

LAUGH AT THE FUNNY ANTICS OF BILLY BUNTER, Inside.

The Magnet ^{2^D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



BILLY BUNTER'S BRAIN-WAVE!



GREYFRIARS is a very nice school. I would like to meet the fellow who says it isn't. It would be a pleasure to punch him in the eye. Greyfriars is the best school there is; but a lot of injustis goes on here, and I don't deny it. Third Form men in particular have to put up with a lot of injustis.

Take the quesction of fagging. Fagging is a beastly nuisance. I can't bare it. The man who invented fagging ought jolly well to be hoarse-whipped. I bet it wasn't a Third Form man who invented fagging, because Third Form men skorn it. I have asked all the Third, and not a single man has a good word to say for it, so that just shows you. There must be something wrong with a thing when everyone kondems it.

Fagging ought to be abolished. So ought Carne of the Sixth. He ought to be prohibited in any decent school. He ought to be prosecuted. He ought to be trodden to deth by terrified clerfants. There is nothing horrible that ought not to be done to him. I sag for Carne of the Sixth.

I despise him. He is a low blighter. He gives me a feeling of nawsea. I treat him with great disdain, and refuse to associate with one who is so far beneath me.

Unforchanately, he is permitted by the Statues of the School to whop a fellow, and he accordingly does whop, in hart-sickening fashion. It is difficult to be cold and aloof with a person who is laying into a fellow with an ashplant. I try to make allowances for him, because he doesn't realise what a rank outsider he is. But he really can't be born. He can't be born by any decent fellow.

I told him so, once. At least, I wrote him an anonymouse letter. I told him my candid opinion of his charackter. I did

not spare him; but was frank and honest from the 1st word to the last.

And it did seem to alter him, because that evening he said to me: "How's Caesar going, kid? Bring your prep along after Roll, and I'll give you a hand with the stuff." Naturally, I accepted the invitation, as any gentleman would. And the beast merely grabbed my exercise and compared the writing with the anonymouse letter. After which, he grabbed me. Readers, let me draw a yale.

As I say, the cad ought to be abolished. And that goes for the rest of the sixth. They are all equally as bad as each other, only some are worse than others. My pal Tubby has the best job, fagging for Wingate—though even Wingate can whop like a steam-hammer. But look at Loder! He's a vile beast. He makes young Nugent cringe with aggonny.

Mind you, Second Form fags are a lot of cheeky young sweeps, and need plenty of ash. It does them good, and knocks some of the bounce out of them. But Loder goes too far. One day we shall find young Nugent cold and stiff on the floor, and then Loder will get six months, and serve him right.

As for Walker, he's just a lowt. We have a scheme to deal with Walker—a jolly good scheme. We are going to paint blue weals on Bolsover mirror's back, and then take him and show him to his major in the Remove. Bolsover major is a hefty great brute, as big as Walker, and we hope he knocks Walker's block off. Of course, he will be bunked for it, but no one will miss him, and it will be a jolly good score off Walker.

I would like to alter the School Statues and make fagging and preflex illegal, because preflex are obnoxious creatures, and would not be missed by anyone.

WHEN BLUE BLOOD BOILS.

Lots of fellows think it's a great catch to have Earls and Dukes and things for relations. I can assure you, dear readers, I would swap the whole lot for Coker's Aunt Judy. Last week, my great-uncle, Lord St. Auburn, dropped in to see me—for the first time in ten years! He arrived in a whacking great Bentley car. My beak, Wiggins, was terribly polite, and so was the Head. Fellows looked enviously at me as I trotted him round the school.

They little knew! When I said farewell to him, my great-uncle patted my head in a

beastly patronising way, and put into my hand—a tanner! A mouldy tanner! But I ought to be honoured, for it's the first time he's given anything away since 1883, so they say.

The others are just as bad. My Uncle Jerome is a Duke, and I sometimes go to his place in Hampshire in the vac. Yet I've only caught sight of the old hunk twice, and then he's just blinked at me in a sort of absent-minded way, like a fish, and tottered away again. I'm always left to the secretary, a beastly skinny blighter, with gglamps, named Hewettson.

And what a swell time I have! 'Now, Master Percival, you mustn't do that!' 'Now, Master Percival, you know his Lordship doesn't like this!' That's what I get all day long. Gr-r-r!

Anyone can have my gang of titled relations, for all I care.

S. P. F. P. S.

And now for my message to the British Public. I am jolly well going to start a Society for the Prevention of Fagging in Public Schools, and I think every British



Paget would like to alter the "School Statues." Is this what he means?

fellow ought to join it. So here are the particulars of the Society.

AIM—to suppress slavery, servitude, fagging, and the performance of all degrading and meenial duties by Third Form men, at school. Furthermore, it is hereby agreed that Prefex must be Abolished forthwith, and notwithstanding as hereafter spessified. Moreover, it is hereby declared that Carne shall be summarily booted out of all British Public Schools with a clip over the ear, for luck.

RIGHT HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY is George Tubb, Esquire, Gentleman, Captain of the Third Form at Greyfriars, and one of the whitest rich there is. (Apart from ink-stains, of course.—ED.)

RIGHT HONOURABLE TREZURER OF THE SOCIETY is Percival Spencer Paget, Esquire, to whom all contributions should be sent at once. Cheques cannot be cashed, so please send five-pound notes or postal orders. The humble halfpenny will not be skorned if your funds are low.

MEMBERSHIP of the Society is open to all Third Form men everywhere for an **ENTRANCE FEE** of One Guinee, and a **SUBSCRIPTION** of One Guinee, and an **ANNUAL PAYMENT** of One Guinee, making Three Guinees in all. Applickants should state their age, batting average, and position in Form. Guinee-pigs will not be accepted in loo of money, as we have nowhere to keep the creatures.

A world-wide strike against fagging will be organised as soon as the President and Trezurer get the thing going. Roll up in your millions.—P.S. Second Form fags are not elligible to join the Society, as they are seldom free from ink. (Fan me!—ED.)

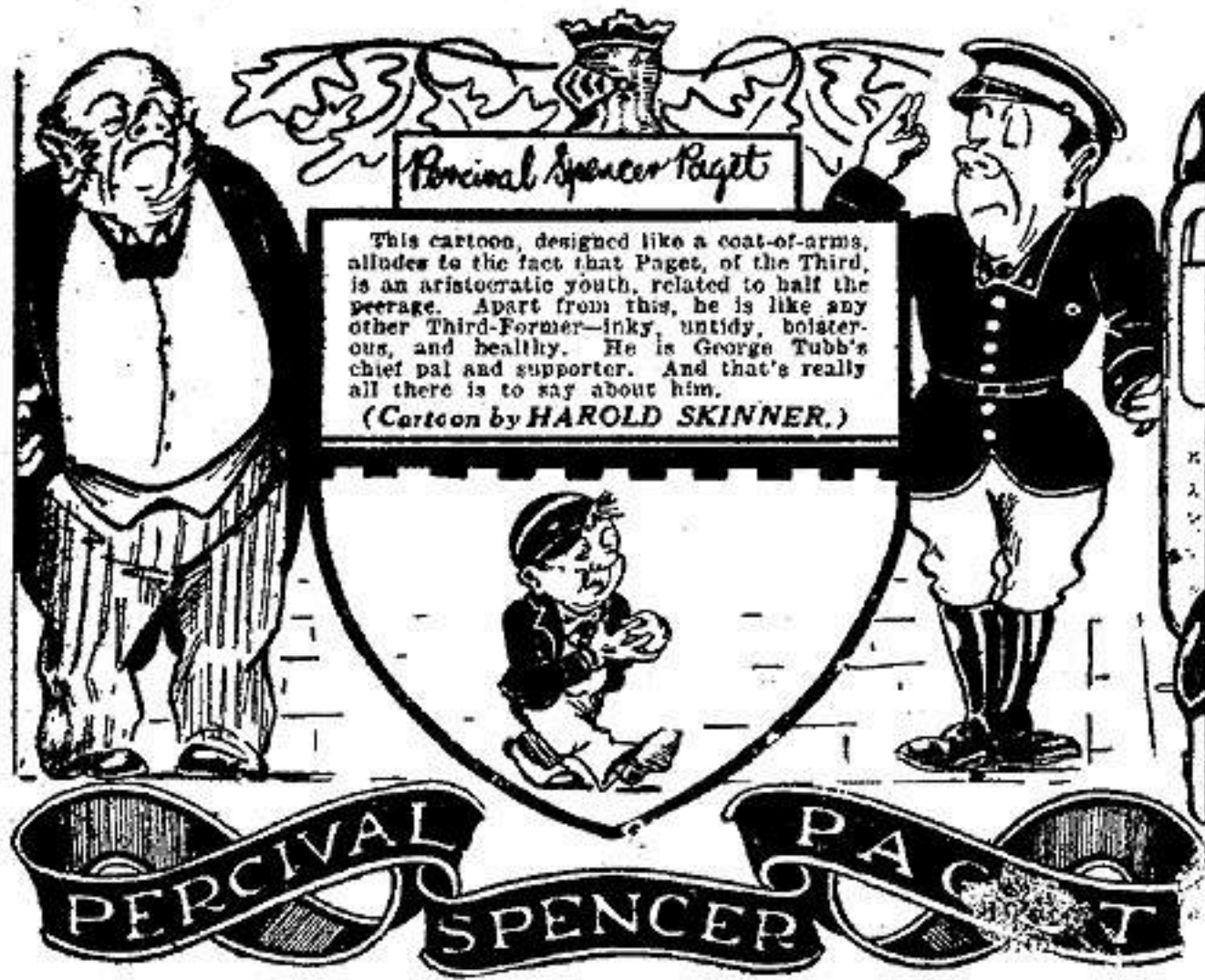
Down With Fagging! Britons Never Shall Be Slaves!

P.S.—BY THE PRESIDENT

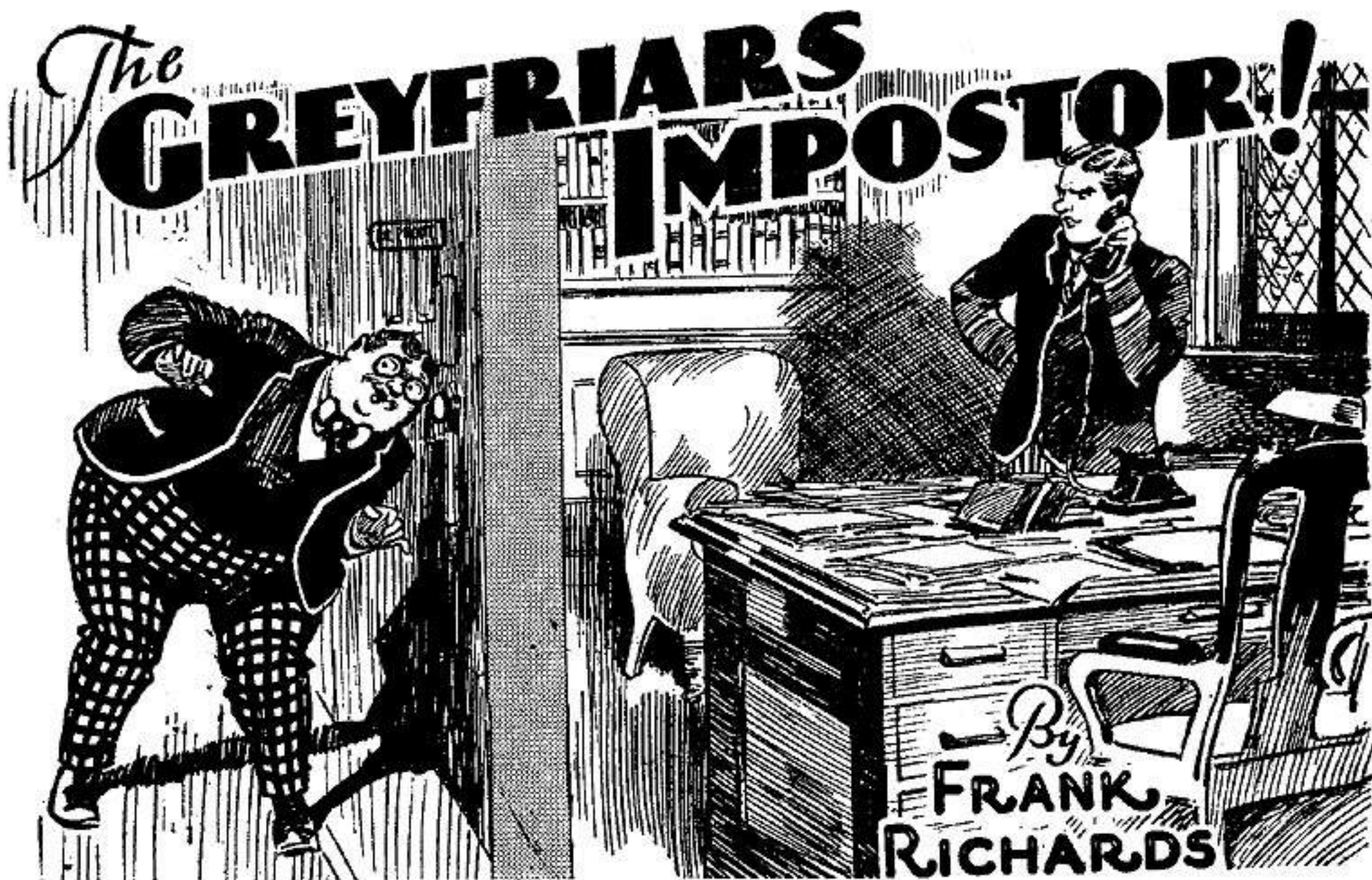
I am sorry to inform the Public that the Trezurer of our new Society had to desist writing at this point, as that brute Carne wanted his tea so badly that he is now lamming the Trezurer in a way which turns my blood cold. The Trezurer of the Society is in great agony, and not able to sit down; but when the pain wears off he will be ready to tackle business again, and deal with applications from all over the world, and I hope readers will not forget the guinees, which are very important.

GEORGE TUBB,

President, S.P.F.P.S.



FROM POOR RELATION TO MILLIONAIRE'S HEIR! School Adventure Yarn
Starring HARRY WHARTON & Co., of GREYFRIARS.



WHAT DID BILLY BUNTER, THE PAUL-PRY, HEAR?

First Aid!

"WHARTON, old chap——"

"No!"

"But, I say——"

"No!"

"Look here——" roared Billy Bunter.

"No!"

"I was going to ask you——"

"Will you chuck it, you fat chump?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove in tones of intense exasperation. "You've asked every man in the Remove to do lines for you. You've asked me three times. I've said 'No' every time. Next time I shall boot you!"

"But, I say——"

"Scoot!"

"But——"

"Bunk!"

Billy Bunter neither scooted nor barked. He remained a fixture in the doorway of Study No. 1, his eyes and spectacles fixed on the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton was seated at the study table, pen in hand, scribbling at a great rate. He had lines of his own—which was perhaps one reason why he was indisposed to do Bunter's.

On that golden July afternoon his friends had gone down to the nets after class, and Harry Wharton had a hundred lines to hand in to Mr. Quelch before he could join them there.

Bunter's lines were, of course, much more urgent—to Bunter, at least. Those lines were a worry to Bunter, and for some days they had been a worry to the rest of the Form.

Bunter had had two hundred. Having delayed delivery again and again, he had them doubled.

But if two hundred lines had been too much for Bunter to work through, four hundred seemed absolutely impossible.

Had Mr. Quelch gone on doubling and redoubling those lines, Bunter would not have minded very much. So long as Quelch doubled and redoubled and did nothing else, Bunter could have watched those lines accumulating with equanimity. But Quelch doubled once, and once only. He did not redouble. The next item on the programme was a whopping. Bunter objected to that.

So for days and days the fat Owl had haunted the Remove with urgent requests for help with his lines. Now he was at the end of his tether; he had to take four hundred lines in that afternoon or bend over under a whopping cane. Of the four hundred, he had written one. Three hundred and ninety-nine remained to be written, and he had ten minutes left.

Scratch, scratch, scratch! went Wharton's pen, line after line racing under the nib, while Bunter blinked at him from the doorway.

"Look here, I've got to see Quelch!" said Bunter. "I say, old chap——"

"Seat!" hissed the captain of the Remove, over his shoulder.

"But look here, old fellow——"

"You blithering Owl!" roared Wharton. "I've got lines to do myself! Besides, Quelch would spot another fellow's fist! Hook it! Go away! Get out! Bunk! Mizzle! Blow off!"

"I ain't asking you to do my lines for——"

"Eh?"

"I think you might lend a fellow a hand when he's in fearful pain!" said Bunter reproachfully.

"What?"

Harry Wharton's pen ceased to race, and he looked round at last. He stared at the fellow in the doorway.

Billy Bunter held up his right hand.

It was swathed in a handkerchief stained with crimson.

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. He jumped up at once. "You fat ass! I thought you'd come to bother me for lines, as usual! Have you hurt your hand?"

"Fearfully!" said Bunter. "Smashed the fingers——"

"Oh! Better come down to the house-dame at once! I'll come with you!"

Harry Wharton had his lines to do. He wanted to join the other fellows at cricket practice. But if Billy Bunter had had an accident he was quite prepared to put personal matters aside and render what aid he could. And that bandaged paw, with its crimson stains, looked serious enough.

"Oh, 'tain't as bad as that!" said Bunter hastily. "I don't want to go to the house-dame, Wharton."

"You duffer! If you've smashed your fingers——"

"Well, they ain't exactly smashed." Billy Bunter moderated his transports, so to speak. "They're injured—fearfully injured! But it ain't bad enough to bother the house-dame."

"Let's look at the damage, then——"

"I'd rather keep my hand bandaged. The pain is fearful! Still, I can bear pain. I'm not soft like some chaps," said Bunter. "A spot of pain doesn't make me howl like it does some fellows. I want you to tie it up for me, old fellow. I can't tie it up with my left hand. I've got to go down to Quelch in ten minutes——"

Harry Wharton looked at him. Sympathetic concern in his face gave place to deep suspicion.

It was, at least, a surprising coincidence if Billy Bunter had sustained that fearful damage to his fat paw just

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before he had to take in his lines to the Remove master!

"You spoofing oyster!" exclaimed Wharton. "Have you hurt your hand at all?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, how did it happen?" demanded Wharton.

"Caught it in the study door," explained Bunter. "I was standing near the door when that ass Toddy slammed it, and so it happened—"

"When did that happen?"

"Ten minutes ago—"

"And Toddy went down to cricket half an hour ago!" said Harry. "Did he make a long arm from the cricket ground to slam that door?"

"Oh, I—I—I mean— Anyhow, Quelch don't know he'd gone down to cricket," said Bunter. "Besides, it wasn't Toddy, now I come to think of it. It was Mauly—"

"Mauleverer went out after class."

"Did he? I mean Smithy—that cad Smithy! It was Smithy's fault I got the lines in the first place, and he ought to have done them for me! So—so I went to his study to ask him, and—and he slammed the door, and I caught my hand in it—"

"Are you going to tell Quelch that?"

"Of course I am! He's a stony-hearted beast, but I suppose he won't expect my lines when I've smashed my fingers in a door—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You've had days to do those lines, and you haven't done them because you damaged your paw ten minutes ago! Think that will do for Quelch?"

"Oh! Oh crikey! No! I—I mean, I—I damaged my hand yesterday—I mean, the day before! It wasn't a door! I got a whop with a cricket bat at games practice—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, will you tie up my hand for me?" demanded Bunter. "I can't tie it up with my left. I think you might help a fellow who's suffering awful pain! I've got a bit of tape here. Do tie it up for me, or I shall be late for Quelch!"

"I'll tie it up, if you like, you howling ass, but it won't wash! A whop with a cricket bat wouldn't make all those stains—"

"Wouldn't it? No, perhaps it wouldn't. Suppose I gashed it with the bread knife? Yes, that's better! The knife slipped, you know, and cut my hand! A cut like that would shed a lot of—"

"Red ink?" asked Harry.

"Think Quelch will notice that it's red ink?" asked Bunter anxiously. "Why should he? I think that's all right. Besides, it isn't red ink! It bled like anything when I cut it with the bread knife this afternoon—I mean, yesterday—that is, the day before yesterday! Look here, you tie it up for me, and don't jaw! I've got to go down to Quelch!"

Bunter held out the bandaged paw to be tied.

The captain of the Remove, gurgling, tied it for him. He was willing to oblige, and he wished Bunter luck; but he could not see that stratagem getting past Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Now, look here, you fat ass," he said, "you'd better chuck it! It might do for Capper or Wiggins, but Quelch is a downy bird. Don't try it on. Ask Quelch to give you another chance, and then wire into your lines and get them done—"

"I can't do lines with my hand fear—"

fully injured, Wharton! I say, I shall have to cut games practice, too! I can't hold a bat with that hand! I expect you to explain to the games master."

Billy Bunter rolled away at last.

Harry Wharton returned to his lines. His pen was scratching again when the fat Owl blinked back into the doorway.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Shut up!"

"But I say—"

"Shut up!"

"You ungrateful beast, I'm only going to give you a tip! Look here, I'll come back and tell you how it works, and then you can chuck your lines and do the same—see?"

"Fathead!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away again, this time for good.

Harry Wharton went on with his lines, having, apparently, no use for Billy Bunter's bright ideas.

Danger Ahead!

"SMITHY!"

"Well?"

That monosyllable came with a snap.

Tom Redwing came into his study—Study No. 4 in the Remove—with a letter in his hand.

The Remove fellow in the study had a Livy propped up against the inkstand and a pen in his hand, and all his attention seemed to be concentrated on that difficult author.

Evidently he was not pleased at being interrupted.

Redwing shared that study with Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. For whole terms they had been friends, but no one, glancing into Study No. 4 at that moment, would have guessed as much.

There was a curious constraint in Tom Redwing's manner to his chum, quite at variance with his usual open and frank manner. And the junior at the table looked far from friendly; he looked impatient and annoyed.

"What is it—Livy?" asked Tom, glancing at the volume propped against the inkstand.

"Yes. I'm busy!"

They did not like Livy in the Greyfriars Remove. There were only two or three fellows in the Form who could—or would, if they could help it—tackle Titus Livius. Herbert Vernon-Smith, most assuredly, had never been one of the two or three.

But that was only one of the many little changes that had taken place in Study No. 4 during the past two or three weeks.

When the old Bounder chucked smokes and breaking bounds, and fancying geegees, and took to mugging up the classics it was, Skinner had declared, time for the skies to fall.

