

"AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!" THIS WEEK'S GREAT SCHOOL STORY!

The

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EVERY MONDAY.



DESPISED BY THE SCHOOL!

Vernon-Smith realizes that he has allowed his hatred of his adopted brother to carry him too far, for he is now virtually an outcast!
(Read this week's powerful school story of the Chums of Greyfriars.)

**IRISH!**

HOW many Irish chaps are there at Greyfriars?" inquires a loyal reader from Dublin. And here's the answer: Five! In the Third Form there's Thomas O'Rourke, in the Remove the redoubtable Micky Desmond, in the Upper Fourth there's Patrick Fitzgerald, in the Fifth Form we find Terence Fitzgerald, and in the Sixth Patrick Gwynne. So my correspondent, who has been arguing with some of his chums, that there are only four "Pats" at Greyfriars is wrong.

FROM OXFORD!

A reader from Oxford wrote me a very lengthy letter and finished up with this remark: "Did you notice a curious feature about the 'Varsity oarsmen when you saw the race?" Hum! I don't know whether that's a conundrum, but if it is, perhaps my answer will "get over." To my mind, the curious feature about the 'Varsity oarsmen is that they all look happy when they get the "Blues." Feeble, you say? Ah, well, it's an answer, anyway. Perhaps my Oxford correspondent will clear the air, so to speak, if he's got a specially good answer up his sleeve!

IVORY!

"Is there any other beast besides the elephant from which we get ivory?" asks "MAGNET Enthusiast." And the answer is yes. We get ivory from the hippopotamus, which is found in East, South, and West Africa, from the narwhal, which is to be found in the Polar Seas, off Greenland, and from the walrus, which roams the Arctic regions.

GOOD NEWS FOR CYCLE BUYERS!

A bike of renown for half-a-crown down can now be obtained by any of my readers, as the Mead Cycle Company Inc., of Birmingham, are willing to supply a high-grade cycle to anyone on these terms. The buyer pays the balance in small monthly instalments while riding the machine for business and pleasure purposes. Intending purchasers should write for the company's latest catalogue, which gives interesting descriptions and beautifully coloured illustrations of twenty-eight new season's models.

Next Monday's Programme:**"THE COMPLETE OUTSIDER."**

By Frank Richards.

This is the next story in the special "Vernon-Smith series" for which so many readers asked. It's top-hole, too, take it from me, and adds another laurel to your favourite author's crown. The Bounder's hatred of Paul Dallas has pulled down what little popularity he once had, and now the Bounder is a regular Ishmael—despised, unwanted, and condemned on every hand. Don't miss next week's yarn, whatever you do, chums.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

You'll like this instalment of our adventure serial, too. Black Michael has set his heart on possessing the title and the estates which rightly belong to young Jack Horner, and the scoundrel is prepared to go to any lengths to secure them. But—and there's always a but—Jack has some good friends to look after him!

"STIRRING UP THE SLACKER!"

Dicky Nugent is in great form in this humorous story of the heroes of St. Sam's. If you miss this yarn, you'll be missing the laugh of the week. Chin, chin, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

FASTER-THAN-EVER FOOTBALL!

A brief review of a most memorable season.

By "PAUL PRY."

THE football season used to shut down automatically at the end of April, but it now continues and "pinches" the first Saturday of May. However, the really outstanding matches of the season have been played; most of the problems so far as relegation and promotion are concerned have been settled, and so it is not too early to review the season. And what a thrilling time we have had: surprises simply tumbling over each other from week to week.

In the view of the sport-loving public football stands where it did. This is obvious. The attendances have been quite up to normal, and the demand for tickets for the Cup Final was something like five times greater than the supply. When a ground was built at Wembley capable of holding a hundred thousand people, most folk thought that it would be equal to all demands for many years to come. As a matter of fact, it is quite inadequate.

INCREASED THRILLS!

This grip which the game retains on the good folk of this country is all the more remarkable in view of the almost continual cry of the critics, that the standard of play is nothing like so high as it used to be. Perhaps there is something in this criticism: perhaps there are fewer really "classy" players and teams than there used to be, but taking a comprehensive review of the season now nearing the end, I should say that what we have lost on the swings we have gained on the roundabouts. If the game isn't so artistic, it is faster than ever it was, and increased pace means increased thrills. Football this season has been a game for the physically fit, the quick thinkers, and the fast runners.

DIFFICULT FOR THE "REF!"

Indeed, football has become so fast that it seems high time some change was made in the method of control. It has really ceased to be a sport which can be satisfactorily controlled by one referee, for the simple reason that the ball travels from one end to the other at such a pace that the fleetest-footed whistle-wielder cannot always be up with the play. Whether the reform will take the shape of two referees for one match, or goal-judges at each end of the field, remains to be seen. But the outstanding lesson of the season is that the ordinary contest is too fast to be followed properly for satisfactory decisions to be given by one referee.

From week to week in the ordinary League games so-called form has been continually upset, but it was in the Cup competition that the greatest number of shocks were administered. For a long time it seemed that the lesser lights: the clubs of the Second and the Third Divisions of the League, would sweep the First Division clubs from the Cup competition. In the end, however, class told, and we had a final tie between the Arsenal and Cardiff City. Still, in reviewing the season we must concede that the clubs from the lower Leagues have done a lot to convince us that there is precious little difference in quality between, say, the First and the Second Division clubs. Even in Scotland the same sort of lesson has been learnt, for a Second Division Scottish side—East Fife—got to the final tie.

CAMSELL, THE WONDER!

The endless possibilities, as well as the romance of the game, has been illustrated in an amazing way by the Middlesbrough club. They started the season badly, but having recovered from this indifferent start, they have simply gone ahead, smashing one record after another. This club has scored more goals than has ever been scored by any team in one season; they have an outside-wing man in Pease who has set up new scoring records for a winger, but the wonder of all has been their centre-forward, George Camsell.

A young fellow of twenty-three, he was not considered good enough to play in the first team in their opening games. But when he did get a place he showed that he was indeed worthy. Before the end of March he had scored fifty goals in League matches alone—or half a dozen more than had previously been scored by any individual player in a whole season. When we think of the exploits of Camsell, and of other young players, too, we can surely say that it is true of football as of other things: that there is as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Camsell and Middlesbrough have possibly set up records this season which will stand for all time.

BEATEN ALL ALONG THE LINE! No matter what despicable plot the Bounder puts into operation to get his adopted brother driven out of Greyfriars in disgrace, something always turns up at the last moment to dash the cup of victory from the Bounder's hand!



At the End of His Tether!

A Grand New Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, with Herbert Vernon-Smith, nicknamed the Bounder, in the limelight.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Wants to Know!

DALLAS!" The Head was taking the roll in Big Hall at Greyfriars. There was no reply as he called the name of Dallas of the Remove.

"Dallas!" Dr. Locke repeated the name sharply. But the usual "adsum" was not forthcoming.

There was a stir in the ranks of the Remove as fellows looked round to see whether Paul Dallas was present. Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, glanced over his Form with a glint in his eyes.

"I say, you fellows," whispered Billy Bunter, "Dallas has cut call-over! The beak's waxy!"

"Looks it," agreed Bob Cherry. "Silly ass!" commented Skinner. "Asking for more trouble! I should have thought he had enough on hand already."

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, looked round rather anxiously over the Form.

It was the first time the new junior had cut call-over since he had been at Greyfriars.

"Not here," said Nugent. Wharton's eyes rested for a moment on the face of Vernon-Smith of the Remove. There was a peculiar smile curving the lips of the Bounder.

For the third time Dr. Locke's deep voice was heard.

"Dallas!" "No takers!" murmured Skinner, and some of the Removites grinned.

Dr. Locke compressed his lips, and marked Dallas absent. Then he went on with the roll.

"Silence!" rapped out Mr. Quelch, as there was a murmur of whispering among the Removites.

Paul Dallas, the new junior in the Remove, had been very much in prominence that day. His absence at calling-over focussed general attention upon him again.

"Where the thump is he?" muttered

Wharton. "He must be a duffer to cut call-over after what happened this afternoon!"

"Mayn't have the nerve to show up after that," suggested Bob Cherry. Wharton nodded doubtfully.

"It's pretty certain he will be sacked," said Johnny Bull. "He may have expected it at call-over."

"Bull, you are talking!" said Mr. Quelch. "Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" There was no more talking in the Remove till the Head had reached the end of the roll.

As the school was dismissed, and the fellows filed out of Hall, Mr. Quelch made a sign to Wharton to remain behind. He signed also to the Bounder, rather to Smithy's surprise.

The two juniors stepped out of the ranks.

Mr. Quelch did not address them till Hall was cleared and the Head and the other masters were gone.

They waited in silence, Wharton with a troubled expression on his face, the Bounder calm and impassive.

"Wharton!" said the Remove master at length.

"Yes, sir?"

"Do you know where Dallas is?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know why he was not present at call-over?"

"No, sir," said Harry. "I haven't seen him since he was sent to the Head's study this afternoon."

"I shall be obliged if you will look for him, Wharton, and ascertain whether he is within gates."

"Certainly, sir!"

The captain of the Remove left the Hall, and Herbert Vernon-Smith remained alone with his Form master.

Mr. Quelch's eyes were very keenly on the Bounder's face, though Smithy did not seem to observe that sharp scrutiny. His manner was quiet and respectful and unconcerned.

"Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, "you are aware of what happened this afternoon in connection with Dallas?"

"I heard something about it in the Remove passage, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "The fellows were talking about it."

"Certain things were found in Dallas' desk in Study No. 1 when the Head inspected the Remove passage this afternoon."

"So the fellows were saying, sir." "You know nothing of it?"

The Bounder looked surprised.

"No, sir. What could I know of it?"

Mr. Quelch's eyes had often been compared by his pupils to gimlets, on account of their penetrating qualities. At the present moment they seemed to be almost boring into the Bounder, so piercing was the Form master's glance.

But Herbert Vernon-Smith was quite at his ease. His face expressed only a mild surprise.

"You were not on friendly terms with Dallas, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir."

"That was rather unfortunate, as he was the adopted son of Mr. Vernon-Smith."

"We bar each other, sir," said the Bounder.

"I have observed it, Vernon-Smith, and I have hitherto considered that it was your jealous and headstrong temper that caused your dislike of your father's adopted son."

"I am sorry for that, sir."

"Your father told me that he took the same view, and that he had told you so."

"My father was deceived, sir."

"By whom?"

"By Dallas."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"Until to-day," he said, "I have had a high opinion of Dallas, as your father certainly has. What has been discovered to-day places matters in a new light. In Dallas' desk, cigarettes, a sporting paper, a pack of cards, and a letter from some bookmaker were found. It appears certain that he has deceived us all as to his character. Certainly I had no suspicion of anything of

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the kind, and his study-mates, Wharton and Nugent, knew nothing of it, as they have assured me. Did you know anything of it, Vernon-Smith? Had you any reason to believe that Dallas was a boy of vicious character?"

"I never trusted him, sir," said the Bounder. "I believed that he was a hypocrite, and that he had deceived my father as to the kind of fellow he was."

The Bounder spoke with bitter earnestness. It was evident that he believed what he said, so far as that went.

"That is not an answer to my question, Vernon-Smith. Were you aware that he was given to smoking, to card playing, and to having dealings with disreputable characters outside the school?"

For a second the Bounder hesitated.

It was an opportunity to speak evil of the fellow against whom he nourished a bitter and irreconcilable rancour. It was not a regard for the truth that restrained the Bounder. It was the caution of his character that withheld the slanderous words he would have liked to utter.

"No, sir," he said, after a brief pause; "I can't say I knew that. He covered it up too well. Wharton and Nugent are in the same study with him, and they never knew."

"It was not for any such reason, then, that you condemned Dallas?"

"No, sir. I disliked him because I believed that he was a humbug, and had twisted my father round his finger. A fellow doesn't like to see his father taken in by a hypocrite."

"It would certainly appear now, that Dallas was a hypocrite," said the Remove master, after a pause. "As he has deceived me, he may very probably have deceived your father, and your distrust of him may have been well-founded. But—"

The Bounder waited anxiously.

Dallas' disgrace was a justification for the attitude the Bounder had taken up ever since Mr. Vernon-Smith had sent his adopted son to Greyfriars. If the fellow was expelled from the school, the Bounder was justified all along the line. Even Harry Wharton & Co., who had backed up Dallas, would have to admit that; even Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith would have to admit it. But the Bounder knew that he was treading on thin ice, and he was anxious.

"But," resumed Mr. Quelch, "I am bound to tell you, Vernon-Smith, of a statement that Dallas made when he was taken before the Head."

"Indeed, sir?"

"He stated that he knew nothing of the articles that were found in his desk, and that they must have been placed there by some personal enemy. He accused you."

"Not really, sir?"

"Neither the Head nor I attached any credence to such a wild statement, but I must question you. The Head's inspection was carried out, as is usual on such occasions, without any warning being given. A Head's inspection is, as you know, always a surprise visit. Dallas may not have known this, being new here."

"It looks as if he did not, sir, judging by what was found in his desk."

"Quite so. But his statement was that someone must have learned in advance that the inspection was intended; in short, that you had somehow found out that the headmaster was coming to the Remove studies, and placed these articles in his desk in readiness."

The Bounder's lip curled.

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"I suppose that he would be bound to say something of the kind, sir. It was that or confession."

"No doubt. But I must ask you, Vernon-Smith, whether you had any previous knowledge that the Head intended to inspect the Remove studies this afternoon."

"How could I have, sir? It's always a surprise visit."

"You knew nothing of it?"

"Nothing."

"Certainly it appears impossible that you should have known anything," assented the Remove master. "But I was bound to put the question, in view of Dallas' statement."

"If I had known that the Head was coming, sir, I should not have had any cigarettes in my desk," said Vernon-Smith. "I was cased, sir, and very severely. I suppose I should have had sense enough to put such things out of sight if I'd known that Dr. Locke was coming to my study."

"Certainly. You must not suppose, Vernon-Smith, that either Dr. Locke or I took any notice of such a wild accusation, resting on no evidence whatever. Very strong evidence would be required to make me believe that any Greyfriars boy could be guilty of such unparalleled wickedness as Dallas attributed to you."

The Bounder winced.

"It was my duty to put the question to you, that is all," said Mr. Quelch. "Dallas' charge against you seems not only incredible, but impossible. You give me your word that you knew nothing in advance of the Head's intentions this afternoon."

It was not easy for Vernon-Smith, unscrupulous as he was, to tell the lie direct. But he had left himself no retreat now, and his answer came sharply.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, Vernon-Smith. I believe you, as a matter of course. You may go."

And the Bounder went. His face was set, and a little pale, as he walked out of Hall. He had triumphed over his enemy; his rival was down and out. But it was harder than the Bounder had expected it to be, and somehow his triumph seemed to leave a bitter taste in his mouth.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Missing!

"SEEN Dallas?"

Harry Wharton was asking that question up and down Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch had directed him to ascertain whether Paul Dallas was still within gates, and it seemed that he was not.

Wharton could understand well enough that the unhappy junior had desired to withdraw himself from all Greyfriars eyes—whether innocent, and suffering under an intolerable sense of wrong, or guilty, and ashamed to look his school-fellows in the face.

Nobody in the Remove seemed to have seen him since he had gone to the Head's study to receive judgment.

In the Remove passage the juniors were discussing Paul Dallas with breathless excitement when Wharton came up there for a last look round in the studios.

"Anybody seen Dallas?" called out the captain of the Remove.

"O where, and O where can he be?" sang Skinner.

"Shouldn't wonder if he's cleared off," said Bolsover major. "It was bound to be the sack for him, anyhow."

"Couldn't be anything else," said Peter Todd.

"Blessed if I'd have believed the fellow was such a spoofer!" said Squiff. "But it seems clear enough."

"The clearfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "but the surprisefulness is great."

"It's clear enough for the Head, it seems," drawled Vernon-Smith, who was lounging in his study doorway.

"How many did you get, Smithy, for the smokes they found in your study?" asked Hazeldene, with a grin.

"Six," said the Bounder.

Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on the Bounder in surprise.

"Did they find smokes in your study, Smithy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, you must be a duffer!" said Bunter, his little round eyes wide open in surprise behind his spectacles.

The Bounder gave him a hard look.

There was one weakness in Smithy's position; one flaw in his armour. It was Bunter who had warned him of the Head's intended inspection that afternoon, Bunter having discovered the Head's intentions by his usual method of eavesdropping. And if Bunter talked too much, there was danger for the Bounder—danger that his whole edifice of treachery might come toppling down round him.

"Mr. Quelch wants Dallas," said Harry Wharton. "Have you seen him, Bunter? You see and hear everything."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Do you know where Dallas is, innage?"

"I saw him go out into the quad after the Head had done with him," said the Owl of the Remove. "He looked pretty sick."

"Where did he go?"

"Blessed if I know! I don't take any notice of fellows who come here from a charity school," said Bunter loftily.

"Fathead!"

"Smithy was down on the fellow all the time," remarked Hazeldene. "Looks as if Smithy knew him better than we did."

"I did!" said the Bounder dryly.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Bob Cherry. "Dallas seems to have been found out, and it beats me hollow; but they've only found out about him what we all know about Smithy, though the Head doesn't."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder, with a sneer.

"Well, it's true, isn't it?" said Bob. "They found smokes in your study, as it was, and it was only your luck that they didn't find anything worse. Every fellow here knows that you buy racing papers, and that you've had notes from that rotter Banks at the Cross Keys. Dallas has been found out, and you haven't. That's all the difference."

"Has Dallas been found out?" asked Lord Mauleverer, coming along.

"What have they found out?"

"My only hat! Haven't you heard, Mauly?"

"I've heard a lot of buzzin' and talkin'," said his lordship. "I don't know what it's about. What has Dallas done?"

A dozen voices explained at once. Lord Mauleverer listened with growing surprise.

"They didn't find that sort of stuff in Dallas' desk," he said.

"They did, ass!"

"Rot!"

"It was found there right enough, Mauly," said Harry Wharton.

"Sure?" asked his lordship.

"Yes, we saw it."



As the ruffian, gripping his weapon, leaped out at the well-dressed man on the footpath, Paul Dallas sprang desperately on him from behind, and grasped him. "Look out, sir!" he shouted. The tall stranger sprang back, while the ruffian gave a startled exclamation and plunged headlong into the footpath, with the Greyfriars junior clinging to him like a cat. (See Chapter 3.)

"Then who the deuce put it there?"
"Dallas did, you howling ass!" said Skinner. "He kept his things in his desk."

"But they weren't his things."
"They were, ass! How could they have been in his desk if they weren't his, fathead?"

"Put there," yawned his lordship.
"Who put them there, then, you grass ass?"

"How should I know?" said Lord Mauleverer. "I suppose it was a lark of some silly ass. You, perhaps, Skinner."

"What!" roared Skinner.
"Well, you're always playin' rotten practical jokes," said Mauleverer. "You put Mrs. Kobble's cat in my hat-box once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"That's rather different, Mauly," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Don't you know it's different, you frabjous fozzler!" howled Skinner.

"I know it ruined my Sunday topper."

"You fellows know I was out of gates all the afternoon!" exclaimed Skinner.

"I don't say it was you, dear man," said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "I only say it was somebody—some silly practical jokin' ass like you, you know."

"And why?" asked the Bounder, very quietly.

Lord Mauleverer glanced at him.
"Because Dallas wasn't that kind of goat," he answered.

"He wasn't a friend of yours," said Hazol.

"Hardly knew the man," assented Lord Mauleverer.

