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Do You Know That?

The senior referee in first-class football is Mr. T. G. Bryan, who comes from Willenhall, and it is suggested that he may be given this year's Final. Asked if he was likely to take the job if offered to him, our office-boy said: "He Willenhall."

Keeping, the clever full-back of Southampton, has a passion for flying. What he doesn't know about aeroplanes is scarcely worth knowing, and the same may be said of his knowledge of the ways of flying wing men.

James McGrory, who has this season broken all scoring records in Scottish League football, had a trial with Bury when he was eighteen years of age, but was allowed to go back home to Glasgow, when the Celtic signed him on.

The clubs which have figured in most Semi-final ties are Blackburn Rovers (12), Aston Villa (11), and West Bromwich Albion (10). But none of these three got to this stage this season.

Bury have never gone through more than two rounds in the Cup since they won the trophy twenty-four years ago. But when they did get to the Final they made no mistake about it, winning by six to nothing—a record Final tie score.

The four Cup Finals which have been played at Wembley have produced over eighty thousand pounds in "gate" money.

This season the leading goal-scorers among extreme wing men in the First Division are all outside-lefts, but the chief winger marksmen in the Second Division are all outside-rights. Funny, isn't it?

It is said that the whole of the players on the staff of the Stockport County club are total abstainers.

The recent transfer of a Liverpool player to Everton is a reminder that very seldom do two clubs in the same city indulge in deals of this kind. Indeed, between Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday there is an unwritten rule that the players of one club should not be sought after by the officials of the other club.

O'Callaghan, the rapidly improving forward of Tottenham Hotspur, has at least one claim to distinction. He is the only player in first-class football with the romantic Christian name of Eugene.

Cardiff City, like many other clubs, have a black cat mascot. It was picked up by Farquharson, the goalkeeper, some little time ago when he was playing golf. It is taken to away matches to "work the oracle."

Smith is a common name in football, as everywhere else, and there are over forty players with that surname who have appeared in the first teams of big League clubs during the present season. Truly it is a case of the "Smith" a mighty man was he.

Billy Gillespie, the Sheffield United forward, says that it is easier to play against a wind than with it. When the wind is at his back he says he feels like he does when he is chasing his hat in the street: the breeze keeps taking the hat out of his reach.

THE OUTSIDER! Despised by his Form fellows, estranged from a chum who once meant all the world to him, and at loggerheads with his father, Vernon-Smith realises with a great bitterness at his heart to what lengths his unreasoning hatred of Paul Dallas has led him!

Paying the Price!



A Powerful and Dramatic Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rough!

"IT'S rough!"

Bob Cherry made the remark. The Famous Five, of the Greyfriars Remove, were sitting in a cheery row in the big window on the landing, when Paul Dallas, the new fellow in the Remove, came up.

The chums of the Lower Fourth were discussing a matter of great interest to themselves—the Easter holidays. It was the general topic just then at Greyfriars. Most of the fellows had made, or were making, plans for the 'hols.'

Paul Dallas gave them a cheery nod in passing, and went on into the Remove passage, and disappeared into Study No. 1, which he shared with Wharton and Nugent.

The glances of the five juniors followed him till the door of Study No. 1 closed on him. Then Bob remarked that it was rough.

"Where is the roughfulness, my esteemed Bob?" inquired Hucree Janset Ram Singh.

"I was thinking of that chap Dallas," said Bob. "He doesn't let on—but I fancy he's rather rottenly fixed for the hols."

Harry Wharton nodded.

He had been thinking of that, too. Since Paul Dallas had changed from Vernon-Smith's study into No. 1, he had been very friendly with the Famous Five. He pulled remarkably well with Wharton and Nugent in their study. But they were not precisely chums.

"It isn't all lavender being the giddy adopted son of a millionaire," went on Bob, "not when the old gent's son takes it so badly as Vernon-Smith has done. I suppose Dallas will go home with Smithy for the holidays."

"He can't very well do anything else," said Frank Nugent.

"Cat-and-dog holidays," said Bob. "Smithy's been rotten enough to him here, and he won't be nicer at home, I suppose. It's rough."

"The cat-and-dogfulness will be terrible," remarked Hucree Janset Ram Singh.

"Smithy's fault," grunted Johnny Bull. "Why couldn't he make friends with the chap, as his pater wanted him to do? The fellow's decent enough. Everybody likes him except Smithy."

"I fancy that makes Smithy like him rather less," grinned Bob. "He will give Dallas a high old time at the family mansion of the Vernon-Smiths. He will have the upper hand there."

"He's a decent sort of chap," said Wharton thoughtfully. "It's not too late to ask a fellow for the hols. You fellows are coming home with me—you wouldn't mind one more, what?"

"Good egg!" said Bob. "Only—"

"Only what?"

"Dallas doesn't swank like Smithy, but he's jolly proud," said Bob. "If he thought you were asking him out of kindness—"

"That's the rub," confessed Wharton. "We're friendly enough, but not really so pally that a fellow would ask him home. Still, I'll put it as tactfully as I can. He's a decent chap, and we shall get on all right. My uncle will be pleased enough to have him. As for Smithy—"

"What about Smithy?" asked an unpleasant voice, as Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, came up the Remove staircase.

Wharton broke off.

"Nothing," he answered curtly.

Since the occasion when the Bounder in his bitter resentment of Paul Dallas being played in the Remove eleven, had let down the team in the Rookwood match, he had had little to say to the Famous Five—they having made it plain that they desired to have as little as possible to say to him.

"You were talking about me," said Smithy, sneering. "Can't you say

what you've got to say in my presence instead of behind my back?"

Harry Wharton flushed.

"I'll say what I was going to say, if you want to hear it, Vernon-Smith," he answered quietly. "I was going to say that if you treat Dallas as rottenly in the hols as you've treated him at Greyfriars, he will have a rotten Easter holiday at your father's house."

"Is that all?" sneered the Bounder.

"That's all."

"Well, you're right," said Vernon-Smith. "If Dallas shoves himself into my home for the holidays, I'll make it hot for him. He got round my father to take him from his charity school and send him to Greyfriars—"

"Oh, rot!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "We've heard all that before, and it's not true. Dallas is a more decent fellow than you will ever be. He helped us beat Rookwood after you'd let us down, anyway."

"If you're so jolly fond of him, why not take him home for the hols?" sneered the Bounder. "Not so fond of him as all that, what? As a matter of fact, he's not coming home with me."

"All the better for him, then," said Nugent.

"He's staying at Greyfriars for the Easter holidays," said Vernon-Smith. "I've stood the fellow here because I can't help it; the Head let him into Greyfriars. But I'm not going to stand him at home, and I've told my father so plainly. Unless some fellow takes pity on him, and asks him home, he will be landed at the school while we're all away—and even that's too good for the cat."

And with that, the Bounder swung on up the Remove passage, and went into Study No. 4 and slammed the door.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another uncomfortably.

It was difficult for their cheery, healthy minds to understand the bitter hatred of the Bounder for the fellow whom his father had adopted. Certainly they did not sympathise with him.

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in the very least. To all the Remove, excepting the bitterly prejudiced Bounder, Paul seemed a decent, inoffensive fellow, quite easy to get on with.

"That does it," said Harry, slipping from the window seat. "It's too rotten for the kid to be left at school, with nobody to speak to but Mrs. Kebbale and Gosling, the porter. I'll jolly well ask him now!"

"Good man!" said Bob.

And Harry Wharton went along to Study No. 1. Billy Bunter came puffing and panting up the staircase. He stopped and blinked at the four juniors in the window seat, through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows! Where's Wharton?"

"I wonder!" said Bob Cherry gravely. "I thought he was with you chaps," said Bunter crossly. "I've got to see Wharton—it's rather important. He hasn't said plainly yet whether he wants me for the Easter holidays."

"I think I've heard him say plainly that he doesn't!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The plainfulness was terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"The fact is I've got to get it fixed up definitely," said Bunter. "Lord Mauleverer wants me to go home with him; but it's a bit slow at Mauleverer Towers, you know. I've had a rather urgent letter from my old pal D'Arcy, at St. Jim's. He wants me."

"No accounting for tastes," remarked Johnny Bull.

"I must let him know, one way or the other," said Bunter. "If you fellows don't believe me—"

"Hem!"

"I'll show you D'Arcy's letter, if you like," said Bunter, with dignity. "Full of friendship; fairly begging me to come. He's willing for me to bring some friends with me, too. I'd take some of you chaps, only—only—"

"Only—" grinned Bob.

"Only a fellow must be rather particular whom he takes to a place like D'Arcy's, you see," explained Bunter, shaking his head.

"Why, you cheeky fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm not sure I shall go to D'Arcy's place. I don't want to turn Wharton down, if he's relying on me."

"Take my word for it, he isn't," said Bob.

"D'Arcy's very pressing; I'll read out what he says," said Bunter, taking a letter from his pocket and blinking at it.

"You've really had a letter, then?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"Didn't I say so, you ass?"

"Yes; that made me think you hadn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Listen to this!" said Bunter; and he proceeded to read aloud: "I shall be frightfully disappointed if you don't come, Billy. Don't let me down, old chap. I know that you're overwhelmed with invitations, of course, as usual. But do try to put in a few days at least at Eastwood House. That's rather flattering, isn't it?" said Bunter, with a fat smirk.

"Awfully!" agreed Bob. "Does D'Arcy of St. Jim's write in your father's list, Bunty?"

"Eh? No, of course not!"

"Well, the writing I can see on this side of the page you're holding up is your father's."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

Evidently it was some old letter from Mr. Bunter, from which the Owl of the Remove was pretending to read out that flattering message from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's.

Bunter shoved the letter hastily into his pocket.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Wharton?" demanded Bunter crossly. "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Where is he?"

"Oh, where, and oh, where can he be?" sang Bob Cherry.

"In the study?" asked Bunter.

And he was about to roll on to Study No. 1 when Bob Cherry slipped from the window-seat and took hold of his collar. William George Bunter was not to be allowed to butt into Study No. 1 just then.

"Downstairs, old bean," said Bob.

"Is Wharton downstairs?"

"No; that's why you're going down."

"Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter.

Bob Cherry helped the Owl of the Remove to the stairs. Then he drew back his boot.

"Bet you fellows I'll land Bunter on the lower landing with one kick," he said. "Stand steady, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter did not stand steady; he did not stand at all. He went down the stairs two at a time.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

PAUL DALLAS was standing by the study window in No. 1 when Harry Wharton came in.

There was a cloud on the brow of the new junior in the Remove.

Paul was naturally a cheerful fellow, and the change in his life, since Mr. Vernon-Smith had taken him away from the charity school and sent him to Greyfriars, was enough to make any fellow happy and contented.

But for the hostility of Mr. Vernon-Smith's son, Paul would have been more than happy at his new school.

He liked Greyfriars; he had made friends with the best fellows in the Remove. He had distinguished himself in the football, and he was generally liked in his Form.

Only the Bounder's bitter and irreconcilable enmity cast a cloud on his life, and that only occasionally, for he carefully avoided Vernon-Smith, keeping out of the Bounder's way as much as he possibly could. Since the day when he had defeated Smithy in the fight in the paddock, the Bounder's hostility had been more subdued, but probably all the more bitter for that. It was an added offence, in Vernon-Smith's eyes, that the new fellow had nothing to fear from him personally, and had proved it in the plainest possible manner.

Smithy's enmity had, in point of fact, injured himself more than the fellow he disliked.

But now that the holidays were at hand, Paul's position was exceedingly uncomfortable.

To go home with Smithy for the holidays was more than unpleasant. Smithy regarded him as an interloper or a schemer—or affected so to regard him. At Greyfriars he could avoid, more or less, the fellow who treated him as a rival and an enemy. In Mr. Vernon-Smith's house matters would be different. And it was not only the discomfort that Paul was thinking of—worse than that, much more painful

than that—was the feeling of having come between father and son.

It was true that the trouble was all due to Smithy's jealous, suspicious temper. Nevertheless, there the fact was—that Paul was the bone of contention. Smithy's treatment of his brother by adoption had deeply angered Mr. Vernon-Smith, as was not surprising, and never, before Paul had entered his house, had the millionaire been anything but thoughtlessly indulgent to his son. Indeed, it was Mr. Vernon-Smith's unthinking indulgence that had helped to make the Bounder so arrogant and self-willed.

Paul could not hope that Smithy would subdue or conceal his enmity, even in his father's presence. That meant angry scenes, for Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was quite as obstinate and arrogant as his son. It was a dismal prospect for Paul, and, much as he liked Greyfriars, grateful as he was for the millionaire's kindness to the orphan son of an old friend, he sometimes wished that Mr. Vernon-Smith had left him where he had found him.

But as Harry Wharton entered the study, Paul turned from the window with a smile on his face.

His heart was heavy, but he had no desire whatever to be compassionated. He was not a fellow to wear his heart upon his sleeve.

"Nearly tea-time," he remarked cheerfully.

Wharton nodded.

"I've been going to speak to you, Dallas. About the holidays."

Paul's lips set a little.

"Yes," he said.

"I'm taking a party of the fellows home with me," said the captain of the Remove; "I'd be glad if you'd come, too, if you're not fixed up otherwise already. Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh, and Bob—all fellows you like, I think."

"Yes," said Paul.

"You'll join up, old scout?" asked Wharton.

"You're very good," said Paul, in a low voice. Wharton had put it very decently, but Paul was no fool. "Thanks very much, Wharton. I'd like to come, but my holidays are arranged."

"Oh," said Harry. He remembered what Vernon-Smith had said. But he could quite understand that even if a fellow was booked to stay at school over the vacation, he would, for pride's sake, turn down an invitation that was prompted only by kindness. "Look here, Dallas, I'd be really glad if you'd come. We'd all like it."

Paul smiled faintly.

"Thanks, all the same, but it's settled," he said. "The fact is, Mr. Vernon-Smith—my father by adoption, you know—is coming down to fetch me and—his son a few days before the end of the term. He's planned some holiday abroad, I gather."

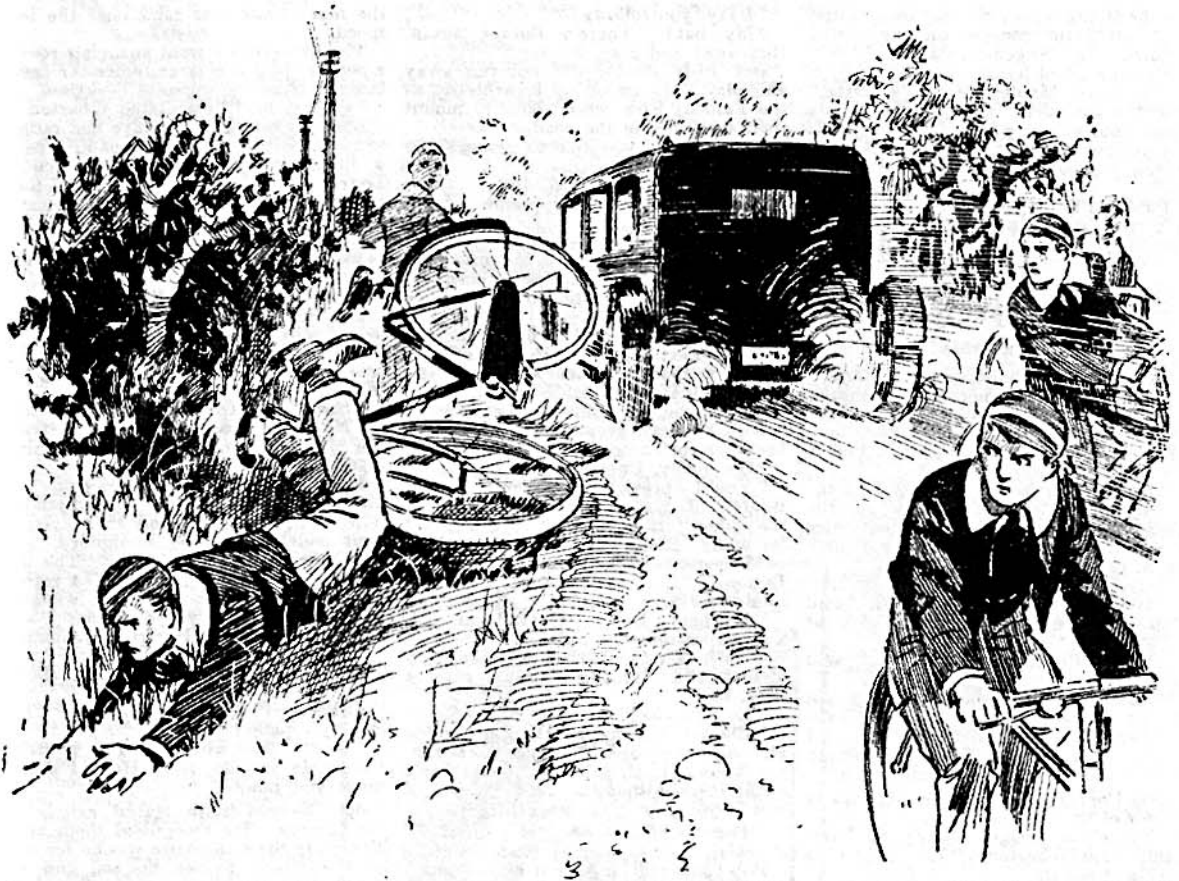
"Oh!" said Harry again.

Paul coloured.

"It won't be pleasant at Mr. Vernon-Smith's house, with Smithy hating me as he does," he said. "You know that, of course. But we shall be at home only a few days, I think, and then go over to France on a holiday tour."

"That's jolly decent of Smithy's pater—I mean, your adopted father," said Wharton. "Well, if you're fixed up you can't come home with me, old chap. But if anything happened I'd like you to come."

"Thank you!" said Paul. "I—I've been wondering—whether it would be any good—" He hesitated and coloured. "I suppose it would be no



The Famous Five went swinging round a corner, just as a large motor-car came buzzing from the opposite direction. "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton. Four of the five rode clear; but Bob Cherry's machine skidded in the mud beside the road and pitched over on the grassy bank, landing Bob with a bump in the grass. "Oh!" roared Bob. (See Chapter 3.)

good speaking to Smithy, and—suggesting a—sort of truce over the Easter vacation. He might agree, for his father's sake. I suppose he must be fond of his father, more or less."

"Smithy is very fond of his father," said Wharton. "I don't believe he cares a rap for anybody else. But he thinks whole worlds of his pater."

Paul's eyes opened. "Yet he's giving him all this trouble—for nothing," he said.

"Yes; but I'm afraid it's because he's so attached to his pater that he hates the idea of Mr. Vernon-Smith taking anybody else up. I don't think it's the money he worries about. They've got lots of that, and Smithy isn't really mean. But he's jealous of his father's affection, I think—jealous, and suspicious, too. He looks on you as a rival. Of course, it's all rot—utter rot—but he's got a feeling of being turned down."

"I understand. But if he feels like that he ought to be willing to keep the peace at home, rather than give his father trouble."

Harry Wharton smiled. "I don't know whether Smithy will look at it like that. But it could do no harm to make the suggestion. Smithy's just gone to his study."

"I think I'll do so," said Paul. "Mr. Vernon-Smith is coming down on Wednesday, and it's rather rotten if he sees us on fighting terms. I shouldn't like him to think that I was to blame; and at the same time I don't want to be the cause of his getting angry with his son.

It's a beastly position for a fellow. I almost wish—"

Paul broke off.

"Well, it's no good wishing," he said. "I'll speak to Vernon-Smith, anyhow. Can't do any harm, if it doesn't do any good."

He left the study.

It was with not much hope in his breast that Paul Dallas tapped at the door of No. 4 and entered. But he felt that it was up to him to make the attempt, at least.

Tom Redwing was in No. 4 with Vernon-Smith. He gave the new junior a nod. Vernon-Smith fixed a stare of dislike upon him.

"Did you ask that fellow here, Redwing?" demanded the Boulder.

"No," said Tom, in a low voice.

"What the deuce do you want, Dallas? You don't imagine that you're welcome in my study, I suppose?"

"No," said Paul. "I want to speak to you—only a few words, Smithy. It's about your father coming down on Wednesday."

"Oh, he's written to you, has he?" said the Boulder, disagreeably.

"Only a few lines, to tell me he was coming," said Paul. "He's taking us both home before the end of the term."

"He's taking me home," said Vernon-Smith bitterly. "My home isn't your home, that I know of."

"It will distress your father a good deal if he finds us on rotten terms," said Paul quietly. "We can't be friends, Vernon-Smith. But can't we agree to stop this cat-and-dog business, while your father is here and while we

are at his house in the holidays? Can't we agree to keep civil to one another, just for Easter?"

The Boulder's lip curled.

