

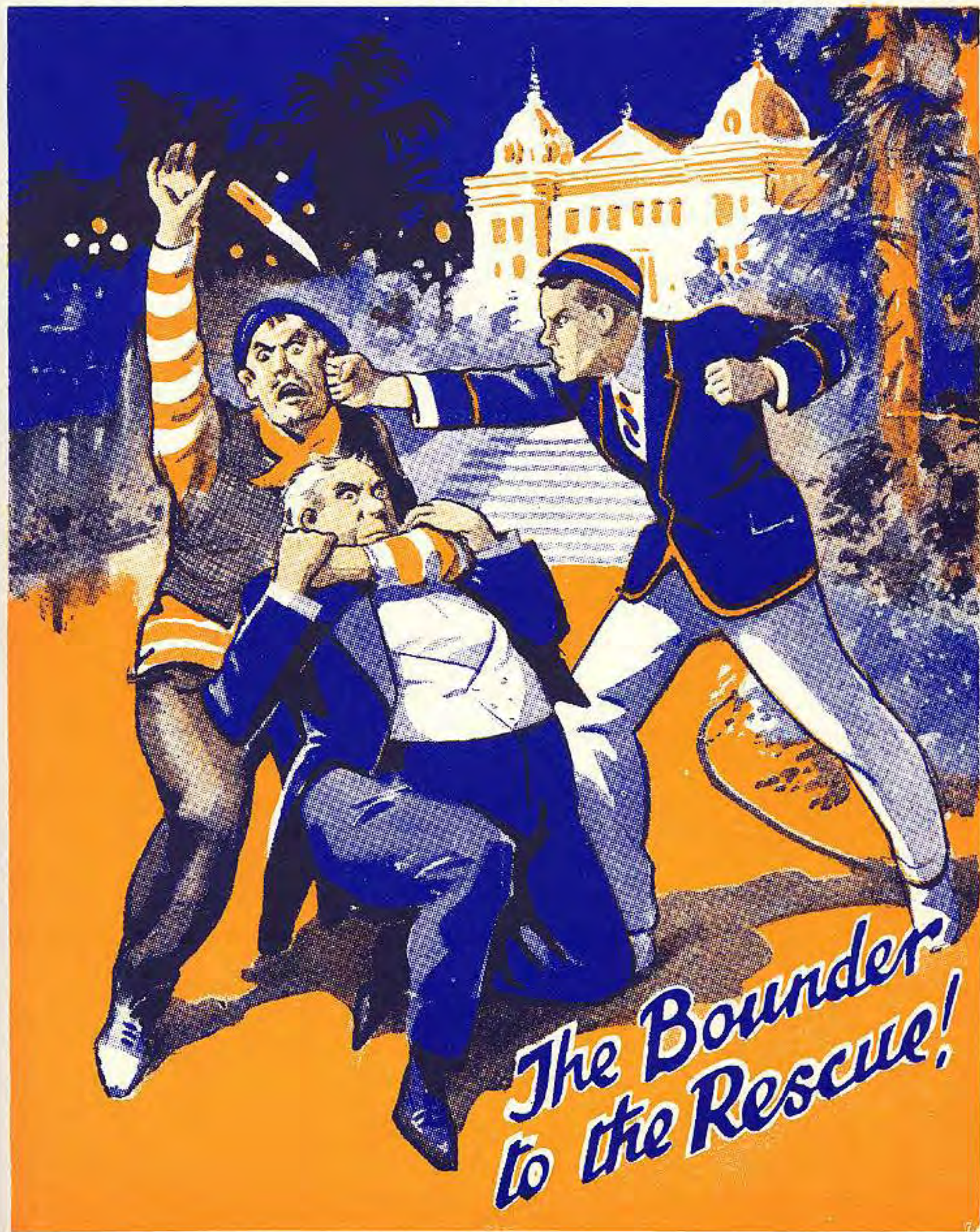
Harry Wharton & Co. in France! *Read:* "The SCHOOLBOY TRIPPERS!"

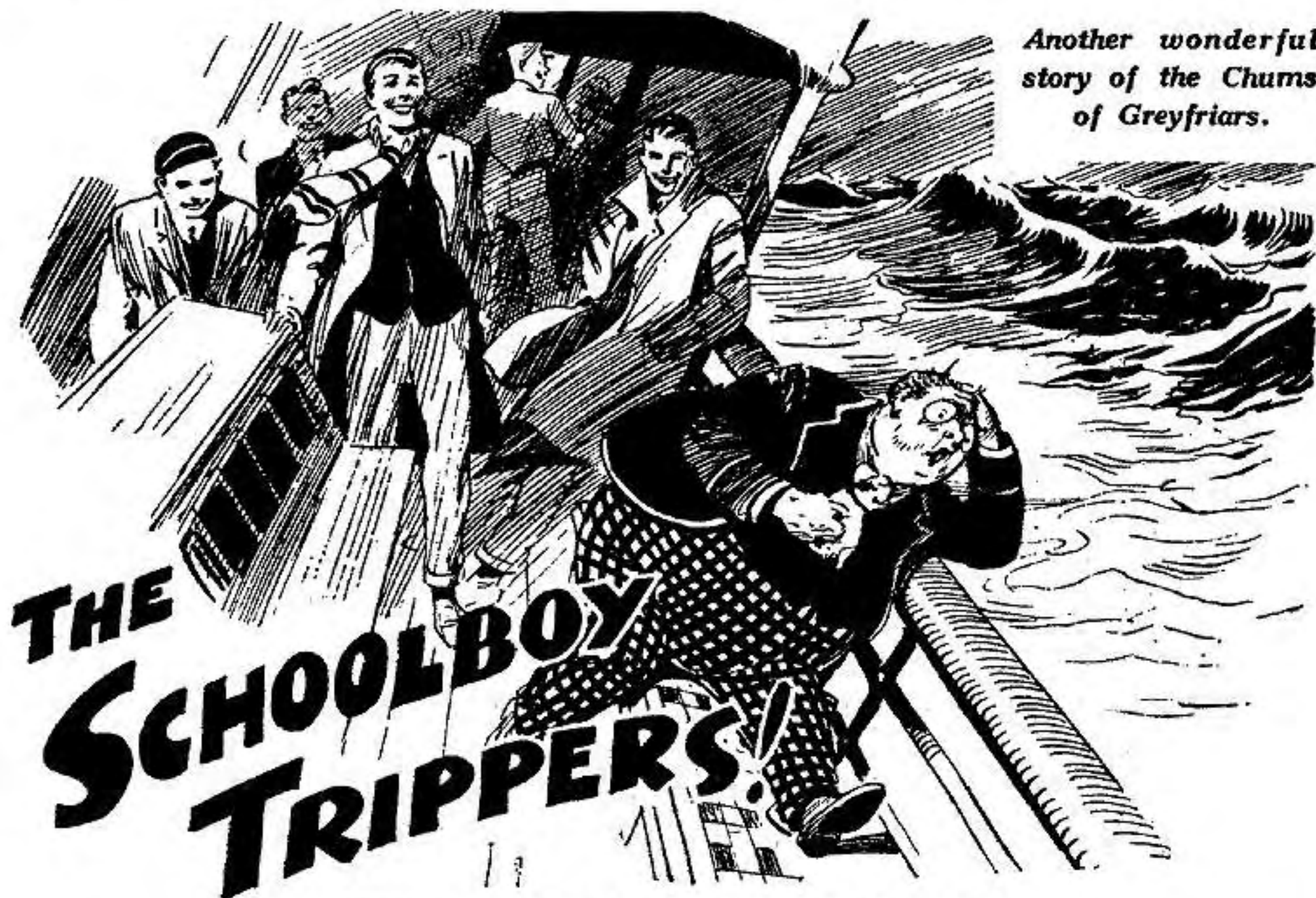
The MAGNET^{2D}

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EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending April 21st, 1934.





Another wonderful story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Admittance!

TAP, tap, tap!
Snore!
Tap, tap!
Billy Bunter grunted.

"Are you awake?"

"Beast!"

"Wha-a-a-a-at?"

Billy Bunter turned his head on the pillow. He was not getting up yet—not if Bunter knew it! It was ten o'clock on a fine April morning. But the bright spring sunshine and the wind in the trees did not tempt Billy Bunter out of doors—or out of bed!

At Greyfriars School Bunter had to turn out at the clang of the rising-bell, like the rest of the Remove. But on holiday Billy Bunter could take his ease. Away from Greyfriars, Billy Bunter never turned out of bed if he could help it till the yearning for brekker drove him forth.

Tap, tap!

"Oh, go away!" yelled Bunter.

"But—"

"Shut up!"

Bunter was indignant—justly indignant! He was having a rotten Easter holiday—absolutely rotten!

Seacliff Bungalow, on the chalky coast of Kent, a few miles from Folkestone, might have attracted some fellows. It did not attract Bunter.

He loathed it.

Only one consideration kept him there. He had nowhere else to go. It was a case of any port in a storm.

A holiday in a lonely bungalow with a tutor who expected him to take lessons was not Bunter's idea of a holiday.

Certainly Mr. Pickering, the tutor, had not been very successful in the

matter of lessons. Making Bunter work was no easy task. Even Mr. Quelch, his Form-master at Greyfriars, had not found that easy.

Tap, tap, tap!

Bunter was glad that he had locked his door.

His first morning there the tutor man, receiving no response to his tapping, had entered and shaken him up. After that the fat Owl of the Remove carefully locked his door at night.

"Master Vernon-Smith!" came the tired, rather squeaky voice of Mr. Pickering outside the bed-room door.

Billy Bunter snorted.

The mention of Herbert Vernon-Smith's name had an exceedingly irritating effect on the Owl of the Remove. It was Smithy who had landed him in this.

It had seemed rather a catch to Bunter when Smithy put him up to it at Greyfriars. Smithy's father was wrathful with him—not without reason! The millionaire had ordered his son to proceed to Mr. Pickering's when the school broke up, and Smithy, who had his own plans made for Easter, had sent Bunter in his place, while he cleared off with Pon & Co., of Highcliff. It had worked like a charm—so far as that went. All would have been well if Bunter had found Seacliff Bungalow the sort of place he expected. But he hadn't!

It was rotten!

All the while he had been at the place Bunter had eaten hardly twice as much as was good for him.

Eating was chief among the joys of life to Billy Bunter; sleeping came next. And if they didn't give a fellow enough to eat, they might at least, Bunter indignantly considered, let him take it out in sleep.

Tap, tap, tap!

Bunter sat up in bed, his little round eyes gleaming.

"Will you let a fellow sleep?" he howled. "I'm not getting up yet! I'm not going to do any work! See? Yah!"

"Master Vernon-Smith—"

"Yah!" hooted Bunter.

"You must really get up—"

"Rats!"

"Your father—"

"What?"

"Your father is here and cannot stay long—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"He is waiting to see you!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Please be quick!"

"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Pickering's footsteps were heard retreating. No doubt he was satisfied that the news that his father had arrived would cause Master Vernon-Smith to turn out of bed at once and put in an appearance.

But in the peculiar circumstances it was not likely to do so.

Bunter sat in horror.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had arrived, expecting to find his son there. Indeed, the tutor, believing Bunter to be Vernon-Smith, had, of course, told him that his son was there, but not yet up.

This was the climax.

What Mr. Vernon-Smith would say—what he would do—when he found another Greyfriars fellow there pretending to be Herbert Vernon-Smith, Bunter hardly dared imagine.

"Beast!" he groaned.

Smithy had told him that his father was going abroad. That had made the scheme seem perfectly safe.

Yet here he was!

When he made such an astonishing discovery there was no doubt that the millionaire would be very angry with his

son. But that was not what was worrying Bunter. He was not thinking of the result to Smithy; he was thinking of the result to himself. The angry millionaire might report this amazing deception to Dr. Locke, at Greyfriars. Worse than even that he might give Bunter the thrashing he undoubtedly deserved. In fact, there was no "might" about it; he was certain—absolutely certain—to give Bunter a thrashing.

"Oh crikey!" gasped the wretched Owl of the Remove. "Wha-a-a-at's a fellow going to do?"

There was a heavy tread in the little hall of the bungalow. It was followed by a sharp knock at the door—or, rather, a bang. It was not the mild Mr. Pickering this time. Bunter knew who it was, and he fairly cringed.

"Herbert!" It was the deep, stern voice of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

"Oh lor'!" breathed Bunter.

He blinked at the door. It was of rather flimsy construction, like the rest of the building, and it shook under the millionaire's heavy knock. Billy Bunter was doubly glad that he had locked it. He wished now that there was a bolt on it—two or three strong bolts!

"Herbert, why are you not up? It is past ten o'clock! Come out of your room at once! If you are not dressed, put on a dressing-gown!"

"Oh crikey!"

"What did you say?" Knock, knock! "I have no time to waste, Herbert! I have come down to Folkestone to take the boat for Boulogne. I determined to give you a look-in before I went, and I find you in bed—in bed at this hour! Open your door at once, you idle young rascal!"

Bunter did not answer. Mr. Vernon-Smith might not have known whose voice it was, but he would have known that it was not his son's. Bunter drew one gleam of hope from the millionaire's words. If Mr. Vernon-Smith was catching the Channel boat he could not stay long. Bunter had only to sit tight and keep his door locked.

"Herbert!"

No answer.

"Good gad! Is the boy sulking? Herbert, answer me at once!" roared the angry voice at the door. "How dare you not answer me! Do you dare to disregard your father?"

Bunter certainly would not have disregarded his father. But he was prepared to disregard Vernon-Smith's father. He sat tight.

There was a snort of wrath at the door.

"Herbert, if you are sulking, I warn you to be careful. I am quite aware that you did not wish to spend your vacation here; you would have preferred to spend it with your disreputable associates. But I intend to see, sir, that you do nothing of the kind. Open this door at once!"

Billy Bunter would almost as soon have opened the door to a Royal Bengal tiger!

"Herbert!" Mr. Vernon-Smith almost roared. He was both amazed and exasperated by the refusal of his son—as he supposed—to see him! He had been prepared to find that the Bounder of Greyfriars had his back up at being compelled to spend a dull and dreary Easter at the tutor's bungalow, in place of the uproarious holiday he had anticipated. But he had not expected this!

"Will you open this door?" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Oh lor'!" breathed Billy Bunter.

"Good gad! Is the boy out of his senses?" thundered Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Impudent—insolent—rebellious——"

"Oh crikey!"

"What does this mean, Herbert?"

"Oh scissors!"

"Open this door at once!"

"No jolly fear!" breathed Bunter.

Knock! Thump! Bang! Thump!

Billy Bunter groped for his spectacles, and set them on his fat little nose, and blinked in terror at the door. It rattled and it shook, as if it was going to yield under the angry thumping of the angry man in the hall. If it did——

Bang! Thump!

From the bottom of his fat heart Billy Bunter repented him that he had taken Smithy's place at the tutor's bungalow for Easter. But repentance, as usual, came too late! He was fairly "for it" now, and he could only sit and blink in terror at the creaking door, as Mr. Vernon-Smith, angrier and angrier every moment, thumped and thumped and thumped.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Astonishing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Is that the place?"

"Looks as if it might be."

"Seacliff Bungalow is the name," said Harry Wharton. "I've got it in Redwing's letter."

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob Cherry.

Ruin stares the Bounder of Greyfriars in the face when his millionaire father discovers the base deception he has practised upon him. But the Bounder's recklessness, which has landed him into this new trouble, is responsible, also, for getting him out of it!

staring from the window of the taxi-cab. "He must feel a bit like Robinson Crusoe there!"

"Then he'll be all the gladder to see us!" grinned Nugent.

"The gladfulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "will probably be terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove were up earlier than Billy Bunter that fine, sunny April morning.

They had been up, in fact, very early.

It was going to be a busy day for the Famous Five.

They had left Wharton Lodge at a very early hour. It was still quite early when they landed at Folkestone from the train. They were going on one of those widely advertised day trips to Boulogne and back in the same day. They need not have arrived at Folkestone quite so early to take the Channel boat. But they were, so to speak, killing two birds with one stone.

Harry Wharton took a letter from his pocket. He had received it a day or two ago from Tom Redwing, the Bounder's chum, who was gone to sea with his father for the holidays. The postmark was Hull, where it appeared that the ship had put in. From that letter it was easy to guess that Redwing was not easy in his mind about his wayward chum. It ran:

"Dear Wharton,—I remember you mentioning that you might be taking a trip across the Channel in the hols. If you happen to be at Folkestone

you might give Smithy a look-in. He's with a tutor for the holidays—a Mr. Pickering—at a place called Seacliff Bungalow, at Amping, which, I believe, is a few miles from Folkestone. I'm sure he'd be glad to see a Greyfriars fellow; it must be rather a bore for a chap like Smithy.

"T. REDWING."

"If that's the show, I've no doubt Smithy finds it rather a bore!" said Harry. "It looks lonely enough."

There was no doubt that the bungalow looked rather solitary. Save for a few cottages near the cliffs, there was no other building in sight. The scenery was glorious. Great chalky cliffs and a rolling blue sea; and inland, the green, surging downs. But the chums of the Remove knew that that was not likely to console Herbert Vernon-Smith very much.

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob. "He was talking just before break-up of going for the holidays with Pon & Co. of Highcliffe. His father seems to have put paid to that!"

"All the better for him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The betterfulness is great!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the borefulness of the esteemed and ludicrous Smithy is probably preposterous!"

"There's a whacking big car at the gate!" remarked Frank Nugent. "I fancy I've seen that car before."

"Smithy's pater's car!" said Bob. "I've seen it at Greyfriars! I know that chauffeur by sight, too! Looks as if Smithy's pater is calling on him this morning, as well as our noble selves! Well, the more the merrier!"

"That's the place, anyhow!" said Harry, as he discerned the name "Seacliff" on the gate. And he called to the taxi-driver to stop.

The chums of the Remove descended.

The gate gave on a long shingly path leading up to the bungalow, which lay well back from the road.

Near the gate stood a magnificent Rolls car, with a chauffeur standing like a statue beside it.

He touched his cap to the juniors, whom he evidently recognised as Greyfriars fellows. He had driven Mr. Vernon-Smith to the school often enough in that magnificent car.

"Is Mr. Vernon-Smith here?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir; in the house," answered the chauffeur.

The chums of the Remove went up the path. They wondered as they went how Smithy was standing a vacation in such a spot. They could have enjoyed it themselves—boating, swimming, and rambling on the rugged downs. But their ways were not Smithy's ways. And they knew, too, that the Bounder of Greyfriars had been making plans for a wild and whirling time in the holidays, in company with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe.

Since Smithy's narrow escape from being expelled, his once indulgent father seemed to have taken the stern Brutus as a model in dealing with him. How Smithy was standing it was quite an interesting question. They were not aware that he was not standing it at all; but had gone off with his Highcliffe friends, leaving Billy Bunter to "stand" it in his place!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry, as they neared the building. "Are they breaking up the happy home?"

Thump, thump! Bang! came from the open doorway of the bungalow.

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Someone, it seemed, was knocking at a door within with extraordinary vigour.

"What the dickens—" murmured Wharton.

Thump, thump, thump!

The chums of the Remove exchanged curious glances. Evidently something of an unusual nature was going on at Seaciff Bungalow.

The front door stood wide open.

As they reached it a loud, deep, angry voice came to their ears—the voice of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the Bounder's father.

"Herbert! You impertinent young rascal! How dare you! I repeat, how dare you refuse to see me, your father?"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

The juniors stopped at the doorway. They seemed to have arrived at a rather awkward moment. In the kindness of their hearts they had determined to give Smithy a look-in, as Redwing suggested in his letter. In fact, they rather hoped that Mr. Pickering might be induced to consent to Smithy taking a day's leave, and coming across to Boulogne with them on the trip. But certainly they did not want to barge in while a family row was going on! And it looked like it—and sounded like it.

In the little lounge hall of the bungalow they sighted a thin, worried-looking gentleman in horn-rimmed glasses. This, as they guessed, was the tutor, Mr. Pickering. Looking past him, they spotted the portly figure of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith standing at a door, on which he was thumping with a clenched hand. His plump face was almost purple.

"Herbert!" he roared, as the Famous Five stopped. "You idle young rascal, you should have been up hours ago! I insist upon seeing you before I go back to Folkestone to take the boat! Do you hear? Unlock this door at once—at once! Do you hear me?"

If Herbert Vernon-Smith was in the locked room, there could be no doubt that he heard. Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice could be heard all over the building, and to a considerable distance beyond. But there came no reply.

"This is—extraordinary!" said Mr. Pickering, in his tired, squeaky voice. "The boy's behaviour is—extraordinary!"

"Is he out of his senses!" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What can be the matter with the boy? What?"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Dear me!" Mr. Pickering spotted the juniors at the front doorway, and came towards them. "Who—what—"

"We're friends of Vernon-Smith, sir," said Harry Wharton. "As we were in Folkestone this morning we thought we'd run along and see him. Isn't he up yet?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith spun round from the bed-room door at the sound of the voices.

"What is that?" he hooted. "Who are— Oh, Wharton!" The angry gentleman calmed himself a little. He was well acquainted with the cheery Co. of Greyfriars, and honoured them with his good opinion. "Oh, you came here to see my son?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "I suppose we can see Smithy?"

"It appears that nobody can see him," snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "He is not up, at past ten o'clock in the morning. His door is locked, and he refuses to answer me. I cannot understand him. He has always been reckless and rebellious, but this passes all bounds."

He thumped on the bed-room door again.

"Herbert!" he roared.

No reply.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another in sheer amazement. If the Bounder was in that room, his conduct was absolutely inexplicable.

Mr. Vernon-Smith breathed wrath.

He was not a patient gentleman. But the most patient of men might have been exasperated by this utter disregard. The millionaire really seemed on the verge of boiling over.

Harry Wharton & Co., hardly knowing what to say or do, or whether to stay or go, stood grouped in the little porch quite at a loss. Mr. Pickering blinked at them, and blinked at the millionaire, evidently in a state of wonder and distress. Mr. Vernon-Smith turned to him.

"Mr. Pickering, I must see my son! I will not be defied by my son, sir! I think the boy must be mad! He refuses to open his door! It must be forced! Have you any objection, sir? I will pay for the damage. You have no objection, I presume, to my forcing this lock, which can easily be repaired? What—what?"

