

EVER MET THE BOUNDER?

Read about him
in this week's
grand school story.

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The Magnet 2^d

EVERY
MONDAY.

LIBRARY



THE BOUNDER SHOWS NO MERCY TO THE INTERLOPER!

The new boy Dallas soon falls foul of Vernon-Smith, for the Bounder imagines that Dallas has come between him and his father! (Read: "THE INTERLOPER!" this week's grand school story inside.)



THEY'VE QUARRELLED!

TWO letters have reached me to-day from readers who have quarrelled with their best chums, and in each case the writer is more than anxious to forgive and forget, and to get back to the old friendly footing. In each case, too, the writer confesses that a certain sense of pride forbids him to make the first step towards a reconciliation. Now that's rather foolish, I think. These correspondents are anxious to be friends again; they know the simplest way to bring this about, and yet their pride holds the whip hand. Almost as bad as the man who is slowly dying of poison knowing that the antidote is within his reach and yet being too lazy to stretch out a hand to grasp it. If two chums fall out—and this is a common occurrence between real pals—it is unwise for either side to hold back when reconciliation is within reach. There's no loss of pride to the fellow who extends the hand of friendship first; on the contrary, he gains something. Often, too, he goes up by leaps and bounds in the other chap's estimation, and the friendship becomes more firmly cemented than ever. So my two correspondents would do well to look up their respective pals at the first opportunity and put matters right. Good pals are hard to find—don't for goodness' sake part company with them through a difference of opinion and an overbearing pride.

FROM PARIS!

A very interesting letter reaches me from a reader in Paris whose one "little trouble" in life is that he doesn't get his *MAGNET* quickly enough. But this can easily be remedied. Instead of getting a friend in England to send out copies of this paper, as has been my chum's custom hitherto, he can either buy his copies weekly at a railway kiosk in Paris, or he can have them sent out to him direct from this office by remitting a postal order for five shillings and sixpence, which is the subscription for six months, or eleven shillings for a whole year. These prices include cost of postage.

LICKING ENVELOPES!

A query reaches me from a *MAGNET* chum who started business a couple of weeks ago. In the course of his daily duties he has to seal about a hundred letters. Is it wise, he asks, to lick the gummed flap of the envelope? In the case of my correspondent, I think it extremely unwise, for the gum on envelopes is usually very inferior stuff, and in some cases carries germs that are better kept away from the

mouth. If my correspondent has no mechanical means in his office of dampening the gum flaps, why not use a small sponge and a saucer of water? This method won't be so swift as licking the flaps, but it's far safer.

HE WANTS TO STOP GROWING!

This is an extraordinary confession, you will admit, for most of us, especially in the boyhood stage, can't grow quickly enough or big enough. But "A. S." of Norwich, says that he's growing too tall. It's alarming to him, he declares, although he feels perfectly fit. If my chum feels fit I certainly advise him not to worry about growing. And there's nothing he can do to prevent himself getting taller, anyway. Let Nature take its own course, and my correspondent will doubtless be thankful one day that he is tall.

A CHUM IN HOSPITAL!

I understand from "J. N." of Sheffield, that his pal is in hospital with a broken leg, and "J. N." asks me if I think it the right thing to do for him to visit his pal on the special days allowed by the authorities, and stay with him to cheer him up. Of course it is, "J. N." I expect your chum looks forward to these visits, and blesses the day he found you as a pal. I know it means a sacrifice of a game of football, we will say, to go round and see a pal who can't move out of his bed, but a little sacrifice is good for all of us, and doubly so where a chum is concerned. Stick to it, "J. N.," and give my regards to your pal in hospital and wish him a speedy recovery.

Next Monday's Programme:

"THE BOUNDER'S FEUD!"

By Frank Richards.

You will enjoy every line of this sparkling story of Harry Wharton & Co., and Herbert Vernon-Smith, of Greyfriars. We are getting more than a glimpse now of the old Smithy—the chap who earned for himself the nickname of the Bounder, and as the Bounder Smithy undoubtedly is fascinating. Don't miss this treat of a yarn, whatever you do!

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

Next week's instalment of this fine serial story is the goods. There's plenty of adventure and pep in it to satisfy the most critical of readers. Look out for next week's instalment then.

"HIGH JINKS AT ST. SAM'S!"

By Dicky Nugent.

There's another Dicky Nugent "shocker" on the programme, too. The fun begins to fly with a vengeance at St. Sam's when Frank Fearless gets going. For laughs you won't find another "short complete" to beat this "ticklish tale." Cheerio, my hearties!

THE EDITOR.

"I'VE BEEN UP ALL NIGHT!"

"Gosh, I am tired! Mind you, it's my own fault. You know that bit they stick in the papers about tellin' the newsagent to deliver your copy every week—saves you gettin' wet feet going round for it, and all that sort of thing? Well, I did it! I said to our newsagent: 'You might stick the "BOYS' REALM" through the letter-box on Wednesday mornings!' My idea was that I'd get it a bit earlier and have a look at it over breakfast. I went to bed Tuesday night—an' blow me if I didn't lie awake all night listening for the old "REALM" to plop on the mat when the bloke delivered it! You see, they've got Jack, Sam, and Pete running in it now—and Pete's a proper scream! I wouldn't miss it for anything, and it's only tuppence. My club's just joined the 'Realm' Football League—and we're right after one o' those Championship Cups they give away. But no more lying awake for me! I'm goin' round to collect the old paper on Wednesdays; the newsagent's going to put it by."

Every
Wednesday

The Boys'
REALM
OF SPORT & ADVENTURE

Price
Twopence.

AT DAGGERS DRAWN! The bare thought of a stranger coming between him and his father is enough to rouse all the bitterest feelings in Vernon-Smith's breast. Without waiting to meet this "stranger," Smithy jealously classes him as a cad, a rascal, and an interloper; without meeting him, Smithy is prepared to hate him and to make things as unpleasant for him as he can the moment the stranger arrives at Greyfriars!

The Interloper!

By
FRANK RICHARDS.



The opening story in this "special request" series, featuring Herbert Vernon-Smith, the reckless, yet likeable youth, who has earned the nickname of the "Bouncer."

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Shock for Smithy!

ONE for you, Smithy!" Some of the Remove fellows were looking over the letters in the rack, in morning break. It was Bob Cherry who called out cheerily to Vernon-Smith of the Remove. The Bouncer of Greyfriars did not look round.

He was standing by the adjacent window, his hands shoved deep into his pockets, looking out into the quad, with a dark expression on his brow.

The Bouncer was not in a good temper that morning.

That was not very unusual. Smithy's temper, at the best of times, was a little unreliable. Occasionally Smithy allowed himself what he regarded, apparently, as the harmless and necessary relaxation of checking his Form master's class. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was about the last Form master in the wide world to be checked with impunity. Hence the dark look on Smith's face. His palm was still aching from the pointer.

"Deaf, old bean?" called out Bob. "Oh, rats!" answered the Bouncer, without turning his head.

"Same to you, old scout, and many of em!" said Bob affably. "Don't you want your letter?"

"Bother the letter!"

"It's from your pater!" said Bob.

"Oh!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith turned round quickly enough then. Bob Cherry smiled, and took the letter from the rack.

"Catch!"

The Bouncer caught the letter in his hand. It was addressed to him in the well-known heavy-stroked hand of his father, Samuel Vernon-Smith, City mag-

istrate and millionaire.

Smithy's face cleared a good deal. If

there was a soft spot in the Bouncer's

rather hard nature, it was for his father.

Few would have suspected the cool, hard, cynical Bouncer of soft feelings of

any kind. But there was his friendship

with Tom Redwing, which had always

been a puzzle to the Remove fellows,

and there was his affection for his father,

which the Bouncer hid as if it were a

thing to be ashamed of, but which was

quite well known. There was more

good than evil in Smithy; though the

evil was there, and at times it was very

prominent.

He slit open the envelope with a little,

pearl-handled penknife, and drew out

the letter. Some of the fellows looked

at him a little enviously. It was prob-

able that there was a handsome tip in

the letter—the Bouncer had more tips

than any other fellow in the Remove, or

perhaps in all Greyfriars. There was a

crisp rustle as he unfolded the letter,

and a banknote came into view.

"Five or ten?" asked Skinner.

"Ten!" said the Bouncer carelessly.

"Lucky bargee!" said Frank Nugent.

"Why ain't my father a money-

lender?" sighed Skinner.

Some of the juniors laughed. Vernon-

Smith crumpled the letter and the bank-

note in his hand, and came across to

Skinner, with a glitter in his eyes.

Skinner backed away uneasily. He

did not like the expression on the

Bouncer's face. Skinner had forgotten,

for the moment, that that was a topic

upon which it was not safe to jest in the

Bouncer's hearing.

"What did you say, Skinner?" asked

Vernon-Smith, in a low but very distinct

voice.

"Only a joke, old chap," said Skinner.

"Don't get your rag out!"

And he backed farther away.

"If you make any more jokes like

that, Skinner, you will get your features

stiffened a bit," said the Bouncer.

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Shut up!"

Skinner flushed, and his eyes snapped;

but he shut up. When the Bouncer was

angry he was not a fellow to be pro-

voked—by Skinner at least.

Vernon-Smith turned his back con-

temptuously on Skinner. He crumpled

the banknote carelessly in his hand, and

shoved it into his pocket; and Skinner,

the Bouncer's back being turned, gave

a sneering grin. It was just like

Smithy's swank to make light of a sum

which was as much as some of his fellows

had in a whole term.

The Bouncer began to read his letter.

A puzzled look came over his face, which

deepened to astonishment. Then his

brow began to grow black—blackier than

it had been when he was staring out of

the window, thinking of Mr. Quelch's

acid tongue, and the sting in his palm

from the pointer.

"By gad!" he ejaculated suddenly.

"No bad news, Smithy, I hope?" said

Bob Cherry good-naturedly.

The Bouncer did not reply.

He continued to read the letter, his

brow growing blacker and blacker.

Under his bent brows his eyes were

glinting. A dozen fellows were staring

at him now in curiosity. They had seen

that look on the Bouncer's face before,

more than once; but never before had it

been called up by a letter from his

father.

"By gad!" repeated Vernon-Smith.

He seemed unconscious of the eyes

upon him. His hard mouth had set in a

tight line. He read the letter through,

and then turned back to the beginning,

and read it through again. He was

gritting his teeth now.

"What on earth's the trouble, old

scout?" asked Bob Cherry, who had

been watching Smithy's face in wonder

"Find out!"

"What?"

"Find out, and be hanged to you!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

Vernon-Smith crumpled the letter into his pocket, and strode away. Bob Cherry stared after him, and made a stride to follow. Bob was not easily angered, but Smithy's words would have provoked a more patient fellow.

Frank Nugent caught him by the arm. "Chuck it, Bob."

"The cheeky cad," said Bob, his face crimson. "You heard—"

"There's something amiss, old chap. Smithy's had a shock in that letter from home. Let him rip."

Bob Cherry swallowed his wrath.

"P'raps you're right, Franky. Let's get out!"

"I say, you fellows."

Billy Bunter came rolling up. The Owl of the Remove blinked at the letter-rack.

"Anything for me, you chaps?"

"Expecting anything?" grinned Skinner.

"Well, as a matter of fact, old fellow, I'm expecting a postal-order," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was not intentionally a humorist, but he could always raise a laugh. The mere mention of his celebrated postal-order was sufficient for that purpose.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Nothing for you, old fat bean," said Skinner. "But Smithy's had a tanner."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles. William George Bunter might have been supposed to have no concern in another fellow's tanner—by anyone who did not know Bunter. Bunter's concern in it was deep. A fellow who had had a tanner from home might be expected to advance a little loan to a fellow who had been disappointed about a postal-order. Anything from a sixpence to a sovereign was welcome to Bunter—he would not have despised the smallest crumb that fell from the rich man's table.

"A—a—tanner?" he ejaculated.

"A whole tanner?"

"Just that!" said Skinner. "Old Smith's the man for whacking out the swag!" The Bouncer was gone now, and Skinner was free to be as humorous as he liked.

"I—I say, you fellows, which way did Smithy go?" asked Bunter, in a hurry. "I—I remember I've got to speak to him about something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, which way did old Smithy go?"

Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles, and sighted Vernon-Smith going out into the quad. He hurried after him, leaving the juniors chuckling.

"I say, Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith did not heed. He tramped away, and Bunter broke into a trot in pursuit. His fat little legs fairly twinkled as he pursued the Bouncer across the quad.

"Smithy, old chap!"

"Go and eat coke!"

The Bouncer tramped up the path under the elms. The expression on his face as he glanced at Bunter for a moment, might have warned off a less short-sighted fellow than the Owl of the Remove. But Billy Bunter did not see it—or, at least, did not heed it. He rushed after the Bouncer again, and caught him by the arm as he was tramping moodily and savagely under the trees.

"Smithy, old chap—"

"Get away, you fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—Yaroooooh!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

roared Bunter, as the Bouncer grasped him by the collar.

Bang!

Bunter's head smote a tree-trunk with a loud concussion. Still louder was the yell that rang out from the Owl of the Remove.

"Whoooooop!"

"Now let me alone, you fat idiot!"

"Yow-wooooo!"

With a toss of his arm the Bouncer sent Bunter spinning. With another roar the fat junior collapsed on the path, and the Bouncer strode on, without giving him another look. Bunter sat and roared; and he was still roaring when the bell rang for third lesson.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Asking for Trouble!

"WHAT'S the matter with Smithy?"

"Blow Smithy!" Harry Wharton glanced at Bob Cherry.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"Well, no," said Bob. "Only the Bouncer's got his rag out this morning, and, as usual, when he's got his rag out, he thinks he can talk to fellows any way he likes."

Wharton nodded. He was aware of that little weakness of the Bouncer's. Not infrequently it had led to trouble.

The Remove fellows were coming in for third lesson. Vernon-Smith, with a scowling face, stalked into the Form-room by himself. He affected not to see Tom Redwing, who had made a move to speak to him. In his present black mood, the Bouncer, apparently, did not want to be spoken to even by the only fellow at Greyfriars whom he really liked.

"The esteemed Quelchly was ragging Smithy in class," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "No doubt that has infuriated the worthy Bouncer."

"Well, we're all ragged in class, more or less," said Harry, laughing. "That's hardly enough to make a fellow scowl like a Hun. Smithy looks as if he would rather bite than bark."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Bunter, or some other barrel?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, that beast Smithy banged my head on a tree!" said Bunter plaintively.

"Did it damage the tree?" asked Bob.

"Eh?"

"When wood meets wood, you know!" said Bob.

"Beast! I say, Harry, old fellow, you ought to take it up, as captain of the Remove, you know!" said Bunter. "It's up to you. I'm jolly well not going to have my head banged because Smithy's got his rag out! I've got a bump on my napper!"

"And didn't you get any of the tanner?" asked Skinner sympathetically.

"Too bad!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Smithy had a tanner in his letter from home," said Bob. "It doesn't seem to have bucked him much. Now, if my pater had any tenners, and if he sent me one, I should be no end bucked!"

"Your pater never learned to diddle other didders in the City," said Skinner, shaking his head. "He was mucking about in Flanders while Smithy's pater was raking in the dough."

Bob Cherry laughed.

Some of Smithy's superabundant cash would have been very useful, but it was

rather pleasanter to think of his father in Flanders in the War-time, than rooting about after profits in "big business."

"I say, you fellows, I've a jolly good mind to tell Quelchly!" said Bunter, rubbing his head.

"Don't sneak!" said Wharton tersely.

"Well, how would you jolly well like your napper banged against a tree?" demanded Bunter indignantly.

"I haven't had the experience; but I don't think I should like it a little bit," said the captain of the Remove, with a smile. "But Smithy isn't always in a bad temper, and he lends you more money than any other fellow in the Remove. Take the rough with the smooth, old fat bean!"

"Yah!"

"Smithy's no end upset by his letter from home," remarked Skinner, furtively watching the Bouncer, who had flung himself down at his desk. The other fellows were standing about the Form-room while they waited for Mr. Quelch, who was a few minutes late for once.

"Not bad news, I hope," said Wharton.

"Well, it can't be bankruptcy," said Skinner. "There was a tanner in the letter. I don't know whose tanner it was, of course."

"Oh, draw it mild, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry, laughing.

"Perhaps this new law about money-lenders being prohibited from advertising may have given old Smith some trouble," said Skinner reflectively.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Harry. "You know jolly well that Smithy's pater isn't a moneylender, Skinner."

"He's as rich as one," said Skinner. "My idea is, it may be that. One of you fellows ask Smithy."

"Pull your own chestnuts out of the fire, old bean!" chuckled Bob. "Whoever asks Smithy that had better guard with his left at the same time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's frightfully ratty," said Snoot. "He won't even speak to Redwing. Nice sort of fellow to chum with—I don't think!"

"I say, you fellows, I've got a bump on my head!" said Bunter. "You don't seem to think it matters!"

"Well, does it?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"The matterfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Bear it grinfully."

Bunter rubbed his head. He was hurt, and he was angry, and he had not the remotest hope of bagging even the smallest share in Vernon Smith's tanner from home. Bunter was feeling extremely ill-used. He was not accustomed to taking the kicks with the halpence; but in this case there had been no halpence to take with the kicks, and that made a difference. Even Bunter was not a fellow to be knocked about for nothing.

"I'll jolly well tell the cad what I think of him, anyhow!" said the Owl of the Remove.

"Keep clear," said Bob Cherry. "Smithy doesn't look in a humour for it, Bunter."

"He's not going to scare me with his scowling, if he does you, Bob Cherry!"

"What?" roared Bob.

Billy Bunter rolled across to the desks, and fixed his eyes on the Bouncer there. The Bouncer, as if unconscious that he was not the only fellow in the Form-room, was sitting with his hands



Bunter's head smote the desk with a resounding bump. "Yoooop! Help!" roared Bunter. Then the Bounder swung the Owl's hapless head towards the desk again, but this time Wharton interposed. He grasped the Bounder's arm. "That will do, Smithy!" The Bounder glared at him. "Let go my arm!" he shouted. "Let Bunter go first," said Wharton quietly. (See Chapter 2.)

in his pockets, staring moodily at the desk before him, buried in moody thought. he did not seem to care if all Greyfriars, and all the wide world, saw that he had been deeply disturbed and irritated by his letter from home.

Billy Bunter fixed his eyes on Smithy's nose, and let his glance travel down to Smithy's feet. Then it travelled up again to Smithy's nose—Bunter at the same time curling his fat lip into a contemptuous sneer.

This was what Bunter called looking a fellow up and down, and he was persuaded that it had a withering and crushing effect.

It did not seem, however, to produce that effect upon Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder gave him a dark look.

"You fat fool!"

"Yah!"

"Get out of it!"

"Yah! You're a rotten bully, Smithy," said Bunter. "If I told Quelch you'd given me a bump on the head, you'd be licked."

"I'll give you another if you don't shut up," snapped the Bounder savagely. "Get out while you're safe, you born idiot!"

