

36 PAGES — PACKED WITH ENTERTAINMENT FOR BOYS OF ALL AGES.

THE SILVER JACKET

THE MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

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**PLANES
THAT TAKE OFF
STRAIGHT
UP!**

SEE PAGE 16

JOHN L. CURTIS

THIS IS AUSTRALIA'S FAMOUS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS!

Roger's Way.



ANOTHER STORY OF CARCROFT SCHOOL
-134- FRANK RICHARDS

"JUST a walk by moonlight!" said Dudley Vane-Carter.

"Fathead!" said three voices in unison.

Compton, Drake, and Lee, in the corner study, seemed to be of one opinion. It was a case of three minds with but a single thought: three tongues that spoke as one.

Vane-Carter, lounging in the study doorway with his hands in his pockets, laughed. The Carcroft Co. were staring at him from within the study: outside, in the passage, six or seven Fourth-Formers were staring at him. Which was very agreeable to Dudley Vane-Carter, who liked to make fellows stare and wonder at his nerve.

"My dear men, where's the harm in a moonlight walk?" drawled Vane-Carter, "I'm getting out of the dorm at half-past ten—"

"You're not, you ass!" snapped Bob Drake.

"—and getting back soon after midnight—"

"And catching an early train home in the morning?" asked Lee. "Wash it out, V. C., and don't play the goat."

"Can't be done! It's a bet."

"A what?" ejaculated Harry Compton.

"Bet! B-E-T, bet! Perhaps you don't know what a bet is, in this model study. Never heard of such a thing, perhaps. Shall I explain, or will you look the word up in the dic'?"

There was a chuckle from the passage. In the corner study they did not bet, as V. C. often did. But undoubtedly they had heard of such things.

"I've bet a man in the Shell that I'll do it," explained Vane-Carter, "so that's that. I looked in to ask

you fellows if you'd like to come."

"Out of bounds at midnight!" exclaimed Bob.

"Why not? A pleasant walk along the beach in the moonlight, to the sea-cave. The tide will be right out. A nice walk back! I'd like your company, if you'd care to come."

"And our company on the train home tomorrow?" asked Bob, sarcastically.

"You keep harping on that. Precious little risk, really. Roger will be fast asleep. Even our beloved form-master doesn't sit up to all hours watching for fellows breaking out. Do come! I'm not goin' to take you to the Lobster Smack for billiards or banker. Only a midnight stroll—"

"And you expect Roger to believe that, if you're nailed?" asked Bob.

"Well, no!" admitted Vane-Carter. "It would sound rather thin. But it happens to be the truth. You can take my word for it, though old Ducas probably wouldn't. Coming?"

"Fathead!" said the three in unison again.

"I suppose that means that the answer's in the negative." Vane-Carter shrugged his shoulders, and turned to the staring juniors in the passage, "Any of you men like to come? Pleasant walk by moonlight, with just a teeny spot of risk to make it a little exciting."

"Too big a spot for me," grinned Levett.

"What about you, Turkey? It's three miles—but if you get tired, I'll roll you home like a barrel."

"Yah!" was Turkey Tuck's reply to that.

"You comin', Lizard?" Lord Talboys shook his head.

"Hardly! Look here, V. C., wash it out, and don't be a goat. Nobody here is ass enough to go with you, if you're ass enough to go. You're rather a bad hat, old chap, and no credit to Carcroft—"

"What?"

"But nobody wants to see you bunked. And you'll be bunked like a shot if you're caught out of bounds at night. That's one thing the beaks are frightfully particular about. Whatever else they may go easy with, they don't go easy with that. You know it as well as I do."

"Quite!" assented Vane-Carter.

"Well, then, wash it out. If you want us to admire your nerve, old thing, we'll all sit round and admire—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared Vane-Carter.

"Eh! Have I said anythin' to offend you?" asked Lord Talboys, innocently. "Sorry if I have. But as I was sayin', we all know you're a devil of a fellow, and don't care a boiled bean for beaks and prefects, and all that, and the rest of it. So why not let it go at that? Why ask for the sack? I don't like you much, personally—but I shall miss you, when you go."