Taking Mr. Pickering's permission for granted, at all events without waiting for a reply, Mr. Vernon-Smith turned to the door again. His portly shoulder bumped on it, hard and heavy. Both door and lock were flimsy enough. There was a crash as both went, and the door flew wide; and Mr. Vernon-Smith, taken rather by surprise by the sudden yielding of the door, pitched headlong into the room, and landed on his portly hands and knees!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Herbert!

BILLY BUNTER quaked in sheer terror.

Sitting in the bed, blinking through his big spectacles at the door, he heard the millionaire's words, and knew that the game was up.

Another minute and Smithy's father would be in the room.

The hapless fat Owl cast a wild blink round him. There was a window which gave on the garden of the bungalow. But there was no time to drag back the curtains, open the window and flee; neither was Billy Bunter prepared to flee into the outer world in his pyjamas, or rather, Smithy's pyjamas. He quaked.

But there was no time to lose. Even as the angry gentleman in the hall crashed his shoulder on the flimsy door, Bunter bounded out of bed.

Another bound, and he was under the bed.

He vanished from sight as the door flew open, and Smithy's father tumbled in.

Under the bed the fat Owl crouched and quaked.

It was a rather small single bed, and there was not a lot of room for the fattest fellow at Greyfriars underneath. But the bed clothes hung over the side of the bedstead, and hid him from sight.

He could only hope that Mr. Vernon-Smith wouldn't look under the bed for his son. That was his only hope now.

He strove to still his breathing as he huddled there in quaking dread. Mr. Vernon-Smith's ejaculations as he tumbled into the room were not reassuring to hear.

"Ow! Good gad! Wow! Wurrgh! Ooogh! Oh gad!"

"My dear sir!" gasped the bewildered Mr. Pickering. He ran forward to help his terrifying visitor to his feet.

But the millionaire scrambled up unaided. The expression on his face was alarming. His temper, already at boiling point, had boiled over in taking that tumble.

"Now, you disobedient young rascal!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

He stared round the room.

Nobody was to be seen.

He gazed at the empty bed.

"Where is he?" he hooted.

"Dear me!" Mr. Pickering, already in a bewildered state, gazed at the unoccupied bed as if stupefied. "Dear me! He—he—he is—is not there!"

"Where is he?" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton & Co. came across the little hall. It occurred to all of them that a little friendly and tactful intervention might be needed in the present exacerbated state of Mr. Vernon-Smith's temper. They stared blankly into the room. The Bounder was not there.

"The boy is not here!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith, with an accusing glare at the tutor. "You told me that he was here—that he was not yet up!"

The elderly tutor was blinking at the bed through his horn-rimmed glasses like a bemused owl.

"Someone was here!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I certainly heard someone, though I received no answer. Certainly there was someone! Herbert—Herbert!" he roared. "Herbert!"

"He—he—he was here!" stuttered Mr. Pickering. "He answered me when I called him. He certainly answered me—"

"Herbert!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bob Cherry, at the doorway.

His eyes were fixed on the blankets that drooped and draped over the side of the bedstead. Through a gap in the tangled bedclothes he could see a foot!

The foot was perfectly still. Its owner, evidently, was hiding under the bed, unaware that that extreme portion of his anatomy was in view. Mr. Vernon-Smith and the tutor had not yet observed it. But it was visible to Bob at the doorway, and visible to his chums when their glances followed his.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Oh scissors!" breathed Nugent.

"Herbert!" roared the angry millionaire. He glared at the window. But it was shut and curtained. There had been no escape that way. Whoever had been in the room—and someone certainly had—was still there. "Good gad! Has the young rascal hidden himself, or what? He must be out of his senses—absolutely out of his senses! Herbert!"

Echo answered; but there was no other answer.

Mr. Vernon-Smith strode across to a wardrobe that stood against one wall, and dragged open the door with a jerk that nearly overturned that article of furniture.

"Herbert!" He glared in among coats. "He is not here!"

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Pickering.

"Herbert!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stood silent. They wondered whether Smithy's father would think of looking under the bed. They did not feel called upon to draw his attention to it.

Purple with wrath, Mr. Vernon-Smith glared round the room. His eyes fixed on the bed at last,

There was, in fact, no other hiding-place possible in the room. He stamped towards the bed, and halted suddenly at the sight of a foot among the tangled blankets and sheets.

"Upon my word! The boy is mad!" he gasped. "He is there—under the bed! A son of mine—hiding under a bed! Mad—he must be mad! Absolutely out of his senses!"

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Pickering, blinking at the foot.

"Herbert!"

No reply.

"Come out, you young rascal! Come out at once!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. "How dare you hide under a bed! Are you insane? What do you mean? Come out at once! I can see you there!"

There was a fearful roar under the bed.

"Ow! Leggo! Yaroooh!"

"We're dreaming this!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's Bunter or his ghost!"

"But how the dickens—"

"The howfulness is terrific!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo! I'm not here!" shrieked Bunter. "I say—yaroooh! Whooop! Help! Leggo! Yow-ow-whooop!"

That terrific tug on the fat ankle was not to be denied. Out from under the bed, in a tangle of sheets and blankets, rolled a fat and gasping figure. It rolled yelling into the middle of the room, and Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at it with staring eyes. Evidently, it was not Herbert!

"What does this mean?" Mr. Vernon-Smith spun round at the tutor. "Tell me what this means, Mr. Pickering! Explain yourself, sir! You told me that this was my son's room—"

"Quite so—"

"Then where is my son?"

"Eh?"

"Where is Herbert?"

"What?"

As Mr. Pickering was under the impression that William George Bunter was Herbert Vernon-Smith, he was naturally surprised by the question.

"Will you give me a sensible answer, sir?" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Where is Herbert, sir?"

"Oh lor'!"

"There he is!" said the bewildered



Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped, reached under the bed, grasped a fat ankle, and then tugged. "Yaroooh! Leggo! I'm not here!" shrieked Bunter. "I say—yaroooh! Whooop! Help! Leggo!" Out from under the bed, in a tangle of sheets and blankets, rolled a fat and gasping figure. Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at it, with staring eyes.

"Oh crikey!" came a startled gasp.

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped as they heard that. It was not the Bunder's voice. It was a familiar voice to their ears; but most certainly it was not Herbert Vernon-Smith's.

They stared at one another almost in stupefaction. Unless they were dreaming, that was the voice of Billy Bunter.

"Herbert, come out at once!" almost raved Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I—I'm not here!" came a terrified squeak.

"What?"

"I—I mean— Oh lor'!"

"What does this mean?" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "That is not my son's voice. Who is there?"

"Oh crikey!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stooped, reached under the bed, and grasped a fat ankle. He tugged.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the fat, gasping Owl of the Remove, hardly able to believe their eyes.

Billy Bunter often turned up unexpectedly; but never had he turned up so unexpectedly as now.

Sitting up in tangled bedclothes, the Owl of the Remove sat his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked round him.

"Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's Bunter!"

"The esteemed and ridiculous Bunter!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Bunter!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Oh lor'! Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, keep him off!" gasped Bunter.

"Tain't my fault. It's Smithy's fault, the beast! Oh dear!"

tutor. He pointed to the gasping Bunter. "There is the boy, sir!"

"Are you mad, Mr. Pickering?"

"Really, sir—"

"If that foolish boy had answered me I should have known that my son was not in the room. I cannot imagine why he did not answer me. Why did you not answer me, Bunter, when you must have been aware that I supposed that Herbert was in this room?"

"Oh crikey!"

"Where is Herbert?"

"Oh dear!"

"Mr. Pickering, I demand to know at once where my son is! You told me that he was in this room, not yet out of bed. I have actually forced the door, and find only this boy, Bunter—"

"Bub-bub-Bunter!" stuttered the tutor. He was now in a state of hopeless bewilderment. "Did you say Bub-bub-Bunter, sir?"

"That boy's name is Bunter. I suppose you are aware of it, as he seems to be staying here. What do you mean, sir? Are you wandering in your mind? Have I placed my son in the charge of an idiot, or what?"

"I—I—I fail to understand—" "You fail to understand?" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What do you fail to understand, sir? Cannot you understand that I am here to see my son, and that I have no time to waste, as I have to catch the boat for Boulogne? Cannot you understand the English language, sir?"

Mr. Pickering blinked at him, owl-like. He was so utterly bewildered that he seemed almost in a trance.

"Is—is—is not that boy Herbert Vernon-Smith?" he got out at last.

The millionaire jumped. "That boy? Are you insane? That boy is named Bunter, as I have said. He is one of Herbert's schoolfellows at Greyfriars. He is nothing-like my son! What do you mean?"

Mr. Pickering almost fell down.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, transfixed. They had been aware that Billy Bunter was somewhere near Folkestone for the vacation. They had not expected to find him at Seaciff Bungalow, however. Still less had they dreamed of anything like this. Unless Mr. Pickering was a lunatic, his words meant that he had taken Billy Bunter for Herbert Vernon-Smith. Evidently, some extraordinary deception had been going on.

Mr. Pickering pressed his hand to his forehead. He felt as if his brain was spinning.

"You—you—you say that—that boy is not your son?" he babbled. "Then—then I do not understand. He—he came here and—"

"You cannot mean that that boy, Bunter, came here pretending to be Herbert Vernon-Smith!" gasped the millionaire.

"Oh lor'!"

"He—he—he certainly did!" gurgled the hapless tutor. "If he is not your son, then where is your son? I fail to understand this! You told me to expect your son here on the day Greyfriars School broke up for Easter. This boy came—"

"This boy!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Certainly, sir! This boy—this boy whom you call Bunter, but whom I received as Master Herbert Vernon-Smith—"

"Good gad!"

"If he is not Master Herbert Vernon-Smith—"

"Do you think that I do not know my own son by sight, Mr. Pickering?" almost shrieked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Oh! Yes. No doubt—no doubt! But—but—but—but if this boy is not he—"

"This boy is Bunter!"

"Dear me! Then—"

"And where is my son, sir?"

"I do not know. I have seen no one but this boy! If he is not your son, I know nothing of your son!"

"He has not been here at all?" roared the millionaire.

"Only this boy, whom you call Bunter, has been here. No other boy has been here. I fail—"

"And you allowed yourself to be imposed upon, sir, to such an extent?" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Are you a fool, sir?"

"Really, sir," exclaimed Mr. Pickering, with some spirit, "really, sir, as I had never seen your son in my life, sir, I hardly see how you can expect me to know him by sight, sir."

"But his boxes—his linen—his personal belongings. Surely someone must have noticed—"

"This boy's baggage is marked with your son's name, sir," said Mr. Pickering. "He has two suitcases with Herbert Vernon-Smith's initials on them. He has other things marked with the same initials, and with the name—"

"In that case, he must have stolen my son's property with the intention of carrying out this impersonation!"

"Oh crikey!"

"The boy shall explain! Wharton!"

"Oh! Yes, Mr. Vernon-Smith!" gasped Harry.

"Hand me the walking-stick I left in the hall."

"Oh yes!"

Wharton handed in the walking-stick, a thick, heavy malacca. Mr. Vernon-Smith took a businesslike grip on it and stepped towards Bunter. There was a yell of apprehension from the fat junior.

"Yaroooh! You keep off! I say, you fellows, keep him off! It wasn't my fault! Oh lor'! Help!"

"Bunter! I find you here, in my son's name, in possession of his property. Where is Herbert now?"

"Ow! I don't know. Wow!"

"Was he a party to this deception?" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The truth was dawning on the millionaire's mind now—as, indeed, it could hardly fail to do. Harry Wharton & Co. had guessed already!

This, evidently, was a scheme of the Bounder's for getting out of the dull and dreary vacation that his father had arranged for him. It was a rather amazing scheme, but there could scarcely be any doubt about it. The fact that the tutor had never seen his prospective pupil had made it easy enough. Naturally, when a Greyfriars fellow arrived on the day appointed, with Herbert Vernon-Smith's baggage, Mr. Pickering had taken him for Herbert Vernon-Smith! He could hardly have done anything else. And all the while the Bounder of Greyfriars was carrying on with his own plans for the holidays, leaving Billy Bunter to keep up appearances for him at the tutor's. Only Mr. Vernon-Smith's unexpected visit had brought the scheme to light!

Billy Bunter blinked dismally at the Famous Five, and apprehensively at Mr. Vernon-Smith. The game was up now, with a vengeance! What he was to say to the irate millionaire Bunter did not know. But he had to say something—and a lick from the malacca warned him that he had to say it quick!

"Ow! Keep off!" roared Bunter. "It wasn't my fault! I never wanted to come here—wow!—and I can tell you that I'm jolly well fed-up, too! Hardly anything for a fellow to eat! If Smithy had told me what it was like, I wouldn't have been found dead here. Oh dear! I might have gone home with Mauly—yaroooh!"

Whack!

"Will you explain yourself?" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Where is my son, you young rascal?"

"How should I know?" yelled Bunter. "He cleared off, and landed me in this! The rotter! I dare say he knew what it was like! Fat lot he cared if a fellow didn't get enough to eat! He said I could run up an account for grub at the shops! And there ain't any shops!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" roared Bunter indignantly. "There ain't a shop for miles and miles! I've been starved here! If a fellow had anywhere to go—I mean—"

"You came here representing yourself

to be my son, to deceive this gentleman, while Herbert went somewhere else!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a grim intensity of wrath, that was more alarming than his previous outburst of anger.

"You—you see—" stammered Bunter.

"Yes or no?"

"Ow! Yes! You—you see, Smithy said—"

"Where did my son go?"

"I—I think—"

Whack!

"Yaroooh! He cleared off with those Highcliffe cads!" yelled Bunter. "Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson. Wow!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith shut his lips hard. He was well acquainted with the Highcliffe friends of his son; he had seen Pon & Co. a good many times. Since Smithy's disgrace at Greyfriars, and his narrow escape from the sack, he had forbidden Herbert to have anything more to do with them. This was how his commands had been obeyed!

"So Herbert has gone with those blackguardly young rascals, and left you to carry on in his name here!" he said grimly.

"You—you see—" gasped Bunter.

"And I should never have known, had I not called here before going abroad!" Mr. Vernon-Smith turned his grim glare on the Famous Five. "Were you boys aware of this trickery?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Not at all, sir."

"We came here expecting to see Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "I had a letter from his pal Redwing, saying that he was here—"

"And if you had found this young scoundrel passing under his name, would you have informed me?"

"Hem!"

It was rather a difficult question for the chums of the Remove to answer. Certainly they did not approve of Smithy's trickery. But giving him away to his irate parent was quite another matter.

Mr. Vernon-Smith snorted.

"Luckily, I was put on my guard!" he snapped. "Otherwise I should not be here. I should have been hoodwinked—taken in completely, had not Mr. Smedley telephoned to me."

"Mr. Smedley!" exclaimed Wharton. "You mean the man who took Mr. Quelch's place at Greyfriars last term?"

"The Creeper and Crawler!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, the beast!" groaned Billy Bunter. "Of course, that beastly Nosey Parker had to nose it out, blow him! Why couldn't he mind his own business?"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Mr. Smedley knew nothing of your trickery here, or he would have told me. He warned me that he had some reason to believe that my son was in company with a set of Highcliffe boys, since the school broke up; company that he did not think good for him. He was doing his duty in bringing the matter to my notice—and I made it a point to call here to ascertain that Herbert was indeed here—and I have found—you!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith gripped the malacca hard.

"Have you anything more to tell me, Bunter?"

"Ow! No! I say—"

Whack! Whack!

"Yaroooh!"

Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter rolled and roared. "Keep off! Leave off! I say, you fellows—whoop!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"You young rascal!" panted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I shall thrash you"—whack, whack, whack—"for helping my son in this rascally deception!" Whack, whack! "I shall thrash you as you deserve." Whack, whack! "I shall give you a lesson you will not forget in a hurry." Whack, whack! "I am very glad I paid attention to Mr. Smedley's telephone message"—whack, whack, whack!—"and came here and"—whack, whack!—"found out the miserable trickery that was going on! Take that, and that, and that, and that!"

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! "Yarooht! Help! Murder! Fire! I say, you fellows! Help! Yarooop! Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, as he took them.

"There!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith, rather breathless from his exertions. "There! That will be a warning—" "Whooooop!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith strode out of the room, grabbed up his hat from the hall-stand, and strode out of the bungalow. In his angry exasperation he had not forgotten that he had to catch the boat for Boulogne that morning. He strode back to his car, hurled himself into it, and in a few moments more the car was roaring away on the road to Folkestone. In Mr. Pickering's bungalow Billy Bunter was roaring louder than a dozen cars!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" roared Billy Bunter. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

Billy Bunter regarded himself as an object for the deepest sympathy. The chums of Greyfriars did not seem to agree. In their opinion, Billy Bunter thoroughly deserved a jolly good whopping! There was little doubt about that—and still less doubt that he had got one! He had got a terrific whopping—that malacca had fairly rung and cracked on the fat person of the Owl of the Remove!

Mr. Pickering, still in a dazed and bewildered state, blinked after Mr. Vernon-Smith when he went; blinked after the car buzzing off down the road; blinked at the Famous Five, and finally blinked at Billy Bunter!

"You—Bunter—if your name is Bunter—get dressed!" he snapped. "Get dressed—and go!"

"Oh crikey!" "If you are not gone in five minutes," said Mr. Pickering, "I shall eject you by force! You are a rascal and an impostor! Get gone!"

"I—I say, what about brekker?" gasped Bunter.

"You will have no breakfast here, you young rogue!"

"Oh crumbs! I—I say—" "Enough!"

With a sniff of angry contempt, the tutor turned away from him. His look seemed to indicate a desire to give Bunter some more of what Mr. Vernon-Smith had given him; but doubtless he considered that the young rascal had had enough.

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter in dismay.

"Good-bye, Bunter!" chuckled Bob. "Come on, you men! As Smithy's not here, there's nothing for us to stay for."

The chums of the Remove turned to go. Billy Bunter was bundling into his clothes at top speed now. Mr. Pickering had given him only five minutes! Bunter had a deep apprehension of what would happen if he was not gone in that

space of time. Also, now that his game was up at Seaciff Bungalow, he did not want to lose sight of Harry Wharton & Co. He had stayed on there, simply because he had no other refuge for the holidays—except home, sweet home! But it was clear that he could stay on no longer!

"I say, you fellows, wait for me!" he yelled. "I won't be a minute! I say, you can give me a lift to Folkestone! I say—"

"Oh, all right—buck up, then!" called back Harry Wharton; and the juniors left the bungalow and walked back to the road, where their taxi was

RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 12.—Not the Cat!



This week our clever Greyfriars rhymester tells in verse how the fact was brought home to Billy Bunter that raiding doesn't pay.

It was twilight! In the gloaming
Fellows came upstairs to tea;
Soon a dozen chaps were foaming,
Roaring like an angry sea.
Cherry cried: "My tuck has vanished!"
Wharton yelled: "My cupboard's
cleared!"
Food in plenty, tea for twenty—
Disappeared!

Every fellow had his losses:
Skinner missed a pot of jam,
Kipps was mourning for his "sosses,"
Rake was grieving for a ham;
Vernon-Smith had lost a banquet,
Desmond ached to find the peat
(He had taken Micky's bacon
With the rest).

"It was Bunter, without question,"
Smithy said, and we agreed;
'Twas a natural suggestion
When we thought about the deed.
But the porpoise said: "I didn't!
I am innocent, that's flat!
It was stolen by a swollen
Pussy cat!"

Then the Bounder, as chief grouser,
Said: "My only summer hat!
Here comes Mrs. Kebble's mouser—
Let us give him pussy cat!"
So we jumped at poor old Thomas,
For we meant to have his gore,
But the feline made a bee-line
For the door!

Vernon-Smith said: "Just a minute!
If the beastly pussy cat
Has the teas of twenty in it
It should be uncommon fat!
But old Thomas has a figure
Like an animated flute!
Even Skinner isn't thinner
Than the brute!"

The conclusion stood out plainly:
We said: "Bunter, it was you!"
He, of course, protested vainly,
But we knew it to be true.
So we jumped upon the porpoise
And we passed an hour away
In persuading him that raiding
Doesn't pay!

waiting. Mr. Vernon-Smith's Rolls was already out of sight.

"What larks!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Fancy coming here expecting to find Smithy—and finding that howling ass in his place! Redwing couldn't have known anything about it—Smithy never let on to him! I wonder where that ass Smithy is now?"

Johany Bull granted.

"Playing the goat with those High-cliffe cads!" he said. "He was telling all the Remove, before break-up, that he was going to have a high old time in the hols to make up for toeing the line last term at school. I suppose his pater was wise to it, and that's why he sent him here!"

"And he'd have got away with it if that spying worm Smedley hadn't phoned to the old bean!" said Bob. "How the dickens did Smedley get on to it? I remember he was always watching Smithy last term! May have seen him joining up with Pon & Co., after sending Bunter here! Well, it's all out now! Poor old Smithy!"

"It was a rotten trick!" granted Johany Bull.

"The rottenfulness was rather terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed and ridiculous Smithy will have a preposterous time when he meets his infuriated and ludicrous pater."

Harry Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"Might give the chap a tip what to expect, if we knew where to get word to him," he said. "But—"

"Not likely to see him again till next term!" said Frank Nugent. "Poor old Smithy! He's rather a sweep, but—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Bunter!"

There was a sound of a yell in the bungalow. The five minutes was up, and Bunter, apparently, was not quite ready. Ready or not, he came scuttling out of the front door, with Mr. Pickering's horn-rimmed glasses gleaming wrath after him. A foot just missed Bunter as he jumped.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Go!" hooted Mr. Pickering. "Rascal! Impostor! Go!"

Bunter stopped on the path and blinked back at the tutor in the doorway. He had given up the idea of breakfast. It was clear that he was going to have no brekker at Seaciff Bungalow. But he had arrived there with baggage, and he did not want to go without it.

"Look here, you cheeky beast—" he bawled.

"Go!"

"My bags!" howled Bunter. "Suit-cases—clothes—all my things—"

"Your things! You mean Master Vernon-Smith's things!"

"Well, Smithy lent them to me! I'm not going without my bag!" roared Bunter indignantly.

"Master Vernon-Smith's baggage will remain here until Master Vernon-Smith arrives, or until I receive instructions from Mr. Vernon-Smith!" answered Mr. Pickering. "Now go!"

"Look here—"

"Are you going?"

"Beast!"

