

"THE HAND OF AN ENEMY!"

This week's powerful school story of Harry Wharton & Co.

No. 1,001. Vol. XXXI.

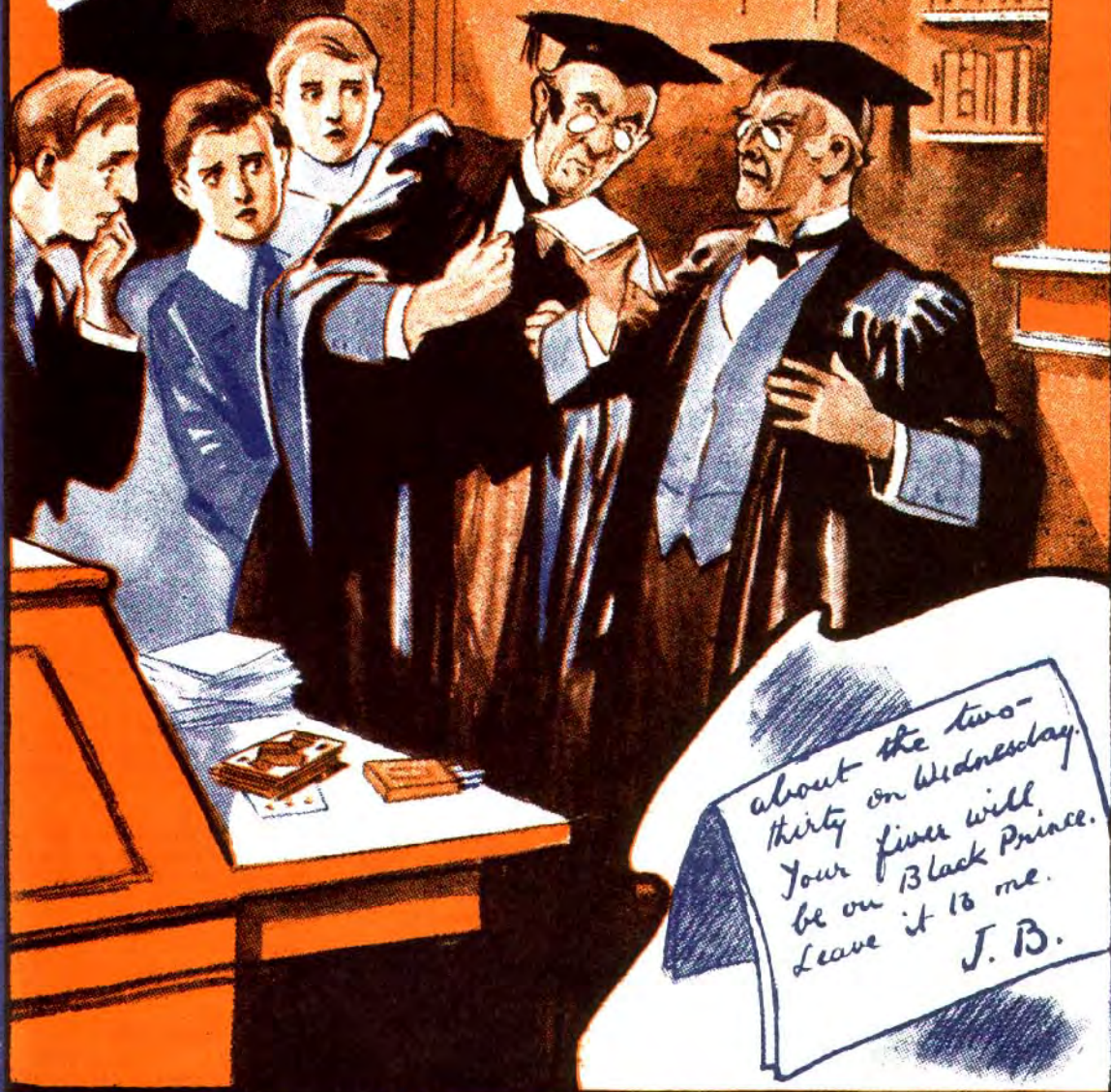
Week Ending April 23rd, 1927.

The Magnet

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EVERY
MONDAY.



about the two-
thirty on Wednesday.
Your five will
be on Black Prince.
Leave it to me.
J. B.

ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO GET ANY BOY THE SACK!

What the "Head's Inspection" brought to light in Paul Dallas' study! (See this week's grand school story—"THE HAND OF AN ENEMY!"—inside.)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

FIVE MEALS A DAY!

A KEEN reader of this paper whispers to me, as it were, that he gets through five big meals a day, and yet he is always hungry. Is there anything wrong with him, he adds. That, surely, is a matter for the doctor. Five meals a day does sound a bit hefty, especially if it leaves a fellow hungry. Sounds almost like old Billy Bunter, doesn't it? But, seriously, though, I advise my correspondent to go and confide in the local doctor. If my chum has anything wrong with him it should be treated without delay.

A BUDDING RHYMESTER!

I don't know whether "George, of Islington," is pulling my leg, but he writes and tells me that he is very keen on a girl chum, and he feels that he must burst into poetry in order to tell her what he thinks of her companionship. Now the poem, I am given to understand, is going strong, or, rather, it was building up all right until my correspondent began to look round for a rhyme for "month." He's gnawed his way through several pencils whilst he has racked his brains for this missing word, and now admits himself beaten. Can I help him? I'm afraid I can't. So far as I know, there is no word that will rhyme with "month." If "George" is still mighty keen to burst into poetry I strongly advise him to bring in a fresh line to that particular verse where the word month occurs. It'll mean a saving in pencils, anyway!

JIMMY SILVER & CO!

Once again a MAGNET reader has written to ask what has happened to Jimmy Silver & Co., who once upon a time figured so successfully in the "Boys' Friend." This correspondent tells me that he misses their cheery faces. Well, he can take comfort in the fact that Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood School appear regularly in our grand companion paper the "Popular," so there's no need for my chum to miss Uncle James and his merry men any longer. The "Pop," by the way, is on sale Tuesday of every week.

Next Monday's Programme:

"AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!"

By Frank Richards.

This is another rattling fine yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., in which the Bounder figures largely. These stories are "going down" exceptionally well, and it would be a rare pity if any of my chums missed a single yarn in the series. Therefore—verb sap.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

There will be another grand instalment of this popular serial by Lionel Day, and it's quite up to "snuff." Mind you read it, chums.

"SPEECH DAY AT ST. SAM'S!"

By Dicky Nugent.

This item on the programme comes last, but it is by no means the least, for Dicky is an acknowledged laughter-maker. Look out for it!—Chin, chin.

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Interesting Tit-Bits for Footer Fans.

The question of the biggest attendance at a Cup-tie is often asked, but how many people remember the smallest attendance at a big knock-out game? This was in 1915, when Norwich City and Bradford City played at Lincoln. Not a single penny was taken in gate money, because for the match—which was played in mid-week—the gates were not opened to the public. The War was then on, and it was not considered advisable to lure the public from their work.

In the old days, when Preston North End had a side which was known as "The Invincibles," Dewhurst, one of their forwards, was always prepared to wager a new hat that he would score twice in any match.

Dick Parker, the centre-forward of Millwall, won a light-weight boxing championship during the War. This is how his final opponent describes the fight, "There were two bits: Parker hit me, and I hit the floor."

Some of the big football clubs have refused permission for details of their matches to be broadcast, the contention being that this encourages people to stay at home and listen to the games rather than pay to see them.

Everton spent nearly twenty thousand pounds in securing new players early in the present year in an effort to get together a side which would help them to escape relegation.

The Calcutta Cup, for which England and Scotland play at the Rugby game every year, used to belong to the Calcutta Rugby Football club, which was disbanded in 1878.

Eight of the men who have done so much for Reading in the Cup this season were picked up for nothing from other clubs with which they had been connected, but which no longer thought their services worth anything.

The only modern footballer who has three Cup-winners' medals, is Clem Stephenson, of Huddersfield Town. Two of these were gained with Aston Villa, and the other one with Huddersfield Town.

In no Final tie since the War has the losing side scored even one goal. On five of the last seven occasions the result has been a goal to nothing, and on the other two occasions two goals to nothing.

Two clubs have won the Cup without having a goal scored against them in the whole course of the competition. They are Preston North End and Bury.

The losers receive gold medals as well as the winners of the Cup; but the consolation prizes are considered a very poor "second best."

There were only about five hundred spectators at the first Cup Final ever played, but one of the newspapers described it as a "great crowd." How would this same newspaper have described the attendance in 1923, when there were about 180,000 present?

When the first English Cup was stolen from the shop-window of a Birmingham tradesman in 1895, a reward of ten pounds was offered for its return. But, though as an inducement it was also stated that "no questions would be asked," the Cup never came back.

When Wolverhampton Wanderers won the Cup in 1908, every member of the team was born in England, and most of them were local lads.

No player has ever done the hat-trick—that is, scored three goals—in a Final tie for the English Cup.

Only once has extra time been played in the Final tie, and that was in 1920, when Aston Villa beat Huddersfield. Previous to this occasion it was not usual for extra time to be played at the first meeting; but now there must be an extra half hour if the teams finish level at the end of an hour and a half.

THE BOUNDER'S HAIR! When such evidence is brought against Paul Dallas as would seem to prove conclusively to his Form fellows that he is a hypocrite and a thorough blackguard, there are a few juniors who can't help suspecting that the Bounder is at the bottom of the plot to blacken his adopted brother's name, and to see him sacked from Greyfriars. But if this is so, the jealous, cunning Bounder has laid his plans well!

The Hand of an Enemy!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Back to Greyfriars!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "No room!"
 "Oh, really, Cherry!"
 "Sorry, no room!" said Bob Cherry firmly.

He held the handle of the carriage door, and smiled down genially at William George Bunter on the platform.

There was a swarm of Greyfriars fellows on the platform at Courtfield Junction. Greyfriars was gathering again after the Easter holidays. From all directions Greyfriars men were arriving at Courtfield, whence the local train was to take them on to Friarfield for the school. It really did not matter much whether fellows went on by the first local train or the second; but there was always a rush for the first.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, had bagged seats—in fact, they had bagged a whole carriage. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, had had designs on that carriage. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, were now strewn on the platform, dusty and enraged. Coker, of the Fifth, had claimed that carriage, with all the lofty authority of a Fifth-Form man. Coker, of the Fifth, was now struggling to extract his head from his hat. And then Billy Bunter rolled up, and clutched at the handle of the door.

Bunter being a Remove man, he was not strewn on the platform, neither was his hat transformed into a concertina over his fat ears. But, like the Peri at the gate of Paradise, he was denied entrance.

"No room, old fat bean!" said Bob. "Roll along!"

"Look here, you beast!"
 "Roll on, thou fat and flabby Bunter, roll!" chanted Frank Nugent, in an impromptu parody of the celebrated Apostrophe to the Ocean.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Why, you beasts, you've got the carriage to yourselves!" hooted Bunter. "There's only five of you, and there's six seats. There's room for one."

"But you need room for two, old fat man!" said Bob cheerfully. "Room for one isn't any use to you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're keeping a seat for Dallas!" said Harry Wharton. "Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"No room!" said Bob. "Roll on!"

"The roomfulness is not great, and your esteemed circumference is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Dallas!"

"This way, kid!"

Paul Dallas, who had been a new fellow at Greyfriars the previous term, came along the platform, and was greeted with a shout from the Famous Five. He glanced round, and smiled, and made for the carriage.

But by that time, Coker, of the Fifth, had extracted his head from his hat, and was glancing round in search of the Famous Five and vengeance. He rushed up to the carriage as Dallas reached it, Billy Bunter hopping aside with great promptness.

Coker did not waste any ceremony on Dallas, who was merely a Remove chap, a trifle light as air in the great Coker's estimation. He shoved him aside, and grabbed the carriage door.

Whereupon, Paul Dallas promptly grabbed the great Coker, and yanked him away. Coker turned upon him like a lion in his wrath.

"Rescue, Remove!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five poured from the carriage and collared Coker in his turn.

Coker had been extremely indignant at having his hat—a new hat—squashed over his eyes. But Coker would have been well-advised to leave it at that. In the grasp of six Remove fellows, his last state was worse than his first. Coker smote the platform forcibly, and was rolled over and over, till he hardly knew what was happening to him.

And while Harry Wharton & Co. were busy with Coker, Bunter plunged into the carriage and bagged a seat. There

was a scream of a whistle and a slamming of doors along the train.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! She's going!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Buck up!"

Leaving Coker for dead, so to speak, the Famous Five rushed back into the carriage, just in time. Dallas plunged in after them, and the door was slammed, and the next second the train started.

"I say, you fellows, give a man room!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Keep your boots off my feet, Cherry! Keep your elbow out of my eye, Johnny Bull, you silly ass! If you shove me again, Dallas, I'll punch you!"

"Why, if that fat frog hasn't hopped in!" exclaimed Bob Cherry indignantly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We were keeping that seat for Dallas, you fat bounder!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Dallas can stand, I suppose!" said Bunter, and he seated himself comfortably in the corner seat.

Paul Dallas laughed.

"I can stand all right!" he said.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's Coker shaking his fist!" said Bob, staring from the window. "He seems to be annoyed about something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry kissed his hand to Coker, who was shaking a frantic list after the vanishing train, and seemed to be on the verge of raving. Platform and Coker disappeared behind.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Here we are again, back at the old shop!" said Bob Cherry cheerily, as he sat down. "Had good hols, Dallas?"

"Pretty fair," said Paul.

"I say, you fellows, I've had splendid holidays," said Bunter. "I was really sorry I couldn't have you chaps at Bunter Court. But, of course, it wouldn't have done—we had very distinguished people there."

"All your titled relations?" asked Bob.

"Exactly."

"Must have been an awful crush."

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"The crushfulness must have been terrific."

"The Duke de Bunter, and the Marquis de Grunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We entertained royalty this time," said Bunter. "If you fellows had been there—"

"We should have seen the royalty—perhaps."

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! You've been rooting about on the Continent these hols, Dallas?"

"Yes."

"Breaking the bank at Monte Carlo?"

"No," said Dallas, laughing. "Mr. Vernon-Smith went to Monte Carlo, and I went with him. But, of course, they don't let schoolboys into the casino."

"Otherwise you'd have come home loaded with loot, what?" grinned Bob.

"Or, more likely, not!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Seen anything of Smithy in the vac?"

Paul Dallas' face clouded.

"No."

"Then he really stayed at the school through the vacation?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I'm afraid so."

"Rough luck on Vernon-Smith!" said Bob. "But he asked for it—really begged and prayed for it!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Cheese it, Bunter! We'll find the Bounder at the school, then, when we get there," said Bob. "Must have had a rotten time, nooching about Greyfriars all on his lonesome own."

"Must have been rotten," said Nugent.

"The rottenfulness must have been—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter! We wound up last term rowing with the Bounder," said Bob Cherry. "I've been thinking we may as well let it drop this term, if Smithy will. No need to start the term at loggerheads, what?"

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Quite," he said. "We'll keep the peace if Smithy will let us. He's had time to think over things a little, anyhow."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Chuck it, Bunter!"

William George Bunter gave an angry snort. Fascinating as his conversation was, nobody seemed keen on giving it a hearing. Nobody wanted to know how Bunter's titled relations had entertained royalty at Bunter Court.

There was a cloud on Paul Dallas' handsome face now.

"It was awfully rotten about Smithy," he said. "He practically defied his father, and I suppose Mr. Vernon-Smith couldn't be blamed for leaving him at the school over the Easter vacation. But—it was rather rotten for me taking his place. I'm afraid Smithy thinks I wangled it; but I hope you fellows believe that I hated the idea of it."

"Of course," said Wharton.

"You see," said Paul uncomfortably. "Smithy said that he wouldn't go home for the holidays unless I was left at Greyfriars. I asked Mr. Vernon-Smith to leave it at that. But, naturally, I suppose, he wouldn't let Smithy dictate to him; and he took Smithy at his word. I had no choice in the matter; I had to do as I was told."

"We understand that, of course,"

said Harry. "It was a rotten position, but you weren't to blame."

"It spoiled my holiday, of course," said Paul. "Mr. Vernon-Smith is rather a determined sort of man; and he will not listen to argument. He's accustomed to having his orders obeyed without question. Having adopted me, he takes it for granted that I do exactly as he directs, as if I were really his son. Of course, that's all right and proper. Only as Smithy takes it so badly, it's jolly uncomfortable. I'd have given anything to stay at school over the holidays, and let Smithy go with his father. You fellows believe that?"

"Right as rain," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Perhaps you'll find your giddy adopted brother in a more reasonable temper when you get back this term."

"I—I hope so," said Paul. But he spoke very doubtfully. He had long given up expecting the Bounder of Greyfriars to act reasonably.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ring off, Bunter!"

"I was going to tell you—"

"Wash it out!"

"About what we did at Bunter Court—"

"Go to sleep and dream again, old fat man."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I say, you know, we had—"

"Friardale!" roared Bob Cherry. "Turn out!"

The train stopped at Friardale, and Bob hurled the door open, and the juniors poured cheerily out. And Bunter grunted discontentedly and rolled after them; his tale of the great doings at Bunter Court still untold.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Bad Beginning!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH looked out of his study window. The silence that had so long lain on Greyfriars School was broken; the quadrangle, so long deserted, was echoing again to many footsteps and a buzz of voices. The fellows were arriving.

Vernon-Smith watched them sourly. He saw Wingate of the Sixth, walking across the quad with Gwynne—Hilton of the Fifth, handsome and debonaire as ever. Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form-master, walked and talked with Mr. Queleh, the master of the Remove. Little Monsieur Charpentier was to be seen, in the same tight-fitting black frock-coat, a little more threadbare than last term. A bunch of Shell fellows passed under Smithy's observation, all talking together, and obviously in the best of spirits. Then there was a swarm of the Second—Dicky Nugent, and Gatty, and Myers, and Sammy Bunter, whooping. Sourer and sourer the Bounder's face grew as he watched.

It had been a new experience for Herbert Vernon-Smith to pass a thoroughly "rotten" holiday.

And no holiday could very well be "rotten" than that to which the Bounder of Greyfriars had been condemned.

The Easter vacation was not a long one, but it had seemed endless to the Bounder, left at the school by himself.

There was not a man in the Remove whom he specially desired to see, it was true. He had no friendly feelings towards anyone in his Form, or in any other Form at Greyfriars.

But solitude was appalling to a fellow

like the Bounder. He would have welcomed the company of an enemy in those dreary days.

Day after day, with nobody to speak to, save Mrs. Kebble, the house-dame, Trotter, the page, and Gosling, the porter. After a few days it grew absolutely intolerable to the Bounder. But he had to stand it to the bitter end.

For the first few days, he had believed, and hoped, that his father would relent.

Yet from his own obstinate and unyielding nature, he might have known what to expect from Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

He had declared, savagely, that he would not go home for the holidays, if his father's adopted son did so. Few parents would have submitted to such a defiance of parental authority; and Mr. Vernon-Smith was about the last parent in the world to do so.

It was true that he was deeply attached to his son; as indeed his son was to him. But when a dispute arose, both natures, hard, obstinate, arrogant, showed their worst side. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not dream for one moment of allowing his son to dictate to him. Herbert Vernon-Smith did not even entertain the idea of yielding. So he had been taken at his word, and left at Greyfriars.

Not a word had come to him from his father during the holidays.

He knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith was going abroad, that he had arranged to take both his son and his adopted son with him, on a continental holiday. In the circumstances, the millionaire had been able to take only his adopted son.

Smithy had no doubt that Paul Dallas was enjoying himself immensely; enjoying above all the triumph over his rival.