And that was what the Bounder appeared to have done.

It was quite surprising to the Remove fellows to see Smithy in his Form-master's good graces! He had always been a thorn in the flesh to Mr. Quelch—never trusted, generally regarded with suspicion. The change in him was a very welcome surprise to Quelch!

Smithy had started that term badly. He looked like ending it remarkably well. For once, it seemed that Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was going to receive a good term's report of his son at Greyfriars.

It was since his cousin and rival Bertie Vernon had left that the scape

grace of the Remove had turned over this unexpected new leaf.

Smithy had been at his very worst while Bertie was at Greyfriars. He had been at daggers drawn with him, and had come perilously near the sack for taking advantage of the strange resemblance between them to land Bertie into rows. But since Captain Vernon, at Lantham Chase, had taken his nephew away from the school, Smithy had been, in many respects quite a new Smithy. Livy on his study table was a sign of it.

"Aren't you going down to the cricket?" asked the junior at the table curtly.

"Yes," said Tom, "but—"

"Well, look here, I'd rather be alone while I'm mugging up this stuff! You know I'm going in for a prize."

Tom Redwing gave him rather a strange look.

"That's a new thing for you, Smithy!" he said. "You've never bothered about prizes before."

"No reason why I shouldn't now."

"No," said Tom slowly. "I suppose Mr. Vernon-Smith would be pleased if you bagged a Latin prize—though I think he'd rather see you make your mark in games."

"I'm in rotten form this term! I'm not coming down to games practice, if that's what you mean! Look here, leave a fellow alone to work."

"I haven't come to stay!" said Redwing curtly. "I saw that there was a letter for you, and I thought I'd bring it up, that's all."

"Oh!"

"Here it is!"

Tom Redwing tossed the letter on the table. It was addressed to Herbert Vernon-Smith in his father's hand.

Generally, the Bounder was keen on letters from his father. But he did not seem eager to open that letter now.

He glanced at it, frowned, and dipped his pen in the ink again.

"Thanks!" he said briefly, and recommenced translation, taking no further heed of Tom's presence in the study.

Redwing gave him a long look, turned to the door, and left the study in silence. There was a strangely perplexed look on his sunburnt face as he went down the passage to the stairs.

A friendship that had survived many vicissitudes had died out! How and why, Tom hardly knew; but he knew that it was the fact!

Every day, and in every way, his former chum made it clear that he had no use for that friendship! And Redwing, to his own surprise, realised that he was, in that, willing to meet Smithy half-way.

It had been, perhaps, an oddly assorted friendship between the sailor-man's son and the millionaire's son! Now it seemed to have ended on both sides, for no particular cause.

Smithy was not the same, somehow! He had seemed to be changed, on the very day that Bertie Vernon had left Greyfriars. And the change had struck Redwing more and more deeply ever since. There was no difference in his looks, of course, but in a hundred trifling ways he seemed different.

The junior in Study No. 4 laid down his pen after Redwing had left the study.

He picked up the letter.

But he did not open it.

Twice he slid a paper-knife into the envelope to slit it open; and each time he withdrew it, leaving the letter unopened.

His face was dark and harassed.



"Hurt your hand, Bunter?" asked Wharton. "Wow!" howled the fat Removite. "Smashed the fingers!"

He rose from the chair at last, and moved restlessly about the study, leaving the still unopened letter on the table.

This was the first letter that Mr. Vernon-Smith had written to his son at Greyfriars for a considerable time—the first, in fact, since the day that Captain Vernon had so suddenly taken his nephew away from the school.

Little could the millionaire, when he wrote that letter, have dreamed that it was to be received at Greyfriars not by Herbert Vernon-Smith, but by Herbert Vernon-Smith's double.

Little could he have guessed, when Bertie Vernon was sent to his son's school, what the outcome was to be—as little as Bertie himself had guessed at the time—for he had known nothing of the plot working in the brain of the dark-faced, saturnine Army man at Lantham Chase.

Not till the time was ripe had Bertie known, and then it was unwillingly that he had fallen in with the captain's amazing scheme—of impersonating the millionaire's son at the school, taking the place of the kidnapped Bounder, who was locked in the turret-room at Lantham Chase.

But willingly or unwillingly, he had acquiesced, and Bertie Vernon played the part of Herbert Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars without exciting the slightest suspicion, beyond those vague misgivings of the Bounder's chum, which had, as yet, taken no definite form.

But the schoolboy who was playing the part of an impostor, under another fellow's name, was far from being the unscrupulous rascal that was required for such a scheme.

The Bounder had been his enemy—his bitter, and irreconcilable enemy. He felt some sort of justification in ousting the rich relative who had never spared him a poor relation. He had

little or no pity for the Bounder, who had never had a spot of consideration for him. But—

To open another fellow's letter, and read it! That was a necessary part of the game he was playing, and he had known that it must come. But now that it had come it made Bertie Vernon feel that it was impossible for him to carry on the deception.

He picked up the letter again—and again threw it down! He could not do it! Yet if he was to carry on at Greyfriars he had to read that letter. He had to know what the Bounder's father had said; he had to answer it in Vernon-Smith's name!

At that moment the Bounder's double would have been glad to throw up the whole game—to walk out of the school, regardless of what might follow, and have done with it!

But it was too late for that!

The Bounder was a kidnapped prisoner in his uncle's house—his uncle, the man to whom he owed everything, who, even in this lawless scheme, had been acting only for his benefit. If the truth came out now it meant the arrest of Captain Vernon on the charge of conspiracy and kidnapping!

For his own sake, he would not have carried on. The inheritance of the Vernon-Smith millions did not tempt him. But for Captain Vernon's sake he had to carry on.

Once more he picked up the letter; and this time, with a firm hand, he opened it. With a set face he read it through.

"Dear Herbert,—I haven't had a letter from you lately. I hope this means that you are working hard in school—and I hope it does not mean that you are in some trouble again. I have heard that your Cousin Bertie has left. I wish you could have been

better friends with him, for he is an excellent lad in many respects, and in some ways his influence would have been for your good. However, as you could not be friends, perhaps it is better that he is gone.

"I find that I shall have time on Saturday to come down to the school. I shall be glad to see you, my boy

"Your affectionate Father,
"S VERNON-SMITH."

Bertie Vernon crushed that letter in his hand.

It was a few days to Saturday!

When Saturday came he had to face Smithy's father!

He was exactly like Smithy to look at—all Greyfriars had taken him for Smithy, since Bertie was supposed to have left. But—the fellow's own father—

It had to come! It was part of the Army man's plan—it had to come, and he had to carry it through! But as he moved restlessly about the Bounder's study, with the crushed letter in his hand, he felt, from the very bottom of his heart, that he could not—he could not!

Alas for Bunter!

GROAN!

Mr. Quelch started.

Sounds of woe were sometimes heard in Quelch's study when the cane whopped. But it was unusual, not to say unheard of, for a Remove fellow to announce his arrival in that study by groaning as he entered.

Billy Bunter, however, did groan. Feeling that it would be rather a good idea to let Quelch know at first shot that he was injured, and therefore

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unable to produce lines, he groaned, indicating severe suffering.

The Remove master laid down his pen and fixed his gimlet eyes on Bunter.

Bunter rolled in, his bandaged paw well to the fore. There was angry surprise in Mr. Quelch's face; his heart did not seem to have been touched by that groan. So Bunter lost no time in displaying his severe injury.

"What is this, Bunter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Why is your hand bandaged?"

"I've cut it, sir!"

"You should go to the house-dame, Bunter. I presume you do not expect your Form-master to attend to cuts?" said Mr. Quelch testily.

"Nod Nod I—I came to—to bring my lines—I mean to say that I can't finish them, sir, owing to my fingers being jammed in a door——"

"You have not finished your lines, Bunter?"

"Not—not quite, sir!"

"If your hand is injured, Bunter, you may bring me the lines you have already written, and the rest may remain over for a time."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"How many have you written of the four hundred, Bunter?"

"One, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"One?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "You have stated that you have not quite finished your lines, Bunter, and now you tell me that you have written one line out of four hundred! What do you mean by this, Bunter?"

"I—I—I mean, I—I was—was going to finish the lot, sir, only—this accident, sir——"

"When did this accident happen, Bunter?"

Bunter was glad that he had had that talk with Wharton in Study No. 1. He realised that an accident that afternoon hardly excused a fellow for not having written lines that had been hanging about for days and days.

"Yesterday, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"You could, and should, have made very considerable progress with your lines by yesterday, Bunter. Do you mean to tell me that up to yesterday you had not touched your lines, though they had been doubled for delay?"

"I—I mean the day before yesterday, sir——"

"You mean the day before yesterday?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! How did this accident happen, Bunter?"

"I got a fearful whop with a cricket bat at games practice, sir——"

"At games practice—on Sunday?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! I—I forgot to-day was Tuesday, sir! I—I mean, it wasn't a cricket bat—it was a door——"

"A door?"

"Toddy slammed the door, sir, and I caught my fingers in it——"

Mr. Quelch gazed at the hopeful member of his Form.

Quelch was, as Wharton had warned Bunter, a downy bird. But he was not unduly suspicious. He might have believed that Bunter had damaged his hand with a whop from a cricket bat; or that he had caught his fat fingers in a slamming door. But even a very trustful Form-master would hardly believe that Bunter had done both!

"The pain is fearful, sir," went on Bunter. "I'm not complaining of that—I can bear the pain! But—I can't use my hand at present for lines, sir!"

"Is your hand injured at all, Bunter?"

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"Eh? Oh, yes, sir—it's fearfully injured, through my catching it in a slamming bat—I mean, through getting a fearful whop from a door—I—I mean——" stammered Bunter.

"You are the most untruthful boy in my Form, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "I fear that this is one more example of your habitual untruthfulness."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"You have made two contradictory statements, Bunter. Neither, I am sure, would either a blow from a cricket bat or a squeeze in a door cause such stains——"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I forgot!"

"You forgot what?"

"I mean, it wasn't a cricket bat, or—or a door—it was a bread-knife in the study!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"It was the bread-knife in the study?" he repeated, rather like a Form-master in a dream.

"Yes, sir! I—I never meant a cricket bat, or—or a door. I—I meant a bread-knife! I—I was cutting the door—I mean the bread—to make toast, when the cricket bat slipped—I—I mean the knife slipped—and I—I cut my finger, sir—a fearful gash—and—and so I can't hold a pen, sir!"

"Bunter!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir! C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"You will remove that bandage from your hand, Bunter! I will see this injury with my own eyes!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Immediately, Bunter——"

"I—I—I—it hurts fearfully to touch it, sir!" gasped the hapless Owl. "The pain is—is awful, sir! I—I hope you'll let me keep the bandage on, sir! And—and I can't untie it with my left hand!"

"I will untie it for you, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"I—I'd rather not give you all that trouble, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I hope you don't doubt my word, sir! A lot of fellows were present when it happened—they all know I'm injured——"

"Indeed! Give me their names, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey! I—I forget exactly which fellows they were, sir!" mumbled Bunter. "But my hand's been bad for days, sir——"

"You were using a pen in Form this morning, Bunter!"

"Oh! I—I mean, it wasn't so bad then, sir—not so very bad! It's got worse since. The—the bleeding started afresh! I—I just managed to get through Form, sir; but—but I haven't been able to do any lines, much—much as I wanted to, sir!"

"Extend your hand across the table, Bunter! I shall examine this injury!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter groaned—quite a genuine groan this time! He could guess what was going to happen after Quelch had examined that "injury."

Mr. Quelch untied the tape and unrolled the handkerchief.

His gimlet eyes glinted at a grubby paw. They glinted at the crimson stains on the handkerchief—evidently, at a close view, made by a fluid no more alarming than red ink!

"Bunter! There is nothing the matter with your hand, except that it needs washing!" he said, in a very deep voice.

"Oh! Ain't there, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"Certainly not!"

"It—it—it's got well, sir——"

"What?"

"All—all of a sudden!" gasped Bunter. "It's one of those—those wonderful cures, sir! Ain't—ain't it wonderful, sir?"

Mr. Quelch did not seem to think that that remarkably sudden cure was wonderful at all! He rose to his feet, and picked up a cane.

"Bunter, you have not brought me your lines! I shall cane you for not having done so! You have come to my study with an absurd fabrication! I shall cane you for that, also! Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Whop!

"Ow!"

Whop!

"Yooop!"

Whop!

"Yoo-hoo-hooooop!" roared Bunter.

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You may now go, Bunter! You will bring me your lines by to-morrow tea-time. As it is a half-holiday to-morrow, you will have ample time to write them. Now leave my study!"

Billy Bunter groaned as he left the study. He had groaned as he entered it, and he groaned as he left it, but his farewell groan was much deeper and more genuine than the earlier groan.

A Sporting Offer!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were at tea in Study No. 1.

They had a guest to tea—Tom Redwing. Perhaps that was the reason why they did not seem to want another. They did not, at all events, seem to want one, for five fellows answered Billy Bunter together:

"Scat!"

"I say, you fellows, I've been whopped!" said Billy Bunter reproachfully.

"Good!" said Bob Cherry heartlessly.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Did it hurt?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, fearfully!"

"Good!" said Johnny.

"Why, you unfeeling beast!" roared Bunter. "Is that the sort of sympathy you feel for a pal when he's been whopped? My lines——"

"If you say 'lines' in this study, I'll heave the jam-pot at you!" hooted Frank Nugent. "We're fed-up with your lines!"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"The fed-upfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"I see your paw's well again," remarked the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"That chicken wouldn't fight," said Bunter sorrowfully. "You fellows would hardly believe what a suspicious beast Quelch is! A chap expects a Form-master to take his word—I mean, of course, an honourable and straightforward chap like me. It might be different with you fellows; but, making me out to be a liar is pretty thick, ain't it?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've been whopped, and I've still got the lines to do. I shall expect my pals to help me out."

"Just what we're going to do, if you don't travel!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! If a pal of mine had been whopped, and had four hundred rotten lines to do and had been disappointed about a postal order at the same time, I should ask him to tea," said Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed that string

of misfortune appeared to answer the purpose of "Open sesame!"

"Roll in, you fat fraud!" he said. "But don't say lines again. Mind if that porpoise rolls in, Redwing?"

"Not at all," said Tom, with a smile. "Here you are, Bunter!"

He made room for Bunter to pull a chair up.

"I say, you fellows!" Having, as a preliminary, filled his mouth with cake, Billy Bunter ran on: "I say, about those lines?"

"Shut up!" roared the Famous Five, in chorus.

"What I mean is, there's still time for Smithy to do the right thing," explained Bunter. "You know it was through Smithy that I got the lines. You remember that man Lodgey—"

"Bother than man Lodgey!"

"You remember he asked me to bring in a message to Smithy, and I did it out of sheer good nature—"

"And gabbled it out for Quelch to hear, and landed Smithy in a row," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, I did it, and Quelch gave me two hundred lines, and they've been doubled," said Bunter. "They wouldn't have been doubled if Smithy had done them when I asked him, as he ought to have, as he jolly well knows! But did he? He chucked me out of his study when I asked him."

"Have some more cake, old fat man, and shut up! We're talking cricket, not lines. We're playing Jimmy Silver's crowd at Rookwood on Saturday."

Billy Bunter had some more cake, but he did not shut up. Cake was in Bunter's line; shutting up was not. Besides, the affair of Bunter's lines was more urgent and important than junior cricket matches. Bunter could hardly be expected to dismiss serious and important matters on account of such trifling things.

"Well, look here, what I want is justice!" explained Bunter. "Smithy ought to do those lines, as I got them for doing him a good turn. It's all his fault, really, for being such a black-guard. If he hadn't backed horses with that man Lodgey, Lodgey wouldn't have come to see him. If Lodgey hadn't come to see him, he wouldn't have sent in that message. And if he hadn't, I shouldn't have got the lines from Quelch. And if—"

"Sounds like the 'House that Jack Built'!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Well, you see how it stands," said Bunter. "Four hundred lines have got to be handed in to Quelch by tea-time to-morrow. As captain of the Remove, Wharton, and head boy, and all that, you ought to see fair play. Make that cad Smithy do the lines!"

"Fathead!"

"I mean to say, suppose you rag the cad?" suggested Bunter. "Redwing won't mind, will you, Redwing? I've noticed that you don't pal much with Smithy now. Can't stand the cad—what?"

"You fat ass!"

"Blessed if I know how you ever could stand him!" said Bunter, blinking at Tom Redwing through his big spectacles. "No wonder you're fed-up! You hardly ever tea in Study No. 4 now. Won't Smithy stand the tea? Lots of fellows have noticed that he's getting jolly stingy."

Tom Redwing made no reply to that. He did not seem cheered by the addition of Billy Bunter to the tea-party in Study No. 1.

"Next Saturday," Harry Wharton remarked.

"Do listen to a chap!" said Bunter.

"You can talk cricket any time, if you must keep on jawing cricket. I say, Skinner says that Smithy owed that man Lodgey money, and that's why he came here. Must have paid him now, I fancy. He's not been near since. I say—"

"Shove the whole cake into his mouth, and see if that will keep him quiet for a minute," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Well, if you fellows don't want any more, I'll finish it," said Bunter. "Thanks, old chap! But, as I was saying, Smithy's got to do those lines, and if you fellows would back up a chap and rag him till he did them, it would be all right."

"Dry up!"

"He could have done them last Wednesday, instead of going over to Lantham Chase to pull that Army man's leg," said Bunter. "Just like Smithy to waste a half-holiday playing rotten tricks. They spotted him all right, though. That Army man had him by the neck when I got there."

"Is he wound up?" sighed Nugent.

"And look how the cad pulled my leg," went on Bunter. "He yelled out to me to tell Redwing that he was kidnapped. I came back and told you fellows that Smithy was kidnapped—just as he asked me to. And then he walks in—not kidnapped at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five chortled. But Tom Redwing did not join in the laugh. He gave the fat Owl of the Remove a very curious look.

Bunter's tale of kidnapping had made the Removites roar—especially as he was telling it in the Rag when the person reported as kidnapped walked into that apartment.

But somehow it had lingered in Tom Redwing's mind—mixed up, vaguely and strangely, with the change in Smithy and his own curious feeling that the fellow he had known so long had become a stranger to him.

"Did that really happen, Bunter?" asked Redwing.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, I like that!" he hooted. "Are you going to doubt my word, like Quelch? Of course it happened, and I really thought that Smithy was kidnapped, as he said so. Then he walks in—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snorted Bunter. "Pulling a fellow's leg like that! He called out, 'Help, Bunter! Tell Redwing I'm kidnapped!' Just like that. Then the captain banged the door, and his man smacked my head."

"I hope he smacked it hard," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Yah! Any more cake, Wharton?"

Billy Bunter blinked round the table. "Well, if there isn't any more cake, I can do with biscuits and jam. Do you fellows want any of these biscuits?"

"I wish that chap Vernon hadn't left!" remarked Harry Wharton. "We could do with his bowling on Saturday. We've never had such a bowler in the Remove, except Inky. And it's rotten that Smithy has gone off his batting form and chucked cricket! Just sickening to lose our best bowler and one of the best bats just before our match with Rookwood."

"Putrid!" agreed Bob Cherry.

Bunter's voice came muffled through biscuits and jam.

"I say, ain't Smithy playing on Saturday? Ain't he going to Rookwood?"

"No!"

"Well, look here, I can help you

out!" said Bunter. "I never thought much of Smithy—he's no good, really! You want a good, all-round man—a good bat, a good bowler, and a handy man in the field—and you've got one in the Remove, if you knew how to pick out a good man when you saw one, Wharton."

Harry Wharton stared at the fat Owl.

The captain of the Remove was a good deal exercised in his mind over the coming match. The loss of Bertie Vernon, who excelled even Hurree Jamset Ram Singh as a bowler, was a heavy blow; and the loss of a batsman like Smithy was another, though not so heavy. The two coming together made prospects a little dubious; for the best men were wanted to keep their end up with Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood.

If Wharton had overlooked a good man in the Remove, and Billy Bunter had spotted him, it was very remarkable. Certainly, the captain of the Remove would have been glad to hear that a man who was a good bat, a good bowler, and a handy man in the field, was available.

"You burbling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "You know as much about cricket as you do about mah-jong! But whom do you mean?"

"Me!" said Bunter.

"What?" roared Wharton.

"You needn't yell at a fellow! Look here, I'll make you a sporting offer!" said Bunter. "You make Smithy do those lines, and I'll play for you at Rookwood on Saturday! There!"

"You, you—you—you blithering bandersnatch—" gasped Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the tea-party.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter. "I mean it, every word—I'm not joking! You make Smithy do those lines to-morrow, as you jolly well know he ought, and I'll play on Saturday! You'll win! After all, you want to win. I'll see you through; but, mind, only on condition that you make Smithy do those lines!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep. His little difficulties as cricket captain did not seem to be solved by that sporting offer from William George Bunter.

"If you say the word 'lines' in this study again, Bunter, I'll boot you!" he said. "That's a tip! Now shut up!"

"But Quelch wants the lines—" urged Bunter.

"That does it!"

Harry Wharton jumped up. So did Billy Bunter. He dodged actively.

"Here, wharrer you at?" he howled. "You keep off, you beast! You jolly well kick me, and I'll jolly well—Yaroooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Beast!" Billy Bunter made a frantic bound into the passage.

The door of Study No. 1 slammed after him, and Harry Wharton & Co. continued that cricket discussion, unassisted further by William George Bunter.

One For His Nob!

"O H blow!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was peeved.

It was enough to make any fellow peeved.

Coker of the Fifth was sitting on the settee on the study landing. His long legs were stretched out—rather in the

way of any fellow coming down from the Remove landing, which was a few steps up.

Coker had an open volume in his hand—a volume of Virgil!

Coker gazed at that volume as if he hated it—as, indeed, Coker did! The great Mantuan poet had written in vain, so far as Horace Coker of the Greyfriars Fifth was concerned. Indeed, Coker would have given a week's pocket-money to be able to step back a couple of thousand years and punch Virgil's head!

Needless to say, Coker was not studying the *Aeneid* from any appreciation of the beauties thereof. He had to!

There were fellows at Greyfriars who read Virgil without having to—such as Mark Linley of the Remove—but such fellows were few, and Horace Coker was not one of the few. How any fellow could look at that tosh without having to was a mystery to Coker! Why Prout—his Form-master—fancied that it was for any fellow's benefit to mug up such piffle was another mystery to Coker.

