

"SKIP'S LUCKY BREAK!"

Special Cover-to-Cover
Story of Amazing Schoolboy
Adventure, featuring . . .

HARRY WHARTON & CO.

The Magnet ^{2^d}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



Glad as he is to be at Greyfriars, it seems to Skip, the ex-pickpocket, that his shameful past will never be forgotten. Then suddenly the black clouds roll by and along comes—

SKIP'S LUCKY BREAK!



Mr. Quelch snapped open the locket. He glanced at the photograph within and then at Miss Bullivant's face. Then he nodded.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble for Two!

BUMP!

"Oh, you fathead!"

"You young ass!"

Smithy of the Remove, and Coker of the Fifth Form, uttered those exclamations simultaneously as they collided.

It was foggy.

Few Greyfriars fellows were out, after class, that dim November afternoon. Even Bob Cherry, who seldom stayed indoors if it were possible to get out of doors, was not tempted to venture into the thick yellow fog that wrapped the old quadrangle like a blanket.

Smithy had tried it on. In that thick, clinging fog, the Bounder of Greyfriars saw an opportunity for getting out of bounds, unseen by masters or prefects. But by the time he was a dozen yards from the House, Smithy was sorry he had made the venture.

The fog, undoubtedly, hid the scapegrace of the Remove from all eyes. But it also hid everything from Smithy's eyes—and he groped, and groped, and bumped into an elm, and bumped into a wall, and so far from thinking of getting out of bounds, he began to wonder whether he would ever find his way into the House again.

Then, groping on, he bumped again—not into a tree or a wall this time, but into another fellow who was groping his way.

Horace Coker, of the Fifth, had also ventured out—and Coker, too, was sorry for it. Coker had started for the school shop. He had not found it. He had found nothing but fog—till he found Smithy bumping into him.

"You clumsy young ass!" hooted Coker, as he tottered.

"You barging idiot!" grunted Smithy, staggering.

Both of them were feeling cross. Vernon-Smith was very much inclined to charge Coker, and send him spinning. Coker was very much inclined to collar the fag who had collided with him, and smack his head.

Smithy refrained, because Coker was rather too big and hefty a fellow for a Remove junior to tackle. Coker did not refrain—Coker grabbed at the junior, and caught him by the collar.

"Barging idiot, eh?" said Coker grimly. "You cheeky fag, you fancy you can butt into a Fifth Form man, and then cheek him! Take that—and that—and—"

Smack, smack!

Smithy took two, before he wrenched his collar loose from Coker's grasp, and jumped away.

Jumping back, he stumbled in a puddle and sat down.

"Oooh!" gasped Smithy.

Coker of the Fifth peered at him. He burst into a laugh. Apparently, it struck Coker as funny to see the junior sitting in a puddle.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

Herbert Vernon-Smith scrambled up, his trousers dripping mud, his face red with rage. His fists were clenched, and his eyes gleaming. But Coker had already disappeared in fog.

The Bounder breathed wrath. He was no more to blame for the collision than Coker was—and he had had his head smacked twice, and had sat in a puddle. Vernon-Smith was about the last fellow at Greyfriars to take that patiently. He gave up trying to find

his way back to the House—and gave his attention to finding Coker.

Even at a few feet, visibility was bad. He could not see Coker—but he could hear him. He followed the sound—treading softly.

Coker was tramping and groping blindly. His large feet splashed in a puddle, and Coker's voice was heard to say:

"Oh, blow!"

That was sufficient guidance for the vengeful Bounder. Stepping softly, he closed up behind Coker, and the burly form of the Fifth Form man loomed up dimly before his eyes. With both hands, Smithy grabbed the back of his collar, and before Horace Coker knew what was happening—or that anything was happening—he was jerked over backwards.

Bump!

Coker gasped as he sprawled on his back. He had time only for one astonished and breathless gasp.

Smithy lost no time. Swiftly, he changed his grip from Coker's collar to his hair. Coker's cap had fallen off as he fell, and his shock of hair gave a good hold. Gripping it, the Bounder twisted Coker's astonished head over, and rolled his features in the puddle.

"Urrrrgh!" came in a horrid gurgle from Coker, as muddy water filled his eyes and nose and mouth and ears.

He struggled wildly and frantically.

Smithy let go, as a fist like a leg-of-mutton swept blindly through the air. But he was not finished with Coker yet.

Released, Coker sat up, dazed and dizzy, and clawed at the mud and water on his face.

The Bounder grabbed at his ankles, and dragged them into the air.

Coker went over on his back again.

His jacket curled up round his neck. His thrashing arms splashed muddy water from the puddle right and left.

"Urrgh! Googh! What—who—leggo urr'gh!" spluttered Coker.

Smithy let go, and backed into the fog—grinning.

Coker, in a dizzy and bewildered state, wriggled into a sitting posture again, and then squirmed to his feet. Three or four articles, dropped from his pockets, lay scattered round him.

"You—who—what—you—who—oooh!" spluttered Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came back from the fog.

"You young sweep!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll—"

Without wasting time on further descriptions of what he was going to do, Coker rushed in the direction of the sound of laughter to do it.

Had he captured Herbert Vernon-Smith just then, the Bounder would have been badly damaged. But it was not easy to capture the junior in the fog.

Smithy scuttled away, still laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!" floated back.

Coker made another blind rush, breathing fury. But he did not find Smithy. He found a tree! Banging into that tree, Coker gave a yell of anguish, as his nose was almost driven into his head like a nail.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Ow! My nose! Wow!"

Coker clasped his damaged nose. For a long minute, he stood caressing his nose. Then, in a state of wrath inexpressible in words, he started in search of the Bounder again.

But he had less chance than ever of finding him. Vernon-Smith had spotted a glimmering window, and it guided him back to the House.

Smithy was in the House, while Coker of the Fifth, groping blindly in the fog, went on searching for him. In those circumstances, Coker was not likely to have much luck.

He gave it up, at last, when he, in his turn, spotted a lighted window, and found his homeward way. It was a wet, muddy, and infuriated Coker that trailed into the House at last.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Ink for Bunter!

"SKIP, old chap!"

"'Ook it!" said Skip.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I say, have you dropped something?" he inquired.

Skip of the Remove, sitting at the table in Study No. 1, looked across at the fat junior standing in the doorway—not with a welcoming look.

Skip was hard at work on a French exercise for Monsieur Charpentier, which he wanted to get finished, before his friends came to tea in the study.

He did not want to be interrupted by anybody, least of all by Billy Bunter.

"No, I ain't dropped nothing as I knows on!" he answered.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

"Well, whatcher cackling about?" demanded Skip.

"He, he! I thought I heard an 'H' drop!" giggled Bunter.

Skip frowned. The waif of the Remove had been the best part of a term at Greyfriars, but he still found difficulties with his aspirates. Often and often he omitted an "H." On the other hand, he often put one in where it was not needed.

"You fat hass!" said Skip. "'Ook it!"

"I say, old chap—"

"I says 'ook it!" snapped Skip, and he dipped his pen into the inkpot, and bent over his exercise again.

"I say, don't be shirty, old man!" said Billy Bunter. "You can't help dropping 'H's'—nobody expects anything better of a fellow brought up in a slum! He, he! I say, old fellow—"

"Get hout!" said Skip.

Billy Bunter did not get out; he got in. Then he stood blinking at Skip through his big spectacles.

"I say, I've got something to tell you before the other fellows come up to tea," he said. "It's rather important. Chuck that rot, old chap. Never mind French verbs now. I say, how would you like a cake for tea?"

Skip made no answer and did not raise his head. French verbs worried the waif from Slummock's Alley and required all his attention.

Billy Bunter blinked at the top of his bent head.

"I say, Skip, Smithy's gone out!" he said.

"Blow Smithy!" yapped Skip. He was not interested in the Bounder—the one fellow in his Form who was his enemy.

"Redwing's down in the Rag; there's nobody in Smithy's study now," said Bunter. "I say, Smithy's got a cake in his cupboard. I've seen it—I saw him in the tuckshop this afternoon."

Vernon-Smith goes out of his way to do Skip, the waif of the Remove, a bad turn—little realising that in doing so he is presenting his old enemy with a lucky break!

But would you believe it, Skip? He's locked his cupboard—just as if he fancied a fellow might be after his cake! Just like Smithy—suspicious beast, you know!"

"Do you want this hink?" exclaimed Skip.

"Eh? That what?"

"Hink! I'll buzz it at you if you don't 'ook it!"

"Oh, ink! He, he, he! I say, do listen to a chap, Skip! I can't open Smithy's cupboard door. You could."

"What?"

Skip looked up at that and glared at the fat Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter favoured him with a fat wink.

"What about it?" he asked. "We'll go halves in the cake. Mind, it's a jolly good cake; I've seen it. Of course, I'm not the fellow to bag another fellow's cake as a rule, but I'm down on Smithy. Look what a cad he is. He makes out that you're still a pincher, old chap, like you used to be before you came to Greyfriars—"

"You blinking idiot!"

"Well, you know he does," said Bunter. "He bars you because he thinks you're the same old pincher you used to be in your alley. That's why I'm down on him, old chap. It's not because of the cake; I don't care much for cake really."

Skip gazed at Billy Bunter, his brow growing darker and darker.

The junior who had been a pickpocket in the dark old days with Barney the

Binger and Jimmy the Rat did not like being reminded of it.

Every fellow in the Remove, excepting the Bounder, believed that Skip was now as straight as a die, and most fellows were tactful enough to make no reference to his peculiar past.

But Billy Bunter had never been famous for tact.

Apparently unaware that this was a distasteful topic to the waif from Slummock's Alley, Bunter rattled on cheerfully.

"You see, I'm backing you up, Skip. I've never barred you since that time you got my sister Bessie out of the river. Just the sort of plucky thing I should have done myself, you know—What are you grinning at, Skip?"

Skip's frowning face relaxed for a moment.

"You blooming hass, roll away!" he said.

"I haven't finished yet, old chap. As I said, I'm backing you up, so I'm down on that beast Smithy for making out that you're a pincher, just like you used to be—"

"Will you 'ook it?"

"My idea is to pay him out!" explained Bunter. "Now, when you used to pick pockets and pinch things right and left you must have cracked a lock a good many times—what?"

"Oh!" gasped Skip.

"And, as Smithy makes out that you're the same old pincher, wouldn't it serve him right to let him have it?" argued Bunter. "See? He thinks you'd crack a lock now just like you used to. Well, crack his cupboard lock, just to—to pay him out, old chap. We'll go halves in the cake."

Skip rose to his feet.

Billy Bunter grinned with satisfaction.

"That's right, old chap—come on!" he said. "Serve Smithy jolly well right—what? Come on! I say, I believe there's tarts as well as a cake! Anyhow, I'm sure of the cake; I've seen it. Just like that suspicious cad to lock his cupboard. I say, fancy his face when he finds that cake gone! He, he, he! I say, what do you want that inkpot for? You can't open Smithy's cupboard with an inkpot."

Skip, as he came across the study towards the fat Owl of the Remove, picked up the inkpot from the table.

Why, Bunter did not know—yet!

Billy Bunter saw no reason why Skip should not lend him his skilful aid in getting at Smithy's cake.

His fat thoughts had been running on that cake ever since he had seen the Bounder buy the same in the school shop after dinner.

Having ascertained that Smithy had gone out, and that his studymate, Redwing, was downstairs, Bunter had rolled along to Study No. 4 to bag that cake.

Had the cupboard been unlocked, that cake would already have been parked in Billy Bunter's capacious interior.

As the cupboard was locked, he had thought of Skip. Skip, he knew, could open a lock. Bunter saw no reason why he shouldn't open this one.

There were a lot of reasons that Bunter could not see, no doubt—but all Bunter saw was a chance of getting at the cake before Vernon-Smith came in.

Billy Bunter's fat intellect moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform. Somehow or other it always seemed to Bunter that if there were a cake, he was entitled to scoff that cake if he could. A locked cupboard was a difficulty in the way, that was all. Skip could overcome that difficulty. So that

was all right—so far as Bunter could see.

Skip seemed to think differently.

He crossed the study to Bunter, who turned to lead the way up the passage, nothing doubting that Skip was going to render first-aid in dealing with the locked cupboard in Study No. 4.

That was a little error on Bunter's part.

Skip grabbed him by the collar with his left hand; with his right he lifted the inkpot.

It suddenly dawned on the fat Owl what Skip was going to do with that inkpot. He roared.

"Here, you leggo! Keep that ink away, you silly idiot! Leggo, you beast!"

"You blooming fat hass!" said Skip. "You come 'ere and ask a bloke to 'elp you pinch a covey's cake—"

"Ow! Leggo! I wouldn't have asked anybody else, of course!" gasped Bunter. "But you being a pincher—"

If Bunter hoped that that would improve matters he was quite mistaken.

"You fat hidjit!" roared Skip.

He up-ended the inkpot. The ink streamed over Bunter's fat face and down his neck.

"Groooooogh!" gurgled Bunter, as it flowed down. "Oooooogh! Oh crikey! You—you—you beast! I shall have to change—I shall have to wash! Oh, you rotter! Oogh!"

"You'll 'ave to wash your blooming neck, and no error!" grinned Skip. "First time this term, I dessay!"

"Urrrgh! Beast! Groooogh!"

"Now get hout!" said Skip.

He spun the fat Owl into the doorway.

Billy Bunter knew what was coming next, and he bounded—just in time! Skip's boot missed him by an inch.

The waif of the Remove slammed the door after him and went back to the table. As he sat down to his French exercise again there was a howl through the keyhole.

"Beast! I'm all inky! Yah! Pincher! You come out here, you rotten pincher, and I'll mop up the passage with you!"

Skip jumped to the door and dragged it open.

He was quick—but not so quick as Bunter.

There was a rapid patter of fleeing footsteps in the Remove passage. As the door of Study No. 1 flew open the door of Study No. 7 slammed shut.

Bunter was gone—having, apparently, changed his mind about mopping up the passage with Skip.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes a Discovery!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter was on the Remove landing when the Famous Five of the Remove came up to tea.

He was not in the best of tempers. Ink down a fellow's neck was not calculated to improve the temper. The awful necessity of having an extra wash made matters worse; Bunter hated washing—and he was hungry.

So far, he had only had tea in his own study with Peter Todd. Except for that and a bag of bullseyes he had found in Bob Cherry's study, he had had absolutely nothing since dinner. The cake in Smithy's study was still safe behind a locked cupboard door.

He had looked into Lord Mauleverer's study. Mauly had only groaned slightly at the sight of a fat face in the

doorway; but Mauly's studymate, Jimmy Vivian, had hurled a cushion at the fat face, and Bunter had departed with a yell—still hungry. That was why he was waiting for Harry Wharton & Co. when they came up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring at the fat Owl in astonishment. "What's the matter, old chap?"

"Eh? Nothing!"

"You've been washing!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Washing?" repeated Johnny Bull. "Rot! Whoever heard of Bunter washing?"

"The washfulness is seldom terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But he has!" exclaimed Bob. "Look at him! His face is jolly nearly clean!"

"So it is!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Wonders will never cease! What the thump have you been washing for, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Keep it up, old man, now you've started!" said Harry Wharton. "It's a jolly good thing when you get used to it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"That's his second wash this term!" said Bob. "You fellows remember Quelch sent him out of the Form-room to wash, about three weeks ago! Now he's had another!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" roared Bunter.

"Looking!" said Bob. "Can't help looking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Look here! I've been waiting for you fellows to come up! I was going to ask you to tea in my study—"

"And you washed specially?" asked Bob.

"No, you silly fathead! What I mean is, I shan't be able to ask you now, as I've been disappointed about a postal order. You remember I told you I was expecting a postal order—"

"Sort of!" assented Bob.

"Well, it hasn't come!" said Bunter.

"I can't quite understand why, as it's from one of my titled relations. But—it hasn't! Well, I shan't be able to ask you fellows to tea, after all. But I'll tell you what, I'll come to tea with you instead, if you like."

"Thanks—we don't like!"

"He, he, he!" Bunter decided to take that reply as a joke. "All right, then, I'll come! But, look here, you fellows, you make that beast Skip behave himself. He's been chucking ink over me—"

"Oh!" said Bob. "Hence the wash! I see!"

"I never did anything, you know," said Bunter. "I only asked him to crack the lock of Smithy's cupboard—I thought he wouldn't mind, being a pincher, you know—and I offered him halves in the cake—"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You podgy, piffling, pernicious porpoise—"

"He cut up rusty," said Bunter. "I don't know why—but he did! After I've been so kind to him, you know—taking him up, and all that, though he was a rotten pickpocket before he came here—"

"Kick him!" said Harry.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter backed out of reach. He kept behind the Famous Five, as they went on to the study. He was not quite sure of the reception he was going to

meet with from Skip—and he preferred the chums of the Remove to enter first.

Harry Wharton threw open the study door, and the five Removites tramped in. Bunter, keeping back, blinked in after them cautiously.

Skip was no longer busy with the French exercise. He had finished it, and he was sitting at the table with an article in his hand that made Billy Bunter's little round eyes pop behind his big, round spectacles.

It was a small gold locket.

Skip's friends had seen it before; but it was Billy Bunter's first view of it. That little gold locket contained a photograph; and, according to what Skip had told his friends, he had had it since before he could remember—the only article that remained to him from his unknown childhood.

In view of Skip's peculiar past, the Famous Five had found that statement very hard to believe, especially as the face in the photograph seemed familiar to them, and they were almost sure that they had seen the original somewhere.

But, strange as the statement was, they had, as Bob expressed it, "got it down." They trusted Skip, and took his word.

Except Lord Mauleverer, no other fellow in the Remove had seen it, or knew of its existence. The hapless waif was only too well aware of what fellows might think if they saw it.

From his friends, however, it was no secret; and he did not put it away as they came in—not noticing, for the moment, the fat junior behind them, lurking cautiously in the doorway.

"Oh, 'ere you are!" said Skip.

He rose to his feet, the locket open in his hand. The photograph inside, that of a young woman with strongly marked features, was in full view.

"I been looking at this 'ere agin," said Skip, "and I was thinking of asking you blokes to take another squint at it, seeing as you fancied that you'd seen that there dial somewhere—"

"Oh crikey!"

Skip was interrupted by that exclamation from Billy Bunter. He stared round, and as he saw the fat junior, hastily snapped the locket and jammed it into an inside pocket.

He glared at Bunter.

"You fat freak—" he began angrily.

"Oh, really, Skip! I say, it's all right!" said Bunter reassuringly. "I've come here to tea with my friends—not to row with you! But, I say, where did you pinch that locket?"

Skip did not answer that question. He glared, and made a stride towards the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter backed into the passage.

"I say, you keep off, you beast!" he exclaimed. "I keep on telling you I haven't come here for a row! It's all right—I ain't going to give you away! I know you can't help pinching, old chap! If these fellows can keep it dark, I can!"

"You fat idiot!" roared Bob Cherry. "That locket belongs to Skip, and we've known about it for weeks!"

"He, he, he!"

"You frabjous Owl!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It belongs to Skip—"

"He, he, he! Keep it up!" giggled Bunter. "He, he, he! Mind, I'm not giving the chap away! If you fellows keep it dark, I'll keep it dark—though I must say I'm rather shocked at you. I mean to say, you've been down on old Smithy like a ton of bricks for sticking to it that that chap's still a pincher—and now he's been pinching again, and you're keeping it dark. It's a bit thick,

and I'm bound to say— Yarooooop!" Billy Bunter yelled frantically, as Skip rushed at him and up-ended him in the passage. He smote the passage floor with a resounding thump. "Ow! Wow! Beast! Gerraway!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Leave off kicking me, you beast! I won't tell anybody you've been pinching a locket—yarooooop! You kick me again, and I'll go straight to Quelch and say—whoo-hooooop!" Skip did kick him again, and yet again; and Billy Bunter, roaring with

There were times when Potter and Greene had too much of Coker's company, and even dodged and eluded it. But tea-time was not one of those times. At tea-time they invariably rallied round Coker like the loyal pals that at heart they were. Potter and Greene were ready—indeed, eager—to oblige old Horace by taking one of his fivers to the tuckshop and changing it there. So Coker—who had been chiefly occupied, since his adventure in the quad, in rubbing his nose—

to the cupboard, and took out a cricket stump. Coker's rugged face was grim. "That young scoundrel!" he said. "Eh—who?" "Skip, of course!" said Coker. "Nobody else at Greyfriars who can pick a pocket, I suppose—or who would!" "But—" gasped Potter. "But—" "Don't jaw!" said Coker. "I've got to see to this at once! I haven't thrashed him enough—that's the trouble. I've thrashed him several times—but not enough!"



Coker's shock of hair gave a good hold. Gripping it, Vernon-Smith twisted Coker's head over and rolled his features in the puddle. "Urrrrrrgh!" came in a horrid gurgle from Coker, as muddy water filled his eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

anguish, squirmed away and fled for his fat life. There was no tea, after all, in Study No. 1 for the hungry Owl.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Coker Knows!

"OH!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth. He looked startled. Potter and Greene, Coker's chums in the Fifth, looked rather impatient.

It was tea-time. It was an almost invariable custom, in Coker's study in the Fifth, for Coker to stand the tea. Potter and Greene stood Coker! The fog, which had lain thick over Greyfriars that afternoon, seemed to have cleared off a little. Coker did not care to venture out again—but Potter was prepared to make the venture as far as the school shop; Greene offering to accompany him with a flash-lamp. This was exactly as it should have been—it was up to Coker's pals to make themselves useful to Coker. All that Coker had to do was to provide the cash. That he was perfectly willing to do—there was nothing mean about Coker, and he spent his ample cash as lavishly on his study-mates as on himself.

now groped in his pocket for his wallet, to produce a banknote therefrom. Only that morning a fiver had arrived for Coker from his Aunt Judy—not an uncommon occurrence. Coker's Aunt Judy was very fond of Coker—for what reason, Coker's pals had never been able to guess.

But Coker, instead of producing that well-filled wallet, drew his hand out empty, with a startled look on his rugged face.

