

BOYS! YOU CAN'T BEAT OUR SCHOOL YARNS!

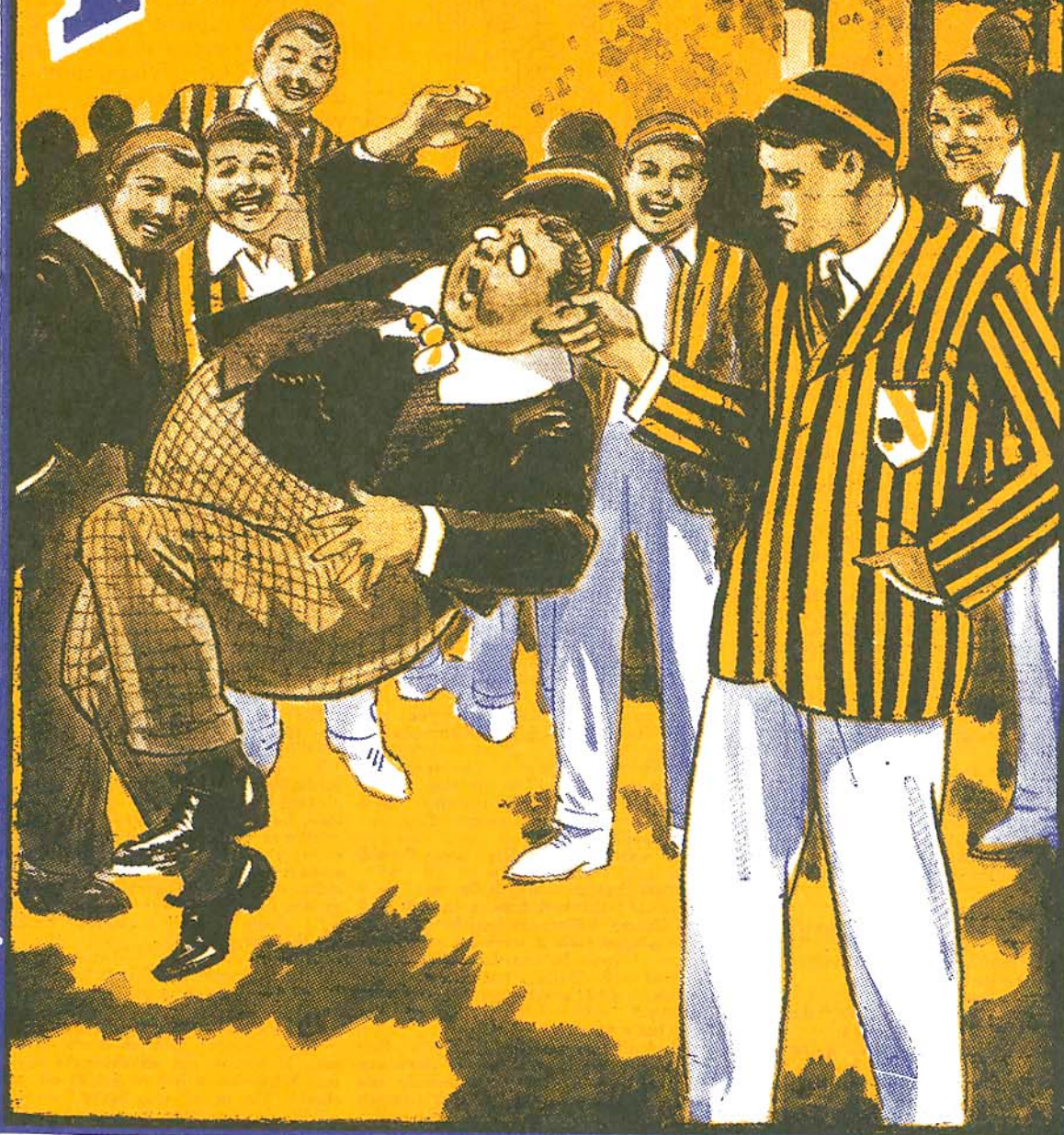
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The Magnet

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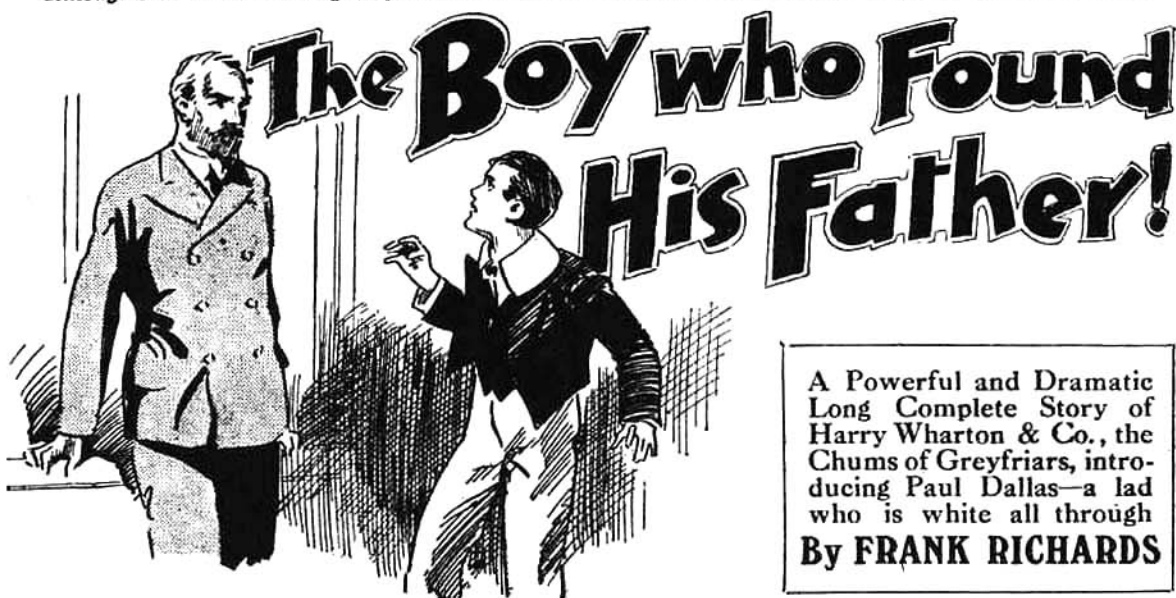
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EVERY MONDAY.



EXTRACTING THE TRUTH FROM BUNTER!

A painful moment for William George Bunter! (Read this week's splendid school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.)

THE CHOICE! On the one side is an adopted father eager to spend some of his millions on the boy he has adopted: eager to give him a good education and a good start in life. On the other side is the real father—until now thought dead—who returns to his son with scarcely a cent. in his pockets. Yet it is to the latter that Paul Dallas clings, although it means renouncing his friends at Greyfriars and a life of ease in exchange for a life of hard knocks!



A Powerful and Dramatic Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars, introducing Paul Dallas—a lad who is white all through
By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Bounder Refuses!

WHAT about Smithy?" Bob Cherry asked that question, rather hesitatingly. Harry Wharton shook his head dejectedly.

"Nothing about Smithy," he answered promptly.

"It's only a Form match—"

"Smithy's barred."

"I know. But—"

Good-natured Bob broke off, glancing at a junior who was coming out of the House. It was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. He came directly towards Harry Wharton & Co. on his way to the gates, but he did not look at them, or seem aware of their existence.

"It's rather rotten," said Bob. "I hate to see a man barred out of games. It's doing Smithy no good, too."

"He asked for it," said the captain of the Remove.

"Begged and prayed for it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He wouldn't be happy till he got it! Now he's got it!"

"It's doing him no good," said Bob again.

"Whose fault is that?" said Frank Nugent.

"His own, of course. But—"

"My esteemed Bob," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the tenderness of your excellent heart does you credit. But the worthy Smith is a bad hat."

"I know he is. But—"

"But what, fathend?" asked Harry Wharton, rather warmly. "Do you think Smithy has had anything more than justice?"

"No. But—"

"The butfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I think he's jolly well going to the dogs, and that barring him is helping him on the way down," said Bob. "We were never exactly friendly with him, but we got on fairly well before Dallas came to Greyfriars. I'd like to see him back on his old footing with the Form. There's a lot of good in Smithy."

"He keeps it pretty dark, then," said

Johnny Bull. "He's in the wrong all along the line in his feud with Dallas."

"I know. Still—"

Paul Dallas, the new junior in the Remove, who was with the Famous Five, coloured a little.

"I rather agree with Bob," he said. "If I'm in the way of giving Smithy another chance, Wharton, I shouldn't mind standing out this afternoon."

"Bosh!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"I don't mean that, of course," said Bob Cherry. "But—but the fact is, I hate to see a fellow down on his luck like Smithy. I know he's done rotten things, and we jolly well ragged him for it, too, and he deserved it and more. But—but he goes about with fellows like Skinner and Snoop now, and Angel of the Fourth, and you know he's taken up all the old rotten tricks he gave up terms ago, and—and he's going from bad to worse. Giving him another chance might make a lot of difference."

Harry Wharton's face hardened a little.

The captain of the Remove was not much inclined to give Vernon-Smith another chance.

"He's had plenty of chances, and thrown them away!" he growled. "We nearly lost the Highcliffe match through Smithy keeping a man away. That was the limit."

"It was Dallas he kept away," said Bob.

"Does that make any difference?"

"Well, I think it does, a little," said Bob Cherry. "I'm sure Smithy wouldn't have played such a trick on any other fellow. I know he's in the wrong in his quarrel with Dallas, but there it is—Dallas is like a red rag to a bull to Smithy."

"That's no excuse for him."

"I don't say it is. But—" Bob broke off again. "Well, I dare say you're right, Wharton, only—only it's doing Smithy no good, and it's rotten to see him going downhill like this. I'm pretty certain that he's clearing off to Friardale now, to sneak in at the back door of the Cross Keys and play billiards with the smoky wasters there. I'd rather see him playing cricket."

"Well, so would I, if it comes to that," said the captain of the Remove.

He hesitated.

"If you fellows agree I'll speak to him," he said, glancing round at his companions.

There was a general nod of assent.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had gone over the limit, there was no doubt about that; but he had suffered for it, there was no doubt about that, either. And it was well known in the Remove that since Smithy had been barred by the Form he had taken up again all the shady, blackguardly ways that had in the past earned him his nickname of the "Bounder of Greyfriars." And they knew that there was good in Smithy, little enough as he showed of it at the present time.

The Bounder, coming directly down the path to the gates, was close to the chums of the Remove now.

He did not look at them. He was passing, staring straight before him, when Wharton made a step towards him and spoke.

"Hold on a minute, Smithy."

The Bounder stopped and looked at him then.

"What do you want?"

There was not the slightest sign of cordiality in his hard face. If he was pleased by being spoken to in a friendly tone, he certainly did not show it.

"We're playing the Shell this afternoon, you know," said Harry, rather embarrassed by the Bounder's grim manner, and half repenting that he had spoken at all.

"I don't know," answered Vernon-Smith coldly.

"Eh?"

"I know nothing about it."

"Oh, draw it mild, Smithy, old bean!" said Bob. "You haven't forgotten the Remove fixtures yet!"

"The Remove fixtures don't concern me. If you've got anything to say to me, Wharton, will you get it off your chest? I'm in rather a hurry."

"Would you care to play this afternoon for the Remove?" asked Wharton abruptly. He quite repented by this time that he had spoken to the Bounder.

"No!"

"That does it, then!"

"Are you hard up for a man, or has your wonderful new recruit, Dallas, turned out a dud?" sneered the Bounder.

"Neither," said the captain of the Remove. "Dallas is as good as any man in the eleven—better than most—and there are twenty fellows keen enough to play. I was giving you a chance."

"Thank you for nothing!" Wharton had stepped back. The matter was ended so far as he was concerned.

Smithy made a movement to pass on, but paused, looking at the Famous Five with mocking eyes.

"Very kind of you to give me a chance, as you call it," he said. "I'm not taking as a favour what I look on as a right. You've turned me out of the eleven and given my place to that interloping cad, Dallas. You can't drop me and pick me up just as you choose. I'm not exactly a fellow like Billy Bunter, to be treated like that. You've turned me out of the cricket, and I'm keeping out of it."

"You're not wanted, if it comes to that," said Wharton coolly. "I was giving you a chance, as I said. You can please yourself. I sha'n't ask you again in a hurry."

"You needn't ask me at all. Leave me alone, and go and eat coke!"

And with that the Bounder of Greyfriars swung on his way.

The Famous Five looked at one another. Harry Wharton's face was red with annoyance.

"Well," he said, rather gruffly, "that's that!"

"The thatfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Smithy has his back up."

"Bright idea of yours, Bob," said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

Bob Cherry grunted.

"Oh, bother Smithy!" he said. "Let him go his own way and be blowed to him! Time we got along to the cricket!"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter came rolling up from the direction of the House. "I say, was that Smithy? Which way did he go?"

"He's gone out of gates," said Nugent, with a grin. "I don't think he's in a humour to cash a postal-order for you, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Come along and watch us beat the Shell, Bunt," said Bob Cherry.

"You're not likely to beat the Shell, with the best cricketer in the Remove left out of the eleven," said Bunter.

"Oh, draw it mild! Smithy isn't all that!"

"Who's speaking of Smithy? I was speaking about myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not that I'm available this afternoon if you want me ever so much," added Bunter loftily.

"Don't worry," said Wharton, laughing. "You're not wanted, Bunter."

"I've got something on this afternoon," said Bunter.

Bob Cherry eyed him.

"You've got Mauly's necktie on," he said.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And that waistcoat looks like one of Smithy's—"

"Look here—"

"What else have you got on?" grinned Bob. "Whose jacket is that? It isn't shiny at the elbows, so it can't be your own."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The trousers are his own!" chuckled Nugent. "They bag at the knees, and

look as if they haven't been brushed for three terms."

"Beautiful! I tell you I've got something on," said Bunter. "No fooling about with a silly bat and ball for me! I'm going to have a jolly time with Smithy!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Painting the town red, you know," grinned the fatuous Owl of the Remove. "I'm going out with Smithy. Can't waste any more time on you fellows! Get along to your kid's game!"

And William George Bunter rolled off the way Herbert Vernon-Smith had gone, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. laughing.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

VERNON-SMITH swung out at the school gates, with a moody frown on his brow.

He was in a black humour that afternoon, as he very often was of late.

Since his former chum, Redwing, had left Greyfriars, the Bounder had dropped back into all his old ways—a change in him that was welcomed by his new associates, Skinner & Co. But the change was by no means wholly satisfactory to the Bounder himself.

He had been a great man at games, an important member of the Remove eleven. What he had lost he missed sorely. He knew at the bottom of his heart that he would have preferred to be playing cricket with the Remove that afternoon, but his angry pride stood in the way. He would not receive as a favour what he considered he had a right to demand. Yet he was well aware that he had received no more than justice. His bitter hatred of Paul Dallas had led him into reckless actions that could not possibly be pardoned. He had suffered for it; but worst of all was the knowledge that he had not succeeded in harming his rival and enemy. Dallas was in the eleven. Dallas was generally popular in the Form. Dallas would be knocking up runs against the Shell that afternoon, and taking wickets for the Remove. All Smithy's miserable scheming had ended in failure, and had only brought upon him contempt and dislike from his Form-fellows.

And he was at the end of his resources now. There was nothing more he could do to harm the fellow whom he persisted in regarding as his enemy.

All he could do was to stand aside, an outcast in his Form, watching his rival score success after success.

That the whole trouble was due to his own bitter, sulky, suspicious temper the Bounder was not likely to admit.

Yet, if he had been able to take a calm and unprejudiced view of the matter, it would have been hard for him to say in what way Paul Dallas had offended.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had adopted the boy, and taken him from a charity school and sent him to Greyfriars. It was a generous action, but not more than the millionaire might have been expected to do for the son of an old friend who had once done him a great service, and who had disappeared in the wilds of South America and was supposed to be dead.

It was jealousy of his father's affection that had been the root cause of the trouble, and the Bounder, allowing his passionate temper full play, had not chosen to reflect. All that had happened since had confirmed him in his belief that Paul had deliberately

schemed to cut him out with his father, and had succeeded. His father had turned against him, and Smithy could not, or would not, see that his bitter persecution of the millionaire's adopted son had naturally roused Mr. Vernon-Smith's anger and resentment.

His father had never refused him anything before, but he had refused to take Paul away from Greyfriars at Smithy's demand. And after Smithy's plot to cause Paul's expulsion, which had come near to success, Mr. Vernon-Smith had threatened to take Smithy himself away if there was any more of it.

That he deserved his father's anger, and indeed much more than Mr. Vernon-Smith had displayed, was nothing to the Bounder. It was all the doing of the "interloper." Paul had turned his father against him, turned his Form-fellows against him, taken his place in the games, ousted him and defeated him all along the line. That was how the Bounder looked at it, and if a small voice sometimes whispered that he was wrong, he stubbornly refused to listen to it.

Skinner and Snoop were lounging by the gateway when Vernon-Smith came out. They were waiting for him.

"Oh, here you are!" yawned Skinner. "You've been a jolly long time, Smithy."

"Mr. Queleh stopped me," said the Bounder, with a sardonic grin. "He wasn't satisfied with my last lot of lines. I've had a lecture."

"Never mind the lecture if you haven't got the lines to do over again," said Snoop.

"And then Wharton stopped me to ask me to play cricket this afternoon," added Vernon-Smith.

"But you're not—"

"No."

"Good!" said Skinner. "We've got something on better than cricket. Come on, Smithy!"

And the three black sheep started down the road towards Friardale.

"I say, you fellows!"

There was a pattering of feet behind the trio, and a fat voice shouted to them.

Vernon-Smith glanced back.

"That fat fool, Bunter! What the thump does he want?"

"Accelerate!" grinned Skinner.

The three juniors accelerated, and Billy Bunter broke into a run after them. His fat little legs fairly flew as he pursued the Bounder and his companions.

"I say, you fellows, stop a minute!" yelled Bunter.

The trio paid no heed.

"Smithy!" bawled Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove put on a desperate spurt and came up. Vernon-Smith and his comrades broke into a trot, and Bunter was left behind again.

"Smithy! Hold on, I tell you!" howled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I know where you're going! I'm coming too!"

Bunter panted on.

But the Owl of the Remove had too much weight to carry to win in a foot-race. He dropped behind.

"If you don't stop, I'll jelly well tell Wingate!" he roared.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Snoop.

"Better stop a minute, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith, with a grim brow, halted.

The Owl of the Remove came panting up, his fat face streaming with perspiration.

The Bounder eyed him grimly.

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"Well," he snapped, "what do you want?"

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter. "It's all right! I know where you're going, and I'm coming, too."

"We're going for a walk on the cliffs," said Skinner.

Bunter gave him a fat wink.

"Then I'll come for a walk on the cliffs, too," he said.

"We're going to the Cross Keys," said the Bounder coolly. "You know that, Bunter. Now cut off!"

"That's all right," said Bunter. "I'm coming. I'm not pi, you know—I'm rather goey, in fact. I'm just the fellow you want with you. You can lend me a quid, Smithy—"

"Can I?" said the Bounder.

"Yes. I'll settle out of my postal-order. Of course, a chap will have to have a little cash in his pockets, for a jolly afternoon at the Cross Keys," grinned Bunter.

"Is that all?"

"That's all. You'd like me to come, Smithy?"

"No."

"Well, I'm coming."

"You're going," said Vernon-Smith. "I give you one minute to get clear before I kick you."

"Oh, really, Smithy?" William George Bunter backed away. "Look here, you're going out of bounds. Suppose a fellow told Wingate of the Sixth, or Mr. Quelch? Where would you be then?"

"So you're going to sneak?"

"Well, the fact is, I'm rather shocked at you, Smithy," said Bunter. "You're a blackguard, you know. You might get sacked for what you're doing. You're disgracing the school. I really think it's my duty to let a prefect know what you're up to."