Mr. Pickering came striding out of the bungalow. During his few days with Billy Bunter he had not taken a liking to that fascinating youth. He had, in fact, entertained a considerable repugnance towards him.

He was as fed-up with Bunter as Bunter could possibly be with him. Only one consideration had saved that pupil from several thrashings at the hands of the tutor—the fact that Mr. Pickering could not afford to thrash.

millionaire's son. Now he had discovered that his pupil was not a millionaire's son at all, but a rascally young impostor. So there was no reason why he should not hand out what he had been yearning, for some days, to hand out.

The look on his face, as he strode out of the bungalow, warned Bunter what was coming. He ceased to argue about his baggage—or, rather, Smithy's baggage—but turned, and bolted for the gate.

The tutor rushed after him.

Bunter reached the gate—just as Mr. Pickering reached Bunter.

Mr. Pickering's foot shot out, and landed on the tightest trousers in Great Britain! Bunter flew!

"Whocop!"

Bump!

Bunter came through the gateway, flying, and landed sprawling!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now go!" roared Mr. Pickering. And he turned, tramped up the path to the bungalow, went in, and slammed the door.

"Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I say—groogh!—I say—ow!—that beast kicked me—wow—ow!—oh, won't I punch that beast Smithy's nose next term at Greyfriars! Oh dear! Oh lor'! Ow!"

"Roll into the taxi, fathead, if you want a lift!" said Harry Wharton. "We can't stay here all day! We've got a boat to catch!"

Bunter rolled into the taxi. The chums of the Remove followed him. It was a close fit.

Back along the road to Folkestone went the taxi, packed. For the first mile Billy Bunter did nothing but gasp and grunt and gurgle. After that, he sat up and took notice, as it were.

"I say, you fellows, did you say you were catching a boat?" he asked.

"Yes, ass! We'll drop you at the station," said Harry.

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, we're going on the Continent!" said Bob Cherry, and his comrades chuckled. They certainly were going on the Continent—though only for one day.

"Well, look here, I'll come!" said Bunter. "I shall be jolly useful, you know, speaking French as I do! Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! The fact is, I can't go back to that rotten bungalow, and I'm rather let down! Smithy's really diddled me over these hols, you know! I'll come, old chaps! I'm afraid I couldn't spare you more than a week—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, if you'll be in France more than a week, I might be able to stretch a point!" said Bunter generously. "I say, you fellows, how long are you going to be in France?"

"About six hours!" grinned Bob.

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him. "You silly ass, you said you were going on the Continent!"

"So we are! Boulogne is on the Continent, isn't it? And we're going to Boulogne."

"Trippers!" said Bunter, with a curl of his fat lip. "Oh, my hat!"

"The tripfulness is terrific, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter!"

"Hardly good enough for you, old fat bean," said Bob. "You couldn't stand trippers! And if you could, the trippers couldn't stand you! So we'll drop you at the station!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! What I mean to say is that there's nothing I enjoy like these—these trips!" said Bunter. "I'll come with pleasure! I mean it!"

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You will have to take a ticket for me, as I happen to be short of money—"

"Not really?"

"Yes, old chap, really! You see, staying at that beastly bungalow to oblige Smithy, I wasn't able to get my own correspondence—and so I never got any remittances!" explained Bunter. "I was expecting a postal order—I mean several postal orders, but in the circumstances, you see—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, if we're catching the same boat as Smithy's pater, we'd better keep clear of him—I don't want to see any more of him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. They could quite believe that Billy Bunter did not want to see any more of Smithy's pater!

"Oh, don't cackle! I say, you fellows, I shall have to have some brekker before we go on the boat."

"We'll drop you somewhere for brekker—"

"I think perhaps we'd better go straight on the boat! After all, I can get some grub on the boat! That's all right—don't worry about me," said Bunter. "I can hold out somehow till we get on the boat!"

"Is that fat slug sticking on to us?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Looks like it!" said Harry Wharton.

And Bunter did! He was very careful indeed not to lose sight of the Famous Five for a single moment till he went on the boat with them—then he dived down at once into the refreshment department, and was lost to sight, though perhaps to memory dear!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry blankly.

"What—"

"Smithy!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

The Channel boat was out of Folkestone Harbour, and churning through the chops of the Channel. The white cliffs of England stretched in a chalky line astern.

Billy Bunter had gone down to feed at once, and he had not come up. He was not likely to reappear for some time. Bunter was busy. But the chums of the Remove did not miss his fascinating society. Indeed, the less they had of it, the more they liked it.

It was a glorious April day, fleecy white clouds sailing across a sky of azure, a deep blue sea reflecting the sunshine. The boat was crowded. Harry Wharton & Co. were not the only trippers by any means. On a day trip there was no need of passports, which made the trip easy to the chums of the Remove, and to a swarm of other trippers.

The Famous Five strolled about the deck. There was not a lot of room for strolling, but they enjoyed the crowd and the bustle and the buzz of voices. As they were aware that Mr. Vernon-Smith was on the same boat, they kept an eye open for him, but they did not see him; probably the millionaire, like Bunter, was lunching on the steamer, to save time when he landed—Mr. Vernon-Smith's time being of immense and incalculable value! But though they did not see Mr. Vernon-Smith on the crowded deck, Bob Cherry was suddenly astounded by the sight of Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Where Smithy was—except that he

was not where he ought to have been—Harry Wharton & Co. had not the faintest idea! They knew that he was with Pon & Co. of Highcliffe, that was all.

"And now—"

"Oh, crumbs!" breathed Nugent.

Three very elegant fellows in a group by one of the boats. They were Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School. Leaning on the boat at the davits, with his hands in his pockets, and a cap pushed back on his head, was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

He did not see the Remove fellows. He was talking with Pon & Co., they were discussing something rather eagerly. As the juniors stood, gazing in astonishment and something like alarm, Pon's voice floated to them on the wind.

"It's roulette now, I tell you! They used to play a game called boule—la boule! But they have roulette in France now!"

That was the eager topic, evidently! "Only a couple of miles out of Boulogne—Le Bosquet, they call the place," Pon's voice went on. "Jolly little place in a wood—variety show, dancing, restaurant, and roulette rooms! Absolutely rippin'!"

"Toppin'!" said Monson.

"They order these things better in France, what?" grinned Gadsby.

The Bounder's eyes were gleaming!

It was evident that he was looking forward, keenly, to a visit to Le Bosquet, that charming little place in a wood, where they had roulette! Obviously, his father had been well-advised to make arrangements to keep him clear of his Highcliffe friends that vacation—though the arrangements had been rather a failure!

Harry Wharton's face was very grave.

The Bounder's blackguardism was no business of his. But it was clear that the reckless scapegrace of Greyfriars had no knowledge that his father was on that very steamer. Such an idea could not possibly have crossed his mind, or he would not have been lounging there chatting carelessly with Pon & Co. But any minute, Mr. Vernon-Smith might come on deck—any minute, his eyes might fall on his son, in the midst of the crowd on the deck of the steamer. What had happened at Mr. Pickering's bungalow, was a hint of what was likely to happen if Mr. Vernon-Smith found his son on the Channel boat—heading for France and a casino, in company with the young blackguards of Highcliffe!

"It's Smithy!" said Frank Nugent. "The silly ass! He can't know—"

Bob Cherry whistled.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith must have gone down before they came on board!" he said. "If he comes up—"

"I'll give Smithy the tip!" said Harry, in a low voice. "He can keep out of sight, stay on the boat, and go back in it. Goodness knows what will happen if his father spots him here."

At that moment the Bounder raised his eyes, and they fell on the Greyfriars group. He started a little, and spoke to Pon & Co., and the three Highcliffe fellows looked round.

Pon & Co. gave the Famous Five a supercilious stare, and then ostentatiously turned their backs on them. There was no love lost between the black sheep of Highcliffe, and the chums of Greyfriars, and it pleased Pon & Co. to be impertinent, in a place where it was scarcely practicable to kick them for their impertinence.



Bunter reached the gate just as Mr. Pickering reached Bunter. The tutor's foot shot out and landed on the fat junior's trousers. "Whoop!" yelled Bunter, as he flew through the gate.

Johnny Bull gave a growl.

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"No rows, old chap!" said Wharton hastily. "We've got to get Smithy out of this, somehow! I'll speak to him."

Johnny Bull grunted, and moved on. Bob Cherry, Nugent, and the Nabob of Bhanipur followed him. Wharton hesitated a moment or two. The Bounder, after giving him a surprised stare, had turned his eyes away, and plainly did not want to speak to him, while he was in company with fellows with whom Harry Wharton & Co. were at daggers drawn. Neither did Wharton want to speak to him, in his present company, but he felt that there was no help for it. He simply could not leave the reckless fellow to be taken by surprise when his father came on deck.

He made his way through the crowd, and among innumerable legs stretched from deck-chairs, towards the Highcliffe group.

Pon & Co. saw him coming, but deliberately ignored him. Smithy gave him a surly and impatient glance.

"Smithy—" began Harry.

"What do you want?" snapped the Bounder impatiently. "Can't you see I'm with these chaps?"

"Just a word—"

"Let's get farther along, Smithy!" said Ponsonby, very distinctly. "Too many of these cheap trippers about here."

The Bounder grinned, and Wharton coloured.

"Yes, come on!" said Gadsby.

The Bounder detached himself from the boat he was leaning on. He was about to follow the Highcliffians, when Wharton caught his sleeve.

"Smithy—"

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "Let go my arm! What the thump are you bargin' in for?"

"To give you a tip—"

"Can it!"

"I must tell you—"

"Are you comin', Smithy?" asked Ponsonby, with an angry snap in his voice.

"Yes! Leave me alone, Wharton, you fool!" The Bounder angrily jerked his arm away.

"Your father's on this steamer!" said Harry quietly.

The Bounder stopped dead.

"M-my father!" he stammered.

"Yes!"

"On this steamer!"

"Yes!"

"Good gad!"

The angry impatience faded out of the Bounder's face. He cast a swift, apprehensive glance round the crowded deck. His breath came thick and fast.

"You're sure?" he breathed.

"Yes!"

"You've seen him?"

"Yes!"

"Look here, Smithy if you're stoppin' to talk to that fellow!" snapped Ponsonby.

The Bounder turned on him.

"Hold your silly tongue! Leave me alone!" he snarled.

Cecil Ponsonby stared at him blankly for a second. Then he turned on his heel, and walked away, with Gadsby and Monson. Herbert Vernon-Smith was left alone with the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

and contemptuous, but the intense alarm in Vernon-Smith's face disarmed him. There was more at stake than Wharton knew, if the millionaire discovered his son in the act of disobedience and rebellion. Smithy's face was almost white.

He moved so that the boat at the davits screened him a little from general view, drawing Wharton after him.

"Is that what you spoke to me for—to tell me that?" he muttered.

"What else?" grunted Wharton.

"Well, thanks—thanks a hundred times over! By gad, I'm done for if the pater spots me!" breathed the Bounder. "He told me he was going abroad for Easter—I thought he'd gone already! Fancy his taking the same boat—I say, you're absolutely certain he's on board?"

"I saw him go down to the saloon, before the boat pulled out of Folkestone Harbour!"

The Bounder caught his breath.

"Thank goodness he did! If he'd been on deck when we came on—oh, my hat! I shall have to keep doggo this trip! For goodness' sake, if you should speak to him, don't breathe a word about me."

"Of course not! But—"

"It would mean a fearful row for me!" whispered Vernon-Smith. "I suppose you guessed that, as you took the trouble to give me the tip! You know he's been ratty with me, ever since the Head nearly sacked me last term. I suppose you know it wouldn't do for him to see me with that Highcliffe crew—"

"More than that!" said Harry. "You see—"

"Much more than that, if you only knew!" said Smithy. "I'm supposed to be with a tutor, at a bungalow near THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,366."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

HARRY WHARTON made a movement to go, but stopped, as the Bounder caught hold of his arm, in his turn.

Wharton was feeling impatient, angry

Folkestone, and if he saw me here, he would know—oh, my hat!" He whistled. Then his face hardened. "He fancied I was going to spend the hols with a dashed tutor-wallah in a dashed bungalow—but I fixed that all right."

"I know how you fixed it, Smithy, and—"

"What! How the thump do you know?"

"I had a letter from Redwing, and we gave you a look-in this morning, before we got on the boat—"

"Oh crumbs! Then you saw—"

"Bunter—"

"You didn't give the game away to the tutor-wallah? You weren't such a fool as that!" breathed the Bounder. "I never told Redwing—the silly ass to send you barging in there—"

"He thought you'd like to see some Greyfriars chaps in the circumstances, and—"

"So I should, I suppose, if I'd been there!" The Bounder laughed shortly. "But I fixed it up with that fat fool Bunter—he had nowhere to go for the hols, as usual, and he was glad of the chance! Pickering's never seen me—it must have worked all right. You never let on?"

"No; but—"

"That's all right, then! Keep it dark!" said the Bounder. "The pater would be in a frightful wax if he ever spotted it."

Wharton gave him a look of compassion. Evidently Vernon-Smith had not the faintest suspicion that his father had "spotted" that deception already! Wharton hesitated to overwhelm him with that news.

Vernon-Smith was recovering his confidence a little now.

"After all, I can keep clear of the

pater on the steamer in a crowd like this!" he muttered. "It will be all right!"

"You'll stay on the boat and go back to—"

"I'll watch it!" sneered the Bounder. "I shall stay on the boat till the pater's gone off it, certainly. I suppose he will be going for the Paris train, and I'll give him time to clear."

Wharton compressed his lips.

He had spoken to Smithy to put him on his guard; but certainly not to help him to carry on with his disregard of parental authority.

"But, look here, Smithy—"

"Oh, ret! Don't give me any pi-jaw!" snapped the Bounder. "I'm going to have a plunge at roulette, and see if I can make something! I was kept short of money last term—but I thought it would be all right in the holidays! Instead of that, I was booked for that dashed tutor's bung—and nothing in the way of cash! I should be stony now if I hadn't been able to sell a few things in London and raise the wind. It's not been easy to keep it up with that Highcliffe crowd—they wouldn't have a lot of use for me if they knew I was on the rocks!" The Bounder's lip curled in a sneer. "Well, I'm goin' to try to make somethin'—neck or nothin', see?"

Wharton looked at him. He could only feel pity for the fellow who supposed that it was possible to "make something" by playing roulette at a foreign casino! The Bounder, in point of fact, was not such a fool as to believe that money would be made at roulette; but he was in a desperate frame of mind and willing to take the wildest chances in his unusual and uncomfortable state of shortness of cash. Keeping under

cover of the boat hanging at the davits, Vernon-Smith cast another swift and searching glance over the crowded decks. But he saw nothing of the portly figure of the millionaire.

"It will be a plunge, anyhow!" he said, "and I may have luck! Don't tell me what you think of it—I know that by heart! Just keep it dark; not a word about that fat fool at the bungalow—"

"I'm bound to tell you, Smithy, old chap! Your father knows!"

"He knows?"

"He was there when we got there this morning," said Harry. "Smedley seems to have suspected something, and phoned him, and he came down early for the boat, and went out to the bungalow to see you, and—"

"I'm done for, then!"

The Bounder's face was white.

"I'm sorry, old chap!" said Harry. "It was better for you to know—"

"Yes, yes! But this means—goodness knows what it means!" For a minute or so the Bounder seemed quite knocked over by the news that his father had discovered his trickery. But he pulled himself together; his face hardened, and his eyes glinted. "Well, if he knows, it means that I'm landed—all the more reason to carry on while I've got a chance!"

"If you go back in this steamer—go to the bungalow—make it up somehow with Mr. Pickering, and—"

"Rot!"

A tall silk hat, glistening in the April sunshine, caught the Bounder's eye across the crowded deck. He gave one look, and turned to the rail, leaning over it, his face to the sea churning below. Wharton stared at his back, surprised by the action; then he guessed what it meant, and glanced round. Plump and portly, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was coming along the deck. He had not noticed the juniors yet, but he was coming towards them, and it was only a matter of moments.

Wharton caught his breath.

There was nothing he could do—he could only wait and wonder what was going to happen.

The Bounder, leaning over the rail, looked like a fellow in the throes of seasickness—only his back was to be seen. He remained in that position as Mr. Vernon-Smith came along with his heavy tread.

The millionaire noticed Wharton a moment or two later, and gave him a nod. To Wharton's horror he stopped to speak.

Smithy, hanging on the rail, was motionless, but his heart was thumping. His father was not six feet from him.

His father, however, could see only a pair of white duck trousers, a lounge jacket, and a cap, if he looked at the Bounder. But Smithy's heart beat almost to suffocation.

"Wharton! So you're on this boat, what, what?" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Harry.

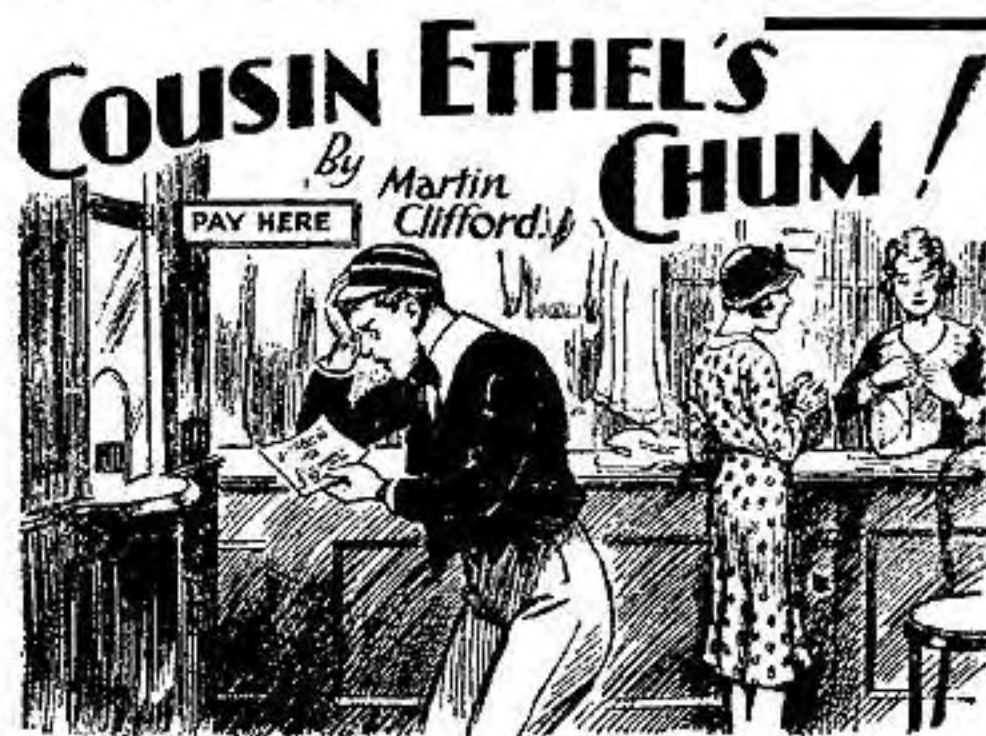
"Taking a holiday trip, what?"

"A day in Boulogne, sir!" answered Wharton. "I—I suppose you're going on to Paris, sir?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"No; I have business in the Pas-de-Calais!" he answered. "I shall be stopping a few days in Boulogne and Wincreux. One of your friends feeling the sea, what?" He glanced with an amused smile at the Bounder's back. "Lucky for him it's not a rough day, what, if he feels it on a fine day like this!"

And the millionaire walked on, greatly to Wharton's relief. Evidently he had taken the fellow leaning over



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the rail for one of Wharton's party, and supposed that he was seasick.

Vernon-Smith remained where he was to give his father time to clear. Wharton watched the portly form going along the deck.

A sallow man, with a short pointed beard, was lounging along after the portly millionaire. He had stopped when Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped; but he went on again when Mr. Vernon-Smith went on. He gave Wharton a look as he passed him, from sharp black eyes like a rat's.

Harry Wharton would not have noticed him, but for the fact that he was watching Mr. Vernon-Smith himself. It struck him that the man with the pointed beard and the rat's eyes was interested in Mr. Vernon-Smith, for he loitered along only a few feet from him, accommodating his pace to that of the millionaire, and stopping whenever Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped. Both of them disappeared at last in the crowd.

Then the captain of the Remove turned to the Bounder.

"All clear, Smithy!" he whispered. Smithy turned from the rail. His face was white, and his eyes had a hunted look.

"By gum, that was a close shave!" breathed the Bounder. "If I hadn't thought of pretending to be seasick, I—" He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, a miss is as good as a mile. I shall be safe below. If he's had his lunch, he won't be going down again!"

"Look here, Smithy—" Without answering, the Bounder sidled away in the crowd on deck, and disappeared below. Harry Wharton left him to it, and went to look for his friends.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

After the Feast the Reckoning!

"I SAY, you fellows!" "Jolly old France!" said Bob Cherry, pointing to the white cliffs that were rising into view ahead of the churning steamer. "Get your French ready, Bunter."

"I say—" persisted Bunter. "The steward wants to see you, Wharton!"

"Eh?" "The steward—" "What the thump does the steward want to see me for?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—" "If he wants to see me he can come on deck," said Harry. "But I'm blessed if I know what he wants to see me for."

The Famous Five were standing by the rail, watching the shores of la belle France rising into view, when Billy Bunter joined them with that rather unexpected news.

"Well, you don't want a lot of argument before all these people," said Billy Bunter peevishly. "You're going to pay the man, I suppose?"

"Pay him!" ejaculated Wharton. "Well, they don't give lunches away in this steamer, that I know of. I think I'd go down," suggested Bunter. "The man's suspicious already."

"Suspicious?" "Well, he didn't seem satisfied when I said that my friends were minding my money, and I had to go and speak to them—" "Wha-a-at?" "It's all right if you go down, old chap. You don't want a suspicious man coming up here and asking for his money before a crowd of people. Dash it all, that isn't the sort of thing a fellow expects when fellows ask him to

join them on a trip!" said Bunter warmly. "I can jolly well tell you that I don't want to be mixed up in any scene here."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Bunter. He had been a long time below, and evidently had packed away a good lunch. After the feast came the reckoning. That detail, however, did not seem to be Bunter's business. Having dealt with the feast, he was prepared to leave the reckoning to others, which no doubt Bunter regarded as a fair division of labour.

"You fat scoundrel—" began Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—" "Haven't you paid for your lunch?" demanded Frank Nugent.