"I'll do as I please," said Bunter independently. "Think you can frighten me with your scowling, like a demon in a pantomime. 'Tain't my fault if they're making a new law about money-lenders."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Skinner.

It was a case of fools rushing in where angels might fear to tread.

Vernon-Smith sprang to his feet.

Bunter jumped back, but he did not jump back quickly enough. The Bounder grasped him in a savage grasp; and, for the second time that morning, Billy Bunter's head smote hard wood. This time it was the top of the Bounder's desk that Bunter's head smote, and he found it even harder than the tree-trunk in the quad.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, in anguish.

Bang!

"Yoooop! Help!"

"Smithy!" called out Redwing anxiously.

As if further irritated by that remonstrance from his chum, the Bounder swung Bunter's hapless head towards the desk again. But this time it did not smite. Harry Wharton had reached the spot, and he grasped the Bounder's arm in time.

"That will do," he said curtly.

Smithy glared at him.

"Let go my arm!" he shouted.

"Let go Bunter first."

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"Don't be a fool, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove pacifically.

"Let the fat duffer alone!"

"I'll please myself about that."

"Well, you won't," said Wharton.

"You'll let him alone."

His grasp tightened on Smithy's arm, and the Bounder was forced to release

Bunter. All the Remove were looking on breathlessly now. Bunter backed away roaring.

Vernon-Smith clenched his free hand fiercely. A glint came into Wharton's eyes. He did not want trouble with the Bounder—very far from that. But if the Bounder struck, it was certain that there would be trouble—very serious trouble.

"Cave!"

It was a call from Hazeldene, near the door.

Mr. Quelch was rustling up the passage. There was a rush of the Remove fellows to take their places. Wharton released the Bounder's arm. For a moment more Vernon-Smith stood quivering with rage; then he dropped sullenly into his seat.

Mr. Quelch rustled into the Form-room.

All was quiet by the time he appeared; but the tense atmosphere in the Form-room did not fail to strike the Remove master. He was well aware that something had been going on just before his entrance. His keen glance swept over the class, and rested on the black, scowling face of Herbert Vernon-Smith, for a moment.

But he made no remark.

Third lesson commenced in the Remove-room. Vernon-Smith gave his Form master a little heed, if any. He sat with a black brow, making no effort

whatever to control the anger and bitterness that were welling up in his breast.

Several times Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes rested on him, and at last he spoke.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!" muttered the Bounder.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing what?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Nothing, sir!" muttered the Bounder, with savage reluctance.

"I will not allow a boy to sit in class with a scowl on his face," said the Remove master. "You forget yourself, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder made no answer.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?"

"I'm not deaf, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted.

"Take two hundred lines, Vernon-Smith!"

"Is that all?" sneered the Bounder.

The Removites almost held their breath. The Bounder, in his pride and arrogance, apparently thought that he could talk as he liked to the Remove master, as well as the Remove fellows. He was quite mistaken.

"No, Vernon-Smith, that is not all," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "you will come out before the class and bend over this chair." Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

The Bounder hesitated.

As plainly as words could have told it, his look told that he was considering whether he should disobey the order.

Some remnant of common-sense saved him from that, however, fortunately for him. With a face of thunder, he tramped out before the class, and bent over the chair.

Whack!

It was only one stroke, but it was a hefty one. The Bounder uttered no cry, but he quivered as the cane rang on him.

"Now go back to your place, Vernon-Smith, and behave yourself."

Vernon-Smith went back to his place, choking. His brow was black when he tramped out of the Form-room with the Remove, at the end of third lesson.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Interloper!

TOM REDWING came along the Remove passage, but he hesitated before he entered Study No. 4, which he shared with the Bounder.

After dinner, Vernon-Smith had gone to his study. Most of the Remove fellows were out of doors, in the bright spring sunshine. The Bounder evidently did not want company. And nobody wanted his company, just then. Harry Wharton & Co. were leaving him alone, and most of the Removites followed their example.

When Smithy was in one of his "tantrums," he was not pleasant company, and was as likely to quarrel with friend as with foe. Certainly the Famous Five wanted no trouble with him. They were not exactly friends of Smithy's, but generally they managed to keep on fairly good terms with him; and in football matters, at least, they were comrades. The Bounder was a tower of strength in the Remove eleven; and Wharton would have been sorry enough for any breach with his best winger.

In his present mood, the Bounder

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

was better left alone, and they left him alone. They could not help feeling, too, that Smithy must have had some bad news in his letter from home, which was some excuse for his "tantrums." If his father was ill, for instance, they could make very extensive allowances for him.

But never had Vernon-Smith seemed to deserve so well his old nickname of the Bounder. Whatever might be his private trouble, a fellow was expected to carry on without advertising it to all and sundry. A fellow was expected to keep a stiff upper lip. The Bounder's way was not really the Greyfriars way. It showed that there was somewhere a streak of inferior quality in Smithy; he did things that, as Lord Mauleverer remarked, were not done! It showed, in fact, that the name of "The Bounder" had not been bestowed on him without reason.

But Tom Redwing, as he paused at the door of Study No. 4, was not thinking on those lines. He was thinking that his chum was in trouble, and that he wanted to help him if he could. There had been many ups and downs in the friendship between the millionaire's son and the sailorman's son; but it was a loyal and lasting friendship. There was a great gulf fixed between the position of the Bounder, who had more money than was good for him, and that of Tom Redwing, who had only his scholarship to keep him at Greyfriars. In spite of that gulf, they had been good pals; and Redwing bore with the faults of his friend and blinded himself to them as much as possible.

He entered the study rather slowly.

Vernon-Smith was sprawling in the armchair, with his father's letter in his hand. A cigarette was in his mouth.

"Smithy, old man!"

"Well?"

"What's the row?"

Vernon-Smith seemed about to make a savage reply for a moment. But perhaps the friendly distress in Tom Redwing's face touched him a little, in spite of his irritation.

"Shut the door," he said.

Tom closed the study door.

"It's that!" said Vernon-Smith, singing the letter on the table.

"A letter from your father?"

"Yes."

"He—he's not ill?"

"Rubbish! No; he's never ill!"

"Well, that's all right, then," said Tom. "If it's nothing serious—"

"Read the letter!"

Tom picked it up, but paused.

"You want me to read it, Smithy?"

"Haven't I said so?" snapped the Bounder.

Tom Redwing did not answer that. He proceeded to peruse the letter from Samuel Vernon-Smith, millionaire. He could not help wondering what might be in that letter to produce such an effect on his chum. His eyes widened a little as he read:

"Dear Herbert,—I have a little piece of news for you which may surprise you, but will, I hope, give you pleasure. You have often heard me speak of my old friend Dallas, who died in South America some years ago. Dallas left a son in very poor circumstances, for whom I always intended to make some provision, but I was out of touch with him, and only recently an agent whom I have employed has succeeded in tracing the lad. He has been placed in a charity institution.

"I had the boy brought home to me, with the intention, if he proved suitable, of placing him at Greyfriars with you.

"He seems to be a very worthy and agreeable lad, just your age, and has made good progress under the tutor I engaged for him. I have become very attached to him, partly no doubt because he is the son of the old friend whom I have lost, but partly also on his own account, for he is a very good-hearted lad, with very pleasant manners. He seems suitable in every way to be placed at Greyfriars, and I have arranged the matter with your headmaster.

"Paul Dallas is very anxious to make your acquaintance and to make friends with you. So you may expect to see him at Greyfriars in a few days' time, and I hope that the two of you will become great friends. This would please me very much. I have practically adopted him as a son, and I want you to treat him as a brother. In old days, before we were as wealthy as we are now, I received a very great service from his father, which I was never able to repay. You will help me repay that debt to the son, I am sure.

"I shall come down to Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon to bring the lad to the school.—Your affectionate father,
"S. VERNON-SMITH."

Tom Redwing read that letter through, and looked at the Bounder with a puzzled look.

So far as honest Tom could see, there was nothing in that epistle from Samuel Vernon-Smith to irritate the Bounder to such an extent.

Why it should have thrown Smithy into a savage rage was so far a mystery to the sailorman's son.

The Bounder watched him, with a grim sneer.

"Well?" he snapped.

"Is that all, Smithy?"

"Isn't it enough?"

"Do you mean to say that this letter has made you angry?"

"It wouldn't make you angry?" jeered the Bounder.

"I don't see why it should. It seems to me that your father has acted in a very kind and generous way," said Redwing. "I should be proud to know what he had done if he were my father."

"I might have expected that from you, I suppose."

"Smithy—"

"I don't want any namby-pamby balderdash!" sneered the Bounder. "By gad, I'll make things hot for that sneaking cad who has been trying to cut me out with my own father!"

"What?"

Tom Redwing looked shocked, as he felt. Certainly he would not have drawn any such impression from Mr. Vernon-Smith's letter. But there were few matters in which Tom saw eye to eye with his chum.

"You can't see it?" jeered Smith. "This cad—this nobody from a charity school—is pulling my father's leg, of course. Because of some fancied obligation to a man that's dead and gone, the pater has taken him up, and, of course, the young rotter has schemed to get round him. Pleasant manners!" The Bounder laughed scoffingly. "I've no doubt he's got very pleasant manners—a charity kid wedging into a millionaire's house! Pleasant manners are his stock-in-trade. I've no doubt!"

"I don't think I should look at it like that, Smithy."

"I don't think you would!" agreed the Bounder contemptuously. "You'd take the pushing cad at face value, as my pater seems to have done! That's the sort of soft ass you are!"

"I don't see why you should suspect

and distrust a fellow you've never even seen."

"If I had heard that a man had picked my father's pocket, I should suspect and distrust him without having seen him!"

Tom smiled faintly.

"But this kid Dallas hasn't done that, Smithy."

"He has—and worse!" said the Bounder savagely. "By gad, I never thought the old man could be so soft! I never supposed that he was sentimental! I never believed that he cared a ha'penny for any living being in the world—excepting myself! Men have tried to over-reach him often enough, and he's always left them in the soup! And now he's let a mere kid from a charity school pull wool over his eyes!"

Vernon-Smith sprang from the chair and tramped restlessly, angrily, about the study.

Redwing watched him in silence.

"A rank outsider! A kid from a charity school! By gad, fancy his feelings at getting into a millionaire's house, with nothing to do but to fool an old man to make his fortune! I can imagine that he had pleasant manners—very pleasant indeed! Of course, he's laughing at my father in his sleeve all the time!"

"That would be pretty rotten. But I really don't see why you should think so, Smithy."

"Don't I know human nature?" said the Bounder scoldingly.

"I'm afraid you know the worst side of it more than you know the better side, Smithy, old chap."

"I'm not an innocent fool like you to be taken in by any scheming humbug, you mean?"

"But, dash it all, Smithy, your father knows his way about!" said Tom. "You've often told me he's the hardest and keenest man of business in London. Is that the sort of man to have his leg pulled by a scheming fellow—a kid, too? It's rot!"

"Every man has his weakness!" said the Bounder, with a sneer. "The hardest case has a soft spot somewhere, and if you can get at it you've got him under your thumb!"

"Perhaps. But—"

"This outsider has worked the gratitude stunt, of course—made the old man feel no end lugged," sneered Smithy.

"I've heard about the man Dallas—a soft sort of fool who came a mucker, and had to clear off to South America. I shouldn't wonder if he was wanted in England—I know there was something fishy about the way he went. A swindler, very likely."

"Your father wouldn't be friends with a swindler."

"A man's friends with all sorts in the City."

"At least, he wouldn't be attached to him, and remember him so kindly, if the man had been a rotter. You're talking wildly, Smithy."

"Oh, cut it out!" snapped the Bounder. "I dare say I'm a fool to care whether my father takes up another fellow and forgets his only son. Yes, I'm a fool right enough!"

"But, good heavens, Smithy, he hasn't—there's nothing to make you suppose so. Your father's rich enough to provide for the orphan son of an old friend—he will never miss the money, and you wouldn't, either. You don't really care much about money, Smithy—you've had too much of it to value it as other fellows do. As for your father forgetting you, that's utter rot. As I read it, this letter shows affection and trust."

"It's a pity you're not my father's son, instead of me," said the Bounder sardonically. "You'd play up cheerfully and sweetly while you were being thrown over for an outsider."

Redwing was silent.

He understood that it was the Bounder's affection for his father—a jealous affection—that was at the bottom of this fierce resentment. It seemed to Smithy that a stranger was coming between him and his father, and the bare thought of it was enough to rouse the Bounder's bitterest feelings.

"You're a simple old ass, Tom," said the Bounder. "When you read a letter you read what's written there, and no more."

"What else can a fellow read, Smithy?"

"He can read between the lines, if he's got any horse sense. Can't you see that my father is no end taken with this kid Dallas?"

"He seems attached to him."

"He hopes we shall be great friends. You can't see anything in that?"

"It's natural enough, if he's adopted him."

"What right has he to adopt him—or anybody?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith fiercely.

"Hasn't he a son already? But that isn't all. The pater has never really liked my friendship with you."

"I—I am afraid that's so," faltered Tom. "He's been very kind to me; but he can't really think a poor sailor-man's son the best kind of friend for his son to make at school. It's natural, and I shouldn't think of resenting it."

"Do you ever resent anything?" scoffed the Bounder. "The pater would prefer me to chum with a fellow like Wharton, or Lord Mauleverer—a chap who could be useful to me after leaving school. He thinks that if I make friends with this fellow Dallas I shall drop you."

Tom made an uneasy movement.

"I—I hardly think so, Smithy. I don't see anything to show that in his letter."

"Oh, rot! I'm not to choose my own friends. I'm to have this cad thrust on me. By gad"—Smithy gritted his teeth—"if he really butts into my school, I'll make him sorry he came!"

"Your father can't have any idea how you feel about it, Smithy."

"I'm going to tell him," said the

Bounder grimly. "I'm not going to leave him in any doubt about that!"

He clenched his hands.

"I—I'd take time to think it over, Smithy, if I were you," said Redwing hesitatingly. "Your father thinks the whole world of you, but he's a hard and imperious man. If you set yourself up against him, it would make him angry; but I don't think it would make him change his plans."

"You think this cad Dallas has got him so fast that he would win if I set up against him?"

"Nothing of the sort—I never said that, or thought of it. The fellow may be all you think—I've never seen him. But it seems to me unlikely: your father is no fool to have his leg pulled. I think he will be angry and resentful if you oppose his wishes unreasonably."

"You call it unreasonable?"

"Well, yes. Until you know more of the kid—"

"I don't want to know anything of him!" said the Bounder savagely. "I want him to go back where he belongs, and leave my family alone. A fellow who gets himself adopted by a millionaire can't wonder at being suspected of being a scheming rascal!"

"But did he? Your father says that he had an agent tracing the kid. He found him and took him up. Dallas can have had no hand in that."

"Oh, cheese it!"

Obviously, the Bounder did not desire to hear anything in favour of the fellow whom he regarded as an interloper.

"I'll make his life a misery at Greyfriars, if he does come!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "And you'll help me!"

"Smithy!"

"Will you?" shouted the Bounder angrily.

"I sha'n't be down on a chap I don't know, and have never seen, if that's what you mean, Smithy," said Tom Redwing steadily.

The Bounder gave him a savage look.

"Perhaps you'll back him up against me!" he sneered. "Perhaps you've got a fellow-feeling for the charity rotter. Birds of a feather!"

The scholarship junior flushed crimson.

"That's a rotten thing to say, Smithy. I think we'd better talk no more till you're cooler."

"Are you backing me up against this cad?"

"Not till I find that he's a cad, at least."

"Then leave me alone—and be hanged to you!"

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Oh, shut up! Leave me alone!"

Tom Redwing quietly left the study. He did not want to quarrel with Smithy—he liked him too well for that, in spite of his bitterness, his hard and jealous nature, and his ungovernable temper. More than once Tom's patience had been put to a hard strain, and he had stood it. When the Bounder was cooler, he would think differently—at least, Tom hoped so. But he realised that the trouble now was more serious than it had ever been before; for it was the good, as well as the evil, in Smithy's nature, that had caused this outburst of furious bitterness. It was possible that his opinion of Paul Dallas was correct; but, in any case, the Bounder could only see in him an interloper, who had robbed him of at least a part of his father's affection. Both from the good and the evil in him, Vernon-Smith already hated the interloper.

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That they would be enemies at Greyfriars was obvious, and Redwing's position was likely to be a very difficult one, between the two of them.

As he went down the Remove passage, the Bounder slammed the door of No. 4 after him, and Tom heard his hurried footsteps, pacing the study.

It was not till the bell rang for afternoon classes that Herbert Vernon-Smith was seen again by his Form fellows. Then he came into the Remove room with a black brow.

Skinner winked at his friends. "Smithy's still got 'em!" he remarked.

And some of the juniors laughed.

There was no doubt that the Bounder had still "got 'em," as Skinner elegantly expressed it. He sat scowling in class, and more than once that afternoon he was in trouble with Mr. Quelch. The Remove master did not know of the trouble that was on the Bounder's mind, and very probably would not have sympathised in the least had he known. Smithy received the sharp edge of his Form master's tongue, and then lines, and then the pointer, all of which made his rage blacker and blacker.

His look and his mood were so black and bitter when classes were dismissed that even Tom Redwing gave him a wide berth. The Bounder tramped out into the dusky quadrangle by himself.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Father and Son!

"YOUR lines?" Mr. Quelch rapped out the words as Vernon-Smith came to his study some time after class.

The Remove master supposed that the junior had come with his lines; but the Bounder's hands were empty.

"No, sir; I—"

"What is it, then?" asked Mr. Quelch coldly.

The sullen and rebellious junior was in his black books, and Mr. Quelch had no graciousness to waste upon him.

"I was going to ask you, sir—"

"Well?"

"If I might use your telephone, sir, if you'd be so kind as to give me leave," said the Bounder, forcing himself to speak respectfully.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

As the Bounder had been inattentive, impertinent, and troublesome all through the day, the Remove master was not very much disposed to grant him a favour. Moreover, it was an unusual request.

"Really, Vernon-Smith—" began the Form master sharply. "I am surprised—I am quite surprised—"

"My father, sir," said the Bounder hurriedly, before Mr. Quelch could quite utter his refusal. "He's written me a letter, and—and it's rather important to speak to him about it."

Mr. Quelch's face cleared a little. "Ah! Doubtless you have heard from your father in reference to the boy—"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good! The Head spoke to me about the matter to-day," said Mr. Quelch. "It appears that Mr. Vernon-Smith's protege is to come into the Remove, and will arrive at the school on Wednesday. No doubt you wish to assure your father that you will welcome the boy, as he desires."

The Bounder controlled the expression on his face.

"I should like to tell my father what I think about it, sir, if you will let me."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

he said, "I shall catch him before he leaves the city if you will allow me to phone."

"Certainly, Vernon-Smith!" Mr. Quelch rose. "I am going to Mr. Prout's study for some minutes. Use the instrument while I am gone."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gave the Remove a rather curious and penetrating glance. Vernon-Smith had puzzled him very much that day, as well as angered him, and possibly he divined some connection between the Bounder's sulky, savage mood and the news he had received of Paul Dallas. He made no remark, however, but quitted the study, leaving the Bounder to make his call.

