nugent, who was steering, while the other fellows pulled. The peculiar kink of blackguardism in the Bounder's nature broke out every now and then; but it was rather a reckless love of excitement than anything else, that he disregarded school rules and laws and pulled the wool over the eyes of the beaks.

As his chum Redwing was not with him, Harry Wharton & Co. might have guessed that Smithy was bound now on one of his shady excursions, had they given the matter thought—which they did not. They were enjoying the fine weather and the sunshine, and the gleaming river and the rowing; and if they were thinking of anything else, it was of the performance of Coker of the Fifth, who was catching crabs unnumbered, and progressing up the river at the rate of an old, tired snail.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as they passed the Fifth Form boat. "How many have you caught, Coker?"

Horace Coker stared round.

"Eh! I'm not fishing, you young ass!" he answered.

"Aren't you fishing for crabs?"

There was a chuckle from Potter and Greene, patient passengers in Coker's boat. Coker glared at them, and then glared at Bob.

"You cheeky young sweep!" he roared. "Do you want me to give you a whop with this oar?"

"Pleased!" answered Bob cheerily.

"By gum! I'll jolly well—"

"For goodness' sake, don't capsize the boat, Coker!" said Greene anxiously.

"Don't be an ass, Greene!"

"You'll have us over!" howled Potter.

"Don't be a fathead, Potter!"

Coker laid in one oar. The other he grasped with both hands, with the full intention of giving Bob Cherry a "whop" with it. His boat rocked wildly, and Potter and Greene threw their weight on the other side.

Frank Nugent steered clear, and the Remove boat was almost out of Coker's reach, but he made a lunge.

The tip of his oar just touched the gunwale of the Remove boat. Quick as lightning Bob Cherry grasped the blade of the oar, and with a sudden jerk hooked it away from Coker's grasp.

"Thanks!" he said affably.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, quite entertained by the expression on Coker's speaking countenance.

Coker very nearly toppled over the gunwale of his boat. The juniors pulled on, Bob waving Coker's oar in triumph. Coker roared after him:

"Gimme that oar, you young rascal!"

"Come and fetch it!" yelled back Bob.

Coker grabbed up his other oar. Whether Coker fancied that he could pull a boat with one oar cannot be said; Coker's powerful intellect might have fancied anything! He succeeded in sending his boat round in a circle, amid cheers from the fellows on the towpath.

Bob slid the captured oar in the

water, and the current carried it down to Coker, and Potter grabbed it and pulled it in.

"I'll go after them and smash them!" gasped Coker, and, equipped with a pair of oars again, the great Horace started pulling after the Remove boat, with the fixed intention of smashing its occupants.

Perhaps it was just as well for Coker that he pulled only a foot to the Remove boat's fathom. When he glared over his shoulder to see how near the young rascals of the Remove were, he made the discovery that they were not near at all—but far; so far they were out of sight along the winding green banks of the Sark.

Whereupon Horace Coker snorted with wrath, and demanded what Potter and Greene were cackling at!

Out of sight of the wrathful Coker, Harry Wharton & Co. pulled on cheerily up the shining river. They were going as far as Popper's Island, round the island, and back to tea. But about a mile from the school Herbert Vernon-Smith called on them to pull in. Beyond the trees on the bank a slate roof and red chimneys showed, where the Three Fishers inn stood.

"Pull in," said Smithy. "I get out here."

Harry Wharton looked at him, looked at the inn half hidden by trees, and looked at the Bounder again. His face set a little. Johnny Bull gave an expressive grunt, and Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

"You're going to that den, Smithy?" asked the captain of the Remove, very quietly.

"Guessed it in one!" assented the Bounder.

"It's out of bounds!"

"Dear me!"

"Oh, chuck him out!" growled Johnny Bull. "I dare say some other shady rotter is waiting for him there—some 'bookie,' perhaps!—Or Pon, of Highcliffe."

"Exactly!" drawled the Bounder. "I'm havin' a hundred up with Ponsonby, for a quid! Why not?"

"Plenty of reasons why not," said Wharton, in the same quiet tone. "But it's no bizney of ours what you do."

"Has that only just occurred to you?" inquired the Bounder sarcastically.

"But," went on Wharton, "you can do as you jolly well choose, if you like to take the risk of being sacked from the school for it; but you can't drag decent fellows into it, Smithy! You shouldn't have asked us for a lift in our boat, if you were going to that den of blackguards."

"Dear old Quelch has his jolly old eye on me," grinned the Bounder. "I told you why I selected your excellent and improvin' company."

"You've made use of us to pull Quelch's leg."

"Guessed it in one again! You're gettin' fearfully bright."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"Well, you're going to have a tip that we're not to be made use of in that way," he said. "Take my advice, stay in the boat, and finish the pull with us."

"Thanks! I'll ask for your advice when I want it."

"You won't?"

"No. I'm getting out."

"Get out, then," said Harry. "Don't pull in any nearer, you men. Hold on where you are."

The crew of the Remove boat grinned. They held on, ten or twelve feet out from the bank, where the water shallowed. Vernon-Smith gave the captain of the Remove a black look.

"Are you going to pull in?" he snapped.

"No!" answered Wharton coolly. "I've told you you're not going to make use of us to pull Quelch's leg. You can stay in the boat, or you can jump out. If you jump into that mud, I fancy you won't enjoy your game of billiards with Pon of Highcliffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Jump it, Smithy!"

"The jumpfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed blackguardly Smithy," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet, his eyes glinting. On land, with room to run, the jump would not have bothered him much; but jumping from a rocking boat was another matter. He paused.

"You cheeky cads, pull in!" he snarled.

"Not an inch!" answered the captain of the Remove coolly.

"Then I'll jolly well make you!" shouted the Bounder, his temper breaking out savagely, and he grasped at Wharton, and grabbed his oar. An unceremonious shove on the chest sent him staggering back. The boat rocked wildly, and the Bounder, staggering against the gunwale, stumbled backwards into the water.

Splash!

"Might as well have jumped!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith plunged headlong into shallow water. He scrambled up, and stood with the river washing round him up to the armpits, his face crimson with fury. The oars dipped into the water, and the Remove boat pulled on up the Sark, leaving the Bounder to scramble to the towpath—which he did, drenched with water and smothered with mud. A sound of merry laughter floated back to him from the Remove boat.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

"COME in, you young ass!"

Wingate of the Sixth spoke rather gruffly, as his minor appeared in his study doorway. Captain of the school, head prefect, head of the games, captain of cricket, George Wingate had plenty to occupy his mind—and no desire to waste that valuable time on a fag of the Third Form—even if that particular fag was his young brother.

He had been kept waiting for Jack Wingate, and no fag at Greyfriars was supposed to keep the captain of the school waiting. He was conscious, too, that he would probably have given any other fag a swipe from his official ashplant, for keeping him waiting. He did not want to be guilty of favouritism.

"I told you to come here after class!" he rapped.

"I forgot!" mumbled the fag.

"You'd better not forget another time!" grunted Wingate. "You wouldn't forget if it was any other prefect, and you know it. Do you think I can let you play the cheeky young goat because you're my brother?"

Jack Wingate made no reply to that. He stood, with a clouded and rather sullen face. The Sixth Form man eyed him sharply.

"What's the matter with you?" he rapped.

The fag statted.

"Nothing! What do you mean?"

"Your Form master, Wiggins, has spoken to me about you. You've been

careless in prep, careless in class, lazy, and slack, and rotting about generally. What do you think you are up to?"

The fag's sullen face became more sullen.

"Wiggins can whop me, if he likes," he answered. "No need to jaw to you about me, that I know of."

"I've a jolly good mind to whop you myself."

"I don't care if you do!"

Wingate's hand strayed to the ashplant on the table. But he withdrew it, and spoke more quietly and kindly.

"Now, look here, kid! It won't do! If there's anything up, tell me—you can forget that I'm a prefect and captain of the school—and speak to me as your brother George. Have you been landing in any trouble?"

"No!" muttered the fag.

"Getting into debt, or anything of that kind?" asked Wingate. "It's pretty plain that you've got something on your mind—Oh, that's it, is it?" he added, as he saw the crimson flush overspread the fag's face.

"I—yes—no!" stammered Wingate minor.

"You young ass! If that's all, why the dickens couldn't you come to me and say so?" exclaimed Wingate. "I remember once you ran up a bill at the tuckshop, and Mrs. Mumble kicked! Is that it?"

"N-n-no—"

"If you've been borrowing money among the other fags, you're a silly young ass; but I dare say I can see you through. What is it—five shillings?"

Wingate minor hesitated. For reasons known to himself, reasons which he did not desire to make known to a Greyfriars prefect, even if that prefect was his brother George, he wanted a pound! But a pound was rather a large sum for a fag of the Third Form to be in want of, and he hesitated.

"More than that?" asked Wingate.

"I—I—I—" stammered Jack.

"Oh, cough it up!" said Wingate good-humouredly. "I'm not rolling in money, as you jolly well know; but if you've been playing the goat, I can see you through, I've no doubt. I suppose you owe half-a-crown to Tubb, and half-a-crown to Paget, and a couple of shillings to somebody else. What? Well, get it off your chest, you young ass."

"I—I believe it comes to a pound!" stammered the fag.

Wingate stared at him.

"A pound! Well, you're a pretty young specimen to borrow a pound among the fags. You must owe something to nearly all the Third, at that rate. Is that what's been worrying you?"

"Yes!" muttered Jack.

"Well, you're a young ass! But I needn't tell you that! Look here! If I see you clear, no more borrowing, see? It's a rotten habit to get into, and might land you in real trouble some day."

"I—I know! But, I—I say, if you'll let me have the pound, it will be all right." Wingate minor eyed his brother hopefully. "I—I know I—I've been a fool, but—but—"

Wingate was going through his pockets. Jack watched him eagerly, as he produced a ten-shilling note and laid it on the study table, and on the note laid three half-crowns, two shillings, and a sixpence. It looked as if Wingate's financial resources were being put to a rather severe financial strain. Wingate was captain of the school, and a

tremendously great man in the eyes of all Greyfriars, but he was far from rich. Smithy of the Remove could have bought him up, lock, stock, and barrel.

"There you are, kid!" said Wingate. "This will leave me fairly stumped; but if it sees you clear, that's all right. Mind, no more playing the giddy ox—that's a condition!"

"No jolly fear!" said Jack Wingate, with such evident relief and earnestness that the Greyfriars captain smiled.

"Well, take it and cut!" said Wingate.

"I—I say, you're awfully good!" stammered the fag.

"That's all right—cut! Trot in, Gwynne, old man," added Wingate, as Gwynne of the Sixth appeared in the doorway.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stood on the river-bank, squeezing water out of his clothes, and scraping off mud. His face was crimson with rage; and had the Famous Five remained on the spot, there would certainly have been scraping. But the boat had pulled on towards Popper's Island, leaving the Bounder alone.

In his present wet and muddy and untidy state, Smithy was not disposed to walk into the Three Fishers and meet the stares of the loungers there, and the supercilious glance of Ponsonby of Highcliffe. He squeezed out water, and scraped off mud, and

and both of them glanced at the slate roofs that showed over the fences. They moved on to the open gateway that fronted the towpath, apparently with the intention of walking into the inn grounds—and Smithy caught his breath as he saw, and guessed their intention. Then Mr. Quelch's eyes fell on him, and he started a little.

"Vernon-Smith!" he exclaimed. Smithy looked up.

"Yes, sir?" he answered.

"What are you doing here?" There was swift suspicion in the look and voice of the Remove master. He had been satisfied when he had seen the Bounder go off with Harry Wharton & Co. Now the boat and the Co. were out of sight, and Smithy was on his own on the river-bank, only a dozen



As Mr. Quelch and Mr. Lascelles came abreast of the Three Fishers, the former's eyes fell on Vernon-Smith sitting on the river bank. "Vernon-Smith!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, with a start. "What are you doing here?" "I've been drying myself, sir," said the Bounder meekly. "I had a spill in the boat!"

Jack Wingate cut, leaving the two great men together. His face was a study in varying emotions as he went down the Sixth Form passage. Relief predominated. Whatever it was that the fag wanted a pound for, it was clear that he wanted it very badly. But certainly it was not for little schoolboy debts in his Form, as Wingate had taken for granted. Wingate minor did not head for the Third Form Room, and when he went into the quad, and Tubb and Paget called to him, he affected not to hear, and hurried down to the gates.

He went down to the towpath, and turned up the river. He went up the bank of the Sark at a trot. Wingate of the Sixth would have had a startling shock if he could have known the destination for which his minor was heading—now that he had a pound! Wingate minor of the Third was not likely to tell him!

gripped his teeth; and at last, tired with his exertions, sat down on the grassy bank.

He was drying in the hot July sunshine. He took a packet of cigarettes from his pocket—but found that they had been too thoroughly soaked to light—and with a savage gesture, he flung the packet into the river, which was undoubtedly the best thing to be done with it in any case! And some minutes later the Bounder had reason to be thankful that his cigarettes had been too wet for lighting; as two figures came in sight along the towpath. Mr. Quelch and Mr. Lascelles were walking along the river. As his eyes fell on the two beaks of Greyfriars, Smithy was glad that he was not smoking.

They did not, for the moment, observe the junior sitting among the grasses and ferns on the bank. As they came abreast of the Three Fishers they slowed down,

yards from the gate of the disreputable riverside inn. It was more than enough to rouse Quelch's suspicions.

"I've been drying myself, sir!" said the Bounder meekly. "I had a spill in the boat."

"Oh!" said Quelch. He came nearer to Vernon-Smith, scanning him. It was easy to see that Smithy had been in water and mud—he was still damp and muddy. The Remove master's brow cleared. His suspicions were allayed, if not banished.

"You fell out of the boat?" he asked.

"We were larking, sir, and I had a tumble," said Smithy.

"You should be more careful," said Mr. Quelch. "You had better go back to the school and change, Vernon-Smith."

"Yes, sir, certainly!"

The two masters remained standing

on the towpath while the Bounder departed. Out of sight, however, Smithy did not continue on his way. He dropped on his hands and knees, and crept back among the thickets along the path, curious to see what Quelch was going to do. He was just in time to see the two masters walk in at the open gateway of the Three Fishers.

The Bounder whistled softly.

But for the spill, he would have been inside that building at the present moment, playing billiards with Pon. Obviously, Quelch was suspicious, and had Smithy been there, there was no doubt that he would have been spotted. His last escapade had earned him a flogging, and a very serious warning from the Head. This time, there was little doubt, it would have been the finish. The scapegrace of Greyfriars realised that he had had a very narrow escape. Slowly and thoughtfully he resumed his way back to the school.

At a turn of the towpath, a running figure came suddenly round a clump of trees. Jack Wingate bumped into the Bounder before he saw him.

"Oh!" he ejaculated, staggering back.

"You young ass!" gasped Smithy. "Can't you see where you're running?"

The fag did not answer. He moved aside to pass the Remove fellow and trot on his way. Smithy stared at him angrily for a moment; and then, as the fag started on again, his expression changed. He called quickly to the captain's minor.

"Hold on, kid!"

"I'm in a hurry!" answered the fag over his shoulder, and without stopping.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. It was no business of his, he told himself. But a better impulse came over him, and he ran after the running fag, overtook him swiftly, and caught him by the shoulder.

"Stop, you little fool!" he snapped.

Wingate minor strove to jerk his shoulder away.

"Let me go, you rotter!" he panted.

"I tell you I'm in a hurry! What are you stopping me for, you fool?"

"In a hurry to be sacked?" jeered the Bounder.

"Wha-a-at?"

Wingate minor stopped at that. He turned round and stared at the Bounder with scared eyes.

"What do you mean?" he faltered.

Smithy grinned. It had only been a suspicion at first; now it was a certainty.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"No bizney of yours."

"None at all!" agreed the Bounder sarcastically. "But if you're headin' for the Three Fishers—"

The fag's face was white.

"What—what makes you think—" he stammered.

"Has somebody lent you that pound you wanted?" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"Find out!"

"You young ass! Where do you think I should fancy you were going—there's no place along this bank except

the Three Fishers, until you get to Popper Court. Not going to tea with Sir Hilton Popper, what?"

"I—I can go for a trot up the river if I like—"

"Oh, quite! Keep on," said Smithy, laughing. "My Form master and Lascelles are ahead—"

"Oh!" gasped the fag.

"I saw them walk into the Three Fishers—"

"Oh crumbs!" stammered Wingate minor. "Quelch and Lascelles?"

"The jolly old beaks are suspicious," grinned the Bounder. "My dear old beak is suspicious of me—but he knows I'm not there! He's got an eye open for other giddy goats. Like him to spot you there?"

Wingate minor staggered against a tree, panting for breath. His face was as white as chalk. It was evident that the Bounder had guessed correctly, and that the Greyfriars captain's brother had been heading for a place that was out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows. The bare idea of being spotted there by a master almost paralysed the wretched fag with terror.

"You—you're not pulling my leg?" he gasped at last. "They—they're really there?"

"I'm giving you the tip, you little idiot. If you've been there before, you may have been seen—anyhow, something's made the beaks suspicious. Quelch and Lascelles are taking a walk round the place—and if any Greyfriars man is there to-day, he will be spotted for a cert!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Jack Wingate.

The Bounder eyed him curiously, contemptuously, and a little compassionately. He was rather proud of his own reckless escapades—but the same kind of thing in a foolish fag of the Third Form excited his derision and scorn, and at the same time, a touch of pity. And he was thinking of Wingate of the Sixth, too. Like most Greyfriars fellows, he liked and admired "old Wingate," though as a prefect he was "up against him" on principle. And this was Wingate's brother.

"Look here, you young ass," said Vernon-Smith. "This sort of rot isn't in your line. If old Wingate spotted you, he would have to take you to the Head—nice for him, as you're his brother! He would never get over it. Prefect; and captain of the school—and his young brother caught pub-haunting! You might think of him a little."

"He doesn't know," stammered the fag.

"I guessed that one," grinned Vernon-Smith. "But look here, what's the game? Take my tip, and keep clear of the place."

"Well, you're a fellow to preach, from what the chaps say about you," said Wingate minor. "You jolly well go there yourself—I've heard a lot of fellows say so."

"Take my tip all the same!" said the Bounder, unmoved.

"I—I can't! I—I've got to pay Leach," stammered Wingate minor. "I—I owe him a pound."

"You awful little idiot," said Vernon-Smith blankly. "How the thump did you get into anything of the kind?"

"I—I never meant to," mumbled the fag. "I—I really went into the place one day for a ginger-pop—I thought it was rather a lark to go into a place out of bounds. I got talking to the man there, and he—he said—he said that Snooper was sure to win, and—and—I put a quid on him, only—only he lost, and—and that was last week, and—and—I've got to pay the pound, see?"

The Bounder whistled.

"Lesson to you to keep out of bad company," he remarked. "After all, the Head isn't exactly an ass—he's got reasons for putting some places out of school bounds, what?"

"I like that—from you!" said Wingate minor. "Fat lot you care about the Head, or school bounds, Vernon-Smith."

"Well, you'd better care more than I do!" said the Bounder, laughing.