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Peter Todd (humorously): "Do you know Ebenezer Blackwood, Lonzy?" Alonzo: "No, my dear Peter, I can't recollect—" Peter: "Well, it is." Alonzo: "What is?" Peter: "Ebony is." Alonzo: "I don't quite follow you, Peter. Ebony is what?" Peter (blandly): "A black wood!" Alonzo hasn't seen it yet!

Congratulations to D. E. Hawks, of 51, Heathwood Road, Bournemouth. Get busy, you other fellows, and send in your jokes and limericks to: "Jokes and Limericks" Editor, c/o the MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

"I mentioned to you fellows that I was stony, owing to being unable to get any of the postal orders I was expecting while I was at that beastly bung!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I never had any brekker. I suppose you didn't want me to miss my lunch, too?"

Harry Wharton laughed. "You fat villain! I'll stand you half-a-crown. You can go down and pay the steward yourself."

"Oh really, Wharton—" "Better buck up before the man comes after you!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I can see him looking out from the staircase now. He's got an eye on you." "Oh, really, Cherry—" "Is it more than half-a-crown, you fat cormorant?" demanded Nugent.

"The morefulness is probably

terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, really, Inky—" "Pass round the hat!" chuckled Bob. "We'll make up five bob for the fat bounder."

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat!" said Bunter. "I had to have some lunch, you know. I've been practically starved at that bung. I never had any brekker. I say, I'll square, of course, next term at Greyfriars. I hope you're not going to be mean."

"We're not rolling in money, you fat ass! How much is it?" demanded Harry Wharton impatiently.

"Only thirty-five bob, old chap."

"What?" yelled the Famous Five. "You see, I cut it rather fine, as you fellows had to pay!" explained Bunter. "I didn't really have enough—"

The chums of the Remove gazed at him. They were not exactly short of money. Kind relatives had "tipped" them in the holidays, but their resources were, of course, rather limited. Thirty-five shillings a time for meals would soon—very soon!—have reduced them to the same stony state as Billy Bunter. They just gazed at him.

"You needn't be afraid that I shan't square," said Bunter, with a touch of scorn. "I'm expecting several postal orders—"

"You've blown thirty-five bob on your unearthly inside!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "My only hat! And how much have you got towards it?"

"I—I've a penny—" "A penny!" gasped Bob.

"Only it's a French penny." Harry Wharton slipped his half-crown back into his pocket.

"That won't be any use," he remarked.

"Look here, cut down and pay the man, Wharton—"

"Any millionaire here who can afford thirty-five bob for a lunch?" asked Wharton. "If so, here's a chance for him."

"Don't all speak at once!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Apparently there were no millionaires present.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter began to feel alarmed. "I suppose you're going to pay the man?"

"I jolly well know I'm not!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, it's a bit thick for a party of Public school chaps to bilk a steward on a steamer!" said Bunter. "Hardly Greyfriars style."

"Let's go for a trot," suggested Bob.

"Let's!" agreed his chums.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter, as the Famous Five moved off. "What about that steward?"

"Echo answers what?" said Bob Cherry over his shoulder.

"Esteemed echo answers that the whatfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, beasts!" howled Bunter. "I say, rotters! Oh crikey!" He made a rush in pursuit of the Famous Five, stumbled over the legs of a French gentleman in a deck-chair, and landed on the deck. "Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! I say, you fellows! Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He scrambled up and blinked round through his big spectacles. Harry Wharton & Co. had disappeared from sight.

A hand touched Bunter on a fat shoulder. He blinked round at a man in a white coat and a peaked cap. It was the steward. If he had been suspicious before, he was more than suspicious now.

"Now, sir!" said the steward grimly. "I—I'm looking for my friends!" gasped Bunter.

"Better find them, then," said the man significantly. "You won't be allowed to leave the boat till you've paid for your lunch."

"Oh crikey!"

"I've had bilks on the boat before," said the steward.

"Look here, you cheeky beast——"

"That's enough! I'm keeping an eye on you. You won't be allowed off the boat, you can take that from me."

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

He resumed his search for his friends, but they were not easy to find when they did not want to be found. Billy Bunter had enjoyed that lunch. He was not enjoying the consequences. It was really terrifying to think of what might happen if Harry Wharton & Co. did not settle with that steward. Visions of being handed over to a gendarme when the boat reached Boulogne danced before Bunter's terrified vision. He even wished that he had not lunched so heartily.

Ten minutes later he wished that still more. It was a fine day, but there were chops in the middle of the Channel. Bunter had not noticed the motion of the steamer while he was lunching; his fat thoughts had been concentrated on the task of parking the greatest possible quantity of food in the shortest possible time. But he noticed it now, and he began to notice it more and more.

"Grooooooh!" said Bunter.

He ceased his search for the elusive Co. He ceased to worry about the suspicious steward, and the unpaid lunch. He ceased even to think of the awful possibility of a gendarme. He had matters nearer at hand to think of.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter.

He rushed to the side. He hung over the rail. He gasped, he gurgled, he groaned. Lunches, stewards, gendarmes did not matter now. Nothing mattered now. Bunter hung over the rail and longed for death to end his sufferings.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Ponsonby!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled. Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of the Highcliffe Fourth, were leaning in an elegant row on the rail. They made it a point to bestow supercilious glances on the Famous Five as the latter strolled along, which did not disturb the equanimity of the cheery Co. in the very least. Smithy was still below, keeping out of sight, and his nutty pals were probably wondering what had become of him.

A portly gentleman, who promenaded the deck as if the steamer belonged to him, spotted Pon & Co. in his promenade, halted, and fixed his eyes on them. That was why the Famous Five smiled. Mr. Vernon-Smith's look seemed to indicate that there was thunder in the air. Certainly he had no suspicion that his son was on board that very steamer, crossing to France with the Highcliffians. But he was aware that the scapegrace of Greyfriars had gone off with Pon & Co. instead of turning up at the tutor's bungalow. But for Wharton's warning to the Bounder, no doubt the millionaire would have found his son in their company at that moment. Luckily that had not happened.

"Oh!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a deep voice. "You!"

Pon & Co. glanced at him.

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They knew Smithy's father, of course, and they raised their hats, though in a rather perfunctory manner. It suited them to consort with the millionaire's son, unaware of the present straitened state of his finances. But their private opinion of Smithy was that he was a rank outsider, and that his wealthy father in the City was a still ranker outsider. They were by nature disrespectful young rascals. They saluted Mr. Vernon-Smith, but there was more than a touch of superciliousness in the salute. Conscious of their own ineffable superiority, they could hardly help revealing that consciousness in their manner to the City gentleman.

"Oh, fancy meetin' you, sir!" drawled Ponsonby. "Charmin' day for a crossin', sir!"

"You young rascal!"

"Eh?"

Shaken out of his ineffable superiority by that reply, Ponsonby stared blankly at the millionaire.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled still more. They looked on with interest at this little scene.

"You young blackguards!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Monson. "Anythin' the matter, sir?"

"So I meet you here!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I am glad to meet you, and tell you my opinion of you. If I had met you in company with my son, I would have laid my walking-stick about you!"

"Good gad!" murmured Ponsonby.

He had been offended by the way the Bounder had "chucked" him when Wharton turned up. But he was rather glad now that Smithy was not present. He did not want to make a closer acquaintance with Smithy's father's malacca cane.

"I am given to understand," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a voice that caused a dozen or more passengers to look round, "that my son joined you when he left school against my commands."

"Quite unaware of it, sir!" said Ponsonby, recovering his coolness, and his impudence at the same time. "I should have thought you'd be glad, sir!"

"Glad!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Well, it's rather a catch for Smithy, sir, to get into a little decent society sometimes, isn't it?" asked Pon. "You City people are generally rather glad to barge in among your betters, if you'll excuse my puttin' it like that, sir!"

Gadsby and Monson grinned.

The City millionaire was, in their opinion, a dashed old bargee, and Pon was the man to put such a bargee in his place.

Mr. Vernon-Smith's face became purple.

"You impudent young rascal!" he gasped.

"Look here, let's get out of this!" muttered Gadsby. "If we can stand Smithy, we're not bound to stand his pater! Kickin' up a shindy——"

But it was not so easy for the Highcliffians to get out of it. Mr. Vernon-Smith was already intensely angry with Pon & Co., whom he regarded, rightly, as being partly the cause of his son's disgrace at Greyfriars. Pon's impudence gave the finishing touch to his wrath.

As the three Highcliffians moved to turn their backs on him with the contempt which, in their lofty opinion, such a bargee deserved, Mr. Vernon-Smith made a stride at them.

He grabbed Cecil Ponsonby by the

collar with his left hand and wielded the malacca with his right.

Whack! came the heavy cane on the seat of Pon's elegant trousers. The yell that Ponsonby uttered rang the length of the steamer.

The dandy of Highcliffe struggled wildly.

"Let go!" he roared. "You blithering old fool, let go! You dashed old ruffian! How dare you lay hands on me! Barge him over, you men!"

Gadsby and Monson made a half-hearted move to their comrade's aid. Two licks from the malacca, one each, drove them jumping back.

Fifty people, at least, were staring at the startling scene. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not care in the very least. Holding Pon by his collar, in spite of his frantic struggles, he whacked with the malacca.

"Oh gad! Help! Leggo! Oh, you old idiot!" shrieked Ponsonby.

It was a fearful come-down for Pon's supercilious loftiness. He struggled and wriggled, and roared and howled.

"Look here——" gasped Gadsby.

"L-look here——" stuttered Monson.

"There!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith, throwing Ponsonby away from him, and sending him staggering along the deck. "That's for your impudence, you young scoundrel! And if I find my son consorting with you again, I will thrash you within an inch of your life, by gad!"

Ponsonby did not stay to listen. Crimson with mortification, and wriggling with pain, the dandy of Highcliffe scuttled away, breathing rage and vengeance.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, sublimely regardless of the sea of staring eyes fixed on him, tucked his malacca under his arm and walked on.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The chums of the Remove chuckled.

"The old bean was in a bait!" murmured Johnny Bull. "Nice for Smithy when he joins his pals again, what?"

"I shouldn't wonder if there's going to be a row in that happy family circle!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At a distance Pon & Co. were muttering together, with furious looks. It was very probable that, after Smithy's father had dealt with them in that drastic way, they would give Smithy a rather warm reception when he joined up again! Certainly, they were not likely to welcome him, so long as his father was anywhere in the offing! It looked as if Mr. Vernon-Smith—though unknowingly—had put "paid" to his son's reckless escapade with his Highcliffe friends that day—which undoubtedly was all the better for Smithy!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Apache!

"BUNTER!" "Urrrrgh!" "Oh, my hat! Poor old Bunter!"

"Yurrrgh!"

"Thirty-five bob's worth wasted!" sighed Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ooooo-er!" moaned Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove had not found the juniors when he looked for them. But the juniors found him—quite easily—when they looked for Bunter! Sounds of woe guided them to a fat and flabby figure that hung on the steamer's rail.

The Channel boat was grunting and



Ponsonby struggled wildly as the heavy cane swished down on his elegant trousers. "Let go!" he roared. "You blithering old fool, let go! You dashed old ruffian, how dare you lay hands on me!" Holding the dandy by his collar, in spite of his frantic struggles, Mr. Vernon-Smith whacked with the malacca.

churning into the landing place at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and it was time to collect Bunter. The Famous Five had settled with the steward, though they did not intend to mention that to Bunter. They did not want any more thirty-five shilling bills to pay for the fat Owl. And, as Bob remarked, that lunch was a sheer waste—judging by the aspect of Billy Bunter when they found him.

Groaning, the fat junior turned a sickly fat face to them.

"I say, you fellows! I'm did-dud-dod-dying!" he gurgled. "I—I say, I'm suffering fearfully! If I did-dud-dod-die—"

"No such luck!" said Johnny Bull heartlessly.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

"Pull yourself together, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton. "The boat's stopping in a few minutes—we're in quite calm water now! We've got to keep together to get ashore."

Bunter blinked round him dolefully and dismally. He was still feeling rather bad; but he realised now that the worst had passed. Boulogne Harbour and the quays crowded with Frenchmen, the houses rising on the hill, the great white building of the Casino, met his eyes. And he was encouraged—terra firma was at hand!

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Feeling better?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Oh! Yes! I—I haven't been—exactly—sick, you know!" said Bunter. Evidently he was feeling better. "I'm never seasick, you know. I'm a pretty good sailor——"

"Three whoppers all at once!" remarked Bob. "You're not pretty,

you're not good, and you're no sailor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I say, what about that steward?" Bunter remembered the steward now. "I say, he says I can't go off the boat without paying——"

"Keep an eye open for him!" said Bob, with a wink at his comrades.

"But I say, suppose he keeps me on the boat——"

"He wouldn't put up with your company for thirty-five shillings. Nobody would!" said Bob reassuringly. "If he tried it on, he'd soon offer you another thirty-five bob to clear!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I tell you——"

"Bow-wow! Come on!"

The fat Owl rolled away with the chums of the Remove, keeping his eyes—and his spectacles—on the alert for the steward. That steward was not likely to turn up and cause trouble, as he had been paid. Still, Bunter did not know that, and he was watchful and wary.

Harry Wharton looked round to see if Vernon-Smith was in sight; but the Bounder did not appear. He was keeping "doggo" till his father was off the boat. Mr. Vernon-Smith's shining silk hat was seen, gleaming in the April sun, and Wharton, as he glanced at him, noticed the man with the pointed beard and the rat's eyes close to the portly figure of the millionaire. The two came into collision in the moving crowd, and Mr. Vernon-Smith gave a sudden start, clapped one hand to his coat over his breast-pocket and with the other pushed the Frenchman away. He gave him a suspicious glare as he did so.

"Mille pardons, monsieur!" said the

man with the pointed beard, and the millionaire gave a grunt by way of reply.

The rat-eyed man disappeared in the crowd.

"Did you see that?" said Harry Wharton. "That fallow-faced sportsman has been haunting Smithy's pater ever since we left Folkestone! I wonder——"

"The old bean glared at him as if he was a pickpocket!" grinned Bob.

"I was just wondering if he was!" said Harry. "He's been jolly interested in Mr. Vernon-Smith, though I don't think the old boy noticed him before. I think we might as well keep an eye on him as we go off—anything might happen in a scrum like this."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Beware of pickpockets, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry solemnly. "Lucky you've left all those postal orders at home—but that magnificent gold watch of yours is worth fourpence of anybody's money——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're getting in," said Nugent, as the siren shrieked hoarsely. "There go Pon & Co., shoving for front places! They don't seem to be waiting for their pal Smithy!"

The steamer came to her moorings, and the usual crowd of "facteurs" came leaping aboard for baggage. The trippers had little or no baggage, and were not bothered by the porters, one of whom, however, immediately grabbed Mr. Vernon-Smith's suitcase.

As the millionaire was travelling alone he was carrying his own bag; but

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

it was difficult for any traveller, landing at Boulogne, to retain possession of his own baggage! As the facteur got it from him Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted and gave him directions in bad French, and as two or three passengers jostled by the salloy man with the rat's eyes bumped into one of them, staggered, and caught hold of Mr. Vernon-Smith for support.

Harry Wharton's eyes were on him instantly.

"Good gad!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith, staggering under the man's weight. "Where are you running? What—"

"Mille pardons, monsieur!" The rat-eyed man detached himself, and was slipping away through the crowd when Harry Wharton made a bound forward.

But for the fact that he had been watching the millionaire, Wharton would never have discerned the pick-pocket's action; it was done so swiftly and so skilfully that Mr. Vernon-Smith himself was unaware of it! But Wharton, watching him, had seen the thievish hand slip under the coat, and he knew what had happened.

With a bound he reached the man, grabbed him by the back of the collar, and, with that unexpected jerk, landed him on his back on the deck.

So sudden and unexpected was that tackle that the Frenchman went over without resistance, crashing backwards on the planks with a startled gasp.

"There was a buzz on all sides.

"What the dooce—"

"Qu'est-que c'est?"

"Look out—"

"Mon Dieu!"

"Wharton!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What—"

"You've been robbed, sir!" gasped Wharton. "This man—I saw him—"

"What!"

The millionaire's hand flew to his breast-pocket. It came out empty. He almost hurled himself at the sprawling Frenchman, his face red with wrath.

"My pocket-book!" he roared.

A buzzing, excited crowd surrounded the scene, with loud exclamations in mingled French and English. The rat-eyed man tore himself loose from Wharton and leaped up like a cat, his face white and desperate. But Mr. Vernon-Smith's grasp was on him, and as they struggled a fat, well-filled pocket-book fell to the deck. The thief had had no time to pocket it safely before Wharton dragged him over.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the jolly old goods!" Bob Cherry pounced on it and picked it up. "Here's your pocket-book, sir."

Mr. Vernon-Smith turned to him at once, releasing the thief. But it was now plain to all what had happened, and a dozen hands were stretching out to seize the pickpocket.

But the passengers started back as there was a sudden gleam of steel in the sunshine. The desperate rascal had drawn a knife!

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A moment's respite was enough for him. With the cat-like activity of the true "Apache," the rat-eyed man leaped on the rail, and thence made another bound to the quay. Three or four porters, two or three gendarmes, made a move at him, but he vanished at the speed of a hunted hare. It was only a matter of seconds before he was lost to sight.

"Good gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith, as he took the pocket-book from Bob Cherry. The escape of the thief did not trouble him as he had recovered his property. "Thank you, my boy! Thank you, Wharton! That scoundrel would have had my passport, my papers, and five hundred pounds, by gad!"

The millionaire returned the pocket-book to its place and carefully buttoned his coat over it.

"Glad I spotted him, sir!" said Harry, smiling.

"You've got keen eyes, my boy—I had no idea. Thanks again!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. And with a nod he moved away, and the juniors did not see him again.

A quarter of an hour later they were on shore in la belle France, and Billy Bunter gave a grunt of relief.

"All right now!" he remarked. "That beast of a steward never spotted me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, what about lunch?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! How many lunches do you want to-day?"

"Well, I've lost that one!" said Bunter. "I can tell you I'm jolly hungry! Let's look for a place to feed, shall we? You can leave the talking French to me."

And as the chums of the Remove were ready for lunch Bunter had his way, and they looked for a place.

"I say, you fellows, this looks a decent show!" said Bunter, stopping before the Hotel Magnifique. "I say, there's old Smith going in—trust him to spot a good place—battered millionaire, you know! Let's sample it, shall we? Looks as if you could get a decent feed here."

"You're the only man in this party that can afford thirty-five bob lunches, old fat bean," said Bob Cherry. "You sample it, and we'll look for something cheaper."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not "sample" the Hotel Magnifique! He rolled on after the trippers, and they sampled a place which was not nearly so magnificent—with prices in proportion. But it was quite a good lunch—so good, in fact, that Billy Bunter packed away several, one after another—his wild adventures on the Channel having left him plenty of room for them! After which, the Greyfriars trippers walked out cheerily to have a look at Boulogne in the bright April sunshine.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy on His Own!

"P"ON, I've been lookin' for you!" growled Herbert Vernon-Smith.

He came quickly towards the Highcliffe trio as they were sauntering away from the quay.

Pon & Co. had recovered their superb equanimity, which had been considerably ruffled on the steamer by the encounter with Mr. Vernon-Smith.

Elegant and at ease, they sauntered along and did not waste a glance on the Bounder when they saw him. And taking no notice of Vernon-Smith's rather surly greeting, they walked on, regardless of him.

The Bounder stared at them blankly for a moment, and then started after them. As they still walked on he caught Ponsonby by the arm.

"What does this mean, Pon?" he snapped. There was evidently a rift in the lute, though Smithy did not yet know why.

Pon & Co. came to a halt and faced the Bounder. There was a cold and deadly glitter in Pon's eyes, and Gadsby and Monson looked surly and rather uncomfortable. Pon jerked his arm free.

"Keep your paws to yourself, please, Vernon-Smith!" he said in a very distinct tone. "And keep your distance, please!"

The Bounder breathed hard. It was rather an ill-assorted friendship, for while Pon & Co. regarded Smithy as a rank outsider, Smithy despised them heartily for their uppishness, their snobbishness, and their vicious, brainless rottenness generally. But he did not want to quarrel with them now; he had a use for them. So, with some difficulty, he curbed his temper and answered quietly.

"Nothin' to get shirty about, Pon! I had to speak to Wharton—he tipped me that my pater was in the offing! I had to get out of sight—that's why I didn't join you again. If the pater knew—"

"I'm not interested in your pater, or in you," said Ponsonby icily. "I'm fed-up with the whole crew of you."

"What do you mean?"

"Find out!"

"Your pater pitched into Pon, Smithy," said Gadsby. "You can't expect a fellow to stand it."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed the Bounder.

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"The dashed old bargee had the insolence to lay his low hands on me, if you want to know!" he said. "Confound his impudence! By gad, I wish I'd knocked him down on the steamer—the blackguardly old ruffian!"

The Bounder's eyes glittered.

"You're speakin' of my father, Ponsonby!" he said in a tone that might have warned the dandy of Highcliffe, but for his bitter rage and resentment at the way Mr. Vernon-Smith had handled him.

It was strange, perhaps, that the Bounder, in the very act of disrespectful disobedience to his father, should display quick and passionate resentment at a single word of disrespect from anyone else.

He did not want to quarrel with Pon. He was Pon's guest at present, and Pon was footing the bill for that trip to France—a rather important matter to Smithy, short of money as he was, and anxious to try his luck at the roulette table at Le Bosquet. The fellow who had lately had much more money than was good for him was counting every half-crown, every shilling now. Certainly he did not want to be thrown on his own resources at this juncture.

But he forgot all that in a moment as Ponsonby spoke of his father. The Bounder's recklessness had its good points as well as its bad.

"Your father! A dashed bargee, like his son!" said Ponsonby with bitter contempt. "He fancies we're not good enough company for you. Good gad! You—as rank an outsider as I've ever

struck! By gad, I wish I'd knocked him spinnin', the ruffianly old hooligan—"

Smack!

Herbert Vernon-Smith's open hand came across Pon's face with a crack like a pistol-shot.

With a yell, Pon staggered back.

The Bounder followed him up with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"You cur!" he snarled. "You speak of my father like that; you're not fit to black his boots, you rotten worm! Put up your hands, you cur, and I'll give you the thrashin' of your life!"

"Here, chuck it!" exclaimed Gadsby.