Vernon-Smith rang up his father's number in the City and waited for the trunk call to come through. He did not have to wait long; the bell rang, and he took up the receiver again.

"Herbert Vernon-Smith, speaking from Greyfriars," he said, into the transmitter. "I wish to speak to my father."

"Mr. Vernon-Smith has left the office, sir," came the reply.

"Left so early?"

"A little earlier than usual to-day, sir."

"He has gone home, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; I believe so."

"Very well."

The Bounder rang off, and called the exchange again, and asked for his father's home number. It was another trunk call, and he had to wait again, and he waited angrily. He wanted to get his talk through before Mr. Quelch returned to the study. What he had to say to his father was certainly not for his Form master to hear.

There was a tap at the study door and it opened. The Bounder looked round savagely.

It was Billy Bunter who came in.

Bunter blinked at Vernon-Smith in surprise.

"You!" he ejaculated. "Where's Quelch?"

"Find out!"

"I've got my lines for him."

"Bother your lines, and you, too!"

Bunter laid his impot on the Form master's table and regarded the Bounder with a grin.

"What game are you playing here?" he asked. "Some jape on Quelch, what?"

"You fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Get out!" snapped the Bounder.

"I'll suit myself about that," said Bunter independently. "If Quelch's gone out I suppose I can stay in his study as much as you can, Smithy."

The Bounder's eyes glinted at him.

"Mr. Quelch has let me use his phone," he said. "I'm waiting for a call. Now clear!"

"Well, I'll wait, too," grinned Bunter.

"Will you?" said the Bounder savagely.

He made a stride towards Bunter, and the fat junior fairly jumped to the door.

At that moment the bell rang, and Vernon-Smith turned to the telephone. Bunter had left the study hastily. The Bounder forgot his existence the next moment.

"Hallo!"

"Herbert Vernon-Smith speaking from the school. Has my father come in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please ask him to come to the telephone."

"Yes, sir."

Smithy held the receiver and waited. His back was to the door as he stood, and he had quite forgotten Bunter; he

had more important matters than the Owl of the Remove to think of. But William George Bunter had not forgotten. Bunter had been surprised to find the Bounder in Mr. Quelch's study, and he was extremely interested to know what he intended to do there. Finding that Smithy really was at the telephone, Bunter left the door an inch ajar, and remained at the opening. Smithy, he had no doubt, was up to some "game," and Bunter wanted to know what it was. As it did not concern him in the very least, the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars was naturally very deeply interested.

"Is that you, father?"

"Yes, Herbert," came Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith's deep and somewhat rasping voice over the wires. "So you rang me up, hey?"

"I rang you up in the City, but they told me you had gone home, father."

"Yes; I was earlier than usual to-day. I promised to take Paul on a joy ride."

"Paul?" repeated the Bounder.

"You know who Paul is—you had my letter this morning?"

"Yes."

"I've mentioned him to you before, Herbert. I think I told you I had a man looking for Dallas' boy?"

"I dare say you did. I've forgotten."

"Well, as I told you in my letter, they found him some weeks ago, and he's here now. A very decent lad, Herbert."

"Really?"

"I think you will like him, my boy."

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"I don't know that I have any special liking for charity cads, father," he answered.

"What? What? That isn't what I expected from you, Herbert. The boy has never had your chances. Dallas left him quite unprovided for. He has been in a charity school; but that is no fault of his, I suppose. He has made the most of what education they gave him there, and he has picked up wonderfully under his tutor since. A studious lad!"

"You never let me know that you had him under your roof."

"I was undecided whether to send him to Greyfriars or not. Having finally decided to do so, I've told you about it. What the deuce do you mean, Herbert? Is your father to report to you and account to you for what he does—what?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith was getting angry.

But he was not so angry as his son; and for his father's anger Smithy cared nothing just then.

Always Samuel Vernon-Smith was at his City office after most other City men had gone home. His business was his pleasure, and he devoted himself to it, taking pride in adding thousands and tens of thousands to the millions he already possessed. Only for some important reason would Mr. Vernon-Smith leave his office early. And that unknown waster from a charity school was an important reason! The millionaire cared enough about him to leave his office early to take the fellow on a joy ride! It did not occur to the Bounder's jealous and angry mind that Mr. Vernon-Smith was giving the lad a little treat before he left for school, and that probably it was the only one that Paul Dallas had had. Smithy visualised a series of joy rides, theatres, expensive entertainments. While he was grinding at school this interloper was in his home taking what ought to have belonged to him. If his father wanted to take someone for a joy ride, or any other entertainment he could have asked leave from Dr. Locke for his son to come home from school. That was how Smithy looked at it.



Bunter laid his impot on the Form master's table and regarded the Bounder with a grin. "What game are you playing here?" he asked. "Some jape on Quelch, what?" "You fat fool!" snapped the Bounder. "Get out! I'm waiting for a phone call." "Well, I'll wait, too!" grinned the fat junior. (See Chapter 4.)

The bitterness that swelled up in his breast was so great that it prevented him from speaking for some moments.

But he found his voice at last. "So you've taken up this charity cad Paul Dallas, father, and practically adopted him?"

"Yes; and I will not allow you to speak of the boy in such terms, Herbert!" boomed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "How dare you!"

"You're bringing him to Greyfriars on Wednesday?"

"Yes—as I've said."

"You want me to be friends with him?"

"Certainly! And I expect you to obey my wishes."

"I've no use for an interloping adventurer," said the Bounder, with savage bitterness. "I'll never speak to the cad! Take him up if you like—I won't!"

"You disrespectful young rascal! Is that the way to speak to your father?"

"It's the way to speak to any man who's fool enough to let his leg be pulled by a scheming young scoundrel!"

"What—what—what?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith seemed scarcely able to believe his ears.

"Herbert! You—you—How dare you!" he spluttered.

"I've told you what I think," said the Bounder.

"How dare you think anything of the

kind! By gad! If I were with you now, Herbert, I'd—I'd—"

"Oh, I know, I know!" sparled the Bounder. "What do I matter now—now you've got a new favourite? I know what to expect now."

There was a pause. Then Mr. Vernon-Smith spoke again in a gentler voice.

"I think I understand, Herbert my boy. But you are quite mistaken; you should not fancy that my care for my old friend's orphan could make any difference to my affection for you. I don't value him a sixpence in comparison, though I am quite attached to the lad."

"Don't send him to Greyfriars, then," said the Bounder bitterly. "Let him go back to his charity school."

"Nonsense! You—"

"Let him go anywhere but here! I don't want him here."

"You are not the only person to be considered, Herbert. All the arrangements are made to enter Paul at Greyfriars. Can I cancel them at the last moment—tell Dr. Locke, by Jove, that I'm not sending the boy, after all, because my son is a jealous young ass, and makes a mountain out of a molehill? Don't be a fool, Herbert!"

"Then you're sending him to Greyfriars?"

"Of course I am!" rapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I tell you, don't be a fool. You've got quite a mistaken idea of the boy; you'll change it fast enough

when you see him and make his acquaintance. He is very anxious to be friends with you."

"Very anxious to pull the wool over your eyes, you mean," said the Bounder contemptuously.

"Herbert!"

"I tell you I won't stand it, father!" the Bounder exclaimed passionately. "You've no right—"

"That will do, Herbert!" the millionaire's voice cut in harshly. "I've indulged you and spoiled you till you've forgotten the respect due to your father. Say no more. I shall be at Greyfriars on Wednesday with Paul Dallas, and I expect you to treat him well. Mind, fond as I am of you, Herbert, I will stand no nonsense in this matter. You will obey my wishes—or my commands, at least. That is enough!"

And the millionaire, evidently very much ruffled, cut off.

"Father, I—"

But there was no answer. Savagely the Bounder jammed the receiver back on the hooks with a force that made the telephone rock.

He strode across to the study door and dragged it open and strode out into the passage—and Billy Bunter jumped away just in time to avoid a collision with the angry Bounder.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Vernon-Smith gave him a furious look.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997,

"You fat rotter! You've been listening—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

The Bounder shoved him violently away and strode along the passage.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

News for the Remove!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag, bursting with news.

He did not notice for the moment that Vernon-Smith was there. The Bounder had gone into the Rag; but not for company, apparently, for he had thrown himself into a chair by the fire, and was sitting silent, with a sullen and forbidding face. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not observe him as he rolled in full of news.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "What is it this time, Bunter? Don't tell us your postal-order's come! Anything but that!"

"The strain upon our esteemed credulity would be too terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gravely.

"It's about Smithy!"

"Is it?" said Bob, laughing, with a glance at the sullen Bounder—a glance that Bunter did not follow.

Some of the Removites chuckled.

It was rather entertaining to see Bunter discussing Smithy within a few yards of the angry Bounder without knowing that he was there.

"No end of a game!" said Bunter.

"I say, he had the cheek to use Quelch's phone in Quelch's study, you know. He was cheeking his pater on the phone—rotten bad form, cheeking one's pater, you know. But Smithy's no gentleman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

"Blessed if I can see anything to chuckle at in that!" said Bunter, puzzled.

"A chap's no gentleman to cheek his pater."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Squiff.

"Passed unanimously!" chortled Bolsover major, with a look at the sullen, silent Bounder. "I'm sure everybody who hears you agrees, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not yet know that Vernon-Smith was among his hearers. There were a dozen Remove fellows in the Rag, and Bunter did not specially notice the sullen, silent fellow in the armchair by the fire. Bunter's spectacles were large and prominent, but they did not seem to help the Owl of the Remove very much.

"Old Smith was in no end of a bate, I fancy," went on Bunter. "I think he would have thrashed Smithy if there hadn't been the length of a telephone-wire between them. He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy called him names," said Bunter. "Actually called his father names! He's that sort. Not decent, is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat duffer, chuck it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It's no bizny of yours, anyhow!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"How do you know what Smithy was saying on the phone, anyhow?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "Eavesdropping, I suppose?"

"It was quite by chance, of course. I went to Quelch's study with my lines," said Bunter. "I happened to hear Smithy by sheer accident. The rotter thought I was listening when he came out. He would, you know; he's

that sort of a suspicious cad! He shoved me!"

"I hope he shoved you hard!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Yah! I'd have jolly well licked him, only he cut off pretty quick while I was getting my breath."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites, quite entertained at the idea of the hefty Bounder cutting off to escape the wrath of William George Bunter. Even Smithy's savage face broke into a grin.

"There's a new kid coming to Greyfriars," went on Bunter. "Old Smith has adopted a kid out of a charity school and he's sending him to Greyfriars. Rather thick, what?"

"Fathead!"

"It's true!" asserted Bunter. "I heard it all. Smithy was going over it on the phone, and he said so. I heard it all from beginning to end."

"By sheer accident?" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Ye-es—exactly. Smithy was in a rage about it. He's jealous of the charity kid. Kid named Dallas—that's the name. Old Smith has picked him out of a charity school and adopted him."

"What rot!"

"Fact!" said Bunter. "You'd never think it of a hard old case like Smithy's pater, would you? But it's a fact. Smithy's frightfully wild about it. I suppose he thinks the kid will get some of the money! He, he, he!"

"If it's true, Mr. Vernon-Smith must be a jolly kind-hearted man!" said Bob Cherry.

"Smithy didn't seem to think so. He, he, he! Just what Smithy would think, you know—suspicious cad! I've always told you fellows that Smithy was no gentleman. If he were here now, I'd tell him to his face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, here he is!" roared Hazeldene. "Stand up, Smithy, and let Bunter tell you to your face."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith stood up.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, and his little round eyes almost bulged through his spectacles.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go ahead, Bunter!"

"Pile in!"

"I—I—I say, Smithy, old chap," gasped Bunter. "I—I—I was only joking, of course. I—I really admire you, you know. I—I don't think you're a swanking cad bursting with filthy money, like some of the fellows do. I—I—I don't really."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith gave the Owl of the Remove a lowering look. Bunter backed away in alarm.

But the Bounder made no motion towards him. For reasons of his own, Smithy was not sorry that Bunter was spreading the story of a "charity cad" in the Lower Fourth. It was likely to make matters all the more unpleasant for Paul Dallas when he came to Greyfriars.

"Is there anything in it, Smithy?" asked Skinner curiously. "Is that what you've had your rag out for all day?"

The Bounder's lip curled.

"It's true," he said. "My father's been taken in by a rotter, a young, pushing cad from a charity school. The fellow's pulled his leg to the extent of getting sent to Greyfriars. The Head seems to have agreed to it. It's disgraceful enough. I sha'n't speak to the cad when he comes here. I hope no decent fellow will."

Skinner whistled.

"A kid from a charity school!" he said. "That's rather thick for Greyfriars!"

"Rotten!" said Snoop.

"Jolly thick, and no mistake!" said Bolsover major. "Some sneaking, snuffing sort of rotter, I suppose."

"Blessed if I know what the Head's thinking of," said Skinner. "Look here, Smithy, you ought to tell your father it won't do!"

"I've told him!" said the Bounder grimly. "The fellow has got round him with some pathetic yarn or other. A sneaking, scheming young rotter—the son of a man who went bankrupt and cleared off to South America. He's made a fool of my father, with his sneaking, soapy ways. And I dare say he expects to wedge in here and be taken up by decent fellows. It won't work so far as I'm concerned."

"I should jolly well think not!" said Skinner. "Look here! Is he coming into the Remove?"

"Yes."

"We've a right to object to having a charity kid shoved into our Form," said Skinner, glancing round at the Removites. "It's up to you, Wharton, as captain of the Form, to speak to Quelch about it."

"What rot!" said Harry.

"Perhaps you like charity kids?" sneered Snoop.

"Certainly I shouldn't be down on the kid without even seeing him," said the captain of the Remove tersely. "If his father left him on the rocks, I suppose he had to live somehow. Must have had a hard time, I should think, and I don't see why we should make it any harder, if Smithy's father is giving him a chance."

"Just like you, isn't it, to set up against every fellow in the Form!" said Skinner, with a sneer.

"I don't think every fellow in the Form agrees with you, Skinner. I shouldn't think much of the Remove if they did."

The Bounder's eyes gleamed at Wharton.

"I'm down on the fellow!" he exclaimed. "I know that he is a sneaking, pushing, soft-soaping cad!"

"Well, if you know him—" said Harry.

"I haven't seen him."

"Then how the thump do you know that a description like that fits him?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove rather warmly.

"Well, I do know it! He's got round my father to pay his fees here," said Vernon-Smith. "He's pulling my father's leg for what he can get!"

"That's all rot!"

"What?"

"Your father's not the man to have his leg pulled," said Harry. "He's too jolly wide. Utter rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to back up Smithy," said Billy Bunter. "I'm shocked, now I come to think of it, you know. I couldn't possibly associate with such a fellow."

"Perhaps he wouldn't let you," grunted Johnny Bull. "He may be a little too particular for that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! A fellow must draw a line somewhere," said Bunter. "My people wouldn't like it. My titled relations would—"

"Probably this kid Dallas has got as many titled relations as you have, old fat bean," grinned Peter Todd.

"Beast! I say, you fellows—"
"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"
"Give the fellow a chance, anyhow," said Squiff. "If he's what Smithy says, he won't have a good time in the Remove. But give him a chance. Fair play's a jewel."

"That's all very well for you," said Bunter. "I hope I've got rather better principles, Squiff."

"Oh, my hat!"
"And if you've got any sense, Smithy, you won't go off the deep end till you've seen the fellow, at least," said Harry Wharton.

"Mind your own business!" said the Bounder savagely.

And he tramped out of the Rag.
In the Remove studies that evening there was a good deal of talk on the subject of the new junior, who was to arrive on Wednesday.

Obviously, there was going to be trouble between him and the Bounder when he came, and that was interesting in itself. The Bounder of Greyfriars held a large space in the public eye in the Greyfriars Remove. A good many fellows, certainly, condemned his attitude, in declaring war upon a fellow whom he had never seen. But there was no doubt that Smith's description of the unknown Dallas had a good deal of effect on some of the Removites. It was probable that the new fellow, when he came, would find life at Greyfriars anything but a bed of roses.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No Go!

TOM REDWING stood in the big doorway of the School House on Wednesday afternoon, with a thoughtful and rather troubled frown on his face. He was looking after the Bounder, who had just left the House.

That afternoon Mr. Vernon-Smith was to arrive with his adopted son. The Bounder's temper had not improved of late. It had grown more restless and sulky and sullen. He had been in more trouble than ever with his Form master, and lines had accumulated on the Bounder, till he hardly knew how many were due. Several times his impositions had been doubled, after being left unwritten; and Mr. Quelch's patience was growing very thin. The Bounder did not seem to care. All that was evil in his nature was on the surface now.

The Remove were booked that afternoon for a football-match with a visiting team from Highcliffe; and the Bounder, of course, was down to play. Courtenay's team from Highcliffe required the best men Harry Wharton could put in the field, and the Bounder was one of the best. But it was obvious that Smithy was not thinking much, if anything, about football. Tom Redwing suspected that he intended to absent himself from the school that afternoon, and to be out of gates when his father came.

Such a proceeding was certain to anger Mr. Vernon-Smith very deeply. But it was quite in keeping with the Bounder's reckless character. He was giving full rein to the evil that was in him, and he cared nothing for consequences.

Redwing turned as he felt a tap on his arm. He turned to meet Harry Wharton's smiling glance.

"Where's Smithy?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Just gone out."

"Not out of gates?" exclaimed Harry.

"Oh, no!" said Tom hastily. "I—I think he's gone down to the bike-shed."
"Well, Courtenay's lot's coming along in an hour's time," said Harry. "I think I'll speak to him."

The captain of the Remove went round to the bike-shed.

He found Vernon-Smith there, taking his machine off its stand.

The Bounder looked at him rather darkly, but did not speak.

"Going out?" asked Wharton amicably.

"Yes."

"Kick-off at three, you know."

The Bounder started.

"Oh, my hat! I'd forgotten!"

"Forgotten the Highcliffe match?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes," said the Bounder, with a sneer. "I've got other matters to think about. Football isn't everything, though you fellows seem to think that it is."

"Well, I've reminded you now, old scout," said Wharton, keeping his temper.

"You'll have to find another man this afternoon," said Vernon-Smith abruptly.

"Why?"

"I'm going out."

"I don't know why you're going out, Smithy, and don't care, either; but it can't be so important a matter as all that. You can't let the side down at the last moment."

"It's not the last moment, if kick-off's at three. It's only two now."

"It comes to the same thing," said Wharton hotly. "You're down to play, and we want you."

"Well, I'm sorry."

The Bounder looked sorry, for that matter. He was a keen footballer, and he had been looking forward to the Highcliffe match until more personal matters had driven it out of his thoughts.

Wharton paused. He was angry, but he was determined not to quarrel with the Bounder if he could help it.

"Well, this is rather serious, you know," he said quietly. "We want our best men to beat Highcliffe, Smithy. But if it's something you think you can't put off—"

"It jolly well is!"

