

SPLENDID NEW CRICKET STORY **JUST STARTING!**

The
BOYS' HERALD

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ON SALE

EVERY TUESDAY.

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STRINGER—THE DEMON BOWLER!

The above is an amusing incident from our Great New Serial.

EDITORIAL

My dear Chums,—I am glad to say that "Stringer—the Demon Bowler!" our amusing and exciting cricket and sporting serial, has proved a great success. The amazing and popular Stringer will undoubtedly create as big a sensation in the cricket world as he did during the football season. I am sure that everybody will soon be discussing this quaint character, and I want all my readers to tell their chums about this splendid story. Next week there will be another long, entertaining instalment of this serial, and you must not miss it on any account. Go to your newsagent, and tell him to save you a copy of the "BOYS' HERALD" each week, then you will not be disappointed. In our next issue also, that splendid new feature entitled "Hurrah! for the Great Outdoors!" will make its appearance. This will deal with all sorts of open-air pastimes and hobbies, and I am sure it will interest you all. Our weekly article on cricket, written by "The School Pro.," will alone make the BOYS' HERALD a paper that you cannot do without. Our competition is still going strong, and many readers write to say how delighted they are with their splendid prizes. Order next week's BOYS' HERALD at once. Don't forget!

YOUR EDITOR.



ANSWERS TO READERS.



COMPLIMENTS FROM CANADA.

S. Sharp, Ont., Canada, writes: "I have read the BOYS' HERALD since the new series started, and I think it is very good. 'Out For The Cup' is splendid. Stringer is certainly very good. The school stories are tip-top, also the serials."

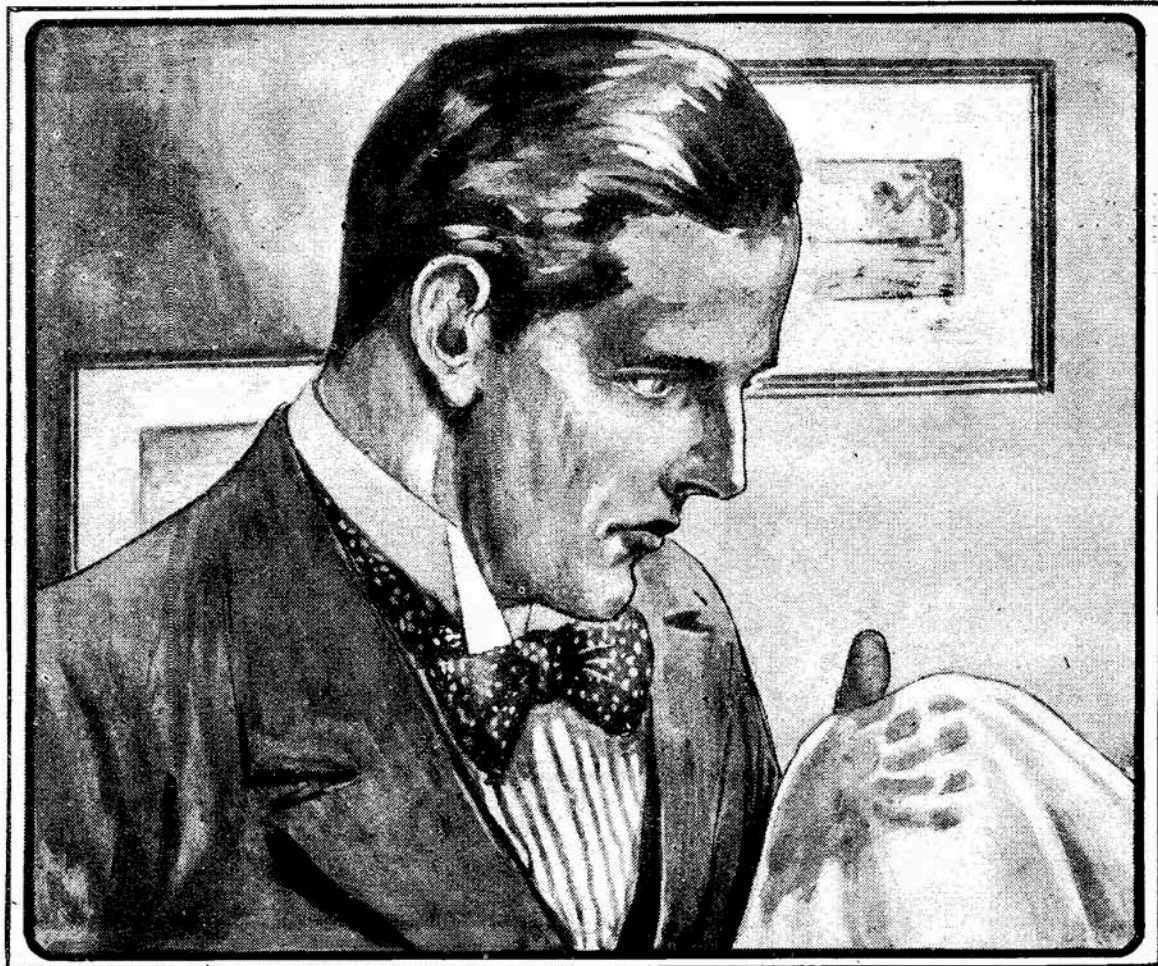
ARRIVED ON BIRTHDAY.