"For goodness' sake—" gasped Monson. "We shall have a crowd round—a jabberin' French crowd—"

But that smack in the face had roused even Ponsonby's fighting blood. He sprang like a tiger at Vernon-Smith, yelling to his comrades to back him up. Fair play was not an article in the code of the dandy of Highcliffe.

Vernon-Smith, with grim jaw and gleaming eyes, met him with left and right. Gadsby and Monson exchanged a glance and rushed in to help their leader.

But a terrific right-hander from the Bounder had already sent Ponsonby spinning, and he crashed down on the cobbles, panting.

Like lightning the Bounder turned on the other two Highcliffians.

"Come on!" he snapped, between his teeth. "By gum, if I can't lick three funkin' worms like you Highcliffe rats, you can kick me from one end of Boulogne to the other."

Gadsby and Monson backed away from a whirlwind attack, but they did not back fast enough. A drive on the chin sent Gadsby whirling; an upper-cut laid Monson by his side.

The Bounder gave the sprawling trio a stare of contempt, laughed mockingly, and turned away.

With his hands in his pockets, whistling carelessly, he walked off the scene, leaving Pon & Co. to pick themselves up, under the staring, grinning faces of a score of loungers on the quay.

He did not glance back as he went. He was done with Pon & Co. now—with a vengeance!

But his face grew thoughtful and moody as he walked through the streets of Boulogne-sur-Mer. The break with Pon & Co. rather disconcerted his plans for the holidays. He would be at a loose end when he returned to England on the night boat. He could not go home; he could hardly go to Mr. Pickering's after what had happened there even if he wanted to—which he certainly did not! He had a few pounds in his pockets, which he had raised by selling trinkets in London. When that was gone—But if he had luck at Le Bosquet—There was comfort in that thought!

(Continued on next page.)



Here's another interesting Soccer talk by "Linesman," whose expert knowledge has proved so valuable to MAGNET readers.

FOOTBALLER-CRICKETERS!

WE are getting near the end of the football season, and soon our thoughts will be turning to cricket—and the Test matches between England and Australia. I imagine that it is the talk of these Test matches which has prompted a correspondent to write to me about footballer-cricketers.

This young reader of MAGNET is a player of the two games, and he has an idea of making sport his profession when he grows up. May I say in the first place that I wish him the best of luck. On the face of it, the life is a fine one—playing games all the year round. I should add, in the second place, that it isn't all jam, of course, for the fellow who would climb to the top of the tree and stay there, in the football and cricket sense, has a job which, to say the least, comes very near to hard work.

I know fellows who have had to decide definitely in favour of one game or the other. There was the case of Wally Hammond, for instance. He was a professional footballer at one time, as well as a professional cricketer, but he gave up the winter game in the serious sense.

As events proved, that was just as well for England, because Hammond would not have been able to play in the Test matches in Australia.

Leslie Ames provided another instance. He used to be a "pro" footballer with Clapton Orient, and had ideas of progressing in this direction. But when he was invited to go to Australia to play cricket he gave up football, and I don't suppose he will go back to it.

The number of players who have risen to the top of the tree at both games is small.

But it will probably surprise some of my readers to know that in one England versus Scotland Soccer match there were three men who also played for England at cricket—Walter Hardinge, Andy Ducat, and Harry Makepeace.

Arnold, the present outside-left of Fulham, is among the latest to join the ranks of an England cricketer and England footballer, and at the present time I can tell you of another man who has ambitions in the double direction—Sam Weaver. He has played for England at football, and during the coming season he is returning to his native Derbyshire to play for the county at cricket.

TACT AND REFEREES!

TALKING of Weaver, reminds me of an interesting story connected with his football career. As you know, he has played for Newcastle United both at inside-left and at left-half, but he considers the half-back position the one to which he is best suited. When Weaver was quite a youngster he had a trial with Derby County—in the inside-left position.

When the trial was over, and Weaver was talking to Mr. George Jobey, the Derby manager, about it, the boy mentioned that he had not played in his favourite place. "Well," said Mr. Jobey, "you come back and have another trial, and if you play as well at left-half as you did to-day at inside-left, I'll sign you on."

Weaver never had that other trial with Derby, for another club spotted him and took him on trust.

There was a lot of wisdom in that poetical observation to the effect that destiny shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may.

There are football honours for referees, as well as for players. And the biggest honour which can fall to a referee is to be chosen to control the Cup Final. The honour for this season has fallen upon Mr. S. F. Rous, and there are some boys attached to the Watford Grammar School who are all excited about it. Mr. Rous is games-master at this school, and I do hope that many of the boys will be able to get tickets for the Cup Final to see their games-master doing his bit with the whistle.

There are always plenty of appointments for the best referees. Before Mr. Rous knew that he was to officiate at this season's Cup Final he had promised to referee the Holland v. Belgium match on the day following our Cup Final. He tells me he is going to do it, too. In order to carry out the appointment he will have to fly from London, after the Cup Final, to Belgium. But he has done the same sort of thing previously, and he says he enjoys it.

I certainly think Mr. Rous enjoys all his refereeing, and he carries out the job with tact.

That, after knowledge of the rules, is the first essential qualification in a successful referee. Nipping trouble in the bud is ever so much better than trying to stop the trouble when it has developed.

A WORD IN SEASON!

IN this connection I recall a story which was told to me by Jack Howcroft, who used to be one of our most respected referees and which illustrates tact. He "took" the Cup Final of 1920. Mr. Howcroft was refereeing in a match in which there was a very clever young player in opposition to a full-back who was getting on in years. The clever lad was making rings round the veteran, at whose ineptitude the crowd was laughing. Gradually, it dawned on the referee that the veteran player didn't like being laughed at, and that he was in danger of losing his temper.

Going up to the younger player Mr. Howcroft gave him a bit of advice on these lines:

"Look here, lad, if you will take a tip from one who knows, cut out the business of making a fool of that full-back, and just get on with the game. If you don't, then he will probably finish up in the dressing-room, and you may finish up in hospital."

That's what they call a word in season.

In a recent match in which a MAGNET reader was engaged, the opposing goalkeeper jumped up as a shot came in, gripped the bar, and broke it by swinging on it. The ball went over the bar, of course, and my correspondent wants to know whether the referee could have awarded a goal. The answer is that the referee could certainly have done so if in his opinion the ball would have gone under the bar if the bar had not been misplaced.

"LINESMAN."

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At the back of his mind Smithy knew how exceedingly rotten a reed that was to lean upon. But his state was getting desperate now. He dared not meet his father—he was going to avoid meeting him till the end of the vacation—but there was a chill doubt in his mind whether at the end of the vacation he would be allowed to go back to Greyfriars at all.

That depended on his father—and he was well aware of how deep and bitter his father's anger would be after the discovery he had made at the tutor's bungalow. There had been a time when the Bounder's luck was a proverb in the Greyfriars Remove, but his luck seemed to have turned against him at last and let him down with a bump. Which ever way he looked now he saw only trouble.

He shrugged his shoulders with bitter recklessness. He might have luck at Le Bosquet, and a fellow with plenty of money in his pockets could have a good time. Then he remembered what he had heard his father say to Wharton; the millionaire was not going on to Paris, he was staying in Boulogne for some reason connected with his business in France. At the alarming thought that he might run into him in the crowded streets, the Bounder made up his mind to get out of the town at once, and he was soon on board a clanging tram jolting and jarring on the way to Le Bosquet.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Walk for Bunter!

I SAY, you fellows!" "Another lunch?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

Even Billy Bunter did not want another lunch yet. He was not even thinking of tea yet! Blinking at the Casino building through his big spectacles, Billy Bunter was thinking of the fact that that attractive establishment was open at Easter to take toll of the foreign tourists. Certainly nobody in Boulogne was likely to take toll from Billy Bunter—not, at all events, to a

greater extent than a French penny! True, he was now in France, where that coin, refused at home more times than Bunter could remember, was current coin. But it was hardly sufficient capital for trying his luck at the Casino!

"I say, you fellows, let's go in here," said Bunter. "I heard Smithy say at Greyfriars that they have roulette here now—"

"Fathead!"

"No masters or prefects about—what?" said Bunter, with a fat wink. "Let's go it a bit—what? You can leave it to me, you know; you fellows stand something for me to play with—say ten pounds—and we'll whack out the winnings. That's fair."

"And who's going to whack out the losings?" asked Bob.

"Well, be a sport, you know," said Bunter. "You have to take your chance of that, of course."

"More like a cert than a chance, I think!" chuckled Bob. "They don't build a building like that and run it on losses. Plenty of mugs going in there, fatty, without you making one more!"

"I say, you fellows, it's a chance, you know, now we're in France. When in Rome, do as Rome does, you know!" urged Bunter.

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Turn roundfully, my esteemed idiotic Bunter."

"Yah! If you fellows don't want to come in, I'll go on my own," suggested Bunter. "Blessed if I see what you're funky about; but I don't mind. Lend me a tenner—"

"You blithering owl!" said Harry Wharton. "We're not going into a gambling den. My uncle gave us leave for this excursion on the understanding that we behaved ourselves decently."

"Oh, blow your silly old uncle—Yaroooh! Leggo my ear, you beast!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Wow! I'll call a jongdum! Whooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter jerked his fat ear away and rubbed it. He glared at the grinning five with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Look here, you rotters, I'm jolly well going in!" he snorted. "Only I happen to be short of money. Lend me a few pounds—"

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! Is that that steward?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, glancing along the street.

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, come on! I—I don't want to see that steward! Come on!" gasped Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove led the way at a trot. Harry Wharton & Co. followed him, laughing. There was no steward in sight; but Billy Bunter, still under the impression that he owed thirty-five shillings for his gorge on the boat, was easily alarmed.

"Here's the tram!" called out Bob Cherry. "This way, Bunter!"

"Where are we going on a tram?" demanded Bunter peevishly.

"Le Bosquet—jolly little place a few miles along the coast," answered Bob. "Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt—"

"What the thump is a forry?" demanded Bunter.

"Forest, fathead—Bosquet-in-the-Forêt! There's a band and a tea-garden, and we're going to have tea there!"

"Is that the place Smithy was talking about at Greyfriars?" asked Bunter. "Oh, all right! There's a rather decent little casino there, where the mob don't go! That will suit me, if you fellows will lend me—"

"I'll lend you my boot, if you don't ring off!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I say, you fellows, why not take a car?" demanded Bunter. "I'd much rather go in a car!"

"Same here!" agreed Bob. "But you can go on the tram for sixpence—and there aren't any sixpenny cars in Boulogne, that I know of."

"If you're going to be mean on a holiday, Cherry—"

"The meanfulness is going to be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Here is the esteemed tram, my idiotic Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked peevishly at the tram. Plenty of other trippers were going on it, as well as a variety of natives. Bunter grunted. He would have preferred to do the thing in style. A big Mercedes car came honking along, the chauffeur sounding his horn like a machine-gun, in the way of French chauffeurs. Sitting in the car was a portly gentleman in a shining silk hat. It was Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

The millionaire noticed the Greyfriars fellows in the crowd at the tram depot, through which his big car was honking its way, and gave them a nod and a smile. They "capped" him politely as he passed.

"I say, you fellows," exclaimed Bunter, "that's old Smith! I say, he's going the same way. What about asking him for a lift in his car?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! As you got his pocket-book back from that pick-pocket, he couldn't very well refuse—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The millionaire's Mercedes was a big car, but the chums of the Remove certainly had no idea of asking him to give six fellows a lift in it. Big as it was, it would have been rather overcrowded with such a party.

"Look here, you silly ass—" hooted Bunter.

"Rats!"

The car passed on, and once free of the crowd, broke into speed, and roared

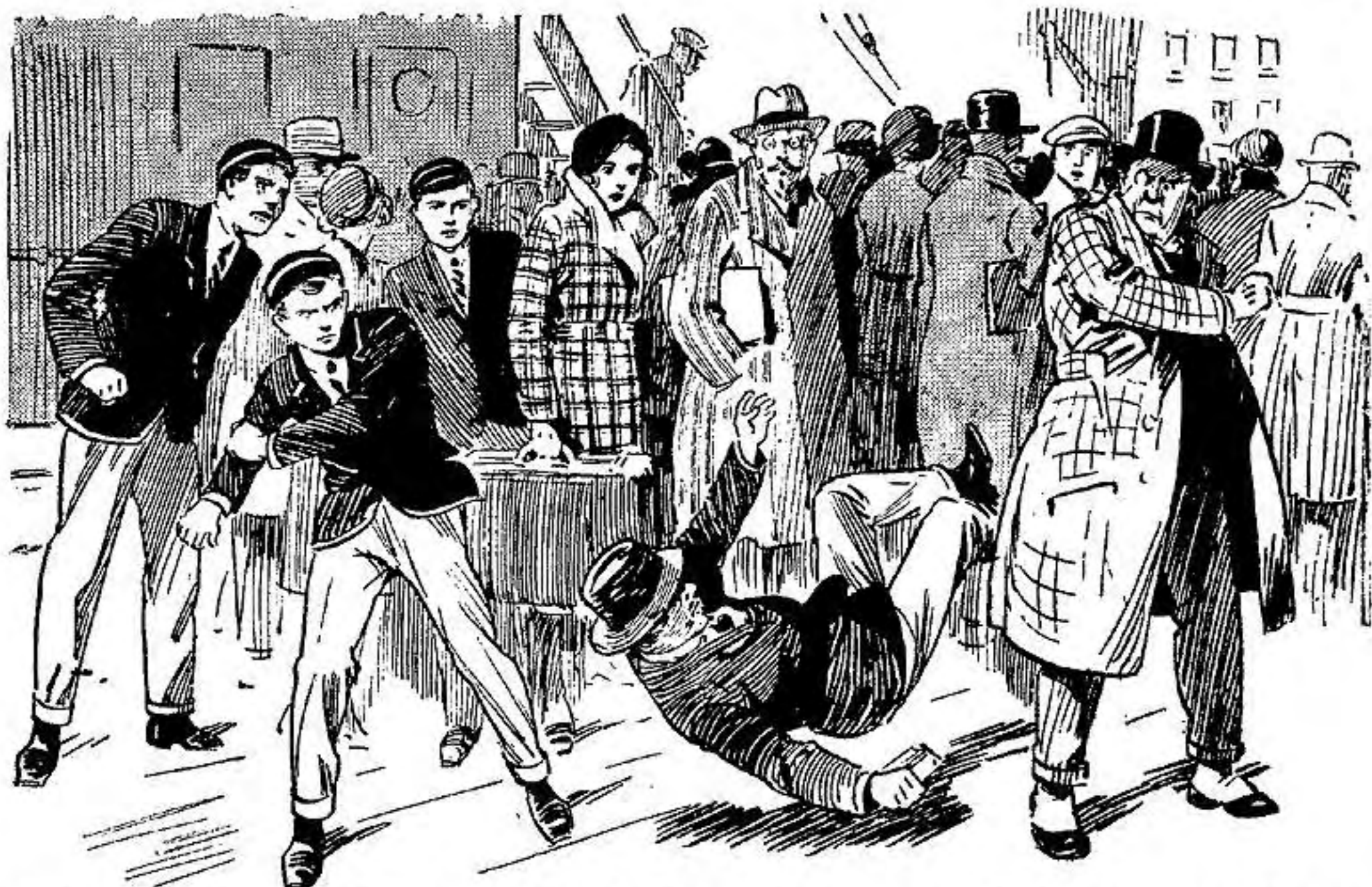
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As the rat-eyed man staggered, he caught hold of Mr. Vernon-Smith for support. Wharton's eyes were on the man instantly, and he saw a thievish hand slip under the millionaire's coat, and he knew what had happened. With a bound he reached the pickpocket, grabbed him by the back of the collar, and, with a jerk, landed him on his back on the deck!

away on the road to Le Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt. It was at that select and delectable spot, apparently, that Mr. Vernon-Smith had business—little dreaming that his son also had business there, though of a very different kind. Certainly roulette was not likely to attract Mr. Vernon-Smith!

The trippers clambered into the tram, Bunter grunting discontentedly. The Mercedes vanished from sight by the time the tram got into motion.

"Not even a seat for a fellow!" growled Bunter. "Look here, you silly asses, find a fellow a seat—see?"

The tram was crowded, and a good many people were standing. That would not have mattered, only Bunter was among the standers! That mattered very much indeed.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Blessed if there isn't another beastly froggy butting in, though we're full up already!" grunted Bunter. "Blow these froggies!"

"You potty porpoise, some of these froggies understand English!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"I don't care—blow 'em!" growled Bunter.

Billy Bunter was the kind of tourist who had no politeness to waste on mere foreigners.

A Frenchman jumped on the tram in motion, and crowded in. Billy Bunter gave him an indignant blink. The man glanced at him, and then his glance travelled to the other juniors, and he gave a little start. His eyes, black and bright like a rat's, gleamed at them for a second, and then he quickly turned his face away, and stood with his back to them.

Harry Wharton fixed his eyes on the man.

Those gleaming rat-like black eyes seemed familiar, and he had noticed

that the man seemed to recognise the Greyfriars party.

"Is that the man of the steamer, you fellows?" asked Harry, in a low voice. "He looks like it to me."

The man on the tram was clean-shaven, and the pickpocket on the steamer had had a black beard. But the sallow complexion, the rat-like eyes, were the same; and it was easy to guess that the rascal had shaved off his beard, to change his appearance, after his escape from the steamer.

"I was just thinking so," said Frank Nugent. He could only see the back of the man's head now, in a black slouched hat. "But—"

"If a fellow was sure—"

"If it's that sportsman, he's had a shave!" said Bob Cherry. "Let him rip, old bean—we haven't come here for a row."

Wharton hesitated.

He was almost certain that the clean-shaven man with the ratty eyes was the man who had lifted Mr. Vernon-Smith's pocket-book on the steamer. But he could not be certain, and, as Bob remarked, the Greyfriars fellows had not come there to get mixed up in a row with a native. The tram was already out of Boulogne, clattering and speeding along the road that led to Le Bosquet.

It was rather difficult to decide what to do, or whether to do anything at all; but the rat-eyed man settled the matter himself, by pushing through the crowded passengers and alighting from the tram.

The vehicle rolled on its clattering, clanging way, leaving the rat-eyed man walking.

"That settles it!" said Frank Nugent. "He jolly well got off because he guessed we knew him!"

"I wonder!" muttered Harry.

"Not much doubt about it now!" said Johnny Bull.

"I mean, I wonder whether he's still got an eye on Mr. Vernon-Smith! He's gone up this road on a car, and the man jumped on the tram after it had started! It looks—"

"Well, he's left behind now!" said Bob. "If he's after Smithy's pater again, he won't catch up that whacking car in a hurry!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"Blow these froggies—swarming into a tram and not giving a fellow room to sit down—"

"It's a French tram, isn't it, you blithering owl? Haven't the French a right to use their own trams?"

"Blow 'em!" said Bunter. "If that fat old blighter would squeeze up a bit there might be room for a fellow! Fat old frump!"

A rather stout French gentleman, whose plump knees rather incommoded the fat Owl as he stood, stared at him through a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez. He smiled.

"Grinning at a fellow!" growled Bunter. "Grinning like a blessed baloon!"

"Will you shut up?" hissed Bob.

"No, I won't! He doesn't understand a word—these froggies are so ignorant! Cunning old monkey!"

"Thank you, young sir!" said the French gentleman, in perfect English. "I am much indebted to you for your kind opinion, expressed so courteously."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Even the fat Owl was rather taken aback. The other fellows were crimson.

"Ayfuilly sorry, sir!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Not at all, monsieur!" said the French gentleman. "Your young friend is very amusing!"

The tram clanged to a halt at a stopping-place, half-way to Le Bosquet. The Famous Five exchanged a glance.

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and Bob Cherry hooked Bunter by the collar.

"I say, you fellows, we don't get off here—"

"We do!" answered Bob grimly.

And they did!

The tram clanged on its way without them. Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles, as Bob released his collar, in almost speechless wrath. On either side of them the long country road stretched, seemingly endless.

"Look here, what have we got off the tram for?" bawled Bunter. "You can't get a car here."

"We're going to walk the rest!"

"You silly ass, it's miles!" yelled Bunter.

"About two!" agreed Nugent.

"Do you think I'm going to walk two miles?" shrieked Bunter.

"Please yourself!"

Harry Wharton & Co. started to walk. Billy Bunter glared after them and then followed.

He realised that he was landed in that walk, as a punishment for his bad manners on the tram. Which was simply exasperating to Bunter. Bad manners did not worry him much, but a two-mile walk did!

"I say, you fellows, let's wait for the next tram!" gasped Bunter.

"Wait, by all means!" assented Bob.

"Well, you wait, too—"

"No fear!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

The Famous Five walked on cheerily. Bunter rolled after them, snorting.

"Don't walk so fast, you beasts!" he roared. "Do you think this is a foot-race? I'm not going to run, you rotters!"

"Take your time, old fat bean!" said Bob, over his shoulder.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

The Famous Five walked briskly. Billy Bunter's little fat legs went like clockwork as he trotted behind. By the time they reached Le Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt those little fat legs felt as if they were dropping off.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Casino in the Wood.

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sat at one of the little tables under the spreading branches of a beech, and scowled.

It was a pleasant scene that was spread before the Bounder's eyes. There was no doubt that Le Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt was a pretty spot. There was not exactly a forest, though no doubt there had been one once. But there was a shady wood of old beeches and oaks and larches, and in the middle was a white building facing the sea.

Through the trees the sea could be seen, darkening now as the evening closed in. Coloured lanterns were lighted among the trees, giving the scene a fairy-like effect. Among the spreading trees many little tables were set, and busy garçons came and went with trays. Through the wood was a path up from the road where the trams stopped, and every ten minutes or so a new tram landed a new party, who came up the path under the coloured lamps. The Bounder watched them sourly.

The Casino of Le Bosquet was open for a variety show and refreshments, but the gaming-room did not open till eight o'clock. At Boulogne the big casino was open afternoon and evening; but Le Bosquet was a more select spot.

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and catered for punters only in the evening.

Sitting at the little table under the branches Smithy was waiting for eight o'clock with sour impatience. His original plan had been to roll round in a car with Pon & Co., dine at one of the big hotels, and then come out to Le Bosquet to tempt fortune at roulette. That plan had been knocked sky-high. He was done with Pon & Co. Where the Highcliffe fellows were, and what they were doing, he did not know, and did not care. He had had his tea, and was smoking a cigarette after it, and idly watching the bunches of people who came up the path through the wood from the trams.