"I can't agree to keep civil to an interfering cad who is looting my father," he answered.

Paul crimsoned.

"That will do," he said. "I knew it was no use, but I thought I ought to speak."

He stepped back to the door.

"Hold on a minute!" said the Boulder sardonically. "You needn't worry about what's goin' to happen at home in the hols. You're not going to my father's house."

Paul started.

"But Mr. Vernon-Smith said in his letter—"

"Never mind what he said. I've told my father that if you are in the house I will not come home for the holidays," said Vernon-Smith. "You seem to have twisted him pretty well round your finger, but I hardly think he will turn his own son out of house and home to let an interloper in. Anyhow, if you go I sha'n't go. I think when it comes to that my father will remember that I am his son. You will be left at the school over the Easter vac. Good enough for you, I suppose?"

"If Mr. Vernon-Smith agrees I would greatly prefer to remain at the school over the holidays—much rather than come home with you!"

"Gammon!" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "But you won't have any choice in the matter. You're booked for us

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Easter at the school on your own, unless you can plant yourself on one of the fellows. Try Nugent, he's soft!"

Paul breathed hard.

"Or Lord Mauloverer; he's softer," said the Boulder, "and you'd naturally plant yourself on a lord, if you could; you've got your way to make in the world, and only your wits to depend on."

Paul did not answer. He turned and left the study without a word, the Boulder's mocking laugh following him.

— — —

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Festina Lente!

"LAST half-holiday of the term!" said Bob Cherry, after dinner on Wednesday. "What about a rag on the Highcliffe fellows to wind up the term? We owe Pon & Co. a lot of things."

"Bother Pon & Co.!" said Wharton.

"Well, we haven't woke up the Fourth lately," said Bob. "What price a raid on Temple & Co. in the Fourth Form passage?"

"Bless Temple!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, then, Coker of the Fifth?" said Bob. "We've hardly ragged Coker at all this term."

"Blow Coker of the Fifth," said Nugent.

"Look here, you slackers, we've got to do something on the last half-holiday," said Bob Cherry warmly. "I suppose you don't want to slack round the passages like Skinner and Snoop."

Bob Cherry's predilections were all in favour of the strenuous life.

"There's a League match at Lantham," said Wharton. "We could bike over and see it."

"Well, that's not a bad idea," admitted Bob. "It's a good long ride. The Lantham Ramblers are worth seeing."

"The worthfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The watchfulness of a good game is the next best thing to the playfulness."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"That jolly old moonshee at Bhanipur was no end of a card when it came to teaching English, Inky," he said. "Well, then, is it agreed that the timefulness shall be spent in the ridefulness to Lantham?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The agreefulness is—"

"Terrific," chorled Bob. "Let's go and get the jiggers out. Never mind what we do so long as it's out of doors."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"But I say—" yelled the Owl of the Remove.

Whatever Bunter had to say remained unsaid. The Famous Five accelerated, and left William George Bunter to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

They wheeled out their bicycles cheerfully. It was a bright spring afternoon, and a ride through the country lanes was quite a pleasant occupation. They caught sight of Paul Dallas as they wheeled the machines out, and Bob nodded to him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coming over to Lantham to see a football match, kid?"

Paul smiled and shook his head.

"I'd like to," he said. "But—"

"Well, if you'd like to, hop on your jigger and come."

"But Mr. Vernon-Smith is coming this afternoon," said Paul. "I'm staying within gates, you know."

"Oh, I forgot! Ta-ta, old bean!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"My hat! There's Bunter again. Run away and play, Bunter."

But Billy Bunter did not run away and play. He rolled up breathlessly as the Famous Five were about to mount their machines in the road.

"Where are you fellows going?" he demanded.

"Lantham," chuckled Bob. "Run your jigger out and come along, Bunter."

The juniors chuckled at the idea of Bunter coming along on a ten-mile spin. The strenuous life did not appeal to William George Bunter the least little bit.

"Well, my jigger's punctured, you know," said Bunter. "I've asked you to mend that puncture a good many times, Bob Cherry."

"No harm in your asking, old fat bean. You can keep on asking till we break up for Easter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You'll break up before Easter, Bunter, if you stand in the way of the bikes," said Nugent. "Shift, old fat man! Roll away!"

"I'll come with you fellows," said Bunter. "You can give me a lift behind your bike, Bob."

"My hat! Do you think I can pull a hippopotamus ten miles?"

"Well, you fellows can all take it in turns," said Bunter. "Same coming back, see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter. "Don't be selfish, you know. If there's one thing I can't stand it's selfishness. Now, which of you is going to give me a lift first?"

"The whichfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry drew back a large boot.

"Turn round, Bunter."

"Eh! What am I to turn round for?"

"I'm going to give you a lift."

"You silly owl!" roared Bunter, jumping away. Evidently the Owl of the Remove did not want that kind of a lift. "Look here—"

But the Famous Five did not "look there." They jumped on their machines and pedalled away. Nobody seemed to want the privilege of pulling Billy Bunter's considerable weight ten miles and back again, and they rode away, leaving Bunter to be as shocked as he liked at their selfishness.

"Now, put it on," said Bob Cherry, as the cyclists turned out of Friardale lane into the Lantham road. "We've got none too much time to see the start. Let 'em rip!"

Bob Cherry shot ahead, and the other members of the Co. put on speed and drew level again. It was a wide country road, with little traffic on it, and they rode hard and fast abreast.

"My esteemed chums," gasped Hurree Janset Ram Singh, who was not quite so hefty on a jigger as the energetic Bob, "there is a proverb that the more hastefulness the less speedfulness. The stitch in time goes longest to the well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, put it on, Inky!" chuckled Bob.

"The perspirefulness is terrific."

"It won't wash off your complexion, old bean."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The five cyclists swept on. There was no time to lose if they were to see the beginning of the football match at Lantham. As a matter of fact, they were riding rather recklessly, for there were a good many sharp turns in the road to Lantham. And a little later they had reason to admit that Hurree Janset Ram Singh was right, and that

the more haste was sometimes the less speed.

The five cyclists went swinging round a corner, just as a large motor-car came buzzing from the opposite direction.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

Reckless riding might have had rather serious results had the Famous Five been a little less swift in an emergency. They parted to right and left, and four of the five rode clear. But Bob Cherry's machine skidded in the mud beside the road and pitched over on the grassy bank, landing Bob with a bump in the grass.

"Oh!" roared Bob, as he landed.

The big closed car rushed on, but halted with a grinding of brakes. Bob Cherry's chums circled back immediately, as Bob sat up in the grass, gasping for breath.

"Hurt, old chap?" called out Wharton. "No; only a bang or two! I'm afraid the jigger's hurt—I heard something crack."

Bob Cherry rose and dragged his machine out of the grass. It had landed with a heavy crash, and there was a bent pedal, a twisted mudguard, and several other minor damages. The big car came backing to the spot. A rather angry face was put out of the window, and a pair of angry eyes, under a silk hat, stared at the Greyfriars juniors.

"You young donkeys!"

"Same to you, sir," said Bob cheerfully.

"Shurrup!" breathed Wharton. "It's Smithy's pater!"

"Oh!" Bob lifted his cap politely.

"How do you do, sir? Hope I didn't make you jump!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared grimly at the juniors. He recognised them now. Evidently the millionaire was on his way to Greyfriars, to see his son and his adopted son.

"How dare you ride so recklessly!" he snapped. "There might have been an accident."

"A miss is as good as a mile, sir," said Bob.

"I have a good mind to report this to your Form master!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Awfully sorry, sir," said Bob mockly.

"But I think your car would have stood the charge of any number of push-bikes."

"You are a reckless young ass!" he said.

And he signed to his chauffeur to drive on, and disappeared again into the interior of the car.

The millionaire's car rushed on and disappeared along the road in the direction of Greyfriars.

"Matter of fact, the old bird was right," said Nugent. "You are a reckless ass, Bob."

"Shouldn't wonder," agreed Bob. "But the question is, how long will it take to get this jigger going again? You fellows had better get on and leave me to it, or you'll miss half the match."

"Oh, rats! Sink or swim together," said Harry.

"All hands to the mill," said Nugent.

"Although it is not good form to speak I told you so fully," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "I must say that I told the esteemed idiotic Bob that the more hastefulness was the less speedfulness."

"You did, old black bean," assented Bob, "so don't sing it over again, but lend me a hand with this jigger."

And the chums of the Remove stacked their machines by the roadside and gathered round the damaged bicycle and proceeded to render first-aid.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tricked!

"SEEN Master Dallas, sir?" Trotter, the House page, asked the question. Herbert Vernon-Smith gave him a rather curious look. Trotter had a telegram in his hand.

"For Dallas?" asked the Bounder. "Yes, sir; and Mr. Quelch told me to find him and give it to him," said Trotter.

The Bounder smiled. "You'll find him on Big Side," he said. "He's watching the Sixth Form practise."

"Thank you, sir!" And Trotter hurried away with the telegram.

The Bounder, who was lounging in the doorway of the House, looked after him, his lip curling in a satirical smile. Five minutes later Paul Dallas came hurrying up to the House. The telegram, opened now, was in Paul's hand. He came up the steps and hesitated as he saw the Bounder.

"I—I think I ought to show you this, Vernon-Smith," he said. "Unless you've had a wire, too. I suppose you have."

"What do you mean? I've had no wire."

"This is from your father."

"He hasn't troubled me with a telegram," said the Bounder. "I suppose that's natural enough. If he has altered his plans for this afternoon he would, naturally, tell you, not me."

"I should not think that natural at all," said Paul. "I should be very much surprised indeed."

"Humbug!"

"Well, we needn't discuss that; but if you have not had a wire, you had better see this. Your father must have meant me to show you."

Paul held out the telegram, and the Bounder took it from his hand. His eyes had a peculiar gleam in them as he read the brief message.

"Delayed at Lantham. Come to Royal Hotel."

"S. VERNON-SMITH."

Paul looked at him.

"I suppose you are going?" he asked. "Why?" sneered the Bounder. "This message is to you. He hasn't sent me one. I sha'n't go!"

"He must expect you as well as me."

"He doesn't say so."

"I can't understand it," said Paul, his face very troubled. "It's very odd that he should wire to me and not to you."

"I don't see that at all, in the circumstances."

Paul compressed his lips.

The bitter jealousy and rancour of Vernon-Smith had always seemed to him totally without grounds. But he had to feel and to admit that this incident gave some colour to the Bounder's jealousy. If Mr. Vernon-Smith was delayed at Lantham, it was to his son that his message should have been sent, not to his adopted son. Paul realised that very clearly, and he was troubled and pained by the millionaire's action. If Mr. Vernon-Smith really was placing his adopted son first in his affections, to the detriment of his own son, the Bounder had very serious cause of complaint. Certainly it was not Paul's fault, but the fact remained

"Well, I'm sorry for this, Vernon-Smith," said Paul, with a red face. "I

can only say that I can't understand it."

"Gammon!"

"I think perhaps your father intended to send you the wire, and may have made a mistake in his hurry."

"Rats!"

"Take the telegram, and go," said Paul. "I will remain here."

"Oh, give us a rest," said the Bounder. "That for the telegram!" He tore the buff strip of paper into fragments and scattered them. "Go or stay as you choose. I sha'n't go!"

"I'd rather you went."

"Chuck it!"

"Will you go, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, I won't!"

"Somebody must go, after that message," said Paul, in distress.

"Please yourself," said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders, and he turned and walked away.

Paul Dallas stood for some moments in doubt. But he knew that he had no choice in the matter. Bitterly at the incident annoyed and discomposed him,

Smithy, for goodness' sake chuck it before your father comes," said Redwing earnestly. "It can only lead to more trouble."

The Bounder laughed.

"Has Dallas had a telegram?" asked Redwing very quietly.

"How should I know?"

"I think you would know, if he has. You were talking to Skinner just after dinner, and I heard you mention Lantham and the telegraph office. And Skinner's gone out for the afternoon."

"And what do you make out of that?" jeered the Bounder.

"I can't understand Dallas clearing off on his bike when your father's expected here."

"Is it your business especially?"

"Well, no, except that I'm afraid you're making more trouble for yourself, Smithy."

"And if I've put a spoke in the wheel of that interloping cad, are you going to interfere?" said the Bounder between his teeth.

"Then you have—"

"I don't mind tellin' you," said the Bounder coolly, "Skinner went over to Lantham just after dinner, at my expense. I'm standin' him the fare, and a seat in the Lantham Picture Palace, for his trouble. I had to ask Skinner, as my own pal would have turned me down if I'd asked him."

"That depends on what you asked."

"Oh, you've guessed already," said the Bounder contemptuously. "Dallas has had a spoof telegram, and he will be out of Greyfriars when my father comes. Shocked, what?"

"Certainly I would have done nothing of the kind, if you had asked me," said Redwing.

"Skinner's the fellow for that. I won't say anything about the rottenness of it, Smithy."

"Please don't!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"But the folly of it!" said Redwing. "It will all come out, and what will your father think then?"

"Does that mean you're going to sneak to my father?"

"You know it doesn't. I shall say nothing. But it puts me in a rotten position, knowing that such a rotten trick has been played."

"You should have minded your own business."

Redwing bit his lip.

"It's bound to come out," he said. "Your father isn't the man to be taken in by a trick. Dallas will explain to him afterwards that he was tricked into going out by a false telegram."

"He won't be able to show the telegram, anyhow. And he won't be able to go home in the pater's car," said the Bounder. "And with that scheming cad out of the way, I can manage my father."

"I wish you'd cut after Dallas and stop him in time, Smithy."

"Too late," grinned the Bounder. "He's going all out for Lantham now. Not that I'd stop him." Vernon-Smith crossed the study to the door, slammed it, and put his back to it, with an unpleasant grin on his hard face. "And if you're thinking of trying it on, Redwing, wash it out. You won't get out of this study without a fight on your hands."

Redwing looked at him, perplexed and troubled. He sat down at the table at last and resumed his lines. The Bounder, leaning on the door, stood

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he was bound to obey his adopted father's order. If the Bounder did not choose to take the message for himself, and go to Lantham, Paul had to go.

Five minutes later the Bounder, from his study window, caught sight of the new junior wheeling his bike out. Redwing was in the study, and he joined the Bounder at the window, wondering what had called up that derisive grin to the hard face of Herbert Vernon-Smith. He was in time to catch a glimpse of Dallas as the new junior disappeared with his bicycle.

"Dallas going out on his bike!" exclaimed Redwing, surprised into the exclamation.

"Looks like it."

"But I thought—"

"You think too much," said the Bounder coolly. "Think about those lines you've got to do for Quelch. I shall want the study to myself when my father comes."

Redwing eyed him uneasily.

"It's odd that Dallas should be going out on his bike when your father is expected," he said.

"I suppose he knows his own business best."

"I—I hope—"

"Well!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"If you've been playing some trick,

watching him with a sneer on his face. Not till Redwing's lines were finished, and he gathered them up to take to Mr. Quelch's study, did the Bounder move from the door.

Tom Redwing went downstairs without a word to him. Between loyalty to his chum and deep repugnance for the ways the Bounder was falling into of late, Tom Redwing was sorely troubled and perplexed. The Bounder followed him down the stairs and went out into the quad. A few minutes later a big car came up the drive.

"Well, Herbert?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stepped out and shook hands with his son. His manner was quite affectionate, but there was a sharp and searching expression on his face—a hard and obdurate face, like the Bounder's own.

"Glad to see you, dad," said Vernon-Smith.

The millionaire's face relaxed.

"You've written me an impudent letter, Herbert," he said. "But if you've thought better of it, never mind. I'll come and see you in your study when I've spoken to the Head. Tell Dallas I've come."

"Certainly," said the Bounder.

A quarter of an hour later Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith tramped up the Remove staircase and came heavily into Study No. 4. He glanced round the room as he entered.

"Where's Paul?"

"Sorry, I don't know."

"Didn't you tell him I was here?"

"I found that he's gone out."

"Gone out?" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith testily. "What on earth do you mean, Herbert? How could he be gone out, when I told him that I was coming here this afternoon to take him and you home for the Easter holidays?"

"I suppose I'm not responsible for what the fellow does," said the Bounder sullenly.

"No—certainly not! But he can't be gone out!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "He would never treat me so disrespectfully—he is more respectful than my own son, if you come to that."

"Well, he's not in the school."

"Nonsense."

"Perhaps you'd like to inquire?"

"Certainly I shall inquire," snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I do not believe for one moment that Paul would act so disrespectfully. He does not know that I am here—that is all."

Mr. Vernon-Smith tramped angrily out of the study again. The Bounder smiled. Paul Dallas, speeding along to Lantham, was not even at the market town yet. By the time he arrived at the Royal Hotel, and discovered that his adopted father was not there, and returned to Greyfriars, it would be lock-up, and certainly Mr. Vernon-Smith would not remain at Greyfriars till lock-up. The Bounder had, as he had said, put a spoke in the interloper's wheel; and he felt not the slightest compunction.

It was a quarter of an hour later that Mr. Vernon-Smith came back to his son's study, with a red and angry face.

"Have you found Dallas, father?"

"No!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith, as he dropped into a chair. "The impertinent young rascal! I find that he has gone out on his bicycle—two or three boys seem to have seen him go. I suppose he meant to be gone only a few minutes, and something has delayed him. But he should not have risked it, when I was coming. I cannot wait here long. If he is not in by five o'clock at the latest, I cannot wait longer."

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The Bounder smiled.

According to his careful calculations, Paul Dallas could not be back at Greyfriars before six at the very earliest.

"Well, it can't be helped, father; let me give you some tea while you're waitin'," said the Bounder amicably.

His father nodded; and the Bounder gave him tea; but Mr. Vernon-Smith was not in a pleasant mood. As the minutes passed, and Paul Dallas did not come, the millionaire's brow grew darker and darker. Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was not a man to be trifled with, or to be treated with neglect or disrespect by a boy to whom he had shown a kindness very unusual for him. A storm was gathering, to break on the devoted head of Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son, and the Bounder noted the signs of it with deep satisfaction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Lucky Meeting!

"OH, blow!" growled Bob Cherry. For once, the cheery Bob was cross.

It was enough to make any fellow cross. The Famous Five had had just about time to get to Lantham to see the ball kicked off in the League match on the Lantham Ramblers' ground. They had covered four miles of the ten, when that unlucky encounter with Mr. Vernon-Smith's car had landed them. And Bob's bicycle, stuck up by the roadside with five industrious fellows round it, gave a lot of trouble. Long minute followed minute, while the work of repair went on; and it began to be doubtful whether the chums of the Remove would reach Lantham in time to see the ball kicked off in the second half of the League match there.

A twisted pedal had been straightened out, and a displaced mudguard set to rights. A lost nut had been hunted for in the grass and luckily found and screwed on. But something was amiss in the hub, which led to further explorations, and oily, dirty fingers, and remarks that could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be called good-tempered.

"Jevver see such rotten luck," said Bob Cherry wrathfully. "Just because Smithy's pater can't travel by rail like an ordinary human being, but must come swanking along in a two-thousand guinea Rolls."

Bob's chums grinned.

Really, it seemed a little unreasonable to lay the blame of the accident upon Mr. Vernon-Smith, who was undoubtedly entitled to travel by road if the spirit moved him to do so.

"If we'd met any other car at that corner—" remarked Nugent.

"But we didn't."

"No, we didn't; but we might have."

"The mightfulness is terrific."

Snort, from Bob Cherry. He was not in a reasonable mood.

"Inky told you the more haste the less speed, old man," said Johnny Bull.

"Inky's a silly ass, and you're another," said Bob.

"Don't lose your temper, old bean."

"Who's losing his temper?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Chap about your size, I think," said Johnny calmly.

"You silly ass—"

"Draw it mild, Bob," said Harry Wharton laughing. "After all, there's no great harm done. You might have hurt yourself instead of your bike."

"We sha'n't see much of the League

match, at this rate," remarked Johnny Bull.

"I told you to go on and leave me," said Bob gruffly.

"I'd rather see you than a League match, old bean," said Johnny affably.

Bob stared at him, and his excited face broke into a grin. The soft answer turneth away wrath.

"Sorry, you chaps," said Bob, "I believe I was getting ratty, and that's fatheaded. The blinking jigger's all right now, I think—only it sounds a bit tin-canny. Shall we get on?"

A cyclist came whizzing along the road from the direction of Greyfriars. He was going at a rapid pace; but he slacked down as he saw the group of Greyfriars juniors gathered round the upturned bike by the roadside.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Paul Dallas in surprise. They had not expected to see him out of gates that afternoon.

"Spill?" asked Dallas. "Anything a chap can do to help?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"If you'd come along half an hour ago, I'd have borrowed your bike," he said. "But this blessed jigger is a going concern again now, I think. Going to Lantham?"