"Gone!" he ejaculated. "Eh?" ejaculated Potter. "What?" gasped Greene. "Gone!" repeated Coker. "My wallet's gone! Out of my pocket!" "Oh crumbs!"

"Look through your other pockets!" suggested Greene.

"Don't be an ass, Greene!" "Well, it can't be gone, you know!" said Potter.

"Don't be a fathead, Potter!" "Well, what about tea?"

"Never mind that now!" said Coker. "It's no use looking through my other pockets, when I know jolly well which pocket I kept that wallet in. My pocket's been picked."

"WHAT!" "Picked!" "Oh crikey!" Coker knitted his brows. He crossed

"But—" gasped Greene. "Don't gabble! He had it, of course," said Coker. "Nobody else could or would. When I took that kid in hand, at the beginning of the term, I warned him that I'd thrash him, every time he took to pinching again—but I can see now that I haven't thrashed him enough."

"But—" "Don't babble! Not a word about this outside this study!" said Coker. "I don't want the young scoundrel sacked from Greyfriars! I brought him here—and I got my Aunt Judy to pay his fees—and I'm responsible for him. You know what he did—saved me from having my nut cracked—and I said I'd make an honest kid of him, if I have to wear out a cricket stump on him! I'm going to do it. I'm not going to have him bunked from Greyfriars—I'm going to teach him to be honest—and—"

"But—" yelled Potter. "I wish you wouldn't interrupt me, Potter! You fellows are like a sheep's head—all jaw! A fellow can't get in a word edge-wise! Nearly a whole term at Greyfriars—and he hasn't learned yet to chuck pinching!" exclaimed Coker, with deep wrath and indignation. "By gum! I'll give him such a hiding—"

"But suppose he never—" howled Greene.

"Don't be an idiot, Greene! My pocket's been picked—"

"But suppose—"

"Jaw, jaw, jaw!" said Coker. "Well, I've no time to listen to your jaw—I've got to see that young scoundrel at once! The sooner I get my wallet back from the young rascal, the better! I shall make him hand it over, of course, and give him a jolly good hiding! Keep this dark, though—don't go gabbling it all over the House—"

"Not likely!" gasped Potter. "I don't believe—"

"Nor I," said Greene. "More likely you—"

"I said don't jaw!" Coker pointed out. "Jaw, jaw, jaw! You fellows must be wound up, I think."

"But look here—"

"I think I said I've no time for jaw!" said Coker. "I've got to see that young scoundrel, and deal with him!"

Coker put the cricket stump under his arm, and tramped out of the study. His pals looked after him—and then looked at one another. Coker was heading for the Remove—to deal with Skip!

If a pocket had been picked at Greyfriars, there could hardly be any doubt that it had been picked by Skip. Coker had no doubt. He was going to deal at once with the young rascal for whose presence at Greyfriars he was responsible.

"Think he's really lost his wallet, Greeney?" asked Potter.

"More likely in the wrong pocket!" said Greene.

"Much more likely, I think. Might have dropped it, though—he's ass enough. He's been telling us about some rag with a fag in the fog—might have dropped it then. But I suppose he shoved it into another pocket—and he's got it there now."

"Ten to one!" said Greene.

"The silly ass!"

"The blithering chump!"

"Those fags will slaughter him, if he kicks up a shindy in the Remove—"

"Yes—that's one comfort!"

"Looks like tea in Hall, after all!"

"Bother the silly ass!"

Potter and Greene went down disconsolately to tea in Hall. They had only one consolation—Coker, who had gone to wake up a hornet's nest in the Remove, was likely to be badly stung by the hornets!

Heedless of Potter and Greene, Coker strode away to the Remove passage, the cricket stump under his arm. He expected to find Skip in his study at tea-time—but if he were not there, Horace Coker was prepared to go in search of him and deal with him wherever found.

However, Skip was there—with his friends. Six fellows in Study No. 1, had just finished tea, when Coker happened. Coker announced his arrival by hurling the door open, with a crash.

He tramped in. Six fellows stared at him, in far from pleasant surprise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo," roared Bob Cherry, "is that how you hooligans in the Fifth come into a study?"

Coker did not answer. He was not there to bandy words with the Remove fags. He fixed his eyes on Skip, and brandished the stump.

"You young scoundrel!" roared Coker.

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Skip.

"You rascally young pincher!"

"Look 'ere—"

"Hand over my wallet, at once, and then bend over that table!" roared Coker. "Now then—sharp's the word!"

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Rallying Round Skip!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. blinked at Coker.

Skip's face crimsoned. Coker brandished the cricket stump.

He had taken them all by surprise. What he was driving at, only Coker knew: nobody in Study No. 1 knew.

"Mad?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"The madfulness seems to be terrific—"

"Push that barge out!" said Frank Nugent.

"Don't you fags butt in!" said Coker sternly. "I've come here to deal with Skip! Don't jaw about this either! I'm not having the young scoundrel booted out of Greyfriars! I'm going to thrash him for pinching—"

"Oo's been pinching?" howled Skip.

"You have, you young sweep! I promised you, when I brought you to Greyfriars, that I'd keep on thrashing you till you turned honest!" said Coker.

"I'm going to keep to that! I'm going to thrash you now! But first of all, hand over that wallet!"

"What wallet?" shrieked Skip.

"The one you've picked from my pocket!"

"Oh smoky 'addocks!" gasped Skip.

"You—you—you silly fathead!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Have you lost your wallet, and fancy—"

"I haven't lost it!" said Coker. "It's gone from my pocket! There's only one pickpocket in this school—and I'm going to thrash him till he chucks it up. Give me my wallet, Skip!"

"I ain't got it!" yelled Skip.

"I've warned you before about telling lies!" said Coker, darkly. "I suppose you don't think I'm going to let you keep it, do you, with a five pound note in it?"

"You silly ass—" began Bob.

"Shut up, Cherry!"

"You terrific fathead—"

"That's enough! Hand over that wallet, Skip! Do you hear?"

Skip looked at him—his face crimson. The crimson died out, leaving him pale. He realised that Coker's wallet must be missing. Coker had jumped to the obvious conclusion—obvious, at least, to Coker!

The waif from Slummock's Alley looked round at his friends.

"You blokes don't believe—" he began.

"Of course not!" said Harry Wharton.

"Utter rot!" said Johnny Bull.

The famous Five believed in Skip. They had made up their minds to trust him. More than once, since the hapless waif had been at Greyfriars, suspicion had fallen on him, and their faith had been shaken. They were not going to let it be shaken again.

"Buck up, old chap," said Bob, "we're standing by you!"

Skip nodded.

But his face was pale and harassed and clouded. Glad as he was to be at Greyfriars, happy as he was there in spite of many trials, he realised that his past never would or could be forgotten there.

The more clearly he came to understand how shameful that past had been, the more bitter it was to him to be reminded of it.

Much as he liked Greyfriars, much as he liked his friends in the Remove, he often wished that he were elsewhere—if only he had some other refuge where no one knew what he had once been!

The Famous Five were angry—but Skip was not angry; he was only feeling wretched. In his own Form, every fellow but the Bouncer believed him to be "straight," whatever he had been before he came to the school. Even so,

he had continual reminders of the shadowed past from tactless asses like Bunter or malicious fellows like Skinner and Snoop. And now Coker—

"Look 'ere, Coker," said Skip, at last, "if any other bloke come 'ere and asked me for his blooming wallet I'd 'it him in the eye, and chance it, even if he was a Sixth Form prefect! But you done a lot for me—I never asked you to, but you did! But I tell you this, and I tell you straight—if you fancy I'm a pincher now, arter all this time, you better let me alone!"

"What?" hooted Coker. "Catch me letting you alone? Think I'm going to let you carry on pinching in my school?"

"I ain't pinched—"

"Chuck that! Hand over my wallet!"

"You think I got it?"

"I know you have, you young rascal! Nobody but you would pick my pocket."

"You've lost it somewhere, you fat-head—" began Harry Wharton.

"Shut up, Wharton!"

"Look here, come on, you fellows, and heave him out on his neck!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There's only one way of dealing with a fathead like Coker—let him have it!"

"Old on, you blokes!" said Skip.

"Let's 'ave this out! You 'ear wot I've got to say, Coker! I was a pincher when you took me up, and everybody knows it. I chucked it arter I come 'ere—"

"Looks like it!" hooted Coker.

"I wouldn't pinch now, if I was on my uppers," said Skip. "Fellers 'ave thought more'n once that I been pinching—but they always found that I hadn't. Only last week old Froggy lost a French banknote, and fancied I had it—and so did you, Coker—"

"Never mind all that. I've come here—"

"You got to 'ear me," said Skip. "I cleared out of the school when they all thought I'd pinched from Froggy, and if I'd took the train for London, like I meant to do, I'd never 'ave got back 'ere again. If I hadn't met Miss Bullivant, and she made me 'ang on, I'd 'ave gone. That lady at Cliff House believed in me when nobody else did! Well, 'ow did it turn out about Froggy's money? You 'ad to own up you was mistaken, like everybody else."

"You're wasting time!" said Coker. "I know all that—but my wallet's gone, and you've got it—"

Skip breathed hard.

"What you mean is this 'ere," he said. "Whatever I does you're always going to jump to it that I been pinching if anything's missed."

Coker stared at him.

"Of course!" he answered. "And I'll jolly well whop you—"

"Well," said Skip, "that ain't good enough! You brought me 'ere, Coker, and you got that aunt of yours to pay my fees—and a kind-hearted old soul she was to do it, too! But if you can't trust a bloke I'm done with you!"

"Done with me!" gasped Coker.

"I'm not done with you, you young rascal, as I'll make you understand!"

"I'm done with you!" repeated Skip steadily. "My fees is paid 'ere for this term, and I can't 'elp that. But that's the lot! I ain't taking no more. I dessay you'll find your wallet, and know that I never 'ad it; but if you miss your 'at, or your necktie, you'll fancy that I been pinching again. It ain't good enough! I done with you!"

The Famous Five stood silent.

They could fully understand the feelings of the hapless waif, though the

(Continued on page 8.)

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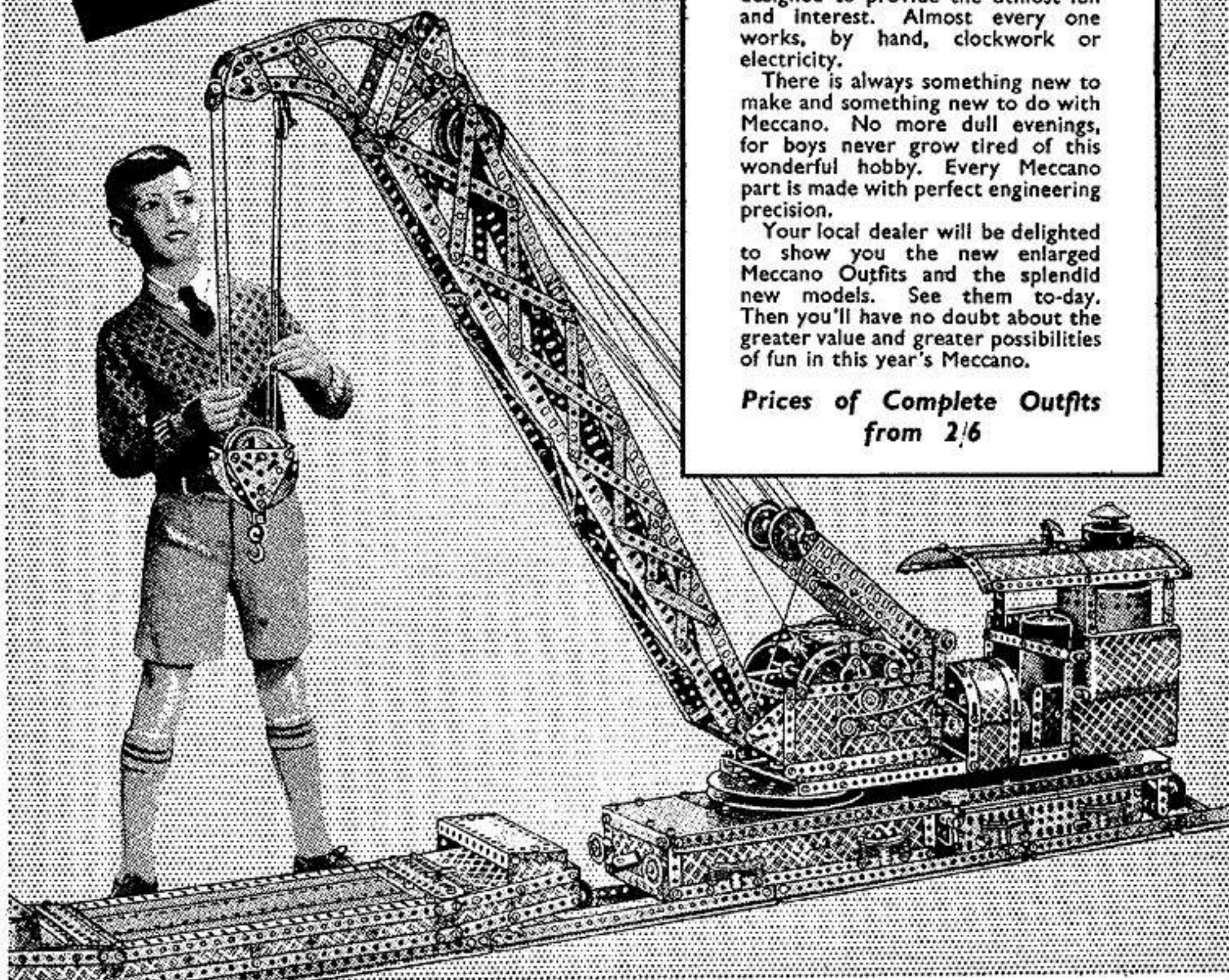
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fathead of the Fifth did not begin to understand them.

Coker, in his overpowering, masterful way, meant to be kind to the waif he had brought to Greyfriars; but he had no use for independence on the part of that waif, and still less use for cheek!

That Skip had changed since he had been at the school—changed so utterly that the suspicion of theft wounded him as deeply as it would have wounded any other Greyfriars fellow, Coker did not begin to understand.

Harry Wharton & Co. understood it easily enough, but Coker's powerful brain could not assimilate anything of the sort.

"Done with me, have you?" said Coker grimly. "If that means that you fancy you're going to keep my wallet you—"

"Oh, it ain't no use talking to you!" said Skip. "You're a silly fat'ead, you are! You done a lot for me, bringin' me 'ere, and I 'ope I ain't ungrateful, but I've 'ad enough from you, Coker. Shut up!"

"Wha-a-a-at?" stuttered Coker.

"Shut up!" said Skip.

Coker gave him a look. Then he made a rush. His left hand gripped Skip, his right lifted the stump.

But the stump never came down.

Like one man the Famous Five hurled themselves at Coker of the Fifth. Five pairs of hands fastened on him at once.

Coker gave a roar as he rolled over in those gripping hands. He gave another roar as the stump was jerked away and jammed down his back. Still a louder roar he gave as he was hurled headlong out of Study No. 1.

He crashed in the passage.

"Hallo, Fifth Form cad!" shouted Bolsover major, looking out of Study No. 10. "Boot him!"

"Roll up, Remove!" yelled Peter Todd from Study No. 7.

There was a rush of Removites down the passage.

Coker of the Fifth hardly knew how he got out of that passage. He forgot all about Skip—forgot all about his wallet. Boot leather took up all Coker's attention for the next few minutes.

When Potter and Greene came up, after tea in Hall, they found Coker in his study. He had a dusty, dishevelled look, and he was gurgling. Potter and Greene exchanged a grin. Evidently, Coker had found a hornet's nest in the Remove!

"Found that wallet yet?" asked Potter.

"Grooogh!"

"What's happened?"

"Oooooogh!"

"Row with the Remove?"

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Coker.

Potter and Greene, smiling, left Coker to gurgle.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker All Over!

"**T**OPPING morning!" said Bob Cherry.

"The topfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shivering.

It was a bright, clear morning, after the fog of the previous day. It was cold and frosty, but fearfully healthy. Bob's face glowed as he came out into the quad with his friends. A frosty sky and a sharp wind from the sea were more welcome to the exuberant Bob than to the junior from India's coral strand.

"Oh, you'll soon get warm, old black bean!" said Bob cheerily. "Raco you

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round the quad! Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Gosling! What about knocking his hat off? Make you as warm as anything, dodging him afterwards!"

"Leave Gosling's hat alone, fat-head!" said Harry Wharton. "You got detention the other day for knocking Coker's hat off."

Gosling, the ancient porter of Greyfriars, was in the quad. He blinked at the chums of the Remove, and came towards them.

"Mr. Coker down yet?" he asked.

"Haven't seen him this morning," answered Wharton. "Do you want Coker?"

"I got something for him," said Gosling. "All right, I s'pose he'll be out before prayers."

And Gosling moved away.

The Famous Five and Skip trotted round the quad to warm themselves up on that cold and frosty morning. As they came by the House a few minutes later Coker of the Fifth emerged.

Coker's brow knitted at the sight of the cheery Removites. He cut across to them.

"Line up!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Coker wants some more. He didn't have enough in the Remove passage yesterday."

"Come on, Coker!" grinned Nugent. "Lots more, if you want it!"

"The lotfulness is preposterous, my esteemed idiotic Coker!"

"I don't want any more cheek from you scrubby young scoundrels!" said Coker sternly. "I want my wallet, Skip! I'll thrash you another time!"

It seemed to have dawned, even on Coker's intellect, that thrashing Skip while he was in the company of the Famous Five was a doubtful sort of proposition.

Skip set his lips.

"Old your row!" he retorted. "I've told you I don't know nothing about your blinking wallet, and I ain't telling you agin!"

"Will you hand it over or not?"

"Go and heat coke!"

"Well," said Coker, "that tears it! I suppose you understand that if you try to keep that wallet, Skip, I shall have to go to the Head about it."

"You can go to the 'Ead, or go to the jooce!" said Skip. "Old your row, and leave a bloke alone!"

"You young rascal—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Coker clenched his big fists. Really, Coker did not want another tussle with the Famous Five at the moment—numerous aches and pains in his burly person reminded him that he really was not a match, single-handed, for those strenuous youths. But he looked like forgetting prudence.

"Now, look here, you rascally young pincher—" he said, breathing hard.

"Shut it!" snapped Skip.

"I'll jolly well—"

"I been waiting for you, sir!" Gosling came up. "I found something what belongs to you, Mr. Coker."

Coker glanced round at the school porter, irritated by the interruption.

"Eh, what? What do you mean, Gosling?" he yapped.

"I found them this morning, early, sir," said Gosling. "I s'pose, p'raps, you lost them in the fog yesterday."

"Lost what?" snapped Coker.

"Look 'ere, sir!"

Coker's eyes opened rather wide, as Gosling produced a cap, handkerchief, penknife, and a wallet. He stared at them.

Harry Wharton & Co. started at them also. There was a moment of startled silence. Gosling went on:

"I see 'em, sir, lying in the grass by

the path," he said. "Your name being in the cap, sir, and your initials on the wallet, I s'posed they was yours, Mr. Coker."

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

Gosling held out the articles. Coker blinked at them. There was an expectant expression on Gosling's gnarled face. That expression revealed that Gosling expected a tip for this service.

"Oh!" repeated Coker, gasping.

He remembered that encounter with Vernon-Smith in the foggy quad.

He had been aware, at the time, that he had lost his cap—he had had to go back to the House without it. Later in the evening he had wondered where his hanky was, but had sorted out another without thinking about it. The penknife he had not yet missed, having had no occasion to use one. The wallet he had missed—most emphatically.

"Oh!" said Coker, for the third time. "Where—where did you find those—those things, Gosling?"

"In the quadrangle, sir," answered Gosling. "Ketched my eye, they did, when I came out of my lodge, me being first up. All lying together in the grass by the path yonder, sir. P'raps you fell over in the fog and dropped them, sir."

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Thanks!" gasped Coker.

He knew now what had happened to his wallet!

He took the various articles, groped in his trousers pocket, and presented Gosling with a couple of half-crowns.

Gosling touched his ancient hat and departed.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another and then looked at Coker. Skip was breathing hard.

"So—so that was it!" said Coker, rather haltingly. "That cheeky young scoundrel Vernon-Smith butted into me in the fog, and—and—"

"And you dropped those things from your pockets," said Harry Wharton, very quietly, "and you hadn't sense enough to think of that—"

"Don't be cheeky, Wharton!"

"You blithering idiot!" said Bob Cherry. "You got into a scrap with Smithy, and scattered your things all over the shop, and then you come and accuse Skip—"

"You ass!" said Frank Nugent.

"You cheeky fathead!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I s'pose you're satisfied now that I never 'ad your wallet, Coker," said Skip bitterly, "or are you going to the 'Ead about it?"

"I know you never had it now, of course," said Coker. "I never knew it had dropped out of my pocket when that cheeky young villain Vernon-Smith was ragging in the fog yesterday. But don't you be cheeky, Skip! I shan't thrash you now—"

"Thank you for nothing!" said Skip.

"I said don't be cheeky!" warned Coker. "I shan't thrash you now—but I shall thrash you next time. I'm jolly well going to keep you from pinching, if I have to wear out a cricket stump on you, as I've already mentioned. I shan't thrash you now, as you didn't do it—but next time you pinch, look out for the stump—and look out for it hard!"

Skip looked at him. Evidently Coker supposed that his heavy-handed methods might still be needed, and was prepared to apply them when necessary.

"You fool, you!" said Skip. "You silly idjit! You ain't got the brains of a bunny rabbit, you ain't! I done with you!"

"That's cheek!" said Coker, frowning. "I'm going to keep a sharp eye

on you, my beauty, and when I catch you pinching, look out for—goooooch!"

Coker spluttered as Skip, making a sudden step forward, grabbed his nose between finger and thumb.

Coker's nose was a prominent feature. It gave a good hold. Skip's finger and thumb closed on it like a steel vice, and he pulled.