Every day, as he tramped drearily about the deserted quad, or drifted aimlessly along the passages, the Bounder thought of his enemy, enjoying the sunshine and jollity in the South of France. The interloper, the parasite, was getting such a holiday as only fell to fortunate fellows. Smithy, whose holiday it should have been, was kicking his heels in dismal solitude about the deserted school.

The Bounder ground his teeth when he thought of it.

It was only the dismal solitude that made him look forward to the beginning of the summer term.

He was unfriendly with most of the Remove, especially with Harry Wharton & Co.; and his own special chum, Tom Redwing, was not coming back that term. It added to the Bounder's bitterness to know that it was through his own action that Redwing had left Greyfriars.

The new term meant to him only the renewal of disputes and strife; but it was none the less welcome on that account. His grudge against Paul Dallas was deeper than ever; and it was not until the interloper came back that he could make him pay, as he expressed it, for all that he had done.

Dallas, as the Bounder regarded it, had cut him out with his father, had been the cause of his losing his chum; had been the author of all the disasters of the late term. Through the long, dreary days and dismal nights, Vernon-Smith had thought and thought, forming scheme after scheme for retaliating on his successful rival. And every day the flame of his hatred burned fiercer.

The echoing of footsteps in the passages, the buzz of voices in the quadrangle, the opening and slamming of study doors, seemed like new life to the Bounder. The deadly solitude was over



Billy Bunier rolled up, and clutched at the handle of the carriage door. "No room, old fat bean!" cried Bob Cherry. "Roll along!" "Why, you beasts!" hooted the fat Remove. "There's only five of you, and there's six seats. There's room for one." "But you need room for two, old fat man!" said Bob cheerfully. "Roll on!" (See Chapter 1.)

—the time of bitter pondering and scheming had finished, and the time of action had come.

There was a tap at the door of his study, and Trotter, the page, looked in. Herbert Vernon-Smith gave him a sour look of inquiry.

"Mr. Quelch sent me to tell you to go to his study, Master Vernon-Smith," said Trotter.

"Very well," Trotter departed.

The Bounder was in no hurry to go.

Mr. Quelch—who did not believe in wasting time in idleness—had set him a holiday task of considerable extent. With nothing to do, and time heavy on his hands, Vernon-Smith might have found relief in that task. But as a matter of fact, he had not touched it.

He had "mooched" about the school, read till he was tired of reading, smoked innumerable cigarettes, stolen out over the wall after dark to visit his sporting friends at the Cross Keys—but even in the moments of deepest boredom he had not turned to study as an occupation.

He was to be called to account now, he knew; but he cared little. If he was to begin the new term in his Form master's black books, that state of affairs was quite in keeping with his present frame of mind.

Deliberately he lingered in the study for ten minutes before he obeyed the Remove master's summons.

Then he went downstairs in a mood to meet angry words with insolent defiance.

The Remove had not yet arrived; and Mr. Quelch evidently intended to deal with the Bounder before they came. He was not likely to have much time to spare after the Lower Fourth came swarming in.

Vernon-Smith tapped at his door and entered.

His face was sullen; his expression drawing a frown to the Remove master's brow.

Mr. Quelch was not in the best of tempers to begin with. No Form master ever is on the first day of term, with plenty of work and worry on hand, and everything out of place. Mr. Quelch was already perturbed by an uncomfortable journey, by the circumstance that his luggage had not yet reached the school, by the fact that Mr. Prout had wasted time in a long, long talk about his holidays, and by having found the Head a little peevish, and by having tripped over a pail the housemaid had left in his study, and by the other thousand-and-one things liable to happen on the first day of term. So he was not prepared to be very patient with a sullen-faced, impertinent junior who had given him a great deal of trouble the term before.

"Vernon-Smith! Come in!"

The Bounder entered.

"I trust you have not wasted your

time during your stay at the school," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" "I was sorry, Vernon-Smith, when I was informed that your father had requested the Head to accommodate you at Greyfriars over the Easter vacation."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder, with a touch of sarcasm.

"But in view of the circumstances, Vernon-Smith, you appear to have left no other course open to your father."

"Do you think so, sir?"

"I trust that this term, Vernon-Smith, you will do better. You have had ample time and opportunity for reflection."

"Ample, sir!" agreed the Bounder.

"I trust that you have decided to show more respect to your father's wishes, and to cease nourishing a groundless dislike towards the boy whom Mr. Vernon-Smith has so kindly adopted."

"You're very good, sir," said the Bounder.

"And now, your task," said the Remove master sharply. "You have completed it, I suppose?"

"No, sir!"

"You have had more than ample time, Vernon-Smith. However, I shall not be hard upon you, as no doubt you have had a very unpleasant vacation. What have you done?"

"Nothing, sir!"

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"Am I to understand," said Mr. Quelch, raising his voice a little, "that you have not touched the task I left for you?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch stared across his table at the Bouncer. Herbert Vernon-Smith waited with an expressionless face.

"Is this meant for defiance, Vernon-Smith?" rapped out the Remove master, at last.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then what do you mean by it?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "You were aware that your holiday task was to be performed, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yet you have not touched it?"

"No, sir."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am very unwilling to punish a boy on the first day of the term, but you leave me no other resource, Vernon-Smith."

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

The Bouncer's face set, hard and sullen.

For a few moments the Remove master looked at him in doubt. Then he laid the cane down again.

"I shall consider the matter, Vernon-Smith," he said icily. "For the present you may go."

"Very well, sir."

The Bouncer left the study. The Remove master shook his head very seriously as the door closed behind him. He was going to have trouble that term with Herbert Vernon-Smith, and he was already fully aware of it. Mr. Quelch's lips set in a tight line.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Unchanged!

SMACK!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smithy!" The Remove had arrived—some of them, at least. Vernon-Smith staggered under that hearty smack on the shoulder, as Bob Cherry's cheery voice boomed in his ears.

"You ass!"

"Made you jump—what?" asked Bob. "Glad to see you again, Smithy, old bean! It's rather jolly to be back!"

Vernon-Smith's face cleared, and he gave Bob a smile and a nod. He had been prepared to meet the Famous Five with sullen hostility, all the more because he had brooded in solitude on the disagreements of the last term, and they had increased, as disagreements always will if brooded upon. But there was no withstanding the cheery, hearty cordiality of Bob Cherry. Bob, at all events, was not a man to remember disagreements or grievances, and it would have been a physical impossibility for him to hate anyone.

"Glad to see you, Cherry," said Vernon-Smith. "It's been pretty rotten here with all the fellows away."

Bob did not tell him that that was his own fault. Bob never said unpleasant things if he could help it.

"Must have been," he agreed. "But we're going to have a ripping term this time."

Vernon-Smith laughed. Every term was going to be ripping, according to Bob Cherry.

"I hope so," he said.

"There'll be the cricket," said Bob. "Quelch's here, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Has he come back in a good temper?"

"Scarcely."

"Well, he never does, so that's no worse than usual," said Bob. "I saw THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,001.

Hilton, of the Fifth, in the quad. So he's not sacked yet."

The Bouncer laughed again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, you fellows, here's old Smithy!" roared Bob Cherry, and the other members of the Co. came up and greeted the Bouncer.

"The gladfulness to behold your pleasing countenance is terrific, my esteemed Smithy," said the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Had a good time, you men?" asked Smithy.

"Oh, fair to middling!" said Harry Wharton. It would have been rather awkward to talk about topping holidays to a fellow who had been detained at school for the vacation.

"I say, Smithy, I had ripping hols," said Billy Bunter, rolling up. "I thought of you stuck here on your lonesome. Ha, he, he! I suppose you're frightfully glad to see us back?"

"I should be frightfully glad to see your back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Tuckshop's open," said Bob. "Come along, Smithy, and open the term with a ginger-beer."

"But—"

"Come on!"

Bob Cherry, taking no denial, marched the Bouncer off, and the rest of the Co. followed.

Herbert Vernon-Smith's face was much brighter.

These were the fellows he had intended to meet with sullen hostility. Evidently they had saved up no grudge during the vacation. He understood quite well that the Famous Five wanted old offences to be blotted out and forgotten, and for the moment, at least, he was prepared to meet them more than half-way.

"Here's a successful term and a win in every match this season!" said Bob Cherry, as the glasses foamed with ginger-pop.

"Hear, hear!"

"I'll drink that," said the Bouncer, with a touch of sarcasm, "though I shan't have any hand in the successes."

"What rot," said Wharton at once. "We're beginning fresh this term, Smithy, and you'll be in the cricket, of course."

"You mean that?"

"Of course."

"After I let you down in the football?"

Wharton coloured a little.

"Never mind that now, Smithy. Let's start fresh."

Vernon-Smith's face softened.

"You're a decent chap, Wharton. If I play for Greyfriars this term, I swear I'll play the game right through, and you can rely on me. I did a rotten thing in the last football match of the season—I own up."

"Chap can't do more than own up," said Bob Cherry. "We're going to see you knocking up centuries for Greyfriars, Smithy, and putting the lid on Rookwood and Highcliffe and St. Jim's—what?"

"I hope so," said the Bouncer, laughing.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Battle it up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "If you begin again about Bunter Court and Royalty and the titled crowd we'll bump you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was going to say—" yelled Bunter.

"I know what you were going to say. Don't!"

"You silly ass! I was going to say—"

"We know all about the Duke of Bunter de Grunter!"

"I was going to say—"

"Chuck it!"

"That I'd have a ginger-pop!" shrieked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, is that it?" chuckled Bob. "You can have a ginger-pop, old fat bean; but give Bunter Court and the nobility and gentry a rest."

"Fatter than ever!" said Peter Todd, coming into the school shop. "Blessed if Bunter doesn't grow wider every term!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Hallo, Smithy!" said Peter. "Glad to see you looking so chippy."

The Bouncer nodded cordially.

Paul Dallas came in at the doorway with Russell and Ogilvy of the Remove. They joined the cheery crowd of Removites before Paul noticed that the Bouncer was with his friends.

In an instant the smile vanished from the Bouncer's face, and it hardened grimly.

Paul flushed and hesitated. Gladly enough he would have given Mr. Vernon-Smith's son a friendly greeting. But the Bouncer's look was a plain indication that it would not be welcomed.

Vernon-Smith's eyes glinted at him.

"So you're back," he said.

"Yes," answered Paul.

An uncomfortable silence fell on the group of juniors. It was borne in upon the minds of Harry Wharton & Co. that it would not be easy to keep in harmony with the Bouncer, if he was keeping up his feud with Dallas, with whom they were on cordial terms.

"I hope we shall be better friends this term, Vernon-Smith," said Paul, as cordially as he could.

The Bouncer laughed.

"Did you have good hols?" he asked.

"Yes, thanks."

"How's my father?"

"Quite well. I suppose you've heard from him?"

"Why should you suppose that?" said the Bouncer sardonically. "I haven't heard from him."

"I—I'm sorry."

"Are you?" jeered the Bouncer.

"Better tell that to somebody who's likely to believe it."

"Smithy, old man—" remonstrated Bob.

"As Dallas has joined up, I'll take my leave," said Vernon-Smith. "You fellows know your own business best, but I bar charity kids myself!"

With that Herbert Vernon-Smith walked out of the tuckshop.

Dallas drew a deep breath. His face was burning.

Wharton set his lips.

"The same old Bouncer," said Johnny Bull.

"The samfulness is terrific."

"Bit ratty, after being kept here all the vac," said Bob. "Enough to make a man ratty, when you come to think of it."

"The fellow's a cad to talk like that," said Frank Nugent. "I'd jolly well shut him up, if I were Dallas."

Paul's eyes glinted.

"Vernon-Smith will not speak of me again like that without being called to account," he said.

And he left the tuckshop, his face clouded.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Bouncer's New Pal!

WHAT the thump!" Herbert Vernon-Smith came back into his study in the Remove passage, and found a fat figure reclining in the arm-chair there.



For a few moments Mr. Quelch looked at Vernon-Smith, in doubt. Then he laid the cane down again. "I am very unwilling to punish a boy on the first day of the term," he said icily. "I shall consider the matter, Vernon-Smith. For the present you may go." "Very well, sir," answered the Bounder. (See Chapter 2.)

There were fellows talking and clattering up and down the passage, doors opening and shutting, boxes bumping and rattling. The din was pleasant enough to the ears of the Bounder, after the long, dreary silence of the vacation. But he did not seem pleased at seeing his study occupied when he returned to it.

Billy Bunter gave him an amiable blink through his big spectacles.

"Trot in, Smithy!"

"Eh?"

"All serene, old man," said Bunter affably. "You're not disturbing me."

"I shall disturb you pretty quickly if you don't roll out of my chair and bunk!" grunted the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Hook it!" snapped Smithy. "What's this game, you fat tramp?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I'm bagging this study for the term," he said, with dignity.

"What?"

"Fellows can bag studies at the beginning of a term. You know that, Smithy. Redwing isn't coming back, is he?"

"No."

"Well, I suppose you don't expect to have a study all to yourself for the summer term, when other fellows go three or four to a study!" exclaimed Bunter warmly.

"Possibly not," assented the Bounder.

"Quelch wouldn't have it, you know," said Bunter. "You can't expect it. You might get some rotten sort of chap put in along with you, Smithy."

"I'm saving you from that by coming in here—see? What are you cackling at?"

Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. We shall get on all right together in this study, Smithy."

"Shall we?" said the Bounder grimly.

"Oh, yes! You can't keep the study to yourself, and you might have had some sponging rotter put in here who would be after your money, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Have you finished?" asked the Bounder. "If you have, you may as well get going, and save me the trouble of kicking you out."

"I'm sharing this study for the summer term—"

"Would you rather go out on your

feet, or on your neck, Bunter?" inquired Vernon-Smith. Apparently he was not keen on Bunter as a study-mate for the summer term.

"You don't seem to catch on," said the Owl of the Remove. "I'm staying here. I've a right to bag the study."

Smithy nodded.

"I shouldn't wonder," he agreed.

"That's all right, then. I'm turning Toddy down," said Bunter. "I really can't stand Peter Todd this term. Not my class socially, you know."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now, we shall pull together splendidly," said Bunter. "Of course, you're not my class socially, if you come to that—"

"Eh?"

"Bit of a parvenu, you know," said Bunter. "But I'm no snob. Fellows of really good family aren't."

Vernon-Smith looked at him. If Bunter were trying to ingratiate himself, he really was not displaying very much tact.

"You'll find it a rather pleasant

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change. I think, after that rotter Redwing last term," rattled on Bunter. "I never could understand how you put up with that low fellow, Smithy. You'll find it rather different, having a gentleman in the study."

"Great pip!"

"You'll pick up a lot of things from me," pursued Bunter. "With all your money, you know, you've never been able to become quite the thing. Always a bit of an outsider. Of course, your father being a self-made man accounts for it. I can give you a lot of tips, Smithy—tell you a lot of things about the way decent people behave. I might take you home for the holidays, too."

"Might you?" gasped the Bounder.

"I don't promise, but I might. Of course, you'd have to be careful, and not talk too much, and go easy on those glaring waistcoats of yours, and all that, I don't suppose you'll ever be a gentleman, but I could improve you an awful lot."

Vernon-Smith did not reply to that. He went round behind the armchair, grasped the back of it, and tilted Bunter out on the rug.

Bump!

There was a yell from Bunter.

"Now are you going?" asked Smithy.

"Yaroooo!"

"I give you one second!"

"Whoop!"

Billy Bunter yelled frantically as the Bounder began to kick. He sprawled and squirmed to the door, fairly dribbled out into the passage.

"Ow! Wow! Wow! Whoop!" roared Bunter.

Vernon-Smith slammed the door.

It opened again a minute later, and Bunter's fat face and big spectacles glared in.

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Bunter. "I refuse to share this study with you. I couldn't stand a cheeky, purse-proud upstart! Yah!"

And Bunter rolled away hastily, just in time to escape a whizzing inkpot. The Bounder kicked the door shut again.

But the Owl of the Remove had given him food for thought. It was certain that he would not be allowed to remain the sole tenant of Study No. 4 for the term, and this term there were no new fellows in the Remove. Neither did the Bounder desire to have a study to himself; he wanted company, though not Bunter's distinguished company.

After a little thought, Vernon-Smith went along the Remove passage to Study No. 11, where Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were taking possession of their old quarters.

The three black sheep of the Remove greeted him cordially.

"Hallo, Smithy!" said Skinner. "Roll in, old bean. Jolly glad to see you again!"

Skinner had great hopes of the Bounder this term. Last term Herbert Vernon-Smith had shown many signs of falling back into his old blackguardly ways; and now that Tom Redwing's good influence was gone, it was likely that his fall would be more rapid and more complete. Which was a very pleasant prospect for Skinner. The Bounder's reform had been a blow to the sporting set in the Remove—not that Skinner had ever believed that it was genuine.

"Had a pretty rotten vac, what?" asked Snoop.

"Thoroughly rotten!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Dallas is back," said Stott.

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"I've seen him."

"Like him any better this term?" asked Snoop, with a grin.

The Bounder's eyes glistened.

"No."

"Has Redwing turned up?" asked Stott.

"No; he's gone," said the Bounder, contracting his brows.

"He really gave up his scholarship here, then?" said Skinner. "Must have been a fool not to hang on to it!"

"Footling ass!" said Stott.

"Somebody will be baggin' your study, Smithy," remarked Skinner. "You'll have to take in at least one chap, I fancy."

"I know. How'd you like to be that chap?"

Skinner's eyes gleamed. He had already thought of that, as his expression showed.

"Mean it?" he asked.

"I came here to ask you."

"Good man! I'm on! We used to get on all right in Study No. 4, before Redwing came to Greyfriars."

"We'll get on all right again," said the Bounder. "I'll lend you a hand shifting your things in."

"Good egg!"

Snoop and Stott displayed no sorrow at losing their study-mate. They only rather envied him for being selected to share the Bounder's luxurious quarters.

Skinner was quite elated.

He was soon installed in Study No. 4; and he found the Bounder unusually amicable. He was glad to take possession of his old quarters, especially with the Bounder in a pally humour. In his wild days the Bounder had been a very valuable friend to Skinner; and the cad of the Remove was quite anticipating a return of the old times. From his point of view, he was a great improvement on Redwing as a study-mate. Certainly, he was more in accord with the Bounder's present moods and tastes.

Vernon-Smith was not likely to betray his real feelings—at least, to a fellow like Skinner. It never occurred to Skinner that the Bounder's heart was heavy at missing the friendly, familiar face of Tom Redwing in the study.

But Redwing was gone; and though the Bounder missed him sorely, it was his better nature that missed Redwing, and it was not his better nature that had the ascendant now.

If his feud with Dallas was to continue—as the Bounder fully intended—it was obvious that he would not keep on friendly terms with Harry Wharton & Co. or their set in the Remove. If he gave up the better fellows, he had to be content with the worse; a fellow had to have friends of some sort. The Bounder's cool, practical mind realised that very clearly; and so he had decided to take up Skinner & Co. for the term. He would have his party in the Remove, though it was a party generally regarded with contempt in the Form.

But it was a blow to the Bounder's pride. Skinner & Co. were only too keen to have him for their leader; but it was not a leadership of which the Bounder could be proud. It was better than nothing, that was all.

The fellow who had been prominent in his Form, a great man at games, respected if not liked, was sinking to the position of leader of a discontented and rather disreputable faction.

But at least he would make his presence felt in the Form; he would show that he could not be disregarded. That was all that was left to the Bounder of Greyfriars now.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Limit!

PAUL DALLAS stopped at the door of No. 1 Study, in the Remove, a few days later. Two or three fellows were loafing about the passage, and they exchanged grins as Dallas halted outside his study.

There was a large placard stuck on the door. Upon it was written, in large capital letters:

"SPARE A COPPER! IN THE CAUSE OF CHARITY!"

Paul's cheeks reddened, and his teeth came hard together.

