

THE
MAGNET

THE BOUNDER OF GREYFRIARS ON THE WAR-PATH!

CONDEMNED WITHOUT EVIDENCE!

By FRANK
RICHARDS



The
MAGNET
*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper* 2^d



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

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STOP
PRESS
NEWS

SO SAYS THE EDITOR!

Change is good for every man, says the old proverb—though the change I had from Uncle Clegg last week put the old proverb in the wrong. One of the half-crowns was good for no man. Still, one can have too much of even a good thing, and we've decided that a little change in the "Herald" will be welcome.

Hitherto—good word, that!—we've run it as a weekly newspaper, with Dicky Nugent supplying the serial. Now, for a short while, we are going to turn it into a magazine. Stories, articles, plays, and poems about Greyfriars men and by Greyfriars men—that's the programme. You will not lose Dicky Nugent and Smithy, who are both favourites with our readers. They will be weighing in as usual, but we are going to let some of the other fellows have a turn.

So we've told Master Dicky that we'll give him a chance every three weeks or so, while we let other fellows do the story in between. He scowled, of course, and offered to thrash us all round, but we pleaded for mercy. What an escape!

School news and views will be aired as usual in the articles we shall print, but we shall not be tied down to mere news. Fellows are at liberty to write anything they like, provided they use one side of the paper only and don't scrawl like a demented spider. And, above all, we ask them to remember the oft-repeated warning:

"Ye who bring in balderdash
Will meet with dire disaster,
And leave this study with a crash
In search of sticking-plaster."

See what you think of the change, and, whether you like or loathe it; don't forget we are always glad to know your views.

Cheerio, chums!

HARRY WHARTON.

TOM BROWN'S Grim Confession

"I SHOT LODER!"

Yes, let me admit it—I shot him deliberately! I shot him with malice aforethought. I felt no tremor of guilty fear as I took careful aim and pressed the trigger. Loder jolly well deserved it, and I meant him to have it.

I confess to the crime because it is weighing on my conscience. I admit frankly that it was wrong to shoot Loder, but when I tell you the full story, I don't think you will blame

me. Loder is a beast and a brute and a hypocrite, and he deserved his fate—that's my view.

Well, then, I was in Friardale Wood one afternoon. I was trying to shoot a sparrowhawk on her nest. I am fond of natural history and am quite keen on British birds. For a long time I had suspected that there was a hawk's nest somewhere in the wood, and on that afternoon I determined to track it down.

You need eyes as keen as a hawk's own to see the bird moving with stealthy rustle through the leaves, but I spotted her at last and began to trail her with the stealth of a Red Indian. I knew she would guide me to her nest as soon as she had collected some beetles or mice to feed her young, and I meant to shoot her as she sat on her nest.

But, alas! She flew over the old wooden fence of the Three Fishers, and I knew her nest must be somewhere in the extensive grounds of that dingy inn. To be spotted in



those grounds meant the boot from the Big Beak, but I was so keen to get my hawk that I decided to risk it. I clambered up the fence, and—
and got the shock of my life. From behind me a voice spoke.

"Brown!" It was Loder, sneaking through the wood! Dash him!

Well, of course, Loder refused to believe my hawk story. That's like him! Wingate would have given me a whopping, but he would have known I meant no harm. Loder decided to make the most of it.

"Don't give me any lies, you young sweep!" he snapped. "I shall report this to the Head! I shall tell him I saw you sneaking into that show over the back fence, and you can get ready for the sack! Now scam!"

So I lost my hawk—temporarily. But when I judged Loder had gone, I returned—in time to see Loder himself creeping through a gap in the fence! He had actually gone into the Three Fishers after promising to get me expelled for the same thing. The toad!

I watched him grimly. I trailed after him, creeping through the fence and treading stealthily through the bracken. I saw him stop outside the pub and speak to Joey Banks. Without the slightest compunction, I took careful aim and shot him.

"There!" I snarled, grinding my teeth. "You won't report me to the Head now, you rotter! Har, har!" And—he didn't! No, he certainly didn't!

I'm jolly glad my Aunt Lucy sent me that little cine-camera—but I don't think Loder is!

Underhand Crime Exposed! SEARCHLIGHT ON SMUGGLING!

By BOB CHERRY

All good magazines run a series of Crime Exposures, so Wharton has given me the job of investigating the Greyfriars underworld. Crime is pretty flourishing at the moment. A master-criminal, known as the Owl, runs an extensive tuck-stealing racket, while a sinister scoundrel called Fish conducts swindling of every description, families waited on daily. I shall expose them both in due course. At the moment, I am poking my nose into a hot-bed of secret smuggling.

Smuggling has been brought to a fine art. They say it is hard to smuggle contraband goods into England, but it is harder still to smuggle tuck into the Greyfriars sanatorium. Mrs. Kebble watches with an eagle eye. So does the doctor and the nurse. If a smuggler is caught bringing tuck to the patients, it means a sound thrashing from Quelch.

Yet the process goes on. Naturally, when a fellow is in sanny he would give his kingdom for a jam tart, so tuck of any kind commands a high price. A fellow has been known to offer an entire term's pocket-money and his second-best spats for a bite of cake. Fisher T. Fish is naturally "on" in this game. His is the brains behind the smuggling racket. He thinks out schemes for getting the tuck in, and gives his assistants a percentage of the profits. The fact that his illicit tuck may ruin a patient for life means nothing to E. T. F.

For some time, it was sufficient to take the patient a parcel of books
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THE NEW TERM HAS STARTED AT GREYFRIARS—AND TROUBLE, WITH A CAPITAL "T", HAS STARTED FOR VERNON-SMITH, OF THE REMOVE!

CONDEMNED WITHOUT EVIDENCE!

By FRANK RICHARDS



HATS OFF!

HORACE COKER jumped. "My hat!" he ejaculated. Not uncommonly, Greyfriars fellows exclaimed "My hat!" But Coker of the Fifth on this occasion had special cause.

His hat—the shining silk topper that Coker sported on the first day of term—had suddenly flown from his head!

It was unexpected.

It was surprising.

It seemed to Coker, for a moment, that his hat, like the riches in the old text, had taken unto itself wings and flown away!

A moment ago Coker had been walking the platform at Lantham Junction, with his pals Potter and Greene, his hat reflecting the rays of the autumn sun.

Now he stood hatless and astonished.

Then, as he noted that an orange rolled at his feet, Coker guessed!

It was a case of cause and effect! The orange was the cause—the sudden departure of the hat was the effect! Coker of the Fifth was not quick on the uptake! But he guessed that the orange must have hit the hat!

"Who——" spluttered Coker.

He glared round.

Lantham Junction was rather thickly populated on the first day of term at Greyfriars School. A train was packed—and there were at least fifty or sixty fellows on the platform. From the windows of one carriage in

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, swung out of the school gateway, watched by many staring eyes!

the train five cheery faces grinned at Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. seemed amused by the sudden disaster to Coker's hat.

Coker made an enraged stride towards that carriage.

"You young sweeps!" he roared.

"Did you knock my hat off!"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Sorry—no!" said Johnny Bull.

Coker glared round again. He wanted his hat. But still more he wanted the fellow who had knocked it off.

Close at hand a fat Removite blinked at him through a big pair of spectacles and grinned from one fat ear to the other.

Coker swooped!

"Bunter—you——"

"Oh crikey! It wasn't me!" yelled Billy Bunter in alarm. "Think I'd chuck away an orange?"

"Then who was it?" roared Coker.

"I don't know! I never saw Smithy——"

Excitement in Plenty for HARRY WHARTON & CO., the World-Famous Chums of GREYFRIARS.

Once more Coker glared round.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stood at a little distance, his hands in his pockets, and a grin on his face.

Coker made a rush.

Smithy did not try to stop that rush. Coker's rushes were rather too hefty for a Remove junior to stop. Smithy dodged Coker round an immense stack of luggage on the platform.

Coker chased round after him.

"Here's your hat, Coker, old man!" called out Potter of the Fifth. Potter had fielded the hat.

Coker did not heed. He did not care a boiled bean, at the moment, whether he was hatted or hatless. He wanted to get a grip on the cheeky junior who had unhatted him!

But Smithy, if he was not so hefty as Coker, was a good deal more nimble. He dodged Coker round that pile of luggage. Fellows gathered round to watch the chase. There were cheers from doors and windows of the crowded train.

"Go it, Smithy!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Put it on, Smithy!" shouted Frank Nugent.

"Here we go round the mulberry bush!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Buck up, Smithy—he'll get you!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, there's old Prout looking out of the train!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "He's got his eye on Coker."

"Chuck it, Coker!" roared Greene of the Fifth. "Prout's watching you!"

Coker did not even hear.

If he had heard he would not have heeded.

Mr. Prout was his Form-master; and Mr. Prout, as he looked from his carriage window and beheld a senior of his Form chasing round a pile of luggage, frowned portentously. A certain dignity, a certain reserve, in Prout's opinion, were expected of a Fifth Form senior. There was no trace whatever of dignity or reserve about Horace Coker at the moment.

There he was, chasing round a pile of luggage like a fag of the Third Form!

Prout frowned!

But Coker was blind to Prout! He chased on!

"Go it, Coker!"

"Chase him!"

"You'll get him!"

"Jump for it, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars crowd seemed to be enjoying this, if Prout was not.

Prout frowned still more portentously and stepped from his carriage. At the risk of losing the train Prout had to intervene. Slowly, majestically, Prout rolled up the platform to intervene.

"Look out, Smithy!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Thrice had the enraged Horace chased round that stack of luggage, Smithy keeping ahead, amid roars of laughter. But now, with a really artful stroke of strategy, Coker whirled round and chased in the opposite direction—with the bright idea of meeting the fugitive face to face before he spotted that strategic move.

Very nearly Coker got away with it! But not quite!

As he came face to face with Smithy, the Bounder suddenly clutched at the luggage and clambered.

Up he went, on piled boxes, packing-cases, trunks, and bags—with the nimbleness of a monkey.

Coker grabbed at a vanishing foot just too late!

Smithy, a little breathless, but still grinning, sat on top of that mountain of luggage out of Coker's reach.

Coker spluttered and glared up at him.

He grabbed at the stack, to clamber after Vernon-Smith. It looked ominously.

Coker desisted, just in time to escape a cascade of suitcases.

"You—you—" gasped Coker. "Come down!"

"Come up!" invited the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker breathed wrath. Smithy's perch was rather precarious. Coker could not follow him up without disaster.

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But if the cheeky Bounder was out of reach of hands he was not out of reach of a missile! The orange that had knocked off the hat lay on the platform.

Coker pounced on it.

"Now, you young rascal!" he gasped.

"Look out, Smithy!"

"Smithy's all right!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Coker couldn't hit the side of a house! Everybody else had better look out—not Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz!

Coker hurled that orange with terrific vim! Had it landed on Smithy, it would probably have brought him off his perch. But Coker of the Fifth was no bowler.

Not only did the orange miss Smithy! It missed the stack of luggage on which he was perched! It whizzed like a bullet up the platform! A dozen fellows ducked.

Crash!

Every bullet has its billet!

Mr. Prout, rolling majestically on the scene, arrived in time to stop that orange with his hat!

Prout's topper flew from Prout's head! A bald spot, generally concealed from the public view, shone in the sun. Prout staggered! Never had a member of the Greyfriars staff been so taken by surprise.

"Oh!" gasped Prout. "What—"

He staggered, and sat down. Prout was weighty. The platform almost shook as he sat. His topper rolled in one direction. The orange rolled in another. Prout sat—spluttering!

From one end to the other of Lantham platform there was a yell of merriment.

Coker did not join in it. Coker gave his sitting Form-master one horrified stare and hurriedly departed from the spot.

He did not wait for Prout to get up. The look on Prout's face did not encourage him to do so. A ghost at cock-crow had nothing on Coker as he vanished from the scene.

"Oh!" gasped Prout. "Coker!"

Coker was already out of hearing.

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

But answer there came none! Prout had no prospect whatever of seeing Coker again till the roll was called at Greyfriars School.

SMITHY BEGINS EARLY!

"HA, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Coker!"

"I say, you fellows, Prout will scalp him!"

"Coker all over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled as the train rolled out of Lantham Junction for Courtfield and the school.

Prout was left at Lantham. He had lost that train! Perhaps he was looking for Coker. He seemed very anxious to meet that member of his Form.

"Coker's born to trouble, as the giddy sparks fly upward!" remarked

Bob Cherry. "He was bound to begin on the first day of term."

"The howling ass!" said Vernon-Smith. Smithy had descended from his perch when Coker disappeared from the scene, and packed into the carriage with the Famous Five.

"It's too bad, really!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Coker will get into an awful row for knocking his beak's roof off!"

"The rowfulness will probably be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. He was not worrying about Coker.

"That cack-handed ass shouldn't buzz things about," he said. "You fellows had good hols?"

"Oh topping!" answered Bob. "Barging on the river! Everything all right—except Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I don't think Bunter really enjoyed it!" said Johnny Bull. "One day he did a spot of work! It haunted him for the rest of the hols."

"Oh, really, Bull—" Billy Bunter blinked indignantly through his big spectacles. "You'd never guess from that, Smithy, that I did practically all the work on that trip on the Thames, would you?"

"I don't think I should ever have guessed that one!" said the Bounder, shaking his head.

"Hasn't Redwing come back to-day, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton. "You had the hols with him?"

"Yes—cruisin' on the briny deep!" answered Vernon-Smith. "Reddy's on the train somewhere."

The Famous Five looked at Smithy rather curiously. As Smithy was Redwing's chum and had spent the summer holidays in his company, they would rather have expected them to be together on the train.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Well, what are you he-he-heing about, you fat frog?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a glare at the fat Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I jolly well know!" he retorted. "I saw Redwing wave to you, farther up the train, when you got into this carriage. He, he, he! I say you fellows, Smithy's been rowing with Redwing in the hols."

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at one another. Smithy was generally rowing with somebody; and his chum Redwing, the only fellow to whom he had ever really been attached, did not always escape.

If Smithy was avoiding Redwing on the train, it looked as if there was another row on!

However, that was no business of theirs, and they said nothing.

Vernon-Smith gave the grinning fat Owl a very unpleasant look.

"You see too much with those gig-lamps of yours, you fat freak," he grunted. "You're asking for a thick ear to match your thick head!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"I haven't rowed with Redwing," went on the Bounder, transferring his unpleasant look to Harry

Wharton & Co. "I know I'm a quarrelsome brute, always kicking up a shindy," he added sarcastically. "But as it happens, I haven't rowed with anybody since last term at Greyfriars."

"Setting out to break records?" asked Bob Cherry, affably.

"Oh don't be an ass! I happened to have a reason for not getting into Reddy's carriage, if you're fearfully curious about it!" snapped Smithy.

"We're not!" said Harry Wharton. "You can row with all Greyfriars, from the Head down to Bunter minor of the Second if you like, Smithy! Still, I'm glad you're not scrapping with old Reddy again."

"I'm getting out at Redclyffe!" added the Bounder.

The Famous Five looked at him.

Redclyffe was little more than half-way from Lantham Junction to Courtfield. No fellow ever got out at Redclyffe for the school.

"Who wouldn't be a millionaire's jolly old son and heir!" said Bob Cherry. "It will run you into a pretty penny to take a taxi from Redclyffe. We poor folks can't even afford one from Courtfield."

The Bounder laughed.

"A fellow can't help liking you, old bean!" he said.

"Thanks!" said Bob. "But why specially?"

"Because you're such an ass!" explained the Bounder.

"Thanks again," said Bob, rather dryly. "But I don't quite see the point. You're not getting out at Redclyffe just to sit on the platform and wait for the next train to come along from Lantham, I suppose?"

"Hardly!"

"You're not looking for a five-mile walk to the school?"

"Not quite."

"Then how will you get to Greyfriars, unless you take a taxi?"

"I'm not in a fearful hurry to get to Greyfriars!" yawned the Bounder. "I may wander about a bit before I blow in and report to Quelch."

"Oh!" said Bob. "More fool you!"

"My turn to render thanks!" said the Bounder. "Thanks!"

"He, he, he!" from Bunter. "So that's why you dodged Redwing on the train! He would have clawed you back! He, he, he!"

The Famous Five were silent—only Johnny Bull giving an expressive snort.

They understood now why Smithy had avoided Redwing's carriage. It was to avoid an argument with his chum, who certainly would have done his best to keep the scapegrace of the Remove on the train. Smithy had no use for arguments or expostulations when he had made up his wilful mind to kick over the traces. The bad hat of Greyfriars was beginning early!

"Shocked the lot of you, what?" asked Smithy with a sneer.

"Well, I think you're a fool!" said Harry Wharton, bluntly. "If you must play the goat, you ought to have sense enough not to begin on the first day of term. Quelch will want to know why you haven't come in."

"First day of term's safest!" grinned the Bounder. "Fellows blow in any time, first day of term! Look at Ogilvy—he comes down from Scotland and never gets in till the last train."

"You don't come down from Scotland, and Quelch knows that," answered Harry. "He will expect to see you at first call-over."

"Blessed are those that don't expect!" drawled Vernon-Smith. "Mightn't I have lost a train? Fellows do lose trains."

Another snort from Johnny Bull! Johnny had his own opinion of fellows who were prepared to state that they had lost trains, when they hadn't lost trains.

"I've been having a jolly quiet time in the hols," said Vernon-Smith. "Reddy's a brick, and there never was a better fellow—but a chap likes worse company at times. That's why I got into this carriage!"

Billy Bunter giggled.

"We're getting on to Redclyffe," said Bob Cherry. "What about squashing him down on the floor and sitting on him, till we pass the station?"

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"You'd better not try it on, you cheeky ass!" he said.

"Look here, Smithy, don't be an ass!" said Harry Wharton amicably. "If Quelch knows that you were on this train——"

"Are you going to tell him?" sneered Smithy.

The captain of the Remove breathed hard.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" he snapped. "Ten to one you'll get spotted, and whopped, and serve you jolly well right!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

The train clanked to a stop at Redclyffe Station.

Smithy rose and threw open the door. But he did not step out till the last moment. If Tom Redwing was looking from his window, he did not want Tom to jump out, too. When Smithy was booked for an excursion which included billiards and banker, and the company of beery and smoky individuals who knew all about horses, he did not want Tom in the offing.

Just before the train re-started, he jumped down, and banged the door.

Bob Cherry groped in his pocket, where there was an apple. He leaned from the carriage window.

"Smithy!" he called.

The Bounder stared round impatiently.

"What——" he snapped.

"It was no end of a joke, knocking Coker's hat off at Lantham——"

"What about that, fathead?"

"Here's another of the same, for you to laugh off!" explained Bob; and the apple flew, with a much better aim than Coker's orange.

Bang!

The Bounder's hat whizzed from his head and rolled across the platform.

Vernon-Smith gave a howl of rage and made a stride towards the carriage, with his fists clenched.

But the train was already clanking on.

Five faces looked back, grinning at the Bounder on the platform.

"Ha, ha, ha!" floated back from the train.

And the Famous Five rolled on for the school, leaving the scapegrace of their Form charging angrily after his hat.

SUPPER IN STUDY NO. 1!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Blow away, Bunter!"

"What?"

"Blow away!"

"Did you say blow away, Harry Wharton?"

"I did!"

"And that," said Billy Bunter bitterly, "is gratitude!"

There was quite a crowd in Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove. Actually there was not a lot of room for another fellow in that study, especially when that fellow was double-width.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, to whom that celebrated study belonged, had many guests to a supper on the first evening of term.

Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, the other members of the famous Co., of course, were there. Squiff and Tom Brown and Hazeldene were there. Skinner was there—not specially wanted, but allowed to wedge in. Lord Mauleverer was there—very much wanted, but requiring to be hooked out of his own study and brought along with a firm hand on his neck. Tom Redwing was there, and Peter Todd, Mark Linley, William Wibley, and little Wun Lung, the Chinese.

It was a fairly roomy study; but there was no doubt that there was a spot of strain on the accommodation.

But if fellows could hardly move, they could talk; and there was a cheery buzz of voices—most of them talking at once and not bothering much about replies.

Two or three hampers had disgorged their contents on the study table, and the provender was good, and it was ample, even for so large a party.