"Think I'd be such a fool again!" mumbled Wingate minor. "Leach met me on the towpath the other day, and reminded me that I hadn't paid him. He's not a bad chap, in his way, I believe, but he wants his money, I suppose. He says he put the quid on for me—anyhow, Snooper lost, and I owe him the money. He will make a fuss if he isn't paid. Now I've got the money—"

"Well, keep clear now," said the Bounder. "You'll have to find a safer time."

"He—he said he wouldn't wait after to-day," groaned Wingate minor. "It's rotten luck, Quelch and Lascelles being there this afternoon! Perhaps I could cut out after lock-up, though. I—I say, I'm glad you told me, Smithy! You're not a bad chap."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder solemnly.

And he walked on to the school, and Jack Wingate, after some minutes of dismal hesitation and doubt, followed him in the same direction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Ructions on the River!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Dear old Coker!"

"Give him a splash as we pass!" suggested Johnny Bull. "Good egg!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had had their pull round Popper's Island. Now they were coming back down the river with the current. Half-way back to Greyfriars, they came on the Fifth Form boat. Horace Coker was still pulling up the river. He might have been pulling up a deeply rooted oak, judging by his crimson face and strenuous exertions!

Coker of the Fifth rather fancied himself as a rowing man. But nobody else, seeing Coker handle the oars, would have fancied that he could row. Indeed, an unprejudiced observer might have said that Coker rowed as badly as he played cricket—which would have been saying a lot! Sometimes his oars missed the water, and Coker nearly went over backwards. At other times they dipped deep, very deep—and had the Sark been a little shallower, the river-bed might have been seriously disturbed.

Potter and Greene found a little light and genial amusement in watching him. But they were kept rather busy dodging the splashes. Every now and then they had to dodge the oars as well as the splashes. An oarsman like Coker was really rather dangerous at close quarters. He had to be watched. Coker was rowing his friends up the river for tea at the Feathers. Potter and Greene felt that they would have earned their tea by the time they got it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Still busy at physical jerks, Coker! Is it your own idea to use a pair of oars for dumb-bells?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites; and Potter and Greene chuckled.

Coker's performance was, perhaps, nearly as much like dumb-bell exercise as rowing.

IMPORTANT NEWS!

Readers of the MAGNET who are about to visit the seaside for their holidays will be glad to learn that Messrs. Cadbury Bros., of Bournville, have contributed no fewer than **A QUARTER OF A MILLION BARS OF CHOCOLATE** for the consumption of readers buying their MAGNET from beach sellers, kiosks, and other such places at most of our popular seaside resorts. In addition to this, Cadbury Bros. are contributing pound boxes of their delicious assorted chocolates as prizes at our Concert Party, Cinema, and Gala Competitions. Be sure, then, and watch out for the MAGNET representatives when you are at the seaside this summer.

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Coker glared round. "Those cheeky fags again!" he snorted. "Steer for that boat, Potter! This is a chance to give them the whop-ping they want."

Potter steered—clear! He had no desire for a naval battle. The Fifth Form boat glided away from the Remove boat.

"Is that what you call steering?" roared Coker. "You silly ass! Pull the other line! Can't you steer?"

"Oh, let's keep clear of those fags!" urged Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

"Look here, Coker—" began Potter.

"Shut up, Potter!"

The Remove boat glided nearer, and Bob roached over with an oar, and gave Coker a playful push in the ribs. There was a roar of wrath from the great man of the Fifth. The junior boat shot away again at once; it was handled rather more handily than the senior boat! Five laughing faces looked back at the infuriated Horace.

"Steer for them, Potter! I'll jolly well give you a bang with this oar if you don't!" roared Coker.

"Oh, my hat!"

Under such persuasion, Potter really had no choice. He steered for the enemy. The junior boat could have walked away with ease; but the merry Removites seemed as keen on entertainment as Coker was on trouble. They let the Fifth Form crew draw near.

Splash! Bob Cherry's oar smote the river, and a little waterspout flew up—over Coker! Horace roared again.

"Wet, old bean?" asked Bob.

"The wetfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Yaroo!" roared Coker. "I'll smash 'em! I—I—I'll—" Standing up, he lunged with an oar.

Johnny Bull grasped it as he lunged, and the two boats rocked. Mindful of what had happened before, Coker fastened a deadly grip on the handle of his oar—he was not going to let it be jerked away again.

"Hold on, Johnny!" chuckled Wharton, and he added his grasp.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky hands fastened also on the blade of Coker's oar.

Coker was not the man to let go. He held on, and pulled, to get his property back. Coker was burly and beefy; but in a tug-of-war, with three fellows at the other end, even the burly and beefy Coker had no chance. He held on manfully—with the result that the tug from the other end jerked him over his gunwale.

Splash!

"Urrrrrgh!"

"Oh crikey! He's in!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Coker floundered between the two boats. Swimming was another of the things that Coker fancied that he could do. He swam about as efficiently as he rowed! It was really rather fortunate for Coker that Bob Cherry grasped his ears, Johnny Bull his hair, and Harry Wharton the back of his neck. They hauled Coker up and kept him afloat.

"Saved!" ejaculated Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrrgh!" spluttered Coker. "Yurrgh!" He had swallowed quite a lot of the Sark. "Wurrgh!"

"Pull him in, you men!" called out Wharton to Potter and Greene. "I'm afraid he's getting wet!"

"Damp, at least!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrrgh! Wurrgh! Leggo my ear! Urrrrrgh!"

Potter and Greene grasped Coker. Then the juniors let him go, and Horace was hauled into his own boat. He floundered there in a pool of water, spluttering wildly.

"Good-bye, Horace!" called out Bob Cherry, and the Remove boat resumed its homeward journey.

Coker sat up, streaming. He dashed water from his eyes and stared at Potter and Greene.

"You cackling idiots! What are you cackling at?" bawled Coker. "Is there anything to laugh at in this? I'm drenched! I'm soaked! I'm—Groooh! I'll smash 'em! I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Coker grasped his oars again, plumped down to row, and rowed. Vengeance was what Coker wanted, and he wanted

near enough for Bob to lean over and poke Coker in the back!

"Yarooooh!" roared Coker, as he got the poke. "Wha-a-at's that? Something hit me in the back—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker stared round over his shoulder. Bob Cherry grinned at him cheerily from the stern of the Remove boat.

"Have another, old bean?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Breathing wrath, Coker stood up, grasping an oar with both hands. The Remove boat at once shot out of reach as he whirled that deadly weapon. But it did not sweep empty space. There was a fiendish yell from George Potter as it tapped him on the side of his head.

"Whooooop!"

"What's that getting in the way?" howled Coker angrily. "Oh, you—Can't you keep your silly head out of the way?"

"Ow! My napper! You dangerous idiot, you've nearly brained me!" raved Potter.

"I should have landed one of the cheeky little beasts if you hadn't put your silly head in the way! Now I've got to catch them again!" snorted Coker.

And he sat down to row once more.

But the Remove fellows were tired of Coker by that time. They pulled on with vigour, and the junior boat disappeared down the river. Coker, alternately sweeping the air with his oars and attempting to dig up the bottom of the river, laboured after them in vain.

Harry Wharton & Co. had landed, put up their boat, and walked up to the school by the time the wet and weary Horace bumped into the raft. Vengeance on the cheeky juniors was unavoidably postponed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bad for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
"Seen Smithy?" asked Billy Bunter anxiously.

The Famous Five smiled. They had not seen Smithy since they had landed him in the mud on the bank of the Sark some time since. It was after tea now, and the chums of the Remove were going down to the nets for a little practice when Billy Bunter rolled up to them.

Billy Bunter had one hand hidden under his jacket. Evidently that hand held something that Bunter wished to keep out of sight.

"What have you got there?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh! Nothing! Nothing at all!" answered Bunter promptly. "I mean, it's a book. I—I'm going to mug up some Latin. Quelch was rather ratty in class this morning, over my con. I haven't been to Smithy's study, you know. If anything's gone from his table drawer he can ask Redwing about it."

"What have you snaffled from Smithy's table drawer, you podgy pilferer?" demanded Bob Cherry. "He doesn't keep tuck there, I suppose?"

"There wasn't any tuck in the study," said Bunter sorrowfully. "Smithy's gone out, and Redwing was tea-ing with Squiff up the passage. Absolutely nothing in the study. Not that I looked, you know! I hope I'm not the fellow to bag a fellow's tuck."

"What a hopeful nature!" remarked Nugent.

"As for looking in his table drawer, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,329.

A POCKET-KNIFE IS ALWAYS HANDY!

Crack a joke and win one, like N. D. Bryon, 2-39, Freeman Road, Nechells, Birmingham, who sent in the following rib-tickler.



VERY LIKELY!

Club Bore: "You know, I am very fond of birds. Yesterday one actually settled on my head."

Fed-up Listener: "Really! It must have been a wood-pecker!"

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

it hot and strong, and he wanted it at once.

"Look here, are we going back?" demanded Greene. "What about tea up at the Feathers?"

"Blow tea! Think I'm going out to tea soaked to the skin? Think I'm letting those young scoundrels get off? Shut up!"

Tea at the Feathers was evidently off! Coker was homeward bound, on the track of the cheeky juniors. It did not even dawn on his powerful brain that he had no chance whatever of overtaking them, unless they let him! But they were in a merry mood, and they did let him.

"Stand by to repel boarders!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry stood up in the stern, with a boathook in his hand. The Fifth Form boat was allowed to draw near—

"why should I?" said Bunter. "I never knew. Smithy kept his cigarettes there—how should I know? Besides, I wouldn't touch them—I don't smoke! He, he, he!"

"You potty porpoise," said Johnny Bull. "Have you been bagging Smithy's smokes?"

"Nothing of the kind! Besides, if a fellow bagged his smokes, it's really doing him a good turn. He would get whopped if a prefect found them in his study. Not that I've touched them, you know. But if you see Smithy, and he asks after me, you might mention that I've gone down to Courtfield, will you?"

"Gone down to Courtfield—when the gates are locked!"

"I mean, tell him I'm doing extra toot with Mossos—the fact is, I'm just going to Mossos for extra French," said Bunter. "That's why I've got this French book with me. I'd rather not see Smithy at present. Mind you tell him I'm with Mossos."

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled on without waiting to be kicked. Harry Wharton & Co. stared after him. It was quite clear to their minds that Bunter had snaffled a box of cigarettes from the Bounder's study; and apparently he intended to smoke them. The chums of the Remove considered whether to follow the fat Owl, collar him, and ram Smithy's smokes down the back of his fat neck. However, cricket claimed them, and they went on their way, leaving Billy Bunter to his own fatuous devices.

Bunter blinked round cautiously through his big spectacles as he rolled on his way. He was anxious not to meet the Bounder—and as the gates were now closed, Smithy must be somewhere about. If he missed his smokes he was only too likely to inquire for Bunter—it was really remarkable how fellows thought of Bunter at once if they missed anything. However, Smithy did not appear in the offing; and Bunter rolled on into the old Cloisters—a secluded spot where a doggish fellow who wanted a smoke might indulge in the same without much risk of being spotted by bothering beaks or prefects. There seemed to be nobody about the Cloisters, and the fat Owl rolled on and stopped at the ivy-clad stone wall that bordered a little lane outside the walls. There he sat down, rested his podgy back against the ivy, and produced the box from under his jacket.

It was a good-sized box, that had contained fifty cigarettes, and was nearly full. It was as much a sort of misguided "swank" as anything else that made Smithy keep smokes in his study—he hardly ever smoked unless there was somebody to see him at it and disapprove of it. Certainly he had not made a very deep inroad into that box. There were plenty left for Bunter! Billy Bunter fancied that he liked a smoke every now and then! He would not have spent his own money on such things—his own cash went on tuck. But if he could get smokes for nothing, it was another matter. And he had got these for nothing! As it was strictly against the rules for any Greyfriars fellow to have smokes in his possession, Bunter did not feel it on his fat conscience that he had snaffled Smithy's supply. Bunter had a rather elastic conscience.

Anyhow, he was going to smoke—and enjoy himself! He selected a cigarette and lighted it, and blew out smoke, feeling no end of a dog!

"Good!" murmured Bunter.

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He was feeling quite a scapegrace, like the Bounder himself, or Pousenby of Highcliffe!

He smoked a second cigarette, and then a third! Burnt matches and fag-ends littered the old flags round him. He was lighting a fourth, when there was a quick footstep in the Cloisters.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked in alarm through his big spectacles. It was a fag of the Third Form who came through the old stone arches directly towards the spot where Bunter sat. Bunter jumped to his feet. He recognised Wingate minor—and was deeply thankful that it was not Wingate major. The fag was coming up at a run; and Bunter wondered what on earth he wanted in that remote spot. Staring at him as he came, he quite forgot the lighted match in his fat fingers. He was reminded of it as it burned down to his fingers—and a sudden howl awoke the echoes of the Cloisters!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter dropped that match very quickly.

Wingate minor jumped as he heard that sudden howl. It apprised him of Billy Bunter's presence. He stopped, panting a little, and stared at the fat Owl of the Remove.

"Ow! You silly little idiot, what do you want to bargo in here for?" howled Bunter. "You've made me burn my fingers!"

"You fat dummy, what are you up to here?" snapped Wingate minor.

He stared angrily at the fat Owl.

The wall against which Bunter had sat was quite out of sight of all the school buildings and windows; and here and there the old stonework was broken and rugged, and easy to climb. It was a spot that had been used many a time by fellows surreptitiously getting out of the school. Wingate minor had time—if he hurried—to get out, trot down to the Three Fishers, and get back for prep in the Third Form Room with Mr. Wiggins. That was his intention. Quelch and Lascelles had come in long ago—he had seen them go to tea in Common-room. The coast was clear—so far as the Three Fishers was concerned. But here, on the spot, it was not clear—Billy Bunter was in the way.

Bunter sucked his fingers and blinked at the fag. He was greatly inclined to kick Wingate minor. Even Bunter, who was not much of a warrior, felt equal to kicking a fag of the Third.

"What do you want here?" he snapped. "Get out!"

"Getting out" was what Wingate minor had intended to do. But he did not care to do so under Billy Bunter's eyes. Bunter, the tattler of the school, would have told the tale all over Greyfriars that the captain's minor had broken bounds. Bunter would not have "sneaked," but it would have come to much the same thing, if he had confided to every fellow that would listen, that he had seen the Greyfriars captain's brother sneaking out of the school after lock-up. The fag bit his lip and turned angrily away. He had to find a way out where there were no eyes on him.

Bunter sat down again and lighted the cigarette. Wingate minor disappeared from sight, and the fat Owl smoked on—trying to believe that he was enjoying himself thoroughly. A fifth cigarette followed the fourth. And that would have been followed by a sixth—but by this time a curious feeling was rising within Billy Bunter. It was a sort of floating feeling, as if his podgy inside had got a little loose from its moorings. Instead of lighting the sixth cigarette, he laid it back in the box and leaned

back against the ivied wall, breathing rather hard. For some minutes Billy Bunter sat quite still, hoping and expecting that that queer feeling in his podgy interior would pass off.

Instead of passing off, it intensified. Billy Bunter's fat face assumed a strangely pallid look, with a tinge of green.

He made a movement to rise—but sat down again very quickly. The dreadful knowledge rushed upon him that there would be a catastrophe if he moved.

"Oh crikey!" muttered Bunter faintly.

He leaned heavily on the wall and perspired. His eyes looked like boiled gooseberries behind his big spectacles. He moaned faintly.

There was a step in the Cloisters again. From a distance Wingate minor peered at Bunter with a scowling brow. He had given Bunter twenty minutes, and come back, expecting to find him gone. But Bunter was not gone! He was a fixture! He dared not move!

He did not even see the peering fag. He was gazing straight before him with glassy eyes, seeing nothing. But the sight of him sitting there was enough for Jack Wingate, and he went away again, this time not to return. Bunter, regardless of him and of everybody and everything else, sat leaning on the ivied wall, moaning faintly. Probably the tough Bounder would have felt some qualms had he smoked five of those hefty cigarettes, one after another. Bunter was feeling something more than qualms! His feelings rather resembled compressed earthquakes.

He sat and moaned!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Luck!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH gave a little start and stared at the fellow standing in the doorway of his study.

Coming up the Remove passage from the stairs, he was greeted by the unexpected sight of Wingate of the Sixth, leaning on the doorpost of Study No. 4, in the Remove. Wingate stood there, with his hands in his pockets, evidently waiting. And the Bounder drew a quick breath, though, after the first moment, he showed no sign of perturbation. He came on up the passage and gave the captain of Greyfriars a cool nod.

"Oh, here you are!" said Wingate quietly.

"Adsum!" said the Bounder, as if he were answering his name at call-over.

"Come in!"

Wingate stepped back into the study, and Smithy followed him in. Tom Redwing was in the room, with a rather worried expression on his face. He had come back from tea in Squiff's study to find Wingate there—and he had been under the prefect's eye ever since. If he guessed why Wingate was there he had had no chance of taking any measures to defeat the prefect's object. And Redwing, as well as Billy Bunter, knew what Vernon-Smith kept in his table-drawer. He wondered in dismay whether Wingate knew.

The Bounder was perfectly cool. He knew that it meant trouble. Any other fellow caught with "smokes" in his study would be caned by his Form master. Smithy was more likely to be sent up to the Head for a flogging. Ever since the night when he had been caught out of bounds after lights out, Smithy had been under the frown of



As the Fifth Form boat drew near, Bob Cherry's oar smote the river. **Splash!** A little waterspout flew up—over Coker, and the Fifth-Former roared. "Wet, old bean?" asked Bob, cheerily. "Yaroooh!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you! I—I—I—I'll—Yaroooh!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

authority, and under the eye of suspicion. What might have been looked on as a thoughtless and foolish act in any other Remove fellow was more likely to be regarded, in Smithy's case, as a proof that he was a young rascal—as indeed he was! But he was as cool as a cucumber. He had, at least, the courage of his faults, and could take what was coming to him without flinching.

"I dare say you know why I'm here," said Wingate grimly.

"Oh, quite," agreed the Bounder lightly. "Sorry I wasn't in when you came, but I'd tea'd out with a Fourth Form man. But, look here, Reddy will cut down to the tuckshop in two ticks, and we'll get another tea, just for the pleasure of tea-ing with you, Wingate."

The Greyfriars captain stared at him. "Do you think I've come here to tea, you young ass?"

"Haven't you?" asked Smithy airily. "If that's meant for cheek, Vernon-Smith, the sooner you cut it out the better," said Wingate gruffly. "I'm here to see what you've got in this study. That's why I waited for you—I'd rather you were present. Listen to me, Vernon-Smith!"

"Pleasure!" drawled the Bounder. "I don't often get a chat with the head of the Sixth. If you want a tip about making up the first eleven, Wingate, my advice is, chuck Loder! The man can't bat!"

"Shut up, Smithy, you ass!" whispered Redwing anxiously.

Wingate's rugged face was growing grimmer.

"Your Form master's been speaking to me, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"You've been caught out of bounds after lights-out, and flogged for it. You had another fellow with you at the time—that young ass, Bunter. It seemed to be made clear that Bunter hooked on to you without your wanting him; but that doesn't alter the fact that your example caused a silly kid to land into trouble. There's a very strong suspicion that you're going on playing the goat; and if you're spotted again you won't get off with a flogging. The other day Sir Hilton Pepper reported that a junior boy was seen leaving the Three Fishers—some kid wearing a Greyfriars cap."