But schoolmasters had to be given their heads, even if there was nothing in them!

Prout had jawed Coker that day in class for a good ten minutes, and warned him most seriously that he expected better things.

By way of helping Horace on to those better things, Prout had marked a section in Coker's *Aeneid* for him to study specially, kindly offering to go over it with him later when he had studied it!

Coker had absolutely no use for such kindness.

Still, Prout was a man of his word! Sooner or later, he would go over that tosh with Coker, and it behoved Horace to make head or tail of it if he could.

So there was Coker of the Fifth, sitting on the settee, his long legs covering a wide expanse of territory, his brows knitted, and his intellect, such as it was, concentrated on Virgil!

He could make little sense of it. Possibly that was because he brought very little to the task! Coker ran to brawn rather than to brain! There was little doubt that he could have knocked out Virgil, with or without gloves—but Virgil had the upper hand in his own line!

"Blow!" repeated Coker savagely.

It was rotten to stick there reading up that idiocy—Coker's opinion of Virgilian verse was that it was sheer idiocy, not to say blethering imbecility—while his friends Potter and Greene had gone down to the nets, and the July sun was shining and the open spaces called.

Even if he twisted some sense out of the tosh what good was it going to do? Did he care what Aeneas said to Dido, and what Dido said to Aeneas? He did not—not a boiled bean! Did he desire to know how Aeneas & Co. fled from Troy and reached the Latian shores? He did not—indeed, he wished they had been shipwrecked on the voyage—then Virgil would never have written anything about it!

So it was no wonder that Coker said "Blow!" and again "Blow!"

He was saying "Blow!" for the second time when Billy Bunter, after his exit from Study No. 1 in the Remove, rolled across the Remove landing and came down the steps.

There was plenty of room to go round Coker's long legs if a fellow had

seen them—the study landing was spacious!

Bunter did not see them!

Bunter was short-sighted, and naturally he did not expect a fellow's legs to be all over the landing.

Bunter tripped over those legs and came down—wallop!

"Oh!" roared Bunter.

"You fat ass!" roared Coker, greatly incensed. "Can't you look where you're going?"

"Beast!" yelled Bunter. Bunter had bumped rather hard, and he was as peeved by contact with the landing as Coker was by contact with a great classical poet. "Beast! Can't you keep your spindle-shanks folded up?"

There was only one answer that a Fifth Form senior could make to a Remove junior who talked to him like that!

Coker gripped Virgil by the corner and smote.

Smack!

"Oh crikey!" howled Bunter as the great classical poet established contact with a fat head. "Ow! Beast! Oh! Wow!"

Bunter scudded across the landing, escaping another swipe.

At the top of the staircase, however, he paused, to blink back at Coker through his big spectacles with an infuriated blink.

"Beast!" he roared. "Spindle-shanks! Yah!"

Coker, of course, was not taking that! Already fearfully irritated by P. Virgilius Maro, he had no patience left for Bunter. He rose from the settee, Virgil in hand, to deliver another swipe.

Virgil, useless for all other purposes, at least came in useful for swiping a cheeky junior.

But Bunter was wary. He had a good start!

As Coker rose, Bunter dodged down the stairs and fled.

Going upstairs, Bunter was generally slow, but even Bunter could put on speed going downstairs. Bunter flew down the staircase, and was going round the lower curve of the same by the time Coker reached the top.

Whiz!

Bunter was out of reach of a swipe! Coker hurled Virgil!

Virgil shot down the well of the staircase, aimed at a fat head below!

Coker, as a bowler, had great powers in sending a ball anywhere but near the wicket. He was what some juniors called cack-handed.

That volume, aimed at Bunter's head, missed Bunter's head not by feet, but by yards, and continued on its career over the lower banisters to the lower staircase.

"Oh gum!" gasped Coker, as his startled eye followed it.

A rotund figure in gown and mortar-board was coming up the lower staircase. It was Prout—coming up, perhaps, to give Coker that kind assistance he had mentioned in the Form-room, or perhaps for one of his talks with his boys in the Fifth Form games study.

Anyhow, there was Prout coming up.

It was quite a surprise to Prout when something landed on his mortar-board, knocking it off—revealing the bald spot that Mr. Prout guarded jealously from all eyes—and dropped, along with the mortar-board, at his feet.

"Good gracious!" gasped Prout.

He blinked at a fallen mortar-board and a volume of Virgil; then he stared up at a startled face looking down from high above.

"Coker!" gasped Prout.

"Oh gum!" repeated Coker in dismay.

He hadn't meant to knock off Prout's mortar-board, never dreamed of revealing the bald spot it hid from curious eyes; he had done it without meaning to.

"Coker!" roared Prout.

"Oh scissors!"

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter. The fat Removite, at least, was amused.

Prout stooped—not without difficulty—and picked up the mortar-board, which he replaced on his portly head, and the Virgil, which he retained in his plump hand. Then he resumed his upward navigation of the stairs.

Arriving laboriously at the summit, he fixed Coker with a baleful eye.

"You threw that book, Coker!" boomed Prout.

"At Bunter, sir!" gasped Coker.

"It struck me!" said Prout.

"I—I never saw you, sir. I—I—"

"Take that book," said Prout, "and go to your study and write out one hundred lines from it! Not a word! Go!"

"But it was quite an accident, sir!" protested Coker. "I never—"

"I said, not a word, Coker!"

"Oh, yes, sir! But I never meant to—"

"Take two hundred lines, Coker!" boomed Prout. "Bring them to me to-morrow, before you leave the House after dinner."

"Look here, sir," protested Coker, "to-morrow's a half-holiday, and I've arranged to bike over to Green Hedges—"

"Take three hundred lines, Coker!"

"But look here, sir—"

"Take four hundred lines, Coker!" roared Prout. "If you say another word I will make it a thousand lines!"

Coker opened his lips—but shut them again.

Prout looked like keeping his word—indeed, he looked in a mood to make it ten thousand!

Coker breathed hard and deep—very hard and very deep—but he did not utter another word.

Below, a grinning fat Owl rolled away feeling quite bucked. That beast who had swiped him had got it right in the neck. Bunter was not the only man at Greyfriars now who had four hundred lines to write; Coker of the Fifth had four hundred, too—and serve him jolly well right!

Coker's impot was quite a consolation to Bunter—though it was none whatever to Coker!

The Spider and the Fly!

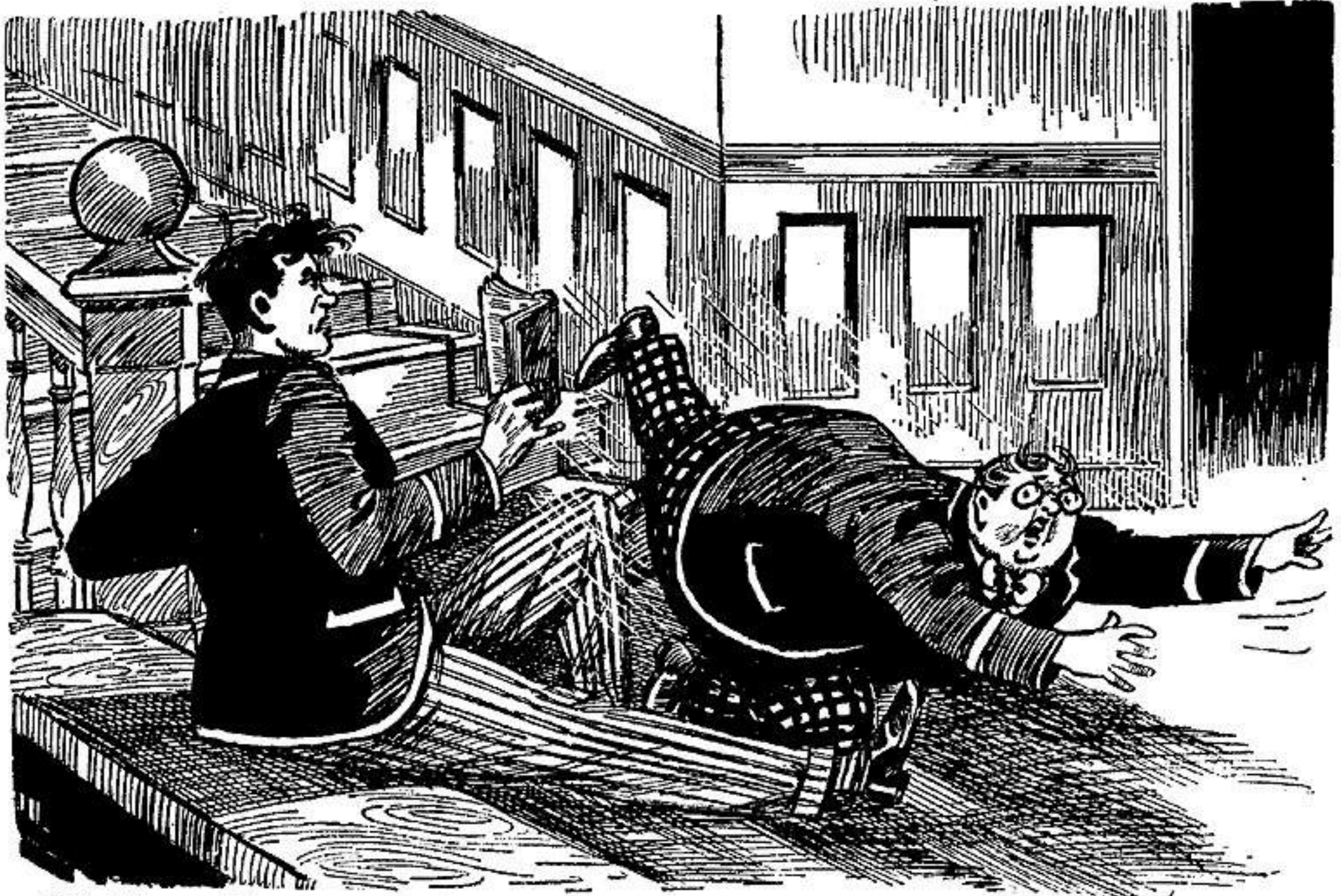
"HOW long—how long?"

Herbert Vernon Smith muttered those words, standing at the window of the turret-room at Lantham Chase, staring between the bars of the shutters in the direction of Greyfriars School.

Often and often in these days of his strange imprisonment the Bounder's eyes lingered on the distant spire that told him where Greyfriars lay.

Two weeks—two endless weeks—had passed! It was not like a fellow of the Bounder's hard, determined nature to give up hope, but hope was sinking low in his breast now.

Only once had a chance—a slim chance—of escape come, when he had obtained the key of the turret-room from old Hunt, the captain's servant, and for a short time had been out of his prison, only to fall into those un pitying hands again.



"Oh!" roared Bunter, as he tripped over Coker's outstretched legs and went down wallop. "Can't you keep your spindle-shanks folded up?"

In that brief space of liberty, even as the Army man's iron grasp fastened on him, he had seen—unexpectedly, amazingly—the fat face of Billy Bunter staring in from the stone terrace into the hall under the old tower, and had shouted to him—a desperate appeal to call his chum Redwing to his aid.

For days he had hoped that something might come of it.

But nothing had come of it.

And the Bounder could guess why! For he knew now that his rival, his enemy, his double, was playing his part at Greyfriars—impersonating him in the school—taking his name, his place, his identity, as it was planned that some day he should take his inheritance.

Even if Bunter had understood—even if he had repeated that wild appeal to the Bounder's chum—what could come of it? How could any man at Greyfriars believe for a moment that Herbert Vernon-Smith had been kidnapped—when Herbert Vernon-Smith, as all believed, was to be seen every day in the school?

Even Redwing, his chum who knew him so well, was deceived—must be deceived—by that cunning cheat, or something would have happened.

And his father?

So far, probably, the impostor had not seen his father. He must see him sooner or later. Would even his father be deceived by that cunning impostor?

The Bounder tried to think it impossible, but he dreaded it!

Often and often had the two been mistaken for one another even when there had been no attempt at deception, no thought of it. And now the deception was deliberate, carefully planned, carefully thought out.

"How long?" breathed the Bounder,

as he stared into the golden July morning.

It was Wednesday again, two weeks to a day since he had made that fatal ride to Lantham Chase—never to return!

Two weeks—two centuries! What a fool he had been, walking blindly into the trap which that cunning scoundrel had long prepared for him—into which he might have found difficulty in enticing his victim, had not the reckless, headstrong fellow walked into it!

"How long?"

He was here a prisoner—hopeless of rescue, almost hopeless of escape! Yet this could not be designed to go on for ever. It could only be a temporary measure, imprisoning him in the old turret. What was to follow? What was it that that iron-faced, inflexible Army man intended?

The click of the key in the lock drew him from the window.

He stared at the narrow door as it opened.

It was not yet a meal-time; and it was only at meal-times that the Bounder received visits, old Hunt coming in, while the captain guarded the turret-stair below.

It was not old Hunt this time.

As the door opened the dark-bronzed face and steely eyes of Captain Vernon met his angry stare.

The Bounder clenched his hands.

Except for glimpses from the high turret, he had not seen the man since the day of his attempted escape; now that he saw him he could barely restrain himself from springing at the man.

But he did restrain himself. He had felt the iron grip of those sinewy hands, and he knew only too well how he would crumple up in that grip.

His eyes blazed with animosity at the cool, quiet, hard-faced Army man.

Captain Vernon shut the door and sat down on the settle just within by the doorway. His eyes were on the Bounder—cold, hard, inscrutable. Quietly he took out a black Indian cheroot and lighted it.

Vernon-Smith realised that he had come there to speak. It was the first visit the captain had paid him in his imprisonment. It dawned on him that he was to hear at last what the man's intentions were. He waited in silence for the man to speak.

"You are tired of this, I presume?" was the captain's first remark.

"Have you guessed that?" snapped the Bounder.

"It is only two weeks," said Captain Vernon, "but I have no doubt that you are tired of it. The question is whether you are sufficiently tired to fall in with the arrangements I have made."

The Bounder's eyes glittered.

"Do you mean stand aside while your nephew cheats me of my name, of my place at Greyfriars School, of my father and his fortune?" he snarled. "If you mean that—"

"You had better listen," said the captain in icy tones. "You have brought this on yourself, Vernon-Smith. One kind action, one generous thought from you to my nephew when you were schoolfellows, would have saved you. But you were his enemy—a bitter, implacable, unscrupulous enemy. As you have sown, you must reap—and lay the blame at your own door."

Vernon-Smith stood silent.

"When it suited you," said the captain, with bitter contempt, "you borrowed his name. You took advantage of the resemblance between you when it suited your purpose. By such

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trickery you handed him over to undeserved punishment. If he has now borrowed your name, it is your own example that he has followed."

"And but for that—" sneered the Bounder.

"But for that," said the captain composedly, "you would not be here. Had you been a boy like Wharton, or Cherry, or Nugent, or Mauleverer, I could not have acted as I have done. I did not act until your own conduct had assured me that you were deserving of no consideration."

The Bounder was silent again.

The man was soothing his own conscience with sophistry. Yet there was truth in what he said.

"On the day you were made a prisoner here what had you done?" went on the captain. "You came here to deceive me, calling yourself Bertie Vernon, pretending to be my nephew. You fell a victim to your own unscrupulous trickery. You cannot complain if it is turned against you."

"And that is your excuse for a crime?" said Vernon-Smith.

He saw the captain wince at the word.

But the Army man's voice was calm and even as he went on:

"I have laid certain plans that you must fall in with. Since you were both small boys you have taunted and twitted your cousin with being your poor relation. I have changed all that. Your cousin is now a millionaire's heir—and you are going to be the poor relation!"

Vernon-Smith stared at him blankly.

"And how are you going to work that?" he sneered. "So long as you keep me here, under lock and key, that cheat can steal my name; he may even deceive my father, for all I know. But you cannot keep me here for ever."

"When you leave this turret-room you leave it as Bertie Vernon," said the captain. "You chose to take that name for your own trickery; you can keep it! Bertie has taken yours; you will keep his! If you are tired of this place, make up your mind to it!"

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder.

He understood now.

That change of identity was to be complete. Not only had his double taken his place; he was to take his double's! That was the whole of the scheme, of which hitherto he had seen only part!

He panted.

"You fool! Do you think I'd ever consent to that? Do you think I'd keep to it, even if I consented?"

"Take your choice!" said the captain, unmoved. "So long as you call yourself Herbert Vernon-Smith your world is bounded by the walls of this turret! When you are prepared to call yourself Bertie Vernon you are free—and you may derive some benefit from the experiences of a poor relation!" he added, with a bitter curl of the lip.

"Never, then!"

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"That does not rest with you," he answered quietly. "After a time—time enough for the new bearer of your name to consolidate his position—you would not be believed, even if you were free to speak and shout out for all the world to hear that you are Herbert Vernon-Smith! The game will be in Bertie's hands—and in mine! You will be my nephew, telling a fantastic story!"

The Bounder looked at him, struck silent.

Was it possible?

With the passage of time, it was

possible. For the first time since he had been a prisoner in the turret an icy chill of fear made itself felt in the Bounder's heart.

He could not speak. He could only stare at the man in whose power he was, like a fly in the web of the spider.

Captain Vernon rose to his feet.

"That is what I came to say," he said. "Reflect on it, and, for your own sake, make up your mind to what you cannot avoid. When all is settled, I shall return to India and take my nephew with me—"

"Your nephew?" muttered the Bounder hoarsely.

"My nephew—you!" said the captain.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith is a generous man, and, in the circumstances, I shall feel justified in accepting financial aid from him for my nephew—you! You shall have a position in life, many opportunities, every chance to make your way in the world—as my nephew! But you will never be Herbert Vernon-Smith again—that is irrevocable! Reflect on what I offer you, and make up your mind to the inevitable!"

Without another word, the captain stepped out of the turret-room, and the lock clicked behind him.

The Bounder turned slowly to the window, where shafts of sunlight fell in between the strong wooden bars of the locked shutters. His eyes turned, haggard, on that distant spire. Would he ever see Greyfriars again? The chill in his heart seemed to tell him that he never would.

Nothing Doing!

"NO good asking Smithy?" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, might as well ask him," said Harry Wharton slowly. "The chap can't want to cut games altogether, though he doesn't seem to mind standing out of the matches. Blessed if I understand Smithy at all this term!"

After dinner, that Wednesday, Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking chiefly of cricket. The captain of the Remove was fixing up a practice game, with all the members of the Remove eleven in it, and as many more recruits as could be enlisted.

The Greyfriars Remove was a numerous form. But twenty-two cricketers wanted picking out. Fellows like Skinner, Snoop, Fisher T. Fish, and Billy Bunter were of no use, and fellows like Bolsover major and Stott not of very much use. Smithy was a very useful man.

"Smithy beats me," went on the captain of the Remove. "It's only a couple of weeks since he was raising Cain at being left out of a match because we wanted Vernon's bowling, and they couldn't be put in the same team. Now he doesn't seem to care a rap. He stood out of the Redclyffe game of his own accord; now he doesn't care a straw at being left out at Rookwood. I can't make him out."

"Well, he can't want to chuck cricket altogether; that's not sense," remarked Frank Nugent. "I hear that he's going in for a Latin prize. Rather a change for Smithy! But he must want a game now and then."

"Must!" agreed Johnny Bull.

"And if the esteemed Smithy's batfulness is anything like his old terrific batfulness," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "Smithy would be very useful on Saturday at Rookwood."

"Well, there's no doubt that he's off his form," said Harry. "His batting has gone right off from what I've

seen of him in the last week or two. Still, a spot of good practice might pull him up. Goodness knows, I'd be glad to play him now we can't have Vernon's bowling!"

And the captain of the Remove went to look for Smithy, to bag him for the practice game if he could.

"Where's Smithy, Redwing?" he called out, as he came on Tom.

"In the study, I think," answered Redwing.

"Not swotting?" asked Harry.

"I believe so."

"Look here, what's the big idea, Reddy?" asked the captain of the Remove. "You know Smithy better than any other fellow here. What's come over him? He was always as keen as mustard on games, and nothing would make him swot. And now—"

Redwing shook his head.

"He's changed," he said.

"For the better in a lot of ways," said Harry. "I hear that he never smokes cigarettes in the study now, or keeps sporting papers there; and that row with Lodgey the other day looks as if he's chucking up the Cross Keys and the Three Fishers. I'm jolly glad of that! But chucking up cricket isn't sense. And what does he care about a Latin prize?"

"That's not all he's chucked up!" said Redwing, with a faint note of bitterness in his voice. Then he coloured. "I—I mean—it's as much on my side as his, but we're not pally now!"

"I've noticed that, of course," admitted Wharton. "It's rather queer; the past week or two he seems like quite another fellow. Well, I'll go and root him out for cricket if I can."

Harry Wharton went into the House, leaving Redwing looking after him, with a strange expression on his face.

Wharton's words echoed very curiously in Tom's ears—"like quite another fellow." Yes, that was it. Smithy was like quite another fellow.

He was like that cousin of his who had left—more like that cousin of his, Bertie Vernon, than like himself as he had always been. That thought came oddly into Redwing's mind, and with it—he did not know why—the recollection of Bunter's tale—of that cry Smithy had uttered at Lantham Chase: "Tell Redwing I'm kidnapped!"

There was no connection between the two. How could there be? Yet they mingled in Tom's mind, and it seemed to him, somehow, that at the back of his mind there was a vague, half-formed thought that he could not quite grasp.

The captain of the Remove cut up to the Remove passage, to root Smithy out of Study No. 4.

On the Remove landing a fat figure barred his way.

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

"Don't bother!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, about my lines—"

"Blow your lines!" roared Wharton.

"Do you want a boot?"

"Look here, you beast," roared back Bunter, "those lines have got to be handed in to-day, and Smithy ought to do them, as you jolly well know, and—Beast!"

Billy Bunter glared after the captain of the Remove with a glare that might almost have cracked his spectacles as Wharton walked round him and hurried up the Remove passage.

Four hundred lines had to be produced that afternoon, or there was a whopping for Bunter, with the lines still to come. It began to look as if Bunter was going to be driven to the

desperate resource of doing some work. Naturally, Bunter was not going to that extreme length if he could possibly help it. But there seemed no help for the hapless fat Owl.

Wharton, clearly, was not worrying about Bunter's predicament. He was thinking about cricket—which was just like him!

"Beast!" hooted Bunter.

Heedless of Bunter's opinion of him, thus expressed, Harry Wharton arrived at Study No. 4, banged on the door, and looked in.

