

"THE COMPLETE OUTSIDER!"

This week's extra-special school story of the Chums of Greyfriars!

No. 1,003. Vol. XXXI.

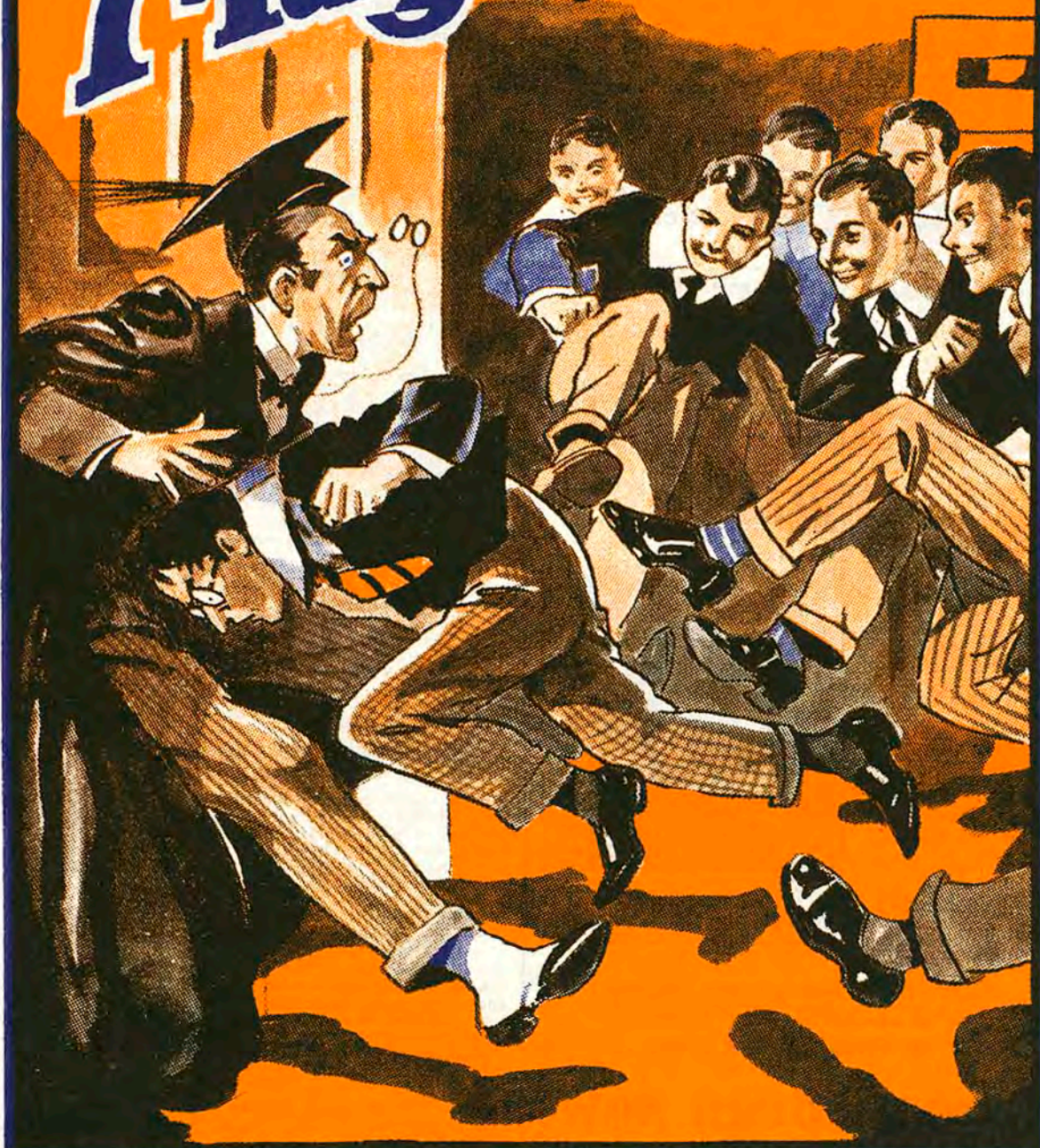
Week Ending May 7th, 1927.

The Magnet

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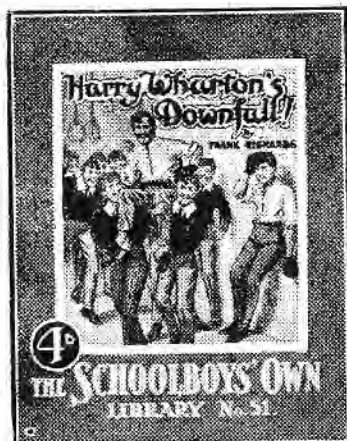
EVERY
MONDAY.



FISHER T. FISH COLLECTS MORE KICKS THAN HA'PENCE!

(Read the ripping story of Harry Wharton & Co's adventures at Greyfriars this week.)

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No. 51

"HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL!"

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By
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No. 52

"UNDER ROGER'S RULE!"

And here's another delightful story of schoolboy fun and adventure, featuring Dickie Dexter & Co., the Cheery Chums at St. Katie's.

By
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Poole.**



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will be obtainable at all bookstalls
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A NEW SERIAL!

MAGNETITES will be pleased to learn, I feel sure, that very shortly that prince of fiction detectives, Ferrers Locke, and his nimble assistant, Jack Drake, will return to our pages. How's that? The story built up around these famous characters is staged in the mystic East—always a popular setting for a detective story well told. And this coming yarn is well told, take it from me. It is early yet to give more than these few details of this treat in store, but it may serve to pacify those of you who have written me on the subject of Ferrers Locke's return to the Magnet. This much I can say in addition to the foregoing: The new serial—it is a serial, of course—will start immediately after "The Trail of Adventure!" concludes. Just a matter of a few weeks, you Ferrers Locke enthusiasts, so keep your peepers open.

IS OXFORD PLAYED OUT?

That's the query of a reader in the Midlands, who declares that he has been "Oxford" ever since he can remember. Now this reader, although he admits to possessing scant inside knowledge of this great University, has been reading the papers of late, and it grieves him to see "poor old Oxford" beaten all along the line in their sporting ventures. It is true that Oxford have had more than their share of bad luck in athletics, as witness the last boatrace, for instance; but my friend should take consolation in the fact that although the "luck" was dead against them in their annual contest with Cambridge on Father Thames, Oxford put up a remarkably fine performance. Certainly it gives an answer to my correspondent's query, "Is Oxford Played Out?" Just wait in patience, my chum. The wheel of fortune will be turning round again very soon unless I am greatly mistaken, and then "poor old Oxford" will bring radiant smiles to the faces of their supporters with a long series of wins.

LLYVRPWL!

"Old Reader" seems anxious to know if Liverpool was always called "Llyvrpwl." No, it was not always called by that name. Liverpool, as we know it, first occurs in a deed dated 1190, and was probably derived from the Cymric Llyvrpwl, meaning "the pool of the confluence" or "the expanse at the pool."

Next Monday's Programme:

"THE BOY WHO FOUND HIS FATHER!"

By Frank Richards.

This is another splendid story in the special "Boulder" series which introduces Paul Dallas, Vernon-Smith's adopted brother. The title of this yarn makes you curious, I'll wager, and it's in this curious stage that I prefer to leave you. But make no mistake about it, if next week's story is missed by any of you there'll be regrets afterwards.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

Look out, too, for another fine instalment of this grand adventure yarn. Black Michael hasn't given up the chase yet, and Jack Horner is still in the dark as to why this sinister scoundrel should pursue him from pillar to post. You'll like next Monday's instalment, take it from me!

"BY FARE MEANS OR FOWL!"

One glance at this title is sufficient to tell you all that Dicky Nugent has come up to the scratch with another amusing story of St. Sam's. It's chock-full of laughs. Don't forget to read it, chums! Chin, chin!

YOUR EDITOR.

OVERSTEPPING THE BOUNDS! The Greyfriars Removees are fed-up with Vernon-Smith and his malignant, unreasoning hatred of his adopted brother, and they take no pains to conceal the fact when the Bounder's bitter feud interferes with Greyfriars cricket!



The Complete Outsider!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars,

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not Wanted!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH tramped along the Remove passage at Greyfriars and threw open the door of Study No. 1 without knocking.

There were half a dozen juniors in the study, and they all looked round as the door flew open.

The Bounder of Greyfriars stood in the doorway, looking in with a grim expression on his face.

Harry Wharton glanced at him with a frown.

"Hook it, Smithy!" he said. "You're interrupting."

"I know that!"

"Well, hook it!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder did not "hook" it. He stepped into the study, and three or four fellows in the Remove passage gathered round to look on. The Bounder's grim look showed that he had not come on a peaceful errand.

"This is a meeting of the cricket committee, I think?" said Vernon-Smith.

"That's so."

"And I'm not wanted?"

"No."

"The answer is in the esteemed negative," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"You're discussing the Highcliffe match, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Wharton.

"And you don't want my help?"

"No."

The answers of the captain of the Remove were brief, but quite to the point.

"Hook it, Smithy, old bean!" said Squiff. "You're interrupting business."

"Dallas isn't here?" said the Bounder, with a glance round the study.

"Dallas isn't on the committee," said Squiff.

"But he's going to play in the match?" sneered the Bounder.

"Certainly he is," said Wharton. "Shut the door after you, Smithy!"

"I want to know whether I'm playing in the Highcliffe match on Wednesday," said Vernon-Smith, with a scowl.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"We've settled that point—you're not," he said.

"Why not?"

"Is there any need to go into all that?" asked the captain of the Remove, impatiently.

"Yes, I think so. Most of the fellows are down on me now on account of that cad Dallas; but I fancy they will want to know why you are leaving out the best batsman in the Remove."

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"You're out of the cricket, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove. "I'm sorry—we shall miss you in matches. But there's a limit, and you've gone over the limit. You're a rank outsider, and for the present, at least, you're barred. You couldn't have expected anything else."

"I don't see that my row with Dallas has anything to do with cricket."

"Not at all. But you know what you've done. What's the good of raking it all up again?" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "The fact is, Smithy, that no decent fellow will play in the same team with you—nobody wants to have anything to do with you. If I put you in, other fellows would resign—"

"I know I jolly well should!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "I'm fed-up with Smithy's dirty tricks, for one!"

"Same here!" said Squiff.

"The sameness is terrific!"

"There's nothing doing, Smithy," went on the captain of the Remove. "I'm sorry, because you're a good man at the game. Later on, perhaps—"

"Never mind later on," said the Bounder. "You won't turn me out when you choose, and pick me up when you want me. If I don't play on

Wednesday you can drop me for the whole season."

"Done, then!" said Wharton, at once.

"And now, if you'll travel, we'll get on with business," suggested Bob Cherry.

Herbert Vernon-Smith set his lips. "May a fellow inquire respectfully why he is turned out?" he asked sarcastically.

"If you want to go into it, I'll tell you," said Wharton. "You're barred by every decent man in the Remove, because you're a rank outsider and a rotter and a plotting cad!"

"Straight from the shoulder!" grinned Bob.

"Because you played a dirty trick on Dallas, intending to get him sacked from the school," went on Wharton. "Because you jolly nearly succeeded. Because you stop at nothing when your beastly temper's got the upper hand! It was just luck that Dallas wasn't expelled from Greyfriars, all through your rotten treachery. That's the limit!"