"Well, then, you ass—"

"But I know a fellow's character when I see him," explained Mauly.
"Dallas wasn't that sort of goat. There's some mistake, or else somebody has been pullin' Dallas' leg."

"Better go and tell the Head so!" jeered Snoop.

"I don't suppose the Head wants me to advise him how to carry on, dear boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But you fellows take my tip," said Lord Mauleverer lazily. "It's some mistake. You'll find I'm right."

And his noble lordship ambled away to his study, evidently tired of the subject.

"Silly ass!" Skinner called after him as he went.

"Thanks, old bean! Same to you!" yawned Mauleverer, without taking the trouble to turn his head. And he ambled cheerfully into Study No. 12.

Wharton's eyes met Nugent's.

In spite of the evidence, which seemed strong enough to convince the most dubious of doubting Thomases, both of Paul's study-mates entertained lingering doubts. Lord Mauleverer's statement of his opinion strengthened their doubts. Certainly Mauly had a way of believing the best he possibly could of everybody. His judgment might not have been

worth much, but his instinctive belief in Dallas weighed.

"I shouldn't wonder if Mauly's right," said Frank Nugent.

"How could he be right?" demanded Bolsover major. "Nobody knew the Head was coming, so how could anybody have planted the things on Dallas to be found in his desk?"

"And who'd do such a thing?" said Peter Todd. "That wouldn't be a mistake or a practical joke, but a crime."

"Oh, those fellows will back up Dallas, even if the Head expels him from Greyfriars," sneered Skinner.

"Looks as if he hasn't wanted to be expelled," said Snoop. "He's jolly well gone, anyhow."

"I guess he's ramoused the ranch," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Harry Wharton left the Remove passage in a buzz of excited discussion, and went downstairs again in search of the missing junior. He went out into the quad and called at Gosling's lodge.

There he received information at last. The school porter had seen Dallas go out of gates that afternoon. It was clear that the hapless fellow had gone out after he had been dismissed by Dr. Locke. He had gone out, and had not come in again when the gates were closed, and Wharton wondered whether he had indeed run away from the school, to save himself from the shame of an expulsion.

The captain of the Remove returned to

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the House, and went to his Form master's study to report.

"You have found Dallas?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir. He went out of gates, and doesn't seem to be in the school now at all," said Harry.

"Very well, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips.

And Harry Wharton returned to the Remove passage, where the breathless discussion of Paul Dallas and his probable proceedings was still going strong.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Strange Meeting!

"WHAT shall I do?"

Paul Dallas whispered the words in the silence of the wood. A score of times he had asked himself that question since he had hurried out of the school gates, almost stunned by his misfortune.

Only a few hours ago he had been at games practice on Little Side with his friends of the Remove.

And now—
The change was stunning.

Whether any fellow in the Remove still believed in him, or trusted him, he did not know. It did not seem likely. He had seen the amazement and consternation in the faces of Wharton and Nugent in Study No. 1 when the discovery had been made.

How could they believe in him? They had to believe the evidence of their eyes, which convicted him of being, not only a disreputable blackguard like the Bounder, but almost worse than that—a scheming hypocrite, such as the Bounder had never been.

Smithy, with all his reckless blackguardism, had never been a hypocrite, so far as his acquaintances were concerned. The Remove had known him as he was. Only from prefects and masters had he kept secrets, simply because he did not want to be turned out of the school. There had never been anything "pi" about Smithy. Fellows might dislike him, reject him, feel disgusted with him, but they could never say that the Bounder sought their good opinion under false pretences.

But what would they say of Dallas? The best fellows in the Remove had made friends with him. They had not cared anything about the "charity" school. They had not believed the Bounder's wild suspicions of his scheming with the millionaire. They had taken him at face value.

Now they were to learn that he had been an abject hypocrite, that he had deceived them, deceived everybody with whom he had come into contact.

It was not true.
But he could not hope that anyone would believe that it was untrue.

He had jumped to the conclusion instinctively when the things were found in his desk, that his enemy, Vernon-Smith, had placed them there to ruin him. Yet, on reflection, it seemed almost impossible that it could have been so. But if that was not the explanation, there was none. And how were the fellows to believe in his denials when he could offer no explanation, save one that appeared next door to impossible, even to himself?

Somehow he thought more of the opinion of the fellows he liked in the Remove than of the condemnation of his Form master and headmaster.

Yet the latter was more serious.
Dr. Locke had said that he would consult with his adopted father before de-

termining upon his fate. But his decision could scarcely be to allow Paul to remain at Greyfriars.

Indeed, unless his name was cleared, he did not desire to remain. To remain with the finger of scorn pointed at him was worse than to be expelled. To be believed a dingy blackguard like Smithy, and a hypocrite such as Smithy never had been! He knew that he could not face that. Unless he was cleared he wanted to leave Greyfriars.

But to leave in disgrace and shame, leaving the fellows to despise him as a shabby humbler who had been found out! He writhed at that thought.

No doubt the Head would request Mr. Vernon-Smith to remove him quietly from the school, to avoid the scandal of an expulsion. That was probably what Dr. Locke intended.

And what would Mr. Vernon-Smith say?

To the millionaire Paul could not justify himself, save by accusing, without a vestige of proof, or even probability, the millionaire's own son!

From the bottom of his heart he wished that Mr. Vernon-Smith had never concerned himself in his fate, but had left him at the charity school of his earlier days.

Paul had forgotten call-over, forgotten lock-up. He had thrown himself down under a tree in Friardale Wood, near the footpath, only desiring to be alone and quiet to think over what he should do.

But he could not think what to do. To give up Greyfriars without making a fight for it was bitter. Yet there seemed to be no resistance in his power.

The Head judged him guilty, and there was no appeal from the Head. Mr. Vernon-Smith was not likely to believe that the Head had judged wrongly. Even if he stood by his adopted son—and that was doubtful—he could not alter the headmaster's decision. What was he to do? What could he do?

The dusk was falling on the solitary wood, deepening to darkness, but Paul hardly noticed it. The thought of going back to the school was repugnant to him—to face a sea of curious eyes, to meet averted looks, to bear the contempt and aversion of fellows he liked—fellows who had been decent to him. In the deepening dusk he lay in the thickets, wearied with thinking, unable to come to any decision. The thought was in his mind of never going back to Greyfriars at all; of never seeing Mr. Vernon-Smith again; of going out into the world and fighting his battle alone.

A step on the footpath, near at hand, came to his ears, but he did not heed it.

There was a rustle in the thickets between him and the path, and he frowned. There was a soft sound of running feet.

It occurred to him that it was lock-up now, and that someone might have come to look for him. He did not want to see any Greyfriars face now. He raised his head and glanced round in the direction of the sound without rising.

Then, for a moment, he forgot his own troubles in his surprise at what he saw.

A man had left the footpath and entered the thickets, and stopped only a few feet from the path.

His back was towards the Greyfriars junior.

He was crouching in the thicket, watching the path, oblivious of the schoolboy's presence a few yards from him.

Paul sat up in the grass, startled.

He could see nothing of the man save that he was burly in figure, roughly dressed, and had a heavy bludgeon in his hand.

But the fellow's object could not be doubted.

He was watching for someone to pass along the footpath in the falling dusk, watching with the intention of making an attack. His crouching attitude, his silence, the bludgeon gripped in his hand, proved that clearly enough.

Paul quite understood. Someone was to come by the footpath, which was a short cut from Friardale to the school, and this ruffian had got ahead of his intended victim and was waylaying him in the wood.

Paul's eyes glinted.
He supposed that the man was a footpad, intending robbery. But whatever he was, and whatever was his object, Paul did not intend to allow him to carry it out undisturbed.

Silently, in the grass under the trees, the Greyfriars junior rose to his feet.

The crouching ruffian did not look round. Obviously he had not the faintest idea that a schoolboy had been lying there, among the thickets, in the dusk of the wood.

Paul watched him, his heart beating. His mind worked quickly. The man had come running from the direction of Friardale, so it was from the village that his intended victim was to come; probably someone who had arrived at the railway station, perhaps a visitor for the school. If there was time to steal away and warn the stranger before he arrived at the ambush on the footpath—

That was Paul's first thought. But there was no time, for even as he was preparing to back away silently in the trees he heard the sound of approaching footsteps. Someone was coming—the footpad had been only a few minutes ahead of his victim.

Paul saw a slight movement of the crouching man, a quiver ran through the burly frame, and the grip tightened on the bludgeon. The ruffian was ready to spring out on his victim as soon as the unconscious man came abreast of the spot where he crouched.

Paul set his lips.

His own troubles had quite gone from his mind now. He was thinking only of saving the unknown stranger from a murderous attack. With set teeth he drew silently closer to the crouching ruffian. Through an opening of the thicket he sighted a rather tall, lean-featured, well-dressed man on the footpath, coming up with quick strides. And as the ruffian, gripping his weapon, leaped out at the man, Paul sprang desperately on him from behind and grasped him.

"Look out, sir!" he shouted.

Paul had not stopped to think. It was the only way to stop the savage attack, and it did not even cross his mind that, if the stranger failed to come to his aid, it would go hard with him at the hands of the footpad.

The ruffian gave a startled exclamation, and plunged headlong into the footpath, with the Greyfriars junior clinging to him like a cat. He reeled and fell, with Paul sprawling over him. The tall stranger sprang back.

The next instant Paul rolled on the ground, struck aside by the bludgeon, half-stunned by the blow, with blood streaming down his face.

But he had effected his purpose.

Even as the footpad turned on his intended victim the lean-faced man was upon him with a spring like that of a tiger.

The ruffian went down in the footpath,

his bludgeon flying from his hand as he crashed to the ground.

Paul sat up dazedly. The two men were rolling on the footpath close to him in desperate struggle. Paul's head was spinning, and he fell again as he tried to rise. But he struggled to his feet to go to the stranger's aid.

But the lean-faced man did not need aid.

Burly as the footpad was, he crumpled up in the grip of his adversary, whose muscles seemed to be of steel. The rascal panted and gasped in a grasp that was like the grip of a vice.

"I'll get you yet, Ferrers Locke!" he panted.

"Not this time," said the lean-faced man coolly. His knee was on the ruffian's chest now, pinning him down.

Paul made a step forward, but his head swam, and he staggered against a tree. He heard a metallic click and a torrent of curses from the ruffian, sprawling in the footpath with handcuffs on his wrists. For some minutes all was dark to the Greyfriars junior, the trees and the thickets spinning before his dazzled eyes. As through a mist he saw a face, like one in a dream he heard a voice:

"Lean on me, my boy."
Paul made an effort to pull himself together. But it was too much for him, and he sank unconscious on the arm of the man he had saved.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke, Detective!

PAUL'S eyes opened wildly. There was a grinding ache in his head, and his face was wet. For some moments he did not understand what had happened.

He was lying in the grass, his head supported by a strong arm, and a lean, kind face was bending over him.

"Better, now?"
"Yes," gasped Paul.
He put his hand to his head. His fingers came away crimsoned. Blood was oozing under his thick, dark hair.

"You're hurt, my boy," said the kind voice. "The brute gave you a hard knock. Keep still while I bandage your head."

"Is he—is he—"
"He is safe enough. Never mind him."

Paul lay still while his head was bound. His mind cleared now, and he glanced about him.

The ruffian sat in the path panting for breath, exhausted by the struggle, and with his hands held together by a pair of handcuffs. Confused as he was, Paul could not help wondering who was this lean-faced, quiet-looking man who carried handcuffs in his pocket. He had caught the name the footpad had uttered, which was the same as that of his headmaster. He wondered whether the stranger was some relative of Dr. Locke.

"Can you get up now?"
"Yes, I think so!" stammered Paul.

With the assistance of Ferrers Locke's strong arm he rose. His head was still aching painfully, but he was more himself again now. From the ruffian in the grass came a stream of curses till the lean-faced man turned on him and rapped out:

"Silence!"
And the ruffian, cowed, was silent.
"You have done me a very great service, my boy," said the man whom the ruffian had called Ferrers Locke.

"I—I was glad," stammered Paul. "I—I saw him. I knew he was going to attack you—"

"And you collared him in time. He would have taken me quite by surprise, I think. I did not expect to meet Smiley Joe in the quiet woods of Kent."

"You know the man, sir?"
Locke smiled.

"Quite well, and he knows me. I had the pleasure of sending him to prison for five years; and now that he has come out his first thought seems to have been of me."

"I'll get you yet!" muttered the ruffian hoarsely.

"Not for a time, I think," said Locke tranquilly. "You will be very well taken care of for some time to come, Smiley."

The man burst into a torrent of curses again, and Paul shuddered.

"Silence!" rapped out Locke.
"Come, my boy."

He drew Paul along the footpath. "You will leave him there, sir?" asked Paul.

"He will not get very far with his hands manacled," said Locke. "I shall telephone from the school to the police station, and he will be looked for and found easily enough. I am going to Greyfriars."

"I heard your name, sir," said Paul. "I suppose you are a relation of my headmaster."

"Yes; Dr. Locke is a relative of mine, and I generally come down to visit him two or three times in the year," said Locke. "You belong to Greyfriars, I think?"

"Yes; I'm in the Remove."
"I have some acquaintances in the Remove," said Locke, with a smile. "No doubt you know Wharton, and Cherry, and Nugent—"

"Wharton and Nugent are my study-mates," said Paul. "I was a new boy at Greyfriars last term."

"And you have not yet learned not to break bounds?" asked Locke.

"I—I—"
"It is surely past lock-up at the school, yet I find you here in the woods."

"Yes," stammered Paul.
"It was a fortunate circumstance for me, and I shall ask your headmaster to excuse you," said Locke, with a smile.

"It won't make much difference my being out of bounds after lock-up," said Paul miserably.

Locke looked at him.
"Rest on this stile a few minutes, my boy," he said, as they reached the end of the footpath.

Paul sat on the top bar. He was glad of the rest. Locke stood by the stile, dropping the bag he carried in the grass. His keen eyes searched the boy's face: it was easy for those keen eyes to read the signs of trouble there, and to see that they were not all caused by the injury the boy had received from Smiley Joe.

"What is it, my lad?" asked Locke quietly. "Are you in some trouble at your school?"

"Yes," muttered Paul.

"Nothing serious, I hope?"
"I'm going to be expelled," groaned Paul.

Locke's face grew harder.

"What have you done, then?"
"Nothing!"

"Come, come!" said Locke.
"I know you won't believe it—nobody will," said Paul wretchedly. "I've no right to tell you, a stranger to me. But you asked me."

"You can scarcely expect me to believe that my relative, Dr. Locke, has

committed an act of injustice!" said Locke severely.

"Oh, no! I don't mean that! The Head thinks I'm a rotter—just as all the fellows do. I don't blame him—I don't see what else he could believe, as things stand. I suppose I should think the same in his place," groaned Paul. "But he's wrong, all the same—I've done nothing. But it looks as if I had."

He pressed his hand to his aching head.

"If what you say is true you may find a useful friend in me," said Locke.

"But tell me nothing now—you must get back to the school, and a doctor must see that cut on your head. Come!"

Paul hesitated.
"I—I think I'd rather not go back to Greyfriars," he stammered.

Locke stared at him.
"What do you mean? You still belong to Greyfriars!"

"Yes, but—"
"Then you must go back."

"What's the good of going back to be sacked?" muttered Paul. "I can't face that. I'd rather cut the whole thing!"

"And go home, do you mean?"
Paul's face quivered.

"I've no home, unless Mr. Vernon-Smith's house is my home. I can't go back there after being kicked out of school."

"Vernon-Smith! I remember that there is a boy of that name in the Greyfriars Remove."

"Yes," said Paul, between his teeth.

"Is he a relation of yours?"

"No. My name is Paul Dallas. Mr. Vernon-Smith adopted me," said Paul.

"That is why Smiley hates me. He thinks I have turned his father against him. My father was a friend of Mr. Vernon-Smith's, and went to South America years ago, and was lost there—he is believed to be dead, but it is not known for certain. I was left destitute, and placed in a charity school. Mr. Vernon-Smith found me there and took me away, and sent me to Greyfriars. But"—Paul flushed—"I am not taking charity from Smiley's father, as he says. My father left money in Mr. Vernon-Smith's hands—a thousand pounds—and my fees are paid out of that. Otherwise I would not have stayed at Greyfriars a day after I saw how Mr. Vernon-Smith's son took it. I am not a beggar."

Locke watched his face keenly while he was speaking.

"I'd rather not go back to Greyfriars now," said Paul passionately. "The Head is going to send for Mr. Vernon-Smith. I know what that means—he is to take me away. But I can't go to his house with this disgrace on me. I can't—even if he will let me, and perhaps he will not. I'm not going back to the school at all."

"You must not run away, my boy," said Locke quietly. "If you are guilty of whatever is charged against you, you must face your punishment and repent. If you are innocent, the truth shall be proved."

Paul shook his head miserably.

"It's impossible!" he said.

"It is very far from impossible. I shall help you."

"You!" said Paul. "You can't help me."

Locke smiled faintly.

"Perhaps you have never heard of Ferrers Locke," he said. "I am a detective, my boy, and have some reputation for success. I imagine that I have handled more difficult cases than this, whatever the details may be. If you are not afraid of the truth coming to

light, you may depend upon me, I think, to bring it to light."

"Ferrers Locke!" repeated Paul. His face brightened. "Of course, I have heard the name! It was familiar to me when that man spoke it in the wood. The famous detective?"

"Fairly well known," assented Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "If you had been longer at Greyfriars you would have heard of me as a relative of your headmaster. But come."

Paul hesitated.

"I—I think—"

"You overlook one point, my boy," said the detective tranquilly. "As you are with me, it is my duty to see that you do not run away from school. I must take you safely back to Greyfriars."

"Oh!" exclaimed Paul. "But—"

"Come!"

The detective's voice was kind, but there was a note of command in it. Paul Dallas walked quietly by his side back to the school.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Scat!"

"But I say—"

"Prep, you ass!"

"Blow prep!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, Dallas has come in."

"Oh!" said Wharton and Nugent together.

Prep in Study No. 1 was suspended as the Owl of the Remove imparted that interesting news.

"You've seen him?" asked Wharton.

Bunter grinned.

"Yes, rotter! He's been scrapping."

"What rot!"

"Well, somebody brought him in with his head all bandaged up," said Bunter. "A fellow with a face like a—a—a hatchet. I've seen him before somewhere. He brought Dallas in, head all bandaged. He's been scrapping with somebody and got hurt. Perhaps the Highcliffe chaps—he had a row with them once."

"He would hardly want bandaging after a scrap with the Highcliffe chaps," said Nugent, staring at the fat junior. "Is this another of your yarns, you fat fraud?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Where is he now?" asked Wharton.

"They've taken him into sanny and telephoned for the doctor," said Bunter. "I heard Quelch phoning. I say, you fellows, I thought he had run away from school, and we were going to miss the expulsion."

"You fat boulder, do you want to see a man expelled?" growled the captain of the Remove.

"Well, it's exciting, you know," said Bunter. "All the fellows in Hall, and the masters looking like a lot of gorgons, and the Head as solemn as an owl, and—"

"Fatead!"

"I'm glad we sha'n't miss it, after all," said Bunter cheerfully. "I thought it was rather inconsiderate of Dallas to bolt, in the circumstances. We don't often see a chap expelled."

"You may see yourself expelled one of these days," growled Wharton; "and the sooner the better."