The occupant of that study had a letter in his hand which he was reading over again. He put it hastily into his pocket as the door opened; and gave the captain of the Remove a far from agreeable look.

"Busy?" asked Harry.

"Yes!"

"Well, what about a spot of cricket this afternoon?"

"Nothing about it."

"Now, look here, Smithy, don't be an ass!" urged Wharton. "Even if you're going to swot for a Latin prize, you don't want to chuck games! We'd be jolly glad to have you on Saturday if you showed anything like your old form—"

"I've told you I'm off colour."

"You could pull up! It's not like you to slack at games," said Harry. "Look here, join up for the practice match this afternoon—we want every good man we can get to make up a twenty-two—"

"I'm not a good man!"

"You always were, and it will come back—we all have our bad spots at times. Don't you want to play at Rookwood on Saturday?"

Bertie Vernon did not answer that. He did want to play—he was as keen on cricket as the fellow whom he had supplanted! Most of all, in his new role, he felt the loss of his favourite game.

But there was nothing doing! His batting was weak—he had never been a good batsman. He was the best bowler at Greyfriars—but he dared not display his almost uncanny skill in taking wickets—it was too dangerous.

Already many fellows had remarked on the change in Smithy. Such a change as a batsman suddenly turning into a demon bowler would excite altogether too much remark.

"I'd put your name up like a shot!" said Harry. "Come along and show us what you can do, Smithy! You'll pull up all right."

Vernon made an angry and irritable gesture.

"I can't come! I'm going to swot at Livy! Leave me alone!"

"Well, you're an ass!" said Harry.

And he left it at that.

Bertie Vernon scowled at the door when it closed on him.

In one respect he did not resemble his double—he was keen on study and on getting distinction in that line. But he could have worked for the Latin prize and played cricket, too—but for the miserable deception that tied his hands.

But it was useless to think of it. He could never pick up anything like the Bounder's batting form. If he played in the practice match to-day, Wharton would not want him—would not have him at any price for the Rookwood match. It was useless!

He took Mr. Vernon-Smith's letter from his pocket again and once more looked at it—and crumpled it in his hand.

On Saturday, when Harry Wharton & Co. were playing cricket, he would be meeting Smithy's father! And the

nearer the day came, the more he shrank from it and felt that it was impossible to face.

How could he avoid it? How?

Then, like a flash, it came into his mind—suppose, after all, he played at Rookwood? Suppose he joined for the match at the last moment—say, on Saturday morning! Then a telegram would do all that was needed before he started for Rookwood.

It was some time before Bertie Vernon settled down to swotting at Titus Livius. He was thinking over that way out of his difficulties—and wondering uneasily what view Captain Vernon would take of it. The captain made no allowance for doubts and hesitations: he expected of his nephew an iron determination like his own. It was not an easy matter for the Bounder's double to decide.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton, having made up his twenty-two, settled down to cricket, dismissing Smithy and the other matters from his mind. And a fat Owl, sitting disconsolate on the settee on the landing, was slowly and reluctantly making up his fat mind that there was absolutely nothing to be done, but to set to work on those putrid lines!

Bunter Has Another Bright Idea!

"THAT'S done!" said Horace Coker, with a weary sigh.

Potter and Greene were glad to hear it.

For the last half-hour they had been loafing about, waiting for Horace to get through.

Four hundred lines was no light imposition. Billy Bunter had discovered that—and Coker had made the same discovery!

Coker & Co. were booked for a bike ride that afternoon—as Coker had told the unheeding Prout. So that impot came very awkwardly. And so, the previous evening, Coker had been grinding at lines in his study, getting a substantial whack done over-night. Potter and Greene had both lent a hand.

Prout hardly looked at a man's lines. Quelch was very careful in such matters—Prout was not! Besides, it was easy to put in a fist like Coker's. It was only necessary to make the sheet look as if a fly had swum in the ink and then crawled over it. Then the fist was near enough to Coker's to pass muster, even if Prout had looked!

Coker, Potter, and Greene had done a hundred each. That left a hundred for Wednesday. After dinner, Coker slogged at that hundred! Now the whole lot was done! It was a weight off Coker's mind.

"Done!" sighed Coker. "Pretty thick to slog at lines like this because a man chucked a book at a cheeky fag and Prout had to stick his silly napper in the way! What?"

"Well, let's get out!" said Potter.

"Yes, let's!" said Greene.

"I've got to take these lines down to Prout's study!" grunted Coker. "The old ass has gone out with Quelch—I saw him from the window—but he will expect them when he comes in to tea. We shan't be back by then. Thank goodness I shall be done with Prout for the day! How I stand that man, I don't know."

Potter and Greene were a little puzzled, too, to know how Prout stood Coker! However, they said nothing and followed Coker from the study, thankful to get going at last! It was, of course exactly like Coker to get landed with lines when the afternoon

had been fixed up—Coker all over. Coker, unreliable in some things, could always be relied upon to do the wrong thing at the wrong moment.

Coker tramped down the passage to the landing, with his sheaf of lines in his hand, followed by Potter and Greene. They were late starting already, and really there was no more time to waste; nevertheless, Coker paused at the sight of a fat Remove on the landing.

"That cheeky little sweep!" he growled.

"Oh, come on!" said Potter.

Coker did not come on.

"There's Bunter," he said. "He got me these lines! Cutting off when I was going to smack his head and—"

"Do come on!" sighed Greene.

Coker, unheeding, strode across the landing. It was a favourable opportunity for delivering that richly deserved smack on Bunter's head which the fat Owl had eluded the previous day with such disastrous results to Coker.

Billy Bunter blinked at him and jumped up!

Richly as he deserved that smack on his fat head, Bunter did not seem to want it.

"You keep off, you beast!" howled Bunter. "I say—Yaroo!"

Smack!

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I'll jolly well hack your shins—"

Smack!

"Yaroooooo!"

"That's a tip, Bunter!" said Coker genially. He seemed to feel better now. "Don't you cheek the Fifth, my pippin! See?"

"Ow!" yelled Bunter. "Wow! Beast!"

"What's that?" snorted Coker. "I'll give you another for that—"

There was a cushion on the settee. Bunter grabbed it up and hurled it to gain time for retreat.

Coker received that cushion in the middle of his rugged features and sat down quite suddenly on the landing.

Sheets of impot paper flew right and left as he sat.

Bunter rolled up to the Remove landing.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "My hat! Why, I—I—I'll—"

He scrambled up and glared round for Bunter!

Bunter performed a rapid vanishing trick round the corner of the Remove passage.

"Look here, are you coming?" roared Potter. "Are you going to put in the afternoon ragging with fags?"

"Shut up, Potter!"

"I'm jolly well not going to wait!" hooted Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Bunter had disappeared. Four hundred lines were scattered over the landing.

Coker began to collect them.

"Instead of jawing, lend me a hand getting these sheets together," he snorted. "Do you want them to blow away all over the House?"

Potter and Greene lent a hand at collecting the imposition.

Coker got it all together at last, and cast a final threatening glare in the direction of the Remove studies. Then, to the relief of his friends, he started downstairs at long last, and they followed him down.

"Beast!" breathed Billy Bunter, peering cautiously round the corner from the Remove passage.

Three heads disappeared down the staircase!

The fat Owl rolled out of his lair, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,639.

and blinked inimically over the banisters at Coker & Co. as they went.

He was strongly tempted to pick up that cushion, and drop it on Coker's head below! It would be rather a lark to scatter his impot all over the stairs again. On the other hand, such an exploit was likely to bring Coker up again with a rush. So Bunter resisted that temptation, and contented himself with blinking ferociously at the top of Coker's head!

But the ferocity faded out of the fat Owl's fat face as a new, startling, and positively brilliant idea flashed into his podgy brain.

Billy Bunter had almost made up his mind that there was nothing for it but work—grinding in Study No. 7 till he had scrawled four hundred lines! That appalling prospect might be averted now!

Coker had four hundred lines!

Obviously, he was going down to Prout's study with them!

Prout was out!

Any fellow who liked could walk into Prout's study. Fellows, in fact, did sometimes walk into Prout's study, when Prout was out, to use his telephone, without leave asked or given! Prout, unaware of this, often made bitter remarks about the way the telephone department kept their accounts—charging him for calls he was sure he had never made!

Suppose Bunter walked into Prout's study, Prout being out—and borrowed those lines?

Coker had smacked his head! Bagging Coker's lines would be a just reward for that head-smacking! Bunter would have liked to smack Coker's head—if it had not been out of his reach! He couldn't smack Coker's head—but he could bag his lines!

"He, he, he!" cackinnated Bunter.

It was a bright idea! Bunter could not help feeling that he was the fellow for bright ideas! That bright idea about the injured paw had proved a fizzle—but this was a winner!

For, by great good fortune, Coker's fist was not unlike Bunter's fist! Both were like the crawling of inky spiders.

In smears, and blots, and smudges, they were practically identical! Bunter, perhaps, dropped a few more blots than Coker—but any defect of that kind was easily remedied—the inkpot in Prout's study was at his disposal. This idea seemed to Bunter a real winner.

All he had to do was to wait till Coker was off the scene—that, of course, was important! Probably the beast was going out, as it was a half-holiday. Bunter sat down on the settee to wait! He did not mind waiting! Sitting down was, in fact, one of his favourite occupations.

There was lots of time! Prout was sure not to be in till tea-time—Coker was bound to go out, sooner or later! Bunter sat and grinned. He allowed a good half-hour to elapse before he went into action.

Then, at last, he rolled down the stairs. He rolled out into the quad, to ask fellows there whether Coker had gone out.

That was easy enough to ascertain. Several fellows had seen Coker, Potter, and Greene pushing out their jiggers!

It was all clear!

Bunter rolled back into the House!

Cautiously, he approached the master's studies. Quelch and Prout, he knew, were out: Capper and Wiggins he had seen in the quad: Lascelles was on Big Side with Sixth Form cricketers—Monsieur Charpentier was taking a detention class in No. 10

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Class-room—and if Hacker was in his study, the door was shut—and if Twigg was, his door also was shut: more likely they were in the Common-room.

Really, the coast could hardly have been clearer for a fat Owl bent on pinching another fellow's lines.

Nevertheless, he was cautious. He tiptoed up the passage to Prout's door, and at the keyhole of that door, he bent a fat ear, to make assurance doubly sure that the study was unoccupied.

And the next moment he was glad that he had been so cautious, as he heard a voice in the study of someone speaking at the telephone.

Advice Wanted!

"**S**PEAKING from Greyfriars!" muttered Bertie Vernon.

"Well?"

"I've had a letter——"

"From Courtman Square?"

"Yes!"

"I understand! Is there any difficulty?"

"He is coming here."

"When?"

"Saturday afternoon."

"It was to be expected, sooner or later."

"I know! But——"

"But what——"

Bertie did not answer immediately. Standing at the telephone in Mr. Prout's study, his face was dark and troubled, and obstinate, too.

It was all very well for Captain Vernon to expect him to carry on at Greyfriars with the same iron determination with which the Army man carried on at Lantham Chase. But facing Herbert Vernon-Smith's father was too severe a trial of nerve.

The Bunder's double had thought it over and over in his study—rather to the detriment of mugging up Livy.

Sooner or later, doubtless, that interview had to come! But he was going to avoid it, if he could—and as long as he could! He had plenty of nerve, but he felt a deep qualm at the thought of facing the sharp eyes of the City millionaire! Anyone else—but not the fellow's own father—not if he could, by hook or by crook, get out of it.

He could not go over to Lantham Chase to consult his uncle. In the present circumstances, he had to keep clear of Bertie Vernon's home.

Only once since he had started this deception had he visited his home: and on that occasion Billy Bunter had rolled unexpectedly in! Greyfriars cyclists sometimes used the path through the Chase. It was too dangerous to risk being seen there.

Even on the telephone he had to be wary, carefully avoiding mentioning names, lest ears should hear at the exchange. Mr. Vernon-Smith's town house was in Courtman Square: and that was sufficient to indicate that he was referring to Smithy's father.

"Well?" came a sharp rap over the wires.

Still Bertie did not speak!

He knew that the captain would not see eye to eye with him in this. He did not want to displease his uncle—neither did he wish to give an impression of weakening nerve. But he was determined not to meet Mr. Vernon-Smith on Saturday, if he could help it.

He wanted the counsel of the man who had landed him in this strange and dangerous position; but he wanted it, he realised, to agree with the determination he had already!

Bertie, like Bunter, had found the coast clear, and Prout's study easy enough to enter unseen! Certainly he had no suspicion that another Remove fellow was bent on visiting that study for an altogether different purpose!

He knew nothing of Coker's lines, and if he had noticed them lying on Prout's table, would not have heeded them: neither, if he had known and heeded, would he have been likely to guess Bunter's bright idea of borrowing those lines.

Naturally it did not cross his mind for a moment that a fat Owl had tiptoed down the Masters' Passage almost at his heels—or that a fat ear was glued to the keyhole outside, listening with wondering curiosity to his half of the talk on the telephone!

"Well?" came another rap, so loud and sharp, that it reached the fat ear at the keyhole, as well as Bertie's.

Vernon breathed hard.

"Look here, I don't want to see him on Saturday!" He spoke at last. "I want to keep clear!"

"That's impossible."

"I don't see it!"

"It must come! If you elude it during the term, it must come in the holidays! Don't play the fool!"

"It may come easier in the holidays! But here——"

"If he has stated his intention of coming, it is unavoidable. What pretext could you possibly make?" The captain's voice, from Lantham Chase, was curt and hard. "It is true that it would come easier in the holidays, away from familiar surroundings. But——"

"I can get away for a cricket match," muttered Bertie. "I—I know I've got to keep clear of cricket, but—but for once—it won't matter for once."

"Where is the match?"

"It's at Rookwood, in Hampshire, far enough from here!"

"But there is ample time to let him know, and he will simply drive to Hampshire, instead of Kent."

"Not if I fix it up on Saturday morning! Then I can just wire: 'Playing away to-day,' or something to that effect."

"That will offend him—so abrupt and ungracious——"

"It won't be the first time. Does that cad of a cousin of mine ever think of anybody but himself?" said Bertie bitterly. "It would be in keeping with the character. It's the sort of thing he would do."

"Perhaps that is true! I have heard of such episodes—indeed, he came near disinheriting once for disrespect and disobedience. But——"

"I can't see him! Later on, when I'm more used to it—and in different surroundings; but here—I can't!" muttered Bertie.

"It would be more prudent to carry on."

"I can't!"

"That is mere weakness."

Bertie's face set with angry obstinacy.

"I tell you I can't see Mr. Vernon-Smith on Saturday!" he said, very distinctly. "That's that! Advise me the best you can, but——"

"Have you no sense?" came almost a hiss on the wires.

Vernon, for the moment, had forgotten his usual caution and mentioned a name!

"Well, I can't see him! Give me what advice you can, but it's got to be on those lines! If there's any way of keeping him away, that would be best; but if not, I've got to keep clear!"

"You have said enough!" The

captain's voice came like ice. "I will think over the matter, and if I can think of any plausible means of keeping him away I will tell you. Otherwise—"

"Otherwise, I go over to Rookwood on Saturday."

"Find an opportunity of ringing me some time on Friday, and then we can decide."

"Very well. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my boy!"

Irritated as the plotter of Lantham Chase obviously was, there was a kind and gentle note in his voice as he said good-bye to the impostor at Greyfriars.

Bertie put up the receiver.

It was possible, perhaps, that the captain's astute brain might hatch some plausible pretext for inducing the millionaire to postpone his visit. That was all that was wanted. Mr. Vernon-Smith was a tremendously busy man; it was very likely that he would not find time to spare later, before the end of the term. If only that meeting could be avoided—

When the summer holidays came it might be possible to get away with some other fellow, and avoid going to Vernon-Smith's home. Bertie hoped so, at least!

If only the millionaire did not come on Saturday! But if he could be put off, Bertie's mind was made up.

It was up to the captain now to find a way out, if he could—otherwise, Bertie knew what he was going to do. He was going to Rookwood!

He crossed to the door. And, warned by his footsteps, a fat Owl outside that door backed rapidly away.

All Right for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER backed—swiftly! He was half a dozen paces from Prout's door when it was opened from within.

The fat Owl's fat ear had been glued to the keyhole. He had heard every word of Bertie's half of the talk on the telephone.

That voice from Prout's study had surprised Bunter at first, but he had quickly recognised it. In voice, as in looks, the doubles were alike, so Bunter knew who was speaking on the telephone in Prout's study.

It was no new thing for the Bounder to bag a master's phone to talk to some acquaintance outside the school. And the fat Owl, at the keyhole, had listened, grinning, expecting to hear Smithy talking geegees, or something of the kind, probably with a man at the Three Fishers at the other end.

What he did hear astonished Bunter.

He gathered that the junior in Prout's study was anxious to avoid meeting somebody who was coming on Saturday; and then Bertie's inadvertent mention of Mr. Vernon-Smith's name enlightened him.

Smithy's father was coming to the school, and Smithy wanted to dodge meeting him—which was so extremely odd that it excited Billy Bunter's inquisitive curiosity to the very utmost.

Always deeply and keenly interested in the business of others, the fat Owl had never been so keenly interested as now.

But as Vernon crossed the study to leave, Bunter realised that he had better not let him learn that an ear had been at the keyhole!

The Bounder of Greyfriars was the least likely fellow in the school to be patient with Bunter's keen desire to hear what did not concern him.

He was, in fact, certain to boot



The heavy volume missed Bunter, but landed fair and square on Prout's mortar-board. "Oh gum!" gasped Coker.

Bunter if he found out what the Peeping Tom of the Remove had been up to.

So Bunter backed rapidly, and was not near the door when it opened, and Vernon came out.

With great astuteness Bunter affected to be coming up the passage to that door, and to be surprised to see Smithy emerge!

Vernon gave a start at the sight of a figure in the passage, but seeing that it was only Bunter, he was relieved. He did not want to be caught by a master coming out of Prout's study.

Bunter blinked at him.

"That you, Smithy?" he ejaculated. "What have you been up to in Prout's study?"

"Don't yell, you fat fool!" muttered Vernon. "I believe Hacker's in his study."

He passed by the Owl of the Remove and walked quietly but quickly down the passage, turned the corner, and disappeared.

Billy Bunter almost shot into Prout's study.

If Hacker was in his quarters Bunter did not want to risk being spotted by the Acid Drop.

He forgot, for the moment, all about Smithy's mysterious talk on the telephone, much as it interested him.

In Prout's study, he shut the door and listened inside for a long minute. But there was no sound of alarm in the passage. If Hacker was in his study he was still there, and had not been disturbed.

Relieved in his mind, the fat Owl blinked over Prout's table in search of what he had come there to annex.

He grinned gleefully at the sight of Horace Coker's stack of lines.

There lay that sheaf of impot paper, covered with Coker's remarkable calligraphy and the imitations thereof by Potter and Greene.

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(Continued from page 13.)

Bunter blinked at it with deep satisfaction.

The impot was Virgil; and it was Virgil that Bunter had to write! The amount was four hundred lines, and it was four hundred lines that Bunter had to produce. The writing was a semi-illegible scrawl—and it was in a semi-illegible scrawl that Bunter was wont to waste good ink and paper. There was only one drawback. In the top corner, according to custom, the name of the writer of the lines was inscribed.

But a difficulty like that was easily overcome by a fellow who was accustomed to adorn his work with smears, blots, and smudges!

Coker was a trifle less smeary and smudgy than Bunter. There was scope for a few more smears and smudges!

Bunter dipped a fat finger in Prout's inkpot and smudged ink over "H. J. Coker." Under that smudge he wrote "W. G. Bunter."

Quelch, unlike Prout, always looked at a fellow's lines! But he would not be surprised to see a big smudge on Bunter's handiwork. He would have been, indeed, surprised by the absence of such adornments.

So that was all right!

All that Bunter had to do now was to convey that stack of scrawl to Quelch's study! Quelch would find it when he came in—instead of Prout! Those smacks on Bunter's fat head would be avenged—for it was fairly certain that Coker would get a royal jaw from his beak for not delivering the lines. All the more, probably, because Coker would make the utterly incredible statement that he had delivered them!

That would serve Coker right!

Coker might have that impot doubled! That might teach him not to smack fellows' heads!

But what might, or might not, happen to Coker did not fill much of Billy Bunter's thoughts. Billy Bunter concentrated, as usual, on W. G. Bunter.

He opened the study door and blinked cautiously into the passage. It was deserted, as before.

The fat Owl emerged, with Coker's impot under a fat arm.

He tiptoed past Hacker's study, in case the Acid Drop was there! He reached Mr. Quelch's door and rolled in.

Coker's lines were laid on Mr. Quelch's study table to greet the Remove master's eyes when he came in!

Then Bunter rolled away, greatly relieved and satisfied!

Those beastly lines, which had haunted him for a week, were done with at last!

Bunter rolled out into the July sunshine in the quad with a cheery grin on his fat face. The wicked had ceased from troubling, and the weary Owl was at rest. He rolled down to the junior

ground, where the practice match was going strong.

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull were at the wickets. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was bowling to the captain of the Remove.

But Billy Bunter did not waste a blink on them.

"I say, Bob, old chap!" squeaked the fat Owl.

Bob Cherry, who was waiting for his call to the wickets, glanced round at him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old fat man! Still looking for somebody to do your lines?" he asked.

"No, that's all right. I've done them," he answered airily.

Bob stared at him.

"You've done four hundred lines already!" he ejaculated.

"I'm a pretty quick worker, you know!" said Bunter.

"Two mistakes, Bunter!" said Bob.

"Eh?"

"Both adjectives wrong! You're not pretty and you're not quick!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, have you seen Mauly?"

"Mauly!" repeated Bob. Lord Mauleverer had been rounded up to make up the twenty-two, and was now in the field—a blur to the limited vision of the fat Owl.

"Yes, I want to see Mauly specially! It's hours to tea-time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I don't want to borrow anything off him," explained Bunter. "I just want to see him specially. I thought he might be watching the game, but he doesn't seem to be about. Know where he is?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Looked in the tuckshop?" he asked.

"The tuckshop? Oh! Good!"

The tuckshop was exactly the place where Billy Bunter would have liked to meet Mauly.

He departed in haste—to look for Lord Mauleverer in the tuckshop!

Where—as Mauly lacked the gift of being in two places at once—he was unlikely to find him!

Coker Knows How!