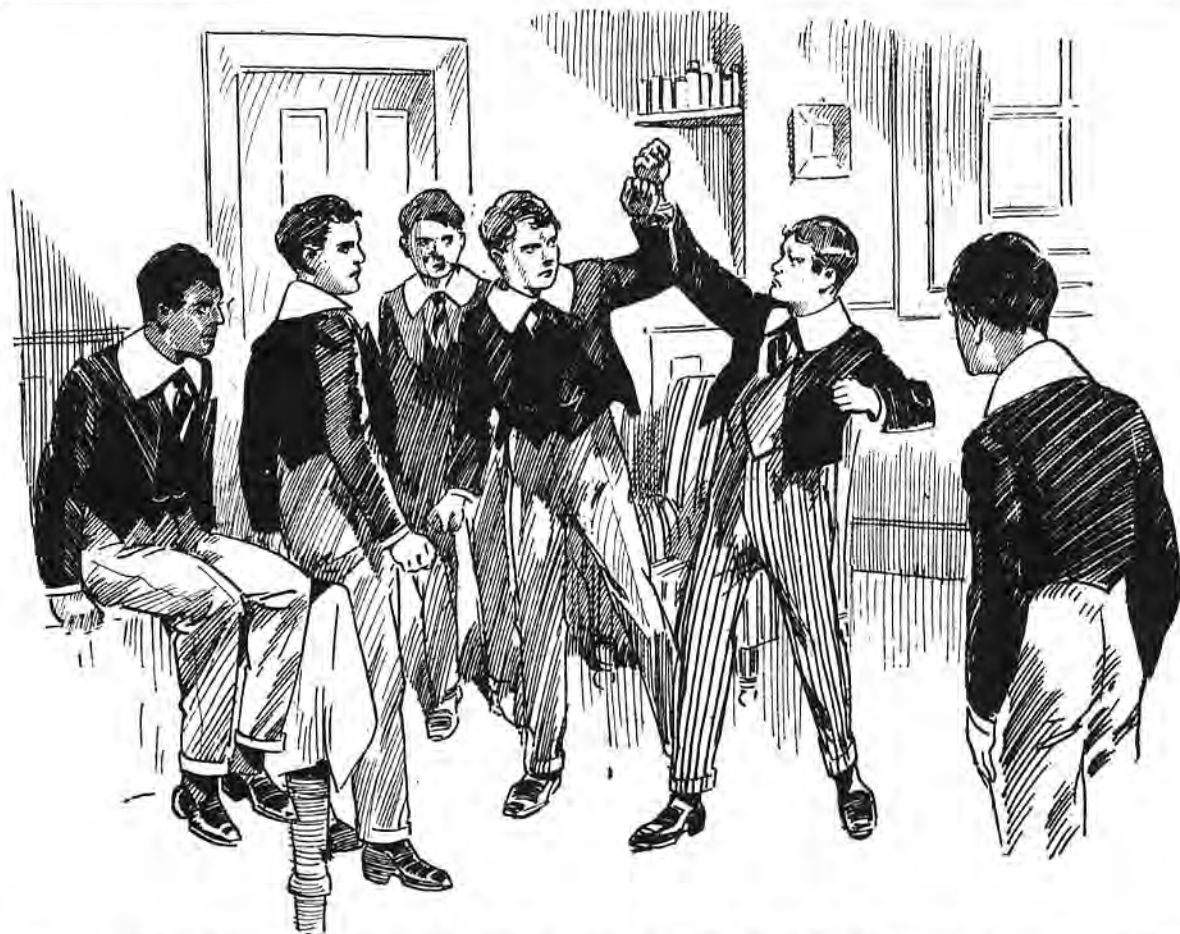
"All on account of Dallas, I see!"

"If it had been any other fellow it would have come to the same thing. And it might have been any other fellow. You're just as likely to make an enemy of any other Remove man, and try the same rotten tricks again. You're a bad egg!"

There was a general nod of assent in Study No. 1.

The Bounder stood silent for a moment or two, breathing hard. To do him justice, he could not realise the truth of Wharton's words. His bitter feud with Paul Dallas, the new fellow in the Remove, seemed to him justifiable, and he considered that he had good reason for it. Certainly he could not expect other fellows to approve of the methods he had used, even if they had admitted that he had cause for his

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Vernon-Smith took a sudden stride towards Wharton, and struck full at his face. But Bob Cherry had been watching him, and his arm came up like a flash. There was a crack on the Bounder's wrist, as his hand was knocked up, and he gave a cry of pain. "Thanks, Bob!" said Wharton. (See Chapter 1.)

the footsteps of his "popper" in New York, who was a great business man, and he could not wait till he was grown up. There weren't many chances, at school, for a real live American business man; but Fishy did what he could in those uncongenial surroundings.

But it seemed to Smithy that this latest scheme of the Transatlantic junior was even more fatheaded than most of Fishy's schemes. A fellow who bought tuck retail could hardly hope to make a profit on its re-sale. But Smithy was not aware yet of the details of Fisher T. Fish's latest scheme for roping in the durocks, as he expressed it in his own wonderful language.

"Awful mean rotter!" said Bunter. "I say, Smithy, I suppose you could lend me a bob if I want to go to Fishy's spread?"

"I could!" assented the Bounder.

"Thanks, old chap!"

"Nothing to thank me for," said the Bounder coolly. "I could—but I'm not spread to."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Smithy picked up his parcel.

"I say, Smithy, old chap, I'll come to tea with you," said Bunter. "I don't mind speaking to you, old fellow, though most of the fellows bar you."

Vernon-Smith crossed to the door without answering.

"Smithy, old chap—Yah! I wouldn't be found dead in your study!"

hooted Bunter. "Who told lies about a chap and nearly got him sacked? Yah!"

Vernon-Smith's cheeks flushed, but he made no reply, and left the tuckshop. Harry Wharton & Co. were coming in as he went out, and with the Famous Five was Paul Dallas.

The Bounder ignored the little crowd, but his eyes glittered for a second at Paul.

The juniors went into the tuckshop without heeding him.

The Bounder of Greyfriars was not exactly in Coventry; but he had been rather effectually "barred" by most of the Remove, since the exposure of his plot against Paul Dallas.

Even his study-mate, Skinner, had turned him down with the rest; though Skinner had come round since. Skinner was not a fellow to stand against a crowd; and when the Remove turned the Bounder down, Skinner and Snoop and Stott had followed suit. But after a little lapse of time, fellows began to treat the Bounder civilly again, though certainly no one desired to be friendly with him. As Bob Cherry had remarked, it was no use keeping up a grudge, and one could be civil to a fellow without having much to do with him. At the first sign of the wind veering in the Bounder's favour, Skinner had veered round with it; and the Bounder, with sardonic contempt which he did not take the trouble to conceal,

had allowed him to resume his old footing.

Paul Dallas glanced after the Bounder, with a cloud on his face, as Smithy tramped away towards the House.

Skinner joined him, and went in with him.

Dallas' face was thoughtful, as he followed Harry Wharton & Co. into the tuckshop.

He was used now to the Bounder's civility; and he could not be expected to forgive the miserable trick by which Vernon-Smith had nearly succeeded in causing his expulsion from the school. But it weighed on his mind that he was on such bitter terms with the son of the man who had taken him from a charity school and adopted him.

Even after all that had happened, Paul would have welcomed a change of heart in the Bounder. Friendship between them was impossible; but there was no need for bitter rancour.

But that change of heart was not likely to take place. His hatred of Dallas was now something like an obsession with the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Trot in, Dallas!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Ginger-pop going, my son."

"Right-ho!" said Paul. And his clouded face cleared as he joined the cherry group in the tuckshop.

The chums of the Remove had been at THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,003.

cricket practice, and had walked over to the school shop for refreshment in the shape of ginger-beer.

"That's a jolly good late cut of yours, Dallas," remarked Johnny Bull. "I was watching you."

"Dallas will come in jolly useful in the Highcliffe match," said Harry Wharton. "It's jolly lucky, as we've lost Smithy."

"Yes, rather!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter standing treat!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Mine's a ginger."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Champagne for me," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, you fellows, I was going to stand a spread all round to-day, only I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

"Which one?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Eh?"

"The one you were expecting when you were in the Third Form, or the one you were expecting when you were in the Second?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Here you are, old fat man," said Bob Cherry good-naturedly. "Another ginger, for Bunter, Mrs. Mimble."

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, have you heard that Fishy is standing a spread?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Gammon!"

Bunter had succeeded in astonishing the natives!

"The age of miracles is past!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "You've got it wrong, Bunter."

"He's charging a bob a time—"

"Oh!"

"That accounts for the milk in the coconut," chuckled Squiff. "Fishy may be standing a spread, if he's charging double prices."

"It's rather thick, even for Fishy!" said Johnny Bull.

"The thickfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, he's ordered a lot of stuff," said Bunter. "Pounds and pounds worth. Look here, if you fellows wouldn't care to tea with a fellow like Fishy, I'll tell you what. You lend me a bob, and I'll go, and I'll tell you what it was like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're too good, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

And the cricketers, having finished their ginger-pop, walked out, to return to Little Side.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bow-wow!"

Bunter rolled after the juniors, and caught Paul Dallas by the arm.

"Hold on a minute, old chap!" he gasped.

"Let go, Bunter!"

"Just a minute. You get a good deal out of Smithy's pater, according to Smithy," said Bunter. "You can spare a bob out of the loot, what?"

Dallas crimsoned.

"You fat idiot!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Dallas—"

Paul Dallas took the fat junior by the shoulders, and sat him down on the ground. Bunter sat down hard, with a loud yell.

Dallas hurried after the rest.

"Yah! Charity!" yelled Bunter.

Paul paused for a moment; but he hurried on, apparently deciding that William George Bunter was not worth kicking.

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"Yah!" roared Bunter. "Charity!"

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove spun round, at the voice of Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars.

"Oh dear!" he ejaculated.

"What did you call after Dallas?" asked Wingate, letting his official ashplant slip down from under his arm into his hand.

"Oh! Nothing!"

"I think I heard you, Bunter."

"The—the fact is—"

"I think I know what the fact is," assented Wingate. "The fact is that you are a grubby little rascal, and badly in need of touching-up. Walk before me to the Sixth Form green."

"I—I say, Wingate—"

"Sharp's the word!"

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter rolled away dismally before the prefect, and arrived at the Sixth Form green.

"Bend over!" said the Greyfriars captain.

"Oh, lor!"

Billy Bunter bent over the low chain that surrounded the Sixth Form green. The ashplant whistled in the air.

Whack!

"Whoooooop!"

"That's a tip!" said Wingate genially. And he tucked his ashplant under his arm again and walked on, leaving William George Bunter wriggling wildly.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not for Skinner!

HAROLD SKINNER eyed his study-mate rather uneasily.

There was an expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face, a gleam in his eyes, that Skinner did not like.

Skinner's position, as the chum of the Bounder, was not wholly a pleasant one. It had its drawbacks.

The Bounder did not even pretend that there was any friendship between them, such as had existed between him and his former study-mate, Tom Redwing, who had left at the end of the previous term. But certainly their tastes were more in common than Smithy's and Redwing's had been. Redwing had influenced the better side of the Bounder's complex nature, and had helped to keep him out of many shady scrapes. Skinner's influence was in the opposite direction, though he could not claim that he influenced the hard, self-willed Bounder very much. He was glad enough to be the nearest friend of the wealthiest fellow at Greyfriars. Smithy was generous enough, in a rather contemptuous way, and Skinner was willing to swallow the contempt along with the more palatable things. He was willing to back up the Bounder in making things unpleasant for Paul Dallas, so long as there was no risk involved. He was more than willing to chum with Smithy, now that he would not be barred by the other fellows for doing so. He was glad to join in the less risky excursions out of bounds. But Skinner was quite determined that he was not going to be drawn into any dangerous scheme, such as that which had so nearly succeeded in causing the ruin of the Bounder's enemy. His caution, if not his conscience, made him determined on that point.