Crowds of people passed under his eyes without exciting his interest in the least, but he gave a start at the sight of a portly figure and a shining silk hat.

"Oh gad!" breathed the Bounder.

There was a "Petit Journal" on the table, and he picked it up at once, and held it as if reading it to conceal his face.

It was his father who was coming up the dusky path, in company with a dapper French gentleman.

Mr. Vernon-Smith walked by within a dozen paces of his son without a

BUDDING RHYMESTER WINS USEFUL POCKET WALLET!

The following winning Greyfriars limerick was sent in by Alec Davey, of 4, Upper Church Street, Bocking, Essex:

After searching each village and port,
Johnny Bull failed to find Bunter Court.
But when homeward bound,
Bunter Villa he found,
But of valets and maids there were nought!

Why don't you try your hand at writing a Greyfriars limerick?

glance at the sitting figure behind the "Petit Journal." Smithy could hear him speaking as he passed.

What was his father doing at Le Bosquet? Certainly it was not the roulette that attracted him. The Bounder grinned at the idea of the hard-headed City man throwing money away on a gaming-table. He knew the dapper Frenchman by sight—a man named Poncet, with whom his father had had many business deals. The deep voice of the millionaire reached him as he sat behind the newspaper. Mr. Vernon-Smith was speaking in English—doubtless Monsieur Poncet's English was better than Mr. Vernon-Smith's French.

"I dare say it's a good thing. I'm looking into it, at any rate. Hotel, restaurant, sea-baths—um—"

The voice passed out of hearing. Vernon-Smith lowered the "Petit Journal," and stared after the portly figure.

He hardly needed telling that his father was there on business—holidays had no appeal for the City gentleman. Those few words had apprised him of what the business was. Mr. Vernon-Smith had many irons in the fire, and now apparently he was taking up a speculation in property on the French coast—no doubt a paying proposition in Mr. Vernon-Smith's capable hands. He

had told his son that he would be abroad at Easter—and this was why.

The two figures passed out of sight, entering the casino building by a private door. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

After all, it was unlucky that his father was there, but it mattered little. It was absolutely certain that Mr. Vernon-Smith would not enter the gaming-room, and that was where Smithy was going to be. Probably his father would dine with M. Poncet and talk business in his office, and perhaps walk round and look at the place. It was easy enough to keep clear of him.

The Bounder lighted another cigarette.

More people were coming up the dusky path from the road. They went by in twos and threes and little bunches, chattering in French or English. Again the Bounder gave a start at the sight of a familiar face.

Harry Wharton & Co. came sauntering cheerily along. Behind them rolled and grunted Billy Bunter. The fat Owl's squeak came to Smithy's ears.

"I say, you fellows, here's some tables and chairs! I say, let's sit down, you beasts! I'm dropping!"

"Drop quietly," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

"May as well have tea here," said Harry Wharton. "Looks rather jolly. There's a show afterwards, and we shall have time to see it, and take the tram back for the boat. Here! Hallo, Smithy!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"The esteemed and ridiculous Smithy!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder gave the Famous Five a curt nod. He was not particularly pleased to see them. However, he had the grace to take the cigarette from his mouth and drop it into the grass.

Billy Bunter forgetting for a moment that he was dropping blinked rather uneasily at the Bounder. He had not seen him on the steamer, though he had learned from the talk of the Co. that Smithy was somewhere in the offing. He did not want to get too near the Bounder, after the disastrous outcome of the trick he had played at the tutor's bungalow. Certainly it was not Bunter's fault that the millionaire's unexpected visit had bowled him out; but Smithy's temper was rather unreliable at the best of times.

"I say, you fellows, let's go farther on!" squeaked Bunter.

"Rot! This is all right!" said Bob Cherry. "Like a little cheerful and entertaining society, Smithy, old bean?"

The Bounder grinned. His sour mood was not quite proof against Bob's cheerful good temper.

"Squat down!" he said. "Lots of room! Glad to see you, in fact. I've got to wait here till eight. I'm on my own now," he added, with a sarcastic grin. "My pater seems to have put up Pon's back on the boat, and I've had a row with those Highcliffe cads."

Harry Wharton & Co. had noticed that the Highcliffe crowd were not with the Bounder, or they certainly would not have stopped at Smithy's table. They were not surprised to hear that there had been a "row"—in fact, they had rather expected it.

They sat down, Bunter still eyeing the Bounder rather uneasily. To his relief, however, Vernon-Smith did not seem to observe his fat existence.

"Garçon!" bawled Bunter. "Here! Ici! Allez this way, garçong! Where's that fool of a waiter? I saw the beast

a minute ago! Where's that silly dummy?"

"Here, sir!" said a voice behind Bunter. He blinked round at the garcon.

"Oh crikey! Do all these beastly froggies speak English?" growled Bunter. "Ow! Who's that kicking me? Wow! Bob Cherry, you beast! Wow!"

Harry Wharton gave the orders, and a well-laden tray was brought to the table. Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his big, round spectacles at the sight of a pile of sticky pastries. There was comfort in that sight for the Owl of the Remove, and he proceeded immediately to deal with them. Wharton leaned towards the Bouncer, and spoke in a low voice.

"I fancy your pater came this way from Boulogne, Smithy."

"I've seen him."

"Oh, then he's here!"

"Gone into the building, with a French johnny. I suppose he's here to buy up the place, or somethin' of the sort." The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders. "Don't mention me if you see him, of course."

"Of course not. But—"

"And don't give me any pi-jaw!" sneered the Bouncer.

"I wasn't going to, Smithy," said Harry quietly. "But look here, old chap! You say you're off with that Highcliffe crew. Why not join up with us, and come back on the boat when we go? Your father was fearfully wrathful about not finding you at the tutor's, but if he knew you were in decent company—"

"Yours?" grinned the Bouncer.

"Yes, ours," said Harry. "We may not be quite so festive as Pon & Co., but I hope we're rather more decent. Stick to us now we're together, and if you'd like to come home with me, my uncle and aunt would make you welcome at Wharton Lodge. If your father knew you were there, and not with those Highcliffe blackguards, it would make a lot of difference."

"You're a decent chap, Wharton," said the Bouncer slowly. "I know you mean well. But you're not here to play roulette, I suppose?"

"Don't be an ass!"

"Well, I am!"

"You're a silly ass, then!"

"Oh, quite!" drawled the Bouncer. "Let it go at that!"

"I say, you fellows, these cakes are jolly good!" Billy Bunter's voice came rather indistinctly; his mouth was full. "Jolly nearly as good as our French chef makes at Bunter Court. Not quite, but jolly nearly! Tell the garson to bring a dozen more, Wharton! Here, I say, garson, apportez beaucoup more de cakes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You fellows were always jealous of my French!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Spot that blighter?"

A man with watchful, rat-like black eyes came lounging up the wooded path. The juniors knew him again at once. It was the man on the tram—as they suspected, the pickpocket of the steamer. He lounged along smoking a cigarette.

"That's the jolly old Apache!" said Bob.

"What about him?" asked the Bouncer, glancing at the man.

"I believe he's the man who tried to pick your father's pocket on the steamer," said Harry, "and I can't help thinking that he's watching for another chance, and that's why he's here."

The man with the rat's eyes spotted the party of schoolboys at the table. He turned instantly from the path and disappeared among the trees.

The Bouncer laughed carelessly.

"If that's his game, the pater can take care of himself all right," he said.

The juniors finished their tea and rose from the table.

"Coming in to the show with us, Smithy?" asked Bob

"Thanks, no."

"I say, you fellows, you can go in to the show," said Bunter. "I'll stick to Smithy. if you'll lend me—"

"Take hold of his ear, Bob!"

"Yaroooh!"

The Famous Five walked on to the building, from which sweet strains of music were now coming, and Bunter rolled after them. They went into the "show," where Bunter made the happy discovery that refreshments could be had during the entertainment. The Famous Five gave their attention to the variety show, while Bunter gave his attention to a variety of refreshments. From another part of the building, in the pauses of the music, there came occasionally the sound of a droning voice:

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs! Messieurs, marquez vos jeux!"

Billy Bunter pricked up his fat ears at the sound of the croupier's voice in the adjoining "salle des jeux." But the Famous Five, while prepared to stand refreshments for the fat Owl, had made it quite clear that they were not prepared to stand him a plunge at roulette. So the Owl of the Remove grunted and devoted himself to sticky cakes.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Man in the Dark!

"O H, gad!" breathed the Bouncer.

He stopped suddenly.

The stars were out over Le-Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt! The facade of the white-walled casino, lighted up like a theatre, shone through the dusky wood. Plenty of people were going in, some heading for the "show" where Harry Wharton & Co. had gone in, others for the "salle des jeux," where the ivory ball spun and clicked on the whirling roulette-wheel. The latter was Vernon-Smith's destination, as he came up the broad, granite steps to the wide balcony in front of the building, where the entrance was. But he stopped suddenly and backed into cover of a tub of palms on the steps at the sight of a portly figure and a gleaming silk hat.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, smoking an after-dinner cigar, was pacing the balcony with Monsieur Poncet, the two of them deep in talk.

Apparently the millionaire was going into business matters with his French business acquaintance. Unconscious of the close proximity of his scapegrace son, Mr. Samuel

Vernon-Smith walked and talked in front of the casino vestibule.

The Bouncer breathed hard in his cover behind the palms.

It was a day of narrow escapes for him. But this escape had been the narrowest of all. Had he stepped on the wide balcony in the glare of bright light there was no doubt whatever that Mr. Vernon-Smith would have spotted him.

Impatiently, with a black brow, the Bouncer waited for his father to go. Cool as he was, iron-nerved and reckless, he felt a chill at the bare thought of meeting his father there. Mr. Vernon-Smith would not need telling why he was there, and the discovery of such a shady escapade would give the finishing touch to his wrath.

But Mr. Vernon-Smith was in no hurry to go.

While people passed, and passed, going into the casino, the millionaire continued to pace to and fro with the Frenchman, deep in conversation. The Bouncer heard nine o'clock strike from somewhere.

He gritted his teeth.

By that time—before that time—he should have had his "plunge," and known his fate, but for this unlucky happening. How long were they going to parade there, talking?

But as nine o'clock struck, Monsieur Poncet made a movement. The two gentlemen parted, and the Frenchman went into the building.

The Bouncer stood still, watching his father from behind the tub of palms. Mr. Vernon-Smith had long ago thrown away the stump of his cigar. Now he walked to the edge of the broad, granite steps and took out another from his case, and stood there while he lighted it.

Then, to the Bouncer's dismay, he descended the steps. Either he was going for a stroll round, or he was going back to his car, which awaited him on the road at the edge of the wood. In either case, he was coming down the casino steps, and as soon as he passed the palm that screened the Bouncer he would see him!

Smithy had no time for thinking. He had to act swiftly, or face discovery!

Turning, he ran down the steps, jumping rapidly from one to another. In a few seconds he was at the bottom

(Continued on next page.)



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and sprinting across the open space to the path through the dusky wood.

Mr. Vernon-Smith undoubtedly spotted the running figure, but the back view of a boy running told him nothing. Certainly, it did not cross his mind that it was his scapegrace son. He was thinking, not of Herbert, but of his business deals with Monsieur Poncet. He descended the steps slowly and walked across, the way the Bounder had gone.

Once under the overshadowing trees on the path through the wood, the Bounder halted, panting.

He looked back.

The tea-tables under the trees were deserted now, the chairs packed away. Nobody was to be seen on the path, which had been thronged an hour or two ago. It was likely to remain deserted, now, till the crowd poured out of the casino, at a much later hour. There was a glimmer of coloured lamps in the branches, but the path was very dusky.

Looking back, as if from a dusky tunnel, the Bounder spotted a portly form against the bright light of the casino front. Mr. Vernon-Smith was coming into the path through the wood. Evidently, he was walking back to the road to his car.

The Bounder turned, and ran on. His idea was to get to a safer distance and then dodge in among the trees and wait in cover till his father had passed.

Crash!

Deserted as the dusky path seemed, there was one other figure there as well as the Bounder's. In the deep gloom Smithy crashed into it, sending it tottering, and staggering back himself from the collision.

"Parbleu!" muttered a savage, angry voice. "Nom d'un nom! Nom d'un nom d'un chien!"

"Name of a dog!" was absurd enough in English, but in French it was a very angry expression indeed.

The Bounder, recovering himself, peered at an angry face, sallow in hue, with bright, black eyes that gleamed and glittered like a rat's. It was the man that had been pointed out to him by the Greyfriars fellows.

"Sorry!" gasped the Bounder. "I didn't see you—"

"Comment! Voila un cochon!" snarled the Apache. "Un Anglais, donc! Pah! Allez-vous-en, alors!"

The man looked a savage ruffian enough in the dusk, with his gleaming eyes, and the Bounder was glad enough to pass him without further trouble.

Avoiding the man, he hurried on his way. Behind him, the heavy tread of Mr. Vernon-Smith had become audible. The delay, brief as it had been, had given the millionaire time to draw near. The Bounder broke into a run again.

Suddenly he stopped.

Back into his mind flashed what the juniors had told him! That rat-eyed Apache was lurking in the darkness on the lonely path through the wood. And his father—

He stopped—and turned!

He told himself that there was nothing in it—the fellows had very likely been mistaken; he was a fool, doubly a fool, to risk being spotted, now that his way was clear.

Yet he stopped, peering back along the dusky path! That savage, sallow face with its rat's eyes haunted him. The man had been lurking silently on the dusky path in the wood—Smithy had not heard a sound from him, or he would not have run into him as he had done. And his father was coming. If they had been right—

He peered and listened, with thumping heart. Scapegrace and rebel, in the very

act of recklessly disregarding authority, dodging out of sight of his own father in order to carry on with his reckless folly, nevertheless, the Bounder forgot everything else at the bare thought of danger to his father!

From the silence and the darkness of the shadowy wood a sound came to him. It was an inarticulate sound—a choked cry—it was followed by scuffling—

He stopped for no more! With a desperate rush, he raced back along the path. He knew what was happening—he could see nothing—but he knew that his father was in the grasp of the Apache, and his feet hardly touched the ground as he ran to his aid.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Father and Son!

"GREAT gad—oh—"

Mr. Vernon-Smith was taken utterly by surprise.

He had forgotten the incident on the Channel boat long ago. It had never occurred to him that the thief of the steamer might be watching for another chance on land. He was thinking, as he came along the dusky woodland path, of a big business deal which was to add another hundred thousand pounds or so to his millions. He did not even see the lurking dark shadow under the trees; he was totally unaware of danger till the Apache, like the human tiger he was, sprang.

He went over backwards into the grass, the cigar flying from his mouth, the silk hat from his head. He fell heavily, the lithe Apache—as lithe and supple and swift as the Red Indian from whom the slang name was taken—landing on him, pinning him down.

"Taisez-vous!" came hissing from the thief. "Pas un mot!"

"You scoundrel!" panted the millionaire.

"Le portefeuille, vite!" hissed the Apache. A thievish hand was already groping for the pocket-book.

But Mr. Vernon-Smith, taken by surprise as he was, was not the man to submit to robbery if he could help it. There were many business papers and a wad of banknotes in the portefeuille for which the thief was already groping. Plump and portly as he was, Mr. Vernon-Smith was no weakling, and no coward; he grappled fiercely with the ruffian and strove to throw him off.

Exerting all his strength, he gained his knees, struggling with his lithe assailant.

For a few moments they struggled. The thief was the more active of the two, as agile as a cat; but the Englishman was stronger. Mr. Vernon-Smith heaved himself to his feet, the Apache clinging to him cat-like. There came a hissing oath from the thief, and a flash of cold, sharp steel in the shadows. The Apache had drawn his knife—the ready weapon of the Paris Apache.

Neither of them, in the excitement of the brief struggle, had heard running feet on the grassy path. But it was well for Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith at that moment that help was at hand. A savage hand, with the knife in it, was flung back for a murderous stab when a breathless figure hurtled out of the gloom and a clenched fist crashed into a sallow face.

A scream of startled rage broke from the Apache as he turned on his new and unexpected assailant.

"Great gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The knife flashed in the shadows. As much by luck as intention the Bounder dodged the fierce slash, but the keen

steel grazed his arm as he eluded it, and he felt the spurt of blood in his sleeve. Unheeding it, he hurled himself at the ruffian, smashing both fists into the sallow, wolfish face, and with a gasping grunt, the thief went over on his back in the grass.

He was down—if only for a second! But the Bounder had his wits about him, he was giving the desperate wretch no chance to rise again, with that murderous steel in his hand. With a swift leap he was on him, crashing both feet in the pit of the sprawling rascal's stomach.

The wretch crumpled under him, gurgling. The knife dropped from his hand as he clawed wildly at the grass in a spasmodic struggle for breath. Smithy pounced on the knife the next second, snatched it up, and sent it flying among the trees.

"Who—who—what—" Mr. Vernon-Smith was gasping. In the dusk he could only dimly see the boyish figure that had rushed to his aid.

Smithy leaned over the sprawling Apache for a moment—ready to deal with him. But the man was utterly helpless and winded, and could only sprawl and gurgle and gasp.

The Bounder turned to his father.

"You're not hurt?" he panted.

"No! Very little—oh gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "The scoundrel—he would have—but who—who—what—" He peered at the Bounder, struck by the familiar tones of his voice. "It's not possible—who—Great gad, that's not Herbert!"

He caught the Bounder by the shoulder, drew him nearer, and peered into his face. The millionaire was shaken and breathless from the struggle, but he forgot that and everything else in his utter amazement at the sight of his son! He stared at him blankly.

"H-Herbert!" he stuttered. "You! Herbert!"

"Yes, father!" muttered the Bounder.

"You here—good gad—and you—you—" Mr. Vernon-Smith broke off. The gurgling, groaning Apache was making an effort to rise. The millionaire peered round him and picked up the malacca he had dropped when he was attacked.

"Take that stick, Herbert, and stun that scoundrel if he stirs."

"What-ho!" grinned Smithy.

He stood over the Apache, the heavy stick in his hand. The rat-like eyes scintillated up at him, but the ruffian sank back and remained in the grass. He was beaten, and the Bounder would have cracked his head without the slightest compunction at an attempt to give trouble. Groaning for breath, the wretch lay in the grass, the Bounder watching him.

Mr. Vernon-Smith picked up his hat and replaced it on his head. There was an extraordinary expression on his face. He knew from what his son had saved him—the Bounder's intervention had only come in time to prevent the Apache from using his knife. There was a minute of silence; Smithy, watching the Apache, wondering how his father was going to take it; hardly conscious of the blood that was oozing down his left arm from the cut he had received.

"Herbert! I find you here!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith at last. "This morning I called at Mr. Pickering's and discovered your trickery."

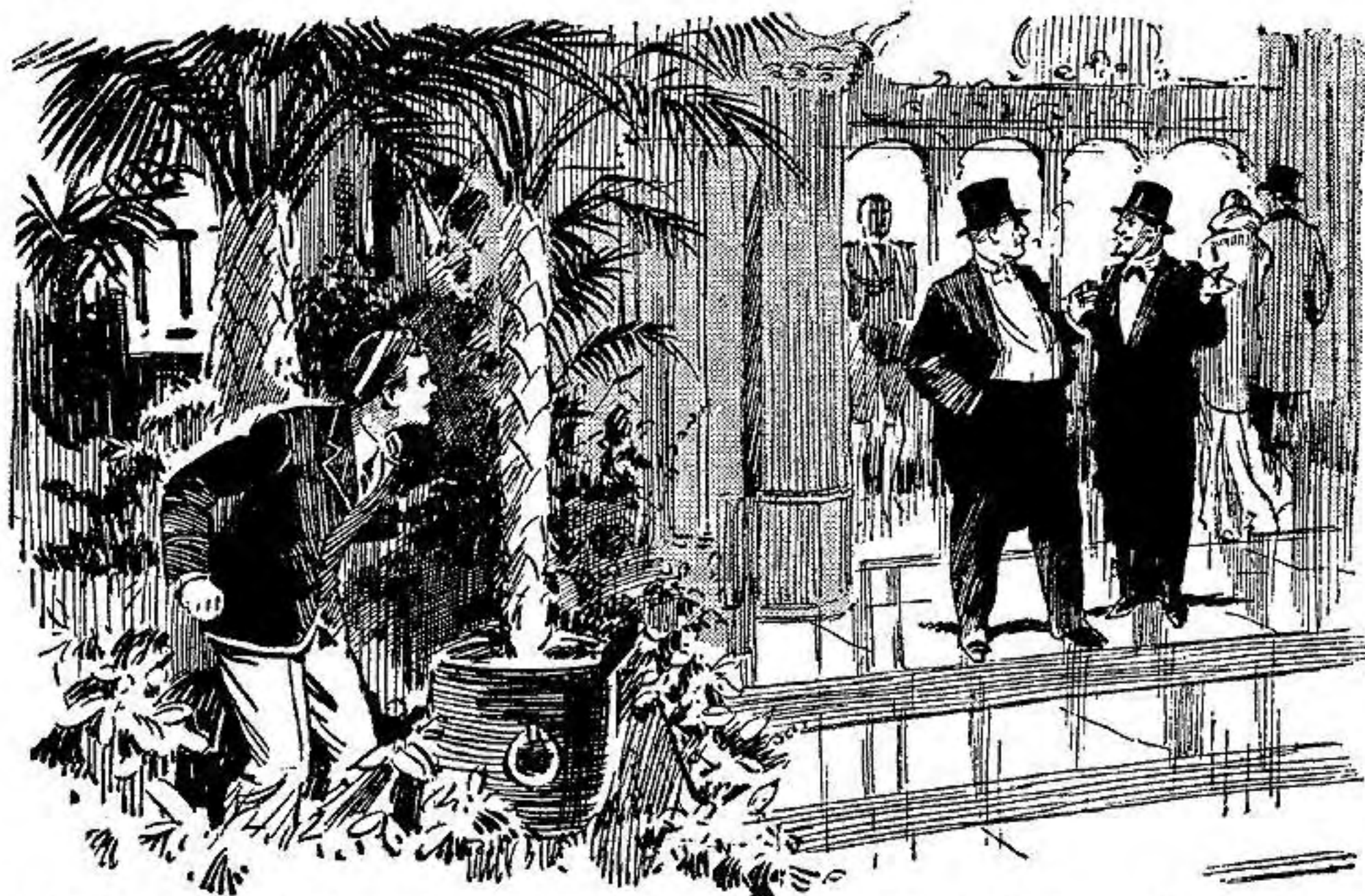
Smithy made no answer.