"And you're a whale on duty," remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Of course, if you treat a fellow as a pal, a fellow's bound to treat you as a pal," said Bunter. "One good turn deserves another. See?"

"I see," assented the Bounder. "I gave you a minute. The minute's up. Are you going?"

"Oh, really Smithy— Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter as the Bounder suddenly collared him and spun him round. "Yaroooooh! Leggo! Leave off kicking me, you beast! Yooooop! I was only j-j-joking—I'm not going to tell anybody— Yarooooop! Oh crikey!"

William George Bunter jerked his collar away and at the third kick, he started for Greyfriars. The Bounder gave him another as he went, and Billy Bunter yelled and ran. At a safe distance he stopped and blinked back through his big spectacles, and shook a fat fist in the air.

"You wait till Wingate catches you!" he yelled.

Then, as the Bounder made a movement towards him, Bunter turned towards Greyfriars again, and ran for his life.

"Come on," said Vernon-Smith.

But Skinner and Snoop did not come on.

"That fat fool will chatter about this, Smithy," said Skinner uneasily. "We don't want to be nailed by a prefect."

"Are you tanking?" sneered the Bounder.

"I don't want a Head's flogging, if you do!" said Skinner tartly.

"It's not good enough, now Bunter's nosed it out," said Snoop. "Let's chuck it for this afternoon."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

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"You can chuck it, if you're funky. I'm going on."

And the Bounder strode on his way, evidently undeterred by the danger of Bunter "chattering" at the school about the shady expedition. Skinner and Snoop hesitated, and looked at one another. But they decided that it was not good enough. Both of them, probably, were worse fellows than Vernon-Smith, but they lacked the Bounder's iron nerve.

"I'm keeping on the safe side," said Skinner.

"Same here," agreed Snoop.

And they walked back, leaving Herbert Vernon-Smith to go his own way alone.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Man from the Sea!

"STOP!"

Vernon-Smith stopped, in sheer surprise.

He had followed the towing-path by the Sark to the Cross Keys, the long inn garden having a gate on the tow-path. It was necessary for a reckless young rascal who was "pub-haunting" to be cautious; and the Bounder preferred to approach his destination by the garden at the rear. As he drew near the gate, he glanced up and down the tow-path to ascertain that the coast was clear before he entered.

There was only one person in sight—a man who looked like a seafaring man, who was leaning against a tree by the river, staring away across the woods towards the old grey tower of Greyfriars, visible against the blue sky in the far distance.

Smithy gave him no heed. Seafaring men were not uncommon in the vicinity, the fishing village of Pegg being only a couple of miles away. And Smithy did not suppose that a seafaring man could take any interest in the proceedings of a schoolboy.

But it was the seafaring man who called to him, as his hand was on the gate of the inn garden.

The Bounder looked round.

The man had detached himself from the tree upon which he had been leaning, and crossed the tow-path towards the Bounder of Greyfriars.

He looked a man of about forty, with a face bronzed by sun and wind, and judging by his looks, his last voyage had not been a prosperous one.

"What do you want?" snapped the Bounder.

His first thought was that the man was a beggar; but a glance showed him that that was not the case. The seafaring man was roughly clad, and looked in hard luck; but certainly he did not look like a mendicant. The Bounder was puzzled.

"You belong to Greyfriars School?"

"I don't see how that concerns you," said Vernon-Smith.

"Perhaps it doesn't. But it is the case, isn't it?" The man's voice was quiet and cultivated.

"Yes, if you want to know."

"I thought so," said the seafaring man.

"I suppose you can tell that by my cap, if you know the Greyfriars colours," said Vernon-Smith. "What about it?" The man made a gesture towards the inn gate.

"That place is out of bounds for your school," he said.

"What the thump does that matter to you?" exclaimed the Bounder angrily.

"No business of yours, I suppose."

"It is every man's business to prevent a young fellow from making a fool of himself, if he can, young sir," said the seafaring man composedly. "If you will take the advice of a man old enough to be your father, you will give that show a wide berth."

The Bounder stared at him angrily for a moment, and then burst into a laugh.

"My hat! Are you giving me a sermon?" he asked.

"I'm giving you good advice, lad."

"I'll ask for it when I want it," said Vernon-Smith, laughing. "You mind your own business, my man, and I'll mind mine."

And he turned to the gate again.

"Hold on a moment," said the seafaring man quietly. "I had another reason for speaking to you. You can answer a civil question, I suppose?"

"Well, what is it?" asked the Bounder impatiently.

"As you belong to Greyfriars, you may be acquainted with a lad named Dallas."

Vernon-Smith started.

"Dallas!" he repeated. "Paul Dallas?"

"Yes, that's the name."

"The fellow's in my Form at Greyfriars," said Vernon-Smith, staring hard at the man, and quite interested now. "What do you know about Dallas? Not a relation of yours, I suppose?" he added, with a grin.

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"No!" snapped the Bounder. "I suppose you know the fellow, as you're asking me about him. What do you know about him?"

"I have not seen him for years," said the seafaring man quietly. "But—I knew his father, and I should like to know how he is getting on at his school."

The Bounder's lip curled.

"He's a fellow to get on anywhere," he said. "The sort of pushing cad who will always make his way."

The bronzed man started a little.

"That isn't a pleasant description of Jim Dallas' boy," he said.

"It happens to be the correct one," said the Bounder. "If you want to know more the fellow is a rank outsider, and a rank rotter!"

"What has he done?"

"I don't see that it concerns you; but I don't mind telling you—not in the least," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "He got round my father to take him away from his charity school and send him to Greyfriars. He's twisted my father round his finger and turned him against me. He's scheming to cut me out and get his name down in my father's will. He's got my father to adopt him as his son, and he's counting on being a rich man some day if my father doesn't find out the sort of rotter he is and shake him off. So, if you want to know about Dallas, there it is!"

The seafaring man's bronzed face had set hard as he listened to the Bounder's bitter words.

"Anything more I can tell you?" said Vernon-Smith.

"From what you say you must be the son of Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the seafaring man.

"You know my father?"

"I knew him long ago."

"You're one of the johnnies who have seen better days—what?" grinned the Bounder.

"I have seen better days, certainly!"

"You'd better wait till they come back before you put in a claim on Dallas as his father's friend," jeered the



Vernon-Smith gave Billy Bunter another kick and the Owl of the Remove yelled and ran. At a safe distance he stopped and blinked back through his big spectacles, and shook a fat fist in the air. "You beast!" he yelled. "Wait till Wingate catches you!" (See Chapter 2.)

Bounder. "That pushing cad will have no use for a man down on his luck."

The man winced.

"I am not thinking of putting in a claim on him," he said. "I—I knew his father, and I wanted to know how he was fixed. I knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith, the millionaire, had taken him up and adopted him, and sent him to his father's old school. I should have expected to hear that he was on friendly terms with Mr. Vernon-Smith's son."

"On friendly terms with the fellow he's cut out and schemed against? Not likely!"

"And you are sure of what you say?"

"I suppose I ought to know," said the Bounder bitterly. "The fellow's a rotter all through, scheming after my father's money. He thinks of nothing else."

The man looked at him hard.

Whatever was the stranger's interest in Paul Dallas, it was evident that the Bounder's bitter description came as a blow to him. And he could see that Herbert Vernon-Smith believed all he said; right or wrong, the Bounder was speaking from his heart.

The seafaring man stepped back.

"Thank you," he said. "I won't trouble you any more. Thank you for answering my questions."

And he tramped away down the tow-path, leaving the Bounder of Greyfriars staring after him perplexedly.

He disappeared in a few minutes, and the Bounder turned to the inn gate again. He dismissed the seafaring man from his mind as he went up the path through the weedy ill-kept garden and let himself in by the french windows of the billiards-room.

"Arternoon Master Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Joseph Banks, taking a cigar from his flabby mouth and bestowing a welcoming grin on the Bounder. "Glad to see you, sir!"

The Bounder picked a cue from the rack.

"This 'ere is like old times, sir," said Mr. Banks, affably.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"A hundred up and a fiver on the game!" he said.

"I'm your man, sir!" said Mr. Banks, with alacrity.

And the affable and greasy Mr. Banks proceeded to make himself five pounds richer at the expense of the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Talks Too Much!

"BRAVO, Dallas!"
"Well hit!"
"Good man, Dallas!"
"Oh, good man!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Form match on Little Side at Greyfriars was drawing to its close. The Shell had batted first, and run up a good score. It was a single-innings game, and Hobson & Co., of the Shell, had expected to finish with a good margin of runs in hand. But they were growing more doubtful now.

Paul Dallas was at the wickets, with Johnny Bull at the other end. Johnny Bull excelled in stone-walling, and he was sedately and steadfastly keeping the innings alive for the more brilliant batsman at the other end to score.

Dallas had just hit a four, and the Remove fellows round the field yelled applause as the figures went up.

"We're going to beat them, all right!" said Harry Wharton, cheerily. "We want a dozen to win, and Dallas looks like handing out a century if we wanted it."

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"And they won't shift Johnny in a hurry," remarked Bob Cherry.

"No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The worthy and ludicrous Hobson is booked for a terrific licking!"

"There he goes again!"

"Bravo!"

"I say, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter joined the little crowd of Removites before the pavilion. Bunter was not much interested in cricket, and Paul Dallas' great innings had not drawn him to the cricket-field, though it had drawn a good many other fellows. Even Wingate, of the Sixth Form, the captain of Greyfriars, had walked over from Big Side, attracted by the cheers from the enthusiastic Removites, and several other seniors had stopped to look on. Dallas had been third man in, and he looked like being "not out" at the finish. There was no doubt that Harry Wharton's new recruit was remarkably "hot stuff" at the summer game.

"I say, you fellows," repeated the Owl of the Remove peevishly.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Roll away, old barrel," said Peter Todd. "Bravo, Dallas!"

"Oh, blow Dallas!" said Bunter. "I'm fed up with Dallas. What about tea, Peter?"

"Blow tea! Roll away!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter warmly. "But it's hours and hours past tea-time, and I'm jolly hungry! I had to have tea in Hall while I was waiting for you, Peter."

"Well, if you've had tea what's the row, fathead?"

"Tea in Hall!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "What's that to me? Ain't we going to have tea in the study, Peter? Don't be mean, you know. Look here, you stand tea to-day, and I'll stand it to-morrow, out of my postal-order."

"Four!" said Harry Wharton. "The Shell are looking a bit tired, Dallas always gives the field plenty of leather-hunting."

"Peter, old chap——"

"Shut up!"

"Look here, why can't you come in, Peter?" demanded Bunter. "You're out, and you're not wanted here. What the thump do you want to watch Dallas for?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Peter——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Haven't you been painting the town red, Bunt?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beast Smithy let me down," said Bunter, dismally. "I say, you fellows, I've a jolly good mind to speak to Quelch about it. Simply disgraceful for those awful rotters to be pub-haunting at the Cross Keys, isn't it?"

"Shush!" said Frank Nugent hastily.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not noticed Wingate of the Sixth, leaning on the pavilion, watching the junior cricket.

"Dry up, Bunter!" muttered Wharton hurriedly.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter. "You know, as well as I do, that Smithy, and Skinner, and Snoop, are gone to the Cross Keys this afternoon. I call it disgraceful. You fellows aren't quite so high-minded as I am on these subjects. I'm shocked!"

"Will you dry up?" hissed Nugent.

"No, I jolly well won't!" said Bunter.

"I'm jolly well thinking whether I ought to speak to a prefect about it! You see——"

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"Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter spun round in dismay at Wingate's voice.

The captain of Greyfriars stepped towards him, with a grim expression on his face.

"Were you only talking out of your hat, or are you stating the facts, Bunter?" asked the prefect quietly.

Harry Wharton & Co. moved a little away. The fat was in the fire now, with a vengeance. Whatever they thought of the scapegrace of the Remove, and his shady proceedings, the Famous Five would never have dreamed of betraying him to the powers. Neither would Bunter have done so, to do him justice; he had been quite unaware that Wingate was within hearing.

He blinked at the prefect in dismay through his big spectacles.

Harry Wharton & Co. continued to watch the cricket. Paul Dallas had taken another four, and only four more runs were wanted to win. And he still had the bowling. It looked like a certain victory for the Remove, with a wicket in hand. But keen as their interest in the cricket was, the chums of the Remove could not help giving an ear to Wingate's voice.

"Now, then, out with it, Bunter!" snapped the Greyfriars captain. "What do you know about Vernon-Smith?"

"Nothing!" gasped Bunter.

"Where is he now?"

"I—I haven't the faintest idea, Wingate," gasped Bunter. "I—I haven't seen him since dinner. I didn't follow him on the road——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I never asked him—that is to say, I haven't seen him—and—and—and I don't know anything about him, Wingate."

"Is he at the Cross Keys?"

"I—I think not," stammered Bunter. "He wasn't going there with Skinner and Snoop this afternoon; now I come to think of it, I think they were going for a walk on the cliffs. I never heard Smithy arranging it with Skinner in break this morning."

"You young idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wingate——"

The Greyfriars captain took Bunter's fat ear between a finger and thumb and gripped like a vice.

"Yaroooh!"

"Has Vernon-Smith gone to the Cross Keys this afternoon?"

"Ow! Wow! Yes!"

"How do you know?"

"I don't—yaroooh!—I mean, I heard him fixing it up with Skinner in break this morning!" wailed Bunter.

"Leggo my ear!"

"Did you follow him?"

"No—ow-wow—yes!"

"Why did you follow him?"

"I—I wasn't going to that pub with him, Wingate—I wouldn't, you know. And—and he didn't kick me, and—and——"

"I think that will do," said Wingate, releasing Bunter's ear. "Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove turned round.

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Do you know anything about this?"

"I know nothing of what Vernon-Smith does," answered Wharton.

"Is he out of gates this afternoon?"

"Yes, he's out of gates."

"Are Skinner and Snoop out of gates?"

"I think so; but I haven't seen them since the cricket began."

Wingate gave the captain of the Remove a very sharp look. Wharton Bull,

might know nothing of the Bounder's movements or intentions; it was quite within the truth to say that much. What he suspected he was not bound to state.

"Look here, do you know where Vernon-Smith is?" demanded Wingate.

"No."

"Have you any reason to believe that he has gone out of bounds?"

"I can't say anything on the subject, Wingate."

"Very well," said Wingate quietly. "From what Bunter says, it's pretty clear how the matter stands, and this is a matter for me to look into."

"That fat ass is always spinning some yarn, Wingate," ventured Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"If he is spinning a yarn this time, he will be sorry for it!" said the Greyfriars captain grimly.

"Even duffers like Bunter are not allowed to spin yarns like that about other fellows. I shall take the matter in hand and see whether it is a yarn or not."

And Wingate of the Sixth strode away.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"Well, the fat's in the fire now," said Bob Cherry. "You piffing idiot, Bunter, why couldn't you keep your silly mouth shut!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"It serves Smithy right," said Squiff.

"But that fat idiot ought to be bumped for giving him away!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I didn't give him away!" howled Bunter indignantly.

"I didn't know that beast Wingate was just at my elbow, did I? Besides, it serves Smithy right! He kicked me——"

"Then we can't do better than follow Smithy's example!" said Peter Todd.

"Good!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Peter suited the action to the word.

"There goes Dallas!" shouted Hazeldene. "Remove wins!"

"Hurrah!"

Fortunately for Billy Bunter, the attention of the Removites was transferred to the cricket once more. The Owl of the Remove rolled away, feeling a much injured youth. Paul Dallas came off the field with Johnny Bull, with a flushed and cheery face, to be thumped on the back by Bob Cherry, and surrounded by congratulating comrades. The Remove had won the Form match with a wicket in hand, and Paul had contributed very materially to the victory.

"If that ass Smithy had only played!" said Bob Cherry.

"We've beaten them without Smithy," said Paul.

"Oh, yes; I mean, if he had played cricket instead of playing the giddy ox, he wouldn't be booked for a flogging or the sack now," answered Bob. "I can't say I like Smithy's ways; but I should be sorry to see him get bunted from the school."

Paul started.

"Smithy bunted!" he repeated. "He's in no danger of that, surely!"

"Never been nearer to it, I fancy," said Bob. "Can't help feeling sorry for the chap."

"But—what's happened?"

"That idiot Bunter knew he was going to the Cross Keys, and he babbled it out with Wingate only a yard away," said Wharton. "Wingate's bound to take it up, as a prefect—I know he's been jolly suspicious about Smithy for some time. Looks as if the Bounder will be fairly caught in the act this time."

"His own fault!" grunted Johnny

"You think it means the sack for Smithy?"

"Pretty certain, I should say," answered the captain of the Remove. "He's been jolly close to the wind before; and the Head isn't likely to go easy with him, if Wingate catches him in that blackguardly den."

"And Wingate's gone—"

"He's not likely to let the grass grow under his feet. Come on—let's get off."

Paul Dallas went off the cricket ground with the other fellows. But he had slipped quietly away from them before they reached the House. Harry Wharton & Co. were in a subdued mood. Little as they liked the Bouncer of late, little as they approved of his manners and customs, they could not help feeling concerned about the reckless fellow, and the overwhelming punishment that impended over him. But he had asked for it, and they could not help him; and they little dreamed of the thoughts that were in the mind of Paul Dallas—the fellow whom the Bouncer regarded as his enemy, and whose implacable enemy the Bouncer was.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Just in Time!

WINGATE of the Sixth left the school gates and strode away on the road to Friardale, with a knitted brow. It was not a pleasant task that had fallen to the captain of Greyfriars; but it was a task that he could not possibly elude. He had his duty to do as head prefect, none the less because it was an unpleasant duty.

Wingate followed the road to the village, and it did not even occur to him that a junior of the Lower Fourth was

heading for the same destination, cutting across the fields at a breathless run.

Paul Dallas had played a hard innings in the Form match at Greyfriars, and he was feeling more inclined for a rest than for further exertion. But he was running now by the field paths as fast as he had run between the wickets on Little Side.

Wingate of the Sixth was losing no time; but the junior was a long way ahead of him. By short cuts across the fields, and running hard, Paul had gained a long start.

But he did not lose a second. Fatigued as he was, he kept up the pace. The ground fairly flew under his racing feet.

Paul had not stopped to think over the matter. The Bouncer's bitter enmity, the narrow escape he had had from ruin at his enemy's hands only a few weeks ago, he had forgotten that. He remembered only that the Bouncer was the son of the man who had saved him from poverty, who had taken him from a charity school and sent him to Greyfriars. The expulsion of Herbert Vernon-Smith would have been a terrible blow to his father; all the more because, by his reckless indulgence of his wayward son, the millionaire himself had been much to blame. From that blow Paul was determined to save his benefactor, if he could.

He had little time for thinking, but he was well aware of the risk he was running. A visit to the Cross Keys was not merely a breaking of school bounds; it was an offence that was booked for the severest punishment, if discovered. And that risk Paul Dallas was running, to save his enemy. If Wingate arrived and found him there he would be marched back to the school

in the prefect's custody, to answer for what he had done before the headmaster. And it was not likely to help him much if he explained that he had not been "pub-haunting," but had set out deliberately to save a young rascal from detection and to defeat a Sixth Form prefect in the execution of his duty.

Paul hardly gave the risk a thought. He was determined to save the Bouncer if he could, and that was all there was to it.

Panting for breath, he came out into the lane at last, near the path that ran down the side of the ill-favoured inn. There he paused, to glance along the road.

Wingate, he knew, was coming; but the prefect was not yet in sight. Whether he would have time to warn the Bouncer and get clear again before Wingate arrived, Paul did not know. He only knew that he was going to chance it.

He ran down the path beside the inn and turned into the weedy garden. The May sun was shining in the garden, but a light already glimmered in the windows of the billiards-room. Paul knew nothing of the place; he had hitherto only seen the Cross Keys from the road, hardly glancing at the inn in passing. But he had heard talk among the Remove fellows on the subject of the Bouncer and his ways. He paused for a few moments in the garden, to recover his breath, and then approached the french windows of the billiards-room.