"Yes," said Paul.

"Changed your mind about seeing the League match?" asked Bob. "You've changed it rather late. The game will be half over."

"No; I'm going to see Mr. Vernon-Smith," explained Paul. "He has been delayed at Lantham, and sent me a telegram to go over to the Royal Hotel. I'll get on if I can't help you."

He put his leg over his machine again.

"Hold on!" ejaculated Wharton.

Paul stopped.

"What is it? I'm rather pressed—"

The Famous Five were staring at him blankly. His statement had taken them utterly by surprise. Less than half an hour ago, Mr. Vernon-Smith had passed them on the road, heading for Greyfriars. Obviously, he had not been delayed at Lantham as Paul stated.

"Are you pulling our leg, or dreaming, or what?" asked Bob Cherry. "Mr. Vernon-Smith is at Greyfriars before this."

"No; I had a telegram," said Paul. "He wired that he was delayed at Lantham, and I'm to meet him there."

"There's a mistake somewhere," said Wharton. "Mr. Vernon-Smith passed us on the road at this corner, six miles this side of Lantham, going towards Greyfriars."

Paul gave a jump.

"You're sure?" he exclaimed.

"Bob nearly butted into his car—that was how he got his spill," answered the captain of the Remove.

"But—it couldn't have been Mr. Vernon-Smith's car—"

"The old scout was in it, fathead, and he stopped to speak to us," said Bob.

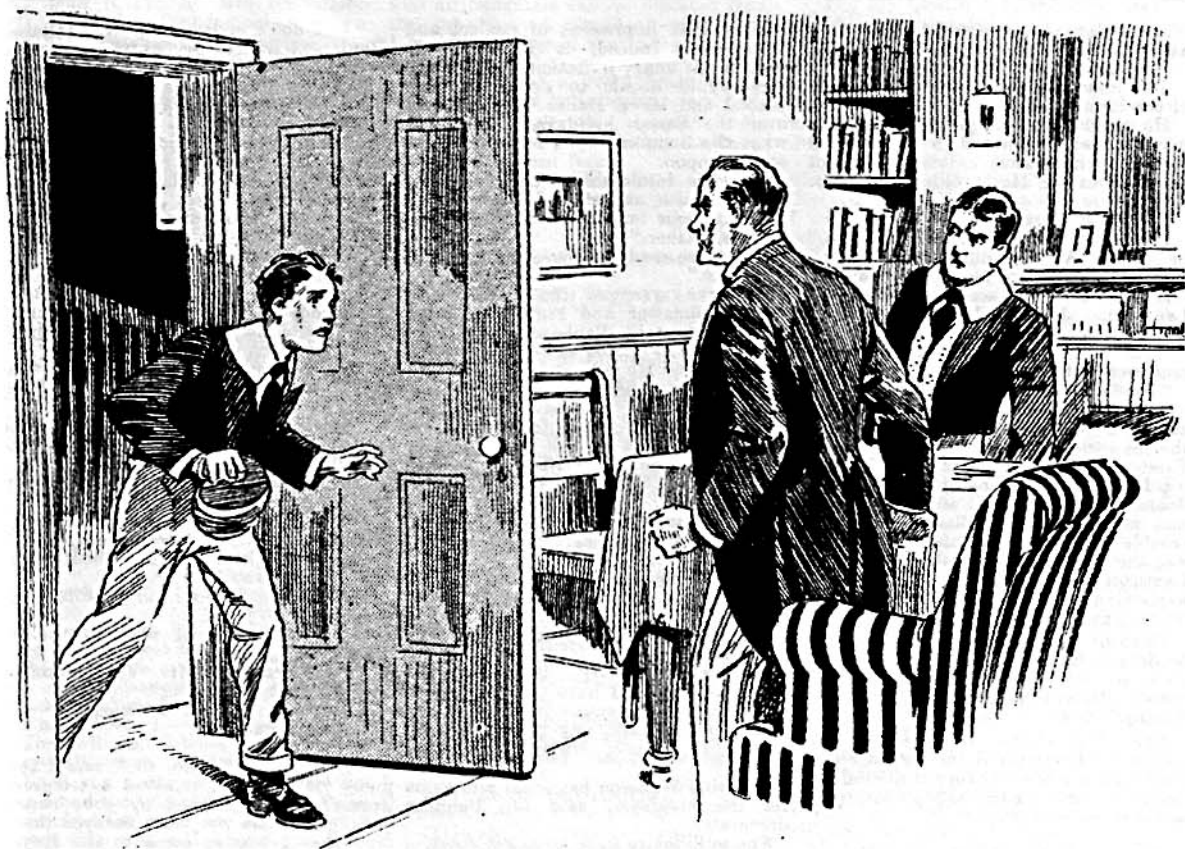
Paul stood with his hand on his machine, his face blank with amazement.

"How long ago?" he asked.

"About twenty-five minutes."

"It's barely half an hour since I had the telegram," said Paul. "I can't understand it at all. Surely Mr. Vernon-Smith would not wire me to come to Lantham, and then go on to Greyfriars. What on earth should I do when I get to Lantham and found him gone?"

"Goodness knows," said Harry. "But it's quite certain that Smithy's father has gone on to Greyfriars. He would come through Lantham, if he



The door of S'ud / No. 4 opened suddenly and Paul Dallas entered, red and breathless. He was astonished to receive an angry glare from Mr. Vernon-Smith. "So you have chosen to go out when I was coming here," boomed the millionaire. "And you return just as I am leaving." "I—I don't understand, sir," faltered Paul. "I had to go, when I got your telegram——"

(See Chapter 6.)

came down from London in the car; he might have had some trouble with the engine and thought of stopping. But——

"But he's gone on to Greyfriars," said Nugent. "There's no doubt about that. Perhaps he found he could get on after all, and sent a second wire."

"But he must have known that I should start at once."

"Yes, it's odd."

"Why, you must have passed his car on the road," said Bob Cherry. "A big blue Rolls."

"I've passed a good many cars, of course," said Paul. "I shouldn't notice it, unless it was open and I saw Mr. Vernon-Smith in it. But I took the short cut across the fields from the school to save time getting on the Lantham road, so I may not have passed it. If you're absolutely sure that it was Mr. Vernon-Smith's car——"

"He stopped and spoke to us, I tell you," said Bob. "If you go on to Lantham, you won't see him to-day."

Paul stood hesitating, in great distress. The instructions in the telegram had been precise. But he could not doubt what the Famous Five told him, and obviously if Mr. Vernon-Smith had passed them at that spot, going on towards Greyfriars, he could not be at Lantham now. And if the millionaire was now at the school, it was certain that Paul would miss seeing him that day if he kept on to Lantham.

"Blessed if I know what to do!" said Paul, at last.

"You'll miss Mr. Vernon-Smith unless you get back to Greyfriars," said Harry.

"That's a cect. He must have changed his mind after sending the wire."

"He could not expect me to guess that he had changed his mind," said Paul.

"No; but there may be a second wire at the school waiting for you, or he may have telephoned after you started."

"Yes, that's possible."

Paul spun his machine round.

"I'd better get back, if he's at the school, anyhow," he said. "Thanks no end, you chaps; you've saved me a long ride for nothing, as well as missing Mr. Vernon-Smith."

And Paul Dallas started back towards Greyfriars, riding like the wind.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked after him curiously.

"That's jolly odd," said Johnny Bull slowly. "Old Smith is a business man; it's not like him to play the ox like that."

"He seems to have done it," said Bob.

"Dallas came jolly near to missing him altogether; and the old gent has come down to take him off for the holidays, too. It would have been awkward."

"Jolly awkward," said Johnny Bull dryly. "Looks to me as if Dallas has had his leg pulled."

"I don't quite see——"

"Spoofer telegrams have been sent before this," said Johnny.

"Oh, my hat! Smithy wouldn't——"

"Wouldn't he?" grunted Johnny. "He tried to keep Dallas out of the Rookwood match last week by a trick. Looks to me as if he's playing another trick now."

"But Smithy can't have gone over to

Lantham to send a spoofer telegram; he's staying in to see his pater."

"He could get another fellow to do that for him. Looks to me like one of Smithy's tricks to get Dallas into trouble with his father," said Johnny Bull. "Anyhow, I'm jolly glad we were able to stop the kid this side of Lantham. Are we going on?"

"Let's!"

The Famous Five remounted and rode on to Lantham. There was not likely to be much left of the League match for them to see, but the spin was enjoyable. When they came into the market town at last, and stopped at the Ramblers' ground, they learned that the second half of the match was well on its way.

"Not much good going in now," remarked Johnny Bull. "We don't want to walk in and walk out. What about the pictures? They've got a tea-room there, and Russell told me it's a good show; his uncle took him last week."

"May as well," said Wharton.

And the chums of the Remove put up their machines at the station, and walked to the Lantham Picture Palace—a rather gorgeous building, on a much more splendid scale than the picture house in Courtfield. The pictures rather disappointed them, however, as the films dealt chiefly with American crooks and hold-ups and "vamps," and rubbish of a like nature, and they soon adjourned to the tea-room, having by this time quite a good appetite for a substantial tea. As they sat down to tea,

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Nugent glanced across at a fellow sitting at a table at a little distance. "Skinner's here," he remarked.

The juniors looked round at Skinner of the Remove.

He caught sight of them at the same moment, and coloured a little, and turned his head away. Skinner had not expected to see Harry Wharton & Co. there.

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Skinner never biked this distance," he said. "And he didn't blow half-a-crown of his own money on railway fares to come and see the pictures at Lantham. I fancy I know now who sent that telegram to young Dallas."

"The awful rotter—if you're right," muttered Bob.

"No 'if' about it," said Johnny Bull.

Skinner finished his tea rather hastily, and, rising from his table, went out of the tea-room, affecting not to notice the Famous Five. Harry Wharton knitted his brows. He had little doubt that Johnny Bull was right, and that a trick had been played on Dallas to cause him trouble with his adopted father. If that was the case, Bob Cherry's spill on the Lantham road had been a fortunate happening for Paul. Bob Cherry's face broke into a cheery grin.

"Smithy's a deep card," he said. "But he doesn't have much luck. Dallas will walk in while old Smithy is still at the school. It will be a jolly surprise for Smithy, what?"

And the chums of the Remove chuckled. Certainly if the Bounder had played such a trick as they suspected, he hadn't had much luck; though assuredly as much as he deserved.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

THE young scamp!

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was growing irate.

He was angry; and, like the ancient prophet, he considered that he did well to be angry.

Mr. Vernon-Smith's time was valuable. He had intended to stay at Greyfriars half an hour at the most. He had now been at the school an hour, and his annoyance was intensifying every moment.

There was nothing soft or sentimental about Mr. Vernon-Smith. He was not likely to think of the possibility of an accident to account for Dallas' absence. Such remote possibilities did not worry his practical mind. Besides, if an accident had happened, that did not excuse Dallas. He had deliberately gone out of gates on his bicycle, when his adopted father was expected at the school. Certainly he did not know the precise moment at which Mr. Vernon-Smith might be expected to arrive. But he should have waited within gates, as Herbert had done.

He had gone out, and either he had forgotten about his adopted father's coming, or he was carelessly neglecting him. Mr. Vernon-Smith could think of no other explanation.

"The young rascal!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith was moving restlessly about the study, growing angrier every moment.

The Bounder watched him with a quiet grin.

Obviously, the millionaire would not wait much longer; and he would leave Greyfriars feeling angry and annoyed with Paul Dallas. Paul's explanation, when it came, would come too late to

remove that impression of neglect and disrespect. Indeed, it was probable that, in his angry irritation, the millionaire would decide to do as his son wished and leave Dallas at the school over the Easter holidays. That was what the Bounder hoped for and almost counted upon.

"This is intolerable!" burst out Mr. Vernon-Smith, at last. "I shall wait no longer. Your box is packed, Herbert!"

"Yes, father."

"You are ready to leave with me?"

"Quite."

"I have arranged the matter with your headmaster and Form master. I intended to take Paul, of course; but if he does not choose to be here, that is his concern. He can stay till the end of the term, and—" Mr. Vernon-Smith paused. "I have made all arrangements to leave for France on Saturday, to give both of you a holiday on the Continent. Dallas knows that perfectly well. I cannot understand his conduct."

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at his son, as if expecting Herbert to make some suggestion.

But the Bounder was far too keen to say anything against his enemy at that moment. He shook his head.

"I can't understand it, either!" he said carelessly.

"It's extraordinary. If he does not want the holiday I have planned he can do without it, the young jackanapes. He cannot have made any other arrangements, I suppose, without consulting me."

"I think Wharton has asked him home for the holidays," said the Bounder demurely.

The millionaire gave an angry snort.

"I suppose he would not make such an arrangement without consulting me!" he snapped.

"Well, he might prefer to go home with Wharton," remarked the Bounder. "They're rather thick!"

Another angry snort from the millionaire.

"Then he should have told me so. I should have raised no objection. But this—this is absolute disrespect! By gad! I will not wait another minute for the young rascal! He can go home with Wharton, or he can stay at the school over the holidays. I shall concern myself no further about him or what he does! Ungrateful young rascal! Get your coat, Herbert, and let us go."

"Yes, father," said the Bounder meekly.

There was a hurried footstep in the Remove passage. The door of Study No. 4 opened suddenly.

Vernon-Smith shut his teeth hard.

It was Paul Dallas who entered, red and breathless.

"Is Mr. Vernon-Smith here?" he exclaimed. "Oh, you are here, sir! I nearly missed you!"

Paul was astonished to receive an angry glare in response.

"By gad! You nearly did!" boomed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "And you might as well have missed me entirely, you young rascal! Do you think that I am the man to be kept hanging about waiting for a schoolboy's pleasure? If you think so, you had better disabuse your mind of the idea at once. I am not that sort of man! Do you hear?"

"I—I'm sorry!" stammered Paul. "I thought—"

"You have chosen to go out when I was coming here, and you return just as I am leaving!" boomed the angry millionaire. "Well, that sort of thing will not do for me. I will tolerate nothing of the kind!"

"I—I don't understand, sir," faltered Paul. "I had to go, when I got your telegram—"

Vernon-Smith bit his lip till it almost bled. There was no way of stopping the expanation now. His luck had failed him somehow—he could not even guess how. Dallas had started for Lantham, and his look showed that he had ridden hard and fast. What had brought him back to the school at that unlucky moment was a mystery to the Bounder. Unless Redwing—

The Bounder's rage was almost uncontrollable as he thought of it. Had Redwing gone after Dallas and warned him? How could he have done so in time? A lift in a car, perhaps—

Mr. Vernon-Smith, surprised in the midst of his angry tirade, stared at Dallas.

"Telegram! Telegram!" he barked out. "What do you mean? I sent you no telegram!"

"Your telegram from Lantham, sir that—"

"Are you mad?" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What nonsense is this? I passed through Lantham without stopping on my way here!"

Paul felt as if his head were turning round.

"You—you did not wire from Lantham?" he gasped.

"No!" rapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What rubbish is this?"

"But—but I had a telegram—"

stammered Paul.

"Nonsense!"

"It is not nonsense, sir," said Paul, more quietly. "I received a telegram from Lantham, signed by your name, telling me that you were delayed there and that I was to come to the Royal Hotel at Lantham to see you."

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at him almost open-mouthed.

"That is why I left the school!" exclaimed Paul indignantly. "I should not have gone out for any other reason. If you did not send the telegram I cannot understand it."

"Where is the telegram?" demanded Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I cannot believe that anyone has dared to forge my name to a telegram! Give it to me."

"I haven't it now, sir, but your son can bear me out," said Paul. "I showed it to him before I started, and asked him if he would come with me. I was very much surprised at your wiring to me instead of to him. But I did not think for a moment that the telegram had not come from you. How could I think such a thing? It was signed with your name."

Mr. Vernon-Smith turned an angry glare upon his son.

"You told me nothing of this, Herbert!" he boomed.

"Of what, father?" The Bounder was cool again now, icily cool. His scheme had miscarried; but with his usual desperate hardihood, he was prepared to play the game out to the bitter end.

"Of this telegram!"

"I know nothing of any telegram!" said the Bounder coolly.

"Paul says he showed you the telegram."

"He is dreaming, I should think. I have no recollection of his showing me a telegram."

Paul looked at the Bounder blankly.

"You cannot have forgotten!" he exclaimed. "You were standing in the doorway when I came in with the telegram. I showed it to you, and—"

Vernon-Smith burst into a scoffing laugh.

"You might have made up a better

story than that!" he said contemptuously. "That's rather too thin."

"What do you mean? I—"

"Why not admit that you went out and forgot that my father was coming?" sneered the Bounder. "I dare say lies come pretty easily to you; but a lie like that is no use."

Paul stared at him.

"Did Dallas show you a telegram that purported to come from me, Herbert, or did he not? Yes or no?"

"No!" said the Bounder between his set lips.

"It is false!" burst out Dallas. "How dare you say so?"

"Enough!" rapped out Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I can see that I have been deceived in you, Dallas. You impudent young rascal—"

"I repeat that there was a telegram, and that I showed it to your son before I left the school!" panted Dallas.

The Bounder smiled mockingly.

"If that is true, why not show my father the telegram?" he sneered.

"That will settle the matter."

"Why, you rotter!" burst out Paul. "You tore the telegram up with your own hands!"

"Pile it on!" jeered the Bounder.

"Enough of this!" snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You have treated me with wanton disrespect, Dallas, and you are telling me the most foolish and palpable falsehood I have ever heard of as an excuse. I am disappointed in you. You have deceived me."

"I have not! I—"

"That will do. Silence!" boomed the angry millionaire. "Silence!"

"I tell you I started for Lantham because I had the telegram!" gasped Paul. "I should have gone on, only I met a Remove chap who told me that you were here—"

"Nonsense!"

"On my word, sir—"

"Enough! Come, Herbert, we are wasting time!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith strode to the door. The Bounder followed him, with a vaulting look of triumph at the "interloper" as he went. Paul, in utter astonishment and dismay, stood rooted to the floor.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hard Measure!

"STOP!"

It was only for a moment that Paul Dallas remained silent.

His face blazed with indignation as he almost shouted to Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The millionaire strode out into the Remove passage without even turning his head.

"Stop!" shouted Paul, quite reckless now in his indignation. "You have no right to doubt my word, Mr. Vernon-Smith! And I will prove that I have told you the truth! I have a right to prove it!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith paused.

"You cannot prove a foolish falsehood!" he snapped.

"I can prove the truth!" said Paul, following him into the passage. "I will not be called a liar, Mr. Vernon-Smith! I had a telegram from Lantham Post Office, signed by your name, and I can prove it!"

"Nonsense!"

"Chuck it, Dallas!" sneered the Bounder. "What's the good of keeping that up?"

"I demand to be allowed to prove what I say!" said Paul Dallas, speaking to Mr. Vernon-Smith, and taking no heed of the Bounder. "You know, sir,

that all telegrams can be repeated from the post office. A record is kept of them. I can get a copy of that telegram from Lantham."

"Oh, give us a rest!" snapped the Bounder. "Are you coming, dad?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped. His glance turned very searchingly on Paul's flushed, indignant face.

"And not only that," went on Paul, "but Trotter, the page, can tell you that he brought me a telegram when I was

"Did Mr. Quelch open the telegram?" asked the millionaire.

"No; he sent it to me as it was. But he will tell you that I had a telegram," said Paul, "and you can ask the Lantham Post Office to repeat it. You have no right to condemn me as a liar without inquiry!"

"I will speak to Mr. Quelch," said Mr. Vernon-Smith; "and if he tells me that you had a telegram this afternoon I will remain here until a repeat telegram is obtained from Lantham Post Office."

"That is all I ask," said Paul. Vernon-Smith breathed hard and deep. He was on very thin ice now, and he knew it.

"Remain here while I speak to your Form master," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with another searching glance at Paul.

"Very well, sir."

It was obvious that Paul had nothing to fear from the inquiry, and Mr. Vernon-Smith's expression was very different now. He went down the stairs, and the Bounder tramped back into Study No. 4. Paul Dallas remained in the Remove passage.

Ten minutes later Mr. Vernon-Smith came back. His angry brow had quite cleared.

"Mr. Quelch tells me that a telegram came for you, Paul," he said. "I have used his telephone to inquire at Lantham Post Office, and a copy of the telegram will arrive here in an hour."

"That will settle the matter, sir," said Paul.

"I believe you, my boy," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Your Form master is now acquainted with the matter, and if you have spoken falsely, the result will be very serious for you!"

"I have not spoken falsely!" said Paul proudly.

Mr. Vernon-Smith pursed his lips.

"You still adhere to your statement that you showed my son the telegram?" he asked.

