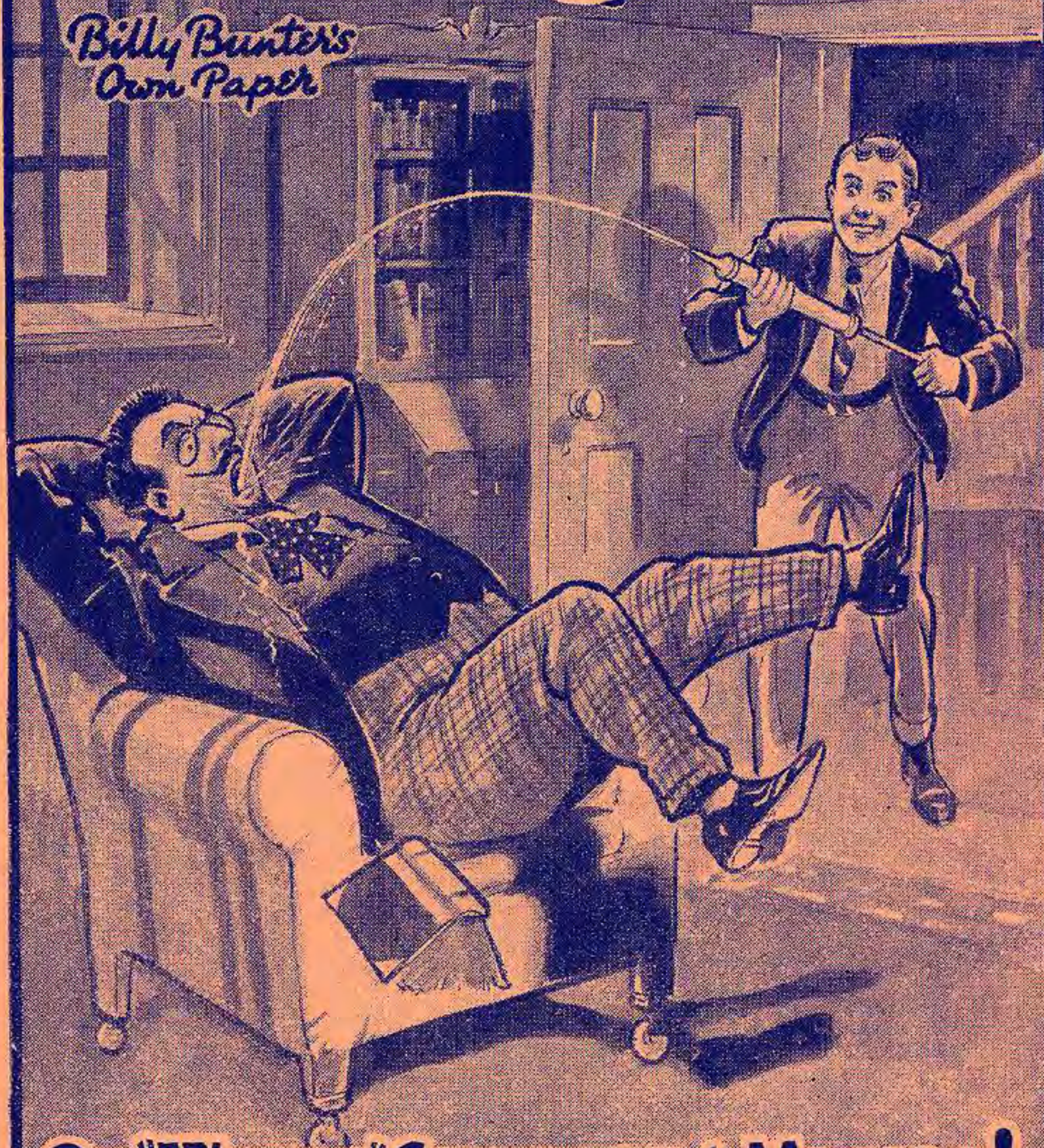


YOU CAN'T BEAT "MAGNET" FOR SCHOOL STORIES!

The Magnet^{2^D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



OH, "WATER" SURPRISE for Mossos!



YOU will all expect me to talk about music, and if you don't like music you'll be afraid I shall bore you stiff. It's all right. I won't say much about my music itself, but I do want to get rid of a few thoughts on the subject of Utter Vandalism and the Philistine Ignorance of the Masses.

Hacker comes under the first heading. He is not only a beast and a blighter, but he is also a vandal of the purest water. His chief delight is destroying works of art. Only last week I brought my "Fantasia and Fugue in C Sharp Minor" into the Form-room to put a few finishing touches to the "Allegro con Spirito" movement. It not only helps to take my mind off Latin, but the cadences and harmonies are much better when they are put in with the white heat of inspiration.

Well, I was just scoring the part for the french horns, klaxons, and sirens, when Hacker dropped on me and snarled:

"Hoskins, bring that stuff you are writing and put it on my desk!"

Now, if Hacker had been an ordinary, decent man who could admire and appreciate works of art, he would have glanced through my music and then cried: "Bless my soul! This is a perfectly new treatment of the diminished seventh. Hoskins, I can find no words to express my delight. I shall tell your headmaster that you are a credit to my Form, Hoskins—indeed, to all Greyfriars. Boys, let us give three cheers for Hoskins' diminished sevenths, and then we will adjourn to the music-room while he plays them to us."

But did Hacker say this? You will scarcely credit the fact, but he never noticed the diminished sevenths at all! Of course, he is a very ignorant man, without any refinement or taste, but wouldn't you have thought that even a nigger coal-heaver would have seen at once that the thing was pure genius? Hacker didn't, though.

"So you are wasting your time again, Hoskins!" That's what he said. Wasting my time, mark you! But the man's a fool! "You are writing this absurd and ineffable rubbish instead of attending to your work!"

"I hope, sir," I reminded him sternly, "that this music is of far more value than Latin. My treatment of diminished sevenths—"

"Silence!" roared Hacker. "Take two hundred lines, Hoskins. If I catch you writing any more of this nonsense, I shall punish you severely!" He then tore the masterpiece to shreds and stuffed it in the wastepaper-basket!

It was all I could do to restrain myself from leaping on him and biting him like a bulldog. The Goth? The Vandal! The Tartar! Let him wait. There may come a day when I shall show him up before the whole world for the soulless blighter that he is!

THE PHILISTINE IGNORANCE OF THE MASSES!

Not less maddening is the absolute idiocy of the masses—in other words, the Greyfriars fellows. My pal Hobson is about the only fellow who can appreciate music, and even he doesn't know a sonata from a Jew's harp. Still, he listens while I play my latest composition, and though he exposes his ignorance on the subject of en-harmonic modulations and cadenzas, he must be something of a musician to listen. (Or he may be merely something of a pal.—Ed.)

And yet, mark you, they will gather round and cheer when a fellow hits a cricket ball out of the ground. In the name of common sense, what is the good of hitting a bit of leather with a bit of wood? What good does it do? I don't dislike cricket—in fact, I play quite a good game—but I don't make it my life's work.

Do they ever stand round and cheer when I work out a perfect cadenza of triple fifths? Not a bit of it. They heave eggs and tomatoes. I have tried to explain to them, times without number, that I am elaborating Schonberg's theory of atonality, but even this does not move them.



No, it isn't Greek! Like all geniuses, Hoskins is absent-minded, and he appears to have sent me his blotting-paper instead of the drawing. However, I print some interesting extracts from it, and if you hold it to the mirror, you can read quite a bit of Hoskins' daily history

EDITOR.

I once took the trouble to explain to Cherry, of the Remove, that my "unearthly din" was an atonal improvement of a Bach Gigue, and all he did was to stuff the Bach Gigue down the back of my neck. This is not funny; it is tragic, it is un-nerving.

But every great genius has had to put up with the crass and beetlewitted

But the other fellows are hopeless. They yell to me to stop playing, they bring things to the music-room and throw them. I have, on more than one occasion, been egged and tomatoed. They describe my music as "an unearthly din," and they ask if my parents could find no vacancies in Homes for Idiots. They won't listen to the music—they just call it a din. Isn't that rich?

antagonism of the masses. I am not discouraged. I shall go forward. I shall achieve my destiny. One day these scoffers and vandals will say, in hushed and contrite tones: "The great Hoskins was at school with me!"

And I shall retort with scorn: "I do not wish to be reminded of it. Depart from hence!"

SOULFUL SONG.

I will now write a short song on this subject. I have set it to music, and will play it to any admirer who calls here and gives the password "Sforzando!" The song is chanted in the organum harmony with atonal accompaniment—if you wish to sing it.

I wrote a perfect Serenade
'Twas better far than Handel,
But Hacker seized it, I'm afraid—
Oh, Hacker, thou'rt a Vandal!
He gripped it, he ripped it,
He fluttered and flipped it,
He wrenched it as though he'd gone mad,
And thus he destroyed it,
He did—and enjoyed it!
The brute and the beast and the cad!

I wrote a perfect movement for
My great D Flat Sonata;
But Hacker seized the work once more—
Oh, Hacker, thou'rt a Tartar!
He clawed it, he pawed it,
He nuzzled and gnawed it,
Or that's what it seemed like, at least!
He seized it and burnt it
Before I had learnt it,
The cad and the brute and the beast!

I wrote a perfect Arabesque,
Much cleverer than Schumann,
But Hacker tore it from my desk—
Oh, Hacker, thou'rt inhuman!
He snatched it, he scratched it,
He doomed and despatched it,
He ground the thing under his boot.
He ripped it and screwed it,
He chopped it and chewed it,
The beast and the cad and the brute!

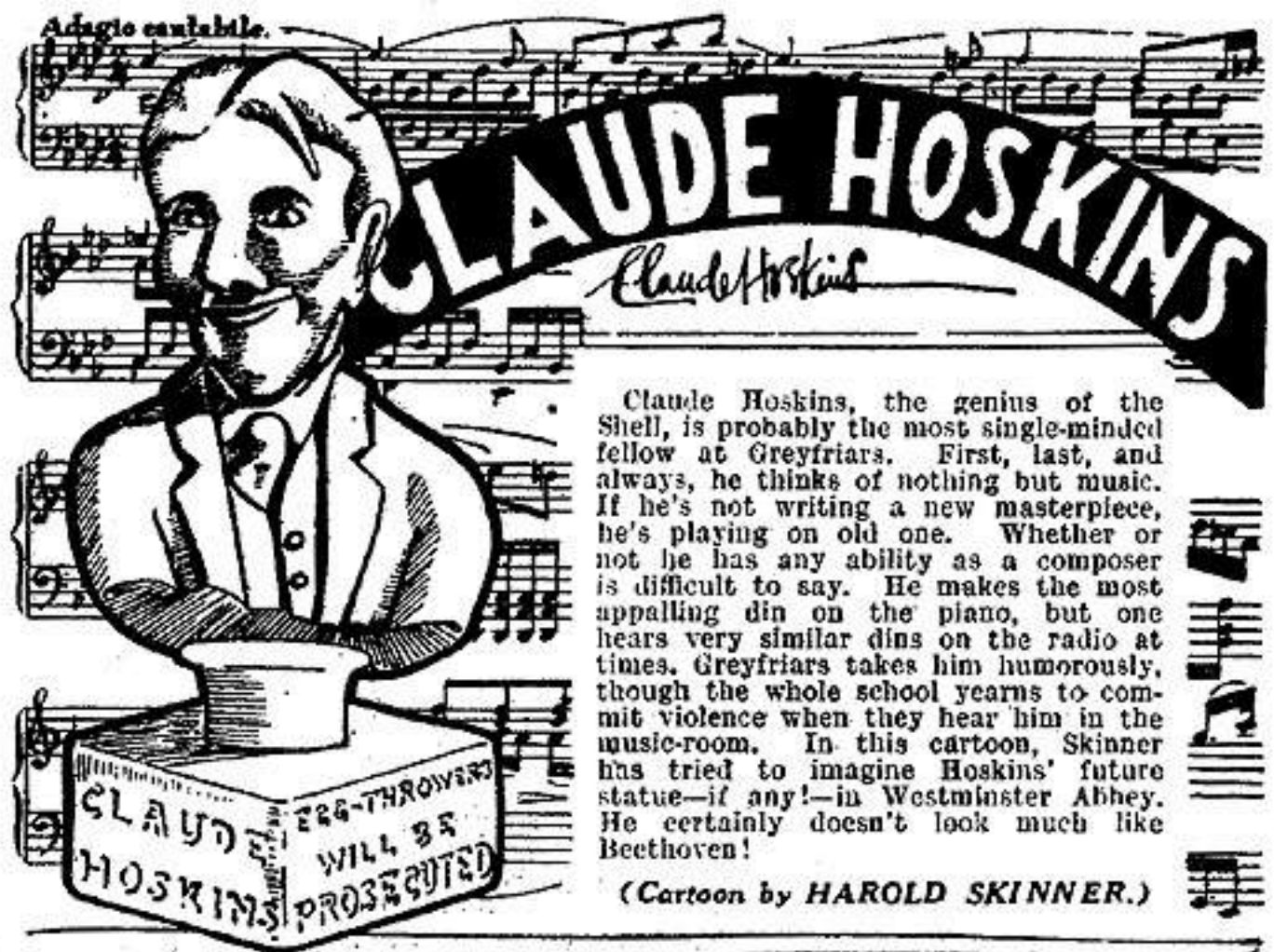
MUSINGS OF A MUSICIAN.

Frank Nugent knocked his young brother Dicky spinning the other day. It was a Romance in A Flat Minor.

It is better to B Sharp than A Flat. Sixteen Greyfriars fellows can play the piano, four can play the violin, two can play the concertina, one can play the cornet, and 115 can play the giddy goat.

When I was playing the piano the other day Bob Cherry said: "You can play all right with your fingers, but I once saw a baby play with his toes."

He said I reminded him of Bunter at a billiards table, because I play for hours without a break. The young idiot!

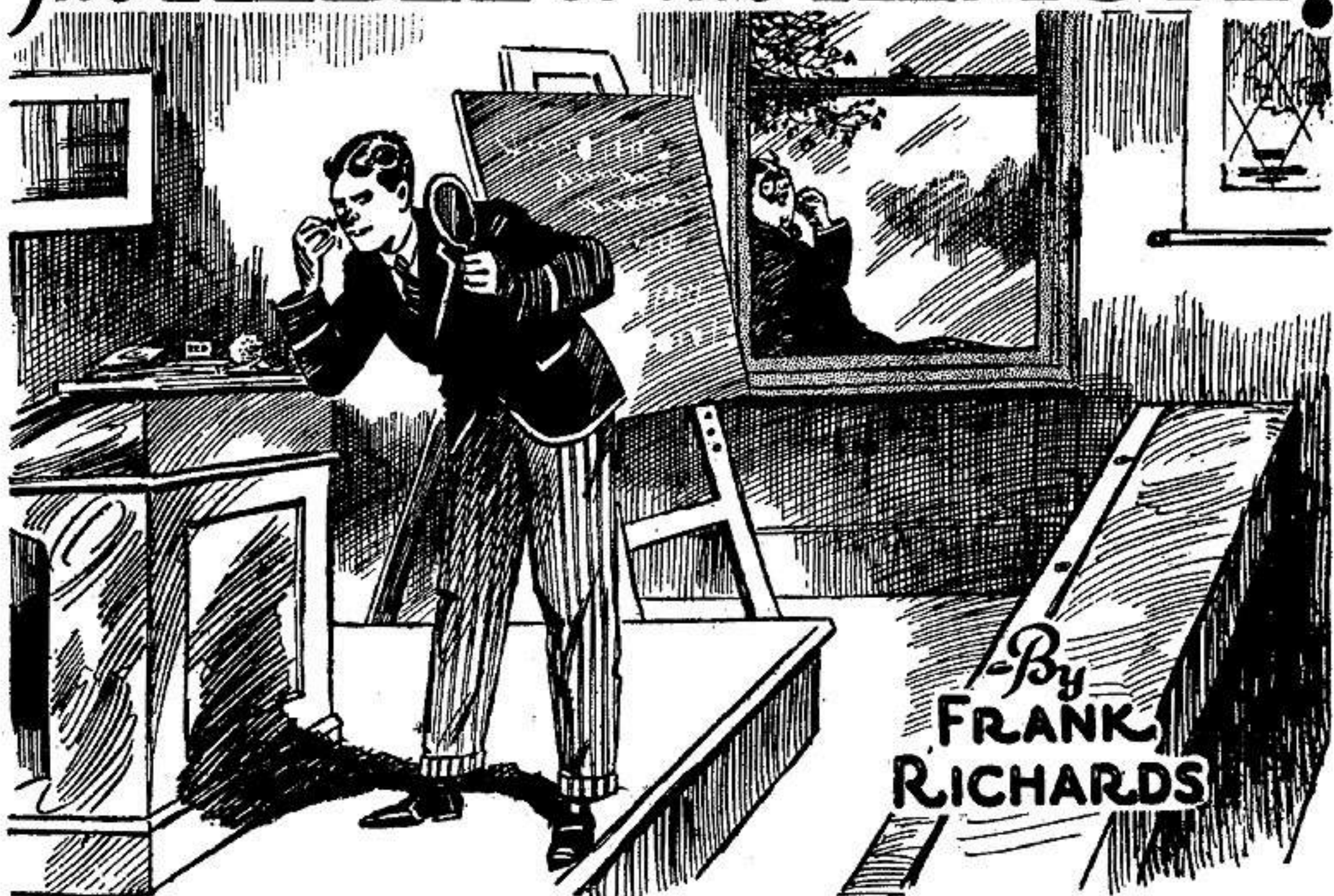


Claude Hoskins, the genius of the Shell, is probably the most single-minded fellow at Greyfriars. First, last, and always, he thinks of nothing but music. If he's not writing a new masterpiece, he's playing on old one. Whether or not he has any ability as a composer is difficult to say. He makes the most appalling din on the piano, but one hears very similar dins on the radio at times. Greyfriars takes him humorously, though the whole school yearns to commit violence when they hear him in the music-room. In this cartoon, Skinner has tried to imagine Hoskins' future statue—if any!—in Westminster Abbey. He certainly doesn't look much like Beethoven!

(Cartoon by HAROLD SKINNER.)

A FAMILY FEUD! Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove, is determined to drive his cousin and rival Bertie Vernon away from Greyfriars. But the task is much more difficult than it looks for—

The REBEL of the REMOVE!



From his seat on the window-sill, Billy Bunter watched Vernon-Smith smudge red ink on his nose, holding up a mirror in his left hand to watch progress.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Chuckling It!

"CHUCK that!" said Coker. Harry Wharton & Co., on the Remove landing at Greyfriars, glanced round at Coker of the Fifth—expressively.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, who had a cricket ball in his hand, glared at him. Coker waved a large hand at them—reprovingly.

"Chuck it at once!" he rapped. "You'll brain somebody if that ball goes over the banisters. Haven't you fags any sense? Just chuck it!"

Coker was right, so far as that went. The Remove landing, really, was no place for cricket. Had Mr. Queloh, the Remove master, or a Sixth Form prefect, come up, it would have been lines all round for the juniors.

But it had started to rain after class. The juniors were chancing it with beaks and prefects. Fifth Form men did not matter. Fifth Formers came and went on the staircase unregarded. And not a fellow on the Remove landing had the remotest idea of regarding Horace Coker any more than any other Fifth Former.

Half a dozen fellows answered Coker of the Fifth at once:

"Shut up, Coker!"

"Don't barge in!"

"Run away and play, Coker!"

"Get on with it, Smithy!"

"Hook it, Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth, thus told where

he got off, would have acted wisely in getting off where he was told! But wisdom was not Coker's long suit.

Coker came up the steps to the Remove landing, frowning.

"I said chuck it!" he rapped. "Vernon-Smith, if you bowl that ball across the landing I'll smack your head! Can't you fags keep something like order? Chuck it at once, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars looked at

A Sensational Complete School-Adventure Yarn of HARRY WHARTON & CO., the world-wide favourites of GREYFRIARS.

Coker, gripping the round red ball hard.

Smithy, who never liked taking orders, even from a beak, was about the last fellow at Greyfriars to take orders from a Fifth Form man.

"Look here, Coker, don't butt in!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Get out, Coker, you ass!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Boot him off the landing!" said Harry Wharton.

"Hold on!" said Vernon-Smith, with

a wicked gleam in his eye. "Did you tell me to chuck it, Coker?"

"I did!" rapped Coker sternly.

"You really want me to chuck it?"

"I've told you to!"

"All right, then!" said the Bounder. "Here goes!"

And he chucked it—in a way that Coker of the Fifth did not in the least expect, though really he might have expected it.

Bang!

The cricket ball landed on Coker's waistcoat!

It banged like a mallet!

"Ooooh!" gasped Coker, as his supply of wind departed from him, knocked out by the impact on his waistcoat.

Coker gasped and tottered backwards. There were only three steps up from the study landing to the Remove landing! They were quite enough for Coker when he did them in one!

Bump!

Coker of the Fifth landed down those steps on his back. His long legs thrashed the air.

"Smithy!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Coker had asked for it, of course. He had begged for it. But it was rather tough on Coker, all the same. Smithy was not a man for half-measures.

"Man down!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh!" gurgled Coker on the

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study landing on his back. "Oooogh! Oooow! Ooooooooooh!"

He sat up.

A dozen grinning faces looked down at him.

"Come up again, Coker!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Do come up again, Coker!" grinned Frank Nugent.

Smithy fielded the ball.

"Let's get on!" he said. "Coker can sit there and watch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh!" moaned Horace Coker. He staggered to his feet, with both hands pressed to his waistcoat. "Wooogh! You wait a minute—Oooogh! I'll smash you—Groogh! Owl! I'm winded! Wooogh!"

Coker gurgled for breath.

Still gurgling, he came up the steps to the Remove landing and headed for Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Smithy, about to bowl, stopped. He turned to Coker, the ball in his hand and his eyes glinting.

"Stand clear, you fellows!" he said. "I'll let him have it on his boko this time!"

"Chuck it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "I mean don't chuck it! 'Nuff's as good as a feast, Smithy! Stop that!"

The captain of the Remove pushed Smithy back.

Five or six other fellows gathered round Coker of the Fifth.

They grabbed him and sat him down on the landing. Coker, in his breathless state, was in no condition for a battle! He rolled over, gurgling, in the grasp of the Removites, and rolled down the steps again.

Once more Horace Coker sprawled on the study landing, his long legs thrashing the air. He sat up again, spluttering.

"Have some more, Coker!" called out Bob Cherry.

"Lots if you want it!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The loftiness is terrific, my esteemed Coker!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

But Coker did not appear to want any more.

He had had quite enough for one day. He had a pain under his waistcoat, and he had toppled backwards down the steps.

Having gained his feet with the aid of the banisters, Coker stood spluttering for breath. He shook his fist at Herbert Vernon-Smith. But he did not invade the Remove landing again.

"You look out!" he gasped. "I'll whop you for this! I'll give you the biggest whopping you've ever had! I'll spifficate you! Oooogh!"

"Go home, Coker!"

"Fade out, old bean!"