But Skinner knew the signs, and he was aware that bitter and revengeful thoughts were working in the Bounder's mind, and he was uneasy.

All the Remove knew what a blow it

was to Smithy to be excluded from the cricket, all the more because Paul Dallas was making his mark in the game, and was looked upon as a valuable recruit. Nobody, except the Bounder himself, considered that he was wronged. Skinner was willing to listen and assent to his angry tirades, but he had his own thoughts on the subject.

There was an ample spread on the study table for tea. That was one of the attractions of the study to Skinner. The Bounder always "did" himself remarkably well, as the richest fellow in the Remove could afford to do, and it never seemed to occur to him to expect Skinner to stand his "whack." Which suited Skinner admirably, for he had little money, and did not like spending what he had.

The Bounder was morosely silent, but Skinner was not there for the pleasures of conversation. In fact, he hoped that Smithy would keep silent till after tea.

In that he was disappointed. The Bounder broke his long and gloomy silence at last.

"That cad's going over to Highcliffe with the team."

"Dallas, do you mean?"

"You know I do!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

Skinner nodded, and helped himself to his fifth éclair.

"His name's up," he said.

"It's queer how he gets round fellows. He's got my father under his thumb, with his cunning tricks, and now he's got my place in the Remove eleven."

Skinner winked at his éclair.

"He wins all along the line!" said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "A rotten outsider—a fellow living on charity!"

"I've heard fellows say that your father pays his fees out of money that Dallas' pater left in his hands," remarked Skinner.

The Bounder scowled. That was not the sort of talk he wanted to hear.

Skinner was quite well aware of that. It was one of his agreeable little ways to make unpleasant remarks, under the appearance of casual conversation.

"They say the fellow isn't really under any obligation to your pater at all," pursued Skinner casually.

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"Not that I believe a word of it, of course," said Skinner hastily, as he read the danger-signal. "He's a rotten outsider! Rank cad!"

"I'm not letting him bag my place in the cricket team without a kick!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh!" said Skinner uneasily.

"I can put a spoke in the rotter's wheel somehow."

"I'd think a bit first, Smithy. You came an awful mucker last time, and the fellows aren't likely to forget it," said Skinner. "Nobody's likely to believe anything against Dallas now. If your gold watch was found in his pocket, the fellows would only think you put it there."

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"I know that. That game's up."

"Well, I'm glad you can see it," said Skinner, relieved. "I say, these éclairs are jolly good! I'll have another."

"There's more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream," said Vernon-Smith. "I can't get the cad turned out of the school, unless luck comes my way. I know I've got to be careful. I came near the sack, and my father has threatened to take me away from Greyfriars. He was frightfully

wild when he learned the truth about that affair of Dallas."

"Well, he would be," agreed Skinner. "Between ourselves, Smithy, it was a bit thick—what?"

"You're so jolly particular!" sneered the Bounder. "You were sacked from Greyfriars once, all the same, only the Head let you come back."

"If the Head knew as much as I do about you, Smithy, you'd be sacked, and the Head wouldn't let you come back," said Skinner tartly.

"I'm not going to let that rotter show off his cricket at Highcliffe!"

Skinner was uneasy again. He had guessed that some revengeful scheme was being evolved in the Bounder's bitter mind. He decided that it was time to leave, though he would gladly have stayed on long enough to clear the table of its good things.

"I've got a wheeze," resumed the Bounder. "Dallas is goin' to miss that match."

"Look here, Smithy, don't be a fool!" said Skinner. "If anything happens to keep Dallas away from Highcliffe every man in the Remove will know that you're at the bottom of it."

"I know that."

"Well, that means a Form ragging."

"Let it!"

"I shouldn't think it good enough."

"That's not the point. I think it's good enough," said the Bounder. "You know I never was a fellow to bother much about consequences. I've got it cut and dried, but I need a little help."

Skinner rose to his feet. Clearly it was time to go.

"Don't hurry away," said the Bounder. "You haven't finished tea yet."

"The fact is, old bean, there's something on in the Rag, and I want to give them a look in."

"Never mind the Rag now."

"It's some new stunt of Fishy's—"

"Never mind Fishy," said the Bounder, unmoved. "I'm not goin' to ask you to take a lot of risk. It's simply a question of Dallas gettin' a message before he starts for Highcliffe. He might be suspicious if it came through me."

Skinner moved to the door.

"He will take it all right from you," said Vernon-Smith. "Just a message."

Skinner opened the door.

"It's not good enough, Smithy. I don't want a Form ragging if you do. The fellows would be no end ratty at a chap interfering in the matches. I advise you to chuck it."

"Look here, Skinner—"

"Sorry! I really must go! I told Snoopey and Stott-I was coming down to the Rag."

And Skinner went.

The Bounder, left alone, scowled blackly.

If the Bounder chose to go upon his own headstrong and wilful way, he had to travel that dangerous path alone; there was no help for him.

But he did not falter.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bargains in Tuck!

"GAMMON!"

"Spoof!"

"Bosh!"

"Rats!"

It was not a flattering comment upon the latest and greatest stunt of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

Fishy looked quite pained as those candid opinions were expressed by the fellows in the Rag.

He had succeeded, perhaps, in interesting the juniors. But he had not succeeded in convincing them. "They knew their Fishy."

On the wall of the Rag was a large placard, the work of Fisher T. Fish. It announced his latest scheme for annexing the loose cash of his schoolfellows.

Fishy, at least, was taking the matter seriously. He had been spending money on it, and it was well known that it gave Fishy a pain to part with money. If he had to part with a shilling, his expression was that of a fellow parting with a tooth. Yet he had been expending cash on this scheme—Bunter was a witness to that. If Fisher T. Fish expended a shilling without groaning aloud, it could only be because he fully expected to receive back at least half-a-crown for the shilling. So far as his striking placard on the wall of the Rag revealed, there was no profit in this latest stunt. So the Remove fellows concluded at once that there was a catch in it.

In large letters, the placard announced to all Greyfriars fellows who cared to read:

"BARGAIN SPREADS!

CUT AND COME AGAIN!

SIX SPLENDID SPREADS, THREE SHILLINGS!

TANNER A TIME!

MENU:

Plum Cake.
Chocolate Eclairs.
Jam Tarts.
Meringues.
Toffee.
Fruit Biscuits.

THREE SHILLINGS FOR SIX SPREADS!

ALL GUARANTEED OF THE SAME QUALITY.

Pay your 3/- now and secure this Splendid Series of Magnificent Feasts!"

"But where does the catch come in, Fishy?" asked Bob Cherry. "I know there's a catch, of course, but where does it come in?"

"I guess you make me tired," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm making you ginks a generous offer. Can you get the same at the tuckshop at the same price?"

Bob shook his head.

"No. That's how I know there's a catch."

"The catchfulness is terrific!"

"Spoof!" said Johnny Bull. "You couldn't stand a feed like that for sixpence, Fishy. It's losing money."

"If I lose money, I guess I can afford it," said Fish.

"So this is a stunt for losing money, is it?" asked Frank Nugent, laughing. "Tell us another, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish pointed a bony forefinger to his placard.

"There it is, in plain American," he said. "You can read, I suppose? The first spread takes place byer in the Rag this afternoon. You can see the stuff before you pay over the dust."

"Might have a tanner's worth to try!" grinned Hazeldene.

Fishy shook his head promptly.

"No fear! You pay for the series of six—that's three bob. You see, it's the quantity that does it."

"Then I kinder guess and calculate that I spot the catch," said Bob Cherry.

"A good spread to begin with, and the other five no good—what?"

The bony forefinger pointed to the notice again.

"Can't you read? 'All guaranteed of the same quality!'"

"Yes, it says so," admitted Bob, puzzled. "But where does your profit come in, in that case?"

"I guess I'm not out for profits," said Fisher T. Fish, blandly. "You pesky jays seem to think I'm always on the make!"

"Well, aren't you?"

"The makefulness is generally terrific."

"You see, a galoot can make profits by buying wholesale," explained Fisher T. Fish. "If I do a good trade, I guess I can give an order to the stores in Courtfield at cut prices, instead of buying from Mrs. Mimble. I sha'n't lose on it."

"Something in that," said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"But what?" demanded Fisher T. Fish testily.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's a catch in it!" he said.

"I say, you fellows, let's give Fishy a chance," said Billy Bunter. "One of you chaps lend me three bob—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'm making it easy for you galoots," said Fisher T. Fish. "You pay a bob down; then you have the feed. If you're satisfied, you pay the other two bob for the whole series. If you're not satisfied, let it drop. Just think how useful it will be to have a feed some time when you're stony! You mosey along and tell me which date will be convenient. I guess this is an offer you can't afford to refuse."

"Dash it all, it looks fair and square," said Hazeldene. "Give Fishy a chance."

"Let's!" said Russell.

"Looks to me as if Fishy is catching himself this time," said Tom Brown thoughtfully. "He may be able to get the stuff cheap from the stores in Courtfield, or he may not. If he doesn't, he stands to lose all along the line."

"I guess I'm taking that risk, not my customers," said the business man of the Remove.

Bob Cherry chuckled. The idea of the cute American junior catching himself, and losing his own money in his attempts to annex that of his schoolfellows, was entertaining. Bob felt in his pocket for a shilling.

"I rather think I'll go in for this," remarked Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth Form, who had been reading the placard with great attention. "Mind, you'll have to play up, Fishy!"

"Sure!"

"All those things mentioned in the menu will have to be trotted out."

"Yep!"

"And all later feeds will have to be of the same quality and quantity," said Temple categorically.

"Correct!"

"You'll lose money on it, but that's your business," said Temple. "Here's my bob."

He extended a shilling. But Fisher T. Fish did not take it immediately.

"Let's have this clear," he said. "If you're satisfied that you get your money's worth, you pay the other two shillings down on the spot for the series of spreads."

"That's understood."

"And we're the judges if we're satisfied?" asked Squiff.

"Yep; I guess I can trust you!"

"More than we can you, old bean!"

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grinned the Australian junior. "But it sounds square enough. I'm on."

"Good!" said Fisher T. Fish. And he accepted Temple's shilling, and then Squiff's, and then Bob Cherry's. After that there was quite a rush of business.

The general impression was that Fisher T. Fish, in his greed, was overreaching himself, and that when the six spreads had been duly supplied and consumed, Fishy would find himself with a very considerable sum on the debit side of his accounts.

But that was his own business; and, in fact, it would not be the first time that the cute junior from New York had overreached himself. Fishy's money-making schemes were not always successful, by any means.

For quite a long time, Fisher T. Fish was busy accepting shillings. He gave a receipt for each one in turn, these receipts to be tickets of admission to the spread. The Famous Five all joined in, and Snoop and Stott, and Skinner, came into the Rag in time to join up. Skinner had had to leave his tea unfinished in the Bounder's study; and he was quite ready to dispose of another, on these favourable terms. Russell and Ogilvy, Peter Todd and Tom Brown, Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, and several other fellows, came on the list. Billy Bunter extracted a shilling from Lord Mauleverer, and paid it over. By the time the rush of business slackened, Fisher T. Fish had taken a total of twenty shillings.

Then Mrs. Mumble's boy assistant came into the Rag with a huge parcel.

It was unpacked on the table. All the good things mentioned in Fisher T. Fish's "menu" were there, and in considerable quantities.

The good things were spread out on the big table in the Rag, where the feed was to take place—no study was large enough for such a party.

It was now tea-time, and most of the Removites were quite ready for tea. Fishy's scheme had come along at a propitious moment.

"Well, I'm blessed if I catch on," Bob Cherry confessed, as he sat down to begin. "That lot of stuff never cost less than two pounds."