"Certainly!"

"You deny it, Herbert?"

"I've denied it already."

His father gave him a penetrating look. It was quite clear to him now that when the copy of the telegram arrived from Lantham it would bear out Paul's statement. That was a certainty now. There was no doubt that his adopted son had been tricked into leaving the school by a telegram sent from Lantham in the millionaire's name.

Mr. Vernon-Smith sat down in the study with a grim frown on his brow. In his experience of Paul he had found the boy truthful; his experience of his own son had not been precisely the same. His natural feeling was in favour of his own son; but it did not lead him to rely too implicitly on the Bounder's word.

"The copy of the telegram will settle the matter beyond doubt," he said. "But there is no need to wait for that. There is no doubt that Paul had such a telegram as he says. Someone has played a trick on him."

"Looks like it," agreed the Bounder.

"Someone sent him a telegram in my name," said Mr. Vernon-Smith grimly. "Do you know anything about it, Herbert?"

"What should I know about it?"

"Let us be plain. Your prejudice against Paul, and your desire to injure him in my eyes may account for it. Did you send that false telegram?" demanded the millionaire bluntly.

The Bounder smiled bitterly.

"A dozen fellows will tell you that I

A RECORD!

Ye Magnetites of England,
And comrades overseas,
Our Mag. has braved a thousand weeks

The battle and the breeze!
From glory unto glory
It marched triumphant on;
And every peerless story
Some now supporter won.

Hats off to good Frank Richards!
All honour to his name!
His fertile brain, his facile pen,
Fashioned our MAGNET'S fame!
One thousand matchless stories
Now to his credit stand;
His Greyfriars and her glories
Are famed throughout the land.

Yes, famed throughout the Empire
Are Wharton and his "Co."
Chums tried and true, whose deeds
True blue
Have set all hearts aglow!
Famed, too, is Billy Bunter
(Though in a different sense);
Each eager fiction hunter
Still votes the Owl "immense"!

Dear to the hearts of schoolboys
Are all the Greyfriars clan;
Bob Cherry's smile, and Smithy's
style—
We love them, to a man!
One thousand times before us
These chums have made their bow,
Yet still we cry in chorus:
"More yarns of Greyfriars,
NOW!"

And wider yet and wider
Shall spread our heroes' fame;
A loyal host, from coast to coast,
Their prowess shall acclaim!
And vaster yet and vaster
Shall stretch our MAGNET'S sway;
No shadow of disaster
Shall dim its far-flung ray!

Long may the MAGNET flourish!
No'er may its proud sun set!
We at the helm, through every realm
Shall make it mightier yet!
In this, our Thousandth Issue,
Triumphantly unrolled,
Chums near and far, we wish you
The best that life can hold!

watching the football on Big Side this afternoon."

"Have you tipped Trotter to say so?" grinned the Bounder.

"I have not tipped Mr. Quelch, my Form master, at least!" said Paul. "Mr. Vernon-Smith, listen to me! You must know that junior boys here are not allowed to receive telegrams without supervision. That telegram was taken to my Form master when it came, and he sent Trotter with it to me. You have only to step into Mr. Quelch's study and ask him."

The Bounder felt a chill.

haven't been out of gates this afternoon," he replied.

"Did you employ anyone else to send the telegram?"

Vernon-Smith bit his lip hard.

"Reflect before you answer, Herbert," said his father coldly. "The matter will not be allowed to rest where it is. I shall not allow my name to be used in trickery. Inquiry will be made for the person who sent the telegram in my name at Lantham; if necessary, I shall call in the assistance of the police to trace him out. If you have anything to confess, confess it before the matter passes out of my hands!"

Vernon-Smith caught his breath.

One look at his father's grim, set face was sufficient to convince him that Mr. Vernon-Smith meant every word he said. He could imagine Skinner's terror when such an investigation started. Whether the sender of the telegram could be traced or not, Skinner was not likely to wait for the police to get to work. The game was up, and Vernon-Smith knew it.

His lips were white in his rage and chagrin.

"Well?" said Mr. Vernon-Smith grimly.

"Don't take all that trouble," said the Bounder, in a low voice. "The game's up, and I may as well admit that I got a fellow to send the telegram for me."

"For what reason?"

"To put a spoke in the wheel of that interloping rotter, who has turned my own father against me," said the Bounder, in a low voice of intense bitterness.

"You admit, then, that Dallas showed you the telegram?"

"Oh, yes!"

"You have lied to me, Herbert?"

"You asked for it," said the Bounder. "If you forget that I am your son, you must expect me to forget that you are my father."

The millionaire's face became purple.

"Herbert! You admit that you deliberately sent a telegram in my name, to disgrace Paul in my eyes, to cause me to treat him with injustice. You dare to attempt to justify your conduct!"

The Bounder laughed recklessly.

"All along the line!" he answered. "I'm not sorry for what I did—I'm only sorry it failed. I know who sent that cad back here in time to see you, too, and I'll make him pay for it!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"You—you young rascal! Upon my word, I've a great mind—"

He broke off.

"You can report me to Mr. Quelch," said the Bounder. "It will be a flogging for me. That will please your adopted son, and you want to please him, you know."

"It would not please me," said Paul. "I'm sorry for this, goodness knows! I had to justify myself, or—"

"Oh, don't give me any of that!" jeered Smithy. "Keep that for my father. He believes it!"

"Certainly I believe it!" boomed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You are a young rascal, Herbert! I hardly know how to deal with you! Upon my word you are a young scoundrel!"

He rose to his feet.

"Come," he snapped—"both of you!"

The Bounder did not stir.

"You remember what I asked you in my letter, father—"

"Do not remind me of your insolence now!"

"I asked you to leave that rotter at the school over the Easter vacation,"

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said Vernon-Smith, with trembling lips. "I can't and won't have him at home with me for the holidays!"

"You dare not dictate to your father."

"Mr. Vernon-Smith!" exclaimed Paul eagerly. "Let it be as he says! I—I'd much rather stay here—much rather. I have no right in your house—your son is right there. Let me stay at Greyfriars over the holidays."

"By gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I am to be dictated to by my son, and by you, too! Upon my word!"

"No, sir. But—"

"You will come home with me, Paul," said Mr. Vernon-Smith sharply. "That is settled. I am not a man to change my plans on account of the insolence of an over-indulged boy. Herbert, come with me at once."

The Bounder sat tight.

"You will come home for the holidays with Paul, or you will remain at Greyfriars for the Easter vacation," said Mr. Vernon-Smith grimly. "Take your choice."

"Then I remain."

"I will take you at your word, Paul, come with me."

"I—I—"

"Come!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

Paul followed him from the study.

Vernon-Smith sat where he was, without movement. He seemed stunned.

It was not till many minutes later, when he heard the whirr of the car on the drive outside, that he stirred. He almost tottered to the window. The big Rolls was gliding away. It was closed, and the Bounder could not see the occupants. But he knew that Paul Dallas was in the car with his father.

With a face chalky white the Bounder watched the car, his gaze stony, till it disappeared.

Long after it had gone the Bounder stood there at the window, his eyes staring out unseeingly into the falling dusk. His father was gone, Paul Dallas was gone, and he—he was left, abandoned, to remain alone at the school through the holidays. His hard and obstinate nature was in conflict with a nature as obstinate and hard as his own.

Yet the Bounder could scarcely believe it.

His father was gone, with the interloper—the fellow who had taken his place. The anger died down in his breast, and a feeling of desolation took its place. He stood there, as the dusk deepened into darkness, silent, unmoving, desolate, with the bitterness almost of death in his wayward heart.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Left!

"I SAY, you fellows, Smithy's still here!"

Billy Bunter greeted the Famous Five with that piece of information as they came into the House.

Bunter's fat face wore a grin.

"Smithy?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, rather! The old bean has gone," explained Bunter. "He's taken that charity chap, Dallas, with him. Smithy's left. He, he, he!"

"Dallas gone?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes; with old Vernon-Smith! Spanking big car," said Bunter. "No end of swank. The old bean's fairly oozing money—no wonder Dallas sucks up to him! He, he, he!"

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Scat!"

The Famous Five went on their way.

They had wondered whether Paul would

reach the school in time to see his adopted father, and what would happen. What had happened was rather dramatic. Obviously, Smithy's scheme had failed, and, equally plainly, Paul Dallas was not to be left at Greyfriars over the vacation, as the Bounder had declared. The fact that the Bounder was left showed that he was in his father's black books.

"Smithy's pater's tumbled to it somehow," said Bob Cherry, as the chums of the Remove went into the Rag. "I imagined he would get his rag out if he tumbled. Smithy was asking for trouble, and he's got it. He can't really be surprised."

In the Rag, Tom Redwing came over to the Famous Five. His face was clouded. Vernon-Smith was not to be seen. He was still hiding his rage and chagrin in the seclusion of his study.

"Dallas left a message for you chaps," said Redwing. "Only to say good-bye for him. He left with Smithy's pater."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"And Smithy's still here," said Nugent.

"Yes."

"Till the end of the term?" asked Bob.

"For the holidays, I understand."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"He told us Dallas was to stay here over Easter," he said. "Has it worked out the other way, then?"

"I'm afraid so," said Redwing. "Mr. Vernon-Smith was very angry—I've never seen him so angry. Dallas was rather cut up, too. It's a rotten position for him—feeling that he's taken Smithy's place for the hols. He won't enjoy his Easter much, I think."

"I suppose not, in the circumstances," said Wharton. "But he's not his own master. He had to go if Mr. Vernon-Smith told him. He's not to blame."

"No; I wish Smithy could see that," said Redwing, with a sigh. "It will be an awful blow to his pride when the fellows find out that he's to stick at school over the vacation. He always had such ripping holidays."

"It's his own fault."

"Yes, only he can't see it. I'm afraid he thinks his father unjust and hard. But some fathers would have given him something much more severe for—"

Redwing paused.

Wharton looked at him curiously.

"You know why Dallas went out just before old Vernon-Smith came?" he asked.

Tom coloured and was silent.

"He would have missed the old bean altogether if he hadn't met us on the road," said Bob Cherry. "As it happened, we'd seen old Vernon-Smith pass in his car, so we were able to turn the kid back."

"So that's how it was?" said Redwing.

He had been puzzled by Paul's return to the school so suddenly.

"And we saw Skinner at Lantham," said Johnny Bull.

Redwing started.

"And so we don't need telling who sent Dallas a spoof telegram," said Johnny Bull grimly. "They ought to be jolly well ragged for playing such a rotten trick!"

"Smithy's got enough," said Redwing, in a low voice. "No need to say anything about it, or make more trouble."

"You knew?" asked Harry.

"Well, yes. As you fellows know, I may as well say so. But no need to tell any of the fellows. Smithy's in low water now."

"That's all right," said Johnny Bull.

"If a fellow's down, no need to give him another shove, even if he deserves



"You cur! Do you think I'm keeping on with you after you've sold me out?" hissed Vernon-Smith. "I'm done with you, from this minute! Take that!" Smaak! The Bounder's open hand came across Tom Redwing's pale cheek, with a crack like a pistol-shot. Tom staggered back, with a cry. (See Chapter 9.)

it. But it was a rotten trick, all the same."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Skinner!" Skinner of the Remove put his head in at the door of the Rag and glanced round him. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him rather grimly; but Skinner affected not to see them. He was looking for Vernon-Smith, and as Smithy was not there Skinner withdrew.

He went up to the Remove passage and looked into Study No. 4.

It was dark there, and for a moment Skinner fancied that the study was untenanted.

Then he caught the glint of the Bounder's eyes, turned on him from the armchair. He started.

"You're here, Smithy!"

"Yes."

"What the thump are you sitting in the dark for?"

"Find out."

"Nice and polite to a fellow who's taken a lot of trouble for you, ain't you?" said Skinner, coming into the study.

He put on the light and stared at the Bounder. Vernon-Smith did not move. His face was white and his eyes glinted, and there was something in his expression that made Skinner vaguely uneasy.

"Anything up, old bean?" he asked.

The Bounder did not answer.

"Didn't it work?" inquired Skinner. Vernon-Smith laughed mirthlessly. The scheme had worked; but only to his detriment.

"Well, I did my bit," said Skinner. "The telegram went off in good time; there wasn't a hitch of any sort. Didn't that cad go?"

"Yes, he went."

"Then what—"

"Only he came back in time to see my father, and it all came out," said the Bounder. "That's all."

"Phew! But I don't see—" Skinner was perplexed. "He hadn't time to get back. We reckoned that if he went to Lantham he was booked till close on lock-up, whether he went by bike or train. Mean to say he changed his mind and turned back?"

Vernon-Smith's eyes burned.

"No; he had a warning before he got to Lantham."

"How on earth—"

"Redwing. He guessed what was on." Skinner whistled.

"Dash it all, Smithy; you let him go after Dallas and warn him! You could have stopped him."

"I kept him in the study till it was too late to go after Dallas, as I thought. I don't know how he overtook him in time; he must have hired a car, I should think. May have gone straight from

Quelch's study and telephoned for a taxi. I was certain it was too late, or I'd have kept him longer in the study—if I'd had to hold him by the neck, hang him! He's going to pay for it!"

"You're sure it was Redwing?"

"Who else could it have been? No one else knew or guessed. Redwing guessed, and told me so."

"But—but it's not really like Redwing to give you away," said Skinner slowly. "I—I suppose he thought it was too thick. It—it was rather thick. Smithy—I mean, from an ordinary chap's point of view. Redwing doesn't think about Dallas as you do, of course, and I dare say he thought the fellow ought to be warned."

It was extremely unlike Skinner to make peace; most unlike him to pour oil on the troubled waters. But the expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face alarmed Skinner a little. Skinner had often attempted to sow trouble between the ill-assorted chums of Study No. 4 and failed. But too serious trouble, in which Skinner himself might be involved, did not suit his book at all. He was feeling very uneasy.

The Bounder looked at him savagely and grimly.

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(Continued from page 13.)

"So you're defending him, are you?" he said. "You've got something to say for a fellow who gave a pal away?"

"Not exactly," said Skinner. "I don't mean that. I—I mean, it doesn't seem to him as it does to you or me. He would look on it as—well, to be plain, as a dirty trick."

"So it was a dirty trick," said the Bounder.

"Eh?"

"Dirty tricks are justified in dealing with a dirty trickster like Dallas."

"Well, that's all very well for us, Smithy; but the other fellows wouldn't think so, and the less said about the matter the better. We don't want any row over that spoof telegram," said Skinner in alarm.

Smithy's lip curled.

"Don't you be afraid; you won't get landed in it. I'm going to call Redwing to account; you will have nothing to do with it."

"Well, that's all right, of course," said Skinner, but he was still uneasy.

"I'm dope for," muttered the Bounder. "Done all along the line. Do you know what's happened? That cad Dallas gets my Easter holiday, and I'm left at Greyfriars over the vacation."

"Great pip! But your father—he wouldn't—"

"He has!"

"You must have cheeked him a lot, Smithy."

"Very likely. He stood a lot of cheek from me before Dallas came along. It's all changed now. I'm for school during the holidays, unless I choose to eat humble pie and give that interloper the glad hand."

"I'd do a lot rather than be left stranded here for the vac."

"I dare say you would! I'd be killed before I'd give in an inch," said the Bounder.

"Well, a chap has to give in to his father. Better think it over, old chap," urged Skinner. Harold Skinner had not been without hope of going home with Vernon-Smith for the holidays. Since the advent of Paul Dallas at Greyfriars the Bounder had been much more friendly with his former associate.

"I've thought it out. I'm not surrendering an inch," said the Bounder, with bitter emphasis. "If my father wants that interloping cad, let him have him; I won't sleep under the same roof! I can stand losing a vacation. I'd stand more than that rather than let Dallas crow over me!"

"He really isn't a chap to crow, Smithy—"

"Oh, shut up!" interrupted the Bounder fiercely. "I've had enough of that from Redwing."

He rose from the chair.

"Going down?" asked Skinner.

"Yes."

"I—I say—" The white, set bitterness in the Bounder's face alarmed Skinner again. He began to wish that he had taken no hand in Smithy's feud with the new junior.

"Do you know where Redwing is?"

"In the Rag. But—"

"You can come along if you want to see the entertainment," said the Bounder grimly.

"All the fellows are there now—"

"All the better."

"Look here, Smithy, you're wild now—let it rest for a bit," urged Skinner.

"Wait till you're cool. I don't like Redwing, and never did; but—"

"Cut it-out!"

"Look here—"

Vernon-Smith left the study without waiting for Skinner to finish. Skinner did not follow him down to the Rag. He went to his own study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The End of a Friendship!

TOM REDWING was standing by the fire in the Rag, in talk with the Famous Five, when Herbert Vernon-Smith came in.

They were talking of the Easter holidays. Redwing was going on a sea-trip with his father, the sailorman of Hawks-cliff, in a coasting vessel, and he was telling the Co. cheerfully about it. He did not think of disguising the fact that he was going to work on the coaster as a ship's boy during the trip, as he had sometimes worked before he came to Greyfriars. It was a holiday different from Harry Wharton & Co.'s, and they were keenly interested, and perhaps rather envied the sailorman's son in a good-natured way. His holiday was, as Bob Cherry expressed it, getting down to real things, and that idea quite appealed to the strenuous Bob.

Redwing ceased to speak suddenly as the Bounder came into the Rag.

He had avoided seeing his chum since Mr. Vernon-Smith had left, knowing that Smithy was in one of his blackest moods, and feeling that he was better left alone. In these days Tom had found it hard sometimes to avoid a serious quarrel with his chum; and he was keen to keep out of one if he could. If it was bound to come, as he at times feared, it could not come too late. And the vacation was close at hand now, and things might change for the better when the summer term started. Tom hoped so, at least.

But the look on Vernon-Smith's face caused him uneasiness. He could see that Smithy had come into the Rag with some set purpose, though as yet he could not guess what it was. It had not occurred to him that Smithy suspected him of having conveyed the warning to Dallas, which had knocked all the Bounder's cunning scheming to pieces. It was a natural suspicion on Smithy's part, knowing as he did how Redwing disapproved of his scheme, and knowing nothing of Paul's accidental meeting with Harry Wharton & Co. on the Lantham road. Indeed, had there been time, after Dallas had gone, for Redwing to warn him, Tom would have been sorely troubled between his obvious duty and his loyalty to his chum. It was only the knowledge that he could not have overtaken Dallas on the road that had saved him from having to choose between the two.

Quite ignorant of the suspicion which to the Bounder's mind was a certainty, Redwing watched his chum across the room uneasily, perturbed by the dark, evil look on Smithy's face. It was plain that there was trouble coming for somebody.

Vernon-Smith glanced round him, nodded carelessly to Snoop and Bolsover major, and then, as he saw Redwing by the fireplace, crossed over.

Harry Wharton & Co. made a movement to stroll away, leaving Redwing with his chum. Since the affair of the Rookwood match, they had little or nothing to say to Vernon-Smith.

"Don't go, you fellows," said the Bounder quietly.

The juniors paused.

"I've something to say that I want you to hear," added Vernon-Smith.

Bob Cherry looked restive.

"If you've come along to pick a row, Smithy, get it off your chest, and don't beat about the bush," he said. "I can tell you I'm getting a bit fed-up with your black looks!"

The Bounder smiled evilly.

"I've no row with you, Cherry."

"I don't care a straw whether you have or not!" said Bob gruffly. "And I can't say that I want specially to hear what you've got to say."

"Oh, I'd like to hear your opinion!" said Vernon-Smith. "What would you think of a fellow who turned his chum down—a chum who stood by him through thick and thin when he needed it—and betrayed him to a cad he was up against?"

The Famous Five stared curiously at the Bounder.

"He was speaking with perfect calmness, but there was a vibration in his voice that told of the deep rage he barely suppressed."

"What would you think of such a fellow?" asked the Bounder, still calm.

"Well, I shouldn't think much of him," said Bob Cherry, puzzled. "I don't see what you're driving at."

"And suppose," went on Vernon-Smith—"suppose the fellow who sold out his own pal, on a sickly scruple of conscience, owed everything he had to that pal—even the scholarship that kept him at school?"

Redwing turned white.

He could not doubt now that it was himself to whom the Bounder was alluding, though he could not understand why.

Harry Wharton broke out angrily: "Stop that, Smithy! How dare you say such things of a chap who's more decent than you will ever know how to be!"

"I dare say that, and more," said the Bounder; and his voice was loud now, and every fellow in the Rag heard it.

"That cad Redwing—"

"Smithy!" panted Tom.

Fellows gathered round on all sides now. A breathless crowd surrounded the group at the fireplace.

It was only too plain that there was going to be bad trouble. The Bounder's face was working with passion.