He pressed his face to the glass and looked in.

The first person he saw there was the Bouncer. There were three men in the room, one of them the marker—all

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strangers to Paul. Herbert Vernon-Smith, with a cigarette in his mouth, was watching the fat and flabby Mr. Banks taking a shot.

Paul threw the french window open. A second more, and he was in the room.

Mr. Banks stopped in taking his shot, to stare round. Vernon-Smith glanced at Dallas blankly.

"You here?" he exclaimed blankly. "Friend of yours, sir?" asked Mr. Banks. "He's welcome!"

The Bounder laughed harshly. "So that's your game, Dallas?" he said mockingly. "Pi-jaw for Wharton and his mob at Greyfriars, and billiards at a pub when they've not got an eye on you. I might have guessed as much, though I admit I never did."

Paul crimsoned. "I've come here to warn you, Vernon-Smith!" he panted.

"What?"

"Wingate is coming here. He may be here any minute now. I left him behind by cutting across the fields!" panted Dallas. "For goodness' sake get out of this without losing a second!"

The Bounder stared at him blankly. "Wingate coming here?"

"Yes."

"And who gave him the tip that I was here?" sneered the Bounder.

"He heard that fat idiot Bunter tattling."

"Oh!"

"I tell you he's coming!" breathed Paul. "I saw him start from the school gates—and he was going pretty quick, too! He would have been here first if I'd come by the road. For goodness' sake, Vernon-Smith, get out of this before it is too late! Think of your father!"

"Better get a move on, sir," murmured Mr. Banks. "Werry kind of the young gent to come here and give you the tip, sir. You don't want to get into trouble at your school."

"And you came to warn me, Dallas?"

"Can't you see that I did?"

"And why?"

"To save you from what you deserve," snapped Paul. "But I've warned you—I can't do more. If you've got any sense you'll clear before you're caught."

And Paul Dallas stepped back from the open window and scudded away up the garden. Vernon-Smith stood motionless for a few moments.

"Better hook it, sir!" murmured Mr. Banks persuasively. "Mr. Cobb, 'ere, wouldn't like trouble with your 'ead-master."

The Bounder nodded.

He realised his danger clearly enough. He was loth to profit by a friendly warning from his enemy, but he knew what would happen if the captain of Greyfriars caught him there—as undoubtedly he would have caught him, but for Paul's warning. He picked up his cap and ran into the garden. The straggling trees hid him from sight in a few moments. But in the screen of trees the Bounder stopped and looked back. He could see the side path from the lane, and on that path a well-known athletic figure appeared in sight—the figure of George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars. The Bounder breathed hard.

He had escaped—by less than a minute. One minute more, and he would have been full in Wingate's view as he fled up the garden into the trees. His heart beat faster.

He stayed only for one glance. Then he was scudding away, and in a very few moments he clambered over the

gate by the river and was sprinting up the towpath towards Greyfriars with all the speed he could muster.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

PAUL DALLAS came into Study No. 1 in the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You've missed your tea!"

Paul smiled. "Nothing left for a late-comer?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton, smiling. "But where on earth did you vanish to after the match, Dallas?"

"I've been out of gates."

"You wanted a walk after taking all those runs?" asked Bob. "Well, it's you for the strenuous life!"

Paul dropped into a chair at the table. Tea in Study No. 1 had been very late, after the cricket match, but it had been long over before Paul returned. But his study-mates had kindly and thoughtfully left something on the dish. Paul was tired and hungry, and he tucked into ham and eggs at a great rate.

He wondered what his friends would have thought had they known why he had slipped away from them and gone out of gates. He had no intention of telling them, however. The less that was said about his visit to the Cross Keys the better.

He only hoped that the Bounder, self-willed and arrogant as he was, had had enough common sense to take advantage of his warning and escape in time. He had done all he could, and he had seen nothing of Vernon-Smith since leaving him in the billiards-room.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 1.

Bob Cherry picked up a cushion. "Where will you have it?" he inquired.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fat villain!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Hook it!" said Wharton sharply. "You ought to be jolly well scragged for giving Smithy away!"

"I didn't give him away, you ass! Besides, it's all right!" said Bunter. "Wingate's just come in!"

"With Smithy?"

"No. Alone."

"Then he hasn't got him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Or the others," said Wharton, puzzled. "Perhaps they'd cleared before Wingate got there. I hope so. It would be a rotten disgrace for the Remove to have an expulsion!"

"They ought to be jolly well bunked!" said Johnny Bull. "Still, we don't want any bunkings in the Remove."

"I thought I'd tell you fellows," said Bunter. "Smithy's got off somehow. He always was lucky. I say, you fellows, don't mention to him that Wingate got anything out of me. Very likely he would cut up rusty. You know Smithy's rotten temper."

"Very likely indeed, I think," said Wharton. "I dare say you were on the wrong track all the time, and Smithy never went to the Cross Keys at all."

"I jolly well know he did! I was going with him, only the beast kicked me!"

"Well, I'm glad he kicked you, at any rate."

"The kickfulness was the proper caper!" assented Hurrec Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Beast!" said Bunter. "They were all going, and I'm blessed if I know how they dodged Wingate. I say, you fellows, he's gone into Quelch's study. I wonder—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, Wingate?"

Bunter spun round in the doorway at the sound of Wingate's voice. He blinked uneasily at the Greyfriars captain.

"You young rascal!" said Wingate sternly. "You were telling me lies, and you sent me on a fool's errand!"

"Oh, really, Wingate—"

"Go to your Form master's study. Mr. Quelch is going to inquire into the matter."

"Oh, dear!"

Bunter limped away. Wingate glanced into Study No. 1. Harry Wharton & Co. met his glance inquiringly. Paul Dallas kept his eyes fixed on his plate.

"Do you know where Vernon-Smith and Skinner and Snoop are?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"No, Wingate."

"It's not look-up yet," said Bob Cherry. "No harm in being out of gates on a half-holiday, Wingate."

"That depends," said Wingate, and he went along the Remove passage to No. 4.

That was Vernon-Smith's study. Wingate knocked at the door and opened it. Three juniors were in the study—Vernon-Smith, Skinner, and Snoop. They were seated round the table, with books open before them and pens in their hands.

Wingate stared at them.

He had not expected to find them there, and certainly he had not expected to find them so studiously occupied.

The three juniors rose as he came in. "So you're here!" said Wingate.

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith meekly.

"Are we wanted, Wingate? It's not roll-call yet, is it?"

"You've been out of gates?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been in?"

The Bounder seemed to consider.

"I haven't been in long," he answered calmly. "I've had a rather long walk round by Pegg and Redclyffe, and it kept me longer than I intended. I don't know about these chaps."

"Weren't you together?"

"Oh, no."

"We came in about a couple of hours ago, Wingate," said Skinner.

"Rather more than that, I think," remarked Snoop. "Is anything wrong, Wingate? We haven't done anything that I know of."

"Come with me," said the Greyfriars captain. "Your Form master wants to speak to you."

"Oh, all right."

Wingate walked away, and the three juniors followed him. They exchanged a wink as they left the study. The Bounder & Co. had had time to compare notes and to prepare their story, and they were not in the least alarmed. They went cheerfully along to the stairs after Wingate.

"Hallo! Trouble?" asked Hazeldene, who was in the doorway of No. 2.

"Not at all that I know of," said Vernon-Smith airily. "Mr. Quelch wants to see us. Only because we're such pleasant company, I think."

Hazel chuckled.

"That will do, Vernon-Smith!" snapped Wingate. "Follow me!"

"Certainly!"

The trio followed Wingate down the stairs and into Mr. Quelch's study. Billy Bunter was already there, looking as if



The french window suddenly opened, and Paul Dallas stepped into the billiards-room. "Friend of yours, sir?" asked Mr. Banks. "He's welcome!" Vernon-Smith laughed harshly. "So that's your game?" he said mockingly, turning on the newcomer. "Pi-jaw for Wharton and his mob—and billiards at a pub when they've not got an eye on you." "I've come to warn you, Vernon-Smith!" panted Paul crimsoning. (See Chapter 5.)

he wished from the bottom of his fat heart that he was anywhere else. The Owl of the Remove was waiting, in great uneasiness, shifting from one fat leg to the other while he waited. Mr. Quelch, busy at his writing-table, gave him no heed till Wingate shepherded the three suspects into the room. Then the Remove master laid down his pen and fixed his gimlet-eyes on the three.

"You found these boys within gates, Wingate?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where have you been this afternoon?" asked Mr. Quelch, his eyes fixed on the three.

"Out of gates, sir."

"Have you been out of bounds?"

"Oh, sir! No, sir!"

"You are suspected of having paid a visit to a disreputable resort which is strictly out of school bounds," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, sir!"

"You are, unfortunately, not among the boys of my Form whom I am able to trust. I require to know how you have spent your afternoon."

"I went to the pictures at Courtfield with Snoop, sir," said Skinner meekly. "No harm in that, sir. The Head allows us to go to the Courtfield Cinema."

"Quite so. Have you any proof of your statement?"

"Oh, certainly, sir! There were at least a dozen Greyfriars fellows there, and we spoke to some of them."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove fairly goggled at Skinner. He was quite unaware that Skinner and Snoop had taken the alarm that afternoon, and had not carried out their intention of visiting the Cross Keys. At the present moment the two young rascals had reason to be glad that they had gone to the pictures instead.

"Give me the names of some of the boys to whom you spoke at the Courtfield cinema, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir—Russell and Ogilvy of the Remove, and Tubb of the Third, sir. Hilton and Price of the Fifth were there, sir, in the front row, and I'm sure they saw us, if you care to ask them, sir."

"I shall refer to the boys you mention, Skinner."

"Yes, sir," said Skinner, unmoved.

On the rare occasions when he told the truth, Skinner had a happy feeling of having a clear conscience, and he was telling the truth now.

"Was Vernon-Smith with you, Skinner?"

"No, sir."

"Where have you been, Vernon-Smith?"

"I had a long walk round by Pegg and Redelyffe, sir," said the Bounder. "It was such a ripping afternoon for a walk, that I didn't care to stick inside a picture-palace."

Mr. Quelch looked perplexed. He signed to Bunter to come forward, and

the Owl of the Remove unwillingly obeyed.

"Bunter, Wingate learned from you that these three juniors had been to a disreputable place out of bounds."

"I never said so, sir," gasped Bunter. "I'm not the chap to sneak about a fellow."

"I am aware that you did not intend to give information, Bunter; nevertheless, you did so. Am I to understand that you were telling deliberate untruths, to cause a Sixth Form prefect to waste his time upon a fool's errand?"

"Oh, no, sir!" spluttered Bunter. "Not at all, sir."

"Then why did you suppose that these boys had broken bounds in an especially reprehensible and disgraceful manner?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—" stuttered the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"Either you were deceiving Wingate—"

"Ow! No, sir."

"Or else you had something upon which to found your belief. Tell me what it was, at once."

"I—I—I—"

"Unless you can explain, Bunter, you will be severely punished for having deceived your head prefect."

"Oh dear! I—I heard them, sir," groaned Bunter. "They fixed it up in break this morning, sir. I heard them."

"What have you to say to that, Vernon-Smith?"

"That's quite correct, sir," said the Bounder calmly. "We knew Bunter was listening, and we pulled his leg, sir. No harm in making a fool of a fellow who was eavesdropping, I hope, sir."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.
"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch. He gave the Owl of the Remove a glare.

"It's gammon!" gasped Bunter. "I know they went. I followed them half the way, and that beast Smithy kicked me—"

"Bunter accused me of intending to visit a low public-house, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "I kicked him, sir. I thought he deserved it, for supposing that I would do such a thing."

Skinner and Snoop had some difficulty in keeping their faces straight, as the Bounder made that statement. Fortunately, they succeeded.

Mr. Quelch was frowning portentously.

"It appears, then, that this utterly obtuse boy was the victim of a foolish practical joke," he said. "Of the three boys he has accused, two at least have proved a clear alibi."

He looked at Wingate, who nodded. "That is so, sir," said the Greyfriars captain. "That young duffer made a fool of me. I'm glad it's turned out that there was nothing wrong, after all."

"I share that feeling," said Mr. Quelch. "You three boys may go. Bunter, I shall punish you for having caused so much trouble. It appears to be your ineradicable propensity to eavesdropping that has been to blame. You will bend over that chair."

"I—I—I say, sir—"
"Silence! Bend over that chair!"

Vernon-Smith & Co. meekly left the study. But they waited in the passage for a few minutes to listen to the swishing of a cane and the wild howls of William George Bunter.

Then they walked cheerily away. The Owl of the Remove had asked for it, and undoubtedly Mr. Quelch would make a point of seeing that the fat Remove got what he had asked for. The Remove master was not likely to be found wanting in this respect.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Gratitude!

PAUL DALLAS did not see the Bounder again, after roll-call, till the Remove went to their dormitory that night. He glanced at Smithy then; and the Bounder met his glance with an ironical look. If Paul had hoped that the incident of the afternoon had softened his enemy's feelings towards him in any way, that hope died in his breast. He had saved the scapegrace of Greyfriars from irretrievable disaster; but the Bounder was still his bitter enemy as before. Indeed, it was probable that having received a favour from the fellow he hated, it had made the Bounder more bitter.

But Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son did not regret his action. The Bounder's expulsion from school would have been a heavy blow to his benefactor, and he was glad that he had acted as he had done. And he hoped, at least, that his narrow escape would prove a warning to the reckless blackguard of the Remove. But anything like a reconciliation with his adopted brother was evidently more hopeless than ever.

The following morning, when Paul went out into the quad after breakfast, Vernon-Smith joined him.

"I should like to know what your game is, Dallas," he said.

Paul's lip curled.
"Do you mean—in what I did yesterday?" he asked.

"Yes. What's the game?"

"I suppose you would think that there was some bad motive behind what I did," said Paul scornfully. "It's like you!"

"Naturally I think so."

"Naturally—for you!" said Paul.

"Nobody else would think so."
"You want me to believe that you are so jolly pi that you turn the other cheek to the smiter, what?" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"I don't want you to believe anything," said Paul quietly. "I think you're incapable of understanding a decent chap. I suppose you can't understand that I am grateful to your father, and that for his sake I acted as I did, as well as for yours. When you play

your rotten blackguardly games, you don't seem to remember how your father would feel it, if you were kicked out of Greyfriars."

"My father's turned me down for an interloper!" said the Bounder bitterly. "That's that! Any fellow might give a chap a tip when he was in danger of being nailed by the beaks; but not you! You mean to make capital out of it somehow"

Paul regarded the Bounder almost compassionately. It seemed almost impossible for any fellow to misunderstand his action; yet the Bounder misunderstood it, and sought for an evil motive behind it—his bitter, suspicious mind rejecting immediately any suggestion of a good motive.

"How could I make capital out of it, even if I wanted to?" asked Paul.

The Bounder laughed.

"I think I catch on," he said. "My father is to hear all about it, and learn how his dear adopted son saved me from the boot. I suppose it was worth your while to take the trouble, to pull my father's leg a little more thoroughly. Well, go ahead and play your game; I'll put a spoke in your wheel some day, somehow!"

"I shall not say a word about it to your father."

"Gammon!"

"Look here, Vernon-Smith," said Paul Dallas quietly and earnestly. "Can't you put this rotten suspicion out of your mind? What harm have I done you? Your father has befriended me, like a generous man; but he has told you that my father befriended him once when he was in an awkward position; you wouldn't like him to leave an obligation unpaid. You have twitted me with being here on charity; but you know that my father left a thousand pounds in Mr. Vernon-Smith's hands, when he left England long ago, and that that money is being used to pay my fees here. Even if it were not so, why should you complain? Your father is a millionaire—he would not miss the money. You will be a rich man some day; I shall be poor, working for my daily bread, after I leave Greyfriars. Even if I were receiving your father's bounty, why should you grudge me so little from so much?"

The Bounder stood silent for some moments.

In spite of himself, in spite of the bitter jealousy, and hatred, and suspicion, the earnest ring in Paul's voice had an effect on him.

"I came here ready and eager to be friends with you," went on Paul, as the Bounder did not speak. "You met me with dislike and suspicion. You had a fancy that your father turned you down in my favour. You are no fool, but you must be blind. Your father does not value me as a pin in comparison with his own son—and rightly. He is kind to me because my poor father was his friend, that is all. Your father has been angry with you over your treatment of me; but surely you can see that any father would be angry with a son who acted as you did. You have been disrespectful and defiant; and no man could take that patiently from a boy at school. If you would only throw up this silly feud, and your defiance of your father's wishes, you would find him as kind and indulgent as he used to be."

Still the Bounder did not speak.

It came into his mind, like a glimmer of light, that his sulky and suspicious temper had led him astray that he had wronged the junior who was

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But that was only for a moment.

As if it were a weakness of which he was ashamed, Herbert Vernon-Smith cast aside the thought.

"You tell the tale well," he said, with a sarcastic grin. "No wonder you are able to get round my father if you pitch it to him like that."

"You don't believe me, then?"

"Not a syllable," said the Bounder coolly. "I know how you've started, and I know that you intend to go on as you've begun. I haven't the slightest doubt that my father has altered his will already, and that his dear adopted son is down in it for a fortune. Every shilling you get from him is stolen from me."

Paul drew a deep breath.

"It is useless to speak to you," he said. "I am not your enemy, as you believe; but you are your own enemy, and a worse one than I could ever be. You had a good pal when I came here, and you threw him aside. You could not trust even Tom Redwing, a fellow whose boots you weren't good enough to clean. So I can't expect you to trust me—or anybody. But I'd rather be a beggar in the street than think of other fellows as you do, Vernon-Smith!"

With that Paul Dallas walked away, with a contempt in his face that stung the Bounder to the quick.

Vernon-Smith made a stride after him, his fists clenched.

Deep down in his heart, probably, there was a glimmering of the truth that he misunderstood and maligned a nature better and nobler than his own; but that glimmering of knowledge he crushed fiercely down.

"You—you rotter!" breathed the Bounder. "You dare to taunt me—the son of a man you've deceived and fooled. Put up your hands, you cad!"

And he struck savagely as he spoke.

Paul Dallas staggered as he received the blow on his cheek, as he half-turned.

The Bounder followed up the attack with savage animosity.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Scrapping again?" exclaimed Bob Cherry as he came out of the House with his chums. "You never know when you've had enough, Smithy."

Dallas, with his eyes blazing, was closing on the Bounder, and they were fighting furiously.

There was a crowd round them at once.

"Go it, Smithy!" chortled Skinner.

"Man down!" grinned Johnny Bull, as the Bounder crashed down on his back in the quad.

Paul stood, breathless and panting. Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet, his eyes ablaze.

"Come on, you rotter!" panted Dallas.

The Bounder came on again with a rush.

"Cave!" squeaked Tubb, of the Third.

Mr. Quelch came striding out of the house with a thunderous brow.

"Vernon-Smith! Dallas! Cease this at once!"

The Remove master pushed his way through the crowd of juniors. Paul Dallas dropped his hands at once, and the Bounder reluctantly followed his example.

"How dare you fight in the quadrangle—almost under my study windows?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting. "Vernon-Smith, I shall cane you! Go to my study at once!"

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"Cane me! And Dallas—"

"You are to blame! I saw you strike Dallas when he was turning away from you. You are wholly to blame!"

"I don't expect justice from you, Mr. Quelch," snarled the Bounder.

"What—what?"

Mr. Quelch fairly stuttered.

The juniors stared on breathlessly. Such an answer to the Remove master was enough to take their breath away. For a second there was silence. Mr. Quelch staring at the Bounder, speechless, while the rebel of the Remove gave him look for look, in sulky defiance.

"Vernon-Smith!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last. "Do you know what you are saying? Have you forgotten whom you are addressing? How dare you? How dare you? Go to my study. I shall cane you most severely."

"And let Dallas off?" sneered the Bounder.