Vane-Carter made no reply to that. He shoved roughly past Lord Talboys, sending that slim and elegant youth staggering against the wall, and tramped away up the passage to his own study, leaving the crowd of Carcroft fellows laughing.

ROGER DUCAS, master of the Fourth Form, stood at his open study window, looking out into the old quad of Carcroft, bright in the

autumn sunshine. There was a puzzled frown on Roger's brow.

Something was 'on' in Roger's form. He knew it as if by instinct. Few things that passed in the Fourth Form at Carcroft escaped Roger's eagle eye. Roger had a numerous form; but he had every one 'tabbed.' If a pie was missing below stairs, he thought of Turkey Tuck at once. If a scent of cigarette-smoke was detected in the Fourth-form box-room, he thought of Levett. If a Latin prose was crammed with unheard-of howlers, he hardly needed to look for Lord Talboys' name on it. If a football was heard to crash up in the studies, Bob Drake's name leaped to his mind. If a School cap was glimpsed over the fence of the 'Lobster Smack,' he hardly doubted that it adorned the head of Dudley Vane-Carter. And his impression now was, not only that there was something 'on' in his form, but that it centred on the scapegrace whom the other fellows called 'V. C.' It was not only because these were his initials that Vane-Carter was called V. C.—it was also a tribute to his nerve.

And V. C.'s nerve was chiefly displayed in a cool and systematic disregard of school rules and regulations, Roger was sure—or almost sure—that V.C. indulged in that extreme of schoolboy delinquency—'breaking out' at night. He could not be quite sure, for V. C. was wary—as wary as Roger himself, if not a little more so. In that peculiar contest between boy and master, all the honours had hitherto been with the former. Roger knew—or as good as knew. But the rebel of his form was always one move ahead of him.

He could see Dudley Vane-Carter now, in the distance under the old Carcroft oaks, surrounded by a crowd of fellows, all discussing something apparently of great interest. Roger wondered what it was. And as he wondered, a fat voice, closer at hand, floated in at his open window.

"I say, you chaps, it's all gammon. V. C. won't go."

Roger started, and stepped quickly away from the window. Roger was very interested to know what was afoot in his form: but Roger would never willingly have heard careless talk not intended for his ears.

"Shut up, you fat ass!" came Bob Drake's voice. "Do you want to tell all Carcroft?"

"Well, I mean to say, V. C.'s got lots of nerve, but I don't believe he'll go—"

Mr. Ducas shut his window.

"YOU fellows asleep?"

It was a whisper in the darkness of the Fourth-Form dormitory. 'Lights out' for the Fourth was at 9.45: so, at half-past ten, all the fellows in that dormitory certainly should have been fast asleep. But on this particular night, matters were not quite as usual. There was a murmur of voices, and a sound of fellows stirring, as Dudley Vane-Carter whispered. The sonorous snore of Turkey Tuck continued unabated. But almost every other fellow was awake. Bob Drake sat up in bed.

"That you, V. C.? Then you're going?"

"Didn't I say so?"

"For goodness' sake, V. C., wash it out," came Harry Compton's voice, in almost pleading tones. "If you're fool enough to go at all, cut it out for tonight at least. It's too jolly risky."

"Tonight's the night!" drawled Vane-Carter. He was dressing rapidly in the dark as he spoke.

"Ten to one Roger will smell a rat!" urged the captain of the Fourth. "Every fellow in the form has been talking about nothing else since tea, and you know that Roger is as keen as a hawk."

"So am I, old bean."

"If V. C.'s got a pal here who doesn't want to see him hunked, he'd better turn out and hold on to his ears!" remarked Drake.

"Good egg!" came from Lord Talboys. "You hold on to one ear, old thing, and I'll hold on to the other. What?"

There was a subdued chuckle in the dormitory. Lord Talboys sat up in bed, and peered round, in the glimmer of moonlight from the high windows. He glimpsed a moving shadow. A door was heard to close softly. Levett gave a low whistle.

"He's gone!" he said.

"Oh, the ass!" breathed Harry Compton.

"V. C.'s a card, and no mistake," said Levett. "I shouldn't wonder if he pulls through all right. After all, this isn't his first night out. And Roger hardly ever prowls round a dorm as some beaks do."

"He might!" muttered Bob.