"That cur Redwing!" went on Vernon-Smith, his voice vibrating. "Every man here knows how I've stood by him. He came here poor, a nobody, a beggar! Fellows looked down on him; some cut him. I never did. I persuaded my father to sink a big sum of money in founding a scholarship, to give him a chance of getting into the school and becoming a Greyfriars man. He got the scholarship and came. He's pretended to be my friend ever since. Fellows have tried to make trouble between us, hinted that he was keen on palling with a millionaire's son, and I'd never hear a word. I've stood by him through thick and thin. Now he's turned me down and given me away—landed me into trouble with my father—all because he sets up to be a more particular chap than I am. If he was so particular, he should have thought of that before he made friends with me and led me to trust him. The cur—"

"Smithy!" Tom Redwing found his

voice. "You're mad, Smithy, to talk like that! For goodness' sake say no more now—don't say any more till you're cool!"

"You cur! Do you think I'm keeping on with you after you've sold me out?" hissed the Bounder. "I'm done with you from this minute! You cur! Take that!"

Smack!

The Bounder's open hand came across Tom Redwing's pale cheek, with a crack like a pistol-shot.

Tom staggered back, with a cry.

He was white as death, only the red mark of that savage blow showing on his colourless face.

"You rotter!" roared Bob Cherry furiously.

He plunged forward at the Bounder. Vernon-Smith did not recede.

"Keep out of this, Cherry! Redwing can defend himself, if he chooses. If he doesn't choose, it's no business of yours!"

Bob dropped his hands. His impulse was to send the Bounder spinning, but what Smithy said was true enough. Redwing could defend himself.

"You rotter!" repeated Bob, his blue eyes blazing. "If I were Redwing, I'd smash you!"

"I'm waiting for him to do it!"

Harry Wharton drew Bob back. It was not a matter for interference, though never had the captain of the Remove felt so powerfully tempted to handle Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Give the rotter what he asked for, Redwing!" said Bob, between his teeth.

All eyes were turned on the sailor-man's son.

Redwing was white, and his face was almost drawn. His lips quivered. The Bounder's mocking glance drew a flush into his pale cheeks. But he did not make a movement.

"I'm waiting, you cur!" said the Bounder.

"I shall not touch you, Vernon-Smith!" Tom Redwing choked. "I don't know what you're accusing me of—"

"Liar!"

"I swear I don't know! I've never done anything to make you think anything of the kind. But I'm done with you! I'll never speak to you again!" Tom's voice quivered with indignation. "You were a good friend to me once, and I've stood more for you for that reason than any other fellow would have stood. But it's all over now!"

"I'm waiting!" repeated the Bounder grimly.

"I shall not fight you, Vernon-Smith," said Redwing steadily. "We've been friends, and I refuse to do anything of the kind. Do you think you could hurt me more than you've done already? I never knew about your father founding the scholarship to give me a chance of getting into Greyfriars—you know I never knew. You told me afterwards—after it was too late. And then I would have resigned the scholarship, but you persuaded me to keep it on—" His voice choked. "After that, I would beg my bread at the street corners rather than keep anything that came from you or your father! I shall resign the scholarship, and I shall not come back to Greyfriars next term!"

"Redwing!" exclaimed Wharton.

The Bounder laughed jeeringly.

"Fine words! I'm waiting for you to put up your hands, you cur! You've sold me out, and you're going to pay for it!"

Redwing put his hands into his pockets.

"I shall not fight you!" he said.

"Coward!" taunted the Bounder.

Redwing's face crimsoned, but he made no movement. In those bitter moments his long-trying friendship was dead. But he would not, he could not, raise his hand against the fellow who had been his friend, once his staunch friend when he had needed one sorely.

"You think you can get out, with fine words, do you?" hissed the Bounder, his rage uncontrollable now. "By gad! I'll make you fight! I'll—"

"Stand back, you blackguard!" rapped out Harry Wharton; and he pushed the Bounder back as he was advancing furiously on Redwing.

"Hands off, Wharton!" roared the Bounder.

"Stand back, you cad!"

"I shall not fight you, Vernon-Smith!" said Tom Redwing steadily.

"Funk!" hooted Bolsover major.

Redwing whirled round on Bolsover. He would not touch the Bounder, but his temper was burning. He struck the bully of the Remove fairly in the face.

"That for you, Bolsover!" he exclaimed.

"Why, by gad, I—I—I'll—" panted Bolsover major.

He rushed on Tom Redwing, and in a moment they were fighting furiously.

"Leave him to me!" shouted Vernon-Smith savagely.

Crash!

Bolsover major went crashing along the floor of the Rag. His nose was streaming crimson, and one of his eyes was closed. He spluttered wildly as he rolled on the floor.

Redwing stood over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes, heedless of the Bounder.

"Get up, you rotter! Get up and call me a funk again, you cad!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Bolsover major sat up blindly.

"Oh, my hat!" Bolsover major caressed his nose with one hand, and his eye with the other. "You blessed wildcat—"

"Get up!"

Bolsover major staggered to his feet. But he did not approach Tom Redwing again.

He grinned sheepishly.

"That will do, old bean," he said. "I'll go on, if you like, but I take back what I said. You're not a funk. You're a blithering idiot!"

Some of the fellows laughed.

Redwing dropped his hands. His hard-held temper had blazed out uncontrollably for the moment.

"All right," he muttered. "I—I'm sorry I lost my temper, but—"

"All serene," said Bolsover major, with a wry grin. "Sorry I spoke. Can't say fairer than that. I'll hold your jacket while you give Smithy some of the same."

Redwing shook his head without replying.

"I'm waiting for you, Redwing," repeated the Bounder between his teeth. "You rotter! You traitor! You coward!"

Redwing was quite calm again now.

"I shall not fight you, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "You can say what you like—if you want to make me despise you more than I do now. But I shall not fight you!"

"Coward!"

Redwing made no answer to that.

"You rotter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Redwing's worth two of you in a scrap, and you know it. Hold your rotten tongue!"

"I'll make the cur fight!" said the

Bounder. "Will you put up your hands, Redwing?"

"No!"

"Then—" The Bounder sprang forward.

In a moment the Famous Five had collared him. In the grasp of their hands Vernon-Smith was swept off his feet.

"Throw him out!" shouted Ogilvy.

The Bounder struggled madly.

"You rotters! Let me go! Let me get at that coward! You hounds!"

"Outside!"

In spite of his struggles the Bounder was whirled along to the door of the Rag, and flung unceremoniously into the passage.

He landed there in a heap.

"Now come back, you unspeakable outsider, and you'll get the same again," exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The Bounder staggered up.

"You rotters!" he panted. "You—you—"

"Get out of it!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"You make me sick! Get out before you're kicked along the passage!"

And the Bounder, breathless, choking with rage, limped away.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Smithy!

BILLY BUNTER blinked into Study No. 4 in the Remove passage with a wary and watchful blink.

The Bounder was there.

He was smoking cigarette after cigarette, with a dark, savage face. His rancour was still unappeased, but he had not sought Tom Redwing since the scene in the Rag. Possibly he expected Tom to come up to the study as usual for prep, but the sailor-man's son did not come. He could wait, the Bounder thought savagely. For the moment his bitterness towards his one-time chum was greater than towards the "inter-lopier," who had gone home with his father. Dallas was his declared enemy, at least; Redwing had been his friend, and had betrayed him—that was how the Bounder regarded it. In his hasty wrath he had not waited for proof, had asked for none, had wanted none. It was certain enough to his bitter, suspicious mind, and that was enough for him. And at the moment he felt that he hated Redwing more than he hated Paul Dallas. Hatred was a feeling to which Herbert Vernon-Smith had grown very accustomed of late.

Bunter eyed him warily.

Bunter was curious. Many of the Remove fellows were curious to know what it was the Bounder had "got against" Tom Redwing. Not a man in the Remove believed what he had said—that Tom had let him down disloyally. They only wondered what had made even the suspicious, bitter-tempered Bounder believe such a thing of the chum who had always stood by him faithfully. Many were curious, and Bunter, in his extreme inquisitiveness, had come along to inquire. But he kept a very wary eye on the Bounder, as he blinked into Study No. 4. Vernon-Smith's look was not inviting.

"I say, Smithy—"

The Bounder gave him a black scowl.

"Get out!"

"But I say, old fellow—"

"Get out, you fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith looked round, as if for a missile. The Owl of the Remove stood ready to dodge, but he did not go. He wanted to know.

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"I say, Smithy, old fellow, you might tell a chap!" urged Bunter. "Lots of the fellows are wondering what you've got up against Redwing. Of course, I'm backing you up, Smithy, like—like anything."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"You can tell all the fellows, if they want to know," said Vernon-Smith. "Tell them the cur let me down, like a rotten sneak and traitor."

"That's all very well, Smithy, but, you see, it ain't true."

"What?"

"Tell a fellow just what he did," urged Bunter. "There must have been something. Has he bagged any of your currency notes?"

"You blithering idiot!"

"He hasn't given you away to a prefect, about your going pub-haunting at the Cross Keys?"

"Oh, get out!"

"Well, what was it?" asked Bunter. "I—I say, Smithy, what are you going to do with the cushion?"

Whiz!

Bunter, no doubt, guessed what Smithy was going to do with the cushion, for he dodged just in time. The cushion travelled across the passage and dropped against the farther wall.

The next moment Billy Bunter was blinking into the study again.

"I say, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith made a grab at the poker, and dragged it out of the fender. "Oh, my hat!"

Bunter slammed the door and fled. He did not want the poker.

Vernon-Smith threw himself into the armchair again, and lighted another cigarette. He smoked savagely, careless of the fact that it was time for prep, and that there would be trouble with his Form master the next morning. He cared nothing for that.

The door opened and Skinner came in.

Vernon-Smith gave him a morose look, but he pointed to the box of cigarettes on the table. If he was to have any friends left at all in the school, he had to be satisfied with fellows like Skinner now.

Skinner helped himself to a smoke and sat down. This was like old times to the cad of the Remove. There had been a time when he had shared that expensive and luxurious study with the Bounder, and they had been comrades in reckless rascality. All that had changed when the Bounder made friends with Redwing. But his friendship with Redwing was evidently at an end now, especially if the sailorman's son was leaving Greyfriars for good, as he had said. Old times were coming back in the Bounder's study, Skinner hoped. It was a pleasant prospect to Harold Skinner.

"There's a lot of excitement in the Remove, Smithy," he remarked. "You seem to have flown out at Redwing properly."

"I haven't finished with him yet!" snarled the Bounder. "I'll make him pay for selling me out!"

Skinner gave him a curious look.

"Some fellows asked me what the trouble was," he said.

"You can tell them, if you like—forged telegram and all," said the Bounder, with a sneer.

"I haven't mentioned the telegram, but I told them Redwing went after Dallas and fetched him back to see your father. You told me so, you know, and I thought he did."

"He did!" snapped the Bounder.

"It turns out that he didn't!"

"Oh, chuck it, Skinner. The role of

peacemaker doesn't suit you," said Vernon-Smith, with derisive contempt.

"What's your game?"

"I'm telling you what you may hear in any study in the passage. Redwing never went after Dallas!"

"Who did, then?" snarled the Bounder.

"Nobody!"

"Oh, don't talk rot! Dallas came back," snarled Vernon-Smith. "Somebody gave him the tip. Nobody knew but Redwing!"

"It was sheer chance," said Skinner. "Wharton and his crew were going over to Lantham, as it turns out, and they were hung up on the road, and your father passed them in his car. Dallas came along and he stopped to speak, and they told him your father had passed them going to Greyfriars, so of course he turned back."

The Bounder sat and stared at him. "I thought it was rather snick, when you told me," said Skinner, with a shake of the head. "Redwing had no time to get after Dallas, you know."

"I—I thought—"

"Well, you got it wrong, old bean." Skinner helped himself to another cigarette. "You ought to keep your temper a bit more, Smithy. I don't care about Redwing; but you're giving yourself away all along the line, you know. It doesn't pay."

"You're lying to me, Skinner," said the Bounder hoarsely. "It must have been Redwing—"

"You can ask Wharton, if you like," said Skinner tartly. "He told me! I don't like Wharton any more than you do, but you know jolly well that he doesn't tell lies."

The Bounder sat quite still.

He had broken with his chum, his only real friend at Greyfriars—struck him and taunted him, in a way that he knew never could be forgotten, if it could be forgiven. And for what? Because his savage, suspicious temper, waiting for no proof, had led him into a mistake. He had taken it for granted—there had seemed ample reason for that. He could not have guessed that there had been a chance meeting on the Lantham Road—such a thing could not have occurred to him. But—

Vernon-Smith rose at last. Without another word to Skinner, he left the study, and went along the Remove passage to No. 1. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were there, finishing prep.

Wharton looked up with a frown as the Bounder appeared in the doorway.

"Don't come in, Vernon-Smith," he said, very quietly. The contempt in his face made the Bounder flush.

"I want a word with you, Wharton?"

"Keep out of my study. You're not fit to enter any decent fellow's study. You're a rotter all through!"

"The worst rotter I've ever heard of," said Frank Nugent, his eyes gleaming at the Bounder. "You've driven a decent fellow out of the school with your purse-proud taunts. I'd give a good deal to see you kicked out of Greyfriars after him."

The Bounder breathed hard. He realised how thoroughly he must be condemned in his Form, when even the

quiet, easy-going Nugent spoke to him like this.

"I want to ask you a question," said Vernon-Smith thickly. "Somebody warned Dallas that my father was here, this afternoon, when he was riding to Lantham. I thought it was Redwing."

"Oh, we know all about it," said Wharton scornfully. "When we saw Skinner at Lantham, we knew who had sent Dallas that spoof telegram, and who had put him up to sending it."

"Did you warn Dallas?"

"Yes."

"Then it was not Redwing?"

"How could it have been, when he was at Greyfriars?" snapped Wharton. "I daresay he might have warned him if he'd had a chance—any decent fellow would chip in to stop such a dirty game. But as it happened, Dallas met us on the road, after we'd seen your father's car pass, and we told him that Mr. Vernon-Smith was at Greyfriars and not at Lantham."

"Redwing knew," muttered the Bounder. "I—I thought—"

"You thought?" said Wharton scornfully. "You thought—and that was enough to make you taunt Redwing with being dependent on your father! Enough to make you insult a fellow who's always been your friend, a better friend than you ever deserved. I suppose if your father had liked Redwing, and treated him a bit civilly, you'd have hated him as you hate Dallas."

Vernon-Smith started.

"Where's Redwing now?" he asked huskily.

"Gone up to Hawkscliff to see his father."

"At this hour?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"He's got leave to stay home for the night."

"But—he's coming back?"

"I believe so—till the end of the term. It's only a few days now," said the captain of the Remove.

The Bounder licked his dry lips.

"What's he seeing his father for—so late?"

"I didn't ask him, but I can guess, and you can guess. He's got to fix things now to leave Greyfriars. He's not coming back next term."

"It's all rot," said the Bounder hoarsely. "I never meant—I—I'd never have said what I did, if I'd known—the scholarship is his own, he's not called on to give it up. My father founded it, but it was open to all comers, and Redwing won it fairly in the examination. He's a fool to give it up."

"I should be the same kind of fool in his place," said the captain of the Remove. "He is not likely to give you a chance of throwing the same taunt in his face a second time."

"I—I never meant—"

"All the Remove heard what you said. You got your father to found the Memorial scholarship, to give Redwing a chance of getting in at Greyfriars. A real sporting thing to do—if you'd never mentioned it—never breathed a word about it. But that's not your sort." Wharton's lip curled.

"You were bound to throw it in the chap's face sooner or later. If Redwing kept it after that, he would not be the fellow I've always believed him to be. You're driven him out of Greyfriars."

The Bounder turned away without answering. His heart was sick within him.

ANSWERS
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The volume entitled "Eminent Statesmen of the Victorian Era" was going up and down the Remove passage in great style when Billy Bunter appeared upon the scene. "I say, you fellows," he bawled. "Stand clear!" "Oh, really, Cherry——" Crash! "Yaroooop!" roared the Owl of the Remove as Bob Cherry's prize whizzed through the air and landed on his ample walsteat. (See Chapter 12.)

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Parting of the Ways!

TOM REDWING was not seen by the Remove fellows again, till morning classes the following day.

He reached the school in good time, and came into the Remove room as the Lower Fourth gathered there.

All eyes turned upon him.

Bolsover major gave him a friendly nod, though Bolsover's nose was in a red and swollen state, and he had a dark shade round one eye. Several fellows greeted him with unusual cordiality. Even Skinner felt a little compunction. He had always been Redwing's enemy, for no reason but the dislike of a mean nature for a noble one. He had sneered at the sailorman's son, at the "school-pincher" in his usual way. Now the fellow was going—all the Remove knew that. A glimmering came into Skinner's mean, malicious mind, of how the matter looked to other fellows, and for once he was ashamed of himself.

Most of the fellows fully understood Redwing's action in deciding to give up his scholarship, but Skinner was not one of those. Much more than an ungenerous taunt would have been required to make Skinner give up anything of value. Harry Wharton & Co. were deeply sorry to know that Redwing was to go, that the next term

would not see him at Greyfriars. But they quite understood and sympathised.

Redwing's manner was very quiet, but his face was cheerful. His voice was as good-tempered as usual, as he answered the greetings of his friends. He did not glance at the Bounder, and seemed oblivious of the fact that Vernon-Smith was in the Form-room at all.

Smith's face was almost haggard.

During the night he had slept little; and the sleepless hours had been filled with reflection—black and bitter reflection. Anger had passed, and Smithy fully realised what he had done. His only friend, the only fellow he had ever cared two straws about was going—and it was he who had driven him out. That knowledge alone was a sufficient punishment for the headstrong Bounder. He wondered, wretchedly, whether it was even yet too late, but in his heart he knew that it was. What he had said and done could not be unsaid and undone. His angry blow Redwing might have forgiven, as he had forgiven the Bounder many things in the past; but the taunt of dependence was unforgivable. Poor Redwing had little in the world but his pride and self-respect; and he could not sacrifice those.

Mr. Queleh noticed nothing in morning classes; he was not as yet aware of Redwing's resolve. It was not for Tom to tell him; it was for his father to decide, and evidently Tom's visit to

Hawkscliff had been for the purpose of consulting with his father.

When the Remove left the Form-room for morning break, Harry Wharton & Co. joined Redwing, going out into the quad. Vernon-Smith hurried after them.

Bob Cherry swung round on him savagely.

"Keep your distance, you cad!" he rapped out. "By gum, if you begin any more of your rot I'll smash you!"

The Bounder gave him a look.

"I'm not going to row with Redwing," he said. "I want to speak to him, that's all. Mind your own business!"

"Keep your distance, anyhow!" Redwing flushed.

"I want to speak to you," said the Bounder, looking at him.

"There's nothing to say, Smithy," said Tom, with an effort. "I'm not owing you any grudge. But the less we have to say to one another the better."

"I must speak to you."

"Oh, all right!" Harry Wharton & Co. walked away, leaving the sailorman's son with his former friend.

"Sit down here!" The Bounder dropped on a seat under the elms, and Tom, after a moment's hesitation, sat down. "Redwing, I want to explain. I made a mistake yesterday——"

"It doesn't matter."

"I—I thought you'd gone after Dallas

and given him the tip and knocked my game into a cocked hat."

"I've guessed that since," said Tom quietly.

"I'm in an awful hole now," said Vernon-Smith, in a low voice. "Everything got the kybosh through Dallas coming back as he did. My father's turned me down, and I'm to stay at Greyfriars over the vacation."

"I'm sorry for that."

"You can't wonder that I was wild, thinking that you had done it."

Redwing looked at him steadily.

"I'm not sure what I should have done, if there'd been time for me to warn Dallas," he said. "It was a dirty trick—a dirty, treacherous trick!—and I couldn't have allowed it to go on if I'd been able to stop it. As it happened, I wasn't able to. You'd have succeeded in doing him if he hadn't happened to meet those fellows on the Lantham road."

"I know—now."

"You've found out your mistake," said Redwing, his lip curling. "If that makes any difference you needn't let it. I'm pretty certain that I should have warned Dallas if I could have."

"Even if you had, I shouldn't have acted as I did if I'd been cool," muttered the Bounder. "I know you don't think about the fellow as I do—I know you'd be down on such a dodge. Taking it that you had warned him, and spoiled the game, I—I'd overlook it—now."

Tom did not answer.

"I acted rottenly, Redwing—I know that. I'm not a fellow to eat humble pie, or apologise, as a rule—you know that, too! I'm willing to say I'm sorry for what happened in the Rag."

"That's all right."

"Well, then, if you don't owe me a grudge—"

"I don't!"

"You mean that?"