Miss Jessie Mitchell, Campbelltown, Scotland, writes: "I have to thank you most kindly for the splendid HAMPER you have forwarded to me as my prize in the BOYS' HERALD competition. I can assure you it gives me the greatest pleasure at winning this reward in your most interesting and attractive little paper, and that pleasure is increased at the Hamper arriving to-day, which is my birthday. I have received letters from South Africa, France, England, and various parts of Scotland, congratulating me by readers of the BOYS' HERALD, so you will see your little paper has friends and well-wishers at home and abroad."

A SPLENDID NUMBER.

Peter Parley, Birmingham, writes: "I think your current number was stunning, full of plums. I, for one, shall never be tired of reading of Stringer. He is positively great, and when he starts talking there is always something good. I think the Bunter yarn the other week was good, though I am glad Jack Drake did not have things all his own way. I think the porpoise deserved a real postal-order—something better than a mean little sixpenny, payable three miles off! But how Bunter could imagine that his weight would travel on Skinner's bike—with Skinner thrown in—I cannot imagine. I do hope you will continue to run in those unexpected little features. It is good to find surprises in the paper—snappy little bits, and so forth, that make one think."

I can tell this correspondent with the famous name that the programme of the BOYS' HERALD is just full of those features he admires. I think he will like our new cricket serial, "Stringer—the Demon Bowler," and also our great new open-air feature, "Hurrah! for the Great Outdoors!"



FERRERS LOCKE.

The famous private detective. A cousin of Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars. Has often been called in to elucidate a Greyfriars mystery. (Another splendid portrait next week.)

These Magnificent, Long Complete School Tales Can't Be Beaten!



The Bounder's Atonement!

Another Splendid School Story Here Next Week.

The Expected Guest!

THESE blessed shoes—"Let my shoes alone!" Jack Drake, of the Remove, fixed a withering look upon Robert Donald Ogilvy.

"Do you think the mantelpiece is the proper place for tennis shoes?" he asked.

"Well, it's handy," said Ogilvy, with a stare. "What the thump does it matter?"

"It matters a lot!" retorted Drake. "I don't see it. I've seen your boots in the bookcase, before now!" said Ogilvy warmly.

"So have I!" chimed in Russell. "What's the matter with you fellows? What's this new stunt, anyway?"

It was, in point of fact, a decidedly new stunt in No. 3 Study in the Remove passage. Drake and Rodney were setting the study to rights, and making it tidy. Russell and Ogilvy, their study-mates, had dropped in on them during the process, and found the study full of dust and shifted furniture.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and Drake and Rodney seemed bent upon spending it in a very unusual way.

Junior studies were seldom very orderly. Still more seldom did the juniors seem to care whether they were orderly or not. So Ogilvy and Russell, naturally, were surprised.

Jack Drake swept the offending shoes from the mantelpiece.

"Take 'em away!" he said.

"Look here—"

"There's such a thing as being tidy," said Drake. "Such a thing as keeping up appearances. When a chap's pater is coming to pay him a visit, he doesn't want to look as if he lives in a bear-garden."

"Even if he does live in one!" grinned Rodney.

"Oh, I see!" said Ogilvy, picking up the shoes. "If your pater's coming, all right. Why couldn't you say so before?"

"We'll keep out and let you have the study to yourself, if you like," said Russell generously.

"Oh, don't do that," said Drake. "Come in to tea; it will be an extra-special spread on account of the pater. Where's that duster, Rodney?"