During the first few days of the term, he had seen little of Herbert Vernon-Smith, keeping out of the Bounder's way as much as he could.

It was not to be wondered at that, good-natured fellow as he was, he repaid the Bounder's bitter hatred with dislike.

But he was very anxious to keep the peace, if he could, at least.

His position was uncomfortable enough, as Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son, regarded as an interloper and supplanter by the millionaire's own son. And his gratitude to the father made him desire to avoid trouble with the son if he could. So long as the Bounder let him alone, he was more than willing to leave Smithy alone. But the scene in the tuckshop, on the first day of the term, had warned him that trouble was sure to come. He had resolved then that the Bounder had reached the limit, and that there should be no more of it. The placard on his study door showed that the persecution was beginning again.

Paul glanced round at the fellows in the passage.

"Who put that there?" he asked.

"Ask me another!" yawned Skinner.

"Did you?" asked Paul quietly.

"Not guilty, my lord."

"You, Snoop?"

"Not little me," said Snoop.

"You, Stott?"

"Find out!" growled Stott.

Frederick Stott was made of rather sterner stuff than his associates.

"I'm trying to find out," said Paul mildly. "I'm going to thrash the fellow who put that insult on my door."

"Well, you can't bully me," said Stott.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent came up the Remove staircase. It was tea-time, and Nugent had a parcel under his arm.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" asked Frank.

Dallas made a gesture to the placard on the study door.

"What rotten cad's put that there?" exclaimed Wharton, his brow darkening.

"May have been put there with kind intentions," suggested Skinner. "I don't know anything about it, of course. But if the study's hard up, I'm prepared to spare a copper in a good cause."

"It's meant for me, of course," said Paul quietly. "I'm going to find out who put it there. I'm fed up with this kind of thing."

"It's too thick!" said Nugent, frowning. "I suppose it was Smithy. Let's go and ask him."

Paul nodded, and went along to No. 4, followed by his friends. Skinner & Co. exchanged glances, and followed on.

ANSWERS
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"Now for the fireworks!" grinned Skinner.

Paul chuckled at Smithy's study door and opened it. The Boulder of Greyfriars glanced round at him.

"Ask next door!" he said.

"What?"

"I've nothing to give away."

Skinner & Co. chuckled, and Paul clenched his hands.

"Smithy, old man, isn't it about time you chucked up this rot?" asked Wharton. "What's the good of it?"

"I don't quite follow!" said the Boulder airily. "I've told Dallas I've nothing to give away. The fact is, my charity list is quite full. I believe that's the usual thing to say on such occasions."

Another chuckle from Skinner & Co. This was quite the old Boulder, the Boulder of the old days.

"Do you think I'm going to stand this kind of thing, Vernon-Smith?" asked Dallas, his voice trembling with anger. The Boulder eyed him contemptuously.

"If you can stand charity, you can stand being reminded of it. I should think," he answered. "You may as well have the name as the game."

"Did you stick that paper on my study door?"

"Find out!"

"If you're afraid to own up!" said Paul scornfully.

Vernon-Smith's eyes blazed.

"I did stick it there!" he said.

"You'll take it down again, and put it in the fire."

The Boulder laughed.

"I've stood all I'm going to stand from you, Vernon-Smith," said Paul, his eyes glinting. "That I was at a charity school before I came here is known to all Greyfriars, and no decent fellow treats me badly on that account. That I am here on charity is a lie, and you know it. My fees here are paid by money that my father left with Mr. Vernon-Smith, and he has told you so. I owe your father gratitude for finding me and paying an old debt that I knew nothing of and could never have claimed. But that is all I owe him, and you know it as well as I do."

"Keep it up!" sneered the Boulder.

"I ask nothing of you but to leave me alone. If I let this matter drop, and say nothing more about it, will you leave me alone?"

"No," said the Boulder coolly. "I won't! I'll leave you alone when you chuck up twisting my father round your finger and feathering your nest at my expense. When you get out of Greyfriars and go back to the workhouse where you belong. Not before then."

"That settles it, then. Put up your hands."

Paul Dallas pushed back his cuffs and advanced on the Boulder.

"Is that the game?" sneered Vernon-Smith. "You've picked up some boxing tips from Bob Cherry, and you fancy you can bully me. Come on, you rotter!"

Whatever might be the Boulder's faults and failings—and their name was legion—no one had questioned his courage. He had boundless pluck and utter recklessness.

In the fight the term before, Dallas had beaten him, after a desperate struggle, in which the Boulder had been completely knocked out. But the millionaire's son was quite ready to try again.

At the bottom of his heart, he knew that he was no match for Dallas, but he would not admit that even to himself.

A moment more, and they were fighting fiercely.

Wharton and Nugent stood back to

give them room; and more and more Remove fellows crowded round the study door to watch.

"Go it, Smithy!" sang out Skinner.

The Boulder fought desperately.

On Paul's first day at Greyfriars, he had licked the new fellow, and had carried matters with a high hand after till the great fight in the paddock, when Paul had defeated him in turn. The Boulder hoped that fortune might smile on him once more.

But Dallas, who was keen on boxing, had improved a good deal, even since the fight in which he had proved victorious. The Boulder was in worse condition than on that occasion. Innumerable cigarettes were taking their revenge, now that he needed all his stamina.

For five minutes Vernon-Smith held his own, and it was such a "scrap" as was seldom or never seen in the Remove passage, the scene of a good many scraps. Then he had to give ground, resisting furiously, his face blazing with rage.

Crash!

The Boulder went down suddenly.

Paul's nose was streaming crimson, as he stood panting. The Boulder's face was a study in damages.

He lay, gasping helplessly, on the floor.

"Are you finished?" asked Paul, between his teeth.

"No, you cur," the Boulder panted, "not while I can stand!"

He staggered to his feet and came on again.

But it was futile. In a couple of minutes he was down on the study carpet again, breathless, knocked out, and unable to rise.

He lay and panted, his eyes glinting at Dallas like a snake's.

"That does it!" said Bob Cherry, from the passage.

"Are you going on, Vernon-Smith?" asked Dallas, very quietly.

The Boulder only gasped.

"I am satisfied, if you are," said Paul.

"I will say nothing more about that paper on my study door, Vernon-Smith. Leave me alone after this, and I shall be glad enough to leave you alone. But I warn you that if you keep on as you've started, you'll have a fight on your hands every time."

With that, Paul Dallas left the study.

Skinner and Snoop came in, to help the Boulder to his armchair. He sprawled there exhausted, panting for breath.

"Better bathe your face, old bean," said Skinner. "You'll be rather a picture after this."

"I'll make him pay for it," muttered the Boulder, in a choking voice.

"Well, you rather asked for it, you know," said Snoop.

"Shot up!"

The Boulder limped away at last to bathe his damaged face. He had asked for it, and he had got it; one more bitter defeat for which the interloper, somehow—anyhow—should be made to pay, when the Boulder's time came.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Tip in Time!

"I SAY, Smithy!"

Billy Bunter rolled into Vernon-Smith's study, about a week later, and shut the door behind him in a very mysterious manner.

The expression on Bunter's fat face indicated that he had news—important news!

Bunter was the fellow for news.

The fat junior prided himself upon knowing everything that went on in Greyfriars, and he was not very particular in his methods of acquiring information. As Bob Cherry had remarked, so long as keyholes were made to doors, Bunter would always be in the know.

Smithy was alone in the study, writing lines. He had a good many lines to write, these days. He had started the term in his Form master's black books; and he had continued in the same way. Mr. Quelch had said nothing more about the holiday task which had remained undone, perhaps desiring to give the sullen junior a chance. But as Vernon-Smith showed no sign of improvement, Mr. Quelch was growing more and more severe.

The Boulder's pen ceased to travel on the paper, and he gave Bunter a sour look.

"Well?" he snapped.

"Don't bite a fellow's head off, you know," remonstrated Bunter.

"I'm busy!"

Bunter grinned.

"Busy or not, you'd be jolly glad to hear what I could tell you," he said.

The Boulder opened his lips for a savage snap, but he restrained his temper.

"It's jolly important," said the Owl of the Remove. "I came to warn you at once, Smithy."

"What is it?"

Bunter winked.

"That's telling, you know," he said.

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith's hand strayed to the inkpot.

"If you don't want to hear, all right," said Bunter, with dignity. "I'll go. I thought you'd like to miss a Head's flogging."

The Boulder stared at him.

"You silly chump! What are you driving at?"

"I know what I know!" grinned Bunter. "But never mind—if you don't want to hear, I'll cut!"

And Bunter turned to the door.

"Hold on!" said Vernon-Smith quietly.

He could see now that there was something in it; and he wanted to know.

More and more, of late, the Boulder had resumed his old ways; the "jolly old times," as Skinner expressed it, were coming back in Study No. 4. A fellow with the Boulder's present manners and customs was always in danger of a Head's flogging, if he failed to cover his tracks very carefully. It was always possible that something had leaked out, in spite of the Boulder's caution.

"You can get on," said Vernon-Smith.

"Cough it up, you fat duffer!"

"I don't call that civil, to a chap who's come here to do you a favour, Smithy," said Bunter, in an injured tone.

"Oh, get on," said the Boulder impatiently. "I've got to get these lines done for old Quelch."

"You'll get something more than lines, if I don't give you the tip," chuckled Bunter. "Head's flogging at least, and perhaps the sack."

"Well?"

"First of all, though," said Bunter. "I was going to mention that I've been disappointed about a postal-order, Smithy."

"What?" roared the Boulder.

"Postal order!"

Vernon-Smith grabbed the inkpot.

"I—I say, Smithy, don't cut up rusty."

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"you know," urged Bunter, with a wary eye on the inkpot. "One good turn deserves another, you know! It may be bunking for you if I don't put you on your guard. I came here at once after what I heard the Head say to Quelch. After all, we're pals, ain't we?"

Vernon-Smith relinquished the inkpot. It was obvious that the Owl of the Remove had been eavesdropping—one of Bunter's delightful little ways—that he believed, at least, that what he had heard was important to the Bounder. And the Bounder had too many shady secrets to keep, to take any unnecessary risks.

"I was expecting a postal-order this morning," explained Bunter. "From one of my titled relations, you know!"

"Oh, cut it out!" snapped the Bounder. "Come to the point!"

"That's the point!"

"You fat chump!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I think you might lend a fellow five bob when he's got a postal-order coming first post tomorrow, and—"

"The five bob's all right, if your news is worth it," said the Bounder. "Get it off your chest!"

"That's a rather rotten way of putting it, Smithy. What I want is simply a little loan till my postal order comes to—"

"Will you come to the point?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith savagely.

"Certainly, old chap," said Bunter. "I can tell you, you're for it, only you've got a pal to stand by you—me, you know. I heard the Head tell Quelch it was for half-past four."

"What was for half-past four, fat-head?"

"Head's inspection," said Bunter.

"Oh!"

It was out at last.

The Bounder's face became very serious. If Bunter's news was reliable, the matter was undoubtedly an important one to Herbert Vernon-Smith, and to some other fellows in the Remove.

"Sure?" he snapped.

"What ho! You see, I heard Dr. Locke tell Quelch," said Bunter. "They didn't see me! Of course, I wasn't listening—"

"Of course not," said Smithy sarcastically.

"Nothing of the kind, of course. I saw the Head come into Quelch's study—"

"I was in the quail, you know! I wondered what the Beak had to say to our Form master—I mean, I happened to stop under Quelch's window by sheer chance. The Head said it was a Form inspection at half-past four—"

Remove passage."

The Bounder looked at his watch.

"Four now," he said.

"Half an hour to get rid of the evidence," grinned Bunter. "You've got lots of things in your study you don't want the Head to see, Smithy, what?"

And Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

Vernon-Smith laid down his pen. If there was to be a Head's inspection of the Remove studies at half-past four that afternoon, he had something more important than lines to think of.

"Downy old bird, ain't he?" said Bunter.

"Nearly all the fellows are out of the House—they would be, you know, on a half-holiday. Most of them at games practice. Skinner's gone out of gates with Snoop and Stott. I fancy they wouldn't have gone out if they'd known this. The Head will find things in No. 11, what?"

"I'll look after that," said the Bounder quietly. "They're friends of mine."

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"Look after yourself first!" grinned Bunter. "If the beak finds your smokes and your sporting papers, and so on, it's you for a flogging, Smithy!"

"Don't say a word about this outside this study," said the Bounder. "If it gets out that you listened, and put the fellows on their guard, you'll get the flogging of your life!"

Bunter looked uneasy.

"I didn't exactly listen—"

"The Head will think you did, if he finds out that you heard what he said to Mr. Quelch," said the Bounder grimly.

"I—I suppose he might—these school-masters are a suspicious lot!" said Bunter.

"You keep it dark, Smithy—I warned you as a pal, you know!"

"I'll keep it dark—and you'd better do the same, if you don't want to be up before the Head. If you tell one fellow the word will be passed along, and the beaks will jolly soon find out that somebody tipped the Remove what was coming."

"I won't breathe a syllable, of course," said Bunter, in alarm. "I—I say, Smithy, about my postal-order—"

A couple of half-crowns dropped into Bunter's fat palm.

Bunter's warning was certainly worth more than that to the Bounder.

A Head's inspection generally happened once in a term, and it was always carried out without notice to the Form concerned.

On such an occasion the Head would proceed on a stately progress from study to study, inspecting and investigating.

Fellows whose studies were remarkably untidy—fellows who kept their boots on the mantelpiece, or their school books in the coal locker—were sure to hear of it emphatically.

Still more emphatically was a fellow likely to hear of it if he had cigarettes in his study.

Naturally, these inspections were in the shape of surprise visits; for had the fellows known that the beak was coming, every study would have been in apple-pie order, and the only discovery the Head would have been able to make would have been that the Greyfriars fellows were the tidiest fellows on the earth and as innocent as lambs!

As a Head's inspection was always a possibility on the horizon, it would have behooved the fellows to be always tidy, always circumspect, and always on their guard. As a matter of fact, the fellows, being human, were nothing of the kind.

So those surprise visits were always followed by discomfort for somebody.

Certainly the Bounder was not prepared to face such an inspection with a light heart if it came suddenly and by surprise.

It would have been only cautious for a sporting fellow to keep his cigarettes under a loose board in the floor and his pink papers up the chimney. The Head's inspection, though usually thorough, was not likely to extend to the chimney and the floor. But a fellow really couldn't take all that trouble—even the cautious Skinner didn't take all that trouble. It was easier to chance it and hope for the best—or, rather, to dismiss the danger from one's mind till it happened, and couldn't be dismissed any longer.

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked very thoughtful indeed. It was unusual for a Head's inspection to take place so early in the term; and that made it all the more certain that delinquents would be caught out. Certainly the Bounder would have been caught out but for Bunter's warning.

"You can cut, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith; and Billy Bunter, with two half-crowns in his fat paw, willingly cut. Bunter made a direct line for the school shop. He was not likely to leave that establishment again until he had consumed refreshments, liquid and solid, to the exact value of five shillings.

The Bounder stepped to his window.

In the distance he could see a number of the Remove fellows at games practice. All the Famous Five were there, and Paul Dallas was with them. A strange and bitter smile came over the Bounder's face.

Bunter had warned him, knowing that the Bounder had forbidden articles in his study. All the Remove knew that; Bunter had thought of nothing further than that. But the Bounder was thinking of something further as he stood at the window and watched Paul Dallas in the distance. The Bounder's chance had come at last!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Laying the Trap I

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH remained only a couple of minutes at the window. Then he crossed to the study door, closed it, and set to work.

There was little time to waste.

He opened the table-drawer and took out a box of cigarettes and a pack of playing-cards. From his desk he took a pink sporting paper—the current number of the "Tipster."

Then he fumbled among the papers for a still more dangerous document that he knew was there. He breathed hard as he drew out a dirty half-sheet of paper, scrawled on in rough handwriting. His name was not on the paper, and the Head was not likely to know the "fist" of Mr. Banks, the bookmaker at the Cross Keys. But the contents of that note from Mr. Banks sufficed to earn a flogging for any fellow in whose possession it was found.

Having stuffed those incriminating objects in his pocket, Vernon-Smith left the study.

He strolled along the Remove passage with a careless air.

Careless as he looked, his eyes were keenly about him. The Remove passage was deserted on that fine half-holiday.

A glance up and down the passage, and a glance down the stairs, and the Bounder slipped into Study No. 1.

His heart was beating a little faster than usual as he closed the door behind him; but he was perfectly cool.

Except on the score, perhaps, of occasional untidiness, Study No. 1 had nothing to fear from a Head's inspection. Had Wharton, Nugent, and Dallas known that an inspection was on its way, they would not have been alarmed. And they did not know; they were giving their attention to games practice, oblivious of headmasters and their proceedings.

To Wharton and Nugent the Bounder gave no thought. He was not on the best of terms with them—owing to his feud with Dallas—but he had no special animus against them. Certainly it would not have crossed his mind to play a base trick on them in their absence.

It was Dallas he was thinking of.

In a corner of the study near the window stood a rather handsome oak desk, which Mr. Vernon-Smith had given his adopted son when he came to Greyfriars.

It was at that desk that the Bounder stopped.



"I don't suppose you'll ever be a gentleman," pursued Billy Bunter, "but I could improve you an awful lot." Vernon-Smith did not reply. He went round behind the armchair, grasped the back of it, and tilted the Owl of the Remove out on the rug. Bump! "Yaroor!" There was a yell from Bunter. "Now," said the Bounder, "I'll give you one second to clear!" (See Chapter 4.)

He raised the lid and lifted the assortment of papers, old letters, blotting paper, exercises, and other odds and ends in the desk.

With a ruthless glint in his eyes, he proceeded to place in the desk the box of cigarettes, the sporting paper, the pack of cards, and the scribbled note from Mr. Banks.

Then he replaced the articles he had removed, leaving only a single cigarette in view. It was fairly certain that the desk would be turned out, for a Head's inspection, when it took place, was always very thorough. But that single cigarette in view when the desk-lid was lifted would make thorough investigation a certainty.

Vernon-Smith closed the lid of Paul's desk and crossed to the study door.

There he stood listening for a moment or two before he opened the door. But the Remove passage was quite silent.

He slipped out of the study and closed the door behind him. No one was in sight.

He went back to his own study, and there he paused in reflection for some minutes.

He had intended to go into Study No. 11 and remove any incriminating goods belonging to Snoop and Stott. But he realised that that would be imprudent. It would show Snoop and

Stott, at least, that somebody had known in advance of the coming inspection, and that was a circumstance the Bounder had to keep deeply secret. Even his own friends were not to be trusted in a matter of such danger.

He shook his head.

Snoop and Stott would have to take their chance. Even Skinner, in his own study, would have to take his chance. The Bounder knew that Skinner had cigarettes in his desk; but he did not think of removing them. Even Skinner was to know nothing of the fact that he had been warned in advance. In his own bitter and prejudiced mind, the Bounder found justification for using any methods against his enemy. But he knew how the other fellows would look at it if they knew the truth: he knew how his headmaster would look at it. He could not be too careful.

A grin broke out on his hard face.

Taking a packet of cigarettes from his pocket, he placed it in the table drawer, inside an envelope addressed to himself.

There they would inevitably be discovered when the headmaster came inspecting the study.

That meant a caning for the Bounder. It meant also that it would be practically impossible for anyone to suspect

that the Bounder had known that the Head was coming.

That was worth a caning.

Indeed, Vernon-Smith's cool, calculating brain realised that, unless he was caught out to some extent, it would be plain that he had been warned, for all the fellows knew that he had smoked in his study.

That was all serene now; he would be caught out.

A quarter of an hour had elapsed, and the Bounder still had plenty of time on his hands. But he did not resume writing the lines for Mr. Quelch.

He laid them aside, and took a volume of Livy and opened it.