"Oh, really, you beast—"

"Buzz off and tell some other study, and let a fellow get his prep done," said the captain of the Remove.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled away along the Remove passage to impart his news in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,002.

the other studies. Bunter liked imparting news, and that occupation was ever so much more interesting than prep. So Bunter gave prep a miss, as he often did, with painful consequences to himself in the Form-room.

Every study in the Remove was interested to hear of the return of Paul Dallas, and very much interested to hear that he had been brought in by a stranger in a bandaged condition. Herbert Vernon-Smith, probably, was the most interested of all. Undoubtedly the Bouncer had hoped that his enemy had bolted.

In his bitter rancour, he would not have spared Paul any of the shame and humiliation of a public expulsion from the school. But he knew that his own position was not absolutely safe, and he would have felt quite secure had Paul gone for good, thus stopping further inquiry into the affair. There had been sufficient inquiry to condemn his rival, and the Bouncer assuredly did not want any more. Carefully as he had covered up his tracks, there was always a bare possibility of something coming to light to confound all his schemes.

"So he's not bolted," remarked Skinner, when Bunter had imparted his news in Study No. 4 and rolled out.

"Apparently not," assented the Bouncer carelessly.

"I suppose he couldn't go back to your father's place, Smithy?"

"I hardly think the pater would let him, in the circumstances. His eyes will be opened now, I hope," said the Bouncer bitterly.

"Then Dallas had nowhere to go if he bolted?"

"Not unless he went back to his school," sneered the Bouncer. "And even there they mightn't take him in, after what's happened here."

Skinner whistled.

"He seems to have done for himself pretty thoroughly," he remarked.

"A rotter like that was bound to come a mucker in the long run."

"The odd thing is that nobody believed him to be a rotter excepting you, Smithy."

"Perhaps the fellows will admit that I was right now."

"Perhaps Wharton seems to think something may turn up in his favour."

"Wharton's a prig."

"And Nugent thinks—"

"Nugent's a milksop."

"And you heard what Mauleverer said—"

"Mauleverer's a fool."

"Toddy seems to have a lingering doubt—"

"Toddy's a freak."

Skinner laughed.

"You think it's all straight, Smithy?" he asked, with a peculiar look at his friend.

"I don't think about it at all," said the Bouncer. "I dare say the Head knows what he's about. If he bunks Dallas, I suppose we shall all have to take it that the fellow ought to be bunked. The Head isn't likely to bunk a man for nothing."

"Of course not. But—"

"But what?" asked the Bouncer irritably.

"Oh, nothing!" said Skinner.

He went on with his preparation. The Bouncer gave him a dark look, and said no more. But he wondered what vague suspicions might be stirring in Harold Skinner's keen, suspicious mind.

After prep there was a general gathering of the Remove fellows in the Rag, and Dallas was the one topic.

It had been learned now that the missing junior had indeed returned, and had

been placed in the school hospital, where the school doctor had seen him. There was much surmise as to what had happened, and considerable speculation as to the identity of the stranger who had brought him to Greyfriars. No one but Bunter seemed to have seen that individual, and Bunter declared that he had seen him before somewhere, but couldn't remember who the merchant was.

"I say, you fellows, I fancy I know what's happened," said Bunter to the crowd in the Rag. "Dallas went back to his pals at the Cross Keys—"

"Nobody knows that he had any pals at the Cross Keys," interrupted Harry Wharton sharply.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"That seems to be pretty clear, I think," said Hazel. "We know the Head found a note in his desk signed J. B. The Beak doesn't know what J. B. stands for, but we do. It's that man Banks at the Cross Keys."

Wharton was silent.

"He went back to his pals at the Cross Keys and had a row with them," said Bunter. "It's as clear as daylight. He's been fighting at a pub."

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"Well, how did he get damaged, then?" demanded Bunter. "I tell you his napper was all bandaged up, and he was as white as a sheet. The man who came with him had to help him into the House."

"If he's in sanny, and really hurt, the Head can't very well bunk him," remarked Snoop. "Not till he's well, at least."

Vernon-Smith gave a start.

"What rot," he said sharply. "What can have happened to Dallas to lay him up in sanny? It's rot!"

"Well, he's in sanny now," said Peter Todd. "There's no doubt on that point, at least."

"His napper was all bandaged up!" insisted Bunter. "Looked like a hospital case. Awful!"

"Oh, rats!"

"In fact, frightful!" said Bunter, impressively.

"Terrific!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When the Remove fellows went to their dormitory, Paul Dallas did not go with them, so evidently he was to remain in the sanatorium for the night, at least. Wingate of the Sixth came to see lights out for the Remove, and half a dozen fellows ventured to question him. As head prefect and captain of the school, Wingate was sure to know something, at least, of the mysterious happenings of that evening.

"Where's Dallas, Wingate?" asked Skinner.

"In sanny. Turn in!"

"Is he badly hurt?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"I believe he had a nasty knock on the head with a stick," answered Wingate. "The doctor's seen him, and he's all right otherwise."

"Did a stranger really have to bring him back?"

"The Head's guest brought him in—a relation of Dr. Locke's, I think. Turn in, you young dawdlers!"

"But who hit him on the head?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Some footpad, I believe. According to what I've heard, he chipped in when some hooligan was attacking a gentleman who was coming here to stay with the Head, and got a knock. But I don't know much about it, and I haven't come up here for a talk with you fags," said the captain of Greyfriars pleasantly. "Good-night!"



“Herbert, my boy,” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, “if you have done anything to bring about what has happened, tell me before it is too late. Whatever you have done, you may trust me to stand by you.” “I’ve told you the truth,” said the Bounder, sullenly. “You will suspect me, and believe anything of me, but you will not believe anything against Dallas. It is what I expect—since that rotter has turned you against me.” (See Chapter 8.)

And Wingate put out the light and left the Remove dormitory.

“Jolly decent of Dallas, if that’s the true story,” Bob Cherry remarked.

“If!” said the Bounder.

“I say, you fellows, you’ll find I’m right!” said Bunter. “He’s been scrapping with those hooligans at the Cross Keys!”

“Did he come on the Head’s guest at the Cross Keys, do you think, Bunter?” inquired Frank Nugent, and there was a laugh.

“It’s some scheme to curry favour with the Head, and get out of bein’ sacked!” snarled the Bounder.

“That’s it,” said Skinner, at once.

“Oh, draw it mild, Smithy!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “If Dallas chipped in to help a man who was being mopped up by a footpad, he couldn’t have arranged it in advance, I suppose.”

“Some scheme, anyway!” chuckled Peter Todd.

“He’s cunning enough for anything,” said Vernon-Smith. “He seems to have lauded himself safe here again, for so long as he can pretend to be ill in sanny. He’s malingering, of course.”

“Rot!” said Wharton.

“Rubbish!” said Johnny Bull.

“Rats!”

“Chuck it, Smithy.”

“Anyway, we shall know all about it to-morrow,” said Bob Cherry. “It will keep till then.”

And it had to keep till then.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

An Old Acquaintance!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

“What?”

“It’s Mr. Locke!”

“My hat! Ferrers Locke!”

Harry Wharton & Co. were first down of the Remove the following morning. As they came out cheerily into the sunny quad for a trot before breakfast, they sighted a rather tall and lean gentleman who was already out of doors, taking a stroll on the path under the elms. Bob Cherry was the first to recognise him.

In a moment the Famous Five were sprinting across to the elms to greet their old acquaintance.

Dr. Locke’s distinguished relative did not often visit Greyfriars, but he was quite well-known there; and on one great occasion, Harry Wharton & Co. had had the honour of entertaining him to tea in Study No. 1. They were quite glad to see the famous detective again.

The five juniors came up to him with a rush.

“Good-morning, Mr. Locke!” sang out five cheery voices in chorus.

Ferrers Locke stopped and gave them a smile.

“I suppose you don’t remember us, sir,” said Bob.

“The rememberfulness is probably not terrific,” remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

“I remember you all perfectly well, my young friends,” said Ferrers Locke, shaking hands with the juniors one after another. “I am very glad to see you again.”

“The gladfulness of our esteemed selves is terrific,” said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Locke smiled.

“Mr. Locke would remember your English, Inky, anyway,” chuckled Bob Cherry. “It’s a thing that once heard would never be forgotten.”

“My esteemed and ludicrous Cherry, I—”

“Inky got his English from a giddy old moonshee at Bhanipur, Mr. Locke,” explained Bob. “A jolly old merchant named Mook Mookerjee—some name! We saw him when we had a trip to

India, and heard him talk. It was topping."

"The topfulness of the worthy Mook Mookerjee is great," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You're staying here, Mr. Locke?" asked Harry.

"Yes; I have come down for a quiet rest for a few days," said Ferrers Locke.

Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation.

"Why, you must be the Head's guest that Wingate mentioned," he said. "Was it you who brought Dallas in last night, Mr. Locke?"

"Yes."

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent. "Then you can tell us what happened, sir! We're awfully curious to know what happened to Dallas."

"If you wouldn't mind, Mr. Locke!" said Wharton.

"I have no objection at all," said Mr. Locke. "This boy Dallas is in your Form, I think?"

"Yes, and our study-mate," said Harry. "Did he get badly hurt?"

"No; a rather severe cut on the head, but no serious damage, fortunately. He did me a very great service."

"Dallas did?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Yes; he is a brave lad."

"We know he's got lots of pluck," said Nugent. "What did he do, Mr. Locke?"

"I was followed from London by a man who has a bad grudge against me," said Ferrers Locke. "A dangerous ruffian whom I caused to be sent to prison years ago. He got ahead of me and waylaid me on the footpath through Friardale Wood. I should have been taken by surprise, and probably hurt very severely, had not Dallas chanced to be there. He seized the man as he was springing on me, and was struck down—a very gallant and rather reckless action."

"Good man!" said Bob.

"And the man?" asked Wharton.

Locke smiled grimly.

"I succeeded in handling Smiley Joe pretty well," he answered. "I left him handcuffed, and he was picked up by the local police a few hours later, after I had warned them by telephone. Dallas showed very great courage, and certainly saved me from very severe injury. Is he a friend of yours?"

"Well, he is, or he was," said Harry, hesitating. "He's rather under a cloud now, and we don't quite know what to make of it. If he's really such a rotter as the Head believes, of course we should turn him down. But—"

"Dallas told me that he was in trouble here, and I have promised to look into the matter," said Ferrers Locke.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Wharton, his face brightening. "That will settle it one way or the other."

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"I am not infallible," he said, "but I shall do my best for the boy who risked so much to help me, a stranger to him. If a mistake has been made, I hope to help set it right. He was a friend of yours until the occurrence?"

"Yes, we all liked him," said Wharton. "He was liked all round, I think. Everybody thought him a decent chap."

"Only the Head has found him guilty," said Johnny Bull; "and I suppose the Head knows."

"Undoubtedly," said Ferrers Locke. "Yet the possibility of some mistake exists. I shall consult Dr. Locke on the matter, and if he approves I shall look into it. In that case, I shall ask you

to tell me what you know or surmise about the affair. I take it that you would be glad to see Dallas cleared?"

"Yes, rather!" said all the juniors at once.

Ferrers Locke gave them a nod and a smile and walked on. Harry Wharton & Co. went back to the House feeling very satisfied. If Ferrers Locke took up the matter, they had not the slightest doubt that Paul would either be cleared, or proved guilty beyond the shadow of a doubt. It was true that there was no shadow of a doubt in the Head's mind, or he would not have condemned the junior. But the Head, after all, did not know Dallas as his friends knew him, had not been in daily contact with him, and had not known his ways. The Head could only decide on the evidence; but the juniors had an instinctive belief in a fellow they had known and trusted in spite of evidence.

"Anyhow, it will be settled now," said Bob. "It looks clear enough; but if there's anything in Dallas' favour that can be found out, Ferrers Locke will find it out."

"That's certain," agreed Wharton.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter rolled up as the Famous Five came in. "I say, the Head's guest is in the quad now and—"

"Go hon!"

"That's the chap who brought Dallas in last night," said Bunter. "I feel sure I've seen him before somewhere."

"It's Ferrers Locke, fathead!"

Bunter jumped.

"Is it? I knew I had seen him before. I say, you fellows, I knew it was Ferrers Locke, of course, all along—"

"Fathead!"

And the Famous Five went in to breakfast.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke Takes a Hand!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH gritted his teeth hard.

Skinner watched him curiously.

It was close on time for morning classes, and by that time most of the Greyfriars fellows knew that Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, was at the school, a guest of his elderly relative, the headmaster. They knew the story of what had happened in Friardale Wood.

There was quite a revulsion of feeling in favour of Paul Dallas.

What had happened had no connection with the question of Paul's guilt or innocence, of course; and there were very few who doubted his guilt. But pluck was pluck. A fellow who had been injured in tackling a hefty ruffian for the sake of a stranger, was a fellow whom Greyfriars could respect for his pluck at least. If he was a thorough blackguard, at least he was a plucky blackguard, as Temple of the Fourth remarked, and that was something in his favour.

Skinner had brought the story to Vernon-Smith, rather wondering what its effect would be on the Bounder. Skinner had no definite suspicion in his mind, but he had a feeling that the Bounder knew more than he admitted about Dallas' disgrace, somehow. What had happened to Dallas was, at least, exactly what the Bounder would have desired to happen, and Skinner wondered whether it was something more than a coincidence.

"What rotten luck!" the Bounder muttered, through his set teeth. "What putrid luck!"

"Not for Dallas," said Skinner, with a grin. "He's made a friend. I should think Mr. Locke would put a word in for him with the Head."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"He might take the matter up as a detective, and see if there's anything to be done for the fellow," added Skinner, watching the Bounder's face closely as he spoke.

But Vernon-Smith had recovered himself now. His looks betrayed nothing.

"Think that's likely, Smithy?" persisted Skinner.

"Hardly. Locke's here as a guest, and the Head would hardly want him to butt into school affairs."

"Well, that's so; but Dallas seems to have done a very plucky thing—"

"Rot! Any fellow would have done the same."

"I don't know about that," grinned Skinner. "I know I should think twice before I tackled a hefty hooligan on account of a man I'd never seen. If Mr. Locke hadn't been able to tackle the ruffian, Dallas might have been simply smashed up. He ran a lot of risk."

"Rot!"

Skinner laughed. The Bounder obviously did not intend to see anything in the episode to the credit of his enemy.

The bell rang for classes, and Vernon-Smith went into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove.

It was only with difficulty that the Bounder could keep an impassive face.

There was a lurking dread in his heart now.

His scheme had been a complete success; not the slightest suspicion attached to him; his enemy was down and out. But if a man like Ferrers Locke took up the matter, there was no telling what might transpire. The Head had investigated the matter like a schoolmaster. The investigation of a professional detective might have very different results.

Certainly, had Ferrers Locke stayed a few days at the school simply as the Head's guest, he would not have been likely to intervene in any way with the affairs of the school, even if he had heard anything about them. But chance had brought him into contact with Dallas, and placed him under a personal obligation to the junior who was in disgrace. Would that make any difference?

Had Dallas been guilty it could have made no difference; Locke's inquiry, if he made one, could only have confirmed the Head's sentence. Guilty, Dallas would not have wished the detective to intervene. Innocent, was he not certain to avail himself of this chance? And if he appealed to the detective for help, was not that a practical piece of evidence in his favour? Ferrers Locke would know that a guilty party would scarcely appeal for help that could only end in confirming his guilt.

It was a dread in the Bounder's heart.

He told himself that Ferrers Locke was a man of the world, belonging to a profession that had probably hardened his heart a good deal—not the kind of man to give much thought to considerations of gratitude. It was more than likely that he would not interest himself in the affair of Dallas at all. The Head, having decided the matter, was not likely to wish his guest to reopen it; it could only be reopened on the assumption that Dr. Locke had possibly made a mistake. The Head was very unlikely to welcome such an assumption.

The Bounder had nothing to fear. He told himself so again and again. But

his heart was heavy with fear as he went into the Form-room with the Remove.

Paul, of course, was not with the Remove that morning. He was still lying in bed in the sanatorium with a bandaged head.

The Bounder was in trouble with his Form master more than once that morning. It was almost impossible for him to give his attention to Form work while he was wondering and surmising what Ferrers Locke might be doing in those very moments. If he took the matter up, what might come to light? But he would not—he could not! The thing was hammering in the Bounder's tormented mind; and Mr. Queleh had never found him so inattentive and sulky as he found him that morning.

The Bounder would have been still more uneasy, if possible, had he been aware that, while the Remove were going into class, Ferrers Locke was seated in the Head's study, discussing Dallas with the headmaster of Greyfriars.

The episode in the wood had caused Dr. Locke considerable perturbation.

It could make no difference in his dealing with the disgraced junior; that was impossible. But it was very disturbing to know that his relative and guest owed his escape from injury, perhaps even his life, to the boy whom the Head was to dismiss from the school in ignominy. Dr. Locke had already decided that Dallas, as soon as he could leave the sanatorium, should depart from Greyfriars quietly, without any actual expulsion. That was the least he could do; and it was the most also, for the condemned junior could not possibly be allowed to remain.

"It is most awkward," the Head confessed to his relative. "The boy has acted with great courage, and done you a great service, for which I am bound to feel grateful. It is very painful that absolutely nothing can be found in his favour to justify me in giving him another chance."

"That is absolutely certain?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"Absolutely."
"I am very far, of course, from thinking of offering an opinion on any matter outside my province," said Locke, with a smile. "But I admit that I am interested in this boy Dallas."

"I should be glad indeed to have your opinion, Ferrers, if it were a matter admitting of doubt," said the Head.

"There is no doubt?"

"None."
"If the evidence is so complete as that the boy must have very great effrontery to continue to protest his innocence."

"I am afraid he has."
"Yet, from his face, I should not have judged him to be brazenly impudent," said Ferrers Locke musingly.

"He has deceived us all," said the Head, with a sigh. "His Form master had a high opinion of him, and he seems to have been popular in his Form, with boys of excellent character. Indeed, his unparalleled hypocrisy appears to me a worse offence than his wretched blackguardly conduct."

"What is he charged with precisely?"

Dr. Locke explained.
"Yesterday, there was an inspection of the Remove studies. Cigarettes, a sporting paper, a pack of cards, and a note from some bookmaker were found in Dallas' desk."

"That should settle the matter, On



My Inky Fag

By A SENIOR.

WITH a look of deep dejection
At an essay marked
"Rejection,"

And heavy feet that always seem to lag,

Leaving marks all black and muddy
On the carpet of my study,
He's a saucy little wretch,
My Inky Fag!

He's untidy and he's lazy,
His idea of truth is hazy,
And at giving cheek he's something
of a wag.

He will babble while I'm working,
But at other times he's shirking.
He's an idle little wretch,
My Inky Fag!

He is careless and he's dirty,
And inclined to turn up shirty,
And tell me that I'm always on the
nag;

He borrows ties and collars.
And when caught he simply "hollers"
That he thought that they were old—
My Inky Fag!

If another chap should choose him,
I should be just wild to lose him,
Though his ties and socks and collars
always sag:

For if it came to voting—
Well, he's got some points worth
noting.
He's a better chap than most,
My Inky Fag!

With a courage simply topping,
When he has to take a whopping,
He always bears the blame for any
rag.

When I've got no ready money,
He can bag me cakes or honey;
He's a stunning little chap.
My Inky Fag!



what grounds, then, does the boy protest his innocence?"

"He made a wild statement to the effect that some other boy must have placed the things in his desk," said the Head. "He appears to be absolutely unscrupulous."

"Did he name any especial boy?"

"Yes; Vernon-Smith of the Remove. Dallas is the adopted son of Vernon-Smith's father, and I learn that they have been on very bad terms."