Supper in Hall was to come later; but judging by the rate at which the good things disappeared, a good many of the Remove were not likely to have a lot of space left for supper in Hall.

Fellows who could not get at the table were passed things by fellows who could. That gave Skinner an opportunity to spill jelly over Lord Mauleverer's trousers—an opportunity that Skinner, of course, did not miss.

When Bunter's footsteps stopped at the study door, Tom Redwing glanced round quickly, hoping to see his chum Smithy—who was welcome to the spread if he came. But it was not Smithy—and even the view of Billy Bunter's classical features did not console Reddy, who was worried about his chum.

There had already been two roll-calls that day, and Smithy had not appeared at either.

Still, as he had told the Famous Five in the train, fellows blew in at all hours on the first day of term, especially those who came from a distance. Several other Remove men, like Ogilvy and Morgan and Treluce, who came from afar, had not yet blown in. So Smithy, so far, was not specially missed.

Indeed, if he came in by lock-up, he was not likely to be called to account, beyond a question or two from Mr. Quelch, his Form-master, to which the Bunder could easily find answers—not too veracious.

It was like the Bunder to risk beginning the term with a row. Tom hoped that he would not be reckless enough to miss lock-up and last call-over.

Nobody else in the study was thinking about Smithy. Fellows had their own affairs to think of. Still less probably were they thinking about that much more important person, W. G. Bunter.

Had Smithy turned up there would have been a howl of welcome. When Billy Bunter turned up there wasn't!

Bunter was bidden to blow away.

Instead of blowing away he stood in the study doorway, squinting round through his big spectacles for an opening in the mob to insinuate his podgy person into the study.

"That," said Bunter, "is gratitude. Do you hear him, you fellows. I went with those fellows in the hols, on a boat, and fairly slaved for them all the time. It was Bunter here and Bunter there all day and every day! If there was any work done, I did it! Hard at it all the time! And now they don't even ask a fellow to a study supper! That's gratitude!"

"Oh my hat!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Did you fellows make Bunter work?"

"They did!" said Bunter. "Hard!"

"Then they'd better tell Quelch how it's done!" said Peter. "Quelch would like to know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I gave them the whole vac, too!" said Bunter. "Stuck to them from beginning to end. I refused Mauly's invitation to Mauleverer Towers purely on their account."

"Oh gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. This was the first he had heard of that invitation to Mauleverer Towers.

"Poor old Mauly begged me to come, almost with tears in his eyes!" continued Bunter, who evidently did not observe Mauly amid that crowd of swarming guests in Study No. 1. "I turned him down! And this is what I get! I might have expected it, I know! I say, you fellows, seen Mauly anywhere?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I suppose you can tell me whether you've seen Mauly or not!" hooted the fat Owl. "He's not in his study—I've looked."

"Go down and look in Hall!" suggested Bob Cherry.

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"I've looked in Hall!"

"Go and look in the Rag!" advised Johnny Bull.

"I've looked in the Rag!"

"Take a walk round the quad and see if he's out of the House!" said Frank Nugent. "I saw Mauly in the quad an hour ago."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the supper-party in Study No. 1.

Lord Mauleverer was about six feet from Bunter! But there were several heads between; and Mauly was not making himself conspicuous. Keen as Bunter was to claim him on the first day of term, Mauly did not seem very keen to be claimed.

"An hour ago!" repeated Bunter. "Well, I don't suppose he's there now."

"Look in the gym!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"The gym ain't open—besides, catch that lazy slacker in the gym!" said Bunter. "He's frowsting in some study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go to the Fifth Form games study!" was Tom Brown's suggestion.

"Eh? Mauly ain't there, is he?"

"No. But it would be nice if you were!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Shove up a bit and make room for a porpoise!" he said. "Squeeze in, Bunter. Mind, it's your own look-out if you burst!"

Bunter, evidently willing to take the risk, squeezed in, and fellows shoved and wedged to make a little space.

Having got in, Bunter wedged a way to the table, banging a fat elbow into an ear on a head that was in the way.

"Ow!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter blinked round at him.

"Why, you beast, you were here all the time!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I mean, how are you, old chap? I say, make room for me on that box—I don't need much room, you know."

"Oh gad!"

Chairs in the study were rather short, for so many guests. Some of the fellows sat on boxes, some on the fender, and for some there was standing room only! On Mauly's box there was not much space for another occupant.

"All right—don't move," said Bunter. "I'll sit on your knee, if you don't mind, old chap."

"Help!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Don't sit on Mauly, Bunter! We've got enough grub without any pancakes!"

Mauly shifted hurriedly to the extreme edge of the box. Being sat on by Bunter was no light matter.

Having annexed two fat fistfuls from the table, Bunter sat on the box beside Lord Mauleverer. Mauly balanced himself gracefully on about four inches. With a jam tart in one fat hand and a cream puff in the other, Billy Bunter was happy and sticky. There was a creak from the

box on which he sat. It was an old wooden box that had been hooked out of some corner or other to supply the deficiency of seats. It had borne the weight of Lord Mauleverer's slim figure with ease. It seemed to protest under Billy Bunter's.

"I say, give a chap a bit of room, Mauly!"

Bunter poked a fat elbow into his lordship's ribs. Half a jam tart dropped from his fat paw and adhered to the knee of Mauly's elegant trousers.

"Oh gad!" said Mauleverer.

He brushed off the jam tart and moved farther, reducing his seating accommodation to two inches. But that was hardly enough even for the slim Mauleverer, and he rose to his feet.

"Standing for a change, old chap?" asked Bunter, spreading his ample person over the whole box. "Well, look here, if you're standing up, you might pass me some grub."

"Here's a chair, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton.

"I was asking Mauly to pass me some grub, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"Help yourself, old fat man!" said Harry, jerking Lord Mauleverer into the chair.

"I'm sitting down!" said Bunter. "Pass me that jug of lemonade, somebody—never mind a glass! The jug will do! And that jam tart—don't cut it. I'll have it on my knee, and you can find me a tablespoon."

Bunter evidently believed in taking his cargo aboard in bulk! But for some reason unknown to Bunter, the supper-party in Study No. 1 seemed disinclined to get busy passing him jugs of lemonade, jam tarts, and finding him tablespoons—although he was, as he pointed out, sitting down! Fellows went on talking, just as if Bunter was not there.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter; but, as nobody heeded, he heaved himself up from the creaking box and reached over the table for the required provender.

With a jug of lemonade in one hand, and a jam tart on a plate in the other, Bunter sat down again.

He plumped down!

Bunter generally plumped down. Generally, the furniture stood the strain. But that old box had not been built to stand it!

Bunter plumped on that old box!

That did it!

The box no longer creaked! It crashed!

"Oooogh!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!"

"Oh crikey!"

The box collapsed on the study floor.

Billy Bunter collapsed on the box. The fat junior sprawled on the wreck of the box. The jug of lemonade landed in his neck. The jam tart squashed on his face. From Bunter came a roar, muffled by jam.

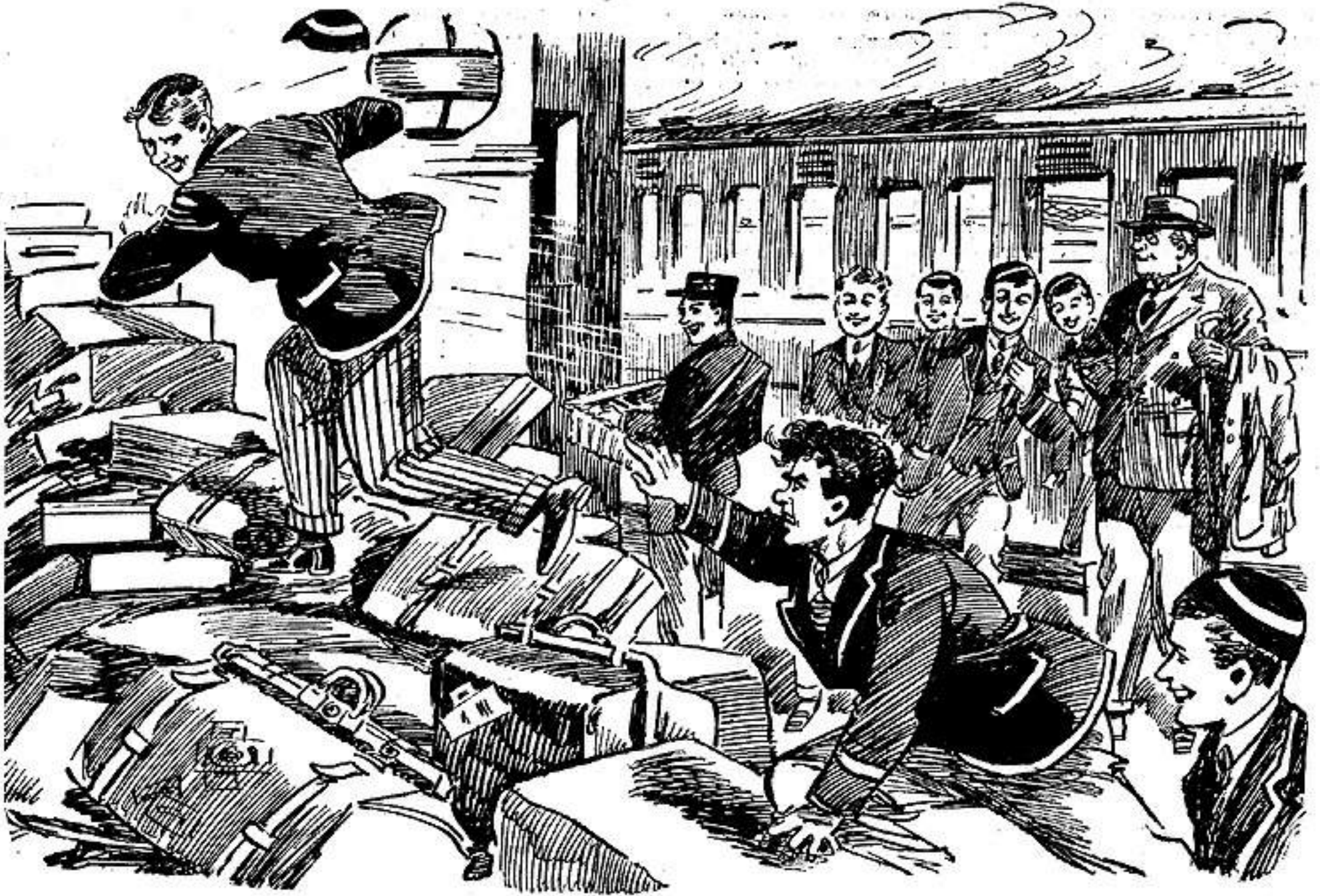
"Gerrroooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrgh! I'm all jammy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat up in the wreck-



Vernon-Smith clambered up on piled boxes, packing-cases, trunks and bags with the nimbleness of a monkey. Coker grabbed at his vanishing foot just too late!

age of the box, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage. Lemonade streamed down his neck. Jam masked his fat features. He clawed at jam, and gurgled.

"Urrgh! I say, you fellows! Gurrgh!"

"Do that again, Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fine! Do it again, Bunter!"

"Ooogh! I say— Ooch! I'm sticky all over! I say— Yurrgh! Oh crikey! What are you cackling at, you beasts? I'm soaked! I'm sticky! I'm— Urrrgh!"

Bunter tottered to his feet. He dabbed at a jammy face with a handkerchief, reducing it to a jammy rag. He blinked at the supper-party through jammy spectacles.

Study No. 1 echoed with merriment. Everybody but Bunter was laughing! Bunter was not!

"Urrgh! What are you cackling at?" yelled Bunter. "Look at me!"

The supper-party were already looking at him. Looking at him only seemed to make them cackle the more.

"You want a wash, old fat man!" gasped Bob. "That wash you had last term won't see you through this! You really want a wash!"

"Beast!"

Even Bunter realised that he needed a wash. Even Bunter was disposed to make a hurried search for soap and hot water. With a couple of pounds of jam adorning his fat features and oozing down his neck after the lemonade, even William George Bunter so far forgot his usual

manners and customs as to turn his podgy back on the foodstuffs and head for hot water and soap.

And— strange to relate— that supper-party in Study No. 1 continued with undiminished cheerfulness, if not with actually increased cheerfulness, after Billy Bunter had departed in search of that much-needed wash!

SMITHY TELLS A TALE!

"DSUM!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith answered to his name as it was called in Hall.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was taking roll.

The Bouncer had come in with the Remove for the last calling-over.

Wherever he had been, and howsoever he had been occupied, Smithy had cut in at the gates just before Gosling locked them for the night—and here he was.

A good many fellows glanced at Smithy, who was as cool as a cucumber. Other fellows, as well as the Famous Five, had seen him at Lantham-Smithy's exploits with Coker having made him rather conspicuous there. So it was generally known that the scapegrace of the Form had started the term by getting out of bounds on the first day.

"Quelch has his eye on you, Smithy!" Tom Redwing whispered uneasily.

The Remove master was in Hall, and it was noticeable that his

gimlet eye singled out the Bouncer in the ranks of his Form.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him!" he answered. "The old bean can't worry a chap first day! How can a fellow help losing trains?"

Redwing compressed his lips. Smithy had no scruples whatever about untruthfulness in dealing with masters and prefects—a fellow's natural enemies, from Smithy's point of view. Tom was very far from seeing eye-to-eye with his chum on that subject.

"Try cachous, Smithy!" whispered Skinner.

The Bouncer stared round at him.

"What do you mean, you ass?" he grunted.

"Anybody notice a scent of cigarettes?" asked Skinner; and there was a chuckle from some of the juniors. There was, in point of fact, a smoky scent about the scapegrace of Greyfriars.

"Oh!" murmured Smithy. "Notice it?"

"Just a few!" giggled Snoop.

"Not my fault!" said the Bouncer airily. "After losing my train, I had to take what I could get and pack into a smoking carriage."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Hazel-dene. "Are you giving that to Quelch?"

"Why not, if he asks me?"

"Wish you luck, old man!" grinned Hazel.

"I say, you fellows, look at Coker!" grinned Billy Bunter. "I say, I've heard that Prout's reported him to the Head for knocking his hat off."

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"Poor old Coker!" sighed Bob Cherry.

Horace Coker, in the ranks of the Fifth, had a morose and gloomy brow. He looked like a fellow booked for trouble.

No doubt he was! Really and truly, a fellow couldn't knock his Form-master's hat off with an orange in a crowded railway station, before half the school and numerous members of the general public—not without trouble to follow.

Coker, like Smithy, was beginning the term with a row—though in a different way! But Coker's row was a cert, while Smithy banked confidently on pulling Quelch's leg; or, at least, bamboozling him to the extent of keeping clear of what he deserved.

Roll-call over, the school was dismissed; but Mr. Quelch, swooping on his Form, called to the Bounder to remain.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!" answered Smithy, with cheerful coolness.

Smithy was feeling no uneasiness—rather, he was enjoying the idea of bamboozling Quelch, with dozens of fellows looking on. It was a spot of victory in the Bounder's unending war against authority—the sort of victory that elated the reckless Bounder.

He was feeling quite safe. Quelch had not been on that train, as he knew. Prout had—but Quelch hadn't. No Remove man was likely to give him away. It was, so far as Smithy could see, as safe as houses.

"You arrived only just in time for calling-over, I think, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch, with his gimlet eye fixed on the Bounder.

"Yes, sir! I should have come to your study, but the bell was ringing as I came in!" explained the Bounder. "I have my medical certificate in my pocket, if you would care to see it now, sir."

"You may take it to my study, Vernon-Smith, when you have explained why you did not come by the usual train!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I am sorry to be late, sir!" said the Bounder meekly. "But there was a crowd at the London terminus, and I lost my train. I went out to get some tea, and lost the next."

"That was unfortunate, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch very dryly.

"Yes, sir, it was very awkward."

Mr. Quelch gave a sniff!

Quelch's nose was as keen as his eyes! That faint clinging aroma of tobacco smoke had struck Quelch, now he was near the Bounder.

"Have you been smoking, Vernon-Smith?" he asked grimly.

"I, sir!" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Answer my question."

"Oh, sir, certainly not! I had to travel in a smoking carriage, as there was such a rush," explained Vernon-Smith. "It was very disagreeable—but I was afraid of getting in very late, so I thought I had better."

Quelch's gimlet eyes seemed to bore into Vernon-Smith as he made that statement.

Fellows who were looking at the two, from a respectful distance, did

not need telling that Henry Samuel Quelch strongly doubted the veracity of that statement!

"Very well, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch after a pause. "I shall accept your explanation. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Bounder went—and did not grin till he was at a quite safe distance from his Form-master.

"O.K.?" asked Skinner, when the Bounder came into the Rag a little later.

Smithy laughed.

"Of course! My dear man, leave it to me to pull a beak's leg!" he answered. "I had it all pat! What could Quelch do?"

"I'll tell you what Quelch could do, Smithy!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If he was an acid drop like Hacker, he could go round asking fellows whether they'd seen you on the train."

"But he isn't an acid drop like Hacker!" smiled Smithy. "Quelch plays the game! He wouldn't go nosing round asking fellows questions."

"Well, if a beak plays the game, a fellow ought to play the game!" said Johnny Bull.

"Is that seventhly or ninthly?" asked the Bounder. "Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen, gather round for a sermon from Bull! Bull has been passin' the holidays in very edifyin' company, and he's anxious to give the Remove the benefit of it! Carry on, old bean—and Nugent can hand out the tracts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull's face reddened, and he made a movement towards Herbert Vernon-Smith, clenching his fists.

Bob Cherry grabbed his arm.

"Chuck it, old man!" he said pacifically. "Smithy can't help being a cheeky ass! He was built that way!"

"I've a jolly good mind to punch his cheeky head!" growled Johnny.

"Wouldn't that be naughty?" asked the Bounder gravely.

"What?"

"Can you reconcile such an act of violence, my young friend, with the edifyin' meekness that is, or should be, a part of a really good boy's character?" asked the Bounder, in the same grave tone.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"You cheeky fathead—" roared Johnny Bull. "I'll jolly well—"

"You jolly well won't!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "Shut up, Smithy, you ass! Come on, Johnny, we've got some unpacking to do!"

"I'll jolly well—"

"This way!"

"Look here—"

"Yes—come on!"

Johnny Bull grunted, but he came on; and the Bounder was left laughing with Skinner & Co.

Smithy had, as he regarded it, scored over Quelch. Johnny Bull's views on the subject only caused him contemptuous amusement. But he was going to have, shortly, reason to wish, after all, that his own views approximated a little more closely to Johnny's.

COMING TO PROUT!

HORACE COKER of the Fifth Form came away from the Head's study after twelve the next day with an expression on his rugged face that was extraordinarily and unusually expressive!

After twelve was the time when delinquents who had to see the Head had the pleasure—or otherwise—of seeing that gentleman!

Coker had seen him!

Judging by Coker's look, the interview had not been enjoyable.

Dr. Locke was a venerable, kindly gentleman, and among schoolmasters he was good company! But Greyfriars fellows did not yearn for his company—good as it was! They respected and esteemed their headmaster—but they did not want to pay calls in his study!

In such morning calls the cane, or even the birch, might be featured. On such occasions the Head was not so much a headmaster as a lord high executioner!

Coker had been through it!

With that expressive expression on his face, Horace came out of the House—passing the Famous Five of the Remove on his way.

One glance at Coker had caused the juniors to suppress their smiles!

Coker, it was clear, was feeling this!

Bob Cherry even ventured upon a sympathetic remark.

"Had it bad, old chap?"

Coker simply smacked at his head.

"Old chap" from a Remove fag was the limit, after what Coker had gone through in the Head's study.

Plainly Coker had been whopped! Fifth Form man as he was, senior as he was, great man as he was in all respects, Coker had been whopped! The Head's cane and Coker's trousers had established contact. Coker came away from the Head's study boiling. "Old chap" from a Removite caused him to boil over!

Bob dodged the smack!

With great self-restraint the Famous Five refrained from dusting the quadrangle with Coker. They realised that a man who had had a Head's whopping had had enough to go on with. Coker passed on in peace!

Mr. Prout was in the quad. He gave Coker a grim and severe glance. Prout was fearfully sick with Coker.