"If he does, V. C.'s number's up. I'm going to sleep. Wake me, somebody, if V. C. comes in with Roger's paw on his shoulder," yawned Levett.

"Oh, shut up, Levett."

Levett chuckled, and laid his head on his pillow. But a good many fellows were not thinking of sleep—though they were sleepy enough, at that hour. They could picture Vane-Carter, treading softly down dark staircases and passages,

letting himself out by the lobby window, keeping in the shadows as he dodged across the quad, climbing the school wall in the well-known corner: swinging along Fir Lane to the sea, tramping along the beach to the sea-cave in the bright moonlight. He could not be back till midnight—and if Roger was on the alert—

"Eleven!" said Bob Drake, as the faint boom from the clock-tower came through the night, "I'm going to sleep! I—oh! What's that?" He broke off with a gasp.

'That' was the sound of a quietly-opened door. And a thrill ran through the Fourth-Form fellows who were still awake, as the light flashed on in the dark dormitory.

MR. DUCAS opened the door very quietly. He switched on the light without a sound. If his form were sleeping—as they should have been, at eleven p.m.—he did not want to awaken them.

There was a frown on his brow, as he stood looking in. Eleven was Roger's own bedtime: but before turning in, he had felt it his duty to give his form the once-over, on this occasion, Roger, as Levett had remarked, was not given to 'prowling.' But he was not easy in his mind tonight: and he was thinking, with deep doubt and suspicion, of Dudley Vane-Carter.

But the frown cleared from his brow as he gazed in. All looked normal. All was silent. All was still. For at the sound of the opening door, every head had been instantly laid on a pillow, and every eye automatically closed. If the Carcroft Fourth were not asleep, at least they looked it. Roger's eye, as it ran from bed to bed, noted the form of a sleeper in every one, and he breathed a little sigh of relief. Something, he was assured, had been 'on' in his form—something that concerned the scapegrace of the Fourth. But it was not breaking out—as he had feared. Or was it?

For, after that survey of the long row of white beds, Roger, his face growing grim again, stepped in. Silently he stepped to Vane-Carter's bed. It contained—or seemed to contain—a sleeper, like the rest. But was there something a little unusually rigid in the outlines of that slumbering form? Roger bent over the pillow and the grim expression on his speaking countenance intensified. There was no hint of breathing from that sleeper—if there was a head on the pillow, it was hidden by the edge of the sheet. Grimly sure now, Roger turned back that edge—disclosing a folded sweater where a sleeper's

head should have been. A rolled rug and an overcoat made up the rest of the 'sleeper.' It was a dummy in the bed.

Roger Ducas breathed hard, and he breathed deep. Dudley Vane-Carter was gone: out of bounds at eleven o'clock at night.

Roger did not speak. He did not want to awaken his boys! He gazed long and steadfastly at the dummy figure in Vane-Carter's bed: then he turned away. As quietly as he came, he went: the light was switched off, the door closed softly. Roger was gone.

THEN there was a murmur of voices in the Fourth-Form dormitory. Slumber, which had seemed to reign supreme, dropped off like a garment.

"V. C.'s done it this time!" came from Levett, "Roger's got him on toast. If you have tears, my beloved carers, prepare to shed them when V. C. goes up to the Big Beak in the morning."

"Oh, shut up, Levett."

"Poor old V. C.," sighed Lord Talboys, "always askin' for it."

"I wish now I'd turned out, and grabbed him by his silly ears!" growled Bob Drake. "He will walk right into Roger's arms when he comes back."

There was a creak of a bed.

"Who's that getting up!" asked several voices.

"Only little me," answered Lord Talboys.

"What are you up to, Lizard?"

"I'm goin' to speak to Roger."

"What on earth for?" exclaimed Bob. "You'll get six if you go out of the dorm, fathead, and Roger spots you."

"I'll chance that!" yawned his lordship.

"But what—?"

Lord Talboys did not answer again. Once more the door of the Fourth Form dormitory opened and shut: and the juniors were left wondering.

ROGER DUCAS sat in his study, with a dark and bitter brow. He was angry—deeply and intensely angry. No master liked an expulsion in his form—and Roger loathed the very idea. But it had to come to that. The scapegrace of his form was out of bounds at night—obviously in shady company in some shady quarter. Roger had often doubted that member of his form—yet the knowledge came as a heavy blow to him.