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a formidable voice. "Another word of insolence, and I will take you to your headmaster and request him to send you away from the school."

The Bounder's lips opened for a defiant retort. But some remnant of common sense stopped him, in spite of his passionate recklessness. With a bitter look at his Form master, he tramped into the House.

Mr. Quelch, fuming and crimson, followed him in.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Smithy's asking for it," murmured Squiff. "He won't be long bagging the sack if he keeps on at this rate."

"Must be potty to talk to Quelch like that," said Bob Cherry.

Paul Dallas moved away from the crowd of juniors with a clouded and troubled face. Fellows who were near the windows of Mr. Quelch's study heard the swishing of a cane; but they did not hear a sound from Herbert Vernon-Smith. Severe as his punishment was, the Bounder took it with set lips and savage hardihood, uttering no cry.

Vernon-Smith's face was white when he came into the Remove Form-room for class. He gave Paul one look, of bitter malevolence. Mr. Quelch caught that look, and his face hardened.

He made no remark at the time, however, but when the Remove were dismissed for morning break he called to Vernon-Smith to stay behind.

The Bounder stopped sullenly at his desk.

"Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master quietly, "I have to give you a serious warning. In connection with your brother by adoption, Dallas, you seem to have allowed yourself to become the victim of a bitter jealousy and an unmanly, unwholesome hatred. This will not be allowed to continue. I appeal now to your better sense and feeling to make an effort to overcome this. Overcome it you must, or go!"

"Go!" repeated Vernon-Smith.

"If it should continue," said Mr. Quelch, "I shall request the Head to take the matter in hand, and to represent to your father that it is injudicious to leave you at Greyfriars with Dallas. Your father will be requested to take you away from this school and place you elsewhere."

Vernon-Smith almost choked.

"Bear that in mind," said Mr. Quelch. "Dallas is a kind-hearted and peaceable lad, and, I am assured, would be glad to be friends with you—or at least, to avoid quarrel with you. On the next occasion when you make any display of animosity towards him the matter will be placed in Dr. Locke's hands, and you may prepare to leave Greyfriars. Take heed of that. Now you may go."

The Bounder went almost blindly from the Form-room. Outside the door he

almost ran into Billy Bunter, who grinned at him. He realised that the Owl of the Remove had been listening, but he gave no heed. He tramped out into the quadrangle, almost sick with rage and bitterness. He was at the end of his tether at last, and he knew it. Long ago his Form-fellows had become "fed-up" with his feud with Paul Dallas. All the Remove were down on him for it. His father had menaced him with being taken away from the school. Now the matter was in the hands of authority, and he knew only too well that Mr. Quelch meant every word he said. At the next outbreak of his temper he was to go. To go, leaving the "interloper" in his place, victor all along the line, to triumph over him, as it seemed to him in his distorted imagination. It was the climax; and the Bounder, as he tramped savagely away, felt as if his heart would burst with the bitterness and rage that swelled within him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bright Idea!

"DALLAS here?"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the door of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were there, at the table, and Paul Dallas was in the window-seat. The Owl of the Remove blinked round the study through his big spectacles, without observing Dallas for the moment.

"I say, you fellows, I want to speak to Dallas," said Bunter, rolling into the study. "I'm going to give him a tip."

"That's generous of you!" said Wharton gravely. "How much?"

"Eh?"

"Has your postal-order come?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Well, as a matter of fact, it hasn't," said Bunter. "I'm expecting it by the next post, though."

"Then how are you going to tip Dallas?" asked Frank. "Are you going to borrow half-a-crown from him to tip him with?"

Paul Dallas grinned. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not seen him yet, and was evidently unaware that he was in the study.

"Oh, really, Nugent! When I say I'm going to give him a tip, I mean a tip, not a tip," explained Bunter lucidly.

"Clear as mud!" agreed Nugent.

"I'm going to put him wise, as Fishy calls it," said Bunter. "I happen to have found out something. As he screws a lot of money out of Smithy's pater, I think he ought, in common decency, to make me a little loan in return till my postal-order comes. What do you fellows think?"

"I think you're a toad!" said Wharton.

"I think you're a worm," said Nugent.

"And I think I'll kick you out of the study!" remarked Dallas, rising from the window-seat.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, I say! I didn't see you, Dallas, old fellow. I say, I've come here to do you a favour."

"You could do me a bigger favour by not coming."

"Oh, really, Dallas—"

"Get out, you fat ass!" said Paul.

"I've got something to tell you," said Bunter mysteriously. "It's the chance of a lifetime. I'm going to tell you because I like you, you know. Not because I want you to lend me ten bob."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. The fact is, Dallas, that I like you no end," said Bunter. "I'm no snob."

"What?"

"I don't mind you being a charity cad, and all that," said Bunter affably. "As for screwing money out of Smithy's pater, why shouldn't you? He's got lots, and I don't suppose he came by it honestly."

"You unspeakable idiot!" said Dallas, in measured tones. "If you say a word against Mr. Vernon-Smith to me I'll shove your silly head into the coal-locker!"

"Oh, come off!" said Bunter, with a fat wink. "We all know what your little game is, you know!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper, as Inky would say," remarked Harry Wharton. "Turn round, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Will you get out, Bunter, without being thrashed?" asked Paul Dallas.

"My dear chap, I've come here as a friend," said Bunter, in surprise. "What are you getting your rag out for? I haven't said anything to offend you, have I?"

Paul stared at him, and then burst into a laugh. Really, it was not much use being angry with William George Bunter.

"He takes the cake, doesn't he?" chuckled Nugent. "Why did they send him to Greyfriars instead of a lunatic asylum, or a home for idiots?"

"Shut up, Nugent, will you, while I speak to Dallas," said Bunter. "You keep on interrupting a chap. I'm going to give Dallas a tip—a jolly valuable tip. I'm not asking him to lend me ten bob, either. I leave that to his sense of honour after I've told him what I know."

"What is the fat idiot barbling about?" asked Paul, in wonder.

"Just you listen to me," said Bunter. "It's the chance of a lifetime! That cad, Smithy, kicked me yesterday, and I got licked by Quelch, too—all his fault. If he'd not caught at the Cross Keys, it would have been all right; as it was, I got into a frightful row. I believe he did the whole thing just to get me into trouble. He's selfish. Well, suppose I show you how to get Smithy sacked from the school?"

"What?" exclaimed Dallas.

"Surprise you—what?" grinned Bunter. "Well, that's how it stands. You can get him turned right out of Greyfriars, with my advice. See? That's what you want, isn't it?"

"Potty, I suppose," said Dallas.

"He tried to get you sacked once, and came jolly near getting away with it," said Bunter. "Of course, you'd like to turn the tables on him. It would get him into trouble with his pater, too, and that would help you with old Vernon-Smith—getting at his money-bags, you know."

"Nothing but kicking is any good to Bunter, Dallas," said the captain of the Remove. "Go it!"

"Do shut up, Wharton, while I explain to Dallas," said Billy Bunter impatiently. "Now, you fellows noticed that Quelch kept the Bounder back this morning to speak to him after second lesson?"

"We noticed that," said Harry.

"It never occurred to you to hang round the Form-room door and hear what Quelch had to say to him?" grinned Bunter.

"No; I don't think that bright idea

would occur to anybody but you," said Wharton.

Sarcasm was a sheer waste on Billy Bunter. He nodded assent.

"I think of things, you know," he explained. "Well, the long and the short of it is, that Quelch told Smithy that he was fed-up with him and his feud with Dallas—fed right up to the chin."

"I think I can hear Mr. Quelch putting it like that!" grinned Nugent.

"Not exactly those words," said Bunter. "But that was what he meant. He warned Smithy that his next row with Dallas he would call in the Head and have Smithy sent home. The very next time Smithy falls foul of Dallas his father is to be asked to take him away."

"Well, I'm not surprised if that's true," said Wharton. "Everybody is fed-up with Smithy's rot, I should think. I hope Smithy will take the tip and chuck playing the goat."

"I hope so, too," said Dallas. "Even Vernon-Smith will have sense enough to take warning if Mr. Quelch really told him that, I suppose."

"But don't you see your chance?" asked Bunter eagerly. "Of course, Smithy will let you alone now; he will drop you like a hot potato. You needn't take the trouble to keep clear of him; he will keep clear of you as if you had the measles. He doesn't want to be sacked. But don't you see, it's in your hands now, after what I've told you."

"What on earth do you mean?" snapped Dallas.

"You don't catch on?" grinned Bunter.

"No, ass!"

"You're a bit dense, old man. All you've got to do now is to pick a row with Smithy—"

"Pick a row with him!" repeated Dallas.

"That's it. Somewhere where Quelch is bound to drop on you. And then it's Smithy for the long jump."

Paul stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

"Catch on now?" chuckled Bunter. "Easy as falling off a form. You get Smithy bunked from Greyfriars, and in disgrace with his father—cut him out all along the line. That's your game, of course. You've fairly got Smithy on toast now."

Wharton and Nugent looked curiously at Dallas as he stood silent, staring at the Owl of the Remove. There was no doubt, in the circumstances, that Dallas had Smithy on "toast," as Bunter expressed it. Had he been the kind of fellow Smithy believed him to be, certainly he would have jumped at the chance. But he did not look like jumping at the chance. He looked more like jumping at Bunter.

"What do you think of that for a tip?" said the fat junior cheerily. "Fairly on toast, you know Smithy's put himself in the wrong. It won't be any good his saying you started the row; nobody will believe him. See? He's piled it on too thick for that. Get his rag out and start a row, and Quelch will be down on him like a ton of coke. Serve him jolly well right for kicking a chap!"

"Well!" said Paul Dallas, with a deep breath. "I believe you are more fool than rascal, Bunter—"

"Eh?"

"But you are a pretty thorough rascal, too."

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"Can I have the table for a few minutes, you fellows?" asked Paul.

"Certainly!" grinned Wharton and Nugent together.

"Thanks! You might hand me a stump."

"Here, I say, wharrer you at?" roared Bunter, as Paul Dallas grasped him. "Here, leggo! Help! Yooop!"

In spite of his heavy weight, William George Bunter was swung across the table, face down, in Dallas' athletic grasp. Then Paul took the cricket stump that Nugent handed him.

"Whack, whack, whack!"
"Yooop! Help! Fire! Murder!" roared Bunter.

"Whack, whack, whack, whack!"
"Yarooooooogh! Help! Rescue!"

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Peter Todd, looking into the study. "Steady on, Dallas! You're not allowed to kill my fat porker!"

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Help!" yelled Bunter, wriggling frantically in Dallas' strong grip. "Help! Yooop! Peter, old man, keep him off! Yarooooooogh!"

"Whack, whack, whack!"

Five or six fellows gathered round the doorway of Study No. 1. Among them was Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder looked in, with a sneer.

"Bullying that fat ass, what?" he said.

Dallas did not heed. He was still laying on the stump—and he was laying it on hard.

Billy Bunter squirmed and roared and yelled. Vernon-Smith stepped into the study.

"Stop that!" he said.

"Mind your own business!" said Dallas savagely.

"I make it my business to prevent rotten bullying," said the Bounder. "If the captain of the Form doesn't interfere, I jolly well will!"

"Better not row with Dallas, Smithy," said Nugent, with a chuckle. "You know what will happen if you do."

The Bounder started.

"What do you mean?" he snapped.

"Bunter's just told us what Quelch said to you in the Form-room this morning," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

The Bounder breathed hard. He had forgotten for the moment his Form master's warning in his keenness to take his enemy at a disadvantage.

Paul Dallas rolled Bunter off the table and threw the stump into a corner of the study.

"That will do," he said. "You can take your next bright idea to some other study, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Dallas looked fixedly at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"You've called me a bully, Vernon-Smith," he said. "If Bunter was a fellow who could put up his hands I'd have thrashed him. As it was I gave him the stump. And as you're curious to know why, I'll tell you. He pointed out to me that by picking a row with you I could get you sacked from Greyfriars. You know best what would happen if Mr. Quelch found us fighting again."

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner in the passage.

The Bounder stood silent, looking at Dallas. For a long minute he stood there, still silent, and then turned and left the study. He went along to Study No. 4, went in, and closed the door.

There was something resembling fear for once in the Bounder's hard and arrogant heart. His fate was in his enemy's hands, and he knew it. Mr. Quelch



"Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "I have to give you a serious warning. In connection with your brother by adoption, Dallas, you seem to have allowed yourself to become the victim of a bitter jealousy and an unmanly, unwholesome hatred. This will not be allowed to continue. Overcome it you must or go!" "Go!" repeated the Bounder, a choking feeling in his throat. (See Chapter 7.)

certainly had not intended Dallas to know of the warning that had been given to Vernon-Smith. But he knew it now. If he took advantage of what he knew, the game was in his hands. It was with a deep tremor that the Bounder realised that he was at the mercy of the fellow he had persecuted and maligned. And he could not understand. Dallas had "stumped" Bunter for suggesting that he should do what Vernon-Smith would naturally have expected him to do now that the power was in his hands. Dallas evidently did not intend to use his advantage. Why? Why? Because he was a decent fellow, incapable of treachery; because he was nothing like what the Bounder's angry jealousy and suspicion had painted him.

But that the Bounder could not and would not believe. If that was the case, what was he to think of himself, and of his long and bitter persecution of Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son? He drove that explanation from his bitter mind, while in his heart of hearts he knew that there was no other.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Strange Visitor at Greyfriars!

THE seafaring man stopped at the gates of Greyfriars and stood for some minutes looking in at the open gateway. Two or three juniors chatting near the gates glanced at him. That stalwart, bronzed man, in the rough clothes of a seaman who sailed before the mast, seemed to be interested in the glimpse he obtained of Greyfriars School through the open gates. It was the morning break, and the quadrangle was crowded with fellows of all Forms. The seafaring man stirred at last and entered the old stone gateway, and stood within the precincts of the school, glancing about him, with hesitation in his manner. It was then that Vernon-Smith saw him from a distance, and recognised the man who had spoken to him on the Sark tow-path a few days ago.

The Bounder came towards him, with a glimmer in his eyes. Who the man was and what he wanted Smithy had no idea; but from the words he had

spoken on the tow-path it was clear that he knew Dallas, and had had some connection in former days with the "charity" junior. From what he had said the Bounder had gathered that that connection had been a friendly one. If that was the case, it was a little injudicious for the man to show up at the school; he did not look the sort of acquaintance that a Greyfriars man would choose to show off in open quad. Obviously he was a man in hard luck.

The Bounder concluded that he must have known Dallas in the latter's "charity" days, and he had no doubt whatever that Dallas would be extremely unwilling to let an acquaintance of those days visit the school. For that reason the Bounder bore down on the stranger, with the intention of bringing him in if he could.

Since the warning he had received from Mr. Quelch, the Bounder had been very circumspect in his dealings with Paul Dallas. He had carefully avoided his rival, giving Paul no excuse for a

(Continued on page 17.)

BY FARE MEANS OR FOWL!

A
THRILLING,
KILLING,
ROLICKING,
FROLICKING
TAIL OF THE
SCHOOL SPORTS



By
Dicky
NUGENT.

ENTRANTS for the hundred yards race—come fourth!" Doctor Birchmell, the headmaster of St. Sam's, was looking worried and flurried as he hurried and scurried two and fro.

The Head had a megafone in his mouth, while in one hand he clutched a starting-pistle, in the other hand a stop-watch, and in the other hand the inevitable birch-rod.

The playing-fields of St. Sam's, where the battles of England were won—and not at Eton, as previously stated—presented a very animated spectacle. For the Junior Sports were about to commence, and the St. Sam's fellows had rolled up in their duzzens to witness the tight-annick tussle for the Silver Cup, which the Guvvners of the School were awarding to the junior who won the greatest number of events.

Besides the fellows, the masters were also mustard together on that suspicious occasion. They were looking very pompous and important—particularly Mr. Lickham and Mr. Justiss, who were to help the Head in his capacity of judge, offshal starter, clerk of the course, umpire, referee, and general sooper-viser.

Molly Birchmell, the Head's charming daughter, was also prezzant, and she had a sweet smile for Frank Fearless of the Fourth, who was Molly's hero, and whom she confidently eggpected to beat all comers and prance off with the magnificent eighteen-carrot Silver Cup.

The Head gave another loud beller through his megafone, and the entrants for the hundred yards lined

up. There were a duzen of them, including Yawnington, the slacker of the Fourth, whom the Head had personally coached and trained for the sports.

The Head had been at grate panes to bring his pupil to the highest pitch of perfection. In fact, he had trained Yawnington so thurringly that the poor beggar was quite limp and had hardly a rick left in him. It was as much as Yawney could do to yawn his way to the starting-place.

Doctor Birchmell was tremendously keen on Yawnington winning the sports, because, in that happy event, the Head was to reseve a five-pound note from Yawney's great-grandfather, Sir Frederick Funguss, the Chairman of the Board of Guvvners.

The Head's enthusiasm was red-hot. Yawnington's was stone cold. The Head was determined that, by fare means or fowl, his prottigy should win the Silver Cup. Yawnington was equally determined that he would not eggsert himself more than he could help.

"Now," said the Head, as the runners stood crouching like greyhounds in the slips—or, rather, in their shorts—"before I fire the fateful pistle, I wish to say a few words. I consider it only right and proper that Yawnington, who has never taken part in any previous sports, and who is very young and inexperienced should be given a modest start."

At this there was a merner of protest from Yawney's schoolfellows, but the Head ignored it.

"Come, my boy!" he said briskly.

And, taking Yawnington's arm, he promptly marched him half-way down the course.

"Well, of all the nerve!" gasped Jack Jolly, the leader of the Fourth. "The Head's giving that duffer fifty yards' start!"

"Why, we sha'n't get a look-in!" snorted Frank Fearless. "Yawnington need only go at a jog-trot, and the race is his!"

"Shame!" ekkoed the rest of the runners.

Even as they spoke, the Head's pistle spoke, and they were off!

Yawnington started to amble along at a snail's pace; but the Head gave him a stinging flick with his birch-rod, and Yawney, with a whoop of angwish, went off at a gallop. Jack Jolly & Co. fairly pelted over the turf in a fast and furious effort to overtake the slacker of the Fourth; but, of course, their chance was hopeless. Yawnington romped home an easy winner, and the Head fairly beamed at him.

"Bravvo! Congraiters!" cried the Head. "This is what comes of my eggcellent coaching—plus a joodishua application of my birch-rod! Keep this up, my dear boy, and then the Cup will be yours—and the fiver will be mine!" added the Head, sotto vocey.

Mr. Lickham and Mr. Justiss had watched the opening race in grate stupefaction. They now came forward.

"Doctor Birchmell," cried the master of the Fourth, "we must respectfully protest at the eggstraordinary way in which the hundred yards race was conducted! You permitted Yawnington to have at least fifty yards' start!"

"You dry up, Lickham!" said the Head feercely. "I know what I'm doing of!"

"But—but Yawnington had a most unfair advantage—" began Mr. Justiss.

"You dry up, too, Justiss!" snapped the Head. "Who's in charge of these here sports—you or me?"

"You are, unforchunitty!" said Mr. Justiss. "But we are on the committy of judges, and we are not going to stand idly by and permit this averitism, this string-pulling and corrupt prack-tiss, this jiggery-pokery!"

The Head frowned.

"Those are strong words, Justiss! I warn you to be very careful, sir! If you say that I am a frawd and a cheat and an old wangler, I shall soo you for definition of carracter!"

Mr. Justiss snorted and turned away just as the juniors were lining up for the next event—the high jump.

The Head was hoping that this event would also fall to Yawnington. The artful old scamp intended, by discreetly lowering the bar just as Yawney was about to jump, to make things easy for the slacker. But Mr. Lickham stationed himself at one of the posts, and Mr. Justiss at the other; so the Head's little scheme came unstuck. Even the best-laid schemes of mice and men—and cunning old scamps of headmasters—sometimes go astray.