"More!" said Nugent. "Nearer three, I should think," said Harry Wharton.

"Two pound ten," said Billy Bunter. "I saw Fishy pay for the stuff."

"I'm on in this!" said Bolsover major, who had stood out so far. "Here's a bob, Fishy!"

"Here's another!" said Wilkinson of the Fourth.

There was quite a shower of "bobs." A swarm of fellows gathered round the big table in the Rag.

There was a total of twenty-five guests at the table. Each of the twenty-five could not help feeling that he was "on" to a good thing. The feeblest arithmetician could work out, that if twenty-five fellows shared a feed that had cost two pounds ten shillings, each of them would receive, on an average, two shillings' worth of tuck. And Fishy had offered a series of six such feeds for three shillings. Apparently his expenditure would amount, at the finish, to twelve shillings for each customer, while his takings from each would be only a quarter of that sum.

But the American junior seemed quite satisfied.

"Go it, you ginks," he said hospitably. "Finish up the lot! Don't leave a crumb!"

"We won't!" grinned Bob Cherry. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,003.

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter.

"Pile in!" chuckled Skinner. "This is a good thing for us, not to mention the pleasure of seeing Fishy diddle himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish was taken at his word; not a crumb was left of that magnificent spread. When it was finished, Billy Bunter roamed up and down round the table, searching for any fragment that might have been overlooked.

"Satisfied?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes, rather!"

"Quite!"

"Then I guess we'll get to business."

Business was quite brisk. Every fellow paid over the additional two shillings entitling him to the rest of the series of spreads. Billy Bunter borrowed his two shillings in sixpences and threepences up and down the Rag. Some of the other fellows had to borrow to make up the required payment. But all the twenty-five paid up at last, and their receipts were duly endorsed by Fisher T. Fish.

"Looks to me as if Fishy has fairly done himself in the eye this time," Bob Cherry remarked to his chums, as they left the Rag.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Looks like it! So far he's a long way out of pocket. He may get the stuff cheaper from Courtfield, but never cheap enough to stand two bobs' worth of tuck for sixpence, and that's what it comes to."

"He seems satisfied."

"He won't be when the rest of the spread comes along," said Johnny Bull. "I say, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish was leaving the Rag. Undoubtedly he looked extremely satisfied. He had taken seventy-five shillings from his customers, and so far his expenditure had been fifty shillings. For the moment he was in pocket. But that happy state of affairs could only last till the next spread came along.

He glanced round as Johnny Bull hailed him.

"Yep?"

"When does the next spread come off?" asked Johnny Bull.

Fishy's eyes glimmered for a moment.

"I guess I'll put up the date in the Rag to-morrow," he answered.

"After the Highcliffe match would be a good time," said Bob Cherry. "We shall have good appetites."

"Anything to oblige. After the Highcliffe match," said Fishy.

"Good man!"

Fisher T. Fish walked off, with innumerable shillings jingling in his pockets. And he left all the juniors greatly puzzled. Unless Fisher T. Fish was deliberately throwing his money away, they couldn't understand it. And that was not likely—not likely at all. Some of the fellows wondered still whether there was a "catch" in it. But if there was, they could not see where the catch came in. It really looked as if the business man of the Remove had "done himself" to the wide for once, and that all the profits would be on the wrong side of his ledger. Which was in itself quite entertaining to the Remove fellows.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in a Hurry!

"I SAY, Fishy—" It was the following morning. Billy Bunter grabbed at Fisher T. Fish's sleeve, as the Remove fellows came out after breakfast.

Fishy jerked his arm away.

"Hook it!" he said briefly.

"Look here, I want to know about that spread!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I've paid for it, haven't I?"

William George Bunter felt that he had just cause to be indignant at Fishy's off-hand manner. He had paid for that series of spreads, and he wanted to know! It was seldom that Bunter paid for anything, still more seldom that he paid for anything in advance. So he quite bristled with indignation.

"You just stop and tell a chap," said Bunter warmly. "You owe me five more feeds, Fishy!"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"My idea is, to have the next feed in morning break, this morning," said Bunter. "How does that strike you?"

Fisher T. Fish grinned. "I guess it doesn't strike me at all," he answered. "Good-bye!"

"Look here, when is it coming off?"

"There's going to be a notice put up in the Rag. You watch out!"

"I say, Fishy—"

But Fisher T. Fish accelerated the motion of his thin legs, and disappeared across the quad.

Bunter gave an indignant snort. Any other fellow, just after breakfast, would hardly have been thinking of a feed. But Bunter seldom thought of anything else. Besides, he had had breakfast enough only for three fellows. So he really had room for a feed on the spot.

The Owl of the Remove rolled up to the Famous Five, who were walking in the quad, discussing the Highcliffe match, which was to come off on the morrow—Wednesday.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll on!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, I want you fellows to make Fishy play up," said Bunter. "He's refused to stand the second feed in break this morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter crossly. "I shall be jolly hungry by then."

"Fishy's standing it after the Highcliffe match," said Bob.

"But that isn't till to-morrow," said Bunter in dismay.

"Awful!" assented Bob. "The lingering agony of waiting till to-morrow for a feed must be frightful—in fact, terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I'm not going to wait till to-morrow!" exclaimed Bunter. "Fishy said in the Rag yesterday that a fellow could come to him and say when it was most convenient, didn't he?"

"He did."

"Well, then, it's convenient to me to have my next spread in break this morning," said Bunter.

"Queelchy will be waxy if you burst in the Form-room in third lesson," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Give Fishy a chance," said Harry Wharton. "After the Highcliffe match to-morrow will be all right."

"Not for me," said Bunter emphatically. "I suppose I can claim my rights if I like? Well, then, I'm jolly well going to have my spread this morning. It's up to you fellows to make Fishy keep his word. You're captain of the Remove, Wharton, and it's up to you."

"Well, Fishy must stand by what he said, of course," said Wharton, after a pause. "Here, Fishy, old bean."

Fisher T. Fish came up. There was a metallic jingle as he came.

"He's jolly well got our bobs in his pockets now," said Bunter.

"Nope," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I keep my dust in a safer place than my pockets. Any of you fellows



Billy Bunter sat down hard, with a loud yell, and Dallas hurried after his chums. "Yah! Charly!" yelled the Owl of the Remove. "Bunter!" The fat Removite spun round, at the voice of Wingate of the Sixth. "Oh dear!" he ejaculated. "What did you call after Dallas?" asked the captain of Greyfriars grimly. "N-nothing!" gasped Bunter. (See Chapter 2.)

lost a key?" Fisher T. Fish's bony hand came out of his pocket with a bunch of rusty keys in it, of all shapes and sizes. "I've got this lot at sixpence each."

"Original cost about a farthing!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Fisher T. Fish looked pained.

"I guess you don't want me to take the trouble of rooting round the second-hand shops in Courtfield and Lantham for nothing," he said. "A galoot is entitled to his profit. Have you lost the key of your desk, Wharton?"

"No, ass!"

"What about the key of your locker, Bob Cherry? You're always losing it. I've got one just like it, and to an old friend like you I'll let it go for five-pence."

"Fathead!"

"What about you, Dallas?"

"Nothing about me," said Paul Dallas, with a laugh.

"You want a key to your desk," said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "You ought to keep a desk locked."

"Bosh!"

"If you'd kept it locked, Smithy couldn't have planted those things in it that time of the Head's inspection," said Fishy. "Suppose it was to happen again? You'd better buy one of these keys!"

"Rats!"

"You keep letters and things in that desk. Suppose your study-mates read all your private letters? Better have a key—"

"What!" roared Wharton and Nugent together.

Fisher T. Fish jumped back.

"Nothing personal," he said hastily. "I'm only pointing out to Dallas that he ought to keep his desk locked. I've got a key that I believe will fit it—only sixpence."

"Bother your second-hand business," said Bob Cherry. "I believe you'd sell your grandfather for ninepence, if Americans had grandfathers. Bunter wants to know about the next feed."

"Oh, blow Bunter!"

"Look here, Fishy, you've got to play up!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove. "I hold you to your terms, see?"

"I guess I don't want holding. A real business man always sticks to his terms," said Fisher T. Fish. "If I don't make good every word I've said, you can use my cabeza for a punch-ball."

"Well, I want my next spread in break this morning."

"Nothing doing."

"Look here, didn't you say that a fellow could come to you and say when it was most convenient?" demanded Bunter.

"Correct."

"Well, then, that settles it. It's most convenient to me to have my next spread in break this morning."

"That's all right," said Fisher T. Fish. "You've said it."

"And the feed—"

"The date will be put up in the Rag," said Fisher T. Fish. "Not this morning, by long chalks. I said that a fellow could come and tell me when it was most convenient. So he can. Nothing to stop him that I know of. I didn't say I'd take any notice of what he said, did I?"

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"Wha-a-at!"

"I told you you could tell me when it was most convenient. Well, you've told me when it's most convenient. That's that!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked off, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. staring, and Bunter's eyes almost bulging through his big spectacles.

"Why, the—the—the beast!" gasped Bunter. "The—the swindler!"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"It's a bit of a catch," he said, "but Fishy's within his rights. He said a fellow could tell him when it was most convenient. He didn't say he'd take any notice of what the fellow told him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, it's a swindle!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, it won't hurt you to wait till to-morrow!" said Harry Wharton. "Fishy has definitely promised that the next spread shall take place after the Highcliffe match, and he can't wriggle out of that."

"I'm not going to wait till to-morrow!" hooted Bunter.

"Looks to me as if you'll have to," said the captain of the Remove, laughing.

And the juniors walked on, leaving William George Bunter glowering with wrath.

"All the same, we'll make Fishy put the notice up, as he agreed," said Harry Wharton. "Better have it in writing with so slippery a customer as Fishy."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

And when the Remove went into classes that morning Harry Wharton tapped the Transatlantic junior on the shoulder.

"Don't forget to put up the date of the spread after class, Fishy," he said. "Fellows will be getting suspicious if you don't."

"I guess there's nothing to get suspicious about."

"I hope not; but the sooner the date's put up the better."

"Leave it to me," said Fisher T. Fish.

And as Mr. Quelch came into the Form-room then, the subject had to drop.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

BILLY BUNTER eyed the American junior in Form that morning as if he could bite him.

A good many other fellows eyed him, too.

The generous offer of six expensive spreads for three shillings was really too good to be true. Fishy stood to lose money on that business deal, unless there was a catch in it somewhere. All the time there had been a lingering suspicion in the minds of Fishy's customers that somewhere there was a catch. Now they were more suspicious. Fishy's words in the Rag had been taken by all the fellows to bear the construction that Bunter placed upon them. Still, it could not be denied that Fishy, while saying that a fellow could come to him and state when the next feed would be convenient, had not said that he would pay any heed to the fellow's statement. It was a quibble; but Fishy was on the right side of the quibble. And Fishy's customers were beginning to wonder whether there were any more quibbles coming.

In break that morning a dozen Remove fellows walked out of the Form-room with Fisher T. Fish, although the American junior showed no desire whatever for their society. Never had the keen youth from New York been so sought after.

And they all impressed upon Fisher T. Fish that they wanted to see him post up the date of the second spread in the Rag, and that they wanted to see it without delay.

"What's the matter with you ginks?" demanded Fisher T. Fish impatiently. "Don't you trust me?"

"Trust you!" ejaculated Ogilvy. "Oh, my hat!"

"The trustfulness is not terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Haven't I said I'll put up the paper to-day? Give a galoot a rest!"

"Why not this morning, then?" demanded Bolsover major.

"What's the hurry?"