Prout did not like men in his Form being whopped. It let down the dignity of a senior Form. Certainly he had wanted Coker whopped for knocking his hat off at Lantham, but the incident annoyed him, irritated him. Coker had driven him to this; and he was very much annoyed with Coker for having had to be whopped.

Coker, who had had the whopping, was more annoyed than Prout.

His eyes gleamed as he passed Prout.

Potter and Greene, who were waiting for him in the quad, eyed him rather anxiously. They were afraid that Coker might tell Prout what he thought of him. A fellow at school couldn't tell his beak what he thought of him—not without awful consequences. But they never could

tell what old Horace might or might not do.

They joined Coker and walked him away from the proximity of Prout as quickly as they could.

"How many?" asked Greene sympathetically.

"Six!" said Coker.

"You'll get over it, old fellow!" said Potter comfortingly.

Coker gave him an icy glare.

"Do you think I care a boiled bean about the whopping?" he asked.

"Oh!" said Potter. "Don't you? I should!"

"I dare say you would!" said Coker bitterly. "But I happen to be a fellow of some standing in the school. I happen to be a fellow who feels this!"

"Well, the Head must have meant you to feel it!" said Potter, deliberately misunderstanding. "Not much use whopping a fellow if he didn't feel it."

"I don't mean that, you dunder-head! I mean, I feel the blow to a fellow's dignity—a senior fellow—a fellow who's looked up to in the school! Other fellows look up to me, Potter."

"Well, you're taller than most!" said Potter, again misunderstanding. "They have to."

Greene suppressed a gurgle.

"You're dense, Potter! I don't mean that! I'm let down before all the school by this!" said Coker. "Prout's got by with it! He likes to let me down—and he's done it again! A man naturally expects justice from his Form-master. Do I get justice from Prout?"

"Oh!" said Potter. "Ah! Um!"

"Hem!" said Greene.

Potter and Greene both had an impression that Coker had got justice, and that was what was the matter. Still, it was no use saying so to Coker.

"He couldn't even whop me himself!" said Coker bitterly. "That would have been bad enough! I'd have stood it! I shouldn't have knocked him across his study if he'd told me to bend over."

"Oh!" gasped Potter. "No! I—I suppose not."

"But he wanted to rub it in!" said Coker. "He reported me to the Head! He took no notice at all of my explanation. I aimed that orange, as you fellows know, at a cheeky fag who cheeked me. It knocked Prout's hat off! Was that my fault?"

"Wasn't it?" asked Greene.

"You silly, fatheaded, cheeky, burbling, babbling ass—"

"Oh! I—I mean, of course it wasn't!" said Greene hastily.

"I explained to Prout that it was an accident—a sheer accident! I pointed out that it wouldn't have happened if he had not come along to interfere, where no interference was needed!"

"You—you—you said that to Prout?" gasped Potter.

"Of course! It was the truth! And after that," said Coker, with a deep breath, "he reported me to the Head."

"You didn't think he would, after that?" murmured Greene.

"I expected him to have a little sense! But he only got rattier when I pointed that out to him."

"I wonder why?" murmured Potter.

"He's got a down on me," said Coker. "Last term he was always ragging me in Form! You fellows know! He would rag me in con, if I hadn't had time to do any prep. Member that time he gave me five hundred lines because I explained that I hadn't had time for prep? I explained to him that I had had something more important to attend to—but he only got shirty! That's Prout all over—a fellow can't say a word to him without the old ass getting shirty."

"Oh!" said Potter. "Ah!"

"Um!" said Greene.

"Now it's come to this!" said Coker. "He sends me up to the Head to start the term with. Well, if he wants trouble this term, he can have it. I've started the term with six on the bags—from the Head! I don't blame the big beak! He has to back up his Form-masters! I'm a reasonable chap, I hope—I can see that! It's Prout! Well, Prout's got it coming."

"My dear old chap," said Potter, in alarm. "For goodness' sake don't cheek Prout any more—"

"Prout's got it coming!" said Coker calmly. "Prout's always making mistakes, but if he thinks he can get by with this, he's making one of his biggest! Let him wait a bit. I can't handle the man! I expect the fat old ass would fall down and pass out if I punched him! Besides, you can't punch a beak!"

"No!" gurgled Greene. "Not as a rule! No!"

"But there are ways and means!" said Coker darkly. "A fellow could ship his study—"

"I—I—I wouldn't ship Prout's study, Coker old man!" groaned Potter. "Man might be sacked for it!"

"I wouldn't, Coker!" said Greene earnestly.

"Of course you wouldn't!" agreed Coker. "You haven't the nerve, for

one thing—and it wouldn't matter twopence if you were whopped, for another! It's a bit different when a fellow of my standing has to bend over and take six! I'm going to ship his study—and see how he likes it!"

"But—"

"When he finds his study a wreck," said Coker darkly, "he will go off at the deep end! He will rage! He will roar! He will make a silly goat of himself—as per usual. I shall laugh!"

"I—I don't think you'll do much laughing, after shipping Prout's study!" gasped Potter. "For goodness' sake, Coker—"

"It's no good jawing to me, George Potter. I've made up my mind about that—and when my mind's made up, it's as fixed as the laws of the Swedes and Nasturtiums!" said Coker—possibly meaning the Medes and Persians.

"But—" groaned Potter.

"Shut up, Potter!"

"But, old chap—" implored Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

"But—" said Potter and Greene together.

"Oh, give a man a rest!" snorted Coker—and he stalked away, depriving Potter and Greene of his exhilarating company. Which, at all events, was some small comfort to his worried pals.

THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG!

"QUELCH!"

"Please step in, Prout!" Prout pleased to step into the Remove master's study.

On the first working day of the term Quelch, like other Form-masters, had plenty to do. Really and truly, he would have preferred the ponderous Prout not to barge in to his study.

Prout was chatty! Quelch was not! Prout's chats were lengthy affairs! Time was of value—to Quelch, if not to Prout.

But it was the beginning of the term. Later, other members of the staff would fall into the old habit of dodging Prout and his chats. They would remember that they had a class, or a date with the Head, or even letters to write, when Prout stopped them in doorways and passages, and began to chat.

But on the first day after the holidays and a long rest from Prout, members of the staff were more tolerant. Just as a dog is allowed one free bite, so Quelch was going to allow Prout one long chat.

Pushing back the Form papers on which he was busily engaged, Quelch

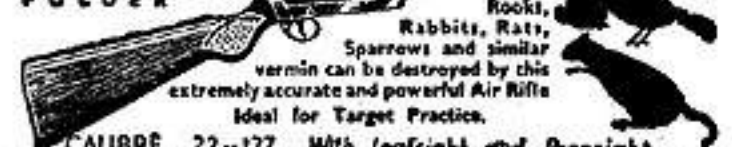
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resigned himself to the sad fate of hearing how Prout had spent the vacation.

But there was a surprise in store for Quelch!

Prout was not in a chatty mood—he had not dropped in for a chat; he was not going to relate, in minute detail, every incident of the vacation, and tell six or seven long stories, the point of which was visible only to Prout.

Prout was on the war-path!

"I regret, Quelch," boomed Prout, "being compelled to begin this term with a serious complaint against a member of your Form."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, taken aback.

He did not quite know whether to be annoyed or relieved. He did not like complaints from other beaks about his Form. On the other hand, almost anything was better than a detailed account of Prout's holiday in the Alps.

"Vernon-Smith!" said Prout.

"Vernon-Smith!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"I regret, as I have said, being compelled to lay a complaint before you," said Prout. "But I have been through a distressing episode, caused by this boy. A boy of my Form, Quelch, has had to be sent up to the Head! I had no choice in the matter! Coker, of my Form, had to be sent to the headmaster! It is a distressing matter to me."

"No doubt!" said Mr. Quelch. "But I fail to see how this concerns a boy of my Form, Prout."

"A boy of your Form, sir, was the cause of it!" said Mr. Prout. "Coker of the Fifth Form behaved in a ridiculous and undignified manner at Lantham Junction yesterday! My hat was knocked off by an orange, hurled by Coker."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"The stupid, foolish, insensate boy was engaged in a scuffle with a boy of your Form!" said Mr. Prout. "It was at that boy that Coker hurled the orange. Vernon-Smith acted as outrageously as Coker. I have reason to suspect that it was he who, in the first place, hurled the orange. I am, at all events, certain that it was he who was perched on the summit of a pile of luggage on the platform at Lantham, engaged in a scuffle with Coker! Coker has been severely punished for his share in the outrageous disturbance. It is for you to deal with Vernon-Smith."

"I do not quite follow this, Mr. Prout!" said the Remove master. "You were present at Lantham Junction—"

"I was, sir!"

"You arrived at the school in the early afternoon—"

"That does not affect the matter, Mr. Quelch!"

"It does, sir, for I utterly fail to see how you can have witnessed any act of Vernon-Smith's, as that junior did not reach the school till last calling-over—" Mr. Quelch broke off suddenly.

He had rather doubted Smithy's statements the previous day, about

the trains the Bounder had lost. Now the truth rushed on his mind.

"Mr. Prout!" he exclaimed. "Are you certain, are you positive, that you saw Vernon-Smith of the Remove at Lantham Junction early in the afternoon?"

"I can scarcely be mistaken, as he sat on top of a stack of luggage on the platform, the cynosure of all eyes!" hooted Prout.

"Vernon-Smith arrived only in time for lock-up, Mr. Prout."

"Indeed!" snorted Prout. "I was not aware of that; and if he were in my Form, I should certainly inquire very strictly how he had spent his time during the afternoon. Certainly he was at Lantham Junction when I was there—with a number of other boys of your Form—I noticed Bunter, and Wharton, and Cherry—"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard.

"Do you mean, Mr. Prout, definitely, that Vernon-Smith was there at the same time as Wharton and Bunter and Cherry, who reported their arrival to me early in the day?" he exclaimed.

"I do mean that, sir, quite definitely," said Mr. Prout. "And if he did not come on to the school with the others—"

"He did not come on till many hours later, and he explained to me that he had lost two trains at the London end!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

Snort from Prout.

"I am very glad that you have mentioned this matter to me, Mr. Prout," said the Remove master. "You may be quite assured that Vernon-Smith will be called to account, and that I shall deal with him as he deserves."

The expression on Mr. Quelch's face left no doubt on that point!

It grew grimmer and grimmer after Mr. Prout had rolled away.

He had doubted Smithy's specious tale. But he had given Smith the benefit of the doubt! There was no doubt now! Smithy had not lost those trains! He had arrived at Lantham Junction by the usual train—he could have come on to the school with the rest, had he chosen so to do. He had allowed himself some extra hours—and had arrived late, smelling of cigarettes—a sufficient indication of the kind of company in which he had passed those hours.

Grimmer and grimmer grew Quelch's face.

Smithy would not have been quite so satisfied with his system of telling the tale and pulling the legs of beaks could he have seen Mr. Quelch's speaking countenance after Prout had left him.

Prout had let the cat out of the bag, and there was stormy weather ahead for the Bounder.

FOR IT!

"WHO'S been biting Henry?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Shush!" breathed Frank Nugent, with a cautious glance.

"I say, you fellows, old Quelch looks shirty!" whispered Billy Bunter.

"Shurrup!"

The Remove were gathered at their Form-room door. All eyes noted, at once, the signs of stormy weather when Mr. Quelch appeared in the offing.

So far, Quelch had been quite good-tempered that day—at least, as good-tempered as a beak could be expected to be on the first day of term.

Now there was a change!

The grim expression on Quelch's face as he appeared in the offing showed that somebody had, as Bob expressed it, been biting him.

The Removes were silent as he came within hearing.

When Quelch had that expression on his face, it behoved Quelch's Form to walk warily.

In grim silence, the Remove master let his Form into the Form-room and the juniors took their places.

Somebody was for it, that was obvious. Nobody yet knew who that somebody was.

The Bounder was looking quite unconcerned. Having pulled Quelch's leg successfully the previous day, Smithy had dismissed that trifling matter from his mind as a thing over and done with. It did not occur to him for a moment that it was going to be raked up again.

There was a brief but tense pause for a moment or two as Mr. Quelch stood eyeing his Form. Then he rapped out a name.

"Vernon-Smith!"

Which was rather a relief to every fellow who was not named Vernon-Smith—though rather a jolt for the fellow who was.

"Yes, sir?" said the Bounder.

"Stand out before the Form!"

Smithy stood out before the Form. "It has come to my knowledge, Vernon-Smith, that you made a series of false statements to me yesterday to account for your late arrival at the school," said Mr. Quelch, in a very deep voice.

"Indeed, sir!" said Smithy, quite coolly. "I am sorry you should think so."

It was easy enough for the Bounder to see that something had transpired, somehow! But he was cool and on his guard. He was not, at all events, going to admit anything, if he could help it.

"Do you still adhere to the statements you made, Vernon-Smith?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"You have the audacity, the effrontery, to repeat that you lost trains in London and did not reach Lantham Junction early in the day?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! Vernon-Smith, you were seen at Lantham Junction by another member of the staff."

"Oh!" breathed the Bounder.

He remembered that Prout had been on that train. Not for a moment had he supposed that the Fifth Form master would mention any Remove boys whom he might or might not have seen.

Neither, of course, would Prout



"Gerrroooooogh!" Billy Bunter sprawled on the wreck of the box, lemonade splashing over him, and the jam-tart squashed on his fat face.

have done so, but for Vernon-Smith's rag with Coker, which had brought him specially to Prout's notice, and caused him to demand Smithy's punishment as a makeweight to Coker's.

Prout had not the faintest knowledge that Smithy had been deceiving his Form-master. He did not know, or care, what time Vernon-Smith had reached the school, Smithy not being in his Form. Prout had been quite unaware of Smithy's deception, when he had given it away from beginning to end.

It was one of those little things that so often crop up to put the untruthful to confusion.

"I have no doubt," continued Mr. Quelch, "that very many members of this Form are aware of the facts. I shall certainly not question my boys. But a statement from a member of the staff places the matter beyond doubt. I now require to know, Vernon-Smith, where you spent the time during your absence from the school—a matter of several hours?"

The Bouncer breathed hard. Obviously, it was Prout who had mentioned the matter to Quelch, and it was, therefore, useless to attempt to stick to his story.

"I am sorry, sir," said Vernon-Smith, with great meekness. "I shouldn't have told you that I had lost trains—but—all I did, sir, was to get out at Redclyffe and walk it. I know it was rather thoughtless, sir."

"If you had only acted thoughtlessly, Vernon-Smith, I should be very glad to hear it," said Mr. Quelch, "but I cannot take your

word on that subject or any other!" The Bouncer flushed. Even Smithy did not like this—though on his system of telling the tale to beaks, it was what he had to expect.

"A good many fellows saw me step out of the train at Redclyffe, sir," he answered sullenly.

"No doubt!" said Mr. Quelch. "And what followed?"

"I walked to the school, sir."

"Even a walk of five miles, Vernon-Smith, would not account for the time or anything like the time."

"I know, sir, but taking a short cut through Redclyffe Wood I lost my way. I was rather a long time finding it again."

"Too thin!" whispered Skinner to Snoop.

The Remove fellows listened in silence. Redwing's eyes were fixed on his desk. All of them knew that Smithy was lying—and, unfortunately for Smithy, Mr. Quelch knew it also. He was not likely to have his leg pulled twice in the same way!

"I do not believe one word of that statement, Vernon-Smith!" said the Remove master, in a grinding voice.

"I am sorry for that, sir," said the Bouncer. "I can only tell you what happened."

"Last evening you told me that you had lost trains. Now you tell me that you had lost your way. Do you expect me to believe this, Vernon-Smith?"

As a matter of fact, Smithy didn't! But it was, so to speak, the best he could do at short notice!

"You refuse, then, to explain to me how you were occupied during

your unauthorised absence of several hours?" said Mr. Quelch.

The Bouncer's eyes glimmered for a second with faint amusement. Certainly nothing would have induced him to tell his Form-master that he had spent those hours smoking cigarettes and playing billiards with Bill Lodgey at a pub. Smithy did not want to return home on the second day of the term!

"Will you answer me, Vernon-Smith?"

"I can only tell you what happened, sir," said Smithy. "I lost my way in Redclyffe Wood. It was rather silly of me to say that I'd lost a train—but I thought you would give me lines for getting out at Redclyffe instead of coming on with the rest."

"That is all you have to say?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, through his set lips. "You have deceived me, Vernon-Smith, and as you refuse to give a creditable account of your reason for absenting yourself, I can only conclude that the explanation is too disgraceful to be given to me. A thoughtless escapade is one matter—a deliberate and unscrupulous deception is quite another! I shall punish you with the greatest severity, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bouncer stood silent.

He was for it—as he expected now that his falsehood was discovered. All that remained was to go through it with cool endurance and show the fellows that he could take what came to him without whining.

"You will be placed in extra school for the first four half-holidays of the

term!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will take an imposition of five hundred lines of Virgil, and I shall cane you very severely."

The Bounder drew a deep breath.

This was steep, though not so steep, certainly, as his punishment would have been had Quelch had any proof of how Smithy had spent those hours on the first day of term.

Mr. Quelch took a cane from his desk.

"You will now bend over, Vernon-Smith!" he said.

In savage silence, the Bounder bent over.

There was grim silence in the Remove as the cane rose and fell. That silence was broken by what sounded like six successive pistol-shots.

Quelch was putting his beef into it.

The Remove master generally had rather a heavy hand with a cane. He never used that implement unless he considered it absolutely necessary; but he was not the man to spare the rod when he believed that it was needed. He did believe most firmly now that it was needed; and there were, in fact, few fellows in the Remove who did not share that belief.

But it was, undoubtedly, a very severe whipping.

Vernon-Smith was determined to go through it without a sound—without even a murmur. And he had an iron endurance on such occasions.

But that whipping was rather too much even for the tough Bounder.

At the fifth whop he gave a gasp. At the sixth, in spite of all efforts to keep silent, he gave a yell.

Then, fortunately, it was over.

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You may go to your place, Vernon-Smith!" he said icily.

Herbert Vernon-Smith went to his place with a white face and burning eyes.

BUNTER THINKS IT FUNNY!

"I SAY, you fellows! Like to see something funny?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Talking about yourself, as usual?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, which, what, and how?" asked Bob.

"I've a jolly good mind not to tell you now," said Billy Bunter warmly. "Still, it's rather too good to miss! I say, what about old Quelch getting a bucket of whitewash on his head?"

"What?" yelled the Famous Five.

"Funny, what?" grinned Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at William George Bunter. There might, perhaps, be an element of the comic in such an incident from the spectator's point of view. But any fellow who tipped a bucket of whitewash over Quelch's majestic napper was not likely to find the consequences amusing.

"Potty?" asked Bob. "Let me catch you with a bucket of whitewash within fifteen million miles of

Quelch's napper! Think we're going to have our one and only porpoise bunked?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where would you go if you were turfed out of Greyfriars?" demanded Bob. "Nowhere, but the Zoo would take you in."

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter.

"I'm not going to tip whitewash over Quelch! I'd jolly well watch it!"

"Is anybody?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" Bunter grinned again. "Of course, I'd jolly well like to see Quelch drowned in whitewash! Any fellow would, of course! But even if it's as safe as Smithy thinks, I wouldn't risk it! You never can tell!" said the fat Owl, with a wise shake of his fat head. "Quelch is a downy bird! Look how he spots a fellow in class even with his back turned! When I had just a single chew at toffee this afternoon—"

"Smithy!" repeated Harry. His face became very serious. "Is Smithy playing the mad ass?"

It was the day following the Bounder's whopping in the Remove Form Room. Every fellow in the Remove knew that Smithy was in a state of black and bitter resentment on that subject. More than one fellow suspected that he might try on some reckless scheme of getting back at Quelch. His chum Redwing was worried and anxious; and other fellows who wished Smithy well hoped that he would not make a fool of himself.

From what Billy Bunter had to say the Bounder was planning to make himself the biggest fool ever. A bucket of whitewash over Quelch's head meant one thing—and one thing only: the sack for the fellow who did it. That fellow would need to cover up his tracks very carefully.

"Come on," said Bunter. Bunter had joined the Famous Five in the quad, after class, with the happy news. "I don't want to miss it! I'm telling you fellows so that you can enjoy it, too. I don't want to keep a treat like that all to myself."

Which was really kind of Bunter!