"With all my heart," said Tom. "I shall be only too glad to part friends, if you're willing."

The Bounder set his lips hard.

"Does that mean you're determined to go?"

"Yes; I can't do anything else."

"Not even if I apologise—if I ask your pardon before all the fellows who heard me last night?" said the Bounder, in a low voice.

"I wouldn't like you to do that. And it couldn't make any difference. I don't owe you a grudge, Smitty, and I don't forget that we've been friends. I don't forget, either, that it was decent of you, a millionaire's son, to make friends with a poor chap who got in here on a scholarship. It was generous of you to get your father to found that scholarship and give me a chance. I'm grateful for your good intentions. But I can't keep anything like that—after—"

Redwing paused.

"After I've thrown it in your face?"

Redwing coloured.

"Well, yes."

"I'd have bitten out my tongue sooner than say what I did, if I'd been cool."

"I believe you, Smitty. But the time would come when you'd say it again, all the same," said Redwing, with a faint smile, "and you'd despise me, too, and rightly, if I kept anything that came from you or your father, after you'd twitted me with it. I haven't much in the world to boast of, but even a foremost hand's son may have his pride."

"I want you to stay on."

Redwing shook his head.

"I'll do anything—say anything you like."

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"There's nothing to be said or done to alter facts. The fact is that I'm here on your father's bounty—much more so than Dallas—very much more so. You know that your father has money that was left him by Dallas' father, to pay his expenses here. Nothing of the kind in my case. You've groused a good deal at times because your father did not like me, and was irritated by your friendship with a mere nobody. Suppose he had liked me—treated me with kindness—I can see now that you'd have been jealous at once. You'd have hated me for it. You'd have treated me as you've treated Dallas. It was only your father's disliking me and disapproving of me that saved me from that. I can see it now."

The Bounder was silent, conscience-stricken.

Wharton had said the same, and his words had found an echo in the Bounder's own heart.

"You see, it won't do, Smitty," said Tom. "I'd never have entered for the scholarship if I'd known that you persuaded your father to found it for my sake. I might have guessed, but I didn't. It was not like Mr. Vernon-Smith to do such a thing;—but I knew he'd do anything you asked him. Still, I never guessed. You told me afterwards, one time when you were ratty. You ought not to have told me, Smitty. But I let that pass. I never knew you as I know you now. But—"

"It's that cur Dallas who's done this for me!" breathed the Bounder, clenching his hands.

"It isn't, Smitty. Something else might have put you into such a temper, and that taunt would have come out, just the same. A fellow says things that he's capable of saying."

Smitty bit his lip hard.

"Take a fellow like Wharton, or Bob Cherry. Do you think they'd have taunted a fellow, like that, whatever he did? If Wharton did a fellow a favour he wouldn't dream of mentioning it afterwards, if the fellows treated him ever so badly. It's the kind of thing that isn't done."

"There's a rotten streak in me," said the Bounder bitterly. "The fellows here didn't nickname me the Bounder for nothing. I'm the son of a purse-proud, self-made man, and I've got it in my blood. You always knew that."

"Perhaps I did. But there's a limit. I swear I don't owe you any grudge, Smitty; and I'm very anxious to part friends. I've never felt easy about it since I knew that I was here on your father's bounty. But I wouldn't hurt you, as I thought, by making any fuss about it. Now, you've let out that you look on me as a hanger-on—"

"I didn't—I don't! That's false!" burst out the Bounder, passionately.

"You know that's false, Redwing."

"You don't think it exactly, Smitty, but you feel it," said Tom. "You couldn't have spoken as you did otherwise."

"You won the scholarship in competition with twenty fellows or more. It's your own property."

"You didn't think like that yesterday."

"I did, and I do now. You're under no obligation to me or to my father, if you stay here."

"I'm under more obligation to your father, if I stay here, than Dallas is. And you know what you think of Dallas."

"You mean that you're determined to go?"

"I mean that I must go."

"But your father, Mr. Redwing, won't let you throw away all your chances

like this!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, catching at a straw.

Tom smiled.

"I saw my father last evening," he said. "He would never have stood in my way. It was a blow to him when I gave up the sea and came to a public school. He always wanted me to go to sea with him."

"And you're going?"

"Yes."

"You've told him about—"

"Not a word. You don't think I'd say anything against you? I've told him that I want to give up my scholarship and go to sea with him—which is the truth. He's jolly pleased!"

"You want to go?"

"I've always wanted to go to sea. I thought, after passing through Greyfriars I'd start on better terms, that's all. But I'm quite willing to start as my father did. I was going on a trip with him, before the mast, in the Easter vacation, anyhow. I shall go just the same—only I sha'n't come back here next term!"

"The Head—"

"The Head will accept my resignation of the Memorial Scholarship when my father tells him it's decided for me to leave. He will have no choice in the matter, even if he disapproves. I had no one to consult but my father, and I knew he would approve."

"Then it's settled?" muttered the Bounder wearily.

"Quite!"

"Nothing will make you stay on?"

"It's impossible!"

"You can throw over a friendship like that?"

"Was it I who threw it over, Smitty?" said Redwing quietly. "When money comes between, or a taunt about money, friendship is at an end!"

"You're going?" said the Bounder. Even yet he seemed unable to believe it. "Nothing I can say—or do—will make any difference?"

"Impossible!"

There was a long pause.

"If you'd let me say a word before I go, Smitty—one word about your own affairs," said Redwing diffidently.

"I'm leaving on Saturday, and we shall never see one another again. But Dallas will be back here next term."

The Bounder ground his teeth at the mention of the name.

"He's not the sort of fellow you think, Smitty," said Redwing earnestly. "He's a decent kid in every way. If your father treated him as he's treated me, you wouldn't hate him as you do. You're spoiling your own life, Smitty. The way you look at things. Your father is kind to him because he's the son of an old friend who once did him a service. That's all. In the same circumstances, he'd have treated me as he treats Dallas. Try to look at it reasonably, Smitty, and—chuck up your feud with Dallas next term, and stop exasperating your father. No good can come of it!"

"You're going?"

"Yes, yes!"

The Bounder rose from the bench. His teeth were set.

"I've never made but one friend," he said. "Never cared a straw for any fellow but you, or any man but my father. That cur has come between me and them both. My father's turned me down, and you're throwing me over. It's Dallas' doing from first to last. Dallas shall pay for it all! I'll throw everything up now but one thing—I'll get that hound kicked out of Greyfriars, and I'll stop at nothing to do it!"

"Smithy!"
"Will you cut out all you've said, and stay at Greyfriars?" demanded the Bounder harshly.
"I can't!"
"That settles it, then!"
And without another word or look at his lost friend, the Bounder of Greyfriars tramped away.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Bow-wow!"
"But I say—"
"Scat!"

It was breaking-up day at Greyfriars School, and most of the fellows were in high, indeed hilarious, spirits. But William George Bunter was in a state of doubt and uncertainty.

It had been definitely settled—by Bunter—that he was going home for Easter with Harry Wharton & Co. But so far as Wharton was concerned the matter seemed still indefinite.

That was a very unpleasant state of affairs on breaking-up day, and Bunter felt justly peeved.

Certainly, whenever he had spoken to Wharton on the subject the captain of the Remove had replied with an emphatic negative. But on some subjects Bunter declined to take "No" for an answer. Emphatic negatives, on such a subject as this, seemed to Bunter mere jests in rather bad taste. So the matter was settled on his side and unsettled on Wharton's, which could not be considered really satisfactory on the last day of the term.

The Remove passage was a scene of hilarity. Bob Cherry had won a prize that term. It was very unexpected. Never before had Bob won a prize; never again was he likely to do so. Skinner wondered—and stated his wonder aloud—by what mysterious mistake R. Cherry had got into the prize-list. If it was not a mistake, according to Skinner, it was a miracle—and the age of miracles was past.

Naturally, Bob was celebrating that uncommon occurrence.

The prize was a large, handsome volume, gilt-edged, ponderous, and entitled "Lives of Eminent Statesmen in the Victorian Era." As reading in matter there was not much to be said of it. The leaves were uncut, and likely to remain so. But as a football, it had its uses. It was now serving as a football in the Remove passage, and a dozen fellows were joining in the game, which looked like a mixture of Rigger and Soccer, with a dash of boxing.

The "Eminent Statesmen of the Victorian Era" went up and down the Remove passage in great style.

"I say, you fellows," bawled Bunter. "Wharton, you beast, what about the train?"

"Stand clear!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Crash!

"Yaroooop!" roared Bunter.

The "Eminent Statesmen of the Victorian Era" whizzed through the air and landed on Bunter's ample waistcoat.

William George Bunter was strewn along the Remove passage as if he had been smitten by a hurricane.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well stopped!"

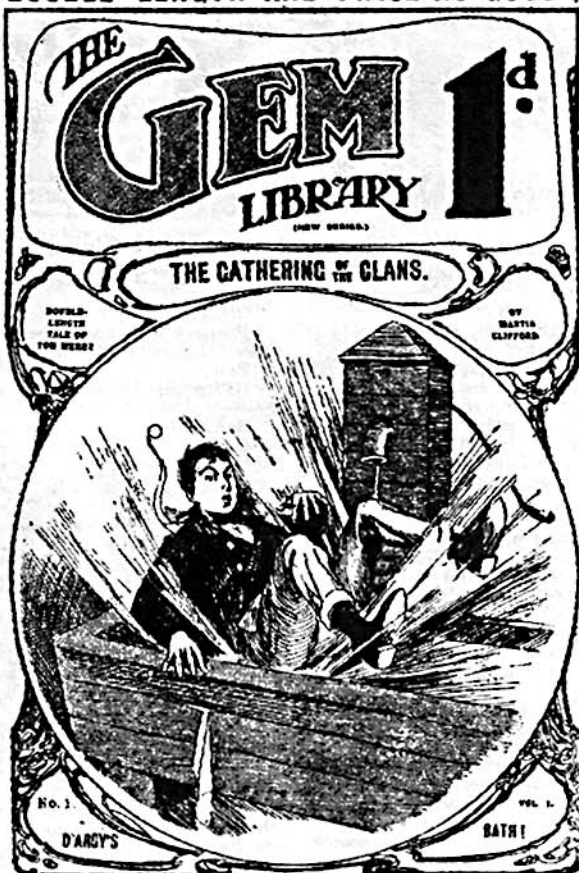
"Yaroooooooop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the brake!" roared Bob Cherry.

And he feldd the "Eminent Statesmen" and rushed for the stairs, and the hilarious crowd rushed after him.

Congratulations to The "GEM"—Our Companion Paper—which also celebrates its 1,000th ISSUE this week!

DOUBLE-LENGTH AND TWICE AS GOOD!



This is a reproduction in miniature of The "GEM" Library Cover No. 1 (New Series) which appeared Thursday, February 13th, 1908.

Bunter sat up and gasped.

By the time the Owl of the Remove had his second wind, the brake was rolling away for the railway station, with the Famous Five in it. Billy Bunter rolled out of the House in time to see it vanish.

"Beasts!" yelled Bunter, by way of valediction.

And he rolled back into the House.

It looked as if the Owl of the Remove was not going to Wharton Lodge for Easter, definitely as he had settled that point.

Billy Bunter looked for Lord Mauleverer, but Mauly had gone early. He looked for Peter Todd, but Toddy was in the brake with the Famous Five. He came on Hazeldene, and caught him by the arm.

"I say, Hazel, old chap—"

"Hook it! I've got to get over to Cliff House for my sister."

"I'll come with you," said Bunter. "Marjorie will be jolly glad, you know. I— Yaroooop!"

Hazeldene had vanished by the time Bunter picked himself up again.

In a very wrathful state of mind, Bunter rolled into the Remove passage again. For some inexplicable reason, that gorgeous mansion, Bunter Court, did not seem to attract him for the vacation. But there was a new idea in his fat brain, and he rolled into Study No. 4, where, at the window, the Bounder of Greyfriars stood, watching the merry faces in the quad with a black brow.

"I say, Smithy, old chap—"

Vernon-Smith looked round sourly. Not a man had come to his study to say good-bye to him. Redwing had gone a couple of days ago; now the rest were going, and even Skinner had not remembered to give the Bounder a look-in before he went.

Bunter gave him an amicable blink.

"Smithy, old chap, I've been thinking about you a lot," he said. "Horrid for you to be left stranded all on your own, what?"

"Mind your own business!"

"I'm awfully sorry for you, Smithy and—"

"Get out!"

(Continued on page 23.)

HERE'S AN EGGSCITING TAIL WITH A THOUSAND LARFS!



Being the adventures and misadventures of Frank Fearless, one of the youthful heroes of St. Sam's.

I.
"WHERE is my wandering girl to-night?"

The Headmaster of St. Sam's asked himself that question for the umpteenth time.

His face was pale and gawnt and haggard, as he tramped two and fro in his study; and the dark rings round his eyes showed that he had spent a sleepless day, and gone without his usual after-dinner nap.

It was locking-up time at St. Sam's; and the Head's study, brilliantly lighted with tallo candles, and with a fire roaring up the chimibly, was very snug and cosy. But out in the dark quadrangle the wind howled and shrieked and groned, and it was reigning cats and dogs. Ever and anonymously, the sky would be lit up by a vivid clap of thunder; while the lightning rumbled and roared in a trooly terrifying manner.

It was a wild nite! The sort of night when everybody would be huddled round their fires, thanking their lucky stars they were not out in the elements.

But somebody was out in them—somebody who was very near and dear to the Head—somebody whom he loved almost as dearly as he loved himself.

His daughter—Molly Birchmall—was out in that fearful storm!

The Head gave a deep grone, as he pictured his charming daughter being buffeted by the thunder, and blown along by the lightning, and drenched by the roaring wind. He rung his hands in despare.

"Where is my wandering girl to-night?" he repeated.

But the only response was the feece rattling of the windows, and the splashing of the rain as it poured through a fsher in the sealing.

The Head stood underneath the leakage for a minnit, and let the rain cool his fevered brow. He was thus engaged, when there came a tap on the door of his study, and Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, came in. He seemed mildly serprized to see the Head taking a shower-bath.

The Head turned a haggard face to the Form-master.

"Where is my wandering girl to-night?" he wailed.

"Is that a conundrum, sir?"

"No, Lickham, it is not!" thundered the Head. "It is the anguished cry of a hartbroken father! I repeat, where is my wandering girl to-night?"

"How should I know, sir? Are you allooking to your daughter Molly?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,000

"Of corse!"

"Possibly she has gone to the pictures," suggested Mr. Lickham.

"Pah!"

"Or to the Masked Ball at Muggleton—"

"Bah!"

"Or else she is in her own room, engaged in darning your sox."

"Yah! Be done with your foolish conjectures, Lickham. My daughter has vanished! She has been missing all day. At an early hour this morning, she flounced out of this study in a huff, and she has not returned! I am distraut! I am undone!"

"Yes, I noticed that," said Mr. Lickham, glancing at a gap in the Head's wastecoa, where a couple of buttons had burst. "But this news of yours, sir, is most, disquieting! Where is your daughter?"

"Fool!" snapped the Head. "Would I have asked you, if I knew? Are you a parrot, Lickham, that you must repeat my questions?"

The Head stepped away from the spot where the rain was coming through, and he mopped his streaming bald pate with a handkerchief. Then he spoke again, and his tone was not so snappy.

"Let me eggspain to you, Lickham, the why and wherefore of my daughter's disappearance. This morning, it was my painful duty to pronounce sentence of the sack upon one of your pupils—Frank Fearless! He has been a sauce of trouble since he came to this school, and I do not relish his wild ways. I was in a very peppery mood this morning—as sour as vinegar, and as fiery as musterd. I sent Fearless to the punishment-room, where he is now lying under sentence. To-morro morning, the gates of St. Sam's will clang behind him, and he will never darken these doors again."

"What, never?" gasped Mr. Lickham.

"No, never!"

"Fearless must leave St. Sam's?"

"By the first post in the morning," said the Head, whose aggitation caused him to get a bit mixed. "When my daughter heard that Fearless was to be sacked, she came to me with tears in her eyes, and begged me to give the young scamp another chance. She pleaded with me most eloquently, Lickham, but I stood firm, and hardened my hart like Faro of old. Then, shaken with sobs and blinded with tears, Molly groped her way out of this study. She has not been seen since!"

Mr. Lickham looked very grave.

"Have you taken any steps to find her, sir?" he asked.

"I have left no turn unstoned," was the reply. "I tellyfoned to Hawkeye, the famous detective, and his men have been scouring the countryside all day, armed with microscopes and magnifying-glasses. Every hour or so, Hawkeye rings me up to report progress. So far, there isn't any."

The Head sighed; and at the same moment his tellyfone-bell rang.

Eagerly, he snatched up the receiver. "That you, Hawkeye? Any news of my daughter?"

"We have not seen so much as her shadow, sir," said the teck.

"And you call yourself a detective?" sneered the Head. "A very defective detective, in my opinion! Did you find any cloos?"

"We picked up a trail, and followed it for hours," said Hawkeye. "It led us over hill and dale for many weary miles, and the tracks came to a halt at last, outside some stables. We then realised that we had been following up the hoof-marks of a horse!"

"Dolt!" hissed the Head. "Blundering booby! When you come to me, cap in hand, for your fee, you will be unlucky! You were engaged to follow up the fairy footprints of my dainty daughter—not the crood hoof-marks of a cart-horse!"

"Doctor Birchmall! You do not appreciate our difficulties. Searching for your daughter is like hunting for a needle in a haystack. All day long, my men have been crawling around the countryside on all fours, with their noses to the ground, making a minute eggamination of every blade of grass. In the hope of discovering your daughter. But there are a good many blades of grass hereabouts, and—"

"Enuff!" snapped the Head. "I'm fed-up with you and your blundering assistants. Do not dare to ring me up again to report progress, when there is none to report!"

So saying, the Head jabbed the receiver on to its hooks, and hurled the tellyfone from him in disgust.

"These detectives, Lickham," he growled, "cannot detect anything unless it is dangled under their very noses! We can eggspect no help from them. Kindly remove your mortar-board, Lickham, and put on your thinking-cap, and tell me what I ought to do."

Mr. Lickham put out his tung and licked his mistosh—a little habit he had when he was deep in thought.

Prezzantly a bright idea occurred to him.

"Go out and look for Molly yourself, sir," he suggested.

"What in this awful storm?" cried the Head. "And get soaked to the skin, and blown away, and struck by lightning, and hit on the head with a thunderbolt? In any case, I could not venture aboard on such a night, for I have pawaed my mackintosh."

"But your daughter may be in peril, sir—in dire and deadly danger—"

"That is no reason why I should risk my own skin," said the Head. "Look here, Lickham, I think you had better go."

"Me?" gasped Mr. Lickham.

"Yes. If you meet with a miss-hap—if a tree crashes down on top of you, and flattens you out like a pancake—I will see that you are given a hansom berrial."

Mr. Lickham groaned.

"If I set out on this mad mission I shall probably lose my life," he said.

"Yet you did not seem very perturbed at the thought of me losing mine," the Head reminded him. "Here, take this electric-torch, and go and search for my

daughter. Seek her far and wide. Eggsplore every ditch and dyke; thrust your arm into every rabbit-hole. Beat down every hedge and clime every tree. Molly must be found!"

With a shaking hand Mr. Lickham took the electric-torch which the Head handed him. Then he moved reluctantly to the door.

"Do not dare to show your face again at St. Sam's without my daughter!" said the Head. "I am in terrible anguish of mind, but I think I'll go to bed and sleep it off. If you succeed in finding Molly, wake me up when you come back; if you fail to find her, don't trouble to come back at all. Do you get me, Lickham?"

"I will do my best, sir," muttered the unhappy Form master.

And he quitted the Head's study just as Tubby Barrell of the Fourth, who had been listening at the keyhole, scuttled away down the passidge like a fat rabbit.

II.

HIS eyes gleaming with egg-sitement, Tubby sped away to the punishment-room, where Frank Fearless was lying under sentence of the sack. The fat junior rapped on the door with his knuckles and put his lips to the keyhole.

"Are you there Fearless?"

"Yes," came a startled voice from within. "Who's there?"

"Me—Tubby Barrell. I say, old fellow, something dreadful has happened! The Head's daughter has disappeared!"

"Grate Scott!" cried Frank Fearless.

"She went off this morning in a huff bekwase the Head refused to pardon you, and she hasn't been seen since," said Tubby Barrell. "She's out in this awful storm, most likely, and the Head's simply frantick about it. He's had a search-party of detectives out all day. As you're a grate pal of Miss Molly, I thought you'd like to know."

"Rather!" said Frank Fearless. "Run away now, Tubby, before anybody finds you jawing to me. I want to be alone. I want to think."