"After all, there's no hurry," remarked Hazeldene. "Fishy has said plainly that the second spread takes place after the Highcliffe match. He can't wriggle out of that."

"I guess I don't want to wriggle out of anything!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "I guess there never was a squarer business-man. Give a man a rest!"

And Fisher T. Fish stalked away. The notice was not up in the Rag by dinner-time. In afternoon class Fisher T. Fish was the recipient of many expressive looks.

After class, fellows hovered round Fishy, but he did not go to the Rag. He went to his study.

Johnny Bull and Squiff, who had the honour—or otherwise—of sharing Study No. 14 in the Remove with Fisher T. Fish, found him there when they came in for prep.

They looked at him expressively. "Notice not up yet?" said Johnny.

"Nope."

"After prep—what?"

"Yep."

"Good!"

There was no doubt that Fisher T. Fish was reluctant to post up that notice in the Rag. Perhaps—though, personally, he was quite satisfied with his business methods—he doubted a little what the effect would be on his customers. Often and often it had been borne in

upon Fishy's cute mind that the inhabitants of the sleepy little island where he now dwelt did not see things eye to eye with a keen business man raised in New York. Still, there was no doubt that Fisher T. Fish had to be as good as his word. Willing or unwilling, he had to post up the date of the second spread in the Rag before dawn.

After prep Fishy left the study, and Johnny Bull and Squiff left it with him, with smiling faces. Other fellows joined them in the Remove passage.

Obviously, the Removites intended to keep an eye on Fisher T. Fish till bedtime. Fisher T. Fish went down to the Rag at last, with a lurking uneasiness in his manner.

In the Rag, shortly before dawn, most of the Remove and the Upper Fourth were gathered. Every single one of Fishy's twenty-five customers was there, as well as a crowd of other fellows. The impression was gaining ground that Fishy wanted to slip out of his engagements, and if that was the case, the juniors intended to have something to say—and that something was likely to be exceedingly emphatic.

"Out with it, Fishy!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Got it in your pocket—what?"

"Yep."

"I say, you fellows, I believe it's a swindle!" said Billy Bunter. "If it's a swindle I want my money back!"

"If it's a swindle we're all going to have our money back," said Bolsover major. "Got that, Fishy?"

"I guess you make me tired!" said Fisher T. Fish peevishly. "I'm going to keep my terms of business, and I guess you can't ask more than that!"

"Nobody wants any more than that," said Harry Wharton. "Shove up the paper, and have done with it!"

Fisher T. Fish drew a folded paper from his pocket. But he still seemed to hesitate.

"Oh, got a move on!" exclaimed Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth. "It'll be dawn soon."

"I say, you fellows, that's what he's waiting for!" squeaked Bunter.

"Get a move on, Fishy!"

"Mind, I expect you galoots to play up," said Fisher T. Fish. "If I fail to keep to the terms, you can lynch me, if you like. But don't you go off at the deep end until you've thought it over."

And Fisher T. Fish, at long last, posted up his paper on the wall of the Rag.

The juniors crowded round to read it. There was a gasp as they read:

"NOTICE!

THE SECOND SPREAD WILL TAKE PLACE THE DAY BEFORE BREAK-UP IN THE CHRISTMAS TERM.

(Signed) F. T. FISH."

The juniors gazed at that precious notice spell-bound. For a moment a pin might have been heard to drop in the Rag.

Then there was a roar.

"The Christmas term!"

"Break-up at Christmas!"

"Why, that's about eight months off!"

"You spoofing villain, Fishy—"

"Collar him!"

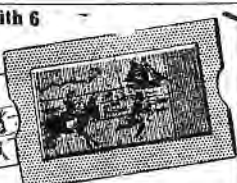
"Lynch him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hyer, you keep off, you silly ginks!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, in alarm. "What are you grousing about?"

"I say, you fellows, scrag him!" yelled Bunter. "I told you all along it was a swindle!"

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"Hands off!" yelled the Remove business man, as the juniors swarmed round him with wrathful faces. "Look hyer, Wharton, you keep order hyer."

"Hold on a minute, you fellows!" said the captain of the Remove. "Let Fishy explain, if he can. You told us the second spread was to take place after the Highcliffe match, Fish."

"We all heard you!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Yep!"

"Well, then—"

"Isn't next Christmas after the Highcliffe match?" demanded Fisher T. Fish.

"The Highcliffe match is to-morrow. Next Christmas is the end of December, ain't it?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Next Christmas, he blowed!" roared Johnny Bull. "After the Highcliffe match means to-morrow."

"It may mean that to you," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you're welcome to your opinion, so long as you leave me mine."

"Why, you spoofing worm—"

"You diddling rotter—"

"Oh, have a little hoss-sense!" said Fisher T. Fish contemptuously. "Business is business, ain't it? Here's a copy of the original announcement. Is there anything in it about the dates of the spreads?"

"Nothing," said Bob Cherry.

"Nothing," agreed Wharton.

"That's so—nothin'," said Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Well, then," said Fisher T. Fish victoriously, "what are you peeved about? All customers have had the first of the series of spreads. You can't deny that. It's for me to fix the dates of the others. I fix the second for the end of the Christmas term."

There was a roar.

"By gum, I could fix it for six years ahead, if I liked!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "I'm letting you down lightly."

"I say, you fellows. I want my money back!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, can it, you fat clam! Ain't I keeping the agreement?" snorted Fisher T. Fish. "You ginks just point out any place where I ain't keeping to the strict agreement."

There was no doubt on that point.

Nothing in the schoolboy merchant's original announcement referred to the dates of that series of six magnificent spreads.

In the innocence of their hearts the juniors had supposed that the dates would be reasonably near at hand.

Still, there was no doubt that, according to the letter of the compact, if not according to its spirit, Fisher T. Fish "had" them.

As most of the fellows had suspected, there was a catch in it. And this was the catch!

It was left open to Fisher T. Fish to date the subsequent spreads just when he pleased. He might really have dated them for the end of the twenty-first century, if he had liked, without breaking the actual letter of the compact.

"Caught!" said Bob Cherry.

"The catchfulness is terrific."

"Well, we really knew there was a catch in it," said Harry Wharton. "It's our own fault for trusting Fishy an inch."

"Money back!" roared Bolsover major.

"I guess—"

"Shell out, Shylock!"

"I calculate—"

"I say, you fellows, scrag him!"

"Hold on a minute," said Frank

Nugent. "If the second feed is to be next Christmas, when is the third to be, Fishy?"

"I guess I haven't fixed that yet. Say the following Christmas, or the Christmas after," said Fisher T. Fish coolly. "All announcements will be made in due time. What more do you want?"

"I want a cricket stump!" roared Skinner. "I'm going to lay it round you till you howl!"

"You silly clam—"

"Collar him!"

"Scrag him!"

There was no doubt that the Greyfriars juniors utterly failed to understand business, as expounded by the bright youth from New York.

The door of the Rag opened, and Wingate, of the Sixth, looked in.

"Dorm!" he said.

Fisher T. Fish had undoubtedly done wisely in deferring his announcement till close upon bed-time. The entrance of the captain of Greyfriars came very fortunately for him.

Wingate glanced at the excited crowd of juniors.

"Now, then, what's this rumpus?" he exclaimed. "Stop it! Remove off to dormitory, sharp."

And the Removites, swallowing their wrath as well as they could, marched out of the rag.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Fishy!

FISHER T. FISH did not look quite at his ease in the Remove dormitory.

He had escaped the first burst of his Form-fellows' wrath; and he was safe from his "customers" in the Fourth Form.

But he had a well-grounded foreboding that there was trouble to come after lights out.

Some of the Remove fellows were grinning, taking the Transatlantic schoolboy's sharp practice as a joke. But most of them were wrathful, and they gave Fisher T. Fish almost wolfish looks.

Obviously, they were only waiting till Wingate was gone to come to close quarters with the business-man of the Remove.

It was not a happy prospect for Fisher Tarleton Fish. He had doubted whether the Remove fellows had intelligence enough to see business as he saw it. Now, he was quite certain on the point—they hadn't. From Fishy's cute point of view, the letter of the bond was sufficient, and the spirit of it did not matter a continental red cent. But he despaired of getting any inhabitant of a sleepy old island to see it.

It was so clear that trouble was to follow Wingate's departure from the dormitory that Fishy thought of appealing to the prefect for protection. Certainly, if Wingate had known that a rag was intended, he would have taken measures to stop it. But Fisher T. Fish realised that if he brought the prefect into the matter at all, Wingate was certain to learn all the facts. He had not the slightest hope that the Greyfriars' captain would understand business as understood in New York. It was certain that the prefect, regardless of business considerations, would order Fishy to return the money he had taken from his schoolfellows; and quite likely that he would report him to the Head, into the bargain. So Fisher T. Fish, though in fear and trembling, did not utter a word while Wingate was present; but he fairly quaked when the dormitory door closed behind the Sixth-Former.

One minute after the prefect had departed there was a general stirring in the Remove dormitory.

Matches were struck, and candle-ends lighted.

A crowd of fellows turned out of bed.

All the Remove, in fact, with the exception of Vernon-Smith, turned out. The Bounder sat up in bed, watching the proceedings with a sarcastic grin. Smithy had not been one of Fisher T. Fish's customers, but he would have taken a hand in the ragging, as a matter of course, had he been on his old terms with his Form. But Smithy was a good deal of an Ishmael now, and shared very little in any proceedings of the Remove.

"Fishy!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

"I guess—"

"Turn out!"

"I guess I ain't turning out, you pesky gink!"

"Turn him out!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Yaroooo!"

Bolsover major and Harold Skinner grasped the Transatlantic junior, and whirled him out of bed.

Fisher T. Fish landed on the floor, in a tangle of bedclothes, with a heavy bump.

"Stand up!" commanded the captain of the Remove.

"Yow-ow-ow! I guess—"

"Stand up!"

Fisher T. Fish stood up.

"Now," said the captain of the Remove, "we'll give you a chance, Fish. You don't deserve it—"

"Scrag him!"

"Rag him!"

"Hold on! We're giving Fishy a chance to do the decent thing," said Harry Wharton. "Fishy, you will hand back the money you have taken from twenty-five fellows."

"I guess not!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Take it off him!" roared Bolsover major.

"I guess you won't get your feelers on that dust!" snarled Fisher T. Fish. "I calculate I reckoned you'd try to swindle me."

"What!"

"My hat!"

"And I calculate I put the durocks in a safe place," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Have a little hoss-sense! Ain't I kept the agreement? Think I can afford to give away tuck for nothing? What are you complaining about?"

"You will hand back the money you have taken," said the captain of the Remove sternly. "You'll lose what you spent on the spread yesterday. You can look on that as your punishment."

"Hear, hear!"

"Why, you—you slabsided mug-wump," yelled Fisher T. Fish furiously. "I can see myself doing it! Come off!"

"You refuse?" demanded Wharton.

"Yep! About a million times! Yep!"

"That's that, then!" said the captain of the Remove. "You refuse to do the decent thing. If you decide to be decent, at any time, you can come along and say so. The chance will always be open. Until you come to that frame of mind, you'll be ragged."

"Look hyer—"

"I don't agree to taking the money off you," went on Wharton. "We really asked for this, in trusting you an inch. I don't think we should be justified in forcing you to shell out. But I hope we shall bring you to a frame of mind to shell out of your own accord."

"Forget it!" jeered Fishy.

"You will be sent to Coventry by the whole Form."

"Hear, hear!"

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"And every fellow in the Form will agree to kick you every time he sees you. It's understood that all kicks are to be hard."

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

"I guess—" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "The kicking will begin now," said Wharton.