"Take your face away and bury it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker—his hands pressed to his waistcoat again—limped away across the study landing and disappeared into the Fifth Form passage. Coker of the Fifth did not always know when he had had enough. But on this occasion it seemed quite clear to him. He disappeared—a gurgle floating back.

"You'd better keep your weather eye open for Coker after this, Smithy!" grinned Peter Todd.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Let's get on, now that fool's gone!" he said.

And the Remove cricketers got on and kept on, regardless of Coker and all his works—till an alarm of Quetch in the offing put a sudden end to indoor cricket and sent the Removites scuttling up the Remove passage.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Mistake!

"I SAY, Smithy, old chap!" said Billy Bunter.

"Buzz off, ass!"

The rain had ceased, and Billy Bunter had detached himself from an armchair in the Rag and rolled out into the quad.

He was really looking for Lord Mauleverer. Often and often did Billy Bunter look for Mauly about tea-time.

But Mauly seemed elusive, as was not uncommon when the fat Owl of the Remove was looking for him. So, at the sight of the Bounder coming out of the school shop, with a little parcel under his arm, Billy Bunter bore down on him at once.

Bunter could guess what a parcel contained when a fellow carried it out of the tuckshop about tea-time! And, in his keen interest in the parcel, Bunter did not note the trifling circumstance that the junior coming out of the school shop was not Smithy, but his cousin Bertie Vernon, who was so exactly like Smithy that they were frequently mistaken for one another.

Other fellows picked them out fairly easily, especially as they dressed rather differently; but the short-sighted Owl of the Remove was always mixing them—sometimes with painful results to himself! For both the doubles of the Greyfriars Remove were equally annoyed at being mistaken for one another, and Smithy had more than once booted the fat Owl for addressing him as Vernon.

Now he was addressing Vernon as Smithy, which was a less dangerous mistake, Bertie being much less handy with his boot than the Bounder. But Bertie was annoyed, and he snapped.

"I say, old chap, I'm jolly glad to see your name up for the St. Jim's match," said Bunter. "I was looking for you to mention it."

"Ass!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Roll off, you bloated barrel!" snapped Vernon, and he started for the House.

Bunter, instead of rolling off, rolled on—with Bertie Vernon. That parcel under Vernon's arm drew Bunter like a magnet.

It was true that Smithy was rather a hard nut to crack. He was not an easy-going fellow like Mauly, or like Harry Wharton & Co. But Bunter fancied that he knew how to get on Smithy's soft side.

Billy Bunter's genuine opinion of the relatives of the Remove was that both were beasts, but Smithy a rather worse beast than the other beast. But Bunter was not the fellow to reveal his genuine opinion to a chap who had a bundle of tuck under his arm.

"I say, Smithy, your name's up," went on Bunter. "I've seen it up in the Rag. That rotten cousin of yours is in, too. I call that foul! He can't play cricket, Smithy."

This was Bunter's master-stroke of plotting.

Smithy either could not, or would not see that Bertie Vernon was one of the best junior cricketers at Greyfriars, and that his bowling was, so to speak, a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

Nobody agreed with Smithy on that point—Bunter no more than anybody else. But if pulling Smithy's leg was the way to tea in Smithy's study, Bunter was the man to pull his leg.

It was rather unfortunate, in the circumstances, that he was addressing these remarks to the wrong man.

Unaware of that circumstance, the fat Owl rattled on:

"That chap Vernon can't bowl, can he, Smithy? Wharton thinks he can. The games master thinks he's no end of a nut with the ball. I don't. Not a bit of it, Smithy. Absolutely rotten, in my opinion!"

Bertie Vernon grinned faintly, but did not answer.

"A silly, stuck-up ass, too!" went on Bunter. In view of Smithy's feud with the new junior, it was judicious to pile it on thick. Bunter was prepared to lay it on like butter. "Everybody knows he's fearfully hard-up; but look at the airs he puts on. That uncle of his who sent him here hasn't a bean to his name. Look how he lives at Lantham Chase—two or three rooms, and one potty old servant; and no—Wow!"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly as a finger and thumb fastened on a fat ear like a pair of pincers.

Bertie Vernon did not mind what Bunter said about his cricket. Bunter's opinion on that subject was not calculated to worry any cricketer. But the reference to his uncle, Captain Vernon—though it might have been welcome to Smithy—was far from welcome to that uncle's nephew.

"Owl!" roared Bunter. "Smithy, you beast, leggo my ear! Wow! Why, you rotter—Wow! You like to hear a chap run that fellow Vernon down, don't you? Wow!"

"You blithering fat Owl, I'm not Smithy!" snapped Vernon.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Now roll away, and shut up!" snapped Vernon, releasing the fat ear.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, rubbing that ear. He realised the awful mistake he had made.

It was the other beast who had that bundle of tuck under his arm, not Smithy at all. Bunter had rather put his foot in it.

"I—I—I say, Vernon," gasped the fat Owl, "I didn't mean—I—I meant—that is—what I really mean is that—Smithy's no cricketer."

"What?"

"Absolute dud at the game," said Bunter, blinking at Bertie through his big spectacles. "I think Wharton's a fool to put him up for the St. Jim's match—don't you?"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Vernon! I mean to say, you can play his head off. He can't bat. He's absolutely no good, and—I say, Vernon, don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you! Beast!"

Bertie Vernon did walk away.

Bunter was left rubbing his ear, and realising sadly that his chance of getting a whack in the contents of that parcel had been reduced to zero. All that Billy Bunter had gained was a tug at his fat ear, which was, no doubt, what he deserved, but certainly not what he wanted.

"Here, Bunter!"

Coker of the Fifth was coming across the quad, and his eyes fixed on Bertie Vernon with quite a deadly look.

Ever since the episode on the Remove landing, Coker of the Fifth had had an eye open for Herbert Vernon-Smith.

But Coker knew all about the doubles of the Remove, and he did not want to make a mistake.

A terrific whopping was due to Vernon-Smith, and he was going to receive it at Coker's first chance of handing it out; but Coker naturally wanted to be sure that he handed it out to the right address.

"Which of them is that, Bunter?"



"Vernon's a silly, stuck-up ass, Smithy!" said Bunter, unaware that he was addressing his remarks to the wrong man. "Everybody knows he's hard up. That uncle of his, who sent him here, hasn't a bean to his name!" Vernon stared at Bunter, but did not answer.

demanded Coker, with a gesture towards Bertie Vernon. "I can't tell one of the young rotters from the other. I'm going to thrash Vernon-Smith—"

"Eh?"

"Not his cousin. Is that Vernon, or Vernon-Smith?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. He rubbed a fat, painful ear. Then he grinned.

Had Bunter been a fighting man, he would have mopped up the quadrangle with Smithy's double for tugging at that fat ear. Coker was welcome to get on with the good work, if so disposed.

"Eh? Oh, that's Smithy!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"All right!" said Coker grimly. And he rushed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Wrong Address!

BERTIE VERNON gave a yell. Quite unconscious of having given any offence to the great Horace, he gave no heed to Coker when he saw him in the quad, and he was taken quite by surprise when Coker rushed.

Coker still had a lingering ache where the cricket ball had smitten his waistcoat. And his wrath was dire. Herbert Vernon-Smith was going to have the whopping of his life; and Coker, in the happy belief that he had Vernon-Smith in his grasp, proceeded to administer the same.

Smack, smack, smack!

Bertie's parcel fell from under his arm, and crashed, bursting as it crashed.

A cake, a bag of doughnuts, and a pot of jam rolled on the earth.

But Bertie had no leisure to heed them.

Coker of the Fifth was grasping him, and smacking him right and left. Coker's smacks were hefty. His large hand landed like a flail.

Coker disdained to punch a junior. But Coker's smacks were rather harder and heavier than many fellows' punches.

Bertie roared and struggled.

"You mad ass! What are you at?" he yelled. "Gone mad? Let go! What do you fancy you're up to, you hulking hooligan?"

"I'll give you a few more for that!" grinned Coker.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

Coker's smacks fairly banged on his hapless victim.

But Bertie Vernon, like his relative, the Bounder, was not the man to take a whopping tamely. Coker of the Fifth was much too big for him to tackle with any chance of success, but he did his very best.

A jolt from a fist that felt like a lump of iron caught Coker under his chin, and made him stagger. It was followed up by another on Coker's nose, which drew a spurt of red.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "By gum!"

"You mad ass, let go!" yelled Vernon, still punching.

Smack, smack, smack!

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter, watching with great interest through his big spectacles. Bertie was getting something back for tugging at that fat ear—there was no mistake about that.

A dozen fellows came running up.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth shouted to Coker together.

"Coker, you ass—"

"Chuck it!"

"I'll watch it!" snorted Coker. "This young sweep buzzed a cricket

ball at my bread-basket! I'll show him!"

"You potty chump, I didn't!" shrieked Vernon.

"Didn't you?" snorted Coker. "I fancy you did, and I fancy I'm going to whop you for it, as I told you I would!"

"You'll get half the school here!" gasped Potter.

"What do I care?" retorted Coker, still smacking. "Think a Remove kid is going to bang a cricket ball on my tummy?"

"He, he, he!"

A pot of jam had rolled near Bunter. Doughnuts and cake were trampled on, but the pot of jam was intact. Bunter picked it up and rolled away. It was quite entertaining to watch Coker whopping Vernon, in the belief that he was Vernon-Smith; but it was judicious to get off the scene before Coker discovered his mistake. Bunter went, and the pot of jam went with Bunter.

But about fifty other fellows were crowding round the spot in great excitement.

Bertie Vernon, with a tremendous effort, tore himself loose from Coker's grip and jumped away.

But Coker was not finished with him yet. That lingering ache in Coker's bread-basket had to be avenged.

Coker jumped at him again; and Bertie met him with left and right, a couple of such hefty jolts that even the mighty Horace staggered.

Bertie followed him up as he staggered, his face flaming and his eyes blazing wrath.

Why Coker had so suddenly and unexpectedly pitched into him the new junior did not know. He had not been present at the scene on the

Remove landing and was unaware of what his double had done; but he knew that he had been smacked as if he had been under a carpet beater, and his chief desire was to hit Coker—and hit him hard.

And he did!

As Coker staggered Bertie followed him up, hitting—getting one into Coker's eye and another on his jaw—and Coker sat down with a bump.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Potter.

Coker was on his feet with a bound. He had been knocked down—knocked down by a Remove junior! Spluttering rage, Coker hurled himself at Bertie, hitting out.

Bang!

Coker's fist landed on Bertie's nose—a rather jutting nose, exactly like his relative's.

No junior could have stood up to that punch.

Bertie flew.

"Coker, you potty ass!" yelled Greene.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

Coker had not meant to punch like that. Juniors were beneath punching by a Fifth Form man. Really he had done it unintentionally. But he had done it.

Bertie Vernon lay on his back, his nose streaming crimson. He sat up dizzily, his hand to his nose, crimson streaming through his fingers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" The Famous Five, having spotted the excitement from a distance, came up with a rush.

Harry Wharton ran to Vernon to give him a hand up.

"Collar that fathead!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bump him!"

"Scrag him!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, you cheeky fags!" hooted Coker. "I'll mop up the lot of you!"

I told that young sweep I'd whop him for buzzing that cricket ball at my bread-basket—"

"That was Smithy!" howled Bob. "That wasn't Vernon; it was Smithy, you howling chump!"

"Well, that's Vernon-Smith, isn't it?"

"No, you mad chump; that's his cousin!"

"Wha-a-at?"

The Famous Five, about to collar Horace Coker, paused. They realised that there had been a mistake.

"That—that—that— Isn't that Vernon-Smith, who buzzed that cricket ball at me?" stuttered Coker.

"No, you ass!"

"No, you fathead!"

"No, you chump!"

"But—but Bunter said he was!" gasped Coker. "I asked Bunter, to make sure, and he said it was Vernon-Smith. Look here, you young ass, are you Vernon-Smith or not?"

"Not, you potty lunatic!" gasped Bertie.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker. "I—I—I thought you were Vernon-Smith! Of course I did when a Remove kid said so!"

"Idiot!"

"Well, I'm sorry!" said Coker. "I'm really sorry! I meant it for that cheeky cousin of yours—"

"You dangerous maniac!"

"Well, don't be cheeky," said Coker. "I've said I'm sorry. You shouldn't be so like your sweep of a relation! Not my fault, is it?"

Bertie Vernon jammed a handkerchief to his nose. He gave Coker of the Fifth an expressive look and moved off towards the House.

"I say, I'm really sorry!" Coker called out.

"Dummy!" called back Vernon, over his shoulder.

"You blithering, blithering, burbling fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

"Don't give me any cheek!" said Coker. "There's one thing, I shall know the other young rotter now; he won't have a nose like that! Where's Vernon-Smith now? I'm going to whop him!"

"Coker, old man—" urged Potter.

"Shut up, Potter!"

"Don't you think you've played the giddy ox enough already?" hooted Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

"Oh, bag him!" said Bob Cherry. "He won't be happy till he gets it! Let's make him tired of whopping Remove men!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Famous Five rushed.

Horace Coker was suddenly up-ended. He came down on the quad with a bump. He bellowed as he bumped.

"Why, you—I— Owl! Oh! Ah! Oooh!"

Splash!

Coker, rolled over, landed with his face in a puddle left by the recent rain; he gurgled wildly.

The Famous Five left him to gurgle. And Coker, when he extracted his rugged features from muddy water, streaming, was no longer thinking of looking for Smithy. He was—for the present, at least—tired of whopping Remove men.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

MR. QUELCH fixed a gimlet eye on Bertie Vernon in the Remove Form Room the following morning.

Then the gimlet eye gleamed round at Herbert Vernon-Smith; and the Bounder, noting it, smiled sarcastically.

Bertie evidently had been fighting; and Quelch jumped to the conclusion at once that there had been trouble between the relatives of the Remove.

Trouble between them had been almost incessant ever since Smithy's double had come to Greyfriars that term. More than once they had come to blows. The mutual antipathy was equally strong on both sides.

But the blame for the incessant rows lay chiefly on the Bounder. Vernon's dislike was only revealed by a quiet disdain; Smithy's took the form of aggressive truculence.

Even Redwing, the Bounder's chum, had to admit that there need not have been trouble if Smithy had kept his temper in better control; they could have barred one another without making the family feud the talk of the Remove.

But Smithy, who both disliked and despised the Vernon branch of the family, had no use for Vernon swank, as he called it. He resented the fact that Bertie had come to his school at all. He did not want him at Greyfriars—he did not want him in his Form, he did not want to see him, or hear his name, or have anything to do with him.

Most of all he resented Bertie's inclusion in the Remove cricket eleven. As Bertie was a bowler and Smithy a batsman, they need not have been rivals in cricket; each in his own line excelled the other, but Bertie was only an average bat, and Smithy only a change bowler. But kudos in any form for his double irritated Smithy. And the striking resemblance between them was a sore point with both.

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That resemblance, which caused many irritating mistakes, was not likely to cause any more mistakes for some days to come; for Coker's punch had given Bertie a nose which made it easy for even the short-sighted Owl of the Remove to recognise him at a glance.

That nose—rather prominent and jutting, exactly like Smithy's—was now the colour of a well-boiled beetroot.

It fairly flamed. It leaped to the eye. Fellows who had been puzzled to say which was which could now pick out Vernon across the quad. That red, raw nose was almost like a danger signal.

Naturally Quelch gave it his attention. Scrapping was, officially, supposed not to occur at all, but a judicious blind eye was generally turned to a scrap with the gloves on; but a nose like Bertie's was very unusual, and called for investigation.

Smithy smiled sarcastically—quite aware, from Quelch's look, that the Remove master took it for granted that Vernon had been fighting with his relative and that it was Smithy's fault, as usual.

"Vernon, you have been fighting!" said Mr. Quelch in a deep voice.

Vernon's face became almost as red as his nose. He was painfully conscious of his disfigured look, which had already caused innumerable glances and smiles to be turned in his direction.

"Yes, sir," he answered.

"With whom?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

"A Fifth Form man, sir."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder winked at Tom Redwing, who suppressed a grin. Quelch was not going to get on Smithy's track this time!

"Really, Vernon, I am surprised that you should have quarrelled with a boy in another Form, especially a senior Form!" said Mr. Quelch.

"It was a mistake, sir. The fellow took me for somebody else," muttered Vernon.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch again.

With that, the matter was allowed to drop.

Bertie rubbed that red, raw nose many times during morning school. It was sore; it was rather painful; and, worst of all, it was fearfully conspicuous.

Bertie was booked to play in the St. Jim's match on the morrow, when Tom Merry & Co. came over to Greyfriars; and he did not want to display that flaming nose to a crowd of fellows from another school. It was not pleasant to turn up with a nose that blazed like a beacon from afar.

He gave his relative more than one inimical glance during class in the Remove room.

True, it was not Smithy who had given him that nose. But, like most of his troubles since he had come to Greyfriars, it was due to his resemblance to Smithy. It was Smithy who had set the fathead of the Fifth on the warpath; and Coker's mistake had done the rest.

The Bounder, catching Vernon's eyes on him, put up his hand to his own eyes, as if to shade them from the glare of the crimson nose!

There was a chuckle in the Remove.

Bertie's face flamed, and after that, he carefully kept his eyes from wandering in his relative's direction.

Smithy grinned. It was evident that his rival was taking that nose to heart, as it were; and Smithy was the man to rub it in.

Second school that morning was English literature, and Billy Bunter groaned when Shakespeare came on the

scene. But Smithy welcomed the Bard of Avon for reasons of his own.

Fellows were encouraged to ask questions about the immortal bard. Smithy had one to ask.

"If you please, sir, may I ask about a quotation?" asked Vernon-Smith meekly.

"Certainly, Vernon-Smith!"

"I don't know which of Shakespeare's plays it is from, sir, but I should like to know!" said Smithy.

"What is the quotation, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch, rather pleased by the Bounder's unusual interest in the subject.

"'Marian's nose was red and raw,' sir!" said Smithy, in the same meek tone.

Mr. Quelch started a little, his eyes wandering to Bertie's nose. Vernon shut his teeth. There was a sudden giggle from Billy Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

"Silence in the class!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

There was silence in the class, but there were smiles on a good many faces.

"It's a well-known quotation, sir, and perhaps you would tell me which play it is from!" murmured Smithy.

Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet eye on the Bounder.

"The quotation is from 'Love's Labour's Lost,' Vernon-Smith; and you will take a hundred lines!" he said grimly.

Smithy made no more jests during English literature! Jest at a hundred lines a time were rather too expensive.

But Smithy was not the only jester in the Remove! Billy Bunter had caught the idea—and Bunter was on this!

The beast had pulled Bunter's ear—and Bunter, taking a tip from the Bounder, was going to rub that nose in! Quelch did not seem in a mood for jesting, but it was like the fat and fatuous Owl to demonstrate the truth of the proverb that fools rush in where angels fear to tread!

"If you please, sir—" squeaked Bunter, after some deep cogitation to recall some quotation that referred to the subject of noses.

"What is it, Bunter?"

"I've thought of a quotation, sir—"

"What?"

"Will you tell me which of Shakespeare's plays it's from, sir?" asked the cheerful fat Owl.

There was a suppressed gurgle in the Remove. Every fellow, of course, knew what Bunter was at—following the Bounder's example!

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on Bunter with an expression that might have terrified him had he not been too short-sighted to see it!

"What is the quotation, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a deep, deep voice, rather like that of the Great Huge Bear.

"Red as a nose is she, sir!" chirruped Bunter.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled all the Remove.

That was Bunter all over!

Bunter never remembered anything he learned in a lesson, if he could help it. But all sorts of fragments of knowledge were mixed up in his fat mind. The Remove had done the "Ancient Mariner" in a previous lesson, and Bunter recalled a line from that great poem, and, of course, got it wrong.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I'd like to—to know what play of Shakespeare's that line is from, sir! I—I'm fearfully keen on Shakespeare, sir, and I—I can't remember whether it's

from King Henry the Twelfth or—or Julius Othello—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! If you are venturing to make a foolish jest in class, Bunter—" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! No, sir! Not at all, sir! I—I wasn't thinking of Vernon's nose, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I hadn't noticed that Vernon's nose was red, sir! I—I haven't looked at him at all! I—I just wanted to know—" stammered the fat Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The next boy who laughs will be caned!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, reducing his Form to sudden gravity. "Bunter! The quotation is 'Red as a rose is she.'"

"Oh! Is it, sir! I—I thought it was a n-n-nose—"

"And it is not from Shakespeare, but from the 'Ancient Mariner,' which every boy in this Form should know was written by Coleridge."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"And in order to impress this on your memory, Bunter, you will stay in after class—"

"Oh!"

"And write out, one hundred times, 'Red as a rose is she' is a quotation from Coleridge."

"Oh crikey!"

There was no more jesting in second school! Quelch was altogether too discouraging.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Smack!

"NO rags, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton warningly.

"What rot!" yawned the Bounder.

"Now, don't be an ass, Smithy, if you can help it!" said the captain of the Remove. "If any man in the eleven gets a detention this afternoon, we may as well make Tom Merry a present of the match."

It was Wednesday morning, and the Remove were booked for French with Monsieur Charpentier. And the captain of the Remove thought a word of warning needed. Rags in the French class were rather the rule than the exception, and the Bounder was always the most reckless offender. And Tom Merry & Co. were due that day for cricket.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Am I to suppose that I'm considered of any value?" he asked sarcastically. "You managed all right at Highcliffe without me."

"We've got a tussle on to-day, Smithy, and if you want me to say that you can't be spared, I'll say it!"

"You've got Vernon, you know!" sneered the Bounder.

"Oh, don't be an ass! We've got Vernon for bowling—his wicket won't last long against bowlers like Wynn and Talbot of St. Jim's. We want you to put up one of your centuries, if you can."

"Don't be a goat, Smithy, old man!" said Bob Cherry amicably. "Nobody wanted to leave you out of the Highcliffe game—you sat up on your hind legs and begged for it! You know you're wanted to-day, so play up like a good little boy."

The Bounder grinned.

"Right-ho! I'll be Froggy's model pupil!" he said. "Hadn't you better give Vernon a tip, too?"

"Vernon never rags!" said Harry. "He won't get Mossos's goat! You jolly well might, and if Froggy goes off

at the deep end, as he does sometimes, if the fat would be in the fire, if you go a detention."

"I'll smooth his fur for him!" promised the Bounder. "Think I want a cut cricket this afternoon, fathead?" "Stick to that!" said Harry. "You can rag Froggy any time—but cricket's cricket!"

The Remove headed for Class-room No. 10, where Monsieur Charpentier was taking his class.

It was a glorious day in June, and most of the fellows were thinking of cricket; not a fellow looking forward to French irregular verbs! It was only too likely that the Bounder might relieve the monotony of the French class by a rag, and a detention would have been disastrous.

The Bounder was in very cheery spirits that morning. The fact that his rival in the Remove looked no end of a clown, as he expressed it, with his crimson beak, entertained Smithy; all the more because Vernon was irritable and sensitive about it.

Monsieur Charpentier was seen to glance at Vernon's nose as the juniors took their places. Perhaps he had not seen it since it had been in its flaming state.