Coker gave a gasping howl of anguish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

After the discovery that Skip was guiltless, they had expected even Coker to express some sort of an apology for his suspicions. Instead of which, Coker only warned Skip to beware of next time. In these circumstances, pulling Coker's nose seemed to the chums of the Remove the very best possible rejoinder—indeed, the only

adequate way of dealing with Horace Coker.

They yelled with laughter as Coker yelled with anguish.

"Goooch! Woooch! Ooogh!" spluttered Coker.

Skip let go Coker's nose and jumped back, grinning, as the leg-of-mutton fists swept the air.

Coker—forgetful of odds—rushed.
(Continued on next page.)

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!

OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

THE MAN WITH THE WHISTLE!

BEFORE we continue the game we commenced after all that "fuss and bother" last week I want you to make sure of one rather important thing. I suppose that when you have the chance to make up sides and to play a proper game, either at school or in your spare time, you will be able to find some kind person who knows a good bit about football who will come and do the refereeing for you.

A referee is very necessary, not so much to keep all you rowdy lads in order as to be there to give tips, tell you where you go wrong, and gradually teach you the rules. You will find it much easier to learn the rules of football—and there are plenty to learn—by having them explained to you during the course of your matches, than by trying to learn them out of a book. So let your referee also be your coach. Even let him stop the game now and then to point out some mistake.

In the game which we are playing together now I am your referee and your coach, putting you right and giving out little hints as we go along. Try to get someone to take my place when you are actually going on the football field proper.

Now on with this game. We have kicked off, and now we must remember that we have two things to do—we have to score goals and we have to stop the other fellows from scoring them. Remembering what I told you about the jobs of the players in the different positions, it works out that the forwards are the ones who are supposed to score the goals. The defenders—the full-backs—stop the other side from getting them; and the half-backs, you remember, do a bit of each.

BRAINS COUNT MOST!

IT seems funny, but there are often arguments as to which is the more important business—scoring goals, or stopping the other chaps from scoring them. Even in first-class football nobody knows which is the better. You remember that Sunderland won the League championship the season before last, and then won the Cup last season. Sunderland are one of the teams which think that the most important thing is to score goals. They say that if they get enough goals themselves, it doesn't matter if their opponents get one or two,

Score all the goals you can and keep your opponents out—that's the only way to win football matches. Follow the helpful advice given in this week's interesting article and you'll be on the winning side!

so they go all out for goals. All well and good.

Now look at Charlton Athletic. They finished second in the First Division last season, and they have been on top quite a lot this year. Yet Charlton think that defence is the more important thing. Don't let the other side score goals, and you don't have to score so many yourselves. That's what Charlton say. So where are we? Nobody can say which is right.

But perhaps it doesn't matter so much. Let us go one better than Sunderland and Charlton put together. We'll say that we'll do our best to score goals and to keep the other fellows out. If we do that we shall be sure to win all our matches.

So, to start with, we are going all out to score goals. You know, of course, that we've got to do it with our feet. Hands aren't used at all on the football field, except, of course, by the goal-keeper. Except for him, everybody might as well leave their arms and hands in the dressing-room. We can use our heads. Oh, yes, we can use our heads to head the ball, and we can also use our heads for thinking purposes.

The people who think in football are much better players than the fellows who barge about, not really knowing where or why. There are plenty of players in first-class football to-day who wouldn't be there if they didn't use their brains. They use their heads to save their feet, which are getting old, from too much running about. Thoughtful football is the best, and I shall probably have a good deal more to say about that before I have turned you all into good footballers.

MARK YOUR OPPONENT!

LET'S start scoring these goals. When our centre-forward kicked off he passed to his inside-right, and the inside-right has the ball now. There is nothing in the rules, of

course, to stop him going right through and scoring a goal straight off. But let him have a try. You haven't forgotten, have you, that there are many fellows on the other side who are determined not to let him score?

Mind you, if our inside-right has been listening to my lessons on how to control the ball, and has been doing plenty of practice, he might stand a chance of travelling some distance towards goals. But if he hasn't been practising ball-control, what will happen? Before he has gone a yard or so he will kick the ball too far in front of him, and one of the other side will nip in and take it away.

The best thing, therefore, is for the inside-right to let somebody else help him. He can do this by passing the ball to someone on his own side. Now you can see why in football the players have their own places on the field instead of running about anywhere.

With everybody in their own place, the player with the ball knows where to pass it. If all the players were just scattered about, the fellow in possession would have to look round first, and probably lose the ball while doing so. The first important thing, therefore, is that you all keep in the place in which you have chosen—or been chosen—to play. You can run about, of course, but don't keep going into somebody else's position.

Our inside-right, knowing where he could find the outside-right, has passed it to him. I hope he remembered to kick the ball with his instep, and not with his toe. But the ball hasn't reached the outside-right, because he was being marked by the left-half of the other side, who ran up to kick the ball away before it reached our right winger.

Now, that's another important matter I've mentioned. Every player on a football side has to mark an opponent. By mark, I mean that every player has to watch an opponent and see that that opponent doesn't get the ball, or doesn't have the ball for very long.

Are you beginning to think that you will never do all the jobs you are supposed to do in football? There is certainly a lot to do, but I'll tell you more about marking your opponent next week before we go any further with our game, because marking is one of the most important things in football.

His nose was red and raw—and had a pain in it. His nose—Horace James Coker's nose—had been pulled by a Remove fag. Forgetful of odds, he rushed at Skip.

But the odds, though forgotten by Coker, were there. The Famous Five piled in on the instant. Skip piled in also. The next three or four minutes were wild and whirling. When the six juniors walked away—a little breathless—they left Coker sitting in the quad—very breathless! He was still gasping when the bell rang and he tottered in to prayers.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skip's Resolve!

"COMING out, old bean?"

Harry Wharton looked into Study No. 1 after class. Skip was sitting at the study table, pen in hand, with a deeply thoughtful and worried look on his chubby face.

Dusk closed in early on November days. But there was time for a run out of gates before lock-up, and the Famous Five were going out. Missing Skip, the captain of the Remove ran up to his study—not doubting that the waif of the Remove had gone there to put in a little "swotting" after class.

"Chuck that, old man!" said Harry. "Lots of time for swotting when we come in! Come out for a trot!"

"I ain't swotting," said Skip. "Tain't that this time. I'm jest writing a letter."

"Oh!" said Harry.

He could not help being surprised.

So far as he knew, Skip had never written to anyone before, since he had been at Greyfriars. The waif of the Remove was in the strange position of having no "people" of any kind—not a single relative. Dim in his mind, as he had told his friends, was some faint recollection of an elder sister—indeed, he had a vague idea that the old photograph he carried in the locket was the face of that sister.

But that was all that remained to Skip of his childhood. Father and mother were utterly unknown to him—as was his own name!

Ever since he could recollect, he had been called "Skip"—obviously a nickname. Barney the Binger, who had brought him up to pick pockets, had never told him anything, except that he was an orphan—only, sometimes, in drunken moments, the wretch had made some allusion to the sister in whose existence Skip believed. If Barney knew more, he had never told.

In those strange circumstances, Skip had no correspondence of any kind. And Wharton, after the first moment of surprise, looked grave.

"I got to write!" muttered Skip.

"Look here, old fellow," said Harry quietly, "I don't want to butt into your affairs, of course. But—but if you're getting into touch with any—any of the people you knew before you came here, I—I think I wouldn't, old chap."

"I ain't!" said Skip.

"Oh, all right, then! I know that that scoundrel you call Barney the Binger has been hanging round these parts—we've seen him—"

"You've seen me 'it him in the eye, too!" said Skip.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes—and I was jolly glad to see you do it, Skip! I've no doubt that that wicked rascal would get you into his hands again, if he could."

"That's his game!" said Skip.

"Barney's been getting into trouble

with the law in London, and he's had to run. He came this way, because he got it from Jimmy the Rat that he last saw me about 'ere—and Jimmy being in chokey on a three-year stretch, Barney fancied he could get 'old of me again. He thinks I'm on a good thing 'ere."

"Well, so you are, old chap!" said Harry. "You've got your little troubles, but Greyfriars is all right."

Skip grinned.

"You don't ketch me," he said. "Barney don't believe I've chucked up pinching any more than Coker does. He thinks I'm lining my pockets 'ere, and he wants his share in the loot."

"The rotten rascal!" breathed Wharton.

"He's a rascal all right, he is!" said Skip with a sigh. "I reckon a bloke hadn't much chance, brought up in Slummock's Alley by a covey like Barney. He's jest bad all through, he is. I remember a time when he wasn't so bad—I dessay it's the drink what did it. A bloke what keeps on pushin' back whisky couldn't be decent if he tried—I seen a lot of it. It jest saps away all the good there is in a bloke. But you don't want to 'ear about such things," added Skip quickly. "I got to finish this 'ere letter."

He dipped his pen in the ink.

"It ain't to Barney!" he said. "Nor it ain't to anybody I knowed in the old days! Don't you think anything of that sort! I'm writing to Coker's aunt."

"Coker's Aunt Judy?"

"Yes! I got to tell 'er!" said Skip.

"This term is getting to the finish, and it's got to be settled. She's a kind old lady. 'Course, I knows what she done for me was because of Coker—still, she's a good old soul. I got to put it polite and grateful. But I got to put it plain."

Wharton's face became very grave.

He forgot, for the moment, that his chums were waiting for him in the quad. He was concerned for Skip.

"Hain't you better think that over, Skip?" he asked. "I think I can guess what you've written. But—"

"I've thought it over, many a time," said Skip, "and there ain't no other way about it. What 'appened yesterday puts the lid on. If Coker got to trust a bloke, like you do, it might be different. Mind, I ain't blaming him. He found me a pickpocket, and he can't get that out of his 'ead. He means well and kindly—and I 'ope I ain't ungrateful. But I ain't taking nothing from a bloke what thinks I might pinch—not no more."

Harry Wharton was silent.

He understood to the full the feelings of the waif of the Remove, and he realised that, had fate placed him in the same strange situation, he would have felt as Skip was feeling.

But he was troubled, all the same.

"I got to tell 'er," said Skip. "I ain't staying on 'ere at Coker's charges—and that's what it comes to, 'cause the old lady's only doing it on his account, of course. That's got to finish."

"But—"

"You'd feel the same, if you was fixed up like me," said Skip.

"Perhaps—but—"

"But p'raps you don't think a covey like me ought to 'ave any feelings," said Skip bitterly. "A bloke what's been a pickpocket, and might 'ave been run in by the peelers, settin' up to be proud—"

"Don't be an ass!" said Harry. "I think I should do the same in your place, Skip. But—it means leaving Greyfriars!"

"I know!"

"What have you got in prospect if you do?"

"I've got my 'ands—what I shall keep from picking and stealing!" said Skip. "I knows 'ow to rough it, too! A bloke can work, I s'pose! 'Ard work never killed nobody! I got to let Miss Judith know I ain't stayin' on 'ere next term—that's over and done with. You jest 'old on a few minutes, while I finish writing this 'ere letter, and we'll post it as we go out."

Wharton opened his lips—but he closed them again. There was nothing to be said—it was for Skip to find an answer to his own problem, and Wharton could not help thinking that he had found the right one.

He stood silent, while Skip finished the letter, enclosed it in an envelope, and addressed it to Miss Judith Coker.

Skip glanced at Wharton's grave face.

"I pulled Coker's nose for calling me a pincher!" he said. "I couldn't let 'im go on keeping me 'ere after that, could I?"

"I—I suppose not. But—"

"It's settled!" said Skip. "I tell you I feel easier in my mind now I done it! It had to be done, and I done it! Let's get out!"

With the letter in his hand, Skip followed Wharton from the study. They joined the Co. in the quad, and a couple of minutes later, the letter to Coker's Aunt Judy was dropped in the school letter-box. And Wharton noticed that Skip seemed to breathe more freely when it was gone beyond recall.

His face was thoughtful, but it was quite cheerful in expression as he walked out of the gates with his friends and they sauntered up the road to Court-field Common.

They turned into Oak Lane, near the common, a winding way that passed the fence of the Three Fishers Inn, and led on towards Popper Court. Skip uttered a sudden exclamation.

Two figures, in the lane, caught his eye at the same moment.

Near at hand, leaning on the gate of the Three Fishers fence, was a squat man in a bowler hat, with evil eyes in a sallow face that turned on the Greyfriars juniors, glinting.

Further, at a distance, was a woman's figure—the sturdy, hefty figure of Miss Bullivant, the games mistress of Cliff House School.

The latter was coming down the lane towards the high road—but still far off. The man leaning on the gate did not see her, as he was looking towards the road—but the juniors did.

Skip's eyes gleamed at the man at the gate.

"You know that covey?" he muttered.

Harry Wharton & Co. knew "Barney the Binger" by sight. The rascal's evil face was not easily forgotten, once seen. They halted.

"Let's walk the other way!" said Bob.

"Not me!" said Skip.

"You don't want to speak to that rotter?"

"I does!" said Skip. "I got a reason! That there lady, Miss Bullivant will be along 'ere in a few minutes—"

"You don't want her to see you speaking to that brute, surely!" exclaimed Harry. He stared at Skip in surprise.

The juniors knew that Skip had a great liking and respect for the Bull. But for Miss Bullivant, he would probably never have been seen at Greyfriars again, after he had cleared off, when he was suspected of theft in the French master's study.

Stern and severe and rather grim as she was, the Cliff House games mistress had been very kind to Skip, and they knew that he valued her good opinion. So his suggestion surprised them all.

"You don't get me!" said Skip.

"That lady, Miss Bullivant, has got something agin Barney! One day last week when I saw him, she went arter him—"

"Oh! I remember—you told us," said Harry. "But—"

"I'm going to speak to him, and keep him from looking round," said Skip. "He ain't seen 'er coming, see? He'd nip over that gate and bolt if he see her, like he did afore. If she wants that brute run in, I'm goin' to 'elp!"

"Oh!" said Harry. "Right!" And, now that they understood, the chums of the Remove willingly walked on towards Barney—who watched them as they came up, with an evil eye—in happy ignorance of the fact that the Bull was coming down the lane behind him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bagging Barney!

BARNEY the Binger took the cigarette from his mouth, and watched Skip, rather like a rat.

He was glad to see the waif of Slummock's Alley again; he was determined not to leave the vicinity till he had "had it out" with Skip and pocketed his share of the loot.

That the pincher of Slummock's Alley was lining his pockets, at Greyfriars School, the rascal had no doubt whatever—and he was "on" in that game, as he had told Skip several times.

At the same time, he was uneasy and wary.

In past years, when he had been training the boy to steal, Barney had beaten him, often and hard. In their meetings near Greyfriars, the boot had been on the other foot, so to speak; Skip had punched him, and Skip's punches were hard and hefty. Barney's red nose still showed signs of the last punching.

So Barney's feelings were mixed, at the present moment. He wanted to come to an understanding with the pilferer—and he did not want any more punching.

He had so wary an eye on Skip, that he had no chance of being wary in another direction. Miss Bullivant came down the lane, from the direction of Popper Court, unseen and unsuspected by Barney.

"Here you are again, Skip!" said Barney.

"'Ere I am!" said Skip. "I warned you to get out of this part of the country, Barney, if you wasn't 'unting trouble."

"I ain't gone!" sneered Barney. "It don't suit me to go yet, Skip! We got some business to do together afore I go. P'r'aps your friends will walk on, while we has a talk."

"Not at all, Mr. Binger!" said Bob Cherry. "Why shouldn't we enjoy your conversation, as well as Skip?"

"The enjoyfulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh—a remark that made Barney blink at him.

"You see," said Frank Nugent, "you're such a nice man, Barney! We don't want to lose sight of you too soon."

"Go on with the jolly old talk," said Johnny Bull, with a grin. "Skip won't mind us hearing."

Barney the Binger gave them a sullen, suspicious stare. He could not understand Skip being on such friendly terms with these Greyfriars fellows, as he was aware that they knew of his past.

"You rascal!" said Harry Wharton. "Do you think we don't know what you want to say to Skip? You brought him up to pinch, and you can't understand that he's chucked it—chucked it as soon as he got away from your sort."

"Mebbe!" said Barney, with a sneer.

"Oh, carry on, Barney!" said Skip, grinning. "You can speak before my friends. You want a whack in what I've been pinching at the school—ain't that it? You can get it off your chest!"

Barney scowled at him, and at his friends. He was hopelessly puzzled. If Skip was still the pincher he supposed, this sort of talk before Greyfriars fellows was puzzling. It might have convinced him that Skip was no longer a pincher—had Barney been capable of believing good of anybody.

"Ow much do you want?" went on Skip. "What's the figure for taking your ugly face away?"

The Famous Five chuckled. The rage and puzzlement in Barney's face amused them. And they were also amused by the fact that he had no idea that Miss Bullivant was approaching.

The Bull had spotted him now.

What she wanted with Barney, unless perhaps he had pinched something from her on some occasion, the juniors could not guess. But it was clear that she did want something with him.

Twice she had come across him, since he had been hanging about Greyfriars, and on each occasion Barney had to run for it.

Now she had come across him again; and Barney was not going to run for it. The Greyfriars fellows were ready to collar him if he did.

It could only be for some breaking of the law that Miss Bullivant wanted him—and the juniors were more than prepared to help back up the law—especially in dealing with a rascal who would have drawn Skip back into dishonesty, if he could.

Miss Bullivant's face, always stern in expression, hardened into an almost terrifying grimace as she saw Barney ahead of her. Though his back was turned to her, it was plain that she knew him.

She hastened her steps, and came on with swift and vigorous strides.

Barney, staring in angry and sullen perplexity from face to face, could not make out why the schoolboys were amused. But perhaps some sound from Miss Bullivant's vigorous strides caught his ear. He looked round.

At the sight of the hefty, powerful figure of the games mistress of Cliff House, he gave an almost convulsive start.

One glimpse was enough for Barney.

Then he spun round to the gate on which he had been leaning, and put his hands on it to vault over. A swift jump into the weedy, bushy grounds of the Three Fishers would have saved Barney once more. Miss Bullivant, though coming on quickly, was still a dozen yards away.

"Stop him!" she called out, as she saw his action.

But the juniors did not need telling. Even as Barney leaped, Skip grabbed him, and dragged him back.

The rascal turned on Skip like a tiger. But the Famous Five had hold of him the next moment.

Grasped on all sides, Barney the Binger struggled desperately, panting for breath—of which whisky and tobacco had left him little.

"Skip, you young 'ound!" he panted. "Leago!"

"Ketch me!" said Skip. "I gotcher, Barney! I dunno what you done to that there lady, but you got to stand the racket for it, you rotter! That lady's been good to me, she has, and I'd do more'n cop you to please 'er!"

Miss Bullivant was on the scene the next moment.

"Thank you, my boys!" she said.

"You can hand him over to me. You will not escape this time, Crake."

"My name ain't Crake," muttered Barney. "I don't know you, ma'am."

"So you said before," said Miss Bullivant grimly. "But I think I know you, my man. It is ten or twelve years since I saw you in Brighton, and you have changed. But I know you—I am sure of that. You are Saul Crake, once employed at Ridings, in Brighton."

"Never 'eard of it, mum."

"You can say so to Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield," said Miss Bullivant composedly. "On my charge, he will take you into custody. And the Brighton police will be glad to see you, I think. You will come with me."

Miss Bullivant fastened a grip on the shrinking rascal's shoulder.

"You're taking him to the station, Miss Bullivant?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes; immediately," said the Bull grimly. "This man is wanted for a robbery at a school in Brighton, more than ten years ago," she added, by way of explanation to the juniors. "But that is not the only reason why I am taking trouble about him. I have another, and a personal reason. Leave him to me."

"Shall we help you take him?"

Miss Bullivant smiled—a grim smile. "I shall need no help," she answered.

"Let him go."

The juniors smiled, and stepped back. It was plain that the hefty games mistress of Cliff House needed no help with the wretched Barney. He had been a man once; but poisonous liquor had sapped all the manhood out of him, and with it all strength and resolution. He crumpled in the grip of the Bull.

"We'd be glad to 'elp, miss," said Skip.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Bullivant.

Which ended argument on the subject.

Miss Bullivant, gripping Barney by the shoulder, marched him away down the lane to the road over the common, and led him off towards Courtfield.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"That's that!" he remarked.

"That thatfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The absurd Barney will not get away from that terrifically hefty lady."

"Hardly!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

It was probable that Miss Bullivant would receive a good deal of attention from the public, as she marched Barney off to Courtfield. To that the Bull was absolutely indifferent. She marched him off, and the chums of the Remove, smiling, continued their walk.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 4.

BILLY BUNTER blinked in at the door of Study No. 4 in the Remove, with a wary eye. His very spectacles gleamed with caution.

He needed to be wary, having dropped in to tea with the Bounder, who had not asked him to tea.

Spreads in Smithy's study were lavish, and often and often did Billy Bunter cast a longing eye at Study No. 4. But it was seldom that he graced that study at tea-time with his distinguished presence. Smithy had his good points; but he was not a long-suffering fellow like Lord Mauleverer—far from it—and he lacked the easy-going good nature of the Famous Five.

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Bunter was more likely to bag a boot than a bun in the Bounder's study.

But Bunter was hard pressed. Lord Mauleverer had gone to tea with Russell and Ogilvy in Study No. 3, so his lordship was not available. More serious still, Peter Todd had gone with him, so there was no tea in Study No. 7 for Bunter. When Peter tea'd out, he forgot Bunter—with the selfishness to which Bunter was sadly accustomed. The Famous Five had gone out after class, and had not yet come in—as likely as not having forgotten that there was such a person as William George Bunter in the wide world. Bunter had looked in on Tom Brown and Hazeldene in Study No. 2; but Browney had picked up a Latin grammar, and Hazel a dictionary, and Bunter had looked out again promptly.

What the juniors called, "doorsteps and dish-water," in Hall, loomed before Bunter, unless the Bounder turned up trumps. But, for once, the fat Owl had a card to play, which he hoped might prove a trump.

It was, perhaps, a doubtful card, but it was all Bunter had; so there he was, blinking in at the door of Study No. 4, and hoping for the best.