Titus Livius was not used in the Remove, but some studious fellows like Mark Linley could handle Livy. The Bounder, indeed, was equal to it if he chose to exert himself. His former study-mate, Redwing, had used that copy of Livy working for an exam. Vernon-Smith opened it before him on the table, and began to transcribe and translate and make notes.

This was about the last occupation in which any Remove fellows would have expected to find Vernon-Smith engaged. He was anything but a "swot." Skinner would have opened his eyes wide had he seen him.

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But Skinner would have understood at once had he known the circumstances. When the "unexpected" visit came from the Head and the Form master, Smithy was to be discovered digging into a difficult Latin author—on a half-holiday, too, when the other fellows were playing games! It could scarcely fail to give him a leg-up in the estimation of his headmaster and his Form master. Certainly they would not guess the little scene was arranged for them in advance. So far as they would know, the Head's inspection would come as a surprise to all the Remove passage.

The Bounder grinned ironically as he worked at Titus Livius and the Carthaginian War.

The silence of the deserted Remove passage was broken at last. There were footsteps from the direction of the stairs.

The Bounder breathed hard.

Perhaps for a second he regretted what he had done in Study No. 1—regretted the treachery dictated by the evil in his nature and his hatred of the "interloper."

If so, it was too late now for regrets. The Head was on the spot now, and Smithy had to go through with it. And he hardened his heart, like Pharaoh of old, and waited.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Head's Inspection!

"If you are ready, Mr. Quelch!"
"Perfectly, sir!"
"Then let us proceed," said the Head.

And they proceeded.

Dr. Locke's face was serious and solemn, as became the occasion. Head's inspections were serious matters, especially to the Head.

Mr. Quelch's face was expressionless.

As a matter of absolute fact, Mr. Quelch was convinced that he could have managed his own Form excellently without any intervention whatever from his chief.

He was not likely, however, to state that opinion to the headmaster. Polite and expressionless, Mr. Quelch accompanied Dr. Locke to the Remove passage.

Fisher T. Fish of the Remove, lounging in the lower hall, saw them go, and whistled.

"I guess some of those guys will be for it," murmured Fishy, guessing instantly that a Head's inspection was on.

Then it came into Fishy's keen American mind that he might be for it himself. Certainly there were no smokes in Fishy's study. Smokes cost money. But there was a little paper in Fishy's desk, signed by Bolsover major, agreeing to hand Fishy the sum of twelve shillings in return for a week's loan of half-a-sovereign. That little transaction was quite right and proper in Fishy's Transatlantic eyes—merely a matter of business. But he doubted very much whether it would seem right and proper to his headmaster. He was sure that Dr. Locke had no sense of business—that kind of business, at all events. Lending money to his school-fellows at interest did not shock the moral sense of Fisher T. Fish. He had been "raised" in the business world of New York, and no doubt his moral sense was fairly tough, and could stand a good deal. But it was borne in upon his mind that Dr. Locke would be shocked—and angry. As Fishy put it in his own beautiful language, the pesky old gink would reckon that he had put the goods on Bolsover in that little transaction.

So Fisher T. Fish scuttled up the stairs to the Remove passage after the two masters, heading for Study No. 14, the last in the passage, which he shared with Squiff and Johnny Bull. Both the latter were at games practice now.

Fisher T. Fish "calculated" that the Head would begin with Study No. 1, giving him ample time to retrieve the tell-tale paper from Study No. 14; so, affecting not to observe the two masters, who stopped at Study No. 1 as he expected, Fishy cut along the passage.

"Fish!"

The Head had not observed him, but Mr. Quelch's sharp voice rang along after the Transatlantic junior.

Fishy stopped reluctantly.

"Yep!"

"Where are you going?"

"I—I was going to—to fetch my bat, sir!" stammered Fishy.

The example of his great countryman, George Washington, had not been lost on Fisher T. Fish; in fact, in that line he could beat George at his own game.

"Stop where you are!"

"Oh!"

The Head's inspection came as a surprise—till it happened. But once the stately old gentleman had marched into the Remove passage with the Form master, any fellow would have known what was on. Mr. Quelch was quite well aware that Fishy knew, and that he was scudding away to his study to hide something. Mr. Quelch was a man of experience, and Fishy was not the first guileful young rascal he had had to deal with.

"The—the fellows are at games practice, sir," said Fishy meekly. "They're expecting me."

"Very good! Perhaps, sir, you will commence at the farther end of the passage," suggested Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly!" said the Head.

Fisher T. Fish suppressed a groan.

"You may go on, Fish!"

"Yep, sir!" groaned Fishy.

He went on.

The two masters rustled on to Study No. 14. They entered the study, and Fisher T. Fish lingered dismally in the doorway.

He hoped that the investigation in

that study would be cursory. Two of its occupants, at least, were quite above suspicion.

But the Head's inspections, though few and far between, were extremely thorough when they occurred. Moreover, Mr. Quelch was suspicious of Fishy; he doubted very much whether that youth had really been hurrying to his study at that particular moment to fetch his bat.

Dr. Locke stood stately and gravely, while Mr. Quelch did all the work. He did it conscientiously.

Mr. Quelch had a high opinion of his Form, and the Head hoped and trusted that there was not a single bad character in all Greyfriars. But both of them were well aware that black sheep are liable to creep into the whitest flocks. If any of the Remove fellows had any shady little secrets, those little secrets were to come to light. Both masters hoped that there weren't any to be discovered. But if there were any, they fully intended to discover them.

Fishy trembled when Mr. Quelch opened his desk.

He fairly shook when the Remove master picked up a half-sheet of paper, scrawled on in Bolsover major's sprawling fist.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

He passed the paper to the Head.

Dr. Locke adjusted his pince-nez carefully and looked at it. Thunder gathered in his brow.

"Bless my soul!" he echoed.

"Oh, gee-whizz!" murmured the wretched Fishy.

He almost crumpled up as the Head's stern and terrifying glance turned on him.

"Fish!" rumbled the Head.

"Oh dear!"

"What is this?"

"T-t-t-t, sir!" stammered Fisher T. Fish.

"You have been carrying on money-lending transactions in your Form, it appears."

"Nope!" gasped Fishy.

"Then what does this paper imply?"

"The—the fact is, sir," gasped Fishy,

"I—I guess I—I lent Bolsover two dollars and a half, sir, because—because he was hard up, sir, and he's a—friend of mine, sir."

"I disapprove of borrowing and lending!" said the Head severely. "But a small loan made in a friendly way among friends is excusable. But this paper states that Bolsover is to pay you interest on the money."

Fisher T. Fish prided himself on being a business-man. He had made Bolsover major put it in writing, so that there should be no doubt on the subject when the time for repayment came. He wished now that he had not been quite so business-like.

"Well!" thundered the Head.

"That—that's a mistake, sir!" gasped Fishy.

"A mistake?"

"I—I guess Bolsover must have written twelve, meaning ten, sir."

"That is an untruthful statement, Fish!"

"Oh, sir!"

"The boy is prevaricating, Mr. Quelch," said the Head.

"Undoubtedly he is prevaricating, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare at the hapless Fish. "I may say that I caned Fish last term for a similar transaction that came to my knowledge."

"The matter is serious, Mr. Quelch."

"Very serious, sir!"

Don't miss this, lads!



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"It seems to indicate a state of depravity shocking in one so young," said Dr. Locke.

"I fear so, sir."

"As the boy is in your Form, Mr. Quelch, I shall yield to your opinion if you consider that a caving will suffice."

"On the other hand, sir, my opinion is very strongly that this young rascal should be flogged," said the Remove master.

"That is my opinion exactly. Mr. Quelch, and I am glad that you agree with me. Fish, you will come to my study at five o'clock."

"Ow!"

"Now you may go!"

Fisher T. Fish limped away. He had felt almost certain that the "peaky old gink" would not understand business, as understood by a galoot that had been raised in New York. Now he was quite certain.

Dismissing the miserable Fish from their minds, headmaster and Form master proceeded with their inspection. They had made their first catch, as it were, and they proceeded along the Remove passage, from study to study, hoping that they would not make any more catches, but very much afraid that they would.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Voyage of Discovery!

THE next study—No. 13—belonged to Bob Cherry, Hurr-e Singh, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung, the little Chinese. Mr. Quelch did not expect to find anything compromising there, and he was right. He found an old football-boot on the mantelpiece, and a "Holiday Annual" open on the table, and smiled. The Head smiled, too. Then they passed on to the next study, which belonged to Lord Mauleverer and Sir Jimmy Vivian. One of the first things that came to light was a "crib" of Virgil, and Mr. Quelch glared as he rooted it out. Lord Mauleverer used cribs as a matter of course; they spared his noble brain a lot of work to which he felt that it was hardly equal. And it was just like Mauly to leave his crib lying about where anybody might see it.

"A—er—hem—crib!" said the Head.

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Quelch.

Both the headmaster and the Form master had, of course, been schoolboys in their time. Quite possibly cribs had not been unknown to them both in those far-off days. But they were schoolmasters now, and that made all the difference. They were shocked.

"To what boy does this belong, Mr. Quelch?"

"Either Mauleverer, or his relative, Vivian, as they share this study," said Mr. Quelch. "I have no doubt that it is Mauleverer's."

"We must be very careful in such a serious matter, Mr. Quelch."

"Quite. But Mauleverer's construe has been unusually good of late, and I had already suspected that he had brought a crib back with him after the holidays."

"His construe is not usually good?"

"Far from it."

"But if he uses a crib—"

"I fear that he is sometimes too lazy even to use a crib," said Mr. Quelch.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"A question will suffice," said Mr. Quelch. "Mauleverer is quite incapable of falsehood. Very different from the boy Fish."

The Head's brow cleared.

"The matter is serious, but a school-boy does not always realise its seriousness," he said. "Prevarication is a much worse offence. If you will speak to Mauleverer on the subject, Mr. Quelch, that will suffice."

"Quite so, sir."

The next study, No. 11, belonged to Snoop and Stott. Mr. Quelch had an eye on those youths already, and in their study his investigation was specially keen. A packet of cigarettes came to light, and the Head frowned portentously. A cigarette-holder was also found. The Head's frown grew more portentous. Mr. Quelch took possession of the offending articles.

"You will send these two boys to my study, Mr. Quelch."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch made a note of the names, and the two masters proceeded.

By this time it had got abroad that a Head's inspection was going on, and several Remove fellows had come up. Mr. Quelch bade them sharply not to enter the studies.

No. 10, which belonged to Bolsover major and Dupont, the French boy, came next. It was fortunate for Bolsover major that he had his smokes in his pocket that afternoon. No. 9 and No. 8 were also drawn blank. In No. 7 Peter Todd was found at home. Toddy had several bulky volumes on the table, at which the Head gazed in considerable surprise. Peter jumped up at once, in some confusion. He had been so deep in what he was pleased to call his legal studies that he had heard nothing of what was going on.

"Bless my soul, what is this?" said the Head. "These are not—hem—school books."

"No, sir," said Peter. "My legal volumes, sir."

"What—a-t?"

"My father is a solicitor, sir," explained Peter. "I'm studying law—"

"Bless my soul!"

The Head blinked at Peter. He had never heard of a Lower Fourth schoolboy studying law before.

"It's a great profession, sir," ventured Peter. "I'm going to be a solicitor when I grow up, sir, and give all my time to getting justice done, sir."

The Head smiled.

He was about four times Peter's age, so naturally he knew a good deal more about such matters than Peter did.

"Hem! Hem! A very worthy ambition, my boy," he said. "I trust—hem—that you will realise it. Bless my soul, what is this?" The Head's glance turned upon a jam-tart squashed in the armchair.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter involuntarily.

He did not feel equal to explaining to the Head that he had placed the jam-tart there ready for Bunter. Practical jokes of that kind were not likely to appeal to a headmaster.

"This is—hem—slovenly!" said the Head.

"Very slovenly," said Mr. Quelch, like a faithful echo.

"Shockingly so!" said the Head.

"Doubtless Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Peter at once. "I—I put it there, sir!"

"You will take two hundred lines, Todd."

"Yes, sir," said Peter meekly.

"And clean your chair at once."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

That jam-tart was a sheer waste. Billy Bunter was never to have the benefit of it.

Headmaster and Form master proceeded on their way. Study No. 6 in the Remove belonged to Wibley, Desmond, and Morgan. On the table lay a

sheet of impot paper, and on the paper a figure was drawn with some skill. Headmaster and Form master gazed at it.

It represented a ferocious-looking Form master, in cap and gown, brandishing a cane. There was a certain likeness to Mr. Quelch's sharp features. From the mouth of the figure proceeded a label, on which was written: "BEND OVER!"

Mr. Quelch frowned darkly. The Head suppressed a smile.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Whose work is this, Mr. Quelch?"

"Wibley is very clever at drawing," said Mr. Quelch. "I have had to punish him before for drawing disrespectful caricatures."

Mr. Quelch's expression hinted that he would have to punish William Wibley again.

Next came Study No. 5, which was drawn blank, and then the two masters entered Study No. 4.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, deep in the study of that entrancing author Titus Livius, did not seem to observe their entrance.

He remained seated, his eyes on his book.

"Vernon-Smith!" rapped out Mr. Quelch sharply.

The Bounder started, quite artistically.

"Oh, sir!"

He jumped up at once.

"Excuse me, sir; I didn't hear you," he said. "I'm sorry! Oh, is it the Head?"

The Bounder seemed quite astonished to see the Head. That was natural enough, as Dr. Locke's footsteps very seldom led him to the Remove passage.

"Dr. Locke is inspecting the studies, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, very well, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, taking up Vernon-Smith's book, and then glancing at the Bounder's papers. "Your boys do not take Livy as a rule, Mr. Quelch."

"No, sir," said the Remove master.

"Is this an imposition, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, no, sir," said the Bounder meekly. "Mr. Quelch never gives us imposts from Livy, sir."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Quelch, in surprise. "Why are you working at Livy, Vernon-Smith, on a half-holiday?"

"I've almost finished the lines you gave me, sir," said the Bounder. "They will be done by tea-time, sir. I thought there would be no harm in my having a shot at Livy."

"Certainly there is no harm," said the Head kindly, and Mr. Quelch nodded surprised approval. "I am glad to see you of so studious a turn, Vernon-Smith."

"Well, sir," said the Bounder diffidently. "Livy of our Form is good at it, and I thought I'd try my hand. A fellow doesn't like being outdone by a man in his own Form. Of course, I shall never be Linley's class at this kind of thing; but I thought there was no harm in trying."

"Very good—very good indeed," said the Head.

Mr. Quelch's eyes rested on the Bounder very sharply for a moment. Had it been possible for Herbert Vernon-Smith to know in advance that the inspection was to take place, Mr. Quelch would have suspected him of playing a part. But it seemed impossible. The Head had decided, off his own bat, so to speak, to take the inspection that afternoon; he had mentioned his

(Continued on page 17.)

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"BOAT RACE DAY AT ST. SAM'S!"

(Continued from previous page.)

much as a "Thank you" to the juniors who had rescued him from a watery grave.

II.

BURLEIGH of the Sixth, looked very pail and worried as he made his way to the Head's study, an hour later. He knew that the Head was in a fearful huff, and that he could expect no mercy at his hands.

Burleigh's bags were barricaded with stout sheets of blotting-paper, in case of a flogging. It was utterly unheard-of, for the Kaptein of the School to be birched like a refractory lag, but the Head was always doing utterly unheard-of things. And Burleigh meant to be on the safe side.

He wondered, as he tapped nervously on the door of the Head's study, what sort of punishment the doctor would inflict. True, Burleigh himself had not laid hands on the Head: but as kaptein of the boat's crew, he was responsible for what had happened. And now he must face the music.

"Come in!"

The Head's voice was sullen and stern and sinister.

With his noose nocking together, the tall, hansom skipper of St. Sam's elunk into the study. The first thing that struck him when he entered, was the Head's birchrod; and Burleigh wondered if it would soon strike him again—in a different way!

The Head was sitting in his chair, looking as sullen as an Old Bailey judge. He now wore his robes of office, and he looked clean and fresh after his bath in the Ripple.

"Ah, Burleigh!" he said grimly. "You needn't wince at the site of my birchrod. I am not going to birch you. The form of punishment I am about to administer will be far more severe than any birching!"

Burleigh started violently. Could it be possible that the Head was going to sack him from St. Sam's?

"Yes, you can blanch and blench, and shake and quake, and shiver and quiver!" said the Head, with a mocking lark. "Unhappy boy, prepare to hear my sentence! And understand that there is no appeal. Not even if you go down on your knees, and beg and plead with tears in your eyes, will I alter my decision!"

There was an awful hush. Burleigh's eyes were fixed wildly upon the Head's stern face.

"You—you're not going to sack me, sir?" he cried.

"No."

"Nor flog me?"

"No."

"Then—then what—" stammered Burleigh, in perplexity. "Do buck up and pronounce sentence, sir! This suspense is awful!"

"Very well, Burleigh. Your punishment is that I refuse to take part in the boat-race! I resign my seat in the St. Sam's boat! It was my intension of stroking you to victory on the great day, as well as coaching your crew. I now wash my hands of the whole business. That is your punishment—to lose the services of the best oarsman in Brittan! It is no use your braking down and sobbing, Burleigh. Your sobs leave me quite unmoved!"

Burleigh had berried his face in his hands, on hearing the Head's sentence. But they were not sobbs he was stifling. They were chuckles!

Truely, the Head could not have hit upon a pleazanter punishment than this. Burleigh was only too glad to be relieved of the old buffer's services. And when he told his fellow seniors of the Head's decision, they rejoiced with a grate rejoicing.

"Now they're off!"

"Hooley!"

The grate boat-race between St. Sam's and Greyfriars was being rode at last. The banks of the Ripple were swarming with oggaited fellows. And the most oggaited person of all was Dr. Birchmall, who danced up and down with a megga-fone to his lips.

The Greyfriars boat was quickly off the mark, and eight blades flashed through the water as one.

"Good old Greyfriars!" yelled Dr. Birchmall. "Strong and steady does it—that's the stile! Why, you've got St. Sam's licked to a frazzle already!"

There were angry cries of "Trayster!" from the indignant St. Sam's fellows on the bank; but the Head heeded them not. He raced along the towing-path, cheering the Greyfriars crew, and giving them advice.

"Put your boof into it, Number Two! Open your sholders more, Number Five! Watch your steering, cox! If they gain on you, pull across to the middle, and fowl them!"

"My hat! What a tretcherus old scamp of a Head!" muttered the Greyfriars cox.

For the first hundred yards, it was all Greyfriars. But Burleigh, the St. Sam's stroke, had moerly been biding his time. He quickened his stroke now, and rallied his men, and the St. Sam's boat fairly flew through the water. Prezzantly it drew abreast of the rival boat; then it got its nose in front; and then the Head changed his tune completely.

"Good old St. Sam's! Bravo, Burleigh! That's the stuff to give 'em! This is what comes of my eggcellent coaching!"

"Well, of all the rotten turncoats!" gasped Jack Jolly. "A minnit ago he was saying that St. Sam's couldn't row for toffy!"

All eyes were glood upon the rival boats. Truely it was a titannick tussle. Greyfriars kept overtaking St. Sam's, and St. Sam's kept overtaking Greyfriars; and the Head kept up his pollicy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Every time the Friars were in front he cheered them lustily, and hurled vulgar abuse at Burleigh and his crew. And every time the St. Sam's boat regained the lead, the Head boomed all over his dilo, and said it was entirely due to his magnnificent coaching.

"St. Sam's for ever!" he yelled. "Oh, what a champion crew! My brave Burleigh! My doughty Dipper! My big-hearted Blades! My tremendous Tailboy! My curragous Crabbe!"

Then the St. Sam's boat dropped behind again, and the Head's cheering turned to jeering.