The Bounder looked at Wingate.

There was quite a curious expression on his face.

Certainly the Bounder had not been seen leaving that disreputable resort up the river. He was far too cautious for that. But he made a shrewd guess at the identity of the "kid" who had been seen. He had very little doubt that it was Jack Wingate, of the Third Form—the Greyfriars captain's young brother. That was a thought that was not likely to cross Wingate's mind. It crossed the Bounder's mind at once; and it brought an involuntary grin to his face.

"No good asking you if the fellow was you, Vernon-Smith?" went on Wingate.

"No good at all—if it was!" grinned the Bounder. "But, as it happens, it wasn't! Not guilty, my lord!"

"Well, you naturally don't expect your word to be taken," said Wingate, "so I shan't ask you. But some Greyfriars flag was there. Sir Hilton is positive that it was a junior boy, and positive about the school cap."

"The way old Popper keeps on buttin' in—" sighed the Bounder.

"As a governor of the school, it is Sir Hilton's duty to report such a thing, as you know very well," said Wingate. "But that's neither here nor there. You're not going to be condemned on suspicion."

"For this relief, much thanks—Shakespeare!" murmured the Bounder.

"Your Form master suspects you, and so do I," continued Wingate, "and this afternoon Quelch found you close by the place. You had a good tale to tell—you always have."

"Presence of mind is my long suite!" said the Bounder affably. "Still, if you like to ask Wharton and his friends, they will tell you I was in their boat, and we had a row, and I tumbled out."

"Just at that particular spot!" said Wingate significantly.

"Well, it had to be some spot," said Smithy.

"I'm not going to ask Wharton anything—though I fancy he could tell me something if he liked," said Wingate quietly. "I've come here now to look through this study."

"Sort of surprise-party!" said the Bounder. "If I'd known you were coming I'd have made a few little preparations."

"I've no doubt about that. Now turn out your belongings, under my eye; and if there's anything against the rules, get ready to see the Head!"

"I hate to bother the Head! He must be tired, after tryin' to drive Latin into the heads of the Sixth. Still, if you insist, I'm your man."

"Get to it!" snapped Wingate. "I've no time to waste."

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"Same here, as it happens!" said the Bounder coolly.

And he proceeded to obey the prefect's directions. Tom Redwing looked on in silence. He knew what must be discovered, and he knew that it meant a flogging for his chum. But there was nothing that he could do.

Smithy's desk was unlocked and turned out. Fortunately for Smithy, he did not happen to have a racing paper in it, as he sometimes had. A locker under the window was opened, but it contained only lumber. The study cupboard was examined, the books cleared off the bookshelf. Smithy seemed quite keen to leave no stone unturned—at least, in turning out the various receptacles where there was nothing to be discovered. He was nourishing a secret hope that Wingate would not notice that there was a drawer to the study table.

That hope, however, was quite unfounded. Wingate disliked extremely the task that had been set him, but he was the fellow to carry it out with thoroughness. He knew there was a drawer to the table, and he did not fail to note that Vernon-Smith kept clear of that article of furniture.

"That all right?" asked Smithy, at last. "If you'd like me to rake 'own the chimney—"

"Open the table drawer."

Smithy breathed hard for a second. There was no escape for him. But he was cool to the last. He jerked open the table drawer.

Wingate bent over it to look at the contents. Smithy gave the dismayed Redwing a wink. The game was up, and it meant a flogging. But the Bounder did not seem to care.

To his surprise, Wingate, after scanning the varied contents of the table drawer, turned away from it. Apparently he had made no discovery there.

Smithy glanced into the drawer. There were a good many things in it—papers, old letters, pens and pencils, and so on. But the box of cigarettes was not to be seen. For a moment the Bounder could hardly believe his eyes. His luck had always been phenomenal;

now, it seemed, it had befriended him again. He jumped to the conclusion, however, that Redwing had somehow found an opportunity of getting the cigarette-box out of sight. That seemed the only explanation. Anyhow, it was not there; and the Bounder breathed freely again.

Wingate stood for a few moments in thought. Smithy watched him with a sarcastic smile. He had nothing to fear now, and he was amused. He was rather surprised to see that Wingate's face expressed relief.

"Well," said the Greyfriars captain at last. "I'm glad of this, Vernon-Smith."

"Glad?" repeated the Bounder.

Wingate looked at him.

"Sorry!" said Smithy at once. "I know you don't like having a fellow up before the Head, Wingate."

"It's not only that," said Wingate quietly. "I'm glad to be able to tell your Form master that a surprise visit to your study has proved that you've nothing here against the rules. I'm glad to think that you're learning more decent ways, Vernon-Smith. I'm glad to think better of you."

The Bounder made no answer to that. It gave him a rather unaccustomed twinge in his conscience.

"I've had my eye on you lately," went on the Greyfriars captain. "This term you've been playing a great game at cricket. You're a fellow who could be a credit to the school if you liked. You're a cheeky young sweep—but there are worse things than cheek. The sort of rot you've been punished for more than once is not good enough for a fellow like you, if you could see it. I hope this means that you can see it."

The Bounder stood silent. It was seldom that his conscience troubled him, but it was worrying him now. As a matter of fact, he valued Wingate's good opinion very highly, and getting it on false pretences gave him a twinge. At that moment he wished from the bottom of his wayward heart that he deserved the good opinion of the captain of the school.

"Well, that's all," said Wingate, and he turned to the door.

"I—I say—" The Bounder, for once, was stammering. "I say, Wingate—"

Wingate glanced round.

"Well?"

Smithy's face was crimson.

"Oh, nothing!" he stammered. "But—but I mean to play up—I really mean it, on my word, Wingate! If that's any good," he added.

"Good enough for me," said Wingate. "Stick to that, kid." And, with a kind nod, the captain of Greyfriars left the study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

After Taking!

THE Bounder stood for some moments silent after Wingate of the Sixth had gone.

He was in a rather unusual mood. He was accustomed to regarding masters and prefects as natural enemies, to be scored over if he could score over them. Yet Wingate had been relieved and glad not to find him out in a fault, not to have to report him for punishment. He was glad to be able to report to Mr. Quelch that Smithy did not seem, after all, to be a just object of suspicion; and that meant an easier time for the Bounder to follow. Smithy, with all his rebellious and mutinous ways, had always liked and respected Wingate—but never so much as at this moment. He turned round to Redwing at last, his face unusually serious.

"Not a bad chap, Reddy," he said.

"One of the best!" said Redwing. "It's a bit rotten to pull his leg, Smithy."

"Well, I'm chucking it," said Smithy. "I'm goin' to be so good that you'll find it such a bore that you'll wander along to Skinner's study for a change."

Redwing laughed.

"Stick to that," he said. "Thank goodness Wingate never found anything here! I was afraid he would."

"Thank you, you mean," said Vernon-Smith. "I suppose you got the smokes out of sight in time."

"I suppose I should have done it to save your skin, but I never had a chance. Wingate was here when I came in."

The Bounder stared.

"You didn't put the smokes out of sight?"

"No. I thought they were in the table drawer, where you keep them."

"Well, my hat! What's become of them, then? I thought you must have shifted them, of course. Some other Good Samaritan been at work? Skinner might have borrowed some, but he wouldn't have taken the whole box. I suppose Wingate never smoked them while he was waitin' for me." The Bounder chuckled. "Blessed if I can make it out, Reddy!"

"It's luck, anyhow."

"Terrific luck!" grinned the Bounder. "Only I wish the muck hadn't been there at all. It worries me a bit to spoof a trustin' old bird like Wingate. He's not a bad chap."

Vernon-Smith's face became grave.

"Old Wingate, if he knew—" He was thinking of the captain's minor, and Jack Wingate's disreputable scrape.

"If he knew what?"

"Oh, nothin'! Or, rather, somethin' I'm not goin' to tell even you, Reddy: it can't be kept too dark. But if he knew who it was whose cap old Popper spotted at the Three Fishers—" The Bounder whistled.

"Not yours?" asked Redwing.

"No fear! And old Popper—or anybody else—won't have a chance of



FRITZ takes the CAKE...

in this rollicking school-yarn by popular

FRANK RICHARDS

IT came as a big surprise for the chums of Grimsdale when Fritz von Splitz, the fattest duffer in the school, had the "nerve" to run off with his headmaster's cake.

The odds seemed a hundred to one on Fritz getting the licking of his life. But the stealing of that cake led up to a series of remarkable events and Fritz was rewarded, not with a licking, but with the most glorious holiday-adventure of his life!

See this week's issue of

The RANGER Every Saturday **2^d.**

spottin' me there this term, at least! Wharton and his mob dished me this afternoon—and I was jolly glad of it when Quelch meandered along! I was goin' there to-night, but—"

The Bounder grinned again.

"Thomas Redwing, my good youth, in me you behold a reformed character! To-night, when we're tucked up in our little beds in the dormitory, I shall go peacefully to sleep and dream of makin' centuries at cricket, or perhaps of handin' out an absolutely faultless con to Quelch in class—perhaps! Beery gents at the Three Fishers, expectin' a fellow about my size to pop in, will be grievously disappointed. No fellow about my size will pop! Let this be a warnin' to you, my young friend. Keep your eye on me and become a perfect character."

"Chuck it, fathead!" said Redwing, laughing.

"Ooooo-er!" came from the passage suddenly.

"What the thump—"

"Oooooer! Woooo-hoo — hoo — wooo! Ooo-er!"

"If we were on a Channel boat on a rough day those sounds would be familiar," remarked the Bounder, "but here—"

"Urrrrrrrrgh!"

In amazement at the strange, weird sounds that came from the passage, Smithy and Redwing looked out of the study doorway. Other Remove fellows were looking out at their doors; fellows in the passage were staring and grinning. All eyes were fixed on Billy Bunter, from whom those strange and woeful sounds proceeded.

Bunter was coming up the passage at a snail's pace, limp and flabby. His fat face was chalky, with a tinge of green;

he almost tottered, and he gurgled and moaned as he came.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old fat bean!" roared Bob Cherry from the doorway of Study No. 13. "Enjoying life?"

"Oooooer!"

"Too many tarts, or too much ginger-pop?" asked Peter Todd, staring at Bunter from Study No. 7.

"Urrrrrrrrgh!"

"The esteemed Bunter seems to be terrifically sick," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The smokefulness does not appear to have agreed with his absurd interior."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "That's it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ooooooer!" Bunter gave Smithy a flabby blink through his big spectacles as he passed Study No. 4. "Beast!"

Vernon-Smith stared at him.

(Continued on next page.)



Readers who want any knotty cricket problem solved should write to "Umpire," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House,

Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The more difficult the question, the better he likes it.

WON by good captaincy; lost by bad captaincy. Watching all sorts of cricket carefully I wonder how often either the one or the other of these opening sentences would be the really correct summary of the game. The captaincy of a cricket side is of vital importance, and as I have a letter this week from a newly appointed captain of a school cricket team, I propose to talk on this subject for a few minutes.

One has only to talk to members of the England side who went to Australia last winter to get this general impression—that the captaincy of D. R. Jardine was a dominating factor in the struggle for the Ashes. The manner in which he nursed his bowlers—very important this—was an object lesson, and I liked the tribute which was paid to the England skipper by one member of the side. "There was always a bowler fresh for the job of attacking a new batsman." In an ordinary afternoon match perhaps, it is not quite so important to have a bowler who is fresh to attack a new batsman. But it is very necessary, even in club cricket, to attack the batsman with the "heavy artillery" before he has a chance to settle down. It has been truly said that the easiest time to get a batsman out is before he gets properly in.

THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX!

KNOWLEDGE of an opposing player's strong or weak points is very useful to a captain—if he uses that knowledge properly. There are batsmen who love slow bowlers, but don't like fast bowlers, and vice versa, of course. The wise captain bears these things in mind.

I know that it is a bit of a fag to change two or three fielders after each single has been made, but such changes are often worth while with a view to "blocking" the scoring stroke of a particular batsman, or with a view to getting him out because of a weak spot in his armour.

The good captain is always on the alert and is always giving the opposition the impression that he is doing something cute or subtle. One of the best of the Australian captains was Warwick Armstrong, and much of his success as a skipper was due to the fact that he impressed the opposition with his subtlety. Many of the bowling changes which Armstrong made were most mysterious. I once asked him, at the end of a Test match day, why he had made a particular change in the attack. "Oh," he said, "just to unsettle the batsmen and make them think I had something up my sleeve—some deep scheme in my head for getting them out." That was Armstrong's way of telling me that, as a captain, he was always trying to get the inferiority complex into his opponents' make-up.

THE ORDER OF BATTING!

THERE are few things I would rather see, in the cricket line, than the well-drilled team in the field. The members of a well-drilled team keep an eye on the captain in case he should want them to move a little this way or that. And just as a well-drilled side watch the skipper, so the successful skipper must ever have an eye on the game. In this connection the order of batting is one of the things which should be carefully watched by the skipper. The usual procedure is to make out the batting order list before the innings starts. I have no objection to this in principle.

It is important, however, that the captain should keep an eye on his batting list as the innings proceeds and change it according to circumstances. Things may be going badly, with the bowlers on top. In such circumstances it is often advisable to send in an adventurous batsman who will make the attempt to knock the bowlers off their length.

At times, too, quick runs are of extra value; at other times, runs are of lesser importance than keeping the wickets intact. The skipper should be ever ready for these occasions and change the batting order to fit the need of the moment. That's enough about captaincy this week. Next week I will reply to another correspondent with some notes about the make-up of the order of batting with a view to getting the best results.

SCORING OFF A "NO-BALL!"

NOW for replies on technical points. A Chelmsford reader tells me that he had a new experience the other day—that of being given out to a second appeal off the same ball, and he wants to know if this was in order. As my chum played at a ball with which the bat did not connect, the wicket-keeper appealed for a catch. The umpire said "Not out!" Then, while the ball was still in the wicket-keeper's hands, my batsman friend, having heard the "Not out," stepped out of his crease. Thereupon, the wicket-keeper removed the balls and appealed for stumping. The umpire said "Out!"

According to the facts as given to me, the umpire was right. The answer of an appeal in the negative does not, as my reader seems to think, render the ball "dead" automatically.

I seem to remember an occasion when Duckworth, the Lancashire wicket-keeper, made three appeals off the same ball, and the third appeal was answered with the word "Out!" These cases depend on the words "finally settled" in the rule book.

There is confusion in the minds of some of my readers as to how runs made off a no-ball should be scored. Let me state the correct way in as few words as possible. If byes or leg-byes are run following a "no-ball" such runs as are made are counted as no-balls, but only such runs are counted—not one for the no-ball in addition. When the batsman scores off a no-ball the batsman is credited with the runs, but again it should be noted that an extra one is not added. A last point. Whether runs are, or are not, scored off a no-ball, such a ball is not counted as a part of the over, and the bowler should have an extra ball in the over.

In reply to J. B., of Somerset, seven batsmen have scored a hundred centuries in first-class cricket up to the time of going to press. They are: J. B. Hobbs, 193; C. P. Mead, 134; E. Hendren, 132; W. G. Grace, 126; F. E. Woolley, 120; H. Sutcliffe, 114, and T. Hayward, 104.

"UMPIRE."

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"What's the matter with you, you fat owl?" he asked.

"Hrrrgh! Beast! Oooo-er!"

Redwing chuckled.

"I fancy I can guess where the smokes went," he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder. He understood now.

"Oooo-er! I've been sick!" moaned Bunter. "I've been fuf-fuf-fearfully sick! I'm ill! It's all your—groooogh—fault, you beast! Oooogh!"

"Smoked the lot?" asked Smithy. "You're welcome, old fat bean! I make you a present of them!"

"Oooo-er!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter staggered on to his study; he staggered into Study No. 7 and collapsed into the armchair. Peter Todd stared at him.

"You've been smoking!" he accused.

"Oooo-er!"

"I've a jolly good mind to give you the fives bat—"

"Oooo-er!"

Peter picked up the fives bat. Bunter only gazed at him with glassy eyes, and Peter laid it down. Bunter evidently had suffered enough for his sins. It was likely to be a long, long time before Billy Bunter smoked again!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker on the Warpath!

"YOU'D better come!" said Coker decidedly.

Potter and Greene, it was clear, did not agree. They looked at Coker, and they looked at one another. In a corner of the games study, where the Fifth Form most did congregate, Horace Coker was laying down the law. Other Fifth Form men seemed to be chiefly interested in the approaching hols—and so, as a matter of fact, were Potter and Greene. But that only made it all the more difficult to tell Coker what they thought of him. For Potter and Greene were going with Coker those summer holidays. Telling Coker what they thought of him might have put a hitch into the programme.

Yet the proposition that they should accompany Coker on the warpath, with the Remove dormitory as the objective, was really dismaying. That was the idea—Coker's idea. It was obvious to Coker that those cheeky Remove fags had to be whopped for their misdeeds on the river. There had been no opportunity of administering the whopping, so far; but, as Coker pointed out, after lights-out it was easy.

The young rascals would be in bed, off their guard. A raid in the Remove passage meant a swarm of young sweeps turning out at the first sound of alarm. A raid on the dormitory was easier. The fellows who were to be whopped would be whopped almost before the Remove knew what was happening. Coker, having administered due punishment, would retire triumphant. It was as easy as falling off a form.

"I dislike being mixed up in a shindy with a mob of fags," said Coker. "It's rather undignified. Better whop 'em and have done with it—see? If I went up to the Remove, or after them into the Rag, they'd have the cheek to resist—in fact, to pile on me in a swarm. They've done it before," said Coker, shaking his head sorrowfully over the sins of the Remove. "They've absolutely no respect for a Fifth Form senior!"

"Um!" said Potter and Greene.

"I shall catch them on the hop in their dorm. You fellows had better

come. Bring a stump each, in case the young rascals try any scrapping. It will be a lesson to them."

"But it means a row with Prout or the Head, if we're caught raiding a dorm!" objected Potter.

"It won't take us two or three minutes."

"Quelch might butt in."

"That's all right; he won't."

"Look here, Coker, why not chuck it? Let's fix up about the hols," suggested Greene brightly.

Coker eyed him with a cold eye.

"No need to talk about the hols now, Greene. I shan't be making any arrangements with fellows who let me down when I want their help."

"But I—I say—"

"You needn't say anything. I've said that you'd better come. Are you coming or not?" inquired Horace Coker.

Potter and Greene exchanged another glance. There was no help for it—unless they were to row with Coker. With break-up close at hand, they did not want to row with Coker.

"Oh, all right!" said Potter, resigned to his fate.

"Come on, then!" said Coker briskly.

"It's a quarter to ten; they've been in their dorm since half-past nine. Late enough. We shall have to be hiking off to our own dorm soon. I've got some stumps in the study; we'll take one apiece."

And the three left the games study. A cricket stump apiece being secured, the three strolled out of the Fifth Form passage, and headed for the upper staircase which led to the dormitories. Coker led the way, full of calm confidence. Potter and Greene followed him, in a worried frame of mind. Coker's idea was that he was going to inflict a just punishment on cheeky fags. To anybody else it would have looked just like a dormitory raid—such as thoughtless juniors sometimes indulged in—miles beneath the dignity of Fifth Form seniors. Moreover, Potter and Greene did not believe that the Remove would take it quietly. They rather suspected that there would be a fearful row—probably with masters and prefects coming on the scene. It would make them look fools—not to mention the fact that there would be punishments to follow.