The prospect did not look bright. Tom Redwing, the Bounder's studymate, gave him a look that was not welcoming. Bunter did not mind that; but the Bounder picked up a loaf from the table, and took aim. Bunter did mind that—he minded it very much.

"I say, Smithy!" squeaked the hungry Owl.

"Where will you have it?" asked Smithy.

"Beast!"

Bunter popped back.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was not in a good temper. His temper was always a little unreliable, but, of late, it seemed to have soured. The fact was that Smithy's feud with Skip had a bad effect on his temper.

Partly from obstinacy, partly from conviction, he was sticking to his guns, on the subject of the waif of the Remove.

He would not admit to himself that the fact that Skip had licked him in a scrap had anything to do with it, though quite a number of fellows in the Remove cheerfully pointed it out to him.

Moreover, on several occasions when Skip had fallen under suspicion, it had been due to Smithy; and each time he had had to own up that he was wrong, which was bitterly unpleasant to the arrogant Bounder.

He was going to prove, before that term ended, that he was right. He was going to show up that artful pincher. If the rotter was keeping straight, it was only caution, and sooner or later he would trip. Very likely, all the time, he was only keeping up appearances in the school, and getting away with pinching outside the school. Smithy hardly dared to say so in the Remove, but the miserable suspicion was strong in his mind.

Meanwhile, Skip made friends all through the Form, and the result was that his feud made Smithy unpopular—and Smithy valued popularity.

So Smithy's temper, these days, was more often bad than good. Tom Redwing did not find him pleasant company in the study. He could not state his own opinion without quarrelling with Smithy—and nothing would induce him to agree with Smithy's opinion. Smithy had his suspicions all to himself.

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"Shut that door, you fat freak!" snapped the Bounder.

Bunter did not shut the door.

But he addressed Smithy from the safe side of it. The loaf was ready to whiz, if he put his fat face and his fat head inside.

"I say, Smithy, old chap, I haven't had tea—I mean, I want to speak to you, old fellow. It's something I think I ought to tell you."

"Will you shut that door?"

"It's about Skip, old chap!" said Bunter, temptingly. "I say, old chap, you were right about him, as—as I've said all along. I say, I've found him out."

"You fat freak!" snarled the Bounder. "I've heard all about Coker's rot! Go and gabble it somewhere else."

"I don't mean that, Smithy!" said Bunter eagerly. "I say, I'll tell you all about it, old chap! Shall I come in?"

"Do!" said the Bounder grimly. "I'll get you with this loaf!"

"Beast!"

"Roll away, Bunter, old fat man!" said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"I've got something to tell Smithy!" said Bunter, still parked on the safe side of the door. "I say, you'd hardly believe it, Smithy, but Wharton and his gang are keeping it dark about that chap pinching."

"Hardly!" agreed Vernon-Smith.

"You fat ass!" exclaimed Redwing.

"You can call a fellow names," said Bunter. "But it's jolly well true! I've seen it in his hand!"

"You've seen what, you fat frump?" asked the Bounder.

Redwing gave his study-mate a look.

"You're not going to listen to that sort of stuff, Smithy?" he said.

"Why not?" sneered the Bounder. "The fellow's a pincher, and if he doesn't pinch inside the school, very likely he pinches outside. That prying fat worm is just the fellow to spot him."

"Oh, really, Smithy—" Bunter ventured to peer round the door. The loaf lay on the table, and the Bounder did not touch it. Encouraged, the fat Owl rattled on. "I say, I saw it, yesterday, you know—a gold locket—"

"A what?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith; and Redwing started.

Both of them knew that this must be true. Bunter, if he was inventing a yarn, would hardly have thought of such an utterly unlikely thing as a gold locket.

"He had it in his hand, in his study!" said Bunter. "I saw it all right—it had a photograph in it—a woman's photograph. He's made those chaps believe it belongs to him—but that's all gammon, of course—how can it? They're keeping it dark."

"By gad!" breathed Vernon-Smith. His eyes were gleaming.

"Look here—" growled Redwing.

"Shut up, Reddy, and let Bunter get it off his chest! If that rotter's been pinching outside the school—"

"He hasn't, you fool!" said Redwing, with unusual acerbity. "You know he hasn't!"

"How did he get hold of a locket, then?" grinned Smithy. "Precious few such things inside Greyfriars."

"It's got a ribbon on it, as if somebody wore it round their neck," said Bunter. "It can't be his, of course. How could it? He stuck it in his pocket fast enough when I saw it, I can tell you. They all know he's got it—you can ask Wharton."

"If Wharton knows, that's proof that he knows it belongs to Skip!" said Redwing. "For goodness' sake, Smithy, don't make a fool of yourself again!"

"Wharton trusts him!" sneered Smithy. "He might take his word

about it. I shouldn't—quite. Come in, Bunter, and tell us all about it."

Tom Redwing rose from the table.

"He's not going to tell me!" he snapped.

"Please yourself!" said Smithy, with a shrug of the shoulders—and Tom, after a glare at Bunter, stalked out of the study and slammed the door.

Billy Bunter dropped into his empty chair.

"I didn't really come here to tea," he remarked. "I—I thought I'd tell you about that pincher, Smithy, because he kicked me—I mean, because you're the chap to show him up. Awful, ain't it? I say, those sosses look prime."

The Bounder laughed. He was in quite a good humour now.

"Help yourself!" he said.

Bunter did not need that. He was helping himself already. He had been rather doubtful about that card he had to play—but it had, evidently, proved a trump. Tea in the Bounder's study was his reward for the news.

To do Bunter justice, however, he had not the slightest doubt that Skip had pinched that locket. He could imagine no other way in which it had come into his possession.

Between large mouthfuls, Billy Bunter told all he knew—which was not very much; but enough to excite the Bounder deeply. Smithy had had to admit that, whether pincher or not, Skip had done no pinching inside Greyfriars. Chiefly for that reason, he had suspected that those light fingers might have been at work outside the school. This looked as if he was right.

He had little doubt—or, rather, no doubt. This was only a confirmation of his fixed belief. But he knew that he had to be careful. He had made too many mistakes already to be able to afford to make more mistakes.

Billy Bunter ate and talked—and talked and ate. But, having extracted from him all he knew, the Bounder did not listen. While Bunter gobbled and gabbled, the Bounder was thinking—how was he going to pin down that pincher, and prove—that he so keenly desired to prove—that while everybody else had been wrong, he had been right—right all along the line!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Grip of the Law!

INSPECTOR GRIMES raised his eyebrows a little.

The constable on duty at Courtfield Police Station suppressed a grin as he showed Miss Bullivant into the inspector's room—with Barney the Binger.

Not for a moment had Miss Bullivant's sinewy grip on Barney relaxed. It did not relax now, till he was safe inside the police station. Once, on the way, Barney had tried to break loose and run. A twist of his arm had warned him not to try it on again—and he did not. And now, here he was, safely landed, with suppressed fury in his evil eyes.

Mr. Grimes was acquainted with the games mistress of Cliff House School; but she had never called at the police station before—and he was surprised to see her there now, especially with that shifty rascal wriggling in her grip.

"Miss Bullivant!" he ejaculated. "What—"

"I desire to give this man into custody!" said Miss Bullivant calmly. "I have brought him here for that purpose."

"Oh! Ah! Yes! What—"

"His name is Crake! He was sent to



Skip up-ended the inkpot, and its contents streamed over Bunter's fat face and down his neck. "Groooooooooogh!" gurgled Bunter. "Oooogh! Oh erikay! You—you beast—I shall have to change! Ooogh!" "You'll 'ave to wash your blooming neck!" grinned Skip. "Fust time this term, I dessay!"

prison at Brighton about twelve years ago, for a robbery committed at Ridings School, but escaped."

"The lady's making a mistake, sir," said Barney, with as much assurance as he could master. "My name's Smith, and I ain't never been at Brighton. Never had a job in a school in my life."

"Please be seated, Miss Bullivant. No doubt you can give me some more particulars," said Mr. Grimes, with a very doubtful look at Barney.

Whatever Barney might have been like at the date mentioned by Miss Bullivant, he certainly did not look now like a man who might have been employed in any school. Rogue and rascal and drunken waster were written all over Barney.

"I am, of course, prepared to make an explicit statement," said Miss Bullivant. "The man has changed considerably, but I am assured of his identity. Twelve years ago I had my first post as an assistant mistress at Ridings. This man—then much more respectable in appearance than at present—was employed as butler, under the name of Crake. As I saw him every day for many months, I naturally came to know him perfectly well."

"Quite!" assented Mr. Grimes. "But after such a lapse of time—"

"I have a very personal reason for remembering the man," said Miss Bullivant. "I believe, although I have no actual proof, that he is a kidnapper, and that he kidnapped my only near relative."

"Um!" said Mr. Grimes. "But after such a lapse of time—"

"Ridings is a children's boarding-school," explained Miss Bullivant. "I had, at that time, a young brother—a small child—whom I was able to place at the school where I was, as I have said, as assistant mistress. We had been left orphans, and Dicky—that is to say, Richard—was in my charge." Miss

Bullivant's grim face softened for a moment. But she went on, in calm, matter-of-fact tones: "It was because the boy was ill—a childish complaint—that I was instrumental in detecting this man, Crake, in the act of robbery. I was sitting by the boy's bedside late at night—and Crake, unaware of that circumstance, selected that night for breaking into the safe."

She paused a moment.

"I heard a noise and went down," she resumed. "I supposed that it was burglars, and went to investigate. I found Crake at the open safe, removing valuables from it. I secured him at once."

Inspector Grimes smiled faintly.

Miss Bullivant must have been in the early twenties at the time she referred to. Evidently she had always been of a strenuous and determined character.

"Crake was handed over to the police," went on Miss Bullivant. "At his trial it transpired that he was a crook who had obtained his post at Ridings by forged testimonials, and that he had played the same trick in other places at various times. He had passed under a variety of names, and had always succeeded in evading justice up to that time. But once in the hands of the police, his history was unravelled. He received a sentence of three years; and I never expected to see him or hear of him again."

"I tell you, sir—" interjected Barney.

"You may speak later, my man!" said Mr. Grimes. "Please continue, Miss Bullivant."

"About a year later," said Miss Bullivant, "I saw a report in the newspapers that Crake had escaped from prison. Two years of his sentence remained to be served, at that time. Those two years still remain to be served, Mr. Grimes."

The inspector nodded, with a puzzled look.

No doubt it was the duty of any mem-

ber of the public to lend aid in securing a runaway convict. But that hardly accounted for Miss Bullivant's grim determination in this matter.

"I have, as I have said, a personal reason for remembering this man," said Miss Bullivant. "Although I was aware that he had escaped from prison, I gave him no thought, never expecting to hear of him again. But about three months later, Dicky—I mean, Richard—disappeared from Ridings."

"Oh!" said Mr. Grimes.

"Every effort was made to find him," Miss Bullivant's grim composure showed signs, for the moment, of breaking. But only for the moment. Then she went on calmly: "Every effort failed. The boy had vanished—he has never been found. No trace of him has been discovered to this day—and nothing is known of his fate, except, of course, that he had been kidnapped and taken away. I had no doubt, then—and have no doubt now—that it was an act of revenge on the part of Crake."

Miss Bullivant's lips set hard.

"I have said that there is no proof. There is none. Neither do I expect this villain to confess. But now that he is once more in the hands of justice, I hope that something may be discovered. He was well aware of my strong attachment for the little boy, who was my only relative; and he attributed his ruin to me—in which he was perfectly correct, for he had played his game with success for many years, and might have gone on successfully from one crime to another had I not secured him that night breaking open the safe at Ridings. I am assured that it was he who stole Dicky—I mean, Richard—away, and that he could tell me, if he chose, what became of the boy."

Miss Bullivant paused again.

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SKIP'S LUCKY BREAK!



(Continued from page 13.)

"In the absence of proof, or evidence of any kind, I cannot make a charge of kidnapping against this man!" she said. "But, as an escaped convict, with two-thirds of his sentence yet to run, he may be taken in charge—and I have no doubt that the authorities will investigate his record since his escape—and something may come to light regarding my brother Richard—"

"Very possibly, madam, if this man proves to be the escaped convict, Crake," assented Mr. Grimes.

"I identify him with absolute certainty!" said Miss Bullivant. "On my positive statement, Mr. Grimes, you will detain him for inquiry."

"Undoubtedly!" said Mr. Grimes.

Barney cast a longing look towards the door. But as a solid, stolid police-constable was standing there, the door was not of much use to Barney.

"Now, if you deny this, my man—" said Mr. Grimes.

"My name's Smith!" said Barney sullenly. "I ain't never lived in Brighton, and I ain't never had a job in a school. Do I look like it?"

"Not now!" said Miss Bullivant. "I have no doubt that, since going to prison, you have sunk lower and lower in crime. But you are the man!"

"I tell you I ain't your man. I swear I ain't! And I never lived in Brighton, neither. And as for saying I was at Ridings School—why, I never heard the name!"

"Present address?" rapped the inspector.

"I have been putting up at the Three Fishers!" muttered Barney.

"Permanent address?"

"I—I ain't got any—I've been in hard luck—"

"Address of any respectable person who knows you in the name of Smith?"

Barney did not answer that. He knew that it was useless to fence—once in official hands, with inquiry started, the game was up for a man like Barney the Binger. Instead of answering the inspector, he fixed his evil eyes on Miss Bullivant's grim, tanned face.

"You got to prove I'm Crake!" he breathed. "I swear I ain't, and never heard the name. You prove it. They can't keep me long. As for kidnapping, you won't get by with that." His evil eyes gleamed. "If that boy of yours was kidnapped by the man you speak of, I'll lay that the man brought him up to his own business—and if you want him, you'd better look for him in Borstal."

Miss Bullivant's face paled a little. The rascal was admitting nothing; but his meaning was clear.

"That's enough from you, my man!" said Inspector Grimes sternly. "You will be detained in custody for inquiries."

And when Miss Bullivant left Court-field Police Station, Barney the Binger remained there—in the grip of the law—which was not destined to loosen on him again!

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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Wants to Know!

COKER of the Fifth put his head into the Rag after prep that evening.

Coker's face was stern.

Unaware of the fact that Skip of the Remove was "done" with his heavy-handed benefactor, Coker was on the path of duty. Coker was a whale on duty; especially when duty took the form of keeping a fag in order.

"Skip here?" hooted Horace.

Most of the Remove were in the Rag, after prep. Every eye turned on the burly Horace, as he stepped in. Skip was there with his friends—and his eyes gleamed as he looked at Coker.

"Want me?" he snapped.

"That's it!" said Coker. He strode across the Rag, to where Skip was standing by Lord Mauleverer's armchair, with the Famous Five grouped round him. "I've got to look into this."

"What is it this time, fathead?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Don't be cheeky, Cherry! You'd better come with me, Skip—I'll question you in my study."

"Has the Head made you a prefect all of a sudden?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Don't be cheeky, Wharton! Come along, Skip!"

"You silly fathead!" said Skip. "I ain't coming along of you, and I don't want nothing to say to you. 'Ook it!"

"That's a tip, Coker!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "Hook it, old bean! Take your face away!"

"You'd better come, Skip!" said Coker, unheeding. "I don't want to shout this out before everybody."

"You can git on the roof, and shout it out to all the county, for all I care!" retorted Skip. "What's biting you now, you silly hass? Not that I want to 'ear it. I done with you!"

"Well, I'm not done with you!" said Coker grimly. "If you've been pinching again—"

"'Old your row, will you?" howled Skip. "Look 'ere, Coker! Let's 'ave this 'ere plain! I done with you. I've written to your aunt, and told her that I ain't 'aving nothing more from you—I'm fed up with you. I've pulled your nose for calling me a pincher—and you call me a pincher again, and I'll pull it again, and chance it!"

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob.

"You've written to my Aunt Judy!" gasped Coker.

"Yes, and told 'er I'm done with you!" said Skip. "What she done for me, was done on your account, and I ain't taking any more. I ain't letting 'er pay my fees 'ere no more, and I'm done with you, so shut up and 'ook it!"

"Well, you cheeky little scoundrel!" gasped Coker. "Of course, I shan't take any notice of that! I took you up, to make an honest kid of you—and I'm going to do it. Will you come up to my study?"

"No, I won't!" answered Skip.

"If you want all these fags to hear, I—"

"I don't care what they 'ear!"

"All right, then!" said Coker. "If you want it out before everybody, have your way. Show me that locket you've got."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I've just heard from a Remove fag that you've got a gold locket on you, and as it can't be yours, I've got to look into the matter!" said Coker sternly.

"Oh!" gasped Skip. He glared round at the fat Owl of the Remove. "You

blooming bloater, you been telling tales to Coker?"

"Eh? No!" gasped Bunter. "I haven't spoken to Coker. I don't know how he heard of it, unless Smithy told him—"

"Smithy?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I mentioned it to Smithy at tea-time."

The captain of the Remove glanced round the Rag. Vernon-Smith was not present. He knitted his brows.

"Did you get this from Vernon-Smith, Coker?" he asked. "Is it that rotter who's started you making a fool of yourself again?"

"Vernon-Smith certainly mentioned it to me," said Coker. "As I'm responsible for this young sweep being here, he naturally told me."

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "You mean that Smithy's working you like a monkey on a stick."

"That will do, Cherry! Hand over that locket at once, Skip, if you've got it. I'm ready to hear anything you have to say."

"I ain't got nothing to say to you, Coker!" said Skip stubbornly. "I done with you—and glad to 'ave done with you!"

"That won't wash!" said Coker. "From what I hear, you've got a gold locket with a woman's photograph in it. Is that so?"

"Find out!"

"I'm going to!" roared Coker. "Either you hand it over and explain how you came by it, or I shall search you."

"If you can get by with it, you silly hass!" retorted Skip. "You lay a 'and on me and I'll 'it you in the eye—and you can lay to that!"

Coker's large hand was laid on him the next moment.

Skip was as good as his word; he promptly hit Coker in the eye.

There was a roar from Coker of the Fifth. He fairly hurled himself at the waif of the Remove. At the same time about a dozen Remove fellows hurled themselves at Coker.

"Boot him out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Kick him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Outside, Coker!"

It took three minutes to get Coker to the door of the Rag. His resistance was really heroic. Chairs were knocked over, the table rocked, trampling feet made a terrific din. Often and often there was a little noise in the Rag: now there was a lot. The din, in fact, was tremendous.

But Coker was got to the door. Hazeldene pulled it open, and Coker flew out into the passage. He landed there with a crash and a roar—at the feet of Mr. Quelch!

The Remove master had arrived to inquire into the cause of that tremendous uproar, and he jumped and stared as the cause landed at his feet roaring.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

So Does Quelch!

MR. QUELCH stared blankly at Coker.

Coker rolled and roared.

The crowd of juniors, about to rush out and help Coker along the passage, stopped at sight of their Form-master.

"Ooooooogh!" spluttered Coker, sitting up.

"What does this mean?" thundered

Mr. Quelch. "Wharton, what does this riot mean?"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. "We—we—we were just—just helping Coker out, sir!"

"What?"

"We—we don't want Fifth Form men in our quarters, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"Coker! Stand up, Coker! Coker, why have you caused this disturbance in the junior day-room? Answer me, Coker!"

"Wurrgh!" gasped Coker.

"Will you speak?"

"Woooooh!"

Mr. Quelch, with a thunderous frown, stooped, grasped Coker by the collar, and dragged him to his feet. Coker stood tottering and gasping.

"You have no right in this room, Coker! I shall report you to your Form-master!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Urrgh! I came here to—to—Gurrgh!" gasped Coker. "Think I came here for a row with those cheeky fags? Urrgh! I came to—Grooogh! I mean I came for Skip—that young—Oooogh!"

"Go at once!"

"Oooh!" Coker recovered his breath a little. "I can't go without dealing with that young sweep, sir! It's a matter of duty! I'm responsible for his having come here, and so—"

Mr. Quelch's face set grimly.

"Are you undertaking to exercise authority over a boy of my Form, Coker?" he rumbled.

"In a way, yes, sir," said the cheery Horace. "I'm bound to, to a certain extent, as I landed him here, and I can't let him go on pinching—"

"Do you mean pilfering, Coker?"

"That's it, sir. You see—"

"Have you any reason to suspect Skip of anything of the kind? If so, inform me at once."

"Oh!" said Coker, while the juniors looked on in silence. "The fact is, sir, that, in the circumstances, I'd rather deal with the matter myself—"

"If you utter another word of impertinence, Coker, I shall box your ears!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Eh?"

"Be silent! Skip!"

"Yessir!"

"I am sure, my boy, that there are no grounds for the ridiculous statement Coker has just made."

"Thank you, sir," said Skip.

"You, Coker, will be taken to your headmaster for having made such a statement, unless you can substantiate it here and now!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "I haven't exactly stated it, sir. But that young sweep has got to explain; I can't leave it where it is. I haven't said he pinched that locket, but he's got to explain how he got it—"

"That what?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Have you any such article in your possession, Skip?"

"Yessir!" muttered Skip, with a burning face.

"Oh!" Mr. Quelch's expression changed a little. "In that case, Skip, I must ask you to explain the matter to me. Certainly not to Coker. Coker, you will go away at once."

"Really, sir—"

"Be silent! Go!"

Coker opened his extensive mouth—but he shut it again. Mr. Quelch really looked like boxing Coker's ears at that moment, Fifth Form man and senior as he was.

Suppressing his wrath and indignation with great difficulty, Horace Coker went.

"Skip, this matter must be explained at once, and it had better be explained

in the presence of your Form-fellows," said Mr. Quelch. He stepped into the Rag—which was quiet enough now.

"Yessir!" mumbled Skip.

"I will say first," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "that I have no doubt of you, Skip. You have proved to my satisfaction and that of your headmaster that you are as honourable a lad as any boy in my Form. You are under no doubt or suspicion whatever. Nevertheless, as this matter has been raised, it had better be fully explained, and I am sure that you will understand that."

"Yessir! If you say so."

"Kindly hand me the article in question."

Skip fumbled in his pocket and drew out a small plain locket with a ribbon attached.