"Here you are."

"Good!"

Drake began dusting. The study had been dusty before; but it seemed considerably more so when Drake started in with the duster. Drake was a most promising pupil in Mr. Quelch's class; but certainly he would never have been able to obtain a situation as a housemaid. He had much to learn in the art of tidying a room—especially a room where four rather easy-going

schoolboys lived, and moved, and had their being.

Ogilvy and Russell regarded each other rather doubtfully. The prospect of an extra-special spread appealed to them; but they were dubious.

"What's your pater like, Drake?" asked Ogilvy, after a pause.

"Tip-top!"

"Oh, of course! Does he bore a chap awfully?"

"No, ass!"

"Does he pat you on the head, and say, 'Hallo my little man'?" asked Russell apprehensively.

"Ha, ha! No."

"Does he talk about his schooldays, and how he hit the Head with a snow-ball and was flogged?"

"Ass! No!"

"Well you know what fellows' paters are," said Russell. "No offence, of course; but a chap has to be careful. It's no joke to be landed for an hour with an old gent whose feelings you don't like to hurt, and who persists in boring you with tales of his giddy youth, like merry old Nestor. Ogilvy and I always stand by one another when our people come—it's as fair on one as on the other, you know. But—"

Jack Drake stopped dusting for a moment or two, and sneezed.

"Look here, you duffers!" he said. "You can come in to tea, if you like, or you can go and eat coke!"

"Well, if it's a good spread, we'll come, and chance your pater," said Ogilvy. "If he pats us on the head, or tells us what a young rascal he was when he was in the Fourth, we'll jolly well bump you after he's hooked it!"

"Done!" said Russell.

"Now lend a hand in getting the study tidy," said Dick Rodney.

Ogilvy and Russell backed into the passage.

"You fellows can do that ever so much better than we can," said Russell hurriedly. "We'll leave you to it. Ta-ta!"

And the two juniors departed in haste.

"Slackers!" growled Drake. "Phew! It's rather dusty! Better open the window!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the door. Possibly he had heard that a feast was toward in No. 3 Study.

"Cut off!" said Drake.

"I say—Gerooooogh!" spluttered Bunter, as Drake shook out the duster. Perhaps it was by accident that he shook it out just under Billy Bunter's fat little nose.

"Hallo! What's the matter, Bunter?"

"Yurraggh! Atchoo—schoo! Atchoo!"

The Owl of the Remove beat a hasty

retreat, coughing and spluttering. As he back hurriedly out, he backed into a junior who was coming down the passage. It was Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Smithy gave the Owl a shove, and Bunter staggered against the wall.

"Ow! Bob Cherry, you beast—"

"Look where you're going!" snapped the Bounder.

"Oh, it's you, Smithy!" gasped Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "You rotter—groogh—but I ain't going to speak to you, Smithy—you ought to be in Coventry—yah!"

And Bunter dodged hastily away after delivering that Parthian shot.

The Bounder stood quite still, looking after him.

A gibe from Bunter was, as a rule, a thing not to affect any fellow very much; but Herbert Vernon-Smith seemed to feel that gibe very keenly.

Drake looked quickly out of the study.

"Hallo, Smithy!" he said, quite cordially.

The Bounder gave him a dry, sarcastic smile.

"You don't agree with Bunter, then?" he asked.

"In what?" asked Drake.

"That I ought to be sent to Coventry."

Drake's face clouded.

"I've told you I don't bear any malice for the trick you played on me, after the way you owned up," he said. "I'd rather let bygones be bygones. Let's forget all about it."

"Unluckily, it can't be forgotten," said the Bounder moodily. "Not that it matters much whether I'm sent to Coventry or not, as I'm leaving Greyfriars."

"You're really leaving?" asked Drake.

"I've asked my father to take me away."

"But will he?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Drake, frankly enough. "So far as I'm concerned, I'd be glad if you stayed."

"You're a good chap, Drake," said the Bounder, his hard face softening. Then, with a hasty nod, he walked on down the passage.

Jack Drake turned back into the study, with a very thoughtful look.

"So Smithy's really going?" said Rodney, looking round from the looking-glass he was industriously polishing with an old kid glove.

"It seems so. I'm rather sorry," said Drake. "Perhaps it's the best thing he can do, in the circs. But I think the fellows would look over what he did, in time, if he stayed. That glass will do now, Rodney. We'd better

sweep out the study again, I think. It seems to be worse, somehow, since I dusted it. The pater will be here about four—we want it spick and span by then, and tea ready."