"But does not a bare possibility exist, at all events, that Dallas' statement was correct?"

Dr. Locke shook his head.
"As it happens, the thing is absolutely impossible," he said. "When I inspect the studies, it is always a surprise visit. You are aware, of course, that such an inspection would be futile otherwise."

"I imagine so," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile.

"It was not till three o'clock in the afternoon that I decided to take the inspection that day. I mentioned the matter to no one but Mr. Queleh, the Form master concerned, in his study. No member of the Remove could possibly have known what was coming. A

number of them were detected in faults and punished, among them this very boy, Vernon-Smith, in whose possession cigarettes were found."

"Yet Dallas declares—"

"That Vernon-Smith must somehow have learned my intention in advance, and plotted to disgrace him by conveying the articles into his desk just in time—a wicked and foolish accusation."

"Upon what does Dallas found the accusation?"

"Only upon the fact that there was ill-feeling between him and his adopted brother. He might say such a thing about any boy with whom he has quarrelled, of course."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"Vernon-Smith has been questioned?"

"His Form master questioned him, and he has denied knowing anything about the intended inspection. He could have known nothing; and the fact that he was one of the culprits detected and punished is a proof, if any was needed, of the truth of his statement."

"Certainly, it would seem so," said

Ferrers Locke; "unless he has a cunning and duplicity very rare in one so young."

There was a pause. The celebrated detective realised that he was on very delicate ground.

"May I ask you a great favour, Dr. Locke?" he said.

"Anything, of course!" said the Head in surprise.

"This boy Dallas has done me a great service. May I look into this matter and ascertain whether any circumstance can be found to tell in his favour?"

Dr. Locke pursed his lips for a moment.

But he nodded. "I should be very glad to hear of any such circumstance, of course," he said, rather dryly.

"Then you will permit me—"

"Certainly; but I fear you will be wasting your time."

"That is a matter of no moment, as I am here on a holiday," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "If you will not regard me as intervening in matters with which I have no concern—"

"Certainly not, my dear fellow!"

Dr. Locke rose.

"I must go to the Sixth Form now. And you—"

"I have to go down to Courtfield Police-Station to identify my hoodigan friend, Smiley Joe."

"Then I shall see you again at lunch."

And Dr. Locke went to the Sixth Form-room, and soon forgot all about Paul Dallas, in dealing with Sophocles and the Sixth. Ferrers Locke, as he walked down to Courtfield in the sunny spring morning, was thinking over the matter he had taken in hand; and already his opinion on that matter was at considerable variance with that of his reverend relative, the Head of Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Father and Son!

"VERNON-SMITH!"

The Bounder breathed hard. In second lesson Mr. Quelch had been interrupted by a tap at the Form-room door. Trotter, the page, came in with a message. That was not a very uncommon occurrence, and the rest of the Remove did not heed it much; but the Bounder sat with beating heart, watching and waiting. The fear that Ferrers Locke had taken up the affair of Dallas, the terrible fear that the keen-eyed detective might have seen further into it than the headmaster, haunted the Bounder, and he more than half expected to hear that he was wanted.

His heart almost missed a beat when the Remove master called him from his place.

For a second he did not stir. In spite of his self-command and his iron nerve, the colour wavered in his face.

"Vernon-Smith!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder dragged himself to his feet.

"Yes, sir!"

He knew that his voice was husky; he could not help it. Fear was gnawing at his heart.

"You are wanted, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder came out before the class. His steps were unsteady, and several fellows noticed how white his face was.

"You will go to the visitors'-room, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,002.

Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master coldly. He was not in a good humour with this troublesome member of his Form.

"Does Mr. Locke want to see me, sir?"

The Bounder tried to keep the falter out of his voice, without success.

"Mr. Locke?" repeated the Remove master. "Why should the Head's guest wish to see you, Vernon-Smith? Your father—"

The Bounder gulped.

He could almost have bitten out his tongue for his want of caution. Of course, Ferrers Locke did not want to see him. It was his father, who had come down to Greyfriars to take Dallas away.

"Your father is in the visitors'-room," said Mr. Quelch, little dreaming of the junior's tormented thoughts.

"He desires to see you, and you may go to him there."

"Very well, sir. Thank you."

The Bounder was quite self-possessed now.

He left the Form-room. What a fool he had been, fancying that it was Ferrers Locke who had sent that message for him! Was he losing his nerve? he asked himself savagely. Of course, his father had come down to Greyfriars at once, on receiving the Head's letter concerning Dallas. He might have expected that; in fact, he had expected it, only he had forgotten in the stress of uneasiness.

Trotter was still in the corridor, and the Bounder hurried after him and spoke to him.

"Seen Mr. Locke this morning, Trotter?" he asked.

"Yessir!" said Trotter. "Pleasant spoken gentleman he is, ain't he, sir?"

"Oh, very! Where is he now?"

"Gone down to Courtfield, sir."

"Oh!" The Bounder breathed freely.

"To Courtfield?"

"Yessir!" said Trotter. He was not surprised by Vernon-Smith's interest in the famous detective's movements; all Greyfriars was interested in so celebrated a character as Ferrers Locke.

"You see, sir, they've got the man that tried to do him in yesterday, and Mr. Locke's gone to identify him, so I heard, sir."

"I see!" said the Bounder.

He almost laughed as he went on his way to the visitors'-room.

His fears had been groundless, then. Ferrers Locke was gone about his own business that morning. Probably he had not given Dallas a thought—possibly did not even know that the junior was in any trouble at all.

"Herbert!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith was in the visitors'-room, and there was a harsh, stern expression on his somewhat podgy face.

Smithy had wondered how his father would take the news of Paul Dallas' disgrace and impending fate. He looked as if he had taken it badly.

If he felt any affection for the boy, the news could scarcely have failed to give him a painful shock. Not that the Bounder cared a straw for that. It was his own jealousy of his father's affection that was at the bottom of his unreasoning hatred of Dallas. There were few things that the Bounder would not have done to save his father pain—so far as he himself was concerned. But if Mr. Vernon-Smith was hurt through his regard for the "interloper," his son had no sympathy to waste on him.

Undoubtedly the millionaire looked very disturbed and very angry. Still, his anger could scarcely be directed against his own son in this case. At

least, so the Bounder supposed. He was not accused of anything or suspected of anything.

He shook hands with his father.

"You've come down about Dallas, dad?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I'm sorry it's turned out like that!"

"Are you?" said Mr. Vernon-Smith grimly.

"Well, one can't help feeling sorry for a fellow that's done for himself so jolly thoroughly," said the Bounder lightly. "I don't pretend to like him any more than I did."

Mr. Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on his son with a very penetrating look.

"I've not seen the Head yet," he said abruptly. "He explained what has happened in a letter that reached me this morning. From what he says, Dallas has turned out to be a pretty thorough young blackguard!"

"Yes," said Smithy.

"He showed no sign whatever of anything of the kind in my house."

"He's pretty deep."

"He never struck me as deep, and he was two months in my house with a tutor before he was sent here," said the millionaire. "Look here, Herbert, you had better be frank!"

The Bounder's heart throbbed.

"What do you mean by that, father?" he asked quietly. "I know nothing about the matter more than the other fellows. The Head can tell you all you want to know."

"Is that true?"

"Quite."

"You haven't been playing any tricks?"

Evidently Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith knew his son's character.

"What tricks?"

"I don't know, I'm asking you!" said the millionaire gruffly. "You know what happened just before the Easter vacation; you played a trick to blacken Paul in my eyes, and it very nearly succeeded! Is this another of your confounded tricks, Herbert?"

The Bounder breathed hard.

"You'd better ask the Head!" he replied unsteadily.

"You wanted the boy to leave this school! You said so!"

"That's true! I'm sick of seeing him in the place! I'd be glad to see him sent back to his charity school! But I suppose you don't think that my headmaster would expel him for that reason?"

"Don't be a young ass!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Have you been playing any trick to get Dallas into trouble with his headmaster?"

"You—you think—"

"I'm asking you. I know what you did before, and I know you detest that poor lad. You grudge what I am doing for him, though I have told you that his father made me a loan years ago that saved me from disaster, and that I am simply repaying the loan to my friend's son. You have a bad and bitter temper, Herbert, and you are capable of many things that other boys of your age are not capable of! I have a very keen suspicion that what Dallas is charged with might be laid to your charge if your headmaster knew all the facts!"

The Bounder's lip curled.

"Not all," he said. "Dallas is charged with being a hypocrite, and nobody ever accused me of that!"

"No; you rather glory in your faults, I think!" said his father. "I am very much to blame for having indulged you so much. I can see that now."

"Since you have known Dallas. You



Vernon-Smith's nerves gave way for a moment, as he realised that ruin was fairly upon him at last. His eyes blazed with rage, and he made a savage spring at the captain of the Remove. "Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter. Wharton reeled back as Smithy's fist crashed into his face, barely saving himself from going headlong down the stairs. (See Chapter 10.)

never spoke to me like this before you knew that scheming cad!" said Smithy bitterly.

"I never had occasion to do so. You have given me trouble and caused me pain since I have befriended Jim Dallas' boy, and all for no reason but a childish jealousy! I am disappointed in you, Herbert!"

"And not in Dallas?" sneered the Bounder. "I am not under sentence of expulsion from the school, at all events!"

"I am not sure about Dallas," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "That is why I asked to see you before seeing your headmaster. If you have been playing any ill-natured trick, own up while there is yet time, and I will do my best to make your peace with Dr. Locke."

"I have nothing to tell you."

"Herbert, my boy," said the millionaire earnestly. "I am speaking as your father—an affectionate father, I hope, though perhaps I have been a careless one in some respects. If you have done anything to bring about what has happened, tell me before it is too late. I know what you did before Easter, and I am very uneasy. Whatever you have done, you may trust me to stand by you, Herbert, tell me the truth!"

"I've told you the truth," said Herbert sullenly. "You will suspect me and believe anything of me! You will not believe anything against Dallas, though his headmaster has condemned him! It is what I expect—since that rotter has turned you against me!"

"Have you anything to confess to me, your father?"

"No!" said Vernon-Smith, setting his lips.

The millionaire gave him one long, searching look.

"I must take your word," he said. "I spoke for your own sake, Herbert—to save you, if you have done anything reckless, before it is too late. You may go back to your class!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith returned to the Remove-room.

His father remained many minutes in troubled thought before he left the visitors'-room and asked to see the Head. Only too well he knew his son's reckless, headstrong character; only too clearly he remembered the Bounder's scheme, before the Easter holidays, which had failed only by chance. But he was shown into the Head's study at last, where Dr. Locke had come from the Sixth Form room to see him.

There was little to be said; the Head's letter had explained all. A

vague suspicion that his son might have done something underhand and reckless haunted the millionaire; but he had to admit to himself that the matter seemed quite clear as the Head stated it. To Dr. Locke he said nothing of his vague, lingering suspicion. Little as the Bounder understood it or believed it, his father's affection for him was quite unchanged; he had been angry and harsh with his son under provocation, but Herbert was still the only being for whom the hard-hearted man of business had any deep regard. He would, in point of fact, have sacrificed Dallas for Herbert's sake had the alternative been put to him, little as the Bounder thought so.

"I trust the matter is quite clear to you, and you see that it is impossible for your adopted son to remain here. Mr. Vernon-Smith?" said Dr. Locke.

The millionaire nodded.

"There seems to be no doubt," he said. "I am ready to take the boy away. Where is he?"

"Unfortunately, he is not in a condition to leave to-day," said the Head. "It is very awkward!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith knitted his brows. "Dr. Locke, I am a busy man. I have

(Continued on page 17.)

SPEECH DAY AT ST. SAM'S!

(Continued from previous page.)

rather have my prize in cash than in kind," said Lirrick. "I happen to be hard-up at the moment, and the value of the watch will be more useful than the watch itself."

Sir Frederick stroked his beard thoughtfully.

"Bless my sole! You seem a very mercenary young fellow, for a poet," he observed. He turned to the rest of the Guvvners. "Shall we humour the boy in this matter, gentlemen?"

"May as well," said Sir Lofly High-brow. "I fancy the funds will just about run to it."

Sir Frederick solemnly counted out the sum of sixpence-halfpenny, which he handed to Lirrick. The Fourth-Former blinked at it in perplexity.

"W-what's this, sir?" he stammered.

"The cash value of the watch," explained Sir Frederick, without turning a hair. "You see, we bought it at a sixpenny-halfpenny bazaar."

"Oh, crumbs?"

There was a roar of laughter from the school at this revelation of the Guvvners' stinginess. Evidently the "magnificent eighteen-carrot gold watch" was the merest simulation of a simulation.

Lirrick pocketed the sixpence-halfpenny and went back to his place, looking very rooful.

II.

THAT'S that!" said Sir Frederick Funguss, with a grunt of satisfaction. "Now I'll start my speech-making!"

The prize-giving had taken a long time, and there was a good deal of grumbling and grousing among the St. Sam's fellows. There were lots of prize-winners, but nobody seemed to have won a prize worth winning. Burleigh's baby bat was useless, eggst as firewood. Tallboy of the Sixth, to his fierce indignation, had been awarded a child's scooter. As if a high-and-mighty Sixth Form man would lower his dignity to the eggstent of whizzing round the quad on a scooter! Tallboy had walked back to his seat with burning cheeks, and the scooter under his arm; and he mentally resolved to make a prezzant of the scooter to his fag, Midgett miner.

Burleigh miner had been awarded a cage of white mice; which was like piling thingummybob upon what's-a-name, for St. Sam's was already overrun with Burleigh's white mice.

Nearly all of the prizes were cheap and nasty; instead of reseaving the applavs of their schoolfellows, the prize-winners had reseaved their simperthy and condolements.

Sir Frederick Funguss cleared his throat, and was about to plunge into his speech, when the Head interposed.

"One minnit, Sir Freddie! You have not finished your job?"

"Eh?"

"There still remains one prize to be prezzented," said the Head, pointing to an alarm-clock which stood on the table. "This award is to be given to the boy who has proved himself the most increbably lazy slacker in the school!"

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That boy, Sir Freddie, is your great-grandson, Yawnington of the Fourth."

There was a chuckle from the St. Sam's fellows. As for Sir Frederick, he cultered to the roots of his hare.

"Doctor Birchemall," he protested, "you might have spared me this publicity! It is very painful for me to have to make such a prezzentation to my own great-grandson—to have to admit that he is the slackest and most slothful boy at St. Sam's. I was hoping to dodge this very painful duty."

"Make him go through with it!" snapped Colonel Fiery Sparkes. "Summon his lazy scamp of a great-grandson to the platform, to reseave the alarm-clock!"

"Rather!" chuckled the Head. "Yawnington! Come fourth!"

There was no response.

"Yawnington!" The Head's voice boomed through the Big Hall like thunder. "Stand forward, sir!"

Still no response.

Yawnington of the Fourth was dead to the world, at that moment. The Slacker of St. Sam's had been sound asleep ever since the start of the prize-giving.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" eggscclaimed Doctor Birchemall. "Bust me if the young scamp hasn't gone to sleep! Stick a pin in him, somebody, and tell him he's wanted!"

Frank Fearless, who was sitting next to Yawnington, promptly stuck a pin into the slacker's calf.

"Yarooo!"

Yawnington shot up with a wild yell. "Come here, sir!" commanded the Head. "Your great-grandpater has a little prezzentation to make to you!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Rubbing his eyes, and yawning and gaping, Yawnington lounged up to the platform, amid a burst of ironicle cheering.

Sir Frederick eyed his great-grandson in bitter reproach.

"My boy!" he said. "You have covered me with shame and confusion! You have shown yourself to be the laziest boy in the school—the Weary Willie of St. Sam's. The Head tells me that you seem to be afflicted with sleepy

sickness. You spend nearly all your time curled up on your study sofa, like a door-mouse. You take no part in sports and games! You fall asleep in the Form-room when you ought to be imbibing nollidge. And now it is my painful duty to prezzent you with this alarm-clock, in the hope that it will induce you to rise with the lark every morning."

Yawnington yawned.

"It would take more than an alarm-clock to make me do that," he mermered. "I'm such a heavy sleeper, you know. One night, the fellows stood a duzeen alarm-clocks round my bed, and they all went off together at six o'clock in the morning, and kicked up a regular hullabaloo. But I heard nothing of it."

Sir Frederick frowned.

"You disgustingly slothful boy! Have you no sense of shame? Why do you think I sent you to St. Sam's—to dream your youth away, and to snooze and snore when you ought to be up and doing? I warn you, you will have to pull up your sox this teim!"

"That's easily done," said Yawnington. And he promptly stooped down and gave a jerk to each of his striped sox. The onlookers chuckled.

"You young ijt!" snapped Sir Frederick. "I am not speaking literally; I am speaking metaforically. You must pull up your sox, and achieve some suxxesses in the Form-room or on the playing field; or I shall take very drastick mezzures! Understand me, boy! By your sloth and slackness, you have made me look a bigger fool than I am. You have covered me with shame and riddicule. Here, take your prize! And bare my words in mind, you worthless young scamp!"

With a very red face, Sir Frederick handed the alarm-clock to his great-grandson. It went off as he did so, and it whirred and clanged noisily as Yawnington carried it back to his place.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling! Buzz-z-z-z-z!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yawnington was too lazy to stop the alarm. He let it run itself out, and

(Continued on page 27.)

TAKE YOUR CHOICE CHUMS!

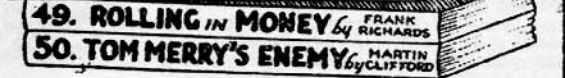
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(Continued from page 15.)

had to leave my affairs in the City this morning, at your special request that I should come here to take the boy away."

"Quite so. But—" "Now you tell me that I cannot take him," said the millionaire hotly. "Really, Dr. Locke—"

"If you will allow me to explain—" "My time has been wasted, sir," said Mr. Vernon-Smith tartly.

"I am sorry for that. But—" "I am here at your request to take Dallas away."

"Please listen to me, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the Head, a little testily. "Dallas has received an injury since I wrote to you yesterday—"

Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted. However, he consented to listen while the Head explained the matter. But his expression was very unpleasant. It occurred to the Head that Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was thinking more of his affairs in the City than of his adopted son's disgrace.

"Well, well," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I am afraid that I cannot spare the time for another journey here. Doubtless you will send him home when he can be removed."

"Certainly!" said the Head, with alacrity. He did not anticipate with any pleasure another visit from Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I will send him to your house in charge of a master. After the service he rendered my relative, I desire that he should leave as quietly as possible, without disgrace. He may do better elsewhere."

Another grunt from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I shall find him a place in my office," he said. "I shall not be at the trouble of placing him at school again if he has not been able to behave himself here. But after the service you speak of, why not give the boy another chance at Greyfriars?"

"I fear that that is impossible." "Then there is nothing more to be said."

And two minutes later Mr. Vernon-Smith was rolling away in his big car, much to the Head's relief.

In the Remove room Herbert Vernon-Smith heard the departure of the car, and was glad to hear it. His father was gone, while Ferrers Locke was still absent, and that was a relief to the Bounder.

**THE NINTH CHAPTER.
Ferrers Locke at Work!**

TAP!
"Come in, fathead!" sang out Frank Nugent.

"Thank you, I will!" said a pleasant voice, and Ferrers Locke opened the door of Study No. 1 and entered.

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton. Nugent jumped up with a crimson face.

"Oh, Mr. Locke! I—I—I beg your pardon! I didn't know—" he stutered.