But the Famous Five were not thinking of witnessing that surprising spectacle. They were thinking, immediately, of stopping it, if they could—and saving Herbert Vernon-Smith from the almost inevitable consequences.

"Hold on, fathead!" said Johnny Bull. "Is this straight?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Well, if Smithy's going to make a fool of himself to that extent, he wouldn't be likely to tell a silly ass who will tattle it all over the school!" grunted Johnny.

"Of course he wouldn't!" agreed Frank Nugent. "Nothing in it."

"That's all you know!" jeered Bunter. "I say, you fellows, have you seen Skinner?"

"Skinner? Yes—he passed us a few minutes ago," said Harry. "What about Skinner? He wouldn't have a hand in such a potty trick."

"He, he, he! Did he go over by the elms?" grinned Bunter.

"Yes! What—"

"Did he have his catapult?"

"If he had, he had it out of sight! What on earth—"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, come on—we may miss it! As soon as Skinner taps on Quelch's window, Quelch is going to get it."

"What?" exclaimed Bob.

"You see, Skinner's going to keep in cover and let fly with his catapult," explained Bunter. "Quelch is sure to open his study window sooner or later, if something keeps tapping on it, see? At least, that's what Smithy said."

"You heard him—"

"I say, don't you tell Smithy I heard him! You know his rotten temper! I heard him quite by accident, of course," explained Bunter. "I never noticed him whispering to Skinner in the passage, and I certainly never listened round the corner. I simply stopped at the corner to sharpen a pencil and as they were only a few yards away, I happened to hear—"

"Just as well you did, perhaps, if this is straight!" said Harry Wharton. "Cough it up!"

"Well, don't tell Smithy! He's such a suspicious beast—he wouldn't believe I stopped there for a minute or two merely to blow my nose!" said Bunter.

"As well as to sharpen a pencil?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"I mean to sharpen a pencil! But look here, you fellows, we may be too late to see the fun if we waste time—come on—"

"So Skinner's going to pelt Quelch's study window with a catapult till he puts his head out—is that it?" asked Harry.

"That's it!"

"Safe enough for Skinner," said Bob. "Bet you Skinner was particular about that! Safety first is his motto. But I don't see where Smithy comes in with his whitewash! Even Smithy wouldn't have the nerve to walk up to Quelch and slosh him, I suppose."

"He, he, he! He's got it all cut and dried!" grinned Bunter. "I heard it all while I was tying my bootlace—I mean sharpening my nose—that is, blowing a pencil—I mean—"

"You fat ass! Where's Smithy?" asked Harry.

"He's up in Woosey's drawing-room!" grinned Bunter.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Famous Five together.

Mr. Woosey, librarian and drawing-master at Greyfriars, had a classroom over the studies. The big window of that classroom was directly over the window of Quelch's study below.

Anything dropped from Woosey's window would pass directly in front of Quelch's window. If a head was put out of Quelch's window it would, naturally, drop on that head! The Famous Five began to understand.

"You see, they've been re-decorating in old Woosey's room," said Bunter. "It wasn't finished when we came back. There won't be an art

class till it's finished, I suppose. Anyhow, there it is—all anyhow, with buckets of whitewash and paint and things. I dare say that's what put it into Smithy's head."

"What a chance for a fathead like Smithy!" said Bob.

"The ass!" said Harry Wharton. "The utter ass! Quelch will suspect him first shot—he's bound to! He hasn't an earthly!"

"Lot the silly idiot cares about that when his silly back's up!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He will be sacked if he gets by with this! No great loss, so far as I can see."

"Well, we don't want Smithy sacked," said Bob. "And I don't see letting Quelch get it in the neck for whopping a fellow for telling lies, either. We're jolly well going to stop this."

"I say, you fellows, don't you be silly asses!" exclaimed Bunter. "Think of old Quelch putting his head out of the window and getting a bucket of whitewash on it—slosh!"

Bunter, evidently, was looking forward to that great treat!

"There's no risk for us," continued the fat Owl. "Nothing to be funky about. We simply look on and laugh! Come on, or we shall miss it!"

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton; and he started across towards the elms, his chums at his heels, and Bunter rolling on behind, grinning.

According to the fat Owl's information, the catastrophe might occur at any moment. The Famous Five had heard of it only in time—if, indeed, they were in time. Skinner was already at his post, with a catapult—Smithy was already up in Woosey's room, with the whitewash.

Harry Wharton glanced up at the House as he went.

He noted that the window of Mr. Woosey's class-room, high up, was open. He noted also something that stood on the window-ledge just inside the window—a bucket! Nothing was to be seen of Smithy—he was not likely to let himself be seen! But it was clear that all was ready for that jape on Quelch; and there was no time to lose.

The Famous Five ran hurriedly under the old elms.

Skinner of the Remove, who was there with something in his hand, hastily thrust that something out of sight into his pocket as they arrived.

ONLY IN TIME!

SKINNER gave the chums of the Remove an irritated glance.

He did not want witnesses to his exploits with the catapult. Exploits of that kind could not be kept too dark!

Smithy would not betray him, caught or not; but nobody else was to know that Skinner had had a hand in the game.

"Interrupted you?" asked Harry Wharton sarcastically.

"Eh? I was going to have a smoke!" said Skinner. "No bizney of yours, I suppose?"

"You can smoke yourself sick, if

you like—but you don't generally smoke a catapult, do you?"

Skinner started.

"What catapult? What do you mean? You know jolly well that catapults are not allowed in the school!" he answered.

"You didn't shove a catapult into your pocket as we came up?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no!"

"Then you won't mind letting us see what you did shove in?"

"Find out!" said Skinner.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter, you fat ass!"

"But I say——"

"Boot him!"

"Look here, you let Skinner alone!" exclaimed Bunter. "Smithy's waiting for him to begin—he can't get going till Skinner does!"

"That's why we've come here, you podgy piffler! Give me that catapult, Skinner!" said the captain of the Remove.

Skinner drew a sharp breath! His eyes glinted at Bunter! He could see that the fat Owl knew.

"I've got no catapult," he said sullenly, "and you can mind your own bizney! What are you butting in for, anyhow?"

"To keep Smithy from getting himself sacked!" answered Harry Wharton. "And if you weren't a measly worm, Skinner, you wouldn't help the hot-headed ass to land himself in bad trouble. After that whopping yesterday, can't you see that Quelch would be on his track first shot?"

"That's Smith's bizney—not yours!"

"Will you hand over that catapult? You'd get six if Quelch knew you had such a thing."

"Go and tell him!" sneered Skinner.

"Hand it over!"

"Mind your own business!"

"Bump him!" said Harry.

"Look here!" yelled Skinner furiously.

He made a jump to escape—and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped him in a moment.

Skinner sat down on the cold, unsympathetic earth. He sat hard! He roared as he sat.

"Now will you hand over the catapult?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"No!" yelled Skinner. "I won't!"

"Give him another!"

"Look here, you rotters——"

Bump!

"Oh!" roared Skinner. "Ow! Oh! You cads, if you don't let go, I'll get a prefect here! Wingate's in the quad——"

"You can call Wingate as soon as you like," answered Harry. "He would like to see that catapult—and I've no doubt that he would be fearfully interested to hear what you were going to do with it. Give Wingate a call, Frank, if Skinner wants him here."

"Certainly!" grinned Nugent.

"Don't be a fool!" gasped Skinner.

"I don't want Wingate here! Look here, let go! I'll chuck it up! I'm not going on with it now everybody knows. Smithy jawed me into it! Now let go!"

"Smithy may jaw you into it again! Hand over that catapult!"

"Shan't!" howled Skinner.

Bump!

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Skinner.

"Take your time!" said Bob Cherry. "Hours yet to calling-over—and we'll keep this up as long as you like, Skinner! We're not tired if you're not."

"You rotters, here it is!" spluttered Skinner.

He drew the catapult from his pocket.

Harry Wharton took it from his hand.

"Mind if I smash this?" he asked.

"It's mine, you rotter!" snarled Skinner. "You're not going to smash my property!"

"Not without your leave!" agreed the captain of the Remove. "A prefect would take it away, and give you six for having it—but I'm not a prefect! I'm not going to smash it unless you give me leave."

"Well, I won't, you fool!"

"Bump him!"

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Skinner.

"Waiting for leave, Skinner!" said Harry.

"You rotter!"

Bump!

"Wow! Yow!"

Bump!

"Yaroooooh! You can smash it if you like, blow you!" howled Skinner.

He realised that the bumping was to go on till leave was given. He was free to give, or withhold, leave, just as he liked. But he had had enough bumping!

"Thanks!" said the captain of the Remove. And he placed the catapult under his heel and ground it to fragments.

Then Skinner was released. He gave the smiling five a bitter and malevolent look.

"You had to interfere, you meddling rotters!" he snarled. "I'll let Smithy know that you queered his pitch!"

"You needn't trouble," answered Harry. "We'll let him know that ourselves! Quelch isn't going to get that whitewash—Smithy is."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Skinner.

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Smithy's not going to get sacked if we can stop him!" said Harry. "And Quelch is not going to get whitewashed because he doesn't like a fellow telling him lies. Smithy will be tired of whitewash, I think, when we stick his head into that bucket! Come on, you men!"

"I say, you fellows, you've spoiled the whole thing!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "I jolly well wouldn't have told you if I'd known—I only told you out of good nature, because I thought you'd enjoy it——"

"You fat chump!"

"Beast!"

Leaving Skinner scowling, the Famous Five walked away to the House.

There was plenty of time now—Smithy could not get going with his part of the contract till Skinner had done his bit with the catapult—and

that catapult was out of action. Smithy, if he waited for Quelch to put his head out of the window, was booked for a long wait.

Still, the chums of the Remove lost no time. Mr. Woosey's class-room, in its present dismantled state, was not, perhaps, likely to be visited—still, if Smithy was found there, he would have to explain why he was there, and the sooner he was out of such a dangerous quarter, the better.

The Co. were concerned for Smithy—but they were irritated as well as concerned. Japing an Acid Drop like Hacker was one thing—Hacker asked for it. Whitewashing Quelch was quite another! If Smithy could not take a whopping, which he richly deserved, without whitewashing his Form-master in return, it was time that Smithy had a lesson on that subject, in the opinion of the Famous Five. That lesson was going to take the shape of dipping Smithy's head into the whitewash—which seemed likely to make Smithy tired of whitewash!

The staircase that led to the upper class-rooms opened off the Form-room corridor. The Famous Five walked up that corridor.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" breathed Bob Cherry suddenly. "Hold on!"

A figure was seen ahead, just turning into the staircase.

It was that of a small, spectacled gentleman; no other than Mr. Woosey! The drawing-master, evidently, was going up to his class-room—no doubt to see how the decorations were getting on, and to judge how long it would be before the painters and whitewashers let him have his quarters.

"Oh!" murmured Harry Wharton. The chums of the Remove came to a halt. They could not follow Mr. Woosey up.

"Great pip!" said Johnny Bull. "Woosey will catch him on the very spot—and if he had whitewashed Quelch—"

The juniors looked at one another in horror. This was the safety the reckless Bounder had banked on. Had they not interrupted Skinner, Smithy would have been tipping the whitewash over Quelch in those very moments—and Mr. Woosey, going into his class-room, would have caught him, right on the spot, probably in the very act!

"By gum!" murmured Nugent. "Smithy's had some luck!"

"The luckfulness was terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bounder would have been sackfully bunked. But a stitch in time saves ninepence, as the English proverb remarks."

And the Famous Five departed from the spot—very glad that they had intervened in time! It had been only in time!

QUELCH'S WARNING!

"DEAR me!" said Mr. Woosey in surprise.

Herbert Vernon-Smith jumped at the exclamation.

The Bounder was at the open window of the class-room, watching and waiting in angry impatience.

The room was in a dismantled state—with steps and trestles and boards, and paint-pots about, as workmen had left it when they knocked off. There were two or three buckets of whitewash—and of these, the Bounder had selected one, now placed in readiness on the ledge inside the open window.

Keeping out of sight from the quad below, the Bounder waited, watched, and listened. He expected to hear the sound of Skinner's pellets popping like hailstones on Quelch's window below.

He could see nothing of Skinner—but he did not expect to! The wielder of the catapult had to be careful to keep in cover. Skinner was going to get to work from behind a tree.

There was no doubt that when pellets clattered on Quelch's study window, he would open that window and look out to see what was the matter.

At the sound of the opening window below, all Smithy had to do was to take one swift peep and tip the whitewash bucket.

Then a minute or less would be sufficient for escape! Quelch would be too busy with whitewash to think of anything else, for a good many minutes.

It seemed to the Bounder safe as houses—safe as any scheme he had ever schemed. Quelch would very likely suspect him—but nothing could be proved.

Safe as houses as it seemed, it was as well for Herbert Vernon-Smith that some other fellows, unknown to him, had chipped in and put paid to the scheme.

The last thing that Smithy expected was old Woosey coming up to his class-room! Why the dickens should the man come up when there was nothing in the room but paint-pots and whitewash buckets, and no class could be held there till the workmen were through?

Nevertheless, it was not very surprising. Mr. Woosey, excluded from his quarters by a bunch of men in overalls, was naturally anxious to see how far they had got on, and how long it was likely to be before they departed with their paint-pots and whitewash brushes.

Mr. Woosey hoped to see that class-room near completion.

Certainly he did not expect to find a Remove junior there.

He stared at Smithy at the window, and ejaculated, "Dear me!" in tones of surprise.

Vernon-Smith spun round.

His eyes almost popped at the art master.

"What are you doing here, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Woosey. He advanced into the room, his eyes and spectacles suspicious on the Bounder.

He hardly needed an answer to his question. The wide-open window, the bucket of whitewash lifted to it, told their own tale.

Mr. Woosey was a mild, little gentleman—almost lamb-like! But his face grew very stern at what he saw.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed. "Vernon-Smith, is it possible that you intended to throw whitewash over some boy in the quadrangle?"

The Bounder gasped for breath.



"What are you doing here, Vernon-Smith?" asked to his question. The wide-open window, the bucket

Mr. Woosey, fortunately, did not guess his real intention—knowing nothing of Skinner and the catapult, or Smithy's grudge against his Form-master. But he knew that Smithy had that whitewash at the window to tip it on a head below, because there was no other imaginable reason why he should have it there at all.

"A revolting—a disgusting trick!" exclaimed Mr. Woosey. "Vernon-Smith, I am shocked—I am disgusted! Take that bucket of whitewash down this instant!"

Smithy, gritting his teeth, obeyed in silence.

Even in his bitter exasperation at being caught, he was thankful that that whitewash had not gone over Quelch.

"I have noticed, Vernon-Smith, that you are a somewhat malicious

boy," said Mr. Woosey, "but this—this is unexampled! Such a disgusting trick—to think of smothering some boy with whitewash! I am surprised that such an idea entered even your mind, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bouncer stood sullenly silent.

He did not care much what Mr. Woosey thought—so long as Woosey did not know that he had intended that whitewash for a master's head! No thought of such a wild and reckless act entered the drawing-master's mind. But what he did believe made him very angry.

"Now follow me, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Woosey. "I have no choice

guessed, and whatever Quelch did, it could not come to that now.

"What is it, Mr. Woosey?" asked the Remove master, with a glance of disfavour at the Bouncer, as Smithy followed the drawing-master in. He had had trouble enough with that particular member of his Form, when the term was only a few days old.

"I am sorry, sir, to report this boy," bleated little Mr. Woosey. "But such a shocking, outrageous thing—I found this boy, sir, in my class-room above, with a bucket of whitewash at the window, obviously intending, sir, to throw it over someone below! I feel, sir, that this boy should be severely discouraged from thinking of repeating such a revolting prank."

Mr. Quelch's brows knitted.

"I agree with you entirely, Mr. Woosey," he said, "and I thank you for reporting Vernon-Smith's conduct to me."

Mr. Woosey faded out of the study.

The Remove master fixed his eyes on Vernon-Smith. Never had those eyes seemed so much like gimlets to the uneasy Bouncer.

There was a brief silence. But Vernon-Smith could read in Quelch's face what was passing in his mind. Little Mr. Woosey was not observant or penetrating in the least—Mr. Quelch was both! And Mr. Quelch was quite well aware that this junior nourished a bitter grudge against him personally.

"Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Did you intend to throw that whitewash over some boy in the quadrangle?"

"It was only a lark, sir—"

"Answer me!"

"Yes, sir!" said Smithy coolly.

"His name?"

"Cherry, sir!"

"And why?"

"He knocked my hat off the other day!"

There was not a syllable of truth in it: but it sounded plausible enough—the Bouncer hoped so, at least. Had Henry Samuel Quelch been a little less thorough, it might have passed. But Quelch was not likely to place much faith in statements from a fellow who had stood before him and told bare-faced untruths without batting an eyelid.

"And how," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "did you expect to induce Cherry to pass beneath that window, Vernon-Smith? It is very unusual for junior boys to gather near masters' windows."

"I thought he might walk along there, sir! Fellows sometimes do."

"You waited at the window above, on that very improbable chance?"

"Yes, sir."

"This window," said Mr. Quelch, with a gesture towards his own study window, "is in a direct line beneath Mr. Woosey's window. Did you intend this outrageous act to be directed at me, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"It was at least as probable that I might have looked out of the window, as that Cherry or any other junior might have passed by it!" said Mr. Quelch, grimly.

"I never thought of it, sir!"

"Had you prepared any trick by which I might have been induced to open the window and look out?"

The Bouncer started a little. Quelch was as keen as a razor. It was well known in the Remove that Quelch was a downy bird. Obviously he had seen the whole thing almost at a glance.

"No, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "Nothing of the kind!"

"Had such an outrage occurred, Vernon-Smith, the perpetrator would have been expelled from this school!" said Mr. Quelch. "That is, of course, if discovered. Discovery might have proved very difficult, as you would have had ample time to escape, and I am only too well aware that you have no scruples about uttering falsehoods."

The Bouncer said nothing.

He expected to be caned; and he wished that Quelch would leave off talking, and get it over. But Quelch did not touch the cane.

There was another brief silence.

"I shall not punish you on this occasion, Vernon-Smith!" said the Remove master at last. "You are already undergoing a severe punishment, and I shall not add to it! I shall give you a warning! I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the outrage you contemplated was intended for me. Had you succeeded, possibly you would have escaped detection. Take this warning, Vernon-Smith—should any such outrage occur, cunning and duplicity will not save you from just punishment. In such an event, I shall request Dr. Locke to expel you from Greyfriars and give him my reason, to which I have no doubt whatever that he will accede!"

He paused a moment.

"I advise you, Vernon-Smith, to heed this warning!" he added. "Otherwise, you may count on it as a certainty that you will not remain at this school. You may now leave my study!"

Vernon-Smith left the study quietly.

His heart was beating rather unpleasantly as he went. It was borne in on the Bouncer's mind that the warpath was a dangerous path to tread!

Quelch meant every word that he had uttered. The sack loomed over Smithy's head now, whether he covered up his tracks or not. And Smithy, who was no fool, hot-headed and headstrong as he was, gave that warning heed, as Quelch had advised him to do!

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Mr. Woosey. He hardly needed an answer of whitewash lifted to it, told their own tale.

but to report this to your Form-master! I have really never heard of such a malicious, such a disgusting, such a revolting prank!"

In savage silence, the Bouncer followed him from the class-room.

Mr. Woosey trotted ahead of him, down the stairs, and along the passages. He tapped at Mr. Quelch's door.

The Bouncer breathed hard as he followed Mr. Woosey into the study. Woosey had not guessed! Would Quelch?

If he did, he could prove nothing! Besides, that reckless act had not, after all, been committed! From the bottom of his heart, the Bouncer was glad of that! His narrow escape of getting expelled from the school in the first week of the term made him almost giddy! Whatever Quelch

PALLY OF POTTER!

"I T'S no good jawing!" said Horace Coker.

Potter and Greene might have inquired why, in that case, Coker went on doing it.

But Coker, no doubt, regarded his own jaw as a superior sort of article—not an uncommon delusion.

"Jaw, jaw, jaw!" said Coker.

Tea was over in Coker's study. Coker had been talking most of the time, if not all the time. Potter and Greene were rather anxious to escape after tea.

But, like good pals, they lingered, to make one more attempt to turn old Horace from his deadly purpose.