And the two chums laboured away manfully, determined that No. 3 Study should be a model study, impressive in its tidiness and cleanliness, when Mr. Drake arrived. By the time the study was perfectly clean, Drake and Rodney were far from being so; and the next move was to a bathroom. As the two dusty juniors emerged from the study, they came on the Famous Five. Harry Wharton and Co. stared at them and chortled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! I didn't know the sweeps were in to-day!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The sweepfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I hear that your pater's coming to-day, Drake," remarked Wharton. "Are you got up like that to give him a surprise?"

"Rats!" retorted Drake cheerfully. "You fellows going out for a spin?"

"The five were in Norfolks."

"Yes; just going."

"Oh, good!" said Drake heartily.

"Couldn't have happened better."

"Eh?" The captain of the Remove eyed him in surprise. "I don't see what difference it makes to you, Drake."

"There's lots of things you don't see, Wharton," answered Drake affably.

"I'll explain. I've stuffed up my pater that I belong to a respectable Form, and if you fellows are out when he comes, he won't discover that I've been spoofing him!"

And Drake walked on before any member of the Famous Five could think of an adequate reply to that observation.

Smithy's Chance!

HERBERT VERNON - SMITH tramped along the lane with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a deep frown on his brow.

It was a sunny spring afternoon; sunlight glinted on the fresh green of the trees and thickets, and the birds were twittering on all sides. It was hard not to be cheerful on such an afternoon.

But the Bounder of Greyfriars was in one of his blackest moods. He had refused the company even of his chum, Tom Redwing, that afternoon; he wanted to be alone, if only to indulge his black mood to the full.

His thoughts were bitter.

He had to leave Greyfriars—he felt that; but he did not want to leave. Never, till the time came, had he realised how much it would cost him to turn his back on the old school for ever.

But it had to be!

Even the Bounder's nerve was not equal to staying on at Greyfriars, after his confession of wrong-doing before the whole Remove.

He had acted badly. In a moment of bitter malice and resentment, he had plotted to blacken Drake's name in the Form, and he had succeeded. And then repentance had come, as it was bound to come, and he had faced the music, owning up to the truth to the Form. Drake had been cleared; but Herbert Vernon-Smith was plunged into deep disgrace by his own act. And though most of the fellows—including the junior he had wronged—showed a disposition to overlook what he had done, it seemed to the Bounder that he read accusation and scorn in every look. Even harder than that to bear, was the scorn he felt for himself. He had

thrown away his good name, and he felt that he had to go—but it was bitter.

His father had been surprised and concerned by his request to be taken away from Greyfriars; but, indulgent as he always was, the millionaire had consented. In a few days more, Herbert Vernon-Smith was to shake the dust of Greyfriars School from his feet.

If only he had not yielded to that bitter, malicious impulse. But it was useless to think of that now. The die was cast, and his sin had to be suffered for.

There was a whirring of bicycles on the road behind him, and the Bounder stopped and looked round.

Harry Wharton and Co., in a cheery bunch, were coming up the lane.

The Bounder's dark face grew darker as he looked at the cheery five. They were happy and careless enough, as schoolboys should be on a holiday; they had none of the bitter care and regret that ate at the Bounder's heart. The five slowed down as they came along by where he stood.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Tramping this afternoon?" called out Bob Cherry.

Smithy nodded without speaking.

"Run in for your bike, and come for a spin," said Nugent.

The Bounder shook his head.

The cyclists passed on; but Wharton slowed and jumped off his machine. He stopped to speak to the Bounder, though Smithy's look was not inviting.

"Is it really fixed that you're leaving Greyfriars, Smithy?" he asked.

"I'm going on Saturday."

"Does the Head know yet?"

"My father's coming down to-morrow to tell him."

"I wish you weren't going," said the captain of the Remove abruptly.

"After what I've done?" said Vernon-Smith drily.

Wharton looked uncomfortable.

"I can't imagine how you ever came to do it," he said. "It was a rotten thing—we all know that. But you owned up and set it right, and Drake's not keeping up any grudge over it. I—I think it would be forgotten in time, if you stuck it out. All the fellows know how you feel about it, and they're sorry—"

The Bounder winced.