Yawnington failed hopelessly at the first attempt. And it was Frank Fearless who won the high jump, with a most wonderful leap of twelve feet. That was a school record—and very nearly a world record—and Frank Fearless flushed with plezzure when Miss Molly rushed up to him and showered upon him her breathless congratulations.

"A wonderful feat, my hero!" purred Miss Molly softly. "But father duzzent seem very pleased about it. Look! He's nashing his teeth and tearing his head where his hair used to be!"

The Head was certainly in a fearful



It was Frank Fearless who won the high jump and his excess put Dr. Birchmell into a fearful wax.

wax, and he gave it to Yawnington good and proper.

"You blundering booby!" he hissed. "After all my coaching and coaxing, all my tuition, both valuable and voluble, you go and make a garstly wess of things!"

Yawnington hung his head.

"I did my best, sir!" he muttered. "Your best!" shrieked the Head. "If a puny leap of two inches reprezzents your best, do not dare to show me your worst! You had better pull up your sox, and win the long jump, or I warn you that it will mean a birching, and perhaps the 'long jump' from St. Sam's!"

"Oh crumbs!" Poor old Yawnington did his best to win the long jump; but here, again, the Head had no chance to do any wangling, and Yawney was beaten on his merits by Jack Jolly. When the contest was over, the viles of the Head's wrath fairly overflowed. He chased the unhappy Yawney, brandishing his birch-rod, and the slacker dodged behind Mr. Lickham and clung to his gown for safety.

The Head was baffled. He could not very well lash out at Yawnington without risk of striking Mr. Lickham, and that gentleman would possibly have resented being birched in publick. So Doctor Birchemall was obliged to stay his hand. He pulled a program out of his pocket and insulted it.

"The next item," he announced, "is the sack race! I eggspcet better things of you this time, Yawnington! Come here a moment, my boy! I want to wisper something!"

Yawney peered out from behind Mr. Lickham's back and eyed the Head's birch-rod apprehensively.

"No tretchery!" the Head assured him. "Come here, and lend me your ears—not for tweaking purpusses!"

Having drawn Yawnington aside, the Head spoke to him in an almost inedible wisper.

"Look here, my boy, you ought to win the sack race on your head!"

"On my head, sir!" gasped Yawney. "Begad, I've never learnt how to hop along on my napper!"

The Head gave an impatient snort.

"I was speaking meta-figgeratively," he wispered horsely. "Let me eggspplain. I have a sack here, ceasealed in my clothing, and in the bottom of this sack I have made a cupple of hoies, through which your feet will pass. Savvy?"

"My hat!" gasped Yawnington.

"You will thus be able to nip along much faster than your rivals!" muttered the Head. "Your peddle eggstremities will be free, whereas theirs will be impeded by their sacks! You ought to win in a canter!"

Yawnington looked quite horryfied. "But—but that's cheating, sir—ras-cally, low-down cheating!"

"Hush!" The Head darted a nervus glance over his sholder. "It is not cheating at all; it is masterly subterfuge! Dash it all, you want to win this Cup, and I want to win your grate-grandfather's fiver! All's fair in love and war—and sack races! Here, take this sack! They are beginning to line up!"

With a swift, stelthy, slight-of-hand movement, the Head transferred the sack to Yawnington, who took it like a fellow in a dream. He lined up with his schoolfellows, and the Head fired the pistol with unseemly haste.

They were off! And while Jack Jolly and the others tumbled and stumbled, and staggered and swayed in

their sacks, Yawnington trotted along at a good pace, heading straight for the tape.

"Come on!" yelled the Head, dancing like a cat on hot brix in his egg-sitement. "Good old Yawnington! You've got 'em licked to a frazzle!"

Yawnington won with many yards to spare. No sooner did he reach the tape than the Head hastily heaved him out of his sack. He then rolled up the latter and thrust it into his clothing.

"Oh, well run, my hoy!" eggscclaimed the Head joyfully. "That's two events to us!"

Mr. Lickham came hurrying to the spot.

"Did you notiss, sir," he panted,

"that Yawnington's feet were free?"

"No, I never!" snapped the Head.



The Head, on hands and kneez, crawled over the turf like a worm and mezzured Jolly's throw. "Sixty-six inches!" he announced, insulting his tape mezzure.

"I never notissed nothing! I haven't a narsty, suspishus mind like you, Lickham!"

"But the young boy's feet were protruding through the sack, sir!" protested Mr. Lickham. "It was manifestly unfair!"

"Tut, tut!" said the Head. "To the fair all things are fair. As I say, Lickham, you have a narsty, suspishus mind."

"I think the race should be run over again," said the master of the Fourth.

The Head did not seem to hear that suggestion. He put his meggrafone to his lips and gave such a thunderous roar

that Mr. Lickman was knocked backwards.

"Entrants for the mile race will now line up!"

Yawnington turned appealingly to the Head.

"I say, sir! I'm just about played out. All this racing and chasing is fearfully eggshhausting to a chap with a delliket constitution. Won't you let me give the mile a miss?"

"Rats!" growled the Head. "We've a long way to go yet before the Cup is yours, and the fiver mine; and we can't afford to miss any events. You will take part in the mile, and I propose to pace you on my bisickle."

So saying, the Head dispatched a fag to fetch his bike; and Yawnington, with a deep and dismal groan, lined up for the mile.

II.

CRACK! The Head shut his eyes and fired the pistle. And, like arrows from a bow, like stones from a catterpult, like bullets from a mashcen-gun, the runners shot off the mark.

The Head tossed the pistle to Burleigh of the Sixth, who caught it with his nose; then he lept astride his bisickle, and, grasping the handle-bars with his left hand and brandishing the birch with his right, he started off in the wake of the runners.

Poor old Yawnington dragged himself wearily over the turf, and he would soon have fallen hopelessly behind had not the Head goaded him on.

"No slacking!" roared Doctor Birchemall. "Put your best foot forward, my pippin. If you need a little stimulus to speed you on your way, how's this?"

Swish! Swish! Swish! The crool birch-rod lashed across Yawney's scantily-clad sholders, and he darted forward with a wild yell.

"Yavoooooo!"

The Head, mounted on his ancient boneshaker, followed in hot pursoot. Strickly speaking, he had no right to be on the course at all, but the Head was in the habit of making and breaking laws to suit his own convenience.

Urged on by the Head's birch, Yawnington made lightning progress.

Three times round the playing-field represented the mile. Yawney took the lead at the end of the first lap, and he covered the second serkitt of the field at a trooly wonderful pace. Behind

(Continued on next page.)



"Come on!" yelled the Head, dancing like a cat on hot brix in his eggseitement. "You've got 'em licked to a frazzle, Yawnington!" And Yawnington came on, the special sack, the Head had given him making him a certain winner against the other hapless sack racers.

BY FARE MEANS OR FOWL!

(Continued from previous page.)

him, like a pursuing Nemmyssis, came the Head punning and snorting from his eggstrations.

When it came to the last lap, however, Yawnington was really "done." His neeze hooked together, his tung lolled from his moun, the inspiration stood out in grate beads on his forid. Not even the Head's birch-rod could stave off the threatened collapse, and the Head realised it.

Suddenly, just as Yawnington was about to throw up the sponge and drop in his tracks, the Head peadling furiously, ran right into the junior's back.

Crash!
"Yoooop!" yelled Yawnington, pitching headlong.

The Head was thrown off his masheen by the impact of the collision; but he escaped with a few broozes and staggered to his feet.

Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless, running neck and neck, came pounding over the turf. The Head held up his hand to them, like a plectrum on point duty.

"Stop!" he cried. "The race is over!"

Grately wondering, the two juniors came to a standstill. They blinked at the Head in blank dismay.

"You see, my boys," eggspained the Head, "Yawnington was badly fowled during the last lap. He was run down by my bisickle. But for that mishap he would certainly have won. I therefore have no alternative but to award the race to Yawnington."

Jack Jolly said nothing. Neither did Frank Fearless. The Head's eggstrordinary statements left them speechless.

Mr. Lickham and Mr. Justiss came hurrying to the spot.

"What has happened, sir?" gasped the former. "Why has the race been suspended?"

"It's all over," said the Head calmly. "As I was eggspaining to these boys, Yawnington was the victim of a dasterly fowl during the last lap. But for that he would indubitably have won. In the serkumstances, therefore, I have awarded him the race."

"But—but you fowled him yourself, sir!" stuttered Mr. Justiss.

The Head grinned.

"Accidents will happen, even in the best-reggulated mile races," he remarked. "We will not pursoo this unforchunit matter any further. What's the next item on the program?"

"Throwing the cricket ball, sir," said Mr. Lickham.

"Aha! That brings back vivid reminders of my collidge days," said the Head. "When I was at Oxbridge I established a world's record for throwing the merry cricket ball. I hurled the little beggar with all the strength of my arm, and it travelled five miles."

"Impossible!" said Mr. Justiss.

"You are drawing the long bow, sir!" "Not at all," said the Head. "You see, this is how it happened. I threw the ball clear of the sports ground, and it crashed through the winder of a railway-carriage. The train then carried the ball nearly five miles to the terminus."

"Oh!"

For some reason or other—personal jollussy, perhaps—the authorities will

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not allow my wonderful throw to stand as a world's record. Nevertheless, it is a world's record, and I am rightly proud of it!"

And the Head swelled vizzibly as he put his meggafote to his mouth, and summoned the competitors for the next event.

Jack Jolly & Co. lined up, looking very glum. They were not at all happy at the way the sports were going. Owing to the Head's wife and guile, they were being cheated out of the owners that were due to them, and most of the events were going to Yawnington. It was a wicked shame.

The Head fumbled in his pocket and produced a brand-new cricket ball. This he tossed to Jack Jolly.

"Now, my boy," he said, "see if you can hurl this ball to the outskirts of the giddy horizon!"

Jack Jolly had a bewtiful throw. In cricket matches he was accustomed to fielding at mid-off-long-on-silly-sho-t-leg—a position which demanded hard and accurate throwing. The leader of the Fourth peeled off his jacket and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and clutched the round red ball firmly in his palm. Then he gave a swing and a jerk, and the ball flashed through space like a rockitt. It landed in the long grass at the bottom of the playing-field.

"Not so dusty!" mermered the Head, taking a tape-mezzure from his pocket and becoming hopelessly entangled in it, until he looked like Hoodini. At last he managed to sort himself out, and, grovelling on hands and neeze, he started to mezzure the distance of Jack Jolly's throw.

The juniors looked on impatiently as the Head wriggled, worm-like, over the turf. Finally, he staggered to his feet.

"Sixty-six inches!" he announced.

"W-w-what?" yelled Jack Jolly.

"I mean, feet!" said the Head, correcting himself.

"Eh?"

"That is to say, yards," said the Head, correcting himself again.

"Sixty-six yards is not a bad throw for a puny infant; but I fancy that my youthful proitigg, Yawnington, will nuke your effort look sick, Jolly!"

The contest continued. One by one the juniors threw the cricket ball, and several of them got very near to Jack Jolly, without, however, beating him.

The last fellow to compete was Yawnington. The Head tossed him the ball with an encourridging grin.

"Go it, my boy!" he said. "Put your beef into it!"

All eyes were on Yawnington as he prepared to make his throw. Yawney gripped the ball, and swung his arm back; and then the attention of all the onlookers was suddenly diverted by a yell of alarm from the Head.

"Look! Look! The school's on fire!"

Pannick and consternation broke out as everybody turned and stared at the building.

"Where—where is the fire, sir?" panted Mr. Lickham breathlessly.

"My mistake!" said the Head calmly. "It was merely the setting sun. I thought, for the moment, that the tower was alight. Have you thrown the ball, Yawnington?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I will proseed to mezzure the distance."

So saying, the Head went striding over the turf, dragging his tape-mezzure after him. On and on he went, as if he was never going to stop.

Flags had been stuck in the ground to mark the spots where the ball had previously pitched. The Head strode past all these flags as if they had never

eggsided. The juniors watched him in wide-eyed wonder.

"My hat!" gasped Frank Fearless. "Yawney must have made a wonderful throw. He seems to have beaten the lot of us!"

The Head had now reached the farthest limits of the ground, and he disappeared into the deep ditch which marked the boundary. For a moment he was hidden from view. Then he emerged, covered with ooze and slime, triumphantly clutching a cricket ball!

"Two hundred and fifty yards!" he announced, through his meggafone. "Yawnington has beaten you all to a frazzle!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Lickham, his brow dark with suspicion, waylaid the Head as the latter was returning.

"Eggscuse me, sir," he said. "May I just eggexamine the ball which you produced from the ditch?"

"Certainly!" said the Head, with a leer. "Still harboring narsty suspicions, Lickham—what?"

Mr. Lickham looked at the ball. It was old, and unstitched, and shedding its stuffing.

"Why, this is not the ball that Yawnington threw!" cried the Form master. "It was a brand-new one!"

"You forget, my dear Lickham, that it has been immersed in a muddy ditch, and has, therefore, lost its pristeen splendor," said the Head. "Why do you eye me so narrowly? Do you suppose that I had this ball in my pocket all the time, and dropped it in the ditch, and then pretended that Yawnington threw it there?"

"That is eggactly what I do suppose, sir," said Mr. Lickham grimly. "There has been enuff, and more than enuff, of this wangling. It must cease fourth-with, or Mr. Justiss and myself will retire from the judging committy and report to the Governers the way in which these sports have been conducted."

"Nunno!" implored the Head, turning dehtly pail. "Don't do anything so drastick, my dear Lickham, I do beseech you! I promis you there shall be no more wangling."

And the Head kept his word—for the remainder of the afternoon, at any rate.

There were several more events, in which Yawnington, without the Head aiding and abetting him, fared badly.

Meanwhile, Frank Fearless put up some splendid performances, and at the end of the day he was level with Yawnington on points, each junior having won six events.

One more contest remained, to decide who was to be the proud winner of the Silver Cup. A boxing match was arranged between Yawnington and Frank Fearless. It was to take place next day, in the Jimmy-nasium.

In the ordinary way, Frank Fearless could have made mincement of Yawnington, in the boxing-ring. But the Head had decided to referee the fourth-coming contest, so Yawnington's chances of carrying off the Cup were very rosy.

It was to be the Head's last throw, so to speak, and the artful old scamp was determined that, by hook or by crook, the spoils should go to Yawnington of the Fourth. In that happy event a handsome Silver Cup would repose on the mantelpiece in Yawney's study, and a crisp and rustling fiver would repose in the wallet of Doctor Birchemall.

Weather the Head would succoed in his base designs remains to be seen.

THE END.

(What ever you do, chums, don't miss: "The Fight For the Cup!" next week's rollicking fine yarn of St. Sam's.)



(Continued from page 13.)

dispute with him. He could not and would not believe that Paul sought no dispute, now that a quarrel would have had such serious results for Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder felt as if his teeth had been drawn; he was on the defensive now, and only too glad to be allowed to let his enemy alone. But that irksome position added to his anger and bitterness, and fed the fire of his hatred. In the seafaring man's visit to the school he saw his chance of giving his enemy trouble without risk to himself, or fancied that he did. And he did not lose the opportunity.

But before Vernon-Smith could reach the hesitating sailorman Gosling came out of his lodge with a frown on his brow and barred the stranger's path. The Greyfriars porter did not approve of persons in hard luck, at least within the precincts of Greyfriars.

"What do you want 'ere, my man?" he asked.

The seafaring man looked at him, and, to Gosling's surprise, recognition came into his bronzed face.

"You still here!" he exclaimed.

Gosling stared at him.

"You seen me afore?" he asked.

The man's grave face broke into a smile.

"Yes, I've seen you before, Gosling."

"Well, you know my name," grunted the Greyfriars porter. "More'n I know yours, my man."

"You're wearing well, Gosling," said the seafaring man.

"Thank you for nothing!" said Gosling surlily. "You ain't told me yet what you want here. You've come to the wrong entrance, my man."

"I have come to see a young gentleman who belongs to this school," said the seafaring man civilly.

Grunt from Gosling.

"The young gentlemen ain't allowed visits from longshoremen along from Pegg," he answered. "You 'ook it!"

Vernon-Smith arrived on the spot just then.

"Let the man alone, Gosling!" he said. "Let him come in if he likes!"

"You mind your own business, Master Vernon-Smith, and I'll mind mine!" said Gosling. "Wot I says in this 'ere—vagrants don't come in at this 'ere gate while I'm lookin' arter it!"

"I have a message for a Greyfriars boy," said the seafaring man mildly.

"Name?" grunted Gosling.

"Dallas."

"There's a boy named Dallas 'ere," admitted Gosling, "but you can't see 'im or anybody else without leave! You can give me the message if you like."

The seafaring man shook his head.

"Well, you'll have to get leave!" said Gosling. "Longshoremen ain't allowed to butt in 'ere and speak to the young gentlemen!"

"You haven't changed much in twenty years, Gosling!" said the seafaring man. "You always had the manners of a bear!"

"Look 'ere—" roared Gosling.

"Come in, my man!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll take you to Mr. Quelch, if you like, Dallas' Form master."

"That's very kind of you!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" bawled Gosling. "Look 'ere, my man, if you've really got a message, you can sit in my lodge while I send word to Mr. Quelch."

"Thank you! I'll go on to the House!" said the seafaring man, unmoved.

"You won't!"

"I think so!"

What happened next was a surprise to William Gosling. He hardly knew how it happened, but he found himself sitting on the hard, unsympathetic ground, gasping for breath. The seafaring man was walking on towards the House as Gosling sat and spluttered.

The Bounder grinned, and followed the visitor.

The little altercation had drawn a good many fellows towards the spot, and many eyes were on the bronzed-faced man as he strode towards the School House.

"I say, you fellows, he's upended Gosling!" chortled Billy Bunter. "Who is it, Smithy?"

"A friend of Dallas'," answered the Bounder.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

"A relation, I think," added Vernon-Smith; "probably an uncle."

"Great pip!"

"Some uncle!" chuckled Temple of the Fourth.

The bronzed man, unheeding, went on to the House, and entered by the big open doorway. The Bounder hurried in after him. He intended to guide the man to Mr. Quelch's study, but he found that the man needed no guide. The sailorman walked on as if he knew his way quite well about Greyfriars.

"You've been here before?" said the Bounder, puzzled, as he arrived at Mr. Quelch's door with the seafaring man.

"Yes; long before your time, lad."

"You're not an old Greyfriars man by any chance?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Why not?" answered the seafaring man composedly. "Stranger things than that have happened."

"Oh, gad!" said Smithy.

"This is still Mr. Quelch's study?"

"Yes."

"Thank you!"

The seafaring man knocked at the door.

"Come in!" called out Mr. Quelch.

The newcomer entered the study, and, rather to the Bounder's disappointment, closed the door after him. Vernon-Smith walked away, wondering.

The master of the Remove rose to his feet as the seafaring man came into his study, regarding his unexpected visitor in great surprise.

"What—" he began.

"Excuse me, sir!" said the sailorman civilly. "You are Mr. Quelch, the master of the Lower Fourth Form here?"

"Certainly!"

"I have a message for a boy in your Form, and should like your permission to deliver it," said the visitor.

Mr. Quelch eyed him.

"The boy's name?"

"Paul Dallas."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"This is very unusual," he said. "I must ask you what is the nature of the message."

"I have news of the boy's father to tell him."

The Remove master started.

"It is understood that Dallas' father was lost in the wilds of South America years ago, and he is supposed to be dead," he said.

"I was with Mr. Dallas in South America, sir, and I thought that his son would like to hear what had happened to him there," said the seafaring man. "I have only lately reached England, or I should have come to see the boy before."

"Certainly you may see him!" said the Remove master, after a keen inspection of the grave bronzed face—an inspection which seemed to satisfy Mr. Quelch. "I will take you to the visitors'-room and send for Dallas."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Not at all."