Every eye in the Rag fixed on it at once. The Famous Five had seen it before; Bunter had seen it—and, since Bunter had seen it, a good many fellows had heard of it, as well as the Bounder. Naturally, there was some curiosity on the subject.

Mr. Quelch took it, under all eyes; his face expressed little, but all could see that he was startled.

Such an article was a very uncommon possession for a schoolboy. It was very surprising, in Skip's possession; he could hardly be supposed to have bought such a thing out of his pocket-money, and he had no relatives or connections of any kind from whom it might have come.

How, then, had he come by it—unless in the way of "business" in his unreformed days, or, worse still, by picking pockets since he had been at Greyfriars School?

Many of the juniors exchanged rather queer glances.

"This is yours, Skip?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yessir."

"What does it contain?"

"A photograph, sir."

"Of whom?"

"I dunno, sir."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He was determined to trust this boy if he could, but this was a little staggering.

Skinner winked at Snoop, and Billy Bunter barely repressed a giggle.

"You state that this locket containing a photograph of a person you do not know is your property, Skip?" asked Mr. Quelch at last.

"Yessir."

"Very well. Tell me how it came into your possession, my boy."

"I dunno, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I mean, I've always 'ad it, sir," said Skip, in distress. "Ever since I was a small nipper, sir, I've 'ad it. Nobody ever knowed, sir. It was on a ribbon round my neck, sir. Nobody never saw it, excepting old Sal—"

"Old Sal!" repeated Mr. Quelch, with a start. "Who—who—What? Who was that?"

"The old woman what kept the dive in Slummock's Alley, sir," said Skip. "That was where I was with Barney the Binger, sir. Old Sal used to look arter me when I was small, sir, and she see it sometimes—nobody else. She never let on to Barney, though; he'd 'ave had it off me for the drink if he'd knowed. She was good to me, she was, sir, though she did push one back occasionally."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Arter I was bigger, sir, I kep' it very carefully, and never let nobody see it," said Skip. "I dunno who it is in the picture, sir; but Barney used to gabble sometimes when he was tipsy

and mention a sister I 'ad, though he would never say a word when he was sober. So I thought sometimes that photograph might be 'ers. But I never knowed."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"We've seen it before, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Skip showed it to us weeks ago and told us about it."

"And we knew it was his all right, sir," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "How did you know that, Mauleverer?"

"Skip told us so, sir," said his lordship innocently.

"Oh, quite!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Quite!"

He turned the little locket over in his fingers and snapped it open; he fixed his eyes on the photograph within.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a very uneasy glance.

They had seen the photograph in that locket—and it was, they firmly believed, that of someone they had seen. They did not recognise it, they could not say whose it was, but every member of the famous Co. was convinced that he had at some time or other seen the original.

That, of course, had made it extremely difficult for them to believe Skip's statement that it had always been in his possession.

A person whom all the five had seen must, presumably, be some person in the vicinity of Greyfriars School—which had seemed rather like evidence that Skip had pinched that locket since he had been at Greyfriars.

Nevertheless, their faith in him stood the strain, and they did believe what he had told them.

But they doubted very much whether Mr. Quelch's faith would stand such a strain if he, too, found something familiar in the pictured face.

Their hearts beat rather unpleasantly as they watched him, and saw the grim concentration that gathered in his countenance.

All eyes were on Quelch. All eyes could read in his face that he was struck by that photograph.

For a long minute the Remove master stood looking at it. Then he fixed his eyes on Skip's burning face.

"Skip," he said, "do you adhere to your statement that the photograph in this locket was in your possession in earliest childhood?"

"Yessir."

"Then how do you explain," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "the fact that this face is familiar to me, and that I have certainly seen it before?"

There was a dead silence in the Rag.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Benefit of the Doubt!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stepped quietly into the Rag. No one noticed the Bounder; every eye was on Mr. Quelch and Skip, in the centre of a circling crowd.

Smithy stood looking on, his hands in his pocket, a cynical grin on his face.

Quietly he stood listening to the questioning of Skip—and he drew a deep, deep breath as he heard Mr. Quelch's startling words, after looking at the photograph in the locket.

The Bounder's eyes glittered.

He had his enemy now—he was sure of that! At long, long last, he had his enemy where he wanted him.

Thrice had the Bounder suspected and accused Skip. Thrice he had been

forced to own up to a mistake; and the last time a flogging had been a severe warning to him to make no more such mistakes! That warning had been effective—he had made no more—and this time he was not appearing in the matter at all. Coker—coolly used as a catspaw—had served his turn. A word to Coker had been enough to set the fathead of the Fifth on the track.

Whatever was the outcome of Coker's intervention, it was certain that the matter, once made public, would have to be cleared up. Clearing it up could only lead—in the Bounder's belief—to one conclusion—that Skip was the same old pincher. Now he had come along to the Rag, to see how matters were going, and he was glad to see the Remove master there. The affair was in Quelch's hands now—and that was the finish for the pickpocket! There was a bitter and sardonic elation in Smithy's face as he looked on.

The silence that followed Mr. Quelch's words was long—and it was painful. Skip stood crimson and speechless. Remove fellows exchanged glances. Skinner, glancing round and seeing the Bounder, winked at him, and Vernon-Smith grinned.

Mr. Quelch waited grimly for the reply that did not come. As it did not come he spoke again.

"I have asked you a question, Skip. Can you answer it?"

"It's mine, sir!" mumbled Skip.

"I repeat," said Mr. Quelch, "that I have seen this face before. I cannot say that I recognise it. I cannot name the original of the photograph. But I am absolutely convinced that I have seen it before."

"These blokes said the same, sir, when they saw it, but they believe that it's mine!" mumbled Skip.

Mr. Quelch started.

"Wharton! Have you seen this photograph?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"It is familiar to you, as to me?"

"I—I—I thought I'd seen somebody like it somewhere, sir!" stammered the captain of the Remove. "I—I certainly thought so."

"Did your friends have the same impression?"

The Co. coloured uncomfortably. They were only too well aware how much this told against Skip. But they had to admit the facts.

"Yes, sir; I—I think so," stammered Harry.

"Nugent! Bull! Cherry! Hurree Singh! You have all seen this photograph, and you believe that you have seen the original of it?"

"Yes, sir!" faltered the four.

"In that case," said Mr. Quelch, "it is clear that I am making no mistake in supposing that it is familiar to me. As so many Greyfriars boys have seen the original, and as I have seen it, it must be the photograph of some person in the vicinity of this school."

The juniors were silent. There could hardly be any doubt on that point.

The evidence seemed overwhelming that that locket, and what it contained, had come into Skip's possession since he had been at Greyfriars. And that meant—what the Bounder wanted to prove.

Mr. Quelch stood silent—grim, but troubled. He believed in the boy and trusted him; he had taken this matter up in public in order that Skip's Form-fellows should have no doubt—no more doubt than he had had himself. He was prepared to accept Skip's story with regard to the locket itself. But the familiarity of the photograph it

contained staggered him. How could he, in view of that, believe that it had been in Skip's possession ten or twelve years before he ever came near Greyfriars? It was the property of some person near the school—he could hardly doubt it.

The Bounder moved forward.

"If you please, sir—" he said softly.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave him angry looks. They had no effect on Smithy. Mr. Quelch glanced at him inquiringly.

"Have you anything to say about this, Vernon-Smith?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. If five fellows in the Remove have seen that photograph before, it's very likely that some fellow may know whose it is!" said the Bounder. "If the original can be found, wouldn't that clear the matter up?"

"Quite possibly!" said Mr. Quelch. "That is a very good suggestion. Every boy here had better look at the photograph, and we may be able to learn the name of the original."

He laid the locket, open, on the table in the Rag.

"I desire every boy present to look at this," he said. "If anyone knows the name of the lady whose photograph it is, he must tell me."

There was a good deal of keenness to look at the photograph.

Vernon-Smith was one of the first to look.

His eyes were keen and his memory retentive. He had no doubt that, if he had ever seen the face, he would recall the name.

He scanned it with sharp eyes. It was the face of a young woman, about twenty-three years old, with strongly-marked features and steadfast eyes. A fleeting resemblance to some face he had seen struck the Bounder, as it had struck the others who had seen the photograph.

But he could not "place" it. He could have sworn that he had seen the original, but he could not recall who it was.

"I've seen it before, sir!" he said.

"Can you give me the name?"

"No, sir," said the Bounder reluctantly.

Every fellow in the Rag, in turn, gazed at the face in the locket. Skip watched them in silence.

His thoughts were very different from those of the other fellows. Strange as his story was, it was true, as his friends believed. That picture had come to him from early, unremembered days, and since he had been old enough to think about it he had wondered and hoped whether it might be the face of some relative—perhaps of the elder sister, of whom he had heard from Barney, when intoxication had loosened the rascal's tongue. If that were so, it might prove, some day, to be a clue to his "people"—to his own home, which he had never known.

Gladly—very gladly—would Skip have heard some fellow exclaim that he knew whose face it was.

That, in the Bounder's belief, would have clinched his guilt, proving that he had pinched that locket from some resident in the neighbourhood. But Skip was thinking that if the photograph could be identified, it might help him to learn what he had always wanted to know.

But both Skip and the Bounder were disappointed, though for different reasons. Of all the crowd of fellows who examined the photograph in turn, not one announced that he knew the original, though a good many declared

that they were sure they had seen a face like it somewhere.

Hazeldene was seen to stare at it very hard, and pucker his brows over it, with a puzzled look. But Hazel shook his head and said nothing. Vernon-Smith, however, noticed that look on Hazel's face, and he touched him on the arm as Hazel made room for the others.

"You've got it?" he whispered.

Hazel shook his head.

"I've seen the chivvy," he said. "I jolly well know that. But blessed if I can 'pin it down.'" He gave his head another shake. "I know I've seen it. I've got a sort of impression that I've seen it in a photograph with a lot of others—a party, or something—but I can't get it!"

The Bounder eyed him eagerly. Hazel could not "place" it, but it was clear that he had got nearer to doing so than anyone else.

"Think it over," muttered the Bounder.

"I'm going to," said Hazel. "If it belongs to somebody about here, of course, I'd like them to get it back."

Mr. Quelch picked up the locket again at last. The Bounder's suggestion had seemed to him useful, but it had led to nothing.

Twenty fellows, at least, thought that the face was more or less familiar, which was practically proof that it was the photograph of somebody in the neighbourhood. But that was all.

The Remove master held the locket in his hand—puzzled and perplexed. Had the original been identified, the matter would have been easy—the young woman could have been interviewed on the subject. As the matter stood, there was nothing to be done—unless he judged Skip guilty of having stolen the locket on the evidence of a fleeting resemblance that could not be traced as far as recognition. That, of course, he could not do—but he was sorely troubled in mind.

"You may take this locket, Skip!" said the Remove master, at last.

"I 'ope, sir, that you believe what I've told you. My friends believe me, sir."

"Every word!" said Harry Wharton, firmly.

"Every syllable!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Mr. Quelch glanced at the Co. Perhaps their firm faith in the waif of the Remove helped to strengthen his own.

"My boys," he said, gravely, "I am glad to hear you say so. The circumstances are very strange—very strange indeed: but I believe this boy, and I trust him; and I should be very sorry to hear that any boy in my Form did otherwise."

With that, Mr. Quelch left the Rag—with a perplexed frown on his face.

The Bounder watched him go, with a bitter sneer. The pincher had pulled through so far, but Herbert Vernon-Smith was not done with him yet. Skip had the benefit of the doubt—that was what it amounted to. Somehow or other, the Bounder was going to clear away that doubt—if he could.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bumps for Two!

"TAKING Skip?"

"Yes."

"I shouldn't!" said Billy Bunter, shaking his head.

It was two or three days later, and after class.

How Bunter knew that the Famous Five were going over to Cliff House to tea with Marjorie & Co. was known

(Continued on page 20.)

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES WITH—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL.

(1)

Walk up and see this breathless show;
It's really wild and thrilling,
For our museum, as you know,
Is absolutely killing!
Excitedly you gaze upon
A jellyfish's skeleton,
Or see, with quiverings of dread,
A prehistoric arrowhead!



The Museum.

(2)

And if your nervous system's still
Not wholly torn asunder,
The fossilised pterichthys will
Provoke a gasp of wonder!
And if it doesn't turn you pale,
The spinal column of a whale
Dug up at Friardale years ago
Will leave your hair as white as
snow!

(3)

It's time, I think, this stuff was burnt,
And in its place collected
Such things as "Knowledge Coker's
Learnt!"
(With microscope erected!)
"The Ha'penny Fishy Gave the
Poor!"
(A French one, 1764.)
And this: "The Cane that Rose and
Fell!"
The Greyfriars Rhymester Knew it
Well!"



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
**THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER**

GREYFRIARS GRINS

There is a rumour that Mr. Prout has started talking in his sleep. Perpetual motion discovered at last!

Science is trying to speed up education. I suppose they'll save time by inventing a machine which makes one swipe of the cane hurt as much as six.

A visitor to the school thought it strange that there was only one Hindu in the Remove when the fag Forms were full of 'em. It certainly is about time the fags had their annual bath.

Fisher T. Fish announced his great stocktaking sale. All articles reduced to ten times their value. Roll up!

PUZZLE PAR

Mr. Prout saw nine pheasants sitting on a tree. He shot two brace. How many remained?

Answer at foot of column 2.

BUNTER'S LATEST.—Answer to a question in a geometry paper: "A quadrangle is a place with buildings on two sides and a tuckshop on the other." (0 marks.)

Mr. Hacker has been so snappish lately that it is feared he may have to be fitted with a muzzle.

Why is the MAGNET like Gosling's nose?
Because it is "red" to the very end.

Wingate and Mr. Quelch were both doing a bit of sprinting yesterday afternoon. Quelch was running for a train and Wingate was training for a run.

Mr. Prout would like to make the acquaintance of a man who can talk about big-game hunting. Mr. Prout's colleagues would like to make the acquaintance of a man who can't!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET EDWARD FRY,

Temple's studymate in the Fourth Form.

F is for FRY of the Fourth,
A fellow of wisdom and worth,
Or so he imagines, but we
Have never been known to agree,
Although we are bound to admit
He's sensible more than a bit



Compared with his studymate, who is Temple, the pride of the Zoo!
And secretly Fry never thinks
So much of old Temple, and winks
When Temple is wagging his jaw
And haughtily laying the law
To Dabney and Fry, and implies
His words are both weighty and wise.
But though he doubts Temple's decrees,
Fry's fond of his tuck and his teas!

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

Four remained—the two brace which were shot. The others flew away—jolly quick!

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

The Greyfriars Criminal Court

(1)

On Tuesday last, to my regret,
My name was called at the assizes.
The trial I never shall forget;
It was a series of surprises!
For I was charged with "Uttering verse
Knowing it was bad—or worse."

(2)

When Mr. Justice Wharton sat
Upon the bench and shook his noddle,
How deeply I repented that
I ever started writing twaddle!
Alas! the sin was sinned, and hence
I had to face the consequence.

(3)

The prosecution, Mr. Todd,
Demanded in a voice of passion
That I should forthwith go to quod
For writing verse in such a fashion.
"It always makes me ill," said he,
"To read the prisoner's poetry!"

(4)

"The prisoner's very good at rhyme,"
My counsel, Mr. Rake, contended.
The judge said sternly: "It is time
This nuisance permanently ended.
For any healthy person must
View poets with a deep disgust."

(5)

The jury found me "Guilty," and
The judge adjusted his black bonnet.
"Now, prisoner at the bar, you stand
Convicted of an ode or sonnet!
This sentence, then, shall be enforced—
Your poet's licence is endorsed!"

(Exit prisoner, sobbing bitterly.)

Meet Again Next Saturday for Further Inside Information About Greyfriars!

only to Bunter. The fat Owl had his own sources of information—often by way of a keyhole. Anyhow, he evidently knew.

Three members of the Co., Wharton, Nugent, and Hurree Singh, were waiting for the other two and Skip to join them, when Bunter happened.

"I shouldn't!" repeated Bunter. "Better leave Skip out! Take my advice, and leave him out, old chaps!"

"Anybody want Bunter's advice?" asked Frank Nugent. "It's not worth anything, but it's going cheap!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Roll off, barrel!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, you'd better take my tip!" urged Bunter. "I'll come with you instead of Skip! They always have a cake—I mean, I'd like to see Marjorie and Clara. And I fancy Marjorie Hazeldene would like to see me—he, he! You fellows know that! I know you fellows don't like a good-looking chap to be present, when there are girls about—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, you can't take Skip!" said Bunter. "Suppose he pinched something else while he was there?"

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Don't yell at a fellow!" said Bunter, peevishly. "Wharrer you want to make a fellow jump for, you ass? I mean to say, where did Skip get that locket? Only girls have lockets—boys don't, do they? Well, Skip never sees any girls, except when you fellows have taken him over to Cliff House. He must have got it there—don't you see that?"

"You fat idiot—"

"Well, it's plain enough to me!" said Bunter. "So far as I can see, he can only have pinched that locket at Cliff House. Where do you think he pinched it, if not there?" asked Bunter.

"You blithering owl, he didn't pinch it!" howled Nugent. "It's his, as he told Quelch."

Bunter gave a fat wink.

"That may do for Quelch," he said. "Though I fancy Quelch doesn't quite swallow it. It won't do for me. Smithy's said all along that he's a pincher—and it's pretty clear now. Look how he kicked me the other day—"

"I don't think he kicked you hard enough!" remarked Harry Wharton. "Turn round, Bunter!"

"Don't be a beast, old chap! I'm advising you for your own good," said Bunter. "You'd look a silly set of asses, if he pinched something else there, and got copped. Take it from me, that locket belongs to some Cliff House girl—he bagged it there all right."

"Bump him!" said Nugent.

Billy Bunter backed away, warily.

"Do listen to a chap!" he urged. "You don't want to take that pickpocket over to Cliff House. I suppose you'd rather have my company, anyhow."

"Oh, my hat! Hardly!"

"I jolly well know Marjorie would," said Bunter. "And you jolly well know it, too—that's why you want to leave me out! This jealousy of a chap's good looks is pretty sickening, I can tell you."

"The good-lookfulness is terrific and preposterous!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's not my fault that girls give me the glad eye!" said Bunter, warmly. "I don't encourage them. Still, there it is! You fellows are rather dense! Marjorie will be fearfully disappointed if I don't go. She only asks you fellows because she thinks I may go with you. You don't seem to see it—"

"Not quite!"

"None so blind as they who won't see!" sneered Bunter. "Well, if you don't see it, you can take it from me. I'm not particularly keen on going, and I'd absolutely forgotten that they have a cake for tea—I'm not so keen on scoffing cake as some fellows I could name. But when I see fellows showing this rotten jealousy because a girl's sweet in my direction, I'm bound to say—Gerraway you beast!"

Bunter jumped back out of reach.

Unfortunately for Bunter, Bob Cherry came out of the House to join his friends at that moment. Jumping back from the three, Bunter landed just in front of Bob—out of the frying pan into the fire, as it were.

Bob's foot flew out. Bunter's remarks, which he had heard as he arrived, seemed to have annoyed Bob. He seemed to fancy that he was kicking for goal.

Thud!

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter, thus attacked in the rear, plunged forward and tottered against the three. All three grasped him—and sat him down in the quad.

Bump!

"Y o o h o o p!" roared Bunter.

"Now," said Bob Cherry, glaring at the fat junior, "all kick him together and see if we can lift him right across the quad."

"Go it!"

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

He did not wait for the four juniors to "go" it. He bounded up and flew.

Johnny Bull and Skip came out; and the party of juniors walked away to the gates.

They passed Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene in the quad. Since that evening in the Rag, Smithy had become very pally with Hazel—doubtless for good reasons of his own.

He whispered to Hazel, as the Famous Five came by with Skip.

Hazel nodded, made a step towards them, and called:

"You fellows going over to Cliff House?"

"Yes—coming, Hazel?" asked Bob.

"No—but—I say, is Skip going with you?"

"Yes," said Harry Wharton, rather curtly. "Why not?"

Hazel coloured.

"Oh, nothing!" he said. And he stepped back and rejoined the Bounder.

Skip gave him a belligerent look.

"Why shouldn't I go with these blokes, if they want me?" he demanded.

Hazel did not answer. All the chums of the Remove could see that the Bounder had been pulling the strings, as it were; but that Hazel hesitated to say what Smithy wanted him to say.

They gave Smithy expressive looks: and were passing on, when the Bounder spoke. As Hazel did not play up, Smithy came to the point himself.

"Hadr't you fellows better think twice?" drawled the Bounder. "It would rather let us down here, if anythin' unpleasant happened at Cliff House."

Skip's eyes blazed.

"What do you mean by that, exactly, Vernon-Smith?" asked the captain of the Remove, quietly.

"Don't you get my meanin'?" grinned the Bounder.

"I think I do. So it's from you that Bunter's got what he's been gabbling?" said Harry. "Bunter's been bumped for it! Collar him, you fellows, and give him some of the same."

"Hear, hear!"

Vernon-Smith's fists flew up, his eyes flashing over them. He was not a fellow to be bumped, like Bunter—if he could help it. But he could not help it. The Famous Five collared him, all at once, and swept him off his feet.

Bump!

The Bounder yelled, as he smote the quad, hard.

"Give him another!"

"What-ho!"

"Look here—" began Hazel, making a half-hearted attempt to intervene.

Skip shoved him back—so vigorously, that he stumbled and sat down.

Vernon-Smith was swept up again, in five pairs of hands, and bumped down again, with another infuriated yell.

Then he was left, gasping for breath, and the juniors walked out of gates—leaving Smithy and Hazel both sitting, gasping, and blinking at one another.

Skip's face was crimson as he went out with his friends.

"Look 'ere, you blokes," he said uneasily, "if you think I better not come—"

"Fathead!" said Bob.

"Come on, ass!" said Harry.

A fat figure rolled after the party as they went down the lane. They stopped, turned, and glared at Billy Bunter.

"Hook it, porpoise!" roared Bob.

"I'm going over to Cliff House, to see my sister Bessie!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "You mind your own bizney, see?"