"I don't want anybody's pity, thanks," he said savagely. "I'd rather be sent to Coventry—than that."

"Well, you won't be sent to Coventry," said Harry Wharton. "And I think most of the Remove would back me up in saying that we'd like you to tell your pater you've changed your mind—and stay on."

The Bounder shook his head; and Wharton, after a moment or two, remounted his machine and rode on after his comrades. In a few minutes the bunch of cyclists disappeared from sight in the distance.

The Bounder tramped on moodily.

But there was a whir of bicycles behind him again soon, and he scowled as he caught sight of Temple, Dabney and Co., of the Fourth. The fine spring weather had brought out a good many fellows on their machines that afternoon. The Bounder wanted to be away from Greyfriars faces—every glance he received now was like a stab to him. He turned from the lane and plunged into the wood, following a foot-road, in the far distance.

He tramped on a good half-mile, by the winding path into the depths of the wood. At a corner of the path, where it turned sharply to the left, stood the tottering remains of an old woodman's hut, long disused and gone to wreck.

The Bounder threw himself down to rest, in the thick grass that grew by the old wall, concealed from the path

by a heap of fallen bricks, overgrown with ivy in heavy masses.

Lying in the grass, staring up at the branches overhead, on which the twigs were showing green, the unhappy junior gave himself up to bitter reflection.

He was glad to be alone—glad to be out of sight of his schoolfellows—away from scornful or compassionate looks.

An hour passed, and the Bounder had hardly moved; the gloom on his face remained settled and unchanged. He was to leave Greyfriars—he was to hide his shame far away from all the familiar haunts he had known—that was the black thought that possessed his mind. He could think of nothing else.

The sound of footsteps and voices on the footpath came to his ears, and he was glad that the masses of ivy hid him from sight. He supposed that it was a party of Greyfriars fellows coming through the wood. But as the voices came nearer and clearer, he realised that that was a mistake. And a gleam of interest came into his face, at the first words he distinguished clearly.

"This is the place, Dodgery; he's bound to pass by here."

It was a sharp, staccato voice; not pleasant to listen to.

"Sure of that, Mr. Carson?"

The second voice was rougher and harsher.

"Quite! I've been over the ground and fixed it up. The car breaks down on the Lantham road just where the footpath comes out. There'll be nothing for him to do but to foot it through the wood, if he wants to get to Greyfriars at all."

The Bounder's eyes opened wide.

Two men were speaking, within a few feet of him. The ruined hut sheltered them now; they had stepped into it from the footpath. The broken wall, overhung with masses of ivy, hid them from the Bounder—and hid him from them. Evidently they had not the slightest suspicion that anyone else was in the vicinity.

The Bounder did not move.

The words he had heard could bear only one meaning—that a man was to be waylaid in the wood, and that these two unknown men were there to waylay him. It would probably have been dangerous to the Bounder to show himself, after what he had heard.

But how did the man called Carson know that a car was to break down on the Lantham road near the end of the footpath? The Bounder had a glimmering of a treacherous plot. Someone—someone who was going to Greyfriars—was to be the victim of treachery. The Bounder's mind worked quickly as the two unseen men moved about inside the hut.

So far as he knew, only one visitor was expected at Greyfriars that afternoon—Jack Drake's father. The Bounder had heard that Mr. Drake was coming down to the school in his car. Was it Drake's father who was in peril, then?

A strange expression came over Smithy's face, at the thought.

Drake's father—in danger; and he was on the spot where the danger threatened. Was it a chance of atonement for the wrong he had done?

For several minutes the two unseen men moved about inside the ruined hut, and the Bounder knew they peered out through gaps in the broken walls. But they did not see the junior lying in the grass close under a wall, overhung by masses of ivy. He had not made a sound or a movement, and they did not dream of suspecting his presence. Evidently satisfied with their inspection, the pair ceased rumaging about the hut, and the thin, staccato voice spoke again.

"All serene, I reckon."
 "Right as rain, Mister Carson," said the rough voice. "'Ow long 'ave we got to wait?"

"Probably half an hour, or perhaps longer. The car will be on the Lantham road before three—"

"It's past three now."
 "Quite so; probably the breakdown has already occurred. Kedge will see that it happens in the right place. He will tell Mr. Drake that it will take hours to get the car going again; and tell him that there is a short cut through this wood to Greyfriars. It's practically certain that Drake will decide to walk, as his son is expecting him at the school. Otherwise he will have to walk a longer distance to a station to take a train."