As Coker reached the dormitory landing, Potter, dropping behind a little with Greene, whispered to the latter:

"You keen on this?"

"What do you think?" muttered Greene.

"Well, look here, as soon as we're in the dark, cut!"

"Good egg!"

Coker marched on. Several passages opened from the vast landing. Most of them were dark. At a quarter to ten all Forms below the Fifth were in bed, and their lights turned out. Shell and Fourth, Remove and Third and Second were—or should have been—fast asleep. The passage leading up to the door of the Remove dormitory was as dark as the inside of a hat.

Coker disappeared into that darkness.

Once enwrapped in deep gloom, he did not expect to see Potter and Greene. But had the brightest of lights been turned on he would not have seen them, either. Under cover of that deep darkness, Potter and Greene had halted, and as Coker marched on towards the Remove dorm, Potter and Greene backed away to the landing again, crossed it swiftly, and disappeared down the stairs. Coker had told them that they had better come, but Potter and Greene were convinced that they hadn't better. So they surreptitiously performed a

vanishing trick, leaving Horace Coker to carry on on his lonely own.

Unsuspecting this base desertion, Coker marched onward. He went quietly—in fact, almost on tiptoe. Even Coker realised the necessity of caution, when he was marching on to war after lights-out. He was going to pop quite suddenly into the Remove dorm, taking the young sweeps entirely by surprise. It was unlikely that they were all asleep yet, and Coker did not want to be heard. Cautiously he stepped onward in the darkness, and suddenly, without warning, ran into an unseen figure that was coming along the passage from the opposite direction.

"Oh!" gasped Coker, utterly startled.

There was an answering gasp from the unseen fellow he had run into.

Coker grasped at the figure. The sudden collision in the dark, utterly unexpected, had made him stagger back. The unseen one struggled wildly in his grasp.

"You young sweep!" gasped Coker. He supposed that it was some Remove fellow. It was hardly likely to be a fag of the Third or Second. "Out of your dorm after lights-out—what? I'll—Yaroooooh!"

Crash!

A clenched fist—probably guided by the sound of Coker's voice—came crashing. It landed in Coker's eye, and, dark as it was, Coker immediately saw whole galaxies of flashing stars.

He staggered back and sat down on the floor.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Coker. "My hat! What—who—oh, crikey! I'll smash you! Yoooooop!"

He struggled up, grabbing round him in the dark. There was a sound of running feet.

"Potter! Greene! Collar him!" panted Coker.

There was no answer from Potter and Greene. They were downstairs by this time, far out of hearing. Coker made a dash, crashed into the wall in the dark, and gave a roar. There was a sound of footsteps in the direction of the landing. Coker spun round and dashed in that direction.

"You young scoundrel! I'll—"

"What is this?" came a cold, clear, icy voice. The passage light flashed on, and Coker, coming to a sudden halt, found himself staring blankly at Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

JACK WINGATE trembled.

The wretched fag's heart was in his mouth.

Little as Coker guessed it, it was a Third Form fag into whom he had run in the dark dormitory passage.

Bed-time for the Third was nine o'clock, and Wingate minor had waited—sleepless, while the rest of the Third went to sleep—till a quarter to ten. Then he had turned quietly out of bed and dressed himself.

Bolsover minor and Tubb, in the adjacent beds, were fast asleep; all the other fags appeared to be sleeping. But Wingate minor made no sound as he hurriedly dressed and crept from the dormitory. By that time all the junior Forms were in bed, and the senior dormitory, the Fifth, was in another quarter; so he had taken it for granted that the coast was clear, as it would have been, but for the fact that the egregious Coker was on the warpath.

The fag had been almost paralysed with terror when he ran into Coker, in



As Bunter stood staring at Wingate minor approaching through the old stone arches of the Cloisters he quite forgot the lighted match in his fat fingers. He was reminded of it as it burned down to his fingers—and a sudden howl awoke the echoes of the Cloisters. "Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter dropped the match very quickly.

dread that it was a master or a prefect. It was an immense relief to him to hear Coker's voice. He hardly knew how he had succeeded in knocking Coker over and getting away; but he had, and he ran down the passage to the landing, which was dimly lit, leaving Coker spluttering, behind him.

From that landing there were several staircases, one of which, dark as pitch, led to the Remove passage. The fag reached it almost in a twinkling, and had barely vanished into it when he heard footsteps on the landing. He crouched on the stairs in terror. The perspiration broke out on his forehead, and he trembled from head to foot. But he was, as a matter of fact, quite out of sight, and the footsteps crossed the landing to the opening of the dormitory passage.

But he did not dare to move. It was not only the punishment for being caught out of his dormitory, after lights-out, that he feared. They would want to know why he was out, and once up before the Head he knew only too well that the whole story would come out—his wretched transaction with the man Leach at the Three Fishers, his intention of going there after dark to pay the man what he owed him—the whole miserable story.

He shrank from the thought of facing his brother, even more than the Head! Wingate would know what he wanted that pound for—not a thoughtless debt in the Third, but to pay a betting man! Captain of the school—head prefect—disgraced by his brother! The miserable fag could imagine Wingate's amazement and shame. If only he got through this—

He had had to try it on after lights-out! Twice that day he had tried to get to the place, and first he had been

stopped by Smithy's warning on the towpath, second by Billy Bunter's presence in the Cloisters.

And after lights-out it had seemed safe enough—easy enough! He could get out by the box-room window at the end of the Remove passage, as he knew that other fellows had done—the Bounder, for one. He would run all the way to the inn, all the way back, get in unseen and unsuspected, and the whole wretched affair would be at an end! But it was not working out like that!

His heart almost stopped beating as he heard the cold, acid voice of Mr. Quelch. The noise in the dormitory passage had brought the Remove master to the spot.

Crouching on the dark staircase, below the level of the landing, Jack Wingate listened in terror. Quelch's voice came quite clearly to him. Luckily, it was not his own Form master.

"Coker! Is that Coker?" Quelch's voice was not loud, but it was very sharp and clear. "Kindly explain what you are doing here, Coker?"

"I—I—I—"

"Answer me!" rapped the Remove master.

"I—I—I—" stuttered the hapless Coker.

"I am waiting, Coker!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice.

"The—the fact is, sir—" stammered Coker.

Really it was a little difficult to explain. Coker was satisfied, fully satisfied, that he was in the right, and had common sense and justice on his side in dropping in at the Remove dormitory to give the young rascals there what they so richly deserved. But he realised that a Form master was not

likely to see eye to eye with him in that matter.

"I—I—I— was going to—to—to—" stammered Coker.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye fixed on the cricket stump which Coker had dropped. Now that the passage light was turned on, it lay in full view.

"I think I understand," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "This, I suppose, is what you would call a rag, Coker."

Coker was misunderstood, as usual!

He was far too lofty and important to think of ragging, like any common mortal! But it was just like a beak to fancy that he was going to rag!

"Nunno!" gasped Coker. "I—I was going to whop a cheeky fag—"

"You have created a disturbance in a junior dormitory!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Just like a beak, of course, Coker reflected bitterly.

"I—I hadn't got there when he ran into me!" stuttered Coker.

"Do you mean that a boy was out of his dormitory?"

"He hit me in the eye!" gasped Coker. He rubbed the eye alluded to. "I shouldn't wonder if it goes black."

"Who was it? A boy of my Form?"

"Eh! I suppose so! I didn't see him."

"Did he return to the dormitory?"

"I don't know."

"Take up that cricket stump, Coker, and go! I shall lay a complaint before your Form master, Mr. Prout."

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"That will do! Go!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard. He had little doubt who had been out of his dormitory and had run into

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Continued from page 13.)

Coker in the dark. If he was still out there would be proof.

Coker, in dismayed silence, picked up his cricket stump and departed. He went down to the Fifth Form passage, where he found Potter and Greene in his study. He blinked at them.

"You got clear all right?" he asked. "Hem! Yes," said Potter slowly. "What—"

"It's a bit of a frost," said Coker. "One of the fags was out of the dorm and ran into me, and there was rather a row, and Quelch came butting in. He's going to report me to Prout."

Potter and Greene could not feel sufficiently thankful that they had started early on the line of retreat!

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch had gone to the Remove dormitory. And Mr. Quelch and Coker both having disappeared in different directions, Jack Wingate crept down to the Remove passage and groped along it in the dark. He had had a narrow escape, and his heart was still in his mouth; but he was safe.

Quelch was going to make sure that all the Remove fellows were in bed; but he was not a man to meddle with another master's Form; neither was it likely to cross his mind, any more than Coker's, that the fellow who had run into Horace Coker was a fag of the Third.

His words showed that he suspected that it was a Remove boy; and, finding all the Remove at home, he would have to conclude that the fellow had run back after the encounter with Coker. The coast was clear for the young rascal of the Third!

He reached the Remove box-room, entered it, and shut the door, and crossed to the window. He left the window an inch open, when he dropped to the leads below, for his return. Five minutes later he had scrambled out over the Cloister wall, and was running by a dewy woodland path towards the river.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Who?

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Who—"

"What—"

The light flashed on in the Remove dormitory.

Most of the fellows were asleep, and the steady snore of Billy Bunter rumbled. Two or three were nodding off. One was wide awake—Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder had planned one of his little excursions for that night. He had given up the idea, after his talk with Wingate in the study. Now, as he lay awake, staring at the summer stars glimmering at the high windows of the dormitory, he half-repent his good resolves.

He sat up in bed as the light flashed on. Other fellows awakened, and there were startled ejaculations on all sides.

Mr. Quelch stepped in and swept the row of white beds with a keen glance

of his gimlet eyes. Those sharp eyes fixed on the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith smiled sarcastically. He read the sharp suspicion in his Form master's look. He had heard, as he lay awake, some noise in the dormitory passage, without knowing or caring what it was. Whatever it was, it seemed to have brought his Form master to the dormitory—in a suspicious frame of mind.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" The captain of the Remove sat up, rubbed his eyes, and blinked at Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Someone has been out of the dormitory," said Mr. Quelch.

"Indeed, sir!"

"Did you not hear a disturbance in the passage, Wharton?"

"I—I think I was asleep, sir!"

"A foolish Fifth Form boy—Coker—was coming here, and some junior ran into him in the darkness," said Mr. Quelch. "I require to know who it was. The boy in question must have run back, as I see that all are here."

Many glances turned involuntarily on the Bounder. If a Remove man had been out of the dorm after lights-out, it was easy to guess that Remove man's name. Vernon-Smith grinned. His conscience was unusually clear—his good resolutions were standing him in good stead! But for that talk with Wingate, and his new resolve to deserve the Greyfriars captain's good opinion, he would have been caught out! Once more his luck had held good!

"Were all you boys asleep?" asked Mr. Quelch.

All the fellows were awake now; even Billy Bunter had ceased to snore. Most of them answered in the affirmative.

"Is anyone aware whether a boy left the dormitory after lights-out?"

Mr. Quelch probably did not expect any answer to that question. Whatever the juniors knew, no fellow there was likely to give another fellow away. Harry Wharton & Co. had their own opinion of the Bounder's shady ways, and made no secret of it—to Smithy! But nothing would have induced them to give him away to a beak.

Mr. Quelch scanned the faces of the juniors, hoping to read there the answer he was not likely to receive by word of mouth. But if any fellow knew anything, his looks did not betray the fact. There was silence.

The Remove master turned directly to Vernon-Smith at last. The Bounder's eyes glinted mockingly.

"Vernon-Smith! Were you asleep when I entered?"

"No, sir."

"Have you been out of the dormitory?"

"No, sir."

"You heard the disturbance in the passage if you were awake."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Did you hear anyone return to the dormitory immediately afterwards?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes were fixed on the Bounder, as if he would penetrate to the thoughts behind the calm, cool, half-mocking face.

He had little doubt, if any, that Vernon-Smith had been out of the dormitory. He had not forgotten the episode of the afternoon. He suspected that Smithy had been bound for the Three Fishers at that time. What was more probable than that, prevented from carrying out his intention in the afternoon, the scapegrace of Greyfriars had planned to carry it out after lights-out?

As a matter of fact, Mr. Quelch's reasoning was quite correct, only he was unaware that the Bounder had abandoned his intention.

But there was nothing to be done! There was Vernon-Smith—in bed, where he ought to be! If he had been out of the dorm, and the encounter with Coker had sent him scurrying back, there was no evidence of it.

Mr. Quelch's face was very grim and hard. He was a just man, and could not even think of punishment without proof. But he had a bitter and exasperated feeling that a young rascal, who had been very nearly caught in delinquency, was laughing at him in his sleeve.

There was a long, long silence. The Remove waited breathlessly. Mr. Quelch spoke at last.

"Very well," he said. "It is possible, of course, that the boy came from another dormitory! I am sorry that I have had to disturb you, my boys! Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!" answered the Remove dutifully.

Mr. Quelch put out the light, and went, closing the door quietly after him. He went away with a thoughtful frown on his face, and his footsteps led him to Wingate's study in the Sixth. The Remove master was far from satisfied, and the events of that night were far from over yet.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter's fat voice was heard, after the door had closed on the Form master. "I say, he jolly nearly had Smithy!"

"Some fellows are lucky, and no mistake!" said Skinner.

"The luckfulness of the esteemed and blackguardly Smithy is truly terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Near thing, Smithy!" said Snoop.

The Bounder laughed.

"Not at all," he answered. "As a matter of fact, I haven't been out of bed! Sorry—but there it is!"

"I knew that," said Tom Redwing. "Nobody's been out of this dorm."

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

"Is that the truth, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton. "Somebody's been out, according to Quelch, and butted into that idiot Coker."

"Nobody in this dorm!" said Smithy, laughing. "I was wide awake, and should have heard him go—at least, I should have heard him come back, if he ran in in a hurry. Nobody did."

"You were so quiet, that you didn't hear yourself?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, chuck it, Skinner!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "Smithy's word is good enough for us, if not for the beaks."

"Then who the dickens was it?" asked Peter Todd.

"Man from another dorm, of course," said the Bounder. "Quelch has got a very special eye on me—I really seem to be the apple of his jolly old eye lately—but there are other black sheep in the flock. Might have been Angel of the Fourth."

"A Fourth Form man wouldn't come down this passage," said Skinner. "Only three doors on this passage—Remove and Third and Second."

The Bounder gave a start. The mention of the Third put a new thought into his mind.

"Oh, my hat!" he breathed.

"Couldn't have been a fag!" said Bolsover major. "I've never heard of fags of the Third and Second going on the razzle."

"They wouldn't have the nerve, if they wanted to," said Skinner. "But the man who was out was Third or

Second or Remove. I've a sort of idea that it was a Remove man."

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.
"Rot!" said Harry Wharton. "Anyhow, the silly ass seems to have got back safe, and they'll probably never know who it was. Only some fellow larking, very likely."

And the captain of the Remove settled down to sleep again, his example followed by most of the other fellows. But Herbert Vernon-Smith was thinking less of sleep than ever. He was thinking of Wingate minor! If a fag had crept out of the Third Form dormitory to get down to the next floor and creep out of a window, he would pass the Remove dormitory. Was the fellow who had run into that fathead, Coker of the Fifth, Wingate's young brother? Vernon-Smith had little doubt of the answer to that question. He was as certain as he could be that the unseen fellow in the dark was Jack Wingate—getting out of bounds.

"The young ass!" breathed Smithy. "The little idiot! By gad! What a knock for old Wingate if his brother was caught—sneaking out of bounds after lights-out—pub-haunting! Lucky he got back safe—but—but did he?"

The Bouncer wondered.
Had the fag scuttled back to his dormitory after that unexpected and startling encounter with Coker in the dark? And, in that case, was he only waiting for the alarm to be over to try it on again?

Smithy did not close his eyes.
Wingate minor was nothing to him! Neither, if it came to that, was Wingate major! Yet he could not dismiss the matter from his mind. He felt contempt, mingled with compassion, for the wretched fag. Somehow, he could not help feeling a deeper concern for "old Wingate." It would be a blow—a crushing blow—to the captain of Greyfriars, if disaster fell on his young brother. They would not expel a kid of the Third—but it would be a public flogging, at least. Disgrace, a sensation that would ring and echo all through the school. It would fairly knock out old Wingate—and the man was thoroughly decent, the best fellow at Greyfriars. All the more because he was, himself, so unlike him, the Bouncer liked and admired "old Wingate." It was no business of his—and yet—and yet—

If the little fool was back in his dorm he had only to stay there, and be safe! The Bouncer knew very well that Quelch had not gone away satisfied. He suspected the Bouncer, and his suspicions were not likely to sleep. What if, watching for the scapegrace of the Remove, he made an unexpected catch—Wingate's young brother! If the little idiot was safe, he had to keep safe. A word of warning would be enough!

The Bouncer lay thinking it over. Finally, he crept quietly out of bed. It was easy enough to slip along in the dark, to the Third Form Room—to see if Wingate minor was safe there, and to warn him, if he was, not to repeat his reckless venture. A tip that "beaks" were on the prowl would be enough.

Silently, in bare feet, the Bouncer crept to the door, silently he opened it. The other fellows were asleep by that time. Without a sound, the Bouncer groped down the dark passage to the door of the Third Form dormitory.

He opened that door softly, and looked in.

Starlight fell from the windows. There was a sound of regular breathing in the dimness.

Vernon-Smith stepped in.

Which was Wingate minor's bed he did not know. But he soon discovered.

(Continued on next page.)

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HERE.

His eyes fixed on a bed, where the blankets were thrown back, just as the foolish fag had left it.

The bed was empty!

"Oh gad!" breathed the Bounder.

It was Wingate minor who had gone out, that was certain now. And it was equally certain that he had not scuttled back after the alarm! He was still absent—out of the House long ago, by this time! In blank dismay, the Bounder stared at the empty bed.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Up to Smithy!

VERNON-SMITH stood silent, staring, quite at a loss. A word of warning would have been enough for the fag, had he been there. But he was not there! Where was he?

There was a picture in the Bounder's mind, of a scared, breathless fag, running, by dark, dewy paths—thinking only of seeing the man he feared, and satisfying him! And another picture came—of a suspicious master, wary and watchful, on the look-out! Jack Wingate was out of school bounds late at night. And when he came back—If Quelch was on the watch, if he had warned the prefects to be on the watch, the wretched fag would return, only to fall into their hands. Perhaps into the hands of his own brother!

Standing there in the sleeping dormitory the Bounder thought it out. So far, it was clear, there was no suspicion in the direction of the Third. Anyone looking in would have seen the empty bed, as the Bounder had seen it.

Quelch's suspicions were fixed on a young rascal in his own Form—he was not likely to speak to Wiggins or Twigg about the matter. But he might. And if they came up to look into the dormitories, the game was up for Jack Wingate.

That danger, at least, the Bounder could guard. Quietly he stepped to the empty bed, making no sound to awaken the sleeping fags round him. Quietly, quickly, he arranged bolster and pillow and blankets, to give the bed the appearance of having an occupant. It was not an unaccustomed task to the scapegrace of Greyfriars—often enough, he had fixed up a dummy in his own bed in the Remove, to deceive a casual glance.

In a few minutes all was safe—the bed looked as if the fag was sleeping in it. It was good enough for anything but a close examination.