There was no bed for Roger yet awhile. He had to wait up for the young rascal to return. And in the morning, it was going to be his painful duty to take Dudley Vane-

Carter to his head-master—and then, after sentence had been duly pronounced, to his train. For there was no doubt about the verdict: there was only one sentence for a Carcroft fellow caught 'breaking out' at night, seeking evil associations at forbidden hours.

Roger gave a start, as there was a light footstep in the passage, and his glance spun round to his study door, which he had left half-open. He stared blankly at a figure that appeared there: a slim figure in the most elegant and expensive pyjamas at Carcroft School.

"Talboys!" ejaculated Roger.

"Yaas, sir! I—"

"What does this mean? How dare you leave your dormitory at this hour? Go back to bed at once. I will deal with you in the morning."

"But, sir—"

"Go!"

"It's about V. C., sir!" said Lord Talboys, in the doorway, and eyeing Roger warily, "I—I mean, Vane-Carter—"

"I am aware that Vane-Carter is out of bounds, Talboys. You need say nothing. Go back to bed."

"You don't know where he's gone, sir."

"I think I have a fairly clear idea!" said Mr. Ducas, compressing his lips. "In any case I require no information from a boy of my form. I—"

"But you haven't, sir."

"What?"

"I've no doubt, sir, that you think V. C. has gone 'pub-crawlin'," said the Lizard, cheerfully. "I admit it looks like it. But—he hasn't. He's simply gone for a walk!"

"What!" almost howled Roger.

"A walk by moonlight, sir."

"How dare you talk such nonsense to me, Talboys. Step into my study." Roger reached for his cane. "Now—"

"Oh, gad!" murmured the Lizard. He had risked it: but he realised with dreadful clearness that silken pyjamas were a very poor protection. He came reluctantly into the study. "If you'll let me speak, sir—"

"I will listen to no such absurdity, Talboys. Bend over that table!" snapped Mr. Ducas.

"Very well, sir!" sighed the Lizard, "but I give you my word, sir, that it's O.K. A fellow dared V. C. to walk to the sea-cave at night, and he was ass enough to fall for it. You wouldn't believe him if he told you so when he came back—"

"I certainly should not!" snapped Roger.

"But it's true, sir!" And—and—

—The Lizard's courage almost

failed him. But not quite. He went on: "V. C.'s half-way to the sea-cave by this time. If you went—"

"What?"

"It's a lovely night for a walk, sir. And—and you walk twice as fast as V. C. If you went—"

"Boy!"

"You'd find it was only a silly lark, sir, and not what you think."

Roger Ducas gazed speechlessly at that bland and elegant member of his form. His grip tightened on the cane: and Lord Talboys wished fervently that he had stayed to put his trousers on. The bare idea of that cane swiping on thin pyjamas made him cringe inwardly.

But slowly, the expression on Roger's grim countenance changed. His grip on the cane relaxed. Finally, he laid it on the table, to Lord Talboys' immense relief.

"Go back to bed, Talboys!" said Roger quietly. He no longer snapped. "I shall consider what you have said. Now go."

And the Lizard went.

Roger Ducas stood, in deep thought, varying expressions chasing one another over his face. He had had no doubt—how could he have any? If Vane-Carter had told him such a story on his return, he would have regarded it as the flimsiest of haphazard inventions. But—

'Breaking out' was breaking out, even if only for an unthinking and reckless 'lark.' But if this was true, it made a difference—a tremendous difference. A walk by moonlight!—was it possible? If—if it was only that—

A smile—a very grim smile—came over Roger's face. A few minutes later, in hat and coat, he let himself out of the House, and Master's gate, in the school wall, opened quietly to his key.

DUDLEY VANE-CARTER grinned cheerfully.

He had done it!