Bertie had hoped that that glaring nose would tone down a little by St. Jim's day. But it required time—and it was as flaming as ever. No fellow could have liked such an adornment; still less could he have liked jesting references to it.

Mossoo's surprised glance made Bertie's cheeks burn.

"Mon Dieu! You Smeet, you have one accident?" asked Monsieur Charpentier sympathetically.

Bertie had no use for sympathy on that subject!

"My name's not Smith!" he snapped.

"Ah! Voila! It is ze ozzer!" said Mossoo, glancing from Bertie to his relative. "It is not Smeet, it is Vernon; n'est-ce-pas? You have vun accident viz a nose, Vernon? He is verree red—tres rouge! Pauvre garçon!"

Bertie scowled. Generally his temper was very much better in control than Smithy's, but it was less in hand than usual now. He opened his lips for a snappish reply, but checked it, and sat down in silence.

"He, he, he!" came from the back of the class. "I say, you fellows, what a boko! What a bezer!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" muttered Peter Todd, as Bertie looked round.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "I say, what will the St. Jim's fellows think of Vernon's boko? Suppose they take it for a danger signal? He, he, he!"

Whiz!

A Henriade whizzed across and landed under Bunter's fat ear!

Bunter gave a yell that woke the echoes of Class-room No. 10.

"Ow! Ow! Yaroooh! Whooop!"

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat? You Smeet, you zrow one book!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier. "Smeet—zat is to say, Vernon—if you do not keep ze ordair in ze class, I report you to Monsieur. Quelch!"

"Ow! Yow! Wow!"

"Mais, silence, Buntair!"

"Ow! Yow! Wow!" roared Bunter.

"Yow-ow-wow!"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" hissed Harry Wharton.

The junior captain had been uneasy on the score of Smithy; now he was uneasy on the score of Vernon! Least of all did he want to lose his champion bowler!

"Shan't! That beast banged a book

at my head! Yaroooh! Wow! Ow!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Cad! Wow!"

"Zat you be silent, Buntair!"

"I'm fearfully hurt, sir!" roared Bunter. "My head's cracked!"

"That's nothing new!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ze silence!" hooted Monsieur Charpentier. "If you make one great noise, Buntair, I gives you somezing zat you make noise for! Vernon, you are one verree bad boy! Zat you keep ze ordair in ze class, isn't it?"

"You howling ass, keep your silly temper!" Frank Nugent whispered in Vernon's ear. "Do you want to be left out of the match to-day?"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Vernon.

French proceeded in Class-room No. 10. From Bolsover major and Skinner, and some other fellows, came the usual accidental dropping of books and desk-lids. But the Bounder was as good as gold! He was not taking the risk of a detention on St. Jim's day; and Mossoo, who knew nothing about Remove games, was quite surprised and pleased by Smithy's quiet and respectful attention in class, a feeling that was shared by the captain of the Remove.

"Smeet!"

"Yes, sir!" said the Bounder respectfully.

Vernon-Smith hated being addressed as "Smith." Little as he liked the Vernon side of the family, he liked to be addressed by his double-barrelled name. Mossoo always seemed to forget it, or perhaps it was too much for him. But on this occasion the Bounder answered meekly and respectfully to the name of Smeet.

"You vill take ze chalk, Smeet, and write one sentence on ze board, zat ze class translate!" said Monsieur Charpentier.

"Certainly, sir!"

The Bounder's eyes glimmered as he stepped out before the class. He was in Mossoo's good graces for once, and it gave him an opportunity! He winked at the class as he took the chalk.

The juniors watched him with interest—some of them with anxiety. This was a chance for the Bounder to rag, if so disposed. Once, on such an occasion, Smithy had chalked on the board "Monsieur est tres petit"—an allusion to the French master's small stature that had caused a roar of merriment from the class and a rap from the pointer from Mossoo. But Smithy was on his best behaviour now, so far as Mossoo was concerned.

But his look, as he took the chalk, showed that something was on, and all the juniors watched him as he wrote:

"Le nez de mon cousin est rouge. Il est tres rouge, comme le feu! Regardez donc ce nez, qui saute aux yeux!"

There was a yell of laughter from the French class.

Bertie Vernon's face crimsoned with rage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, what does it mean?"

Bunter was not a whale at French. The nose of my cousin is red—

chuckled Skinner.

"It is very red, like fire!" chortled Bolsover major.

"Look at that nose, which leaps to the eye!" giggled Snoop.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the class.

"Mais, silence donc!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier, puzzled by that outbreak of merriment. "Assez! Je vous die, assez!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mossoo, apparently, did not discern the connection between Smithy's sentence on the board and Vernon's crimson nose. Possibly he was unaware that the two were cousins. He had told Smithy to write a sentence in French, and Smithy had written a sentence in French. That was all!

"Vill you be silent in ze class?" hooted Monsieur Charpentier. "I vill not have ze class-room turn into one garden of ze bear! Mon Dieu! You Vernon, vat is it zat you do?" shrieked Mossoo as Vernon, stepping from his place, landed his open hand, with a sudden smack, across Vernon-Smith's face.

Smack!

It rang like a pistol-shot through Class-room No. 10.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Rough Luck!

"O H, my hat!"

"Vernon, you mad ass—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"Smithy—"

Vernon Smith staggered against the blackboard as the hefty smack landed across his face. The blackboard rocked on its easel and went over, with a crash. The Bounder stumbled, then, recovering himself, he leaped at Bertie like a tiger, with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Stop them!" gasped Harry Wharton in utter dismay.

"Go it, Smithy!" chirruped Skinner.

"Mon Dieu! Zat you shall stop us!"

shrieked Monsieur Charpentier, gesticulating with both arms, and almost with his legs, in his excitement. "Garçons—boys—verree bad boys— Ciel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it!"

"Go it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There had been rags in the French class before, many a time and oft. But this was the first time that there had been a stand-up fight, even in Mossoo's class!

All the juniors were on their feet, some shouting to the combatants to stop, some spurring them on. Monsieur Charpentier danced round them, waving and shrieking.

Headless of all, Vernon and Vernon-Smith closed in strife, punching and pommelling fiercely.

But they were not allowed to carry on.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed out of class and collared both of them. In the grasp of the Famous Five, the rivals of the Remove were dragged apart by main force.

As they glared at one another, each held back by two or three fellows, Monsieur Charpentier pranced between.

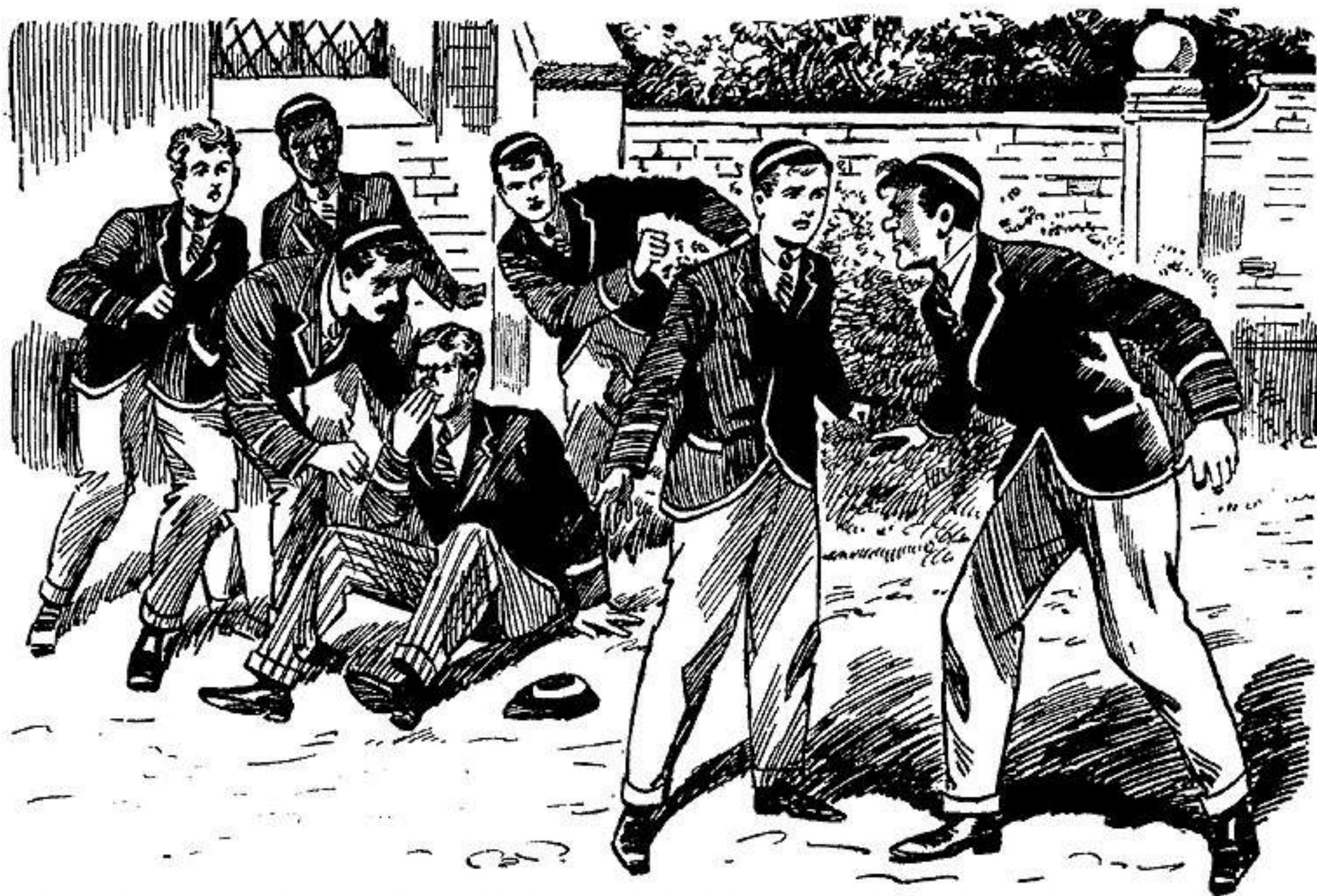
"Vernon! You verree bad boy!" he squealed. "Smeet, you verree bad boy!"

"Do you think I'm going to have my face smacked?" roared the Bounder. "Let me go, you fools! I'll smash him! You saw that cad smack my face—"

"Bother your silly face!" snapped Wharton. "Do you want to bring Quelch here, you dummy? Shut up!"

"I tell you—"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Stick him back in his place!"



"I told that young sweep, Vernon-Smith, I'd whop him!" hooted Coker, as his victim sat up, rubbing his streaming nose. "You mad chump!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's Smithy's cousin!" "Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker. "I—I—I thought it was Vernon-Smith!"

And the Bounder was jammed back at his desk with a bump.

Bertie Vernon stood panting for breath.

"Zis is of ze too much!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Vernon, you verree bad boy, you smack one face—undair my eyes, you smack ze face of Smeet! Vy for you smack one face, you verree bad boy? Smeet, if you leave your place, I send you to Monsieur Quelch for ze cane!"

The Bounder half-rose; but he sat down again. The blame for that sudden outbreak of hostilities in the class-room was falling on his enemy; and Smithy was well content to let it fall there!

"I'm sorry, sir!" said the Bounder, with unaccustomed meekness. "I couldn't let a fellow smack my face, sir!"

"Zere is excuse for you, Smeet! But for you, Vernon, zere is no excuse!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier sternly. "You smack Smeet ze face, and you make one fight viz Smeet, you verree bad boy! I have one verree large mind to send you to ze head-master!"

Bertie Vernon did not speak.

Already he regretted that fierce outbreak of temper, and his utterly reckless action in smacking a fellow's head in a class-room, in the presence of a master.

That jesting sentence of the blackboard, irritating as it was to a fellow already feeling deeply disgruntled, was no excuse for his action. He had, for once, allowed a bad temper to rip—a thing that Smithy often did, but which his double very seldom did.

For once he was placed in a position new to him, though not new to the Bounder; that of a headstrong young rascal with no respect for authority.

There was nothing for him to say; and he said nothing.

"I have a verree large mind!" repeated Monsieur Charpentier, no doubt meaning a very great mind, "to send you to Dr. Locke! But I vill give you five hundred lines from ze Henriade, and you bring zem to me zis evening."

Harry Wharton's face became very grim as he heard that.

Five hundred lines was a heavy imposition—very heavy indeed, and if Vernon was to hand them in that evening, it washed out his half-holiday.

His half-holiday mattered nothing; but his bowling in the St. Jim's match mattered a great deal.

Vernon went back to his place without a word.

His face was set and sulky and savage.

"Vous econtez!" snapped Monsieur Charpentier. "Zis evening you bring me zose cinq cent—those five hundred—lines, or I make one report to ze head-master, you verree bad Vernon."

Vernon made no answer; and Monsieur Charpentier, after a severe glare at his sullen face, resumed French with his class.

The Bounder smiled.

He had never foreseen this, when he chalked that irritating sentence in French on the blackboard! Everything, for once, seemed to be going Smithy's way. Bertie Vernon had fairly played into his hands by losing his temper and resorting to fisticuffs in the class-room.

He was out of the cricket now—that impot was as good, or as bad, as a detention. Only by slogging at lines all the afternoon could he hope to get through. And if he failed to hand in the lines, it meant a report to the head-master—not an easy thing to face. Mossoo, generally regarded by the juniors as a good little ass, evidently

meant what he said; even little Mossoo would not tolerate fellows coming to blows in the class-room, much-enduring little gentleman as he was!

As for the loss to the side, Vernon-Smith gave that no thought at all. He did not believe, or would not believe, that Bertie was so valuable a recruit as the fellows supposed; but even had he believed it, he would still have been glad to see him out of the cricket.

The French class was dismissed at last.

Johnny Bull gave the Bounder an angry snort as the juniors went out.

"You've done it now, you dunny!" he said. "There goes our bowler! Precious little you care, I expect!"

"Precious little!" agreed the Bounder. "But it's hardly my fault, is it? Did I ask him to smack my head?"

"What did you want to rag him about his silly nose for?" grunted Johnny.

"Mustn't a fellow rag a fellow? A man's supposed to know how to keep his temper—at least, in class!" drawled the Bounder.

Johnny grunted, but had no other reply to make to that.

Harry Wharton joined Vernon, as the juniors went out into the quad.

"What are you going to do about it, Vernon?" he asked, not very pleasantly.

"What can I do?" snapped Vernon. He coloured angrily. "I'm sorry I was fool enough to lose my temper with that cad—but it's done now."

"Are you going to let us down?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "You're in the eleven, and you're wanted! Smithy was a ragging ass in class; but you ought to have had sense enough not to break out like that."

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"I know that!" grunted Vernon. "I've no doubt that the cad's glad enough that I've dished myself over the cricket."

"That's as may be; but you've no right to let us down for the sake of letting your rotten temper rip!"

"What can I do, then? I've got to write those rotten lines this afternoon, or it means a report to the Head!"

"You can think that out for yourself!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

Bertie set his lips.

"Froggy meant what he said," he muttered.

"I know that!"

"I don't want to go up to the Head! I'm not a fellow like Smithy!" said Vernon bitterly. "I don't thrive on rows with the beaks, and I don't want to get a reputation like his! A fellow wants to keep clear of being sent up to his headmaster."

"You should have thought of that before you let your temper rip in Froggy's class-room!"

"I know that! But——"

"Well, you can please yourself, of course; but if you're standing out, I shall have to get another man; and there's not much time left. St. Jim's will be here soon after break."

There was a long pause.

Vernon was keen on the cricket! But he did not want a report to the Head, which was a black mark against any fellow. The Bounder might be reckless of such things; but it was a point of pride with Bertie to resemble his cousin as little as he could. So far from glorying, like Smithy, in the reputation of a reckless rebel against authority, he loathed the idea of getting a reputation like the Bounder's.

"Well?" said Harry, at last.

Vernon breathed hard.

"I won't let you down!" he said. "I'll let Mossoo's impot stand over—and go up to the Head afterwards."

"It's rough luck," said Harry. "It's your own fault, though, Vernon. But you can please yourself."

"I'm playing!" said Vernon shortly.

"That's that, then!"

Harry Wharton left him, and Vernon tramped in the quad, his hands driven deep into his trousers pockets, his brows knitted, his face dark.

He had been a fool to give way to his temper, and he admitted it. But it was all Smithy's fault from beginning to end. Never since he had been at Greyfriars had his feelings towards his relative and rival been so bitter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The St. Jim's Match!

TOM MERRY & CO. arrived at Greyfriars soon after break.

Remove men who were in the team had leave from third school, stumps being pitched soon after eleven.

Bertie Vernon was with the cricketers—the Bounder shrugging his shoulders when he found that Vernon was down to play, after all.

He rather wondered whether the prospect of an interview with the headmaster afterwards would cramp Vernon's style in the match. Perhaps Smithy rather hoped that it would!

Smithy himself was in great form. It was a bitterly sore point with him that he had been left out of the Highcliffe match; and he had been very assiduous in games practice since; he wanted to show all the Remove that he was a man who could not be left out.

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Smithy was dreaming of centuries when the cricketers went down to the pavilion.

Tom Merry won the toss, and elected to take first knock.

Greyfriars went into the field, and the St. Jim's innings opened with Tom Merry and George Figgins.

Bertie Vernon bowled the first over.

The men in the field watched with keen interest; the Bounder with rather a jaundiced eye. Keen cricketer as he was, and a sportsman in his own way, Smithy did not want to see his rival distinguish himself; indeed, he would probably rather have seen the St. Jim's wickets stand intact, than have seen them taken by Bertie Vernon.

Vernon had proved himself a bowler of uncommon powers. But Tom Merry, of St. Jim's, was a remarkably good bat; and though the over gave him only two runs, he proved equal to the bowling, good as it was.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took the next over against Figgins of St. Jim's, and Figgins added five. Then, with Figgins still batting, Vernon went on to bowl again.

Then there was a shout.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"By gum!" said Figgins. He seemed quite surprised. He stared at the unexpected sight of a spreadeagled wicket. Then sadly Figgins plodded back to the pavilion with his bat.

"Look out for that man, D'Arcy!" he said to next man in. "That man with the beetroot nose is a corker!"

"Wuff luck, old chap!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. "Vewy wuff luck, Figgay, old man! I could not help thinkin' that it was wathah a mistake for Tom Mewwy to open the innings with a New House man!"

Figgins, who belonged to the New House at St. Jim's, gave Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the School House a concentrated glare.

"You howling ass!" he said.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"You burbling School House cuckoo——"

"Bai Jove! What are you gettin' your wag out for, Figgins?" asked D'Arcy in surprise. "I only wemarked that it was wathah a mistake to open the innings with a New House man! You see, a School House man would hardly have gone down to that ball. Don't you think so?"

"Chump!"

"But, weally, Figgins——"

"Idiot!"

"Man in, Gussy!" said Jack Blake of the St. Jim's Fourth. "You've come here to play cricket, not to wag your chin, old bean!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Look out for that man with the fire-brand nose," said Figgins. "I tell you he can bowl!"

"That's all wight!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy reassuringly. "He won't bowl a School House man vewy easily, Figgins."

"You born ass!"

"Get going, Gussy!" said Talbot of the St. Jim's Shell. "You're keeping the field waiting, old bean."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy got going. He walked elegantly down to the wicket and took up his stand.

As a School House man at St. Jim's, Arthur Augustus had little doubt, or rather none, of standing up to the bowling that had been fatal to a New House man!

But a change came o'er the spirit of his dream as the poet remarks, when the ball came down!

Arthur Augustus really was a good bat, though not perhaps equal to George Figgins. But the bowling was too good for him, and his leg stump went, D'Arcy did not quite know how or why.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated in astonishment.

He blinked at the wicket, even more surprised than Figgins at the deadliness of the bowler with the firebrand nose.

"Bai Jove!" he repeated.

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy trailed home.

"What price ducks' eggs?" inquired Figgins, when the swell of St. Jim's arrived at the pavilion.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Man in!"

Talbot of the Shell went out to join Tom Merry at the wickets. A single brought Tom Merry to the batting end for the fourth ball of the over.

Tom Merry had a very keen eye open for the bowler with the flaming nose. Whatever was the matter with his nose, there was nothing the matter with his bowling, as the junior captain of St. Jim's had already observed. Tom played that ball very carefully and stopped it dead. But he hit the last ball of the over and it sailed away.

"Smithy!" gasped Harry Wharton.

The ball was dropping a perfect sitter for Smithy. The Bounder's hand was up, the ball almost in his palm; but whether it was clumsiness, or whatever it was, the ball dropped at his feet, and there was a general gasp from the field.

It was as a batsman that Smithy excelled; but he was always a good and reliable man in the field. Harry Wharton made it an inexorable point to keep his men well up in that branch of the game, so often neglected. But Smithy failed now—unaccountably. It was not often that Tom Merry of St. Jim's gave a fieldsman such a chance; he had given it to Smithy, and Smithy let the ball go.

"Butter fingers!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The Bounder coloured as he threw the ball in. Tom Merry had had a narrow escape of being dismissed for 2; now he had a new lease of life, and he was the man to make the most of it.

Bertie Vernon's eyes blazed at the Bounder.

He, at least, had no doubt why Herbert Vernon-Smith had muffed that catch. He had not the slightest doubt that Smithy had let the ball drop intentionally, to deprive him of another wicket to his credit.

He came towards the Bounder as the field crossed after the over, his eyes glinting and gleaming.

"You rotter!" he breathed.

Vernon-Smith stared at him.

"What's biting you now, you fool?" he asked, without troubling to lower his voice, which was heard by the St. Jim's batsmen.

"You threw away that catch!" breathed Bertie Vernon. "You don't want me to take wickets if you can help it!"

Harry Wharton hastily interposed.

"Enough of that, Vernon! Shut up and get to your place!"

Vernon controlled his anger and moved away, and the captain of the Remove turned to Vernon-Smith.

"Smithy," he said, in a low voice, "there's nothing in that! You wouldn't—you couldn't—— Did you?"

The Bounder's face set in a bitter sneer.

"Think so if you like!" he snapped, and he turned his back on his captain.

Harry Wharton breathed hard. At that moment he almost wished that he had left out two of his best men. He was fed-up with the pair of them.

But it was rather too late to think of that. He could not believe that Vernon's suspicion was well founded; but on the other hand he could not feel sure of Smithy. Only too well he knew how unscrupulous the Bounder could be when his back was up.

The innings went on, and there were no more chances in the field from Tom Merry. Whether Smithy had muffed that catch intentionally or unintentionally, it gave the junior captain of St. Jim's a long lease of life.

Kerr and Wynn, and Blake, and Lowther, and Manners came out in turn, and Tom was still batting, and his score was at 46 when at length a deadly ball from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sent him home.

By that time the school was out, and a crowd of fellows arrived in the field to see the finish of the St. Jim's innings. In time for lunch the innings closed with 98 for St. Jim's.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Run Out!

BERTIE VERNON stood at the pavilion when play was resumed after lunch, watching his rival go out to the wickets with Harry Wharton to open the home innings.

Tom Merry & Co. were in the field, and Fatty Wynn, a New House man of St. Jim's, had the ball.

Other faces at the pavilion were merry and bright; but Vernon's was darkly clouded, and his eyes glinted at the Bounder as he went.