"I saw your Highlife friends on the boat—By gad! You must have crossed with them, as I find you here! Were you on the boat?"

"Yes!"

"And you kept out of my sight?"

"Yes."



"Oh gad!" breathed the Bounder, backing into cover of a tub of palms on the steps of the casino, at the sight of a portly figure in a gleaming silk hat. "My father!" Mr. Vernon-Smith, pacing the balcony with Monsieur Poncet, walked and talked, while the Bounder breathed hard, waiting impatiently for his father to go.

"To come here——"

"Yes."

"And for what," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a deep voice, "are you here?" The Bounder made no reply to that.

"But I need not ask!" said the millionaire grimly. "You are here to gamble in the casino with those young scoundrels of Highcliffe——"

"Not with them," said the Bounder. "I've rowed with them and we've parted."

"No doubt—no doubt—after the way I handled your precious friend Ponsonby on the boat! But you are here—I know why you are here, you disgraceful young rascal."

"You wouldn't have known I was here, but——" The Bounder broke off. But his words recalled to the millionaire's mind the service his son had rendered him, which he had forgotten for a moment in his rising wrath.

"But for that!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, breathing hard.

"Oh, don't let that make any difference!" said the Bounder flippantly. "I cleared off from the tutor's—you found that fool Bunter there in my place. I've sold things in London to raise the wind for a plunge here. You want an excuse to throw me out and adopt your precious nephew Lucius Teggars in my place! Well, now you've got it! Don't mind me."

"You insolent young rascal!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith, his wrath breaking out. "By Jove, I've a mind to take you at your word! I've a mind——"

"Haden't you better call a gendarme to take charge of this sportsman?" drawled the Bounder. "I'd like to get this scratch tied up."

"What!" Mr. Vernon-Smith's wrath vanished in a flash. "What? Are you hurt, Herbert? Why did you not say so? What——"

"Nothin' to speak of—only a scratch really——"

"You young fool! How dare you not tell me at once?" The alarm and anxiety in the millionaire's look and tone, struck the Bounder with remorse. Bitterly as Mr. Vernon-Smith was incensed against his scrapegrace son, prepared to disinherit him if he did not mend his ways, that anxiety told clearly how dear his son still was to him; dearer, perhaps, than he realised himself.

"It's nothing, father!" muttered the Bounder. "Only a graze from the brute's knife—a scratch—I—I—I say, dad, I—I'm sorry—sorry that I've played the fool—I'll go straight back to that dashed tutor's if you like—I'll stick there——"

"Never mind that, you young fool—what does that matter now?" rasped the millionaire. "Let me see—come with me—at once——"

"That blighter will get away——"

"Nonsense! Come!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith grasped his son's arm, to drag him up the path towards the distant lights of the casino building. There was a yelp of pain from Smithy, it was his injured arm that the millionaire grasped. It was echoed by a cry of alarm from Mr. Vernon-Smith, as he felt his fingers wet from the schoolboy's sleeve.

"Herbert! You are wounded!" he panted.

"I tell you it's only a scratch—nothing——"

"Come at once—instantly!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Give me your arm—I will help you—come—come——"

He almost dragged the Bounder up the path. As they disappeared, the Apache crawled to his feet, and crawled away into the wood. He vanished, unheeded by either. Ten minutes later, the cut on the Bounder's arm, which was in fact little more than a scratch, was being bound up, in Monsieur

Poncet's rooms in the casino building, under the anxious eye of Mr. Vernon-Smith, and gendarmes were dispatched to look for the Apache. And the Bounder was thinking that, after all, the day's adventures had not turned out so badly—though it was quite certain now that he was not going to have that "plunge" at the roulette-table at Le Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

"WHAT about supper?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Nothing about supper, old fat man."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Where on earth are you going to put it?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Really it was rather a problem where Billy Bunter was going to park the supper—if any! How many sticky cakes he had packed away, during the show, even Bunter could hardly have counted. He was looking very shiny and sticky, as he rolled out after the performance, with the Famous Five. Anyhow, there was no supper for Bunter.

"Time to take the tram back to Boulogne, for the boat!" said Harry Wharton. "Just about time! I wish that silly ass Smithy was coming back with us."

"Thanks!" said a quiet voice at his shoulder.

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

The Famous Five turned to look at the Bounder. His face was a little pale, but smiling, and his left arm was held a little stiffly. He gave them a nod and a grin.

"Mean that, Wharton?" he asked.

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Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes—I didn't know you heard me, Smithy, but I certainly mean it. Be a sensible chap, and come back with us."

"Have I ever been a sensible chap?" grinned the Bounder.

"My esteemed Smithy, it is never too late for the cracked pitcher to mend, by going longest to the well for a stitch in time, as the English proverb remarkably observes!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Good old English proverb!" said the Bounder. "That jolly old moonshee in Bhanipur who taught you English, was a nut on proverbs, Inky. I've been waiting here for you chaps to come out."

"I say, Smithy, how did you get on?" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly. "Did you break the bank?"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Shan't! I say, old chap, did you get away with the stuff? Did you stick 'em?" gasped Bunter. "I was going in to try my luck, only these rotters were too jolly mean to lend me any money. Have you had any luck?"

"Fathead!" answered the Bounder. "I haven't been in the casino, and I'm not goin'. You men comin' along to the tram?"

Vernon-Smith walked down the steps with the Famous Five, joining the crowd going down the path through the wood to the road. That path, so dusky and lonely when the Apache had attacked Mr. Vernon-Smith there, was now crowded with people heading for the trams. Perplexed as they were, Harry Wharton & Co. were glad enough that Smithy had joined up, and hoped that he was going to stick to them.

"Anything wrong with your fin, Smithy?" asked Harry.

"Scratch from a knife," answered Smithy. "Nothin' much, and I've had it bandaged, under the pater's affectionate eye."

"You've seen your father, then?"

"Well, yes." The Bounder laughed. "That sportsman you pointed out to me—you remember him?"

"Yes. What about him?"

"He tried it on again, and I happened to be near at hand. He was handlin' his sticker—hence this jolly old scratch! And hence," added the Bounder, with a grin, "the restoration of peace and a friendly footin' in the jolly old family circle! I've left the pater in a fairly good temper—and nothin' more is goin' to be said about my boltin' from the tutor's. On the understandin', of course, that I chuck up what I came here for, and go back like a good boy! Bein' a good boy isn't really my long suit—but in the jolly old circle, I'm playin' up."

"You're catching our boat, then?" asked Bob.

"Yes—that's a condition! The pater trusts me, so far as to travel home with you! That's why I'm bestowin' on you the inestimable boon of my improvin' society."

"Good!" said Harry.

It was a cheery party that crowded on the tram and clanged away to Boulogne. Bunter, perhaps, was not so cheery as the rest. He was doubtful whether he was going to get any supper—also he was thinking of the immense fortune he might have made at Le Bosquet, had the beasts he was with lent him sufficient cash for a plunge at roulette.

But nobody heeded Bunter. The Bounder seemed in great spirits, in spite of his stiff arm. His luck, which had seemed to let him down so severely,

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had turned in his favour again. He had hardly ventured to think of what might be the outcome of his reckless and rebellious escapade; and now it was washed out, forgiven, if not forgotten, and he was able to make a fresh start.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Seen that sportsman before?" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as the tram clanged past a little group, in the light of a roadside lamp.

Two French police, in their cloaks, were holding either arm of a sallow, savage-faced man with rat-like eyes, marching him along the road. It was the Apache, safely held between the two gendarmes.

"That's the johnny!" said the Bounder. "They've got him, then!"

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

The tram clanged on, and the gendarmes and their prisoner disappeared in the night.

The Greyfriars party left the tram at the depot in Boulogne, to walk down to the quay. Billy Bunter halted.

"I say, you fellows, what about supper?" he asked. Bunter had asked that question before, without getting a satisfactory answer. He had no better luck now.

"Is that a conundrum?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Eh? No, you ass! What about supper?" demanded Bunter.

"The answer is a lemon!" suggested Bob.

ANOTHER POCKET WALLET WON

Harry Barnes, of 181, High Road, Wood Green, N. 22, wins one of these useful prizes for sending in the following GREYFRIARS LIMERICK:

The Bounder, of dubious fame,
Has come to the end of his game:
Yet though we agree,
The sack it should be,
We all want him back, just the same!

Get busy with your efforts, chums!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "Look here! Why can't we have supper?"

"Because one rode a horse, and the other a rhododendron!" answered Bob, just as if the Owl of the Remove was asking conundrums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Supperless, Billy Bunter rolled on the steamer with the chums of the Remove. A little later, when the Channel boat was out in the Channel, the fat Owl had reason to be glad that he had not added a supper at Boulogne to the sticky cakes of Le Bosquet-dans-le-Forêt.

The lights of Boulogne-sur-Mer were sinking astern, and the juniors were watching the shadowed sea for the lights of Folkestone, when strange, weird, and woeful sounds came from a fat figure that huddled in a state of collapse in a deckchair.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, peering round in the gloom.

Groan!

"Is that Bunter?"

Groan!

"Anything the matter?"

Groan!

"Look here, you fat duffer," said Bob, not for the moment discerning what the trouble was. "If you really

want to stuff, you can get something on the boat! There's supper downstairs, and we'll lend you—"

"Beast!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"D-d-don't talk to me about supper!" gurgled Bunter. "Don't mention food to me, you unfeeling brute! Gurrgh!"

"Oh, my hat! I see!" Bob chuckled. "I thought you were rather overdoing those cakes at Le Bosquet, old fat bean! Poor old Bunter!"

"Gurrgh!"

"Buck up, old bean!" said Bob. "Think what a lot of room you'll have for supper when we get home!"

"Yurrgh!"

The crossing lasted little over an hour. But to Billy Bunter it seemed to last years and years.

But at last the Greyfriars party landed in Folkestone. Billy Bunter was still gurgling a little as he rolled over the gangway with the Famous Five. The Bounder's face was rather thoughtful. Harry Wharton touched him on the arm—not the damaged one.

"Look here, Smithy! Are you bound to go back to the tutor's?" he asked. "If your father knew you were with us—"

"He does know."

"If you'd told him we wanted you to come back with us for the rest of the hols—"

"I did!"

"Well, then—"

said Harry. The Bounder grinned.

"I told him you'd asked me, and he said that if I went with your crowd, it would be all right!"

"Good egg!" said the captain of the Remove. "That's that, then! This way for the train!"

"The goodfulness of the esteemed egg is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Where are you going, Bunter?" asked Harry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, I'm not going home," he said. "You see, the decorators are in at Bunter Court! It's rather too late to go to Mauleverer's—Mauly wants me for the vac, but I can't get to Hampshire to-night! I'll tell you what, Wharton—I'll come home with you, old chap!"

"Oh!"

"That's settled!"

"Is it?"

"Yes, old chap. And now, what about supper before we take the train?" asked Bunter. "I'm hungry! The sea always makes me hungry—"

"Not to mention what happens to you on the sea!" murmured Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! What about supper, Wharton?"

"Nothing!"

"If you're going to be stingy with a guest, Wharton—"

"Oh, my hat! There's only one train to-night, and it goes in five minutes. But stay in Folkestone for supper if you like! Come on, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter decided not to stay in Folkestone for supper. He was very careful not to miss that train. At long, long last the Greyfriars trippers reached home—where Bunter was able to find a satisfactory answer to that important question—what about supper?

THE END.

(Get ready for another amazing, thrill-packed yarn of the chums of Greyfriars in next Saturday's MAGNET, chums. It is entitled: "THE SHADOWED SCHOOLBOY!" and it's just the type of story you will all enjoy! Order your MAGNET early!)

The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!

Starring FERRERS
LOCKE, detective,
and his clever boy
assistant, JACK
DRAKE.



BY
HEDLEY SCOTT

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

FERRERS LOCKE, detective, and his boy assistant, JACK DRAKE, are on the trail of two clever criminals—JULIUS TANKERHEAD and MERVYN VILLIERS, who have been pulling off big coups in connection with sporting events. In order to find out how these crooks work their clever swindles, Locke poses as Julius Martinez, a wealthy Argentine book-maker, and wagers big odds with the two conspirators against Henry Stafford's horse, Victory, winning the Wexborough Stakes. Knowing the likeness between Victory and its half-brother, Desmond, a Grand National winner belonging to Sir Tony Walforde, Locke details Drake to keep a watch on Stafford's training establishment while he himself starts out for Sir Tony Walforde's place.

(Now read on.)

Companions in Crime!

DARKNESS, heavy and almost impenetrable, cloaked the countryside, completely in harmony with the quietness of night.

No lights gleamed from the latticed windows of the Rookery, the modest house and training establishment of Old Man Stafford.

Far away, across the rolling downs, twinkled a myriad lights from the cluster of houses which basked in the name and glories of Epsom Town. Here, at the Rookery, solitude, peaceful as the grave, reigned supreme.

The soft sighing of the night breeze played fitful gambols with the gnarled old oak and its clustered foliage, which dwelt within a stone's throw of Old Man Stafford's house. Across the light gravel drive weird and fantastic shadows danced and disappeared to appear afresh in some new shape.

"Hist!"

It was one of those grotesque shadows which brought a hissing warning from one of the two muffled-up individuals who suddenly appeared. Men with guilty consciences have been known to start at their own shadow. These prowlers had cause for alarm; guilt was written largely in both of their fleshy, heavy faces—added to which they were trespassers.

"It's all right, Julius!" came back a whispered reply. "It's only the shadow cast from the tree."

Julius Tankerhead breathed heavily

with relief. But his relief was short-lived, for at that precise moment there pierced the silence a noise which was uncommonly like a human being snoring. Julius said as much, at which his confederate laughed impatiently.

"Don't be a fool!" he said. "You're imagining things! Come on!"

Taking his companion by the arm, he led him softly towards the stables at the far end of the narrow drive and to the left of the living quarters of the Rookery.

Had either of them paused to inquire further into those sounds suggestive of someone snoring, and gazed into the forked boughs of the old oak, they would have seen an unusual sight. For there, wrapped up in a blanket coat, fast asleep, was a youth whom they fondly imagined to be safely ensconced in bed, way back at the Epsom hotel. As it was, Jack Drake thoroughly tired out with his uneventful vigil, had succumbed to the embrace of sleep.

The conspirators trod on, their rubber goloshes pulled over their walking shoes scarcely making a sound on the powdered gravel.

Before them loomed the brick-and-wooden structure of Old Man Stafford's stable. As they listened Tankerhead and Villiers could hear the restless movements of the horse Victory in his box.

Advancing another couple of paces, they inclined their ears towards the loft above the stable in which they knew Martin, the stable-boy, was housed.

From that direction came the faint sounds of deep breathing. Martin, a young and healthy lad, was deep in the arms of Morpheus.

A meaning glance passed between the night intruders, and almost in the same moment Tankerhead withdrew from one of his capacious pockets a small cylinder, not much larger than a pint ginger-beer bottle. In another moment he had produced a length of rubber tubing, and was soon attaching it to the nozzle of the cylinder. That done, he motioned to Villiers to place the ladder, which he had taken off the hooks in the wall, against the small, open window of the loft.

Without a further word, Villiers

took the length of rubber tubing and started to mount the ladder. On the gravel drive below Tankerhead took charge of the cylinder. Once Villiers had gained the topmost step of the ladder, and was on a level with the window, he inserted the rubber tube through the aperture, and, holding it at arm's length, saw to his satisfaction that the end of it just reached the head of the sleeping boy in the loft.

A signal passed between him and Tankerhead. Followed the slight hissing as of gas escaping. By clever manipulation, Villiers, without inhaling any dangerous quantity of the gas himself, for gas it was, held the rubber tubing at arm's length, in line with the sleeping boy's nostrils.

A little of the gas was all that was necessary to ensure that neither he nor Tankerhead were disturbed by the boy Martin for at least three or four hours—and that little Villiers made sure the boy inhaled.

The gas took almost immediate effect. The breathing of the boy became heavier and faster. For about five minutes Villiers dangled the stiffened rubber tubing over the head of his victim, and at last pronounced himself satisfied. With a cautious, muttered whisper to Tankerhead to turn off the flow of gas, he began to dismount the ladder.

"Took it like a kid having a tooth out under gas," was his remark when he reached ground. "Wait a moment while I shove this ladder back where I found it, and we'll soon have the stable door open."

It seemed an age to the nervous Tankerhead while his companion in crime performed these tasks. In reality, the picking of the lock took exactly one and a half minutes.

The door creaked open, Tankerhead cursing under his breath at every fresh sound.

Inside, in the deep gloom, relieved only by the straw-coloured blanket thrown across his back, stood the horse Victory, his ears upstanding, perplexed doubtless by this early intrusion in his sleeping quarters by two strangers.

But Victory was a good-tempered animal, and he made no resistance when Villiers picked up each hoof in turn and

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calmly wrapped a square of blanket around it, each square of the thick material, specially prepared for the occasion, being held in place by lengths of tape which were carefully fastened round the horse's fetlocks.

Without protest, Victory allowed himself to be led out of his box, to make the acquaintance, at closer quarters, of the second stranger.

"Here, Julius," said Villiers, "hold him while I close the door."

Tankerhead obliged very gingerly. He knew little about horses, or how to treat them. And his guilty conscience began to play tricks with him; the rolling whites of Victory's eyes suggested to his nervous condition that the horse would savage him at any moment.

"Look sharp, Mervyn," he said fearfully, as his partner set about the task of relocking the double doors. "This gee looks—"

He broke off in alarm, and let the halter slip through his fingers as Victory, naturally enough, eased his position, and threw out one of his hind legs to stretch the muscles.

Had victory been a difficult animal to handle, Tankerhead's nervousness would probably have spelt ruin to Villiers' cunningly thought out scheme. Likely as not, he would have bolted, for any horse knows by instinct those who understand him and can master him, and those who cannot.

As it was Victory merely backed a couple of paces and stood stock still. Next moment Villiers had pushed Tankerhead out of the way and taken charge.

"Looking after a kindergarten's more in your line!" he growled. "What did you let him go for? Ain't you heard that racehorses are high-spirited animals?"

"That's just it!" retorted Tankerhead. "I had heard it—and I wasn't particularly keen to get a kick. Come on—let's get moving!"

But Villiers was already doing that. A glance at his watch told him he would have to hurry. At the appointed rendezvous, Judd, Sir Tony Walforde's lad, would be waiting for him, with Victory's half-brother Desmond.

Through the cold night air the strange procession moved on, the muffled hoofs of the horse making but little noise.

Soon, very soon, Villiers and Tankerhead—and the stolen horse—were two hundred yards away from the Rookery.

It was then that Jack Drake woke up—with a start. So violent was that start that he all but fell out of the tree. Regaining his balance, however, Jack repressed the impulse to yawn; his first thought was of the time.

"Good lor!" he muttered unhappily, as he gazed at the luminous dial of his watch. "Must have dozed off. Been asleep for about forty minutes."

He shivered with the cold into full wakefulness. Instinctively his eyes went towards the stables at the Rookery. Under his searching gaze they appeared to be exactly the same as when he had last seen them. The upper window of the loft was open, the double doors of the stable box were closed; no sign of any intruders showed whichever way he looked.

Drake settled down to watch afresh, avowing to himself that this time he would not fall asleep.

Meanwhile, the horse stealers were nearing a spot about a quarter of a mile away from Sir Tony Walforde's

stables. In the shadow of a clump of trees the treacherous Judd awaited them, holding by a halter Desmond, the prize steeplechaser. Desmond, not quite so manageable as his half-brother Victory, was pawing the ground restlessly. His eyes were rolling, too, and his short well-groomed tail swished round in circles. He liked not this rude and apparently inexplicable intrusion upon his night's rest.

The horse grew more fretful still as he sensed the approach of another animal, and started to neigh a welcome. But Judd half suppressed it by clamping his hand over the animal's velvety muzzle.

"Here we are, Judd!" Mervyn Villiers was the speaker, and Judd heaved a sigh of relief at the sound of his voice. "Sorry if we're a bit late."

The treacherous stable-lad mumbled his grievances at being kept waiting and at the grave risks he ran, and he was all eagerness to complete his part of the roguish bargain and be off.

With a lightning-like move he slipped the halter off Desmond's head, what time Villiers did the same with Victory, and exchanged them. Both horses' hoofs were wrapped in the noise-proof blanketing.

"Here you are, Judd," said Villiers, handing over Victory to the diminutive stable-lad. "Give me Desmond. After the race to-morrow we'll meet here, as arranged, and exchange the gees again."

"O.K. with me," growled Judd—"providing, of course, my money's here! What about a bit on account?"

It wasn't so much a request as a demand, but Villiers had anticipated it. He drew from his pocket a bundle of notes.

"There's a hundred there, Judd," he remarked coolly. "You'll get the second hundred after the race. So long!"

Villiers waited a moment while Judd moved off with the horse Victory, and then plucked Tankerhead by the arm. That individual was looking more reassured now. The exchange had been worked so easily that already he could picture his winnings from that poor fool of a bookmaker, Jules Martinez, in advance.

The return journey to the Rookery was started, this time Villiers keeping a hold of the halter all the time. Desmond was a different tempered animal from Victory, and all the way he tossed his head in protest in an effort to break loose. Villiers was glad, then, that he had been a witness to Tankerhead's weakness in handling horses way back at the Rookery, for of a certainty Desmond would have frightened the life out of Tankerhead, and bolted into the bargain.

Tankerhead was thinking much the same thing, too, as he walked along, keeping out of kicking length of those muscled, slender legs which had carried Desmond over the mountainous jumps at Aintree.

Yet it was this slight troublesomeness on the part of Desmond which nearly brought about the two rogues' undoing, for Desmond displayed an unwillingness to enter the gravel drive of the Rookery, and started to cavort and strain at the halter.

The noise he made, added to the muttered curses of Villiers, woke up a certain young man, who, for the second time that night, had succumbed to slumber in the chilly shelter of the old oak.

Again Jack Drake came to. He censured himself severely for his lapse, rubbed his eyes, and, for the second time that night, nearly fell out of the tree. Staring through the darkness, he made out the dim shapes of moving figures—two men and a horse. He looked again—yes, this was not a trick of the imagination; the shadows moved just in front of the stable doors.