On the lonely beach he had not met a soul. Seamark village had been sleeping when he passed. The risk of being spotted seemed nil. He had reached the sea-cave, a mile along the beach from Seamark. The tide was far out: vast stretches of ribbed sand lay glimmering in the gleam of the full round moon. A fellow with less nerve than V. C. might have been daunted by the solitude, the silence broken only by the hoarse murmur of the sea, the yawning blackness of the deep cave-mouth. But there was nothing the matter with V. C.'s nerve. On a projection of the rock within the arch of the cave, he tied a Carcroft tie—proof to meet doubting eyes,

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followed the torpedo into the sea, it would make an enormous white bubble.)

From forward: "Number One tube fired."

From Cryer: "Torpedo running."

Through the periscope I followed its track as it closed the distance between us and the merchantman. Despite its forty-five knots, the torpedo seemed to creep through the water like an aquatic snail. On . . . on . . . on, until Haddow, holding the stop-watch, ordered: "Fire Two!"

Lord, was that forty-five seconds? It seemed as many minutes.

"Number Two tube fired."

"Torpedo running."

A quick glance at the cloudless and still empty blue sky, then on to the track of the second torpedo.

At last: "Number Three tube fired."

"Torpedo running."

Now we could only hope. Savagely I gripped the periscope handles. "We've got to hit her," I whispered. "We've got to." I straightened, gestured with a finger, and the periscope was lowered back into its well. "Eighty feet. Group up. Full ahead together. Starboard twenty-five. Steer north."

It was essential to get away from the tell-tale spot where the torpedo tracks started.

I stood at Haddow's side and watched the seconds tick past on the stop-watch. Everyone's ears were strained to catch the sound of a hit.

One minute.

Someone spoke but was immediately silenced. I raised my eyes and saw Churchill peering round the door of the ward-room. He winked. I winked back.

Two minutes.

We were a fair distance now from the torpedo tracks, so I ordered: "Group down. Slow ahead together." As speed was reduced the clattering vibrations diminished, and we would be able to hear more clearly the sounds of any explosions.

Six minutes.

I was soaked with perspiration and the air inside the submarine was a heavy foul blanket. To its natural staleness were added the odours of three dozen people who had neither bathed nor washed their clothes for a fortnight.

Seven minutes.

Still we waited. A heavy despair seized my heart. By this time the torpedoes had run 8,000 yards. Either we had missed the merchantman, or she was out of range. . . . Then we heard it—the unmistakable sound of a torpedo

striking home, a noise Churchill described admirably as an outsize monkey-wrench falling on a corrugated iron roof. There was a great, spontaneous cheer from the sailors. Two minutes later we heard two deeper explosions as the other torpedoes hit the bottom.

Slowly we returned to periscope depth. The merchantman was stopped and down by the stern. A plume of white steam trailed upwards from her funnel. She listed badly to port. "We've got her," I announced. "Want a look, Number One?"

Quickly Taylor fixed his eye to the periscope. "She seems to be sinking stern first," he said—and another cheer filled the boat.

There was no longer any point in loafing around at periscope depth. The water was clear and calm and a patrolling aircraft might well sweep across from the Italian mainland. We dived to eighty feet, "fell out" diving stations, and headed seawards.

I felt I could claim the ship as "hit, probably sunk." She had a long way to go to the beach, and with Cryer's report that her propellers were stopped, a severe list to port and a hit in the stern, it did not seem a wild claim. My only fear was that no one would believe we had managed such a sinking at a range of over 8,000 yards. (There were, indeed, a few doubts about it among the sub-mariners at Gib., but they were quickly silenced when confirmation came through that the merchantman had gone down. Crutch, meanwhile, needed no confirmation before sewing a white bar on our Jolly Roger to signify the achievement.)

Steering southwards at eighty feet, we waited anxiously for retribution. Receiving a signal from the sinking merchantman, it was quite possible for a team of destroyers or patrol craft to be sent in search of us, backed up by low-flying aircraft. But none came, and I blessed our good fortune, and allowed myself to relax. I had forgotten the old Spanish proverb: "Take what you want, says God, and pay for it."

We had taken what we wanted, and were to pay for it with the ugliest incident I had yet experienced in the submarine service.

We spent a further thirty-six hours in the Gulf of Genoa anxious to stalk fresh prey, but the enemy kept his distance and the time came to start back towards Gibraltar. Although disappointed, I reckoned that even if we had a clear run home our patrol had been justified.

We were "blooded" and I had proved myself to the crew.