"Yah! Call yourselves oarsmen! I've never seen a more chicken-hearted crew! My blundering Burleigh! My dithering Dipper! My blithering Blades! My tuppenny-ha'penny Tailboy! My chuckle-headed Crabbe!"

Neither of the crews took any notice of the Head. They were pulling for dear life now, for the winning-post was in site. St. Sam's were behind, but Burleigh rallied them; and foot by foot, inch by inch, millymetre by millymetre, they gained upon their rivals. Now they were nearly level; now they were quite level; now they were nearly in front; now they were quite in front! And now, every man pulling his hardest, they shot past the winning-post, to win the great boat-race by the narrowest of margins!

Cheer upon cheer rent the air; and the Head cheered louder than anybody.

"All through my coaching!" he chortled, as he helped Burleigh out of the boat. "A magnnificent victory, Burleigh, but you owe everything to me. You needn't shower thanks upon me, though."

And Burleigh didn't. He was feeling too wheeked, in any case, to contedict the Head's claims.

That evening, there was a big sallybation in the Senior Common Room, in honour of the St. Sam's victory. The Head hoped to be prezzant as the guest of honour; but he found the door locked in his face; and after hammering at it savvidgely for a few minnits, he retired crushed and crestfallen to his study.

"I coached them to victory," he grumbled, "and this is how they serve me. Alas, how black is man's ingrattytnde! But I shall have the larf of them next year—the beasts! Rust me, if I won't ban the boat race!"

THE END.

(Now look out for: "Speech Day at St. Sam's!" next week's top-notch story by Dicky Nugent.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

intention only to Mr. Quelch in the privacy of the latter's study. It really seemed impossible that Vernon-Smith could have known what was coming, and, realising that, Mr. Quelch felt a little ashamed of his momentary suspicion.

Dr. Locke was looking over the Bounder's exercises, and he was nodding with approval. Undoubtedly the work was very good for a Lower Fourth boy.

"You have a very promising pupil here, Mr. Quelch," said the Head.

"So it would seem," agreed Mr. Quelch, with quite a kindly glance at the Bounder. "I am very glad to see it. Yet your construe this morning was very bad, Vernon-Smith, and it was clear that you did not prepare your lesson yesterday evening."

"I got rather keen on Livy, sir," said the Bounder. "Of course, I know that I ought not to neglect the Form work for that."

"I should not, however, have given you lines had I been aware that that was the reason," said Mr. Quelch. "You need not complete your imposition."

"Thank you, sir," said the Bounder demurely.

But Mr. Quelch's gracious manner changed when he proceeded with the inspection of the study.

First of all a box of cigarettes came to light in Skinner's desk.

"Whose desk is that?" asked the Head.

"Skinner's, sir."

"You will send Skinner to my study, Mr. Quelch."

"Certainly!"

Further investigation revealed the envelope in the table-drawer with smokes in it. Mr. Quelch picked it up and looked grimly at the Bounder.

"Whose are these, Vernon-Smith?"

"Mine, sir," said the Bounder quietly.

Half a dozen fellows had gathered outside Study No. 4 now.

Now that it was known that one of the Head's surprise visits was taking place, the fellows expected, as a matter of course, that some discovery would be made in Vernon-Smith's study.

They grinned at one another as the smokes came to light.

"Smitty's for it!" murmured Hazel-dene.

"So you are addicted to smoking, Vernon-Smith!" said the Head sternly.

"Oh, no, sir!" said the Bounder. "I should be very sorry for you to think anything of that kind, sir."

"You admit that these cigarettes are your property?"

"I suppose it was foolish of me, sir," said Smitty. "It was more a lark than anything else."

"I trust that that is the case," said the Head. "I am all the more inclined to believe it, as I find you to be a boy of a studious disposition. But you are well aware, Vernon-Smith, that smoking is strictly forbidden."

"I know that, sir," said Vernon-Smith humbly. "I'm not trying to excuse myself, sir. I know it was wrong."

"I am glad you can see it," said the

Head dryly. "You will come to my study when this inspection is over, Vernon-Smith. I have no alternative but to cane you severely."

"Very well, sir."

The two masters left the study and went along the passage. Hazeldene grinned in at the doorway.

"A clean bowl-out—what?" he said.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"What's a fellow to do? If the Head had told me he was coming, he wouldn't have found any smokes here."

"I fancy not!" chuckled Hazel.

"Any in your quarters?" asked the Bounder.

Hazel laughed.

"No; I smoked my last after dinner."

"Better tell the Head that."

Hazel laughed again, and followed the other fellows along the passage. More of the Remove were coming up now, as the news of the inspection spread; but studies were not entered. There was no chance of getting tell-tale evidence out of sight. Study No. 3, which belonged to Ogilvy and Russell, was in a state that made the two masters frown. A boxing-match had taken place there between the two juniors, and they had not set the study to rights again before going down to games practice. Two overturned chairs, a smashed vase in the fender, an inkpot streaming its contents over the table, and other signs of the strenuous life, did not please the inspecting eyes.

Mr. Quelch made a note of the names of the fellows in Study No. 3, and the two masters passed into Study No. 2. That room belonged to Hazel and Tom Brown, and passed the inspection successfully, Hazel having, very fortunately, smoked his last cigarette after dinner!

The inspection was drawing to its close now; only Study No. 1 remained, which belonged to the captain of the Form. Neither Mr. Quelch nor the Head had any expectation of finding fault with Wharton's study, but a Head's inspection was a Head's inspection, and had to be carried out thoroughly to the end. So Study No. 1 went through it like the others.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

The property belonging to Wharton and Nugent passed muster. But as Mr. Quelch opened Dallas' desk a cigarette met his view.

He picked it up.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "I am greatly surprised at this, Mr. Quelch. Is not this Wharton's study?"

"Yes, sir. But this is not Wharton's desk," said Mr. Quelch. "The study is shared with Wharton and Nugent by the new boy who came last term—Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son, Dallas."

"That is his desk?"

"I believe so."

"No doubt one of your boys could tell you," said the Head, apparently becoming aware of half a dozen faces looking in from the passage.

The juniors backed away in confusion. "Todd!" called out Mr. Quelch.

Peter had left his legal studies for the time, to join the gathering crowd in the passage.

"Yes, sir?"

"Can you tell me for certain to whom this desk belongs?"

"Dallas, sir," said Peter.

"Very good!"

"Kindly examine the desk further, Mr. Quelch," said the Head, in a deep voice.

"I was about to do so, sir."

Mr. Quelch turned out the desk very thoroughly. A packet of cigarettes rewarded him first, then a folded pink

paper, and then a packet of playing-cards.

The expression on Mr. Quelch's face was quite extraordinary as these articles were taken out, one by one, from Paul Dallas' desk. The Head's expression began to resemble that of the fabled gorgon.

"What is that, Mr. Quelch?" he asked, as the Remove master sorted out a half-sheet of paper.

In silence Mr. Quelch passed it to him.

The Head read it through, with thunder gathering on his brow. It ran:

"Sir,—All right about the two-thirty on Wednesday. Your fiver will be on Black Prince. Leave it to me.—Yours truly, J. B."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Called to Account!

THERE was a deep silence in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

For some moments a pin might have been heard to fall in that apartment.

The Head gazed at the scrawl from Joseph Banks, and Mr. Quelch gazed at the Head.

Outside, in the Remove passage, a hush fell on the juniors.

They realised that some startling discovery had been made. The looks of the two masters were alarming.

"What on earth's up?" whispered Peter Todd. "There can't be anything fishy in Dallas' desk."

"Looks as if there was!" murmured Hazeldene.

"He doesn't smoke—"

"Not where anybody can see him," grinned Hazel.

"Oh, rats! He doesn't; not such a booby."

"Well, I'm pretty sure I saw Quelch hook smokes out of his desk, anyhow!"

"What rot!"

"And something else, too. I say, it looks as if there's going to be an awful row! There's always a row after a Head's inspection," said Hazel, shaking his head. "Something always turns up, and as often as not a fellow gets bowled out that nobody's suspected."

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter arrived on the scene, with a smear of jam on his fat face. "What's up?"

"Head's inspection," said Peter.

Bunter grinned. He did not need telling that.

"They've found something in Dallas' desk," said Hazel.

Dr. Locke made a step to the study doorway. He looked out, and the excited juniors made themselves as small as possible.

"Todd!"

"Yes, sir?" said Peter.

"Are you aware whether the boys belonging to this study are within gates?"

"They are at games practice, sir."

"Kindly go to them, Todd, and tell them to come here at once—Wharton, Nugent, and Dallas."

"Certainly, sir."

Peter Todd hurried away.

Games practice, as it happened, was now over; and Peter met the owners of Study No. 1 coming to the House. They had heard of the inspection by this time, as all the Remove had who were within gates; but had not given it much thought. Study No. 1, like Caesar's wife of old, was above suspicion. Certainly it did not occur to any one of the trio that a disgraceful discovery might be made in their study.

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"You're wanted, you men!" said Peter.

"His Nibs on the giddy war-path?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

"He is, and no mistake!" said Peter. "What the thump have you been keeping in your desk, Dallas?"

Paul opened his eyes.

"In my desk," he repeated. "Has the Head been rooting into my desk?"

"The Head roots into every jolly old thing in a fellow's study when he puts in an inspection," said Peter. "He isn't frequent, but he's thorough! What was there in your desk, ass?"

"Nothing of any consequence. Books and papers and old letters and things," answered Paul.

"Is that all?"

"All that I remember."

"Well, the Head didn't look as if he'd lifted nothing but books and papers and old letters," said Peter dryly. "Anyhow, he wants you and these two lads. And I advise you to look out for trouble!"

"What rot!" said Wharton. "Nothing in our study to wake up the beak! Tidiest study in the Remove!"

"No smokes in it!" chuckled Frank. "Apply to Study No. 4 for ample supplies of bacry!"

"Oh, they've got Smithy, all right!" said Peter, with a grin. "Smithy's booked for a whaling!"

"I suppose so," said the captain of the Remove.

"But you fellows—"

"Oh, rot! The Head's found nothing in our study that we wouldn't have shown him willingly."

"Well, he didn't look like that!" commented Peter.

"Bosh!"

"I'm quite certain that there was nothing in my desk to get his rag out," said Paul Dallas.

"Well, his rag's out, anyhow. 'Ware beaks, and mind what you say!"

"Piffle!" said Wharton cheerfully.

"You'll see, then."

The chums of Study No. 1 went into the House, and made their way to the Remove passage without any feeling of uneasiness. There was a crowd in that passage now, and all eyes turned on Dallas. He did not look like a fellow who had anything to fear; but all the crowd knew that some startling discovery had been made in his desk, though they did not know what it was.

"You're for it, Dallas!" grinned Billy Bunter, as the trio came up the Remove staircase.

"Fathead!" answered Dallas.

"What on earth was in your desk, Dallas?" asked Hazeldene.

"Nothing of any harm."

"Tell that to the Marines!" grinned Hazel. "Nothing of any harm wouldn't have made the Head jump as if he'd trodden on a tinker."

"He looks like thunder, Dallas!" said Squiff.

"Blessed if I know why he should, then!"

"Conscience quite clear—what?" chuckled Hazel.

"Quite!"

Dallas went into Study No. 1 with Wharton and Nugent. He was not uneasy, but he was very much perplexed. It was obvious that all the fellows there believed that he was "for it," and Paul did not see why.

That trouble was brewing was clear enough as soon as he saw the Head and his Form master.

Never had he seen such wrath in the headmaster's face, or such concentrated anger and disgust in Mr. Quelch's.

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Paul drew a deep breath.

"You sent for us, sir?" said Harry Wharton very quietly.

The captain of the Remove saw that there was trouble—serious trouble—on hand; but his conscience was quite clear, and he certainly did not intend to show any disquietude.

"Yes, Wharton," said the Head. "I have sent for you and Nugent because you occupy this study with Dallas, and may know something of the matter. Neither of you is under suspicion. I think I may speak for you as well as myself, Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I have the highest opinion of Wharton and Nugent, and I shall be surprised to learn that they knew anything of this. Dallas must have deceived them. I think, as he has deceived me."

Paul crimsoned.

"Mr. Quelch!" he exclaimed.

"Dallas," said the Head, in a deep voice, "you are called upon to account for what has been found in your desk. Look at these articles!" He waved his hand to the box of cigarettes, the playing-cards, the sporting paper, and the note from Mr. Banks, which had been placed on the study table. "These belong to you!"

Paul stared at them.

"No, sir."

"What? What?"

"I have never seen them before, sir."

"Boy!"

"How dare you make such a statement, Dallas?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his voice trembling with anger.

"It is the truth, sir," said Paul. "I don't understand this. If I am accused of anything—"

"These things were found in your desk."

"In my desk!" said Paul dazedly.

"This is your desk, I presume?"

"Yes, it is mine."

"You do not ask your headmaster to believe that your study-mates use your desk as a receptacle for cigarettes and sporting papers?"

"Certainly not, sir! I have never seen anything of the kind in this study!"

"Wharton, does anyone use this desk beside Dallas?"

"No, sir."

"You and Nugent never go to it?"

"No, sir; we have our own desks."

"You did not know that Dallas kept such things in it?"

"No, sir. I'm quite sure he didn't."

The Head broke in.

"What do you mean by that, Wharton? Mr. Quelch has said that these things were taken from Dallas' desk!"

"I can't understand that, sir," said the captain of the Remove blankly. "I'm sure Dallas never kept them there."

"How can you be sure of what was in the desk, if you never go to it, and do not use it?"

"Only from what I know of Dallas, sir, of course," said Wharton, in dismay and perplexity. "I know he doesn't smoke, for one thing. At least, I've never seen him do so."

"Nor I, sir," said Nugent at once.

"He would scarcely do so in this study," said Mr. Quelch. "I am quite sure, sir, that the head boy of my Form would not permit it."

"Certainly I shouldn't," said Wharton warmly. "If Dallas were that kind of silly ass—I mean, that kind of fellow, Nugent and I would never have asked him to share this study."

"Pray do not think that you are blamed, Wharton. I was quite sure that Dallas had deceived you as to his true character."

"I don't think so, sir," said Harry. "If he were playing the fool like that, I should be bound to see something of it."

"Unless you were a party to Dallas' conduct. Wharton, he must have deceived you."

"Oh!" said Harry, rather taken aback.

"I am bound to accede to Mr. Quelch's opinion that you two boys were ignorant of this," said the Head.

"Dallas alone is answerable."

He fixed his eyes on Paul.

"Dallas! You have not been long at Greyfriars; but I understand from Mr. Quelch that you have earned his good opinion in the short time that you have been here. You have deceived him, and taken unscrupulous advantage of his trust. If I had found only cigarettes in your possession, you would have been punished, as some other Remove boys will be punished for what might have been only a foolish prank. I have found playing-cards, also; but I might have been willing to believe that these were only used for a harmless game, though you must be aware that Greyfriars boys are not allowed to keep cards in their studies. But when I find a disreputable racing paper also, there can be no doubt on the subject."

"Dr. Locke!" gasped Paul.

"I find, also," said the Head, in a deeper voice, "this note, which can only have been written to you by some disgraceful acquaintance outside the school. It is signed only with initials. You will tell me at once the name of the man whose initials are 'J. B.'"

Dallas simply stared at the paper.

Several fellows in the passage could have told Dr. Locke that the initials were those of Mr. Joseph Banks, of the Cross Keys. But the new junior had never even heard of Mr. Banks. He could not have answered the Head's question.

"Answer me, Dallas!"

"I—I can't, sir."

"What! Do you mean that you will not?"

"No, sir!" gasped Paul. "I can't answer, because I don't know. I've never seen that paper before."

"You have never seen that paper before?" repeated the Head, in a voice of terrifying distinctness.

"No!"

"How dare you say so? Do you assert that anyone uses this desk beside yourself, in the face of what your study-mates assert?"

"No, sir; nobody uses it but myself."

"These things have just been taken out of your desk by your Form master. They belong to you."

"They do not belong to me," panted Paul. "I—I can't understand how they came there. I can't imagine—"

"What is the name of the man who has written you this note?"

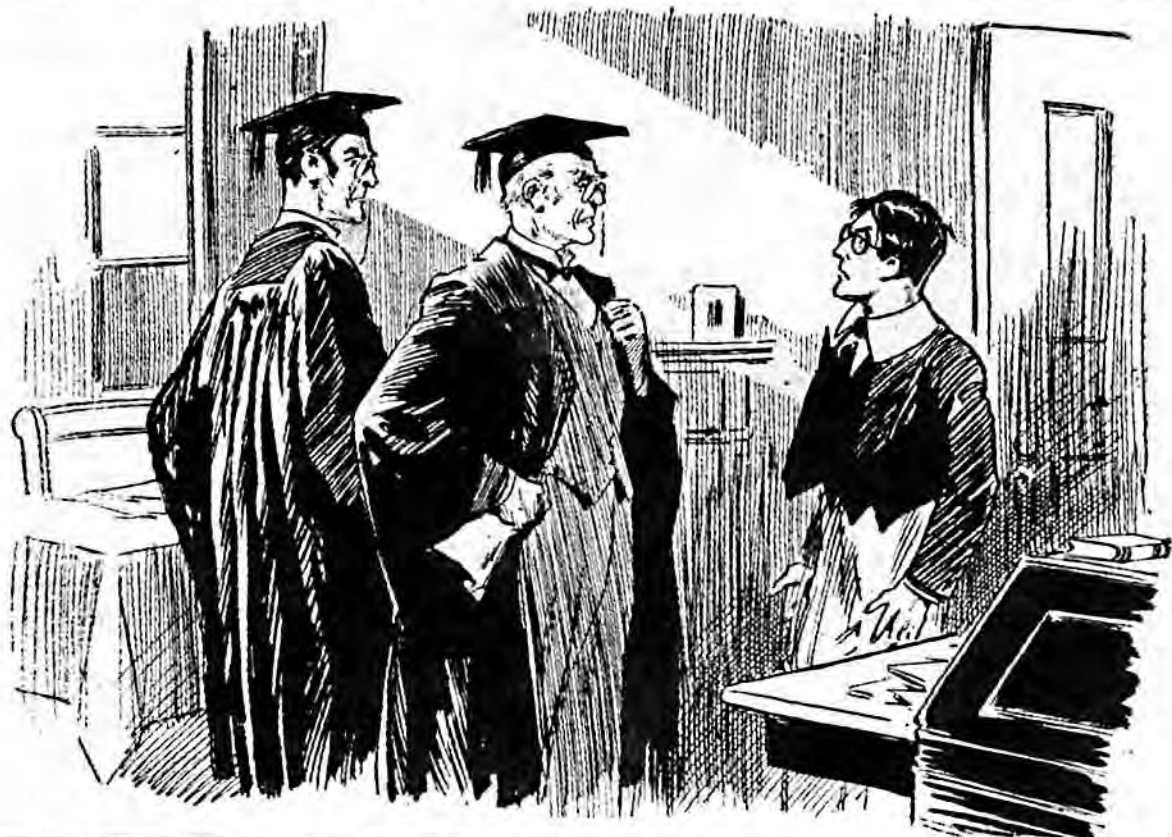
"I don't know, sir."

"You dare to say that you do not know the name of the man with whom you have had dealings outside the school?"

"I've had no dealings with him. That note never was written to me. I can't understand it."

The Head gave him a contemptuous look.

"If you persist in palpable falsehoods, Dallas, it is useless to question you further," he said. "It becomes a matter for punishment, and I shall have to consider whether I can allow you to remain at Greyfriars at all. Go to my study now!"



Dr. Locke glanced at the paper, and thunder gathered in his brow. "Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "Fish! You have been carrying on money-lending transactions in your Form, it appears." "Nope!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "The—the fact is, sir, I—I guess—I—I lent Bolsover two dollars and a half, because—he was hard up, sir, and he's a—a friend of mine!" (See Chapter 8.)