"You see," said Potter, "you can't ship a beak's study!"

"That's it!" said Greene. "You can't, Coker!"

"Can't I?" said Coker grimly. "You just wait a bit, my pippins, and you'll see whether I can or not. Studies have been shipped before at Greyfriars—but this is going to be a record. You just wait a bit!"

Coker was sticking to that deadly purpose.

A Head's whopping was an injury and an insult that had to be wiped out. Potter and Greene had hoped that, with the passage of a few days, Coker would get over it—time is a great healer!

Coker hadn't! Instead of getting over it, Coker spent his leisure hours, during those days, making plans and looking for chances to carry them out. Often he was seen haunting the precincts of Masters' Studies.

Prout's study was going to be shipped. It was going to be shipped on an extensive and devastating scale—that was as fixed and immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians—or, as Coker preferred to put it, the Swedes and Nasturtiums.

But Coker had to realise that there were a lot of difficulties in the way of shipping a beak's study.

He had to keep it dark that he had done it—even Coker realised that!

And it was far from easy to get into Prout's study unseen and unsuspected.

Prout was often there! Even when he wasn't, other beaks always seemed to be about the place. Quelch would be writing at his table with his door open—or Capper would be talking to Wiggins in the passage—or Hacker looking out of his study—or Monsieur Charpentier whisking about. Beaks haunted the spot, in fact.

Coker, at length, realised that a secret and surreptitious raid on Prout's study in the daytime was a practical impossibility.

Did that deter Coker? It did not!

Coker simply resolved on a night attack!

Beaks, like chickens, went to roost at night. Masters' Studies were silent and deserted in the small hours.

What was to prevent a fellow from coming quietly down from his dormitory when everybody else was in bed and shipping a study?

Nothing at all—so far as Coker could see!

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But if Potter and Greene had been dismayed already they were horrified by that development of Coker's plan of campaign.

Shipping a beak's study was mad enough in itself. Breaking dormitory bounds at night was an added offence. It was a serious matter for a fellow to be copped straying out of his dormitory at night. Yet they had to hope that Coker would be copped before he reached Prout's study. Anything was better than old Horace getting through with his scheme for wrecking that study.

"To-night's the night!" remarked Coker, quite casually. "You fellows will hear of something in the morning! I shan't want you to come down and help."

They gazed at him.

Wild horses, or hippopotamuses would not have dragged Potter and Greene down to help in such an enterprise.

"You'd be in the way!" said Coker. "If that's what you're thinking of, forget it! I can't have you blundering about."

Potter and Greene were not thinking of that! Far from it!

"I go down," said Coker, "about midnight! Everybody will be asleep then. I ship Prout's study—rag it right and left—I don't leave one thing standing on another! Say half an hour! Then I get back to dorm! It's no good thinking of it in the daytime. I've looked for chances a dozen times—there's nothing doing in the daytime! It's night or nothing."

"Make it nothing, old chap!" implored Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Wash it right out!" urged Greene.

"Don't be a goat, Greene!"

"Well, this means the long jump, and that's that!" said Potter. "Sorry you'll be leaving Greyfriars soon, Coker!"

"I think I said that it's no good jawing!" said Coker. "Nobody will know I had a hand in it, of course. I fancy I'm pretty wary!"

Potter and Greene could only shake their heads. In the belief of his pals that was a double error on Coker's part! He was not pretty, and he was not wary!

"Prout will find his study looking as if a cyclone had struck it," said Coker. "Let him wait."

"You'll be copped!" moaned Potter. "Somebody will see a light, if you turn it on—"

"Think I'm a fool?" asked Coker.

"Eh? Yes!"

"Look here—" roared Coker.

"Well, are you going to barge about in the dark?" hooted Potter.

"I certainly shan't turn on lights to tell everybody I'm up!" said Coker sarcastically. "A flash-light will be enough for me! I'm going to borrow your flashlamp, Potter."

"Oh!" said Potter.

"I shan't need it till I get downstairs. Risky to turn on a light on the stairs. Somebody might be up. I'm no fool!"

That was another error on Coker's part, as his chums knew, if Horace did not. But it was no good pointing out that error to Coker. He would never have seen it.

"Might as well shove a new battery into that lamp, Potter," added Coker. "I shan't want a light till I get to Masters' Passage—but I shall want one then. It will be black as a hat. See that that lamp's all right, Potter."

"Oh!" said Potter.

"Do it now!" added Coker. "No time like the present—and you know what a fool you are, Potter! I've told you often enough."

"Oh!" said Potter again. "All right!"

He stepped to the study cupboard, where his pocket flashlamp was kept. Greene stared at him.

It seemed to Greene that it would be a jolly good thing if the light failed when Coker was groping along a dark passage for Prout's study door. In that case, Coker would have to give it up and return to the dormitory, leaving Prout's study unshipped.

Potter closed one eye at Greene as he stood at the cupboard.

From that pocket lamp Potter extracted a battery that was in good order and that would have shown all the light Coker needed—more than was for his good, in the opinion of his friends.

Potter put that good battery carefully aside and picked out one that had lately been discarded as exhausted and therefore useless.

"Oh!" murmured Greene, who had a watchful eye on Potter.

Coker, sitting in the armchair with his long legs extended, had no eye on Potter! So far as he condescended to heed Potter at all, he supposed that he was, as per instructions, putting a new and reliable battery into that flashlamp.

Potter wasn't!

Potter was putting in an exhausted battery, which could be relied upon not to show the faintest glimmer of light.

Greene suppressed a gurgle!

If Coker relied on that flashlamp in his nocturnal excursion, Coker was going to be let down with a bump! All that would remain would be to return to his dorm, leaving Prout's study alone! Which, his pals thought, was a consummation devoutly to be wished.

This was, in fact, really pally of Potter. He was doing all he could to save old Horace from playing the goat and getting sacked.

Having thus, with great care, rendered that flashlamp absolutely innocuous, Potter turned from the cupboard with it in his hand.

"I'll nip up to the dorm and shove this under your pillow, all ready for you, Coker," he said blandly. He was rather anxious that Coker should not test that flashlamp till the time came to use it.

Coker nodded approval.

"That's rather unusually sensible of you, Potter!" he said. "Do!"

And Potter did!

SOME FOR SMITHY!

"YOU meddlin' asses!"

"Thanks!"

"You cheeky fools!"

"Thanks again!"

"You interfering bargees!"

"The thankfulness is terrific!"

The Famous Five were on the Remove landing when Herbert Vernon-Smith came up the stairs.

He gave them a black, angry look as he came—which had no perceptible effect on the chums of the Remove.

Smithy evidently had heard from Skinner of the intervention of the Famous Five in his campaign against Quelch.

That intervention had saved him, as he very well knew, from being taken to his headmaster and sacked. For, had that whitewash descended on Quelch's head, when Mr. Woosey caught him in the art class-room, the Bounder's number would have been up. There was no doubt whatever on that point—Smithy knew it as well as the other fellows did.

But that did not diminish his resentment at what he chose to regard as an unwarrantable interference in his affairs.

It had turned out lucky for him, but it was cheeky meddling, all the same, in Herbert Vernon-Smith's opinion. If he chose to be a law unto himself, it was not for other fellows to say him nay.

"You can't mind your own business!" he exclaimed savagely. "Have I ever asked you to look after me, you goody-goody worms?"

"Do you still wish that Quelch had had the whitewash?" inquired Bob Cherry. "You'd be saying good-bye now if he had."

"That's not your business!"

"No," said Bob. "I suppose it isn't! If you want to improve the landscape at Greyfriars by getting off it, why not?"

"The whynotfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Next time, we'll let you rip," said Harry Wharton, "but not to the extent of whitewashing Quelch, Smithy. If you try on any rotten trick like that, and we hear of it, we'll stop you fast enough!"

"We were coming up to dip your head in that whitewash when Moosey turned up!" said Frank Nugent.

"You cheeky fool——"

"And you haven't done with it yet, Smithy!" said Johnny Bull. "You can get bunked as soon as you like, but you're not whitewashing old Quelch without getting a lesson on the subject."

"Greasing up to Quelch?" sneered the Bounder.

"There's a limit," said Harry, "and that's the limit! If you can't see it you'll get it pointed out to you. Now shut up!"

"You cheeky, meddling fool——"

"I said shut up!" said the captain of the Remove. "If you can't take a tip, you'll get shut up, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder clenched his fists.

"Get on with it, then, you meddlesome fool!" he snarled.

Tom Redwing, who was following the Bounder up the staircase, ran on the landing and caught him by the arm.

"Stop that, Smithy!" he exclaimed.

"Don't barge in, Reddy——"

"Stop it, I tell you!" snapped Redwing. "Haven't you any sense or a spot of gratitude in you? These fellows have saved you from getting sacked—not that you deserve to be saved from getting it in the neck."

The Bounder gave him a glare, wrenched his arm away, and stalked up the Remove passage.

"Hold on a minute, Reddy!" called out Bob Cherry, as Tom was following his disgruntled chum.

Redwing turned back.

"Don't mind Smithy, you fellows," he said. "The fact is, he's got his back up, because he knows jolly well that he's got to chuck up making a fool of himself. Quelch knows as much about that whitewash as Smithy could tell him, and even that hot-headed ass knows that he's got to stop."

"Good for him if he does!" said Bob.

"But what did you call me back for?" asked Redwing.

Redwing stared at Bob Cherry, puzzled.

The Famous Five were looking up the Remove passage from the landing, and Redwing looked in the same direction.

Then he saw why Bob had stopped him.

As he looked, Herbert Vernon-Smith reached the door of Study No. 4. That door was ajar.

The Bounder shoved it roughly open and stalked in.

Crash!

Swoosh!

Yell!

"Oh!" gasped Redwing.

"We didn't want you to get a whack in that!" explained Bob cheerfully. "It's Smithy's own whitewash—we fetched down a jugful after Woosey had cleared."

"Lesson for Smithy!" said Johnny Bull. "We're going to make him tired of whitewash."

"I say, you fellows," came an excited squeak from the doorway of Study No. 7. "I say, look at Smithy! He, he, he!"

From the Bounder's study a figure emerged, a figure that was hardly recognisable as that of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

He had walked into that booby-trap without a suspicion. He had got the full benefit of it. A flat tin pan, with a gallon of whitewash in it, had been lodged on top of the study door. It had fairly bonneted the Bounder as it landed on him.

He was white as the driven snow, from head to foot! His face was a mask of streaming whitewash. Whitewash swamped all over him! He had got it fair and square, and he was in a worse state than Quelch would have been, had the whitewash descended on his head as planned. Smithy was fairly drenched from top to toe.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, look!"

"Gurrrggh!" came a horrible gurgle from the Bounder. There was whitewash in his mouth, as well as all over him. "Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fellows at tea in their studies stared from doorways. There was a roar of laughter all along the Remove passage.

"Is that Smithy?" gasped Skinner.

"Or his ghost?" howled Squiff.

"Looks more like his ghost!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh!" The Bounder stood in the passage in a pool of dripping whitewash, gouging the fluid from eyes and nose and mouth. "Urrgh! Who—urrg!—who—grogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tired of whitewash yet, Smithy?" roared Bob Cherry.

"More, if you want it!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Yurrrrgggh! Gurrrggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder came squelching down the passage. He gave the Famous Five on the landing a whitewash glare.

"You did this!" he yelled.

"Guessed it in one!" assented Harry Wharton. "That's what you had for Quelch. How do you like it yourself?"

Obviously, the Bounder did not like it at all! He hated it!

Spluttering with rage and whitewash, he hurled himself at the Famous Five with brandished fists.

"Hook it!" gasped Bob.

The Famous Five scattered. Smithy was rather too whitewashy for close contact! They did not want any of the whitewash.

"Gurrrgh! I'll—I'll——" spluttered the enraged Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, Smithy wants a wash!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co., laughing, scattered down the stairs. If Smithy wanted a scrap, after that booby-trap, all the members of the Co. were ready to oblige him—but not till he had got the whitewash off! Nobody wanted to share the whitewash.

"Gurrrgh! You rotters! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smithy, in his rage, made a rush in pursuit.

Tom Redwing—heedless of whitewash—grabbed him in time.

"Smithy!" he gasped.

"Let go, you fool!" yelled the Bounder.

"You can't go down like that!" gasped Redwing. "For goodness' sake, come and get a wash and a change!"

"Oh, let him come down!" called Bob Cherry, from the middle landing. "Come and chase us across the quad, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But even the enraged Bounder realised that that would not do.

Panting with rage, he tramped away to a bath-room to get himself cleaned—leaving the Remove passage rocking with laughter.

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SHIPPING A STUDY!

"**B**LOW!" breathed Horace Coker.

It was exasperating.

"That fool, Potter!" breathed Horace.

He would have liked to punch Potter's head at that moment.

But Potter's head was not within reach. Potter's head was on Potter's pillow in the Fifth Form dormitory. Coker was groping in Masters' Passage in the dark.

It was midnight's stilly hour!

Greyfriars slept!

Only Coker did not!

Coker was on the warpath. Coker, at the witching hour of midnight, had turned out of bed and dressed himself in the dark. At ten minutes past twelve Coker was stealing down dark staircases and passages—sufficiently lighted on his way by glimmering starlight at high windows; but with Potter's torch to light him, later, when needed.

Now it was needed!

And it did not act!

Masters' Passage was black as a hat, as Coker had told his pals that it would be. Coker could hardly see his hand before his face—though it was, in ordinary circumstances, large enough to be seen!

From his pocket he drew Potter's flash-lamp and switched it on—in vain! He looked for light—but there was no light! Like the poet, who was visited by the raven at midnight, Coker saw "darkness there, and nothing more!"

No wonder Coker said "Blow!" No wonder he longed to punch Potter's head. Distinctly, he had told Potter to put a reliable battery in that blessed lamp! And Potter, as usual, had made some fatheaded mistake! The light would not come on.

Coker was left in the unhappy position of the heathen who sat in darkness—except that Coker was standing.

He stood—enraged, exasperated, in doubt as well as in darkness. It looked like giving up his enterprise for that night! But Coker, after having specially stayed awake till midnight—not an easy task—and after having turned out, dressed, and descended to the scene of action, was naturally unwilling to give up his enterprise.

On the other hand, he could not pick out a study in the dark. A box of matches would have seen him through. But a fellow provided with an electric flash-lamp had not, naturally, thought of bringing matches. Coker was let down—bumping!

He made a retrograde step! But only one! He was not going to chuck it and have all that tiresome business over again of staying awake and turning out and creeping cautiously down dark passages! Coker was going to carry on—somehow!

He groped along the passage.

It was easy to find study doors by groping. But it was not easy to tell one study from another. In fact, it was impossible. Even Coker did not think of opening door after door, switching on light after light. That

was altogether too dangerous a game.

Late as the hour was, there might be wakeful eyes. Lights flashing from a study window would certainly have startled any eyes that beheld the same.

Coker looked into study after study. But as at night all cats are grey, so studies looked much alike in the dark.

He stopped at last, breathing fury.

It looked as if Coker was going to be beaten.

He did not want to ship the wrong study! Coker had no feud on with any beak but Prout. He wanted to make Prout sit up and howl—but Prout would not have sat up and howled had Capper's or Hacker's or Quelch's study been shipped. But how was he to spot Prout's study in the deep dark?

Then Coker—not easily beaten—remembered that Prout's study was sixth from the end of the passage.

That recollection came as a happy relief.

All he had to do was to grope carefully in the dark, counting the doors from the end of the passage; and that was bound to land him at Prout's door!

Then a doubt smote him!

He knew—he remembered that Prout's study was sixth from the end. But which end?

He was not sure of that? Was it sixth from the Common-room end or sixth from the staircase end?

Coker cudgelled his brains to remember! Finally, he decided that it was from the staircase end. Yes, it was the staircase end all right! Coker groped to that end, from which he glimpsed the staircase in a glimmer of the stars from a window. Starting from that end, Coker moved along the passage, groping from door to door.

At the sixth door he stopped.

He opened that door.

Within was blackness. The window was covered by a blind. Erebus was no blacker!

Coker groped into the blackness and shut the door.

He could work in the dark! Still, just a glimmer of light would help! He groped across to the window.

"Ow!" hissed Coker, as his knees established contact with a chair.

The chair rocked over! Coker nearly followed its example. But he clutched out wildly to save himself, and grabbed a study table. The table rocked under his grab, and there was a showering sound as books, papers, and inkstand rolled off to the floor.

Coker gasped.

He had meant to be stealthily silent. A fellow shipping his Form-master's study could not be too cautious! But the noises of the falling chair, the falling books, and the crashing inkstand seemed rather like thunder.

He listened anxiously.

The studies at Greyfriars were a good distance from the bed-rooms. He hoped that nothing had been heard. But he listened for two or three long and anxious minutes before he could feel sure.

Then he got going again.

This time he got to the window without accident. He jerked the blind aside sufficiently to allow a pale glimmer of starlight to penetrate into the room.

He did not need more!

All he needed was to glimpse the things he was going to ship. The shipping had already started, so far as the study table was concerned. Coker proceeded to add to it. He turned the table quite over, and jerked up the hearthrug, draping it over the table-legs.

Then, opening the bookcase, he showered books right and left, all over the floor, some of them swimming in the ink from the upset ink-pot.

Then he piled the armchair on the overturned table, and piled the other chairs on the armchair. On top he placed the fender.

By that time, Coker considered whether he had done enough. But he remembered Prout's old rifle, which hung in the study—souvenir of ancient days when Prout had been a mighty hunter. Coker groped over the wall for that old rifle, to add it to the pile.

To his annoyance, it was not there! A picture was hanging in its place! Prout seemed to have made a change in his study since Coker had last entered it in the day-time. However, he unhooked the picture and added it to the heap on the inverted table. The glass cracked as he added it! That could not be helped!

Then there was the desk. That desk stood in a different corner—not the one Coker expected to find it in. Prout seemed to have made more than one change! Still, though it was in a different corner, there it was—and Coker heaved it over!

He was now sure that he had done enough! Certainly he had done more than enough to get sacked for, if he was spotted.

He groped out of the study into the passage, and closed the door after him. He tiptoed away to the staircase—as softly and stealthily as a rhinoceros! Fortunately, no one was up to hear the cautious, stealthy Coker!

At last—at long last—he stood in the Fifth Form dormitory again! He grinned as he threw off his clothes and tumbled into bed.

He had done it! He had said that he would do it—and he had done it! Prout's study was shipped—such a shipping as constituted a record! That Head's whopping was, at last, avenged!

Potter and Greene were fast asleep! All the Fifth were asleep! Coker, too, was soon asleep. And Coker smiled in his sleep!

HIS OWN FAULT!

"**W**HAT'S the latest?" asked Bob Cherry, sarcastically.

The Bounder gave him an angry stare.

"What do you mean, you fool?" he asked, politely.

"You don't know, of course!" said Bob, still sarcastically.

"How should I know what you're

burbling about, you dunderhead?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith did not seem in a good temper that morning.

He was, in fact, in a very bad one!

Having, from sheer wilful wrong-headedness, started the term badly, Smithy was rather naturally finding things rotten all round. A severe caning in the Form-room, five hundred lines to work through somehow, detention for four half-holidays—all these were bad enough. Then his scheme for retaliation had been knocked on the head—luckily for him, certainly, but that did not make it less irritating. Then Quelch's warning, which had sunk deep into his mind, made him realise that he had better chuck getting back at Quelch—which was a disappointment. And the whitewash booby trap in his study had been a sort of climax.

Altogether the Bounder was in a very disgruntled state—disappointed, angry, resentful and ready to quarrel at a word. Indeed, he was ready to quarrel with the Famous Five without even a word!

It was just before breakfast when Bob Cherry spoke to him in the quad.

Bob had just seen Mr. Quelch from a distance! And he had noted an expression on the face of Henry Samuel Quelch which told that stormy weather was coming again.

"I fancied that whitewash would feed you up!" went on Bob. "It seems to have been wasted! What a fool you are, Smithy!"

"I'll make you sorry for that, and your pals, too!" said Vernon-Smith between his teeth.

"Well, you're a fool and rather a swab, but we shall be sorry to see you go!" said Bob. "But if you keep on asking for it, a fellow can't always be butting in to stop you."

"Who wants you to butt in, you meddling idiot?" snarled the Bounder. Then he added, "What do you mean, though? Has anything happened?"