In a way I was not sorry to pause for breath, for the intense concentration needed for the attack on the merchantman, coming after a long, debilitating period at sea, had left me tired and temporarily washed-out. But I was back on top of my form and impatient for further action when, at dawn on April 26th, soon after we dived, Thirsk called out: "Diving stations! Captain in the control-room!"

Through the periscope I saw to starboard a schooner of some 200 tons. We were twelve miles off Bordighera, and still in the "free for all" area.

(To be continued)

Don't miss the next instalment of "UNBROKEN" in next month's issue of THE SILVER JACKET. Make sure by ordering your copy at your newsagent now.

ROGER'S WAY

(Continued from page 12)

on the morrow, that he had been as good as his word. Then, grinning, he turned to leave the cave—and walk, or rather saunter, home. V. C. was in no particular hurry. It was a lovely night for a stroll.

V. C. was feeling elated. Once more he had demonstrated what a deuce of a fellow he was: undaunted by beaks, regardless of rules: a law unto himself. Once more he had the laugh on Roger, sleeping peacefully at the school; and, if he was dreaming, never dreaming that a member of his form was out of bounds. At that thought, V. C.'s grin became a chuckle. He was more than a match for Roger!

"Vane-Carter!"

The scapegrace of Carcroft jumped clear of the ground. He had heard no footstep on the soft sand. He had not dreamed that anyone was at hand—least of all the owner of that cool, clear, cutting voice. He stared at the portly form of Roger Ducas, as that portly form appeared round the cliff, with popping eyes. He could hardly, for a moment, believe those eyes.

But he had to believe them. It was Roger! Dudley Vane-Carter was standing face to face with his form-master.

His heart beat thickly—and then seemed to cease to beat at all. The grin vanished from his face as if wiped off by a duster. His colour ebbed—it was a white face that stared at Roger Ducas. The sack! This was the sack! That word hummed in V. C.'s mind. He had

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ROGER'S WAY

(Continued from page 31)

asked for it—and he had got it! There was a long, long silence. Roger broke it.

"Have you enjoyed your walk, Vane-Carter?"

V. C. blinked at him. Whatever he might have expected Roger to say, he could not have expected that polite and casual question.

"I—I—I—" He stammered helplessly. "I—I only came out for a walk, sir! I—I—"

"Quite!" said Roger, with a nod.

"It's true, sir!" Vane-Carter had no hope that Roger would believe him. But he said it.

"Quite!" repeated Roger. "It is a beautiful night for a walk. But it is hardly safe for a schoolboy to walk alone at such an hour. We will walk together. Come."

Vane-Carter, dazed, came. He walked by Roger's side. He had to put on speed to keep pace with Roger's long, springy strides. Roger, portly as he was, was a tremendous walker. When he walked with the other beaks at Carcroft, often he walked them off their legs. His own long legs seemed tireless. Twenty miles was little to Roger. V. C., breaking into a little trot now and then, kept level. He stole a glance at his form-master's face. It did not reveal the thunderous wrath he naturally expected to read there. It did not reveal anything. There was a glimmer in Roger's eyes that he did not understand. That was all.

In silence, they reached the village of Seamark, where the lane led inland. To Vane-Carter's surprise, Mr. Ducas kept on along the beach. The amazed junior ventured to speak.

"This is the way, sir. We turn off here."

Mr. Ducas glanced at him.

"You are tired of your walk so soon, on such a lovely night?" he asked.

V. C. could only stare. Ducas spoke as if it were quite a normal thing for a Fourth-Form fellow to go out for a walk at midnight. V. C. wondered dizzily whether he was wandering in his mind.

"We will take a longer way—on such a lovely moonlight night!" said Mr. Ducas. "Come!"

Lost in wonder, Vane-Carter followed him. Seamark was left behind, and they tramped away along the glimmering sand of the beach. At several points, further on, it was possible to turn inland and reach the school by a round-about route. But Roger did not turn inland. He marched directly on, and V. C., almost wondering whether he was dreaming, walked at his side. A beak catching a fellow out

of bounds at night might have done many things—anything, but starting off on a long walk. That was unimaginable. But that was what Roger was doing.