POT!

"Blow!" said Coker.

He halted.

Potter and Greene put on

brakes.

"That tyre's gone!" said Coker. "Prout's fault! I fancied it wanted looking to, but when a fellow's time is taken up with lines—"

"Oh dear!" said Potter.

The three men of the Fifth were well on their way to Green Hedges. They had passed Redclyffe and done the Lantham road at a good pace. At Lantham Chase they turned off the road to take the bridle-path through the park, which was the usual route.

That bridle-path through Lantham Chase was a public right-of-way, used by horsemen and pedestrians and cyclists. It was said that the new tenant of Lantham Chase did not like the public using it, all the same, though no objection had ever been raised in old Squire Luscombe's time. Captain Vernon had been known to lay his malacca round thoughtless youths who had strayed from the path into the woods on either side.

He did not preserve game—indeed, he did not keep up Lantham Chase in anything like its old style at all. But he was extremely particular about his property being respected and quite fierce about trespassing.

If Coker of the Fifth had heard that

the tenant of Lantham Chase disliked the public use of that right-of-way, that would only have made Coker of the Fifth more determined to use it. It would, indeed, have made him ride that way, if it had been a long instead of a short cut!

Peaceable folk, who had no use for black looks or altercations, often avoided that path since the new tenant had come to the Chase. But Horace Coker had never been numbered in the ranks of peaceable folk. Coker was far too aggressive himself to dream of putting up with aggression.

He dismounted and looked at his tyre.

His fancy that it had wanted looking to was well founded. Prout and his dashed lines had landed him like this! It was not merely a puncture—it was a bad burst, and further progress was extremely problematical.

"Blow!" said Coker crossly.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance.

This, of course, was Coker all over. If there was any trouble lying around loose, Coker was the man to gather it up!

"This means walking to Lantham!" said Potter. "About two miles from here."

"Might as well walk on to Green Hedges!" said Greene. "It's only about three."

"We haven't come out for a walk!" said Coker. "We've come out for a spin! I can repair punctures, I hope! It looks pretty bad, but I can handle it all right! All I want is a puncture repair outfit. I suppose one of you fellows has got one."

"I haven't," answered Potter.

"Nor I," answered Greene.

Coker looked at them.

"You mean to say that you've started on a ride, a good twenty-five miles there and back, without anything to mend a puncture if it happened?" he asked. "Haven't you ever heard of punctures before? Mean to say—"

"Have you got a repair outfit?" asked Potter.

"If I had, I shouldn't ask you for one! Don't be a fool, Potter, if you can help it!"

"Mean to say," asked Potter, with a sarcastic imitation of Horace's remarks, "that you've started on a ride, a good twenty-five miles there and back, without anything to mend a puncture if it happened?"

Greene contributed a chuckle.

"I suppose you think that's funny!" said Coker, with calm content. "When anything happens, all you fellows can do is to jaw! Jaw, jaw, jaw! Here we are, miles from anywhere, landed with a punctured bike, and nothing to mend it—owing to your crass carelessness—absolute thoughtless idiocy! Two fellows with bikes—and not a spot of solution between the two! My hat!"

Evidently it got Coker's goat!

"Well, are we walking?" asked Potter, after a lengthy pause, during which Coker gazed at the flattest tyre ever.

"You can walk, if you like walking!" answered Coker. "I'm going to ride—when I've repaired this puncture." He pointed to the summit of the old turret of Lantham Chase, visible over the tree-tops. "It's about a quarter of a mile up to the house—we can walk that."

"But—" said Potter and Greene together.

"I suppose you know this place," said Coker. "A Remove kid lives here—a relation of that cheeky young sweep, Vernon-Smith. He rides a bike—and ten to one we can get what we want in the bike-shed here. Stands to reason."

"Young Vernon has left!" said Potter.

"Has he?"

Coker of the Fifth had not heard of it. The comings and goings of mere microbes like Remove juniors were far beneath the notice of Horace James Coker of the Fifth Form.

"I've heard so," said Greene. "They used to be always making mistakes between Vernon and Vernon-Smith two or three weeks ago—you punched young Vernon once yourself, thinking he was Vernon-Smith—"

"I know I did!" said Coker. "That makes no difference. I'd punch him again as soon as look at him!"

"I mean, there was a lot of jaw about those two, and that's how I know he's left!" yapped Greene.

"Well, if he's left, he's at home, I suppose, and if he's got his bike here he will have some puncture things. Come on!"

"But——" said Potter and Greene again.

"Jaw, jaw, jaw!" said Coker. "Did we come out for a bike-spin or a conversation?"

"Look here, that man Vernon doesn't like people about here!" snapped Potter. "He's an unsociable brute, and I've heard that he never sees a soul. He gives people black looks for using this path, and whops fellows who wander off it——"

"I'd like to see him whop me!" said Coker, with a warlike look.

"Very likely you will, then!" snorted Potter. "I know he gave Hobson of the Shell a whop with his malacca for stepping off the path—just stepped off it, Hobson said——"

"Serve him right!" said Coker. "Fags shouldn't trespass! I've a short way with fags myself!"

"He cut up rusty with a Sixth Form prefect, too! I heard that Loder of the Sixth——"

"Blow Loder of the Sixth! I'm not going to stand here talking about Loder of the Sixth! I'm going up to the house to see if I can borrow something to mend that putrid puncture. You fellows can wait here if you're afraid of that black-faced Army man biting your silly heads off!" added Coker, with sarcasm.

"Well, I'm not going to butt in where I'm not wanted, for one!" said Potter.

"Nor I, for another!" said Greene. Snort from Coker.

"Where's the harm in dropping in at a house where a Greyfriars man lives to borrow a puncture outfit?" he demanded. "Stick here, if you like, and be blowed to you!"

Coker hooked his bike out of the bridle-path into the great avenue that wound through the park to the house and wheeled it away.

Potter and Greene remained where they were. They had heard too much about the grim inhospitality of Lantham Chase and the black looks and curt manners of the tenant there to have the least inclination to beard the lion in his den.

Coker, regardless, wheeled his bike up the avenue.

The idea of walking two miles to Lantham or three to Green Hedges with a punctured jigger, when it was practically certain that there was a repair outfit on the spot, did not appeal to Coker in the least. Coker was not a particularly civil chap, and had no great use for civility, but he supposed that a Greyfriars fellow, if he was there, or his relative, if the fellow was not there, would be civil enough to furnish first-aid to a Greyfriars cyclist in distress. Why should he not?

So Coker wheeled on that uncom-

fortable jigger, with its flat tyre, never doubting.

He came in sight of the house at last—an immense building, many-windowed, looking strangely lifeless and deserted.

Coker, who had never been there before, did not know that Captain Vernon and his man inhabited the rooms under the old turret in the west wing, and that the rest of the vast mansion was deserted and shut up. But he was struck by its silent, deserted look.

"Oh gum! I wonder if there's anybody about?" grunted Coker, staring at the mansion. "Must be somebody here, I suppose, if that kid Vernon lives here."

From the stone terrace under the tall turret a face looked out—the leathery, grizzled face of old Hunt, the captain's servant.

He stared at Coker, and waved his hand at him, obviously waving him away. It was the plainest possible indication that visitors were not wanted at Lantham Chase, and that Coker was to go, and to go forthwith.

But Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars was not to be waved away like an intrusive chicken.

He stared at the man on the terrace, and calmly wheeled his bike in that direction.

Old Hunt came to the terrace steps and glared at him.

"Get out of this!" he called out.

Coker eyed him grimly.

"Is that how your master allows you to talk to callers?" he inquired. "I'd jolly well sack you! Is young Vernon at home?"

"What?"

"Deaf?" snorted Coker. "I asked you if young Vernon was at home. I've heard that he's left, but he was at my school."

"Master Bertie is not at home."

"Well, it doesn't matter much. I want to borrow his puncture outfit. If you use your eyes you can see that I've got a puncture! Is Captain Vernon at home?"

"Trespassers are not allowed here," said old Hunt. "Go away at once!"

"Don't be a fool!" suggested Coker.

"I have orders to eject trespassers!" said the captain's man. He made a step down from the terrace.

Coker laughed.

"You try it on!" he said. "You'll want a new face soon afterwards!"

Old Hunt eyed him. Then he turned back, crossed the terrace, and entered the little hall under the turret.

Evidently he had gone to call his master, and Coker waited calmly for his master to appear.

Hope!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH caught his breath.

His heart beat so hard and so fast that he felt almost faint with excitement.

The sight of a Greyfriars cap, of a Greyfriars face, was what the imprisoned Bounder longed for above all things. Never, not even to his Aunt Judy, had the sight of Horace Coker's rugged features—not delightful in themselves—brought such delight.

Smithy was—as usual—staring from the high turret window that bright summer's afternoon.

Sometimes he read, sometimes he studied—he had an ample supply of books—sometimes he handled the punchball. But hours and hours were spent at the windows—either the window that looked towards the

distant school, or the other window that gave a view of the avenue and the park.

It was at the latter that Smithy was standing now, gazing down on the avenue, remembering that on half-holidays Greyfriars cyclists sometimes came by the public path through Lantham Chase—as he had done himself often enough the previous term, before he had ever dreamed what Lantham Chase was some day to mean to him.

Reckless fellows trespassed sometimes in those woods. The Bounder himself had done so more than once.

Remote and faint, the hope was in his heart of seeing somebody—by happy possibility a Greyfriars man.

Even so, it was impossible to signal from the turret-room; and a voice would not carry the distance. But the mere sight of a Greyfriars face would have seemed like new life to him.

And now he saw one!

Coming up the avenue, wheeling an evidently punctured bike, was Coker of the Fifth!

Often and often had the Bounder ragged Coker of the Fifth. More than once he had felt the weight of Coker's heavy hand. But the sight of Coker was sheer joy to him.

He shouted, forgetting for the moment that no shout from the high turret could possibly be heard.

Coker did not look up. But the Bounder could see that his attention was directed towards the stone terrace in front of the rooms under the turret. He turned his jolting bike in that direction, and, though he was coming nearer, disappeared from Vernon-Smith's sight.

From the turret windows it was not possible to see objects near at hand; the ancient window embrasures were deep in the thick old walls, and the shutters were on the inside of them. The prisoner was two or three feet from the outer face of the wall, and so could not look down.

Vernon-Smith panted.

Coker was there. He was at the terrace below, though unseen.

No shout could reach him; and the shutters prevented Smithy from reaching out to make any signal. He could see between the bars of the shutters, but he could not pass an arm between them. Neither could he have done so, would his hand have reached as far as the opening in the outer wall.

Coker was there—help was there—help and hope, rescue and vengeance—all within a stone's-throw—and he was helpless!

There were glass casements fitted in the window embrasures, but these were wide open for air. Glass could not have stopped him for a moment. But the oaken shutters were beyond his strength—tried on them more than once during the last two weary weeks.

But to let this hope pass——

The public path across the Chase was out of sight, hidden by tall trees. Only by chance was anyone using that path likely to approach the house. Coker had done so. It might be weeks, months, before anyone else did so! Was he to lose this gleam of hope?

If he could only have shouted his name!

Useless! He had had that chance on the day that Billy Bunter had butted in, and nothing had come of it! Who was going to believe that Herbert Vernon-Smith was a kidnapped prisoner, when Herbert Vernon-Smith, in the person of his double, was visible to all eyes at Greyfriars School?

Had Coker heard his desperate cry, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,639.

as Bunter had heard it, he would have dismissed it from mind when, returning to the school, he found the junior there who was called Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The hapless junior was beaten at all points. In the Army man's relentless hands he was like a bird in the net of the fowler.

But Coker was there, below the turret. It hammered in Smithy's brain that Coker was there. That this was a chance, if he could make use of it!

He looked wildly round the turret-room. The thought flashed into his mind of a hastily scribbled paper tossed from the window.

But even if he could get it out of the deep window embrasure, it was more likely to blow away on the wind than to draw Coker's attention.

Useless—useless—all was useless!

But his brain was working at desperate pressure. Any minute Coker might go. Indeed, it was certain that his stay would be brief, for Smithy knew only too well that his gaoler would allow no one to approach the house if he could prevent it.

Minutes—seconds—were precious.

He jumped to the table where his books lay. A paper would blow away on the wind; a book would fall to the earth!

A book could be thrown between the bars—a small book—to fall—Surely Coker would see it, or hear it fall, and would give it heed?

Hastily the Bounder opened a small volume of Cicero that lay on the table. It contained the oration "Pro Balbo." On the fly-leaf he wrote in pencil:

"Help! I am a prisoner in the turret-room of Lantham Chase. For mercy's sake, take this to the police station!"

He did not sign his name. It was useless—worse than useless—to sign the name that was borne by the impostor at Greyfriars. Such a signature could only be taken for some sort of fantastic joke.

But that was enough! If Coker saw that message, surely he would have intelligence enough to take it to the police station? Surely the police, if they saw it, would act on it, at least, to the extent of calling at Lantham Chase to make inquiries? Surely?

The Bounder twisted the book's covers backward, so that it would open of its own accord at the fly-leaf.

Then he sprang back to the window.

His eyes, almost haggard with anxiety, swept the long avenue that wound away into the park. No one was to be seen. If Coker was going, he would have seen his back. Coker was not gone yet!

It was not easy to throw the book through a narrow space with sufficient force to carry it beyond the window embrasure and cause it to fall outside. But the Bounder, wildly excited as he was, had a cool head and a steady hand. He took the book by the edge, calculated carefully, and flung it between the bars of the shutter.

It whizzed away, and, to his deep thankfulness, passed over the edge of the window-embrasure and dropped from sight.

It was all that he could do.

If Coker spotted it—if he picked it up—if he read that message—if he had sense enough to act on it—The Bounder could have groaned over so many "ifs."

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But there was hope—hope—and he waited with a wildly thumping heart for the outcome.

The Heavy Hand!

COKER jumped.

Plop!

Something whizzed down past Coker's head, narrowly missing the same, and dropped on the ground at his feet.

"What—" ejaculated the astonished Coker.

From the hall door on the stone terrace a figure emerged.

It was Captain Vernon, with a set, angry, dark face and a glint in his steely eyes under the knitted brows.

He had a riding-whip under his arm as he strode across the terrace to the steps.

Coker was waiting for him, but he did not for the moment heed his coming in his surprise at an object nearly falling on his head.

He stared at it.

It was a book—a volume of Cicero. It had fallen open, the outspread cover uppermost.

On that cover Coker could see the title: "Cicero: Pro Balbo."

Coker was not interested in Cicero, and he would not have perused that eloquent oration for love or money. But he was interested to know how the dickens it had come there.

He stared up.

High over the rooms that looked on the stone terrace rose the ancient stone-walled turret. Coker could see the opening of the window-embrasure, high above. He could not, of course, see into it, but he could see that a window was there. Somebody had chucked a book out of that window, and it had very nearly fallen on his head—quite an extraordinary and surprising occurrence!

"What the dooce!" exclaimed Coker.

He stooped to pick up the book.

There was a rush of footsteps.

Captain Vernon had been coming out in no pleasant mood to deal with Coker.

At the sight of the book—and of Coker stooping to pick it up—the captain fairly bounded.

Instantly he knew what must have happened. In that instant he saw himself discovered, a ruined and disgraced man, a fugitive from justice!

His movement towards Coker was like the spring of a tiger.

Coker's fingers were touching the book when the captain reached him and kicked it from his hand.

"Whoop!" roared Coker.

That kick landed on fingers as well as on the book.

Little enough the captain cared for that. But Coker did!

The book flew yards away.

Coker straightened up, roaring, and clasping the fingers of his right hand with the fingers of his left.

"Oh!" roared Coker. "Wow! You dashed fool, wharrer you at?"

The captain made a swift stride to place himself between Coker and the book.

Coker, naturally, did not guess that a message was written in that book, but Captain Vernon could guess only too easily.

Barring Coker off from "Pro Balbo," if Coker had had any idea of going after it, the captain slipped the riding-whip down from under his arm into his hand.

"Get out," he snapped—or rather, snarled. "How dare you come trespassing here? Go!"

Coker gave him a glare. He had a pain in his hand, and another in his temper. He had leaned his bike against the terrace, and he made no motion to remove it.

"What do you mean by kicking my hand?" he roared. "Somebody chucked that book out of that window—"

"Will you go at once?"

"Think I want to pinch the putrid book?" bellowed Coker.

"You blockhead, will you go your way?" exclaimed the captain. "You are trespassing here, and I shall remove you by force if you do not go at once!"

"You uncivil blighter!" hooted Coker. "Look at that bike! I've got a puncture! A Greyfriars kid lives here. Where's the harm in asking him to lend me his puncture outfit?"

"My nephew is not here, neither does he wish to see boys from the school he has left. Go at once!"

"I don't care a boiled bean whether the little scug's here or not!" bawled Coker. "But if he's left his puncture outfit here—I suppose there's a shed or something where he keeps his bike—"

Captain Vernon made a movement towards him. Probably he was in apprehensive expectation every moment of some further attempt at communication dropping from the turret window.

"Go!" he said between his teeth. "You had no right to come here for such a reason—you shall receive no assistance here, and if you do not instantly go I will lay this whip round you!"

"Will you?" said Coker. "I'd like to see you do it! What sort of a show is this, I'd like to know, where a chap can't—Yaroooh!"

Swipe!

Coker had hardly believed it possible that the angry Army man would be as good as his word. But he was!

The riding-whip swished in the air and came down across Coker's broad shoulders with a hefty swipe.

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered the enraged Coker.

Swipe!

Coker rushed.

He was on the man's property—the man had a right to order him to go. Such considerations were wholly lost on Coker as he felt the swipe of the riding-whip.

In a state of blind rage, Horace Coker hurled himself at the captain, with thrashing leg-of-mutton fists.

Swipe!

Another lash caught him, unheeded, as he rushed!

Then a leg-of-mutton fist caught Captain Vernon on the chest, and the Army man fairly spun.

"Take that, you swab!" roared Coker. "Think you can whop me? Think you can whop a Fifth Form man of Greyfriars! By gum, I'll show you! I'll—"

Coker had no time for more.

It was the captain's turn to rush. And, beefy and brawny as Horace was, that rush simply overwhelmed him.

Hardly knowing how he got there, Coker found himself on the earth, gripped and pinned down by an iron hand, while the riding-whip lashed and lashed and lashed again.

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

Coker roared and bawled and bel-lowed and struggled.

So terrific were Coker's bellows that they reached the ears of the junior in the high turret.

But his struggles did not avail him. Beefy as he was, brawny as he was,



"Why, you—you——" stuttered the enraged Coker, as the riding-whip came down across his broad shoulders.

he had no chance in the grip of the iron-limbed Army man.

Coker's friends, as well as his foes, often thought that a jolly good whopping would do old Horace good. He was getting it now.

It seemed really incredible to Coker that he, Horace James Coker, of the Greyfriars Fifth, was really getting whopped. But he was! And a Head's whopping at Greyfriars was nothing to it.

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Oh! Ow! Oh! You cheeky rotter! You putrid outsider! You sneaking swab! I'll smash you! Ow! I'll spifficate you! Wow!"

But there was nothing in the smashing or spifficating line to be done! Coker struggled in vain in that iron grasp, while the riding-whip lashed and lashed.

Then, at last, with a swing of his powerful arm, the captain threw him away, and Coker rolled helplessly on the earth.

"Hunt!"

"Sir!"

"Give the fool his bicycle, and set him off!"

"Yes, sir!"

Old Hunt took the bicycle from where it leaned and brought it to Coker.

Coker staggered to his feet.

His eyes burned at the captain. But he did not renew the tussle. Even Coker, bull-headed as he was, realised that there was nothing doing.

Indeed, the captain looked more than half-inclined to begin again with the riding-whip—and it was borne in on Coker's mind that he had better travel!

He grabbed the bike from old Hunt and trundled it away. His feelings were deep as he went—very deep.

The captain, with a grim brow,

watched him out of sight down the leafy avenue. Then he strode across to the fallen book and picked it up.

It came open at the flyleaf, in his hand.

Black as thunder grew his brow as he read what the Bouncer had written there. He thrust the book into his pocket, and tramped across the terrace into the house.

Coker, gasping and limping, still hardly able to believe that this incredible thing had happened, trundled away with his jigger.

He rejoined Potter and Greene on the bridle-path at last. They looked at him.

"Hit trouble?" asked Potter.

He hardly needed to ask. It was written all over Horace Coker that he had hit trouble, and hit it hard!

"That swab——" breathed Coker.

"Pitched into you?" asked Greene, with a whistle.

"That rank, rotten outsider——" Coker choked.

"But what——"

"That rotten ruffian! A Greyfriars man drops in as civil as you please, and he lands into him with a riding-whip!" Coker choked again.

"Oh crumbs!"

"I gave him one good one!" said Coker. "I'm glad of that! Fancied I was going to pinch a book, I think—must be mad! Let's get out of this—I've got to walk to Lantham with this puncture! If you fellows hadn't been such silly asses, such benighted apes, as to start without a puncture outfit——"

Coker tramped on, trundling his bike. Potter and Greene followed.

Coker, evidently, had had a whopping. And it was sad to relate that Potter and Greene, as they walked on behind Coker, exchanged a wink.

Not A Winner!

MR. QUELCH was surprised. He was more than surprised; he was astonished; and to judge by the expression on his speaking countenance he was deeply and intensely exasperated.

Quelch had come in from his walk with Prout. In his study, conspicuous on the table, he found a stack of lines, and at a glance had no doubt that W. G. Bunter of his Form had delivered the goods.

That was his first impression!

A closer examination gave him quite another impression. Quelch was a careful man in these matters. Quelch knew all about the little ways of schoolboys, and the likelihood that one fellow might help another fellow out with an impot. This, from the schoolboys' point of view, was sporting—but schoolmasters took quite different views.

Quelch always looked over lines very carefully. He had a keen eye for a variety of hands!

Now, as a matter of fact, that impot would have passed muster, so far as the fist went. Bunter's handwriting and Coker's handwriting might have been produced by the same spider dipped in the same inkpot!

But——

In the top corner of the top sheet Coker had, as per custom, written his name. Over that name Bunter had smeared a smudge with a fat finger. Under it he had written his own.

The smudge excited no suspicion in itself. Bunter was the man for smudges. One smudge more or less, among dozens, was a mere trifle.

Unfortunately, Bunter had overlooked a matter of detail.