"But isn't your father coming this afternoon?" asked Harry, remembering. "I've heard a lot of talk about your pater bringing that new kid, Dallas, to Greyfriars this afternoon."

"Yes."

"You're not going out of gates while your father's here?"

"Yes."

Wharton understood then, and his eyes glinted. Really, it was a little too much for the patience of a keen football captain.

"I think I catch on," he said very quietly. "You're going to keep clear of your father because he's bringing that kid you dislike to the school."

"That's my business."

"Not wholly," said the captain of the Remove. "A member of the Form eleven has his duty to the team to consider."

"Don't preach to me."

"This isn't preaching, Smithy. If you let the team down this afternoon because you've got your back up against a fellow you've never seen, there will be trouble."

"Let there be trouble, then," said the Bounder carelessly. "I'm rather used to trouble. I don't mind."

"It won't do, Smithy."

"I rather think it will have to," said the Bounder coolly. "I'm going out this afternoon. That's settled."

"Your father will expect to see you."

"Let him."

"Smithy, old man," said Wharton earnestly, "don't be a fool! A fellow can't treat his father like that."

"Can't he?" said the Bounder. "You'll see!"

There was a pause.

The Bounder's face expressed sullen determination.

"Well, your family affairs are no business of mine, of course," said Wharton at last. "But football is a different matter. We want you to line up with the Remove this afternoon, Smithy."

"Can't be done! Put another man in."

"We haven't another man to replace you with your form. You know that."

"Sorry!"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"A fellow can't play fast and loose with school matches like this, Smithy."

"You can turn me out of the team, if you like," said the Bounder indifferently. "You did so last season, when you got your back up. Do it again."

"Nobody wants to do that."

"Well, I've said I'm sorry, and so I am," said Vernon-Smith. "But I can't play this afternoon; I've got other things on hand. Redwing's a good man."

"He's nowhere near your form."

The Bounder did not answer that. It was obvious that his obstinate mind was made up, and that nothing that Wharton could say would alter his determination.

"Well, if you won't play, you won't," said Harry at last. "I shan't act hastily, Smithy, but you can see for yourself that this sort of thing can't go on."

With that the captain of the Remove walked out of the bike-shed.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

He did not want to quarrel with Wharton, but in his present mood he did not care very much about it. He did not want to be dropped from the Remove eleven, but he would have preferred even that to giving up his own wilful way. He was bitterly determined that he would not be in the school to meet his father when Mr. Vernon-Smith brought the interloper there.

He wheeled his bicycle out.

"Smithy, old chap!"

It was Tom Redwing. The Bounder looked at him with a sneering smile.

"Well?" he rapped.

"You're not going out of gates?"

"I am going out of gates."

"Your father—"

"I've had that from Wharton. Cut it out!"

"He will be angry, Smithy."

"Let him!"

"Not only that," said Redwing; "he will be hurt."

"He will have Dallas to console him," said the Bounder ironically. "Is that all?"

Redwing sighed.

"I wish you'd think better of it, Smithy."

"Well, I won't! Cut along and speak to Wharton. You've got a chance for the football-match this afternoon, as I'm standing out."

And the Bounder wheeled his bike on, heedless of the distress in Tom Redwing's face.

"Vernon-Smith!"

It was a sharp, acid voice. Mr. Quelch, with a knitted brow, bore down on the Bounder as he was wheeling his machine down to the gate.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth. He had forgotten his Form master and the accumulated lines that were due.

"Have you written your lines, Vernon-Smith?"

"N-n-o, sir!"

"And you are going out?"

"It's a half-holiday, sir," said the Bounder sulkily.

"You will take back your bicycle, Vernon-Smith, and go to the Form-room at once! You will not leave the Form-room till every one of your lines is written! You have six hundred!"

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Your father is coming to the school this afternoon," went on Mr. Quelch. "If Mr. Vernon-Smith should arrive before your detention is over, I will send you word. But you will not leave the Form-room for any other reason! You understand me?"

"Yes, sir!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

There was no help for it. Mr. Quelch, well aware of the junior's rebellious disposition, watched him wheel the bicycle back and replace it on the stand. Then he followed him to the Remove Form-room, and saw him start on the belated imposition.

"I warn you, Vernon-Smith, that you are trying my patience very hard!" he said. "I warn you to take care!"

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder, as impudently as he dared.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips and left the Form-room.

Smithy sat at his desk, chafing.

His scheme could not be carried out now. He was reckless enough to leave the Form-room without leave and take his chance of punishment afterwards. But he was well aware that the Remove master distrusted him, and would be keeping a wary eye open that afternoon. Vernon-Smith did not want to be locked up in the punishment-room; the Form-room was better than that.

With a bitter face, and black bitterness in his heart, he sat at his desk and wrote lines. From the distance, later on, he heard shouts on the football ground, and gnawed his lips as he heard them. The Remove were playing Highcliffe, and he might have been playing football instead of grinding out lines. Mr. Quelch would have let a member of the team off detention if he was wanted in a school match. He might have been playing in the Highcliffe match, and here he was, grinding out weary Latin. His own sullen temper was at fault, but the Bounder did not realise that, or did not choose to realise it. With growing anger and bitterness, he sat in the lonely Form-room grinding out lines.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The New Fellow!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

It was half-time on Little Side when Billy Bunter rolled up, full of excitement.

"I say, you fellows, old Smith's come!" bawled Bunter.

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry.

"He's got the new kid with him."

"Bless the new kid!"

The Remove footballers were not likely to be interested just then in Mr. Vernon-Smith and his protégé. They were playing a hard game with Highcliffe, and they were thinking, living, and breathing Soccer.

"But, I say—"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

The whistle went, and the sides lined up again, heedless of Bunter and the

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

new arrivals, and of everything else in the wide world excepting the game. But a good many fellows standing round the field had heard Bunter's news, and they were interested.

"Come on!" called out Bolsover major. "Let's go and have a look at the charity kid!"

And seven or eight fellows followed Bunter as he rolled back to the House.

Outside the House a magnificent motor-car stood—the well-known expensive car belonging to Samuel Vernon-Smith, millionaire.

But the millionaire had gone in.

"Gone in to see the Head, I suppose," said Skinner. "We'll have a look at young Charity when he comes out!"

"He, he, he!"

They crowded along to the corner of the Head's corridor, and there they had a glimpse of the newcomers entering Dr. Locke's study.

Mr. Quelch was with Mr. Vernon-Smith, the portly and rather pompous millionaire. There was a boy with him, too, a stranger to Greyfriars, and this obviously was Paul Dallas, the new junior.

"Looks a regular tick!" said Skinner.

"What rot!" said Bolsover major.

"He looks all right."

"Soft and soapy!" said Snoop.

"Bit timid," said Bolsover. "All new kids are timid when they're going to see the Head. Rot!"

Certainly the new junior did not, on his looks, seem to justify the description the Bounder had given of him.

He was a sturdy, well-built lad, with fair hair and blue eyes, and quite good-looking and pleasant. His manner was subdued, but that was natural enough in the presence of his new Form master and of so overpowering a gentleman as Mr. Vernon-Smith.

He passed into the Head's study, and the door closed.

Bolsover major grunted.

"The kid looks all right," he said. "I dare say Smithy's only been talking out of the back of his neck! He's got a rotten temper, Smithy has."

And Bolsover major walked away, more interested in the finish of the Highcliffe match than in Paul Dallas.

The other juniors remained where they were. In a few minutes Mr. Quelch came out of the Head's study, and he glanced at the group at the corner of the Head's corridor.

"Why are you waiting here?" he asked.

"Just to see the new chap, sir," said Skinner respectfully.

"We're not going to chip him about being a charity kid, sir," said Billy Bunter hastily.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Bunter, how dare you use such an expression! Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, lor!"

"All of you go away at once!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "Go to the Form-room and write your lines, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir!"

"Go!" rapped out the Remove master.

And Bunter quaked, and went.

Skinner & Co. cleared off unwillingly.

Bunter rolled dismally into the Form-room. There the Bounder greeted him with a sulky stare. Bunter sat down dolorously at his desk.

"That cad's come, Smithy!" he said.

"I heard the car. You've seen him?"

"Yes. An out-and-out rotter!" said Bunter. "I've got lines all through

him, the cad! I'd like to punch his head!"

"What is he like?"

"Absolute outsider—sneaking cad—ering worm!" said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove laid his hundred lines to the new boy's account, which did not enhance Paul Dallas' attractions in his eyes.

The Bounder grunted and returned to his task. But he hardly saw the Latin he was writing.

The fellow had come, then! And his father was there! There was no getting out of the meeting. Sooner or later he would be called out of the Form-room to be introduced to Paul Dallas. He gritted his teeth at the thought. It was his jealousy of his father's affection that was the root cause of the Bounder's bitterness, but his mood at present was certainly not that of an affectionate son. He had no intention whatever of seeking to please his father in this matter which Mr. Vernon-Smith had very much at heart. His intentions were quite the reverse of that.

Since the day he had received the letter from his father his bitterness had intensified more and more, till now his feeling towards the new junior was one of unreasoning hatred.

If that distressed his father, let it distress him! He could find consolation in his new favourite, the Bounder thought sardonically. The Bounder had no welcome for an interloper.

Mr. Quelch came into the Form-room at last.

"Vernon-Smith?"

Smith stood up.

"Your father desires to see you, Vernon-Smith."

"Very well, sir!"

"You have not finished your lines?"

"No, sir."

"You may write the remainder to-morrow, Vernon-Smith. Come with me now!"

The Bounder followed Mr. Quelch, and Bunter was left alone in the Remove-room. At the foot of the staircase, Mr. Quelch paused.

"Your father has gone up to your study, Vernon-Smith. You will find him there, with the new junior whom he is placing at Greyfriars."

"Yes, sir!"

"The boy seems to be quite an agreeable lad, and I hope you will be good friends with him, Vernon-Smith. I have decided to place him in Study No. 4 with you and Redwing, so you will see a good deal of one another."

"You're very kind, sir," said the Bounder, with an impassive face.

Mr. Quelch turned away, and the Bounder mounted the stairs. In the Remove passage, he met Skinner, who gave him a grin.

"They're in your study, old bean," said Skinner. "Are you going to kill the fatted calf for your new pal?"

The Bounder walked on to No. 4 without replying. Skinner winked at Snoop. From the expression in Smithy's eyes, he guessed that there was going to be trouble in Study No. 4. And his guess was well-founded.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Scene in the Study!

"HERBERT, my boy!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith spoke with bluff gentility.

Evidently he had determined to forget that talk on the telephone.

He shook hands with his son.



"Smithy's no gentleman," said Billy Bunter, blinking round. "If he were here now I'd tell him so to his face!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. "Well, here's Smithy," said Hazeldene. "Stand up, Smithy, and let Bunter tell you to your face," Vernon-Smith stood up. Billy Bunter blinked at him, and his little round eyes almost bulged through his spectacles. "Oh!" he gasped. (See Chapter 5.)

"Detained, what?" he asked.

"Yes, father!"

"Kicking over the traces, I suppose,"

said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a smile.

"Cheeking my Form-master," said

the Bounder calmly.

"Well, well, I can't approve of any-

thing of that kind, Herbert; but never

mind now. Never mind, my boy—here

you are, anyway. This is Paul Dallas."

With all his assumption of geniality,

a trace of uneasiness crept in Mr.

Vernon-Smith's manner.

He knew his son's passionate, head-

strong nature; and the expression on

Smithy's face was not promising.

Vernon-Smith looked at the new

fellow.

Dallas came a step towards him,

holding out his hand, with a friendly

smile on his face.

"I'm glad to meet you," he said, in

quite a frank way. "Your father has

told me a great deal about you, and

I hope we shall be friends."

"That's right," said the millionaire,

with a nod. "That's right!"

The Bounder stood looking at Dallas,

and coolly put his hands behind

him. Dallas' hand remained extended

for a moment more, as if he did not

quite understand; then, with a flushed

face, he let it drop to his side.

Mr. Vernon-Smith flushed, too.

"Herbert!" he said, in a warning

tone.

"Yes, father," said the Bounder

calmly.

"Shake hands with Dallas."

"I shake hands with whom I please,

father," said Vernon-Smith. "Not

with a sneaking interloper, at all

events."

"Herbert!" thundered his father.

Dallas stared at Vernon-Smith, his

cheeks growing crimson. He seemed

to be utterly unprepared for the

Bounder's hostility. Apparently not a

suspicion had crossed his mind, on that

subject.

"An interloper!" he repeated. "Are

you speaking of me? Why do you call

me an interloper?"

"What do you call yourself?" asked

Vernon-Smith sardonically. "Have

you any right here—have you any right

in my father's house?"

"He has the right I have given him,

Herbert," exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith

angrily.

"The right of a fellow living on

charity, begging his bread!" said

Herbert Vernon-Smith bitterly.

"How dare you, Herbert?"

Dallas had stepped back. The crin-

son had died out of his face, leaving

it very pale.

He stood tongue-tied, as if over-

whelmed by this unexpected attack

from the son of his benefactor.

Vernon-Smith watched him with a

sneer. His anger was all the greater,

because Dallas did not look in the least

like the fellow he had pictured in his

mind's eye.

He had fancied Paul Dallas some sly,

cunning-eyed fellow—the wish perhaps

being father to the thought.

He had to acknowledge that the boy

looked nothing of the kind—that there

was nothing to mark him out from other

fellows in the Greyfriars Remove—and

the best fellows in the Form, at that.

He looked healthy and frank and

wholesome, a fellow anyone might

have been friendly with. But the

Bounder was not inclined to admit even

facts that were plain to his eyes. If

Paul Dallas did not look sly and cun-

ning, it was because he cleverly hid

those traits in his character; at least,

Smithy was determined to believe so.

Mr. Vernon-Smith stood frowning and

nonplussed.

Obviously he was concerned for

Dallas' wounded feelings—wounded

recklessly and wantonly by the

Bounder. His concern added fuel to

the fire of the Bounder's resentment.

Who was Dallas, after all, that Smithy's

father should be concerned about him?

An unknown nobody, picked up out of

a charity school! If Mr. Vernon-Smith

wanted to concern himself about any-

one, there was his son.

The Bounder stepped back towards

the door.

"You don't want me here, father,"

he said mockingly. "I suppose I'm

only in the way."

"Stay where you are."

"But am I not interrupting your con-

versation with your dear adopted son?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith clenched his hand.

"Herbert! You will go too far! I

forbid you to leave this room till I

give you permission."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well!"

"You have surprised and shocked me

very much, Herbert. I had reason to

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

"THE SCAPEGRACE OF ST. SAM'S!"

(Continued from previous page.)

in the direction of the cubberd. The door creaked a little, but did not open, and the Head breathed freely again. He turned savagely upon Frank Fearless.

"You have had the ordassity to turn your pets loose in my garden!" he whispered. "Do not dare to deny it!"

Frank Fearless could not have denied it, for two reasons. Firstly, the charge was true; and, secondly, the duster tied round his mouth was an effective gag.

"Your pilfering rabbits," hissed the Head, "have glutted themselves on my cabbages! Your goat has run amuck and eaten everything in sight! It fairly gets my goat! I am boiling over with rage, and it is an aggerny to me not to be able to raise my voice!"

Frank Fearless wondered whether the Head had a sore throat. Unless this was the case, what was to prevent him raising his voice if he wanted to?

The creaking of the cubberd door might have given Frank the explanation; but he did not heed it.

"But for your transgressions," went on the Head, still in a hoarse whisper, "I should now be playing croaky with my daughter. But my duty compels me to put you through the hoop instead. Hold out your hand!"

Frank Fearless obeyed fearlessly.

The Head tightened his grip on the birch rod, and darted another nervous glance towards the cubberd.

If the door were to open, and Molly saw that the victim was not Jack Jolly, but Frank Fearless, there would be a row. Molly would rightly condemn her father for his trickery and deceit.

This thought caused beads of inspiration to stand out on the Head's brow, and he was anxious to get the birching over and done with. He would have liked to do it thoroughly, but he dared not dally over it, in case Molly, stifled by the close atmosphere of the cubberd, should pop out for air like a diver.

The cubberd door seemed to mesmerise the Head. He could not keep his eyes off it. Frank Fearless noticed this, and marvelled greatly.

Whack!

The Head brought the birch down with stinging force. But he was not paying proper attention to his job, and the result was that he missed the culprit's outstretched hand. The birch swept the empty air, and caught the Head a terrific crack on his right shin. He would have bellered with anguish, but he manfully restrained himself; for his beller would certainly have brought Molly from the cubberd to see what was wrong.

The Head gritted his teeth, and tried again. But the cubberd door seemed to mesmerise him more than ever, and he again missed his mark. This time it was the tellyphone on his desk that suffered. The birch curled round it and swept it on to the floor, where it fell with a loud crash. In falling the receiver came off its hooks, and the bell started ringing loudly. Evidently the operator was trying to tell the Head that his receiver was off—a fact of which he was only too painfully aware!

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

The Head swooped down upon the offending instrument and snatched it up, and restored it to its proper position on the desk. But the crash and the clanging had been heard by Molly, and a muffled, startled voice came from the interior of the cubberd.

"What was that, pop?"

Frank Fearless started violently when he heard that voice. He recognised it at once as the voice of Molly Birchmell, the Head's charming and delightful daughter.

"It was nothing, my dear!" cried the Head hastily. "Stay where you are! Do not come out! Do not dare to take so much as a peep! I have never allowed you to witness the birching of a boy yet, and I never shall!"

The Head watched the cubberd door in an aggerny of apprehension, but Molly stayed where she was.

Then the Head turned to Frank Fearless, and he meant business this time. He was satisfied that Molly had taken his words to heart, and would not emerge from her place of concealment.

"Now, you young cub!" hissed the Head. "Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

The birch did not miss its mark this time. It descended with cool, cutting force upon the new boy's palm, and Frank Fearless, stoic and spartan though he was, had to gnaw the duster to keep himself from yelling.

And then a bright idea occurred to him. Molly Birchmell was in the cubberd, and if only he could make his presence known to her, she would surely help him. She had already risked him on one occasion from the Head's wrath, and she would do so again.

While the Head was preparing to administer the second stroke, Frank Fearless tore at his gag and the duster came away in his hand. Then he gave a yell.

"Molly! Miss Birchmell! Save me!"

The Head stood paralysed. The birch fell from his nerveless fingers. The fat was in the fire now, with a vengeance!

With incredible swiftness the door of the cubberd flew open and its fair tenant leapt forth. She flung herself between the

Head and his victim and looked at her father with flashing eyes.

"Pop, you have deserved me! It is not Jack Jolly that you were flogging. It is my hero!"

The Head groaned.

Molly's lip curled scornfully.

"To think that you could deasend to such depths as to dupe your daughter!" she said angrily. "Is there no depth of meanness to which you would not sink!"

"I—I can't think of one, at the moment," confessed the Head.

Molly turned her back on her father. Her glowing eyes were glood upon Frank Fearless.

"Flee!" she cried dramatically. "Hop it while you have the chance!"