Vane-Carter's steps began to lag. He had done a mile and a half to the sea-cave before Roger happened. Now he had done three miles since. V. C. was tough and hardy, but that walk was telling on him, especially with a long-legged beak setting the pace. It was not a warm night, but perspiration broke out on his forehead. He began to breathe in gasps. Roger, at length, gave him another glance.

"Are you tired, Vane-Carter?"

"A—a—a little, sir!" panted V. C.

"I will accommodate my pace to yours," said Mr. Ducas, considerately. "But we must not waste time, as we have a long walk before us still."

"A—a—a long walk, sir!"

"Yes, as we are going home by way of Marling."

"Marling!" gasped Vane-Carter.

It was miles to Marling—and when they reached Marling, that was still four miles from Carcroft School. Vane-Carter walked on like a fellow in a dream.

They turned from the beach at last, into a shadowy leafy lane. It was easier going, off the sand and on the firm earth. It was a relief when Roger slackened his stride still more. But Vane-Carter, by that time, was almost beyond feeling relief. His legs were aching horribly. By the time they paced through the sleeping village of Marling, he was feeling that he could scarcely drag one leg after the other. He dragged on wearily, feeling like a fellow in the grip of an awful nightmare. He could not suppress a groan, at the sight of a sign-post: CARCROFT: 4 MILES.

His legs seemed to double under him. He leaned on the sign-post, panting. Mr. Ducas came to a halt.

"A little tired?" he said, genially. "I am sorry! Perhaps, after all, it was a little injudicious to set out on a moonlight walk, Vane-Carter. Perhaps there is something to be said for toeing the line at school. But take a rest, my boy. I can give you five minutes."

Five minutes seemed, to Dudley Vane-Carter, to flash by like five unusually swift seconds. Then Roger signed to him, and he stumbled on again.

He understood—now. Roger, unexpectedly, did believe that he had only gone out for a moonlight walk that night. He was giving him a walk! He was giving him such a walk as was likely to tire him of the idea of taking moonlight walks! He was giving him such a walk

as he was likely to remember as long as he stayed at Carcroft. That dreaded interview with the Head, in the morning, was not after all to take place. But this, at the moment at least, seemed worse. Vane-Carter was sleepy—horribly sleepy. He was tired—horribly tired. He was aching—horribly aching. But he had to walk—and walk—and walk!

Roger had slowed down, by this time, to almost a funeral pace. But he kept on: and Vane-Carter had to keep on, at his side, stumbling, lurching, half-asleep and wholly wretched. Would that awful walk never end! He stumbled on—and on—and on. He did not care if he was sacked, or flogged, or both—if only that walk would end. He could have sobbed with relief when, at last, it ended, and Mr. Ducas unlocked Master's gate with his key.

Vane-Carter stumbled on. The old quad was a sea of moonlight—V. C.'s shadow danced and bobbed, as he lurched and swayed across to the House. Mr. Ducas let him in: and to V. C.'s surprise, a portly but sinewy arm helped him as he limped painfully up the staircase. Without its aid he could hardly have reached the Fourth-Form dormitory.

It was long past three o'clock. At that hour, the most wakeful fellow in the Fourth was fast asleep. Not an eye opened as Mr. Ducas switched on the light. Vane-Carter was just able to stagger to his bed. There he rolled over, not even removing his boots, and was instantly asleep. The dormitory door closed quietly.

So the Fourth saw him, when they turned out at rising-bell. The bell did not awaken Dudley Vane-Carter. Even Bob Drake's vigorous shaking only elicited a grunt from him. The Fourth went down and left him to it: and to their surprise, no remark was made by Mr. Ducas when Vane-Carter was missing from prayers and from the breakfast-table. They could only wonder what had happened—and later, when they learned, there was much merriment in the Carcroft Fourth. Roger, that morning, was fresh as paint, and quite genial. V. C. dragged about lifelessly with aching limbs. V. C. was not seen to smile that day—but he was surrounded by smiling faces.

"Old Roger's a card!" said Bob Drake, "a real, genuine, gilt-edged card! Bet you ten to one in doughnuts that V.C. won't go for any more moonlight walks this term!"

And it was so! Dudley Vane-Carter had had enough moonlight walking to last him for many terms.