Ferrers Locke laughed. "That is all right," he said. "Of course you did not know that it was I. If you young fellows have a few minutes to spare—"

"Hours if you like, sir," said Harry, smiling.

He placed a chair—the best chair—for the distinguished visitor. Ferrers Locke sat down.

"Your headmaster has given me permission to look into this affair of Paul Dallas," he said. "I want to ask you a few questions."

"Certainly, Mr. Locke!" said Wharton. "I suppose you've heard Dallas' account?"

"Yes. I have had a talk with him in the sanatorium. He denies any knowledge of the articles that were found in his desk, and persists in his denial," said Ferrers Locke. "He suspects that they were placed there by a boy who desires to do him injury."

Wharton and Nugent exchanged a quick glance.

"Had you thought of anything of the kind?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"Well," said Harry slowly, "you see, Mr. Locke, it was so unlike Dallas, as we knew him. If he smoked and gambled and backed horses and dealt with book-makers, he was about the completest humbug a fellow could be. We shared the same study, and never had any idea of it."

"The discovery was a surprise to you?"

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "Can you guess which boy he suspects of having played a dastardly trick on him?"

"The Bounder, I suppose?" said Harry. "I mean, Vernon-Smith. There was no love lost between them."

"That is the name he mentioned," said Ferrers Locke. "Now, all the evidence is against Dallas, of course. But we must see whether we can find a line of investigation to show something in his favour. To do that, we will assume, for the moment, that he is telling the truth, and that he knew nothing of what was found in his desk. In that case, the articles that were found there belonged to another boy."

"That's so."

"Is Vernon-Smith a boy likely to have such articles in his possession?"

The two juniors coloured uncomfortably.

"You must speak freely," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "This is not a matter of telling tales to your headmaster, but of giving information to a detective. Unless it should be proved that Vernon-Smith is guilty of having wronged Dallas, not a word will be said to his headmaster of what I learn concerning him. It is no business of mine, and I shall dismiss it from my mind. But if it should indeed be true that he has plotted to disgrace and ruin an innocent lad, he must suffer for what he has done. And surely you would not hesitate to help place the guilt on the right shoulders?"

"If you put it like that, sir, of course, we'll tell you anything you ask," said Harry. "It's understood that it goes no farther, unless the Bounder is proved to have played a trick on Dallas."

"Exactly!"

"Well, then, to answer your question, Smithy is a chap very likely to have things of that kind in his hands," said Wharton.

"If he desired, then, to place a racing paper, a pack of cards, a box of cigarettes, and a note from a bookmaker in a desk, he would very likely have such articles ready in his possession?"

"Quite likely."

"That is an important point," said Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, I see that," assented Harry. Both the juniors were keenly interested now. Obviously, the Baker Street detective's methods were very unlike those of the schoolmaster. The juniors were getting a glimpse into Ferrers Locke's methods, and could not fail to be interested.

"Yesterday was Wednesday," went on Ferrers Locke. "That is a half-holiday here, I believe?"

"Yes."

"It was a fine day. On a fine half-holiday there would not be many fellows indoors?"

"Hardly any, unless they had lines."

"Was this study occupied before the Head's inspection?"

"No; we were all three at games practice. We were just coming off when Dallas got a message from the Head to come here, and we came with him."

"Anyone could have entered the study, then, unknown to you?"

"Certainly!"

"And, the other studies being deserted—or nearly so—he could have done so with little likelihood of being observed?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Dallas uses that desk a good deal, I am told."

"Every day, several times a day. He keeps his papers and exercises and things in it."

"We must conclude, then, that if the articles did not belong to him, they could not have been long in his desk without his discovering them?"

"That is so. I know he went to the desk after dinner, just before we went down to games practice."

"If his statement is correct, then, the articles could not have been there at that time?"

"No. He would have seen them."

"And whoever placed them there must have known that he would find them, unless a Head's inspection took place first."

"Yes," said Harry. "But that's the difficulty. Nobody ever knows when a Head's inspection is coming. Smithy certainly couldn't have known, because they found smokes in his study, and he had to bend over."

"We will come to that later. Taking it that Vernon-Smith did as Dallas suggests, there was nothing to prevent him. The study was empty, the Remove passage deserted, and such articles were very probably ready to his hand in his own quarters. Was Vernon-Smith at games practice with you?"

"Oh, no!"

"He couldn't come down, as he had lines," suggested Nugent.

"Where was he?"

"In his study. We always do our lines in our studies, unless we're specially detained in the Form-room."

"The matter seems to grow clearer," said Ferrers Locke. "Had Vernon-Smith gone down to games practice with the rest, he would be cleared of all suspicion, since, on Dallas' own statement, the articles must have been placed in his desk during this games practice."

"Yes," said Wharton, with a nod. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,002.



"It's rather unlucky for Smithy that he had lines yesterday, if he's innocent in the matter."

"He was in his study, it seems," said Ferrers Locke. "Should it come out that he knew in advance of the Head's intention to inspect the Remove studies, Dallas' case will be, at least, a good one."

"Yes, rather!"

"Vernon Smith had totally denied knowing anything in advance of the coming inspection. If he knew, he has lied. That falsehood must be taken as evidence of his guilt, if it can be demonstrated that he knew."

"Only he couldn't have known," said Frank. "You see, nobody ever knows."

"If Vernon Smith knew nothing in advance, Dallas' statement must be taken as a reckless falsehood," said Ferrers Locke. "We cannot imagine that Vernon Smith would place his property in Dallas' desk, to be discovered when the boy came in from games practice."

"No; that's rot! If he put it there, he knew the Head was coming," said Wharton. "Only he couldn't have known."

"You have been through Head's inspection before?"

"Yes," said Harry, with a smile.

"Did the secret never leak out in advance?"

"Never that I know of. The whole point of the thing is that it's a surprise visit."

"Quite so. Nevertheless, secrets do sometimes become known."

"But Smithy was in his study writing lines," said Nugent. "He was there when we went down to Little Side, and there when the Head came along at half-past four."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"The Head tells me that he mentioned his intention of visiting the Remove only to the Form master concerned—Mr. Quelch, in Mr. Quelch's study. If anyone surprised the secret, it could only have been by overhearing what Dr. Locke said to Mr. Quelch."

"I suppose so," said Harry. "Smithy couldn't possibly have done that if he was in his study."

"If another boy did so, would he be likely to warn Vernon-Smith?"

"Quite certain to, if he was friendly with him. A tip like that would be passed along the Form, of course."

"But he would warn other fellows, too," said Frank. "Nobody was on his guard. Half a dozen fellows were caught out."

"That's a difficulty, isn't it, sir?" asked Wharton, with a curious look at the detective's thoughtful face. "We've got to imagine that a fellow heard what the Head said to Quelch—I mean, Mr. Quelch—and that he gave Smithy the tip, and let the other fellows take their chance."

"The difficulty may not be so great as you suppose. Taking it that some Remove boy learned what was intended, he may have warned Vernon-Smith first, knowing him to be a boy with shady secrets to keep."

"Yes, that's so."

"And if this scheme of injuring Dallas came into Vernon-Smith's mind, he would naturally persuade his friend to say nothing to others of what he had discovered. It would be very important to him to keep the matter secret."

"Yes," said Harry slowly. "But a chap would have to be an awful rotter to leave fellows in the dark if he knew the Head was going to butt in."

The Baker Street detective laughed.

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"Your headmaster would scarcely take that view," he said. "But I am aware that a schoolboy's view is not precisely similar to that of a schoolmaster. If the boy were a very special friend of Vernon-Smith's—"

"He hasn't any special friend now since Redwing left. And Redwing wouldn't find anything out by listening at a keyhole, if he was here. Nobody else ever cared much about Smithy."

"Skinner might listen, and he would tip the Bounder, and keep it dark if Smithy asked him," said Nugent. "Only Skinner was out of gates all the afternoon. He was awfully scared when he came in and found there had been a Head's inspection."

"Let us leave that point for a moment," said Ferrers Locke. "The Head spoke to Mr. Quelch in the Remove master's study. I am following the theory that he may have been overheard. Have you ever known such a thing to happen?"

"Oh, yes! Bunter's often told fellows things he's heard like that," said Wharton. "He had a terrific whaling last term for listening at Mr. Quelch's door."

"Then the thing is at least possible?"

"Yes, quite possible."

"I have noticed Bunter," said Locke.

"A rather stout youth—"

"Jolly stout! Fattest ass going!" said Nugent.

"Was Bunter at games practice yesterday?"

"No fear! It wasn't a compulsory day."

"If anyone played the eavesdropper, Bunter was a likely person?"

"Likelier than any other, I think," said Wharton.

"Is he specially friendly with Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, no; not at all! He cadges from him sometimes."

"Would he be likely to convey the warning to Vernon-Smith, if he chanced to overhear what was said in Mr. Quelch's study?"

"Quite. He's an ass, but he's good-natured," said Wharton. "He would be likely to tell every fellow in the Form, if only for the sake of talking and telling them something. I dare say he'd go straight to the Bounder with it, knowing that he had a lot to be afraid of if the Head came round. Smithy would be likely to lend him something, too, on the strength of it."

"The whole case for Dallas hangs upon Herbert Vernon-Smith having known in advance that the Head intended to inspect the studies, while the Remove were at games practice," said Locke. "It must be learned, therefore, whether any boy in the Remove overheard Dr. Locke speaking to his Form master, and conveyed the warning to Vernon-Smith in his study. That is the line I shall follow, and I shall begin with Bunter. Perhaps you could bring him here, without telling him what is wanted, of course."

"Certainly."

"Then I will wait."

And Harry Wharton left the study in search of William George Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The End of His Tether!

"WHARTON!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith was leaning on the balustrade of the Remove landing. He spoke quietly as the captain of the Remove came along towards the stairs. Wharton pruned and coloured.

After what had been said in Study No. 1 he did not want to see the Bounder or to speak to him.

The conviction was growing in Harry Wharton's mind that the line of investigation Ferrers Locke was following was likely to lead to the truth of the mysterious matter. He had instinctively doubted the charge against Paul, though the evidence was overwhelming. Now the Baker Street detective had shown, at least, that the evidence was not so overwhelming as it had seemed. He had shown that it was possible, at least, that Vernon Smith had known that the Head's inspection was coming; and if that was possible, the rest hardly needed proving, to Wharton's mind. It was easier to believe that the rancorous Bounder had revenged himself upon an enemy, than that Paul was a thorough rascal and an accomplished hypocrite.

"I'm in rather a hurry," said Wharton, and he would have passed on.

But the Bounder stepped into his path.

"You can spare me a minute," he said sarcastically.

"Well, what is it?" asked Wharton restively.

"Ferrers Locke is in your study?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Just as a visitor, as he was once before?" asked the Bounder, his keen eyes on Wharton's face.

The captain of the Remove did not answer.

If he had needed proof that the Baker Street detective was following the right line, he thought that he had it now. Evidently Smithy had been on the watch and had taken the alarm, and there was no reason at all why he should have done so had his conscience been clear. In spite of the hard calmness in Smithy's face, Wharton could see that he was deeply uneasy. The restless glitter in his eyes betrayed him.

"Well," said Vernon-Smith sharply, "can't you answer a fellow?"

"No," said Wharton. "I'd rather not talk to you at all just now, Smithy. Let me pass, will you?"

The Bounder did not move. In spite of his self-control there was a trembling of his hands for a moment.

"Why is Locke there?" he asked.

"I'd rather not speak about him to you."

"You are playing with me," said the Bounder, and his voice was hoarse.

"You've got to tell me. I know all about Dallas' theatrical trick yesterday—playing the gallant rescuer and all that. Has he asked Mr. Locke to take up his affair for him?"

"I don't know if he's asked him."

"But Locke is doing it?"

"How does that concern you, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly.

"It concerns me if that cad throws dust in the Head's eyes somehow, and hangs on here instead of gettin' bunked."

"That's rot, and you know it. Whatever Mr. Locke may discover, it can only be the truth, and I suppose we all want to know what the truth of the matter is."

"That means that Locke is taking it up?"

Wharton paused a moment.

"Yes," he said at last, "I'll tell you that much, Smithy. Mr. Locke is trying to find out exactly what happened yesterday, and I hope he will be able to clear Dallas."

The Bounder clenched his hands hard. His worst fears were realised now.

"And you're helping him?" he asked huskily.

"Naturally all I can. If Dallas is

guilty of what's charged against him; I'm done with him; if he's not, I want him cleared. Any decent fellow would say the same, I suppose."

"The Head is satisfied already."

"I know that."

"You think the Head has made a mistake?"

"I think that whatever Locke may discover will make the affair clear. If Dallas is guilty, it will be proved. If the Head has made a mistake he will be glad to know it before it's too late."

"Something is goin' to be trumped up to save that rotter," muttered the Bouncer.

Wharton laughed contemptuously.

"Mr. Locke is not the man to trump up anything. Don't be a fool, Smithy. Let me pass."

A feeling of something like compassion came into Wharton's heart, as he saw Smithy's hard face whitening. He had little doubt now, if any, that Vernon-Smith was the guilty party, and he could guess the misery and despair in the Bouncer's breast, if that was the case, when the celebrated Baker Street detective intervened in the matter. Whatever was the truth, it was scarcely possible that Ferrers Locke would fail to bring it to light. And the result could only be terrible for the fellow who had plotted the ruin of his schoolfellow. A sword of Damocles impended over Smithy's head, if he was guilty, and the fall of it could only be delayed.

"Smithy," said Wharton in a low voice, "if you've done anything—if you've let your rotten temper carry you too far—you may have a chance if you own up before it goes further. Whatever the facts are, Mr. Locke is certain to get at them. A matter like this is child's play to him. If you've planted

this on Dallas, it's not really like you—you're not so bad as all that. You must have acted hastily, carried away by your rotten temper. You may have a chance if you own up."

The Bouncer looked at him, forcing a mocking smile to his lips; but his eyes were haggard.

"So you believe what Dallas said of me?"

"You're making me believe it, Smithy. You wouldn't be concerned in the matter at all if you'd nothing to fear."

The Bouncer knew that he was giving himself away to Wharton, at least. But it mattered little, if Ferrers Locke was on the case. He knew that that meant inevitable disaster to his scheming.

"Go to the Head and own up before it's too late, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove earnestly. "I'm speaking as a friend, though we're not friends now. You've done an awful thing, but I don't want to see you sacked from the school, for one. So long as Dallas gets justice, I'd be glad to see you have another chance."

The Bouncer laughed discordantly. "Thank you for nothing!" he jeered. "Well, that's a tip," said Harry, and as the Bouncer did not move, he walked round him and went down the stairs.

Vernon-Smith leaned on the balustrade again, his face white, his breathing hard. He knew his danger—it was very clear to his mind. He knew the weak spot in his scheme—the fact that Billy Bunter had warned him of the Head's coming the day before. If Ferrers Locke made a searching inquiry—as was certain now—sooner or later the Owl of the Remove would be questioned. Bunter had forgotten, or almost forgotten, the matter now. But

Locke's questions would soon draw from him all he knew. And then the game would be up with a vengeance.

The Bouncer turned a stare of hatred towards Study No. 1. But for the intervention of Ferrers Locke he would have been safe. Dallas would have been already gone. And now—

But the Bouncer's nerve did not fail him. Successful or defeated, he was game to the last.

He waited. His glance turned on the staircase as footsteps came up. Harry Wharton was coming back, and with him was Billy Bunter.

The Bouncer caught his breath. Bunter's voice floated up to his ears from the lower stairs.

"Look here, Wharton, if it's about the pie—"

"It isn't, fathead!" said Wharton, half-laughing.

"Well, you see, the cook must have missed the pie," said Bunter cautiously. "I know nothing about it, of course. I'm willing to give anybody my word about that. I suppose I'm entitled to be believed?"

"Come on, Bunter!" "Still, there may be a row about it." "You silly owl!" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "Do you think the Head would ask Ferrers Locke to track down a missing pie?"

"Well, it was a jolly good pie, and I know Mrs. Kebble will be waxy when she misses it," said Bunter. "There wasn't enough gravy in it, but it was a ripping pie. Ferrers Locke being a detective, I think very likely the Head might have asked him—"

"Fathead!" "Well, what does Mr. Locke want to

(Continued on next page.)

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"AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!"*(Continued from previous page.)*

see me for, then, anyhow?" demanded Bunter. "I don't see why he should."

"Nothing about a pie, you crass ass! Do come on!"

"Anyhow, he's bound, as a gentleman, to take my word when I tell him I know nothing about the pie," said Bunter.

"Hurry up!"

Harry Wharton piloted the Owl of the Remove up to the landing. Herbert Vernon-Smith stepped in the way.

"You're taking Bunter to Ferrers Locke?" he said thickly.

"Yes. Step aside!"

"You rotter!" The Bounder's nerves gave way for a moment, as he realised that ruin was fairly upon him at last. His eyes blazed with rage, and he made a savage spring at the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Wharton reeled back as Smithy's fist crashed into his face. He barely saved himself from going headlong down the stairs.

Vernon-Smith was following up the attack furiously, but Wharton rallied at once and grappled with him. There was a fierce struggle for a minute, and then the Bounder went with a crash on the landing.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what's the row about? Has Smithy gone potty?"

Harry Wharton panted.

"Come on, Bunter."

And as the Bounder sprawled gasping on the landing, Wharton led Bunter on to Study No. 1. The door closed on them as Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet.

For some minutes the hapless Bounder stood, breathing, in gasps, his face like chalk. Then, with the sickness of despair in his heart, he went unsteadily down the stairs.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.**Light at Last!**

BILLY BUNTER blinked uneasily at Mr. Locke through his big spectacles.

He was haunted by a doubt, though really it was extremely improbable that Dr. Locke had asked his distinguished relative to investigate the mystery of the disappearance of a pie from the larder. That pie was on Bunter's mind if not on his conscience.

"Wharton says you want to speak to me, sir?" mumbled Bunter.

"I should like the pleasure of a few minutes conversation with you, Master Bunter," said Ferrers Locke genially.

"Is it about a pie?"

"Eh?"

"If it is," said Bunter. "I want you to understand, at the start, that I know nothing whatever about it."

"You fat ass—" ejaculated Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Shut up, Bunter, and let Mr. Locke speak," said the captain of the Remove impatiently.

"That's all very well," said Bunter obstinately. "But I want this thing clear at the start. If Mrs. Kebble has complained to the Head about a pie being missing, I want to make it clear that I never touched the pie. In fact, I never knew there was a pie in the larder at all, and my belief is that the cat got it."

"Dear me!" said Ferrers Locke, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,002.

gazing at William Bunter quite curiously.

Possibly Billy Bunter was something a little new, even in the Baker Street detective's wide experience.

"I haven't been near the larder," said Bunter, further. "If Trotter says he saw me on the lower stairs, he's fibbing. I'm afraid Trotter's a very untruthful chap. Low people are, you know."

"Master Bunter—"

"If the Head asked you to look into it, sir, you can tell him that I'm as innocent as a babe-in-arm's," said Bunter. "I'm not the fellow, I hope, to bag a pie from the larder. I haven't been scoffing it in the box-room. I know nothing about it. Nothing at all."

"You fat duffer!" shrieked Nugent. "Do you think Mr. Locke is bothering about a mouldy old pie?"

"It wasn't a mouldy pie," said Bunter. "It was a jolly good pie, though there wasn't enough gravy. Not that I know anything about it, of course. I hope you can take my word about that, Mr. Locke."

"Never mind the pie," said Ferrers Locke, laughing.

"You didn't want to see me about a pie?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Nothing of the kind."