Frank needed no second bidding. He was through the doorway like a flash of greased lightning.

When he had gone the Head flung out his arms beseechingly to his daughter.

"Forgive me, Molly! It—it was only a joke on my part. I was not really flogging the boy. I was—er—just tickling him!"

Molly tossed her head angrily.

"The sort of humor you indulge in, pop, does not tickle me!" she said. "I shall have to consider what punishment to inflict upon you for this deception." She knitted her brows in thought for a moment.

"I know!" she cried. "You shall be forbidden a second helping of pooding for the next week, and for that same period I shall refuse to play croaky with you!"

The Head sank into a chair and berried his face in his hands. That threat about the second helping of pooding had wounded him sorely. The Head had a grate weakness for second helpings—especially of Molly's pooding.

"You will leave Frank Fearless alone in future!" said Molly. "He is my hero, and no vandle hands are to be laid upon him. Do you hear?"

The Head nodded mutely, and Molly Birchmell turned and flounced out of the study, glad to have been in time to save the Scapegrace of St. Sam's.

THE END.

(Be sure you read "HIGH JINKS AT ST. SAM'S!" next week's amusing yarn by Dicky Nugent. Every line's a laugh!)

DO YOU KNOW THAT—?

Only three times in the whole history of the Cup competition has the trophy been won by a Second Division side? Once, of course, it was won by a Southern League side, Tottenham Hotspur gaining the honour in 1901.

A well-known referee thinks the big games would be better controlled if referees were given the same line-men in a greater number of games? We have all heard about combination on the field, but combination among the officials is a new idea.

Ted Vizard, the Bolton Wanderers outside-left, declares that he gets much more excited when he is watching a football match than when he is playing in one. Temperament is a queer thing.

An anonymous supporter recently paid a cheque of one thousand two hundred pounds into the coffers of the Bradford City club.

Just recently the supporters of the Everton Club held an indignation meeting to protest against the attitude of the directors. As the meeting broke up, those who had attended were greeted by a man selling the colours of the Everton Club. An optimist, evidently.

In the first season after the War, Bradford had two teams in the First Division. One of them has already dropped into the Third Division, and there is a probability that the other Bradford club will follow them at the end of this season.

Tom Allen, the goalkeeper of Southampton, was at one time on the books of the Sunderland club, but, owing to a clerical error, he was not put on their retained list in 1920. So he went to Southampton without transfer fee.

Jones, the Notts Forest inside-left, had always played on the extreme wing until in an emergency last season Wales asked him to play at inside-left. He did so well that his club has played him in that position ever since; a providential discovery.

The Interloper!



(Continued from page 13.)

believe that you would be pleased to know that I was able to repay my old debt to my friend Dallas, by taking care of his orphan son."

"Take care of him, father—I'm not stopping you. I suppose I'm not expected to take care of him, too. I don't owe any debt to the man who bunked to South America."

"That is your mistake, Herbert—you do," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Had not Jim Dallas come to my help once, years ago, before you were born, we might never have been in the position we are in to-day. It might have been your father who would have had to bunk, as you call it, to South America. You have never known anything but wealth, Herbert, and it has spoiled you. But I can tell you that you might never have known wealth at all, but for this boy's father in the old days."

"Quite romantic," said the Bounder. "You should write a novel, father!"

"What—what?"

"It sounds rather like the films, doesn't it?" said the Bounder calmly. "I never knew you had a romantic imagination, father. You certainly ought to write a novel, or at least a scenario for the films."

Mr. Vernon-Smith turned purple. "Good gad!" he gasped. "But it's my own fault—my own fault! I've spoiled you, Herbert, and indulged you, till you have no respect left for your own father."

"Possibly," said Vernon-Smith. "May I point out that you should never have spoiled me, and indulged me, if you intended to turn me down in the long run?"

"Who's turning you down, you young rascal?" boomed the angry millionaire. "Are you not my son?"

"Quite; though I thought you had forgotten it," said Smithy, with a sneer.

The millionaire clenched his hand again.

"I've petted you, spoiled you, indulged you, when I ought to have thrashed you, you disrespectful young rascal!" he said.

"It's never too late to mend, father," said the Bounder, with bitter coolness. "You have never raised your hand to me, and never threatened me—till that bound came to make trouble between us. But you may as well go the whole hog now."

"Dallas has made no trouble between us," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Where is the trouble? What do you mean?"

The Bounder gave a shrug of the shoulders.

"You're talking sheer nonsense, Herbert. My taking care of Jim Dallas' boy makes no difference—no difference whatever. You should be able to see that."

Paul Dallas broke in. "Mr. Vernon-Smith! I—I had no idea of this—I never dreamed that your son would take it like this. I thought he would be glad to see the son of his father's friend at Greyfriars. But as

he does take it like this, I can't stay here."

"What? What?"

"I am grateful to you for all your kindness to me, sir, but I cannot accept your kindness any further," said Paul quietly. "It was not by my wish that I came here—and I am ready to go."

"Hold your tongue!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You will do as you are told, Paul."

"But, sir—"

"Are you setting up to dictate to me, as well as my own son?" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"No, sir. But since your son takes it like this—"

"Is it for my son to give orders, or for me?" snorted the millionaire. "Hold your tongue, boy!"

Paul set his lips.

"In accepting your kindness, sir, I did not feel that I was taking charity," he said. "But your son has made that quite clear to me. You are no relation of mine, and I have no right to your charity. You must let me go my own way."

"What I give you is not charity, Paul. It is the repayment of an old debt—a debt I never could repay in your father's lifetime."

"A debt of gratitude, perhaps—but not money," said Paul. "And I have no right to your money."

"Money, too, if you must know," snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Herbert, listen to this. At a time when I was driven into a corner by a ring of men in the market, long ago, I had to raise a thousand pounds or go under. I could not raise it. You may smile. A thousand pounds is little enough to us now; but at that time it stood between me and financial ruin. Jim Dallas lent me the money."

"I suppose you paid him?" sneered the Bounder.

"Then you suppose wrong!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I had no chance to repay him before his ill-luck came and he had to leave England. He went into the interior in South America, and was never heard of again. If he had lived, I should have repaid him with interest. He did not live. I still owe him the loan that saved me from ruin."

"Oh!" exclaimed Paul.

"That thousand pounds, with five per cent. interest for all the years that it has been owing will be spent on your education, Paul," said the millionaire. "In money matters, you will be under no obligation to me. Without that, I should do precisely as I am doing, it is true. Nevertheless, you are independent."

Paul Dallas drew a deep breath.

"That alters the case," he said. "It does not lessen my gratitude to you, sir; I knew nothing of the debt until you told me."

Vernon-Smith burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Quite a pretty story," he said. "So the independence of the interloper is saved."

"Herbert! Do you dare to cast doubt on your father's word?" thundered Mr. Vernon-Smith.

Paul looked startled.

"You don't think—you can't think that—"

"Oh, cut it out!" jeered the Bounder. "You are an interloping cad, living on charity, and if I really am under any obligation to you or your father, I hate you all the more for it!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was mockingly silent. "Say no more, Herbert. You do not seem quite yourself now. You are foolishly jealous and unreasonable. Paul will remain at Greyfriars, and if you do not treat him with the kindness I wish—"

He paused.

"Well, what?" asked the Bounder. "Will you disinherit me in his favour? That is what the cad is aiming at."

"It is false!" exclaimed Paul indignantly. "Such a wicked thought has never crossed my mind!"

"Liar!" said the Bounder icily.

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

He strode towards his son, and grasped him by the shoulder. For a moment it looked as if he would strike the Bounder.

Smithy's eyes met his father's furious glance calmly, fearlessly. He did not care if the blow fell.

But Mr. Vernon-Smith controlled his anger. Perhaps it was in his mind that the Bounder's passionate, headstrong temper was largely his fault. He had never checked the boy—never corrected or controlled him—he had always indulged him recklessly, and taken pride in his arrogance to others. Now he was reaping as he had sown.

"Well?" said the Bounder mockingly. "Let him see you strike me, father—it is that what he wants, and you want to please him."

"Mr. Vernon-Smith!" exclaimed Paul in great distress.

The millionaire lowered his hand.

"You would provoke an angel, I think, Herbert," he said. "Let there be no more of this, I say. Jim Dallas' son is entitled to my protection, and I will do my duty by him, even if you choose to misunderstand. He will be a Greyfriars man—he will be treated here on exactly the same footing as my own son. And when you have got over this unreasonable folly you will be friends with him. You cannot be enemies and both be at the same school."

"We shall be enemies if he remains," said the Bounder. "If you must take the pauper up, send him to some other school."

"Oh, sir, I could go to another school!" exclaimed Paul. "Surely, sir, that would be better, as your son thinks—"

"No!" thundered Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I am not a man to be dictated to by an unreasonable and ungrateful son. You will remain here."

"We shall be enemies!" said the Bounder bitterly. "I will make it as hot for him as I can."

"In spite of my wishes?"

"What do you care for my wishes?" said the Bounder. "One good turn deserves another."

"In spite of my commands!"

Another shrug from the Bounder.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a concentrated voice. "I shall not take Jim Dallas' boy away from Greyfriars; but, as I have said, if you two are enemies, you cannot remain at the same school. I warn you, Herbert, to mend your manners. If there is trouble, it is not Paul that I shall take away from Greyfriars, it is you!"

"Me?" hissed the Bounder.

"You—as you are to blame! You have been over-indulged, and it has made you selfish and reckless. A year in my office would bring you to your senses a little."

The Bounder almost choked.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

"You—you would—for the sake of that pauper—"

"Silence!" Bear my warning in mind!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith sternly. "You know me, Herbert—you have seen me a hard man to everyone but you. Take care that you do not make me treat you harshly also! You will regret it, I warn you! Enough! Paul, you may come with me to the car; you may stay here, Herbert, and think over what I have said!"

And, without shaking hands with his son, the millionaire strode from the study; and Paul Dallas, after a brief hesitation, followed him.

The Bouncer stood quite still for some minutes when he was left alone. The rage that boiled up in his breast almost suffocated him.

He knew—he did not need telling—that the millionaire was a hard man. He was a man of his word, too. Never had he been hard to the Bouncer—his fault had been in the other direction. But it might come! Under the influence of the interloper, his father was turning against him—that was how it seemed to the Bouncer. It was for his father to say—or, as it seemed to the passionate mind of Smithy, it was for the interloper to say—whether he should be taken away from Greyfriars; whether the happy, careless life of school should be changed for the grind of a City office!

The Bouncer dug his nails into the palms of his hands. His rage was so great that he could have cried it aloud. Skinner looked into the study.

"Smithy—"
Skinner did not continue. The look on the Bouncer's face frightened him, and he backed hastily out of the study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

One in a Crowd!

"GOAL!"

"Bravo!"

"Well kicked, Wharton!"

Paul Dallas' face brightened a little as he came on the football ground.

The big car was gone, with Mr. Vernon-Smith in it.

Paul was a Greyfriars fellow now.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had departed with a clouded brow, angry with his son. But he was not angry with Paul; indeed, before departing, he had muttered some apologetic words concerning Herbert's temper. Certainly, if the Bouncer had heard his father apologising for him, it would have given the finishing touch to his rage. Fortunately, he did not hear. From the window of his study he saw his father shake hands with the interloper, and glide away in the big car. His father's good-bye was said to Paul—not to him. The Bouncer shook with rage and misery as he watched.

Paul knew nothing of the white, savage face at an upper window watching him with baleful eyes.

After the car had gone, the new junior stood by the House steps for some minutes in painful thought.

A feeling of intense loneliness had descended upon him.

He had made the acquaintance of his Form master, his headmaster, and the House dame. They had been kind. But what he wanted was some chery word and look from a fellow of his own age. In the great school he knew no one—no one save Mr. Vernon-Smith's son. He had been told that he was to

share Smithy's study; but, naturally, he did not feel disposed to turn his steps in that direction now. Paul Dallas' life had not been a very bright one, so far, but he had a cheery disposition, and was inclined to make the best of things. But how to make the best of Vernon-Smith's unreasonable hatred and hostility was a problem. It was too difficult a problem for Paul to solve, and his only thought at present was to keep out of Smithy's way as much as he could.

He walked away across the quad at last, with a far from happy expression on his face. If Mr. Vernon-Smith's son had only been friendly, as he had rather expected, what a difference it would have made! And why should he not have been friendly? His wild and bitter suspicions came as a surprise and a shock to the interloper. Certainly, Paul's conscience was quite clear; but the feeling of haying come between father and son was bitterly disagreeable. Smithy's jealous and unreasonable temper was to blame; but the position was distinctly uncomfortable, all the same. There was a deep cloud on Paul's face.

"Hallo! New kid?"

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were walking loftily in the quad, and they condescended to pause and speak to this lost-looking new fellow.

Paul stopped.

"Yes," he answered.

"What's your name?" asked Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Dallas."

"What's your Form?"

"The Remove."

"The Remove?" repeated Cecil Reginald Temple. "Good heavens! Aren't there enough scrubby little scoundrels in the school already? Is Greyfriars goin' to be overrun by fags who don't wash their necks?"

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"I wash my neck," said Paul, with a smile.

Temple shook his head.

"They never wash in the Remove," he said. "If you do you'll have the rest of the Form down on you. They can't stand it."

"They can't," agreed Fry of the Fourth. "They couldn't if they tried. And they never try."

"Are you fellows in the Remove?" asked Paul.

"That's cheek!" said Temple. "We never allow new kids—especially Remove kids—to cheek us! Bump him!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Almost before he knew what was happening, Paul was grasped in three pairs of hands and bumped on the ground. Temple, Dabney and Co. walked on, roaring with laughter, and left him there.

Paul picked himself up rather breathlessly.

But he laughed. He realised that it was only a rough-and-ready joke, and, as a matter of fact, the incident cheered him a little. There was a spontaneous hilarity about the way the Fourth-Formers had bumped the new fellow that was very pleasant, after the sulky, sullen bitterness of Vernon-Smith. Paul dusted his "bags" and walked on.

He heard the shouts from the football ground, and went on to Little Side. Two teams—evidently, junior teams—were playing Soccer, and Paul wondered if his own Form might be engaged. A roar from the crowd soon enlightened him.

"Well done, Remove! Hurrah!"

The game was over.

"Are the Remove playing?" Paul asked one of the cheering juniors.

The junior left off cheering, to stare at him blankly.

"Where have you dug yourself up?" he inquired.

Paul coloured. He was new at Greyfriars, and he felt very new indeed at that moment.

"He blushes!" said another junior. "Blushes, by gad! Milksop!"

"Oh, chuck it, Hazel!" said the first junior. "You've got plenty to blush for, if you had any blushes left!"

"Why, you cheeky ass, Russell—"

"Yes, my son, the Remove are playing," said Russell kindly, in answer to Paul's question, "and they've just beaten Highcliffe, because Wharton had sense enough not to put Hazeldene in goal."

"Silly ass!" commented Hazel.

"Who's Wharton?" asked Paul.

"Skipper. There he is!"

Russell pointed out Harry Wharton, who was coming off the field with the other footballers. Paul looked at the heroes of the Remove breathlessly. He wondered whether the time would ever come when he would be playing football for Greyfriars, and would be as self-possessed as these cheery youths.

"You the new kid?" asked Hazeldene, regarding Paul curiously. All the Removes were rather curious on the subject of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith's adopted son.

"I'm new here," confessed Paul.

"You look it."

"I—I suppose I do," faltered Paul, colouring again.

"Seen Smithy yet?"

"No—yes—do you mean Mr. Vernon-Smith's son?"

"That's the merchant! Seen him?" grinned Hazel.

"Yes."

"Did he punch you?"

"N-n-no."

"You've got it coming, then!" And Hazeldene walked away, laughing, with Russell.

Paul's face clouded again. The Bouncer's outbreak of angry hostility in the study had startled and surprised him; but he realised now that other fellows in his Form knew all about it. He noticed that a good many glanced at him with curiosity, and one junior called out, amid laughter, to the footballers:

"Redwing! I say, Reddy, here's your pal's adopted brother."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redwing had played in Smithy's place. He looked round, and Paul Dallas was pointed out to him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that the kid?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How do you like Greyfriars, sonny?"

Paul could hardly have answered that question; but the cheery Bob did not wait for an answer; he walked on with the other footballers. The crowd were streaming off the football ground now, and Paul went with them.

He wished that he knew someone there. He had taken a liking at first sight to the cheery fellow who had asked him if he liked Greyfriars, and wished specially that he knew that fellow. The fellows seemed to be kind and civil enough, but they were occupied with their own concerns, and did not think of bothering their heads about a newcomer.

But one fellow, at least, was rather keen on the newcomer. William George Bunter, of the Remove, loved new boys. New boys hadn't heard of his celebrated postal-order, and were much more likely to make an advance in cash upon that postal-order than fellows who knew Bunter.



"Vernon-Smith!" It was a sharp, acid voice, and Mr. Quelch bore down on the Bounder as he was wheeling his machine down to the gate. "Yes, sir?" muttered Vernon-Smith, stopping. "Have you written your lines?" asked Mr. Quelch. "N-n-no, sir!" "And you are going out?" snapped the Form master. "It's a half-holiday, sir—" "You will take back your bicycle, Vernon-Smith, and go to the Form-room at once!" (See Chapter 6.)

Certainly, Bunter had taken the view that Paul was responsible for his lines, and that it behoved him, as an aristocratic member of the noble family of Bunter, to look down on the charity kid. For these two reasons Bunter was more inclined to knock the new fellow's hat off than to be civil to him. But W. G. Bunter had an eye to the main chance. Indeed, he generally had two eyes and a pair of spectacles on the main chance. So William George sidled up to the new junior and gave him a patronising nod and an agreeable grin.

"You're Dallas—what?" he said.

"Yes," answered Paul.

"The charity bounder!" asked Bunter agreeably.

Paul flushed, and did not answer that.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, old chap," said Bunter. "I've been looking forward to seeing you."

"Oh!" said Paul in surprise.

"I'm no snob," said Bunter genially. "Bless you, I don't despise you because you're a rank outsider, and brought up in charity. Not at all!"

Paul looked at him.

He did not want to begin at Greyfriars by kicking a Greyfriars fellow. Moreover, Bunter apparently intended to be agreeable. So Paul resisted the impulse to plant his boot upon W. G. Bunter's portly person.

"I'm Bunter, you know," said the Owl of the Remove.

"Are you?"

"In the Remove, you know."

"Oh!"

"I've got a lot of influence in the Form," said Bunter. "I'm generally regarded as a leading spirit. Fellows follow my lead."

"Do they?" asked Paul in surprise.

"Yes, they do," answered Bunter testily. "When I say turn they all turn, you know. Now, you being a rank outsider, and a queer sort of cad, you know, I can help you a lot in the Form."

Paul did not answer that agreeable speech.

"Of course, I can't exactly take you up," Bunter was careful to explain. "That would be too thick altogether, considering. A fellow has his position to think of. But I shall speak to you."

"You needn't trouble," said Paul dryly.