Much had been expected of the new bowler in the Remove; but Vernon, though he had done fairly well, had rather disappointed expectations. He had looked forward a good deal to that match—the biggest fixture in which he had had a chance of playing so far. But he was not in his best form. And he told himself savagely that it was Vernon-Smith's fault and that, but for his rival, all would have been well with him.

The damage to his nose, and the unwelcome attention it drew, was more or less due to Smithy. The row in Class-room No. 10 had been Smithy's doings—foolish as he had been to be drawn to such an extent. The prospect of going up to the Head weighed on his mind and worried him.

Altogether, he was far from being at his best. And he was convinced that Smithy had deliberately dropped that catch rather than let the St. Jim's captain's wicket fall to his bowling.

He had taken only two wickets in the St. Jim's innings—Figgins' and D'Arcy's. He would have taken Tom Merry's also, had Smithy let that ball drop into his palm instead of dropping to the ground. The fellow was so utterly unscrupulous that he carried the family feud into the cricket field, careless of the result of the game. How was a fellow to deal with a fellow like that?

Tom Merry would have been "caught Vernon-Smith, bowled Vernon"—had not the Bounder let the ball go. After that escape he had put on 44 runs, likely enough to make all the difference in the match. And Vernon-Smith cared nothing for that so long as he prevented his enemy from taking wickets!

Now he was going to shine in the very middle of the limelight—opening the innings with the captain of the Remove and putting up a great batting display!

In his present mood, Bertie would have been very glad to put paid to that display. But there was nothing that he could do as a knock back at Smithy! A man in the field could drop catches and spoil a bowler's success—but he could do nothing to cross Smithy—all that he could do was to stand there and watch his rival's triumph.

And it was something like a triumph that he had to watch. For Smithy, unlike his rival, was at the top of his form that day. If he had been clumsy or negligent in the field, there was, at all events, nothing amiss with him when he had the willow in his hands.

The St. Jim's bowling was good, but Smithy's wicket seemed impregnable.

Fatty Wynn dismissed Harry Wharton for 8, and Bob Cherry, who followed him in, was sent home by Talbot of the St. Jim's Shell. Both were first-class bats, and both had been cheaply dismissed; but Herbert Vernon-Smith was still going strong.

Peter Todd went in to join Smithy. Peter was a good man with the willow; but it was the Bounder who was putting on the fireworks.

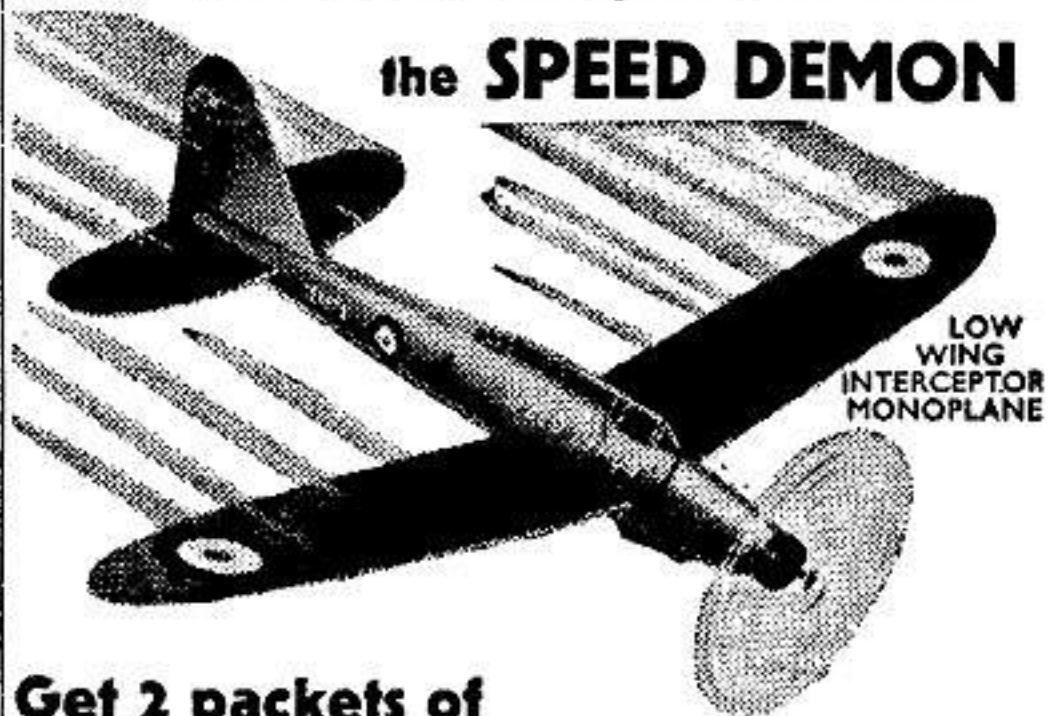
"By gum, old Smithy's going strong!" Bertie heard Bob Cherry's voice. "Smithy's in great form, you fellows!" "Topping!" agreed Johnny Bull.

(Continued on next page.)

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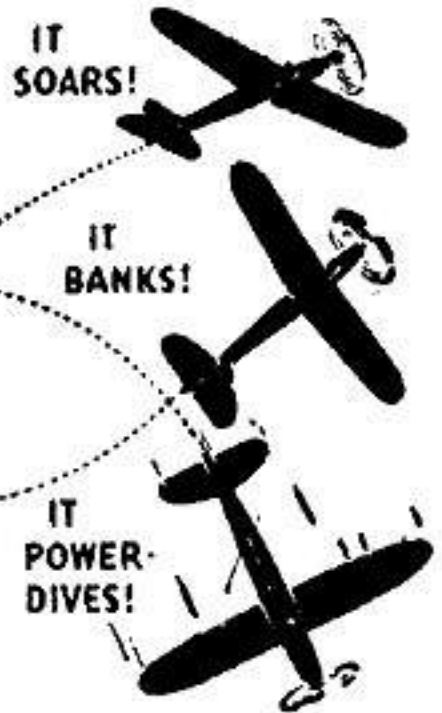
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"The topfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and absurd Smithy is a prize-packet to-day."

"Yes; something to be thankful for," said Harry Wharton. "That fat man from St. Jim's can bowl. He got me all right. Thank goodness he's not getting Smithy."

"Ninety-eight to beat," said Squiff. "We shall do it, with Smithy in such form. Good old Smithy! Bravo!" added the Australian junior, as the ball went for a boundary.

"Good old Bounder!"

Bertie Vernon's lips set bitterly.

Nobody but himself was thinking of that dropped catch. Smithy had the spotlight. It was Smithy first, and everybody else nowhere. The captain of the Remove did not seem to care that he had been sent home for 8, so long as Smithy continued to pile up the runs. Bob Cherry, who had put on only 6, roared with glee at every good hit by the Bounder.

Bertie could not find within himself so sporting a spirit. He was, in fact, too much like his cousin Smithy. Like Smithy, he was a good winner, but a bad loser.

Smithy was enjoying life at the moment, but all the fellows knew that he would scowl if his sticks went down. And Bertie could not help thinking of the hat-trick he might have put up, but for Smithy. That dropped catch haunted his mind.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up to the batsmen at the pavilion. "I say—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you come down to see the game, old fat man?" asked Bob Cherry. "What an honour for us! Pull up your socks, you men! Bunter's going to watch you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, where's Toddy?"

Bob Cherry chuckled. Toddy at the moment was crossing the pitch with the Bounder.

Bunter blinked round the pavilion for him.

"Toddy's in," answered Bob.

"Blow him!" grunted Bunter. "The silly ass has locked the study cupboard! I want the key!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Pretty rotten, I think, if a fellow can't get at his own study cupboard! Just as if he fancied that a fellow might get after his cake, you know, while he's playing cricket? As if I would! Suspicious, I call it! I never even knew he had a cake; but he goes and locks up the study cupboard—"

"Hallo! There goes Toddy!"

Peter Todd came out.

"Man in, Squiff!" said Harry Wharton, and Sampson Quincey Idley Field went in to take Peter's place.

"I say, you fellows, is Toddy out? Good!" said Bunter. Evidently the fat Owl attached more importance to the cake in Study No. 7 than to the result of the St. Jim's match. "I say, Toddy—"

Peter was not looking his brightest as he came back, caught out by Figgins in the field.

"Rough luck, old chap!" said Bob.

"I say, Toddy!" squeaked Bunter.

"Blow!" said Peter. "There goes my century!" Which remark was greeted by a chuckle from the men at the pavilion. Toddy had made 9, which was rather a long way off a century. "I was just getting set."

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Smithy seems glued there, though—that's a comfort."

"Oh, you can't bat, old chap!" said Bunter cheerily. "What did you expect? I say, where's the key of the study cupboard?"

Peter fixed his eyes on his fat study-mate.

"What did you say?" he inquired.

"I said where's the key of the study cupboard?"

"I think you said I couldn't bat, too," remarked Peter. "I'll show you what I can do with this bat, Bunter."

"I'm not going to stay here for the second innings."

"No need. I'll show you now," said Peter.

Whop!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter. "Keep that bat away, you silly chump! Wharrer you banging that bat on my trousers for, you beast?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whop!

"Whoo-hoop!" roared Bunter, and he departed in haste, without making any more inquiries for the key of the study cupboard.

"Oh crumbs! There goes Squiff!"

It was hard luck on the junior from New South Wales. Squiff was a mighty man with the willow. But his luck was out. He had made only 4, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy held up the ball, and Squiff came home looking as cheerful as he could.

"Man in, Johnny!"

There was the keenest interest now. Johnny Bull was a good stone-wall man, and, with the Bounder putting on the pyrotechnics at the other end, the Greyfriars fellows looked for a long stand. But cricket is an uncertain game. Johnny had made a single run when Fatty Wynn caught him napping; and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went out to replace him.

Inky was a great man with the ball, and generally a reliable bat, but his batting did not prove reliable this time. He came out for a duck's egg, and Tom Brown followed him in.

The New Zealand junior kept the innings alive, but runs did not seem to come to him. But they came to Smithy when he had the batting.

Smithy was not always at top-notch, but on his day he seemed to be master of the game. To-day, evidently, was his day, and the runs seemed to come for the asking. A delighted crowd of Greyfriars fellows saw his score leap—50, 60, 70, 80! Centuries were uncommon enough in junior cricket, but it looked as if the Bounder would make his century. There was a roar at every hit.

Tom Brown came out at last for 6, and Mark Linley went in. The Lancashire junior had hard luck, going down to the first ball. Hazeldene, who followed on, never looked for a moment like holding the bowling.

Harry Wharton made a sign to Bertie Vernon to get ready. Bertie was last man in, and, by an unexpected chance, he had to join his double at the wickets.

Hazel lived through the finish of an over, and then Smithy put on the runs again. His score stood at 98, which equalled the whole score for the first St. Jim's innings, when that over ended. Undoubtedly it was Smithy's day.

Then Hazel had the bowling again, and the Greyfriars men watched him anxiously. Hazel's job was to keep the innings alive for Smithy, but Hazel was more likely to think of breaking his duck than of backing up

another batsman. However, he played cautiously, and stopped ball after ball, till in an unlucky moment he was tempted to hit out, and landed the ball fairly into George Figgins' palm.

Bertie Vernon went out to take the last ball of the over.

First man in, and last man in were both at the wickets now.

Bertie Vernon had watched his rival's big innings, with deeper and deeper feelings of bitterness. After spoiling his show, as it were, the Bounder was getting all the limelight, and all the kudos. But he had never supposed that Smithy would last right through the innings, and that he would have to join him as last man.

Smithy wanted two more to make his century. A Remove man who put up a century in a match with St. Jim's was rather like the classical gentleman of old, who was like to strike the stars with his sublime head. There was little that the Bounder would not have given to complete that century, and little, unfortunately, that his rival would not have done, in his present bitter mood, to prevent him from completing it.

That Smithy would go on piling up runs, so long as his partner kept the innings alive for him, nobody doubted. He was going to make his century, and go a good deal over it, if only the innings lasted. Once he had the batting again, the fur was going to fly once more. All that was required of Bertie was to keep his sticks up for the last ball of the over. If he blocked one ball, all was well. Nobody wanted him to hit. The hitting could safely be left to Smithy, when he had the bowling again. And he was not a vain-glorious ass like Hazel. He knew what was wanted, and could do it.

Nevertheless, Bertie did it—knocking the ball away, and running. Some of the fellows at the pavilion gasped.

There was no run to be had for that ball—everybody could see it, except, apparently, Vernon. But he was running, and the Bounder from the other end stared at him in rage and amazement. Somebody at the pavilion shouted: "Go back, you fool!" in the excitement of the moment. Bertie tore on, and the Bounder, waking up to it, as it were, ran also, glaring fury at his rival as they crossed.

Smithy ran like the wind, but there was no chance. The ball crashed in, with Smithy's bat a yard off the crease.

The Bounder fairly stuttered with rage.

"Out!"

Smithy turned round and stared at Vernon, and then made a stride along the pitch, the bat gripped in his hands, as if the thought was in his mind of handling it on the fellow who had run him out.

Fortunately, he restrained himself. But his face was white with rage as he tramped off the field.

"You saw that?" he panted. "You saw it—he's run me out! I—I—I—"

The Bounder choked with rage. "Rotten luck, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "But you've done splendidly to—"

"I tell you he ran me out on purpose!" panted the Bounder. "I tell you—"

"Oh, that's rot!"

"Draw it mild, old man!"

"I tell you—" The Bounder almost shrieked.

"Don't let St. Jim's hear that, Smithy! Pack it up, old bean!"

The Bounder shut his teeth on his rage. Other fellows looked very curi-



Smack! Vernon-Smith staggered against the blackboard as Vernon's hefty smack landed across his face. "Mon Dieu! Zat you shall stop zis!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier, gesticulating with both arms in his excitement. "Garçons—boys—verree bad boys— Ciel!"

ously at Vernon. It was difficult to believe that he had deliberately run out the batsman who was on the verge of making his century. As difficult as it was to believe that Smithy had intentionally dropped the catch which would have given Bertie the hat-trick. The fellow had made a mistake—a disastrous one, but only a fat-headed mistake.

But no such thought was in Smithy's mind. The fellow had run him out to spoil his show, taking advantage of the unexpected chance that had brought them together at the wickets. That was the Bounder's firm conviction.

Smithy threw down his bat with a crash. Several fellows hastily interposed between him and Vernon, or the visiting team might have been treated to the unexpected sight of a scrap between two members of the Greyfriars eleven. The Bounder tramped away, and some of the St. Jim's fellows glanced after him curiously, and Figgins winked at Tom Merry as he went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Uncle and Nephew!

"UNCLE!"

Captain Vernon started.

That glorious June day was drawing to a close, the sun setting red over the Kentish downs.

Captain Vernon was pacing the little stone terrace in the west wing of Lantham Chase—the only inhabited portion of the great mansion which the Army man rented for reasons best known to himself.

Half a dozen rooms at most were used in the mansion that contained more than a hundred. Garage and

stables were locked up, and never used at all. The whole household staff consisted of the captain's old Army servant, Hunt.

It was a puzzle to Bertie Vernon, as well as to other fellows who had seen the place, why the captain rented such a place at all, which evidently he did not want. Certainly he had no money to throw away uselessly. The Vernons were, as Smithy had scoffingly told all the Remove, poor relations of the Vernou-Smiths.

Captain Vernon's dark, sunburnt face was deep in thought as he paced on the stone terrace. Perhaps he was thinking out financial problems which must have been difficult for him to deal with.

He did not notice a cyclist coming up the avenue that wound through the park. He started and stared as a breathless voice addressed him and Bertie Vernon came up the stone steps of the terrace.

"Bertie!" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

Bertie Vernon almost tottered on to the terrace. His face was flushed, and he panted for breath. He looked as if he had covered the nine or ten miles from Greyfriars School at top speed on his bicycle.

"Bertie!" repeated the captain, staring at him. "What are you doing here? Have you leave from school?"

"No!"

"Has something happened?"

"Yes!"

"You have been fighting!" The captain's eyes rested on his nephew's nose, redder than his flushed face.

"That's nothing!"

"Why are you here? Sit down, my boy." Captain Vernon led the panting junior to a seat on the terrace. "Sit

down—and tell me what has happened."

"I want you to take me away from Greyfriars!"

The captain did not answer that. He stood looking at his nephew, a dark cloud settling on his face.

"Why did you send me there?" went on Bertie Vernon. "You must have known there would be trouble with that cad! We've loathed one another since we were small kids. It had to come if I went to his school. Uncle, I want you to take me away from Greyfriars."

The captain did not speak, but he shook his head slowly.

"I can't stay there!" exclaimed Bertie. "I tell you I can't stand that fellow! If you knew what had happened—"

"I'm waiting to hear what has happened," said the captain quietly. "Nothing very serious, I am sure."

"Oh, no—not serious!" said Bertie bitterly. "Only I'm ashamed to look any fellow there in the face after to-day. That's all!"

"You've done nothing to be ashamed of."

"I have."

"That's nonsense!" said the captain tersely. He sat down in the seat beside his nephew. "Tell me what it is. I heard from you that you were playing cricket to-day—"

"That's it! That's how it happened."

"Calm yourself, my boy, and tell me," said Captain Vernon. "It is not like you to get excited like this. More like—"

"More like my Cousin Smith!" said Bertie bitterly. "Yes, and if I stay at

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

his school I shall get more and more like him!"

"That's nonsense! My brother's son could never be like that rank outsider, except in looks, which cannot be helped! Tell me, first of all—how did you get disfigured like that? Fighting with Smith?"

"No! But it came through him, like everything else that's happened at the school. He vowed with a senior man, who took me for him, owing to that rotten likeness between us, and pitched into me!"

The captain smiled faintly.

"Well, schoolboys will row with one another," he remarked. "That was hardly Smith's fault, Bertie."

"There's something or other nearly every day. He chipped me in the French class this morning, and I smacked his head."

"Not in class?" ejaculated the captain.

"Yes!"

"You seem to have your temper in little better control than Smith's!" said Captain Vernon dryly. "This won't do, Bertie. I suppose you have a pretty stiff punishment to face?"

"Five hundred lines—which I haven't touched, as I had to play cricket. That means going up to the Head."

"Couldn't you have cut the cricket match?"

"Yes—and let the fellows down! I cut the lines instead, and I've got to go up to the headmaster. Like Smith!" said Bertie savagely. "He doesn't care—I do! More than once his blackguardly tricks have been landed on me, owing to that rotten likeness! Now I'm landed with the Head! But—but what's happened to-day is the limit. He dropped a catch I gave him—a perfect sitter. It would have had the St. Jim's skipper out, and he let it go—on purpose! That sort of thing puts a fellow off his form! I've done rottenly in the game—"

"A cricket defeat is not the end of the world, Bertie."

"Oh, I know! Only a schoolboy game! But when a fellow acts like a cad and a traitor in a game—"

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"That sort of thing must be expected from a fellow like Smith!" he said contemptuously.

"But not from a Vernon!" burst out Bertie. "I'm as rotten as he is. I ran him out to get even!"

"Oh!"

"He didn't care if he chucked the match away, if he put a spoke in my wheel! And I—I didn't, either, just at the minute—though I could have kicked myself the next! But—it's done now!"

The captain's face was very grave.

"We won the match," went on Bertie. "I don't care a hoot about that! After what I'd done to Smith, I couldn't bowl—I couldn't do anything. I'd have been glad to get out. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,636.

of sight of everybody. My bowling was no good, but Smith's batting pulled us through. We've beaten St. Jim's—if that matters! Smith is telling all Greyfriars at the top of his voice that I ran him out to prevent him from getting his century! What can I say? I can't tell lies—like Smith! I can't own up to it! Even fellows like Bunter and Skinner would despise me for it. Not so much as I despise myself! It's all that rotter's fault—he's making me as blackguardly as himself!"

The schoolboy sat panting.

Captain Vernon sat silent.

"Why did you send me to his school?" went on Bertie. "There are plenty of other schools! That's what Smith himself says—and he's right in that at least. There couldn't have been any need to pick out his school from a hundred others!"

"Greyfriars is near Lantham Chase, Bertie."

"St. Jude's is nearer—so is Redclyffe. I'd gladly go to either to steer clear of Vernon-Smith!"

The captain shook his head again.

"Why not?" demanded the schoolboy passionately. "I can't understand you, uncle! In everything else, you do everything you can for me! I've no claim on you—"

"You are my brother's son."

"Plenty of men don't bother much about their brother's sons! I'm not a fool, and I'm not ungrateful. You've done everything for me, and I'm going to prove, some day, if I can, that you haven't thrown it all away. But in this—in this—"

"I've told you that there was a reason for sending you to Greyfriars!"

"Although Smith is there?"

"Because Smith is there!" said the captain, quietly.

"Oh, I can't understand you!"

"You will understand, when the time comes!" said the captain, with a grimness in his look and tone that made his nephew stare at him: forgetful, for a moment, of his own troubles.

"What do you mean, uncle? I can't understand all this! I can't understand why you've taken Lantham Chase—a place you don't want! Do you think I don't know that you're spending money you can't spare? The school fees at Greyfriars must come heavy on you—yet you're throwing away hundreds—for nothing, that I can see! You take this immense place, and live in a corner of it—you specially pick out Smith's school for me—there's something behind all this that I can't understand."

"You will understand when the time comes!" said the captain again. "Leave it at that! And now—"

"Will you take me away from Greyfriars?"

"I cannot."

"Let me stay here! As soon as the rotten match was over, I got on my bike—and came— Let me stay here, and write to the Head—"

"Impossible!"

Captain Vernon rose to his feet.

Bertie's eyes were on his face: but that face was inscrutable.

"Listen to me, my boy!" he said, quietly. "I have made certain plans for you—plans for your benefit and advantage! Their success depends upon your staying at Greyfriars. Some day I will explain—not now! Now you must trust to your uncle's judgment. My dear boy, surely you can trust to me to do what is for the best for you."

"Yes! But—"

"You will be late for lock-up—you will have to face trouble when you get back! My boy, you must toe the line!"

Bertie did not stir. He had left Greyfriars as soon as the St. Jim's match ended, hoping never to return to the school. And, attached to his uncle as he was, and grateful to him, there was a touch of resentment in his look. Why had he to stay at Greyfriars—the very last school in the kingdom that he would have picked—Smithy being there? Why?

The captain stood looking at him, in silence. His face grew darker and darker, though not with anger. His affection for the boy was too strong, for anger to enter. His voice was low when, at length, he spoke again.

"You don't want to stick it out at Greyfriars, Bertie?"

"No!" muttered Vernon, stubbornly.

"If you choose, you shall give it up! It will wreck all my plans—it will be the end of all the hopes I have formed for you! It will be a knock-out blow for me! If, after hearing that, Bertie you still desire to leave Greyfriars, let it be so, and I will say no more."

Captain Vernon walked across to the stone balustrade of the terrace, leaving his nephew to think it out!

His nephew was at his side in a moment.

"I'm going back, uncle!" he said, quietly. "I can't understand—and it's no good trying to! But if it's as you say, I'm going back! Good-bye!"