"But, sir—" stammered Paul.
"Go to my study!" thundered the Head.

In utter dismay Paul went.

"We are finished here now, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "You assure me that you are convinced that Whar-ton and Nugent were not concerned in this?"

"I am perfectly convinced of it, sir."
"Then the matter ends as far as they are concerned."

The Head and Mr. Quelch left Study No. 1, passing through a hushed crowd to the stairs. Immediately they were gone a buzz broke out in the Remove passage. It was the sensation of the term.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Surprise of the Term!

"DALLAS! Who'd have thought it!"

"A jolly deep card!"

"Awfully deep!"

"I say, you fellows, I jolly well knew it all the time! At least, I suspected it all along!" chirruped Billy Bunter.

"You never know a fellow till you find him out!" chuckled Hazel. "I must say that I never suspected Dallas of this kind of thing."

"It's jolly thick," said Bolsover major. "A fellow might smoke a fag—but dash it all, there's a limit."

"Dallas didn't know there was a limit," said Wibley. "He seems to have allowed himself a lot of latitude."

"Beastly hypocrite," said Bolsover;

"Smithy's a bad egg, but at least he's

got the decency to own up to what he does. This sort of thing in secret—pah!"

"Blessed if I can catch on to it," said Peter Todd, in wonder. "I'd have bet a term's pocket-money that Dallas was a decent chap."

"You'd have lost it!" grinned Hazel.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott came up the Remove staircase. They wanted to know at once what the excitement was about. Having been out of gates, they knew nothing so far of the Head's inspection.

"What is it—a fire, or somebody sacked?" asked Skinner.

"Somebody going to be sacked," said Hazel.

"Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not Smithy," said Russell laughing.

"Who then?" asked Skinner. "Of course, a fellow would naturally think of the Bounder first. Who's the jolly old victim?"

"Dallas!"

Skinner jumped.

"What on earth has Dallas done? I thought he was a shinin' light in a study wholly inhabited by shinin' lights?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it turns out that he wasn't," said Ogilvy. "He must have taken Whar-ton and Nugent in pretty completely."

"But what's happened?" asked Snoop.

"Head's inspection—"

"Oh, crickey!"

Skinner & Co. stayed to hear no more.

They rushed for their studies, in a state of great alarm, followed by a laugh from the other fellows. Evidently the

three black sheep had cause to fear a Head's inspection.

In No. 11, Snoop and Stott searched in vain for their smokes. The smokes were gone; and the two young rascals knew that they had been found.

"We're for it!" groaned Snoop.

"Just like the old bird to put in an inspection while we were out of gates!" growled Stott. "I gave five-and-six for that cigarette-holder. I shall never see it again."

"I daresay you'll see it in the Head's study, when you're up for a licking. Not after that."

"Oh, what rotten luck!"

Skinner had rushed into Study No. 4. He found the Bounder there, sedately seated in the armchair.

"Smithy!" gasped Skinner.

The Bounder looked up with a grin. "We're for it," he said. "You and poor little me. The Head came round—"

"I've just heard. Did he find—"

"Of course he did."

Skinner groaned.

"That's a licking, then," he said.

"Well, we can stand a licking, I suppose," said the Bounder. "If we kick over the traces, we must expect to come up against the beaks now and then."

Skinner went to his desk. His cigarettes were gone; but the loss did not trouble Skinner very much. It was what was to follow that troubled him.

"It's rotten!" he growled. "They oughtn't to pay these surprise visits. It's not cricket!"

"The Head stands in loco parentis!" said the Bounder solemnly. "He's

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bound to bring us up in the way we should go."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" grunted Skinner. "Do you think it will be a caning or a flogging?"

"The bettin' is 'even'!"

"We've been ragged before for this sort of thing," said Skinner. "Quelch will tell the Head that."

"Sure to!" agreed the Bounder.

"It's rotten!"

"Oh, keep a stiff upper lip. We have to take the downs with the ups," sneered the Bounder. "What's a licking, anyhow?"

"Well, I'm glad he found your smokes as well as mine," said Skinner viciously.

The Bounder smiled.

Skinner, even the cunning and suspicious Skinner, had not the slightest suspicion of the true state of affairs. Had the Bounder not been "caught out" along with the other black sheep in the Remove, Skinner would certainly have suspected that he had guessed what was coming. But the Bounder had been caught out with the rest. Even Skinner could not suspect that that was part of a deep-laid scheme. A Head's licking was no light matter, even if the Bounder chose to make light of it.

Skinner was wriggling with miserable anticipation of a summons to the Head's study. He was probably a worse fellow than Vernon-Smith; but he lacked the Bounder's cool hardihood.

"Oh, have a little pluck," said Smithy scornfully. "I'm for it as much as you are, and I'm not showin' the white feather."

"Rats to you!" snarled Skinner.

The Bounder laughed.

"Look here, I'll say I gave you those smokes," he said. "It won't make it any worse for me, and it might get you clear."

Skinner brightened up at once.

"I say, Smithy, you're a good sort," he said eagerly. "I always said you were a sportsman."

"Well, I never said you were—I should jib at such a thumping whopper as that," said the Bounder coolly.

"Look here—"

"I'll do as I said. I gave you the smokes—dash it all. I gave Snoop and Stott some, too," said the Bounder laughing. "Go and tell them, and put them out of their agony. I expect they're shaking with funk now!"

"I suppose the Head has bowled them out, too?"

"Sure thing! Tell them to back me up when I take it on, as soon as we're up before the beak. If I get a bit extra I can stand it—better than you weak-kneed slackers can, anyhow."

"I'll tell them," said Skinner.

And he hurried away to No. 11, where his news of the Bounder's offer brought comfort to two shivering young rascals.

Wingate of the Sixth came up to the Remove passage a few minutes later, to gather in the delinquents who were wanted in the Head's study. They trailed away after the captain of Greyfriars.

The Remove passage was still in a buzz of excitement. Quite a number of fellows were up before the "Beak," which was only to be expected after a surprise visit from the Head. But almost all the interest of the Remove was concentrated on the case of Paul Dallas. Nobody was surprised to hear that the other delinquents were in trouble; but the discovery in Dallas' desk astonished all the Remove. None was more astonished than Wharton and Nugent.

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"It beats me hollow," said the captain of the Remove. "I can't quite believe it now."

"Seeing is believing," said Nugent.

"Yes; but—"

"I'd never have thought it of Dallas," said Frank. "He's kept it jolly dark, and that's a fact."

"Could he keep it dark from fellows in the same study?" asked Harry. "It doesn't stand to reason."

"But the things were there, old chap!"

"I know. But—"

Nugent gave his chum a startled look.

"Wharton! You can't imagine that somebody else planted the things on Dallas?"

"I know it's unlikely; but it's not so jolly unlikely as that Dallas has taken us in so thoroughly," said the captain of the Remove. "If he's that kind of a blackguard, we're done with him, of course. But—I can't quite believe it! Between ourselves, Frank, we know that he's got a bitter enemy in the Remove."

Nugent whistled.

"You think that Smithy—"

"It's rotten to think so, without any evidence. But—it's practically impossible for Dallas to be a rotter of that kind, without us knowing something about it. Not only the smokes, but the racing papers, and the cards, and the letter from a bookmaker. If they'd been found in Smithy's study, nobody would be surprised."

"No. But—I—I say, it's awfully thick. Dallas uses that desk every day—goes to it sometimes a dozen times in a day. He would have found the things if they had been put in by somebody else."

"Of course, if they were put there, it was only just before the Head came—while Dallas was with us at games practice."

"But nobody knew the Head was coming."

"Well, no. But—it might have leaked out, somehow. If Smithy got on to it, somehow, in advance—"

"How could he?"

"Well, I don't know how he could; but he might have possibly."

"But Smithy was caught out with the rest," said Frank. "Wingate's taken him to the Head with the others. They found his cigarettes, all right."

"Well, it beats me!" said Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, clear off, Bunter."

"I say, you two fellows got out of it pretty well," said Bunter, grinning into the study. "Fancy only Dallas being lagged! Of course, you were all in it."

"What!" roared Wharton.

Bunter gave the captain of the Remove a fat wink.

"Mean to say you never knew, when you were in the same study? Gammon."

"You fat idiot—"

"All serene, old chap; I'm not going to give you away to the beaks," grinned Bunter. "The fact is, I suspected it all along. I knew that you two fellows were pretty deep."

"You—you—" gasped Wharton.

"Well, you're bowled out now, ain't you?" said Bunter cheerfully. "Mind, I don't blame you. I'm a bit of a dog myself. I go it, sometimes, especially in the hols. But the way you've run down Smithy for the same sort of thing—that's rather thick. Hypocritical, you know."

Bunter shook his head seriously.

"I call that thick," he said. "I never could stand humbug. I must say I despise you. I must say—Yarooop!"

Billy Bunter found himself up-ended in the doorway, with his obtuse head tapping on the floor. And it tapped hard.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

AN unhappy row of Remove fellows stood in the Head's study, under the stern eyes of the Head. There were six of them—Fisher T. Fish, Bolsover major, Snoop, Stott, Skinner, and Vernon-Smith. Paul Dallas, whose case was more serious than the others, stood apart, to be dealt with last. The lesser delinquents, such as Wibley and Lord Mauleverer and some others, were not there; they were to be dealt with by their Form master. But the Head had a pretty fair "bag." It was seldom that a Head's inspection produced such a harvest, in any Form at Greyfriars. Bolsover major looked sulky and perplexed, not knowing why he was there. The others knew only too well.

"I will deal with you first, Fish!" said the Head. "Stand forward."

The wretched Fishy cringed forward.

"I guess, sir—" he began.

"Silence! You have lent money at interest to this boy, Bolsover."

"You see, sir—"

"I learn that you have been punished on previous occasions by your Form master, Fish, for unscrupulous conduct."

"I guess, sir—"

"Silence! Bolsover, you will take two hundred lines of Virgil for borrowing money off Fish, and agreeing to pay interest on the loan. Fish, you will receive six strokes. Bend over the chair."

Bolsover major, quite relieved, suppressed a grin. His feelings towards the schoolboy moneylender were naturally not very amiable. He did not mind two hundred lines for himself, if Fisher T. Fish was to get six strokes of the cane.

Fishy groaned dismally as he bent over the chair. It was not the first time he had suffered on account of the lack of a business sense in the Greyfriars community. Fishy, indeed, was fed-up with the sleepy old island in which he found himself for his misfortunes. He felt that he would have been appreciated in his own great and glorious country, where business was understood from the word "go." But it was useless to attempt to open the mind of a pesky old gink on that subject, he knew that. The Head's lack of appreciation for his abilities as a business-man, naturally, got his goat. But he had to take his six.

It was quite a hefty six, and Fisher T. Fish almost crumpled up when the ordeal was over. The Head signed to him to go, and he limped away, and went dismally down the corridor—Bolsover major accompanying him with remarks that were neither grateful nor comforting.

"And now!" said the Head, in a voice that made Skinner & Co. feel their knees knocking together.

Vernon-Smith made a step forward.

"May I speak, sir?" he asked, respectfully.

"Your offence is the same as that of the others, Vernon-Smith. You will be punished in the same way."

"I think, sir, that I ought to own up," said the Bounder, in the same quiet and respectful manner.

Mr. Quelch, who was standing by the Head's desk, gave Smithy a very keen look.



Billy Bunter faced Wharton and Nugent. "I'm a bit of a dog myself," he said. "I go it sometimes, especially in the hois. But the way you've run down Smithy for the same sort of thing is rather thick. I must say I despise you. I must say—Yaroop!" Bunter broke off suddenly, to find himself up-ended in the doorway, with his obtuse head tapping on the floor, hard. (See Chapter 11.)

"If you have anything further to confess, Vernon-Smith, you may, of course, proceed," said the Head.

"I think I ought to tell you, sir, that I gave these fellows some cigarettes," said the Bounder. "I'm not excusing myself, sir, for doing so. But if they are going to be punished for having them, I—I think I ought to tell you how the matter stands, sir."

"Oh!" The Head was a little taken aback.

"It was you, then, who brought the cigarettes into the school, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir."

"They have not said so."

"We don't sneak in the Remove, sir," said the Bounder.

The Head coughed.

"If you are chiefly to blame, Vernon-Smith, if you confess that you have not only formed bad habits yourself, but have led other boys into bad habits, you will be more severely punished."

"I felt bound to speak, sir. The fellows would think me an awful rotter if I let these chaps be punished for what I did."

There was a pause.

"These boys should not have taken the cigarettes from you," said the Head. "But that is very different, of course, from smuggling forbidden things into the school. I think, Mr. Quelch, that impositions will meet the case with these three boys."

"Certainly, sir."

"Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, you will each write out two hundred lines of

Virgil, and take them to your Form master to-morrow."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Skinner & Co., scarcely able to believe in their good luck.

"You will bend over that chair, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder obeyed quickly.

He received six; but not so severely as Fisher T. Fish. His confession had softened the Head a good deal.

"You may go," said Dr. Locke.

The Bounder rose.

"Will you allow me to say, sir, that I am very sorry," he said meekly. "I am very sorry indeed, sir."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Vernon-Smith," said Dr. Locke kindly. "I shall hope and believe that your conduct was dictated only by foolish thoughtlessness. You must be more careful, my boy. You may go."

And the delinquents went. Both the headmaster and the Form master were left with a better impression than they had ever had before of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

In the corridor, Skinner & Co looked at the Bounder, with grinning faces, as they departed.

"You got away with it, Smithy!" chuckled Snoop.

"I got away with your lickin'!" said Smithy.

"Blessed if I don't believe you'd have got it worse if you hadn't owned up!" said Skinner admiringly. "You're a deep card, Smithy!"

"It was jolly decent of you, Smithy!"

said Stott. "If you stick to a pal like that, it's decent. You can jolly well rely on me to back you up in the Remove!"

"Same here!" said Snoop.

And Skinner nodded.

The young rascals returned to the Remove passage in a state of great satisfaction.

"But what's Dallas up for?" asked Skinner. "They're keeping him there."

"Blessed if I know!" said Vernon-Smith. "I never expected to see him in the dock."

"Somebody said he was going to be sacked," remarked Stott.

"What rot!"

"Well, it does seem rot—but it looks serious," said Skinner. "I suppose they know in the Remove. We'll soon find out."

It did not take Skinner & Co. long to learn of what Paul Dallas was accused. The Remove passage was buzzing with it. Seldom or never had there been such a sensation in the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars.

"Well, my word!" said Skinner, when he knew. "Dallas is about the last chap I'd have thought of! They say no fellow is safe when the beaks make an inspection of the studies."

"I thought he was jolly goody-goody," said Snoop.

"Pi, I always thought," remarked Stott. "Never knew a chap so pi as Dallas—excepting Linley. And it was all humbug!"

"It generally is," grinned Skinner.

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"I know what pi-jaw is—cover, as a rule. I've pi-jawed myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But is it true?" asked the Bounder. "Is it certain that the Head found anything of the kind in Dallas' desk? It sounds thick to me."

"No doubt about that," said Harry Wharton, with a very keen look at the Bounder. "We saw the things. Mr. Quelch took them out of Dallas' desk."

The Bounder whistled.

"Well, it beats me," he said. "I never liked Dallas, as I think all you fellows know—"

"Just a few!" grinned Skinner.

"But I never thought he was a rotten humbug of that sort! He's covered up his tracks pretty well!"

"If it's true!" said Wharton. "I can't believe it of Dallas."

"How did the things get into his desk, then?" chortled Snoop. "Did they belong to his study-mates?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't understand it, that's all," said Wharton, without heeding Snoop's question. "Some trick may have been played. I can't understand it; but I'm not turning Dallas down till it's beyond doubt."

"And the doubtfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I see where the doubt comes in!" said Bob Cherry. "But let's hope for the best, anyhow."

"That's only cricket," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't think much of Dallas, but I sha'n't quite swallow this unless the Head finds him guilty and gives him jip. I suppose the Head knows."

And the Bounder went on to his study with Skinner.

"Did the Head find all you had, Smithy?" inquired Skinner. "You didn't give me the last lot; but you can give me some now if you've got any."

The Bounder shook his head.

"Good news for you about Dallas!" said Skinner, eyeing his study-mate rather curiously.

"I don't know about that. I dislike the fellow enough, but one can't help feelin' a bit sorry for a man who's got the chopper," said the Bounder calmly.

"Makes a fellow think of what might happen to himself," grinned Skinner.

"Exactly!"

The Bounder looked at his watch.

"Time for a run out before lock-up," he said. "There won't be another Head's inspection yet awhile, and it will be safe to lay in a few smokes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"Comin'?"

"You bet!"

And they went.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

PAUL DALLAS had waited in dazed silence while the Head dealt with the other delinquents and dismissed them from his study. When the last of them had gone, Dr. Locke's stern glance turned on Dallas, and he made him a sign to come forward.

Paul had had time by now to pull himself together a little.

The discovery in his desk had utterly amazed him; he had almost wondered whether he was dreaming when the startling accusation was made.

But he had had time to think now, and he understood clearly enough the position in which he stood.

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As he had known nothing of the incriminating articles in his desk, it followed that someone had placed them there. Either it was a ghastly joke, or else it was a deliberate design of an enemy. He had only one enemy at Greyfriars who was at all likely to seek to do him such injury; and Vernon-Smith's name was in his mind. Someone—certainly Vernon-Smith—had known that the Head was about to make an inspection, and had played that cruel and cunning trick upon him. Only Smithy had a sufficiently powerful motive; the enmity of fellows like Skinner and Snoop was of a very different quality. They had not the nerve, even if they had the wickedness, for such an act of actual villainy. But the Bounder had never wanted nerve.

By the time the Head was prepared to deal with him, therefore, Paul had the matter fairly clear in his own mind. He had come to the only conclusion to which he possibly could come.

And though he was dismayed and disquieted, he did not allow himself to fear. He faced the Head calmly, meeting his glance without flinching. It seemed utterly impossible to him that such a dastardly scheme could succeed.

"I must now deal with you, Dallas," said the Head, in an ominous tone. "You have had time to think over your position."

"AT THE END OF HIS TETHER!"

is a Greyfriars yarn that no
Magnetite should miss.

You'll find it in next week's
Bumper Issue.

"Yes, sir," said Paul.

"Are you prepared to make a full confession?"

"I would willingly confess, sir, if I had anything to tell you. I have nothing," said Paul steadily. "I have thought the matter over now, and know that those things must have been placed in my desk by someone else."

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows. Mr. Quelch made an impatient gesture.

To both the masters the statement seemed a feeble prevarication.

"You use that desk frequently, I presume?" said the Head.

"Every day, sir."

"Articles could not be left in it without your discovering them?"

"Not for very long, certainly," said Paul.

"You wish me to believe that someone placed these things in your desk, knowing that you would find them there—that you were certain to find them there?"

"No, sir, that is very unlikely, I suppose," said Paul. "I do not think that at all. I am afraid that the things were placed in my desk for you to find there. In fact, I know that they were not there early this afternoon, as I looked through the desk for some stamps just before going down to games practice. If they had been there then I should have seen them."

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

"You charge some schoolfellows with placing incriminating articles in your desk?"

"That is the only explanation, sir, as I did not place them there, and had

never seen them before," said Paul firmly.

"You are aware, Dallas, that when your headmaster inspects the studies no notice is given beforehand. Perhaps, as you are new here, you did not know that. It is, however, the case. It was at three o'clock this afternoon that I decided to carry out the inspection today. I mentioned the matter to no one but your Form master, in this study. Not a single person at Greyfriars, therefore, was aware that the inspection was about to take place until I arrived with Mr. Quelch in the Remove passage."

Paul's colour changed.

The Head's words quite confounded him.