"Oh, good! You see, Mrs. Kebble is jolly suspicious, and she's accused me before of sneaking down to the larder," said Bunter. "Not in my line at all. You see—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I wish to ask you a question, Master Bunter."

"Not about a pie?"

"No, no."

"Go ahead, sir," said Bunter genially. "If you want my opinion about any case you've got in hand, sir, I shall be very pleased to give it. You needn't glare at me, Wharton, and you needn't either, Nugent. If Mr. Locke wants to ask my opinion, he's welcome to it."

"Oh, you frajvous ass!" murmured Wharton.

"I should be very pleased to help you with your work, Mr. Locke, so far as time allows, of course," said Bunter.

"I've got a lot of engagements, but I'll give you some of my time with pleasure. I've often thought I should make a jolly good detective. Keen, you know, sagacious, and all that."

"I want to know where you were yesterday afternoon," said Ferrers Locke.

Bunter jumped.

"Why?" he asked.

"Never mind why; answer my question." Ferrers Locke's face grew severe in expression, and a considerable amount of Bunter's fatuous self-confidence deserted him. When Mr. Locke looked stern, his features bore a resemblance to those of his reverend relative, the Headmaster of Greyfriars, on occasions when the Headmaster was wielding the birch. That resemblance was quite sufficient to deflate the fatuous Owl of the Remove.

"Of course, I don't mind telling you, Mr. Locke," said Bunter, in haste. "I haven't done anything."

"Not at all; but for certain reasons, I desire to know what you did yesterday afternoon."

Billy Bunter reflected. Yesterday was generally a blank in his fat mind.

"Let's see, there was games practice yesterday," he said.

"You did not attend that?"

"Oh, no; it wasn't a compulsory day. I mean, I don't need all the practice these fellows do."

"How did you spend your time?"

"I had a nap in the study," said

Bunter. "Then that beast Toddy shifted me out because he was going to work—what he calls work. Then I went to see Lord Mauleverer. He refused to cash my postal-order. Just because it hadn't come yet, you know! Mauly's rather mean."

"And after that?"

"I had a walk in the quad." Billy Bunter's fat face became more serious. He remembered now that his eaves-dropping exploit came next, and he did not want to mention that to Ferrers Locke. It was important not to mention that to anyone, as Smithy had warned him.

"And then—"

"Then I came up to see Smithy—I mean—"

"Vernon-Smith was in his study?"

"Yes. I mean, I don't know," Bunter realised that the less he said about Vernon-Smith the better, in the circumstances.

"You do not know?" repeated Ferrers Locke, his voice so suddenly deep and terrifying that Bunter quaked.

"I—I—I mean, yes, he was in his study."

"What did you see him for?"

"Oh, I—I just dropped in for a chat," said Bunter uneasily. "Not to give him a tip, or anything of that kind."

Ferrers Locke smiled. He had intended to carry his questioning through the whole Remove if necessary. It looked now as if it would not be necessary.

"Did you see the Head go to Mr. Quelch's study?"

"The—the Head?" stammered Bunter.

"Were you near Mr. Quelch's door when the Head went there?"

"No fear; I was in the quad."

"Mr. Quelch's window looks on the quadrangle, I think?" said Ferrers Locke, glancing at Wharton.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Was the window open, Bunter?"

"I—I—I don't know," gasped Bunter. Even his obtuse brain grasped the fact that he was on dangerous ground.

"Mr. Quelch generally has his window open on a fine afternoon, Mr. Locke," said Harry. "It was very fine here yesterday."

"Is it possible for anyone near the window to hear what is said in the study?"

"Quite, if he got close to the window, and wasn't noticed."

"You were near the window when Dr. Locke was there, Bunter?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter.

"You knew the Head was there?"

"Not at all. Hadn't the faintest idea."

"You have already told me that you were in the quadrangle when the Head went to Mr. Quelch's study."

"Yes; that's right!" gasped Bunter.

"Right out in the quad. Nowhere near the spot, you know."

"How do you know when the Head went there, if you did not know that he went there at all?"

"I—I didn't know."

"Well, upon my word!" said Ferrers Locke.

Bunter backed to the door.

"I—I think I'll go now, if you don't mind," he said. "I—I've promised to go to tea with a fellow."

"I do mind!" said Ferrers Locke grimly.

"Look here, you ain't a master in this school," said Bunter feebly. "You haven't any right to ask me questions, you know."

"Would you prefer to be questioned by your headmaster?"

"Oh dear! No!" gasped Bunter.



"I should like the pleasure of a few minutes conversation with you, Master Bunter," said Ferrers Locke genially. "Is it about a pie?" asked the Owl of the Remove nervously. "Eh?" "If it is," said Bunter, "I want you to understand, at the start, that I know nothing whatever about it." The Baker Street detective gazed at the fat Remove quite curiously. (See Chapter 11.)

"The Beak wouldn't understand that it was all an accident."

"What was an accident?"

"Nothing!" stammered Bunter.

"Now, attend to me, Bunter," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I require you to tell me the truth; but in the circumstances, I can give you an undertaking that you will not be punished. But you must tell me the whole truth."

Bunter brightened up.

"You can square it with the Beak?" he asked.

"I shall explain to Dr. Locke, and you will be excused."

"That's what I mean," said Bunter. "You see, it was all an accident. I stopped to tie my shoelace under old Quelch's window, and, of course, I couldn't help hearing what the Beak said, could I?"

Wharton and Nugent exchanged a glance.

"You heard Dr. Locke tell Mr. Quelch that he was taking an inspection of the Remove studies at half-past four?"

"Sure I sha'n't be licked?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Quite."

"Well, that's what I heard," admitted Bunter. "You see, I wondered what was up when I saw the Head come into Quelch's study, and mizzled across to Quelch's window to—tie up my shoelace—"

"Never mind your shoelace now.

Having learned that there was to be an inspection of the Remove studies, what did you do?"

"Well, what would any decent chap do?" said Bunter. "I made up my mind at once to tip the fellows the wink, so that they wouldn't be caught out. No end of a sell on the Head, you know, if he rooted all through the studies and found nothing at all." And Bunter chuckled a fat chuckle.

"To whom did you go first?"

"Smithy," grinned Bunter. "I knew Smithy would get it hottest, if he was taken by surprise. Besides, I thought that in common decency he couldn't refuse to cash my postal-order, if I saved him from a Head's licking." Bunter broke off. "I say, you know, don't you tell the Beak what I said about Smithy. I'm not going to sneak about a man."

"That's all right, Bunter," said Wharton reassuringly. "It's a more serious matter than Smithy's smokes."

"You warned Vernon-Smith that the Head was to come on an inspection?"

"Of course. He stood me five bob—"

"You warned no one else?"

"Well, you see, after what Smithy said, I saw that it would be too risky," explained Bunter. "Smithy's wide, you know. He pointed out that if the Head found nothing wrong in any of the studies, he would guess that it had leaked out that he was coming. Then

he would know that somebody had heard him speak to Quelch, and tipped the fellows the wink. He warned me to keep it dark, and, of course, I kept it dark."

"You did not remain with Vernon-Smith after that?"

"No; I went to the tuckshop."

"You do not know what Vernon-Smith did afterwards?"

"Well, I suppose he got ready for the Head," grinned Bunter. "They found some smokes in his study, but they'd jolly well have found something else if I hadn't warned him. He jolly well had his five bob's worth. Of course, that five bob was only a loan. I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"You did not mention what you had learned to anyone but Vernon-Smith?"

"No, you see I saw it would be risky, after what Smithy said. The Head might have guessed it was me—I often get suspected of things I haven't done. For instance, when they miss that pie—"

"I think you have told me enough, Master Bunter," said Ferrers Locke.

"You have acted like a young rascal—"

"Eh?"

"Your eavesdropping has had very serious consequences."

"You see, it was quite by chance—"

"That will do."

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"Oh, really, Mr. Locke—"

"If I were your schoolmaster, Master Bunter, I should cane you very severely."

"Oh, lor!" gasped Bunter. "I'm jolly glad you ain't my schoolmaster, then. I—I say, Mr. Locke, I—I hope you ain't staying here long."

"As I have drawn this information from you for a certain purpose, I shall see that you are not punished for your cavedropping. But I advise you to mend your ways. You are a young rascal. You may go."

"Shall I kick him out, Mr. Locke?" asked Nugent.

"Perhaps it might be as well."

"Oh, crickey!"

Bunter was gone in a flash.

Ferrers Locke smiled, but his lean, clean-cut face became very serious at once.

"I think the matter is fairly clear now," he said. "It is proved that Vernon-Smith had previous knowledge of the Head's intended inspection yesterday; and that was the point in question. He has denied this, and he will have to explain for what reason he denied it." Locke's face grew grim. "There is no doubt that the wretched boy deliberately planned to disgrace Dallas and cause his expulsion from the school. I must go now and see the Head."

Ferrers Locke left Study No. 1. Wharton and Nugent looked at one another.

"Thank goodness he came here!" said Harry, with a deep breath. "I never quite swallowed it about Dallas. It seemed impossible, somehow, plain as it looked!"

"What an awful rotter Smithy is!" said Nugent. "I could hardly have believed it of him, bad hat as he is!"

"I met him in the passage, when I went to fetch Bunter, and he as good as admitted it," said Wharton. "I suppose he knew the game was up when Mr. Locke took a hand in it. It's up now, anyhow. It will be the sack for Smithy."

"Can't say I'm sorry."

Wharton made no reply to that. If ever a fellow had earned expulsion from Greyfriars Herbert Vernon-Smith had. Yet, somehow, at the bottom of his heart, Wharton had a lingering compassion for the headstrong, reckless fellow, and a hope that the gates would not close for ever behind the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Luck!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH was coming away from the Head's study as Ferrers Locke reached it.

The Bounder's face was pale, and there were beads of perspiration on his brow.

But he was cool, though deeply shaken; and he gave the Baker Street detective a grin of sardonic mockery as he passed him in the corridor without a word.

Locke paused and glanced after the Bounder, perplexed, for the moment, by the strange look Vernon-Smith had given him.

Smithy turned the corner and disappeared; and the detective, with a thoughtful brow, tapped at the Head's door, and entered.

He found Dr. Locke standing by his writing-table, obviously not in his usual state of calm and scholastic repose.

The doctor was deeply disturbed.

Locke glanced at him.

"If I have come at an awkward moment, sir—" he said.

"Not at all—not at all!" said the Head. "Pray sit down. I have just learned a startling—indeed terrible thing!"

"Indeed!"

"When you spoke to me this morning, my dear fellow, of that poor boy Dallas, I thought I detected a thought in your mind that some ghastly mistake had been made," said the Head.

"I must admit that that is correct," said Ferrers Locke.

"I am afraid I was a trifle offended," said Dr. Locke. "The case was so absolutely clear, as I then thought—"

"Then something has occurred to change your opinion?"

"That is so. If you doubted the boy's guilt, you were right," said the Head. "I have narrowly escaped committing a serious act of injustice. I am utterly distressed! But who could have imagined such wickedness—such unscrupulous depravity as that to which Vernon-Smith has confessed?"

"He has confessed, then?"

"Yes; he left me only a few minutes before you came in. No doubt the burden of his guilt lay heavy on his conscience," said the Head. "It is not surprising that he has confessed; it would have been surprising, I think, if he had not done so."

Locke made no reply to that.

He remembered the bitter, sardonic grin on the face of the junior who had passed him in the corridor. He had little doubt, if any, that Vernon-Smith had foreseen what was coming, and had made his confession in the nick of time.

No such thought was in the Head's mind.

"I am glad—deeply glad—that the wretched boy confessed before Dallas had been actually sent away from the school," said Dr. Locke. "It was the one act of reparation he could make. Fortunately, the worst has not happened. Dallas will remain, and I shall write a full explanation to his adopted father. The poor boy!"

"Then the matter is clear now?"

"Perfectly clear. Vernon-Smith has confessed that he was warned by some boy whose name he refuses to disclose, and who had overheard me mention to Mr. Quelch my intention of taking an inspection of the Remove yesterday afternoon. Taking advantage of this knowledge, he obtained the articles that were found in Dallas' desk and placed them there for me to find."

Dr. Locke sighed.

"It is a dreadful occurrence," he said—"very dreadful! The only redeeming circumstance is that the wretched boy, unable to bear such a burden of guilt, came to me of his own accord and made a full confession."

Locke was silent.

"You had some intention, Locke, of looking into this matter. I think you told me this morning?" said the Head.

"I had such an intention," admitted the detective.

"It will not be needed now."

"No, evidently not."

"I cannot say how relieved I am that the truth has come to light in time to save that poor lad from further undeserved disgrace!" said the Head, in a moved voice. "In view of Vernon-Smith's voluntary confession, and his having made what reparation he could, I have told him that he shall not be expelled."

"You have told him so?"

"I could do no less, though his punishment, of course, will be very severe. His confession gives me hope that he acted hastily, thoughtlessly, and is not so bad at heart as would appear. You have not yet taken any steps in the matter?"

"I have questioned three boys," said Locke. "But the matter, of course, is at an end, and I shall dismiss it from my mind."

"Your doubt in Dallas' favour was justified," said the Head, "and, but for the guilty party's confession, I should have been glad for you to elucidate the truth, as I have no doubt you could easily have done."

"I do not think it would have baffled me long," said the detective, with a faint smile. "No doubt you will inform Dallas at once that his name is cleared, and relieve his mind."

"I shall go to him at once," said the Head.

A few minutes later the headmaster was on his way to the school sanatorium with happy news for Paul Dallas. Ferrers Locke smiled faintly as he watched him go. He took his own way to the Remove passage. There he inquired of a junior which was Vernon-Smith's study.

The Bounder was in the study, alone, when the detective looked in. Skinner had come in to tea; but Vernon-Smith's savage words had driven him forth again, astonished and offended. He did not know what was the matter with Smithy, though he was soon to know, as all Greyfriars was to know.

Vernon-Smith, white and furious, gave the Baker Street detective a stare of bitter hostility.

"What do you want?" he said, between his teeth.

Ferrers Locke entered the study and closed the door.

He stood with his back to the door, his eyes fixed on the white, furious face of the schoolboy, reading there the chagrin, the bitter despair and misery that rioted in the Bounder's heart.

"Only a few words with you, Master Vernon-Smith," said Ferrers Locke, very quietly. "I have been told of your confession."

The Bounder's eyes glinted at him.

"That confession was made just in time to save you, as I think you know," said Ferrers Locke. "It is not my business to tell your headmaster what I think on that subject; I am not here to intervene in matters pertaining to the school, except so far as it was my duty to prevent the success of an unscrupulous scheme. Of what I know I shall say nothing, but I have a warning to give you."

"Keep it!" snarled the Bounder.

"I shall give it you, Master Vernon-Smith, and I advise you to profit by it. Dr. Locke will allow you to remain at the school. If any further trouble should fall upon Paul Dallas, I shall take measures to become aware of it. I shall make it my business to intervene personally, and to place your headmaster in possession of all the facts. You know what that will mean to you."

The Bounder licked his dry lips.

"Take warning, then!" said Ferrers Locke coldly. "Repent of your baseness if you can; but, at all events, take warning, and do not seek further to injure Paul Dallas! That is all!"

He left the study and shut the door after him.

Vernon-Smith threw himself wearily into a chair.

The game was up now. He had saved himself from the worst penalty; he was

(Continued on page 23.)

BLACK MICHAEL, THE RELENTLESS! A failure never puts paid to Black Michael's ambitious hopes—on the contrary, it makes him more purposeful and cunning than ever, as Jack Horner finds out to his cost!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
Lionel
Day



A Powerful and Dramatic Story of Mystery and Intrigue.

In the Silent Watches of the Night!

WHEN Jack called to him first, Squall did not move, and when he repeated the order, the dog came to his side for a moment—licked his hand, and then returned to his former position.

"Something's up, to be sure," said Bill Bowker. "He's got a down on that there packing case. But, come on, my lad—we'll be on the homeward journey."

With the aid of the long punt poles, the monkey-boat was turned and headed once more for London. Until they reached the next village the Emerald was kept on her course. Only then did Bill Bowker announce his intention of lying-to.

"Give Tommy a good feed, Jack, and see as he's comfortable. He's got to do a hard day to-morrow. The quicker we can do this job, Jack, the more money we shall make in a manner of speaking."

Jack led the horse down to the village, but it took some time before he could find any one awake and willing to stable Tommy. It was nearly eleven when he had finally fed and watered the horse and having seen him comfortably bedded with straw, returned to the Emerald.

The sounds that emanated from the cabin told him that Mr. and Mrs. Bowker had not waited for his coming back, but had retired to bed and were now fast asleep. As he walked along the dock his attention was once more attracted by Squall's curious behaviour. With neck stretched out and bristling ruff, the wolf-dog was stalking round the hold, pausing every now and again to sniff at the hatches, and to whine.

"Whatever is the matter with you, Squall?" Jack exclaimed, dropping on his knees and putting his arm about the dog's neck.

Squall looked at him with an expression that could only be described as anxious, but for once his master was unable to interpret the thought in the dog's mind.

"It's only a big case, Squall. There's nothing to be frightened of. Lie down and keep guard."

Squall had a bed on the deck of the Emerald. As Bill had often remarked, there was no need for him to worry at nights about anyone trying to play tricks with the cargo, with the wolf-dog around. Now Squall lay down obediently in the box of straw which Mrs. Bowker had provided for his comfort.

But Jack had hardly reached the companionway leading to the cabin, when he heard a rustling in the straw, and, looking back, saw that the dog had emerged from his rough-and-ready kennel, and was once more engaged in stalking round the hold. When Jack made him lie down again, he did so with obvious reluctance, and the moment Jack's back was turned, Squall renewed his strange patrol of the hold.

Jack stood still for a moment, a little frown of perplexity on his forehead. He had never known Squall behave like this before, unless there was something really amiss. Could it be possible that there was somebody in the hold? He dismissed the thought as soon as it occurred to him. Until they had begun to discharge the timber, the hold had been completely filled. No one had left the monkey-boat while the task of un-

loading was in progress. No one had come along the tow-path except Mr. Thrasher, and it was impossible therefore that anyone could be in the hold. And yet—

"I wish you could speak, old fellow, and tell me what you think is the matter," he exclaimed, addressing the dog.

Now Squall was scratching at the hatches, whining faintly, as if urging his master to take off the hatches and let him into the hold. Jack made up his mind at once. If Squall was so anxious about the hold, he should sleep there. Whistling to the dog, he led the way down into the cabin. In the side of the wall there was a small panel, which could be moved so as to allow the skipper to keep an eye on the cargo. Without waking Mr. and Mrs. Bowker, Jack slid the panel. In the darkness beyond he could just make out the outline of the huge box.

"In with you, Squall, and keep guard," he whispered.

Almost before he had uttered the words, the dog had leapt through the gap and had begun sniffing and scratching about the box. Jack called to him sternly to lie down and keep quiet, and the scratching and sniffing ceased. Pushing back the panel, Jack hastily slipped out of his clothes and scrambled into his bunk.

The last thing he remembered as sleep came to him was the restless movements of Squall in the hold.