And in a minute more, Bertie Vernon was on his bicycle, racing over the miles back to Greyfriars School.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy in a Tantrum!

"THAT cur—"

"Oh, chuck it, Smithy!"

"That rotter—"

"Give us a rest!"

"I want to know whether he's going to play for Greyfriars again, after what he did to-day!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "You saw what he did—every man on the field saw it! Is that rotten traitor sticking in the Remove eleven?"

Harry Wharton made no reply to that.

He was in his study, not in a very pleasant frame of mind, when the Bounder tramped in.

Tom Merry & Co. were on their homeward journey. Neither that dropped catch nor the run-out had, as it happened, made any difference to the result of the game. It was a victory for the Greyfriars Remove, though not by a wide margin.

Certainly that margin would have been much wider, had Tom Merry been dismissed for 2 in his first innings, as he might have been—and had the Bounder made his century, and some more added to it.

The Bounder, in his second innings, had not done so well—he was in a state of rage and exasperation and resentment that did not make for good play. It was his 92 in his first innings that really had pulled the game through.

Still, it was a win for Greyfriars; and most of the fellows disregarded the mutual accusations of the rivals of the Remove.

As cricket captain, Harry Wharton could not quite disregard them. If either was right, or if both were right, it was foul play on the cricket field; and if the family feud was being carried into cricket, it was time for a foot to be put down, and put down hard.

Bertie Vernon had disappeared immediately after the match. He had not come in yet, though it was past

lock-up. But Herbert Vernon-Smith was very much in evidence.

If he was not, as Bertie had described it to his uncle, telling all Greyfriars at the top of his voice, he was at least finding plenty to say about it, and in far from subdued tones.

He would have made that century, but for the treachery of his rival. He might have made another in the second innings—he thought so, at least. The Bounder undoubtedly thought more about his individual display than about the match itself. He had been deprived of that very unusual distinction—a century against St. Jim's "Vernon-Smith out for 98" was better than any other man in the match could show; but it was not like "Vernon-Smith 100 not out." And his second innings had been mucked up—he had made only 20. The day of his life, as it were, had been turned into more or less of a fizzle! And he had had foul play!

He stood in the doorway of Study No. 1, his eyes glinting at the captain of the Remove. Wharton's face was worried and troubled—and angry, too! He was feeling, at the moment, fed up to the chin with both the rivals of the Form.

"You're not blind!" went on Vernon-Smith. "You saw it, like everybody else! He ran me out—"

"Fellows have been run out before!" grunted Wharton. "Every man who gets run out doesn't make a song and a dance about it."

"You know that he did it to dish me!" snarled the Bounder. "He wasn't going to let me get my century!"

"Oh, bother your century!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, impatiently. "Is cricket a one-man game, with you playing to the gallery all the time? Do we run games in the Remove only to show you off?"

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

"You're shouting out foul play at Vernon!" went on Harry. "Well, he's doing just the same thing at you! You dropped a catch for him! He thinks you did it to dish him! You're a precious pair—six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other."

"Catches have been dropped before this—"

"And men have been run out before this!" Harry Wharton fixed his eyes on the Bounder's face. "You dropped a perfect sitter, Vernon-Smith! It was a catch that Bunter, or Coker of the Fifth, could have made! You let it drop! Is your conscience quite clear about that?"

The Bounder hesitated a moment before he answered.

"Yes," he said, at length. "I never meant to drop it—it was clumsy enough, I know; but I never meant—I can say I never meant—"

"Yes, I think I get you!" said the captain of the Remove contemptuously. "You never said to yourself, in so many words, that you'd drop that catch. But you never tried—not as you would have if Inky or Squiff had been bowling. You couldn't do your best for a fellow you dislike! And you call that cricket—and howl out about foul play when the same man runs you out."

The Bounder clenched his hands.

It was true that his conscience was clear, about that dropped catch, so far as actual intentions went. But Wharton's words were true, all the same: unconsciously, or sub-consciously, he had not done his best. Still, that was different from a deliberate run-out.

"Are you playing that man again?" he asked, between his teeth.

"I dare say Vernon will ask me the same question about you!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "And I'll tell you this—both of you won't play in the same match again! I'm fed up with your family feuds, Vernon-Smith. If you can't give one another fair play, you can't both play in the same team! I've settled on that—when Vernon plays, you won't—and when you play, Vernon won't! And if you don't like it, you can lump it!"

"Then you'll be playing him again, after—"

"When we want a bowler, I shall play Vernon! When we want a batsman, I shall play you! I won't play you together again."

"That's not good enough for me!" roared the Bounder. "If you leave me out once for that cad, you can leave me out altogether."

"You can please yourself about that!" retorted Wharton. "If the Remove choose to elect you captain, you can run the cricket—until then, you'll toe the line like any other fellow! And now go and shout at somebody else—I'm fed up with it. Keep your tantrums for Redwing—he will stand them, and I won't."

Vernon-Smith gave him an angry glare, and slammed the door and stamped away.

On the Remove landing he passed Billy Bunter, who favoured him with a fat grin.

"I say, Smithy, did Vernon really run you out?" he asked. "Skinner says it was all right if you hadn't gone to sleep at your wicket! I say—Yaroo!"

Bunter roared as the Bounder's foot shot out!

Vernon-Smith tramped down the stairs and left the fat Owl roaring.

At the foot of the staircase, Monsieur Charpentier was standing, and his glance fell on the Bounder as he came down.

Vernon-Smith did not heed him, or even see him, till Mossoo caught him by the shoulder as he passed.

"You verree bad boy!" exclaimed the French master. "Now, zen, I take you to ze headmaster, you verree bad boy."

"Let go my shoulder!" snarled the Bounder, and he jerked himself away so forcefully that Mossoo tottered and stumbled against the newel-post of the banister.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Mossoo. "Vous osez—you verree bad boy! Come viz me at vunce, mauvais garçon."

The Bounder strode on, too savagely angry to heed.

Why the French master was meddling with him, he did not know, or care; it did not occur to him, for the moment, that Mossoo was mistaking him for Vernon, who was due to go up to the Head.

"Ecoutez!" squealed Mossoo. "Je vous dis—I tell you—Mon Dieu! Is it zat you do not heed?"

"Vernon-Smith!" The Bounder had not noticed Mr. Quelch in the offing, but he noticed him as the Remove master's voice came sharply. "Vernon-Smith! Stop at once! How dare you treat Monsieur Charpentier with such disrespect?"

The Bounder came unwillingly to a halt! He was in a mood to treat Quelch as he had treated Mossoo, but he restrained that reckless impulse.

"You will ask Monsieur Charpentier what he desires to say to you, Vernon-Smith, and then you will follow me to my study to be punished for your insolence," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Smeat! Is zat Smeat!" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier. "But it is ze ozzier zat I vant—ze boy Vernon—"

"This is Vernon-Smith, Monsieur Charpentier!"

"Eh? C'est ca! Now I remember zat Vernon he have ze nose verree red," assented Monsieur Charpentier. "It is not Smeat zat I vant—but—"

"But that does not excuse the boy's insolence!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Follow me to my study, Vernon-Smith!"

In a state that was near boiling point, Vernon-Smith followed Mr. Quelch to the Remove master's study, where six of the best were his reward for his disrespect to the French master. He was almost boiling over when he left Mr. Quelch.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bang for Bunter!

PREP was on in the Remove when Bertie Vernon came up to the studies.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent looked up as he came into Study No. 1.

He had cut lock-up and calling-over, though why, and where he had been, nobody knew. He looked tired, which was not surprising, as he had had a long bike ride following a cricket match. He gave a little gasp as he dropped into a seat. The two juniors could guess the cause.

"Been up to the Head?" asked Nugent.

"Yes!" answered Vernon briefly.

"I fancied that Mossoo meant business! Whopped, I suppose?"

"Six from the Head!" said Vernon bitterly. "Might have been a flogging in Hall—but it's the first time I've been up to the Head, so I was let off lightly."

"Well, if you punch a fellow's face in class—"

"I shall be punching it again soon, I expect! Don't talk to me about that cad!"

Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

"I won't talk to you at all till you feel a little more civil!" he answered.

Vernon coloured.

"Sorry!" he said. "I'm not feeling frightfully bucked at the present moment. Everything's gone amiss to-day!" His colour deepened as he met Harry Wharton's eyes. "I suppose you're going to ask me whether I ran Smith out on purpose this afternoon?"

"No!" said Harry. "I won't ask you that, Vernon! I'll tell you the same as I've told Vernon-Smith: that you won't both play in the same match again."

"Oh!" said Vernon. "Well, that's sense! We don't seem to be able to keep the peace—and the cricket field isn't the place for family feuds! I'm always here when you want me—and when Smith plays, I'll be more than willing to stand down!"

Wharton nodded, and the subject dropped with that. But the captain of the Remove could not help reflecting that Bertie Vernon had received that decision a good deal more sensibly and reasonably than Herbert Vernon-Smith had done.

After prep, when Wharton and Nugent prepared to go down, Bertie Vernon sorted out a *Henriade* and a sheaf of impot paper.

"Lines?" asked Harry.

"The same lot—I've still got them to do!" granted Vernon. "If I don't hand them in to-morrow evening, there's another visit to the Head to come—and I'm tired of calling on my dear headmaster."

"Mossoo's got his back up this time!" said Harry. "He's generally a lamb!"

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But you rather got his rag out, you know!"

Vernon's eyes glinted.

"I'll get it out again, too!" he snapped. "If the old ass is going to be down on me, I'll give him some reason!"

"You gave him some to-day, old bean!"

"I know that! But he ought to have had sense enough to see why Smith wrote that rubbish on the board! If he wants the same kind of treatment from me that he gets from Smith, he can have it! By gum, I'll make the old ass sit up for getting me six from the Head!"

Wharton and Nugent looked very curiously at Bertie. They might have fancied that it was the Bounder who was speaking. It was evident that the resemblance between the two was more than skin deep!

"I'd get the lines done, and forget all about it!" said Harry quietly. "Mossoo's a good little ass, and what's the good of hunting for trouble? Look here, Froggy never looks twice at an impot—we'll stay up a bit and help you with the lines, if you like."

"No; that's all right!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Just in time, Bunter!" said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"Eh? Is it a spread?" asked Billy Bunter eagerly.

"No—lines!"

"What?"

"Just in time to help Vernon with five hundred lines in French!"

"You silly ass!" roared Billy Bunter. "Catch me helping anybody with five hundred lines in French! I say, you fellows, would you mind cashing a postal order for me?"

"Trot it out!"

"It hasn't come yet——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It will be here in the morning—it's from one of my titled relations, you know! If you let me have the five bob now—I say, you fellows, don't walk off while a fellow's talking to you!" roared Bunter.

But Wharton and Nugent did walk off, laughing, leaving William George Bunter to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

The fat Owl turned his spectacles on Bertie Vernon.

"I say, Vernon, if you've got half-a-crown you don't want——"

"I haven't! Get out—I've got lines to do!"

"No—I suppose you haven't!" said Bunter. "Must be awful to be hard up! I say, Vernon, what is it like to be short of money?"

"You fat ass, get out!"

"Well, I'm only being sympathetic," said the fat Owl. "I sometimes run short of cash myself—very rarely!—but, of course, my people are rich! I've heard Smithy say that your uncle can't afford to pay the rent on Lantham Chase! What will you do if they put the bailiffs in?"

Bertie Vernon picked up a ruler.

"I say, did you mean it about making old Froggy sit up for getting you six from the Head?" inquired Bunter. "Smithy would! He chucked a bag of flour at Mossoo once, and there was an awful row. Are you going to chuck a bag of flour at Mossoo?"

"Will you shut up and get out, you fat chump?"

"Well, look here, what are you sticking in the study for?" demanded Bunter. "Nothing of yours in the cupboard, I suppose?"

"I've got my lines to do, you fat owl!"

"Well, you can't do five hundred lines in French before dorm. That stands to reason! I'd advise you to leave them till to-morrow and go down to the Rag now," said Billy Bunter. "You needn't worry about anything in the study cupboard. Nothing of yours there. He, he, he! Besides, I'm not going to touch the study cupboard. Look here, why not go down to the Rag?"

"Do you want this ruler on your bags?"

"Eh? No!"

"You'll get it if you don't clear!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study. At the doorway, however, he turned and blinked back at Bertie.

"I say, Vernon——" he squeaked.

"Well, what?" asked Vernon impatiently.

"Who ran Smithy out? Yah!" hooted Bunter.

And, having delivered that Parthian shot, the fat Owl revolved rapidly on his axis and bolted.

But he did not bolt quite fast enough. The junior in Study No. 1 stepped swiftly to the doorway and swiped with the ruler, and there was a report like a pistol-shot as it landed on Bunter's tight trousers.

Bang!

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter.

And he flew!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Calling on the Captain!

"COMING?" asked Vernon-Smith after class the following day.

"Where?" asked Redwing.

"Lantham Chase!"

Tom Redwing's face became very grave.

"You're not going to Lantham Chase, Smithy! What on earth are you thinking of?" he exclaimed.

"Can't a fellow call on a relation who happens to live near the school?" asked the Bounder. "Don't you think Captain Vernon might be pleased to see me?"

"More likely to give you a licking, I think! Have you forgotten the trick you played on him last week—taking a party of fellows there, palming yourself off as your cousin," exclaimed Tom. "You're pretty lucky that Captain Vernon never complained to the Head about it when he found it out! For goodness' sake leave him and Lantham Chase alone."

"Think he may cut up rusty if he sees me there?"

"I should say it was a cert."

"All the more reason why you should come, then; he can't wallop two of us!"

"Keep clear of him!"

"I've got something to say to him," answered the Bounder, "and I'm going to get it off my chest. Come or not, as you like."

Tom Redwing, with a sorely troubled face, followed his chum to the bikeshed.

Lantham Chase was about the last place in Kent that he would have wished to visit in company with Herbert Vernon-Smith. He could hardly understand the Bounder's nerve in going there after the trick he had played a week ago, which must have incensed the captain deeply. But if the obstinate and headstrong fellow was going, he did not want to let him go alone.

They pushed out their bicycles and pedalled away to Redclyffe and the Lantham road. It was rather a long ride, but they covered the ground swiftly, with hardly a word spoken as they went.

The great gates of Lantham Chase were shut; the lodge, where a lodge-keeper had lived with his family in old Squire Luscombe's time, shut up and deserted. But entrance was easy enough; there was a right-of-way through the park, and the two Greyfriars juniors turned their machines from the road into the path under the trees.

They emerged into the great avenue, which wound for more than a quarter of a mile from the gates to the grand entrance of the mansion—closed now and never opened. It was Tom Redwing's first visit to the place, but the Bounder had been there before more than once.

Tom looked with interest at the great many-windowed facade of the mansion as it burst on his view at the last curve of the long avenue.

"A splendid place, Smithy," he remarked. "Must cost a fortune to keep up a place like this in these times."

The Bounder gave a sneering laugh.

"If the gallant captain has three or four hundred a year, he hasn't more than that," he answered. "The rent's more than his income."

"I don't quite see how any man could pay his way on those lines, Smithy," answered Tom, with a smile.

"Bet you he's getting head over ears in debt. I can't make the man out. He's up to some game here," said the Bounder. "He must be beggaring himself to keep this place—and he lives in it like a rat in a corner! Two or three rooms out of more than a hundred! One old Army man in his service! When I made the old goat take me for Bertie the other day, and landed a crowd of fellows on him suddenly, they couldn't even scrounge a tea for the party."

Tom's lips set a little. He had his own opinion about that audacious trick the Bounder had played.

"Here we are!" The Bounder dismounted and leaned his machine on an ancient stone lion at the towering porch. "No good knocking at that door; it's never opened, as you can see! This way for the inhabited part!"

"But look here, Smithy——"

"What is he doing it for?" asked Smithy. "Hundreds of pounds in rent for as much accommodation as he could get for a pound a week in Courtfield! Can't be only swank. The Vernons are all swank, but where's the swank in taking a whopping place and camping in a corner of it? He looks poorer here than he would look in a cheap bungalow, against all this background! The man's no fool—he's keen as a razor. He's got some reason; but what the dooce it is beats me hollow."

Redwing, in silence, followed his chum to the stone terrace on the west wing.

Nobody was in sight there, and Vernon-Smith went up the steps to the terrace, Redwing following him reluctantly.

A door stood wide open, giving admittance to the house.

Herbert Vernon-Smith gave it a sharp rap.

From some dusky region at the back a man emerged.

It was Hunt, the captain's man, and he came to the door, with a frown on his face. Only too clearly visitors were not expected, or wanted, at Lantham Chase.

But his frown cleared as he saw the Bounder.

"Oh, you, Master Bertie!" he said. "Why didn't you walk in, sir?"

Hunt, the captain's man, had a leathery brown face and a grim, square jaw. But that leathery face melted at



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the sight of the schoolboy he took for Bertie Vernon. It was clear that the old fellow was attached to the captain's nephew—a circumstance that had an irritating effect on the Bounder.

"I'm not Bertie, you old goat!" he snapped. "I'm Vernon-Smith."

Hunt's leathery face became grim and hostile at once.

"Oh! You're the young rascal who played that trick last week, coming here and calling yourself Master Bertie!" he snapped. "If I were the master I'd lay a stick on you for your impudence!"

"You'd better remember that you're not the master, then, my man!" answered the Bounder contemptuously. "Go and tell your master that I want to see him."

"The master's in the turret-room, and I ain't calling him down for you!" said old Hunt. "You ain't wanted here, Master Smith, and well you know it. You'd better go before the master sees you."

With that Hunt turned and tramped back across the hall and disappeared down a passage at the back.

"Checky, old fool!" said Vernon Smith.

"Let's go, Smithy!" muttered Redwing.

"I'm not going without seeing my relation," sneered the Bounder. "That old goat said he was in the turret-room; I know my way there! Come on!"

"Smithy, you can't walk into a man's house like that—"

"I can and I'm going to!"

"Well, I can't!" said Redwing.

"Wait for me here, then."

And, leaving Redwing on the stone terrace in a very uneasy frame of mind, the Bounder coolly walked in.

At a little distance down the hall was

the steep, narrow stair that led up to the turret. The Bounder knew the way well enough; he had visited the turret when he was at Lantham Chase, pulling the captain's leg, a week ago.

He mounted the narrow, steep stairs.

At the top there was a small landing, from which only one room opened—the turret-room.

Pausing on the landing, the Bounder looked in at the open doorway.

Captain Vernon stood in the turret-room, full in his sight. He was leaning on one of the window embrasures, staring out across the smiling landscape of Kent—not in the direction by which the juniors had come, or he would have seen them.

He did not look round, evidently not having heard the Bounder's steps on the turret stair.

Smithy stood looking at him for a few moments. He glanced at the new wooden shutters, with their patent locks, on the two window embrasures, which he had noticed on his previous visit.

Those shutters had puzzled him then, and puzzled him now. Why the captain, who had hardly a bean to his name, spent money on the addition of those useless shutters in a room that was not occupied was a mystery to the Bounder.

The man had a reason; he was too keen, alert, and quietly businesslike not to have a good and sufficient reason for what he did. But the reason was hard to guess; for it was scarcely imaginable that anyone was ever to be kept against his will in the turret-room, and those shutters seemed to serve no other purpose.

As the Bounder stood looking in, Captain Vernon suddenly turned, as if

becoming conscious that he was not alone.

He gave a start at the sight of the Greyfriars junior.

"Bertie!"

But the next moment he knew that it was not Bertie—partly from the Bounder's sneering, hostile look, but chiefly, doubtless, from the recollection of the beetroot nose Bertie had sported the previous day.

A glint came into his eye, and he made a quick step towards the Bounder.

"You!" he said, between shut lips. "You impudent young rascal! You have the effrontery to come here!"

"Why not?" sneered the Bounder. "I've got something to say to you, Captain Vernon, and I've come here to say it!"

The anger in the captain's dark face was very easy to read. But it faded out, and a very singular look came in its place which was far from so easy to read.

"So you have come here to call on me, Vernon-Smith?" said the captain in a quiet tone, and still with that strange look on his face.

"I've come to speak to you."

"Very well."

Captain Vernon smiled—a smile that Herbert Vernon-Smith, keen as he was, could not fathom. But it gave him, somehow, a sense of danger, and for a moment he hesitated to step into the turret-room.

"You may come in!" said Captain Vernon; and he stepped back to the window, and stood there, leaning against the wall.

And the Bounder, shrugging his shoulders at that strange premonition

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of danger that had for a moment assailed him, stepped into the turret-room of Lantham Chase.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Danger!

CAPTAIN VERNON took a black Indian cheroot from his case and lighted it, and the Bounder, watching him curiously, noted that his hand shook slightly.

The man was labouring under some suppressed excitement, it seemed to Smithy. But it was not anger; the anger had quite passed from his look.

He occupied himself for almost a minute with the cheroot, the Bounder watching him, and wondering what was in his mind.

It was likely enough that the captain might think of laying a stick round the junior who had deluded him and made a fool of him only a week ago. But Smithy did not think that that was in his mind.

Something was—something hostile—and Smithy could not fathom it; but again for a moment that premonition of danger came—a strange chill feeling, like that of a fellow suddenly glimpsing an abyss at his feet.

"You may sit down, Vernon-Smith." The captain, ceasing to be occupied with the cheroot, waved a hand to an oak settle by the side of the fireplace. "I am waiting to hear what you have to say to me."

"I'll stand, thanks!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Please yourself!"

"I've come here to speak to you about Herbert Vernon," said the Bounder. "I want you to take him away from my school."

Captain Vernon gave a start.

He had heard that request the day before from his nephew. Certainly he had never expected to hear it repeated by Vernon-Smith.

His eyes glinted.

"You have the nerve, the impudence, to come here and say that to me, Herbert Vernon-Smith!" he said in a very quiet tone.

"I've come here to speak plainly!" answered the Bounder coolly. "I can't make out why you picked my school for him. I know you dislike me—you always have—and I can assure you it's returned; but I'm not fool enough to fancy that you sent the fellow to my school simply because I didn't want him there. But you knew there would be trouble; you'd seen enough of it between us when we were small kids and loathed one another."

Captain Vernon did not speak.

"I'm not saying it was all Vernon's fault; very likely it was mine as much as his—or more than his, I shouldn't wonder! That makes no difference; it was only sense to keep us away from one another, as we couldn't stand one another at any price! Isn't that so?"

No answer from the captain.

"Now he's sent to my school, and, as we're the same age and about the same in other things, he's naturally in my Form. We're chucked together every day—in class and out of class. I can't step out of my study without seeing him in the Remove passage; he can't go up or down stairs without passing me. We're both cricketers, and both in the Form eleven. We jar on one another all day, every day."

"Well?"

"Well, what's the good of it?" demanded the Bounder. "I loathe the

fellow, but I don't want to be always rowing with him. He loathes me, but he'd be satisfied to see nothing more of me; he doesn't want continual rows and troubles, even less than I do. Where's the sense in sticking us in the same Form in the same school?"

"Is that all?"

The Bounder breathed hard.