But Billy Bunter was not destined to see Miss Elizabeth Bunter that day—if he wanted to, which was doubtful. Bob Cherry strode towards him, with a gleam in his eyes which caused Bunter to give up, on the spot, the idea of visiting Sister Bessie that afternoon. Bunter turned to flee—and there was a heavy thud as he went—and a roar.

"Owl! Beast! Leave off kicking me, will you?" roared Bunter.

Thud, thud!

Bob landed two more before the fat

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Owl dodged in at the school gates and escaped.

After which the chums of the Remove resumed their walk to Cliff House—minus Bunter!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Thinks It Out!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sat in the armchair in his study, his hands driven deep into his pockets, a wrinkle of thought in his brow.

Tom Redwing sat at the table, working at a Latin paper—but every now and then he glanced round at the Bounder with a frown.

Smithy was deep in thought—and Tom knew only too well the subject of his meditations—and it troubled and irritated him.

He laid down his pen at last, twisted round his chair, and fixed his eyes on the Bounder.

"Look here, Smithy," he said abruptly, "you'd better chuck it! You've often wished, too late, that you'd taken my advice! Take it now!"

"Good advice?" asked Smithy.

"Yes, I think so."

"Keep it, then! I've no use for good advice!" drawled the Bounder. "Try me with bad, and I'll see what I can do."

"Oh, don't be an ass! You've got your feud with that chap Skip on the brain, I think," said Redwing angrily. "Three times over you've made a fool of yourself—and now you're on the same tack again."

"Three misses—and then a bullseye, what?" grinned Smithy. "I fancy I've got the rotter this time, Reddy!"

"He's not a rotter, and you'd know it as well as I do, if you hadn't got your silly back up!" snapped Redwing. "I know what he was before he came here—and I know it's to his credit how he's turned out. Every other man in the Remove thinks well of him—why can't you?"

"They don't think quite so well, since it came out about that locket!" said the Bounder. "I fancy there's a few doubts about now."

"All your fault, if there is—putting up that fool Coker to kick up a shindy about it!" snapped Redwing. "That brought Quelch into it—as I dare say you intended all along—"

"Don't you think Quelch ought to take up a matter of pinching?"

"It's nothing of the kind."

"You believe that that fellow's had that gold locket all his life, with a photograph in it of somebody he doesn't know?" said the Bounder derisively.

"It sounds a bit queer, I know—but I believe it. I don't see why it shouldn't be so. The kid must have had some relations, some time or another—he must have a name, though he doesn't know it."

"Rot! Waif of the slums!" sneered the Bounder. "If he's got relations they're in chokey—where he ought to be! He's got hold of that locket since he's been at this school. He must have got it from somebody about here—which proves what I've suspected all along—that he's keeping straight inside the school, to save his skin, and carrying on the old game outside."

"Rot!"

"We're going to see whether it's rot—when I get in touch with the original of that photograph!" said the Bounder grimly. "Don't you worry, Reddy—I'm not making a fool of myself again. No more back's floggings

for me. It's going to be a fair catch this time—without me in it! I'm the nigger in the wood-pile—Polonius behind the curtain! I'm pulling the strings—and standing clear!" The Bounder gave a sneering laugh. "Wait till I get on to the owner of that locket, that's all! I've had my lesson, Reddy—behind the scenes for me! But I'm pulling the strings all right!"

Redwing gave an angry, impatient grunt.

"Leave the fellow alone!" he said.

"Leave him to carry on—and some day the police to come to my school to run in a Greyfriars man!" jeered the Bounder. "Is that good enough?"

"Nobody but you fancies anything of the sort."

"Oh, look at it, you fathead!" snapped the Bounder. "Admitting a bare possibility that he was telling the truth about that locket, if the face in it was unknown here, what does it mean when twenty fellows, at least, are certain that they've seen it before? Isn't that proof that he got it since he came here?"

"I know it looks queer about that!" admitted Redwing. "It's jolly odd. But—"

"Altogether too queer and jolly odd!" said the Bounder. "That locket belongs to some woman about here, with her chivvy in it. He pinched it. What beats me is that nobody recognises her—when so many fellows are sure they've seen a face like it. But I've been thinking that out."

"Well?" snapped Redwing.

"The photograph may be an old one!" said the Bounder. "It doesn't look new, that's a cert. If it's an old one, the woman in it may be older—much older—now. She may have changed a lot—people do as they get older. Just enough resemblance left for a fellow to feel sure that he's seen the face, but not enough to recognise. See?"

"Doesn't that look as if Skip may have had it for years, as he says?"

"It looks as if somebody's had it for years, before he pinched it!" said the Bounder coolly. "I've been thinking hard over this, Reddy. That face in the locket is of a girl in the early twenties. If it's ten years old, she'd be in the thirties now—if it's twenty years old, she'd be in the forties. See? We've been trying to call to mind some girl of twenty-three or four—that it might belong to. Very likely the owner is thirty or forty—see that?"

"Likely enough, I suppose."

"Well, that opens a new line," said Vernon-Smith. "Instead of trying to spot some girl in this neighbourhood, we may have to spot some grown-up woman—perhaps forty years old—somebody who kept that photograph from her youth."

"Spotted her yet?" asked Redwing sarcastically.

"Not yet—but I'm going to. I know I've seen her," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm banking on that. But I fancy she's a good bit older, and has changed so much that nobody could recognise her from that photograph. Just a spot of resemblance left that puzzles a fellow."

"Is that as far as you've got?"

"So far, yes—but I'm worrying it out. Where did Skip get a chance of pinching a thing that belongs to a woman? Nobody here; it would have been missed and inquired for, and we should have heard of it. Likely enough he got it in the street at Court-field—"

"Oh, chuck it!"

"But what about Cliff House?" went

on the Bounder. "Those soft asses in Study No. 1 have taken him over there a good many times—they've gone again to-day. That's a likely spot, Reddy—considering that the locket must have belonged to a woman, and the staff there are all women. What?"

"You think he would—"

"I know he would!" said Smithy coolly. "Quite sure of that, old bean—to such an extent that I've made Hazel ask a few questions over there of his sister and her friends—whether they've heard of anything missing."

Redwing stared at him, aghast.

"You—you fool!" he exclaimed. "If Quelch heard of that—"

"Quelch isn't likely to hear of a question Hazel asked his sister Marjorie and her pal Clara," drawled the Bounder.

"I'll bet he never heard of anything missing from them."

"You win!" agreed Smithy, with a nod. "They had heard of nothing. Still, they mightn't have heard. I can't help thinking that, ten to one, he bagged that locket at Cliff House. It's the sort of thing one of the Form-mistresses might have. All the more because Hazel's more certain than anybody else that he knows the face—and he's at Cliff House more often than any other fellow here, being Marjorie's brother."

"So that's why you've been chumming with Hazel the last few days," said Redwing, in disgust.

"That's why, old bean. If Hazel can help me nail down that pincher, he's willing to do it. The odd thing is that he thinks he's seen that chivvy—not an older one like it, but the chivvy itself, just as it is in the locket. What do you make of that, Reddy?"

"Rubbish!" said Redwing. "If it was a recent photograph, everybody would know the original, if she's at Cliff House. If it's an old one, Hazel can't have seen her there at that age."

"Yes, that looks like a bit of a dilemma!" said Vernon-Smith. "But I've thought that out, too, Reddy! I've been givin' the old nut a lot of hard work on this subject." He grinned. "Some crusty old bean who had that photograph taken twenty years ago, and has changed so much that her nearest and dearest wouldn't know her by it, may have another left over—what? Hazel may have seen it, at Cliff House, some time or other. What about that?"

Redwing laughed.

"Hazel trots over to Cliff House to see his sister Marjorie—chiefly when he's hard up, I believe," he said. "Think the Form-mistresses there show him their photographs, taken in their far-off youth?"

The Bounder laughed, too.

"No—hardly. But—"

"Oh, go on," said Redwing. "You're rather amusing as a detective, Smithy—funny without being vulgar! Keep it up!"

"But," said the Bounder, unheeding. "Hazel fancies he's seen that chivvy among a lot of others."

"The whole staff sorted out their ancient photographs, to show a Remove fellow?" asked Redwing. "Sounds likely!"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Might be a group!" said Smithy. "Photograph of a tennis match, or a hockey team, or something."

"Bosh!"

"Hung up somewhere, and Hazel's seen it some time over at Cliff House," said Smithy. "What about that, Reddy? Some old group, taken years ago."

"Does Hazel think so?"

"He thinks it's possible, now I've suggested it to him."

"Have you been lending Hazel money?"

The Bounder started.

"You ass! Suppose I have? What has that got to do with it?"

"Might be his reason for pulling your leg—letting you have your money's worth!" said Redwing, laughing.

The Bounder stared at him. His brow darkened. That suggestion, clearly, was very unwelcome to Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, shut up!" he snapped. "Go and eat coke!" He rose from the armchair, scowling, stalked out of the study, and slammed the door after him.

Redwing, grinning, resumed his Latin paper.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smacks for Smithy!

HORACE COKER knitted his brows.

"Oh!" he said grimly. "You!"

Coker of the Fifth was leaning on the banisters, on the landing, with a worried expression on his rugged face. There was a letter in his hand, which Coker had been reading.

That letter was from Coker's celebrated Aunt Judy.

Generally, Coker was pleased with a letter from Aunt Judy. Often such letters contained handsome tips. But this particular letter, it was clear, had not pleased him.

It was about Skip.

Miss Judith Coker, having received Skip's communication, had written to her dear Horace on the subject. Gratitude to Skip, for the service he had rendered her dear Horace, in saving him from getting his "nut" cracked, had caused Miss Judith to play up, at Coker's request. She had persuaded the Head to give the waif a chance at Greyfriars; she had paid his fees there. She was prepared to continue doing so. But—

Now that the boy had made it clear that he did not desire it, and was, in fact, determined not to remain at the school at the cost of the tribe of Coker, Miss Judith took the rather natural view that her responsibility was at an end.

So Coker learned, from Aunt Judy's letter.

It rather worried Coker.

Coker, in his own way—which was not everybody's way—was kind-hearted. He had taken up the waif—snatched him, as it were, like a brand from the burning. He believed in thrashing as a cure for all ills, where fags were concerned—and he was prepared to thrash Skip, for his own good, to any extent. He had, in fact, thrashed him several times; and every time, Coker was convinced, it had done him good. Witness his improvement since he had been at Greyfriars!

So this worried Coker. He had not the slightest doubt that Skip, once out of his influence, away from his watchful eye, would fall back into his old bad ways. Coker could not even think of allowing that.

Skip could say he was going, if he liked. He wasn't going; unless Coker liked—and Coker did not like. But the matter was difficult—Coker had to admit that.

He had to toe the line, at Coker's lordly behest, of course—Coker had absolutely no use for independence in a waif he had taken up and befriended—

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it was, in Coker's view, cheek—a thing he would never stand. Still, there were difficulties in the way—though Coker did not realise that they were caused by himself. He did realise that it was rather unfortunate that he had jumped to incorrect conclusions so hastily, and thus put the cheeky young rascal's back up.

Not that Coker blamed himself. Often and often, worries and troubles came Coker's way; but if Coker was to blame, it was hidden from him. In the present case Coker was, as usual, blameless—it was all the fault of that impudent young rascal, Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

True, he had supposed that Skip had picked his wallet from his pocket. But that wallet never would have been dropped, but for the Bounder's cheek in ragging him in the fog. True, he had called Skip to account about that rotten old locket—which, as Mr. Quelch was satisfied that it was Skip's, Coker had to conclude was Skip's. But he never would have even heard of that locket, had not Vernon-Smith come to his study and told him about it.

In both cases, therefore, it was clear as noonday—to Coker—that he was absolutely blameless; but that very serious blame was due to that impudent young scoundrel Vernon-Smith!

Coker was thinking this out, when Vernon-Smith came out of the Remove passage, scowling. Coker was quite glad to see him—and he jerked his burly form away from the banisters, and addressed him.

The Bounder scowled at him. He had left his study in a very bad temper, and he had no patience to waste on Coker.

"You!" repeated Coker. "Just the fellow I want to see! You're the young rotter who makes out that Skip has been pinching!"

Smithy stared at him.

"You were making it out yourself, at the top of your voice, the other day!" he snarled. "Changed your mind? Half the Remove heard you yowling that he'd bagged your wallet!"

"Who made me drop it in the quad?" hooted Coker. "He never had it! And Quelch thinks that locket belongs to him! There's absolutely nothing against the kid—only your rotten slandering!"

"Quelch is a fool, and you're another!" retorted the Bounder. And with that, he stalked past Coker.

But he did not get quite past. Coker reached out and grasped him by the collar. Smithy was halted suddenly.

"Let go, you blockhead!" he shouted furiously.

"Oh! I'm a fool, am I, and a blockhead, too?" said Coker grimly. "Well, I'm not fool enough to let a fag cheek me and get by with it. That young ass has got his back up about it—and I shall very likely have to thrash him to bring him to order. You've caused all this trouble, Vernon-Smith, and I'm jolly well going to—Whoop!"

Coker roared as the Bounder, having attempted in vain to wrench himself loose, hit out savagely.

His fist crashed on Coker's jaw, suddenly cutting short his flow of eloquence.

Coker staggered, roaring—it was quite a hefty knock.

The Bounder wrenched again, and almost tore loose. But not quite!

"Ooooh!" gasped Coker, holding on with one hand and rubbing his jaw with the other. "Wooh! Oh, my jaw! You cheeky young scoundrel, do you fancy you can punch a Fifth Form man? Ooh!"

Vernon-Smith evidently fancied that he could—for he punched again, and

yet again—landing one on Coker's nose and the other in his eye.

Coker bellowed.

But Smithy had no time for more. The next moment, he was crumpling up in Coker's powerful grip. He went whirling over, and crashed down on the big settee on the landing.

"Now—" gasped Coker.

The Bounder struggled fiercely. But one mighty hand pinned him down by the back of his neck—the other rose and fell like a flail! Smacks that sounded like rifle-shots rang on the Bounder.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Yarooop! Ow!" roared the Bounder, as that series of tremendous smacks descended.

"He, he, he!"

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles rose into view over the landing from the stairs. Billy Bunter blinked at the startling scene and chuckled. Bunter seemed amused.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Ow! Leggo, you mad fool!" shrieked the Bounder. "Oh crikey! Will you let go, you silly rotter? Ow!"

"He, he, he!"

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Yarooop!"

"There!" gasped Coker. "Now, you say another word about Skip"—smack!—"and I'll give you a few more"—smack!—"like that"—smack!—"and like that!" Smack, smack, smack! "Got that?" Smack! "There, I think that will do!" Smack, smack!

With a last resounding smack, Coker released the Bounder, and stalked away up the Fifth Form passage, rubbing his palm as he went. It seemed to have suffered a little from those hefty smacks, though not so much as the Bounder. Smithy was left spluttering and gasping.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "I say, Smithy—He, he, he! Fancy letting a chap spank you! He, he, he! I say, the fellows will snigger when I tell them this! He, he, he! I wouldn't let a chap spank me! He, he, he!"

The Bounder rolled off the settee. Coker was gone, and Smithy was not disposed to pursue him and ask for more. But he was simply yearning to wreak his fury on somebody; and there was Billy Bunter, asking for it.

"Wouldn't you?" hissed the Bounder.

"No fear!" grinned Bunter. "Catch me letting a fellow spank me on the bags! He, he, he! I say—Here, leggo! Wharrer you at? Don't pitch me over, you silly idiot! I say—Yaroooh! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Spank, spank, spank, spank!

"Oh crikey! Yarooop! Stop it! I say, old chap—leave off, you beast—I say, old rotter—I mean, old fellow—Oh—ow—whoo-hoop!"

Spank, spank, spank, spank!

"Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Leggo! Yaroooh! Oh jiminy! Whoop!" roared Bunter. "I say—Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

The Bounder pitched him on the landing, yelling, and stalked away down the stairs.

He was feeling better; Bunter, on the other hand, was feeling worse. For the next five minutes the celebrated Bull of Bashan, famed for his roaring, had nothing on Billy Bunter!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Is Startled!

HAZELDENE!

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You were speaking to Vernon-Smith, I think."

"I—I—"



Smack, smack, smack, smack! Coker's mighty hand rose and fell like a flail. "Oh crumbs! Oh crikey!" roared Vernon-Smith, as that series of tremendous smacks descended. "Yarooop! Ow!" Peering over the landing, Billy Bunter blinked at the startling scene, and chuckled. "He, he, he!"

"You will take fifty lines, Hazel-dene."

It was in third school the following morning. Hazel had leaned over to speak to the Bounder—but he had got only as far as "Smithy—" when Quelch's gimlet eye fell on him.

Fifty lines was his reward, after which Hazel decided to leave what he had to say to Smithy till after class.

The Bounder glanced round at him rather sourly.

There was something like excitement in Hazel's face—something, it seemed, had come into his mind, which he was eager to communicate to Smithy.

If it was any new light on the mystery of that mysterious photograph in Skip's locket, Smithy was very keen to hear it; but he was doubtful.

It was true, as Redwing had guessed, that he had been lending Hazel money, and he knew that that was why Hazel was interested. Hazel did not care a straw about Skip, personally. That was all right; but if Hazel, who was always hard up, was pulling his leg, it was not all right—far from it. Anyhow, he had to wait till the Remove was dismissed, to hear what Hazel had to say.

When the lesson was over, and the Remove went out, however, Harry Wharton stopped to speak to the Bounder in the corridor.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and the Remove had a football match on, in which Smithy was booked to play.

Rows in the Remove had—or ought to have had—nothing to do with Soccer. Still, the captain of the Remove thought that he had better speak a word to Smithy on the subject. Smithy's unreliable temper made him rather unreliable in other matters.

"You're playing this afternoon, Smithy?" he said.

He could not speak very cordially; Smithy's feud with Skip, and its outcome, banished cordiality.

"You don't want me?" sneered the Bounder, always quick to take offence.

"Oh, yes; but I want to know!"

"Well, I'm playing."

"All right."

Harry Wharton left it at that, and followed his friends out of the House.

Hazel joined the Bounder a moment later.

"One for his nob!" sneered Smithy.

"He would like me to stand out, and make room for his pal Nugent, as it's only a match with the Fourth, and he could beat them without me. Well, I'm standing in. What was it you were going to say to me in class, Hazel?"

"Come out into the quad," said Hazel.

They left the House together, Smithy eyeing Hazel dubiously.

"Thought of something?" he asked.

"Yes," breathed Hazel.

"Well, what?"

"I've been thinking over what you said to me—about that photograph being in a group, perhaps. It came into my mind suddenly where I'd seen it," said Hazel, his eyes shining with excitement.

The Bounder was eager now.

"Where?" he asked.

"At Cliff House—in my sister's study."

"Wha-a-t?"

The Bounder stared at him blankly.

"You see, I've been in Marjorie's study sometimes," said Hazel. "When they have the other fellows over there to tea, they tea in the school-room. I don't suppose any of them have ever been in her study. So they've never seen it—not this term, anyhow. But I have. I'd forgotten it, but, thinking

it over, it came back to me. I jolly well knew I'd seen it somewhere."

"But I don't catch on," said Vernon-Smith. "Mean to say that your sister Marjorie knows the original of that photograph?"

Hazel chuckled.

"Yes, rather; so do you, Smithy, only you never saw her at the age in the photograph. She's ten or fifteen years older now, I fancy."

"I thought of that," said the Bounder. "You mean to say that you know her?"

"You bet! So do you, I tell you! You've got jolly good reason to remember her, too," chuckled Hazel.

"How do you mean?"

"Because she whopped you with her walking-stick one day, weeks ago, when you were ragging Skip with your Highcliffe pals," grinned Hazel.

Smithy jumped.

"Not old Bullivant?" he exclaimed.

"You've got it."

"Miss Bullivant!" gasped the Bounder.

"The jolly old Bull!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood silent, staring at him.

He made a mental effort to recall Bull's stern, grim face. If the Bull was the original of that photograph, she was at least twelve or fourteen years older than at the time it had been taken. No wonder fellows had not recognised it; for the change was very great, if it was so.

But mentally comparing the two faces in his mind's eye, as it were, the Bounder nodded. There was a tremendous difference between a girl of twenty-three, and a woman of perhaps thirty-five—all the more, because the Bull's strenuous outdoor life had hardened and toughened her features, and tanned her face.

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But there was a resemblance—that fleeting resemblance, which so many fellows had noticed without being able to pin it down, was a resemblance to the Bull of Cliff House.

The Bounder felt sure of that, now that he thought of the two faces together, and concentrated on a comparison between them.

Indeed, he was sure now that had he seen Miss Bullivant frequently, he would have noticed it before this. But he had seen the games mistress of Cliff House only once or twice that term.

"By gum, I believe you've got it!" he breathed. "But—but what do you mean about a photograph in your sister's study? How—"

"Marjorie's got it framed on the wall," explained Hazel. "She gets on no end with the Bull, as you know, though lots of the girls there think her a gorgon. Old Bullivant gave her the picture terms ago. I know I've seen it more than once, though, of course, I never took any special notice of it. It's a photograph of a hockey team that Bullivant played in donkey's years ago—long before she came to Cliff House as games mistress. The Bull's in it—and that's where I've seen that photograph that Skip's got in his locket."

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder.

His eyes danced.

"Mind, there's no mistake about it," said Hazel. "Ever since I saw that locket in the Rag the other night, I've been puzzled. I knew I'd seen that chivvy somewhere. Well, that's where I've seen it—Bullivant in a hockey team, just about the age she was when Skip's photograph was taken. Her name's on it with the others, I believe. Anyhow, there's a list of the names. If Marjorie had seen that photograph of Skip's, she would have known at once that it was Miss Bullivant's—taken years ago, of course. It's exactly the same as the one in the hockey team."

"By gad!" breathed the Bounder.

"That settles it, I fancy!" said Hazel. "Miss Bullivant gave Marjorie that photograph of the old hockey team, but she jolly well never gave Skip a gold locket with a fifteen-year old photograph in it—what?"

"Hardly!" grinned the Bounder.