And Mr. Quelch accompanied the bronzed man to the visitors'-room—under the stare of a good many curious eyes—and Trotter, the House page, was dispatched to call Dallas of the Remove.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were refreshing themselves with ginger-pop in the school shop in morning break, and talking cricket, when Billy Bunter burst in on them full of news. Paul Dallas was with the Famous Five. The chums of the Remove so far were unaware of the arrival of the visitor for Dallas.

"I say, you fellows, is Dallas here?" gasped Bunter.

"Adsum!" said Paul, with a smile.

"He, he, he!"

"Well, what is the cackle about, fathead?"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"There's a visitor for you, Dallas! He, he, he!"

"Rot!"

"But there is!" chortled Bunter.

"Smithy thinks it's an uncle! He, he, he! A longshoreman from Pegg! He, he, he!"

Dallas stared at him.

"I have no uncles," he said; "no near relations at all. What do you mean, you fat duffer?"

"I suppose it's somebody who knew you when you were in the workhouse, then," said Bunter.

"What!"

"I mean, in the charity school! Anyhow, he's a tarry longshoreman, and he's asking after you!" chuckled Bunter. "Smithy's taken him in to see Quelch. He, he, he!"

The chums of the Remove stared at Bunter.

"I suppose this is one of Bunter's little jokes," said Bob Cherry. "Shove an ice-cream down his neck, Dallas!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Look here, you fat fool," exclaimed Dallas angrily, "what do you mean? Has anyone asked for me?"

"Don't I keep on telling you?" chortled Bunter. "A sailorman—a rough longshoreman, like those who hang about the Anchor at Pegg. Just the sort of chap you want to show off in the quad! He, he, he!"

The Owl of the Remove dodged back as Paul made a movement towards him.

"Don't get ratty!" he said, waving a fat hand at Dallas. "I've come to tell you, that's all. Of course, I always knew that you were no class—a charity

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kid, and all that. But if you'll take a tip from me, you'll keep you, forecastle friends away from Greyfriars! He, he, he!"

"If I had a forecastle friend, you fat fool, I should not be ashamed to let all Greyfriars know it and see him!" said Paul contemptuously. "But I am acquainted with any seamen that I know of!"

"Well, this ancient mariner is acquainted with you, anyhow!" chuckled Bunter. "Gosling wasn't going to let him in, and he upended Gosling—sat him down as if he was a baby."

"Serve him right if he was cheeky!" said Bob Cherry. "Gosling is a jolly old snob!"

"The snobfulness of the esteemed Gosling is terrific," remarked Furree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the no-classfulness of the execrable Bunter is equally great."

"Oh, really, Inky—" Trotter, the page, put his chubby head into the doorway of the tuckshop.

"Master Dallas 'ere?" he asked.

"Here I am," said Dallas quietly.

"There's a—a—a gent to see you, sir," said Trotter.

"A tarry longshoreman!" grinned Bunter.

"Mr. Quelch says you're to go to the visitors-room and see him, sir," said Trotter.

"Very well," answered Dallas.

Trotter departed, leaving Paul looking very much puzzled. His chums were regarding him very curiously, and Paul flushed as he met their gaze.

"I haven't the least idea who the man is," he said. "I can't imagine why a sailorman should call to see me."

"Sure he isn't an uncle?" chuckled Bunter.

"Yes, you fat idiot!"

Paul Dallas left the tuckshop and crossed to the House. Billy Bunter grinned after him.

"Rather a show-up for that charity cad, what?" he chortled.

"What do you mean, you fat idiot?" asked the captain of the Remove. "If Dallas has a relation who follows the sea, is that anything to be ashamed of, you puffing duffer?"

"You should see his clothes!" chuckled the Owl of the Remove.

"The clothes don't make the man!" said Bob Cherry oracularly. "A man's a man for all that."

"Oh, you'd think so, of course," said the Owl of the Remove scornfully. "That's just what you'd think, Bob Cherry. If he's Dallas' uncle, as Smithy thinks, it's a show-up for Dallas. He's no gentleman."

"Then you ought to have a fellow-feeling for him," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"If you're going to judge a man by his clothes, what about you, fatty?" asked Bob Cherry. "How long is it since you brushed your waistcoat?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And your trousers would make any self-respecting scarecrow ashamed to own you as a relation."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop. Evidently his aristocratic prejudices were not going to receive any sympathy from Harry Wharton & Co.

"I wonder who the Johnny can be," remarked Bob. "Dallas doesn't seem to know. Time we got along."

The Famous Five left the tuckshop and went to the House. It was nearly time for third lesson now, and the Remove fellows were gathering in the Form-room passage. Dallas was not among them; he was in the visitors-room with his unexpected visitor. Most of the Removites were discussing that visitor, whose arrival had made rather a sensation in the Form.

"A relation of the fellow, of course," Vernon-Smith was saying, as the Co. arrived in the Form-room passage.

"He's called to touch Dallas for a loan to blow at the Anchor in Pegg."

"Jack ashore, you know!" sniggered Skinner. "We've never seen any of Dallas' people; it's rather interesting to see a specimen at last. Was he squiffy, Smithy?"

"Not exactly squiffy. Just a longshoreman—just the kind of relation one would expect Dallas to have," drawled the Bounder. "I suppose he's a foremast hand on some coasting vessel that has put in at Pegg."

"Ye gods!" said Snoop.

"And if he is a foremast hand, Smithy, what about it?" growled Johnny Bull. "Perhaps he never had a chance to be a financier in the City, and stack his pockets with other people's money."

The Bounder sneered.

"Yes, cheese it, Smithy," said Harry Wharton. "You can leave snobbery of that sort to Bunter. The man must be respectable, at least, or Mr. Quelch wouldn't let him see a Greyfriars chap here."

"I saw him," said Russell. "He looked a decent sailorman. Certainly he didn't look wealthy—which I suppose must seem an awful thing to Smithy. Smithy lives and breathes in quids."

"Oh, shut up!" snapped the Bounder, and he went angrily into the Form-room. As a matter of fact, snobbishness was not one of Herbert Vernon-Smith's failings; but, as usual, in his desire to score over his enemy, he was making himself out a worse fellow than he really was.

Mr. Quelch came along the passage, and the discussion ceased, and the Remove went to their places.

But one place remained vacant.

Paul Dallas did not come.

As Mr. Quelch made no remark on his absence, it was evident that Paul had leave from third lesson. The lesson began and ended without Paul putting in an appearance in the Remove Form-

room, and all the fellows, his friends as well as his enemies, could not help wondering who was the mysterious visitor, and why Paul was occupied with him so long.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Paul's Father!

PAUL DALLAS entered the visitors-room in a very surprised frame of mind. He was still more surprised when the stalwart seafaring man rose from a seat near the window and faced him, with his back to the light. So far as he knew, there was no reason why a seafaring man should call upon him at the school—he had never had any connection with the sea or seafarers.

"Master Dallas?" said the sailorman quietly. His keen eyes were on the junior's face searchingly.

"Yes," said Paul. "What did you want to see me for?"

"I have some news to give you."

"Go ahead, then," said the Greyfriars junior. "I can't imagine what it is."

"Perhaps you are not anxious to receive news of a relation?" said the seafaring man, with the same intent gaze on the junior's handsome, frank face.

Paul smiled.

"I dare say I should be, if I had any near relations," he answered. "But I haven't. And if I have any distant relations, I suppose they have not taken the trouble to send me any message."

"The news I have is of a near relation."

Paul started.

"I had only one near relation that I remember," he said, with a tremble in his voice. "That was my father. He is dead."

"I was with your father when he lived."

"Oh! You—you can give me news of him?" exclaimed Paul eagerly. "You were a friend of his? He left for South America years ago. I was a little kid then. I know that he sent money for some time to provide for me, but that stopped suddenly—I suppose that was when he died."

"And after that?" said the seafaring man.

"After that, I was placed in a charity school," said Paul. "I should be there still, if Mr. Vernon-Smith had not taken me away and sent me to Greyfriars. But tell me about my father. It was years ago that his last message reached England. What happened to him then?"

"He went up-country in Brazil to hunt for diamonds," said the seafaring man. "He fell into the hands of a savage tribe of Indians, and was made a prisoner."

"Oh!" breathed Paul.

"For two years he was a prisoner in their hands," went on the seafaring man.

"And he died?"

"No."

Paul's heart gave a throb.

"You mean—you mean—oh, is it possible that you mean that my father is living?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Good heavens!" breathed Paul.

A faintness came over the Greyfriars junior, and he sank into a chair. For several minutes there was deep silence in the room. Paul was struggling with a flood of emotions. The bronzed man stood motionless as a statue, watching

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The school porter hardly knew how it happened ; but he found himself sitting on the hard, unsympathetic ground, gasping for breath. The seafaring man was walking on towards the House as Gosling sat and spluttered. Vernon-Smith grinned and followed the visitor. (See Chapter 9.)

him with intent eyes. There were tears on the junior's cheeks. But his face, when he raised it at last, was very bright.

"My father's alive," he said in a shaking voice. "I shall see him again, then. I—I never let myself believe that he really was dead—I always kept on hoping that something might have happened to account for his silence—something less terrible than that. I knew that he would not have abandoned me to want if he could have helped it—but—but I always hoped that some day there might be news of him. Where is he? Oh, I want to see him!"

"You want to see him?"

Paul stared at the man.

"That's a strange question to ask," he said. "Of course I want to see my father. Where is he? Has he returned to England?"

"He has returned."

"Then I shall see him—soon?"

"You will see him if you desire," said the seafaring man. "I shall—shall give him any message you care to send."

"I don't understand you. I want to see him at the earliest possible moment," said Paul. "He may think I have forgotten him; he might think that I blame him for leaving me without a word. I know that he could not help it; I should have known that without your message. Where is he now?"

The seafaring man did not answer for a moment. The bitter words he had

heard from Vernon-Smith were still in his mind.

"You had better reflect first, Master Dallas," he said at length. "Your father staked his all on his last venture, and lost. He escaped from the savages in the wilds of Brazil, and made his way to the coast, and had to work his passage home to England in the fore-castle of a tramp steamer. When he landed he had nothing more than a common sailor's pay in his pockets."

"What does that matter to me?"

"It may matter a great deal. Your father's first thought was for you, and he began to seek you out at once. He found the charity school where you had been placed, and there he learned that you had been taken away by Mr. Vernon-Smith, the millionaire, and adopted by him, and sent to an expensive public school."

"Then he knew where to find me!" exclaimed Paul. "Why did he not come at once? Why should he send you with a message, when he might have come himself? I don't understand!"

"Think, my boy. You have been adopted by a millionaire. Your future is provided for; you will be rich, and will have a place in the world when you leave school. What can your father do for you? If he claims you, you must leave your adopted father."

Paul was silent.

"Your father cannot pay your fees here. If you go back to him you must

leave Greyfriars. Public school and University are within your reach now; your father can offer you nothing but a share in his poverty."

"He is my father," said Paul.

"He is poor. He has little but the clothes he stands in."

"He is my father."

"You will leave a wealthy home, a great school, wealthy friends, and great prospects."

"He is my father."

"Think again," said the seafaring man in a low voice. "Your father is willing to leave you in your adopted home, willing to leave you all the advantages of Mr. Vernon-Smith's wealth and protection. He can only offer you a share in his broken fortunes—a fight with the world. As Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son, you will have all that your heart can desire; but if you return to your own father, you cannot accept charity even from his friend. You must give up everything that makes life pleasant to you. Think again."

Paul Dallas laughed.

"I don't need to think twice, or even once," he said. "Mr. Vernon-Smith has been very kind to me, but he would not raise any objection to my leaving him. He has done his duty to his old friend's son, but it is not a matter of personal attachment. But even if it gave him pain for me to leave him, I should have to go to my own father if he wants me."

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"He does want you," said Paul. "That settles it, then," said Paul. "Where is my father? I understand now why he did not come to me at once; but I wish he had trusted me more. Where is he?"

The bronzed face of the seafaring man worked strangely. Paul made a step nearer to him.

In silence the seafaring man turned his face to the light of the sunny window. Paul scanned the bronzed features, his heart beating almost to suffocation. Then he sprang forward. "Father! It's you! I know you now!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Paul Dallas' Resolve!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" "There's Dallas!" Paul Dallas was on the path under the elms in the Greyfriars quad when the Remove came out after class. A crowd of fellows bore down on him as he was sighted. The visitor, apparently, was gone. At all events, nothing was to be seen of the seafaring man.

Paul's handsome face was a little flushed, and his eyelashes were still wet. There had been tears in his eyes—tears of relief and happiness. Always, faintly at the bottom of his heart, he had nourished a hope that perhaps his father had not perished in the South American wilderness—a hope so faint that it scarcely could be called a hope, but which, nevertheless, never quite left him. And that lingering hope had been justified. Fate had been kind to him.

His father lived! His father had come back! It was like a dream coming true.

He was buried in thought as he paced under the green elms. His father's return made a great change to him—a very great change. It was a change that required thinking over.

His worldly prospects were altered, not for the better, that was certain. That aspect of the matter, however, did not trouble Paul. His heart was full of joy and thankfulness.

He started a little as the Remove fellows came up, and turned a bright face on the Famous Five.

It was easy to see that he had had good news, and Harry Wharton & Co. were glad to see it. So were the other fellows, for that matter, with the exception of Vernon-Smith, who was puzzled and angered by the expression on Paul's face. He had hoped to do his rival an ill-turn by bringing the seafaring man into the school. It did not look as if he had done him an ill-turn.

"So the jolly old sailorman had good news for you—what?" asked Bob Cherry, with a cheery grin.

"Yes," said Paul. "How did you guess?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "It's all over your chivy, old bean! You look as if you'd come into a fortune."

"Oh, I say," ejaculated Billy Bunter—"I say, Dallas, have you come into a fortune?"

Paul laughed.

"Better than that," he answered.

"Oh, my hat! I—I say, you know, I—I was only joking in the tuckshop, you know," said Bunter hurriedly. "I—I think that longshoreman—I mean, that sailorman—was no end of a ripping chap, you know. If he's your rich uncle, old chap, he—he's an uncle to be proud of! Splendid chap, in fact!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"If he's Dallas' rich uncle, he ought to be advised to spend some of his wealth on a new pair of boots," remarked Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner, you cad!" growled Johnny Bull.

"He is not rich," said Paul calmly, "and he is not my uncle. He is my father."

"What?"

"Your pater!" exclaimed Nugent.

"But—but I thought—" stammered Bob Cherry, in amazement.

"So did I," said Paul. "But he was not dead; he was lost in the wilds of South America, and taken by a wild tribe of Indians. He was a prisoner for a long time."

"Great Scott!"

"Quite a romance!" sneered the Bounder.

Paul glanced at him.

But he did not speak to the Bounder. Herbert Vernon-Smith's animosity was little enough to him now, in his hour of great happiness. He could forgive the Bounder—he could have forgiven him a dozen times over. He had no room in his heart for any but kind feelings now.

"Gratters, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "I say, this is ripping news for you! Where is your father now?"

"He has gone," said Paul. "He stayed only to talk to me and to see the Head for a few minutes."

"He had the cheek to see the Head in those clothes!" murmured Skinner.

Paul laughed lightly.

"The Head is not so particular about a man's clothes as you are, Skinner," he said. "Perhaps because the Head is a gentleman."

"One for you, Skinner!" chuckled Bob.

"Why, you cheeky rotter—" began Skinner.

"My father is an old Greyfriars man, as you fellows know," went on Paul. "I dare say it surprises Skinner, but the Head was glad to see him, and did not even notice that he was poorly dressed."

"Did he touch the Head for a loan?" jeered Skinner.

Paul flushed.

But it was not necessary for him to answer Skinner's jeer. Bob Cherry grabbed the end of the Remove, and Skinner's head came against the trunk of an elm with a mighty smite.

Bang!

Skinner gave a fiendish yell.

"Yarrogogh!"

"Have another?" demanded Bob savagely.

"Yooop! Leggo, you ruffian! Yow-ow-ow!"

Bob sent Skinner spinning with a swing of his arm. Johnny Bull's boot caught him as he went, and Skinner tottered. After which Harold Skinner retired from the spot and contributed no more humorous remarks to the conversation.

"I wish your pater had stayed to see us, Dallas," said the captain of the Remove. "We'd have liked him to come to tea in the study. He could have spun us a yarn about South America, too."

"He will come again," said Paul brightly. "He will come for me in a few days."

"For you?" repeated Wharton.

Paul nodded.

"Yes—I shall be leaving."

Vernon-Smith started, and fixed his eyes strangely on the adopted son of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. That was

about the last thing he had expected to hear from the interloper.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked very serious.

"But what the thump are you leaving for?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Your father can't want to take you away from Greyfriars."

"My father is not rich," said Paul. "He is going back to South America. He has an interest in a coffee plantation in Brazil, and I am going with him—to work and help."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"And what about the cricket matches?" he said. "We've been counting on you to knock up centuries against St. Jim's and Rookwood."

"I shall be sorry to leave," said Paul. "You fellows have been awfully decent to me, and I like Greyfriars. It will be a bit of a wrench going. But I want to stick to my father; he comes first."

"Right as rain!" said Nugent.

"The rightfulness is terrific," said Hurrec Jamsot Ram Singh. "But the misfulness of the ludicrous Dallas will be great."

"But are you bound to go?" asked Harry Wharton. "Mr. Vernon-Smith is seeing you through here, isn't he?"

"Not now I know that my father is living. He has been very kind to me; but I have no claim on him, except as the son of his old friend. Now that my father has come back I shall share his luck, good or bad."

"Well, I suppose that's right," said the captain of the Remove, with a nod.

"But I jolly well wish you were staying here. We shall miss you in the cricket—and in everything."

"The misfulness will be—"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry.

"But you'll be giving up an awful lot, Dallas," said Johnny Bull slowly and thoughtfully. "You're under the wing of a millionaire at present. And I suppose your pater won't make millions on a coffee plantation in Brazil, will he?"

"Not likely!" said Paul, laughing. "He will make a living, and so shall I. That's all I want."

"But your adopted dad would see you through if you stayed on at Greyfriars," said Johnny. "He couldn't do less after starting you here."

"I know he would. But I want to go with my father."

"And chuck up all that a giddy millionaire can do for you?" asked Bob.

"I don't want him to do anything for me now that my father has come back. I can be grateful for his kindness without asking any more at his hands."

"Well, that's right, I suppose," said Harry. "But I jolly well wish you weren't going, all the same!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood silent, staring at Dallas, who seemed to have forgotten his presence as he talked to his friends. But the Bounder broke in suddenly and harshly.

"You want the fellows to believe that you're really going, Dallas—that you're giving up your claim on my father—going away to work for your living?"

"Nobody here doubts my word, excepting you, Vernon-Smith," said Paul quietly; "and you will soon have proof of it."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll believe that when I see it!" he sneered.

"Then you will believe it soon."

"Oh, come away, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's get away from Smithy, for goodness' sake! He makes me ill!"

Paul Dallas walked away with his friends. The Bounder, with a flush in his cheeks, stood staring after him. He



"I'm sorry, Dallas," said Vernon-Smith, gripping his adopted brother's hand. "I—I wish we'd been friends while you were here. I've been a rotter to you—a rotten and suspicious brute. I'd be glad to part friends if you are willing!" "More than willing!" said Paul, holding his hand out frankly. The Bounder gripped it—a friendly grip in which the old bitter feud was buried for ever. (See Chapter 13.)

could not understand, he could not believe.

This was the fellow he had called the "interloper"—the fellow he had suspected and maligned and persecuted—who, he had never doubted, had planned and schemed with a sole view to the millionaire's money-bags. This fellow who was giving up everything, without a thought to what he was losing, in order to share his father's fortunes! This fellow who was obviously overjoyed because his father had come back—though he had come back poorer than he went, in the rough clothes of a man who had worked before the mast.

Greyfriars, and all that Greyfriars meant—prospects of a fortune under his adopted father's will—these mattered nothing to Jim Dallas' son now that Jim Dallas had come back alive from the wilderness.