"I reckon it will work."
 "It can't fail."
 "Unless Kedge—"

"Kedge will do what he is paid to do," said the staccato voice. "I've squared him safe enough."
 "Does he know—"

"Nothing; excepting that the car is to break down, and Mr. Drake is to walk through the wood. He knows nothing about the Nigerian diamonds. The fewer that know, the better."

Dodgey chuckled hoarsely.
 A faint smile crossed the face of the hidden junior.

So it was Drake's father—and his chauffeur had been "squared" to place him in the hands of these two ruffians. The Bouncer drew a deep breath. But he did not move.

"Probably he will be here in less than half an hour," continued Carson. "In fact, if he steps out, he may be here in half the time. Keep watch on the path, Dodgey, and don't show yourself."

"You bet!"
 "Mind, he is not to be hurt, if it can be helped. You collar him, and I will get the chloroform pad over his mouth. He will go quietly to sleep. When he wakes up"—there was a chuckle—"he will be in strange quarters. I've got it all cut and dried."

"And the car—"

"The car will drive round to Greyfriars to call for him. Kedge will be surprised to learn that he has not been at the school at all."

Another chuckle.
 "There'll be a search, Mr. Carson—"

"I've provided for that."

The Bouncer, without moving, looked round him for a weapon. His hand closed on a broken brick. Soon—in a few minutes perhaps—Jack Drake's father would be there; to be seized and kidnapped by the two men in the hut, if he was not saved. Could the Bouncer save him? He could help, at least. The object of the outrage he could not even guess. From the muttered talk that ran on, in the hut, he gathered little; there was mention of Nigeria, of the Tin Fields, and of a diamond discovery; but it was strange talk to the schoolboy. He knew that Drake's father was the proprietor of extensive tin lands in Nigeria; but that was the only connection he could see. He heard the word "Limoro" several times, and he had a hazy recollection of having heard Drake speak of tin fields at Limoro, in Nigeria. The mutterings died away at last. There was a sound of footsteps on the path through the thick wood. Then came a whisper:

"It's our man! Ready?"

Quietly, steadily, the Bouncer rose to his feet; the broken brick grasped in his hand. If he could not save Drake's father, he would help him, at least. He had wronged the son, but he would

help the father, and the account would be square.

Struck Down!

"QUIET!"
 The word was scarcely breathed in the silence.

Vernon-Smith, on his feet now, looked in through a gap in the old wall. He could see the two men, now; one of them a slim, well-dressed man; the other a burly fellow in rough clothes, with a coloured muffler knotted round his neck. Their faces he could not see, as they had their backs to him—they were crouching in the doorway of the hut, watching the path that ran by it, listening to the approaching footsteps.

Through another opening in the opposite wall across the hut, Vernon-Smith caught a glimpse of the further path, and of the man who was coming along it.

He saw a rather tall gentleman in an overcoat, with a handsome face very like Jack Drake's. It was Mr. Drake, and he was coming along at an active pace, evidently utterly unsuspecting of the trap laid for him. In a minute more he would be opposite the hut where the footpath turned, and the two rascals would be springing upon him.

Herbert Vernon-Smith set his teeth. He knew the danger he was about to run—he saw the heavy cudgel grasped in Dodgey's hand. He knew that he was dealing with desperate men. But he did not hesitate.

He ran round the hut to the path, taking no heed now to conceal his presence.

He came out into the footpath, directly in front of Mr. Drake, now only a couple of yards from the doorway.

There was a stifled exclamation from the hut.
 "Stop!" shouted the Bouncer.
 "Danger! Look out!"

He had no time for more. From the ruined hut two figures came springing, with savage faces, dark with rage.

The sudden appearance of the school-

boy had startled and surprised the two rascals; but they did not hesitate. They could no longer hope to take their victim wholly by surprise; but at any risk, Carson and his confederate intended to carry through their plan.

Mr. Drake had halted, in sheer astonishment.
 "What—" he began.

The rash of the kidnappers cut him short.
 Carson ran at the tall gentleman, and Dodgey at the Bouncer, with his cudgel uplifted.

"Good heavens!" panted Mr. Drake. He had no weapon, not even a walking-stick; but as Carson leaped at him he faced him courageously and closed with him. He was an older man, but he put up a fierce struggle as the kidnapper grasped him, and they fell on to the footpath together.