That was all that Smithy could do. He did it quietly and quickly; and crept back to the door to go. He reopened it silently.

Then he stopped suddenly, his heart thumping.

The passage, dark as pitch a moment ago, flashed into sudden light. The electric light must have been turned on. Footsteps, and a murmur of voices came to Smithy's ears as he stood with his hand on the door, an inch open.

He was right in thinking that the matter was not at an end. It was, from the point of view of authority, far too serious to be lightly dismissed. But what was up now?

The Bounder, with beating heart, stood listening. Catching every sound, he knew that the footsteps had passed his own dormitory, and were coming on. He closed the door silently.

Wiggins and Twigg—masters of the Third and Second! Evidently Quelch had spoken to them.

The Bounder stared round him in the dim starlight. In a minute or less, the door would open, the light would be on—He scudded softly across to the

beds and slipped under the empty one. Crouching there, hardly daring to breathe, he waited.

The door opened.

Light gleamed in from the passage. A moment more, and Mr. Wiggins had pressed the switch, and the light flooded on in the long, lofty room.

From beneath Wingate minor's bed, Smithy had a view of two pairs of shoes, and two pairs of legs, standing in the doorway.

"Quite absurd!" It was Mr. Wiggins' voice. "I told Quelch—you heard me, Twigg—that it was impossible that any boy in my Form had left his dormitory after lights-out! Unthinkable!"

"Quite!" said Mr. Twigg. "However—"

"However, one may as well ascertain beyond the shadow of a doubt," said Mr. Wiggins. "I quite agree! As a matter of fact, Twigg, I believe that Quelch is quite aware of the boy's identity."

"A boy in his own Form!" said Mr. Twigg.

"Precisely!"

"No doubt he desires to make absolutely certain of that," said Mr. Twigg. "In the circumstances—"

"Oh, quite! No one is missing here." From the doorway Mr. Wiggins scanned the row of beds.

"No one!" agreed Mr. Twigg.

The hidden Bounder grinned. Five minutes earlier, there would have been a very different tale to tell. The empty bed would have stared the two masters in the face. Thanks to Smithy, there was nothing suspicious to meet their eyes.

A grunt came from one of the beds, and Bolsover minor sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"I say—what—" mumbled the fag.

Tubb and Paget, and two or three others awoke, and stared at the masters in the doorway.

"Nothing is the matter, my boys," said Mr. Wiggins. "Nothing at all. Do not disturb yourselves."

He switched off the light, and the door closed on the two masters. Their footsteps receded in the direction of the Second Form dormitory—where the same inspection was to take place.

Smithy made no sound or movement. He was a prisoner now, till the Third settled down to sleep again.

"I say, what's up, though?" mumbled Tubb.

"Beaks on the prow!" said Paget. "Wish them luck! I say, you asleep, young Wingate?"

There was no answer from Wingate minor's bed.

"Silly old asses," said Bolsover minor disrespectfully. "Waking a man up in the middle of the night!"

The fags settled down again. There was a mumble of voices for a few minutes, and then silence.

The Bounder did not stir. Listening intently, he heard the footsteps of Wiggins and Twigg pass the door. Evidently they had looked in on the Second Form, found all well, and were going down. Smithy wondered with a grin, whether Hacker, the master of the Shell, and Capper, master of the Fourth, were also giving their Forms the "once-over."

He waited till all was still and silent, and then crept out from under the bed and tiptoed to the door. The passage outside was dark again—the beaks were gone, and the light turned off.

Vernon-Smith slipped out, and crept silently back to his own dormitory.

There was no light now on the big landing at the end of the passage. It was now long past the bed-time of the Fifth; and all the sleeping-quarters of

Greyfriars were in darkness. The Sixth, who had studies and bed-rooms combined, were free to decide bed-time for themselves; but it was probable that most of the Sixth had turned in by that time. Not all of them, the Bounder fancied—he had little doubt that there were prefects "on the prowl."

Smithy entered the Remove dormitory, and sat down on the edge of his bed to think it out.

Jack Wingate was out of bounds. He would come back, expecting to find all quiet, and to slip in unseen. What would he find? Smithy had saved him so far—his absence had not been discovered. That was of little use if he was caught coming in. The Bounder had only gained time to act. But what could he do further?

Pity for the wretched fag, in danger of condign punishment, concern for "old Wingate" in danger of a disgraceful discovery, actuated the Bounder. But he was feeling something else, too—the keen excitement of a battle with authority; the desire to score over the beaks; to carry through his intervention to a successful end. To do Smithy justice, his motives were mainly good; but there was no doubt that he enjoyed the excitement of a risky and dangerous contest.

He rose and went to the window, and climbed up to look out. The summer night was light; and stars twinkled innumerable in a deep blue sky. From the high window, he could see fairly clearly the objects below—here and there a glimmer of light from a window—the old elms standing out black; facades of buildings glimmering in the stars. He was not surprised to catch a glimpse of moving figures in the starlit quad—he had expected it. Two dim forms passed—two of the Sixth—prefects evidently, and he wondered if one of them was Wingate! It was likely. They were in his view for two or three minutes before they disappeared into the shadows.

Prefects on the prowl!

Smithy could follow the suspicious thoughts in his Form master's mind. This was a game he had played often. Quelch would not re-visit the Remove dormitory and startle the fellows out of their sleep again—he did not want to look a suspicious fool to his Form. There was little danger of that. But it was fixed in his mind that the Bounder had intended to break bounds, and had only been stopped by the accidental encounter with Coker. He would not think of playing Bo-Peep, as it were, at the dormitory door—he did not want the thing to become the joke of the Form. But he would take measures—and the sight of the two Sixth Form men in the starlight told what measures he had taken.

Two prefects at least; probably more, were "prowling," as the Bounder termed it—watching for a reckless scapegrace who might make a second attempt to get out when all was quiet! And watching for a fellow to get out, they were absolutely certain to catch a fellow getting in.

The game was up for Wingate minor—he had no chance! When he came back—and his return could not be long delayed now—a hand would drop on his shoulder as soon as he climbed into the school precincts. And as likely as not, it would be the hand of his brother.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

HARRY WHARTON stirred and awoke. Some slight sound or movement in the dormitory had awakened him.

He lifted his head and glanced round.



There was a sound of footsteps on the dark landing as Jack Wingate dodged, and Coker spun round and dashed in that direction. "You young scoundrel! I'll—" "What is this?" came a cold, clear, icy voice. The passage light flashed on, and Coker, coming to a sudden halt, found himself staring blankly at Mr. Quelch.

For a moment he heard only the snore of Billy Bunter. Then a faint movement reached his ears. His eyes fixed on a fellow who was standing by a bed, dressing quickly in the dimness.

"Smithy!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

The Bouncer started.

"Quiet!" he muttered.

Wharton sat up, staring at him.

"Smithy! You can't be fool enough to be going out now—after Quelch has been here—he knows—"

"Yes, I'm fool enough!" grinned the Bouncer. "Just that kind of fool, old bean. Don't wake the dorm!"

"You must be mad!" breathed Wharton. "Mad as a hatter! Couldn't you see in Quelch's face that he felt certain—"

"I'm not blind!"

"Smithy!" Wharton subdued his voice, speaking with deep earnestness. "For goodness' sake don't be such a fool. It's the sack if you're spotted—you know that!"

"Don't I?" grinned Smithy. "I'm takin' the risk."

"It's not a risk; it's a certainty! Quelch knows it was not a fellow from another dorm who ran into that idiot Coker—at least, he's certain of it. Do you think he will let the matter drop? Ten to one, hundred to one, he had warned the prefects to keep an eye open for a fellow getting out to-night."

"A million to one, old bean, you mean! In fact, I know he has."

"And you're going to chance it, knowing that?"

"Yes!"

"You must be mad!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith fastened his collar and tie with perfect coolness.

"Don't shout," he said. "The less said the better. I've got a reason for goin'."

"Is that cad Ponsonby waiting for you at the Three Fishers?" said Harry scornfully. "Highcliffe fellows can take those risks—but it's the sack here—this isn't Highcliffe! You're just asking for it."

The Bouncer laughed softly. Wharton was taking it for granted that he was bound on a shady excursion as usual. Smithy had no intention of enlightening him; for the moment, at least.

"Keep it dark," he said, "and don't wake the fellows!"

Wharton watched him anxiously. The black sheep of the Remove deserved to be kicked out of Greyfriars, if it came to that. But Wharton could not help feeling concerned about him. He disliked that strange kink of blackguardism in Smithy—but the fellow had his good qualities—plenty of them. They were hardly friends—and had often been enemies—but he did not want to see Smithy sacked.

Having dressed, Smithy was rigging a dummy in his bed. Then, as he moved away, Wharton whispered again.

"You're really going?"

"Quite."

"For goodness' sake, Smithy—"

The Bouncer paused. He came over to the captain of the Remove, and his mocking face, for once, was serious.

"Look here, Wharton! It's not as you think! There's a fellow asking for it—sticking his silly head fairly into the claws of the beaks! I've got to tip him in time."

"Skinner—"

"Not a Remove man."

"Angel of the Fourth? You needn't bother about that cad—"

"I'm not telling you who it is! Most likely you wouldn't believe me, if I did! But—it's honest Injun! That's all!"

Without another word the Bouncer slipped silently to the door and left the dormitory. Wharton stared after him blankly.

He believed what the Bouncer had said—but it amazed him. Smithy was not, as a rule, the fellow to concern himself much about others. It was true that he was a fellow to take risks, merely for the excitement of the risk. Judging by what he had said it was not even a pal of his who was in danger—not one of the shady set in the Remove and Fourth. Harry Wharton laid his head on the pillow again—but he did not close his eyes. He was not likely to sleep now.

The Bouncer, silent in rubber shoes, threaded his way by dark stairs to the Remove passage. He wondered whether that was the way the fag had gone—anyhow, it was the way Smithy was going. The studies were all in darkness; the passage as black as a bat. Silent as a spectre, the Bouncer flitted along, reached the box-room at the end of the passage, and entered it. He soon had evidence that that was, indeed, the way the fag had left the House; the window was an inch or more open.

Vernon-Smith flattened his face against the glass and stared out. All was still and dim; there was no sign of a movement. He had to take the chance; and at length he pushed the sash up and dropped lightly out on the leads below. He closed the window, and

lying flat on the leads, crawled to the edge, and there he waited and listened for a long minute. But there was nothing to alarm him; and he clambered down the clamped rainpipe, that he had clambered down many times before, and dropped on the earth.

A few minutes more and he was away from the buildings and creeping in the shadows towards the silent old Cloisters. Suddenly he stopped, and jammed himself close to the trunk of an elm, stilling his breathing. Quiet footsteps came to his ears. He heard a yawn and a muttering voice.

"Rot, I call it!" He recognised the voice of Loder of the Sixth.

"Well, we've got to keep it up!" It was Walker speaking.

"I'm fed-up!"

The two passed on, hardly three yards from the Bounder. Footsteps came from another direction. Peering out of the black shadows into the starlight, Smithy made out Wingate and Gwynne. They stopped as they met the other two seniors.

"Seen anybody?" asked Wingate.

"No!" grunted Loder.

"The young sweep's too jolly cautious to try it on again!" said Walker. "Lot of rot!"

"Well, we're bound to play up," said Wingate. "Though, in my opinion, there's nothing in it! Quelch has plenty of reason to be suspicious of Vernon-Smith, but—"

"Shady young rascal!" said Gwynne. "If he's really prowling out at night, the sooner he's kicked out of the school the better."

"Well, yes, but I can't believe so," said Wingate. "I had a jaw with him to-day, and he gave me his word."

"Lot of good, that!" sneered Loder.

"Well, he's a cheeky young rascal and he's given a lot of trouble, but I've got some faith in him. I believe he was sincere in what he said to-day. Still, we've got to keep it up. Where's Carne?"

"Mooching about somewhere with Sykes! The young sweep would be flattered if he knew he'd got half the prefects watching for him!" growled Walker.

The Bounder grinned.

"Well, keep your eyes open!" said Wingate, and the Sixth Form men separated, and moved off in various directions—little dreaming that they had been seen and heard by the "young sweep" for whom they were watching.

When they were gone the Bounder crept away with redoubled caution. He knew now that there were six prefects "on the prowl"; which was no doubt flattering to his self-esteem, but very awkward and dangerous. But the Bounder was wary—a good deal warier, in point of fact, than any of the Sixth Form men. He crept into the Cloisters at last, clambered over the wall at the spot where Billy Bunter had sat enjoying his smoke in the afternoon, and dropped into the lane outside.

He was safe from the prefects now; they were watching round the House, not outside the school walls. By what route Wingate minor would get back he did not know; and he could not take the chance of missing him. He knew, of course, that the fag must have gone to the Three Fishers to see the man Leach; and the only way of making sure of meeting him was to meet him on his way back. Keeping in the shadow of the trees, the Bounder stole away, till he reached the path through the coppice that led down to the river. He stopped at the corner of the path.

There, he was certain of spotting the fag, whether he came by the road or by the towpath. And now he could only wait.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Escape—for One!

"W HO—what—" Jack Wingate cried out in sheer terror as a dark figure detached itself from the shadow of a tree in the coppice and stood in his path.

The fag was coming up from the towpath at a run.

It was densely dark under the trees. But a glimmer of starlight fell on the path; and at the corner where it joined the road that shadowy figure suddenly appeared, and the fag's heart leaped into his mouth.

"Quiet!" came a whispering voice. "It's me—Smithy of the Remove—quiet, you young ass!"

Wingate minor had hardly known what he feared—a ruffianly tramp, perhaps, or a Greyfriars master! The voice of the Bounder reassured him; and at the same time startled and amazed him.

"You—Smithy—" he stammered.

"Yes! You've got through?" asked the Bounder, peering at him curiously in the shadows. "You've been up to the Three Fishers!"

"Oh! Yes!" panted Wingate minor. "I—I've seen him, and—and paid him! That's all right! He was surprised to see me, I can tell you. But—but it's all right! I'm done with him! But—how did you know? Have you been out?"

"I came out after you—to tip you," said the Bounder quietly. "You must have been a young ass to clear off after the alarm. Why didn't you cut back to your dorm?"

"I—I thought it was all clear—it was only Quelch and Coker—" stammered the fag. "I—I had to go—" He peered anxiously at Vernon-Smith.

"Has there been a row?"

"Heaps! Quelch came along expectin' to catch me out." Smithy chuckled. "Then I tumbled to it that it was you. Wiggins and Twigg came up to give their dormitories the once-over—"

A cry of terror broke from Wingate minor.

"Wiggins! Then he's found out—"

"He would have, if I hadn't been on the spot. But it's all right—there's a dummy in your bed now, and it was good enough for Wiggy; he only looked in from the door."

"Oh!" gasped Wingate minor.

"I've been waitin' for you here! There's half a dozen prefects prowlin' round the House, watchin' for a chap suspected of gettin' out. Goodness knows how long they'll keep it up, but they were still on the prowl when I left them. I fancy Loder and Walker will chuck it, but your brother—"

"My brother!" breathed the fag.

"Old Wingate will keep it up—jolly old sense of duty, you know."

The Bounder chuckled again.

Jack Wingate caught his arm convulsively.

"He doesn't know—my brother doesn't—"

"Of course not! He's watchin' for me—it would be a jolly old surprise for him if he guessed who it was butted over Coker, and got out. Keep cool! You've got to get in without being spotted—that's why I'm here! You'd have walked right into their hands."

"And—and you came—"

The fag's tone revealed his wonder, that the "hard case" of the Remove

should have taken so much trouble and risk for him.

"Well, your brother isn't a bad sort—I'd rather not let him get such a painful shock!" said Smithy lightly. "You won't be playin' this game again, I fancy—there won't be a next time?"

The fag shivered.

"No fear! Once I get clear of this—"

"That's all right—we'll get clear somehow. We've got to lie low and keep wary till they give it up and go in. They can't keep it up much later—even Quelch won't fancy that a Remove man will be goin' out at midnight! Come on—and keep quiet!"

Wingate minor followed the Bounder out of the coppice into the road. On the road lay clear starlight, but they cut into the shadow of the trees. In the little lane that ran between the old Cloister wall and the fir plantation they stopped, and the Bounder heard Jack Wingate panting breathlessly in the shadows at his side. The fag's nerves were on the jump—which was no wonder in the circumstances. The Bounder himself was as cool as ice.

He had, he considered, saved the situation. Sooner or later the prefects would give it up—more likely sooner than later. Then the coast would be clear—he would help the trembling fag back into the House, and they would go to their dormitories. They had to wait and watch till they were sure that the prefects were no longer on the prowl. That was all!

Smithy made a jump and caught the top of the wall and peered over. All was shadowy and silent.

He reached down a hand to the fag, and Wingate minor clambered up beside him. They dropped on the inner side of the wall lightly.

"You got out here?" asked Smithy.

"Yes; I should have gone before prep only that fool Bunter was here. I couldn't let him see me breaking out—"

The Bounder grinned.

"Might as well have let all the school see you at once," he agreed. "Well, here we are—quiet!"

Holding the fag by the arm, Smithy led the way in the silent, shadowy old Cloisters. His eyes were as watchful as a cat's, his ears tensely on the strain. But there was no sound or movement, and it seemed likely that the watch was already given up. He knew that Loder and Walker were tired of it, and would chuck it as soon as they could, and he knew, too, that Wingate did not share Mr. Quelch's suspicions—he trusted to the word Smithy had given him.

But Vernon-Smith did not neglect caution. When he left the shadow of the old Cloister it was to dart across to the black shade of a tree and halt there, to watch and listen before going further. Jack Wingate, giving himself up entirely to the Bounder's guidance, panted at his side. Only too well he knew that but for Smithy he would have walked directly into capture.

Long minutes the Bounder waited and watched. Suddenly there was the sound of a yawn, so close at hand that the Bounder started, and Jack Wingate barely repressed a cry. A shadowy figure moved only a few feet away, and Smithy knew that it was Gwynne of the Sixth. With a faint sound of footfalls Gwynne disappeared again.