His own theory, in the light of what the headmaster stated, obviously would not hold water.

Yet no other possible explanation could be thought of, to account for the discovery in his desk.

"Such an inspection," continued the Head, "seldom takes place more than once in a term. It is unusual for it to take place so early in the term as this. Do you wish me to believe that someone placed these articles in your desk, to meet my eye in an inspection that might not have taken place for a month or more?"

"No, sir!" gasped Paul.

"On your own statements, you would have found the things there, either today or to-morrow."

"Yes, sir, certainly I should!" stammered Paul. "I—I can't understand it. He must have known you were coming this afternoon, sir."

"No one knew I was coming to the Remove passage this afternoon. But you allude to some special individual?"

"Yes," said Paul, between his teeth.

"You accuse some particular individual of attempting to do you a treacherous injury?"

"Yes."

"His name?" rapped out the Head.

"Vernon-Smith!" said Paul desperately. "It's well-known to all the Form that he hates me, and would injure me if he could."

The Head pursed his lips.

"Do you know anything of this, Mr. Quelch?"

"I am aware that there has been bitterness between Dallas and Vernon-Smith, sir. Vernon-Smith's father seems to have taken the view that his son was to blame, as he left him at the school over the Easter vacation. I have hitherto considered Vernon-Smith to blame in the matter. If, however, Dallas is so accomplished a hypocrite as would now appear, it is quite probable that he has deceived me on that point, as on others."

"Very probable, I think. On what grounds do you accuse Vernon-Smith of such wickedness, Dallas, apart from your mutual dislike?"

"No other fellow I can think of would have done it, sir. It must have been Vernon-Smith!" panted Paul. "He must have found out somehow that you were coming to the Remove studies—"

"He knew absolutely nothing of my intended visit!" snapped the Head.

"Dallas is aware," said Mr. Quelch, "that Vernon-Smith was one of the boys punished a few minutes ago. Had he had any inkling of an inspection about to take place, it is scarcely likely that cigarettes would have been found in his study."

"There is not the slightest doubt," said the Head, "that Vernon-Smith was as completely taken by surprise as any other boy in the Remove."

"Not the slightest!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I am astounded that you should have

(Continued on page 27.)

"BLACK MICHAEL AND SIX OF THE GANG!" That message, whispered in the darkness of a cinema, is enough to make Jack Horner's hair stand up on end, for it means that once again the mysterious, sinister stranger known as Black Michael, is contemplating another attempt to kidnap him!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
Lionel
Day



A Powerful and Dramatic Story of Mystery and Intrigue.

Jim Snow Reappears!

"**J**ACK! Jack, but whatever are you doing?" Bill's voice exclaimed. "And what's got Squall—"

Jack made no answer. That strange influence that was being exerted from somewhere close at hand seemed to have robbed him of the power of speech. All he knew was that he wanted to go, and that Squall was holding him. Bill Bowker leapt over the side of the Emerald. As he did so the wolf-dog, thinking that the game was over, released his hold of his master. Instantly, Jack began to scramble up the bank. He had almost reached the top, when Bill's hand closed upon his ankle and dragged him back.

"I've had enough of these bloomin' games for one night, my lad," he gasped. "You come along to mother."

Jack struggled violently, but to no purpose. He was dragged aboard the Emerald, carried down the deck under Bill's arm, and finally deposited on the bunk in the cabin. There he sat staring lazily at the familiar faces of Mr. and Mrs. Bowker. He passed a hand across his face. That strange influence seemed suddenly to have been suspended.

"What the blazes were you trying to run your head into more trouble for? Crawling up the bank, he was, mother, just the same as if he wanted to stop one of the bullets that that dirty greaser was pumping out of his gun. Wish I'd taken the gun from him!"

Mrs. Bowker looked at him in astonishment, and then pointed to something lying on the table.

"Why, Bill, you don't think I was such a juggins as to leave him with his gun do you? There it is! It was somebody else as fired that shot."

Jack sat bolt upright in the bunk.

"It was Black Michael—I'm sure it was Black Michael," he stammered. "He can make me do things I don't want to do by looking at me. He was making me go to him when you caught me, Mr. Bowker."

Bill Bowker's only reply was to turn and stamp out of the cabin. A few

minutes later and the monkey-boat had been worked across the canal, the horse had been secured from the neighbouring field, and with the tow-rope taut, the Emerald was moving eastwards. Only when he had put a mile between himself and Weald Park did Bill summon his wife on deck.

"Jack asleep, mother?" he whispered. "No, he's having a cup of cocoa and a bit of something to eat. What do you think it all means, Bill?"

"That's what I want to find out, old girl. All I knows is that that mooring-place don't seem healthy, so we'll move along a bit for a couple of hours. As I can't leave the tiller, tell Jack to come up here and he can tell us all about it."

Leaning against the roof of the cabin Jack, a few minutes later, was relating his night's experiences to his astonished listeners.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JACK HORNER, a youngster of fourteen, orphaned by the War, flees from Dane's Farm, owing to the brutal treatment of his rascally uncle and guardian.

GEORGE PARKER, Squall, Jack's faithful wolf-dog, goes with him. Unknown to himself, Jack is heir to a title and estate, and in consequence of this he is relentlessly pursued by

BLACK MICHAEL, a sinister individual, who will automatically inherit the title and estate should Jack Horner die. Jack reaches the London Docks, where he finds a new home with

BILL BOWKER, skipper of the monkey-boat Emerald. A few days later, Jack is stalking Black Michael with the intention of discovering the sinister secret which has inspired the outrageous attempts upon his liberty when he overhears his enemy plotting death.

BRILLIANT SING, a Chinese accomplice, to murder a feeble, aged lady, who apparently stands between him and his greed of gold. Jack nips the plot in the bud, but is unfortunate enough to be captured by Brilliant Sing. Bowker, comes to his rescue, however, and the Chinaman is driven off. Then just as Jack is about to board the Emerald, he finds himself overcome by the spell of some mysterious magnetic force which seems to be calling to him. Frantic with terror, Jack is appealing to Squall to hold him back when Bill Bowker appears upon the scene.

(Now read on.)

"I can get it all, Jack—Black Michael and his dirty gang—and that murdering chink and that there Curly that mother boiled ready for washing; but what I can't get down to is this here fancy talk of yours about Black Michael being able to make you do what you don't want to do. It don't seem no sense or reason."

The boy shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

"I don't know what it is, Mr. Bowker—I can't explain it. But that night when I followed Jim Snow—in that Chinaman's den in Limehouse—that was when it first happened. He just looked at me and I seemed to forget everything. It was just the same as if I'd got to do what he told me. And that other time—in the barn, you remember. I was coming down the rope from the beam just because he told me to and looked at me."

Jack shivered as if with the cold. He was only fourteen, and after all the excitement of the night the inevitable relapse was setting in. He would like to have cried if he hadn't been too proud. Mrs. Bowker, as if divining what was passing through his mind, put her arms about him and hugged him to her maternal bosom.

"There, there, my dear," she whispered. "You've no need to be frightened. You're quite safe now. My old man mayn't be much to look at, or much use but to eat victuals and stand on the deck of this monkey-boat a-looking as if he were working hard; but he's a match for all them nasty sewer rats. Look what he did to that datted Chinaman. He's a terror when he gets going, is Bill, and he'll stand between you and Black Michael."

She winked at her husband as she spoke as if forbidding him to talk any more, and then lifting Jack up she carried him downstairs to the cabin. The next day he lay there in comfort while the Emerald plodded slowly on its way. On the following day he had quite recovered from his thrilling adventure, and towards evening he helped to moor the monkey-boat in the dock.

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Brentford, and attend the skipper at the office. As they came away from that interview with the somewhat disgruntled clerk, Bill put his hand upon the boy's shoulder.

"You've saved me three quid at least. If it hadn't been for you, that greaser with the linen fence round his throat would have done me down. Takes me for a regular sucker, he does! But he can't get past you with any of them figures. You're a wonder at the multiplication. And just to show you how pleased I am with you, I'm going to take you along with mother and me to the pictures."

To the boy, who had been reared among the mountains of Cumberland, "the pictures" were still a source of wonder and delight. It was with a feeling of thrilling excitement that he sat in the dark of the cinema house and watched the amazing adventures of a film hero and heroine. It seemed to him the most delightful and entrancing performance, and he was hoping that it would never end—at least, not until he was too sleepy to keep awake—when he felt something touch his arm. He looked round, but in the darkness he could see nothing. And then he felt somebody breathing on his neck. He was just about to make a protest when a low voice sounded in his ear.

"Jack—sit still, and don't look round! It's me—Jim Snow! I followed you here and took my chance when the lights went up last, to jump the seat behind you."

There was no mistaking the note of alarm and excitement in Jim Snow's voice. Jack sat quite still.

"I've been watching out for them blokes, Jack. They've been around here, some of 'em, the last two days, making inquiries about the Emerald; and they're here in the house now—six of 'em I counted, Jack. And Jack—Black Michael's here himself."

As he uttered that startling piece of information Jack's interest in the film story utterly vanished. He looked about him nervously. Somewhere in that darkness was Black Michael his enemy—Black Michael and six of his gang!

At Grips with the Enemy!

THOUGH the cinema house was stiflingly hot, Jack shivered as if with the cold. Somewhere in that darkness was Black Michael who had developed a curious power over him. Terror seized upon the boy lest that power should be suddenly exercised and he should find himself rising and following wherever he was bidden to go.

The film hero and heroine were evidently getting to the end of their trials and tribulations. A "close-up" of them kissing had been flashed on the screen. The orchestra were playing: "Show Me the Way to go Home!" Even Jack, most inexperienced of picture fans, realised that the performance was drawing to an end. In another moment the lights would go up again.

He must pass Jim Snow's message on to Bill Bowker. But that was not an easy thing to do. There were no subtleties about the skipper of the Emerald; unless something were expressed in the plainest of plain language he was incapable of understanding it; and his idea of whispering was a noise which could be heard yards and yards away. But Mr. Bowker had to be told. Nervously Jack plucked at his blue jersey.

"Mr. Bowker!" he whispered.

"Arf a mo, my lad! I just wants to see what's goin' to happen? Looks to

me as if there's goin' to be a weddin' after all."

Bill Bowker was such a steady patron of the Cinema Theatre that he ought to have known that for certain.

"Mr. Bowker—I'm sorry—but it's dangerous here! Black Michael and six of the gang are in the house!"

Bill dragged his eyes reluctantly away from the concluding scene on the screen.

"What's that you're saying, Jack?" he bawled.

Jack Horner's hand tightened on his arm.

"Please don't talk so loud, Mr. Bowker—they may hear us. I've just been given a message. Black Michael and the gang has been making inquiries for the last few days about the Emerald, and they're here in the house now."

Bill Bowker's reply to that startling announcement was to lift Jack bodily up, take the boy's seat and place Jack between his wife and himself.

"You sit there tight between mother and me, Jack. If this here push try to get fresh, they'll be looking for trouble. This ain't a lonely spot on the canal side. I've got plenty of pals in this here crowd as would take it very kindly from me if I was to introduce 'em to a bit of scrapping."

There was a roar of applause. The last few feet of film had been flashed on the screen; the lights went up; the orchestra were playing: "God Save the King!" Everybody had risen to their feet. Old Bill was looking about him.

"Crumbs! There's my nevy—Hi, Dirk, lad, come over here, I wants you! And bring them pals along with you."

By the simple process of hailing everyone he recognised in the immediate neighbourhood there was soon some dozen sun-tanned, hard-bitten men swarming over the seats to the great inconvenience of the departing audience.

Bill looked down at Jack with a grin. "What price Black Michael now, Jack? If he wants any trouble he can have it. Where is the scoundrel?"

Jack looked round. The audience were now pouring out of the exits. He couldn't be certain, but it seemed to him that for a moment he glimpsed the white-stained face and dark evil-possessed eyes of Black Michael. And then that evil vision had vanished.

"Hallo, uncle, what's the game?" Dirk exclaimed. "And how's Jack? Been having any more trouble with them boys what tried to cop you down in the pool?"

"That's the very identical trouble, Dirk," old Bill broke in. "I've stood about as much from that lad Black Michael as I've any patience for. There's somebody given Jack here the tip, that he and his merry boys were in the house, and I thought maybe that you and the rest would give me a hand in beating 'em up."

Grins of anticipatory pleasure lighted up the sunburnt faces of the men who had gathered round Bill and his party. Several of them Jack recognised as having taken part in the battle on the tug. They needed no explanations as to what was afoot. As for the others it was obvious that the rights or wrongs of the case did not matter; as long as it was going to be a scrap that was all that concerned them.

"But there ain't anybody left in the blessed place," Bill exclaimed, looking round the empty house. "It maybe they're waiting outside. Supposing we git and see what they want?"

With Jack and Mrs. Bowker in the centre the party made their way out of the cinema house in a solid phalanx. A thick fog had risen while they had been occupied with the performance, and it was impossible to see even across the road.

"Seems to me, Dirk, if they wants to make another shot at getting hold of Jack here, now is the very identical time to suit 'em. I'd take it very kindly if you and the rest of the boys would just see us safe aboard the Emerald."

Accompanied by their escort Bill Bowker, his wife and Jack Horner made their way down to the quay. As they reached the dock gates Mrs. Bowker gave vent to an exclamation of amazement.

"Jack, lad, what ails you? Bill, look here, the kid's come over all funny again! Here, Jack, stay where you are. What are you trying to do?"

Mrs. Bowker might well ask that question, for Jack's face was strained and set, and he was using all his strength to try and drag his arm away from Mrs. Bowker's hold. Even as the woman spoke, with a final tug Jack extricated himself, dived between the two men on his left, and plunged into the wall of fog.

"After him, boys!" Bill shouted. "Hold him!"

It was one thing to give those orders—quite another thing to carry them out. The fog was so thick and the network of narrow streets in the neighbourhood so dense that Jack was away out of sight before they could catch him. With that strained look on his face he rushed through fog-laden streets and alleys, never once hesitating which turn to take, while after him came fainter and fainter the noise of the pursuit. Someone was calling, and Jack had to obey that summons.

Now he had reached a long, narrow street that ran at right angles to the river. On one side was a dilapidated wooden fence. It was towards a gap in this fence that Jack was making, when the figure of another boy appeared from behind.

"Jack—Jack!" screamed the newcomer. "Come back! They're there waiting for you!"

It was Jim Snow who uttered that frantic appeal. He had followed the party of bargemen from the cinema house, watching them unobserved. He had seen Jack's extraordinary behaviour and had pursued him. To the wail of the streets the fog meant nothing. He knew every twist and turn by heart. At first he had thought that Jack must have some definite object in running away from his party, and with boyish loyalty he meant to help in that object, if he could. But when he saw Jack Horner leave that narrow street and make direct for the gap in the fence, behind which he himself had seen the gang assembled only a few hours before, a panic seized upon him. Throwing himself forward, Jim Snow flung his arms about Jack's knees and brought him to the ground.

"Come back, quick, Jack!" he screamed.

As his shrill voice rang through the fog-laden air, there was a rush of footsteps on the other side of the fence. Three brutal-looking men blundered through the gap and rushed towards the spot where the boys were struggling.

"Now, then, you dratted kid, come along with us!" one of them shouted.

Their hands closed upon Jack's stocky figure. He was jerked to his feet.

Jim Snow clung desperately to him. "Help!" he shouted. "Help!"



With head down, Jim Snow rushed in, clutching at the ruffians' legs and winding his emaciated body about their feet, causing them to stumble and slip. And at that moment there was a rush of feet round the corner, and Dirk, stick in hand, came charging towards the spot. (See this page.)

A brutal blow across the mouth made Jim Snow reel back against the wall of the adjoining house; but though his mouth was bleeding and two of his teeth had been dislodged, he was determined to help the boy who had risked his life to save him. Head down, Jim Snow rushed in, clutching at the ruffians' legs—winding his emaciated body about their feet, causing them to stumble and slip. At that moment there was a rush of feet round the corner, and Dirk, a stick in his hand, came charging towards the spot.

"At 'em, boys!" he shouted.

There was no need for these exhortations to the men behind. Dirk dealt with the situation by himself. One man was sent flying through the gap in the fence by a blow from his brawny fist; a second, receiving the full force of that stout stick on his arm, gave a scream of pain and dropped Jack. The third man, trying to grapple with the brawny bargee, was lifted up bodily and flung across the fence. The battle was over before the others had arrived on the scene.

"You're always in too much of a bloom!" he hurled, "one of the men grumbled, staring round the deserted battlefield. "Ain't there anybody left as wants something put across him?" "They're hiding somewhere yonder!" Dirk exclaimed, pointing to the gap in the fence. "Go and knock 'em up! I've got special instructions from Old Bill to take this lad back to him."

Tucking Jack under his arm as if he were a puppy, Dirk raced back through the fog to the dock gates. Jim Snow followed at his heels.

Five minutes later and they were all seated in the cabin of the Emerald.

The Mysterious Mr. Thrasher!

BILL looked at Jack in a puzzled way. The boy was very pale, and there was a dazed, bewildered look in his eyes.

"What got you, lad?" Bill exclaimed. "Whatever made you go and run your head into trouble like that?"

Jack blinked at him. That curious influence had lost its power now.

"I don't know what happened!" he stammered. "I remember leaving the cinema, then everything seemed to go blank. Black Michael has some power over me."

Bill Bowker scratched his head. It was all beyond him. He turned to his nephew.

"It's a rum go—the rummiest go as ever I struck, Dirk. Here's this boy, with a real good head on his shoulders—knows how many pounds go to a stone and adds up like shelling peas—and yet he says as this scoundrel, Black Michael, has only got to be near him to sort of make him do as he wants him to do."

Dirk also fell to scratching his head and staring at Jack.

"He's hip—something. I know, it's called hip—something."

"It ain't hip-hip-burrah, is it?" Old Bill suggested helpfully.

"Garn, you silly Juggins! You and your hip-hip-burrah! This here's a scientific word—one of them boss jaw-breaking words whotcher see in patent-medicine advertisements. And I was just getting it when you must come butting in with your blained nonsense."

He put both his hands to his head.

"Hip—no—hip—Gosh! That's it—got it—hypnotism! One of our fellers on the trawler during the War got what they call shell-shock, and they sent him to a chap wot made him go to sleep by looking at him, and when he was a-sleep got him to tell him all about what was troubling him. So he kind of felt better when he got it off his mind!"

He looked up at Jack.

"You come over all cold and stiff-like, Jack—same as if you were a-sleeping?"

Jack admitted that his sensations as far as he could recall them, were rather like that.

Dirk grinned delightedly.

"That's it. He's got an influence on you—must have sort of put it across you when you were down in that Chink's den;

and now when he wants you, he can sort of make you do what he wants you to do."

He turned to Bill.

"You tell us what's happened this last trip?"

Bill having related the episode of the Red Barn and Jack's strange adventure in Weald Park, Dirk screwed up his lips and shook his head.

"Something's coming to that guy, Black Michael. I don't hold with this here hypnotism. Punchin's all right, but this other game—it's Dago stuff—rotten, stinking Dago stuff!"

Then for the first time Dirk's eye lighted upon Jim Snow. He leaned forward and drew the boy on to his knee.

"Here's the kid that's got the right stuff in him. He was fighting like a good 'un with those three toughs when I come along. How's yourself, Jim?"

Jim Snow, so encouraged, related briefly what had happened to him during the Emerald's absence from Brentford. His mother was better, and he was now able to do a little work. He had given up the collar-stud and matches business, and with the money that had been given him, was trying a very paying line in balloons. Having given these personal details, he related how he had been able to keep observation on the gang.