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Coker's hand with a pen, as with everything else, was a heavy hand. He had written "H. J. Coker" hard and deep. "H. J. Coker" had dried, hard and black, long before Bunter's fat fingers got to work smudging.

That smudge covered it. But it covered it thinly. Only a very thick coating of fresh ink would have obliterated that "H. J. Coker." Bunter had given a single smudge with a fat finger. What with short sight, carelessness, and obtuseness, Bunter had left it at that, nothing doubting.

The consequence was that "H. J. Coker," black and clear, showed through the smudge!

And so, as Quelch's gimlet eye scanned, that gimlet eye was rewarded by the sight of "H. J. Coker," peering, as it were, through the smudge, with "W. G. Bunter" unsmudged underneath.

Quelch gazed, and gazed, and gazed! The expression on his face grew more and more and more expressive.

Finally he touched the bell and sent Trotter for Bunter. While he waited for Bunter he selected a cane.

Such an attempt to delude a Form-master called for drastic measures. It was an "imposition" in the wrong sense of that word! Quelch was not to be imposed upon! He was going to make that painfully clear to W. G. Bunter.

A fat face looked uneasily into the study. Bunter had not expected to be sent for. Quelch had his lines—and he could not want Bunter, too! However, he did seem to want Bunter, and Bunter came—uneasily.

"Come in, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a very deep voice.

"Yes, sir! I—I've done my lines, sir!" squeaked Bunter. "I—I left them on your table, sir!"

"I have found these lines on my table, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "Have you the audacity, Bunter, to state that you wrote these lines?"

"Oh, yes sir! I—I've been hard at work all the afternoon, sir!" stammered Bunter. "Nobody helped me, I never asked anybody to help me. Besides, they all said they wouldn't!"

"These lines were written by Coker, Bunter!"

Bunter jumped.

"Oh crikey! I—I don't see how you know, sir! I mean, that's my fist, sir! I—I've noticed before that it's a bit like Coker's—"

"I repeat that these lines were written by Coker of the Fifth Form and signed by him!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "This is an attempt at deception, Bunter! You have taken another boy's lines—"

"Oh, no, sir! Coker never had any lines to do for Prout. At least, if he had I never knew!" gasped Bunter. "So far as I know, he never buzzed a book at Prout's head on the staircase yesterday—"

"Bunter!"

"I certainly never saw him with any lines this afternoon, sir! If he dropped them on the landing I never knew anything about it! I was out of gates at the time—I mean, I was in my study, writing those lines, sir—working like anything—"

"Look at this, Bunter!"

Quelch's long forefinger indicated the smudged signature.

Billy Bunter blinked at it. But to the fat Owl's limited vision it was a smudge—merely that and nothing more!

"I—I—I couldn't help making that

smudge, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I upset some ink—"

"A name is written there, Bunter!"

"Wha-at?"

"It is Coker's name!"

"Oh crikey!"

"It shows quite plainly through the smudge, Bunter, which has evidently been purposely made to obliterate it."

"Oh lor'!"

"These lines," thundered Mr. Quelch, "were written by Coker! Where did you obtain them, Bunter?"

"I didn't, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I haven't been anywhere near Prout's study! If Coker left any lines there, I expect they're there still! If he hasn't done his lines for Prout it's not my fault! He shouldn't go out on his bike without doing his lines!"

"You abstracted these lines from Mr. Prout's study!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I never went up the passage at all, and Smithy never passed me there, and—"

"Silence, Bunter! I shall have to explain this matter to Mr. Prout. I shall assure him at the same time that the Remove boy who played such a trick has been severely punished for it!"

"Oh, scissors!"

"You will now bend over that chair, Bunter!"

What followed was painful—very painful! It was really hard lines on Bunter—his bright ideas seemed to lead him, inevitably, to bending over that chair under a whopping cane! Bunter had been absolutely certain that he had backed a winner this time. It was, alas, a bad loser!

Whop, whop, whop!

"Ow! Wow! Wow!"

Whop, whop, whop!

"Yaroooh!"

Quelch put his beef into it! This sort of thing had to be nipped in the bud! The cane fairly rang on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars.

Bunter yelled, and roared, and squealed, and squeaked.

"Now, Bunter—" said Mr. Quelch, laying down the cane.

"Yoo-hooop!" roared Bunter.

"Be silent!"

"Yow-ow-ooop!"

"I shall take these lines to Mr. Prout and explain the matter. I shall give you till Saturday to write your lines, Bunter. If they are not handed in to me on Saturday—"

"Wow! Wow! Wow!"

"You may go, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Sounds of woe and lamentation faded away down the passage. Billy Bunter wriggled woefully away—with four hundred lines still to write!

Really, it looked as if those lines were going to haunt W. G. Bunter all through the term!

Impossible!

"WHARTON!"

"Trot in, old man! Your name's down, Reddy!" said the captain of the Remove, with a smile.

After class the following day, Harry Wharton was in his study with a list on the table before him, over which he was wrinkling his brows. The team that was to go over to Rookwood on Saturday was a little bit of a problem to him. With his best bowler gone, and one of his best batsmen cutting cricket,

and another good man crocked, Harry Wharton had plenty of food for thought.

It is said that it never rains but it pours. In the practice match, Squiff, first-class bat and good change bowler, had captured a bang on the wrist from a whizzing ball. It was just one of those things that do sometimes happen, but it could not have happened more unluckily for a cricket captain who wanted his very best men to face Jimmy Silver & Co. in the field.

Redwing, in the study doorway, glanced at the list.

"Thanks!" he said. "I shall be jolly glad to play! But—well, if you're busy, I'll look in another time."

Redwing, it seemed, had not come to talk cricket.

"That's all right," said Harry. He rose to his feet, and slipped the list into his pocket. "Go ahead!"

Redwing came in. There was a dark, troubled look on his face that made the captain of the Remove give him a second glance.

Redwing shut the door as if he did not want to be overheard from the passage, which made Wharton give him a third glance.

"You've heard about Coker," he said abruptly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I think all Greyfriars has heard," he answered. "Coker's been telling the world. What about it?"

"What did you think about it?"

"Eh? I haven't thought about it at all," answered Harry, in surprise. "Coker does these things. It was a bit thick for Captain Vernon to pitch into him with a riding-whip; but everybody knows that he dislikes people butting in at Lantham Chase, and Coker ought to have had sense enough to keep clear. I dare say he checked the man, too. You know Coker."

"Yes; but—"

"But what?" asked Harry, more and more surprised.

Horace Coker had told the world about his wild adventures at Lantham Chase. He was still telling the world—as much of the world as wanted to listen. Coker was still boiling with anger and indignation over his reception at Lantham Chase. The disagreeable names he applied to Captain Vernon in his recital made a very long list.

Most fellows laughed over the story, though, like Wharton, they thought it was rather thick for the captain to have handled his riding-whip. Still, everybody agreed that Coker was the man to ask for it.

Why Redwing of the Remove was concerning himself about the matter was a puzzle to Wharton.

"Well, look here," said Tom, his face flushed—"look here, it wants some making out. Coker butted in where he was not wanted, and that Army man lost his temper. Nothing in that. But I suppose you've heard the rest. Somebody dropped a book from the turret window, and Coker was going to pick it up, when the captain kicked it out of his hand—kicking his fingers, too."

"Must have been in a rotten temper," said Harry. "It was rather thick. But what about it?"

"Why didn't Captain Vernon want Coker to see that book?"

"Eh?"

"You heard what I said!"

"Asking me riddles?" exclaimed the astonished captain of the Remove. "I don't make you out. Captain Vernon couldn't have cared a boiled bean whether Coker saw that book or not! Why should he?"

"Then why did he do such a brutal thing for no reason?"

"Just rotten temper, I suppose. Coker had annoyed him." Harry Wharton fixed his eyes on Redwing's flushed face. "Look here, Reddy, what are you getting at? What do you mean?"

Redwing was silent for a few moments.

"I'm going to say something that I don't want you to repeat outside this study," he said at last. "I've got something on my mind."

"I can see that."

"Something that I hardly dare think of," said Tom, with a quiver in his voice. "But I'm going to ask you something. You remember the day Smithy took a party of you over to Lantham Chase, weeks ago—a surprise party he called it?"

Wharton's brow darkened a little.

"That was a rotten trick, Reddy, and we jolly well ragged Smithy for it," he said.

"I know—I know! But you remember Smithy took advantage of that wretched likeness to pretend to be Bertie Vernon, and pulled the captain's leg—landing a party of fellows on him. You went over the house—"

"Part of it," said Harry. "Only a few rooms are lived in. Smithy took us in, as well as the captain, and—"

"Smithy told me afterwards about it. You went up the old turret, and saw the room at the top."

"Yes," said Harry.

"Did you notice that new shutters had been put on the windows?"

"Oh, yes! I remember we did. But what—"

"Smithy said at the time that it looked as if those shutters had been put up, not to keep burglars out, but to keep somebody in—if such a thing had been possible to think of, which, of course, it wasn't," said Tom.

"I remember that struck me, too," said Harry. "But I never thought much about it. No bizney of mine. I dare say Smithy did. He was always suspecting that Army man of being up to something or other. He's rather dropped that lately. I haven't heard him mention Captain Vernon for weeks."

"Not since Bertie Vernon left."

"Come to think of it, that's so," assented Harry.

"You've been in that turret-room, I haven't," said Tom. "But from what Smithy told me at the time the windows are old-fashioned, deep embrasures in the wall—more like big loopholes."

"Yes; the wall is two or three feet thick."

"How could a book drop from such a window?"

"Eh?"

"Well, how could it?" asked Tom. "Nobody could sit at the window in a position to drop a book by accident, without actually climbing into the window embrasure. And who'd do that?"

"Nobody," said Harry. "Jolly dangerous, I should think. But I'm blessed if I know what you're getting at, Redwing!"

"I'm getting at this. The book was not dropped. It must have been thrown out of the window intentionally."

"Oh, my hat! Somebody chucked it at Coker's head, do you mean?"

"No."

"Then what do you mean?" asked Harry, utterly mystified.

"I mean this!" Redwing's colour deepened, but he went on quietly. "A room high up at the top of a turret, out of reach of a call, has new shutters put

on the windows, though there's not the remotest spot of a chance of anybody from outside climbing to those windows. A book is thrown out when Coker happens to be there, and Captain Vernon kicks it out of his hand before he can look at it, and then pitches into him and drives him away. Who threw that book out—and why?"

Wharton stared at him.

"What may have been written in it?" said Tom, his voice sinking almost to a whisper. "Harry Wharton, is someone shut up in that turret-room? And was he trying to get word to a Greyfriars man who turned up unexpectedly?"

"Redwing!"

"I've startled you!"

"You have!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Redwing, have you gone off your dot? For goodness' sake, old man, don't fancy such things! Somebody shut up in that turret-room! Redwing, what on earth has put such a mad idea into your head?"

"You think it's a mad idea?"

"Absolutely potty! Smithy used to talk a lot of rot about that Army man, but, by gum, you beat him! Who on earth do you think could be shut up in that turret-room?" gasped Wharton.

Redwing gave him a strange look.

But he did not answer.

What was at the back of his mind was so strange, so terrible, so seemingly impossible, that he could not believe it himself. What he had said already, had made the captain of the Remove wonder whether he was wandering in his mind. He almost thought himself that he was, and yet—

"You think it's impossible?" he said, at last.

"I know it is, old chap. For goodness' sake, put the idea right out of your head!" said Harry. "That Army man is a hard nut to crack, but this, my dear chap, you're dreaming! Has that ass Smithy put this into your head?"

"Smithy," repeated Tom.

"I suppose he's started on Captain Vernon again?"

"Captain Vernon has not been mentioned in my study—since Bertie Vernon left Greyfriars," said Tom slowly.

"Then it's not Smithy's idea? Well, it's jolly unlike you to fancy such things. Wash it right out, Reddy!"

"Don't mention what I've said outside this study."

"No fear!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Fellows would think you'd got bats in the belfry, old bean. Come on, let's get out, and forget all about it!"

They left the study—and passed in the passage the fellow whom all Greyfriars believed to be Vernon-Smith.

Redwing instinctively moved aside quickly as if shrinking from possible contact with him.

The Bounder's double gave him a stare and went on to his study without speaking.

Wharton glanced after him and then glanced at Redwing.

"You and Smithy had a row?" he asked.

"Oh, no!"

Wharton made no comment. Whether Redwing and Smithy had had a row or not, it was evident that the friendship in Study No. 4 was a thing of the past.

Harry Wharton joined his friends and went down to the nets, and very soon forgot Redwing's startling words in Study No. 1. What had put such a wild idea into Tom Redwing's usually steady and common-sensible head, he could not imagine.

Wild or not, that idea did not leave

Redwing's mind. He told himself, again and again, that it was impossible. But was it impossible?

Unexpected!

"HARRY, old chap—" "Look here, Wharton—" Two fellows addressed the captain of the Remove simultaneously after breakfast on Saturday morning.

One was Billy Bunter and the other was the Bounder's double.

"Oh, don't bother!" was Harry Wharton's reply, which did for both.

It was a long trip to Rookwood, and the cricketers had special leave from classes to start early. A baker's dozen were going: thirteen being a lucky number, in this case, as there was no school that day for the Rookwood party.

It was a sunny July morning; and most faces were bright and cheery.

But Harry Wharton was not feeling his usual equanimity on this occasion. He could not feel quite satisfied with the team he was taking over to Rookwood.

Squiff getting a game wrist was the last straw. Frank Nugent had been put into the place of the New South Wales junior; but glad as Wharton was to play his best chum, and glad as Nugent was to play, neither of them supposed for a moment that Frank was in the same street with Squiff as a cricketer.

In Smithy's place was Lord Mauleverer; a good man and true, and quite a good cricketer if he chose to exert himself—which Mauleverer could always be relied upon to do if it was for anybody's sake but his own. But he was rather a doubtful proposition in a tough game like that with the Rookwooders.

Mauleverer would have been glad to be excused—and Wharton would have been happy to excuse him, if only the Bounder had been available in anything like his old form. But his form now was dubious; and he was not available, anyhow; so that was that!

Getting ready to start, with the motor-coach at the gate, Wharton was indisposed to be bothered by either the fat Owl of the Remove or the batsman who had let him down.

But both of them had something to say; and both intended to say it.

"Oh, really, Wharton!" yapped Bunter. "I say, it's rather important and—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" snapped Vernon. "I—"

"You shut up!" snapped back Bunter. "I'm speaking to Wharton—"

"I tell you—"

"One at a time, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "And get it out—I've no time to waste!"

Bertie Vernon flushed and scowled.

Bunter rattled on:

"It's about those lines, old chap—"

"What?" roared Wharton.

"You needn't yell at a chap!" said Bunter peevishly. "I've still got those rotten lines to do, and Quelch says they're to be handed in to-day! Well, look here, if you ask Quelch to let me come over to Rookwood with you, that will see me through for to-day, at least. I'll play for you, if you like! I'd rather play cricket than do lines."

"You fat chump!" howled Wharton. "Shut up! Now, Smithy, what's yours? Cut it short!"

Vernon compressed his lips. He did not like being treated like a worry and a nuisance, like Bunter. But he answered quietly:

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"I'm ready to play, if you want me! I've thought it over, and if you'd like me in the team, I'm ready."

Wharton gave him a stare.

"That's rather late in the day!" he said, far from cordially. "If you want to play for the school, why the thump haven't you stuck to games practice? Last time I saw you handling your bat you were pretty rotten."

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter. What he heard now reminded him of what he had heard on the telephone in Prout's study several days ago.

"Shut up, you cackling ass!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Roll away and be quiet! Look here, Vernon-Smith—"

"If you don't want me—" muttered Vernon.

"You know perfectly well that we want you!" said Harry angrily. "You've known that all along. But we want to know whether you're in form or not—you've been off colour for weeks. I think it's pretty thick to steer clear of games practice for a week or more and tell me at the last minute that you're ready to play for the school."

"I shouldn't be worse than Mauleverer, I suppose!" said Vernon, with a sneer.

"I'm not so sure of that!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, it's for you to decide! I'm ready to play, if you want me—and you've said more than once that you did."

Harry Wharton stood silent for a moment or two. He did want the Bouncer in the team—anything like the old Bouncer! He did not want him if he had lost his form. Putting him in, at the last moment, like this, was a good deal like buying a pig in a poke.

And yet, if the Bouncer only put up a show such as the Remove were accustomed to, it was well worth the risk. After all, the fellow must know whether he was any use or not. Smithy was a cricketer uncommonly keen on the limelight; not the fellow to put up a rotten show if he could help it. If he was willing to play after all it must mean that he was confident of the outcome!

"Very well," said Harry at last, "you're in! I shall have to tell Quelch—and Mauly, too! Mauly won't mind—he's only doing this to help me out of a hole. Get your things, Vernon-Smith."

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter, as the Bouncer's double hurried into the House. "I say, Wharton, why doesn't Smithy want to see his pater to-day?"

"Eh? What?"

"Think he wants to come over to Rookwood?" grinned Bunter. "No fear! He's doing this to dodge his pater!"

Wharton looked at the fat Owl! Five or six of the cricketers, who were with him, looked at Bunter.

"What do you mean, you fat ass?" asked Bob Cherry. "Smithy's pater isn't coming here, is he?"

"He jolly well is!" grinned Bunter. "I heard Smithy say so on the phone in Prout's study—he, he, he! He was telling somebody—I don't know whom—he, he, he! He said if he couldn't keep him off any other way he'd go over to Rookwood. He, he, he!"

"What utter rot!" said Johnny Bull. "Smithy's always glad to see his pater—it's the most decent thing about Smithy! Everybody knows it! What blithering idiocy have you got hold of now, you fathead?"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "Perhaps you know, and I don't! Perhaps Smithy isn't going to send his pater a

wire to say he's playing away to-day! I jolly well fancy he is! That's what he said! He, he, he!"

Tom Redwing's eyes fixed on Bunter's grinning, fat face with a singular look.

"Whom did Smithy say that to, Bunter?" he asked.

"He never said it to anybody, fat-head!" said Bob Cherry. "It's only Bunter's bunk!"

"Is it?" jeered Bunter. "I don't know whom he was speaking to on the phone in Prout's study on Wednesday, but I jolly well heard him. You go and see if he ain't making up a telegram now."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snapped Harry Wharton, and he walked away, quite uninterested in Bunter's latest.

Lord Mauleverer had to be told that he would not, after all, be wanted.

Mauly received that news with great equanimity.

"Thanks, ol' man!" he said.

Harry Wharton laughed and went into the House. He had to speak to Mr. Quelch, to get leave for Vernon-Smith instead of Mauleverer.

He tapped at the door of Mr. Quelch's study and opened it.

To his surprise, a junior was in the study. Bertie Vernon was standing at the telephone and was uttering the word "telegram" as Wharton opened the door.

Harry Wharton stared at him blankly.

He had taken no heed of Bunter's babble. But it was plain now that, after getting included in the team at the last moment, the fellow had asked Quelch's leave to use the telephone to phone a telegram. For there he was at the instrument asking for "Telegrams."

"What is it, Wharton?"

Mr. Quelch was in the study, so it was clear that he had given the junior at the telephone leave to use the instrument.

Harry Wharton explained the change in the programme and the Remove-master nodded assent. He left the study immediately; not at all curious to hear the telegram that was being dictated to the operator at the exchange. But he could not help catching the words "Playing away"—as he went out.

His lips were set as he went.

It looked, as Bunter had declared, as if the Bouncer had some reason for dodging a meeting with his father that day. That was no concern of Wharton's—but if the fellow was making use of the Rookwood match for such a purpose, it concerned him a good deal.

Why, after all, had the Bouncer joined up at the eleventh hour in that unexpected way? Was it because he felt confident of putting up a good game, or was it a dodge to avoid a meeting that, for some reason or other, he did not want? It was not a pleasant doubt for the captain of the Remove, who wanted that batsman if he was going to help the side, and certainly did not want him if he was not.

That doubt was still unpleasantly in his mind when the cricketers rolled away from Greyfriars.

One Duck's Egg!

"HOW'S that?"

"Out!"

"Oh, Smithy!" murmured

Bob Cherry.

Greyfriars were taking first knock at Rookwood.

Harry Wharton opened the innings, with Vernon at the other end.

When Bertie Vernon had played in

his own name in Remove matches he had been highly prized as a bowler; but he was at the tip of the tail in an innings. His wicket might, or might not, be worth a handful of runs; but he was no batsman, and would never have been played at all on his batting form.

But Vernon-Smith was entitled to a good place in the list. Nobody expected bowling from Smithy; he was a good change bowler, that was all. Great things were expected of his batting; and in the match with St. Jim's he had come near a century—an uncommon exploit in junior cricket.

Wharton, therefore, had Herbert Vernon-Smith's name second on the list almost as a matter of course.

Wharton took the first over from Jimmy Silver, the Rookwood junior skipper. He made six off it. Then Mornington bowled to his partner. Morny's bowling was good, but not so good as Jimmy Silver's. But it seemed a great deal too good for Smithy.

Rookwood fellows who had seen the Bouncer at the wickets were surprised to see his sticks go down to that ball. But down they went, and Vernon's face flushed crimson as he looked at his wrecked wicket.

Harry Wharton gave him a look as he went out, but Vernon avoided glancing in the direction of his captain. With burning cheeks, he went back to the pavilion, having scored a duck's egg, and Bob Cherry took his place.

"Hard luck, Smithy!" said Nugent, not very heartily.

Every man at the pavilion knew that Smithy's wicket ought not to have gone down—that it would not have gone down had he been in anything like his form of two or three weeks ago. And if he was not, what was he doing in the team at all?

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

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

"Rotten luck, I suppose!" muttered Vernon.

"That wasn't rotten luck; that was rotten play!" said Johnny. "You ought to have stopped that ball! A kid in the Third could have stopped it! Standing there with your eyes shut, or what?"

Bertie Vernon's colour deepened, but he made no answer. He moved away from the waiting batsmen, feeling far from happy.

He had not meant to let his captain and his fellow-cricketers down like this. But in his plans for that Saturday he had thought more of making use of the only possible pretext for avoiding a meeting with his double's father than of cricket at Rookwood. Rather late in the day, he realised that he was giving the Remove team a rather raw deal.

True, he had never played at Rookwood before, though, as the Bouncer, he was supposed to have done so. So he had not quite known what to expect, and had hoped for good luck.

He knew what to expect now, and knew that he was not likely to have better luck than this in his second knock. Rookwood were strong in bowlers, and a much better man that he was required to keep his end up against them.