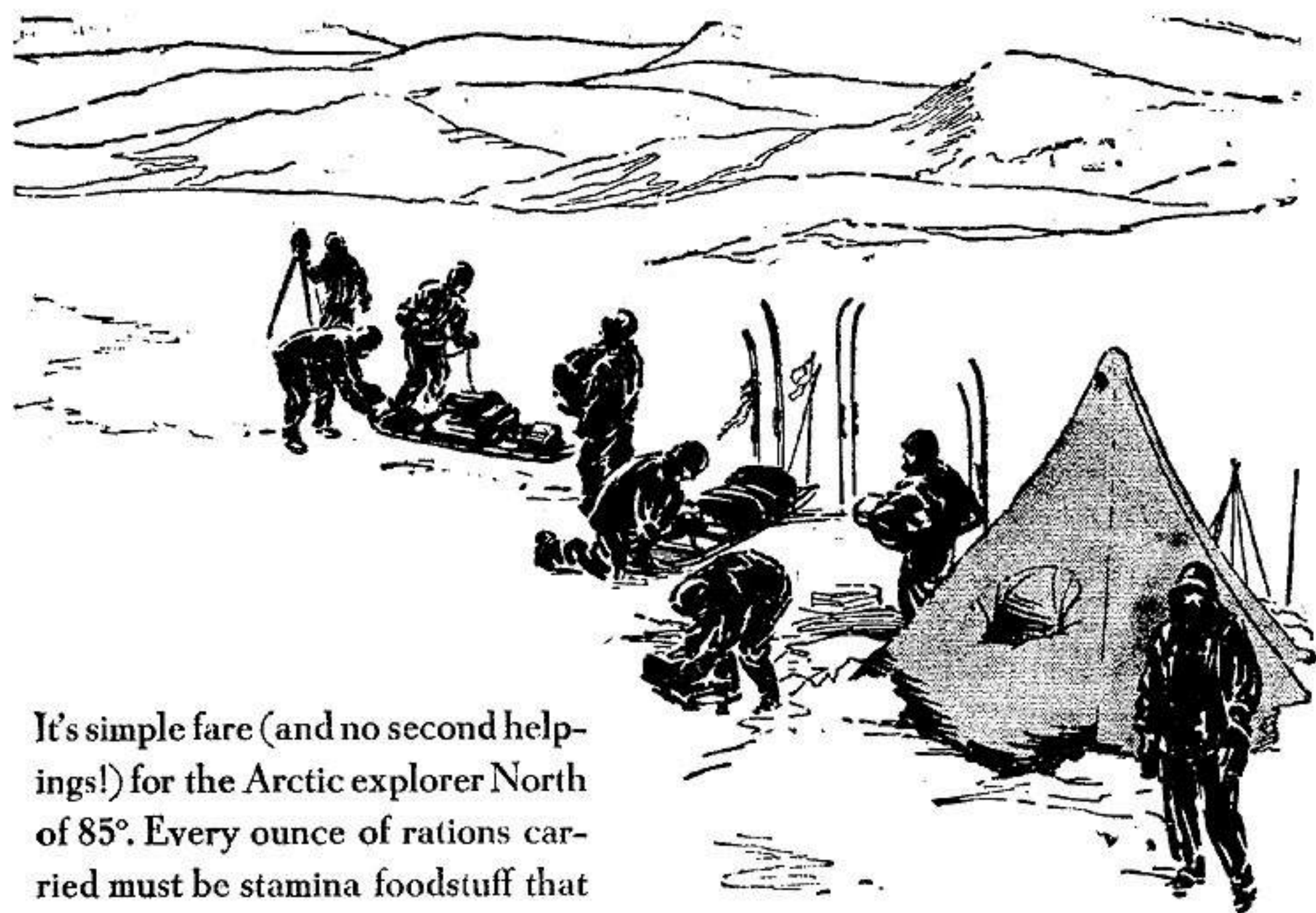
"Oh!" breathed Jack Wingate.

The Bounder felt him trembling.

"They're not gone in yet!" whispered Smithy. "We've got to wait! They can't keep it up much later."

(Continued on page 22.)

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THE BOUNDER'S GOOD TURN!

(Continued from page 20.)

Jack did not reply. His heart was beating almost to suffocation. He leaned on the elm, his face white in the shadows. If he had doubted before he knew now that the Bounder had saved him from inevitable discovery.

"Was that—was that my brother?" he breathed at last.

"No; his pal Gwynne."

"But—he's still out—"

"Sure to be, if Gwynne is. We've got to wait!"

They waited.

It seemed an age to both before they heard, faintly from the distance, the sound of a closing door. Jack Wingate gave a start.

"That was a door shutting," he whispered.

"Yes. Looks like all clear now. But wait!"

For ten long minutes more the Bounder remained motionless, watching and listening. Someone had gone in—perhaps all the prowlers. Surely it was safe at last! The Bounder decided at length to move. He touched the fag's arm.

"Chance it now," he whispered. "Looks clear! Look here, if we barge into them, duck into the nearest cover and leave it to me to lead them off. I'm more used to this game than you are."

Wingate minor nodded—he could not speak. Leaving their cover, they scudded to the House and reached the ivied wall of the outbuilding, under the window of the Remove box-room. They saw and heard nothing, and it seemed certain that the watch was no longer kept.

"Up with you!" breathed the Bounder.

The hapless fag was trembling almost too much to clamber up the rainpipe to the leads above. The Bounder helped him up.

"Keep cool!" he whispered. "All safe in a tick!"

"But—you—"

The fag peered down at him.

"That's all right. Cut off to your dorm as soon as you're in! I shan't be far behind you."

Wingate minor clambered up and drew himself on the leads. The Bounder grasped the rainpipe to climb in his turn, and as he did so there was a foot-step, and a grasp of iron was laid on his arm. He was dragged away from the wall into the light of the stars, and a tall Sixth-Former bent to peer at his face.

"You!" Wingate's tone was cutting in its contempt. "Vernon-Smith! Who was with you—you were not alone?"

The Bounder did not answer. A grim, sarcastic grin was on his face—a grin of bitter mockery. Caught—by Wingate of the Sixth! And from above a faint sound of a window told that Wingate minor of the Third was climbing in—to safety!

Not even aware that the fellow who had saved him had been caught, the fag scuttled away in the darkness to his dormitory, leaving the Bounder to pay scot and lot for both.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quelch is Not Surprised!

WINGATE released the Bounder's arm. He stepped back a pace, his eyes fixed on the face of the scapegrace of Greyfriars.

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The Bounder winced under his look. The contempt in it stung him to the quick. He could read Wingate's thoughts. This was what his word was worth! An irreclaimable young black-guard—a disgrace to the school! And the sooner he was kicked out of it, the better. Wingate's thoughts were clear enough in his scornful face.

The Bounder opened his lips—and shut them again. He was doggedly silent under the searching, contemptuous eyes of the captain of Greyfriars. After that one faint sound from above all was silent there. Jack Wingate was out of danger. Smithy had saved him, so far as that went. Wingate broke the silence.

"You were not alone, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, quite!" drawled the Bounder.

"I heard someone else—he got away—a few moments sooner, and I should have had you both."

"Your bad luck, then!" said Smithy.

"Who was it?"

"That's for you to spot," said the Bounder, coolly. "You don't really fancy that I should give a man away, do you?"

"You admit that someone was with you?"

"Your mistake—I don't admit anything! It's up to you!"

Wingate compressed his lips.

"You've been out of bounds," he said—"you and another! I can't imagine how you got out unseen—you dodged us somehow! Now you were coming back—that's pretty clear!"

"It's getting into the Sixth that makes a fellow so bright," said the Bounder gravely. "What a brain!"

"You won't tell me who was with you?"

"I don't admit that there was anybody."

"Was it Bunter?"

"Bunter!" Vernon-Smith jumped.

"What the dickens—"

He stared blankly at the Greyfriars captain.

"Bunter was with you, the night Lascelles caught you out of the House," said Wingate quietly.

"Oh!" The Bounder laughed.

"The fat fool hooked on. I had to let him come, or he'd have kicked up a row. What a memory you've got, Wingate! I'd really forgotten all that!"

"Nobody else has," said Wingate.

"Whether some silly kid hooked on to you, as you put it, or whether you led him into your rotten ways, doesn't make much difference. It's all the more serious, if the fellow you've got into wrongdoing is a fool, and not a rascal like yourself."

"I see the point!" admitted the Bounder coolly. "But—"

"But what?"

"Nobody went out with me," said Vernon-Smith.

"Somebody came in with you."

No answer.

"If you won't answer me, perhaps you will answer your Form master," said Wingate. "I believed what you said to me to-day, Vernon-Smith, in your study—I fancied you could be trusted! You were pulling my leg, that's plain enough now—I dare say it's easy to pull," added Wingate, with a contempt that brought the crimson into the Bounder's cheeks. "You're a bad egg, Vernon-Smith—and you won't be allowed to pride yourself on a point of honour, on not giving a fellow away! You've got to give the name of the fellow you've led into this—for his own sake!"

"You'd like to know his name?"

The Bounder could not help grinning. Wingate little knew what he was asking.

"I intend to!"

"Well, you won't—from me."

"We shall see! Come with me now," added Wingate, and he led the Bounder away, round the buildings to the door of the Sixth Form lobby.

They entered the House by that door, and Wingate led the captured breaker of bounds directly to Masters' Studies. Light gleamed under Mr. Quelch's door.

The Bounder was breathing hard; but he was quite cool! He had taken the risk—and at the last minute, when all seemed safe, the risk had materialised! It was the irony of Fate! A score of times he had taken the same risk—from sheer recklessness and love of excitement and lawlessness—and had got away with it. Now the chopper had come down when he had acted for the sake of another—chiefly for the sake of the very fellow who was marching him in to stern judgment! The Bounder could have laughed.

Wingate tapped on the Remove master's door and opened it. Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

There was no surprise in his face as he saw the Bounder. He had quite expected it.

"You found this junior out of bounds, Wingate?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Leaving the House—at this hour?"

The clock on the mantelpiece indicated half-past eleven.

"No, sir; coming back."

"Coming back! I understood that watch was being kept—"

"I don't know how he got away without being seen, sir, but he must have. He was certainly getting back when I found him—and the boy with him had already gone in."

"Then he was not alone?"

"No, sir."

"And the other—"

"I did not see him, but I heard him. He climbed in at the Remove box-room window. He went first—but I was in time to catch Vernon-Smith. The other prefects gave it up at eleven," explained Wingate. "But I thought I would make a last round, and—I heard them."

The gimlet eyes fixed on Vernon-Smith.

"Who was with you?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Nobody left the House with me, sir."

"You are certain that Vernon-Smith was not alone, Wingate?"

"Quite certain, sir."

"I have no doubt of it, and I should not dream of accepting this boy's word! Where have you been, Vernon-Smith, at this time of night?"

"As far as the coppice by the river, sir."

"And where else?"

"Nowhere else."

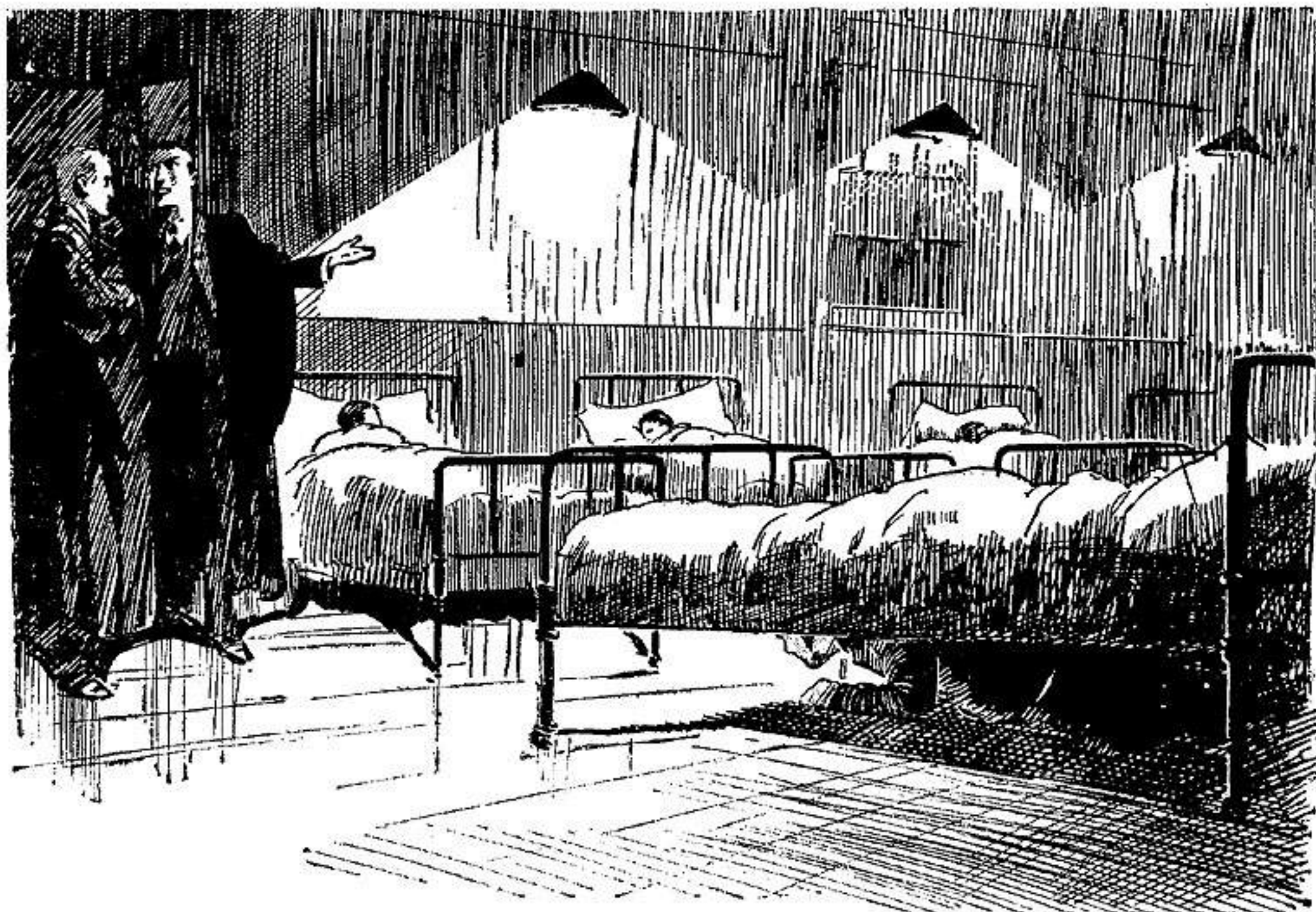
"Do you expect me to believe that?" asked the Remove master contemptuously.

"It's the truth, sir."

"I shall hardly believe that you went out simply for a walk, Vernon-Smith. Even if it were true, you know the punishment for breaking bounds after lights-out. But, in point of fact, I have no doubt where you have been—the disreputable place near which I found you this afternoon!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his voice rising in anger.

"I have not been there, sir!"

"Your denial counts for absolutely nothing! I shall not disturb your headmaster at this hour; but you will go before Dr. Locke in the morning, and I need not tell you what the result will be. On the last occasion you were flogged,



As the light switched on, Vernon-Smith, from beneath Wingate minor's bed, had a view of two pairs of shoes and two pairs of legs standing in the doorway. "Quite absurd, Twigg!" Mr. Wiggins was saying. "I told Quelch that it was impossible that any boy in my Form had left his dormitory after lights-out! Unthinkable!" The hidden Bounder grinned.

and warned of what would happen if you transgressed again. You will be expelled from Greyfriars to-morrow."

The Bounder did not speak. He knew that, without his Form master telling him so.

"Before you are locked up for the night," continued Mr. Quelch, "give me the name of the Remove boy you have led into your own rascality."

"I have led no one into anything, sir."

"Who was with you?"

No reply.

"You refuse to give the name?"

"I've nothing to tell you, sir."

"I shall go to your dormitory, Vernon-Smith, and doubtless I shall be able to ascertain. Wingate, take Vernon-Smith to the punishment-room—here is the key."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Quelch hurried from the study. The fellow who had been with the Bounder had had ample time to get to his dormitory and get to bed. But it was quite likely that the gimlet eyes would detect the signs of guilt—if the fellow was in the Remove, as Mr. Quelch naturally supposed.

The Bounder, as he followed Wingate to the punishment-room, had a lurking grin on his face. A visit to the Third Form dormitory might have discovered a wakeful and frightened fag; but in the Remove Mr. Quelch was not likely to make any discoveries.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Secret!

GREYFRIARS SCHOOL turned out in the morning, to learn that something very unusual was "on."

The Remove knew what it was, and

the news was not long in spreading from the Remove to the other Forms. The Bounder's bed had remained unoccupied during the night—save by the "dummy" Smithy had left in it, and which Mr. Quelch had discovered on his second visit. He had discovered nothing else; and was still in the dark as to who had been the Bounder's companion in his escapade. Where Smithy was was no secret; as he had not returned to the dormitory, he could only be in "punny." And that, no one could doubt, was the preliminary to the "sack."

"Smithy's done it at last!" was Skinner's comment.

And that was the general comment! Smithy, who had risked it so often, had "done it" at last!

Tom Redwing, that morning, looked dismal and distressed. Harry Wharton & Co. were grave enough. They were sorry for Smithy! He had asked for it often enough; but it was a blow to most of the fellows, when he got what he had so often asked for.

Wharton, too, remembered what Smithy had said before he left the dormitory in the night. He could not help thinking that it was hard luck—if the Bounder really had got it "in the neck" on account of some other fellow.

Smithy was not seen at prayers. Quelch's face, at that early function, was very grim, and the Head looked uncommonly grave. There was a fag in the Third Form who looked as white as a sheet—and Tubb and Bolsover minor asked Jack Wingate whether he was ill—without even receiving an answer. The whispering among the fags had apprised Wingate minor of what had happened, and he stared at the Remove and missed the Bounder there. It had

not occurred to him before that Smithy might have been caught. The discovery almost knocked him over.

When the Famous Five were in the quad, before breakfast, Wingate minor came up to them. The ghastly pallor in his face attracted their curious attention at once.

"Where's Smithy?" asked the fag, in a choking voice.

"In punny!" answered Wharton. "He was caught out of bounds last night."

"Who—who caught him?"

"I've heard that it was Wingate—your major."

"But—but—What's going to happen to him?"

"I'm afraid it's the sack."

Wharton looked very curiously at the fag. The Third had nothing to do with the Remove, and Wingate minor hardly knew Smithy. It was difficult to account for his concern.

"Has he told them——" Wingate minor broke off.

"There wasn't anything to tell! He was caught!" said Harry.

"I mean——"

The fag broke off again, and did not explain what he had meant. The fear was in his heart that Smithy had told the name of his companion out of bounds. But he realised that that could not be the case, or he would already have heard. He moved away, leaving the clowns of the Remove staring.

"What's the matter with the kid?" asked Frank Nugent, in wonder.

"What does he care about Smithy? Never thought he even knew the chap."

"The carefulness seems to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton had a startled look.

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According to what Smithy had said, he had gone out to "tip" a breaker of bounds that the prefects were on the watch—and not a Remove man. Surely it could not have been a fag, and the captain's minor. But, if not, what did Jack Wingate's evident terror mean?

Smithy was not at the Remove table at breakfast. Billy Bunter—who, of course, saw everything—told the other fellows that he had seen Trotter carrying a tray to the punishment-room. The fellows wondered with what appetite Smithy was eating his solitary breakfast, in a room with a locked door and a barred window.

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob Cherry, when the juniors came out. "I suppose they can't do anything else, but—but it's rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is preposterous!"

"Blessed if I ever thought I should care if Smithy got what he's begged for!" said Johnny Bull. "But it's rotten, and no mistake!"

"Poor old Reddy looks like a giddy goat!" said Nugent. "I—I suppose there's no chance for Smithy?"

"I wonder!" said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "I—I've a good mind to speak to Quelch! Smithy doesn't seem to have said anything for himself. But I think——"

"I say, you fellows!"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bob! I say, rough luck on Smithy, ain't it?" said Bunter. "It's the sack, of course! He's rather a beast! Only yesterday morning, you know, he refused to cash a postal order for me! And he was making out that I snaffled cigarettes from his study. As if I would, you know! But, I say, Quelch wants you, Wharton, in his study. I say, did you go out on the tiles with Smithy?"

"What!" yelled Wharton.

"Well, fellows are saying that somebody was with him, and Smithy won't give his name," said Bunter. "I heard Wingate say so to Gwynne. If it was you, Wharton, you're copped!"