"I see two of the blokes hanging around the dock, and I hides behind a barrel and watches 'em. Then more of 'em come along, and then at last Black Michael himself. He goes straight into the office, and when he comes back I hears him say as when the Emerald would reach here, and he gives his boys come orders to hang about. So I watches 'em, and when I sees the Emerald come in I peens around. After you'd gone into the pictures they follows you all in a bunch, so then, I thinks to myself, it was time to give you the tip."

"Mother," said Bill Bowker, "what about some bacon and eggs for this here

youngster? He looks as if he could do with a meal—and, gosh, he deserves it!"

Jim Snow, getting outside a large plate of bacon and eggs, was quite the hero of the hour. When he had finished his meal the little party in the cabin fell to discussing the situation. It was agreed that Jack must keep strictly to the Emerald until they left Brentford. Meanwhile, Jim on shore was to keep such observation as he could on the movements of the gang.

"It won't be any use your coming here, Jim!" Dirk exclaimed. "They'll see you and smell a rat. Tell you what—you'd better get your mother to pass any message you've got for Bill here to me at the First and Last, and I'll put uncle wise afterwards."

Those arrangements having been made, and Jim and Dirk having taken their departure, the cabin door was firmly closed and Squall was left to guard the deck. The night passed without any further interruption. All the next day Bill Bowker was clearly anxious. Once the cargo had been shifted he was all eagerness to get another job and to be off again. But the luck that had been with him for so long seemed suddenly to have deserted him. For the better part of five days the Emerald lay idle on the quayside.

Jack, strictly confined to the monkey-boat, felt those days very trying. No word had come from Jim, and he began to fret at precautions which seemed wholly unnecessary. And then on the sixth day, Bill Bowker, who had been growing gloomier and gloomier, suddenly came over the side of the Emerald with a cheerful grin upon his face.

"Cargo of timber for Dillingham!" he shouted: "and they've just told me, that as likely as not I'll pick up something else there. It's to be along in a couple of hours. So get them hatches off, Jack, and have everything ready."

The timber arrived in big lorries—great lengths of Norwegian fir, which were rather difficult to handle. Jack's arms and back were aching when at last everything had been stored away and the hatches replaced. But Bill Bowker allowed no time for rest.

"The sooner we get out of this, the better, my lad, so get Tommy harnessed up and we'll be off."

Tommy, after six days' rest and good feeding, was more than usually full of back. Before nightfall, they were a good twenty miles on their way. Two days later they arrived at Dillingham, a lonely, deserted village set in the heart of the rolling countryside.

"I wonder what they want all this timber for in a one-eyed place like this?" Bill exclaimed, when they moored the Emerald and stepped ashore.

A man, who had been evidently waiting for the arrival of the monkey-boat, came up the steep path that led from the village street. He was a curious-looking man, with a foxy face and a very red nose.

"You're the Emerald?" he asked.

"That's me," Bill retorted.

"My name's Thrasher. You've got a cargo of timber aboard consigned to me from Brentford, haven't you?"

Bill admitted the fact.

"Well, bring it along, will you, and when you've cleared, I've got an empty I want you to take back to Limehouse for me."

Bill regarded him fixedly.

"I don't mind taking the empty along to Limehouse to oblige you, if you pays for it, but this here free-and-easy talk

of yours, gus'nor, about shiftin' the timber—wotcher take me for—a bloomin' aeroplane?"

The man pulled at his moustache.

"You've got to deliver it, haven't you, where it's consigned to?"

"Deliver it my grandmother! I'll put it out here on the bank, and when I've done that my job's over. If you've got a lorry, I'll load it for you."

Mr. Thrasher seemed strangely non-plussed for a moment.

"Is there very much of it?" he inquired.

"You ought to know 'ow much there is. You ordered it, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes—quite so—of course," Mr. Thrasher replied nervously. "I think if you were to unload it just down the bank there, I could send some of my men later on to fetch it. I'll have the empty ready for you this evening."

"Wotcher make of that chap, Jack?" Mr. Bowker inquired, when Mr. Thrasher had taken his departure.

Jack didn't know what to make of him.

"Seems as if he didn't want this here cargo," Bill grumbled. "Well, it's his funeral. It'll be a blame sight easier chucking it down the bank than stacking it. I'll see he pays for it just the same. So call mother, and we'll get a move on."

There and then they began their task of unloading. The derrick was raised and in bunches the baulks of timber were lifted out of the hold, swung over the tow-path and then, the chains that bound them having been released, allowed to roll down the bank to the bottom of the slope. It was Jack's duty to slip off the chain while Mrs. Bowker worked the windlass and Bill was busy in the hold. Very soon an untidy mass of timber littered the grass. It was already growing dusk when the last of the cargo had been discharged.

"He'll have a job to draw it out of there, will Mr. Thrasher; but that's where he wanted it, and that's where he's got it," Bill exclaimed. "Kept a check on how much we've unloaded, Jack?"

Jack, who had checked every baulk, gave the skipper the figures.

"Well, come aboard, my lad, and make out a little bill for this here Mr. Thrasher. Between you and me, I don't like the looks of him, and the sooner I has my money for this job, the better I'll be pleased. There's something queer and puzzling about the whole show."

Jack, having duly drawn up a statement of the transaction, showing just how much timber had been delivered, joined Mr. and Mrs. Bowker at tea. They had just finished the meal when there was the rumble of cartwheels outside.

Bill put his head out of the companionway.

"Lor' love me, here comes the Bloomin' empty he spoke of. It's the biggest thing in the way of empties as ever I set eyes on."

There was every justification for Bill's astonishment, Jack saw, when he gained the deck. A big cart was coming along drawn by one horse and driven by Mr. Thrasher in person. On the cart was an enormous box the size of a small room.

"Here's your cargo for Limehouse, Mr. Bowker," Mr. Thrasher exclaimed, checking the horse when the cart was alongside the Emerald. "You'd better pass a chain round her, and lower her with that derrick of yours into the hold."

Just throw up the chain, my boy, and I'll fix it for you."

As Jack made as if to carry out this request, Bill stopped him.

"Here, halt a bloomin' mo', Mr. Thrasher. What about the money for that there timber?"

"Oh, that'll be all right, Mr. Bowker. What's the damage?"

Bill stated the amount. The man drew a leather case from his pocket and counted out a number of notes.

"I've added another tenner to that amount, Mr. Bowker, for the carriage of this empty to Limehouse. If there's any change over, you can use it to drink my health in."

Bill Bowker counted over the bundle of notes a little dazedly, and then stowed them away in his pocket.

"Well, I won't say as you ain't treated me handsome. You'll find all your timber where you asked me to put it, and we'll have that case of yours aboard in no time. What's it been used for? I don't remember ever having seen one so big."

Mr. Thrasher pulled at his moustache. "Machinery. I've had a steam lathe put up in my workshop. The parts come down in that there case, and we've been busy all this week assembling them. It was a Belgian firm as I bought the machinery from, and when you get it to Limehouse, the Transport Company will take it over and put it aboard the first ship crossing the Channel. The firm was very particular that I should return the empty, or they'd charge me very near a matter of five pounds."

This explanation was detailed and convincing—at any rate, to Bill Bowker, whose knowledge of machinery was limited to his hatred of bullys. Without more ado, the chain was passed round the huge box which was raised from the cart and swung over the hold. Once there, it was lowered slowly.

"It fits just exactly," Bill exclaimed. "Them foreign folk might have had the blessed thing made for my boat."

Mr. Thrasher smiled down his foxy nose.

"Perhaps they did, Mr. Bowker—you never know! They're very cute folk. Belgians—out to save every bit of money they can. Maybe, when they were packing that machinery, they thought to themselves that it'd go a deal cheaper by canal than by rail, and so they makes the case so as it'll fit the hold of a monkey-boat."

"You ain't got any more instructions then, Mr. Thrasher?" Bill inquired, as Jack began to replace the hatches.

"Not as I know of. Don't let anybody pinch the case—that's all, skipper. And when you get to Limehouse, there's a chap'll come to you from the Transport Co. He'll give you my card and a receipt, and you might send me a wire to say it's got through all right."

They shook hands across the side of the Emerald. Then Mr. Thrasher, turning the cart, disappeared up the towpath in the direction he had come.

"Well, he's a mug—a proper mug, is that Mr. Thrasher!" Bill exclaimed. "It's money for nothing, this here—absolutely money for nothing. Lor', what's got Squall?"

For Squall, standing with stiffened body, and bristling ruff, was staring at the hold.

(What is it that has attracted Squall's attention? Is it something to do with the mysterious packing-case? Look out for some startling developments in next week's thrilling instalment, chums.)

"THE HAND OF AN ENEMY!"

(Continued from page 22.)

the effrontery, with the proofs of guilt before you, to make such wild and reckless accusations, and against the son of the man who has befriended you," said the Head, his eyes fixed scornfully on Paul's pale, dismayed face. "I will listen to no more of this! If you have any further accusations to make, you may speak; if not, I forbid you to utter such falsehoods in my presence."

"I—I have told the truth!" gasped Paul. "If it was not Vernon-Smith, I can't imagine—I can't understand—"

His voice trailed away.

"Enough!" Dr. Locke raised his hand. "Say no more, Dallas! Had you made

a full confession, I might have considered that a flogging would suffice for your punishment. You have added a series of palpable falsehoods to your offence, and a wicked accusation against a schoolfellow which will not bear investigation for a moment. I do not think it will be possible for me to allow you to remain at Greyfriars. I shall consult your adopted father, and decide later what is to be done with you; but I hold out no hope that you will be allowed to remain here. Now go!"

"Dr. Locke, I—" panted Paul.

"Go!"

"On my word, sir—"

"Your word is worth nothing! Go!"

Paul Dallas almost tottered from the Head's study. His face was white as a sheet. Fellows stared at him when he

passed them. Wingate, of the Sixth, caught him by the shoulder.

"Steady on, young 'un! What's the matter with you? Are you ill?"

Paul burst into a wild laugh.

"No, I'm sacked, that's all! I've done nothing! I've had a dirty trick played on me—and I'm sacked! I'm going to be kicked out of Greyfriars—for nothing! That's all!"

And the unhappy junior tramped out into the quad, leaving Wingate staring after him blankly.

THE END.

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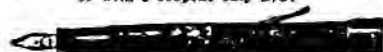
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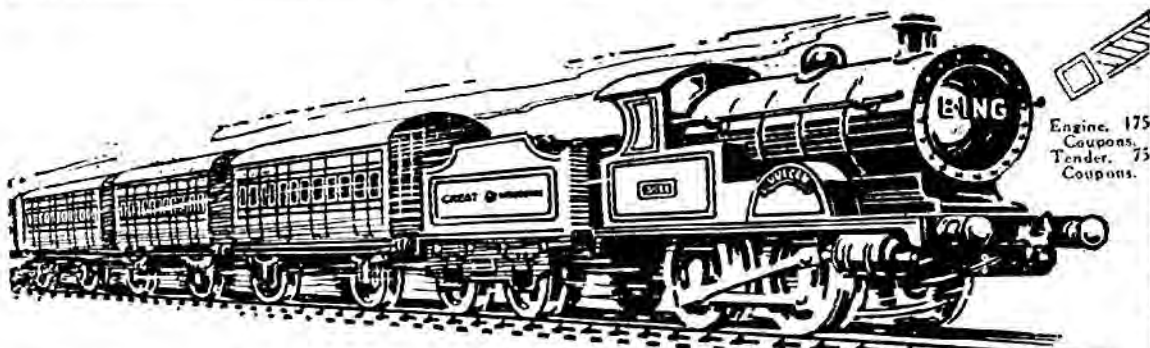
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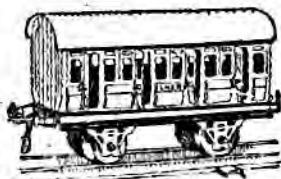


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A "watery," but not "grave," narrative, describing the annual tussle between St. Sam's and Greyfriars on the rippling River Ripple!

"Seventy years ago," said the Head, "I rode for my college. I was awarded the ever since. I was a wonderful oarsman in those days, and I

"GOING ROWING?"
Doctor Birchmull, the headmaster of St. Sam's, asked the question, from the open window of his study.

It was a soporific question. For the party of Sixth-Formers who were crossing the quadrangle were all in the morning slumps, and their eyes were closed. A long rowing-boat was balanced on their athletic shoulders. Moreover, all these

men of metal carried an ore. Burleigh and Talbot were in front of the procession. Behind them came Killoch and Blades, two of the sturdiest oarsmen at St. Sam's; and Pughman and Howver, and Dipper and Crabbe. These fellows formed the senior crew of St. Sam's; and young Midgett, minor of the First, who was their cox, completed the party.

"Going rowing?" repeated the Head, raising his long, ostrich-like neck out of the window.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Burleigh, sarcastically. "We're going to play a fouter match!"

"Then why do you carry ores, Burleigh?"

"To brain the referee with, if he gives us any trouble!" chuckled Burleigh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Doctor Birchmull frowned.

The seniors groaned internally. They did not relish the prospect of having the Head in their boat. He was a bumbling blunderer at the best of times. A bull in a china-shop would be gentle and graceful by comparison with the Head in a rowing-boat. Burleigh spoke to the Head respectfully, but firmly.

"I'm afraid we've no room for you in the boat, sir," he said. "Eight oarsmen, and a cox, take up all the space."

"Then one of you must stand down!" said the Head cheerfully. "I suggest that Killoch takes a back seat!"

"I always do, sir!" said Killoch.

"You see, I row at bow,"

stuttered the Head. "Why Burleigh should select a puny weakling like you for such a post is beyond me. You have hardly strength enough to lift an ore."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Killoch, who had the biggest and bravesticeps of any fellow at St. Sam's, and who was the acknowledged Hercules of the crew.

"You will stand down, Killoch!" said the Head sternly. "Burleigh will take your place at bow, and I will take Burleigh's place as stroke."

"But, sir—" began the indignant Killoch.

"Enough!" said the Head tartly. "Wait for me, my boys."

And Doctor Birchmull withdrew his commiee enuff, even in his robes of office. In rowing garb he looked positively jocular. Burleigh & Co. made queer noises in their throats; and Midgett mither burst out laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head spun round feverily upon the fact. What are you laughing at, Midgett mither?"

"Alom!" Something tickled me, sir."

"Report to me after the rowing practice, and something else will tickle you—namely, my birchrod!" said the Head grimly.

"I know I look an awful guy, but it's very bad form to snigger at your Headmaster's appearance. Hand me your ore, Killoch!"

Killoch solemnly complied; and the Head, sloping arms with the ore, wrapped out a sharp command.

"Quick march!"

The procession moved off, and marched down to the river, with Jack Jolly & Co. and a crowd of curious juniors at its heels.

The Head was very stern and dignified at first; but when the sparkling waters of the Ripple came in sight, he soon recovered his normal animal spirits. When the boat was lowered, and the oarsmen stepped into their places, the Head burst into song:

embracing sweep of my trusty blade, Fall in and follow me!
"If we do follow him we shall certainly fall in!" growled Burleigh, from the bow.

"Yo-ho-hee-ho! Off we go!" roared the Head.

And he kicked out his legs, and swung back his ore, and caught Talbot, who was just behind him, a terrific crack on the head.

"Yaroooo!" roared Talbot, in wild anguish.

"You've jolly well brained me, sir!"

"Impossible!" said the Head cheerfully. "You cannot brain the brainless. That was a false start. We will now try again."

Once more the Head's blade described a backward sweep. Talbot saw it coming, and promptly ducked his head. And this time it was Blades who got the blade.

It smote his cranium with a sickening thud.

"Yow-ow!" bellowed Blades. "Hold him down, somebody! Pull in to the bank, you fellows, or we shall all be brained or drowned!" That hapnanned old buffer ought never to be let loose in a rowing-boat!

The Head twisted himself round in his seat and glared at Blades.

"You will take a thousand lines, disappointment!" he thundered. "Having made two false starts, we will now proceed!"

Again the Head lashed out with his ore, and the St. Sam's crew shrank back in alarm. As Blades had said, they were all in danger of having their skulls cracked by the "all-embracing sweep" of the Head's blade. Bitterly they regretted having allowed the Head to board their boat.

But they were soon rid of his company. As the Head was making his sliding seat suddenly slid away from under him, and he toppled over backwards, with his legs wildly thrashing the air.

Like a newly landed fish, Doctor Birchmull squirmed and struggled for a moment, and Talbot and Blades, who both had splitting headaches, seized their opportunity—and the Head's ankles—at the same time, and swung him clear of the boat.

With the aid of a boathook, Jack Jolly and Co. succeeded in hauling the Head to the bank.

The Head groaned, and hurried him bodily into the rippling Ripple.

The Head smote the water with a terrific concussion. He vanished completely from view, and when he popped up to the surface, gasping and gasping, with his long beard trailing in the water, he looked like the Old Man of the Sea.

From the boat and the bank came peals of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

The Head struggled wildly in the water. "Save me, somebody!" —I can't swim a stroke!"

Burleigh grinned.

"What a confession, from a man who is supposed to have swum the Channel when nobody was looking!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head clutched wildly at the St. Sam's boat; but the seniors, who had no intention of being captured, promptly pulled off down stream; and with a bubbling cry, the Head vanished under the surface again. But for the presents of hand of Jack Jolly, on the bank, the old buffer would certainly have been food for fishes. But Jack Jolly dashed into the boathouse for a boathook, and with the aid of his chums, Merry and Bright, he succeeded in hauling the Head to the bank. There he collapsed like a wet sack, and it was not until the juniors had resorted to artificial perspiration that he recovered.

Tottering to his feet, the Head shook his fist angrily at the St. Sam's boat.

"I have been fizzically assaulted!" he roared. "Whoever heard of a headmaster being grabbed by his ankles and chucked out of a boat? I never—not until now. You shall pay dearly for this outrage!" Burleigh! Report to me on your return to the school, and I will punish you in such a way that you will bitterly regret this afternoon's work!"

And with that, the Head turned savagely on his heel, and aquitched away along the towing-path, without so (Continued on the next page.)



"You would rather not trespass on my kindness, eh?" said the Head.

"Tut, tut, Burleigh! Don't mention it! Not at all! I shall be only too pleased to give you a helping hand. Kindness to dumb animals—especially prefects—comes natural to me. I am always dispensing help and cheer. I am a little ray of sunshine!" The Head smiled. "Just hang on a moment, dear boys, and I'll see if I can find the rowing kit I wore seventy years ago!"

The seniors blinked at the Head in dismay.

"But you—you won't need your rowing kit, sir!" stammered Talbot. "I understand you are merely going to coach us—"

"Quite so, Talbot. But a coach, in my opinion, should be an actual member of the crew. Where is the sense of a man rushing along the riverbank, and bawling instructions through a megaphone? That is a fool's way of coaching. My way is to row with the crew, and put them wise to all the finer points of the game. Savvy? I will be your Admiral!"

"Good god!" gasped Burleigh. "Boat-crews don't have Admirals, sir!"

"Then I will be fire mate," said the Head, "and you will be common deck-hand, carrying out my orders. Is that clear?"

head from the window, and stepped to the cabot in which he kept all the relics and mementoes of his college days. For some time he rummaged about on his hands and knees, among a collection of jerseys and shorts and blazers which would have delighted the heart of an old-schoolman. Presently he dragged out a pair of short shorts, and a rowing vest, and a skull-cap. They had fitted him well at the age of eighteen. Weather they would fit him so well at the age of eighty remained to be seen.

The Head peered at the garments affectionately for a moment, then he popped behind the screen, and made a lightning change.

"Dear me! These things seem to have shrunk somewhat!" he murmured. "The vest fits me like a straight-jacket; and these shorts are the shortest shorts I've ever struck. However, they set off my calves to great advantage. And now for the fray!"

When the Head emerged into the quad, a few minutes later, the seniors nearly went into convulsions. The Head looked



The Head groaned, and hurried him bodily into the rippling Ripple.