"Goodness knows how he got it, but it's plain enough now—"

"That's easy," said the Bounder. "He's met her several times, I know. She barged in that day we were ragging him, and another time she met him when he cleared off from the school—that time they thought he had Mossoo's French banknote. He's met her at least twice, and may have seen her other times, for all I know. One of those times he pinched the locket."

"Right as rain!" said Hazel. "But what an unscrupulous young rotter!"

"Haven't I said so, all along?" sneered the Bounder. "I fancy that locket isn't all he's pinched outside the school, by some dozens of things. He steers clear here, and lines his pockets outside Greyfriars. If this isn't proof of it I'd like to know what is."

"Are you going to Quelch about it?"

"Am I going to Quelch—to get six for telling another tale about Skip?" sneered the Bounder. "No fear! I'm not on in this! Somebody's going to Quelch or the Head, you can bet your boots on that; but it's somebody they'll have to listen to."

"Who, then?" Not me!" said Hazel hastily.

"Don't be an ass! The Bull," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

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"Oh!" exclaimed Hazel.

"She's an old Tartar," said the Bounder, "but that will make her all the more certain to take it up. She must have missed that locket; but she's never thought of Skip, though she might have. She's heard what he was. She's about the last old bean in the bunch to let a thief off, I fancy. If she's put on the track of her property she will be after it like a bloodhound, and after the rotter that pinched it."

"You're going to speak to the Bull?"

"Hasn't she a right to know where her property is?" demanded Smithy.

"Yes, rather. She ought to be told. By gum, I can see her whizzing over here on that bike of hers when she knows!" Hazel chuckled. "There can't be any doubt about it, Smithy. She can't possibly have given it to him."

"How could she, fathead? Does she look the sort to give her photographs about like a film star?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hardly."

"All the same, I'm going to make sure," said the Bounder. "I've put my foot in it three times in handling that young scoundrel, and I'm not making any more mistakes. Don't say a word about this, Hazel. I'm going over to Cliff House this afternoon. I'm going to get a squint, somehow, at that picture in your sister's study, and make sure, and then I'm going to see the Bull, and I'll find out fast enough whether she gave that locket to Skip. I know, of course, that she couldn't have. But not a word till I've made sure."

Hazel nodded.

"Leave it in my hands," said the Bounder. "You don't want to get mixed up in it, anyhow."

"No fear!" said Hazel promptly. "I say, Smithy, that man Lodgey's dunning me, and I still owe him two pounds."

The Bounder laughed. He had plenty of money, and it was worth more than two pounds, in his estimation, to get his enemy on the hip.

Smithy was smiling cheerfully when he went in to dinner with the Remove.

He glanced along the table at Skip, whose chubby face was quite cheery. He would not have looked so merry and bright, the Bounder reflected, if he had known what was coming to him. Unless Smithy was once more mistaken—and how could he be mistaken?—that was the last time that Skip would ever sit at the Remove table.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE looked surprised.

"That's Smithy!" said Miss Clara Trevlyn.

"The Bounder!" said Bessie Bunter, blinking at the Greyfriars junior, who had come in at the gate of Cliff House, through her big spectacles.

Herbert Vernon-Smith raised his cap politely.

"I came over to speak to you, Miss Hazeldene," he said.

"A message from my brother?" asked Marjorie.

"Not exactly. Hazel's been telling me about a photograph of a hockey team you've got in your study. Might I see it?"

Marjorie looked more and more surprised.

"I—I suppose so," she said. "But why—"

"From what Hazel says I think I know one of the people in it," explained the Bounder. "I'd like to see it for that reason, if I may."

"I shall have to ask Miss Bellew if you may go up to the study," said Marjorie.

"Would you mind?" said the Bounder. "I'd be ever so much obliged, Miss Hazeldene. I really wanted to see that photograph."

"Certainly! I will ask her at once," said Marjorie.

Miss Bellew, the Form-mistress of the Fourth, was standing at a little distance, in conversation with Miss Bullivant. Marjorie, surprised as she was, saw no reason to refuse the Bounder's request, and she went across to speak to her Form-mistress.

"I say, I don't know anybody in that photograph, except the Bull, Smithy!" said Bessie Bunter.

"Oh, the Bull's in it, is she?" asked Smithy. He had no doubt of what Hazel had told him, but he wanted complete confirmation.

"Oh, yes, though you'd hardly know her now from it!" grinned Bessie. "It was taken years and years ago, when she was young; she's frightfully old now. When I saw it first, I didn't believe it was the Bull. Only Marjorie said it was, and there's the name on it, too."

"The Bull isn't frightfully old, you little duffer!" said Clara. "She's thirty-six, I believe. But it's a jolly long time since that photograph was taken—twelve years at least. She was at a school called Ridings, at Brighton, at the time. I believe it was her first job—I mean post—ever so long ago. She played hockey there."

Marjorie came back.

"Miss Bullivant is going in, and she will take you up to the Fourth Form studies, if you like," she said.

"Lots of thanks!" said Smithy.

He crossed over to Miss Bullivant, who eyed him grimly. The games mistress of Cliff House, plainly, had not forgotten him. She remembered quite distinctly having laid her stick across Vernon-Smith's shoulders several weeks ago. So did the Bounder—very distinctly indeed. But his manner was as polite as he could make it as he raised his cap to the Bull.

"You wish to see a photograph in Marjorie Hazeldene's study?" asked the Bull abruptly.

"Yes, please, if I may!" said the Bounder meekly.

"I do not see why you should be interested in a photograph of a hockey team, taken at Brighton over twelve years ago," said Miss Bullivant. "However, if you wish to see it, come with me."

"Thank you so much!" said Smithy politely.

Miss Bullivant's reply was a sound resembling a grunt.

She was a lady of few words, even with people she liked, and she did not like Vernon-Smith.

But Smithy did not mind if she grunted, so long as she took him up to the study, and that Miss Bullivant proceeded to do.

In a couple of minutes Vernon-Smith was standing in Marjorie Hazeldene's study in the Fourth Form passage in Cliff House, his eyes fixed on a framed photograph on the wall.

His eyes almost devoured that photograph—fixing on a face; the face of a girl of about twenty-three, with strongly marked features; the face that he had seen in Skip's locket—that all the Remove fellows had seen.

It was the same face; there was not the slightest doubt about that. And, looking from the photograph on the wall to the games mistress standing in the

(Continued on page 26.)

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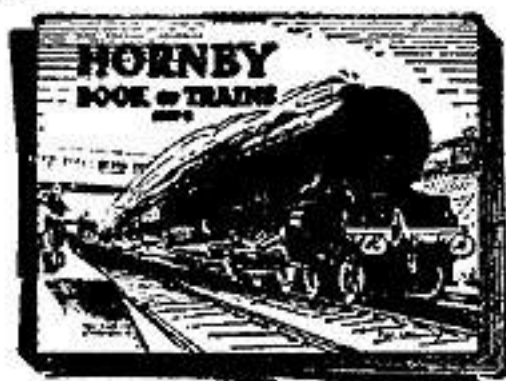
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study doorway. Smithy could trace the resemblance—different as the Bull looked at thirty-six.

"Well?" said Miss Bullivant, after the lapse of a minute. Her eyes were uncommonly sharp, and she had noticed that it was her pictured face in the group that drew the Bounder's concentrated attention. She was puzzled, and not pleased. "Well?" she repeated.

"That is your photograph, Miss Bullivant," said the Bounder.

"Mine is there, certainly." Miss Bullivant stared at him more grimly than ever. "That is not what you desired to see, I presume."

"It was," said Vernon-Smith. His eyes were gleaming.

There was no doubt now—no room for a shadow of doubt. Skip's photograph was that of the Cliff House games mistress. He knew that now, by evidence of his own eyes.

Only by one possible means could it, and the gold locket that contained it, have come into Skip's possession. He had robbed Miss Bullivant. That was how the pickpocket of Slummock's Alley had repaid her kindness.

"May I ask you, Miss Bullivant, whether you have lost a gold locket lately?" asked Vernon-Smith.

The Bull stared at him.

"No," she answered.

"Oh!" Smithy was a little taken aback. "Perhaps you have not missed it yet?"

"I do not understand you in the least," said Miss Bullivant coldly. "I have had no such article in my possession, and, therefore, cannot have missed it. What do you mean?"

The Bounder stared at her.

"You haven't—" he stammered.

"Not for a very long time, at all events!" said Miss Bullivant. "Twelve years ago I had—" She broke off. "What do you mean? Explain to me at once what you mean."

"A gold locket, with your photograph in it—the same photograph as that in the hockey team—" stammered the Bounder. "It must have been yours—at least, I suppose it must."

He broke off, in sheer amazement.

Miss Bullivant, who looked like a rock for strength and rigidity, the games mistress who was as hard as nails, who had marched Barney the Binger to the police station as efficiently as any constable, tottered!

Under the Bounder's amazed eyes she tottered in the study doorway, and her hard, tanned face became quite white.

She caught at the doorpost for support.

The Bounder, dumbfounded, stared, his eyes almost popping from his head. He could not begin to understand.

But that spasm of weakness lasted only a moment. Miss Bullivant straightened up again. She made a stride into the study and caught the astounded Bounder by the shoulder. He gave a yell of pain in her grip. It seemed to him as if the bones would crack.

"What do you mean?" Her voice came husky, but sharp, almost threatening. "Tell me instantly! You have seen a gold locket, with my photograph in it—taken at the same age as in the hockey team?"

"Yes," gasped the Bounder helplessly.

"A small, plain gold locket, less than an inch in diameter, oval in shape, with a small ring, for a ribbon?"

"Yes," gasped Vernon-Smith.

"That's it. It must be yours, or you couldn't describe it like that."

"Where have you seen it?" thundered Miss Bullivant.

"Let go—"

"Where have you seen it?"

"At Greyfriars!" gasped the Bounder. "I came over to tell you, after I'd made sure it was yours. I knew he must have stolen it from you and—"

"He—who?"

"That pickpocket in my Form at Greyfriars—Skip!"

"Skip!"

"Yes, Skip—he's got it!"

"Skip! Impossible! How did he obtain it? How does he say he obtained it?"

"He makes out that he always had it, but I jolly well knew—"

"He says he always had it!"

"Yes; but as it's got your photograph in it, I knew, of course, that he must have got it since he came here and—"

"Fool!"

"Wha-at?" gasped the Bounder.

"Richard—Dicky! Is it possible?" gasped the Bull. "Can it be possible? I thought I had seen his face! I even asked him if he had ever been at Brighton. Oh, can it be possible?"

She released her grasp on the Bounder's shoulder. Taking no further notice of the astounded junior, she turned and hurried away.

"Mad!" gasped Smithy. "Mad as a hatter! Oh crumbs!"

He wriggled—his shoulder still feeling the Bull's iron grip. He followed Miss Bullivant down the stairs, but she was out of sight when he emerged from the house.

Bessie Bunter rolled up to him, blinking curiously through her spectacles.

"I say, what's the matter with the Bull?" squeaked Bessie. "She's just rushed out and gone off on her bike, like a runaway car. What's up?"

"Blessed if I know," said the Bounder, "unless she's gone off her rocker!"

He hurried down to the gate for his own bike. Far in the distance he had a glimpse of Miss Bullivant—going like steam.

Her bicycle fairly flew. She was going in the direction of Greyfriars School—and the Bounder, as he followed, could only conclude that she was going after that locket—evidently hers, or how could she have described it? What her excitement and strange exclamations had meant, the Bounder could not begin to understand; but it seemed that she was, after all, the owner of that locket, and that she had gone off to Greyfriars to see about it.

So, amazed and perplexed as he was, Smithy had little doubt—or, rather, none—of what he would hear when he got back to Greyfriars.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Skip's Sister!

"SKIP!"

The waif of the Fourth looked round as Billy Bunter squeaked his name. He was watching the Form match on Little Side. Smithy, after all, had stood out of the game, and Frank Nugent was playing in his place. A good many Remove fellows were watching, Skip among them,

when the fat Owl of the Remove rolled down to the football ground and squeaked his name.

"Whatcher want, fat'ead?" inquired Skip.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Quelch wants you in his study," he answered. "He sent me to call you. I say, I fancy it's a licking! He looked fearfully solemn. The Bull's with him!"

"Who?" asked Skip.

"Old Bullivant—that hefty old sketch from Cliff House; and, I say—Beast!" roared Bunter. "Leggo my nose, you beast! Wharrer you pulling my nose for, you rotter? Yarrooh!"

Skip, having stayed a moment to pull Bunter's little fat nose, as a reward for his unflattering description of the Bull, cut off towards the House.

"Beast!" roared Bunter, rubbing his nose. "I hope you'll get six! I hope you'll get a dozen! Yah! Beast!"

Unheeding the indignant fat Owl, Skip hurried to the House.

He wondered what was wanted; but he was glad to see Miss Bullivant. He had a great liking and respect for that strenuous lady. It could hardly be a licking, as Bunter charitably hoped, if Miss Bullivant was present.

He tapped at Mr. Quelch's study door and entered.

Mr. Quelch was not looking exactly solemn, as Bunter had stated. But his expression was very serious; and there was, at the same time, a spot of something almost like excitement in his look.

There was more than a spot of excitement in Miss Bullivant's usually calm and composed face. Her eyes were shining, and she was breathing very quickly. She rose quickly to her feet as Skip entered.

It was clear to Skip at a glance that there was something very unusual in the atmosphere, though he could not begin to guess what it was.

"Ah! Here is the boy!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yessir!" said Skip. "Good-afternoon, miss!" he added, with a duck of his head to the Cliff House games mistress.

Her eyes were fixed on him intently. She seemed to be searching the features of the surprised junior.

"Oh! Is it possible?" she breathed. "Can it be possible? He would be about the same age. How old are you, Skip?"

"I dunno exactly, miss!" stammered Skip, astounded by the question. "I think about fifteen, miss."

"He would be fourteen and eleven months!" said Miss Bullivant. "Oh, if this should prove to be possible!"

"It appears to me, Miss Bullivant, from what you have told me, not only possible, but probable!" said Mr. Quelch. "But I hope that we may be able to ascertain beyond doubt. Skip, I understand that you have little or no recollection of your early childhood?"

"No, sir," said Skip, more and more astonished.

Why he was being questioned on that subject, in the presence of the Cliff House games mistress, he could not imagine.

"You do not remember having lived by the sea?" asked Miss Bullivant.

"No, miss."

"You remember nothing of Brighton—of having lived in a school there?"

"No, miss!" Skip wrinkled his brows. "Sometimes I seem to sort of

remember a school, with a lot of little boys and girls, but I don't get it clear at all. I s'pose I never was at school where there was boys and girls—little kids, miss."

"He remembers!" gasped Miss Bullivant. "Yes, Skip, if what I think—what I believe—is true, you were at a school with little boys and girls when you were a small child, too young to remember anything clearly."

"Oh, miss!" exclaimed Skip.

"My dear boy," said Mr. Quelch, in a very kind voice, "it appears possible that your name and relatives may be traced—"

Skip gasped.

"Oh, sir!" he exclaimed, and his eyes danced. "I say, that would be prime, sir! Of course, I've always knowed that my name wasn't Skip. It couldn't be! I was jest called Skip, in Slummock's Alley, 'cause I never 'ad no name. If Barney knowed it, he never let on."

"Barney?" repeated Miss Bullivant.

"That was the name of the bad-hearted man in whose hands Skip passed his earliest years, Miss Bullivant," said the Remove master. "A bad, unscrupulous man, who trained him in dishonest ways—"

Miss Bullivant gave a little shiver.

"Ways," went on Mr. Quelch, "which I am glad to assure you, Skip abandoned at the earliest opportunity. No change could be more complete, Miss Bullivant. Since he has been a Greyfriars boy, Skip has been above reproach in every way. I am sorry to say that suspicion has fallen upon him, owing to his unfortunate past; but on each occasion, it has been cleared away—leaving the boy absolutely without a stain on his character. I have as high an opinion of him now, Miss Bullivant, as of any boy in my Form."

He turned to Skip again.

"My boy, you must not, for the moment, hope too much—but it certainly appears to me that this lady has found a clue to your name and parentage," he said.

"Oh, sir!" murmured Skip.

"Kindly hand me that locket," said Mr. Quelch. "The one that was examined by me a few days ago."

Skip crimsoned.

"It's mine, sir!" he stammered. "On my davy, sir, I told you the truth about it. I've 'ad it ever since I can remember, sir. Old Sal told me it was on a ribbon round my neck when I come into 'er 'ands, sir, and me a little kid knowing nothing about it, sir. She took care of it for me, she did, till I was old enough to stick to it, and see that Barney never got 'old of it. He'd have had it for the drink, if he'd knowed it. Oh, sir, you wouldn't let that lady think as 'ow I'd pinched it!"

Skip's voice broke. He made a step towards Miss Bullivant.

"I never did pinch it, miss!" he panted. "Don't you go for to believe that it ain't mine! Some of the blokes think I must 'ave got it since I come 'ere, because they think they seen the face in it before, though they can't say who it is. But it ain't so, miss—I've always had it."

"I know—I know!" said Miss Bullivant. "I am sure of it, Skip!"

"If you believe me, miss, that's all right!" said Skip, fumbling in his pocket. "I don't mind you seeing it, miss. 'Ere it is."

He produced the locket, and laid it on the table.

Mr. Quelch picked it up, and snapped it open. He glanced at the photograph within, and then at Miss Bullivant's

face, and gave a nod. Then, in silence, he handed it to the Cliff House games mistress.

She took it in a trembling hand, and fastened her eyes on the pictured face—her own face of youthful days.

For a long moment she gazed at it; then she examined the locket carefully.

"It is the same!" she said.

"There is no doubt?"

"None! This locket was given me when I was a child. The photograph was taken when I was twenty-three, in my first post, at Ridings School, at Brighton. I myself put it on the ribbon round my little brother's neck, all those years ago."

Skip stood very still.

"Yourn?" he said, in a faint voice. "Oh, miss, don't you go for to think so. If you think me a pincher, miss, I—"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant. "You don't understand, my dear boy. This is my photograph—I have others exactly like it. The locket was mine, many years ago, before I gave it to you—"

Skip jumped.

"You—you—you give it to me, miss?" he stuttered. "But I ain't never seen you afore, miss, afore I come 'ere a few weeks ago, miss—and—and I've 'ad that there locket all my life, like I told you."

"And you have no recollection of an elder sister, who cared for you many years ago?" asked Miss Bullivant.

"N-n-no, miss. Barney let on that I had a sister, when he was tipsy sometimes, but I never knowed."

"My dear, dear boy!" said Miss Bullivant. "You were the child to whom I gave this locket many years ago, though you do not remember it. Listen to me, my dear. Nearly twelve years ago, a wretch—a dastard, named Crake—whom I had caused to be sent to prison for robbery—stole my little brother Dicky—and you are that brother!"

Skip staggered.

"Me!" he gasped. "Oh, smoky 'addocks!"

"You!"

"Oh, miss!" panted Skip.

"I almost knew you, when I saw you," said Miss Bullivant. "But I never dreamed. And if I had not changed so much in all these years, you would have known me from that photograph. Thank Heaven that boy Vernon-Smith came to Cliff House to-day—I fear his motives were not good, but he has caused me the greatest happiness of my life!"

"Oh, miss!" said Skip, feeling as if his head were turning round. "You the sister what Barney let on about?"

"Yes, yes, my dear! Your name is Richard Bullivant. There is no doubt now—none!"

"There can be little," said Mr. Quelch, in a moved voice. "Fortunately, the man Crake is now in the hands of the police, and he may be made to confess. Do you remember a man named Crake, Skip?"

"Don't I just, sir!" said Skip. "I ain't likely to forget Barney the Binger!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The wretch you call Barney—"

"He had a good many names, sir, one time and another," said Skip. "Crake was one of them, but he was always called Barney the Binger in our alley. You called him Crake, miss, when you took him up the other day—that bloke was Barney the Binger."

"The same man!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant. "That man was Crake! That is proof positive!"

"Indeed, it seems so!" said Mr. Quelch. "Skip, I am glad—more glad than I can say—that this discovery has been made. Your name here, from to-day, will be entered on the Form list as Richard Bullivant. That is your wish, Miss Bullivant?"

"Most certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

"I have to see the headmaster, if you will excuse me," he remarked. And the tactful master of the Remove left the study—leaving the brother and sister together.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the School!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Come into a fortune, Skip?"

Skip chuckled.

"Yes!" he answered.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come in from the changing-room after the football match, and they found Skip waiting for them. They found him with a look on his face that, for brightness, was like the summer sun at noonday.

"What's happened, old chap?" asked Harry Wharton. "Something good, I should say, from your jolly old chivvy."

"What do you think?" chuckled Skip.

"I say, did the Bull tip you, old chap?" asked Billy Bunter eagerly. Bunter was on the trail of the Famous Five—and tea. But he transferred his attention to Skip now. "I say, I saw her when she went away—she looked fearfully good-tempered. Never seen her crusty old chivvy look so jolly good-tempered before—keep off, you silly ass—I mean, her pretty face—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see why she should tip you, but if she has—" continued Bunter, blinking inquiringly at Skip through his big spectacles.

"You fat idjit!" grunted Skip. "I'd jolly well boot you, if I wasn't so jolly 'appy! Let me 'ear you saying anything about my sister agin!"

"Your whatter?" yelled Bunter.

"Your which?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Skip, old man, what the thump—" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five gazed at Skip in sheer wonder. For the moment, they really wondered whether he was wandering in his mind.

"I've found 'er!" grinned Skip.

"Found who?" gasped Nugent.

"That lady in the locket!" roared Skip jubilantly. "See? I knowed it was some relation of mine—I knowed it—and now I've found 'er! See? Smithy done it for me!"

"Smithy!" gasped the five.

Skip chortled.

"Jest Smithy! He never knowed, but he done it! He found out somehow that that lady in the locket was Miss Bullivant—"

"Great pip!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's it, is it? I knew I'd seen the face somewhere before—changed, of course?"