"I've come here to see if I can get you to take a sensible view," he said. "I know that Vernon never wanted to come to my school, and that he'd be glad to leave. I'll say that for him—he hates it as much as I do. It's as rotten for him as for me."

"Well?"

"Why not take him away?" said Vernon-Smith. "Redclyffe's a good school, and nearer this place, if you want him near you. He's a new fellow—only a few weeks in the school; he could leave at the half-term, and no harm done. It would please him as much as me; and I suppose you care a bit about him, as you're standing the racket for him at school. I should have forgotten all about the fellow if he hadn't butted in at Greyfriars. Why keep up a feud for nothing?"

The captain allowed a stream of blue smoke to escape his lips, and regarded it thoughtfully as it rose in the air. But he did not speak.

"There's another thing," went on Smithy. "We're so alike that we're always being taken for one another. It makes us both savage. Vernon's landed in my rows more than once. I've quarrelled with a dozen fellows for taking me for him. And we're both in the cricket, and even on the cricket field we can't stand one another. Yesterday, in our biggest fixture, he played a dirty trick on me—a foul trick—"

Captain Vernon raised his hand.

"That will do!" he said curtly.

"I haven't come here to tell tales about the fellow!" said the Bounder contemptuously. "I only want to make it clear that, whatever your reason was for sticking him at Greyfriars, it was a mistake to send him to my school. There's been trouble ever since he came, and now it's got to a point that I can't, and won't, stand it any longer! He feels the same as I do—"

"Very likely," said the captain, with a curl of the lip.

"It's not even as if Greyfriars was your own school," went on Smithy. "You were a Harrow man. Why not send him to your own old school?"

"That is my business!"

"Of all the schools in the kingdom, you had to pick out my school, for no reason that I can guess!" said Vernon-Smith. "You don't care about me, but it's as rotten for him as for me. Don't you care about that?"

The Bounder was speaking quietly and patiently. He was sincerely making an effort to get rid of the trouble before it went from bad to worse.

"What he did yesterday," he went on, "has put the lid on. I believe a foul trick like that won't rest easy on his mind. He ran me out, so palpably that everybody could see his game. I've not the slightest doubt that he's feeling rotten about it since. If I'd done it I should feel rotten enough. You've put him in that position against his will! It's your fault!"

The captain's eyes glittered for a moment.

"I dare say you think the trouble is all my fault, and that Bertie's a perfect specimen," went on Smithy. "Well, even if you're right, that's no reason for keeping him under my nose. He would be as glad to get away as I should be

to see him go. Why not take him away, then?"

"You have come here to dictate to me on the subject of selecting a school for my nephew?" asked Captain Vernon sarcastically.

"I've come here to ask you not to send him to the one school in England where he's bound to come up against trouble all the time," answered the Bounder. "I think that's reasonable."

Captain Vernon stood silent.

He eyed the Greyfriars junior, and that singular look which the Bounder could not understand was on his face again.

"Does my nephew know that you have come here?" he asked at length.

"I never speak to him if I can help it!"

The captain moved from his position by the window. He paced several times to and fro across the turret-room, and came to a stop again, this time standing between the Bounder and the narrow doorway.

Smithy smiled sarcastically.

He was as keen as a razor, and he knew, as well as if the captain had told him that the man was blocking his retreat from the turret-room.

If that meant that the licking was coming, Smithy had no fear—he was ready to hit out, and hit hard, if the captain laid a finger on him. And Tom Redwing, on the terrace below, was within reach of a shout.

"Are you going to answer me?" he asked quietly. "You can call it a cheek, if you like, to come here and talk to you like this—but I call it horse-sense! There's absolutely no reason why Vernon should be at my school—unless you've got some reason that a fellow can't understand."

"That may be possible," said Captain Vernon, with a curl of the lip. "I have no intention of explaining my reason to an impertinent schoolboy!"

"Well, if I've come here for nothing, that's that!" said Vernon-Smith, with a deep breath. "You can take the responsibility for what's coming! I'll make that fellow fed-up with my school as hard as I can!"

"So you, a junior schoolboy, have come here to threaten me?" said the captain grimly.

"Take it as you choose!" said the Bounder coolly. "You've acted like a fool in this, and now you know how it's turned out, you're doing wrong in keeping that fellow at my school. You know it."

"And no doubt you have mentioned to a crowd of interested schoolboys that you were coming here to tell me where I get off?" smiled the captain.

Smithy stared at him.

"What do you mean? I've told nobody I was coming to Lantham Chase, if that's what you mean!" he answered.

Captain Vernon stood very still in the doorway. His face had set suddenly hard.

The Bounder, looking at him, felt his heart beat with that sudden feeling again of danger in the air. It was a feeling that he could hardly understand, caused by the strange, unfathomable look on the hard, dark face of the Army man.

"I'm going!" he said.

He made a step towards the door.

The captain did not stir. He stood there like a statue, barring the way.

The Bounder's fists clenched. He could not understand that tense look on the Army man's face; but he knew that he was not going to get out of the turret-room without trouble.

"Redwing!" he shouted.

Captain Vernon gave a violent start. "What do you mean? Who is Redwing?" he exclaimed, in startled tones.

"My pal, who came here with me—he's waiting on the terrace!" jeered the Bounder. "I'm not here alone, if you're thinking of handling me, Captain Vernon! Better think again."

Captain Vernon seemed to catch his breath. He gave the Bounder a very strange look and stepped aside from the doorway.

"I have no intention of handling you, as you express it, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "You have come here unasked, and you have been insolent; but you can go as soon as you please, and I shall be glad to see the last of you!"

He walked across to the window, turning his back on the Bounder.

The doorway was open to Vernon-Smith, and he left the turret-room. He found Tom Redwing at the foot of the turret-stair as he went down. Tom had heard his shout and entered.

"Smithy, what—" he began.

The Bounder laughed mockingly.

"O.K.!" he said. "I fancy I should have hit trouble here if I'd come alone, but the dear man gave up the idea when I called to you. Let's get out of this."

They went back to their bicycles and rode away down the avenue.

From one of the windows of the turret-room Captain Vernon watched them as they went.

Herbert Vernon-Smith guessed that he would have hit trouble had he come to Lantham Chase alone that day. But he little dreamed as he rode away with Redwing what that trouble would have been—as little as he dreamed of the dark thoughts in the mind of the man who watched him go from the high window of the turret.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mad?

BILLY BUNTER grinned.

Bunter was rather amused. It was the following day, and the school dinner was over. Billy Bunter was taking a little rest—which he really needed after his exertions at dinner—in a quiet and secluded spot.

He was seated on the low, broad window-sill of Class-room No. 10. That sill was low and easily reached; it was warmed by the June sunshine, and Bunter sat leaning back against the brickwork, with his fat little legs stretched along the sill.

As he sat he chewed butterscotch.

It was quite likely that Hazeldena of the Remove, if he had a fancy for eating butterscotch after dinner, might be inquiring in those very moments what had become of the packet he had left in his study.

That did not worry Bunter.

It was quite likely that Hazel might think of Bunter in connection with missing butterscotch! Fellows often did think of Bunter at such times. But he was not likely to spot Bunter in that secluded corner.

Basking in the summer sunshine, happy and sticky and comfortable, Billy Bunter found life worth living; the only fly in the ointment being that in an hour's time the bell would ring for class. But that was one of the awful things in life that could not be helped. At the moment Bunter was happy—the universe was, on the whole, working to his satisfaction.

Nobody, of course was in Class-room No. 10. That was the French master's class-room, and nobody would be there till the next French set. Class-room No. 10 was rather far from the Form-rooms. It opened from a side passage on Masters' Passage, quite near the French master's study.

But though nobody had any business in the French master's class-room, the door of that class-room opened and a Remove man entered.

Bunter, outside the window, could see in.

That was why he grinned.

The Remove man who entered Class-room No. 10 was either Herbert Vernon-Smith or Bertie Vernon. But even the short-sighted Owl, who often made mistakes, knew this time that it was Smithy!

His nose was not like a beacon!

Vernon's nose had toned down somewhat since Coker's hefty punch had landed on it. But it was still red as a rose, if not as a beetroot—it was still an annoyance to its irritated owner and a cause for smiles in the Remove. So, as the Remove man had a nose of normal hue, though exactly like Bertie's in other respects, Billy Bunter knew that the newcomer was the Bounder.

He grinned a wide grin.

There was only one reason for a fellow to enter Class-room No. 10 when it was vacant—and that was a rag on the French master.

Smithy was the man for rags! And only a couple of days ago he had had six from Quelch for cheeking Mossoo. Bunter had no doubt that he was there for a rag.

He would not have been surprised to see Vernon at that game. Bertie's angry words on that subject had been heard by the fat Owl, and tattled by him up and down the Remove. All the Form knew that Bertie was sore about having been sent up to the Head, and had said that he was going to make Froggy sit up for the same.

Probably, after reflection, Bertie had dropped that idea; at all events, he had done nothing in that line. His five hundred lines of French had been handed in, and the trouble seemed to be at an end. If Bertie had any schemes of retaliation in his head, he certainly had not carried them out so far.

But Smithy was always a ragger! This fellow, anyhow, was Smithy! And Billy Bunter watched him through the window with great interest.

The Bounder had entered the room quickly and shut the door after him. He stood for a moment or two listening at the door, as if to make sure that he had not been seen coming there. But that was not probable if he had been careful.

Class-room No. 10 was perilously near Masters' Studies; but Mossoo, at all events, was not likely to have an eye on his class-room, for it was generally known that Mossoo took a little nap in his study after dinner, and at that moment he was most likely fast asleep in his armchair and dreaming of la belle France.

The Bounder did not even glance towards the window. Having listened at the door, he stepped quickly to the French master's desk.

Bunter's grin widened.

He had no doubt that Mossoo was going to find some startling surprise in that desk when he came in to take a class again in that room.

Skinner once had parked the House-dame's cat in it; a rat had been found in it once.

Deeply interested, the fat Owl watched through the window.

But the grin faded from his fat face, and a look of utter amazement took its place, as he watched Smithy's actions.

From the desk the Bounder took a bottle of ink. As it glimmered in the sunshine, Bunter could see that it was red ink.

He expected to see Smithy swamp that red ink over the books and papers in the desk. Smithy did nothing of the kind.

He drew the cork from the ink-bottle, then he laid it on the desk and took something from his pocket.

It was a small sponge-bag, such as a washing sponge is packed in for travelling. From the bag the Bounder drew a wet sponge.

He snipped off a corner of it, wetted it with the red ink, and rubbed it on his nose.

Bunter's eyes popped behind his spectacles.

He could not for a moment or two believe either his eyes or his spectacles. Smithy's action was so utterly amazing that it took his breath away.

Unless a fellow was utterly potty, it was unimaginable that he should sneak into a deserted class room and smudge red ink on his nose.

But, short-sighted as Billy Bunter was, he could see all that was going on in Class-room No. 10.

Bunter blinked, dumb with astonishment.

He watched the junior in the class-room like a fellow mesmerised.

Smithy took a little mirror from his pocket and surveyed the effect of his handiwork. He did not seem quite satisfied with it. He snipped off another piece from the sponge and rubbed his nose carefully with it, holding up the mirror in his left hand to watch progress.

The bright red was reduced in tone; it left the Bounder's nose a glaring red, but not so aggressively red as before—it left it, in fact, looking exactly like Bertie Vernon's reddened nose.

Satisfied at last, the Bounder recorked the bottle and returned it to its place in the desk. He crossed to the fireplace and threw the two small inky pieces of sponge into the chimney; he was done with them. The wet sponge he packed in the bag again and crammed the bag into his pocket.

Then he cut back to the door of the class-room and opened it.

Bunter, dumbfounded, watched him.

It seemed incredible that Vernon-Smith, after that amazing action, meant to show himself in public with a red nose. If he did, it meant only one thing to Bunter—that Smithy had gone off his rocker. It meant that he was absolutely potty—as mad as a hatter!

The Bounder stepped out of the doorway and shut the door after him.

He was gone.

Class-room No. 10 was deserted again. Bunter was left blinking.

"Oh crikey!" breathed the fat Owl.

Smithy was mad!

What would the fellows think when they saw him going about with a nose reddened like a clown in a circus?

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He slipped from the window-sill. He had not finished the butterscotch, but he did not stay to finish it; he slipped the remnant of Hazel's butterscotch into his pocket and rolled away—to impart to the rest of the Remove the startling news that Herbert Vernon-Smith had gone mad!

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THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Rag on Froggy!

MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER awoke suddenly

The dapper little French gentleman was reclining in his armchair in his study, the window tightly shut to exclude any possibility of fresh air, his eyes shut, and his mouth open, taking his usual nap after his midday meal—and dreaming of his native land.

From that happy dream he came back to reality with a jump—though, indeed, what he came back to seemed rather like a nightmare!

Something wet was splashing in his mouth.

He blinked dizzily and dazedly through a splashing stream; he gasped and he gurgled.

Dimly, through the splash, he saw that his study door was open, that a junior stood there, and that that junior had a squirt in his hand.

But such a sight was so startling, so amazing, that Mossoo might well have wondered whether he was not still dreaming.

Mossoo was often ragged—indeed, he lived and moved and had his being in an atmosphere of ragging. But this was a wild and reckless rag quite outside the limit—unheard-of, unthinkable! It was safe to say that never before in the history of Greyfriars School had a fellow barged into a master's study and squirted that master with water from a squirt!

"Urrgh!" gurgled Mossoo. "Wurrgh! Mon Dieu! Gurrgh!"

It was a large squirt. It had a lot of water in it. Mossoo got the lot in a splashing stream.

Had the junior at the doorway bolted on the spot he might have escaped unrecognised, so utterly astounded was the French master at this amazing, this unthinkable happening.

But he did not bolt on the spot; he seemed in no hurry, wild and reckless as his action was.

Monsieur Charpentier staggered to his feet, clawing water from his eyes.

He had a full view of the junior in the doorway.

In usual circumstances he could not have said at a glance whether it was Vernon or Vernon-Smith; but in the present circumstances one glance was enough. Form and features were the same, but the nose glared red. It was Bertie's red nose that he glared at.

"Mauvais garçon!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. He made a jump for a cane on his table. "You bad, wicked Vernon!"

Slam!

The door banged shut, and there was a patter of running feet. The junior, who had not been in haste before, bolted with the greatest haste now that he was recognised.

"Mon Dieu!" Monsieur Charpentier clawed at his streaming face and beard.

Mossoo had a jet black moustache and beard—and some fellows knew, or guessed, where the black came from.

Mossoo's fingers were grubby as he clawed at that wet beard, the stream of water had damped the dye.

"Parbleu! Nom d'un nom!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. Seldom or never did Henri Adolphe Charpentier permit himself such expressions. Only in dire moments was he capable of calling on the name of a name. "Nom d'un nom d'un nom! Ce mauvais

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garçon—nom d'un nom d'un nom d'un chien!"

Name of a name of a name of a dog was really frightfully expressive in French. Only Mossoo's drenched state excused such language.

The French master clawed and dabbed and gasped and spluttered, then he whisked across to the door.

But the passage was empty when he glared out into it. The ragger had had two or three minutes—and half of one would have been enough. He was safe out of Mossoo's clutches.

But Mossoo had recognised him—recognised him beyond the shadow of a doubt! He knew that it was Vernon! Vengeance for that unexampled outrage was only postponed.

He tottered down the passage to Mr. Quelch's study.

Mr. Quelch—who had no use for naps—was in his study, correcting Form papers. He jumped as his study door was hurled open and a drenched and dishevelled French master shot in.

"Regardez!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier, gesticulating wildly.

Mr. Quelch "regarded" him—he stared at him—he almost goggled at him! He was accustomed to excitability from the little French gentleman, but Mossoo was more than excited now; he was almost foaming.

"Monsieur Charpentier, what has happened?" exclaimed the startled Remove master. "What—?"

"Regardez donc!" shrieked Mossoo, prancing with rage. "Voyez! Je vous demande—I ask you, *sair*, is it *zat* I shall be drench *viz* *votter*, *comme ca*?"

"Drenched with water?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Regardez, donc! Am I not drench? *Zat* garçon he *tirer*—he shoot *viz* one squirt—he come to my study, and he drench my face—*viz* *votter* from one squirt—"

"Is it possible? Monsieur Charpentier, surely it was not a boy of my Form—"

"*Zat* Vernon!" howled Monsieur Charpentier. "*Zat* mauvais garçon—*zat* I send to *ze* headmaster it is two day since—"

"Vernon? Surely not!"

"*Mais j'en suis sûr!* I see him *viz* *ze* squirt at my door—*zat* *verree* bad boy Vernon—"

"Pray be careful in what you state, Monsieur Charpentier!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Another boy in my Form—Vernon-Smith—"

"*Mais si!* But *zis* is Vernon—"

"I must be assured of that, *sir!* Only a couple of days ago, you will remember that you mistook Vernon-Smith for Vernon—"

"*C'est ca, c'est ca!* But *zen* I forget *zat* Vernon have *ze* nose *verree* red! *Zis* is Vernon because he have *ze* nose *verree* red."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Ever since Coker of the Fifth had given Bertie Vernon that nose on Monday nobody had been able to mistake the doubles of the Remove for one another. Mossoo certainly had done so on Wednesday, having for the moment forgotten Bertie's distinguished nose. But he had realised his mistake at once when he had remembered that nose.

"You are sure, Monsieur Charpentier?"

"*Je vous dis, j'en suis sûr!* I see him *viz* my own eyes! *Je ne suis pas aveugle!* I am not *vun* blind man, Quelch! I see him—it is Vernon—*zat* nose is *verree* red—*ce nez saute aux yeux*—he jump to the eye! Monsieur Quelch, I demand if *zat* boy go to drench me *viz* *votter* *viz* one squirt—"

"That boy, *sir*, shall be most severely

punished for such an outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "He shall be taken to the headmaster and flogged! His punishment shall be exemplary, *sir!* You need have no doubt on that point, Monsieur Charpentier! The boy will be flogged!"

Mr. Quelch touched a bell.

"I will send for Vernon this moment!" he said. "Remain here, Monsieur Charpentier—I will send for him at once."

And when Trotter came in answer to the bell, he was dispatched to send Bertie Vernon to his Form-master's study—where a grim-faced Form-master and a French master almost dancing with rage awaited him.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Safe!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH dodged hastily into Class-room No. 10 and shut the door.

He whipped the sponge-bag from his pocket, grabbed the sponge, and hurriedly wiped the stain of red ink from his face.

There were no eyes on him now: Billy Bunter had been gone several minutes from his seat on the window-sill outside.

Breathlessly the Bounder rubbed the red ink clean, and glanced into his pocket-mirror.

His nose, which a few minutes ago had looked exactly like Bertie's red, inflamed proboscis, was normal in hue again.

He packed the sponge into the bag and crammed it in his pocket; and crossed to the window. He had had time to escape to the class-room after squirting the French master in his study; but it was hardly safe to leave by the door again.

He opened the window, clambered out, shut the window after him, and stepped from the sill, where the fat Owl of the Remove had been reposing five minutes ago.

The spot was not overlooked by other windows; he was quite safe. And now that the glaring red was gone from his nose there was nothing to connect him with what had happened in the French master's study.

Perfectly composed, the Bounder strolled away with his hands in his pockets, a sneering grin on his face.

Already, he had no doubt, the hunt was up—for Vernon! He had made sure in Mossoo's doorway that the French master should see him—and, seeing him, Mossoo could not fail to take him for Vernon—with that nose! This time there was no doubt—Vernon was for it!

Smithy to do him justice, was not the fellow to play such a deadly trick on an enemy in ordinary circumstances. But, in his own mind, at least, he saw justification for any measure against Bertie Vernon!

He had gone to Lantham Chase at the risk of getting a licking from the captain to make an attempt to end the trouble in a peaceable and reasonable way. He had failed.

Vernon had not played fair in the matter of the run-out, and foul play on one side seemed to him a justification for foul play on the other.

If a fellow played Smithy fair he would play fair—if a fellow played him foul he would play foul! That was the Bounder's cynical code of ethics—a dangerous code, likely to land him in bad trouble.

After that interview at Lantham



"You'll be late for class, Vernon!" called out Hazeldene, as he saw the new boy wheeling out his bicycle. "If Quelch wants to know where I am," said Bertie Vernon, "tell him I've gone home, and that I'm not coming back!"

Chase the Bounder had made up his mind on the subject with cool and ruthless determination.

The fellow had barged into his school where he was not wanted; there was absolutely no reason why he should not go to another school—unless the Army man had some secret and surreptitious reason that no fellow could understand. Vernon-Smith had set out, coolly and deliberately, to make his rival fed up with Greyfriars—to land him, if he could, in row after row, till he had to go, or until he prevailed on his uncle to take him away.

That was the Bounder's determination which he intended to carry out without hesitation and without scruple.

The fellow had played foul, and he could take what he gave! That was excuse enough for the Bounder.

Smithy strolled into the quad and grinned sarcastically as he saw Bertie Vernon there.

Bertie's expression showed that he did not know, so far, that a row was impending—he had no knowledge of what had happened, and no idea of what was coming to him.

Smithy walked on, grinning again as he noticed Trotter, the page, coming out of the House. He could guess what Trotter was sent for.

Vernon-Smith strolled into the House, passing Trotter.

The page came to a halt.

"You're wanted, sir!" he said.

Smithy felt a qualm for a moment. Had he, after all his careful planning, made some mistake—were the vials of wrath, after all, to be poured upon the guilty head? But the next moment he guessed the House page was mistaking him for his relative.

"Who wants me?" he asked.

"Mr. Quelch, sir—if you're Master Vernon, sir!" added Trotter doubtfully. The Bounder laughed.

"I'm not! Vernon's in the quad!

Look for a fellow with a nose like a bonfire on Guy Fawkes night."

"Oh! Yessir!" said Trotter.

He went on, and the Bounder paused long enough to see him pick out Bertie and speak to him. Then, as Bertie Vernon followed Trotter to the House, the Bounder went up the staircase.

A number of fellows were gathered on the Remove landing, and he heard a fat squeak as he came up.

"I tell you, he's mad! Mad as a hatter! Stark, staring, raving mad, you know! Quelch ought to be told! Are you going to tell him, Wharton?"

"Not quite, old fat man! You can tell him, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, when a fellow's gone stark, staring, raving mad! Mad as a matter—I mean, mad as a hatter! I don't feel safe with a maniac about, I can tell you! I—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Smithy!"

"Oh crikey!"

Vernon-Smith, as he came up the Remove staircase, had a glimpse of a fat figure vanishing into the Remove passage.

A slam was heard up that passage! Then the click of a key!

Billy Bunter, evidently, was alarmed! What he had seen through the window of Class-room No. 10 convinced Bunter that Smithy had gone off his rocker—and Bunter had no use for lunatics at close quarters!

Vernon-Smith stared after the vanishing Owl as he went and then glanced round, none too pleasantly, at a dozen faces, all of which were regarding him rather curiously.

"What's up with that fat idiot?" he asked.

"Seems sort of scared of you, Smithy," grinned Bob Cherry.

"The scarefulness seems to be truly

terrific, my esteemed Smithy!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The Bounder frowned. He could see that something was on—though he had not the faintest idea what it was. Nobody was likely to tell him that Bunter had stated that he had gone mad.