When the fat junior had gone, Frank Fearless paced two and fro in his prison. His hands were tightly clenched, his eyes were gleaming with egg-sitement.

"Miss Molly missing!" he cried. "Went off this morning, and hasn't returned! My hat! It looks to me like fowl play. Poor little chicken! I wonder if the gipsies have got her?"

Such a possibility had not occurred to the slow-witted Head, or to the addressable Mr. Lickham. But Frank Fearless was a fellow of keen perception. He had a marvellous knack of putting two and two together and making them five.

As he strode up and down the punishment-room, kicking the furniture right and left, Frank reckerlected the last occasion when Miss Molly had fallen into the clutches of the gipsies. He had rushed gallantly to her reskew, and had fought and foiled the would-be kid-nappers. But he had heard them threaten to capture Miss Molly sooner or later, and hold her to ransom.

The more he thought about it the more convinced Frank Fearless became that his girl chum had again fallen into the hands of the Philistines. Somewhere, out in that storm-swept waist of countryside, Molly was held captive in a caravan. Frank Fearless choked with rage at the thought of her slim wrists being notted together with rope, and a pair of handcuffs fastened to her ankles, and possibly a gag crammed into her pretty red mouth.

Frank's own troubles were forgotten now. He was to be sacked from St. Sam's on the morrow; he was to be cast fourth on his neck. But what did that matter now? Molly was in danger! Molly, who had been such a brick to him, and who had saved him time and again from the viles of the Head's wrath.

"She must be saved!" cried Frank Fearless through his clenched teeth. "She must be found, and reskewed, and brought back! And I must be her gallant night-errant!"

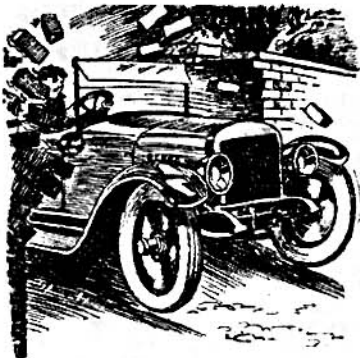
He strode to the window and flung it wide. A powerful gust of wind blew in, bowling him over backwards. Scrambling to his feet, he rushed again to the window, and drew himself up on to the sill and looked out into the opake darkness.

Far, far below, lit up by vivid flashes of lightning, was the school quadrangle.

The window of the punishment-room was at least a thousand feet from the ground, and even a cat-burglar would have thought twice about making the descent.

But Frank Fearless never thought twice about anything.

There was a rain-pipe close to the outer sill, and Frank gripped it with both hands and swung himself out through the window. Then, with the



The Flying Fury crashed clean through a brick wall which collapsed like a house of cards.

agility of a munky, he slithered down the pipe.

Down he went—down, down, down into an abyss of darkness. The wind whistled and shrieked around his head, and a sudden streak of lightning struck his wrist-watch and shivered it to atoms. The rain-pipe wobbled and swayed under his weight, but he hung on grimly.

Then, to Frank's horror, the pipe came to a sudden full-stop. It had been broken off in the middle, half-way to the ground. And now there was a sheer drop of five hundred feet.

For one dizzy moment Frank Fearless clung to the eggstream end of the pipe.

"Here goes!" he panted.

And, with the words, he let go. Down, down, down! Falling, falling, falling through an affinity of space.

What would the St. Sam's fellows say in the morning when the mangled, lifeless body of Frank Fearless was found lying in a twisted heap on the flagstones?

They wouldn't say anything, bekwase the body wouldn't be there!

Frank Fearless was one of those fortunate fellows who always manage to fall on their feet. And it was on his feet he landed now, with a jarring shock that shook every bone in his body.

Cuffed and buffeted by the fierce wind, Frank battled his way through the darkness in the direction of the Head's private garridge. It was here that he had housed his car, the Flying Fury.

Frank switched on the powerful headlights and eggsamined the car. Then he uttered a cry of rage.

"Some awful rotter has punctured all the tyres! I shall have to take 'em off and fit spares."

No doubt it was the Head who had done this dastardly deed out of spite. But Frank Fearless didn't stop to wonder who had committed the outrage. He wrenched off the punctured tyres and fitted new ones, and chafed at the delay.

At last all was in readiness.

Frank Fearless sprang on to the soap-box which served as a driver's seat, and steered his way out of the garridge.

The engine made an awful din. It kept on back-firing, and snorting, and rumbling. The powerful headlights swept over the quad, making it as light as day.

Suddenly an upper window was opened and a nightcapped head was thrust out.

"Who goes there? Who has dared to brake into my garridge in the middle of the night? Stop thee! Stop thee!"

"The Head!" muttered Frank Fearless.

And, realising that he was in danger of discovery, he put on top speed and dashed down to the school gates.

The gates were closed and locked, for it was long past locking-up time. But Frank Fearless didn't worry about that. Increasing his speed to the highest maximum, he set the Flying Fury at the gates, and she went through them like a knife through butter.

There was a terrific crashing and smashing; and Frank Fearless was through and away.

The Head, gazing spellbound from his bed-room window, saw the Flying Fury flash down the lane, to be swallowed up in the cavernous darkness of the night.

Frank Fearless was not travelling aimlessly. He knew eggsactly where he wanted to go; and he lost no time in getting there.

In a lonely meadow, several miles from St. Sam's, stood the gipsy encampment; and Frank had no doubt that he would find Miss Molly there.

He did not stop to reflect that he would be one against many—one unarmed junior against a whole tribe of savvidge gipsies. The grater the odds against him, the better he liked it. Frank was simply spoiling for a scrap; and his blod boiled at the thought of Miss Molly being at the mercy of those swarthy-faced skoundrels.

He raced on through the blinding storm. Never had the Flying Fury travelled at such a dizzy speed. So fast was it flying that Frank had no time to take corners. When he reached a bend in the road, he simply smashed his way through hedges and over ditches, and picked up the road again at a point farther on.

Prezzantly, in the darkness, he crashed clean through a brick wall. It collapsed like a house of cards, and hefty bricks came raining down. But Frank Fearless was a mile ahead before the bricks had time to hit the ground.

At last he jammed on the brakes and slowed down. Ahead of him he could see a blaze of light, and a shower of sparks ascending to the sky.

"The gipsies' camp-fire!" he muttered. And so it proved.

(Continued on page 26.)

THE SILENT VOICE! Although no words are spoken—no figure disturbs the blackness of the night, Jack Horner, answering some strange, all-compelling power that travels through the ether, finds himself leaving his friends to walk into the arms of the man who is his bitterest enemy!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
Lionel
Day



A Thrilling New Story of Mystery and Intrigue, Introducing Jack Horner and his Best Pal Squall, a Wolf-dog!

Bill to the Rescue!

FOR the thousandth part of a second Jack Horner stared at that incredible violation of all the known laws of gravity. How came it that Squall, without any visible means of support, was standing suspended in the air with his hind legs about a foot from the ground?

Then, with a terrible shock of suddenness, the meaning of what he was witnessing dawned upon him. For round Squall's neck were fastened a pair of sinuous hands. Even in that light Jack could see the long, claw-like nails of the fingers of those hands. And, following the direction from which those hands came, he glimpsed a pair of muscular wrists and wide silken sleeves draped by the leaves and branches of the undergrowth.

Brilliant Sing had come on him from behind. While he was dreaming his dreams of triumph, while he was thinking himself such a hero, the Chinaman, with unerring instinct, had nosed out his hiding-place. And now he was having his revenge. He had seized his opportunity to deal with the boy's dangerous ally first. He had caught Squall in a strangle hold by the throat.

The sight was sufficient to rouse Jack to a very storm of fury. Reckless of the odds, he rushed in head down. A knee quickly raised knocked him sideways, but he recovered his feet in an instant.

"You brute! You murderous, yellow brute!" he shouted. "Let go my dog!"

Jack closed with the Chinaman. He had flung his arms about the man's wrist and was kicking at him with his heavy boots. Catching sight of that yellow, impassive face among the leaves, he struck at it with all his might. Though there was not much force about those blows, or much that need have worried his antagonist in that attack, had he had to deal with Jack alone, they had the effect of forcing Brilliant Sing towards other tactics. Risking everything, he withdrew one hand from Squall's throat, while with the other he

still held the straggling dog in the air. Jack saw that disengaged hand grope among the silken robes he wore, and he at once divined his intention. He was going to use his knife.

Forgetful of himself, thinking only of Squall, the boy clutched frantically at the man's arm, jerking his fingers away just in time from the place in which he kept the weapon hidden. Throwing all his weight upon that arm he made the Chinaman stagger back. As he did so even his strength was unequal to the task of keeping his equilibrium and still keeping his clutch on Squall's throat. Jack saw the dog slip to the ground and lie there gasping.

"Home, Squall!" he shouted, thinking only of his faithful companion's safety and not of his own. "Home—quick, I tell you!"

As if summoning together all his strength to obey his master's order, the wolf dog staggered to his feet, and with slavered jaws wide open, staggered through the undergrowth on to the grassy track.

"Home, Squall!" Jack shouted after him.

As Jack uttered those words he released his hold of the Chinaman's arm and sprang back. It was his intention to slip through the low-hanging undergrowth, where his tall opponent would be unable to follow him. But in the darkness he never saw the branch that hung suspended just behind his head. As he backed swiftly it caught him on the nape of the neck and knocked him face forward at the very feet of the Chinaman. Instantly those long, sinuous hands closed upon him. He was jerked to his feet; something was pressed into his mouth, stifling the cry that rose to his lips. Another moment and, borne in Brilliant Sing's arms, he was being carried swiftly through the woods.

His first thought when he recovered his senses somewhat was to wonder why Brilliant Sing was not dealing with him there and then. The man was a murderer who had sought to take the life of a defenceless old lady. He knew that it was the boy who had foiled him

in that attempt; and yet he was not using the knife which he had hidden away. Why, Jack wondered.

Now they had emerged from among the trees and were racing across the park. Jack had a vision of the great house which he had seen Black Michael enter earlier in the evening. Was that master fiend in hiding somewhere? A chill of apprehension seized upon him that perhaps Brilliant Sing was taking him there to the leader of the gang.

But the Chinaman skirted the gardens and made straight across the park. Now, with cat-like agility, he had climbed the iron fence on the other side and stood holding his burden. More trees closed about them, and then they emerged on a road which ran by the side of the canal parallel to the tow-path along which Jack had trudged that day.

There flashed into the boy's mind a recollection of the conversation he had overheard between Brilliant Sing and Black Michael. The Chinaman had explained that a car, driven by Curly, was waiting for him at the end of a certain lane. It was to that car that he was obviously being taken. And he knew only too well what his next destination would be. Before the sun rose the following morning he would be a helpless prisoner in that opium den in Limehouse. The horror of that thought filled him with a sudden frantic strength and energy. Freeing one arm, he tore the handkerchief from his mouth, and before the Chinaman could stop him he had whistled long and shrilly. The Chinaman's reply was a very drastic one. He paused in his tireless lolling run, and, flinging Jack to the ground, held him there with his hands pressed on his throat. The boy could see the glare of cruelty in his eyes.

"Me breakee all your fingers one time for that, and cuttee liver out!" he hissed.

It seemed to Jack that he intended to carry out his purpose there and then, and as a preliminary to strangle him first. That pressure increased steadily upon his throat until he could no longer

breathe. He felt the blood collecting in his head. The trees of the canal bank, the good fresh English scenery, grew misty before his bolting eyes. He was losing consciousness. And then, when it seemed that he could no longer endure that torture, from a long way off—so it appeared to his ears—came the sound of a dear, raucous, familiar voice.

"Jack, lad—Jack, where are you?"

Instantly the Chinaman released his hold of Jack's throat and snatched him up in his arms. Jack lay there helpless, sobbing for breath, feeling as if his lungs would never work properly again, that his windpipe had been permanently contracted.

"Jack—Jack, where are you?"

It was Bill Bowker who was calling him—Bill Bowker, not far away, as he had dreamed at first, but quite close at hand, separated only by the width of the canal.

Even in his then dazed state the boy realised what must have happened. Squall, following the orders he had received, had gained the Emerald. Once there he had tried to indicate to Bill Bowker the dangers by which his master was beset. Remembering how the dog had behaved on a similar previous occasion, the skipper must have followed the dog on deck and tried to understand what exactly it was Squall wished him to do.

And while he was trying to translate the dog's substitute for language, Jack's whistle had rung out. Instantly Squall must have darted along the tow-path in the direction from which that sound came. Bill Bowker, following, was now trying to make out where Jack was.

"It ain't no use your pulling at me like that, Squall," he heard the old man exclaim protestingly. "I don't see where the lad's got to! Jack! Where the blazes are you, Jack?"

Brilliant Sing had evidently taken alarm for he was no longer running now, but walking very cautiously, taking advantage of every bit of cover that the willow-trees, growing sparsely on the bank of the canal, afforded him. Jack tried hard to shout some intelligible words, but his throat was still too painful. As a substitute he gave vent to a gurgling sound. Instantly the Chinaman crammed a silken scarf into his mouth, holding it there with the palm of his hand. But the cry had been heard from the other bank.

"Gosh! What was that, Squall? It came from you side."

There was silence for a moment during which space Jack's heart beat furiously. Oh, if only Bill would try and cross the canal. Then he remembered, with a sense of sickening despair, that the nearest bridge was a mile further back, and that long before old Bill could reach him by that route he would be well on his way to London with Brilliant Sing. Help was so near that, even in that light, the skipper of the Emerald could have hit the Chinaman with a pebble with absolute accuracy. And yet, because of that channel of water, he could not gain his freedom.

He glanced despairingly across the canal, feeling Brilliant Sing's grip on his body increase threateningly as he moved his head slightly to do so. He could make out old Bill's figure in his high jack boots running along the bank, holding Squall by a chain attached to the animal's collar.

It was clear that the skipper had tumbled to the fact that the boy was somewhere on the other side of the canal, for he stopped every few yards to stare across the water—to shout Jack's name, and to argue with Squall as if he were another human being.

"Jack! Jack! For the love of Mike where are you, lad? It's no use your going on like that, my dog. Don't I tell you I can't see him! Yes, I know he's there, but I ain't a bloomin' owl as can see in the dark, let alone through all them dratted willow-trees! Jack!"

The Chinaman's movements were so slow and cautious now that Bill Bowker, on the other bank, had drawn ahead of the Chinaman. Suddenly Brilliant Sing stopped altogether, his hand pressed more firmly on Jack's mouth. The boy, trying to discover the meaning of that halt, saw that the line of willow-trees had suddenly ceased—that to proceed farther his captor must make a dash across the open. And obviously the Chinaman was reluctant to do that. There flashed into Jack's mind the words he had overheard Black Michael use that night:

"A Chink like you would be a landmark in this place."

Brilliant Sing, aware that his Oriental clothes would afford a clue which the police might very easily follow up, was frightened lest Bill Bowker should catch even a glimpse of him.

"Jack, give us a shout, lad! Make some sort of noise, if it's only a squeal!"

As Bill's voice thundered across the water, Jack struggled frantically in the Chinaman's arms, but the only effect of his efforts was to bring into action all the other's Oriental cruelty. Noiselessly swinging the boy across his knee, he pressed back his head until it almost seemed that Jack's neck must break, while the silk scarf effectively prevented any sound escaping from his lips.

Jack was in despair. He was beginning almost to wish that Bill Bowker would return to the Emerald so that this torture might stop, when a curious thing happened.

Up to that moment the night had been very still, but now of a sudden there was a faint rustle in the leaves of the willow-trees. A breeze was springing up that grew stronger every moment. The night air became alive with the rustling of branches. And that wind was blowing across the canal from the side on which Jack and the Chinaman were stationed.

To Jack that wind meant nothing, but had he only known it, it was an un-

suspected ally. Suddenly from the opposite bank Bill's voice rose in angry protest.

Mrs. Bowker Chips In!

"D R A T' you, Squall! Keep quiet, won't you! Here, you'll have me in the bloomin' canal if you don't look out! Lumme, what are you doing?"

Squall had scented his master, and was now frantic to get to him. Bill, pulling on the chain, was trying to hold him back. The great wolf-dog crouched for a moment on the bank, and then leapt forward with all his weight and strength. The effect of that sudden impetus jerked Bill forward to the edge of the canal. Unless he released his hold of the chain he would be dragged into the water. Having no desire to swim, he took the former course.

"All right, have it your own way, Squall," he said protestingly.

There was a splash and then silence, save for the wind in the willow-trees and the faint noise of something swimming through the water. The Chinaman, too, had heard it, for he rose to his feet and, holding the boy with one arm, fumbled in his silken blouse. Jack could see that he had drawn that big, wicked-looking knife. He knew that Squall was coming.

There was a scraping on the mud-bank, and abruptly into view came the wet, lank figure of the wolf-dog. Jack, squirting in the Chinaman's arms, managed to force the silken scarf from his mouth.

"Keep away, Squall!" he shouted. "Watch him, but keep away!"

He could see the furious glare in those almond eyes as his voice broke upon the stillness. Squall seemed to understand instantly what was expected of him, for he began to circle about the Chinaman, now pretending to spring, now drawing back as that wicked knife was raised to stab. It was an unequal contest, but Brilliant Sing was handicapped by his prisoner, and the dog seemed to make a living circle about him, now in front, now behind, gradually driving him inch by inch into the open. As the animal's jaws snapped at his legs, the Chinaman moved a few inches from the cover of the tree which led to his immediate discovery. From the other bank came Bill's voice.

"Lumme, what are you doing?" he exclaimed hoarsely. "What are you dressed up in them clothes for—and what are you doing to my lad? Wait till I get hold of you, that's all! Keep him, Squall, till I come and says how do you do to him!"

Jack could hear Bill running back along the towpath. He imagined that his employer was making for the bridge, and that the best part of half an hour must elapse before he could reach him—half an hour in which anything might happen. But Bill was not the man to take any unnecessary exercise. As soon as he reached the side of the Emerald, he cast off the mooring-ropes and, picking up a huge punt-pole from the deck, shouted to his wife.

"Mother, come and give us a hand here! There's some dirty tyke got hold of our Jack on the other bank, and I wants to get at him!"

Mrs. Bowker was out of the cabin in a moment, and had added her weight to the punt-pole which was slowly forcing the Emerald into mid-channel. Slowly the monkey-boat swung round; another moment and her bows had crashed into a willow-tree on the opposite bank.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,000.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JACK HORNER, a youngster of fourteen, orphaned by the War, flees from Dune's Farm, owing to the brutal treatment of his rascally uncle and guardians.

GEORGE PARKER, Squall, Jack's faithful wolf-dog, goes with him. Unknown to himself, Jack is heir to a title and estates, and in consequence of this he is relentlessly pursued by

BLACK MICHAEL, a sinister individual, who will automatically inherit the title and estates should Jack Horner die. Jack reaches the London Docks, where he finds a new home with

BILL BOWKER, skipper of the monkey-boat Emerald, whose timely intervention saves Jack from a horrible fate at the hands of his enemy. A few days later, Jack is stalking Black Michael with the intention of discovering the sinister secret which has inspired the outrageous attempts upon his liberty when he overhears his enemy plotting with

BRILLIANT SING, a Chinese accomplice, to murder a feeble, wretched lady, who apparently stands between him and his greed of gold. Thanks to Squall, however, Jack is instrumental in slipping the plot in the bud. Shortly afterwards Squall, having wandered away from Jack, gives a sudden gasping whimper. Turning round, Jack is horror-stricken to find the great wolf-dog apparently hanging suspended between heaven and earth.

(Now read on.)

"Hold her, mother, while I go and deal with this bloke!" Bill shouted, as he blundered ashore.

Now he could see clearly some forty yards away the man who was trying to kidnap Jack.

"Gosh, it's a Chink!"

Bill rushed down the path, his big fists clenched. The Chinaman, as if realising the attack that was approaching him from the rear, decided to disregard the dog and to make a rush for it. As he leapt forward, he gave a long, piercing whistle. Squall snapped at his feet, almost bringing him to the ground, but Brilliant Sing staggered on. And now the meaning of that signal became clear to the boy. Somebody was coming along the path towards them.

"Shooty dog!" the Chinaman shouted breathlessly.

There was the rapid report of an automatic, but either the light was bad, or Squall's movements in the rear of the Chinaman made aiming difficult, for the dog was untouched. From close behind now came Bill's voice.

"You murdering scoundrels!" he roared.

The man with the revolver, becoming aware for the first time of his human opponent, turned to face him.

"Here, you dirty canal-shifter, put your hands up and stand where you are, unless you want me to let daylight through on your fat carcass!"

Bill Bowker feared nothing as a rule,

but the sight of that revolver made him pause.

"Put that there revolver down, and fight me fair and square!" he cried.