"Don't you know?" asked Bob.

"Of course I don't!" howled Smithy angrily. "How should I?"

Bob looked at him very doubtfully.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "If you don't, all the better. I fancied you did. Something's happened—I don't know what—but it must be something to do with Quelch—he's looking as if he's going to bite, this morning."

"Well, I've done nothing!" grunted Vernon-Smith.

"Good—if you haven't!" said Bob, and he went away to join his friends, leaving the Bounder scowling.

When the Greyfriars fellows went in to breakfast, Mr. Quelch did not, as usual, take the head of the Remove table.

By that time, a good many fellows had heard, or guessed, or surmised, that something unusual was up, and there was a good deal of wondering on the subject.

"I say, you fellows, I've heard that something happened in Quelch's study last night!" whispered Billy Bunter. "The beaks were all in the passage, looking like a lot of owls! Quelch was grinding his teeth."

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

"He jolly well was!" declared Bunter. "Never seen him look in such a fearful rage. I say, the Head was there!"

"The Head!" repeated Peter Todd. "Yes—I saw him there! I say, you fellows, what can have happened? Has Smithy been up to something again?"

"I shouldn't wonder!" said Johnny Bull.

"The wonderfulness would not be terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Tom Redwing gave his chum a very anxious look. He had believed that after Quelch's warning, even the reckless Bounder had decided to go slow. But this did not look like it.

Smithy gave him a sneering grin in return.

"I've done nothing, you fool!" he muttered. "Not me this time, if there's anything up."

"You didn't do down from the dorm in the night, Smithy?" asked Hazeldene, with a grin.

"No, I did not!" grunted the Bounder.

"Somebody did!" grinned Hazel.

"How did you know somebody did, Hazel?" asked several voices.

"Because I heard Prout say so to Hacker," answered Hazel. "Old pompous said it must have happened after lights out!"

"But what's happened, then?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I don't know—something has!"

Most eyes were on the Bounder. Whether he had gone down from the Remove dormitory after lights out or not, nobody, of course, knew: the Form having been asleep! But if something had happened in the night, of which Mr. Quelch was the victim, there was not much doubt on the point, in the minds of the Removites.

After breakfast, when the fellows went out of Hall, Vernon-Smith was stopped at the door by a Sixth Form prefect.

"Go to your Form-master's study, Vernon-Smith!" said Loder.

The Bounder breathed hard, and gave Loder of the Sixth a very unpleasant look.

"What for?" he asked.

Loder laughed.

"Quelch wants you there," he said. "I fancy you know why."

"I don't know anything about it."

"Quelch will tell you, then!" said Loder, laughing again. "I don't suppose he can tell you more than you know! Anyhow, cut off!"

Vernon-Smith, with a black brow, tramped away to his Form-master's study.

Obviously something had happened—something rather serious—and Smithy was supposed to be the culprit.

He could hardly wonder at that. He only wondered savagely what the dickens could have happened, which he was supposed to have done.

He learned—as soon as he arrived at Mr. Quelch's study.

The Remove master was there! He was standing, with a grim brow, in the midst of a wreck that looked as

if hurricanes had struck his study in the night.

The Bounder stared at the dismantled study! He caught his breath! He knew now what the matter was—Quelch's study had been ragged. Somebody—certainly not Vernon-Smith—had shipped that study in the night.

It was in an awful state! Nothing so far had been done to put it to rights! It was as the ragger had left it.

Smithy's face paled a little.

The room was an utter wreck. He gazed at an upturned table, stacked with chairs, a fender, and a picture draped with a hearthrug. He gazed at books and papers scattered all over the floor, some of them drenched with ink. Was he supposed to have done this?

"You may come in, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch, in a low, calm, bitter voice. "You may look in the daylight on what you did last night."

The Bounder panted! It was the sack for the fellow who had done this! He had done it! Quelch evidently believed that he had, and had not the slightest doubt on the subject.

"I never did this, sir!" the Bounder panted. "I haven't entered the study."

The Remove master's lip curled with contempt.

"I expected that!" he said. "I was prepared for untruthfulness from you, Vernon-Smith! Though how you have the impudence to utter such palpable falsehoods is beyond my understanding."

"I never—"

"That will do! I have sent for you, Vernon-Smith, to tell you that this is your final act of rebellious disrespect in this school. I warned you only yesterday what to expect. You leave Greyfriars—"

"Who says I have done it?" exclaimed the Bounder. "I know nothing about it."

"No other Remove boy would venture upon such an act!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "I am well aware, Vernon-Smith, that there is no direct proof. I have no doubt that you came down in the night unseen by anyone. I have no doubt that you will deny your own action. There is no more direct proof in this case than there would have been yesterday, had you succeeded in drenching me at my window, as you planned, and escaped detection."

"I—I—"

"I warned you that in the event of your attempting any further such outrage, you would not be allowed to escape punishment by cunning and duplicity. You will be expelled for this act."

"I never did it!" almost shouted the Bounder. "I never even opened my eyes till the rising-bell went."

"I expected you to say so!" answered Mr. Quelch contemptuously. "Precisely as you would have said that you had never entered Mr. Woosey's class-room yesterday, had

you succeeded in your design, and escaped detection."

The Bouncer caught his breath. That wonderful system of his of telling the tale to the beaks seemed to have let him down. He had not done this! But his denial was not worth the breath with which he uttered it.

"You need say no more!" added Mr. Quelch. "I have merely sent for you to say that this is the end. You need not come to the Form-room this morning. I shall inform you later what arrangements are made for sending you home; or, if you prefer it, you may leave at once, and I will telephone an explanation to your father. It is immaterial to me, but I do not desire to see you in my Form-room again, and I forbid you to enter it."

"On my word, sir!" said Vernon-Smith huskily, "I never did this—I never knew anything about it—not a thing."

"Please say no more—it is painful to listen to such untruthfulness," said Mr. Quelch. "You may leave my study, Vernon-Smith; your time is your own this morning!"

"I swear, sir——"

"I forbid you to utter another falsehood, Vernon-Smith! Leave my study at once!" rapped the Remove-master.

And Herbert Vernon-Smith left it—overwhelmed.

He had not done this, but he was condemned for having done it, as a matter of course—that, in the circumstances, was inevitable. And—if it was any comfort to him—he realised, only too clearly, that it was his own fault.

A SURPRISE FOR COKER!

HORACE COKER was surprised. He could not make it out. In the Fifth Form room that morning, Coker naturally expected to see Prout not merely in a bat, but in the most tremendous bat ever.

Prout's wrath, when he saw his shipped study, was calculated to exceed the celebrated wrath of Achilles, to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered!

And Prout was not wrathful!

Old pompous was precisely the same as usual.

He found fault with Coker, as usual. As usual, he told Coker that his con would have disgraced a Third Form boy. As usual, he objected to Coker putting a "K" in "comic," and a double "E" in "serious." But these were trifles—these were quite as usual.

Evidently, Prout did not suspect Coker! But that was all right—Coker had not expected to be suspected.

But why was Prout so calm?

He must have discovered what had happened. Certainly he had been to his study that morning. Besides, all the Fifth had heard a rumour of some strange happening in Masters' Passage.

Details were not known—except to

Horace Coker. But everybody knew that there had been something amiss in that quarter.

Yet Prout carried on with perfect unconcern. It was surprising. It was really inexplicable. Prout was not going off at the deep end. He was not going off at all! Coker had expected him to go off, almost like a bomb! And he was not so explosive as a penny cracker.

Potter and Greene had looked rather anxious when they came into the Form-room. They had not awakened in the night, and knew nothing of old Horace's exploits so far. But the rumour of some strange happening in Masters' Studies alarmed them. They dreaded to find that, after all, Coker had got on with it, in spite of Potter's pally attempt to put paid to the scheme.

But Prout's placid calm reassured them! Prout would not have been placid and calm had he found his study shipped!

They were relieved! It was all right!

Coker could only marvel. He was still marvelling when the school went out in break.

He gathered up Potter and Greene, and walked them away in the quad, his rugged brow wrinkled with perplexity.

"Who'd have thought it?" he said.

"Which?" asked Potter.

"Prout!" said Coker. "Not a word! Not a sign! Not a snort! Can you fellows make it out?" Coker shook his head. "It beats me! I'm sharp enough—brighter than most chaps—but it beats me! I don't get it!"

"You'd get it fast enough if you'd shipped Prout's study, old man," said Potter. "Thank goodness you didn't!"

"Eh?" said Coker. "But I did!"

"What?"

"Of course I did! Didn't I say I would?"

Potter and Greene gazed at him.

"You—you—you did!" gasped Potter. "You dreamed it, old chap! Prout doesn't look as if you did!"

"No!" said Coker. "That's what I can't make out! But I did it all right—jolly well wrecked the whole show! I thought I should have to give it up when that flash-lamp wouldn't come on, and I was all in the dark."

"Wouldn't it?" murmured Potter.

"No! You're an awful fathead, Potter! I asked you specially to see that the battery was all right! You must have put in an old one instead of a new one!"

"Think so?" gasped Potter.

"Well, it must have been that—anyhow, it wouldn't show a glimmer of light when I got down to Masters' Studies."

"You went down, then?" asked Greene.

"Didn't I tell you I would?"

"Oh! Yes! And you chucked up the idea when the light wouldn't come on—is that it?" asked Potter, closing one eye at Greene.

"No; I shipped his study all right—I've told you so."

"Did you go to sleep in Masters' Passage?"

"Eh? No!"

"Oh! Did you dream it awake?"

"You silly owl, I tell you I shipped his study!" howled Coker. "Ragged it right and left—hardly left one thing on another."

"Well, Prout seems to be taking it in a friendly spirit, if you did!" remarked Greene. "He doesn't seem to mind."

"That's what beats me!" said Coker. "I expected him to go off like Mount Vesuvius! He hasn't!"

"He hasn't!" agreed Potter. "He would, if you had done it!"

"I tell you I did!" shrieked Coker.

"Well, if you did, how did you find Prout's study in the dark?" asked Potter. "Blessed if I could!"

"That was easy enough, when I thought of it! Prout's study is sixth from the end—I remembered that!"

"Oh!" said Potter. He began to look serious. If Coker had counted the doors from the end to Prout's study, he could have found that study in the blackest dark. "But—look here, you can't have upset Prout's study—he would be raging!"

"Well, I did," said Coker—"fairly wrecked it!"

Potter gave a sudden start.

He, like Coker, remembered, now he thought of it, that Prout's study was sixth from one end of the passage. But it was not sixth from the other end! And something or other had happened in Masters' Passage during the night—they all knew that! A horrid doubt smote Potter.

"You say you counted the sixth study from the end?" he exclaimed.

"Yes—I remembered——"

"Which end?" breathed Potter.

"The staircase end."

"Oh, holy smoke!" gasped Potter.

"Suffering cats!" ejaculated Greene.

Coker stared at them.

"What are you gurgling about?" he asked. "I got Prout's study all right—sixth from the staircase end——"

"You blithering, burbling, dunder-headed dummy!" hissed Potter. "Prout's study is sixth from the Common-room end."

"Rot!"

"It jolly well is!" said Greene.

"I—I thought——" Coker spoke haltingly. A dreadful doubt was smiting his own powerful intellect now. "I—I thought it was the staircase end——"

"It's the other end!" hissed Potter. "The sixth study from the staircase end is Quelch's!"

"Quelch's!" repeated Coker mechanically.

"If you counted from the staircase end, you got to Quelch's study! If you've shipped any study at all, you've shipped the Remove beak's!"

"Oh gum!" breathed Coker.

"You idiot!" said Greene.

"You born idiot!" said Potter.

Coker blinked at them. It filtered into his solid intellect! That was why Prout was so calm that morning! That—as Coker recalled now—was why some of Prout's things hadn't



From the study a figure emerged, a figure that was hardly recognisable as that of Herbert Vernon-Smith. There was a roar of laughter all along the Remove passage!

been in their usual places—the desk in a different corner—a picture in the place of the old rifle on the wall! These differences were now accounted for by the fact that it hadn't been Prout's study at all, but Quelch's.

"Oh gum!" repeated Coker.

"Something's happened among the beaks!" said Potter. "Everybody knows that! I know now what it is! Quelch's study—"

"Shipped!" murmured Greene.

"The Remove beak's! Oh, my hat!"

"Oh gum!" said Coker, for the third time.

"There's one thing," said Potter—"if Coker had shipped Prout's study he would have been found out and bunked. He would be catching his train home now. But nobody will suspect a Fifth Form man of ragging the Remove beak."

"No," said Greene, thoughtfully. "Coker's only got to keep his mouth shut!"

"Oh gum!" said Coker, for the fourth time.

He knew now what he had done. It was quite a surprise for Coker. He had missed Prout's study and shipped Quelch's! It was fearfully unfortunate. Coker really wished that he hadn't started shipping studies at all.

WHO SHIPPED THE STUDY?

"I SAY, you fellows—Quelch's study!"

"Shipped!"

"Wrecked!"

"That mad ass, Smithy!"

"This will be the finish for Smithy!"

"Jevver hear of a man asking for it like that?"

"Where's Smithy?"

"Is he gone?"

"The howling ass!"

The news was out in break that morning. All the Remove knew that Quelch's study had been shipped over night. So the Remove fellows could guess why Herbert Vernon-Smith had not appeared in the Form-room that morning.

Who had shipped that study?

There was, of course, only one answer to that question—Smithy had!

Nobody even thought of doubting that.

In all the Form there was no other fellow reckless enough for such an act. Even had the Bounder not been known to be on the warpath against his beak, the fellows would have said: "Smithy or nobody!"

But all the Remove knew that Smithy was on the warpath. Harry Wharton & Co. knew that they had barely prevented him from an equally reckless act only the day before. Shipping Quelch's study was on a par with drenching him with whitewash. They had stopped the one—and Smithy had done the other. How could any fellow doubt it?

Obviously, Quelch did not doubt it as Smithy was already excluded from his Form-room.

"The utter, blithering ass!" said Bob Cherry. "Couldn't he guess that Quelch would know at once who had done it?"

"There's no actual proof in such a

case," said Nugent. "A fellow sneaking down at night to ship a beak's study wouldn't wake anybody up to see him. But it's plain enough! Smithy did this because we stopped his whitewash stunt."

"And Quelch knows that," said Johnny Bull.

"Of course he does! Smithy must be an awful ass," said Bob. "I'm sorry he's going, but, dash it all, what can he expect?"

"But is he gone?" asked Peter Todd. "He wasn't in class—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars came out of the House.

He looked cool enough as he strolled out, with his hands in his pockets. But his lips were set, and his eyes were glinting.

There was a rush of the Removites to surround him.

"Did they spot you, Smithy?" asked Skinner breathlessly.

"Sacked?" asked Bob.

The Bounder nodded assent to both questions, with a sardonic grin.

"Yes, they spotted me, and Quelch says I'm sacked," he answered.

"Well, you did ask for it, and no mistake," said Bob. "Sorry, old man, but asking for it like that—"

"So you think I did it, you fool?"

"Eh?"

"I'm spotted, and sacked," said the Bounder sarcastically. "But, as it happens, I never went near Quelch's study last night."

That statement was followed by a silence in the crowd of juniors. Not

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a fellow there believed it, or thought of believing it.

One thing was certain—that if a Remove man had shipped Quelch's study that man was Herbert Vernon-Smith. And that the shipping had been done by a fellow in another Form did not occur to anyone—even the Bounder himself. No fellow in another Form could be supposed to have any wrath to wreak on the Remove master.

The silence was broken by a cackle from Billy Bunter.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, who did it if Smithy didn't? He, he, he!"

Smithy took no notice of the fat Owl of the Remove. He glanced round with a sneer at a crowd of staring, unbelieving faces.

"You don't believe me, of course," he said.

"Well, it wants some believing," remarked Skinner.

"Did you tell Quelch that?" grinned Bolsover major.

"I did!"

"Did he believe it?"

"No!"

"Who did it, if you didn't?" asked Hazel.

"That beats me hollow!" answered the Bounder quietly. "I've been trying to think that out! Wharton's the man if he had had a row on with Quelch—"

"Thanks!" said Harry.

"I can't think of any other man in the Remove with neck enough to do it. Whoever the fellow was, he's a priceless worm to leave it on me!"

"Are you going to keep that up?" asked Hazel, in wonder. "What's the good?"

"Yes, what's the good?" asked Squiff. "If you're bunked for it, what's the good, Smithy?"

"I've said I never did it."

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"When are you going, Smithy?" asked Skinner.

"Not at all, I hope," answered Vernon-Smith composedly. "Quelch kindly offered to let me clear at once if I liked. I didn't like! So it's up to them! I'm going to see the Head after twelve." He shrugged his shoulders. "Quelch is jumping at this with both feet! But the Big Beak may see justice done."

"Justice!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Isn't it done already?" grinned Hazel.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"No," said the Bounder very quietly, "it isn't! I was going to get Quelch with the whitewash yesterday—everybody knows that! He warned me that if there was anything more, I should be for it, proof or no proof. I'm no fool, and I took his tip. It's just my rotten luck that somebody else got on Quelch's track so soon afterwards."

"Who?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I don't know—unless it was you," said Vernon-Smith, his eyes fixed grimly on the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" snapped Harry.

"You had a feud on with Quelch once upon a time, and did exactly such things," said the Bounder coolly. "You're the only man in the Remove with nerve enough to do it, except myself—and I know whether I did or not. If you'd had a row on with Quelch this term, I should be certain that you did it. As it is, I think you did it."

Harry Wharton's face reddened with anger.

"You may have some grudge to pay off that I don't know anything about," went on the Bounder, in the same cool tone. "I think you did it, and if you did I hope you'll have decency enough to own up before the chopper comes down."

The captain of the Remove drew a deep breath.

"I won't row with you, Smithy, as you're going," he said quietly. "But I've had enough of this! You can keep the rest!"

He turned and walked away from the group, his friends following him. Any sympathy they might have had for the Bounder was quite washed out by that unexpected accusation.

But a good many fellows looked rather curiously after Wharton as he went. There was, after all, no actual proof in the matter—it was not a matter that admitted of direct proof, as the act had not been witnessed, and could not have been witnessed.

"By gum!" said Skinner, with a whistle, "I wonder—"

"Don't be an ass, Skinner!" said Peter Todd. "You know who did it as well as every other fellow!"

"Give a dog a bad name and hang him," said the Bounder satirically. "I'm a dog with a bad name—Wharton isn't! So I'm going to get it in the neck for what he did!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Toddy, in disgust, and he walked away.

When the bell rang for third school, and the Remove went in, Vernon-Smith was left alone in the quad.

Tom Redwing joined him after the others were gone. His face was deeply clouded.

"You've got to see the Head yet, Smithy," he said. "For goodness' sake be careful how you talk to him! If you didn't do it—"

"I've told you I didn't," said Vernon-Smith, with glinting eyes.

"Well, I believe you, of course, Smithy," said Tom uncomfortably. "But goodness knows who did, if you didn't! Anyhow, don't cheek the Head—that won't do any good."

"I'm not going to chuck away my last chance here," sneered the Bounder. "You can leave that to me. Cut in—you'll be late!"

Redwing went into the House.

Mr. Quelch glanced out at the Bounder in the quad and called to him.

"Have you packed your box, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir!"

"You should have done so!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "You had better go and do so at once, Vernon-Smith!"

"Why?" asked the Bounder coolly.

"Why?" repeated Mr. Quelch, raising his eyebrows. "You will be sent away immediately after you have seen your headmaster, Vernon-Smith. If your box is not ready it will be sent after you."

"I'm not gone yet, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "May I make a suggestion, sir?"

"What do you mean?"

"When you see Wharton in the Form-room, ask him why he shipped your study last night!" said the Bounder coolly.