"Eh?"

"In fact, I'd rather you didn't."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Don't be a silly ass, young Dallas! Precious few fellows will be keen on speaking to a charity kid; and Smithy and his friends will be down on you like—like billy-o. Don't you be cheeky! Look here, I mean it. I've got a generous nature. That's me all over. I'm going to protect you!"

"Oh, rot!"

"Wha-a-i?"

"I don't need protecting; and if I did you couldn't do it, I imagine," said Paul. "You'd better leave me alone. Bunter, if that's your name."

And Dallas quickened his pace to shake off the fat junior.

A few minutes before he had been wishing that he knew one of the fellows. Now he found that there was at least one acquaintance at Greyfriars that he did not desire to cultivate.

But the Owl of the Remove was not THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

to be shaken off so easily. He accelerated, too.

"Hold on, Dallas! Nothing to hurry for. What the deuce are you getting your rag out for?" he gasped. "I can tell you it doesn't pay a new kid to put on airs here. I say, Dallas, according to Smithy his pater is paying your fees here, and allowing you pocket-money, and all that."

"That is no business of yours."

"But it's so, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Paul impatiently.

"I dare say you've got a quid or more in your pockets now!"

"Yes."

"Well, don't hurry," said Bunter. "This is how the matter stands. First of all, I want to warn you not to lend money to fellows. That's a tip I always give new chaps. It doesn't pay. It's a bad system. You can take that from me, as an old hand."

"Thank you."

"Not at all! Always like to do a new kid a good turn," said Bunter. "But it happens, by sheer chance, that my postal-order hasn't come. I was expecting a postal-order this morning for a pound. Owing to some delay in the post it hasn't turned up. I suppose you could let me have the pound and take the postal-order to-morrow morning when it comes?"

Paul laughed.

"You've just advised me not to lend fellows money," he said.

"That's different, of course. I was speaking in a general way," said Bunter. "With me it's different. I'm a fellow that never borrows; and I always settle up on the nail, too."

"Oh!" ejaculated Paul.

"That's how it is," said Bunter. "Can you manage the pound? I should take it as a favour," added Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Sorry! No."

"I could really do with ten bob," said Bunter. "I dare say you haven't a pound about you—a charity fellow like you. Make it ten bob!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"What?"

"And shut up!"

Paul Dallas quickened his pace again and Bunter was left blinking after him in great indignation and annoyance. Bunter had really not put it very tactfully, though he did not realise that. But he realised that the new kid had been drawn blank, and Bunter snorted with indignation as he rolled away to the House. From that moment the new fellow in the Remove had forfeited the friendship and protection of Billy Bunter—whatever they might have been worth!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Friends in Need!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH turned an evil eye upon his study door as it opened. It was Tom Redwing who came in.

"Oh, you!" said the Bouncer.

Redwing's face was ruddy and cheery. He had thoroughly enjoyed the football match. But the look on his chum's face was more than enough to dash his spirits.

"Yes," said Redwing. "What about tea?"

"How did the match go?"

"We beat Highcliffe two to one."

"Then I wasn't missed," said the Bouncer sardonically.

"Well, you were," said Redwing. "It was touch and go right up to the finish. Did you go out?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

"No."

"I'm glad you thought better of that, old chap," said Redwing, relieved. "So you saw your father?"

"I didn't think better of it; Quelch kept me in to do my lines," said Vernon-Smith. "I've seen my father, and that cad Dallas, and we've had rather a row. Do you know that the worm has been planted in this study?"

"That's rather unfortunate."

The Bouncer laughed harshly.

"That's Quelch's tact. He thought it a bright idea to put my adopted brother in my study."

"Well, I suppose we can keep the peace," said Redwing. "If you don't like him you're not bound to speak to him."

"I shan't speak to him, except when I choose to tell him what I think of him. I dare say I shall tell him often enough, and I know I shall always put it plain."

"It's not much use settling down to a cat-and-dog life in the study, Smithy."

"Let him find another study, then."

"That's not for him to decide, if Mr. Quelch has placed him here. Be reasonable, old chap."

"So you're backing him up?"

"I've not even spoken to him yet, and I don't suppose I shall like him—certainly not if he's anything like you believe. I saw him for a minute on Little Side, and I didn't see anything rotten in his looks, I must say."

"You wouldn't?" said Smithy bitterly. "Your father hasn't threatened to take you away from the school if you can't pull with an interloping, scheming cad."

Redwing started.

"Your father must have been very angry to say that, Smithy."

"He was!" said the Bouncer grimly.

"My fault, of course?"

"It must have been. Your father thinks the world of you, and so far as I know, he's never lost his temper with you before."

"He's never been under the influence of a scheming rotter before," said the Bouncer, between his teeth. "Don't talk to me about it, Redwing, or we shall row; and that won't do any good. Let's have tea!"

"Dallas will be here to tea, I suppose, if this is his study," said Tom, with a worried look.

Smithy made no answer to that.

It was a quarter of an hour later, when the two juniors were at tea, that the study door opened, and Paul Dallas looked in.

Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on the new junior.

Dallas stopped in the doorway, flushed and confused.

The Bouncer's hard, steady stare was extremely disconcerting.

"I can come in, I suppose?" faltered Dallas.

"Certainly: it's your study," said Redwing, as the Bouncer did not speak.

"A fellow told me that one usually has tea in the study here," said Paul.

"That's so."

"A fellow usually stands his own tea, too!" said the Bouncer. "But perhaps you expect to sponge on me as well as on my father."

Dallas crimsoned.

"Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing, in great distress.

"Well?" sneered the Bouncer.

"You've no right to speak to a chap like that. Dash it all, there's such a thing as decency!" exclaimed Redwing hotly.

"I shall speak as I like!" said Vernon-Smith. "If the fellow doesn't like it, he's not forced to listen. Let him tea in Hall!"

Dallas hesitated.

"I don't want to butt in here, if I'm not wanted," he said. "Mr. Quelch told me this was to be my study, and I—I don't quite know what to do."

"Go where you're wanted—if you're wanted anywhere."

"A fellow must use his own study, I suppose?"

"Is it your own study? Have you anything of your own?" scoffed the Bouncer. "Get down the lower staircase, into the servants' quarters. The boot-room is a suitable place for you."

Dallas set his lips.

"You can't talk to me like that, Vernon-Smith," he said, very quietly.

"Can't I?" jeered the Bouncer.

"No. I should hate to quarrel with you, as you are Mr. Vernon-Smith's son, and he has been so kind to me. But I cannot allow any fellow to talk to me as you are doing," said Paul steadily. "That's impossible, and you should know it."

"How are you going to stop it?"

Paul breathed hard.

"You seem to be trying to drive me into a quarrel," he said.

"Has that just dawned on you?"

"I shall not quarrel with you if I can help it. I owe your father too much for that."

The Bouncer gave a jeering laugh.

"Any excuse is better than none," he assented.

"What do you mean by that, Vernon-Smith?"

"My meaning's clear enough, I should imagine. A scheming adventurer is fairly certain to be a coward as well," said Smithy contemptuously.

"I am not a scheming adventurer, and I do not think I am a coward. But I shall not quarrel with you if I can help it."

With that, Paul Dallas stepped out of the study and closed the door. The Bouncer's scoffing laugh followed him.

"For goodness' sake draw it mild, Smithy," said Redwing. "You're trying to force that chap into a fight."

"Not so easy, is it, with a shivering funk?"

"I don't see that he's a funk: naturally he doesn't want to scrap with the son of a man who's befriended him."

"He won't have much choice in the matter. I'd just enjoy knocking him right and left," said the Bouncer, setting his teeth. "All his fine reasons won't save him from a licking."

"Your father would be frightfully angry."

"You mean that the fellow will tell him? Of course he will—that's his game. Let him!"

"I don't mean that at all. He doesn't look like a sneak, to me!"

"None so blind as those who won't see."

Redwing made no answer to that. Obviously, it was futile to argue with Herbert Vernon-Smith on this subject.

Meanwhile, Paul Dallas had drifted rather aimlessly down the Remove passage to the stairs. The position of a new boy, a stranger in the school, was not an easy one, anyway; and the bitter and implacable hostility of his study-mate made it very much more unpleasant for Paul Dallas. He was feeling depressed and "rotten," and beginning to wish that his benefactor had never thought of sending him to Greyfriars. A sudden smack on his shoulder made him stagger, and he looked round half-angrily. But his face cleared as he found himself looking at the cheery face of the junior who had spoken to him on the football ground.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" boomed Bob Cherry.

Paul smiled faintly.



"I'm glad to meet you," said Dallas in a frank way, "and I hope we shall be friends." "That's right," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, "that's right!" But the Bounder stood looking at Dallas and, coolly, he put his hands behind his back. "Herbert!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Shake hands with Dallas!" "I shake hands with whom I please, father," said the Bounder. "Not with a sneaking interloper, at all events!" (See Chapter 8.)

"Not quite," he answered. "You

"Had your tea?"

"Not yet."

"We generally tea in the study here, when the funds will run to it," said Bob.

"I know! But—I'm in Study No. 1 and—and—"

Bob Cherry comprehended.

"I—I think I shall tea in Hall," said Dallas.

"Perhaps you'd be kind enough to tell me where to go."

"Quite!" said Bob. "But I couldn't be kind enough to put back tea-time. Tea in Hall is over."

"Oh!"

"That's all serene," said Bob. "I'm going to tea in Study No. 1 myself—come along with me!"

"But—but—" Paul hesitated.

"My dear man, Wharton and Nugent won't mind if I take a friend," said Bob, with a cheery grin. "Don't be

bashful. Come along with your Uncle Robert."

He linked his arm in the new junior's, and led him, willy-nilly, to Study No. 1. Four of the Famous Five were already

there. They all looked at Dallas as he came in with Bob.

"Now kid," said Bob. "Found him wandering about like a lost sheep, so I've headed him into the fold."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Good man!" he said. "You're Dallas, aren't you?"

"Yes," said Paul.

"Trot in! What study have they put you in?"

"Study No. 4," said Paul uncomfortably.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily. He coloured, and went on hastily: "Glad to see you, kid! Find a chair for the giddy guest, Franky."

"I—I—" stammered Paul.

"Welcome as the flowers in May, old bean!" said the captain of the Remove.

"We're rather a spread, as it happens—celebrating a terrific victory on the football field. Sit down!"

"The welcomefulness of the esteemed Dallas is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, with grave politeness.

Paul started a little. It was the first time he had heard the remarkable

English of the dusky nabob of Bhani-pur.

The new fellow was soon at his ease in Study No. 1.

His clouded face very quickly cleared, and in a few minutes he found himself chatting with the chums of the Remove as if he had known them for a whole term.

The Famous Five were kind and hospitable; perhaps all the more so, because they knew that in his own study, the new fellow would find matters very different.

Before tea was over, they had "sized" up Dallas fairly accurately, and were quite assured that the Bounder's wild suspicions of the fellow were unfounded.

He seemed, to them, an ordinary, good-natured, frank kind of fellow, and certainly not at all likely to enter into any such treacherous and cunning scheming as the Bounder believed.

Vernon-Smith's suspicion and hatred, in fact, were founded upon little more than his own jealous and suspicious

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 997.

temper. So, at least, it seemed to the chums of the Remove.

Paul thoroughly enjoyed that tea in Study No. 1. It more than reconciled him to Greyfriars School.

After tea, he would gladly have lingered; but he felt that it would not do to over-stay his welcome, and impose upon the kindness of these cheery fellows.

When the door closed on him, the Famous Five looked at one another rather curiously.

"So that's the chap!" said Nugent.

"Seems to me a quite decent sort."

"The quietness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"It's just Smithy's temper," he said.

"The fellow's all right. I daresay Smithy will come round. I hope so, at least. It would be beastly for the chap, having a fellow in his own study up against him all the time. Smithy's rather an ass!"

All the Famous Five hoped that Smithy would "come round." But they had very strong doubts on the subject.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Blow for Blow!

PAUL DALLAS was glad to find Study No. 4 empty.

After that cheery tea in No. 1, he was feeling better and more hopeful. Even if he had one enemy at Greyfriars, he might have many friends; at all events, he had already made some acquaintances that were very agreeable. He sorted out his books and other belongings in his study. He found that a bookshelf was vacant in the book-case, and guessed that it must have been Vernon-Smith's study-mate who had made room for him. He had rather liked Tom Redwing's look; and he was glad to know that he was not to share the study with a fellow like Smithy alone.

Paul had come to Greyfriars prepared to like Herbert Vernon-Smith. He would have been civil to him, whether he liked him or not, on his father's account. But that was over now; he knew that he had an enemy in his benefactor's son, and he knew that he was not himself to blame. So far as he could, he would keep the peace—for the sake of gratitude to the millionaire, he would err on the side of patience and tolerance. But there was a limit; and Paul hoped fervently that the Bounder would not over-step it.

He had finished sorting out his things,

when Redwing and Smithy came into the study for prep. Redwing gave the new junior a nod; the position was awkward enough, as he was Smith's best chum; but he felt it incumbent on him to be at least barely civil to a fellow who had given him no offence. The Bounder took no notice at first of Paul's presence.

Paul had been told that there was no prep on the first night at the school; but Mr. Quelch had enjoined him to take note of what his study-mates did, in order to learn the customs of his form. It was Redwing's natural and good-natured impulse to speak cheerily to the new fellow, a stranger in a big school. But the Bounder's scowling face forbade that, and Tom was uncomfortably silent.

Paul watched the juniors take out their books. Redwing began his work; but the Bounder sat idly, gnawing his finger-nails, a bad habit he had when his nerves were out of tune. He looked at the new junior at last.

"Are you staying here?"

"What else can I do?" asked Paul patiently.

"You could go back to the charity school where you belong," said Vernon-Smith deliberately.

Paul bit his lip hard.

"But anyhow I'm not standing you in this study. I've told you already that the boot-room is your mark."

"You've told me twice now," said Paul quietly. "Don't say it again."

"I'll say it as often as I please."

"Better not."

"And why not?" mocked the Bounder.

"Because," said Paul, with a flash in his eyes, "if you keep on insulting me, I shall hit you."

"What?"

"I don't want to quarrel with you—I'd do anything, almost, to avoid it," said Paul. "But I cannot put up with this. You can't expect it. I never asked your father to send me here—and he has told you himself that he owes it to me and to my father. Why cannot you treat me decently?"

"I treat decent fellows decently—not outsiders like you. If you had a rag of shame, you'd not stay where you're not wanted."

"You're the only fellow at Greyfriars to tell me I'm not wanted. Other fellows have been civil enough."

"You haven't worried your way into their homes, and played treacherous tricks on them."

Paul breathed hard.

"Is that how you look at it?" he asked.

"Just that."

"You have no right to do so. I had never even heard of your father, till he found me and took me to his home."

"So you say."

"You do not believe me?"

"No."

"Well, if you do not believe me, it is useless for me to speak to you," said Paul, calming himself with an effort.

"Let us not speak to one another. Then there need be no trouble."

"But I choose to speak," said the Bounder mockingly. "I'm going to make Greyfriars too hot to hold you. I'm going to get rid of you somehow. I'm going to open my father's eyes to your real character, if I can. At least, I will make you sorry for butting into my home and causing my father to turn against me!"

"I—I never—"

"Liar!"

Paul's eyes blazed.

"That's enough!" he exclaimed. "I tell you, Herbert Vernon-Smith, I've stood all I'm going to stand! Don't speak to me again unless you can speak civilly!"

"Liar!" repeated the Bounder coolly.

Smack!

The long-held temper of the new junior blazed out. His open hand came across the Bounder's face with a smack that rang like a pistol-shot.

With almost a roar of rage, the Bounder leaped to his feet.

"Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing.

He sprang between the two.

"Stand aside, you fool!" shouted the Bounder. "He's asked for it. Stand aside, or, by gad, I'll smash you, too!"

"Smithy! You—"

Vernon-Smith shoved his friend so violently aside, that Redwing staggered across the study.

Then he fairly leaped at the new junior.

"Put up your hands, you cad!"

Paul's hands were already up.

In a moment more they were fighting furiously.

Tom Redwing looked on helplessly. He realised that it must have come sooner or later; and it had come sooner, that was all. His face was distressed and disapproving as he looked on. The new boy was putting up a vigorous fight; but he was no match for the Bounder. He was sturdy and strong, and it was plain that he had plenty of pluck; but the Bounder was a splendid boxer, and it was rather clear that Paul had had little training in that line.

But he fought fiercely, with a blaze in his blue eyes, and for some minutes he held his own.

Then there was a crash as he went down.

"I say, you fellows," an excited fat voice squeaked in the Remove passage—

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's fighting the new kid!"

There was a rush of feet in the passage.

"Get up, you cad!" the Bounder hissed, as Paul Dallas lay panting for breath on the study carpet. "Get up! You're not licked yet! Don't lie there malingering, you rotter!"

Paul scrambled to his feet.

He did not wait for the Bounder's attack. He rushed on fiercely, and the fight was fiercely resumed.

The study door flew open. A dozen faces were crammed round the doorway.

"Go it, Smithy!" yelled Skinner.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Smithy!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Stop that!"

The Bounder did not heed. Neither did Paul Dallas. Outclassed as he was,

(Continued on page 27.)

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Home Again!

THE movement of the boat and the extraordinary quickness of Black Michael foiled Squall's attempt; for the leader of the gang ducked just at the right moment, and the wolf-dog shot over his head and fell with a splash into the water.

But that attack had had one effect. It had forced Black Michael, in order to save himself, to release his hold of Jack. The boy wriggled back on to the deck of the tug and scrambled to his feet.

"My dog!" he shouted despairingly. "Oh, please, don't leave my dog!"

The boat had drifted clear of the tug, and was now receding rapidly downstream, its crew a confused, huddled mass of humanity. Squall's head was visible—the dog swimming with the increasing tide alongside the tug.

"All right, sonny! We won't leave that little dog of yours in the lurch!" the man at the wheel exclaimed. "He's a real good pal, he is. Stand by to catch his collar."

There was a clang of the engine-bell; the vibrations of the tug suddenly ceased. Jack, leaning over the side, whistled to Squall. The wolf-dog swam alongside, and, raising his head and shoulders out of the water, tried to accomplish the impossible feat of pulling himself aboard. Jack caught him by the collar, and, with the aid of one of the men, drew his huge, dripping figure on to the deck.

Safe and sound again with his master, Squall gave himself a good shake, treating the crew to a shower-bath as he did. Then his tail wagged—a sign that Squall was well satisfied with things in general.

"Full steam ahead!" the skipper of the tug shouted; and once more the deck shook as the powerful engines made the screws revolve.

The man with the golden beard wiped the sweat from his forehead and looked down at Jack with blue, child-like eyes that had lost all their fighting fury.

"Ay, laddie, it were grand while it lasted! But what were it all about?"

The skipper called to one of his crew, and, handing the wheel to him, stepped down on to the deck.

"Yes, now we've had our fun, supposing you tell us how it begun, my lad. I didn't cotton on to that story you were trying to tell me."