Dodgey was springing on the Bouncer, and he slashed with the cudgel as he sprang. Vernon-Smith did not lose his coolness. He leaped back quickly, and the cudgel swept down through the empty air. The next moment, the Bouncer had hurled the broken brick, and it crashed into the ruffian's face.

There was a fearful yell from Dodgey, as the missile struck him, and the blood streamed down his face from the blow. He stopped for a moment, curses streaming from his lips.

"Quick!" yelled Carson. "Quick with the boy, Dodgey, and help me!"

"You scoundrel!" panted Mr. Drake. Older as he was, the mine-owner was giving a very good account of himself, and it was clear that his assailant would not be able to overcome him unaided.

All that Carson could do was to keep him fully occupied, till the other ruffian could come to his help.

Cursing savagely, Dodgey closed in again with the Bouncer, and struck at him again with the cudgel. Vernon-Smith eluded the blow, and rushed in to close quarters, and hooking his leg in the ruffian's, brought him with a crash to the ground.

The cudgel dropped into the footpath, and Vernon-Smith made a clutch at it.



Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry carried, between them, a strangely still form. A glimmer of light fell upon an ashen face. "Good heavens!" gasped Drake, coming upon the scene. "What's happened?" "It's Smithy," said Wharton, in a low voice. "We—we found him in the wood, he's been hurt—badly hurt."

But Dodgey's grasp was upon him, and he was dragged over, and for some moments they rolled on the footpath, fighting like wildcats. Twice, thrice, the Bounder's fists crashed into the brutal face. But the strength of the ruffian told. The Bounder was under him, at last, still resisting fiercely, but at the mercy of the footpad. And then the ruffian reached out and grasped the cudgel again, with a savage snarl.

The Bounder made a desperate effort. So fierce was his struggle, that the ruffian reeled aside, and the junior gained his knees—almost his feet. But the cudgel was in the ruffian's hand now; it swept through the air, and crashed on the Bounder's head.

A low cry escaped Vernon-Smith, and darkness rushed on his vision and he sank helplessly to the ground.

Dodgey, panting, staggered up, gripping the cudgel, ready to strike a second time. But it was not needed. Vernon-Smith, stunned by the crashing blow, lay senseless in the grass. His face, white and still, was upturned, and a crimson stream ran down from under his hair.

"I reckon that puts you to sleep, my bantam!" muttered the ruffian, with a savage oath.

"Dodgey! Quick!" yelled Carson. Mr. Drake was uppermost now; his hat was gone, his collar torn out, his face flushed crimson. He was getting the better of the struggle, and the younger man was crumpling in his grasp.

A few minutes more, and he would have been victorious. But it was not to be. Dodgey came panting up. He dropped the cudgel, and seized Mr. Drake by the shoulders and dragged him over.

The unfortunate gentleman struggled with his new assailant, while, for a few moments, Carson lay panting. But he was quickly on his feet, and groping in his pocket for the chloroform pad.

"Hold him, Dodgey!"

"I've got him, guv'nor! Dab it on him!"

"Scoundrels!" panted Mr. Drake. "You—Oh!"

The chloroform pad was jammed over mouth and nose, and the ruffian pinned him, helpless, while Carson held it there.

His struggles ceased. He lay insensible in the footpath, and the two rascals rose panting to their feet.

"A close thing!" muttered Carson.

"The boy might have ruined every-

thing! Who is it—his son, I wonder?"

He stepped towards the Bounder, and stared down at him.

"It's not his son—some fool, who could not mind his own business. Let him suffer for his folly. Let's get clear of this."

Leaving the Greyfriars junior where he lay, the two rascals picked up the insensible man and bore him away into the wood. There was silence on the footpath again. The rustle of the bushes had died away; and the Bounder, stretched senseless in the path, did not move. The afternoon sun glowed golden through the branches overhead, and gleamed on the white face, and the closed eyes. The sunlight grew dimmer; the shadows lengthened in the wood, and still the Bounder of Greyfriars did not move.

He stirred at last.

His eyes opened, staring round him wildly—he moved, and sank back again with a groan of anguish. There was blood in a little pool beside him. For some minutes he lay, too racked with pain to move. But he struggled to his knees at last, groaning.

"Help!"

He uttered the word; but it was only a husky whisper. He sank back again in the grass, his senses swimming. He could not even crawl away—he could not even think clearly. Sounds came to his ears, at last—a whir of cycle wheels, the ring of a bell; a voice—

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's somebody in the path!"