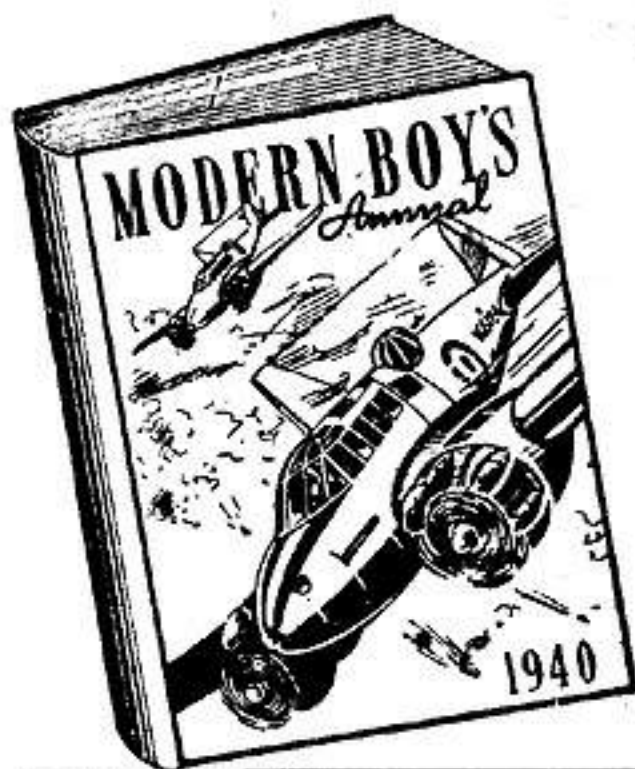
Mr. Quelch started a little. He gave Vernon-Smith one look of contempt and turned away without answering.

The Bounder sneered bitterly as he

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disappeared. He was, as he had said, a dog with a bad name. His one remaining hope was in the Head—and that hope was a faint one. The scapegrace of Greyfriars was not feeling happy as he loitered dismally about the quad till twelve chimed out from the clock-tower.

SACKED!

DR. LOCKE had a severe expression on his face as he sat in his study after twelve.

It was an unusually serious matter with which he had to deal on this particular morning. It was not pleasant to think of sending a Greyfriars boy home only a few days after the term had started. But Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove was an old offender. He had been sent up oftener than any other fellow at Greyfriars School. Now he was sent up for the last time.

Mr. Quelch entered the study, followed by Vernon-Smith.

Quelch's face looked as if it were moulded in iron.

The Bouncer's was cool.

"Here is the boy, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

Dr. Locke glanced at the culprit.

"Very good, Mr. Quelch! I am sorry, Vernon-Smith, that I have no choice but to send you away from Greyfriars," he said, not unkindly. "I shall hope that in some other sphere—"

"May I speak, sir?" asked the Bouncer, respectfully, yet unable to keep a slight inflection of sarcasm out of his voice.

"You may speak, if you have anything to say!" said the Head curtly. "Be brief!"

"Mr. Quelch thinks that I ragged his study last night, sir! I never entered it! I never left my dormitory after lights out."

Mr. Quelch's lip curled.

The Head looked at the Bouncer very attentively.

"You deny having done this, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir; I deny knowing anything whatever about it."

"There is no doubt in your mind, Mr. Quelch?"

"None whatever, sir!"

"Will you ask Mr. Quelch, sir, what proof he has that I went anywhere near his study last night?" asked the Bouncer. "If a fellow is to be condemned without any evidence—"

"I shall ask Mr. Quelch nothing," said the Head grimly. "But I shall ask you some questions, Vernon-Smith. Did you, or did you not, post yourself in Mr. Woosey's class-room yesterday, with the intention of drenching your Form-master with a bucket of whitewash at his window below?"

The Bouncer hesitated a moment.

"I never did it, sir!" he answered. "I admit that I had the idea in my mind. I know it was a fool trick! But I never did it!"

"Did you, or did you not, absent yourself without leave on the first

day of term and make a false explanation to your Form-master when you were questioned?"

"Yes, sir!" said Smithy, in a low voice.

"That is sufficient!" said Dr. Locke. "The present case does not admit of direct proof! But on your own admission, you planned a similar outrageous action only yesterday. On your own admission, you are a boy upon whose word no reliance whatever can be placed. If by some remote chance you are guiltless in the present instance, you have only yourself to thank for the fact that your denial carries no weight."

The Bouncer opened his lips—and shut them again. It was useless to speak.

"The matter is now closed!" added the Head. "Mr. Quelch, you will make arrangements for this boy to be sent to his home."

"Certainly, sir!"

The Bouncer broke out savagely.

"I never did it! A fellow expects justice from his headmaster! There's no evidence—not a jot or tittle of evidence—"

"The evidence," said Dr. Locke, "is in your own character, Vernon-Smith, and in your own actions. That you may not have committed this particular act is, I suppose, barely possible. But that you planned a similar act is known—and that your word is worthless is also known. You will, therefore, be sent away from this school. You will now leave my study."

"I tell you—!" almost shouted the Bouncer.

"Take this boy from my study. Mr. Quelch."

"Come!" said the Remove master in a voice of iron; and he laid his hand on Vernon-Smith's shoulder and led him from the study.

In the corridor the Bouncer savagely shook his shoulder free.

"Let me alone!" he snarled. "You're getting rid of me—that was what you wanted! Leave me alone!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Go and pack your box, Vernon-Smith!" he said in a deep voice. "In a quarter of an hour a prefect will take you to the station."

"You can tell the prefect to mind his own business!" retorted Vernon-Smith. "I can get to the station without a Sixth Form ass toddling along with me. I'm going—and after I'm gone, perhaps you will find out who shipped your study last night! I never did it—but I wish I had now, as it's turned out—and I'd have done a lot more damage, too! By gum, if I'd known this was coming, I'd have given you something to remember me by!"

With that, the Bouncer cut down the corridor, leaving Mr. Quelch blinking.

He went out into the quad with a savage face.

All Greyfriars was out, after third school; and a crowd of fellows looked round at the Bouncer.

He cut across to Harry Wharton.

"I've got it—right in the neck!" he

shouted. "Are you going to own up before I go, you rotter?"

Wharton gave him a look of contempt.

"You did it!" said the Bouncer passionately. "No other fellow in the Remove would, or could! It was you!"

Wharton's expression changed a little. There was a ring of savage sincerity in the Bouncer's voice which sounded as if he believed what he said. But if he did, he could not be the guilty party.

"If you never did it, Smithy, I'm sorry!" said the captain of the Remove quietly. "But if you didn't you've done your best to make it look as if you did!"

"It was you!" roared the Bouncer.

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

"Chuck it, old man," said Bob Cherry amicably. "Sorry you're going—but what's the good of talking such rot?"

The Bouncer, beside himself with rage, made a rush at the captain of the Remove, his fists clenched and his eyes blazing.

Tom Redwing grabbed him by the shoulder and dragged him back.

"Smithy—"

"Let me go, you fool!" roared the Bouncer, and he dragged himself loose.

Harry Wharton stepped back. He was deeply and intensely angry; but he did not want to punch the expelled Removite before he went.

The Bouncer followed him up with gleaming eyes. It was fixed in his suspicious mind that the captain of the Remove had done this and left it on him. He wanted vengeance before he went—it was all he had left.

But the Co. closed round him, grasped him, and sat him down forcibly on the earth.

"Now chuck it, you sweep!" growled Johnny Bull.

And the Famous Five walked away from the spot, leaving the Bouncer sitting and gasping for breath.

Redwing helped him to his feet.

"Smithy, old chap—" he muttered.

"Oh, leave me alone, you fool!" snarled the Bouncer, wrenching himself away.

"I say, you fellows, here comes Wingate!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

Wingate of the Sixth was hurrying to the spot.

"Vernon-Smith—" he called out.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Vernon Smith. A Sixth Form prefect, even the captain of the school, was nothing to him now. "Do you think I want you to walk me to the station, you fool? Mind your own business!"

Wingate breathed hard.

"I won't give you six, just before you go," he said, "but—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Smithy.

And he stalked away to the gates. Wingate stared after him—a hundred other fellows stared after him. He swung out of the school gateway and disappeared.

The Bouncer of Greyfriars was gone!

UP TO COKER!

"BY gum!" said Coker of the Fifth.

Horace Coker wore a worried look.

"This is pretty grim!" said Coker.

"Eh, what is?" yawned Potter.

"Been shipping any more studies?"

"Capper's or Hacker's!" asked

Greene sarcastically. "I fancy you'll

work through the whole passage

before you get Prout's!"

"They've got a fag for it!" said

Coker.

"Oh!" Potter and Greene became

serious at that!

They were aware that some tre-

mendous excitement was going on in

the Remove—not an important Form

in the eyes of Fifth Form men.

They had heard, in fact, a rumour

that one of Quelch's fags was sacked.

They did not know which one it was.

But at Coker's words they sat up

and took notice, as it were! It was,

as Coker stated, pretty grim, if some

wretched fag in the Remove was

getting bunked for Coker's extra-

ordinary exploit as a shipper of

studies.

"Young Vernon-Smith!" said

Coker, with a deeply worried look.

"A cheeky young rascal—from what

I've heard about him he ought to

have been bunked two or three terms

ago. But—"

"Sure they've got him?" asked

Potter. "Sure it's for this?"

"Yes!" said Coker. "They've got

him for this. They think he shipped

old Quelch's study last night. Good-

ness knows why they think so—but

you know what duds schoolmasters

are! I don't think much of them. A

dense lot! I mean, look at Prout—"

Greene whistled.

"I suppose Quelch would think it

was one of his own lot!" he said.

"He could hardly think anything

else, really."

"He couldn't guess that a potty

hippopotamus was barging about

Masters' Studies last night!" agreed

Potter.

"I don't want any lip from you

fellows!" said Coker. "I want to

know what I'd better do. From

what I hear, young Smith is actually

bunked for it."

"His beak must have had some-

thing else to go on," said Greene.

"They wouldn't bunk a man on spec.

Young Smith must have piled it on

pretty thick, one way or another, to

get picked on."

Coker nodded.

"Yes, I dare say he's asked for it,"

he said. "In fact, from what I've

heard of the scrubby little beast he's

asked for it time and again. But he

never did this—"

"No!" said Potter and Greene,

looking very curiously at Coker.

They could see what was in the great

Horace's mind.

Could a fellow stand by and save

his skin by letting another fellow

get it in the neck for what he had—

inadvertently—done? Some fellows

could have—Price of the Fifth, for

instance, would have. But Horace

Coker would have been hanged,

drawn, and quartered before he would

have resembled Price of the Fifth in

the remotest way.

On the other hand, it was the sack

for shipping a beak's study—even for

shipping it in mistake for another

beak's. And Horace Coker—in his

own estimation, at least—was of more

value to his school than all the

Remove rolled together, with the

Third and Fourth thrown in. Remove

fags mattered very little—Coker

mattered a lot!

And yet—

"It's pretty grim!" repeated Coker.

"But—what do you fellows think?"

"Um!" said Potter.

"Hem!" said Greene.

They knew, of course, what Coker

ought to do. So did Coker! But it

was a wrench!

"They've bunked him!" said Coker.

"Only a little, scrubby Remove

rotter—the cheeky sweep who knocked

my hat off at Lantham, too!

But—"

Coker drew a deep breath.

Without saying more, he walked

away to the House. He went slowly—

but he went!

Potter and Greene exchanged an

eloquent look. It was up to Coker—

and if anything was up to old Horace,

old Horace was the man to face the

music. They wondered whether they

would miss old Horace very much

after he was gone!

Coker had made up his mind!

Deeply worried, but with his chin up,

the champion chump of Greyfriars

made his way to Mr. Quelch's study.

Mr. Quelch was there—not looking

pleasant.

The study had had some attention

that morning—Coker's havoc over-

night had been repaired. Ink-

splashes here and there and a picture

standing against the wall instead of

hanging up, doubtless waiting for a

new glass, were reminiscent of

Coker's nocturnal visit.

Quelch had a heap of books on the

table—sorting them out for return to

the bookcase. They had got rather

mixed on the floor.

He gave Coker a cold look of in-

quiry. He did not see what a Fifth

Form man wanted in his study, and

he did not want to see Coker.

Coker, however, barged in. His

face was red and he was feeling fear-

fully uncomfortable. But it was

clear to Coker that he had to go

through with it.

"Er—" began Coker confusedly.

"Well?"

"Er—" repeated Coker. "I—um

—er!"

It was not very lucid, and Quelch

was not in a sweet or patient temper.

He rapped at Coker:

"If you have anything to say to

me, Coker, kindly say it at once. If

not, leave my study!"

"Oh, yes! Certainly!" said Coker.

"The fact is—"

"Well?"

"Er—" stammered Coker. His

face was scarlet. "I—er—"

"Kindly shut that door after you!"

said Mr. Quelch, and he turned back

to sorting books, leaving Coker to

depart.

Coker did not depart.

"Er—" he began again, address-

ing Mr. Quelch's back. "I'm sorry,

George Alfred Grundy, the fool of the school, has always been a source

of great amusement at St. Jim's, but never was he so funny as in

this sparkling long story. His antics are enough to make a cat

smile! Treat yourself to this grand number and have a good laugh

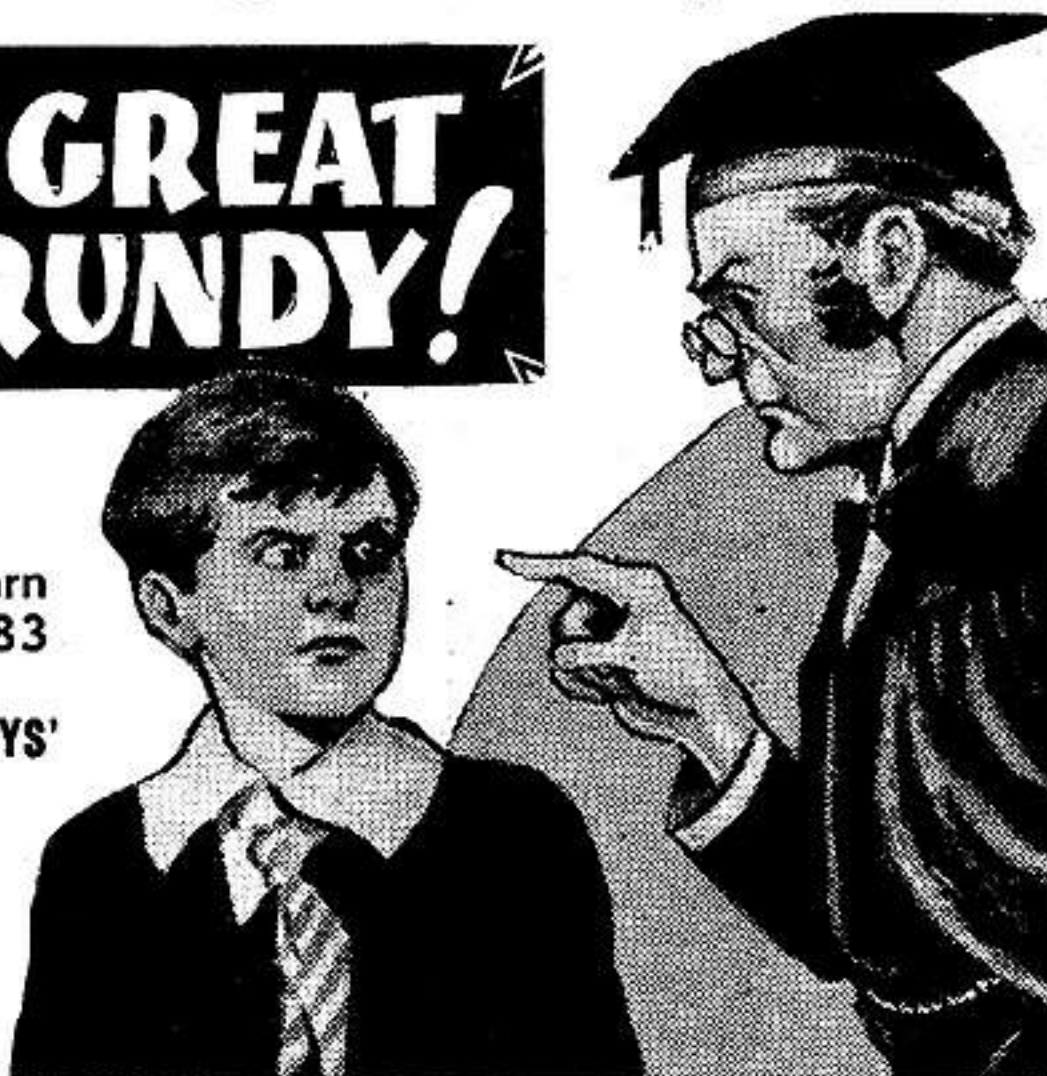
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George Alfred Grundy, the fool of the school, has always been a source of great amusement at St. Jim's, but never was he so funny as in this sparkling long story. His antics are enough to make a cat smile! Treat yourself to this grand number and have a good laugh at the great Grundy's expense!

sir—er—it was all a mistake! I—I hope you don't think, sir, that I had the least idea of—of—I mean—er—

Quelch revolved on his axis again. "I think I have noticed, Coker, that you are the stupidest boy in Mr. Prout's Form—indeed, in all the school!" he said. "That is not, perhaps, your fault—but I decline to have my time wasted by the stupidity of a boy not in my Form! Leave my study at once!"

"But it was me, sir!" stammered Coker, taking the plunge.

"What?"

"Me all the time!" said Coker. "I'm awfully sorry, sir! I know what it means, but I'm bound to tell you, as things have turned out. Only don't you think I meant it for you, sir. I never dreamed of such a thing!"

Mr. Quelch looked at him. He realised that Coker must mean something. But what Coker meant, if he did mean anything, was a deep mystery to the Remove master.

"It was a mistake," added Coker, to make it all clear. "I'm not a cat!"

"You—you—you are not a—a—a cat!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He backed a step away from Coker. He knew—all Greyfriars knew—that Coker was the biggest ass ever. But he had not suspected, so far, that he was not sane. Now he did! What was Quelch to think of a fellow who came to his study and said that he was not a cat?

"No," said Coker. "Cats can see in the dark. I can't!"

Coker's meaning was sun-clear to himself. It was the darkest of mysteries to the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch forgot that he was irritated, and began to feel concerned and a little alarmed.

Coker was a big, powerful fellow, and if he had suddenly gone mad it was no joke to be cornered in a study by him.

"That's how it was, sir," said Coker. "Of course, I never meant anything of the kind! Never dreamed of it! I've got to stand the racket now, of course! I can't let it go on, naturally!"

Mr. Quelch stood silent—wishing that Coker was not between him and the door!

"Is Vernon-Smith gone yet, sir?" added Coker.

"Vernon-Smith!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly. "You have not come here to speak about that boy in my Form, I presume?"

"Eh? Yes! Of course!" said Coker, blinking at him. "Isn't that what I've been talking about?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I mean to say, it had better be stopped!" said Coker. "I can't make out why you think he did it, but I suppose you do, as the Head's bunked him. He had nothing to do with it."

"With what?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Eh? Shipping your study, of course!" said Coker.

Quelch seemed to him very dense! Still, he did not expect much in the way of brains from a schoolmaster! Quelch jumped nearly clear of the floor.

"Upon my word! Do you mean, Coker, that you, a Fifth Form boy, know anything about what occurred in this study last night?" he exclaimed.

"I've just told you so, sir."

"You do not make your meaning clear, Coker," said Mr. Quelch, putting it mildly. "If you know anything about the matter, you should certainly tell me, as Vernon-Smith has been expelled for the act."

"Only that I did it, sir!"

Quelch nearly fell down.

"You!" he articulated.

"Yes!" said Coker gloomily. "I've got to tell you, as that fag's getting bunked for it! I suppose I shall be bunked! I can't help that! Still, I'd like you to know that I never meant anything of the kind."

"You wrecked this study—"

"I never knew it was your study, sir! I'm not a cat! Owing to that fathead Potter, the flash-lamp was a dud. I was all in the dark! I counted the studies from the wrong end of the passage—as any fellow might have done, and—and—"

Quelch gazed at him.

"Is it possible, Coker, that you—you—you did this—that you—you—you intended this outrage for your own Form-master's study—and—and made a stupid, indeed, incredibly stupid mistake?" Quelch fairly gasped.

"I don't see that it was stupid, sir!" said Coker. "I'm not a cat, as I said. I can't see in the dark! I simply counted the studies from the wrong end, as any fellow might have done! I never knew till break this morning that I'd got your study by mistake. I never knew till ten minutes ago that you fancied it was a kid in your Form. So I came to tell you."