"You blithering owl!"

"Well, Quelch told me to tell you to go to his study, and he's looking like a jolly old gargoyle! Looks to me as if he's spotted you, old chap! And, I say—— Yaroooooh! Leave off kicking me, you beast!"

Wharton left off kicking Bunter, and went to the House. He found Mr. Quelch, looking very grim indeed, in his study. The Remove master had visited the prisoner of the punishment-room, and the interview did not seem to have had a soothing effect on him.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Wharton. As head boy of the Remove, you must give me your assistance in this matter," said Mr. Quelch. "It is established, beyond doubt, that Vernon-Smith had some companion in his disreputable escapade last night. He refuses to give the boy's name."

Wharton's lips set a little. Mr. Quelch quite understood the expression on his face, and he went on quietly:

"It seems certain, Wharton, that Vernon-Smith has led another boy into his own bad ways. For that boy's own sake, his identity must be known. On a previous occasion that extremely foolish boy, Bunter, followed Vernon-Smith's bad example. A foolish and unthinking boy, Wharton, must be guarded against his own folly when he has fallen under a bad influence. I am sure that you will understand that?"

"Well, yes, sir," said Harry slowly. "But we know Smithy in the Remove, sir. I'm not making excuses for him;

but he's not the fellow to lead anybody into a scrape—not if he could help it."

"As head boy, Wharton, you must know who went out of bounds with Vernon-Smith last night."

"Nobody in the Remove, sir. I know that for a fact. I was awake when Smithy went, and I stayed awake a long time afterwards. Nobody else went out of the dormitory."

Mr. Quelch started a little.

"If you are certain of that, Wharton——"

"Quite certain, sir."

"In that case, Vernon-Smith's companion must belong to some other Form. There is no doubt that someone was with him; Wingate heard him, and barely missed finding him with Vernon-Smith. If you have any knowledge of the boy's identity, Wharton, it is your duty to speak in so terribly serious a matter as this."

Wharton thought of the white, frightened face of Wingate minor. Was it possible? At all events, he knew nothing.

"I don't know who was with Smithy, sir. But I'm quite sure that it's not so bad as you think," he said earnestly. "I woke up when Smithy was going, sir, and tried to persuade him not to be such a fool, and I think I ought to tell you what he said. He told me that a silly fellow was in danger of being caught, and he was going to warn him that the prefects were on the watch. I know it's against all the rules, sir, but it's not so bad as—as what you suppose."

"If it were true, certainly," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "But I fear that thoroughly unscrupulous boy was deceiving you."

"I am sure not, sir. I'm sure that Smithy never meant to break bounds last night, and it was on another fellow's account that he went."

"Some associate of his, do you mean?"

"No; I'm sure not," said Harry. "Smithy's friends know how to take care of themselves. I believe it was some silly ass—excuse me, sir—I mean, some silly fellow getting himself into a scrape, and Smithy was only trying to do him a good turn."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"You appear to me to be very credulous, Wharton!" he said.

And he made a gesture of dismissal, and the captain of the Remove left the study.

When the bell rang for classes there was an empty place in the Remove Form Room. Smithy was not there. Neither was Mr. Quelch. Monsieur Charpentier came to take the Form in French. The Remove could guess how their Form master was occupied, and few fellows expected to see the Bounder at Greyfriars again.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sacked!

WINGATE of the Sixth unlocked the door of the punishment-room and opened it.

The Bounder, who was staring from the barred window into the bright July sunshine without, turned and looked at him. It had been a clouded face that looked from the window, but it cleared at once as Smithy turned round to face the prefect. The Bounder knew what was coming to him, and he had had plenty of time to think it over, and his nerve was equal to the test. He had asked for it; it had come, and he was going to face it without flinching.



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"Top of the mornin', old bean!" he said lightly. "You're lookin' uncommonly serious, Wingate! I hope you didn't lose your beauty sleep last night doin' sentry-go!"

Wingate looked at him.

"I'm sorry for this, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly—"more sorry than you'd understand, I dare say! Even now I can't believe you're such a thorough rotter as it looks!"

"Thanks!"

"If you've really led some silly fellow, some duffer like Bunter—into your rotten ways, there's no word for you! But—"

"But you don't think so?" asked the Bounder, with a very curious look at the Greyfriars captain.

"No, I can't. I've thought it over, and I can't," said Wingate. "I believe you meant what you said in your study yesterday, too. I don't quite make you out, but I can't believe you're bad to the core. I'm sorry you haven't done better here—you could have." Wingate paused. "Look here, kid, I've got to take you to the Head now. Quelch is with him, and—"

"And it's the sack?"

"Yes," said Wingate. "I'm afraid there's no hope. But, look here, I'd like to do something for you if I could. You've refused to tell your Form master who was with you out of bounds. Will you tell me?"

"You?" repeated the Bounder, with a start.

"It's a bit irregular, I know," said Wingate. "But it's pretty rotten to see a fellow sacked! I might be able to help you out. I would if I could! If you'll tell me the name of the fellow who was with you, I'll promise to keep it to myself, and not to let the fellow suffer for it in any way. You can see that I'm stretching a point—rather wide, too—but—"

"What good would it do if I told you?" asked Smithy, his eyes still very curiously on Wingate's honest, rugged face.

"The Head has some confidence in me," said Wingate, with a faint smile, "so has your Form master. Give me the fellow's name, and I can judge how the matter stands. There are some black sheep here—fairly well known, too. If it was one of them—"

"Some blighter of my own kidney?" grinned the Bounder.

"That's it! In that case, I shall keep quiet what you've said, but I shall be able to tell the Head and Quelch that you've satisfied me that it was not some silly kid you were leading into scrapes, as they fancy now. If it was Skinner, or Angel of the Fourth, for instance, I—"

The Bounder's face was unreadable.

"I'll promise," said Wingate, "not to let the young rascal suffer for it; I'll promise not to pass on the information you give me to the beaks. Only let me know for certain that it was not some silly duffer you were leading into rascality, and I can put in a word for you—and it may save you. Don't you understand?"

"You're a good chap, Wingate," said the Bounder, and his voice was unusually soft, "but—"

"Speak out, then!" said Wingate. "It's your last chance! You believe that I'd like to help you—"

"Yes, I know you would! But—"

"Give me a chance to do it, then! I tell you if I could give the Head my personal assurance that your companion last night was not some silly ass acting under your influence, it might save you."

"I suppose it might," said the

Bounder musingly. "You're a good chap, Wingate, and I'm grateful. And I'll tell you this much—and you can believe it or not, as you choose. I never meant to break bounds last night; I was going to, but I chucked it after you jawed me in the study. I found out—never mind how—that a fellow was out of bounds, and I knew you'd catch him, watching for me by Quelch's orders, and I went out to give him the tip. He was a fellow I've never had anything to do with—a fellow I hardly know. It was by sheer chance that I heard that he had got into a scrape; and he's been so jolly frightened that I'm sure he will never get into another of the same kind. I can't tell you that it was a fellow of my own kidney, because it wasn't. It was an absolutely silly ass—a fatheaded young mug, as you'd know if I told you his name!"

Wingate's eyes were fixed doubtfully on the Bounder's face.

"I'd like to believe you," he said. "You say it was a young duffer in a silly scrape, and you had nothing to do with getting him into it?"

The Bounder laughed.

"No fear! I tell you I heard of it by chance."

"And the fellow—"

"Quite a decent kid—only he happened to make a fool of himself for once."

"If that's the truth," said Wingate, "you've only got to tell me. I'll see the kid and speak to him. And if it's as you say, I shall tell the Head how it stands without mentioning names. He trusts me enough to make that all right. It sounds a bit steep from a fellow like you—"

"I know it does."

"Well, satisfy me; and, as I say, I can clear you. Give me the kid's name and—"

He paused and waited. The Bounder's look as he gazed at Wingate was almost pitying. Not for a moment did it—or could it—cross Wingate's mind what he was asking—that it was his brother's name that the Bounder must have given.

"Well?" he said at last.

"I can't tell you, Wingate. I can't give the kid away."

"I've told you that he shall not suffer in any way; that I shall keep his name a secret if it turns out that you're telling the truth."

"I know! But—"

Not to save his school career—not to save his life—would Smithy have dealt the blow Wingate was asking him to deal. If he had thought of telling the whole story, that thought was banished from his mind now. The earnest kindness of the Greyfriars captain, his desire to help the fellow who was "for it," made it impossible. Smithy shook his head.

Wingate's face grew stern.

"You've nothing to say?"

"Nothing."

"Then we're wasting time. Follow me!"

The Bounder followed him in silence from the punishment-room. His face was set. He had thrown away the last chance of salvation—he had had to throw it away. Now he had to take his gruel.

A faint buzz from some of the Form-rooms reached his ears as he followed Wingate by deserted passages to the Head's study. All the fellows were in Form; the culprit was to be dealt with before classes were over, and sent away without anything like a scene. The Bounder understood that; he knew that he was not to see the Remove fellows again—not even his chum Redwing.

Dr. Locke was in his study; Mr. Quelch with him. Both the masters looked grave and stern.

"Here is Vernon-Smith, sir," said Wingate; and, the Bounder having entered the study, the Greyfriars captain drew the door shut and walked away to the Sixth Form Room.

The Bounder breathed hard as he stood before his headmaster. There was little trace of kindness to be seen in the usually kind face of the Head; his glance at the culprit was icy.

"Vernon-Smith, I have only a few words to say to you. A few weeks ago you were found out of House bounds at night, and I warned you of what the result would be if it occurred again. You know what to expect. You will leave Greyfriars this morning."

Smithy set his lips hard. It was what he had expected, yet it came as a crushing blow to him. But he did not flinch.

"Before you go," added the Head in the same stern voice, "I require to know the name of the foolish boy whom you have led into your own pursuits. Mr. Quelch tells me that you have refused to answer him. You will not, I think, refuse to answer me."

"I've led no one into anything," said Vernon-Smith composedly. "I went out last night to warn a fellow that he was in danger. I've told Mr. Quelch so, but he does not believe me."

"Neither can I believe you, Vernon-Smith. But the expulsion of a Greyfriars boy is so terribly serious a matter that I am anxious to give you every chance. If matters are as you state, your conduct was reckless, thoughtless, wilful, but not wicked—and may be punished by a much less severe sentence than expulsion from the school. If you can give me proof of what you say, you remain. The name, then?"

The Bounder was silent.

Perhaps for a moment he was tempted. But had he saved the wretched fag, only to betray him at the finish? And "old Wingate" had been so decent—so thoroughly decent. Was he going to repay him with a blow like that? A thousand times, no! He said nothing.

"Give me the name of the boy, and I will judge," said the Head.

"I can't, sir."

"If you refuse to do so, Vernon-Smith, I can only conclude that you are making one more attempt to delude and deceive me, and that you have nothing to say in extenuation of your conduct."

"I've told the truth, sir. I can't say any more."

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"That is the end. You are expelled from Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith! You leave at once! Mr. Quelch, will you see that this boy in your Form packs his box immediately."

"Follow me, Vernon-Smith!" said the Remove master coldly.

And the Bounder followed him—sacked!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gone!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Seen Smithy?"

"He's sacked! And gone!" said Billy Bunter.

"Gone?"

"Went in a taxi, with Quelch. I asked Gosling. I say, you fellows, ain't it jolly exciting?" grinned Bunter. "They bunked him while we were in class. Rather rotten, don't you think? I'd have liked to see him go."

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,329.

ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!

By JOHN BREARLEY!



WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Simon Allison, once part-owner of the great Allison Motor Works, invents a powerful supercharger that promises to revolutionise the small car industry. Spurred on by a thug named Valetti, Len Allison, the old man's nephew—"boss" of the works and an amateur in the Avonshire County Cricket eleven—enlists the services of a masked hunchback to raid his uncle's workshop and steal the plans. The raid is carried out, and old Simon is badly battered. The "plans" the hunchback takes away, however, are fakes. Left to support his crippled father, Bill Allison, a crack left-handed bowler, joins the county club as a pro, and very soon establishes himself as a match-winner in the eyes of the cricket world. Overjoyed at Bill's success, Mike Doyle, old Simon's mechanic, prepares a warm welcome for Bill. "If the old man's enemies come after the plans again," he murmurs aloud, "we'll be ready for 'em."

(Now read on.)

The Hunchback Again!

DOYLE'S lantern jaws clamped tight on the words. There was a viciousness in the way he turned the key of the workshop door that boded ill for Simon Allison's foes if ever he did get a clear shot at them with his strong, bony hands.

Outside, the sun had just set. The rugged hills beyond Avonport loomed black against a sky-wide blaze of crimson-and-orange fire, and blue dusk clouded the little cottage garden, and the hedge-lined, winding road outside that ran through Kelsey.

Mike, taking a firmer hitch on the "blower," cast a quick, wary glance round before crossing to the cottage itself. Somehow this constant vigilance had become a habit with him of late, for he was quite certain that Simon Allison's enemies were ever on the alert to strike again at Bill and himself.

However, as the only soul in sight just then was a tattered, harmless-looking tramp, meandering down the road, the mechanic shrugged and entered the cottage with his burden. There he went straight up to his bed-room, where he opened a cupboard and pulled up the flooring. Into the cavity below went

plans and model. This was a new hiding-place which Mike had made himself. A dour grin of satisfaction twisted his lips as he replaced the flap and dumped a heavy suitcase on top.

Descending to the lower regions again, Mike Doyle spent some while cleaning off the stains of the day's toil. By that time darkness had closed down; so, switching on the light in the little kitchen-parlour, he drew the blinds and started to prepare supper. Soon the aroma of frizzling sausages filled the room.

"Hoi, there, Cannonball!" whooped a cheery voice, as Mike shoved the pan into the oven to keep hot. "And how's the little ray of sunshine?"

Boisterously the cottage door was flung open, and in barged Bill, fit as a fiddle and brown as a berry; a somewhat older-looking Bill these days, toughened mentally and physically by hard work on county cricket grounds. But his beaming smile was as boyish as ever as he heaved his bag at Mike, who dodged sinuously and let the friendly "gift" fly across the room.

"Noisy young sweep!" growled the mechanic, though his twinkling eyes belied the words. "Glad to see you, son! So you slipped it across Hampshire, then?"

"Not half!" Bill chuckled elegantly, shaking hands. "And just skidded aboard the four o'clock afterwards for home. 'cos we're free until the Essex match on Saturday. Gosh! That grub smells good. How's work been going, Mike?" he added eagerly.

"Pretty good; nearly finished. Got a few repair jobs, too, that brought in a bit of cash since you've been on tour."

"Stout fellow!" Bill smiled at his partner. "The firm's beginning to prosper at last—eh? Jove! I'm just longing for the day when we can pick up a decent car and fit the blower into it; then we'll show the motoring heads what the Allison supercharger can do to an engine. And that reminds me, Mike! I was talking to a fellow in Southampton last night, and he offered to sell me a second-hand Bluebird

Straight Eight for two hundred quid. Of course, we can't afford anything like that yet, but I'd have liked to snap her up. The fellow said he'd raced her at Brooklands, too; and with a car like that for experiments—"

"Nope!"

Mike, setting down the kettle, turned, with a steaming teapot in his hands.

"A Bluebird Straight-Eight is no use to us, Bill, apart from the cost," he said decisively. "It wouldn't prove the real value of the blower at all. Y'see, the beauty of your dad's invention is that it will put the speed and power of a Bluebird engine into the ordinary small every-day car, such as an ordinary every-day driver uses, and so increase the—"

"Ye gods! Mike! Look!"

Harsh and explosive came Bill's sudden cry of alarm then, bringing the technical discussion to an abrupt end.

As a warning to Mike, however, it was a fraction too late.

In a second the partners were trapped in their own cottage.

Silently, swiftly the door opened, and at the same noiseless speed something—a black, shapeless phantom, it seemed at first glance—bounded tigerishly into the room. Then the door clicked shut; masked eyes leered at the two partners wickedly, and a heavy automatic gleamed in a black-gloved hand.

"Up! Hands up—keep 'em up!"

The savage command was as the snarl of a wild beast.

Counter-Attack!

"**J**OE THE HUMP—"

Neither partner could do anything to prevent the daring hold-up, but for the moment neither obeyed the fierce order.

They were too numbed, too petrified, by the sight of the hideous gunman to move. Even the hard-bitten, hard-boiled Mike stood like a statue, still holding the teapot unconsciously. Bill's husky exclamation as he froze in his

chair was the only sound, save the heavy ticking of the clock.

Joe the Hump!

After many weeks the evil, mysterious hunchback, who had nearly killed Simon Allison to get at the valuable plans of the supercharger, had crept out of hiding once more. And this time, it was very clear, the resolute thug had come to complete his dastardly work.

Again, as on that terrible night of the first attack, Bill felt mesmerised, completely overpowered by the hunchback's appearance and brutal personality. Again the nauseating feeling swept over him that this was not a living man of flesh and blood, but a fiend—an inhuman ghoul out of a nightmare.

Scarcely a vestige of the gunman's features could be seen. His head, deep sunk between the malformed shoulders, was covered by a black felt hat, pulled well down over the masked eyes. A scarf of the same sinister colour hid all the lower half of his face, save the sneering lips; and to-night, instead of the high-necked sweater Bill remembered, the ruffian wore a long cloak that reached to his rubber-soled shoes.

Thus he stood, a dark, motionless figure of evil, with the gun resting, firm as a rock, on his right hip.

He it was who first broke the stricken silence.

"Ge'rrium up, I said! Reach for th' ceilin' snappy!"

The words, fired from the corner of his mouth, were like bullets; the voice all the uglier by reason of its sharp, American twang.

Bill, though he pulled himself together somewhat, could do nothing else but obey.

Sluggishly his hands lifted from the table, crawled to the level of his shoulders, and stayed there. The boldness, the ferocity of the hunchback took the youngster's breath away. Both he and Mike were snared; they were in the tightest corner of their lives, he knew. Worse, there seemed no possible way of escape from the gaping muzzle of that gun.

By sheer will power Bill tore his fascinated gaze away from the weapon at last, and glanced dully at Mike. And there again he received a shock, for in the lean, self-controlled mechanic's eyes shone bitter chagrin and rage. His teeth were bared in a snarl; his short hair bristled. Somehow, he reminded Bill just then of a cornered lynx, only biding its time to light for dear life.

"Joe the Hump—eh?" Mike spoke with dangerous quietness. "Corsica Phil Valetti's American sidekick come to life again?"

For a moment the hunchback's gun quivered convulsively, and Bill braced himself for a shot.

But none came. The thug recovered himself. When he retorted his voice was cool, derisive.

"Know me—huh? Waal, an' I know you, Cannonball. An' I know what I've come for, and so do you. Where's those beautiful Allison plans you were chinning about jest now? Oh, yeah! I've been listenin'-in, an' waiting, too, till I got you both together. And—"

The gorilla took a half-step nearer, sinking his voice to a hissing whisper.

"Listen to this as well, Cannonball. I'm itchin' to use this gat—see? Any tricks, and I'll smash this kid's arm and his cricket career at th' same time. As for you, burn it! I'll plug you right where you live! I know th' plans ain't in the safe now. You've got 'em somewhere. Now, d'you hear me?"

The gun flashed ominously.