Greyfriars were as good—or as bad—as playing a man short. That was the price they had to pay for an impostor's anxiety to avoid meeting the father of the fellow he was impersonating. And Bertie Vernon had decency enough to feel it deeply.

But it was too late for regrets now; neither did he really regret it, for anything that might happen at Rookwood



"These lines, Bunter," thundered Mr. Quelch, "were written by Coker, and not by you!"

was better than meeting the sharp eyes of Mr. Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars.

"Dirty trick!" grunted Johnny Bull, as Vernon moved away out of hearing—not that Johnny cared whether he heard or not. The fellow was welcome to hear Johnny's opinion of him. "We all noticed that he was off colour; but if he was anything like that, why did he butt into the team?"

"Can't make the man out," said Peter Todd. "Smithy handled better bowling than that in the St. Jim's match, and made ninety-eight off it—would have topped his century if Vernon hadn't run him out. And now—"

"What on earth's up with Smithy, Redwing?" asked Nugent.

"No good asking me!" answered Tom shortly.

Smithy's downfall had come as a surprise to all the Greyfriars party—excepting one.

That one was Tom Redwing.

Tom had expected it.

Why had he expected it? He would not have put the thought into definite words, yet he knew that he had expected it. And that fulfilled expectation fitted in with the lurking strange suspicion at the back of his mind. Why had Smithy, one of the best bats in the Remove, conked out like that to a ball that Mauleverer certainly would have played had he kept his place in the eleven? Why?

The answer to that question was mixed up, in Tom Redwing's mind, with other things—Bunter's tale of Smithy being kidnapped; the locked shutters in the turret-room at Lantham Chase; the book that Captain Vernon had kicked from Coker's hand when it fell from the turret window; the avoidance of a meeting with the Bounder's father!

All these things seemed, in Tom's mind, to fit together like the different

parts of a jig-saw puzzle; and to them were added a hundred little circumstances—the changes in Smithy's manners and customs; the total cessation of his angry allusions to the man at Lantham Chase; and, above all, the change of his own feeling of warm friendship into one of cold dislike.

Yet the conclusion to which this train of reasoning led him was so strange, so startling, so terrible, that he shrank from believing it possible; and he knew, at least, that he must have something more definite to go upon before he could think of speaking or acting upon it.

For how could anyone else believe—how could he himself believe—that the fellow called Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars was not Herbert Vernon-Smith at all?

Yet that suspicion had come to Redwing at last.

It had come slowly, but it had come. Vague, unshaped doubts and perplexities had taken shape at last, and that was the shape they had taken.

"Man down!" exclaimed Ogilvy, interrupting Redwing's thoughts; and he looked at the cricket again.

Harry Wharton was out to Jimmy Silver for sixteen.

Johnny Bull went to the wickets.

The captain of the Remove glanced at Vernon as he came back to the pavilion, but did not approach him or speak to him. He was feeling utterly sick with the fellow.

"Sixteen ain't bad, old bean, against Silver's bowling," said Tom Brown. "But Smithy—well, you never know your luck!"

"My fault for taking the fellow on trust," said Harry quietly. "I knew he wasn't in the form he showed in the St. Jim's match a few weeks ago, but I never dreamed that he had gone off like this. He ought to have known—

in fact, he did know, and told me so on Wednesday."

Wharton set his lips hard.

"It's pretty plain why he joined up to-day," he said. "Some row on with his pater, and he wanted to keep out of his way. That was a good enough reason for the fellow to let us down like this."

"Think that's was it?" asked Nugent doubtfully. "Bunter's gabble amounts to just nothing?"

"I don't think—I know!" said Harry. "He was phoning a telegram when I went in to speak to Quelch. Bunter couldn't have guessed that he was going to send a telegram; he knew!"

"Oh!" said Nugent.

"Can't be helped now," said Harry. "He's pulled my leg to get out of his pater's way—and we throw away a wicket in each innings to pay for it! The rest of us will have to pull up our socks, that's all!"

"Oh, my hat! There goes Bob!"

Bob Cherry, caught out by Tommy Dodd in the slips, came off, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh went on.

Inky, the great bowler of the Remove, was an average bat, and his average was not up to Rookwood bowling. He made six before he was dismissed, and Tom Redwing took his place.

Johnny Bull was solidly stonewalling, stealing a run here and there.

Redwing put up quite a good innings, making fourteen before Arthur Edward Levell of Rookwood got him in the field.

Rookwood bowling was good, and Greyfriars batting did not seem up to the usual mark. Smithy's duck's egg, to begin with, had not had an encouraging effect.

The total was 80 when the innings finished, in good time for lunch.

And when Jimmy Silver & Co. took their knock after lunch, and put up a

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total of 130, Bob Cherry remarked that the visiting team were not likely that day to have a lot of write home about—and his friends agreed that they weren't!

Smithy's Pair of Spectacles!

"VERNON-SMITH!"

"Well?"

"You come on last!"

"All right," said Bertie Vernon quietly.

Harry Wharton spoke curtly enough. He was feeling angry and contemptuous, and he did not take much trouble to hide those feelings.

But some of the fellows were surprised at the quiet way in which Smithy took being shifted from the top of the list to the bottom.

It was not like the Bounder to be quiet or civil in such circumstances. It was more like him to make himself as unpleasant as possible.

Not that Wharton cared a straw what he thought or felt about it. The fellow had pulled his leg, butted into the team for a rotten reason of his own that had nothing to do with cricket, and then let the team down. Smithy could like it, or lump it. On his present form he was entitled to appear at the tip of the tail, and that was where he was going to appear. He could wind up the innings with his second duck's egg!

Harry Wharton went on with Bob Cherry to open the innings.

Vernon watched them from the pavilion with a clouded brow.

He was feeling thoroughly rotten.

He was a cricketer—and, in his own way, a sportsman. It was not comforting to think that he had made a fool of a fellow who had trusted him,

and that one of the biggest fixtures in the Remove list was to be chucked away through his double dealing.

He had done no bowling in the Rookwood innings. Harry Wharton had no use for him at all.

Once, twice, it had crossed his mind to ask for an over, and then exert his real powers. What he could have done as a bowler would have compensated—more than compensated—for his failure as a batsman.

But prudence restrained him.

Smithy was played for his batting; nobody expected fireworks from Smithy as a bowler. Such a sudden and startling development would cause general surprise and comment. Fellows would remember what a wonderful bowler Bertie Vernon had been; and in too many ways already it had been remarked that Smithy seemed to have grown like that cousin of his who had left Greyfriars.

It would have set him right with the team—but he dared not!

He stood alone at the pavilion. Every fellow there was sick with him, and had nothing to say to him.

Even Redwing, always the Bounder's chum, was avoiding him—glancing at him sometimes, but never coming near him, or speaking to him.

For several days past that avoidance on Redwing's part had been marked.

It suited in many ways the fellow who was under another fellow's name. Captain Vernon had cautioned him to break off by degrees the friendship with the junior who had known the Bounder so well.

But that break seemed to be coming from Redwing's side, rather than his own. It was as if some secret instinct

warned the Bounder's chum that this was not the fellow he had liked.

"If we only had that chap Vernon here—"

The Bounder's double started as he heard Ogilvy's voice uttering his name. He glanced round at the Scottish junior.

"Yes, if we had Vernon!" said Peter Todd. "Blow that coffee-coloured captain for taking him away in the middle of the term! And that ass Smithy kicked up a fuss the time he was left out for Vernon. Fat lot of good Smithy is!"

"Blessed if I understand a chap running to seed to that extent!" said Tom Brown. "I was looking for at least fifty from Smithy. Look how he played with the bowling in the St. Jim's game."

"Oh what a fall was there, my countrymen!" sighed Toddy.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Johnny Bull, with savage sarcasm. "Smithy's chucking wickets away here. But what does that matter, so long as he dodges his pater? That's the really important thing!"

Vernon's face flamed.

But he did not speak. It had got out somehow that Mr. Vernon-Smith had been coming down to Greyfriars that day, and that that was why he was at Rookwood. That was to have been the deepest of deep secrets. It was no secret now.

"Oh, chuck it, Johnny!" murmured Nugent, with a rather uneasy glance in Vernon's direction at a little distance. "The chap can hear you."

"Let him hear me!" answered Johnny stolidly. "When a fellow plays a dirty trick I don't mind letting him hear that I think it's a dirty trick! It was a dirty trick to pull Wharton's leg and shove himself into the team—and he jolly well knows it without my telling him!"

"Don't let's have a row here, you ass!" said Tom Brown.

All the fellows expected the Bounder to break out in an angry outburst of temper.

But Vernon did not speak. He moved farther away, his cheeks burning.

It was, as Johnny said, a dirty trick—and he knew it. The team had already been below par, and prospects at Rookwood dubious, and he had butted in and weakened it further. And all the fellows knew somehow that his reason had not been over-confidence, or a keenness on cricket—it had been a reason for which they could only feel contempt.

The innings went on, not very happily. Jimmy Silver, almost as good a bowler as Vernon himself, put up the hat trick in that innings. Later Tom Brown and Redwing made a good stand—the New Zealand junior putting up a useful twenty; Browney was still at the wickets when last man was called; and Bertie Vernon went out to join the New Zealander.

The other fellows could have groaned to express their feelings as he went.

Browney was well set; even Jimmy Silver's bowling had passed him by as harmlessly as water on a duck, and, with a good man at the other end to keep the innings alive, the New Zealander was good for a hatful of runs.

The score stood at eighty, the same figure as the first innings. And after what they had seen of Smithy's form already the Greyfriars fellows did not expect to see it reach even eighty-one, as he had the bowling.

It was to take the last ball of an over that last man was called. It was not

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much to ask of a batsman like Smithy to stop one ball and let Browney get the bowling again. But they all knew that it was too much to ask now.

Harry Wharton stood with his eyes fixed on that batsman with a gleam in them.

If the fellow merely saved his sticks for a single ball it meant a great deal; Tom Brown would put on the runs again, given a chance. But a duck's egg now meant the end of the innings, and Browney not out for a twenty that might have become thirty in one more over—fifty or sixty if Smithy could only have kept the innings alive for him. But even if he saved that single ball it would be something!

And that was the fellow who had baited into the team—a fellow who, instead of putting up a good score in each innings, as his captain had a right to expect from a batsman like Smithy, was obviously going down to the first ball—and depriving the side of the last ghost of a chance of pulling off the match.

"The rotter!" muttered Wharton.

It came—as he knew it would come. Bertie Vernon was nowhere on a level with the Rookwood bowling, and the ball whipped out his leg stump, and ended the brief suspense of the men at the pavilion.

"Out!"

"All down for eighty!" said Bob Cherry. "Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen, I shan't waste any ink writing home about this!"

"The rotter!" repeated Wharton.

"A pair of spectacles—for Smithy! And he jolly well knew when he butted in! The rotter!"

"How a man could go off his form like that beats me!" said Bob. "We have our ups and downs, but that's the jolly old limit!"

"He doesn't seem the same man at all!" said Nugent.

"No," said Tom Redwing quietly, "he doesn't. What Greyfriars man would say that that was Smithy at the wicket?"

Even Tom Brown, good-tempered fellow as he was, gave the proprietor of the pair of spectacles a grim look as he came off. Browney could not help thinking of those runs that would never materialise now.

"What the thump are you doing in this team, Smithy?" he grunted. "Better stick to marbles, or hop-scotch, after this! You used to be able to play cricket, but marbles is your game now!"

Vernon did not answer.

But if the Greyfriars men were disgruntled, Jimmy Silver & Co. were in very cheery spirits.

"Thirty to tie, thirty-one to win!" remarked Jimmy Silver to his men. "And we made a hundred and thirty in our first knock! I fancy we shall have a few wickets to spare at the finish—what?"

"Sort of!" grinned Arthur Edward Lovell.

And Harry Wharton & Co. could not help being of the same opinion.

Amazing!

"WHARTON—"

"Don't speak to me!"

"But—"

"Sheer off!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I'm fed-up with you, Vernon-Smith! Leave me alone!"

Vernon's face burned.

After the interval for tea the Rookwooders were preparing for their

second innings—which none of them expected to last long, any more than the Greyfriars fellows did. Two or three wickets might go down, but it could make no difference to the outcome; Rookwood, obviously, were going to win with wickets in hand.

Harry Wharton knew how to lose a match, as well as how to win one. But this was too utterly rotten for any fellow's patience.

A fellow could not help it, perhaps, if he had started as a first-class batsman and then gone off his form and become a mere rabbit. But he could help butting into a team and letting them down.

Even Billy Bunter could have put up nothing worse than a pair of spectacles in a cricket match. And Wharton had taken the fellow on trust—on his own word that he was equal to the game, knowing what he had been only a few weeks ago.

"Look here," said Vernon, in a low voice. "I'm sorry—I never realised that I should put up such an utterly rotten show—"

"You knew it well enough!" said Harry bitterly. "Don't I know why you came here at all—to keep out of your father's way, because you've got one of your rotten rows on! You were sending him a telegram when I saw you in Quelch's study this morning—do you dare to deny that, Vernon-Smith?"

"Never mind that—" muttered Bertie.

"No, never mind it; it can't be helped now! You've made a fool of me and let down the side! We had only a sporting chance of a win, in any case—and now we're going to be licked by a margin that will make the fellows laugh when we tell them at Greyfriars! You told me you were chucking cricket—why couldn't you stick to that! Couldn't you find any other lying excuse for getting away from the school for the day, without mucking up one of our biggest fixtures?"

"I'm sorry—"

"That's a lot of good—now! You're a rotter, Vernon-Smith—a tricky rotter—and if you're not ashamed of yourself I suppose you've got no sense of shame at all! Leave me alone, anyhow!"

"I was going to ask you—"

"Will you shut up? I don't want a row here to make the Rookwood men stare, but I can tell you that I'm jolly near knocking you spinning! Keep away from me!"

"Will you listen to me?" breathed Vernon. "I've said I'm sorry—I can't say more than that! Give me a chance—"

"What do you mean, you fool? You can't score more than two duck's eggs in a cricket match! What do you mean?"

"Let me bowl an over—"

"Don't talk rot!"

"I—I think—"

"I said don't talk rot!" snapped Wharton savagely. "You used to be a fairly good change bowler—and you used to be able to bat! You can't bat for toffee now! I'm likely to trust you with an over! How many do you think Rookwood would make off it—if your bowling's anything like your batting?"

"I—I believe—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here—"

Harry Wharton turned his back on him.

Vernon's face was dark as he went

into the field with the Greyfriars men.

He had a sense of shame, and at that stage of the proceedings he wished that he had faced Mr. Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars, rather than have cut this miserable figure at Rookwood.

The angry contempt in every face stung him deeply. And he had resolved, risk or no risk, to do what he could do—and he knew that, if he chose to exert his powers as a bowler the game was far from lost.

But that resolve seemed to have come too late. Smithy's bowling had never been anything like his batting, and his claim to bowl, after such an exhibition of batting, excited only angry derision. He was no use at all, and his fellow-cricketers were sick of the sight of him, and he had to make the best of that.

His face was clouded and his heart heavy as he watched Tom Brown bowl the first over to Lovell, opening the innings for Rookwood.

Lovell made six off Tom Brown's bowling, and then Hurree Singh bowled to Tommy Dodd of Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd hit two fours in the over. Rookwood had already fourteen out of the thirty-one they wanted for no wickets.

Bertie Vernon set his lips hard, and came up to Wharton.

"Look here—" he began.

"Get into your place, and shut up!"

"Look here," said Vernon savagely, "give me a chance in one over. If it doesn't do any good, what harm will it do? The game's up in a quarter of an hour at this rate."

"Do you think you can take wickets as fast as you can lose them?" asked the captain of the Remove, with savage sarcasm.

"What harm will it do to give me a chance? I—I've gone off in batting, but I—I think—"

Wharton gave an angry shrug of the shoulders.

"Oh, all right! You used to be a fair change bowler, and you mayn't be such an utter dud at that as you are with the bat! Goodness knows, it can't do much harm after the way you've let us down! Give him the ball, lanky!"

"Now look out for fireworks!" said Peter Todd sarcastically.

Wharton, half-repentant of his concession, looked on, with a knitted brow, as Vernon went on to bowl against Arthur Edward Lovell. But Tom Redwing watched that bowler with a strange intentness.

Arthur Edward Lovell played the ball with confidence—perhaps a little too much confidence. Arthur Edward gave a jump when his off stump was uprooted.

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell.

The Greyfriars field jumped as one man. Harry Wharton stared speechlessly.

Lovell of Rookwood was out. He seemed hardly able to realise it as he stared at his wicket; but there it was. He was out—bowled Vernon-Smith!

"My only summer straw!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"This," said Tom Brown, "is a jolly old dream! Smithy taking Rookwood wickets! Wake me up, somebody!"

"Good man, Smithy!" gasped Frank Nugent.

Arthur Edward Lovell walked away to the pavilion.

Ruby of Rookwood took his place. Ruby stayed exactly long enough for a fast ball to slant his middle stump and scatter his bails.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Duck's eggs, after all, were not

wholly and solely the portion of the Greyfriars visitors.

Wharton began to feel glad that he had let Smithy have that over. He could not understand it or begin to understand it. Smithy had been a good change bowler—nothing like this. His batting had gone utterly to rot, and simultaneously, it seemed, his bowling had picked up in a wonderful way—which was a thing no fellow could have expected.

Newcome of the Rookwood Fourth came on. There were eager faces in the field now. With Smithy in this amazing and utterly unexpected form as a bowler, great possibilities dawned on a team already resigned to defeat.

Those possibilities looked a little like being realised as Newcome's wicket went west.

"The hat-trick!" stuttered Bob Cherry. "And Smithy! Oh!"

"I said we were dreaming!" gasped Browney. "We shall hear the rising-bell soon and wake up!"

"Good old Smithy!"

"Good old Bounder!"

"Bravo, Smithy!"

Tom Cook came on for Rookwood. Eyes were fairly glued on the bowler now.

Bertie Vernon was unconscious of it—unconscious of everything but his game. He was going all out; and he knew what he could do, and he was doing it. He had let the team down; he was pulling the game out of the fire for them. There was no angry contempt in Greyfriars faces now; there was wonder and admiration and eager expectation. The fellow whom every other man in the team had wanted to boot off the field had suddenly become a man they delighted to honour!

Nobody could understand it; but there it was, and the Greyfriars cricketers gladly accepted the gifts the gods sent them, without understanding how this miracle had come about.

One of them knew!

The last doubt had left Tom Redwing's mind now, and he knew!

Bertie Vernon had known that this might spell danger, and disregarded it. But he had not known how great the

danger; he had not known that this was the final proof to the Bounder's chum who already suspected his imposture. He was not thinking of Redwing; he was thinking of nothing but taking Rookwood wickets, and he was taking them.

"How's that?" shrieked Bob Cherry. "Out!"

Tommy Cook trailed sadly home.

Tommy Doyle took his place. A few minutes later he was following the other Tommy home.

Then came Jimmy Silver for the last ball of the over. Jimmy was a bowler; but he was a good bat, and he hoped to stop the rot. That hope was brief.

"Oh gum!" said Jimmy Silver, as his wicket went.

Bob Cherry pitched his cap into the air, set back his head, and roared. Harry Wharton was disposed to rub his eyes, to make sure that he was not, as Browney suggested, dreaming this!

Had Smithy really put up the double hat-trick? Really, it was hard to believe that he had!

Even that fellow Vernon, who had left, wonderful bowler as he was, had never beaten this! Except that fellow Vernon, no bowler in the Greyfriars Remove had ever equalled it. That fellow Vernon had had an uncanny, almost miraculous gift. There were Sixth Form men at Greyfriars who could not keep up their sticks against him. But Smithy had never shone as a bowler. Now he was shining like a bright, particular star, and at a time when he had seemed utterly off his form and gone completely to seed! It wanted some understanding!

But there it was.

Rookwood had been fourteen for no wickets. Now they were still fourteen for six wickets! Cricket, proverbially an uncertain game, had not often witnessed so kaleidoscopic a change as this! In a single over, certain defeat had changed into a glorious prospect of victory.

"Smithy, old man!" Harry Wharton clapped the wonderful new bowler on the back. "Forget what I said to you—sorry I cut up rusty! But who the dickens could have dreamed of this?"

"It's jolly old magic!" said Bob Cherry. "Smithy, you've got us all guessing! How do you do it? I suppose you haven't suddenly changed by magic into that relation of yours?"

Vernon caught his breath, but he contrived to laugh.

Tom Redwing smiled—a bitter smile. Quite unconsciously, Bob's jesting words had stated what Redwing now knew to be the actual fact. He knew now—there was no lingering doubt in his mind. He knew!

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bowled the next over to Tommy Dodd.

Tommy Dodd made four before he joined the other two Tommies at the pavilion, the nabob getting him out. Seven down for eighteen!

Mornington took the next over from Vernon.

Bertie did not have to ask for an over now. He was going to have all the overs that the laws of the game allowed.

But the fellows in the field, who looked eagerly for more fireworks, had a disappointment.

Bob Cherry's jesting words had struck the hapless impersonator with a sudden, clear sense of the risk he was taking.

In that amazing over which had produced the double hat-trick he had dismissed it from his mind. Now it came back. Morn made two, two, and four, and the score jumped to twenty-six. Five wanted to win—and three wickets yet to fall!

Tom Redwing, watching the bowler, could read his thoughts as if they were written in his face. He had determined to play the game, regardless of danger. Now prudence, or fear, had supervened! He dared not carry on. And then—he saw that the fellow's resolve had hardened again. He could read what others could not read in the set face.

"How's that?" yelled Bob Cherry, when the next ball went down.

"Out!"

Mornington was out for his eight! Twenty-six for eight wickets! Two more balls to the over, and two more men to come—the mere "tail" of the Rookwood team! They came, and went, rewarded by a couple of inglorious duck's eggs! It was the hat-trick again—to wind up with—and Greyfriars had won the match at Rookwood by the narrow margin of four runs!

Third Time Not Lucky!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old fat man!" roared Bob Cherry.

"We beat them!"
"Eh? Did you?" said Billy Bunter.

"All right! I say—"

"Or, rather, Smithy did!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Did he?" said Bunter. "All right! I say, look here—"

The Greyfriars cricketers were back late for calling-over. But they were in time for prep; and when the famous Five came up they found Billy Bunter on the Remove landing, just about to come down.