In the wolf-dog's mind, susceptible more to instinct than to reason, there was a feeling of intense alarm. Some danger was threatening his master. He knew it, though he had seen nothing to justify that belief. And the danger he was positive, was connected with the big box. In the darkness he nosed round and round, his eyes shining like gleaming coals. If there was any danger there, threatening his master, he would be ready to meet it. For an hour he continued his patrol, growing every moment more apprehensive. Then he lay down, with his head pressed to the side of the box, in an attitude of

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JACK HORNER, who has run away from his rascally guardian, finds himself pursued from place to place by a sinister individual who goes by the name of

BLACK MICHAEL. This consummate scoundrel knows that Jack is heir to a valuable property and a title. Should he die, Black Michael automatically inherits both title and estates. Knowing nothing of these things, Jack, accompanied by his faithful wolf-dog Squall, flies to London and seeks sanctuary with

BILL BOWKER and his good wife, who own the monkey-boat Emerald. The relentless Black Michael follows Jack wherever he goes, however, but so far his attempts to kidnap the boy have failed.

JIM SNOW, a wail whom Jack has befriended, promises to keep a watchful eye on Black Michael and his gang. Bill Bowker is commissioned to take a huge packing-case to Limehouse. The case is housed in the hold on due course, but Squall thinks there's something peculiar about that case for his body stiffens and his coat bristles as he paces round sniffing at it.

(Now read on.)

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attention. A faint click reached his ears. It came from the other side. Instantly he was on his feet and had swept round to the other side.

Something was lying there on the deck—something he had not seen before. He approached it cautiously, like a sheep-dog stalking the flock. Now he saw that it was something familiar. It was a big earthenware bowl, and in the bowl was a white liquid. He sniffed at it. It was milk.

There was only one person who fed Squall, and that was Jack. The dog, in consequence, associated the presence of food with his master. His master must have put it there, and therefore it was all right, though Squall hadn't seen it before. He was very thirsty. Usually at nights he was free to drink, like his ancestors of the wolf pack, from the nearest pool he could find. Shut up there in the hold, with no chance of quenching his thirst in this way, he began to lap the milk, his ears still cocked for any approaching danger. The milk was sweetened, and he liked sweet things. He lapped it up to the very last drop.

He stood for a moment in an attitude of attention. Presently his long, furry body began to sway. He dropped down on the deck. Another moment, and he lay there stiff, as if he were dead.

Absolute silence reigned upon the monkey-boat save for the snores of Mr. and Mrs. Bowker. The clock in the cabin chimed the hour of one. Suddenly there was a faint sound as of a door being opened cautiously. Stealthy footsteps came along the hold. Then a muffled voice spoke.

"It's all O. K. That dratted dog has taken his medicine all right. Turn on a light, will you?"

The light from an electric torch stabbed the darkness. It lit up the tall, heavy figure of a man, who was leaning over the apparently lifeless figure of the dog. It lit up, too, the panel that had been slipped back in the side of the big box, from which were emerging three other men.

"Now then, Tom, you know your way about this place," the man who had first spoken exclaimed in a whisper. "Show us how we get to the galley."

One of the men in the rear slipped forward, and, holding the torch, gained the end of the hold, which was formed by the cabin wall. Arrived there, he switched off the electric light and slowly and cautiously moved the panel. The snoring of Bill Bowker grew louder now. The man thrust his head and shoulders through the panel and peered cautiously about. Apparently what he saw satisfied him that no watch was being kept, for he turned and beckoned to his companions. Then, raising himself, he slid like a snake through the panel and gained the floor of the cabin.

One by one the others followed till only one man was left in the hold. They stood there in the faint light that came from the companion-way, motionless, hardly seeming to breathe, as if waiting for their orders. Again the man who acted as their leader beckoned to them. He had taken a bottle from his pocket and some cotton-wool, which he made into a pad. A faint acrid odour of chloroform filled the cabin.

At the signal all the men advanced towards the bunk where Jack was sleeping. They lined up there, side by side. Suddenly the man who had that pad of cotton-wool in his hand lowered it and held it firmly over Jack's mouth and nose. Instantly the other men bent over the bunk and, seizing the boy's

legs and arms, held him powerless and rendered all his struggles unavailing. Some more chloroform was poured on the pad. Jack's struggles grew less, finally ceasing altogether.

The man with the bottle recocked it and placed it in his pocket with the pad of cotton-wool. Then he made a motion with his head. The others threw back the blankets and raised Jack's unconscious figure. Silently carrying him across the floor, they passed him feet-first through the opening in the panel. The man in the hold took Jack in his arms and disappeared into the darkness.

A minute went by and still Mr. and Mrs. Bowker snored serenely, unconscious of what was happening about them. Now something else was being passed from the hold through the opening in the wall of the cabin. It was the long, heavy, furry body of Squall. Two men took it in their arms and climbed with it on to the deck. A shadow seemed to slip through the gap in the wall—the panel was closed.

Five minutes later—nearly half a mile away—five men came to a halt behind a hedge.

"Gosh, we've done with the lad!" one of them exclaimed exultantly. "That there case'll keep him comfy for a bit. Now all we've got to do is to make sure of that bloomin' dog, and then for home."

His hand went to his belt where he carried a long knife. It seemed that Squall's hour had come; but even as he drew the knife a voice from the other side of the hedge challenged them.

"Now then, you lads, I've copped you at last, a-pinchin' of the gov'nor's pheasants! Hold your hands up, every one of you, or I'll fire!"

The reply of the gang was to fling themselves on the ground, crawl for a short distance on hands and knees, and then, rising to their feet, run like the wind away from the presence of the gamekeeper.

And there under the hedge in the moonlight, now unheeded for and unnoticed, lay the stiff body of the great wolf-dog.

"The Ungrateful Young Varmint!"

BILL BOWKER stretched himself, clasped and unclasped his big, workmanlike hands, sighed like a man whose dreams had been so pleasant that he was sorry to wake up to the realities of life, and then opened his eyes. Through the companion-way he could see the faint light of the dawn.

"Jack!" he bawled. "Time to turn out, my lad. I want to make Limehouse this evening."

There was no answer. He sat up and looked across the cabin. The boy's bunk was empty. The discovery caused him no uneasiness. It was like Jack to anticipate his wishes. There never was such a boy, he reflected, for hard work, or for doing what was expected of him without being asked.

"Good lad!" he muttered to himself.

Of course, Jack had risen early and had gone down to the village to fetch the horse. He would be back in a moment. It would be just as well to have everything ready against his return, so that they should lose no time. Bill wanted, if he could, to make Limehouse that night. It was a matter of thirty miles. Coming up from Brentford to Dillingham it had been a long and rather complicated course, across a large number of branch canals, zig-zagging in and out. But now he had only to do a two-mile stretch on the

Dillingham branch to reach the main artery of the Grand Junction, and so proceed to Paddington Dock, and finally take the Emerald through the ten-mile waterway popularly known as the Regent's Canal.

Bill slipped out of his bunk, pulled on his trousers, and his big jack-boots, washed himself, and then, drawing on his blue jersey, made his way on deck.

It was a lovely morning. Away in the east the sky was every moment growing brighter. It was going to be a fine day, Bill reflected, as he sniffed the air. He looked with pleasure at the green and gold paint of the Emerald. She was the best monkey-boat on the canal, he told himself. He patted the gunwale almost affectionately. Deep down in his heart was a great love for this floating home of his, where he had lived so many years with his partner. If only there had been children his cup of happiness would have been full to the brim.

"Never mind, there's Jack," he muttered to himself. "He's a good lad, and the wife's proper fond of him, and he's taken to us wonderful."

He shaded his eyes and looked across at the sleeping village. No one was awake there, and not a wisp of smoke rose from the chimney-pots.

"Regular good sleepers they are in this here hole," he muttered half-aloud. "Wonder when Jack will be along?"

He pulled out his pipe and lit it. Then, making his way on to the tow-path, he began to walk up and down there, so that the sound of his heavy boots on the deck should not disturb Mrs. Bowker. A quarter of an hour went by, and still there was no sign of Jack.

"Wonder what the blazes has got him?" growled Bill.

He would have gone down to the village in search of him had he not remembered that he hadn't the slightest idea of where Jack had stabled Tommy. Presently a man's figure loomed up in the fields below. Bill watched him as he climbed the stile and made his way on to the towpath. He was dressed in corduroy breeches and gaiters and carried a gun over his shoulder. He was obviously a gamekeeper. Usually Bill had no particular sympathy with gamekeepers. They had a nasty habit of inquiring about the rabbit that had found its way into Mrs. Bowker's stew-pot; but Bill was in a good humour that morning, and he liked talking to strangers.

"Love us, Velveteens, you must be trying to earn your salary, if you're up as early as this!" he exclaimed genially. "I thought you blokes never got up till eleven o'clock, until the morning was aired and the pubs was open."

The gamekeeper ignored this badinage.

"I'm looking for a party of men," he exclaimed. "There were five of them—strangers to these parts. You've been moored here since last night, haven't you?"

"I have, but I ain't seen anything of the parties you speak of. What's the trouble?"

"Same old game. Poachers trying to pinch the gov'nor's pheasants. I thought I'd got 'em, too. Came on them from behind the hedge, but they were too quick for me. I've been chasing them most of the night."

Bill was frankly unsympathetic.

"Love us! What do you want to be doing poor men out of a bit of cheap poultry for? You're well fed enough, ain't you?"

The gamekeeper flushed indignantly. "Oh, you're one of that sort, are



Looking round, Bill Bowker saw to his utter astonishment that Squall had just sprung upon the deck. But it was not the well-fed, well-cared-for Squall that he had always known, for he was long, lean and lank, and in a state of utter exhaustion. (See page 26.)

you? Maybe you had a hand in this game. I'm a good mind to get the police and have you searched."

"Nasty temper you've got this morning, Velveteens. I should hate to disappoint you, and I should hate to do any violence to you. After all, this here canal's a nasty, cold, damp place after a bloke's been up all night chasing shadows."

The gamekeeper looked him up and down, noticed his height, and weight, and the breadth of his chest, and decided discreetly that further argument would be unwise.

"Let me catch you, that's all!" he growled, as he turned away. "I'll know you again."

"It'll be an unlucky day for you if you do catch me," Bill retorted with a grin.

For some minutes the skipper of the Emerald was considerably cheered by this verbal encounter with the gamekeeper; but presently his old irritation at the non-return of Jack asserted itself. Where was the boy? The rim of the sun was already pushing itself above the horizon. They ought to have been under way a quarter of an hour ago. He stepped back into the monkey-boat. As in all difficulties, he was going to seek the advice of his wife. As he descended the companion-way and entered the cabin something in Jack's empty bunk caught his eye for the first time. It was a folded piece of paper, and, picking it up, Bill saw that it was addressed, in printed characters, to himself. He unfolded it with a sense of impending evil. Like the address, the note was written in printed characters, as if the writer feared that its recipient might find some difficulty in reading ordinary handwriting.

"Dear Mr. Bowker,—I can't stay any longer with you. I'm going away to make my fortune. Good-bye!"

"JACK."

As soon as Bill had absorbed that startling piece of news he stretched out his hand and agitatedly roused his wife.

"Mother, look at this! Jack's been and beat it, the ungrateful young varmint!"

Mrs. Bowker, sitting up in the bunk, read the note, and as she read it an angry flush spread itself on her cheek and tears gathered in her eyes.

"All I can say, Bill, is that I'd never have thought it of him. It don't seem like him to go without even a word of thanks. And me so fond of him, and thinking, Bill, that he might be the boy we never had."

Quite suddenly she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears, Bill scowled, bit his lips, and then put both his arms about his wife.

"Here, cheer up, old gal. He ain't worth thinking about. For why? We done him a kindness; we took 'im in when 'e was 'ungry and starving, and we give him a job and you was a mother to him. We stands up for him agin that Black Michael and his gang, and then the ungrateful little beast goes and plays it on us like this!"

The tone of his voice hardly suggested the indifference he was trying to assume.

"Don't think about him any more, old gal. He ain't worth thinking about. You get breakfast ready while I go and fud the horse, and get a move on."

Not caring any longer to be a spectator of his wife's tears Bill stamped out of the cabin and made his way down to the village. His heart was very hot and sore. That Jack, whom he had been kind to should treat him like this—abscond in the middle of the night without even a word of thanks! Oh, it was almost unbelievable. While Bill searched for the horse he muttered to himself over and over again: "I wouldn't have thought it of him! I wouldn't have thought it of him!"

He found the horse at last, fed him, and then led him to the scene of his toil. Before the village clock was striking five the Emerald was once more on her way.

Bill Bowker was usually very con-

siderate towards his horse, but that day in his sullen, angry mood, he made Tommy work overtime. Before midday they had reached the outskirts of London. It was not until they had entered the Paddington Dock that he called a halt. There, having seen to Tommy's feed, he joined his wife in the cabin for dinner. They were both very silent over that meal, missing, as they did, the little stocky figure that had sat between them. It was not until the meal was almost over that Mrs. Bowker, who had been sniffing a great deal and dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief, broke the strained silence.

"Bill, what clothes had Jack with him when he first came to us?"

"Blowed if I know—and blowed if I care! Nasty, ungrateful little varmint!"

"I can't make it out, Bill. Here's the clothes he was wearing yesterday—the clothes what he took off when he turned in. What's the lad dressed himself in?"

Bill obstinately refused to be interested.

"I don't know, and I don't care. I hope he's cold and hungry. Making his fortune! Gosh, and we so friendly to him! He's got me properly riled, old gal, and I don't want to speak of him or hear of him again."

As if to show his determination he banged the table with his fist, rose, and made his way on deck. There he stumped up and down for the best part of two hours. Then, retrieving Tommy from his stable, he harnessed him once more to the Emerald, and the monkey-boat started off on her last ten-mile lap through London. Circling Regent's Park and diving through tunnels in the neighbourhood of Camden Town, she slipped through the Pool in the City, and then turned southwards towards the river. It was nearly eight o'clock when she at last made Limehouse.

Bill moored the Emerald, and, having disposed of Tommy for the night, made his way to the office. He was even more savage and sore now than he had

been during the day. He had come to rely upon Jack to smooth away all his business difficulties, and he missed the boy, and because he missed him he felt all the more aggrieved with him. As he was about to turn the handle of the office door a man came through the dusk and touched him on the shoulder.

"You Mr. Bowker, of the monkey-boat Emerald?" he inquired.

Bill turned on him savagely. He was an unpleasant-looking man, dressed in a shabby blue suit and a bowler hat, with the air of one whose chief business in life seemed to be to raise a glass to his lips and replace it empty on a bar counter.

"Well, if I am, what the blazes has it got to do with you, mottle-face?"

The man smiled, quite unmoved by this attack. He took a card from his pocket and tendered it to Bill.

"I'm the representative of Mr. Thrasher, of Dillingham. I was to give you Mr. Thrasher's card to prove my claim to take over the empty case you have on board."

Squall's Return!

BILL glowered at the card. It was quite in order. He rather wished it hadn't been. His mood was so bitter that he would have liked to have found relief in quarrelling with someone. Mrs. Bowker being out of the question—for he never quarrelled with his "old gal"—he had had great hopes of this mottle-faced representative of Mr. Thrasher. And, apparently, there was nothing doing.

"Well, come and give me a receipt and take the durned thing out of my monkey-boat. I'm fed-up with you, and Mr. Thrasher, and the whole bloomin' crowd of you."

"Certainly, Mr. Bowker," the other retorted suavely. "I will just get the men from the transport company, and we will remove the case at once. I am sure you are a very busy man, and I have no wish that your hold should be occupied with our cargo a moment longer than is absolutely necessary."

Bill glowered at him.

"I suppose it's the whiskey in your breath that makes you talk easy like

that!" he remarked savagely, still hoping that he might somehow invent a row. "Git your crowd of loafers and come and take it! But you must give me a receipt first!"

The man produced from his pocket a receipt already made out, which he handed to Bill. Then he blew a whistle, and a number of men appeared. They were dressed like bargemen, in blue jerseys and mud-stained trousers, but a close observer would have noticed that their hands hardly suggested men engaged in manual toil.

The hatches were removed, the chains bound about the huge case, and, by means of a crane, the box was lifted from the hold. Then the crane was run along the quay and the case was lowered into a barge that was waiting in the river.

Bill was savagely replacing the hatches, wondering what he should do for the rest of the evening, when he heard a soft pad behind him. At the same moment there was a cry from his wife. Looking round, he saw to his utter astonishment that Squall had just sprung upon the deck.

But it was not the well-fed, well-cared-for Squall that he had always known. Jack had told him with pride that the animal was three-fourths wolf. Now he seemed to have shed even that quarter that was dog. He was long and lean and lank, and in a state of utter exhaustion. His tongue was lolling from his cavernous jaws, and the saliva dripped from his mouth. He was covered with dust and mud, and his red eyes seemed to shine with an ugly look of madness.

"Squall!" Bill gasped. "Why, Squall—"

But the dog ignored him. Swinging past him, he jumped through the opening where one of the hatches had not yet been replaced, and gained the hold. Bill from above could hear him sniffing about and whining. Then, gazing down, he saw him rush to that panel that communicated with the cabin.

"Mother!" Bill shouted. "There's something fair wrong with that dog, or else there's something wrong with Jack! He's trying to tell us!"

As if acting by some mutual instinct, they both made their way to the cabin, and, having closed the door, opened the panel. Instantly the wolf-dog leapt through the aperture.

Bill caught him by the collar and patted his head, while Mrs. Bowker produced a bowl of water and some scraps. Squall drank the water eagerly and quickly bolted the food. Then he began to sniff about the cabin, his nose to the ground. Once he leapt to the bunk where Jack had lain. When he found his master's clothes, he whined and fretted and showed every sign of intense excitement.

"Bill," Mrs. Bowker exclaimed suddenly—"Bill, there's been something wrong! I'm certain of it!"

"What d'ye mean, wrong?" Bill inquired.

"I don't believe Jack would have left us like that. We don't know that that note was in his handwriting. It was all written in printed letters. And, Bill, he must have taken his clothes with him if he'd gone."

Husband and wife stared blankly at one another, and then Bill spoke in an awed voice.

"What do you think's happened to the lad, old girl?"

"I wish to Heaven I knew!" Mrs. Bowker exclaimed frantically. "But I'm sure there's something wrong. I don't believe the dog's been with Jack. Likely as not he's been locked up somewhere at Dillingham, and took some time before he could work his way out. And then he's followed us. You can see how exhausted he is. He expected to find Jack here."

Bill scratched his head dazedly.

"Love us, old girl, but who could have locked Squall up?"

"The same parties as have taken Jack. I'll swear they must have come here in the night when we were asleep and kidnapped him. That's why the poor boy wasn't wearing his clothes. Oh, Bill, I see it all now!"

"But they'd never get past the dog, mother. They couldn't have got aboard without Squall knowing."

"They may have poisoned him or doped him. Oh, I don't know, Bill, what they did, but I'm sure as I'm standing here that they got rid of Squall somehow, and then kidnapped Jack."

Squall was now scratching agitatedly at the closed door of the cabin and whining. Bill looked at the animal dully. His behaviour reminded him strangely of his conduct on a recent occasion.

"He was a-going on like that when we took the case aboard, mother. I was laughing with Jack about it."

Mrs. Bowker gave a little gasp and clasped at her husband's arm.

"Bill, you don't think there could have been anybody in that case?"

Bill's jaw dropped.

"It's big enough to hold six or seven blokes, and if there was anybody in the case, and they had a way of getting out of it they could have come in here when we were asleep. But Jack—where's Jack?"

Mrs. Bowker was now almost hysterical with excitement.

"Oh, Bill, look at the dog. Perhaps he knows. Jack always trusted him. See; he wants to go somewhere."

She snatched up a length of rope from the table and thrust it in her husband's hand.

"Tie it to his collar, Bill, and perhaps he'll lead you to where the poor boy is. Oh, quick, Bill!"