"Hold on, you fellows!"

Like a fellow in a dream, the Bounder knew the voices—knew that there were Greyfriars fellows round him. Five juniors jumped from their machines, with exclamations of horror. Harry Wharton and Co., after a long spin, were taking a short cut home through the wood, when they came on their schoolfellow.

"It's Smithy!"

"Good heavens!"

"Smithy, old chap—"

The Bounder gave them a ghastly look; but he could not speak. His eyes closed again. He was conscious of being raised from the ground—of being carried—and then came insensibility again.

Black News!

"H E'S late!"

"Jolly late!"

Jack Drake and Rodney were loafing about the gateway of Greyfriars—waiting.

No. 3 Study was spick and span; the spread was ready; all was prepared for the honoured guest. But the guest had not arrived.

At three-thirty, or four, at the latest, Mr. Drake should have arrived. At half-past four he had not appeared, and the two juniors went down to the school gates to wait for him there.

It was now past five; but there was no sign of Mr. Drake's car on the road. Drake was puzzled, and a little alarmed.

"He must be coming!" he said. "It was arranged a week ago, and he'd have told me if he'd changed his mind. If there was a breakdown on the road, he could have sent a telegram—or 'phoned. I—I wonder if there's been a smash?"

His face grew troubled at the thought.

"Petrol run out, or a tyre burst," said Rodney comfortingly. "He'll turn up all right, Drake."

"I wish he'd come."

The dusk was falling; cars that passed on the road were lighted up now. Drake eagerly watched each gleaming pair of lights that flashed up through the dusk. A car slowed down at the

school gates, at last, and the Removite uttered an exclamation of relief.

"Thank goodness, it's the pater's car."

The car stopped, and Drake ran out to it.

"Father!"

"Mr. Drake ready, sir?" asked the chauffeur, peering at Drake in the dusk.

The junior started.

"Why, he's not in the car!"

What—

"I've called for him, sir."

"Called for him?" repeated Drake dazedly. "What do you mean? My father's not here—I'm waiting for him—"

"What's happened?" exclaimed Rodney breathlessly.

"Mr. Drake must have lost his way, I suppose, sir," said the chauffeur.

"We had a breakdown on the Lantham road, and the governor said he'd walk through the wood here, and I was to call for him as soon as I could bring the car round."

"He hasn't arrived!"

"That was at three o'clock, sir. It's six now!"

"There was no accident—he was well when he left you?"

"Certainly, sir—well and hearty," answered Kedge. "Jest started to walk through the wood by the footpath, while I was doing repairs."

Drake drew a deep breath of relief.

"It's all right then," he said. "It's all right, Rodney. The poor old pater has missed the path in the wood; people have been lost in that wood before, I believe. We'll get leave from Mr. Quelch, and go and look for him."

"Yes, rather," said Rodney.

"You'd better run the car into the garage here, and wait, Kedge," added Drake.

"Yes, sir."

The car turned in at the gateway, as a bunch of bicycle lights came in sight on the dusky road.

"Some of the fellows coming in," said Rodney. "They may have seen something of your pater."

"I'll ask them."

Drake ran towards the returning juniors.

"You fellows—" he began.

Then he stopped.

Nugent and Harree Singh and Johnny Bull were wheeling five bicycles. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry carried, between them, a strangely still form.

A glimmer of light fell upon an ashen face.

"Good heavens! What's happened?"

"It's Smithy!" said Wharton, in a low voice. "We—we found him in the wood, he's been hurt—badly hurt—"

"Is that Drake?" It was the Bounder's voice, weak and faint.

"Yes, old chap," said Drake.

"I tried to help him," breathed the Bounder. "Drake, listen to me—your father—"

"My father—what about him?" he panted.

"They set on him in the wood—I tried to help him—they stunned me," said the Bounder feebly. "I—I did my best, Drake. Oh, my head! I—I've tried to make up for what I did to you—I've tried—I did my best—"

The Bounder's voice trailed off into a faint moan.

Drake bent eagerly over him, to hear more; but no words came; Vernon-Smith had fainted. The juniors carried him on, in at the gates of Greyfriars; and Drake stood alone in the road, his heart throbbing, his brain in a whirl. His father; what had happened to his father?

THE END.

There will be another grand story of the chums of Greyfriars next week.

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