Bunter had a sheaf of impot paper in his fat hand, and a cheery grin on his face.

"I say, you fellows, look here!" grinned Bunter. "I've done my lines!"

"Your lines?" repeated Wharton. Actually, he had forgotten Bunter and his lines, as completely as Bunter had forgotten that a cricket match was going on at Rookwood!

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Neither was he fearfully interested now that he was reminded of them.

The Greyfriars fellows had returned full of that chequered game at Rookwood and the astonishing way in which Smithy had pulled it out of the fire. Sunday prep in the Remove studies that evening was likely to be a little neglected.

"But, I say, you fellows, look here!" Billy Bunter's fat face was irradiated by a wide grin that extended almost from one fat ear to the other. "I say, I thought of a jolly clever dodge!"

"One of your bright ideas?" asked Harry Wharton, with a laugh.

"A real winner this time!" said Bunter impressively.

"Smithy put up a double hat-trick, old fat man—"

"Bother Smithy—"

"Smithy's turned out no end of a bowler—"

"Blow Smithy!"

"Hooked the game out of the soup right at the finish—"

"Do stop talking rot, Cherry! I say, you fellows, look at this! If it works all right with Quelch, I don't mind letting you have the idea! It will come in jolly useful, I can tell you!"

Bunter held up his impot. Apparently another bright idea had flashed into the fat brain of the Owl of the Remove and solved, at last, the pressing problem of those troublesome lines.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked, not interested, really; but they looked. But, having looked, they looked again—quite interested.

Bunter's impot was rather unusual! "You see," grinned the happy Fat Owl, "Quelch said they had to go in to-day—four hundred of them. I've just finished—I can take them in before prep! See? Of course, a fellow wasn't going to write four hundred

lines! What do you think of this for a dodge?"

Bunter's lines really were worth looking at, even by fellows full up with cricket!

"Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris.

Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris.

Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris.

Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris."

And so on and so forth! Every line was repeated four times.

When a fellow was given lines, they were supposed to be consecutive lines. Still, Quelch certainly had not said consecutive lines. He had said lines. That was good enough for Bunter.

"But what the thump," said Bob Cherry, "is the big idea? Doesn't it take as long to write a line four times as to write four lines?"

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS—AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

FOR next Saturday:

"THE HOUSE OF DARK SECRETS!"

is the title of the next grand yarn of the famous chums of Greyfriars, by Frank Richards. This talented author has excelled himself with a vengeance in this super-yarn featuring Herbert Vernon, who is impersonating his cousin and double, Vernon-Smith. So far, Vernon has got away with his amazing deception, but certain things happen that arouse Tom Redwing's suspicions. And Tom, a man of action and not words, sets off to make a few inquiries, with what result you will learn next Saturday. Latest information about what's happening at Greyfriars will be found in the interesting edition of the "Herald," while "My Page" will be taken over by the "big noise"—Mr. Quelch. Have you ordered your copy of the MAGNET for next week? If not, take my advice and do so now!

Now for a few replies to readers which may be of interest to other "Magnetites."

George Wilson (Edgbaston), informs me that he was out in his back garden the other day when he saw an aeroplane which, to him, appeared stationary in the air. Was it imagination, he asks, or can an aeroplane remain still in the air?

An aeroplane can never stand still in relation to the air, the slowest rate at which it can fly being about half its top speed. When travelling against a very strong wind, however, it is possible that it may stand still in relation to the earth.

The next query comes from Robert Bonny (Gravesend), a ship's cook,

who asks me: Why does an onion make our eyes water?

As a matter of fact, "Bob," our eyes are really watering all the time—that is to say, we are producing tears that pass over our eyeball and keep it clean. That is why we blink, to carry the tears that appear under the upper lid over the surface of the eye. These tears escape into the nose. We say that our eyes water when the tears form so swiftly that they cannot escape quickly enough. Onions give off something to the air which excites the ends of the nerves of smell in the nose, and also excites the ends of the nerves of touch in the eyeball and eyelids, and so sends a message to the brain telling the tear-glands to make tears quickly; and then we say our eyes water. There is use in this, for the rapid flow of tears helps to protect the eyelids and the eyeball from the stuff the onions give off. In people who, for some reason, cannot produce tears, such things as onions will make the eyes smart severely, because such people cannot protect themselves by making their eyes water.

Now I must remind you about the July issues of the "Schoolboys' Own Library." I am not going to recommend any individual issue—as they are all so good. No. 376 contains a lively holiday-adventure yarn starring your old favourites—Harry Wharton & Co., who meet with adventures of a rather unusual kind while tramping the peaceful countryside. Note the title: "The Greyfriars Hikers!" It's a Frank Richards' special. No. 377, "The School Squadron!" is a story of school and flying adventure, which tells how the chums of Selborough "put paid" to a

band of spies who are a danger to the country. You will find thrills galore in this powerful story by Eric Roche. No. 378, "The Schoolboy Crusoes!" will prove one of Edwy Searles Brooks' best sellers. Shipwrecked in a hurricane, the chums of St. Frank's are cast away on a desert island in the Pacific! Are they downhearted? There's life in every chapter of this great yarn. Be sure you get one, if not all three, of these popular volumes. Every newsagent stocks them.

The next letter in my postbag comes from Mrs. Spears (Cornwall), whose son Alfred is a staunch reader of the MAGNET. Unfortunately, Alf walks in his sleep, which is naturally a worry to his mother. Mrs. Spears asks me why do people walk in their sleep?

There are two parts of our mind which control all our movements and actions. One part has to do with all those things which "we know we are doing," while the other part does things "without our knowledge." We do quite a lot of things without being conscious of them. For instance, we do not think about breathing, though we are always doing it. We do not think about our heart beating, although it never stops as long as we live; and there are some things we can learn to do so well as to be able to do them without thinking at all. Walking is one of these things. Now acts of this kind are sometimes done by people in their sleep, and they can do them just as well asleep as awake, because the mind has got so used to looking after such acts that it does not require us to be conscious when doing them. So some people are found to walk in their sleep because one part of the mind is wide awake when the other is asleep. The curious thing about it is that, just because the walker is asleep and not conscious, he can walk over dangerous spots which would probably cause him to fall through nervousness if he were wide awake. As he is not conscious, he generally walks safely, and remembers nothing about it.

That's all for now, chums. Meet you again next week.

YOUR EDITOR,
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,639.

"He, he, he! Not if you've got four pens fixed together on a wire rod with a wheel at the end!" chuckled Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Quelch said lines," said Bunter. "Well, there they are—lines! One line's as good as another, I suppose?"

"Let's hope that Quelch will suppose so, too!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, why shouldn't he? Lines are lines!" said Bunter. "I've done four hundred lines—only one hundred, really—see? The writing's a bit scraggly, perhaps—"

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"But see the idea?" said the triumphant Owl. "You get four hundred lines done in the time of one hundred! You fellows have never thought of a dodge like that!"

"Never!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Only a brain like yours could think that one out, Bunter."

"Well, I'm fairly clever, you know," admitted Bunter. "The fact is, a chap has to have his wits about him at school, to keep his end up with the beaks. They're always trying to make a chap work, one way or another! You fellows can use this idea, if you like, and—"

"I think we'll wait and see how it works out with Quelch first!" chuckled Nugent.

"Oh, that's all right! Just think of it—you get a hundred lines, and you only have to do twenty-five, with four pens wired together! I don't want to keep this to myself. You fellows can use the idea; but I shall expect you to stand me a study supper! One good turn deserves another, you know."

And Billy Bunter rolled away down the stairs, leaving the Famous Five grinning!

They wished Bunter luck—but they doubted it! Bunter's bright ideas really were wasted on a tough nut like Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smithy!" Bob Cherry roared from the doorway of Study No. 1, a few minutes later, where the Famous Five were dealing with doughnuts, as Bertie Vernon came up. "Trot in and munch a doughnut, old bean! Lots of time before prep!"

"Roll in, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

All the Famous Five wanted to be agreeable to Smithy.

After having been treated like a pariah in the team he had pulled the game out of the fire, and they were anxious for him to forget a good many unpleasant words that had been

uttered. Likewise, his amazing display as a bowler was a topic of the keenest interest.

It was not, however, a topic that Vernon was anxious to discuss!

He glanced into the study and shook his head.

"Thanks, I'm rather tired," he said shortly and went on to his own study.

Bob made a grimace.

"A bit shirty, I suppose!" he said.

"Some of us did rather rub it in—"

"I know I did," said Harry. "But—well, how was a fellow to know what was coming? I can't understand it now! Smithy's lost all his batting form, and he's picked up bowling in a style that I've never seen equalled, except when that relation of his was here. No fellow could have guessed that one!"

"It's thumping queer!" said Johnny Bull.

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"Jolly glad he came to Rookwood, anyhow!" said Bob. "If he can't bat, he can bowl, and what we lose on the swings we win on the roundabouts. But it's no good trying to understand a thing like that—it just beats me!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" came floating up the passage from the Remove landing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's Bunter's signature tune!"

"Sounds as if these bright ideas don't go down with Quelch, somehow!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Yow! Ow! Wow! Oh crikey! Ow!"

A fat figure, and a lugubrious fat face, appeared in the doorway!

Billy Bunter blinked at five grinning countenances with a dismal, dolorous blink! He wriggled as he blinked!

"Wow! I say, you fellows—wow! Wow!" wailed the unhappy fat Owl.

"Quelch pleased with your lines?" asked Bob.

"Ow! No! Wow! I say, you fellows, jever hear of such a beast?" groaned Bunter. "He just looked at those lines and said—wow! Yow! Wow!"

"Quelch said wow! Yow! Wow!" ejaculated Bob. "What did Quelch say that for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, you fathead! Quelch said—yow-ow-ow—I mean, Quelch said it was the third time I had tried to delude him about those measly lines. Wow! You remember you tied up my injured hand, Wharton—well, Quelch made out that that was all—wow!—gammon. After that he made out that I hadn't written Coker's lines, though I told him I had—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Wow! Now he makes out that I've tried to diddle him—what he calls delude him—by fastening a lot of pens together! Suspicious beast, you know! Just because the lines were repeated four times over, he said—ow! Wow!"

"But that's what you did!" howled Bob.

"Ow! Wow! I told him I hadn't!" wailed Bunter. "A chap expects a schoolmaster to take his word—I mean a truthful chap, like me! 'Tain't as if it was one of you fellows! Wow! But did he? No fear! What do you think he said? He said that he knew that trick of fastening pens together when he was in the Fourth Form, forty years ago! Of course, he was a boy once, you know. You wouldn't think it to look at him, but I suppose he must have been ages ago—ow! Wow!"

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

"Well you can cackle!" moaned Bunter. "But I've had six—six on the bags—and I've still got four hundred lines to write! I shall never see the last of those lines—ow! Wow! All that beast Smithy's fault! Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows, I shan't be able to sit down to prep—wow!"

"Feeling bad?" asked Bob.

"Ow! Yes. Ow!"

"Too bad to scoff a doughnut?"

"Oh! No Not at all, old chap!"

And Bunter found comfort in doughnuts!

TOM REDWING went into Study No. 4—but not for prep.

Bertie Vernon, at the table with his books, glanced at him; but Tom did not glance at the fellow whom he knew now was not his chum. What he knew he could not prove; he could hardly venture to utter what would sound, to other ears, like an utterly fantastic suspicion. But since the Bounder's double had bowled at Rookwood he knew—and he was going to act on his knowledge.

Without a glance at the junior at the table, without a word to him, Tom collected his books and left the study. He did his prep that evening in Study No. 1.

The Remove fellows knew that the break between Redwing and Smithy was complete, but—as yet—they knew no more than that!

THE END.

(Special for next week, chums! "THE HOUSE OF DARK SECRETS!" By Frank Richards. Don't miss it!)



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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS
:: PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER. ::



A VILLAIN UNMASKED!

"Eggsciting" School Story of Jack Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's.

By DICKY NUGENT

"Telegram for Master Fearless!" Binding, the page, made that announcement from the doorway of Fearless' study in the Fourth passage at St. Sam's.

He poked his nose into the study and jammed a penny dreadful into his pocket and thrust a buff envelope on to the table. He caused quite a stir in the study—though it was nowhere near tea-time!

"A telegram! My hat! Let's see it!" said Fearless eagerly. "It must be awfully important. Catch!"

The grinning page deftly caught the threepenny bit Fearless tossed him and departed, resuming his perusal of the penny dreadful as he went.

"News from home, old chap?" asked Jack Jolly, as Fearless opened the envelope. "Is it about those secret plans your pater left with you?"

"Right on the wicket!" grinned Fearless. "Up till now the pater has given me plenty of rope. But now he has sent me a wire! He says: 'Have plans ready. Will arrive at St. Sam's almost immediately.' That must mean he wants the plans back again."

"For which relief, much thanks!" remarked Jolly. "After you've got rid of them, we shan't have any more trouble with that shifty rascal who calls himself Honest Joe Goodman!"

"He has tried hard to get them, and no mistake!" larfed Frank, as he went down on his knees by the loose floorboard under which he had hidden the secret plans. "If he hadn't had such an idiot as the Head to help him, he mite have got them by this time and—oh!"

Fearless broke off with a gasp of sheer dismay. He had taken up the loose floorboard and his eyes were now glued to the space beneath it.

"By gum!" he eggscclaimed. "Something come unstuck?" asked Jolly anxiously.

For answer, Fearless pointed a trembling finger at the hole in the floor.

"The plans!" he gasped. "They're gone!"

"Impossible!"

"Impossible or not, they're not there!" Frank Fearless jumped to his feet. He was white with agitation and red with rage. The loss of his pater's precious plans seemed likely to give him a fit of the blues. "Someone has pinched those plans, and I think I know who that someone was—the Head!"

"Oh, grato pip!"

"We mite have guessed!" groaned Fearless. "We mite have known when he climbed up Fossil's ladder into this study the other day that he wasn't doing it for a lark!"

"The eggsplication he gave us afterwards was certainly hard to swallow," remarked Jolly, with a shake of his head. "He said he was training to be an ank-silly-airy fireman!"

"A likely story!" said Fearless, with a bitter larf. "The fact was that he had found out where the plans were hidden and was trying to get them. I stopped him at the time, but he must have come back later—like a thief in the night!"

"Fearless! How dare you talk about your headmaster like this here!"

sound of that familiar voice. They found Dr. Birchmall himself standing in the doorway, his brows nitted fiercely, as though Frank's remarks were by no means to his liking.

"How dare you suggest that I am a thief?" he cried. "I would never dream of theiving, Fearless—particularly in the nite! As a matter of fact, I did this little job early this morning, before rising-bell!"

Jack Jolly & Co. simply blinked at the Head.

"You admit, then, sir, that you took the plans?" ejaculated Fearless.

Dr. Birchmall grinned and nodded.

"Not much good doing otherwise, Fearless, now you have nottised they are gone," he answered cheerfully. "I should have left some bogus papers in their place so you wouldn't smell a rat. Unfortunately, I forgot to do it, so there is no need for further concealment. But don't think I am a thief, I'm not!"

"Then what the dickens are you, sir?" eggscclaimed Fearless.

The Head smirked.

"If you must know, Fearless, I'm a detective—a sort of Herlock Sholmes or Bexton Slake, you know, but grater than either of those two fumbling amateurs. I tracked your secret plans to their hiding-place because your esteemed father wanted his lawyer to have them!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You may have nottised the lawyer nocking about the school once or twice lately. Goodman is his name—Honest Joe Goodman!"

"Honest Joe Goodman, my pater's lawyer!" yelled Fearless. "Why, sir, you must be potty! His lawyer is a man named Grasper—of the firm of Grasper, Grabbe, Snatcher & Snaffle."

"Bosh!" said the Head. "Goodman is your father's lawyer, and the fact is that your father cabled him from Timbuctoo—"

"T-T-Timbuctoo?" stuttered Frank.

"Why, sir, my father's never been to Timbuctoo in his life!"

"Ratts!" retorted the Head cheerfully. "Mr. Ferdinand Fearless is in Timbuctoo at the present moment, and he won't be home till—"

"Morning, everybody!"

Everybody jumped at the sound of that voice, while the Head's eyes nearly bolted out of their sockets, as he turned to the doorway.

For, standing in the doorway, was Mr. Ferdinand Fearless himself!

"M-M-Mr. Fearless!" gasped Dr. Birchmall. "Then you're not in Timbuctoo?"

"No; nor in Timbucthree, either!" replied Mr. Fearless, with a merry larf.

"Where did you pick up this weird idea, Dr. Birchmall?"

"From—from your lawyer, phaltered the Head. "He said you—"

wanted him to have the plans without your son knowing anything about it, and—"

A hard look came into Mr. Fearless' eyes. His face seemed to turn to granite. He grabbed Dr. Birchmall by the shoulders amid a stony silence. "Let's have the concrete facts!" he said. "You have met an imposter. What was he like?"

"He—he had a black mistosh and smoked glasses, Mr. Fearless, and—lemme see—his voice was horse and husky—"

"Hymer Kerr, my biggest bizziness rival!" ejaculated Mr. Fearless. "That's his voice to a T. The smoked glasses and black mistosh were false. But the plans! Where are they?"

"I—I gave them to him this morning!"

"Well, of all the fooling fatheads—" hooted Mr. Fearless.

Words failed him. Seizing the Head by his venerable beard, he gave it a tug that made the Head howl.

"Yarooow! Ow-ow!"

Leggo my whiskers! Yooowoo!"

Mr. Fearless released him at last and paced feverishly up and down the study.

"Dished! Diddled! Done!" he cried. "There's a fortune in those plans! That invention for the high-speed shelling of hard-boiled eggs can be used for a hundred purposes—peeling oranges; shelling peas, and so on and so forth! Without a doubt, Hymer Kerr will take the plans abroad and market my invention—and make a mint of munny out of it!"

"Then let's try to stop him!" cried Frank Fearless eagerly. "He hasn't a grato start. He may still be packing his bags at the Jolly Sailor, in Muggleton!"

Mr. Fearless' eyes gleamed.

"Who knows? We may yet be in time! Would you boys like to come?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Please, can I come, too?" came a whimpering, winning question from the Head. "Now I know the truth, nothing will give me grater plezzure than to help in the capture of this raskal!"

"Oh, all serene, then!" granted Mr. Fearless. "Kim on!"

They all charged out of the study, galloped out of the House, and then hurtled down in Mr. Fearless' Rolls-Rice to the Jolly Sailor.

Grate was their delite, on entering the inn, to find "Honest Joe Goodman," alias Hymer Kerr still there—bizzily talking on the tellyphone!

"Is that Kapitn Cadman?" they heard him say. "Hymer Kerr here. Get ready to sail at once, kapitn. I shall join you at Sandport Harbour in a few minnits, and I want to leave as soon as I board the Saucy Sal. See?"

And, having made that decision, Mr. Fearless turned to the Jolly Sailor to order a taxi—while Jack Jolly & Co. cheered him to the echo.

Little did our heroes dream, as they cheered, what amazing adventures they were to face in helping Mr. Fearless to fulfil his resolve!

("The Ocean Trail" is the title of the sequel to this yarn, in next week's number. Don't miss it!)

No. 353.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

July 15th, 1939.

HARRY WHARTON CALLING

All is now ready for the Greyfriars Pageant, which is fixed to take place next Tuesday.

From my own observation, I can say with certainty that the Pageant will not fail for want of enthusiasm on the part of the Pageant Committee. They have worked with a will. In Wibley's case I know for a fact that he has spent all of his spare time and even burnt the midnight oil in preparing for the great occasion.

Wib tells me, and I can quite believe it, that the committee's chief difficulty has been deciding what to leave out. Greyfriars is rich in historical tradition

and events deserving reproduction have occurred in nearly every reign since that of Edward VI. Selecting the most suitable incidents has obviously been no easy task.

The programme, which has just been issued, seems, in the circumstances, to cover the ground extraordinarily well. The Pageant begins in the ruined Cloisters with a representation of the opening of the old monastery in 1472, by the Order of the Grey Friars. The next scene, to be enacted with the ruins of the old chapel as background, is of the invasion of the monastery by Henry VIII's soldiers and the desperate, but hopeless, resistance of the Friars.

The Pageant will then move to the School House, where we shall see Edward VI opening the restored monastery as a school for

boys. From 1551, when this event took place, we shall pass to 1564—the date of the visit of Queen Elizabeth to our alma mater. The arrival of Good Queen Bess (who will be played by Marjorie Hazeldene) is to be the most decorative scene of the day and will provide a fine opportunity for the effective display of the costumes of the period.

After that, there is a long jump to 1716, when the school was reorganised on its present basis.

The last scene will be a game of cricket as played in 1815—rules, dress and all—concluding with the arrival on Big Side of the British troops who rested at Greyfriars on their way back from the victory of Waterloo.

An ambitious programme, what? But Wibley, I think, can be trusted to see

that it is put across in the best possible manner. Look out in next week's "Herald" for a full account of the great day by cheery Bob Cherry!

All the very best, chums!

HARRY WHARTON



THE SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLBOY JOURNALIST

By HAROLD SKINNER

The fellow who aspires to be a journalist should have brains, resource, imagination, nerve and un-failing optimism.

He should also have that rare gift, a nose for news.

Of course, it often happens that nothing worth reporting is on the move. Does this stump a good junior journalist? Not likely! He just sits down at his typewriter and uses his imagination; and the results are much better than if he allowed himself to be limited by mere facts.

Unfortunately, a brilliant journalist can hardly expect to be appreciated properly at a school like Greyfriars. The fellows who run the "Greyfriars Herald," for instance, have a quaint old-world prejudice against printing anything that isn't true.

Still, if you think you're cut out to be a newspaperman, there is nothing to stop you asking Wharton for a trial. Put your cap on the side of your head, chew a piece of gum, and stroll into the editorial sanctum with your thumbs in your waistcoat armholes. Sit on the editor's desk and say: "Looking for a stick of human dynamite for your reporting staff, big boy? Well, here I am!"

When Wharton, electrified by your go-getter methods, has given you a start—

(As the budding "news-hound" would at this juncture go out on his neck, there is no point in printing the rest of our contributor's peculiar tips.—Ed.)

KIPPS BALANCES THE BOOKS

Kipps has been deputising for Nugent as cricket treasurer. But it has been found that there are disadvantages in having a conjurer for the job. He is liable to do things in such an unorthodox way.

When the committee asked him to balance his books, for instance, he paraded in front of them with a billiard cue on his nose and the books on top of the cue!