Bill, so urged, tied one end of the rope to Squall's collar. Then he opened the door of the cabin. As he did so the wolf-dog leapt on deck, almost jerking the rope from his hand. Arrived there, he began to nose about, growing every moment more excited. Then he sprang over the side on to the quay, and began anxiously to work backwards and forwards as if searching for some trail. Five minutes of these manoeuvres brought him to the edge of the river. Bill saw that the barge to which the case had been transferred was slowly drifting down the tide. It was so dark now that the vessel was hardly visible, but the case stood out on its deck, its white wood glistening in the obscurity. Squall was obviously at the end of his tether.

"If it's that there empty you want, Squall, it's over there, where we can't get to it. It'll be aboard a ship before an hour is out. It ain't no good, old fellow!"

He bent down and patted the dog's head. There was something almost like a despairing expression in the wolf-

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dog's eyes as he raised them to the other's face.

"Wish to blazes you could speak, Squall, and tell us what's the matter. I guess you don't want to find Jack more than I do. It don't seem that either of us can help."

As he uttered these words Mrs. Dowker appeared at his side.

"Come, quick, Bill! There's Dirk there, wanting to see you, and that lad, Jim Snow."

Bill made a hasty return to the Emerald, where he found Dirk, looking very solemn, with Jim Snow by his side, in the cabin.

"What's the trouble, nevy?" Bill exclaimed.

"Shut that door. You've got a voice like a foghorn, and if you whispers half the shipping in the Port of London can hear what you say. Now, then, Jim, you tell 'em that bit you was tellin' me."

Jim Snow's face was very pale, but his eyes were shining with excitement.

"I seed them blokes up at Brentford again, guv'nor. You remember that place behind the fence where they nearly got Jack? Well, it was there. Two of them there was, and I reckons they'd been told off to keep an eye on the monkey-boats, and to pick up any information as might be useful. I gets there early one morning before they're about and hides myself in an old barrel."

"Get on with it, my lad!" Bill exclaimed, as the boy paused breathlessly.

"They come along about six, guv'nor, and they stands about talking and smoking. It'd be after nine when another bloke joins 'em. They was quite close to me, and I could hear every word they said. And I tell you I wasn't half scared lest they'd hear me breathin'—"

"You tell my uncle what you heard

'em say, and cut out the stuff about how you felt," Dirk interrupted.

"It's all right, boys. The guv'nor's sent me to tell you you can clear off. That's what the bloke said as joined 'em. And then they began asking 'im questions. There was talk of a case which they said had been put on board the Emerald at Dillingham. I couldn't make out exactly what they were talking about, but it had something to do with Jack. They went away soon after, and I gets out and scouts around to find Dirk here. He wasn't in Brentford, but at the First and Last they gives me an address where I'd likely find him in Limehouse. And so I comes down here, and I've been looking around for him ever since."

As the boy paused at last he looked anxiously at the faces of the three people who were staring at him. It was Dirk who broke the silence.

"I don't make head nor tail of it—this here talk of a big case and Dillingham and all the rest of it, but maybe you can throw some light on it, uncle. Where's Jack?"

"Jack! He's vanished," Bill said, in a hollow voice.

"How do you mean he's vanished?" Dirk protested. "He ain't a ghost!"

"It's as I say. He's vanished. We were at Dillingham last night. Delivered a cargo of timber for a Mr. Thrasher and took aboard an empty. A big case it was—biggest case as ever I've seen. Machinery had been packed in it. We got that aboard by sunset, and we did a matter of ten miles before we laid up for the night. Jack went and stabled the horse and came back. I was asleep when he returned, but we knows he come back, because his clothes was here. When we wakes up in the morning he had vanished, and Squall along of him, though the dog turned up just now, looking as if he'd been through it."

Jim Snow leapt to his feet.

"That's the case they were speaking of, guv'nor. Jack must have been in that case. Oh, don't you see it fits in, all of it, with what I heard them blokes saying? Jack's in that case, and he's been taken somewhere, and we shall never see him again!"

Bill stared at the boy's white, passionate face, and slowly, like the flushing of the sunset in the evening sky, the blood mounted to his big moon features.

"Gosh! That's it! There were men in that case! That was why Squall was carrying on so. And they came out in the night and collared Jack. But, by gum, they haven't got him yet!"

He dived for the cabin door, only to be caught by the shoulder and pulled back by Dirk.

"Now then, old Hothead, what are you after? You're like a bloomin' hull in a china shop, that's what you are!"

Bill turned a pair of red, baleful eyes on his nephew.

"You take your hands off me, my lad, and behave respectful to him as is your uncle, although he can't help it. That there case is on a barge in the river. I saw it not ten minutes ago, and I'm going to find that there barge and go aboard and break that there case open, if I have to do it with my hands."

"And what about the blokes aboard? You silly old jossler! Do you think they'd let you get within a cable's length of her? They'd sink your boat! This ain't the time for silly head-over-heels doings! If they've got Jack, as you say, then you can bet they're taking every precaution to keep him, and they won't let an old jiggins like you get within a mile of him."

(Now look out for next week's thrilling instalment, chums. You'll enjoy it, no end.)

"SPEECH DAY AT ST. SAM'S!"

(Continued from page 16.)

then, regaining his seat, he promptly went to sleep again. Yawny had found the long walk up to the platform very eggshasting.

"Now, my boys," said Sir Frederick Funguss, after performing his yew-miliating duty. "I want to speak to you about Sports Week."

Instantly there was a buzz of interest.

"You see here," said Sir Frederick, holding it up to view, "a magnificent Silver Cup. It is a really hansom trophy—solid silver throughout. We spent more munny on it than all the prizes put together."

"In that case, it will be worth about half-a-crown!" chuckled Jack Jolly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This Silver Cup," said Sir Frederick, "will be prezzented to the junior boy who wins the greatest number of events in the Sports. We should like to have given a Cup to the best senior athlete as well, but funds wouldn't run to it. Our coughers are somewhat low at the moment; in fact, I am sorry to say there is an overdraught at the bank. However, we have been jenniferus-enuff to invest in this wonderful trophy. I

Birchemall, and the Guvvners will assemble here again at the conclusion of Sports Week, when I shall have pleasure in prezzenting the Cup. And may the best man win!"

"Hurrah!"

The St. Sam's juniors were wildly eggsgited. In spite of Jack Jolly's joekular remark about the price of the Cup, it was really an egggsensive one. The Guvvners could not have seen much change out of a ten-bob note, when they purchased it. That Cup would be well worth the winning; and the Head handled it almost reverently.

Already, in his mind's eye, Jack Jolly saw that Silver Cup adorning the mantlepeace in his study. And already, in their mind's eye, all the other fellows in the Fourth saw it adorning their mantlepeaces. In fact, they were so busy dreaming about the Cup, that the four-hour speech which Sir Frederick prosseeded to make did not bore them in the least.

When, at last, the speechifying was over, Sir Frederick drew the Head aside.

"Birchemall," he said, "I have set my hart on my great-grandson bagging that Cup. If he does so, it will amply atone for all his past failures, and for that unplezzant eppisode this afternoon. I refer to the prezzentation of the Slacker's Prize."

The Head stared.

"But, my dear Sir Freddie, there is no earthly chance of your great-grand-

son winning the Sports. If he competed in a race, he would fall asleep before he had covered half the course!"

"Not if somebody took him in hand and trained him," said Sir Frederick. "And that is what I want you to do."

"Me?" gasped the Head.

"Yes. You were a great sportsman in your younger days, having got the Blues for running, and cycling, and er—"

"Ludo!" said the Head proudly. "Ah, yes, and ludo. Well, you would make an eggsgellent coach for my great-grandson; and your coaching—plus a little wangling, if necessary—should secure him the Silver Cup."

The Head eyed Sir Frederick narrowly.

"Is this a business deal?" he inquired. "I mean to say; if I consent to wangle the Cup for Yawwington, will you make it worth my while?"

"Certainly!" Sir Frederick lowered his voice to the merest whisper. "How would a fiver suit you?"

"Top-hole!" chuckled the Head.

And so the bargain was struck; and it was arranged that the Head should take Yawwington of the Fourth in hand, and coach him to victory in the Sports. Weather or not he would succed in this difficult enterprise remained to be seen!

THE END.

(Another laugh next week? Why, sure thing, when you read: "Stirring Up The Slacker!" by D. N.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,002.

"AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!"

(Continued from page 22.)

not to be sacked from the school. He owed his escape not so much to his own cunning, as he had supposed; Ferrers Locke had spared him. His brain was in a whirl with a throng of bitter thoughts. He was still a Greyfriars man. But as he thought of the contempt and horror in the faces of his school-fellows when they learnt what he had done he wondered whether it would not have been better, after all, to go. What was his life likely to be at Greyfriars after this?

He groaned aloud.

The game was up. Paul was safe from him now. Any further scheme against his enemy could only bring about his own ruin. That fact stared him in the face now. He could not—he knew that he dared not—enter into any new plot against his enemy. That was over and done with.

What had he gained?

Defeat and misery, the narrowest escape of his reckless career, and the severest punishment that was still to come. That was the net outcome of his plotting and his scheming.

It was said of old that the way of the transgressor is hard. Herbert Vernon-Smith was finding it very hard indeed.

Paul Dallas was back in the Remove next day.

There was still a bandage on his bruised head, but his face was merry and bright when he rejoined his Form-fellows.

That morning the school was assembled in Big Hall for a function that seldom took place at Greyfriars—a public flogging.

Vernon-Smith, with a white, set face, was brought in by a prefect of the Sixth. All eyes were fixed on the Bounder; but he looked neither to the right nor to the left as he walked up the Hall.

The Head had a few words to say—cordial words to Dallas, and sharp, scathing words to Vernon-Smith. Then the culprit was hoisted by Gosling, and the birch rose and fell.

But not a sound came from the white, set lips of the Bounder. Severe as the punishment was he endured it in bitter silence to the very end.

His face was colourless when he left the Hall, still without a word, or a look at the sea of faces. But his step was firm, and his head was high. The Bounder of Greyfriars was game to the last.

The hushed assembly broke up. The Remove, with serious faces, went to their Form-room. Vernon-Smith was not present at class in first lesson. He came in for second lesson, however, with a white, but composed face. Mr. Quelch gave him a glance, but no word. Fel-

lows who were near the Bounder moved up a little on the forms, to give him a wider berth. The Bounder did not seem to notice it.

When the Remove came out for morning break the Bounder lingered in the corridor. Paul Dallas passed him without a look, going out with the Famous Five. They also passed the Bounder with unseeing eyes.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard. He had expected this, after what he had done, and confessed to having done. He did not expect any decent fellow to speak to him.

Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott came along together, and they hesitated as they saw the Bounder in their path. They coloured and exchanged glances, turned, and walked the other way.

Smithy drew an almost sobbing breath. Even Skinner & Co., the shady black shoop, the outsiders of the Remove, had turned him down. That was the bitterest blow of all.

For some minutes Smithy stood motionless, fellows from a distance glancing at him curiously; no one approached him. He stirred at last, and went out into the quad—an Ismael in the school.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next yarn in this grand series, chums: "The Complete Outsider!" It's a great story and will hold your interest right from the word go.)

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"O N the hall, Sir Freddie!" said the Head cheerily.

The St. Sam's fellows crowded in a dismal corner.

It was Speech Day—the day when the Ancient Order of Chim-waggers assembled to do their verbal "howling." Sir Frederick Funguss, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, had risen to his feet, and was about to let off steam. The Head was the only person to give him any encouragement.

"Go it, Sir Freddie!" he cried.

The St. Sam's fellows fretted and fidgeted in their seats. They knew Sir Freddie's speeches of old. Once the old huffer fairly got going, there was no stopping him. Like Browning's brook—or was it Shakespeare's?—he went on for ever!

"Gentlemen, chairs, and—er—hobbes!" began Sir Frederick. "This is a very suspicious occasion—a red letter day in the annals of this school. In short, it is Speech Day!"

"Tut us something we don't know!" growled Jack Jolly of the Fourth.

"I am not going to make a speech," went on Sir Frederick.

"Hurrh!"

"I am merely going to say a few words—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"My observations will not detain you for more than a couple of hours at the outside—"

"Help!"

"Cut it short, sir!" snapped Colonel Frieri Sparkes, who was a member of the governing body. "Last Speech Day, I remember, you were so long-winded over your confounded speech that our lunch got cold! Be brief, sir!"

"You dry up!" snarled Sir Frederick, rounding on the colonel. "Who is Chairman of the Board—and you or me?"

"You're Chairman, and I'm bored!" growled the colonel.

And the St. Sam's fellows chokked.

"Gentlemen, chairs, and hobbes!" began Sir Frederick, beginning all over again. "This is a very suspicious occasion—a red letter day in the annals of this school. It is Speech Day!"

The St. Sam's fellows were wishing



from the bottom of their hearts that it was Speechless Day!

"I am not going to make a speech," went on Sir Frederick. "I have no patience with these old fossils who get up on their hind legs and jaw for hours at a stretch. Such long-winded old fogies ought to be muzzled!"

"They ought, by gad!" snapped Colonel Frieri Sparkes.

Sir Frederick ignored the interruption. "Nothing bores an audience—especially a youthful audience—so much as a long, rambling, wearisome speech," he went on. "I will, therefore, be as brief, terse, and succinct as possible. The first hour of my speech will be devoted to telling of the glories of the school's past. The second hour of it will deal with the school's present. The third hour will deal with the bright and radiant future which awaits St. Sam's. The fourth hour—provided I have not broken a blood-vessel, or strained my larynx, in the meantime—will deal with the prize-giving."

"Why not reverse the order of things," suggested Colonel Sparkes, "and dish out the prizes first? I am a man of action, sir! I refuse to sit



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"I'm not accusing you," said Sir Frederick. "I'm merely taxing you with the offence, you've pinched the best part of the Founders' Prize, you theevyng rascal!"

Colonel Frieri Sparkes gave such a snort that the St. Sam's fellows egged him to see fiery sparks issue from his nostrils.

"By George! I have never been so consulted in my life," he roared, with a savage glare at Sir Frederick. "If only I had a handful of my old regiments here I'd wipe up the floor with you, beggad! I'd make you eat your words!"

"Yah! Theel!" cried Sir Frederick. "Yillan!" boomed the colonel. "Scamp!" cried Sir Frederick. "Skomped!" barked the colonel.

The Head stopped between the angry pair.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" he interceded. "You forget yourselves. This is not the place to exchange compliments of this nature."

"He says I pinched the tarts!" roared the colonel.

"The name of Earnest Swotter was then called, and a big booth in spectacles lounged up to the platform. Now, the Founders' Prize was supposed to be the cream of all the prizes—a really noble and handsome award. But the school funds happened to be in a very low state this year, and the Governors had not been able to make so much of a splash with the prizes. The Founders' Prize on this occasion consisted of a bag of jam-tarts. There had been a dozen at the outset; but Colonel Frieri Sparkes, who had felt rather peckish, had been feverishly helping himself from the bag when the rest of the Governors weren't looking. Consequently, poor old Swotter had to be content with three or four stale tarts.

Sir Frederick handed him the bag with a flourish.

"This handsome and delectable prize," he said, "is the reward for months and months of hard toiling. And what more fitting reward could a schoolboy have than a bag of luscious jam-tarts? I remember, when I was a boy—"

"Cut it out!" snapped Colonel Sparkes. "We don't want to be treated to any reminiscences of ninety years ago!"

"When I was a boy," went on Sir Frederick, unheeding, "I had a perfect push for jam-tarts. Yet when I won the Founders' Prize at my school, they presented me with a bound volume of the Works of Arny Stolle. Now, I ask you—of what use are the Works of Arny Stolle to a hungry schoolboy? He'd rather have a dozen jam-tarts any day of the week!"

"But there aren't a dozen here, sir," protested Swotter, peering into the bag.

"There's only four."

"My hat!" gasped the Chairman of the Board of Governors. "Looks to me as if some pilfering's been going on." He spun round and glared accusingly at Colonel Frieri Sparkes. "Sir!" he cried. "I perceive a suspicious smear of jam on your military duds! How did it come there?"

The colonel sprang to his feet, his eyes blazing.

"Good gad, sir!" he beltered. "Are you accusing me of stealing jam-tarts?"



here and be lulled to sleep while you prate of the glories of the school's past, present—and future! I have not indulged them on the subject—hardly agree with me!"

"Hear, hear!" muttered the Governors, in their beards.

Sir Frederick Funguss sighed.

"If you really prefer, gentlemen, that I should put the cart before the horse, and kick off by distributing the prizes—"

"Yes, yes! We do, we do!" crussed the Governors.

"Very well," said Sir Frederick. "As you like it. But I think you are making much ado about Nothing. The Temper of my impassioned oratory would have thrilled these boys—right up to the Twelfth Night of my speech! However, such things are not to be."

Sir Frederick stepped towards the table, which was piled high with prizes of every sort and description.

"I will now call upon the lucky prize-winners to come forward, and I reserve their well-earned torrels," said the Chairman. "The first prize I have to award is for the finest all-round sportsman at St. Sam's, George Barleigh!"

There was a roar of applause, as big, hefty Barleigh, the popular skipper of St. Sam's, stepped up to the platform. Sir Frederick picked up a small toy bat—suitable for a kid in a kindergarten—and presented it to Barleigh with a grato air.

"I trusted you will treasure this magnificent bat, my boy," he said, "and that you will make many centuries with it!"

Barleigh looked at the baby bat, and reflected that it would take a century to make a century with such an absurd toy.

The St. Sam's fellows were grinning broadly, and poor old Barleigh flushed as pink as a pony as he carried the bat back to his place.

Sir Frederick turned to the Head.

"Who comes next, Bircemall?" he whispered.

"Swotter of the Sixth," said the Head. "He's won the Founders' Prize."



"And so you did!" snorted Sir Frederick. "Disgraceful! I call it—stupid, mean, and despicable! If you have any sense of shame you will take Swotter along to the tuckshop after this meeting and make good the deficiency. You owe him eight tarts!"

For a moment the colonel looked as if he was going into convulsions. But his fellow-Governors yanked him back into his seat, and he simmered down slowly, while the prize-giving proceeded.

Sir Frederick picked up what appeared to be a gold watch, and dangled it on its chain.

"This magnificent, eighteen-carat gold watch," he announced, "is the Poetry Prize—the award offered for the best original piece of verse composed by a St. Sam's boy. The happy winner is Lirrick of the Fourth Form. Come forward, Lirrick!"

Blushing all over his face, the hair of the Fourth made his way to the platform.

"Congratulations you, my dear boy!" said Sir Frederick, extending a friendly hand. "The Governors are agreed unanimously, with one voice, that your Prize Poem is a very fine and original piece of work. The first verse remains fresh in my memory. I will recite it to the school.

"The shades of nite were falling fast, As through an Alpine village passed A youth, who bore, mid snow and ice, A banner with the strange device—

"Eggsalator!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Jack Jolly. "I seem to have heard that poem before, somewhere!"

"Same here," muttered his chum, Merry. "Sounds like a bit of Shakespeare. Looks to me as if young Lirrick is what they call a plagiary-writer—a chap who cribbs from the writings of another."

Anyway, the Governors haven't spotted it, so Lirrick gets the gold watch," said Bright.

But Lirrick made no movement to take the watch. Sir Frederick held it out to him, but he shook his head.

"Alone! If you don't mind, sir, I'd

(Continued on next page.)



Talbot walked back to his seat with burning cheeks, and the seater under his arm, mentally resolved to make a present of his prize to his friend, Midgett Miller.