With a frowning brow he tramped across the landing and went up the passage, leaving the Removites grinning.

Skinner, coming down the passage, stared at him and grinned.

Skinner had heard Bunter's startling tale.

The Bounder gave him a dark look. Whatever it was that was on, he could see that Skinner knew.

"What's up, Skinner?" he asked.

"What's the gabble about?"

"You ought to know!" said Skinner.

"Well, I don't—what is it?" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Bunter's telling the world that you've gone batchy—"

"What?" yelled the Bounder.

"Mad as a hatter, according to Bunter!" grinned Skinner. "I—Mind where you're shoving, Vernon-Smith."

Vernon-Smith did not mind where he was shoving. He gave Skinner a push that sent him staggering against the wall and tramped savagely up the Remove passage to Study No. 7.

He banged on the door of that study as it did not open.

"Bunter, you fat fool!" he roared.

"Oh crikey!" came a terrified squeak.

"Open this door, you blithering Owl!"

"No fear!"

"You burbling bloater—"

"You keep off, you beast!" gasped Bunter, on the safe side of the locked door. "You go away, Smithy! I ain't

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unlocking that door with a lunatic in the passage, so don't you think it."

"You potty porpoise!" roared the enraged Bounder. "What do you mean?"

"You go away!" squeaked Bunter. "You go and be mad in your own study! I'll yell for help if you try to get in here! You go away! You ain't safe!"

Bang!

The Bounder bestowed a kick on the door that made it ring and tramped on to his own study—much to Bunter's relief.

In Study No. 4 Vernon-Smith skived the sponge-bag, with the inky-red sponge in it, out of sight, up the chimney. Then he sat down to smoke a cigarette till the bell went for class, satisfied that, in those moments, his rival and enemy was going through it!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bertie Takes French Leave!

"C'etait mauvais garçon!"

Bertie Vernon stared at the French master as he came into Mr. Quelch's study.

Monsieur Charpentier, red with fury, pointed a forefinger at him as he entered.

Bertie had wondered whether that summons to his Form-master's study meant trouble. He had wondered, too, whether, if it was trouble, it was caused by Herbert Vernon-Smith. But he had not thought of the French master at all, and he was quite taken aback.

"Vernon!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I have sent for you to tell you that Monsieur Charpentier recognised you when you drenched him with water in his study, and that you will be reported to your headmaster for a flogging."

Bertie gazed at him, for a moment, in sheer bewilderment.

Then a bitter sneer crossed his face. "What has my cousin done now?" he asked.

"C'etait vous, mauvais garçon!" squealed Monsieur Charpentier. "Viz my own eyes I see you."

"I have done nothing, that I know of, to Monsieur Charpentier, sir!" said the new junior quietly.

"Allons! Je vous dis—"

"There is no mistake of identity on this occasion, Vernon!" said Mr. Quelch. "Monsieur Charpentier positively recognised you—"

"Mais si! Mais si!"

"What have I done, sir?" asked Bertie, with the same sneer on his face. "I mean, what am I supposed to have done?"

"You squirted water from a squirt over Monsieur Charpentier in his study, a quarter of an hour ago, Vernon, as you know very well."

"I did nothing of the kind, sir."

"Ecoutez!" gasped Mossoo. "Hear him!"

"I have been out of the House ever since dinner," went on Bertie quietly. "I have been nowhere near Monsieur Charpentier's study! I should never have dreamed of squirting water over him, in any case! I don't want to accuse anyone, sir, but you cannot have forgotten—"

"I have not forgotten, Vernon, that on several occasions your cousin's actions have been attributed to you, owing to the unfortunate resemblance between you!" said Mr. Quelch. "But on this occasion no such error can arise, as the disfigurement of your face makes it impossible."

"If Monsieur Charpentier thinks he saw me, sir—"

"He did see you, Vernon!"

"It is a mistake, sir! I have not been near his study!"

"Mais je vous ai vu!" shrieked Mossoo. "I have seen you! Yes! Viz ze nose so red—yes! You zink I do not know a nose zat is so red as one feu—as one fire, you mauvais garçon? Oui, I know him! I see that nose—yes! Otherwise, I zink it is Smeet; but when I see zat nose zat is so red I know zat it is you! Yes!"

Bertie Vernon breathed hard.

Again and again, since he had been at Greyfriars, his resemblance to the Bounder had landed him in trouble. But since Coker's punch had turned his nose into an imitation beetroot there

had been at least one consolation for the damage—he could not possibly be taken for his cousin, or his cousin for him, so long as the damage lasted.

Yet now, distinctive as they were in appearance, owing to that flaring nose, the mistake had occurred again—for he did not doubt for a moment that it was Smithy who had drenched the French master in his study. No other fellow at Greyfriars could possibly have been mistaken for him.

But the mistake was inexplicable, unless Mossoo had been so fearfully excited at the time that he did not know what he had seen and what he hadn't!

"I repeat, sir, that I know nothing of what has happened," he said steadily, "and by this time, sir, I think you ought to be prepared to take my word on the subject."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"If there were a doubt in the matter, Vernon, I should certainly do so," he said. "But there can be no doubt now. You were recognised by Monsieur Charpentier; in the present circumstances, it is quite impossible that your cousin can have been mistaken for you."

"Vraiment!" interjected Mossoo. "I zink I know zat nose when I see him—zat nose like one fire—"

"You are mistaken, sir," answered Bertie. His face set hard and his eyes glinted. "And no master ought to make such mistakes!"

"Eh, vat?" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier.

"Vernon!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Take care what you say!"

Bertie's eyes glinted at him.

"I said that no master ought to make such mistakes, sir," he exclaimed, "and I say the same to you, my Form-master!"

"Boy!"

"I suppose that Monsieur Charpentier was too excited to know what he saw," exclaimed Bertie. "Certainly he did not see me! And after what has happened several times already, I have a right to be believed."

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Say no more, Vernon! If you add impertinence to your offence—"

"I've told you the truth!" said Bertie stubbornly. "This is not the first time that Smith has played such a trick and landed it on me—and I suppose it will not be the last! Monsieur Charpentier is making a mistake—a silly mistake—"

"Vernon!"

"And I have a right to expect you to understand so! You have no right to believe me guilty of what another fellow has done!" exclaimed Vernon passionately.

Mr. Quelch's face reddened.

"Another word of such insolence, Vernon, and I shall request Dr. Locke to consider expelling you from this school, instead of administering a flogging!" he exclaimed.

"I don't care! I want to leave Greyfriars. I've asked my uncle to take me away, to keep me clear of Smith. He has refused! I'd rather be sacked than go through this over and over again!" almost shouted Vernon. "I'm fed-up with it! Ask the Head to sack me—I don't care! I'd rather be sacked than stay here!"

"You may be taken at your word, if you are not careful," rapped Mr. Quelch. "Be silent, and leave my study! I shall report your conduct to Dr. Locke, and to-morrow morning you will be flogged in Hall, in the presence of the whole school. Now go!"

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Bertie Vernon gave him a defiant look and tramped out of the study.

His face was as red as his nose with rage as he went down the passage.

A dozen fellows turned to look at him as he went out of the House. He did not give them a glance.

"My dear chap!" Tom Redwing tapped him on the arm. "What on earth's the matter? What?"

Bertie gave him a fierce look and jerked his arm away.

"Tell that rascal he's got by with it this time!" he said, his voice thick with rage. "Tell him I'm up for a flogging—for drenching the French master with a squirt!"

"You awful ass!" exclaimed Redwing, aghast. "Did you?"

"No; Smith did!" hissed Bertie. "That old fool, Froggy, thinks I did—but it was Smith!"

"I hear you've been talking a good deal about making Mossoo sit up," said Redwing dryly. "Every fellow in the Form has heard of it."

Vernon gave a savage laugh.

"Yes, I talked out of my hat when the old ass sent me up to the Head," he snapped. "I dare say that put it into Smith's mind!"

Redwing looked at him hard.

"Are you making out that Mossoo saw Smithy and took him for you?" he asked.

"Yes; it happened before, and it's happened again!"

"It couldn't happen now, with that nose of yours!" retorted Redwing. "If you don't know that, any fellow in the Remove could tell you. Even a blind ass like Bunter couldn't make a mistake between you! You'd better cut that out, Vernon!"

Redwing turned away with that.

Bertie cast a fierce look after him and tramped away to the bike-shed.

It was getting near time for class. But he was not thinking of class. What had happened now was the last straw. Whether by accident or design, Vernon-Smith had landed him for a flogging in Hall—and he was determined not to go through it! He was going home!

It seemed to him that even Captain Vernon, determined as he seemed to be to keep him at Greyfriars, for some reason beyond his understanding, must see now that he could not remain there. How could he be expected to go through this?

"You'll be late, Vernon!" called out Hazeldene as he saw him wheeling out his bicycle.

Bertie glanced round at him.

"If Quelch wants to know where I am, tell him I've gone home, and that I'm not coming back!" he called out.

And he wheeled out his machine, mounted, and rode away, leaving Hazel staring.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in a Funk!

"**V**ERNON'S cut!"

"Vernon?"

"Hooked it on his bike!"

said Hazel. "Is anything up, d'you fellows know?"

The crowd of fellows gathered at the door of the Remove Form Room all stared when Hazel came up with that startling news.

"Something's up, I believe," said Skinner. "Something to do with Froggy?"

"That ass Vernon was talking about ragging him!" said Bob Cherry.

"But—"

"He seems to have done it from what

he said to me!" said Tom Redwing. "Mossoo's been squirted!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Vernon couldn't have been ass enough—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Looks as if he has—"

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Hazel.

"Well, he's cut! He told me to tell Quelch that he had gone home, and wasn't coming back! I can see myself telling Quelch that—I don't think!"

"Heard that, Smithy?" called out Bolsover major, as the Bouncer came up. "Hazel says that giddy relation of yours has cut! Hooked it for home!"

The Bouncer gave a start, and his eyes glinted. If that news was well-founded, he had gained his point sooner than he had dreamed.

"Is that official?" he drawled.

"That's what he said!" answered Hazel. "He hooked it on his bike ten minutes ago—I saw him!"

The Bouncer laughed.

"So sorry to lose him!" he remarked.

"You fellows know how we love one another—you must have noticed it! Anybody got a hanky for me to weep into?"

Some of the juniors laughed.

"The fellow must be cracked if he's done anything of the kind!" said Johnny Bull.

Skinner chuckled.

"Bunter's been saying that Smithy's cracked!" he remarked. "Perhaps he's got them mixed again! I say, where's Bunter? He hasn't turned up!"

"Too scared of Smithy!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I fancy he will be more scared of Quelch, though, if he turns up late!"

Mr. Quelch came rustling along to the door of the Form-room.

Having let his Form in, he glanced over them frowning. Two members of his Form were missing from class.

Quelch was a whale on punctuality. The fact that Vernon was up for a flogging was no excuse for being late for class—in Mr. Quelch's opinion, at least. And there was no excuse at all for Bunter.

The lesson commenced. But the two missing members did not arrive in a breathless hurry, as was customary with late comers. They did not arrive at all.

Quelch rapped out to his head boy.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Two boys are not here! Do you know where they are?"

"I think Bunter's in his study, sir! I haven't seen Vernon!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"Please go and fetch Bunter immediately; and if you see Vernon, tell him to come in immediately!"

Harry Wharton left the Form-room. He was not likely to see anything of Vernon, who was miles away on his bike by this time. But it was easy to trail down the fat Owl of the Remove.

He found the door of Study No. 7 in the Remove passage still locked, and heard a terrified squeak within as he thumped on it.

"Bunter, you ass—" he called out.

"Go away, you beast!" squeaked Bunter. "You're mad!"

"Oh, my hat! Me, too?"

"Oh! Isn't that Smithy?"

"No, you fat ass! It's Wharton, and Quelch has sent me to fetch you down to the Form-room, you blithering owl!"

"I—I say, is—is Smithy in the passage?" gasped Bunter.

"You frumpious chump, Smithy's in the Form-room with the Form! Come out of that, you burbling bloater!"

"I—I say, is—is he calm?" gasped Bunter. "Not raving, or anything?"

"Oh crumbs! No—but Quelch will be soon if you don't come into class!

What's the matter with you, you potty owl?" exclaimed Harry.

"Smithy's mad!"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Mad as a hatter, you know! I mean to say, a fellow must be mad if he paints his nose red and walks about like that!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, I suppose he would be—but you only dreamed it, you fat duffer!"

"I tell you I saw him!" hooted Bunter. "I was sitting on the window-sill of Class-room No. 10 eating butter-scotch—it wasn't Hazel's butterscotch—and I saw him painting his nose red and—"

"Perhaps the butterscotch got into your head!" suggested Wharton.

"Anyhow, Smithy's all right now—but Quelch isn't—Quelch is getting wilder and wilder every minute! Come out of it!"

"I—I say, it ain't safe in the Form-room with a lunatic, you know," wailed Bunter. "You tell Quelch that Smithy's gone mad, Wharton! Tell him I'll come as soon as Smithy is taken away to an asylum."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Look here, you beast, suppose you saw a fellow paint his nose red, and walk off like that, wouldn't you think he had gone balmy?"

"Yes, rather! Right off his chump! But you must have dreamed it, you ass! Smithy's nose isn't red now."

"Isn't it? Then he must have washed it off!"

"Washed his nose off?"

"No, you fathead—the red ink! But he had it on—I saw him! He's mad—he may be dangerous! You ask Quelch to get a strait-jacket for him!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You howling ass, come out—if I go back without you, Quelch will come up after you! Is that what you want?"

"Oh dear! I—I say, sure Smithy ain't lurking in the passage?" gasped Bunter. "I mean to say, if he sprang on a chap suddenly—"

"Nobody here, but me! Come out, ass! Come out, blitherer! Come out, you frumpious chump! I shall have to go back to Quelch!"

The key turned in the lock!

The door of Study No. 7 opened, and a fat-face peered out cautiously, two little round eyes popping behind a big pair of spectacles.

Bunter was going to make sure that the coast was clear before he emerged. That, at least, was his intention. But as soon as the fat head was put out, Harry Wharton grasped a fat neck, and hooked the Owl of the Remove into the passage.

"Ow!" howled Bunter. "I say—Wow!"

"Come on, fathead!"

"I—I—I say, if—if I come to the Form-room, you—you'll see that that maniac doesn't spring on me!" gasped Bunter.

"I'll answer for Smithy—but I can't answer for Quelch!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Come on!"

Bunter reluctantly came.

Several times on the way to the Form-room he hesitated; and the captain of the Remove lifted a foot as a hint for him to move on—and Bunter moved on. But at the door of the Remove-room, the fat Owl stopped as if his fat little legs refused to carry him any farther.

"I—I—I say, old chap, you—you go in first and—tell me if—if he's calm!" he gasped.

Wharton opened the Form-room door.

"Get in, chump!" he said.

"But I—I say—Ow!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,636.

A shove on his podgy back sent Billy Bunter tottering into the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes shot round at him. The glint in those gimlet eyes might have alarmed Bunter had not his alarm already been concentrated on the Bounder. He did not look at Quelch—he turned his eyes and spectacles on Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder gave him a scowl.

Why Bunter had started an extraordinary story that he was mad, the Bounder did not know, and could not guess; but naturally it annoyed him exceedingly. His glare at Bunter indicated that the fat Owl had something to expect after class! To Bunter's alarmed eyes, it was a maniac's ferocious glare; and it caused his fat knees to knock together.

"Wharton! Have you seen Vernon?"

"No, sir!"

"Very well!" Mr. Quelch compressed his lips in a way that indicated that it was far from very well; indeed, not well at all; and turned his attention to the distressed fat Owl. "Bunter! Bless my soul! Where are you going, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Bunter was heading for the door! That glare from Vernon-Smith had done it! Fully convinced that Smithy was right off his rocker, Bunter really expected a spring next; and he was in retreat.

Mr. Quelch gave him an astounded stare, and then made a quick stride, grabbed at the fat Owl by a fat shoulder, and spun him back into the middle of the Form-room.

"Bunter," he thundered, "what does this mean?"

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Lets in Light!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at his Form-master.

But he gave him only one blink.

Then he revolved on his axis, to face the class, and the Bounder. Bunter was not turning his back on Smithy—not if Bunter knew it. Bunter was not going to run the risk of a mad fellow springing on him from behind.

He simply dared not turn his back on Smithy, so he had to turn it on Quelch. But that was such an extraordinary and surprising action that it made Quelch's gimlet eyes almost pop from their sockets.

The whole Remove stared at Bunter. Some of them had heard his amazing tale that Smithy had gone mad, so they understood what was the matter with him. Other fellows hadn't, and they rather wondered whether Bunter was right in his fat head.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!" squeaked Bunter, over his shoulder.

Quelch gazed at him almost dumb-founded. For a fellow to stand with his back to his Form-master, and answer him over his shoulder, was really unheard of.

"Bunter, face me at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word, what is the matter with this boy? Look at me, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey! I—I mean, yes, sir," mumbled Bunter, and he turned round and faced his Form-master.

"Now, Bunter, explain yourself. You are twenty minutes late for class, and— Upon my word! What are you looking over your shoulder for, Bunter?" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch.

Bunter was standing facing him now. But he had to keep an eye on Smithy. So he blinked round at the

Bounder over his shoulder, giving Quelch a back view of a fat head.

"Bunter, are you out of your senses?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"N-n-n-no, sir! Smithy is!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I—I don't know what he might do, sir, if—if I don't keep an eye on him," stammered Bunter. "Sup-suppose he sprang on a chap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed from the Remove.

"Silence! Silence in the class! Bunter, you utterly foolish boy! What has put this extraordinary idea into your foolish head?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"He—he—he's mad, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I jolly well know! I saw him! Mad as a Harch mare, sir!"

"What?"

"I mean a March hare! Madder! I—I say, sir, if—if you'd lock him up in a study, sir, and send for a doctor—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "This boy's extraordinary stupidity is no subject for merriment. Some thoughtless boy, I presume, has been taking advantage of Bunter's stupidity, and deluding him. Vernon-Smith have you done anything to frighten this stupid boy?"

"No!" grunted the Bounder.

"It is, I suppose, some sort of a foolish practical joke on this obtuse boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "I will allow nothing of the kind! Bunter, cease at once to look over your shoulder at Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh, yes, sir! But—but suppose he jumped at a fellow, when a fellow wasn't looking—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder's face was red with rage. But every other fellow in the Form was laughing. Bunter's antics were ever so much more entertaining than Roman history, which was awaiting the Remove when their Form-master was through with William George Bunter.

"Bunter, stop talking nonsense!" Quelch almost roared. "Who has told you this? Who has put this foolish idea into your head?"

"Oh, nobody, sir! I—I saw him!" gasped Bunter. "I've told some of the fellows, sir, but they don't believe I saw him, but I jolly well did, sir! Oh crikey! He's washed it off now, but I jolly well saw it!"

"Who—"

"Smithy, sir. I saw it all right—he did it. And I jolly well knew he was mad. Wharton says he'd think a fellow mad if he saw him do it. Well, I jolly well saw him, sir!"

"You saw what?" gasped Mr. Quelch. It was clear that the obtuse fat Owl was in a state of nervous dread, and the Remove master was determined to get at the bottom of this strange mystery. "What did you see, Bunter, or fancy that you saw? Vernon-Smith can have done nothing to give you so extraordinary an impression."

"He jolly well did, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I mean to say, Wharton himself said that he'd think a fellow mad—"

"Wharton, do you know anything of this? It is not a laughing matter, Wharton! Tell me at once if you know anything of Bunter's extraordinary delusion?"

"Only what Bunter said to a dozen fellows, sir," answered Harry, as seriously as he could. "He fancies that Smithy painted his nose red, and

went about with a red nose like a clown."

The Bounder gave a violent start.

Bunter had seen him.

He guessed that at once.

Bunter, of course, had never dreamed of the reason Smithy had had for reddening his nose. Supposing that Smithy had done it without any reason, it was rather natural for him to suppose that Smithy had gone off his rocker. Certainly any fellow who painted his nose red, intending to walk about in that state, might be reasonably suspected of having a screw loose somewhere.

"I didn't fancy it!" yelled Bunter. "He's washed it off now—but I jolly well saw it! Painting his nose red with red ink—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

Not a fellow in the Form was likely to believe that Smithy had painted his nose with red ink. It was too utterly absurd a thing to believe of any fellow. Certainly nobody had seen him with a red-painted nose, even if the Bounder could have been supposed capable of such clowning.

But Mr. Quelch caught his breath suddenly.

His glance passed from Bunter to Herbert Vernon-Smith. It rested on the Bounder's sullen face with a penetrating stare. Then it shifted back to the frightened Owl.

"Calm yourself, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, very quietly, "and tell me at once what has occurred. You say that you saw Vernon-Smith paint his nose with red ink—"

"Oh crikey! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter. "And a fellow must be mad to walk about the school with his nose painted red!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Where did you see this, Bunter?"

"In Class-room No. 10, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I was sitting on the window-sill, when Smithy came in and painted his nose red."

"Oh!" breathed the Bounder.

"I—I—I thought he was going to rag Mossos at first!" gasped Bunter. "And—and then he got the red ink, and—and painted his nose red with a bit of a sponge. And—and then he went out, sir, with—with his nose like that. So—so I knew he had gone mad, sir. Wharton says—"

"Will you be silent in class? Bunter, at what time did this occur?"

"After dinner, sir."

"At what time after dinner?"

"I—I don't know, sir. I—I never noticed," stammered Bunter. "It was some time after dinner—about half an hour after."

"That would be about an hour ago," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Precisely! I am very glad that you have told me this, Bunter."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I think if—if Smithy's locked up in a study, sir, and you—you send for a doctor, sir—"

"Go to your place, Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I say, sir, if—if Smithy was sent out of the Form-room, sir, we—we should all feel safer."

"Silence!"

"Oh, yes, sir! But when a chap's mad, sir—"

"Go to your place immediately, Bunter, and be silent, or I shall cane you!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to his place, keeping an uneasy eye on the Bounder as he rolled.

Vernon-Smith's lips were set in a tight line. He knew now why Bunter

had fancied that he had gone mad. Other fellows might have thought so, too, if they had believed Bunter's extraordinary tale.

But if they had known what had happened in the French master's study, they would have guessed the truth at once. He could see that Quelch guessed it. Indeed, it hardly needed guessing. All that was needed was putting two and two together.

"Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, in a very deep voice, "stand out before the Form!"

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

The Finish!

"**V**ERNON-SMITH, it was you that drenched the French master with water from a squirt!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder stood sullenly silent.

There was a buzz in the Remove.

"It was you!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Monsieur Charpentier was positive that it was Vernon because of the red and inflamed state of Vernon's nose, which it seemed impossible to mistake."

"Oh!" came a gasp from the Removites. They began to understand.

Tom Redwing's startled eyes fixed on his chum. He remembered what Bertie Vernon had said in the quad.

But Smithy did not look at him. He stood with a sullen, savage, sulky face, a gleam of defiance in his look at his Form-master.

This was the safety he had banked on! The merest chance had been enough to knock sky-high his cunning scheme—and that mere chance had materialised! He was found out, and he had the music to face!