"And to be continued in our next!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you ever want to squirm out of it, you can do so by handing back the tin you have spoofed the fellows out of. Until that time comes, you will lead the life of a football—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you jays—"

"Begin!" said Wharton.

"What-ho!"

"Go it, you fellows!"

There was a rush at Fisher T. Fish. It was fortunate for the business man of the Remove that the fellows had their boots off.

But it was severe enough.

Fisher T. Fish gave a frantic howl and dodged along the dormitory. After him went the Removites. Even Lord Manfeverer joined in the chase, and planted a kick on the fleeing form of the Remove merchant. Even Billy Bunter was going strong, and put in a kick or two. More active fellows put in half a dozen.

Fisher T. Fish, yelling, dodged among the beds, and fled up and down the dormitory. Possibly, just then, Fishy wished that he had left smart business methods over for a time, till he got back to New York, where they were understood and appreciated. He yelled and dodged and sprinted and twisted and turned.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Cave!" shouted Bob Cherry suddenly.

There were footsteps in the corridor.

The Removites bolted back to bed. Only Fisher T. Fish, quite spent and exhausted, leaned helplessly on the end of a bed, pumping in breath.

The door opened, and a light flashed in. Mr. Quelch stared grimly into the dormitory.

"What is all this disturbance?" he demanded.

"Grooogh!"

That was the only answer, in an anguished gasp from Fisher T. Fish. All the rest of the Remove, apparently, were asleep.

The Remove master fixed his eyes sternly on Fish.

"Fish!" he rapped out.

"Oooch!"

"You are out of bed, Fish!"

"Goooooch!"

"Take a hundred lines, and go back to bed at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, gum!" groaned Fisher T. Fish; and he crawled into bed.

Mr. Quelch frowned and left the dormitory. In his bed, the business man of the Remove gasped and groaned, and groaned and gasped, in the lowest possible spirits.

"More to-morrow, Fishy!" called out Bob Cherry.

"Wow!"

"We'll ask the Fourth to look after you while we're away at Highbelief!" chuckled Dallas.

"Grooogh!"

And the Remove settled down at last. But it was a long time before Fisher T. Fish slept. He had rather expected the Form to cut up rusty, but he had not quite expected this. To be kicked continuously till he restored his ill-gotten gains was altogether too steep.

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To part with the money was impossible—to Fishy. He would almost as soon have parted with teeth as with shillings. But an endless prospect of kickings was quite dismaying. And on the morrow the Removites would have their boots on!

It was an awful prospect, and the fact that it was exactly what he deserved did not comfort Fisher T. Fish in the very least.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

More Kicks than Halfpence!

THE clang of the rising-bell the following morning was followed by an unusually prompt turning out of the Greyfriars Remove. Even William George Bunter, for once, was a prompt riser. And all eyes turned on Fisher T. Fish's bed.

But that bed was vacant.

Prompt as the Removites had been, Fishy had been prompter. He had turned out before rising-bell, and was already gone.

"Stolen away!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"We shall find him downstairs," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Mind, every fellow is to kick him on sight!"

"What-ho!"

"The kickfulness will be terrific!"

And the Removites hurried through their dressing, quite anxious to see Fisher T. Fish again.

They swarmed out into the quadrangle, looking for the business man of the Remove.

But he was not to be seen.

Evidently Fisher T. Fish, like the sinner of old, felt that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

He was keeping out of sight, and the vengeful Removites sought him in vain. But at breakfast they were bound to see him, and, after all, as Bob Cherry remarked, he would keep.

Fisher T. Fish was late for brekker. He did not come in until all the Remove were in their places, with Mr. Quelch at the head of the table. In the august presence of the Form master it was, of course, impossible to kick Fishy. The Removites had to content themselves with looks, expressive of what was to happen later.

"You are late, Fish!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," mumbled Fisher T. Fish.

"Take fifty lines!"

"Oh dear!"

It was worth fifty lines to keep clear of his customers. But Fisher T. Fish's face was thoughtful and gloomy as he sat at breakfast. He could not perpetually dodge the members of his Form. Neither did he desire to spend the remainder of his career at Greyfriars in dodging the boots of his Form-fellows. Even upon Fishy's cute and unscrupulous mind it was borne in that he had exceeded the limit. But he could not entertain the idea of parting with his plunder—yet. That thought was altogether too painful—more painful than kicking. The cumulative effect of continual kicking, however, was likely to be very painful indeed.

Fishy rose to his feet before the Remove were finished, hoping to dodge out and disappear until morning

classes. But Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye fixed on him at once.

"Sit down, Fish!"

"I guess—"

"Sit down!"

Fisher T. Fish suppressed a groan and sat down again. A grin ran along the Remove table.

Not until Mr. Quelch rose and gave the signal was the American junior able to get away. And then the rest of the Remove marched out with him.

Fishy cut into the quad, still hoping to dodge. But the Remove went after him in a mob.

"Go it, you fellows!" sang out Bob Cherry. "I kick, thou kickest, he kicks! Nous kickons, vous kickez—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Let up, you jays!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Oh, holy smoke!"

Fisher T. Fish fled for his life. The Removites streamed after him, and Fishy was dribbled round the quad till he dodged into the House again. There he fled into Masters' passage, and leaned on the wall and gasped for breath. Outside the masters' studies he was safe for the time. In those sacred precincts Fishy could not be used as a football. It was a much-needed respite for the business man of the Remove.

Mr. Prout came along to his study and stared at Fish.

"What are you doing here?"

"I—I guess—"

"I disapprove," said the Fifth Form master, in his ponderous tones—"I disapprove of juniors loafing about the passages. Are you here to see your Form master?"

"N-no."

"Then be off at once!"

"Oh dear!"

Fisher T. Fish limped away, followed by Mr. Prout's frowning glance. Really, it seemed a case of there being no rest for the wicked. The hapless business man dodged into the Remove Form room, and there was a yell from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, he's in the Form-room."

"After him!"

A crowd of Remove and Fourth Form fellows swarmed into the Form-room after the miserable Fish.

"Here he is, by gad!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth. "I haven't kicked him yet, you men. Give me a chance!"

"Go it!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Keep off, you jays!" yelled Fisher T. Fish desperately. "Look here, I guess I'll put Quelch wise to this, if you don't let up!"

"And we'll put him wise to your swindling," said Bolsover major.

"I guess I've done all I undertook to do!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

"And we guess we're going to do what we undertook to do," said Johnny Bull. "Buck up, Temple; I'm waiting for my turn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish dodged frantically among the desks. But Cecil Reginald Temple was behind him. Cecil Reginald let out an elegant boot, which landed on the Transatlantic junior and sent him whirling. Fishy crashed down among the desks.

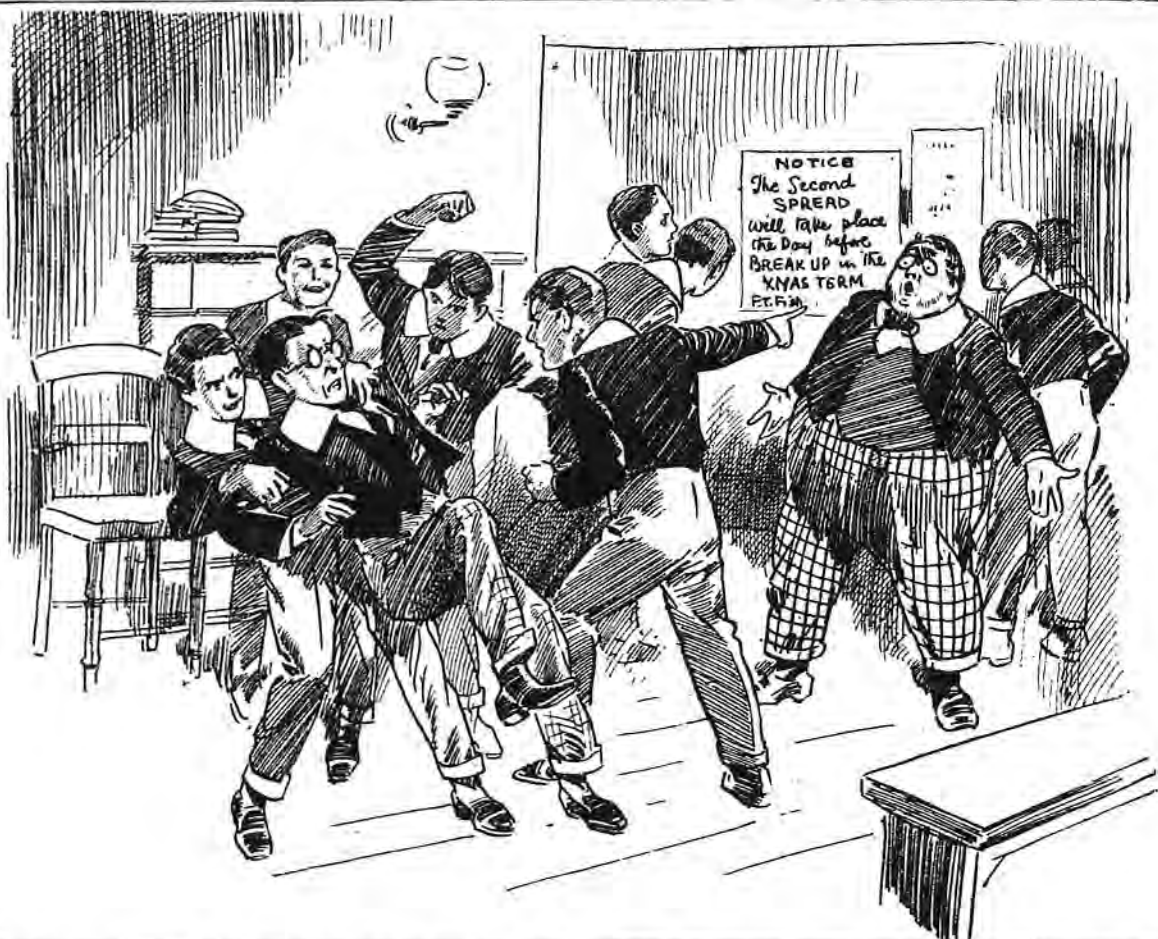
"Lemme get at him!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Give a fellow room!" bawled Skinner.

"Yaroooh! Oh, Jerusalem! Help!" raved Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, crickey! I guess I'll tell the Head! Yooooop!"

Fisher T. Fish picked himself up and

ANSWERS
Every Saturday —PRICE 2:



The juniors gazed at the precious notice spellbound. Then there was a roar. "You spoofing villain, Fishy—" "Collar him!" "Lynch him!" "Serag him!" "Hands off!" yelled the Remove business man, as Harry Wharton & Co. swarmed round him with wrathful faces. "Look hyer, Wharton, you keep order hyer!" (See Chapter 6.)

fled from the lunging boots. Round the Form-room he went, dodging and jumping and twisting. In the excitement of the chase the Removites forgot that morning lessons were nearly due. They were giving all their attention to the 'cute business man of the Form.

"Ow! Yow! Yoop! Help! Oh, great gophers!" gasped the hapless Fishy. "Oh, you galoots! You mug-wumps! You jays! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fisher T. Fish had made a profit on his remarkable business transaction. But it really seemed as if he would capture more kicks than halfpence.

He fled for the door and rushed out of the Form-room at last.

Crash!
"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Whoop!"

It was sheer ill-luck for Fishy that the Remove master was coming in just then to take his Form. He staggered back from the collision as the fleeing Fishy rushed right into him. Fishy tottered back into the Form-room quite winded.

"Oh, gad! Cave!" yelled Temple of the Fourth.

"Fish!" Mr. Quelch spluttered.