Instantly Drake began to swarm down the tree, during which time, of course, he lost sight of his quarry. Yet when, having reached the ground and stealthily approached the stable yard by a somewhat devious route, he peered over the wall and saw nothing untoward.

There was the open window of the loft, the stable doors were fastened—and there was no sign of any human prowlers.

Drake blinked and blinked again. He did not know that Villiers, the man in command on this tricky venture, had worked with speed; that while Jack had shinned down from the tree and stealthily approached the stable yard from another direction Villiers had quickly opened the doors of the stable, looped the halter of the horse to its customary hook, and as quickly departed.

Something under half a minute it had taken the quick-moving Villiers—just seconds too late for Drake to witness the whole queer business. And while Drake, growing more certain than ever now that his eyes had played him false, climbed over the wall and dropped, panting, on to the gravel drive, Villiers and Tankerhead, well pleased with their night's work, were hurrying out at the other end of the drive, their rubber goloshes making no more noise than the souging of the wind in the trees.

Once clear of the Rookery, the pair of villains stopped and congratulated themselves on their cleverness.

"Julius, my lad," said Villiers, "you will admit that this little job is my stunt from beginning to end. Gosh, boy, wait till to-morrow when Desmond romps home—and we romp home, too, with a fortune!"

"You're a clever devil, Mervyn," conceded Tankerhead, albeit somewhat grudgingly. "But I'll give you full marks when we've touched Martinez for the hundred thousand. By the way, I suppose you really can trust this fellow Judd?"

Villiers laughed impatiently. "Of course I can! Do you think he'd squeal now? Why, it would ruin him! He's gone too far to back out. And, another thing, he doesn't know who we are. I've not mentioned a name to him during the whole of the business."

"Good! Let's get back to the hotel," grunted Tankerhead. "I can do with a spot of shut-eye. Expect that fool Martinez is snoring now."

They laughed, little knowing that Martinez, alias Ferrers Locke, was at that precise moment standing in the shelter of the big red-brick wall which enclosed Sir Tony Walforde's racing establishment.

He had been waiting there for some time, and, greatly to his chagrin, nothing had happened. Had the detective been able to reach the spot five minutes earlier he would have seen the rascally Judd taking out the horse Desmond with muffled hoofs, all ready to exchange the prize steeplechaser with its undistinguished half-brother at the appointed rendezvous. As it was, the

detective received an unpleasant surprise when his attuned ears caught the sounds of approaching feet—and horse's feet at that. He knew then, in a flash, he had arrived on the scene too late!

Soon, into view, came the rascally Judd leading the chestnut—Locke could see the distinguishing white blaze on the horse's forehead, dark as the night was. For a moment he stood undecided, but Judd's next action at once made up the detective's mind to follow a certain course, for it told him that the horses had been exchanged.

Just beyond the wall, all unconscious that his movements were being observed, the stable lad pulled out the

roll of notes Villiers had given him and started to count them. That done, he grunted with satisfaction and thrust them into his rubber knee boots.

"Safer there!" Locke heard him mutter. "Kim on, you miserable bit of catsmeat! You can sleep in a real stable for one night!"

Judd and his charge moved on. From a distance Locke saw him take the horse into the box, over which the name of Desmond was proudly inscribed, lock the door, and then emerge into clearer view carrying the four squares of blanket. For a moment, the stable lad seemed undecided what to do with these. Eventually, however, he crossed to the

big refuse bin and pushed them in under the other rubbish. Then he sauntered off to his living quarters.

Ferrers Locke gave him exactly three quarters of an hour, before he moved from cover. Then, as quietly as Judd in his rubber boots, the detective made a dive for the rubbish bin, calmly extracted the thrown away blankets, felt in his pocket for his bunch of skeleton keys, and padded softly towards Desmond's box.

"Two can play at this game," was his reflection, as he bent over the lock, which held the door in place.

(Continued on next page.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

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

SPEED, speed—and still more speed! That seems to be the cry of the present generation, and before long we are likely to see a revolution so far as speed in air travel is concerned. Already aeroplane men are talking about building passenger planes that will achieve a speed of 300 m.p.h. At the present moment Great Britain, America, and Germany are all making plans to possess

THE BLUE RIBAND OF THE AIR!

The Americans confidently expect to achieve an operational speed of at least 200 m.p.h. for ordinary passenger-carrying planes. And you can bet your boots that Great Britain won't let them get away with it first if we can help it! Not only are our aeroplane designers going out for speed, but they're making a bid for size, too! Our latest plane is so big that it has to be assembled in the open-air. The workshops aren't large enough for the job to be done under cover.

The Germans are contemplating an air liner that will even put the giant Do-X in the shade. This is going to have a length of 160 feet, and a wing span of 288 feet, and is designed to carry 200 passengers, plus thirteen thousand pounds of freight. Her speed is to be in the region of 190 m.p.h.

Who is going to win this race for air supremacy? Believe me, chums, we're going to see some mighty advances in aeronautics before we're much older!

Here's another paragraph to add to your "Things You'd Hardly Believe!" C. J. S., of Walthamstow, has heard that

LIGHTNING MAKES GLASS,

and he wants to know if it is true. Yes, natural glass can be made both by lightning and meteorites striking the earth. The intense heat fuses the silica of the sand and produce glass. In some cases—such as when a meteorite strikes—the glass is formed in a rough, irregular shape, and often has most gorgeous colourings, caused by the oxides in it. "Lightning" glass produces some very curious results. When lightning strikes sand, it fuses the silica along its path, and the result is to form a hollow glass tube around the path of the lightning. These glass tubes, formed by lightning, are sometimes more than thirty feet in length.

Here is a query from Jack Donaldson, of Dumfries. He asks:

WHAT IS A FATHOM?

And how many fathoms are there in a cable? A fathom is a nautical measure equivalent to six feet. There are 120 fathoms in a cable. But I wonder if you know why six feet was called a fathom? It's rather interesting. The term comes from the Anglo-Saxon word fathm, and means the space enclosed by the arms when outstretched. So, actually, the word fathom means to encircle anything with the extended arms.

FROM the land of Fisher T. Fish comes an amusing story of the man who is claimed to be

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SALESMAN!

His speciality is selling Brooklyn Bridge—and no one knows exactly how many times he has managed to sell it—and to "sell" the credulous buyers who trusted him. He gets into touch with wealthy visitors from "way back West," and by means of a plausible tongue, manages to persuade them that Brooklyn Bridge is his to dispose of. Of course, the salesman doesn't want money down. He tells them that a couple of hundred pounds will do as a deposit. The rest can be paid in instalments. It takes some swallowing, but people have been so impressed with him that they have handed over their "deposit." He hasn't waited to collect the rest of the instalments!

But the American Government are waiting for him, and when they catch him, they're going to send him for a nice long rest at Uncle Sam's expense!

This reminds me that a reader asks

WHO WAS UNCLE SAM?

Like Dickens' character, Mrs. 'Arris—"there never was sich a person!" Uncle Sam corresponds with our John Bull. But here is the story of how the name came to be used.

At a local station in the West, in the early days, the stationmaster was a veritable autocrat. He was also the postmaster, and he was known to all and sundry as "Uncle Sam." The American mail-bags are painted with the words: "U.S. Mail," and some local wag suggested that the initials stood for "Uncle Sam's Mail." The nickname stuck, and gradually spread from postal workers

and railwaymen to the general public. So the little local autocrat was handed down to posterity as typifying the Government of the United States.

Here are a few

PARAGRAPHS IN BRIEF,

which may interest you.

Do you know that when pulling its load at 60 m.p.h. only three quarters of its energy is used by the Royal Scot? The other quarter—400 horse-power—is used for overcoming air pressure when travelling at this speed.

The American Billy Bunter! A fifteen-year-old New York boy is nearly eight feet in height, and weighs 25 stone 12 pounds. He takes size 35 in. boots—and he is still growing!

Infra-red cameras are being used to prevent shipping accidents. A new apparatus can pierce fogs by means of the infra-red rays, and can take and develop a photograph in a few seconds. The photograph shows the navigator exactly what dangers lie ahead of him.

Over 700 people of Allied nationality were decorated for assisting British soldiers behind the enemy's lines during the Great War. A special medal was issued in 1921 for the purpose. The holders are mostly Belgian and French.

Do you know which "neutral" state fought on the Allied side during the War? The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg although in German occupation, and regarded as a neutral, formed a "Luxembourg Legion," the men of which fought with the French and Belgian armies.

Artificial silk comes from trees! It was after seeing children rubbing out fibres from cherry stones that gave an inventor the idea of making wood pulp mechanically. This led to the use of wood pulp for making artificial silk.

NOW for next week's tip-top programme. Pull up your socks, chums, and race round to your newsagent to tell him to reserve a copy of next Saturday's MAGNET for you. You certainly won't want to miss

"THE SHADOWED SCHOOLBOY!"

By Frank Richards,

which is a long complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars. Our favourite author has packed it with thrills, fun, and interest. You won't want to put down the MAGNET until you've read every word of it.

Have you written to me yet to tell me what you think of our thrilling detective story? If not—why not sit down now and drop me a line? The more often you write, the better I'll be pleased.

When you've finished chuckling over next week's "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, turn over to my page—and don't be afraid to "come into the office" for a heart-to-heart chat.

Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

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Turning the Tables!

ELMBRIDGE racecourse was filled. The sun streamed down in a comforting blaze upon the well-conditioned turf of the natural racecourse, glinting on the broad water jumps, and lighting up the faces of bookmakers and punters alike.

The bookmakers, looking ridiculous on their small, wooden stools—for most of them were big and fleshy men—invited all and sundry to "find the winner" of the first race. Their raucous voices as they yelled the ever changing prices of the competing horses, was like unto that swelling tumult which accompanied the building of the famous tower of Babel. Interspersing the prices of the horses the generous bookmakers were prepared to lay, were sundry jokes—usually at the expense of some innocent newcomer to the sport of kings and a novice in the art of backing a winner.

But above it all, the swaying, ever moving crowd, the yelling of the bookmakers, the boastful cries of the tipsters who knew a "certainty for this race," and the "mugs" who purchased this "inside information" for sixpence or a shilling, good humour reigned.

Racing draws a mixed crowd, from the highest in the land to the lowest of the low. Yet, wide as are the poles, so to speak, between these two classes, they met here on common ground, they loved the horse, the friend of man.

In the guinea enclosure, Mervyn Villiers and Julius Tankerhead were to be seen, apparently at ease with all the world. They bestowed gracious nods on all who chanced to catch their eye—including Jules Martinez and his youthful, but rather tired-looking clerk.

"Not betting in the ring to-day?" asked Julius Tankerhead, sauntering up to the bookmaker he hoped to rob to the tune of one hundred thousand pounds. "Just looking on, what? Well, you'll see a real race when Victory wins the Wexborough Stakes!"

He looked meaningfully at Mervyn Villiers, who had swaggered up—and the latter laughed in an irritating, confident manner, which made young Drake all afire to bash him.

"Well, a bookmaker must acclimatise himself to surprises," was Martinez's, alias Ferrers Locke's, reply. "Still, I hope you will appreciate the joke should you have to pay me eight thousand pounds between you."

He walked off, leaving Julius Tankerhead a prey to sudden, instinctive misgivings.

"What's he mean by that, Mervyn?" asked Tankerhead. "Nothing gone wrong, what?"

Villiers shook his head and laughed scornfully.

"Nothing can go wrong. Old man Stafford, for once, is paying top price for a fashionable jockey. I tell you, with Brookes on his back, our mount's a certainty. Let's split a bottle!"

The precious pair paid but scant attention to the preliminary races, but they were all eagerness when the horses for the Wexborough Stakes paraded before the stand.

Their horse, with the crack jockey Brookes in the saddle, certainly looked a picture of health. It stepped out proudly, its chestnut coat aglow, its ears erect. A few moments later the horses were cantering to the starting tapes.

"They're off!"

The moment the tapes were broken the crowd took up the shout and passed on the information as only a crowd can. Almost before the echoes had died away the horses were taking the first fence. Old Man Stafford's horse, number five on the programme, took the jump with the leaders in fine style, and Julius Tankerhead and his confederate, were content to wait until the pace of the race increased—that would be just about half-way round the three and a half mile circuit they reckoned. It was—but, to their horror, the horse, which carried a fortune, had dropped behind. It was tailed off behind the first three horses by fifteen lengths!

"He'll never do it!" breathed Tankerhead in an agony of suspense. "Good gosh, why doesn't that fool Brookes pull him out?"

But the fashionable jockey, try as he might, could not improve his position by riding alone. It was only due to an accident to two of the horses well in

front of him, which resulted in a double fall, that enabled him to gain a poor third place when, eventually, the odds-on favourite of the race thundered past the post an easy winner!

The faces of Mervyn Villiers and his partner in crime were almost indescribable. All their scheming had come to nought. Their fortune of a hundred thousand pounds had vanished from their gaze like a beautiful dream. They realised now with growing horror, that they themselves had to pay out to the tune of eight thousand pounds! The reflection turned them green.

Just behind them, Ferrers Locke nudged Drake.

"Worth a guinea box—their faces I mean," whispered the Baker Street detective. "The poor mutts can't understand how it is that Desmond, the National winner, couldn't win a race like the Wexborough Stakes."

"Steady, guv'nor," cautioned Drake, catching sight of a bow-legged little man who suddenly approached the two conspirators. "That's their friend, Judd, unless I'm mistaken."

It was the rascally Judd—and his face was pale and troubled.

"Guv'nor," he said plucking Villiers by the arm. "I can't make it out. That wasn't Desmond who ran?"

"What?" almost screamed Tankerhead and Villiers. "Not Desmond?"

"No! I swear it, I know his peculiar action when he takes off for a jump. That's Stafford's own horse Victory."

"But how—how can it be?" exclaimed Villiers. "Didn't we change them last night?"

"We did!" said the stable lad fearfully. "An' someone's changed 'em back again. I tell you I don't like it. Somebody's rumbled us! I'm not going back to Walforde's place. I'm leaving for Belgium—to-night!"

And the rascally Judd kept his word.

(Villiers and Tankerhead have caught another "cold"—what? But they're in high hopes of "putting one over" on Jules Martinez, alias Ferrers Locke, yet! You'll read all about it in next week's gripping chapters, boys!)

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GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

The game of Foot Ball, which used to be looked down on at Greyfriars as merely a pastime for village clodhoppers, seems to be enjoying quite a vogue at present. Those who were present at the recent match between the Fourth and the Fifth will not find it difficult to account for this fact. We must confess that until we watched this game we had not appreciated how fascinating the sport can be.

Play took place in the quad, "goal posts" as we understand they are termed—being erected at either end. All told, there were forty-five players, twenty-five belonging to the Fourth Form and twenty to the Fifth, and the vigour and enjoyment with which these forty-five players threw themselves into the game augurs well for the future of Foot Ball at Greyfriars.

We regret that we cannot congratulate the Fifth on their particular style of play. As many of our readers know already, the only aggressive acts allowed by the rules of the game are punching and kicking. Yet we distinctly saw members of the senior Form biting and jumping on their opponents.

Notwithstanding these tactics, the Fifth found it beyond them for a considerable time to penetrate their opponents' defence. Suddenly, however, Harker, their leader, conceived the idea of hugging the ball to his chest and racing up the "field" to the Fourth Form goal, which was protected by a body-guard of ten or so stalwart Fifth-Formers who energetically attacked all those who were sufficiently venturesome to approach. The ruse succeeded, and Harker scored the first goal of the match. This was followed by several others, all scored in precisely the same way, and the Fourth Form players began to look considerably worried.

When all seemed lost, however, George Wharton, the new boy in the Fourth, changed the aspect of the game completely by initiating an open kind of play in which the ball was thrown from player to player with a speed which completely bewildered the Fifth. As a result of this revolutionary alteration in their style of play, the Fourth quickly drew level with their opponents and it was not long before they were actually leading.

The game was called off at the end of two and a half hours' play owing to exhaustion on the part of the players generally. By that time, according to independent witnesses, the Fourth had scored seventeen goals and the Fifth only eleven.

Our congratulations to the young victors! So far as we are able to judge, they played a good, fair game, kicking and punching with skill and vigour and handling the ball like village experts.

Undoubtedly Foot Ball is an exciting and exhilarating game. But we hardly think that as a pastime it can ever attain the eminence of Cricket.

(The quad as a football field—and kicking, punching, and handling looked on as part of the game! Times have indeed altered—and we fancy the Old Boy who wrote this account of "Foot Ball" in the "earlies" at Greyfriars would upon his eyes wide if he saw its modern counterpart on Little Side to-day!—Ed.)

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

No. 81 (New Series).

EDITED BY HENRY WHARTON

April 21st, 1934.

WHY TREVOR LIKES HIKING

Rural Beauties Motorists Miss

"I rate not to me of motor-joy," said Trevor scornfully; the other evening, when Tom Brown was talking of the delights of owning a motor-bike. "The motorist! Pah! He sees nothing of the beauties of the countryside!" "Bosh!" was Tom Brown's comment. But Trevor, undeterred, smiled a superior smile. "All the motorist sees is a ribbon of white, dusty road rolling endlessly before him," he said. "All he hears is the endless roar of his engine."



"Very nice too!" remarked Tom Brown, enthusiastically. "What does anybody get out of hiking, anyway?"

"A thousand and one delights that motorists miss!" was Trevor's quick retort. "The inspiring vision of the undulating English landscape, the sound of the breeze through the trees, of the cattle lowing and of the babbling brook, the smell of new-mown hay."

"I seem to have read that somewhere recently," Skinner said thoughtfully. "Wasn't it in the 'Courtfield Gazette' last week?"

Trevor blushed. "Certainly not. It's my own idea, and it comes from the depth of the heart. You can have your blessed motor-bikes. Give me hiking, all the time!"

Trevor's hearers couldn't help being impressed. They saw that there was much to be said for Trevor's point of view. They talked it over. Quite a number of them felt keen on experiencing the breeze through the trees and

They didn't have time!

Wibley Plans Screen Sensation

Amateur Actor's Ambitious Plans

There was a thoughtful frown on Wibley's face as he sat in his classic countenance all last week. Several times he was noticed to be pacing the elms. His pals guessed that he was planning a new stage play for the Dramatic Society. But his plans were wrong. Something entirely different was taking shape in Wibley's brain on this occasion. He was contemplating producing a "talkie" film! "Got it!" he cried enthusiastically, bursting excitedly into the elms. "If you mean that five-foot you borrowed from me last week," began Dick Rake, looking rather pleased, but Wibley stopped him with a gesture.

"Don't worry me with notions of five foot when I'm talking about the biggest idea of all time," he said severely. "This is the world's wonder. Wheeze—something that's going to make history! Has it is in brief: a talking picture, produced, acted and made entirely by members of the Greyfriars Remove!"

"Great pip!" "Why not?" asked Wibley challengingly. "We've got talent, haven't we? I've produced my first plays and there's no earthly reason why I shouldn't produce my fine films. You fellows, to give you your duo, have acted well in the stage and there's no earthly reason why you shouldn't act equally well for me on the films."

"Of course, the technique different," Wibley admitted. "But we shall soon overcome that. Difficulties were only made to be overcome, any- way! And the film I've planned will give us all inspiration, I can tell you. I've got the whole thing worked out in my mind, and it's going to be a screen sensation! I'm calling it 'The World of Youth'!"

BOLSOVER STARTS BEAUTY PARLOUR

Methods Impressive and Original

There was general surprise in junior circles last week when it was learned that Bolsover major had decided to become an instructor in beauty culture instead of physical culture. The idea of this budding Camera going in for eyelash cultivation and wrinkle removing seemed idiotic. "Why the change?" the Greyfriars Herald representative asked Bolsover, looking in at the beauty parlour soon after it had opened. "I thought Greyfriars needed beauty culture more urgently than physical culture," was Bolsover's reply. "When I looked around me and saw the faces of my friends and others, I came to the conclusion that it would be a



Indignant," writes to ask what we thought of the riot in the tuckshop last week, when two gangs of lags indulged in a violent scrimmage in front of the counter. "We can only say, 'Indignant,' that we couldn't help being struck by the large number of doughnuts that were flying across the shop!"

Does This "Menu"? I hereby warn the humorist who raided my cupboard and left behind a note complaining of the thin hair he got that he'll get a thick ear when I find him!—J. WALKER, Sixth Form.

FREE LEGAL AID
Young lawyer, brilliant advocate, defends tuck-snatchers, cigarette-puffers, speed fiends, games-practice dodgers, and other members of the Greyfriars Underworld free of charge—not because he likes 'em, but because he needs practice!—PETER TODD, Study No. 7, Remove.

could easily be put right if you'd let me do this a dozen or so times a day for the next month or two!" As he finished speaking Bolsover grabbed our representative's ear and gave it a violent wrench that drew a howl of agony from the "Herald" man. "Yarooooop! Wharrr you doing, you silly ass!" "Just showing you," explained Bolsover cheerfully. "Then take your nose. It's far too flat; gives you an insignificant appearance, you know. You need it lengthened a bit—like this!" Leggo by does, you siddy idiot!" yelled the "Herald" rep., as Bolsover gave his nose a pull of almost incredible forcefulness.

"Your chin, too, is far too weak. It wants lifting out a bit and hammering into shape." "Yooooop! Cerraway, you maniac!" The "Herald" man saw Bolsover reach for a mallet and decided that he had seen enough. Before Bolsover could bring that implement of beauty culture into play he had fled.

We can't help thinking that Bolsover's Beauty Parlour is very much the same thing as it is. For instance, take your face!"

Mick: "Why are blankets like trains?" Mac: "Because they go over sleepers!"

TWO POINTS OF VIEW
Because Loder has fits of the blues, often gives black looks, and sometimes goes green with envy or red with rage, some fellows think he's a colourful character. Our own idea about it is that he's a double-dyed villain!

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM
Sammy Hunter told Mr. Twigg he didn't like the way we have to work in class. Now Sammy's working on entirely new lines. One hundred of them, as a matter of fact!

LINLEY'S NEW DEPARTURE
Owing to a recent overflow of water from the bath-room over Study No. 13, Linley had to hang out his books on a line to dry them. This is the first time on record "Marky" has ever been found guilty of "airing" his knowledge!