He had the hardihood to face it!

"Monsieur Charpentier was deceived," went on Mr. Quelch, "by a cunning artifice—a trick that he never dreamed of suspecting, and that I never dreamed of suspecting when the matter was reported to me."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The awful rotter—so Bunter did see him, after all—"

"In Class-room No. 10, which is very near the French master's study, you made your appearance resemble that of Vernon by reddening your nose in a similar manner, by the use of red ink, Vernon-Smith!" resumed Mr. Quelch. "Do you dare to deny it?"

It was not much use for the Bounder to deny it!

Mr. Quelch paused, but he did not speak.

The silence was broken by a gasp from Billy Bunter.

"Oh crikey!"

Even Bunter was beginning to understand now!

Not for a moment had it occurred to the obtuse fat Owl that Smithy had had any special motive for that reddening of his nose! He had fancied that Smithy had gone off his dot—that was all!

But he began to realise now how the matter stood; and to realise, too, that he had, quite unconsciously, given away something of which he had never dreamed!

"You then proceeded to the French master's study, and perpetrated that outrageous action!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice deepening. "Knowing, and intending, that the blame would fall upon your relative, you did this! It was your object, and your intention, to involve your relative in punishment for an act he had never committed! For no other reason can you have made up your face to resemble his in the one respect in which it differed! Do you deny this, Vernon-Smith?"

There was a tense pause.

All eyes were fixed on the Bounder of Greyfriars.

There was contempt, there was disgust in many faces; in Redwing's, shame and distress.

The Bounder spoke at last, quietly and steadily. Every word came with crisp distinctness.

"No! I don't deny it! The fellow played me foul, and I've given him back what he gave me. I'm only sorry it hasn't come off!"

"You have been guilty of an act of treachery, Vernon-Smith—an act which, I am sure, your Form-fellows despise as thoroughly as I can do!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "This is the last time that such a trick shall ever be played! This is the third time—and the last!"

The Bounder breathed quickly.

He could guess what was coming now! All the Remove could guess.

Mr. Quelch's voice went on quietly:

"On the first occasion, I believed that you inadvertently allowed your guilt to fall on your relative's shoulders. On the second occasion, there was some shadow of excuse or extenuation! On this occasion, it is obvious that the act was deliberate, and carefully planned! You are not a suitable boy to remain at this school, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder opened his lips—and shut them again.

He had planned, coolly, resolutely, ruthlessly, to make his enemy fed up with Greyfriars, to drive him away from the school if he could. It had seemed, for a time, that he had succeeded! And this was his success—what he had designed for Vernon was coming home to himself! It was not Vernon who was to go—it was he who was to go! That was the ultimate outcome of his miserable and tortuous plotting!

"The truth," went on Mr. Quelch, "has come to light in time to prevent an act of injustice. But there shall be no such risk in the future. You will leave Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder stood very still.

"After class to-day," added Mr. Quelch, "I shall acquaint your headmaster with what has occurred. Tomorrow, you will leave this school. You may now go back to your place."

With a firm step, the Bounder returned to his place.

Every eye was upon him, but he looked neither to the right nor to the left. He sat down, his manner perfectly composed. The chopper had come down, but Smithy had the nerve to take what came to him without flinching.

The lesson was resumed, Mr. Quelch making no further comment on Vernon's absence.

But the Remove fellows noticed that

he did not glance at Vernon-Smith, or address any word to him. The Bounder sat there till the lesson ended, but it was clear that Mr. Quelch had already ceased to regard him as a member of the Form.

Often and often had the Bounder of Greyfriars gone dangerously near the limit—now he had overstepped it, and it was the finish.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Game to the Last!

"**I** SAY, you fellows!"

"You fat ass!"

"Well, I thought he was potty, you know!" said Billy Bunter. "Who wouldn't have? You said yourself, Wharton—"

"Fathead!"

"But I say, you fellows, what an awful rotter, you know!" said Billy Bunter. "Making up his boko to look like the other beast's boko, so that that old ass Froggy would think he was the other beast! I thought he was right off his chump when I saw him. Dirty trick, you know! I've a jolly good mind to tell Smithy what I think of him and his dirty tricks!"

"Oh, chuck it!" granted Bob. "The chap's got it in the neck—no need for anybody to rub it in!"

"That's all very well!" said Bunter. "Perhaps you don't despise dirty tricks so much as I do. Perhaps you haven't got my high principles! Smithy's an awful rotter, and I've a jolly good mind to go to him now, and say—Yarooop!"

It was rather unfortunate for Bunter that Herbert Vernon-Smith came along just then. A sudden boot on a pair of tight trousers interrupted Billy Bunter's remarks, and he roared.

"Yarooop! Wow! Who—Ow! Smithy, you beast! Wow!" Bunter jumped away just in time to elude another lunge of the Bounder's foot. "Yah! Beast! I'm jolly glad you're going to be sacked! Yah!"

And with that, Billy Bunter departed on his highest gear.

The Bounder cast a black look after him, and then gave Harry Wharton & Co. a sneering grin.

The Famous Five were serious enough.

They could not help feeling disgusted by the miserable trickery of Vernon-Smith. At the same time, they knew that he had been hurried into it by a headstrong temper and a sense of having had foul play. There was no excuse for him—but there seemed to be extenuating circumstances! And, in any

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case, the punishment that was to follow was a crushing one! It was no light matter for a fellow to be turned out of his school in disgrace—especially a fellow who had held his head so high.

"Well, you're going to see the last of me!" drawled the Bounder. "Feeling bucked?"

"No!" said Harry quietly.

"Save you a lot of trouble over the cricket!" jeered Smithy. "You'll lose a bat—but you've got plenty of batsmen—you keep your prize bowler—a real prize-rocket! He may run you out in an innings if he gets his back up—but perhaps you'll think his bowling is worth it."

"I think you must have been mad to do such a thing, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove. "But I'm sorry you're going."

"The sorrowfulness is truly terrific, my esteemed Smithy!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Nobody glad but Bunter?" asked the Bounder, in the same jeering tone. "I rather thought it would cause rejoicing all round! Except Redwing—he seems to feel it a bit—I don't know why! Still, it's a comfort to think how jolly they'll feel at Lantham Chase!"

The Bounder laughed—a jarring laugh!

"I don't know why that scheming rotter, Captain Vernon, sent the fellow here!" he went on. "He's got some game on that I can't fathom! I'm pretty keen, I think, but I can't spot his game. I know he's up to something, but it beats me to make it out. He can't have foreseen this—he knew there would be trouble, but he can't have foreseen how it would turn out. But—this will be pie to him—his precious nephew barging in here and turning me out of my school! Has that worm crawled in again yet?"

"Vernon hasn't come in!" said Bob.

"Good news for him when he does!" said Vernon-Smith. "Well, I shall see him again before I go—". The Bounder clenched his hands, and his eyes glinted. "I shall have the pleasure of leaving him something to remember me by—I'll leave him something good!"

"I—I suppose there's nothing that can be done, Smithy?" said Bob slowly.

"Only to knock that cad out before I go!" sneered Smithy. "I shall do that!"

"That's rot, old chap! That's no good!"

"Isn't it? It will be rather amusing to leave Quelch's favourite with a couple of black eyes to match the nose Coker gave him!"

"For goodness' sake, don't shout!" breathed Nugent. "There's Quelch coming out of the House—"

The Bounder laughed again.

"What do I care? What can Quelch do now? The old bean has done his jolly old worst—he can't pile on anything more! Quelch can go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith deliberately raised his voice, intending it to reach the ears of the Remove master as he came into the quad.

The Famous Five saw Quelch give a start, and his gimlet eyes gleam round at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Smithy had his back to the Remove master, but he had the corner of his eye on him.

"The old ass—" he went on.

"Dry up!" whispered Nugent.

"Why?" Evidently the Bounder, now that the worst had happened, saw no reason why he should not have his full money's worth, as it were! "The old goat has always wanted to get shut of me—now he's got his chance, and he's jumped at it with both feet! Who cares a boiled bean for Quelch?"

"Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder turned at his Form-master's voice, and eyed Mr. Quelch with cool unconcern.

"Hallo, old bean!" he said. "Seen the Head? Fixed it all up for me to take a morning train? Many thanks!"

"You impertinent young rascal!" said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "Go into the House at once!"

"Bow-wow!" said Vernon-Smith, a reply to his Form-master that made the Famous Five gasp.

"What? What did you say, Vernon-Smith?" Quelch seemed hardly able to believe his majestic ears!

"I said bow-wow, old bean! Getting deaf in your old age?"

"Upon my word! Vernon-Smith, go to my study at once! I shall cane you for this insolence—"

"You won't!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Deaf again? Don't be an ass, Quelch!" said the Bounder, with perfect coolness. "I'm sacked! That draws your teeth! If you think you're going to whop me, you've got another guess coming! Pack it up!"

A score of fellows had gathered round, and they listened to the Bounder in petrified silence.

Mr. Quelch gasped, apparently on the point of choking.

"Vernon-Smith! Come with me!" He made a grab at the Bounder's collar.

Vernon-Smith promptly dodged round the Famous Five.

Mr. Quelch came to a stop! It was altogether too undignified for a Form-master to chase an impertinent junior in the quad under a crowd of staring eyes.

"Boy!" he gasped. "I—I—"

"Save your breath, old thing!" jeered the Bounder. "Keep it for jawing the Remove! Thank goodness I shan't hear any more of it!"

And Smithy, deliberately turning his back on the Remove master, walked away across the quad.

Mr. Quelch made a stride after him.

The Bounder laughed, and broke into a trot. In his present reckless mood, it would have amused Smithy to give his Form-master a chase round the quad.

"Coker!" Mr. Quelch called to Coker of the Fifth, who was staring from a little distance. "Stop that boy!"

"What-bo?" said Coker.

Coker of the Fifth had not forgotten the cricket-ball on his waistcoat, for which he had inadvertently given Bertie Vernon a prize nose. He rushed in to stop Smithy.

With Coker in front, and Mr. Quelch coming on behind, the Bounder paused for a moment. Then, as Horace Coker grabbed at him, he made a sudden rush, lowering his head and butting!

Coker hadn't expected that! Coker never expected anything till it happened. Smithy's head crashed on the spot where the cricket ball had crashed, and Coker went over on his back, spluttering.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder circled round the sprawling Coker, and scudded on.

Mr. Quelch came to a halt—just in time to avoid falling over Coker's long legs.

"Urrgh!" spluttered Coker. "Ooogh! I'm winded! Wooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch stared at the sprawling Coker, and then at the Bounder—who, from a distance, waved a hand to him! Then, with a heightened colour, the Remove master went back into the House, leaving Coker gurgling, the crowd of Greyfriars fellows staring, and the Bounder laughing!

THE END.

(Vernon-Smith's asked for it, now he's going to get it! Look out for "THE PRISONER OF THE TURRET!" next week's super-story by Harry Wharton & Co. You'll enjoy every line of it!)

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HIS SINISTER VISITOR!

Amazing Story of Schoolboy Adventure,
featuring Jack Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's.

By DICKY NUGENT

"Seen your headmaster, young gents?"

That soft, stethy, sinister question made Jack Jolly, of St. Sam's, jump.

The cheery kaptin of the Fourth and his chums, Merry and Bright, were improving the shining hour. They were due to play in a darts tournament in the cricket pavilion in five minnits' time. In the meanwhile, they were bizzily engaged in spreading banana skins across the path leading up from the St. Sam's gates. Snarler, of the Sixth, was eggpected along that path at any moment, and Jolly and his pals were preparing a little surprise for that hulking grate booby.

That hoarse, husky whisper behind them was a startling interruption!

Wheeling round, the heroes of the Fourth found themselves gazing at a

mysterious-looking stranger. He wore a big black mistosh and a pair of smoked glasses, and there was a cunning, crafty smile on his face as he eyed the open, honest countenances of the St. Sam's juniors.

"Seen your headmaster, young gents?" he repeated, in oily, treakly tones. "I am seeking an interview with him. My name is Joseph Goodman—Honest Joe to my friends!"

"You'll find the Head somewhere about, I eggpect," said Jack Jolly. "Seen the Head, Fearless?"

As Jolly pronounced the name of the junior who had just arrived, a keen observer mite have spotted a movement of interest from the stranger. His eyes suddenly blazed behind his smoked glasses and a violent, spasmodic start shook him from head to foot, while a gasp like a tyre being punctured escaped from his lips.

"The Head?" repeated Fearless, in reply to Jolly's question. "Yes; I saw him making for the tuckshop five minnits ago. Who wants him?"

"I do, young gent," hissed the Head's sinister visitor, fixing a peering, penetrating look on Fearless through his smoked glasses. "By the way, did I hear your young friend call you Fearless?"

"Quite correct, sir!" replied Fearless. "Any objection?"

"Oh, no; none whatever!" leered the stranger. "Mite I ask where one can find the tuckshop?"

"Over there!" said Fearless, curtly. Mr. Goodman's lips twisted up into a smile.

"Many thanks, Master Fearless. I will see if I can find him."

He turned on his heel, chuckling evilly. But he didn't chuckle for long. As luck had it, he stepped right on to a banana skin. An instant later, he slid off his feet and landed on his back with a terrific bump.

Bang!

"Yaroooo!" cried Frank Fearless. "Lend a hand, you fellows!"

The grinning juniors helped the stranger to his feet. The next moment they wished they had left him to get up on his own. Too late they learned that Mr. Goodman's oily politeness was a

mask that

concealed an

evil nature

and a shock-

ing temper;

for the first

thing he did

when he stood

up again was to hit

out right and left!

Bang! Crash! Wallop! Thud!

"Yooooop!"

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Jack Jolly and Co. were bowled over

like ninepins; and they were not a

bit consoled when Mr. Goodman

swiftly recovered his good yewmour

again.

"I apologise, young gents!" he

leered. "Quite an accident, I assure

you! I will now go and find your

headmaster!"



He then sneaked off, leaving the injured Fourth-Formers mourning and groaning.

Mr. Goodman—if that really was his name—sneaked across to the tuckshop on the other side of the quad. There was only one customer in the shop—a bearded old fogey, who was moodily sipping a ginger-pop at the counter. Mr. Goodman bared his fangs in a smile.

"This must be the old goat, I suppose," he muttered to himself. Aloud, he said: "Eggscuse me, sir, but have I the honner of addressing that distinguished gentleman, the headmaster of St. Sam's?"

The Head looked round with a start. "Right on the wicket!" he said.

"The name's Birchmell—Dr. Alfred Birchmell at your serviss!"

The stranger boughed.

"Pray let me introduce myself, Dr. Birchmell. I am Joseph Goodman—

commonly known as Honest Joe. I have called on you to discuss a somewhat delicate matter—a private and confidential and very mysterious matter!"

A gleam of interest came into the Head's eyes.

"You couldn't discuss it with a better man than me!" he said, with a smirk. "It so happens that I have recently taken up the study of detective work—in fact, when you came in, I was just wondering to myself how long it would be before some crime was committed at St. Sam's that would give a chance to my marvellous abilities as a slooth! If you have some mistery that awaits elucidation—"

"That's eggactly what I have got, Dr. Birchmell!" mermered the Head's visitor, eyeing the Head craftily. "Shall I put the case briefly to you?"



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CROQUET A GAME FOR HE-MEN!

Says H. VERNON-SMITH

A good sporting writer should never be afraid to admit a mistake; and this week I am going to admit a very big mistake.

The mistake concerns the ancient game of croquet. Right up to last Thursday evening, I looked on croquet as a game for maiden aunts and doddery ex-colonels.

Since then I have changed my mind!

You can put the blame on Larry Lascelles. He invited me to make up a four on the Head's lawn with himself, Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout. I did so.

We played the "cut-throat" game in which you get another hit for knocking an opponent's ball; and believe me, I saw more venomous slogging than I have ever seen in either cricket or baseball!

It would not have surprised me towards the end, if we had all started bashing each other on the napper with our mallets. Fortunately, my bedtime arrived before we got to that stage.

I returned to the House with a new-born respect for this much-maligned form of sport.

Croquet, my friends, is a game for he-men; and if my experience on the Head's lawn was a fair guide, nobody but a he-man could ever hope to do well at it!

SHOULD FAGGING BE ABOLISHED?

By HARRY WHARTON

"Don't you see that fagging is simply bestly?" comes a heartfeltry this week in a letter from reader who calls himself 'Fed-up Third-Former'.

Well, yes—and so!

To lag for a p like Loder, I imagine is very "beestly" indeed. On the other hand, fagging for fellows like White or North must be quite a pleasant experience.

But my youthi corre-spondent probably agrees

I don't mind admitting, though it may sound like heresy to Greyfriars seniors, that I am rather inclined to agree with him.

Fagging is a survival from mediaeval times when education was in the hands of religious orders and schools were almost indistinguishable from monasteries. In those days the younger scholars probably had to do a good deal of the menial work of their establishments.

The system as it survived in public schools was viewed with favour in the nineteenth century because it was said to teach discipline and respect for one's elders. But in these changed days a lot of people are saying that it is a picturesque old custom which has outlived its usefulness.

The critics contend that it seriously interferes with the work of junior Formas without offering any compensating advantages. Their view is that discipline and respect for one's elders can be taught without it. If the idea of fagging had not become hallowed by tradition, they maintain, the headmaster who suggested

introducing it in any school would be looked on as a maniac!

In the old days at Greyfriars the Remove used to fag. We are no longer a fag Form, so I have no axe to grind; and you can take it that you are getting an unbiased view when I say that in my opinion fagging is unnecessary and ought to be abolished.

Having expressed which opinion, I must now prepare to face a flood of scornful and abusive letters from the seniors. I hope the "old fogey," as Dicky Nugent would call them, will not be too hard on me!

More chin-wag next week! HARRY WHARTON.

BUNTER TURNED TABLES ON JAPERS!

Confesses HERBERT TREVOR

I was one of a little band of japers that had a lark with Bunter on Wednesday afternoon. My fellow-plotters were Skinner, Snoop, and Stott.

It was Skinner's idea. Skinner is full of bright ideas. He had this particular idea when Bunter started badgering us to let him join our picnic on Popper's Island.

"Oh, all right, you can come,"

he said, at last, apparently yielding to the fat chump's blandishments. "But mind you, you'll have to work for your keep. You can only come if you carry one of the tuck hampers and row it across to the island yourself. We'll go for a row upstream in another boat before we land, and you can be unpacking your hamper in the meantime. All serene!"

"What-ho! Leave it to me, Skinner, old chap!" said Bunter eagerly. The duty of acting as custodian of a tuck hamper was one that made an instant appeal to our prize porker.

After we had shed Bunter, Skinner explained the wheeze. Bunter's hamper was to be a very special one, filled with bricks and rubbish. We were going to change our venue from Popper's Island to one of the meadows near Highcliffe. We would leave Bunter at the boathouse, taking the real hamper in our boat, and the owl would be left to row across to the island on his own and obtain whatever entertainment

On Wednesday afternoon, we left Greyfriars together in a very cheery crowd. Skinner and I carried the real hamper between us and Bunter toiled behind us carrying the dud.

Bunter's cheeriness was not quite so noticeable by the time he had reached the gates. His hamper was large and heavy. With his cap on the back of his head and streams of perspiration rolling down his face, Bunter looked decidedly the worse for wear.

"I say, you fellows, you might give me a hand. This hamper's jolly weighty!" he gasped.

"Nothing doing!" Skinner told him. "You agreed to the terms, and you'll have to stick to 'em. Of course, if you'd rather not come—"

"Nunno! That's all right, Skinner," said Bunter hastily. And Bunter stuck it out.

When we reached the boathouse, Bunter's hamper was duly deposited in his boat right next to ours. We dumped ours in our own boat. Bunter stretched out, gasping.

"I say, you fellows, where's my cap? It must have fallen off somewhere," he panted.

"Never mind your cap, old bean," Skinner said. "We'll give you a push off."

"Beast! I mean, not just yet, old chap. I must have my cap and, anyway, I can't row a blasted boat till I get my breath back. I say, you

he could obtain out of the hamper we had foisted on to him!

We all roared, when Skinner revealed his plan. Frightfully funny wheeze, we thought.

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fellows, you might look for a chap's cap."

"Oh, find the chump's cap some-body," grunted Skinner; and we all had a look round for Bunter's cap. It was quite a time before we found it, but we came across it at last some distance up the towpath; and by the time we returned, Bunter had recovered his breath and was ready to depart.

We gave him a shove into midstream and Bunter pulled off towards the island. After which, we got into our own boat and pulled away in the opposite direction, chortling.

But we didn't chortle later in the afternoon when we came to the picnic!

When Skinner opened our hamper, it was to find, to his horror, that it contained the boots, bricks, and rubbish that we had reserved for Bunter! Of the tuck we had packed for ourselves there was no sign whatever!

Breathing fire and slaughter, we got back into our boat and rowed to the island with all speed. But there was no Bunter on Popper's Island. The only signs remaining of his recent visit were an empty hamper and a small quantity of crumbs! Nor did we see anything of him again till calling-over.

After calling-over, we made a rush at him. Bunter, however, had apparently prepared for contingencies, and we found him promptly protected by Peter Todd and others.

"I say, you fellows, I hope you enjoyed your picnic," Bunter grinned. "I sort of had an idea your tuck-hamper would be easier to handle than mine, so I swopped 'em over while you were finding my cap. Mine was topping. Sorry I cleared off, by the way. Got tired of waiting, you know. He, he, he!"

That was all the change we got out of Bunter; so we made the best of a bad job, and bumped Skinner instead for thinking out such a brilliant wheeze.

Any further jape I play against the fat Owl will provide against the possibility that Bunter may not be such a fathead as he looks!

case, blissfully unaware that its owner was staring at them from the doorway!

The chums of the Fourth simply blinked at the sight of the two old jossers. But they didn't remain blinking for long!

At a signal from Fearless they raised the darts in their hands and took aim at the yewman's exposed soles. The next instant, four darts whizzed across the study and buried themselves in the seats of two pairs of trousers!

"Yarooooo!"

"Ow-ow!" In punctured! Woooooop!"

Dr. Birchmell's visitor woke up with a vengeance! Yelling feendishly they jumped to their feet. They danced frantically round the study, clapping their dazed anatomies and howling like the duns!

"Sorry, sir!" Fearless. "We mistook you and another gentleman for a couple of boards! Our mistake!"

"You—you—y—"

The Head choked. It was fearfully annoying to him to be caught like this. In view of his suspicious behaviour it was impossible for him to kick up a fuss, as he would have loved to do.

For two pins, he should have birched the boys black and blue. But for two darts, it was difficult for him to do anything! All eggtracting the darts from the seaf his trousers, the Head fled. The gentleman in the smoked glasses bowed suit and followed him. A roar of laughter followed the pair them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thus ended the old fogey's first effort to find the secret documents that Mr. Fearless left at St. Sam's. It could certainly not have been described as a success. But Frank Fearless, had he known it, had by no means come to the end of the trouble he was to have with the Head and his sinister visitor!

(More mirth and mystery in: "Lod Up the Garden!"—next week—no or-piece" by Dicky Nugent)