"How dare you!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Mr. Quelch strode in, gasping for breath. His gimlet-eye glittered at the mob of panling juniors.

"What are you Fourth Form boys doing in this Form-room?"

"Hem!" stammered Temple. "We—we're just going—"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney.

"Leave this Form-room at once!"

thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir."

The Fourth-Formers were glad enough to leave, now that Mr. Quelch had arrived. They hurried out promptly.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on the Removites.

"I suppose this is what you would call a rag!" he said icily.

"Hem!"

"Every boy in the Form will take a hundred lines."

"Oh!"

"As for you, Fish, you will be caned. You have given me a very painful shock. Bend over that chair!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now go to your place, Fish!" snapped Mr. Quelch, laying down the cane.

And Fisher T. Fish groaned dismally and went.

Tarleton Fish. Although by no means a studious youth, Fisher T. Fish would have been content to pass the whole morning in class under the gimlet-eye of Mr. Quelch.

He would have welcomed Latin conjugations, and even deponent verbs, in preference to what awaited him outside the Form-room.

Fishy had no doubt that this trouble would die away in time. The Remove fellows, sooner or later, would tire of kicking him. But it was certain that Fishy would tire first. On that point there was not a shadow of doubt.

Even if it did not last long, so long as it lasted it was inexpressibly painful and uncomfortable. The business man's latest and greatest stunt was turning out more disastrously than he had dreamed. The only fellow in the Remove who did not seem keen on spending all his leisure time chasing and kicking Fisher T. Fish was Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder was thinking of far other things. All the rest of the Form seemed to have taken it up as a sort of new game, with enthusiasm.

Twice that morning Fisher T. Fish answered Mr. Quelch with careless impertinence, in the hope of being detained over break. Detention was better than kicking. But Mr. Quelch gave him lines for the first offence, and caned him for the second. After that Fishy gave it up.

(Continued on page 17.)

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In Hiding!

MORNING break was generally looked forward to by all the Remove. On this especial morning all the Remove were looking forward to it, with one exception. The exception was Fisher

STIRRING UP THE SLACKER!

(Continued from previous page.)

running shorts; but while he was thinking about putting on his vest he had fallen into the arms of Morphia, goddess of slumber.

The slacker was awakened, and the messenger hustled him into his vest, and hustled him out of the dorm, and justled him down the stares and into the quad. The Head was waiting there, slapping his arms across his chest to keep warm.

"Ah! Here you are at last, lazy-bones!" said Doctor Birchmell. "We will now get busy. I propose to race you as far as the tuckshop, Yawnington."

"Oh lor'!"

"I warn you that you will have all your work cut out to beat me," said the Head. "Seventy years ago I was champion runner of my collidge. I still have in my possession the newspaper cutting describing how I did the hundred yards in five seconds."

"That must have been a sprinter's error!" chuckled Jack Jolly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head frowned the larfing juniors into silence and turned to Yawnington. "Owing to the slight disparity in our ages," he said, "I must insist upon having a few yards start."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Yawnington.

The Head took a duzen paces forward and then halted. He looked round at Yawnington, who was yawning his head off.

"Wake up!" thundered the Head.

"When I say 'Go!' I shall not expect to see you for dust. The tuckshop door is our objective, and if you want to overtake me you'll have to pelt like fury!"

So saying, the Head started off at a wonderful gallop, considering his years. His long, lean lgs fairly streaked over the ground.

Yawnington stood still. He was waiting for the word "Go!" But the artful old Head covered at least twenty yards before he jerked out the word of command; and Yawnington failed to hear it.

Jack Jolly & Co. stared at the strange spectacle of the Head in action, and they larfed almost historically.

"Go it, sir!" roared Frank Fearless encouragingly. "Put the pace on!"

"Three to one on the Head!" chuckled Bright, whose pater was a bookmaker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wheezing and snorting, the Head ran on. The pace soon began to tell, and he realised that a man is not so active and agile at ninety as nineteen. He had bellers to mend, his tung lolled from his mouth, and his eyes, glood on the tuckshop door ahead, seemed to be starting out of their sockkitts.

As he ran he suddenly caught sight of his own shaddo running beside him. But the Head failed to realise that it was his shaddo. He took the whirling legs and arms to be those of his school-boy opponent; and, horrified at the prospect of being beaten, he put on a terrific spurt.

Fast as he ran, however, the Head could not shake off his opponent. The shaddo clung to him like a leech, and flatly refused to be left behind.

"Lummy!" reflected the Head.

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"That boy Yawnington is a far better runner than I bargained for! I simply must shake him off somehow! To be beaten in a race by a junior—and the laziest junior at St. Sam's at that—would deal a death-blow to my dignity. I'll outpace him, bust me if I won't, or drop dead in my tracks from hart-failure!"

With this grim resolve, the Head mustard all his energies for a final spurt. And still the shaddo of his opponent—as he thought—stuck to him with irritating tenacity.

The tuckshop door was only a little way off now. It was closed. But just as the Head hurled himself boddily upon it, in a despit effort to gain the victory, the door was opened from within by the tuckshop dame, who was coming out to see what all the commotion was about.

"Lawks a mussy!" gasped the dame, stepping aside in the nick of time.

Doctor Birchmell shot into the tuckshop as if he had been propelled from a masheen-gun. He knocked a cupple of chairs flying, and crashed into the counter with stunning force. Then he collapsed to the floor in a howling heap.

"Ow! Yow! Yaroooo!" he roared. "I verrily belevee that every bone in my body is broken!"

The tuckshop dame blinked at the Head in astonishment.

"Are you in a hurry to be served, doctor?" she asked innocently.

"No, madam, I am not!" snarled the Head. "I did not come here to be served at all. I had no intenshun of entering your shop. But you opened the door at the cycle-ogical moment of my approach, and I was hurled through the aperture. Oo-ow-ow! I am broozed, bemazed, baffled, and bewildered!"

Jack Jolly & Co. came crowding into the doorway as the Head slowly tottered to his feet.

"Are you much hurt, sir?" inquired Jack Jolly.

"Oh, no!" said the Head, with heavy sarkazzum. "I have meerly fracktured my spine, and busted my collar-bone, and had a cupple of ribs stove in! But I am not injured in any way! But tell me," added the Head eagerly, "did I win the race?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" chuckled the juniors.

"Oh, good!" gasped the Head, feeling compensated for all his injuries. "But it must have been a jolly close thing—a matter of inches."

"It was a trifle more than that, sir," said Merry, with a grin. "You see, your opponent was left at the post. He didn't start!"

"W-w-what?" stuttered the Head, wondering if he had heard aright.

Could it be possible that he had eggspended all his energies, and run himself completely out, all to no purrpus? Had that young rascal Yawnington dared to defy him by refusing to start at the word of command?

With a thunderuss brow, the Head stepped out into the sunny quad. Shading his eyes with his hand, he looked for his schoolboy opponent—and spotted him.

Yawnington had not budged from the starting-point. He had sunk down on to the flagstones, and was reclining there, with his head resting on his arm. He had been watching, with vast entertainment, the Head's solo sprint.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped the Head. "To think that I have gone through all this marderdom for nothing! I raced myself to a standstill, thinking that Yawnington was close

behind me, and all the time he had not budged! Really, I shall have to take drastick mezzures with the lazy young cub! Jolly, I will trouble you to go and fetch my birch rod!"

Jack Jolly scuttled away, and returned in a few minnits with the instrument of torcher.

"I—I say, sir," faltered Yawney, "you're not going to give me another licking, are you?"

"Right on the wicket!" said the Head grimly.

"But—but what have I done, sir?"

"It isn't what you have done, it's what you have left undone," said the Head. "You had implissit orders to race me to the tuckshop when I gave the word 'Go!'"

"But I never heard you say 'Go!'"

"Come, come!"

"I didn't, sir—omner brite!"

The Head sneered.

"It's jolly convenient to be deaf sometimes," he said. "Now, look here, Yawnington. I'm not going to have any more of your old buck. As a punishment for having made a larfing-stock of me, I am going to make you run round the quad twenty times!"

"Help!"

"And every time you show signs of slacking I shall lay my birch rod across your sholders! Now then! One to be ready, two to be steady, three to be—off!"

So saying, the Head gave Yawnington a sharp flick with the birch; and the Slacker of St. Sam's bounded forward with a wild yell.

"Go on!" hissed the Head. "You seemed to derive vast amusement from the spectacle of your headmaster doing a solo run, and now the boot's on the other foot. It's my turn to larf now. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

The Head larfed—a mocking, sinister larf, like that of a demon in a panter-mime—as he chased Yawnington round the quad, lashing out at him ever and anonymously with his birch rod.

Poor old Yawney! He ran as he had never run before. It seemed to him like a garsly nightmare, in which he was being pursued by a terrifying monster. Every time he slackened speed the Head's birch caressed his sholders.

Twenty times round the quad—twenty complete serkitts, each one more weeri-some than the last—went the lacker of St. Sam's. And by the time the ordeal was over poor old Yawnington felt more dead than alive.

"Aha!" chorled the Head. "Revenge is sweet! And not only have I avenged myself, but I have given you some eggcellent training for the Junior Sport. You can go now—if you have sufficient strength left to crawl into the House. Report me to again after tea, and I will give you some tuition in long-jumping, high-jumping, hurdle-racing, chucking the merry cricket-ball, hurling the jolly old discuss—and so forth!"

Yawnington groaned—partly from prezzent woes, partly at the prospect of future ones. It seemed that the Head, as his coach and trainer, was determined to give him neither rest nor respite.

Doctor Birchmell was taking his novel duties very seriously; and, weather or not he succeeded in winning the Silver Cup for Yawnington of the Fourth, he had certainly succeeded in "Stirring Up the Slacker!"

THE END.

(Don't miss: "By Fate Means or Foul!" next week's highly amusing yarn of St. Sam's. It's a tit-bit!)



(Continued from page 13.)

But he almost palpitated with terror as break grew near.

Harry Wharton & Co., as a matter of fact, were not thinking much about the ousting of the Remove. The Highcliffe match was due that day, and they gave it all the attention they could spare from lessons—which was a good deal.

But the absence of the cricketers that afternoon was not likely to make much difference to Fisher T. Fish. There were plenty of other fellows to look after him; and Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth had entered into the new game with zest.

Second lesson ended at last, and Mr. Quelch dismissed his class.

Fisher T. Fish was first on his feet, and he made a rush for the Form-room door.

"Fish!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir?"

"How dare you rush across the Form-room in that disorderly manner?"

"I—I guess I'm in a hurry, sir," stammered Fishy.

"Go back at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—"

"You will leave the Form-room last!"

And the hapless Fishy limped to the tail of the Remove.

He was last out of the Form-room, and he found quite an array waiting for him.

Morning break, that day, was quite an exciting time to Fisher Tarleton Fish.

Most of the fellows found break too short. Fisher T. Fish found it too long.

When the Remove assembled again for third lesson, the Transatlantic junior had a worn and weary look, as if he found life hardly worth living.

And there was the half-holiday to come that afternoon; and Fisher T. Fish shuddered at the prospect.

With a half-holiday for the Remove fellows to devote their undivided attention to him, Fisher T. Fish felt that it was not to be stood. Almost he made up his cute mind to restore his ill-gotten gains.

But not quite!

After dinner there was a hectic interval till dinner. At dinner Fisher T. Fish wore a worried look. The other fellows grinned, and from the Fourth Form table Temple, Dabney & Co. gave the business man expressive glances. Obviously, that half-holiday was to be a sort of field day; and Fisher T. Fish shuddered as he thought of it. There was no possibility of dodging out of gates and getting clear till lock-up; eyes would be upon him all the time.