"I don't think!" came Curly's sneering voice, in reply. "You clear off to your bloomin' monkey-boat, and look smart about it! Do you hear me, old Tomato Face?"

But Bill Bowker did not move. He was trembling with fury, not only at the other's insults, but at his own helplessness. Retire, however, he wouldn't.

"Gosh, but I'd like to have you in a square fight, my lad!"

Curly ignored the remarks.

"Get along, Sing!" he exclaimed.

The Chinaman began to run down the path. But Squall was still at his heels, snapping viciously, only refraining from closing with the man because of the orders he had received from Jack.

"Shooty dog, one time!" Sing shouted again.

But that was just what Curly was not in a position to do. To take aim at Squall he must turn his back upon Bill Bowker; and, as the skipper of the Emerald was not more than a yard away that was a manoeuvre he dared not attempt. He must deal with his opponents in turn, he decided.

Approaching Bill, he thrust the muzzle of his revolver into the other's ribs.

"I ain't just talking—I mean it! You get, while the going's healthy!"

Bill Bowker obstinately refused to move.

"I'll count ten, and if you ain't shifted by then, Heaven help you!" Curly exclaimed, with an ominous scowl.

He began to count:

"One—two—"

He had got as far as five when an utterly unexpected interruption took place. A voice sounded at Curly's side.

"What yer doing to my old man, you nasty-looking rat?"

Curly turned his head with a start. The apparition was Mrs. Bowker, with a huge iron kettle in her hand. Even as he saw her she raised the kettle with both hands, and poured its boiling contents upon his face and neck.

There was a squeal of pain, followed by a series of four shots as his finger, pressed on the trigger of the automatic, caused that weapon to empty its magazine. But Bill Bowker's body was no longer at the business end of the revolver.

As soon as he had seen Curly turn his head he had moved slightly to one side, and then, with perfect confidence in his wife's capacity to deal with the situation—probably regarding it as an unfriendly and unhusbandly act on his part to interfere in what was clearly her scrap—he rushed after the retreating form of the Chinaman.

And then the skipper of the Emerald proved that his threats had not been mere talk, for he gave a display of the almost incredible strength he possessed.

(Continued on next page.)

"EVERY INCH A HERO!"

(Continued from page 23.)

The rain had stopped now; and the gipsies had lit a roaring fire of brushwood, over which they were cooking their supper.

Frank Fearless jumped out of his car, and he crept on all fours to the spot.

A weird spectacle met his gaze.

Gathered around the camp-fire, squatting on their haunches, were a dozen sinister-looking gipsies. They were singing and making merry.

A short distance away, bound hand and foot to a tree, her eyes flashing defiance at her crouching captors, was the Head's daughter!

Frank Fearless could scarcely repress a cry of horror.

"Molly!" he gasped, in a horse whisper.

The time was now ripe for the rescue; and Frank's next movements were so rapid that it was hard to follow them.

Swift as a rattle-snake swooping down upon its prey, he rigged through the long grass, until he came within reach of a stout wooden cudgel which lay beside one of the gipsies.

Frank's fingers closed over the cudgel; and at the same instant the gipsy turned his head and spotted him. But before the black-hearted rascal had time to cry out, Frank Fearless caught him a terrific crack on the head.

"Ow!" he gasped, rubbing his cranium.

"That's your little packet, for your share in this villainy!" cried Frank Fearless. "And if you dare to show fight I'll give you another tuppenny!"

The alarm was fairly raised now, and all the gipsies were on their feet, their eyes gleaming wickedly in the firelight.

Fearless as ever, Fearless faced them fearlessly.

"Come on, you curs!" he cried. "One at a time, or all together; it's all the same to me! I'll give you something to remember me by!"

At the sound of that familiar voice, Molly Birchsmall uttered a joyful cry. Hope had died in her heart; but at the sight of Frank Fearless it came to life again.

"My hero!" she sobbed.

Frank smiled at her reassuringly.

"I'll let you loose in a jiffy, Molly!" he said. "Just shut your eyes for a minnit, while I deal with these dastards! It would be a painful site for a young lady!"

And then Frank Fearless fairly let himself go. He flew at the gipsies, swinging the stout, notted cudgel above his head.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

For some minnits there was a sound like somebody cracking nuts. In reality, the gipsies' skulls were being broken. And Frank's hefty blows gave them such bad headaches, that they didn't feel like fighting. They turned on their heels, and bolted to the safety of their caravans.

Only the leader of the gang showed fight, but a hefty blow from Fearless' cudgel stretched the villain senseless at his feet.

Molly would have clapped her hands with delight, only they happened to be tied up. But Frank Fearless swiftly severed her bonds, and Molly was free!

"Quick, Molly!" panted the gallant junior.

And he half dragged, half carried the Head's daughter to his car, the engine of which was still running.

Overcome with joy and relief, Molly sank into a swoon.

When she came two, she found herself in the Head's study at St. Sam's. Her

father was there, clad in dressing-gown and slippers; and Mr. Lickham was present, and several other masters. Her hero was there, too, receiving the Head's congratulations.

"Fearless!" cried the Head, clasping the junior in a fond embrace. "By some miracle which I do not pretend to understand, you have restored to me my daughter! In these circumstances, I should not dream of sacking you from St. Sam's. On the contrary, I propose to make you a handsome presentation, as a token of my gratitude. To-morrow morning, in Big Hall, you will be publicly presented with a postle-order for sixpence!"

"You are too good, sir!" murmured Frank Fearless.

"Not at all," said the Head. "One cannot be too jenerous in matters of this kind. I trust, my dear boy, that you bear me no malice for all the croolty and injustis I have shown you since you came to St. Sam's?"

"It's not my nature to bear malice, sir!" said Frank Fearless, smiling. "You've been a beestly rotter to me, but I forgive you freely and fully. I'm jolly glad I'm to stay on at St. Sam's!"

"And I'm glad, too, Frank!" cried Miss Molly. "You are the best and bravest boy that ever breathed; and St. Sam's will ring with the story of your doughty deeds!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Head. "Them's my sentiments, too!"

And as he dragged his weary limbs up to the Fourth Form dormitory, Frank Fearless felt that he had indeed deserved well of his country.

THE END.

(Look out for another of these scurrilously funny yarns in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "Boat-Race Day at St. Sam's." It's a rib-tickler, chums.)



Before Brilliant Sing could bring his knife into play Bill Bowker swung him off his feet and sent him flying through the air into the water. (See page 27.)

Coming up behind Brilliant Sing, he seized him by the pigtail, took a good hold of it as if it were a rope, checked the other's progress, and then stood with his feet, wide apart, firmly placed upon the ground.

"Now, you dratted Chink!" he growled.

The Chinaman's reply was to drop Jack and to half-turn the knife in his hand; but before he could use that weapon he was swung off his feet, circled twice in the air, almost as if he were a hammer used at an athletic contest, and then sent flying through the air into the water.

"Call that little dawg of yours back, Jack!" Bill growled, as there was the sound of a splash and Squall leapt forward towards the water. "He'll save him, or something, and I ain't going to give any first aid to nasty murdering heathen Chinks like him!"

Jack, who had collapsed on the ground, managed to roll a short way down the bank, and as Squall turned in obedience to his master's gasping order, he grabbed the animal by the collar.

"Now, mother, if you can spare your bloke for a bit, I'd like just to teach him not to be so fresh with them guns!"

Curly, who had been lying on the ground screaming with the pain of the scalds he had received, while Mrs. Bowker trounced him with a stick, was roused by that threat. Scrambling to his feet he dodged, whimpering, towards the bushes.

"Leave 'im alone, Bill. I reckon 'o's 'ad 'is medicine!" Mrs. Bowker shouted. "Let's get the lad safe aboard."

"All right, mother," Bill growled; "ave it your own way! Here, Jack, come along and get aboard as quickly as you can!"

Jack, who was still feeling somewhat faint, gripped Squall's collar, and allowed the dog to pull him up the bank. As the animal's head appeared above the level of the path there was a blinding flash from among the trees beyond, followed instantly by a report. To Jack it seemed as if an angry wasp had buzzed past his ear. He dropped back behind the bank, pulling Squall

with him, his heart beating violently. That bullet had been intended for the dog, and could only have missed him by the fraction of an inch.

Bill Bowker was shouting to him: "Stay where you are, Jack! That guy must have had some ammunition on him! I'll bring the Emerald down to you."

The Magic Power!

JACK heard the sound of Bill's heavy boots boarding the Emerald. Up to that moment, in spite of his physical weariness and the pain in his neck and throat, Jack had been filled with a sense of triumph. But now something almost akin to a panic possessed him. He was quite safe there behind the bank, and Bill was bringing the Emerald up the canal to the spot. There was nothing to be frightened about. And yet he was frightened.

It was useless to tell himself that there was nothing to be frightened about—that the Chinaman had already scrambled out of the water and disappeared—that Curly was not likely to linger in a neighbourhood where he had undergone such unpleasant experiences. There was nothing tangible to explain his terror, but there it was. He wished Bill Bowker would hurry up with the Emerald. It was as if Jack were conscious of some evil presence in the neighbourhood—some all-powerful, all-compelling influence that was calling to him.

At his side Squall growled. He looked at the dog dully. More powerful and more compelling became that strange influence. It seemed to be bringing a message to his brain. He was to get up from where he was lying, climb the bank from his hiding-place, and make his way towards that place among the trees from which he had seen the flash of the gun. It was madness, of course, and yet, somehow or other, he felt impelled to carry out that unspoken order.

He began to move slowly up the bank, his face growing curiously rigid. It was as if a magnet were drawing him. His waning consciousness warned him

against the dangers into which he was running, and he tried to argue with himself. He mustn't go. And yet he was going—slowly, like a sleep-walker. "Hold me, Squall," he gasped—"hold me!"

It was an old game that he had played with Squall on the mountains of Cumberland. Without biting him, it was Squall's part in that game to keep him in one position. In the early days, when they had first played together, Jack had been able to elude the wolf-dog, but as Squall had come to understand thoroughly what was expected of him, and had grown, too, in weight and strength, the victory had always rested with him. Now, while that strange influence was drawing Jack into danger his weakening will-power flung up, as it were, to the surface of his brain this means of helping himself against himself.

Instantly Squall was standing astride him, his mouth wrinkled, his ears cocked, evidently delighted at the thought of a game. As Jack would have moved up the bank, the dog caught the collar of his coat. He struggled violently. He wanted to go now. He didn't want Squall to hold him. Somebody—or something—was calling him, not in words that the human ear could hear, but by means of some strange magnetic force.

Leaping lightly aside Squall, still with his teeth fastened in the boy's coat collar, pulled him back again. Now he placed one paw in the hollow of Jack's back and strained downwards towards the canal making it utterly impossible for him to move. A sob escaped from the boy's lips.

"I'm coming," he wailed. At that moment the bows of the Emerald came sliding from behind the overhanging willow tree and struck the bank.

Once again Bill Bowker turns up at the right moment, but Jack hasn't seen the last of Black Michael by any means. Mind you read the continuation of this story in next week's bumper number, chums.

"PAYING THE PRICE!"

(Continued from page 21.)

"Hem! You don't catch on, old chap," said Bunter. "The fact is, I'm going to take pity on you."

The Boulder glared.

"That's how it is," rattled on Bunter. "I'm going to get leave to stay at school over Easter, Smitty, just to keep you company. That's the kind of generous chap I am, Smitty. I'm turning down all my numerous friends just to see you through, old bean."

"You fat fool!"

"I think you might be grateful, Smitty," said Bunter warmly. "You're thrown over by all the Form. Nobody wants to speak a word to you. I'm taking pity on you."

"By gad!" said Vernon-Smith.

"I mean it," said Bunter reassuringly. "Of course, I shall expect you to do the decent thing. Luckily you've got lots of oof. We can get up some motor-car excursions. Might drop in at the races, what? And, of course, a good feed in the study every day. I couldn't consent to stay on with you, Smitty, unless that's definitely understood. The fact

is, we can have a jolly time, Smitty, what?"

"Is that all?" asked the Boulder grimly.

"That's about all. And—Yaroooh! Wharrior you up to, Smitty, you beast?" yelled Bunter.

"Kicking you out of my study!"

"Yarooooh!"

The Boulder's door slammed on Bunter.

"Ow-wow-ow-wow!"

William George Bunter drifted dimly down the Remove passage. Smitty had been his last resource; and there was nothing for it, at long last, but Boulder Court!

Herbert Vernon-Smith returned to the window. His hands were shoved deep into his pockets; his brow was black. With a fixed, grim gaze he stood staring out into the quadrangle.

The hum of voices, the clatter of feet, died away more and more as the old school was deserted and silence fell at last. He heard the clang in the distance as Gosling closed the gates.

The Greyfriars fellows were gone; Vernon-Smith remained. Paul Dallas, his rival and enemy, was holiday-making on the Continent. Tom Red

wing, with his sailorman father, was treading the deck of a coasting vessel out at sea, never to tread the Remove passage at Greyfriars again. That passage, generally so noisy, was quiet as life grave; the silence and solitude of it struck Herbert Vernon-Smith like a chill.

He was left alone. His rival had triumphed, as he regarded it—he had lost his friend! He had earned the dislike and contempt of all his Form; not a man had given him a word before he left. Staring out into the deserted quadrangle, the Boulder thought of all that he had lost, of all that his savage and suspicious temper had cost him. Left alone, while the dreary days dragged by till the new term, with no companions but bitterness and malice and angry pride. The Boulder of Greyfriars had gone recklessly on his own wild and headstrong way, and this was where it had led him!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next rattling fine yarn in this magnificent Vernon-Smith series, entitled: "The Hund of an Enemy!" It's a pearl of a story, and shows Frank Richards in absolute tip-top form.)

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Our Thousandth Number

By YOUR EDITOR.

If a look of pride settles on my face as I write these words, MAGNETERS will be the first to judge me and say that it is justified.

One thousand

Many an editor has sighed wistfully for the day to elopent number gracing the cover page of the paper he controls. But it doesn't fall to the lot of every editor to produce and maintain a paper with such a world-wide appeal nor to cater for such a loyal and enthusiastic body of readers as it has been my pleasure to serve. And yet just over thirteen years ago the *MAGNET* was only just being thought of in the chrysalis stage. But they were hatched in due course, and it seems that they are destined to rank among the immortal.

Even now I correspond with chums who read the first issue of the *MAGNET* a thousand weeks ago. Many of them married, with young sons of their own. And it is quite in the nature of things that these sons should follow in their father's footsteps so far as their taste in literature is concerned. The *MAGNET* means just as much to them as it did to their father.

And Frank Richards, I am sure, will live through the generations, for no author has been more widely read and appreciated than he. What the celebrated Charles Dickens was and is to the general public, so Billy Hunter is to the *MAGNET*-speaking boys and girls. What Sam Weller is to the general public, so Billy Hunter is to the *MAGNET*-speaking boys and girls.

I feel sure that were it possible for all of the past and present readers—to meet in one great open space to pay our tribute to Frank Richards, our editors would wake the seven sleepers! Thirteen years sounds a long time, to some it is a big slice out of life. But for myself I would not have it different. I have years of tribulation with the *MAGNET*; those years among genuine friends have given me youth that I verily believe is perpetual. Friends in every corner of the globe: I receive as many letters as a Prime Minister, but whereas these unfortunate individuals are more often than not told that they can do nothing right, your humble servant, with very few exceptions, receives nothing but enthusiastic support and encouragement.

Yet I would emphasize that letters from my chums containing helpful criticism and advice, or giving their own views on any matters connected with the paper, are no less welcome to me than those which express unqualified approval. I am always eager to give careful consideration to any suggestion which may lead to a possible improvement in the good old *MAGNET*. Perhaps that is the reason that now, after one thousand weeks of unbroken success, the paper is more firmly established than ever in the hearts of British boys and girls throughout the world.

I am proud to have assisted in the preparation of the very first number of the *MAGNET*. We'll do I remember the anxious consultations that took place daily with Mr. Frank Richards, the suggestions that were made and rejected before the project began to take definite shape and the now-famous characters began really to live. The hard work of the staff and the genius of Mr. Richards were happily combined in No. 1 of the *MAGNET* which actually appeared on Tuesday, February 11th, 1908. It was an instantaneous success; the anxious lines disappeared from our brows, and by the end of that week we were able to congratulate Mr. Richards and ourselves upon having launched a winner! And a winner the *MAGNET* has remained ever since. Everyone has heard of Harry Wharton & Co.; Billy Hunter's name is on everyone's lips. I verily believe the *MAGNET* has heard of him and his famous pointed order!

And why not? Where will you find anything unwholesome or unhealthy to youth in the *MAGNET*? Who can throw stones at our morals? No one! For the policy of this paper has been consistently adhered to: "clean, wholesome literature every week." We have not "preached" and right in our thousand stories. These things have been treated in a delicate yet easily comprehensible fashion. And right has always triumphed over evil, as indeed it should. Humour, too, has found a ready-place in our pages, for life without humour is indeed a drear and a dull thing. Where would we be without our Billy Hunter, our Frank T. Fish, our Alonzo Ford, and that likeable, mischievous Oriental, Wun Jang?

I tremble to think, don't you?

One thousand

You see, I like the look of that record. I have said that I have youth; that I have the finest body of friends it has ever been the lot of an editor to claim. Then you will not think it boastful of me if I, having seen to press one thousand issues of the *MAGNET*, should raise an imaginary glass of foaming ginger-pop and say: "MAGNETERS, you will honour me by drinking to our two-thousandth issue."

Some Reminiscences by Frank Richards

WHEN I was a schoolboy, I had two favourite occupations. One was reading school stories. The other was writing school stories. The stories I read were not half so exciting as those I wrote!

I began to write at the age of nine. My earliest work has not been preserved, which strips is just as well. The subject-matter could not have been very original; but the spelling, I believe, was not only original, but strikingly so. It has improved since.

I turned naturally to prose. My father was a poet. The remuneration he received for the verses paid, I believe, for the ink he used, but not for the paper. This may help to account for my feeling no attraction towards poetry.

At thirteen I had written a complete work, which made an imposing pile when it was finished—though, as my father was then a large round-head, the story was perhaps not so long as it looked. It proved too long, however, for the friends to whom I sent it to read, sometimes it would be kept for a week, sometimes two or three weeks. I found traces of coffee and jam on the first half-dozen pages, but all pages after page 9 were quite clean, and remained so. It came in very useful subsequently on the occasion of a paper-chase.

My first appearance in print was a story which I was still a schoolboy at the time, though the editor who published my story certainly was not aware of that fact. It was in the holidays, and I had a holiday task to get through. I forgot what the task was, but I remember that I had set against the handle of my pen for a long time, in the lowest of spirits. Then I began to write—but not my task. An idea had come into my head, founded upon a story my uncle, then just over from Canada, had told me. It was a story of frozen trails and snow-shoes and wolves, and it had stirred me deeply. I wrote it down almost without stopping to take breath. In fear and trembling I sealed it in an envelope and posted it to a certain weekly paper; and during the following days, I waited anxiously for the result. It came! A brief note informing me that the story was "being used."

I walked on air for some time. I told my elder brother about it, and he said "Gammion!" I told my little sister, and she said "Goo!" not being quite two years old at that time. I told my uncle, and he said "Bravo! You'll be a great author some day!" I have always regarded my uncle as a man of great judgment.

I never was a fellow to count chickens before they were hatched; but in this case, the egg seemed safely hatched, so I planned the expenditure of my money in advance. A complete new football outfit and a camera for myself; a squeaking doll for my sister, a pony for my brother, and a real Russia-leather tobacco-pouch for my uncle, were some of the items on my list. There were many others.

Then the cheque came. It was for 15s. And I did not buy all those things.

Still I have wondered sometimes, since, whether that paper really got its money's worth. However, that was the beginning.

I had written a great deal, and had grown quite accustomed to admiring my hurburbations in print, when one day, soon after my return from Canada, I fell in with Martin Clifford.

I had known him years before; since when he had become a well-known author. I had a manuscript—a story founded upon some of my own schoolboy experiences—just completed; and I determined to show it to Clifford and ask his opinion.

He good-naturedly consented to read it.

"By Jove, old scout, this is the stuff!"

"You like it?" I asked.

"Like it? It's repeated. 'My dear chap, there's only one man in existence whose stuff is better than this.'"

"Whose stuff is that?" I asked.

"Mine!" said Martin.

He dragged me off at once to see the Editor of the "Gem," then in its very early days, not already on the way to becoming the amazing success it has since become. And the first time I saw the Editor was that the Editor made his appearance as "Stable-companion to the Gem," and what my old friend Martin has done for the "Gem," I have endeavoured to do for the *MAGNET*—with what success I must leave to my readers to judge.