"Upon my word!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "I suppose you know, Coker, that you will be expelled for such an outrage—"

"I suppose so, sir," said Coker, gloomily. "I can't help that! I wish now I hadn't thought of it at all! But I thought it was Prout's study—"

Quelch looked at him. Then suddenly turning from Coker, he threw up the window and called to his head boy in the quad.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" Harry Wharton came to the window.

"Has Vernon-Smith left the school?"

"Yes, sir; a quarter of an hour ago."

"I should be obliged, Wharton, if you would follow him on your bicycle and tell him that he may return. You may tell him that I have now received some new information and am aware that he did not enter my study last night."

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"Lose no time, Wharton, please." The captain of the Remove shot away to the bike shed.

Mr. Quelch turned back to Coker. Coker's look was glum—the glum-mest ever. The prospect of leaving Greyfriars was a gloomy one to Coker. Besides, he could not help

realising what a loss it would be to the school!

"Coker," said Mr. Quelch slowly. "Your stupidity is amazing—it is abysmal—it is almost unnerving! It is redeemed by your uprightness of character—but—but—" Mr. Quelch paused. "I am glad that you have told me this, Coker! You intended an act of disrespect towards your Form-master, and you—you—Bless my soul!"

The Remove master paused again.

"Coker, if you will give me your word to abandon any such idea, any such intention, I will allow this matter to end here!" he said. "As you did not succeed in your absurd design—and if you promise to abandon it—"

"Oh gum!" said Coker. He gasped. "Yes, rather, sir! D-d-d-do you mean that you'll keep it dark?"

"I mean that I shall say nothing, Coker, if you promise me never, never to entertain any such intention again!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"What-ho!" gasped Coker. "I—I mean, yes, sir! Certainly!"

Coker seemed to be walking on air when he left Mr. Quelch's study.

CALLED BACK!

"SMITHY!" Herbert Vernon-Smith glanced round on the Court-field road at the calling voice behind him.

He gave Harry Wharton the blackest of scowls as he came breathlessly up and jumped off his bicycle. "You!" he said. "What do you want?"

"Quelch—"

"Hang Quelch!"

"He sent me after you!" gasped Wharton. "You're to come back—"

The Bounder gave a sneering laugh.

"What does he want? A whopping for cheeking him before I left? So what? Tell him I won't come! Tell him to go and eat coke! Tell him—"

"You hot-headed ass!" said Harry. "He's found out somehow that it was not you who shipped his study, and you're not sacked!"

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder.

He stared blankly at the captain of the Remove.

"You haven't owned up?" he asked.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" snapped Wharton. He turned his machine round and put a leg over it. "That's Quelch's message—do as you like, and be blown to you!"

"Hold on!" said the Bounder. "If Quelch has found out that I never did it, that means that the man must have owned up. Who was it?"

"I don't know! Coker was in his study—I fancy he must have told Quelch something! I can't quite make it all out—everybody knew—I mean, everybody thought you'd done it—but that's Quelch's message."

The Bounder laughed.

"I'll come back!" he said.

And they walked back together. Harry Wharton wheeling his machine.

There was a buzz in the Greyfriars quad when they arrived, and the Removites crowded round the junior they had not expected to see again.

"Gratters, old bean!" said Bob Cherry.

"The gratterfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Smithy!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Tom Redwing slipped his arm through his chum's.

"It's all right, Smithy," he said. "They've found out somehow! Some of the fellows are saying that it was Coker of the Fifth—goodness knows why! Quelch wants you in his study—come on!"

"Dear old Quelch!" said the Bounder. "I shall be quite pleased to see him again—in the circles! Fancy anybody bein' glad to see Quelch!"

There was a faintly sarcastic expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face, when he presented himself in his Form-master's study.

Mr. Quelch met him with his grimmest look.

He had recalled the expelled Removite because he was bound to do so now he knew the actual facts. But his opinion of that member of his Form was not improved in the least.

"It has transpired, Vernon-Smith, that you were not guilty of the out-

rage in my study last night," he said. "I have learned that it was the act of a stupid boy in another Form. It was entirely by your own fault that the blame fell upon you: and I trust that this will be a warning to you."

"I told you, sir——"

"What you told me, Vernon-Smith, is immaterial, as your word is worthless. You may learn from this occurrence that truth has its value!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "I shall acquaint your headmaster with the facts and you may consider your sentence of expulsion cancelled. That is all. You may go!"

And the Bounder went.

(Continued on page 28.)



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.

"PARADE 'shun!" commands the sergeant, when going his rounds with the Orderly Officer.

"Any complaints?"

Readers of the MAGNET are all perfectly satisfied, and this week's mail contains not one letter of complaint.

The Old Paper still goes merrily on, giving satisfaction to countless boys and girls the world over. To-day it is still the supreme school-story paper on the market!

I have some rather interesting letters to reply to this week, so here goes.

Jack Potter, who writes me from Plymouth, is apparently interested in the Navy. He asks me the following question: "How does a sailor know his way in the middle of the ocean?"

For centuries, the sailor who ventured out of sight of land had only the stars to guide him. As long as the stars are to be seen, they help the sailor on his way. From the northern hemisphere of the earth, there can always be seen, when the sky is clear, the North or Polar Star, which indicates the north. Once this is known, all directions are known.

Nowadays, however, the sailor uses the compass. The compass is a piece of iron balanced so that it can move freely, but it must be made of the kind of iron which is sensitive to a magnet. Now, the earth is itself a huge magnet, having a north magnetic pole and a south magnetic pole. What we call the north pole of a magnetic needle always points to the north magnetic pole, and thus the sailor can steer his course with the help of the compass more accurately than if he went by the North Star.

I don't know if my Plymouth chum contemplates joining the Navy when he is old enough, but if he is ambitious in this way I wish him luck. The Navy is, undoubtedly, a great life, as many readers of the MAGNET now in the Service have written and informed me.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,651.

THE second query, this time from Walter Foster, of Ipswich, is: "Who is John Bull?"

Many countries have nicknames and are represented in pictures by an animal. The British lion is the animal which stands for England, and John Bull is its owner and master. The lion is the country; John Bull is the nation. The name of John Bull comes from a work written by John Arbuthnot, a witty Scottish doctor and writer. He was born in 1667 and died in 1735. The sketch he wrote dealt with the political affairs of Europe at the time, and the countries were made to appear as if they were men and women. England was John Bull and Queen Anne was Mrs. Bull. The church was Mr. Bull's mother. Scotland was John Bull's sister, Peg.

England was made to appear a man of very good nature, but not without faults. John was shown to be an honest, plain-dealing man, courageous, and rather hot-tempered. He was very difficult to deal with, especially if anyone tried to master him; but, treated with kindness and a little flattery, he could be easily led.

There was a John Bull in real life, a Doctor of Music, who lived between the years 1562 and 1628. He is regarded as the composer of "God Save the King." Nobody can be quite sure who did write the National Anthem, but there is reason to believe that the melody was found written down among the papers which Bull left.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

It is specially worth noting that those readers who have so far omitted, for one cause or another, to secure a copy of this year's issue of the splendid book so closely linked with the "Gem" and MAGNET, have still a chance to repair the omission. In all its career as a prime cheerer-up, the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" has never

put forward a better programme than this time. The Annual remains the best on the market, and has a real appeal to boys and girls of all ages. It also fascinates those who are getting on in years—who were readers in the very early days of the MAGNET. The "Holiday Annual" can bring sunshine into the dullest hour. One never need feel gloomy with the "Holiday Annual" at hand. Stories of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, and Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's—not to mention many other interesting features—appear in this bumper issue. And this lot is yours for the small sum of five shillings.

"JACK DRAKE AT GREYFRIARS!"

Mention of the "Gem" reminds me that our popular companion paper now contains every week a ripping Greyfriars yarn by Frank Richards. This is in addition to the sparkling new St. Jim's story and the exciting yarn of Frank Richards' schooldays in the backwoods of Canada. I should advise all "Magnetites" to treat themselves to the "Gem" this week, now on sale, price 2d., and read how two newcomers—Jack Drake and Dick Rodney—make their advent at Greyfriars. Believe me, they cause quite a sensation for a couple of new kids!

BY the way, chums, have you all enjoyed this week's yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. Yes! Good! I thought you would. I can guess you are all anxious to hear something about next week's programme now—what?

Well, I've read the story, the title of which is:

"GRUNTER OF GREYHURST!"

and it's one long scream from beginning to end. Laugh—you'll laugh till the tears run down your cheeks. I've never laughed so much in all my life as I did when I read this sparkling fine yarn. You've all laughed over Bunter, but wait until you read about Grunter of Greyhurst! There's fun and excitement in plenty in store for you all next week. As regards the "Greyfriars Herald," written and compiled by the Greyfriars juniors themselves, every article and story deserves full marks.

Order next Saturday's MAGNET to-day, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

(Continued from page 2)

to read, until the matron discovered that the interiors of the books had all been scooped out and filled with tuck. All books are now examined with care. Then the "malingering" game was tried. A fellow would develop a bad cough or a sudden rash (by tapping his face with the bristles of a hair-brush), or else be pale and bilious (by rubbing his face with chalk). He would be sent to the sanny for treatment, taking a rope concealed under his jacket. As soon as Mrs. Kebble went to get a thermometer or some medicine, he would let down the rope from the window. Fishy, waiting outside, would tie a parcel of tuck to it, and the tuck would be hidden under a bed by the time the matron returned.

This stunt was discovered, and now patients are obliged to remove most of their clothes before being treated. The "laundry game" is the latest. Fishy bribes the driver of the laundry van to let him slip a parcel into the hamper of linen which is delivered to the sanny. The hamper is always left in the matron's room, and, after it arrives, Fishy rings up the matron on Quelohy's phone. She goes to the office to take this spoof call, and the patient nips into her room and bags the tuck.

You may well shudder at the fearful crime thus exposed. I know all the facts, because I was in sanny for three days with a chill, and it cost me five bob to get a dozen tarts from Fishy—the worm!

TALKS TO OUR TOTS!

By **UNCLE SKINNER**

Now, children, Uncle Skinner has some won-der-ful news for you this week. What do you think? You'll never guess! Well, then, here it is—you can all put your little shirts on Spinnaker in the 3.30 at Wapshot next Tuesday, because he's an ab-so-lute dead cert. I had it straight from the horse's mouth. He's a booful big gee-gee, and can run like a greased greyhound. Go and tell Uncle Banks about it, kiddies.

And now for some answers to your sweet little letters.

PLAYFUL PON (Highcliffe): No, tots-y-wotsy, you should never put an ace up your sleeve when playing ban-ker. Keep it in the turn-up of your trouserkins in case nasty-minded rough boys examine your coat-sleeve during play.

LITTLE BUNTY (Study No. 7): What a shame, ducky, that naughty Mr. Quelch thinks it was you who raided the pantry! You should look him straight in the eye and tell him frankly, (a) that you didn't do it, (b) that you didn't mean it, and (c) that you won't do it again. Always

tell the truth, my pet, and no one can harm you.

HORRID HORACE (Fifth Form): Fie on you for losing your temper, little lamb. What if a naughty Remove boy did knock your hat off with a turf? You should never be peevish or spiteful. Next time it happens, sit down and cry, until Mr. Prout folds you in his arms and tenderly wipes away your tears. You will feel so much better. Bless-hoo, my child!

Good-bye, kid-dies; and don't forget Spinnaker.

Superb Short Story

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DUNN-BROWNE!

A Sheerluck Homes Drama.

By **PETER TODD.**

The beach at Winklesea was thronged. It was thronged from beginning to end, especially near the bathing pool. People were hiring Corporation costumes (6d. each) and diving from the spring-board with dull thuds into the briny.

On a glistening white upturned boat on the beach sat Sheerluck Homes and his crony, Dr. Spotson. They sat there, because the great detective had been unable to detect an empty chair. The problem baffled him. He brooded darkly over his enormous pipe.

"Spotson," he said tensely, "I am thwarted. We have come here to trace the missing financier, Rupert Dunn-Browne, who has done a bunk—I mean, absconded—with a million pounds tied up in a red handkerchief. And where are we?"

"At Winklesea, Homes, if my deduction is correct."

"Really, Spotson, you excel yourself. I mean, what is our position?"

"We are sitting on this boat, Homes."

"Exactly. We are doing nothing! We are trying to find a red-haired man with a red-haired beard, and we haven't the remotest idea where to look for him. Excuse me, sir"—Sheerluck Homes turned to a red-haired man with a red-haired beard, who had just sat on the boat beside them—"have you seen a red-haired man with a red beard anywhere around?"

The man nodded. He was encased in a Corporation costume and was evidently about to go swimming.

"Do you mean Dunn-Browne, the financier?" he asked.

"I do!"

"Then I happen to know that you're too late. He's fed-up with being chased by the police, and has decided to drown himself."

Sheerluck Homes gave him a keen glance.

"How do you know that?"

"Because I am Rupert Dunn-Browne, Mr. Homes! Good-bye for ever!"

The man thereupon leaped to his feet, sprang to the diving-board, and hurtled down to a watery grave. Homes and Spotson stood on the brink, watching for him to come up. Crowds of people gathered round. The police stood waiting, with handcuffs and ball-and-chain all ready for Dunn-Browne when he came up. But he never came up!

An hour went by. Inspector Cods-eye was getting anxious.

"Surely he can't hold his breath much longer?" he muttered. "Or is it possible that he has really drowned?" He called to the people in the bathing-pool. "Swim around and find that man for me!"

Sheerluck Homes stood brooding darkly, his hawk-like glance flickering over the pool, as the bathers dived vainly for the missing scoundrel.

"He has, by Jingo!" grated the inspector. "Mr. Homes, he has met a sticky end."

The great detective smiled.

"Hardly," he replied. "He is very much alive, I fancy. That was just a clever dodge to put us off the trail. He was wearing a Corporation costume, like most of the other bathers here. How could we tell him from the rest of them?"

The inspector and Spotson gazed blankly.

"But his hair and beard!" gasped the former. "There's no man like Dunn-Browne here."

"But suppose he removed a false red wig and a false

beard while he was under water?" suggested Homes. "He could bob right up in front of us and never be noticed."

"Amazing, Mr. Homes! Then we've lost him for good!"

For answer, Sheerluck Homes strode up to a man who was just climbing out of the water.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "let me introduce you to Rupert Dunn-Browne, who shaved off his hair and beard and put on a false set to play us this trick!"

The scoundrel snarled, but he was seized by a dozen police. He glared at Homes bitterly.

"How did you know I was me?" he demanded.

Homes yawned.

"Elementary, my dear sir! You see, you utterly failed to detect that the boat on which we were sitting had



been newly whitewashed, and your southern portion is gleaming a beautiful white. And by the same token," he added ruefully, "I failed to detect it myself. Come, Spots-on, lead me to a trouser-cleaner. We both have work for him to do!"

And the great defective marched away, followed by gasps of amazement from the populace. Isn't he good, eh?

(Yes, marvellous, Toddy. We'll pay you 4d. for this story, and don't make a beast of yourself on it.—H. W.)

Cecil Reginald Temple is thinking of bringing an action against a tailor who put two buttons instead of three on his summer suit. I could make a pun about a "law suit," but I think I'll let you off. (H.W.)

Coker, of the Fifth, having opened his birthday present from an uncle, wonders whether it is worse to have a beard and no razor, or a razor and no beard. But such is life.

**PENFOLD'S Prose is BAD,
But this is VERSE!**

FATHER GOSLING!

By DICK PENFOLD.

"You are old, Father Gosling," the young man said,

"And your eye is perceptibly duller.

Yet your nose is a flaming and furious red,

What makes it that singular colour?"

"All me life," said the Sage, with a petrified glare,

"I've drunk nothing stronger than cocoa!

If you want for to know, it's the action of air

On the skin, wot 'as tinted my boko!"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your life has been spent

Doing nothing with curious vigour,

And yet you have grown most uncommonly bent,

What causes that curve in the figure?"

"All me life," said the Sage, "I 'ave 'oisted young

rips

To be flogged by the 'Ead, and no error!

In time they 'ave nach'rally weakened me 'ips,

And you'll be the next, you young terror!"

"You are old," said the youth, who was feeling benign,

"As I think I have previously mentioned,

It is hard to do work at a hundred and nine,

Don't you think it is time you were pensioned?"

"All me life," snarled the Sage, "I've reported

young blokes

Who was cheeky and given 'em torture!

And you'll get a whacking to pay for your jokes!

Wot I ses is this 'ere, I'll reporcher!"

BILL LODGEY'S SONG!

(Words by R. L. STEVENSON with slight improvements by BOB CHERRY.)

I have a little shadow

Who goes in and out with me,

And what can be the use of him

Is more than I can see;

I never can get rid of him

Although I try so hard,

That shadow will not leave me

For he comes from Scotland Yard!

A ventriloquist, giving a show at Courtfield Theatre, invited Bunter on to the stage and made him remark: "I am much too fat, and something ought to be done about it." But the ventriloquist had the surprise of his life when he himself seemed to remark: "I'm a rotten ventriloquist, and there's nothing to be done about it" (Loud applause.)

ALONZO TODD writes on PRESERVATION OF THE SPECIES

It has recently been my good fortune to glance through Professor Battie's work on Anthropology, and I came across a picture of the probable appearance of Neolithic man. This creature is presumed to be the missing link between the ape and ourselves, and it bore a striking personal resemblance to Bolsover major. It therefore occurred to me that there is a possibility of a pure and undiluted strain of ape-man being in existence to-day—a fact hitherto unsuspected by scientists.

The question naturally arises as to what extent the habits and customs of the original ape-man have been preserved in his descendant. As far as appearance goes, we may assume that Bolsover is very closely related to the main stock. We then have to examine his habits, which are, in some respects, more like those of a wild animal than a human being. His temper is singularly violent, and he will proceed to acts of physical assault upon the least provocation. This is consistent with what we know of the ape-man's character, and his intellect, which is on a par with that of Bolsover's, is dim and bestial. So far, all our facts are in agreement, but we now come to the crucial question of Bolsover's ancestry, which I require light to examine critically in the light of this new discovery.

The only method of doing this is to interview Bolsover and derive the material facts by questioning him. This I propose to do without delay, and shall continue this article when I have studied the information I obtain.

(Don't worry about Bolsover, Lonzy. Look after yourself.—H. W.)

CONDEMNED WITHOUT EVIDENCE!

(Continued from page 26.)

The dinner-bell was ringing: and the Bounder joined the Removites as they went in. His face was bright: he had never expected to sit on the old oak benches in Hall again.

"Sorry, Wharton!" he said rather awkwardly to the captain of the Remove. "I thought—I never dreamed that it was a man in another Form—and I thought—"

Harry Wharton nodded without speaking. He was glad that the Bounder had not been sacked, after all; but he could not feel cordial to him just then. Plenty of fellows, however, crowded round the Bounder with gratters.

"I say, you fellows, ain't it ripping!" exclaimed Billy Bunter.

Smithy gave the fat Owl a stare.

"Is it?" he asked.

"Yes, rather," said Bunter, his fat face beaming. "Prime! I was jolly glad when I heard, I can tell you!"

"That's frightfully kind of you," said the Bounder, staring. "I didn't expect you to care much whether I was sacked or not!"

"Eh? I don't," said Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? Ain't you sacked after all?"

"You burbling owl, what are you babbling about?"

"Eh? There's steak and kidney pie for dinner!" said Bunter. "I've just heard—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites.

Bunter blinked round in surprise.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you'll find it's right!" said Bunter, and he rolled into Hall in happy anticipation.

Who shipped the study did not remain a mystery.

It leaked out.

Mr. Prout, fortunately, never knew the facts of the matter. Quelch said nothing to Prout; and the master of the Fifth never even dreamed that a fellow in his Form had ever entertained the disrespectful and audacious idea of shipping his study.

Coker was no longer entertaining that audacious idea. There was his promise to Quelch: and, as it had turned out, old Horace was fed up with shipping studies.

But most of Greyfriars knew, and roared over Horace Coker's exploit in the dark. Even the Bounder grinned over it. Probably the only fellow at Greyfriars who was not hilariously entertained by Coker the study-shipper was Horace James Coker.

THE END.

(Watch out for "THE BOUNDER'S DUPE" next Saturday's grand long story of your old pals—Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars. You'll vote it absolutely TIP-TOP!)