He turned, with an explanatory gesture, to the golden-bearded giant.

"You see, it's this way, Dirk. You know old Bill Bowker, of the Emerald?"

"Know him? Why, he's my uncle!"

"All right, my lad, I don't want to say anything against your family. You do know him—and a nice, quiet, gentle, lamb-like, bread-and-milk navy he's got!"

Dirk grinned.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JACK HORNER, a stocky youngster of fourteen, orphaned by the Great War, is forced to flee from Dan's Farm owing to the brutal treatment of his rascally uncle,

GEORGE PARKER, known in the locality as "Mean-as-Mud" Parker. Jack Horner is heir to a title and estates, and in consequence of this he is pursued by

BLACK MICHAEL, a mysterious individual, who will automatically inherit the title and estates should Jack Horner die. Aided by his faithful dog, Squall, Jack eludes his enemy and reaches the London docks, where he finds a new home with

BILL BOWKER, skipper of the monkey-boat Emerald. Later,

JIM SNOW, wandering aboard in search of food, is captured in Jack's stead by the agents of Black Michael, and imprisoned in an Oriental den run by

BRILLIANT SING. Squall scent the trail, however, and, single-handed, Jack rescues the waif. The trio are making their getaway down-river, when the plashing of oars warns them that Black Michael and his gang are hot on their heels. Acting on the instant, they leap aboard a passing barge—which happens to belong to the same company as the Emerald—the crew of which makes a gallant stand against Black Michael's gang. The odds soon tell, however, and Black Michael is in the act of claiming his "price" when Squall, realising his master's plight, leaps at the rascal's throat.

(Now read on.)

"Let's have the yarn, skipper, and not so much of the bloomin' trimmings! You're like that chophouse I went to and ordered 'ash—you couldn't see the meat for the bloomin' gravy!"

"If you didn't talk so much I'd put you wise, Dirk. As I was saying about old Bill Bowker. This here's the lad that works along of him. Your uncle ain't very strong on the calculating line, and this lad, by all accounts, is a bloomin' wonder. He can add and subtract and divide as quick as you and me can breathe. Bill took him on so as he wouldn't have to scratch his head so much."

Dirk treated Jack to a glance of wonder and admiration.

"The never sayst!"

"Well, as I was saying— Anyway, I was up at Brentford this evening, and he was telling me about this lad. I caught a train to Rotherhithe to bring this lot up, and was waiting round in the office when I hears the telephone-bell go."

"Mr. Bowker wants to speak to you," someone says.

"Mr. Who? I says, not recognising old Bill for the moment under that there style and title."

"I don't wonder!" interrupted Dirk.

"Mr. Bowker— Gosh!"

"It was old Bill right enough, and he weren't half in a stew! The boy was missing, and he couldn't find him anywhere. I might have taken him along with me, he thought—though why he should have thought that I can't think. Suppose he was just chancing his luck. Anyway, he asked me to keep a look-out for him. And you'd think I'd have as much chance of doing that as I'd have of finding a needle in a haystack. Wouldn't you?"

Dirk nodded his approval of this view.

"It just shows you what luck is. Here I was, a lying amidstream, waiting for the tide to turn, when up comes this very identical lad, with his little dawg and a pal, and asks me to take him on board, and spins me a yarn as I couldn't

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 997.

make head or tail of—except that them lads what we've just put it across wanted to kidnap him, or something."

He laid a friendly hand on Jack's shoulders.

"Now, sonny, suppose you do your turn at a bit of a spell? What's this here fairy tale you were telling me?"

Jack related as clearly as he could all that had happened that night from the moment that Jim Snow had set foot on the Emerald to the time when he had come alongside the tug. They had long passed Westminster Bridge before he had finished.

There was a look of utter incredulity on the faces of his audience. Dirk went so far as to take the boy's head in his hands and examine it.

"No, he ain't had a slit let into his brain-pan!" he exclaimed. "And he's too young to have delirium tremens; so it must just be some of the hardest and fastest lying as ever I come across."

He looked solemnly at Jack.

"My lad, if I could spin 'em like that I'd make a fortune!"

"But it's true!" Jack protested, reddening. "Every word of it's true! You can ask Jim!"

In reply to this appeal, Jim, to whom some kindly member of the crew had given an immense sandwich, which he was devouring, was questioned. When he repeated, detail by detail, exactly what Jack had related, the amazement of the men was a thing to marvel at. Some of them wanted to turn about there and then and go and beat up what they called the Chinks Hole without any delay. But the skipper wouldn't hear of such a suggestion.

"I'm going to hand this lad over to old Bill. But we'll watch out for these merry boys, with their dopping and their murdering; and if we do catch hold of any of 'em we'll put an end to their pretty games. But what's this Black Michael got up against you?"

"I don't know," said Jack wearily.

"I never saw him until the night I ran away from home. I suppose he's in my uncle's pay; only that don't seem likely, as uncle never parted with a penny if he could help it—and certainly wouldn't spend any on me."

"It's a rum go!" said the skipper.

"Taking it big and large," Dirk remarked solemnly. "it's the rummiest go as ever I remember. I'd like to have a word with yon Black Michael."

The dawn was breaking as the tug and its escort of barges made Brentford at last. But Jack did not see the glory in the eastern sky. He was lying, with a tarpaulin thrown over him, on the deck, with Jim Snow huddled up by his side, Squall mounting guard, with his head between his paws.

It was Dirk, as one of the family, who carried the two boys on board the Emerald.

"Hallo, Uncle Bill!" he exclaimed to the skipper of the monkey-boat, who was striding up and down the deck like one demented. "I've brought you along some of the cargo you dropped overboard."

Bill Bowker stared at the two figures, who were lying fast asleep on each of his nephew's broad shoulders. Dirk had the air of a nurse presenting a proud father with twins.

"Hallo, Dirk! What have you got there?"

"Don't say as you don't know 'em, uncle."

Old Bill took a step to Dirk's side, looked at Jack, and then gave vent to an exclamation of delight.

"Lor, if it ain't my young Jack! And I thought I'd lost 'im for good and THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 907.

all! My, but mother'll be pleased! She's been crying her eyes out since she found he was gone, and carrying on same as a sheep as has lost its lamb."

"And this here other one?" Dirk exclaimed.

Old Bill looked at Jim Snow and shook his head.

"I never set eyes on him before," he remarked solemnly. "He don't belong to me."

"What are you going to do with him—draw him?"

Old Bill scratched his head.

"Better give him something to eat. Looks to me as if he could do with a bit."

As he spoke Mrs. Bowker emerged from the cabin, evidently roused by the sound of voices. On hearing the news she deliberately took Jack in her arms, kissed him, and by that means woke him up. The boy looked round him dazedly.

"It's all right, Jack!" Mrs. Bowker whispered, hugging him to her bosom. "You're quite safe now aboard the Emerald. Don't you ever go and run away from us again."

When, ten minutes later, Jack was seated in front of a plate of bacon and eggs in the cosy cabin he told himself that it would be no fault of his if he ever exchanged the homely, friendly atmosphere of the Emerald for any other quarters.

As for Jim Snow, he just sat silent and ate all he could lay his hands on. In his view this was not an opportunity to be missed. When at last he could eat no more, he slipped, with a contented sigh, from the bunk on which he had been seated.

"I've got to beat it back to muvver," he said in his high-pitched Cockney voice. "She ain't well is muvver, and she'll be worrying about me being out all night."

"What was you doing when you came aboard the Emerald last evening?"

"I was sellin' matches and collar-studs, and I was looking for a bit of grub, mister."

"Ain't you doin' any work, then?"

"There ain't any work that I can get, and I has to try and make a bit of money to buy muvver the things doctor says she ought to 'ave."

Old Bill stealthily thrust one big hand into his trousers-pocket. Then he looked up furtively, to see if his wife was observing him. Mrs. Bowker was watching him, with a curious expression on her sunburnt face. For a moment husband and wife seemed to exchange a message in silence. Then old Bill quite openly drew some money from his pocket.

"See here, Jim, you copped it in the neck along of being mistook for my Jack, and it's only fair and square as you shouldn't suffer. You take that along and buy your mother something good with it."

"That" was four half-crowns, at which Jim stared, hardly believing his eyes.

"And you can take this along with you, too, sonny," Mrs. Bowker exclaimed, beginning to wrap up a loaf of bread, some rashers of bacon, and some butter.

Even Dirk contributed his mite.

"You put me same as I can stand up fair and square to this here Black Michael, and I'll make that ten bob a quid for you," he remarked.

Like one in a dream, from which he felt certain he was going to wake up,

Jim Snow made his way out of the cabin on to the deck. Jack followed him on to the quay. At the dock gates the two boys halted and faced one another. Jim's lips were twitching curiously.

"You ain't half a good pal, Jack," he stammered. "And I never 'ad a real pal before. If it hadn't been for you I'd have been a stiff by now, and there'd have been no one left to look after muvver."

He held out his hand. "I'd just like to have the chance of paying it all back. If I can find this here Black Michael out, I will, and I'll keep an eye on him."

Jack generously realised the other's feelings. He wanted a chance of showing his gratitude. Of course, Jim Snow couldn't really help him, but it would please him to let him think he could.

"Yes, I wish you would, Jim. If you can find out something about Black Michael, and let me know, you'd be a real pal. A letter will always find me c.o. the Emerald—Brentford, I suppose. And I'd better have your address."

"Coram Court," Jim answered eagerly. "And you will write to me, won't you?"

"I promise faithfully," said Jack. "Good-bye and good luck! And don't forget to let me have any information you can get about Black Michael and his gang. And I do hope your mother will be better."

The Stranger!

JACK went back to the Emerald to sleep until it was nearly noon.

When he awoke it was dinner-time, and after that meal was over he turned with energy to the work that had to be done. The Emerald was taking on a cargo of bricks for a small builder and contractor at Tellingham, the Midlands, and he had to help the skipper and his wife, not only in loading them, but in checking them. That done, the horse had to be fed and groomed, and everything made ready for an early start on the morrow.

By sunrise the Emerald slipped out of the dock, and, at a steady three miles an hour, began to make its way northwards. For the first three days of that voyage nothing happened to disturb the peace and sense of security which wrapped Jack about. As he looked at the friendly towpath, at the rolling, sunlit countryside, at the snug, pretty villages through which they passed, his adventures in that Oriental den of iniquity in Limehouse seemed like a nightmare that had never had any real existence. Black Michael, Brilliant Sing, Curly, and the rest of the gang, it seemed impossible that there really could have been such people. He was working; he had escaped from the cruelty of his uncle and aunt; he was earning his own living; he had the kindest employers that any boy could wish for, and he was perfectly content and perfectly happy.

On the fourth day of their voyage out, however, it rained. A south-westerly wind had sprung up, and the heavens opened and poured down water as if they never intended to stop that deluge. The towpath became a sea of mud, and after fifteen miles old Bill called a halt.

"Ain't going no further," he exclaimed solemnly. "It may be all right for them dirty butties, with their nasty, smelly engines, but for a clean, up-standing monkey-boat, what has a good 'orse to pull it, there ain't no use fighting against the elements."

He filled his pipe and lit it.



The movement of the boat and the extraordinary quickness of Black Michael foiled the wolf-dog's attempt, for the leader of the gang ducked just in time, and Squall shot over his head and fell with a splash into the water. (See page 23.)

"There's a little village called Sandham up there, Jack, a matter of three miles. You take the 'orse along and stable him at the Good Intent, and see as he has his oats and chaff. And I desay mother will have one or two things she wants bought."

With a macintosh sheet tied round him, Jack trudged off, presently, on his errand. Now walking, now sitting astride the lumbering carthorse, he reached Sandham towards six o'clock; and, having taken the horse to the stables of the Good Intent, watched him eat his proper supply of oats and chaff, rubbed him down with wisps of straw, he set out to make the purchases Mrs. Bowker had ordered. It was nearly eight when his task had been completed. The sun had already sunk, and dusk was closing in, as he once more gained the towpath. It was still raining in torrents. Squall, with his head down and his fur very wet, slunk like a shadow at Jack's heels.

Jack had covered half the distance when he saw a man coming towards him from the opposite direction. He looked like one of the canal people, with his blue jersey and his oilskin cap and his sunburnt face. He stopped Jack to ask him for a match.

"Used all mine up trying to light my baccy in this bloomin' rain!" he exclaimed.

Jack gave him a box from his pocket. As the man made several attempts to light his pipe he chatted in a friendly tone.

"You belong to that monkey-boat that's moored a mile or two away back there?" he inquired.

"Yes, I belong to the Emerald," Jack admitted.

"Old Bill Bowker be still skipper aboard her, ain't he? Bother this rain!"

"Yes, Bill Bowker's the skipper. Here, hold your pipe under my macintosh sheet, and you'll be able to light it."

Jack flung back the sheet that was draped about his shoulders, and the man, stooping down, inserted his head in the opening. As he struck another match Jack made a curious discovery. The man's oilskin cap had shifted slightly, so that the line of his hair was visible. By the light of the match Jack saw that the sunburnt appearance of his skin stopped short with extraordinary abruptness about an inch from the edge of his hair. While the rest of his forehead was bronzed and weather-beaten, this mysterious bar was white. And his ears, too! It almost looked as if somebody had been painting his face and had forgotten to cover the whole of the surface evenly.

"Thanks very much, my lad!" the man growled. "I've got it going at last. It'll last me maybe till I get to Sandham."

Curiously uneasy of that mysterious discovery he had made, Jack glanced at the man's hands as he gave him back the box of matches. The nails he saw were long and carefully trimmed—quite unlike the nails of the ordinary monkey-boat hand. And then it came upon him suddenly. The man was dressed for a part. He was masquerading as the hand of a monkey-boat for some purpose of his own.

"Well, good-night!" Jack exclaimed, in as steady a voice as he could muster.

"Good-night, sonny!"

A few yards ahead of him was a bridge that carried a road across the canal. Jack passed under this bridge, and then, as soon as he had gained the other side, stepped behind the brick buttress and looked back.

In the dusk he could see that the man had halted. Even as he watched him

the man vaulted over the fence into the field beyond. Scrambling to the top of the bridge, Jack was just in time to see him standing out against the skyline on the summit of a little rise signalling with his arms. Another moment, and he was running swiftly across country in the direction of a big red-roofed barn that stood by itself in the corner of a long field nearly a quarter of a mile from the road.

Jack slipped back on to the tow-path, a prey to all sorts of anxieties. Who was this man, made up to look like one of the canal folk, and yet obviously nothing of the kind? And why had he been standing on that little rise, semaphoring with his arms? To whom had he been signalling? It must have been someone situated between the bridge and the place on the canal bank where the Emerald was moored. He would have to pass that person, or persons, for whom the message had been intended.

"I don't like it, Squall!" he muttered. "I don't like it a bit!"

The wolf-dog raised his head and licked his hands as if to assure him that he was there to help him.

"Oh, I know you'll stand by me, Squall, but all the same I'm more than a little anxious. I don't like that man, and I'm more than afraid that his being here has something to do with Black Michael."

He stared meditatively at the mud-soaked ground. Supposing the gang had followed the Emerald, and had waited until the monkey-boat was moored in some such lonely place as this, to make another attempt to kidnap him? Jack had heard Black Michael offer as much as two hundred pounds for his capture, and though he could not for the life of him understand why he should be considered worth two

hundred pounds to any man, the fact remained that Black Michael had offered that amount. There might be an ambush waiting for him.

If the gang were in hiding there, how could he hope to escape? Squall, Jack knew, would fight until he was killed for him; but, after all, six resolute men, likely as not armed, could easily overcome the wolf-dog. As for himself, he was only a boy, and though he had plenty of pluck and courage, he did not possess the strength to put up any real fight with grown men.

He thought and thought, and the more he thought the more frightened he became. There was no blinking the fact that he funked walking that remaining mile and a half to where the Emerald was moored; but the more he funked it, the more clearly he saw he must do it. In all probability he was just dreaming, he told himself. That man he had met might be quite genuine; those signals may have been quite innocent. Eventually, after waiting in the shadow of the bridge for something like ten minutes, Jack decided upon a compromise.

Taking out of his pocket an old envelope and a stump of pencil, he scribbled a note to Bill Bowker:

"Dear Mr. Bowker,—It may be all rot, but I think there are some men waiting on the tow-path to kidnap me. I am sending this note on by Squall. If I don't turn up in twenty-five minutes after you receive this, you will know that I was not mistaken. One of the men I suspect has gone into the big red barn about half a mile from the tow-path to the north of the road which runs across the bridge, a mile and a half from the Emerald, where I am writing this.

"Yours obediently,

"JACK HORSER."

He tied this note with a string round Squall's collar, and then, bending down, whispered in the dog's ear:

"Home, Squall! Take it! Good dog!"

It was a trick he had taught Squall with much patience on the Cumberland mountains, and the dog at once knew what was expected of him. With a glance of understanding, he shot like an arrow down the tow-path. Another moment, and he had vanished into the rain and deepening dusk.

Jack allowed him five minutes by his watch, and then, taking a deep breath and clenching his fists, began to walk bravely in the same direction.

Taken Prisoner!

THE rain continued its steady downpour. The hedge on his left faded more and more into a mere indistinguishable mass of shadow. His boots splashed and slipped in the clayey puddles. He tried to calculate exactly how he was progressing by counting the number of steps he took, and the length of each stride. He longed for the moment when he should see the friendly lights of the Emerald.

He had covered, he calculated, over half a mile. In another moment he would be round the bend of the canal and in full view of the long stretch known as Sandham Reach, where the Emerald lay moored.

He quickened his footsteps. It seemed to him that once he could see

the lights of the monkey-boat he would be safe.

Across the desolate night there rose a wind, faint at first, but growing louder. It dashed the rain into his face, blinding his eyes, and half deadening his power of hearing. He halted abruptly, his heart beginning to pound against his ribs. A few feet away from him was the bend.

At this point the ground above the tow-path rose steeply to a little coppice of trees. Perhaps it was the sight of those trees standing out against the sky—dark, mysterious, eerie shadows—that made Jack halt. He had only that moment raised his eyes, and the sight of them, in his now highly strung state, took him utterly by surprise. He stopped, listening.

At first he could hear no sound save the moaning of the wind and the hiss of the rain. Then it seemed to him that a twig snapped close at hand. The faint sound roused him to a sense of danger. He was about to run for it—to get round that corner—to have his comforting sight of the Emerald—when from behind the hedge rose a man's figure.

It seemed to him that the darkness was pierced by two fiercely-glowing eyes. He could see no face—only those eyes that glowed like some dimmed headlights of a motor-car.

Terror held Jack in its grip. A moment before he had wanted to run, but now it seemed all the strength had vanished from his limbs. He could not move. Those eyes held him. He wanted to scream, but though his mouth opened he could utter no sound.

Nearer and nearer came those eyes. And now Jack could hear somebody's movements. There was a rustle in the hedge—the violent breaking of a number of stout, closely-growing branches. Those noises, so distinct and so close at hand, woke him for a moment from his trance. His mind told him that the one thing he must not do was to look into those awe-inspiring, fiercely-glowing eyes. He must fly—quickly, before it was too late!