The Bounder stood, with a whirl of conflicting thoughts in his mind, obstinate still in his belief, yet with conviction slowly forcing itself upon him.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Gives In!

PAUL DALLAS was an object of great interest to the Greyfriars fellows during the next few days.

The romantic story of his father's adventures alone would have made him an object of interest. But that was not all. It was known that Dallas was to leave, to go to his father; though it was at his own choice to remain at Greyfriars as the adopted son of Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder of Greyfriars was the recipient of a good many remarks, sarcastic and caustic, from the other fellows in the Remove. He had made no secret of his belief in the "interloper's" mercenary scheming; rather he had shouted it from the housetops. All the Remove had heard it, and grown fed-up with hearing it. Now the fellows asked him what he had to say; and it appeared that the Bounder had

nothing to say. At all events, he said nothing.

Paul Dallas had been happy enough at Greyfriars; but his face now was brighter than his friends had ever seen it before. He was sorry to be leaving the school; sorry to be parting with the many friends he had made there. But even that loss counted for little in comparison with what he had gained. All the more because he had no other near relations, his father's supposed fate had been a heavy blow to him. And now his father had come back—poor, it was true, but alive and well. A father to love and be proud of, though he had come to Greyfriars in the clothes of a deck-hand.

Paul's obvious delight made most of the Remove fellows like him all the more. It perplexed Skinner & Co., and greatly puzzled Billy Bunter. Those worthy youths simply could not understand a fellow who chose to follow the fortunes of a man who had worked

before the mast, when he might have hung on to a millionaire.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was more puzzled even than Skanner & Co., and he still clung to his unbelief. There was, he told himself bitterly, a trick in it somewhere; the interloper, the scheming cad, did not really intend to give up all that he had gained. And yet Paul was evidently making his preparations to leave.

More than once during those days, when Vernon-Smith came on Dallas, he seemed about to speak to him, but refrained. But one day after class, when Dallas had gone to his study to read a letter that had arrived for him, the Bounder followed him there.

Vernon-Smith hesitated a minute or two at the door, but finally opened it and went in.

Dallas was seated at the table in Study No. 1, with his letter in his hand and a wrinkle of thought in his brow.

He glanced round as the Bounder stepped in and frowned; but his face cleared again at once, and he nodded with a smile.

"Come in, Smyth," he said. "I'm glad to see you."

"Oh, you're glad, are you?" said the Bounder, eyeing him.

"We've not been friends," said Paul; "but I think that even you will admit that you've done me injustice now; and I'd like to make friends, if you're willing."

The Bounder was silent.

"I've just had a letter from my father," went on Paul. "I suppose a fellow who's not lost his father wouldn't quite understand what it means to me. I'm too jolly happy to have any ill-feeling for anybody now. I wish we'd been friends, Smyth—we might have been."

"You mean that it was my fault?"

"Never mind whose fault it was. Let's forget all about it," said Paul cheerily. "Like to see my letter? I've envied you, Smyth, because you had a father, and I had no relations at all; but I don't envy anybody in the wide world now."

"You don't really care about his being poor?"

Paul laughed.

"My dad's a man in a million," he said. "Look at his letter."

The Bounder took the letter mechanically and read. His face, which had become almost friendly in spite of himself, changed as he read.

"Dear Paul,—I have been considering the position carefully, and in consultation with my old friend, Mr. Vernon-Smith. I am in doubt whether I ought to take you away from the school where you have done so well, and where you have such bright prospects. You are aware that the sum of a thousand pounds was due to me from Mr. Vernon-Smith when I left England long ago. Some of this has been expended on you, but enough remains to give me a good start on the coffee plantation of which I have told you. Mr. Vernon-Smith has offered to lend me all the capital I may need, but this offer I have gratefully refused.

"Now, my boy, your adopted father has a high opinion of you; and, though he approves of your willingness to throw in your lot with mine, he is willing, and indeed anxious, to provide for you at school, and, later, at the University, and, though it will be a blow to me to part with you again, after being parted so long, I feel that it is my duty to accede, in order to secure your future prospects. I shall, however, leave it to you to decide. But I advise

you, in your own interests, to accept the kindness which my old friend has offered.

"Your affectionate father,
"J. DALLAS."

The Bounder read the letter through and laid it on the table, his old sardonic expression returning to his face.

"I expected as much!" he said.

Paul looked at him.

"What do you mean, Smyth?"

The Bounder laughed.

"I knew it was all bunkum," he said.

"It was just a move in the game—the devoted son sticking to the father in hard luck, and all the rest of it. Humbug from beginning to end!"

"You think so?" said Paul, with a curious look at the Bounder.

"I know it," sneered Vernon-Smith.

"You've got the credit for being willing to give up all you've gained. You've fooled my father into believing that you don't care two straws for his money—you've pretended to be willing to chuck up everything and go, and now you're to stay—not because you want to—oh dear, no!" The Bounder laughed again—but because your father advises you to stay. And you very nearly got me to believe that it was all genuine. I came here to say so!"

Paul Dallas put the letter in his pocket.

"And you're staying, after all," said the Bounder ironically. "I knew there was some trick in it. It was a little too thick to be genuine."

"But I am not staying," said Paul Dallas quietly.

"Gammon!"

"You have read my father's letter," said Paul. "Now read my answer to it. I was just going to write it when you came in."

He dipped his pen in the ink and wrote. The Bounder, with an incredulous face, read over his shoulder as the pen dashed across the paper:

"Dear Father,—I am glad you have left it for me to decide. I am coming with you. Thank Mr. Vernon-Smith for me, and tell him that I shall never forget his kindness. But I am coming with my father.

"Your affectionate son,
"PAUL."

Paul Dallas folded the letter, placed it in an envelope, sealed it, and addressed it, and stamped it. The Bounder watched him blankly.

He left the study without speaking to Vernon-Smith. The Bounder stepped to the study window. From that window he watched Paul emerge from the House and cross to the school letter-box. He saw the "interloper" drop the letter into the box.

When Paul Dallas came back to the study, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were with him. The chums of the Remove had come in to tea, and they were surprised to find the Bounder in the study. Their looks showed unequivocally that he was not welcome there.

But the Bounder did not heed them.

Even into his obdurate mind belief had come at last—even into his hard heart repentance had come. He turned to Dallas.

"I'm sorry, Dallas," he said quietly. "I wish we'd been friends while you were here. I wish I'd listened to Redwing when he told me—" The Bounder paused. "I've been a rotter to you—a rotten and suspicious brute. I'd be glad to part friends, if you're willing."

"More than willing," said Paul. "I owe your father too much to think of bearing you a grudge, Smyth."

And he held out his hand frankly.

Wharton and Nugent looked on in surprise. The Bounder did not heed them. He gave Paul Dallas a grip of the hand—a friendly grip in which the old bitter feud was buried for ever—and left the study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Good-bye to Greyfriars!

"I SAY, you fellows! Dallas' pater has come!"

It was the following afternoon. Billy Bunter, as usual, was first with the news.

"And he's changed his clothes," added Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"He has, really," said Bunter. "He looks quite decent now. Of course, not like my pater—"

"Not wide enough for that," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, old fat man. Let's go and see Dallas' pater, you fellows."

The handsome, well-dressed man standing in the hall of the School House, talking to Dallas of the Remove, did not look much like the rough seafaring man who had come to Greyfriars a week before. The man in hard luck, who had been in great doubt about claiming the son adopted by a millionaire, had had all his doubts removed now. His bronzed face was very bright. Paul presented his friends, and Mr. Dallas shook hands with them cordially. But a slight frown came over the bronzed face as Herbert Vernon-Smith came up. He had not forgotten what the Bounder had said to him that day on the tow-path. The Bounder understood his look and coloured.

"I don't want to butt in," said the Bounder, "but I'd like to tell you, Mr. Dallas, that I'm sorry for what I said to you that day you met me on the tow-path. I hope I needn't say that I should not have spoken as I did if I'd known that you were Dallas' father?"

"I suppose not," said Mr. Dallas. "But I am afraid that what you said came from a bad heart, my lad. I was in doubt at that time whether I should claim my son, and what you told me made me more doubtful."

"I'm sorry, sir," said the Bounder in a low voice. "I was wrong. I've changed my opinion now. I apologise!"

And Herbert Vernon-Smith walked away before Paul Dallas' father could answer him.

"Smyth's a queer fish," said Bob Cherry. "But I told you fellows that there was a lot of good in him."

"Lots!" said Paul.

"You're coming to tea in our study, Mr. Dallas," said Harry Wharton. "It will remind you of old times at Greyfriars."

Mr. Dallas smiled.

"I shall be very glad," he said. "I was here in your uncle's time. Wharton, I dare say Colonel Wharton still remembers me. I knew your father, too, Cherry, and a cheeky young rascal he was. I've tea'd in No. 1 Study a good many times in the old days."

"We'll show you that Greyfriars hasn't degenerated in the matter of study spreads, at least," said Bob Cherry.

And it was a feast of the gods in

(Continued on page 28.)

ELUSIVE TO THE END! For years Scotland Yard has scoured the country for Black Michael, but the elusive scoundrel has up till now escaped the net. And even when they do capture him and place him in the dock, Black Michael proves too clever for them!

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DIRK glanced round the cell. In one corner was a pile of clothes. "Them yours?" he demanded. Curly nodded.

"You ain't by any chance got a gun there, have you?"

He asked the question, and, without waiting for an answer, picked up the man's coat and searched the pockets. A moment later, with a pleasant grin, he produced a Browning automatic.

"In the ordinary way of business I don't hold with these 'ere things; but if there's to be any shootin' I'd like to shoot first. Now you put us wise where we shall find 'em."

"They'll be in his room. It's the one next door to where Brilliant Sing has his dope kip. But the doors'll be locked. If he's got that, boy he'll have work to do that he won't want anyone to see."

His listeners were conscious of a cold shudder of apprehension.

"Ain't there any way of getting in?" Dirk demanded.

"There's a window that looks on the passage. Sing uses it to see who's outside. But if you tried to break in they'd hear you and you'd never get through!"

As Bill and Dirk pondered over this difficulty, which seemed insurmountable, Jim, who was wild with excitement and anxiety, made a suggestion.

"Guv'nor, if we broke the window, we could put Squall through it. He'd hold 'em while I slipped after him and opened the door. But, oh, mister, don't let's wait any longer! Something terrible may happen to Jack!"

"Lumme, but that boy's got a head on his shoulders!" Bill exclaimed enthusiastically. "Come along, nevvie; I want to get this job done as soon as I can. I've got my old gal, your aunt, waiting for me, and I don't want her to be anxious."

Leaving Curly there, Bill Bowker and Dirk made their way into the passage and presently reached the door. Trying the handle cautiously, Dirk discovered that it was locked as Curly

had anticipated, but, bending down, he made an important discovery. The key was in the lock!

"That's a bit of luck!" he whispered. "If Squall holds him all Jim has to do is to look slippy and turn the key, and we'll be with him. Here, Bill, you talk to the dog; you know him better than we do, and maybe he'll understand you."

Bill bent down and whispered in Squall's ear:

"Jack's in there, Squall, and he's in a pretty tight place, old fellow. We're going to get him out, but you've got to help us. See that there window—well, we're going to break it, and

you must get through and bite at everything you see."

It really seemed as if Squall understood every word, for he made at once for the window, which stood about four feet to the left of the ground above the door.

Standing upon his hind legs, he tried to reach it. Dirk took command of the situation.

"Jim, you hold Squall away back there. He'll want a bit of a run to jump through that. When I smash the window, let him go, and you go after him like a ferret after a bolting rabbit. Now, then, stand fast!"

Jim had backed some ten feet down the passage, holding Squall's collar. Bill took up his position at the door, grasping the handle, which he kept turned. Dirk stood at one side of the window with that piece of wood which he had torn from the fence in his hand. He raised it. There was a moment's breathless pause.

"Now!" he shouted; and he shivered the glass in the window.

Almost at the same time, it seemed, a long, lean, furry body flashed past him. Straight through the aperture made by the broken window leapt the great wolf dog, and as he disappeared Jim's emaciated little figure scrambled heroically over the sill and vanished.

From the other side of the door pandemonium seemed to be let loose—shouts, cries, commotion, the banging and overturning of furniture, and the ominous cracking of a revolver. Then the waiting men heard the sounds they had been expecting so anxiously—the quick turning of an oiled bolt in the lock.

As it clicked back, Bill thrust the door open and staggered into the room beyond. What he saw before him was a struggling mass of humanity—nine or ten men fighting as if for their lives amidst a debris of broken furniture, while around them, snapping and dancing, was the great wolf dog. Jim was leaning against the wall, one hand gripping his arm from which there flowed a crimson stream. But the

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 uses 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, and by a clever ruse, eventually succeeds in capturing him and taking him to his headquarters in Limehouse, a destination

JIM SNOW, a swif whom Jack has befriended, has no difficulty in locating. He was leading the way, Bill Bowker and his nephew Dirk lose no time in getting on the track of the precious gang. A fierce fight follows, but Black Michael, with his captive, succeeds in rushing into the mysterious confines of the den. Not to be outdone, however, the trio are cautiously wending their way through the maze of passages, when they discover Curly, who, having incurred Black Michael's anger, is suffering the penalty of Chinese torture. Dirk releases the man, and Curly, in gratitude, warns the trio that they are playing a losing battle and advises them to beat it while the going's good.

"Not on your life," retorts Dirk. "Me and Bill have got a punch that will put domino to any little game of Black Michael's!"

(Now read on.)

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skipper of the Emerald had no time to waste upon the boy just then.

In Berserker rage, he rushed straight into that melee. Seizing the first two men he came across by their necks, he banged their heads so violently together, that the fellows sagged and collapsed on the ground. Two other men he treated in like fashion before he was joined by his nephew.

A man backed into the corner—a small man, with a foxy face. In his hand was a revolver. There was a series of sharp, rattling reports. Dirk swung one of the men he had seized by the waist in front of him, using him as a living shield. Then, with all his strength, he flung him forward on the top of that crouching figure with the gun.

As they both came to the ground he lifted up the monstrous image that stood in the centre of the room, and though it must have weighed close on two hundredweight, flung it on top of them. The next moment he had torn the revolver from the man's hands.

As far as that room was concerned the trouble was over. Of Jack there was no sign. Picking their way over the unconscious figure of their recent opponents, Bill and Dirk made for the door leading to the inner room. As they did so, it was opened and Black Michael appeared on the threshold.

An exclamation of fierce joy escaped Dirk. He made a movement as if to spring forward, his right fist swinging from his hip, ready to deliver that blow on the point which he had counted on. But it was never delivered.

Black Michael stood there, apparently unarmed—cool, calm, and aloof. Save for a faint flush on his cheeks, there was nothing in his white, strained, ascetic face to suggest any alarm. To look at him and to disregard his eyes, anyone would have taken him for a dreamy, emotional poet. But it was his eyes that mattered.

They were like two blazing points of light, and exercised a strange, magnetic influence. Furious as they were with the lust of battle, Bill Bowker and Dirk suddenly paused. Between them and the man that they wanted to reach seemed interposed some influence against which they were powerless. They halted, immovable.

"So," said Black Michael—and his voice was like velvet—"you've come here, my friends, to make trouble? Well, you will only have yourselves to blame!"

He pointed a finger at Bill, whose sunburnt face had grown curiously grey.

"I know you. You're the skipper of the monkey boat Emerald. I've had a lot of trouble from you, and I'm only too glad to have this opportunity of repaying you! As for you—"

He made a movement of his finger as if to point at Dirk, but before he could utter another word something happened. To those bemused men, held helpless by the magnetic power that Black Michael wielded, there came an ally.

Squall had scented his master. With dog-like instinct, he knew that the being he loved more than anything else in the world was in the inner room, and that between him and his master was this man in the doorway. Without sound—without a hint of his presence beforehand—for he had been crouched behind the motionless figures of Bill and Dirk—Squall sprang. Like

a flash of lightning, his long, gaunt body streaked through the air straight at Black Michael's throat. Squall's fangs were bared to give the wolf slash at the other's neck.

It was done in a flash. Squall had struck Black Michael with all four paws. His teeth had torn the rascal's coat and collar and shirt as if they were made of paper.

Flinging up his hands, Black Michael reeled back into the inner room and dropped on the floor.

As he did so, that mysterious spell was lifted from Bill and Dirk. With a muttered growl of exasperation, as if they were ashamed of their behaviour of a moment ago, they flung themselves on the prostrate man. Another moment, and Black Michael was held helpless against the wall by Bill's brawny clutch.

"None of your hip-hip tricks now!" he growled. "Or I'll smash them peepers of yours in! See? Where's my boy? Where's Jack? If you've done anything to him I'll kill you!"

But there was no need to ask where Jack was. He lay there like one dead on a table in the centre of the room, his face deathly white, his jaws fixed. Only the regular rise and fall of his chest showed that he lived. Squall, astride his body, was licking his face.

In the corner, his hands folded in front of him, stood Brilliant Sing. So motionless was his figure that he might have been one of the native statues. Dirk, his face crimson, stormed across to him, and, taking him in his embrace, held his hands powerless to his sides. Then, lifting him up, he flung him face downward on the ground, tore off his silk blouse, and removed from their hiding-places the small armoury of weapons he kept concealed there.

Having rendered him harmless by this means, he jerked him to his feet by his pigtail, struck him under the jaw, and then kicked him into the outer room.

"We've tidied up the lot now, Bill. There's only the boss left to deal with. Have you found out what he's done to Jack?"

"He won't talk, Dirk!" Bill exclaimed.

"Make him, you old juggins! Squeeze his throat! If you can't do it, I'll do it!"

But there was no need to resort to such extremities. Black Michael found his voice by himself.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"What do we want?" Bill growled. "Love us, did you ever hear the like! What do we want, you murdering haythen? I'll tell you what we want bit by bit, and you'll tell us how we'll get it, or I'll know the reason why."

He banged Black Michael's head against the wall as if to show what he would do if he didn't get answers to his questions. The man's face grew a shade paler.

"You'll kill me!" he gasped. "Well, what about it? Ain't that what you do with rats? But don't you be uneasy, gov'nor. I ain't going to kill you if you answer my questions. First, what's the quickest way out of this hole?"

"There's a door behind that curtain. It leads to a flight of steps. There's two doors above, the last of which leads into the street."

"And are they open?"

"Yes."
"And there ain't any murderin' blokes hanging around with knives or revolvers?"

"There's no one there except the door-keeper. He will ask no questions about anyone coming from here."

"If he does he'll get a crack on the jaw!" Bill growled. "But now for my last question. You've done some jiggery-pokery to that boy. It's what my nevvie calls hip-hip something. You've put something across him. Can you take it off again?"

"Yes."
"Then you do it, and look mighty smart, unless you want your windpipe closed for ever!"

Twisting Black Michael round as if he had been a child of two, Bill seized both the rascal's wrists and, holding them firmly behind his back, propelled him across the room to the table on which Jack lay.

"Now, then, look smart about it, Mr. Whatever your name is! It's time that there lad were in bed. My old gal's awaiting for him, and crying her eyes out."

Black Michael bent over the motionless figure of the boy. Dirk, watching his movements from the other side of the table, saw his dark eyes glow with a sudden, mysterious light. He uttered no word, but as if in answer to some unspoken signal, Jack raised his right hand and then lowered it again. Still that steady gaze persisted. A few more seconds went by, and again the boy raised his hand as if in acknowledgement of some message.

"Here, get on with it!" Bill broke in impatiently.

Black Michael bent closer over Jack. "Awake!" he exclaimed. "Awake, but do not forget what I told you!"

And then Bill Bowker and Dirk witnessed an extraordinary transformation. That deathlike pallor vanished from Jack's cheeks; the boy's old healthy colour returned; he drew one hand sleepily across his eyes, stirred, and then sat up.

"Where am I?" he stammered. Bill Bowker, as if alarmed at what might happen if he caught a glimpse of Black Michael, turned that gentleman with his face to the wall.