"That's it!" chuckled Skip. "That's abso-blooming-lootly it! See? 'Ow Smithy found it out, I dunno—he's a card, he is, finding things out—but, thank goodness he did! He goes over to Cliff House, thinking that there locket belonged to Miss Bullivant—I mean, my sister Amelia—thinking it was 'ers—see? Thinking she would come over 'ere arter it and show me up for 'aving pinched it from 'er—"

Skip went off into a roar of laughter.

That unexpected outcome of the Bounder's detective work was fortunate—but it had its comic side! Skip yelled with merriment, while the Famous Five stared at him blankly.

"But—" gasped Johnny Bull. "My esteemed and absurd Skip—" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What the ridiculous thump—"

"Don't you see?" chortled Skip. "Smithy fancied I'd pinched it off 'er, as it was her photograph, like he found out somehow—but as soon as Miss Bullivant 'eard what he had to say, 'course she was on it like a bird—she's been jest longing, for donkey's years, to 'ear of a bloke about my age what had that locket with her picture in it—"

"Oh!" gasped the Co. "So she knowed, and she come over 'ere, see? Not to nail me for pinching that there locket, as Smithy thought—Ha, ha! No fear! She knowed who I was then, and she come over to see her brother Richard."

"Oh, my hat!" "Smithy pulled the strings all right—but he never knowed what was going to come out of the box!" chuckled Skip. "I'm going to tell Smithy 'ow much obliged I am to 'im! He done me a good turn, he has!"

"Well, jolly old wonders will never cease!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Mean to say that that sister you've talked about is Miss Bullivant—"

"Jest that—and a better sister nor that lady no bloke could 'ave!" said Skip. "I liked her when I fust see 'er, too! I knowed she was a good sort—and now I know she's my sister Amelia, what I ain't seen since I was a small nipper. I say, ain't it glorious?"

"The gloryfulness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Skip, old man—" "Bullivant, if you please!" said Skip. "You can cut out the Skip! Skip's a back number now! Richard Bullivant—that's me!"

"Well, that will want some getting used to!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Gratters, old bean—tons of them!"

"I say, you fellows—" "Shut up, Bunter!"

"But, I say, what about tea? I'm jolly glad about Skip—I mean Bullivant—but I'm hungry—"

"Come on, old chap!" said Harry, slipping his arm through Richard Bullivant's. "Tell us all about it in the study."

Skip almost danced up to the Remove passage with the Famous Five.

Lord Mauleverer met him on the landing with a cheery grin.

"I say, Skip, I hear—" "Bullivant, old man!" said Skip. "Mind calling me Bullivant? It 'appens to be my name."

"Pleased!" grinned Mauly. "So what I've heard is right? Tons of gratters, Skip—I mean, Bullivant!"

Lord Mauleverer joined the merry tea-party in Study No. 1. There were many chuckles over Smithy's unexpected and inadvertent part in bringing about the happy discovery of Skip's real name and identity.

"You owe the old Bounder a lot, Skip—I mean Elephant—that is to say, Bullivant!" chuckled Lord Mauleverer. "Don't I?" grinned Skip. Then his

face became grave. "I owe you more'n any other bloke, Mauly! What'd I feel like now if I 'adn't chucked the pinching? What'd Amelia think of me? And it was you more'n anybody else what did it, Mauly. These blokes, too, but you, most of all!"

"I say, you fellows—" "Shut up, Bunter!"

"But, I say, here comes Smithy!" "Oh! Good old Smithy!" chortled Bob Cherry.

All eyes turned on the study doorway. The Bounder stood there, staring into the study. His face was quite perplexed.

He had passed Miss Bullivant, on her way back to Cliff House, as he returned to Greyfriars; but he had learned nothing from her—receiving, in fact, only a glare from the Bull as she passed. He arrived at Greyfriars in a state of doubt, wondering what had happened. Looking into Study No. 1 at a crowd of bright and merry faces, Skip's the brightest of all, he had to realise that Miss Bullivant's visit had not meant disaster for the waif of the Remove.

"Trot in, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Give Bullivant your congratulations!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I got to thank you, Smithy!" said Skip, grinning from ear to ear. "I got to tell you 'ow much I am obliged to you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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The Bounder scowled at him. "Miss Bullivant's been here?" he asked.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Did she claim her locket?" snapped the Bounder.

"She knowed it was 'ers!" chortled Skip. "That's what I'm thanking you for, Smithy. She might never 'ave knowed, if you hadn't gone over and told her. You done the best turn of your life, Smithy!"

"I suppose Skip's going to be sacked for it!" snarled the puzzled Bounder.

"Does he look like it?" grinned Bob.

"But don't call him Skip any more, Smithy—he doesn't like it now! Call him Bullivant!"

"What?" "Meet Bullivant of the Remove!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly idiot!" yelled the Bounder. "What do you mean? Who's Bullivant?"

"I am!" grinned Skip. "Jest me! Miss Bullivant's brother Richard, and it's you that's found it out for me, Smithy! Thanks!"

The Bounder stared at him, petrified.

"Honest Injun, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Best day's work you ever did in your life, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Come in and join the celebration,

Smithy! You're the cause of the jolly old rejoicing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder slammed the door. It opened again a few minutes later, to reveal the astonished face of Horace Coker of the Fifth.

Coker stared at Skip.

"What's this I hear?" he demanded.

"Is that a riddle?"

"Don't be cheeky; look here, Skip, is—"

"Bullivant, if you please!" said Skip. "Don't you call a bloke out of his name, Coker!"

"Then—it's true!" gasped Coker.

"Well, I'm jolly glad, kid! I was going to thrash you for your cheeky letter to my Aunt Judy. Of course, I shouldn't have allowed you to do anything of the sort. Still, if you've got relations, after all, to look after you, you're off my hands. That's all right; I won't thrash you, Skip—"

"Bullivant!" insisted Skip.

"I won't thrash you," said Coker generously. "But I'll give you a word of advice! Don't go pinching any more, and—Oooooooch!"

Two jam tarts, a cream puff, a pat of butter, and half a loaf of bread, landed on Coker's features all at once. He disappeared from the doorway with his advice unfinished. Bob Cherry slammed the door after him.

BULLIVANT of the Remove was the cynosure of all eyes at Greyfriars for some days afterwards.

Fellows still called him Skip from force of habit; but every time he was called Skip, he pointed out that his name was Bullivant.

But after a few more days, neither Skip nor Bullivant was known any longer at Greyfriars. Miss Bullivant—now once more in charge of her young brother, so long missing—had decided to place him in new surroundings, where his past history was unknown—and, reluctant as his friends were to part with him, and Skip with them, they all agreed that it was a wise move.

A host of friends saw him off when he went—and among them was Herbert Vernon-Smith. During those days, the Bounder had been thinking matters over to some purpose—and it had dawned on him, at long last, that he was not right and everybody else wrong—but that everybody else was right, and he was wrong. And the day Skip went, Smithy owned up to it.

"Sorry, old man" he said shamefacedly. "I've been rather a beast to you—forget all about it."

"'Course I will," said Skip, cheerfully. "All I'm going to remember is that you found my sister for me, and found me for her—and made me the 'appiest bloke in the jolly old world, Smithy!"

And—utterly unexpected as the outcome had been—Smithy was glad that he had pulled the strings!

THE END.

(Like a good laugh, chums? Then look out for: "BUNTER'S ORDERS!" in next Saturday's 32-page issue of the MAGNET. It's one of Frank Richards' funniest yarns. The wise "Magnetite" will order his copy today!)

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THE BITER BIT!

Last laughable instalment of Dicky Nugent's

great serial:

"THE ST. SAM'S AMBULANCE!"

DE-COKING THE HEAD!

Honk! Honk! Honk!
Clang! Clang! Clang!

The St. Sam's Ambulance roared deftly on route for the Skool House, with its alarm-bell ringing and its horn honking feverishly.

The fellows who happened to be in its path scattered madly in all directions, as it tore across the quad.

"Another accident!" was the cry on a hundred lips. "Yet another unforchunit chap has copped it!"

Then there was another cry, as the crowd reckoned Sir Frederick Funguss at the driving wheel.

"Grate pip! Look who's driving!"

"What the dickens is old Funguss doing in charge of the ambulance?"

"The old buffer's accident must have affected his brain," said Burleigh, nitting his brows thoughtfully, as he watched the ambulance careering up to the Skool House steps on which he was standing.

"After the way the Head made him pay for the services of the ambulance, I should have thought Funguss would have had enuff of the ambulance to last him a lifetime. But instead of that he has made himself President of the Corps—and now he's driving the blessed ambulance!"

"Who's hurt, I wonder?" asked Tallboy, as the ambulance came to a stop at the foot of the steps.

That question was soon answered when Jolly, Merry, Bright and Fearless came dashing out of the House.

"This way, sir!" they cried. "The Head's in a simply awful mess. He's badly in need of the ambulance."

"What has happened to him, kid?" asked Burleigh, as Sir

Frederick helped the Fourth Formers to get out the stretcher.

"He's had a pail upset over his napper, Burleigh," grinned the kaptn of the Fourth.

"My hat! Was there anything in the pail?"

"Yes, rather! Ink, and soot and paint and whitewash and glue!"

"Grate soot! Where was it?"

"Please, Burleigh, it was over his study door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Burleigh and Tallboy.

Leaving the two Sixth Formers nearly busting their sides with laughter, Jack Jolly & Co. went back



into the Skool House at the duble, bearing the stretcher between them.

Sir Frederick Funguss brought up in the rear, his monocle gleaming and his face fairly beaming. Behind him streamed a grate crowd of St. Sam's fellows, all agog with eggstement at the news.

Nobody bore Doctor Birchmall any ill-will. But they couldn't help laughing over what had happened. For weeks and weeks the Head had been profiteering out of the amazing epidemic of accidents

that had happened in the skool. Now Nemmysis had overtaken him and he needed the ambulance himself. There was a sort of poetick justiss about it that tickled the juniors immensely.

The crowd simply gasped when at last they reached Doctor Birchmall. They had never seen a yewman being in a sorrier plite. The garstly mixture from the booby-trap over his door hung over him like a Paul. The more he struggled to free himself from it, the worse he became.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the crowd, when they had got over their first shock of surprize.

That howl of laughter seemed to infewriate the Head. He seemed to be tying himself into notts in his efforts to rid

himself of his burden. He tried to bawl out a fewrious order; but the glue in the mixture prevented him opening his mouth very wide, and he only succeeded in uttering a series of meaningless sounds.

"Mmmmmmmmm! Gug-gug-groooo! Mmmmmmmmm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! You have propably copped it, my deah fellow!" chuckled Sir Frederick Funguss, in his refined voice. "But don't worry, the St. Sam's Ambulance

faddy over clean cups and plates. It will also have to state that he respects the feelings of his fag—too much, for instance, to compare the fag's nicely browned toast with cinders like some of the cheeky old buffers do!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Woe betide the fagmaster of the future who tries to secure a fag without providing himself with a reference!" said Tubb, darkly. "He'll be spurned by every self-respecting fag—laughed at, in fact!"

"FA-AG!" came a yell from outside the door at that moment. "Tubb, you young sweep, come here at once and make me some toast! And if it's anything like the cindery stuff you made yesterday, you'll get a taste of my ashpant!"

Tubb dumped his frying-pan.

"Loder again, blow him!" he growled. "Guard my sosses while I'm gone, you chaps!"

Then Tubb flew to obey the bidding of his fagmaster.

Apparently his bright schemes for reforming the fagging system are reserved for the far distant future!

Corps is here. Lie down, the stretchah, deah man!"

If that order had come from anyone but Sir Frederick, Doctor Birchmall would not have taken it lying down. But he could hardly stand up to the chairman of the St. Sam's guvvernors; so he stretched out on the stretchah instead.

On the word of command from Sir Frederick, the four stretchah-bearers lifted up the disabled headmaster. Then they bore him down to the ambulance.

Grately to the Fourth Formers' surprize, Sir Frederick drove back to the garage instead of to the sannytorium. But there was method in the baronet's madness.

"It's a much bettah place than the sannytorium for cleanin' jobs, ahtah all," he said. "People de-coke their cahs heah; so why should we not use the place for de-cokin' Doctor Birchmall?"

Jack Jolly & Co. quite agree. They soon proceeded to de-coke the Head.

First, they put on old overalls. Then they deposited the Head on the floor and set about overhauing him.

Often in the past Doctor Birchmall had pored cold water on their ideas. Now they poured hot water on Doctor Birchmall. After that they made an onslaught with scrubbing brushes—causing the Head to bristle with rage!

Yells of pane arose from Doctor Birchmall, as they scrubbed away at him; but the chums of the Fourth carried on regardless, until evenhally he was freed from the last traces of that garstly booby-trap.

The Head then staggered off to his house for a change of clothing and a viggerous towelling in the privacy of his bedroom. And Jack Jolly & Co. bade Sir Frederick au revoir and galloped away rejoicing, leaving the St. Sam's Ambulance to look after itself.

WELL DONE, FUNGUS!

NOTISS.

All members of the St. Sam's Ambulance Corps are ordered to assemble in the Fourth Form room immediately after dinner to-day to hear an important annoucement.—(Sined)

ALFRED BIRCHMALL,
Headmaster.

That notiss, posted up at the board in Hall on the following morning, attracted a lot of strasshun at St. Sam's. There was keen speculation amongst the first-aid squad as to the natchor of the annoucement that the Head was going to make.

The general opinion was that Doctor Birchmall had the wind up over something. But when he

marched into the meeting, he looked quite bright and breezy.

"Boys!" he cried. "I have called you together on this suspishus occasion to hear some news that will cause you all intense greef. I have decided to disband the St. Sam's Ambulance Corps!"

"Grate pip!"

If the Head eggspected the fellows to display signs of intense greef over that annoucement, he must have been grately disappointed. Instead of looking sorry and sad, they all looked jolly and glad!

"Thank goodness for that, sir!" said Frank Fearless, frankly. "We haven't had a mimit to call our own since you started running the Corps!"

"Hear, hear!"

A slitley paned eggspression came into the Head's face.

"Really, boys, I'm serprized at you being so selfish over it!" he eggsclaimed. "You should be only too pleased at having been able to help suffering yewmanity. It's a grate pity you do not take an eggsample from me. Look at the munny I've pored out on it!"

"My hat! I like that, sir!" gasped Jack Jolly. "What about all those wacking grate fees you've charged our customers?"

Doctor Birchmall frowned.

"Well, Jolly, what about them? They have not repaid me a fraction of the vast sums I have lavvished on the Corps!"

"Eh?"

"Draw it mild, sir!"

"Anyway, even if I have made a slite profit, it duzzent repay me for all the time I have spent on ambulance bizzness in the last few weeks," said the Head, with a coff. "In actual fakt, boys, that eggsplains why I have decided to disband the Corps. I can no longer afford the time—let alone the munny!"

"Ye gods!"

"Chuck it, sir!"

"Do you know any more funny stories like that?"

"Why, you must have made a regular pile out of the cases we've had to deal with lately!"

The Head's complexion took on the hew of a ripe tomato.

"Silence!" he roared. "How dare you accuse me of profiteering out of people's misfortunes? If I only had my cash book I would show you that I have made a heavy loss. Unforchunitly, however, I seem to have lost it, and I—"

"Heah you are, my deah Birchmall!"

Doctor Birchmall broke off as the chairman of the St. Sam's Guvvernors stalked into the Form-room, wearing a pekuliar smile on his hawty face. He carried a well-

thumbed notebook in his gloved hand.

"I fanny this is the missin' cash book, deah man!" he chuckled. "It fell out of your pocket when you were bein' carried into the ambulance. I took the libahty of lookin' into it."

"D-d-did you, Sir Frederick?" stattered the Head.

"Yaaa, rathah! You seem to have done very well out of the Corps, from what I could make out of it. Up to this mornin' your profits are fifty-five pounds, five shillin's, an' fivepence!"

"Few!" wissed the members of the Ambulance Corps.

"Howevah, as the profits were all made befoah I became President of the Corps, it's no bizzness of mine," went on Sir Frederick,



grately to the Head's relceef.

"Heah's the book."

"Thanks awfully, Sir Frederick!" grinned the Head, sezzing the grimy notebook eagerly and transferring it swiftly to his trowsis pocket. "By the way, your houner, I suppose I should menshun now you're here that I have decided to disband the Corps."

The Head eyed Sir Frederick rather dowbiously out of his somewhat shifty eyes, wondering how he would take that annoucement. But, again to his relceef, the chairman of the Guvvernors raised no objection.

"Bai Jove! That's quite a good ideah!" he said. "Once the Ambulance Corps goes, there should be an end to this frightfully annoyin' epidemic of accidents you've been havin' heah lately!"

"Eggsactly, Sir Frederick!"

Then the Head started. "I—I mean, what do you mean—"

"Oh, nothin', my deah fellow—nothin' at all!" beemed Sir Frederick. "I wouldn't accuse you of goin' round the skool strewin' banana skins about an' openin' coal-holes for worlds—any more than I would accuse myself of gettin' the boys to fix up that booby-tr up in your study!"

"You—you never did that!" gasped Dr. Birchmall.

"Tutt-tutt! As if I should!" cried Sir Frederick. "I mite just as well ask you if you fixed up accident traps so as to encouridge bizzness for the Ambulance an' rake in the fees! Periah the thought, my deah fellow—an' proceed with the disbandin' of the Corps! There's only one thing left before you close the books!"

"W-w-what's that, Sir Frederick?" stattered the Head.

"Why, there's one outstandin' dett owin, to the Corps which you forgot to collect!" grinned Sir Frederick. "As President of the Corps, I have made out the bill myself! Heah it is!"

He handed over a slip of paper to Doctor Birchmall.

The Head looked at it and then his jaw dropped.

"Doctor A. Birchmall to the St. Sam's Ambulance Corps," he read. "Charge for professional servisses, including scrubbing and cleaning: FIFTY-FIVE POUNDS, FIVE SHILLINGS, AND FIVE-PENCE."

The bill fluttered to the ground from the Head's nerveless fingers. A groan burst from his lips. And from the lips of the St. Sam's ambulance workers came a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sir Frederick—ha, ha, ha!—has charged him up, the eggsact amount of his profits! Ho, ho, ho!"

Slowly and sadly the Head projected a wad of notes and a handful of silver and coppers from his pockets. Slowly and sadly he counted out the amount dew. And swiftly and gladly Sir Frederick accepted it.

"Thanks, my deah fellow!" he said. "It's all for a good cause. I shall refund the amounts you have taken from all the customers of the Corps from the beginnin'. An' now, boys, I declare the St. Sam's Ambulance Corps disbanded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Havin' done that, I have pleasah in invitin' you all ovah to the skool tuckshop for a little sallybration!" added Sir Frederick. "This way!"

He led the way out of the Form-room.

The cheering crowd followed him. They left the Head behind them—a pray to bitter and yewmiliating thoughts.

But nobody was serprized to find Doctor Birchmall sneaking cheerfully into the tuckshop five minuits later.

Ritter and yewmiliating thoughts never lasted long with the Head—and a jolly good feel was quite enuff to make him forget his disappointment at being forced to disgorge the ill-gotten gains he had made out of the St. Sam's Ambulance!

"SIMPLICITY" IS MAULY'S WATCHWORD!

Says TOM BROWN

Readers who have never been to Greyfriars are always writing in, asking for details of the fabulous luxury in which they seem to think our old pal Lord Mauleverer lives. I should like to correct their misapprehensions.

The general impression from what I can make out of it, is that Mauly goes about like a giddy

Eastern potentate and that his study is a kind of Aladdin's Cave.

Such, I assure you, dear readers, is not the case.

Dear old Mauly is a most unassuming chap. He simply detests luxury in any shape or form. His watchword is always "Simplicity."

He never dreams of wearing his scarlet and ermine robes and coronet at school. He is quite satisfied with a neat and unobtrusive lounge suit costing a mere eighteen guineas.

Ho could, if he wished, wear diamond rings on all his fingers, costly jewelled tiepins in his tie, and a diamond and platinum watch round his wrist. He does nothing of the kind. Just one finger-ring and a single diamond in his tie are all he allows himself in the way of jewellery, while his watch is an old-fashioned half-hunter that could not have cost more than fifty quid.

The note of simplicity which this modest young nobleman strikes in his personal adornment is found again in the furnishing of his study.

Those who visit him expecting to find their feet sinking into the thick, luxurious pile of a priceless carpet and their eyes dazzled by costly objects of art will be disappointed. Stark simplicity will confront them on all hands.

They will see a simple little Persian carpet, worth a mere hundred pounds and just a few plain, modern pieces in the way of chairs, table and so on, not worth more than four hundred the lot.

Yes, there's no doubt about it, dear readers, "simplicity" is the watchword where Mauly is concerned.

(Great pip!—Ed.)

Just Fancy!

Wibloy is an optimist. He expects to make a lot of money lending out fancy dresses for the Christmas season—and yet he has a notice on the board saying that his costumes are guaranteed to give anyone a fit!

WHY NOT REFERENCES FOR FAGMASTERS?

George Tubb's Bright Idea

I found Tubb of the Third (writes our Special Correspondent) frying sausages over the fire in his Form-room. He turned a frizzled and frowning face round to me as soon as he knew why I'd come.

"Yes, it's quite true that I advocated references for fagmasters in my speech to the Third last night!" he barked. "Why not?"

"If it comes to that, my dear young fellow," I retorted, blandly. "WHY?"

"Because it's jolly well time something was done for the protection of us fags!" said Tubb, fiercely. "We've had to take our fagmasters on trust too long. Why shouldn't we demand references from 'em before we fag for 'em?"

"Hear, hear!" roared the rest of the Third—equally fiercely.

"Right from the dawn of history," said Tubb dramatically, "we fags have had to put up with overworking, overhacking, and underfeeding!"

"Good old Tubb!"

"On the bawl, old bean!"

"Now the time has arrived when we should make a few conditions about this fagging stunt," said Tubb, giving a spluttering sausage a vicious jab with his pocket-knife. "First and foremost, we want a reference from every prospective fagmaster!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The reference will have to certify that the applicant is kind-hearted and generous—"

"Jolly good idea!"

"And that he strongly objects to using an ashpant, and that he's not