"Down wi' that pot, and up wi' them hands—quick!" ordered the hunchback.

Mike Doyle obeyed at last, and raised his hands. And he raised the teapot as well!

With incredible speed—so smoothly, so slickly that even the vigilant hunchback was caught unawares—the one-time daredevil of the racing tracks shot out his arms, and flung the steaming pot with all his strength, backed up by seething fury.

From that instant the Allison parlour became a wild and stormy battlefield.

One Exciting Night!

CRASH!
Full on to Joe the Hump's chest landed the heavy missile, bursting with the effect of a bomb. There came a high-pitched yell of agony as piping-hot liquid spurted high, the venomous, ear-tingling report of a gun, and then a warlike shout as Bill slammed into action like a young bull.

The youngster launched himself into the desperate counter-attack as promptly and fearlessly as Mike had done.

Over went the table, crashing to the floor. Then followed another heavy thud as Cannonball Mike, clapping both hands to his face, staggered, tripped, and toppled over a chair. But by that time Bill was piling into the scalded, half-blinded gunman, tooth and nail.

It seemed then as though the tall, tough youngster had gone clean berserk. Here was the cur who had crippled his father; and here was his chance to get square. That was all Bill asked. The rabid desire for vengeance gave him a strength beyond his years.

Quick as lightning he grabbed the hunchback's gun arm before the latter could fire again, and wrenched his wrist backwards with such savage energy that a second cry of pain rang out. The automatic dropped from nerveless fingers, and Bill kicked it vigorously across the floor. Then, ducking under a terrific right swing, he attacked more furiously than ever in an effort to capture the bandit, also.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG ATTRACTIONS!

First and foremost comes Frank Richards' fine, long complete Greyfriars yarn, entitled:

"THE MILLIONAIRE DETECTIVE!"

Popular Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Boulder of Greyfriars, is expelled from school. But don't think Greyfriars is to see the last of him. Oh, dear, no! Not while Smithy's pater is about. In his amazing efforts to clear his son's name, Mr. Vernon-Smith, a City stockbroker, becomes a first-class amateur detective. You'll find this a real tip-top story, and if you haven't already taken my oft-given advice, and ordered your copy in advance, you'd better do so without delay!

Our serial story:

"ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!"

gets better and better every week. Next week's chapters fairly teem with thrills.

Then comes another rib-tickling issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," and last, but not least, our usual cricket feature. Order your MAGNET now—it's too good to be missed!—Ed.

But, alas! he failed.

Once again the humpback's tremendous strength and fighting ability proved too much for the plucky youngster. Badly hurt though he was, Joe the Hump recovered his scattered wits, and rallied fiercely, goaded to madness by the loss of his weapon, and fear.

For the second time the raid on the Allison plans had flopped. The hunchback knew that now. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Mike Doyle crawling across to pick up the fallen automatic, and he was terrified, too, lest any of the Kelscy villagers farther down the road might have heard the shot and be on their way to investigate.

Cursing thickly, he flung Bill off, tore open the door, and, for a second, crouched at bay. For Bill Allison had still to be settled before the path to freedom was clear.

Slap into him rushed the youngster once more, fighting mad. But now that he was out in the open the desperado had elbow room to spare.

Like the expert he was, he swayed back from a rousing straight left, then slipped in again, and countered with a haymaker to the heart.

Just in time Bill got his forearm across, partially blocking the murderous uppercut with his elbow. But though he staved off a certain knock-out, the crushing force of the blow sent him reeling back into the parlour, and next moment the hunchback was in full retreat.

As Bill, bruised and groggy, tottered after him through the door, Mike, in a gasping voice, called to him imploringly to come back.

Bill did not hear, however. He did not know even that Mike's right cheekbone had been laid open by the one shot Joe the Hump had fired. All he did know was that the misshapen bandit was escaping once more, and the knowledge lent wings to his heels.

Outside in the dim starlight he was just in time to see the black, blurred figure hurdle the front gate, swerve right, and go pelting up the road.

Bill, sobbing for breath, spurted; but then, of a sudden, he checked and made a dash for the toolshed instead.

A moment later he was rushing his faithful old bike down the path.

Through the gate, into the saddle. Again he caught a bare glimpse of his quarry just turning a bend in the road, and with that he drove hard at the pedals.

That he was taking an appalling risk of being manhandled, or even killed, in tackling the powerful crook again singlehanded, never occurred to the headstrong youngster. All the impetuosity, the reckless courage in his nature, was uppermost now, urging him on blindly. Like a shot from a gun, Bill went up the road in pursuit.

"Go it, Wheezy—he won't run far!" said Bill—then changed to a bitter groan of despair as an all-dismaying sound floated back to him an instant later.

From somewhere not far ahead, came the vibrant whirr-rr of a self-starter!

"A car! Oh, blazes, of course! I forgot! The brute had a car waiting last time!"

The disjointed sentences ripped through Bill's mind then, even as he redoubled his efforts to catch up. Wheezy's tyres fairly zipped on the macadam. At a perilous angle the lad streaked round the bend. A shout of baffled rage escaped him at sight of the hunchback's car swinging out from the side to the centre of the road.

An open tourer it looked like, though the darkness blurred its outlines. No
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lights showing, of course—and no number-plate visible in the gloom.

Joe the Hump was standing on the running-board, wrenching open the door of the tonneau, and Bill scorching faster, throwing every ounce of energy into a breathless, resolute attempt to get on terms before the driver could change gear and accelerate. Just when his hopes were running high, however, the change was made swiftly, expertly.

Bill's last chance of getting to grips with his foe faded then—perhaps fortunately for him.

Full on, the fugitive car went hurtling down the road, leaving Bill as though he was standing still. The last thing the youngster saw was the dark figure of the hunchback leaning grimly over the back of the tonneau as the driver took the next bend flying.

Nevertheless, Bill carried on.

He had one last card to play, and that was to keep going, sticking as close to the trail as he could on the off-chance of meeting the local policeman or A.A. man on night-patrol, and so spreading the alarm as speedily as possible. Still full of flight, therefore, he, too, skimmed round the bend at top pace, and—

Ran full-tilt into a well-laid snare!

What happened exactly Bill never knew, until it was too late. But, of a sudden, there came a sickening lurch as his front wheel struck something in the road, and the next moment Wheezy Anna was hopelessly out of control.

Loose stones slipped from under the wheels; the machine bumped, bounced, then skidded wildly across the road. With a violent thud, the front wheel struck again, this time against the grassy bank.

Bill, flung heavily over the handlebars, toppled head-first into the ditch and stayed there, half-stunned, badly-winded, and torn from head to foot by brambles.

The pursuit of Joe the Hump was definitely over!

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the exciting developments in next week's chapters of this powerful cricket story.)

THE BOUNDER'S GOOD TURN!

(Continued from page 25.)

"Gone!" repeated Harry Wharton blankly.

The Remove were out in the morning break. Mr. Quelch could be seen in his study, through the open window. He had returned from Courtfield Station, after seeing the Bounder off by train.

The Bounder of Greyfriars was gone! It was difficult for the fellows to realise it!

"Poor old Smithy!" said Frank Nugent softly. "He—he's really gone!"

"It won't be the same without Smithy!" said Bob, in a subdued voice.

"Next term—it won't be the same."

"We've had lots of rows with him," said Johnny tall. "But—but—dash it all, it's rough luck on the man!"

"Gone!" repeated Wharton. "Yes, it's rough luck—rotten rough! I—I can't believe he's really gone—for good!"

Wingate of the Sixth was in the quad, with a grave face. Harry Wharton ran across to him.

"Is Smithy gone, Wingate?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Bunked?"

"Yes."

Wharton returned to his friends.

"It's official," he said. "He's gone—bunked! Poor old Smithy! He's had hard luck. I'm absolutely certain that he never was playing the goat last night. He went out to tip some silly ass. He said so, and I'm certain of it! But I suppose the beaks can't be expected to believe so—after his record!"

"If it's so, the other fellow could see him 'rough' said... "He must be rather a worm to keep mum and let Smithy get it in the neck."

"Too scared to speak out, I imagine," said Nugent. "But—but he must be rather a rotter, if what Smithy said was true."

Across Wharton's mental vision floated a pale, frightened face—the face of Wingate minor! Was it possible?

In third school that morning Mr. Quelch's face was very grim. The most troublesome boy in the Remove was gone. But an expulsion in his Form was disagreeable enough to any Form master. Fellows' eyes turned continually to Vernon-Smith's vacant desk.

After third school Harry Wharton

looked for Wingate minor of the Third. He found a crowd of that cheery Form in the quad—all discussing the startling news of an expulsion. But Jack Wingate was not with them.

"Seen young Wingate, Tubb?" asked Harry.

Snort, from Tubb.

"Oh, he's mooched off somewhere," he answered. "Shirty little beast!"

Wharton found the captain's minor "mooching" under the elms. He seemed to want solitude—which was not unexpected, if Wharton's growing suspicion was well-founded. The captain of the Remove found him with his hands in his pockets and a cloud on his face, looking thoroughly miserable. He gave a start as Harry tapped him on the shoulder.

"Smithy's gone!" said Harry.

"I—I know!"

"Do you know anything about it?"

The fag gave a jump, and stared at him with scared eyes.

"What should I know about it?" His voice was shrill. "What do you mean? Mind your own business!"

Wharton knew, then!

"Look here, kid," he said quietly.

"Smithy's got the chopper for doing some fellow a good turn last night. It's up to that fellow to cough it up. I know it's hard; but they wouldn't sack a kid in the Third. You'd get off easier than Smithy. If it was you—"

"I don't know anything about it!" It was a squeal of terror. "Mind your own business! Can't you mind your own business?"

Wingate minor turned and scuttled away among the elms. Wharton stared after him with a grim face. What would Wingate say, if he knew? But Wingate would not know. Smithy had kept the secret!

"We'll jolly well see old Smithy again in the hols, anyhow!" declared Bob Cherry. "I don't care if he's sacked! I'm not turning him down for one! We're going to see him in the hols!"

And the chums of the Remove agreed that they were going to.

THE END.

(Make sure you read: "THE MILLIONAIRE DETECTIVE" the next yarn in this wonderful new series dealing with the ever-popular Bounder of Greyfriars. It's filled with exciting situations, and is, without doubt, one of Frank Richards' extra-specials!)

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Will readers please note that the result of GEM "OUTLINES" Competition—in which FIVE JAMES' CYCLES were offered as prizes—will appear in the GEM on sale Wednesday, August 2nd.



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EMEROCATION

Small quantity wanted urgently. Wharton has just told me I'm going to get it where the chicken got the chopper, and thinking about it gives me a pain in the neck.—H. SKINNER, Study No. 11, Remove.

HINT FROM THE RAILWAY

We learn that the railway company is doing away with the old buffers at Courtfield Station. Some fellows are of the opinion that a similar reform is overdue in the Greyfriars Board of Governors.

No. 44 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

August 5th, 1933.



DISCARDED HOSIERY WANTED!
A juvenile acquaintance has informed me that the "Remove" will give the Fourth socks next term, and I want to be ready with my quote.—ALONZO TODD, c/o GREYFRIARS HERALD.

SLOT-MACHINE EGGSPELT—
Gives Free Tushun in seaside slot-machine games in return for Board, Lodging and Eggspelets. 1st Klass rofs. from eggspelet's own titled relashuns.—Write "Eggspelet," Box 34, GREYFRIARS HERALD.

RIOT ON WORTHING PIER

Bolsover Leads Slot-Machine Rebels

Our Worthing correspondent writes: That the celebrated bally air of Worthing has not yet smoothed off the rough edges of Bolsover major's un-certain temper was shown in no uncertain manner on the pier this week.

Bolsover thought he'd try one of those penny-in-the-slot machines in which you have to shoot six cats off a wall and get your penny back if you do it according to schedule.

Much to Bolsover's disgust, the machine wouldn't work. Several small boys noticed his dilemma, however, and reeled off to fetch a young man who carried about a million keys suspended on chains around his neck. The young man inserted one of these keys in the machine and opened it. His expression was hostile when he looked round at Bolsover.

"No money in it!" he said, briefly, thereafter slamming the machine back into place and marching off to the musical accompaniment of his jingling halter.

To say that Bolsover was annoyed would be doing a serious injustice to the fondish expression that came into Bolsover's face. Bolsover knew jolly well that he had inserted a penny, and he knew jolly well that the machine hadn't worked.

"Robbers!" he gurgled, in a voice choked with rage. "Strandlers! Why, I'll smash 'em! I'll..."

Several interested pier-promenaders gathered round to listen. Their eyes flashed and their faces darkened as they heard his story. There is a spirit of comradeship among holidaymakers in matters like this. With holidaymakers, it's a case of "Each for all and all for each." All Worthing Pier seemed to rally round Bolsover during the next five minutes.

"I'm not going to be sat on by any one!" roared Bolsover, when he had worked himself up into a white heat of passion. "Either I get my penny back or I do my level best to wreck their blessed pier for 'em! We'll soon see which it's to be!"

Grinding his teeth ferociously and



operate the works, it had slipped out and fallen on to the ledge of the stand on which the machine was resting!

Bolsey decided not to lead the revolt, after all. Instead, he had a go at the penny-in-the-slot punchball—and succeeded in smashing it!

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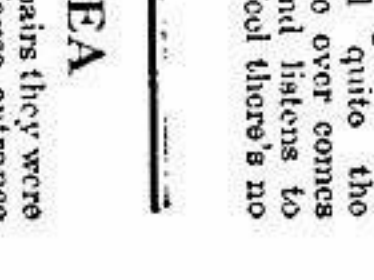
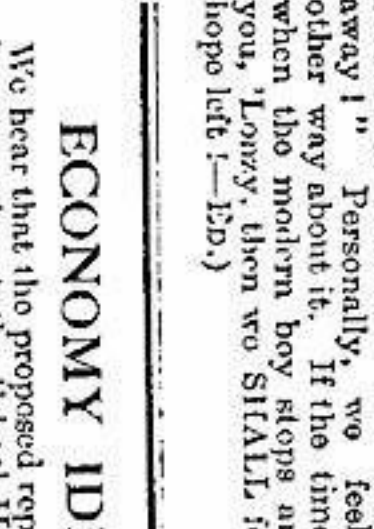
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

Prefects are the most unreasonable because I know. If you don't do what they tell you, you get "six"—and if you do it, you get "six" all the same!

When I was practising on my mouth-organ the other day and Loder leaned out of his window and yelled "Chuck it, you young idiot!" I chuckled it at once. And what do you think I got for chucking it? SIX!

Personally, I can see no earthly eggcuse whatever in Loder's rage apart from the fact that in chucking it, I happened to hit him on the boko!



AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Coker Minor

By Tom North

Reginald Coker, better known as Coker minor, is the young brother of Horace Coker. But, by a strange freak of fate, he belongs to a higher form than his elder brother!

When he first arrived at Greyfriars and secured a place in the Sixth, it was after tragedy to his major. The whole school roared over the strange situation and Coker major's pride received a blow from which it seemed likely never to recover.

It speaks volumes for Coker minor's tact and good sense that it actually did recover in a very short space of time. To-day, nobody thinks of chipping Horace because he has a brother in the Sixth—a state of affairs for which Coker minor can justly claim most of the credit.

Coker minor, you see, for all his intellectual attainments, is as modest as they make 'em. He looks up to his major with the same respect as you might anticipate from a Second Form lad and gratefully every demand an elder brother's pride can reasonably make on him.

That he finds no difficulty in doing this is explained by the fact that he lacks everything which Horace possesses—physical strength, self-assertiveness, courage and buoyant optimism.

Young Coker was a target for bullies in his early days at Greyfriars. But Coker major came down with such a heavy hand on his minor's would-be persecutors that they soon gave it up, and most of us were very glad to see it.

It takes all sorts to make a world and, while Coker minor may not be every-body's ideal, it is generally realised now that he is a decent chap, well deserving of his respected place in the life of the School.

(And now look out for Coker minor's views on Tom North next week, chaps!—Ed.)

REMOVES CAPTURE THE SEA-SERPENT

Greyfriars Heroes Feted



but now that a sea-serpent was actually advancing on them, the funny side didn't occur to them at all.

The only thing they could do was to die like Britons and sell their lives as dearly as possible.

With this end in view, Kippes picked up a bathook and Hilary an oar, and both faced the oncoming monster.

Then, as it drew nearer, they noticed that the Sea Serpent was particularly lifeless and wondered whether their preparations were altogether needless. Doubt on this point soon changed to certainty. As the monster drew abreast of them, they saw that its "flesh" was merely gaudily-painted timber and its "head" just a creation of cardboard. They also noticed that the curves that protruded

from the water all contained seats.

The whole thing was nothing more than a curiously contrived boat, shaped to resemble a sea-serpent!

Were they relieved? Well, Kippes tells us Hilary was so relieved that he threw his oar into the water and forgot to retrieve it! Still, that didn't matter much for, on exploring the Sea Serpent, they found that it was fitted with a motor and proper steering apparatus. So they were able to take their own boat in tow and sail round the coast looking for the home from which their weird capture had escaped.

That home turned out to be one of the island pleasure piers from which the "serpent," which was to have been one of the novel attractions of the local regatta, had broken loose and drifted away during the night.

Kippes and Hilary arrived just in time for the regatta and were feted as the heroes of the day.

Their one regret is that they can't claim the monster as a record catch to add to their angling honours!

People We Don't Cater For

1. The cricketor who seriously maintains that there is only one thing wrong with the Remove team—his absence from it!
 2. The chap who runs a mile when Bolsover kicks him and calls Bolsey "old fellow" next time they meet.
 3. The chap who sings a pee at Quech in class and then says that Dutton did it.
 4. The optimist who expects us to devote two columns a week to describing how clever he is—and to see that Quech gets a copy of each number!
 5. The fellow whose imagination is so disordered that he imagines Coker has a brain.
 6. The rank outsider who uses our paper as a pipe-lighter.
 7. The fathead who scowls and says "Bah!" when he reads our jokes and yells with laughter over our serious articles.
- There are many more—but that will do for this week!



'Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—A feature appertaining to modern juvenescence which, in the adjudication of the writer, is to be vigorously deprecated is that inherent restlessness, the concomitant of those psychological neuroses so characteristic of this age, which renders immobility a matter of inordinate difficulty. Lagubious as it may be, I cannot elude acknowledgment of the conclusion that this phenomenon demonstrates a tendency to augmentation. My dominant logical motive for thus cogitating is incontrovertibly substantial: I INAUGURATE A VERBAL DISCOURSE ON ANTHROPOPHILICAL, DOCTRINES OR SUBJECTS OF EQUIVALENT INTEREST, MY JUVENILE ACQUAINTANCES! PEDESTALIANISTIC ACTIVITIES!

Sorrowfully yours,
ALONZO TODD.

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

(Brief translation: "The modern boy is obviously going to the merry bow-tows because as soon as I start talking he walks away!" Personally, we feel quite the other way about it. If the time ever comes when the modern boy stops and listens to you, Lonzy, then we SHALL feel there's no hope left!—Ed.)

ECONOMY IDEA

We hear that the proposed repairs they were going to make at the School House entrance during the vac. are now being postponed owing to the need for economy.

May we suggest that the repairs could be quite satisfactorily effected with the aid of some of the "doonkeys"? They serve up for tea in Italy!