With a jerk of his head he tore his gaze away from those twin lights. Instantly the power of movement returned to him. He sprang forward, reeling a little on his feet. He had almost reached the bend, when out of the blackness a hand closed on his shoulder.

After the tortured uncertainty through which he had passed, this actual physical contact with danger was an immense relief. Here was no shadow, no phantom figure, but a man's steel-like hands—something real—something he could try to contend with. Jack turned swiftly, and, dropping his parcels, he struck out with all his might. For a moment that held upon his shoulder lifted.

Jack ducked, and made a desperate dive along the tow-path. But the condition of that muddy track was not one for any elegant display of footwork. His boots slipped on the clay, and he fell sprawling into a puddle. Instantly hands clasped his ankles.

"Let me go!" he shouted. "Let me

go!" And then, remembering the distant Emerald, he tried to hail her.

"Mr. Bowker!" he called. "Mr. Bowker! Help! Help!"

"There's no help for you now, my lad!" said a voice that he knew only too well—the cold, sinister voice of Black Michael.

Jack felt himself being drawn by the feet across the tow-path. He tried to continue his shouting; he even made a passionate attempt to whistle, in the hope that Squall might hear him; but the mud from the tow-path, along which his face was being dragged, prevented him from emitting anything but choking, meaningless sounds.

He felt himself dragged through the hedge into the field beyond. Once there, brutal hands seized upon him. A handkerchief was tied over his mouth.

"On with the brat! You know where to keep him until I fetch the car. Confound this infernal weather! I'll make the boy pay for taking me out on a night like this!"

It was Black Michael who spoke, and even at that moment of stress Jack had a certain feeling of relief at the thought that for a while at least he was to be deprived of Black Michael's company. But his captors had evidently taken their tone from their leader. He might be worth two hundred pounds, but the way they treated him did not suggest that they held him in any particular value. He was rushed up the path, forced head foremost through bushes, flung over fences, and when he dropped to the ground, dazed and utterly weary, a brutal kick quickened him to his feet.

"Get on with it, you little rat! I've got a score to settle with you before the governor deals with you!"

Through his confused senses Jack recognised Corly's tone. Clearly the man remembered only too well their previous meeting, and meant to pay back with interest all he had been made to endure at the boy's hands.

"If he won't walk, twist his bloomin' arm! We ain't going to carry the lazy little toad if we can help it!"

A cruel twist of his arm made Jack realise the wisdom of keeping his feet at all costs. Fortunately, they had now reached the big meadow, and over the close-cropped grass the going was easy. Still, even then, his captors kicked and hit him, finding in every stumble an excuse to ill-treat their victim. Jack's head was singing, and it seemed to him that he had hardly any breath left in his body, when he was flung over a gate into the hands of some men who were waiting for him at the other side. Another second and they had crossed a road and were in the field beyond.

And now Jack, despite the state of his feelings, realised what place he was being taken to. For the first time a faint glimmer of hope lit up the darkness of his despair. Ahead of him loomed the great red barn that he had seen from the bridge. Clearly he was being taken there. He had been right in his surmise—that if he were captured, this place was to be the scene of his temporary confinement; and he recalled the warning he had sent Bill Bowker.

Now they had reached the barn. A door was flung open, and he was shot into the interior as if he had been a sack of straw. The rest of the gang followed, closing the door behind him. Lights from a couple of electric torches

ANSWERS
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perced the darkness. Jack lay there on a litter of mouldy straw, surrounded by a ring of men. As he looked up at them he could see the gleaming, malevolent cruelty of their faces. The man whom he recognised as Curly bent down and jerked him to his feet.

"Let down the rope from that beam. I'm going to tie the kid up and give him half a dozen. I owe him more than that, but I reckon I've got to leave something to the gov'nor."

There was a murmur of coarse laughter. Other torches were turned on, and by their light Jack saw a thick rope being lowered from a beam that stretched across the roof of the barn. One end was fastened in a loop about the waist.

The men hauled on the other end of the rope, and Jack found himself raised about a foot from the ground. Curly, he saw, had taken off his coat, and was swinging in his hands a thick leather belt.

"Now, then, my lad, now you're going to have some of the right stuff!"

As the words fell from his lips his fingers stiffened; the hand that held the belt dropped to his side; he swung round with a start.

"What in blazes is that?" he whispered.

From the other side of the door came a loud whispering, the scratching of an animal's paws, a violent sniffing. But Curly was in doubt, Jack wasn't.

"Squall!" he shouted, with a last effort of his strength. "Squall!"

Will Jack's faithful pul be able to help him in this emergency? Mind you read the continuation of this sparkling story in next week's issue of the MAGNET, chums!

THE INTERLOPER!

(Continued from page 22.)

Paul was gaining ground for the moment, and his fists came home on the Bounder's face, leaving red marks there. But the Bounder rallied at once, and drove him back.

Back he went, resisting hard under the slogging attack, till the wall of the study stopped him, and he could go no further. There he rallied and fought desperately.

"By gad, the charity kid's got pluck!" said Bolsover major. "He knows how to take his gruel."

"I dare say he's used to gruel, or skilly, at his charity school!" sniggered Skinner.

Wharton entered the study.

"Smithy, stop it! The kid's no match for you! Drop it, I say. You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!"

Vernon-Smith dropped his hands, with a bitter grin.

"Let him get out of my study, then."

"It's his study, too. Don't be a fool!"

"He's going out, or he's going to take the stiffest licking I can give him! Will you go, you outsider?"

"No!" shouted Dallas. "Come on, you rotter!"

"You've asked for it!"

And the Bounder came on again.

"Say the word, Dallas, and I will stop him!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Let him alone. Nobody's going to protect me!"

Wharton stepped back. It was the answer he would have made himself; but it went against the grain to see the

outclassed junior thrashed so mercilessly by the hefty Bounder.

"Are you going?" jeered Smithy.

"No!" panted Dallas.

"I think you are."

And the Bounder closed with his adversary, and swung him away from the wall. He exerted all his strength, and hurled him at the doorway. There was a roar from the crowd of juniors there as Dallas crashed helplessly into them.

"Look out—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Dallas sprawled on the floor. Bob Cherry lifted him to his feet, and he stood unsteadily. But he turned on Vernon-Smith again.

The Bounder was waiting for him. He came on to the attack, and his left crashed in the new junior's face, followed up by his right. Dallas spun into the passage. The way was clear for him now.

"Is that enough?" panted the Bounder.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull picked the new fellow up. Evidently it was enough. Dallas could hardly stand.

The fight was over. In silence the two juniors led him away to bathe his face. The Bounder burst into a mocking laugh as he went.

"Shame!"

That word, cried out by half a dozen of the Removites, seemed to sting the Bounder.

"Shame!"

Vernon-Smith slammed the door of his study. THE END.

(There's no more attractive Bounder living than Vernon-Smith, and in next week's fine long school story—"THE BOUNDER'S FEUD"—we get more than a glimpse of the character which earned him the nickname of the Bounder of Greyfriars.)

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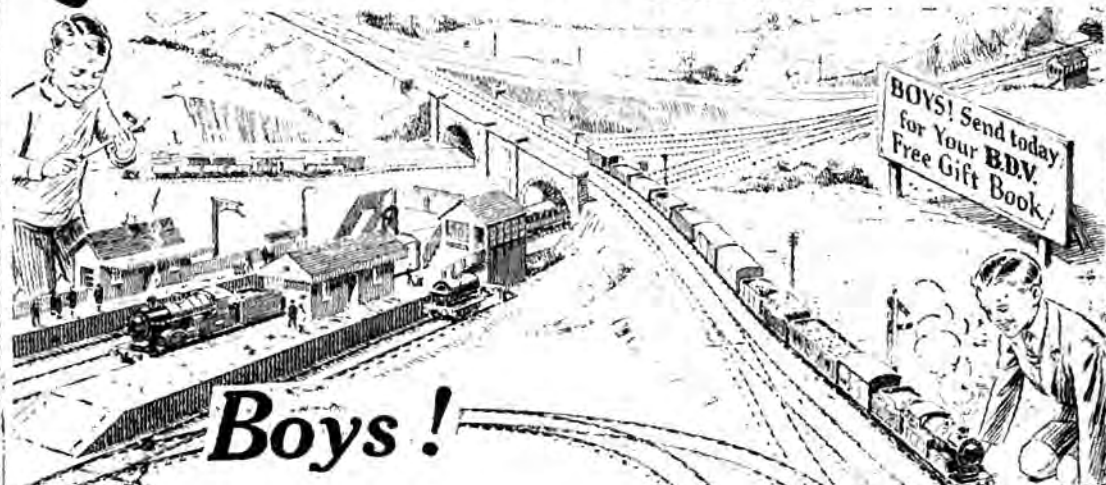
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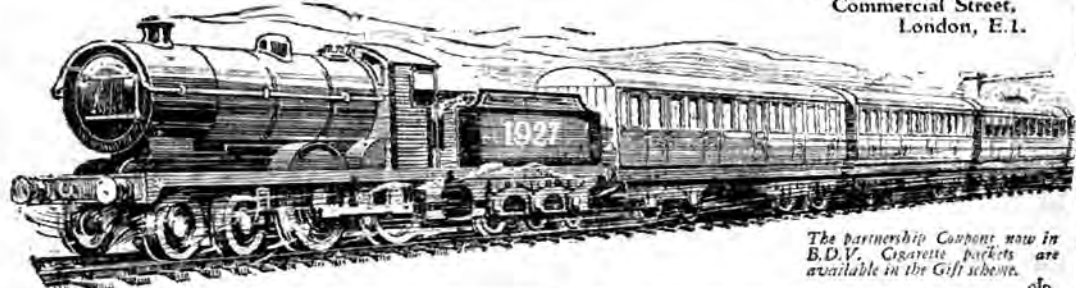
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"COME in, fat-head!" growled the Head, as a sharp ratter-let sounded on the door of his study.

The next minute Doctor Birchmell, flushed as pink as a pony, for it was the House Dame who wedded into his study.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Buxom!" stammered the Head, trying to his feet. "I should not have addressed you as 'fat-head,' had I been aware of your eye-don'ty. I thought it was one of the masters who had come to peep on me. I trusted there is nothing amiss, ma'am?"

added the Head, for Mrs. Buxom was looking very grave.

"Something is very much amiss, sir," said the House Dame. "I have bad news for you. I am about to drop a bomb-shell!"

"Yaroooo!" yelled the Head, in mortal terror of being suddenly blown into little bits. "Have you turned Bolshevik, ma'am? Have I been harboring on my staff a disciple of Lenin and Trotsky?"

Mrs. Buxom laughed—rather scornfully, for the Head was quaking in every limb. It was clear that he was expecting her to produce a bomb-shell, drop it on the carpet, and hurl him into eternity.

"Compose yourself, sir," said the House Dame. "I don't mean the sort of bomb-shell that goes off with a bang. I am speaking meta—meta—"

The Head helped her out.

"Meta—figuratively?" he suggested.

"That's the word, sir. I have some dreadful news for you—"

"Tell me the worst at once, ma'am!" muttered the Head, hoarsely.

Mrs. Buxom gulped hard, and averted her eyes. Then she dropped her bomb-shell.

"Do not Bitchmell!"

"Look!" cried the House Dame, pointing a peckey fourfinger towards the garden. "Look for yourself, and verify the truth of my words!"

The Head turned and looked, and his brow grew black as thunder. His eyes rolled in their sockets, and he tore at his beard like a man demented.

Running wild in the garden were a number of rabbits—very plump and well-fed-looking rabbits—who were having no end of fun in the morning sunshine. Not far away was a billigose, grazing placidly among the Head's arcychocks. For one breathless moment, the Head looked as if he were about to throw a fit. He gazed at the barren patches where his cabbages had been, and roared with rage. He gazed at his disappearing arcychocks, and gave a harty choke.

"This is monstrous—outrageous!" he cried. "My garden—has been turned into a rabbit-warren! My cabbages—my perfectly precious cabbages—to say nothing of my lettuce and spring onions, and other kinds of frook—have all been consumed! And I am consumed myself—with violent and savage rage! Leave me for a few minutes, Mrs. Buxom. I wish to unburlen myself and say a few words which might jar upon sensitive ears."

The House Dame hurried away, and then the Head gave his anger full vent. He stormed, and he raved, and he ranted, and he uttered all sorts of mallydixtions and vallydixtions. The mallydixtions were for the benefit of the rabbits and the goat—and their owner, the vallydixtions—said words of farewell—were addressed to his cabbages.

Then the Head hung his hands in despair.

"My garden is ruined!" he groaned. "For years past I have made an honest penny by making salads, and selling them to the masters at a tanner a time. I have put in hours and hours of hard work in this garden, when I ought to have been taking the Sixth at Latin and Greek."

And now—all is ruin and desolation!"

The Head glared at the sticky bunions who were scamping round in circles chasing each others' tails. He glared at the lilly-goat, who was enjoying his break-fast of arcychocks; and again he hung his hands.

"Now what shall I do for pocket-munny?" he groaned. "No more salads for the masters; no more cabbages for my own dinner. If only I knew—who was responsible for this outrage, I'd flog him until he howled for mercy!"

And then, in a flash, recollection came to the Head. He recalled that when Frank Fearless the now boy, had come to St. Sam's, he had brought a small money with him, consisting of rabbits, white mice, a goat, and a parrot.

Frank Fearless had travelled with these pets in an open car; and the Head, who had ridden in the trailer behind, had had ample opportunity to study the pets.

Now, in a flash of revelation, he recognized them again. The goat, pawing for amusement in his attack on the arcychocks, turned and nodded to the Head quite familiarly.

Doctor Birchmell fairly danced with rage.

has had the temerity to let them loose in my garden! He shall pay dearly for all this damage. I shall send the bill in to his father—and a hefty bill it will be! Meanwhile, I will summon the young welp to my study, and deal with him as he richly deserves!"

The Head gave one last long lingering look at his desolated garden, then he turned on his heel and stamped furiously away to his study.

Binding the page, was loafing in the passages, beated in a commick cuff.

"Binding! How many times have I told you not to read such a pernicious paper as 'Cackles'?" If you want a paper that will educate you and eddify you, why don't you take 'Sniggers'—every Friday, price tuppence? My brother is a half-porter on the staff of it. But never mind that now. Go and find Fearless of the Fourth, and tell him to wait upon me in my study!"

Binding scouted away with alacrity. He found Frank Fearless in the truckshop, standing next to all and sundry. For the new boy, whose paper was the mallydixtions and petencies of Fearless's Fattion.

ing Foods for Frait Feeder's was simply rolling in licker.

"Master Fearless!" said Binding.

"Which the 'eadmaster wants you to wait on him in 'is study."

"My hat!" said Frank.

"Hasn't he got a maid to serve his breakfast? Surely he dezzent expect a new kid to act as waiter?"

"You don't quite comprey, old fellow," said Jack Jolly. "The Head dezzent want you to wait on him at table. He wants you to go and report to him. I expect it's a licker!" he added, contently.

"Eh? Why should the old buffer want to lick me?"

"Goodness nose! But I shouldn't keep him waiting, if I were you. Was the Head looking very waxy, Binding?"

"E, was, an' all!" said Binding.

"Foamin' an' rogin' like a madman! Looks as if Master Fearless is goin' to get it in the neck!"

Frank Fearless started.

"I'm not afraid of old Birchmell," he said. "A Fearless is always Fearless as long as he lives. I'll go and beard the lion in his den."

"Better barrycade your baggs first," suggested Merry.

So saying, Frank Fearless elbowed his way through the crowd in the truckshop, and marched away to the Head's study.

GOOD-MORNING, pop!" Molly Birchmell tripped cheerily into her father's study.

The Head's daughter looked the very picture of dainty and elegant girlhood as she stood there, with a croaky-mallet over her shoulder.

The Head was sitting up and down, swishing a birch-rod through the air and snorting like a fiery dragon. He usually had a kiss and a smile for his dainty daughter, but even Molly's interruption was not welcome now.

"Run away, my dear!" he said ruffly. "But aren't you coming out to play today, pop, before mourning lessons?"

The doctor shook his head.

"I'm going to take my eggessive in another form," he said. "I have a secret birching to administer!"

"May I stay and look on?" asked Molly, eagerly.

"No, no! Such painful sites are not for innocent lambs to witness. I have sent for a certain young rascal, in order to give him the lesson of his life!"

"Who is he?" asked Molly, curiously.

The Head heezled. He was on the horns of a dilemma. He dared not tell Molly that he was about to punish Frank Fearless; for Frank was Molly's hero, and she had already interested for him successfully on a previous occasion. For it was Frank Fearless who had rescued the Head's daughter from the clutches of a gang of gipsies, who had tried to kidnap her and hold her to ransom.

Molly Birchmell had a grate influence over her father, and she would certainly not stand by and see her hero flogged.

The Head realized this, and he deemed it prudent to tell a whopper.

"The boy I am about to punish, my dear," he said, "is Jolly of the Fourth."

"Jack Jolly?" cried Molly.

"What has he done?"

"Oh—er—lots of things," said the Head vaguely. "He's always getting into mischief. Jolly is one of those boys who ought to be birched regularly three times a day, just to keep him in order."

Molly nodded her pretty head.

"If Jolly has been really naughty, pop, I've no objection to his being flogged," she said. "But don't be too severe, will you? Just a couple of cuts on each hand!"

(Continued on the next page.)

The Head laughed grimly.

"A dozen, of the best on each paw is what I propose to administer," he said.

"That's the stuff to give 'em! It's the little daily dozen that does it. It's a hark! I believe the miserable boy is now approaching!"

Footmarks sounded in the passages. The Head darted across to the cubert and threw the door open.

"In here, Molly—quickly!" he cried. "I do not wish you to witness this panel exhibition."

Dr. Birchmell fairly danced with rage as the goat, pawing for a moment, quite familiarly.

Molly squeezed herself into the cubert.

"Promiss me!" hissed the Head.

"Promiss me that you wif you come out until I say the word!" said Molly.

And the cubert door was slammed upon her, just as Frank Fearless, without troubling to knock, strode into the study.

The Head turned upon him in a fury, with black rage seething in his breast as he thought of his cabbages, and his arcychocks, and all the green things of the earth which had furnished in his garden, and which now—a last—flurished no more.

"Fearless!" he said, in a husky whisper, not daring to raise his voice in case Molly should hear. "Your gilly conscience will tell you why I have summoned you to my study!"

Frank Fearless was about to reply, when the Head, realising the danger of Frank's voice being heard and reog-nised, promptly attached up a duster and tied it round the mouth of the wemonished junior.

"Not a word!" hissed the Head. "I can do all the talking that is necessary. You are at my mercy now, you young scamp! My daughter saved you before from getting your deserts, but she is not here to save you now."

The Head darted a nervous glance

Dr. Birchmell tore at his bald hair like a man demented. "This is monstrous—outrageous!" he cried. "My garden has been turned into a rabbit-warren!"

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