"It's all right, Jack, my lad. It's Dirk and me as is here. We'll be taking you home in a moment."

The boy was still rubbing his eyes, looking about him in utter confusion. As he did so, Jim Snow crawled into the room, looking very white and shaky, the sleeve of his shirt crimson with blood. He ran up to Jack. But before the two boys could exchange any greetings, Bill shouted to Dirk:

"Come and hold this rascal, Dirk! I've got to get them kids home."

Having handed Black Michael over to Dirk, Bowker snatched Jack up into his arms. Then, without another word, with Squall and Jim Snow following at his heels, the skipper of the Emerald made for the curtained doorway. As he drew back the curtain and opened the door, Black Michael's voice reached him.

"What are you going to do with me?" he stammered.

"You? Why, Dirk there's going to take you to the nearest policeman and give you in charge. This time next week you'll be picking stones at Portland, and I hopes as you'll like it, my man!"

Back on the Emerald!

BILL BOWKER had drawn back the curtain and now opened the door which it concealed. From the room behind him came an inarticulate cry of rage. Black Michael was struggling with demonic fury,



BLACK MICHAEL CHEATS JUSTICE!

"Remanded"—began the magistrate, and he broke off suddenly, for the figure in the dock was giving at the knees. The constable by his side seized him, and for a moment Black Michael looked up into the man's face. "Too late!" he gasped. "I've slipped through your fingers!" (See Page 27.)

But that last remark of Bill's, uttered in an almost casual tone over his shoulder, made him realise that he was going to be handed over to the police. There would be a close inquiry into all his doings. For years he had sheltered himself behind the gang, using them as his tools and sacrificing them without mercy if they blundered into the hands of the law. He had always remained in the background—the master mind who directed and organised—being very careful to leave no clues as to his identity.

That was all over now. He was caught, and there was no escape. He would have to pay the penalty of his crimes, and they were a long, black list. As he thought of prison a fury of rage lit up his dark soul. But there was something worse than the prospect of penal servitude—the thought that turned him all of a sudden into a madman—and that was his damaged vanity.

Wrestling, raging, tearing, trying in his fury even to bite Dirk with his teeth, Black Michael struggled desperately to free himself. But he had to deal with a man whose muscles were like steel, whose strength was four times greater than his own.

"Don't stand any nonsense from that guy, Dirk!" Bill shouted back from the stairway. "Put one on his point, and then take him off to the police station. I ain't going to stop to help you, because I know you can manage the job yourself, and I want to get these kids where they'll be safe. Don't be too long about it, either, because that lot in the other room may wake up!"

Having delivered himself of this parting advice, Bill Bowker ran up the stairs, opened the door at the top, and passed into the hall beyond. There was a Chinaman there dressed in

ordinary European clothes calmly perusing an evening paper.

"Now then, you durned Chink, open that door—and look quick about it!" Bill commanded.

The Chinaman, after one look from those almond eyes of his, quickly opened the door. Another moment Bill was out in the street, and without delay had turned his face in the direction of the dock. It was a little disconcerting to have to parade those streets with a boy in his nightshirt, but Bill put up with all that. He was glad, however, when at last he stepped across the plank and reached the deck of the *Emerald*.

Hearing his footsteps, Mrs. Bowker rushed on deck.

"Here's Jack, mother!" Bill exclaimed. "Sound in wind and limb! You take him along and make a fuss of him."

Mrs. Bowker almost snatched Jack from her husband's arms, covering the youngster's face with kisses.

"Oh, Jack," she cried, "I thought you were never coming back to us!"

She carried him downstairs to the cabin and seated him near the fire, crooning over him as if he were indeed the child that she had always longed for.

"Tell us all about it, Jack! How did it happen?"

Jack looked at Mrs. Bowker dazedly. He knew that an interval of time had elapsed since he had been last in that friendly cabin; but for the life of him he could not recall where he had been, or what had taken place.

"I took the horse down to the stable in the village, and I came back, Mrs. Bowker; and then—"

He paused abruptly. "I can't remember," he stammered.

"Nothing about a big case, Jack?" Bill broke in.

Jack stared at Bill, blank amazement in his face.

"A case? I don't remember anything about a case—unless you mean the one we took aboard at—"

Bill winked at his wife, as if to suggest to her the uselessness of pursuing the matter any farther just at the moment. In order to change the subject he turned to Jim Snow, who, seated on the bunk, seemed to be getting paler every moment.

"Here, mother, you must have a look at this lad. He's one of the best. I dunno what we should have done without him. He's a proper good plucked 'un! It's all through him as we've got Jack back."

Mrs. Bowker ran to the wail's side and gave vent to an exclamation of horror as she saw the bloodstains on his shirt sleeve.

"My poor lad, why, what ever have they done to you?" she exclaimed, rolling back his shirt-sleeve.

"One of them blokes fired at me and hit me!" Jim gasped.

Mrs. Bowker examined the wound. Fortunately, it was merely a flesh one, but the bullet had only missed the bone of his upper arm by the fraction of an inch.

Getting some warm water, Mrs. Bowker bathed the wound carefully, staunching the bleeding, smeared the place with boracic, and then bound it with a bandage.

"This poor lad must sleep here, Bill," said Mrs. Bowker; "he's maybe got a touch of fever."

"Right, mother! Whatever you says goes. Anyway, the best of the best
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wouldn't be too good for him after the way he stood by our Jack to-night."

Clad in one of Bill's flannel shirts, which was so long that it might have been a baby's swaddling clothes, Jim was put to bed in one of the bunks, and, propped up on the pillows, was fed with milk in which an egg had been beaten up.

"Now, you go to sleep, Jim," Mrs. Bowker remarked. "That'll be the best care for you. And, Jack, I'm thinking you'd better turn in, too."

Within a very short time Jack Horner and Jim Snow were sound asleep.

Shortly afterwards the sound of footsteps and voices near by reached the ears of the skipper and his wife. Mrs. Bowker turned quickly on her husband.

"Bill, if that's anyone come to see you, don't let 'em come down here. These poor lads mustn't be disturbed."

Mrs. Bowker followed her husband out of the cabin, closing the door behind her. They were just in time to reach the plank as a number of police-officers and Dirk stepped on board.

"This here's my uncle, Bill Bowker," Dirk exclaimed. "Bill, this is the big noise from the police station. He's come to take down all your family history from the time you was born."

The police-inspector smiled and held out his hand to the skipper.

"It's all right, Mr. Bowker; we're here as friends. You've done us a very good turn. You've put in our hands at last the man that Scotland Yard have been trying to get hold of for years."

"Meaning Black Michael?" Bill stammered.

"Yes, that's one of his names; but he had almost a dozen others. I want you just to tell me your account of this affair."

Bill thrust his hands into his pockets and stared fixedly at the watery moon.

"Well, it was like this. You mustn't let it go any farther, because it might do me 'arm professionally; but I ain't very strong on arithmetic. I never could make quite certain how many pounds go to a stone. And, you see, one morning when I was doing some calculations and getting all messed up a kid comes aboard and suddenly does the sum for me without my asking him. That was Jack. A bloomin' little wonder—a regular lightning calculator. He had run away from home, where I reckon they weren't very good to him, and he wanted to make his fortune. I gives him a job aboard this monkey-boat. That's how Jack and me became acquainted."

From this commencement Bill slowly evolved the whole of the story that had culminated in that night's doings.

The inspector listened patiently, taking occasional notes.

"Thank you, Mr. Bowker! I'm afraid you'll have to give evidence to-morrow, when this man is brought up before the magistrate; but the proceedings will be quite formal, and we shall ask for the usual remand. We've laid our hands on Brilliant Sing and the rest of the gang, whom you and your nephew so kindly dealt with for us. There's an unfortunate man, known by the name of Curly, who seems to have been subjected to some very bad treatment, and is, in consequence, prepared to turn King's evidence. I think we shall have more than enough to go on to secure a long term of imprisonment for the lot of them."

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The inspector closed his notebook and thrust it into the top pocket of his tunic.

"Now I should like to have a few words with the boys, if you don't mind," he remarked.

But at this point the inspector struck a snag in the person of Mrs. Bowker.

"They're both down there, inspector," she said, pointing to the cabin. "You can have a look at 'em, to make sure I'm speaking the truth, as long as you don't make no noise. But I ain't going to have you waking 'em up, after all they've been through."

The inspector was inclined to argue the point, but Mrs. Bowker was adamant. Eventually the inspector capitulated. Having inspected Jack and Jim, who were sleeping soundly, he finally retired.

"Take care of them, Mrs. Bowker," he exclaimed in parting. "Their evidence is really the most important."

The Last of Black Michael!

ALL aboard the Emerald were asleep when the clock let into the wall chimed the hour of two. Suddenly the stillness of the cabin was disturbed. Jack sat up in bed, and, throwing back the blankets noiselessly, slipped over the edge of the bunk to the floor. He seemed to find no hindrance from the obscurity in which the cabin was plunged, for he found his clothes and dressed himself completely. As he stood up in his stocking feet the glow from the fire illuminated his face. It was quite blank and expressionless. His eyes were staring into space, and he seemed almost like one who was trying to remember some orders. Then he rummaged under the bunk, found his boots, and silently opened the cabin door. Another moment and he was on the deck.

There was the soft patter of padded paws, and Squall bounded out of the moonlit shadows and began cavorting about his master, now and again looking up to try and lick his face. But no word of recognition came from Jack. He seated himself on the hatch, and, drawing on his boots, laced them up. Then he rose, very stiff and erect, with that strange, far-away look in his eyes.

Squall had ceased his gambolling now, and was standing in front of the boy, looking at him with an expression that somehow suggested that he was more than a little puzzled and perplexed. His master had never uttered a word—that in itself was amazing. Somehow, there seemed something wrong about it—something that told the dog that he was in danger.

Suddenly Jack began to move. He walked across the plank, and as soon as he gained the quay broke into a run along the towpath. Squall followed at his heels like some grey shadow. Jack ran with an tireless energy which seemed to suggest he would never stop. As the clocks were striking four, and the first faint light of dawn was breaking, he reached Paddington Dock—a distance of ten miles. The perspiration was streaming down his cheeks, and physically he looked in the last stages of utter exhaustion.

The skipper of a monkey-boat near at hand, who had risen early, hailed him, and, receiving no answer, conceived the quite erroneous idea that the boy must have been engaged in some burglary, and was trying to escape from the police. He mentally determined that

he had never seen him, if anyone should question him.

For another eight miles Jack followed the towpath of the canal until the last traces of London had been left behind. Then, as if he were familiar with every detail of the district, he struck across some fields to a wayside station. Arrived there, he presented himself before the booking-office, still with that strained, odd, fixed look in his face.

"Single ticket to Weald, please," he said, putting all the money he had in his pocket—it amounted to eight-and-sixpence—on the counter.

Through the window the ticket clerk could see Squall's head.

"Taking the dog with you?" he inquired.

"A single ticket to Weald," Jack repeated, in that strange, sleepy voice.

The ticket clerk stared at Jack, and came to the conclusion that the youngster was somebody wanting in his wits. He took it upon himself to decide that Squall was going to accompany the passenger, in which anticipation he was quite correct; for, with or without a ticket, Squall would not have left his master's side.

With the two pieces of pasteboard in his hands Jack made his way on to the platform. He had only to wait a few minutes before the train for Weald arrived. Getting into a compartment which was empty, he seated himself in a corner, and almost instantly dropped off into a sound sleep. The train, on its slow journey westward, stopped at every station. More than once the door was opened and other passengers made as if to enter, but at the sight of the wolf-dog crouched on the floor they hurriedly withdrew. Jack slept peacefully the sleep of exhaustion until the train drew up at Weald.

It was curious how almost instantly, though he had been sound asleep a moment ago, he rose to his feet, and, opening the door, stepped out on to the platform. He had never been to the place before in his life, and yet he seemed to know exactly where he ought to go and what he ought to do. Giving up his tickets in the booking-hall, he walked through a pretty country village and then struck across country. Presently he was passing along the side of a canal.

It was the very canal and the very grassy road where he had his encounter with Brilliant Sing and Curly, and yet he never paused to meditate on the spot, and his eyes did not look upon the scene as if he even recognised it. Ahead of him were the woods about Weald Park. He walked straight towards them. Now he was surrounded by the trees; now he had come to the high, spiked iron railings which enclosed the park. There was a gate there. He turned the handle like one who knew he would find it open. Another moment and he was in the park.

It was now past ten o'clock. In far away London, in a certain police court, a very worried inspector was exchanging an angry conversation in whispers with two big burly men in blue jerseys.

"I relied upon you, Mr. Bowker, to produce the boy this morning. It makes my position very difficult. It looks to me as if you had deliberately tried to get this witness out of the way."

"Garn! Don't be silly! As if I would! And my old gal a-cryin' her eyes out and a-carrying on simply fearful! I wouldn't have lost that boy for a thousand quid, I tell you! He must

have got up in the night and beat it. If you ask me why he did it—well, I can only say as I don't know."

"Michael Horner!" somebody shouted. The inspector made a motion with his hand for Bill Bowker to keep silent. There was a moment of suspense, and then a man appeared between two burly constables and was placed in the dock facing the magistrate. His worship glanced towards the inspector of police, who rose obediently, fingering some papers.

"Your worship, this is a very serious case. The man in the dock, Michael Horner—known as Michael Silver, or Black Michael, and a number of aliases—is charged in the first instance with an attempt to forcibly abduct a certain boy employed as a hand aboard the monkey-boat, Emerald. I have every reason to believe that there will be other charges to be brought against him, and with your worship's approval I propose to-day only to give formal evidence of arrest and to ask for a remand."

The magistrate nodded and glanced curiously at the man in the dock.

"Call the first witness," he said. "William Bowker!" shouted the usher.

Dirk drove his elbow into his uncle's ribs.

"That's you, Bill." The skipper of the Emerald was guided to the witness-box, where, in a dazed way, he took the oath.

"Will you tell his worship what you know about the facts of this case," the police-inspector demanded.

"That bloke standing there between them two good-looking constables tried to pinch my boy Jack, as works along of me on the monkey-boat, Emerald. Two boss shots he has at it, not counting a bit of a dust-up as we were coming from Oxford to Reading. And then, t'other day, he played it up on us proper."

The inspector of police interrupted him at this point to guide him gently into the story that he wanted told briefly.

Bill told his story, relating the incident of the big empty case which he had taken aboard at Dillingham.

"The case is now in the hands of the police, your worship," the inspector broke in, "and will be produced in due course."

Bill went on to tell how they had broken into the opium den and recovered Jack.

"That's all there is to it, your worship," he concluded at last.

Dirk corroborated his uncle's story, and then Jim Snow, looking very white and frightened, stepped into the witness-box. He was highly commended by the magistrate for his courage, and the boy's circumstances having been elucidated, Jim, to his amazement, was handed a pound-note from the funds at the disposal of the police court.

"That's all the evidence I propose calling to-day, your worship," the inspector exclaimed. "The other boy—known as Jack—disappeared in the night, but we have every hope of finding him within the next few hours. There are many other serious charges against the prisoner, and I will therefore ask your worship to grant a remand for a week to enable the police to make inquiries."

The magistrate turned to the man in the dock. Over that intervening space the eyes of the judge and the prisoner met. The magistrate's lips moved. As they did so Black Michael bowed his head on the rail; covering his face with his hands.

"Remanded—" began the magistrate, and broke off suddenly, for the figure in the dock was giving at the knees, and a hoarse cry escaped from his lips.

The constable by his side seized him. For a moment Black Michael looked up into the man's face.

"Too late!" he gasped. "I've slipped through your fingers!"

As those whispered words came from his lips, Black Michael's body suddenly convulsed. He threw up his hands. There was a gasp, and then he sank back into the constable's arms dead.

The clock ticking on the wall of the police court showed that it was then precisely five minutes to eleven.

While the court was still thrilling with this sensation and the police doctor was making his examination of the dead man, to discover that he had swallowed some deadly poison which he must have kept concealed about him, another scene was being enacted at Weald Park.

It had been a quarter-past ten when Jack had opened the gate leading into the park. He walked slowly across that mile of pleasant turf. It was clear that his strength was nearly spent, but he still carried himself erect. Still, there was in his face that strange, fixed, entranced look. Like one who was familiar with every detail of his surroundings, Jack passed into the gardens, took a path to the right, and presently gained the west wing of the house. The trees grew quite close to the great mansion on this side, and though the sun was shining brightly, all was in shadow there. The boy paused before a door. It opened as he turned the handle, and he stepped inside. As he would have closed it again quickly, Squall slipped through the gap and joined him.

Beyond was a long, cool passage, from which a number of doors opened. The boy stood still for a moment, and as he did so Squall, his body crouched, his tail wagging ingratiatingly, came towards him and licked his hand. The boy ignored the dog absolutely. He seemed indeed to be quite unconscious of his presence. The wolf-dog whined, and, taking the edge of his master's jacket delicately in his teeth, pulled it as if to draw attention to himself. Still Jack took no notice of him.

Then suddenly he seemed stirred to motion again. He walked down the passage and opened the last door on the right. Within was a huge apartment, with a painted ceiling, sumptuously furnished. The windows were shuttered, but through little circular holes at the top of the shutters, the sunlight filtered, lighting up the spacious splendour of the room. Jack looked neither to

the right nor the left of him, but walked straight to a chair and sat down.

For a moment Squall stood watching him, his head on one side, his ears cocked. It was all very puzzling. Such behaviour on the part of his master was quite beyond his understanding.

Presently the dog appeared to give up all attempt to solve the problem, for, with a "Whoof!" he sank on the floor at Jack's feet and lay there, with his muzzle between his paws.

Absolute silence reigned in the great room. Jack was sitting erect, his hands clasped limply on his lap, staring straight in front of him with unseeing eyes. Unknown to him, time was passing. It was thirty-five minutes now since the moment he had opened the gate in the railings and entered Weald Park.

The seconds passed one by one. Still Jack sat there motionless. Had there been a clock in the room it would have shown him the hands slowly moving towards five minutes to eleven. A moment more and a curious change came over Jack's face.

Squall must have been conscious of something odd happening, for he suddenly raised his head and looked at his master. Then he rose stiffly to his feet. Jack's figure had lost its pose of stiffness. He was blinking his eyes. Then he drew the back of his hand across his face. A frown of perplexity twisted his forehead. Squall approached gingerly and thrust his wet nose into the boy's hand. At that Jack looked down.

"Squall!" he exclaimed, like one who has been roused from a deep sleep. "Where am I?"

(Now look out for the thrilling follow-on of this magnificent serial, chums. Every line will hold you spellbound!)

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taste the
cream!



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"THE BOY WHO FOUND HIS FATHER!"
(Continued from page 22.)

Study No. 1 that afternoon, and as many of the Remove as could cram themselves into the room came to tea. Probably Dallas' pater did not enjoy cream-puffs and plum-cake quite so much as in the old days when he had "tead" with Wharton's uncle and Bob's father in that celebrated study. But certainly he enjoyed the function, if not the tuck.

When the taxi came to bear Paul and his father to the station, an army of the Remove gathered round to see them

off. The Head himself, and Mr. Quelch, shook hands with Dallas for good-bye. Herbert Vernon-Smith watched the departure from his study window.

The feud was over. His enemy and rival—who, as he realised now, had never been an enemy or a rival—was gone. Paul Dallas, setting out for a far country with his father, would never cross his path again. The feud was a thing of the past. Paul Dallas was gone. Passionately the Bounder had desired to see the last of him; but now that he saw the last of him there was little satisfaction in it, only the bitter knowledge that his evil, suspicious

temper had led him from one false step to another—that he had wronged a fellow who had never wished him harm—that he had lost the respect and comradeship of his Form-fellows for nothing. Darker and darker the Bounder's face grew as he stood staring into the darkening quad, long after the rumble of wheels had died away, and the train was bearing Paul Dallas towards a new life in a new land.

THE END.

(There will be another topping tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "Bunter The Bold!" It's a winner all the way, chums.)

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