After dinner Fisher T. Fish limped out, and a crowd of the Remove went with him.

"Look here, you jays—" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

"Come out into the quad," said Bob Cherry invitingly. "I want to take one more kick before we start for Highcliffe."

Mr. Quelch came out of the dining-room, and Fisher T. Fish, in desperation, followed him into Masters' passage.

The Remove fellows waited at the corner for him.

Harry Wharton & Co. had to withdraw, to prepare for their journey over to Highcliffe. But there were plenty left. They eyed Fishy from the corner, as he lurked in Masters' passage.

He could not stay there long; juniors were not allowed to hang about the masters' quarters.

Once more Mr. Prout came into the office, rolling along majestically to his study.

He frowned at Fisher T. Fish.

This was the second time Mr. Prout had discovered the same junior lurking in Masters' passage for no ostensible reason.

Fisher T. Fish did not wait for the Fifth Form master to speak. He hurried on up the passage and left it by the farther end.

The Removites had to wait till the Fifth Form master had gone into his study. They could not rush along the passage after Fishy in the majestic presence of Mr. Prout.

But the moment Mr. Prout's door closed there was a pattering of racing feet along Masters' passage.

A mob of juniors swept round the corner at the farther end, where Fisher T. Fish had disappeared from sight.

He was not to be seen.

There were two or three passages by which he might have fled, and the Removites scattered to search for him.

But they searched in vain.

The Form-rooms, the passages, the studies, the box-rooms were drawn blank.

Fisher T. Fish had vanished.

Obviously, the business man of the Remove had found some deep and obscure corner for a hiding-place, where he was lying "doggo." He was not likely to enjoy his half-holiday. But it was a case of any port in a storm.

Quite an army of the Remove and the Fourth hunted for Fisher T. Fish for a long, long time. But their hunt was unavailing. The Transatlantic junior seemed to have vanished into thin air.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

"YOU men ready?"

"Quite."

"The readyfulness is terrific."

"Where's Dallas?"

The motor-charabanc was waiting in the road to convey the Greyfriars cricketers over to Highcliffe. Harry Wharton & Co. were ready to walk down to it. Besides the team, eight or nine fellows were going over to Highcliffe in the motor. There would have been more, but some of the Remove were devoting their time to Fisher T. Fish. Not that they were needed; for Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were hunting for the Remove merchant with deadly intent, and if they found him, Fishy was likely to capture enough ragging to last him for the afternoon.

Only Paul Dallas had not yet joined the cricketers in the group outside the House. But he came out of the House as Harry Wharton asked after him.

"Come on, kid!" called out Bob Cherry. "Time!"

Dallas was looking a little flushed and annoyed.

"Seen my bat?" he asked.

"You haven't lost your bat when you're just starting for a cricket match?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Some ass has shifted it in my study."

Bob looked at Wharton and Nugent.

"Which ass was it?" he asked.

"Fathead!" said Nugent.

"The bat was there last night," said Wharton. "You showed it to us, Dallas. You left it in the study."

"I know. But I can't see it there now."

"Ask Bunter to lend you his specs, and look again," suggested Bob Cherry.

"I thought one of you fellows might have brought it down," said Paul, looking at his study-mates.

"No," said Wharton, and Nugent shook his head. "Cut along and fetch it—it must be there—and follow on."

"Right-ho!" said Dallas.

He went back into the House, and the cricketers walked away to get on board the waiting charabanc.

Paul Dallas ran up the stairs to the Remove passage and into Study No. 1. His bat was a handsome new one, a present from his adopted father, Mr. Vernon-Smith. Paul had been showing it to his study-mates, the evening before, in Study No. 1, and it had been left standing in the study. But it had not been in sight when he looked for it.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was lounging in the Remove passage, and he gave Dallas a sarcastic grin as he passed.

Paul did not heed it.

The Bounder's look was provocative; but Paul did not want trouble with him at any time, and especially now that he was due to start for Highcliffe, and the other fellows would be waiting for him.

Taking no heed of the Bounder, he went into Study No. 1, and looked round the room again for his bat.

It was not to be seen.

He looked in every corner of the room, in the cupboard, and even on the bookcase and under the table. But it was evident that the bat had not been carelessly shoved out of sight by his study-mates. It was not in the study at all.

Someone, obviously, had removed the bat, knowing that he would want it to take over to Highcliffe. He remembered the sarcastic grin on the face of the Bounder.

It seemed almost impossible that Vernon-Smith could have played so childish a trick as that of hiding a fellow's cricket-bat. Certainly such a foolish prank was not like the Bounder at all. But the bat was gone, and it must have been taken away. Paul came out of the study and found Vernon-Smith still loafing there in the passage.

"Have you seen my bat, Vernon-Smith?" asked Paul very quietly.

"Your bat?" repeated the Bounder.

"Yes. It's been taken from my study."

The Bounder laughed.

"Perhaps," he said.

Paul's lips closed hard.

"What have you done with it?" he asked.

"How do you know I've done anything with it?" returned the Bounder.

"That's pretty plain, I think. Tell me where it is, Vernon-Smith," said Paul impatiently. "A Remove man ought to have more sense than to play a kid's trick like this—like a fag in the Second Form. The fellows are waiting for me."

"Let them wait!"

"Have you taken my cricket-bat?" demanded Dallas, his anger rising.

"Yes or no?"

"Yes," said the Bounder coolly.

"Where is it?"

"That's telling," said Vernon-Smith banteringly.

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"Well, tell me, then, like a good chap," said Paul, as good-temperedly as he could.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Look here, Vernon-Smith, I want my bat," said Paul, with a gleam in his eyes. "Tell me where it is, or—"

"Or what?" sneered Vernon-Smith. "Or I'll jolly well punch your head till you do!" exclaimed Dallas, his anger breaking out. "What the thump do you mean by meddling with my things? Where's that bat?"

He advanced on the Bounder, putting up his hands. Vernon-Smith eyed him evilly.

Twice it had been proved, in fierce conflict, that the Bounder was outclassed by the new junior. Nevertheless, it was not like the Bounder to refuse a challenge. But on this occasion he had his own reasons for yielding the point.

He put his hands in his pockets. "Keep your wool on," he said lightly. "Your bat's in the punishment-room, if you want it."

"You took it there?"

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "You silly chump!" snapped Dallas.

"A silly kid's trick. Never mind. I've got no time to waste on you!"

And Paul turned and hurried away.

The trick the Bounder had played seemed to him absolutely childish. But it was annoying, all the same, as the cricketers were waiting for him. It was time that they started for Highcliffe, and they would all be in the vehicle by this time, and wondering why Dallas did not come. And the punishment-room was in a secluded part of the buildings, a good distance from the Remove passage. Paul's face was flushed with annoyance as he hurried along the passages and turned into the long corridor that led to the punishment-room.

That room was at the end of the corridor, with no other rooms near it. On the rare occasions when a fellow was locked up there he was quite cut off from the rest of Greyfriars.

Paul reached the door. It was locked, but the key was in the outside of the lock.

He unlocked the door and threw it open, and hurried into the room.

The punishment-room was sparsely furnished, with a bedstead, a table, a chair, and one or two other articles, and there was a large cupboard in the alcove beside the fireplace.

Paul glanced round for his bat.

It was in sight on the opposite side of the room, lying across the bedstead.

He hurried across to pick it up.

As he did so the door of the punishment-room suddenly slammed shut. He spun round, the bat in his hand.

Click!

"Why, you rotter!" panted Paul.

He understood instantly what had happened. Vernon-Smith had followed him to the punishment-room, and turned the key in the lock!

He bounded across to the door and dragged at the handle. A low laugh was audible outside.

"Vernon-Smith!" Paul's voice almost choked with rage. "You cad! Unlock the door at once!"

The Bounder laughed again.

Paul heard the scraping sound as the key was withdrawn from the lock. The Bounder was taking it away.

He hammered on the door.

"Vernon-Smith! You dare to lock me in—"

"I fancy so!" came the jeering voice of the Bounder. "You fool! Did you fancy I'd play a kid's trick with your silly bat? I put it there to get you

there; and you're there now, and you'll stop!"

"I'll smash you for this!" roared Dallas.

"Will you? I'll be there when you do it!" sneered Smithy. "You've bagged my place in the eleven, you cad; but you won't be playing at Highcliffe to-day. I'm out of the match, and you're out, too! See? Put that in your pipe and smoke it, you interloping cad!"

"Let me out!" panted Paul. "You'll get the ragging of your life if I miss the match!"

"You'll miss it!" chuckled the Bounder. "No doubt about that, my pippin! No cricket for you to-day!"

"If you don't open the door I'll shout from the window, and you'll have to answer for it if a master comes up!"

"You can shout till you're black in the face and nobody will hear you," said the Bounder coolly. "I've been locked in the room myself once upon a time, and I know, you see. That's why I selected it. Shout away as much as you like! I'm going out of gates for the afternoon, and taking the key with me! Good-bye!"

"You scoundrel!" shouted Paul. Only the Bounder's mocking laugh replied, and Paul heard his footsteps die away along the corridor.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"WHY doesn't that ass come?"

"Bother him!"

"Bother his silly bat!"

The Remove cricketers were getting impatient. They were sitting in the charabanc, all ready to start, and minute followed minute, and Paul Dallas did not join them.

"The silly chump!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If he can't find his silly bat, I suppose he could borrow one!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Cut off and tell Dallas to hurry up, Bunter!" called out the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Cut off, fathead!" said Squiff.

"I was going to make you an offer, Wharton," said the Owl of the Remove, with dignity. "As Dallas doesn't seem keen on playing, I'll take his place if you like. After all, you want to beat Highcliffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'd like to play at Highcliffe," said Bunter. "They always give fellows a decent tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks no end, fatty!" said Harry Wharton. "But I don't think you can have a place in the team to get a free tea. Run away and find Dallas and tell him to buck up."

"Oh, blow Dallas!" said Billy Bunter crossly. And he rolled away—but not to find Dallas.

"The silly owl must be off his chump to keep us waiting like this!" said Tom Brown. "Look here, let's get off, and Dallas can come after us on his bike. We can't hang up here."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's all right," he said. "Franky old man, if you wouldn't mind—"

Nugent made a grimace. He was not in the eleven, but he had a place in the charabanc to go over to Highcliffe. But he rose at once.

"All serene!" he said. "I'll come over on my bike with him." And Nugent jumped down.

"Tell him to hurry!" called out Wharton. "If he's not there when he's

wanted I shall have to play another man."

"Right-ho!"

And the charabanc rolled off on the road to Highcliffe, while Frank Nugent went back into the school to look for Dallas.

In the quad he came on Bolsover major and several other Remove fellows, all of them looking exasperated.

"Seen Dallas?" he called out.

"Dallas? No! Blow Dallas!" growled Bolsover major. "Seen that squirming worm Fishy?"

"Fishy! Blow Fishy!" answered Nugent, laughing; and he went on to the House.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was coming out of the School House as he reached it, and Nugent called to him.

"Seen Dallas, Smithy?"

"Hang Dallas!" answered the Bounder, and he walked off towards the gates.

Nugent went in and ran up to the Remove passage. There was no one in Study No. 1 when he looked in.

"Bother him!" grunted Nugent.

He concluded that Paul was still looking for his missing bat; there seemed to be no other reason for his absence. Frank Nugent rather liked the new fellow in the Remove, but he was greatly exasperated with him now. The latest recruit in the Remove eleven did not seem to understand that he was not entitled to keep his captain and his fellow-players waiting. Nugent, as he ran along the Remove passage calling to Dallas, felt strongly inclined to punch his head when he found him.

But he did not find him.

All the Remove were out of doors that fine afternoon, excepting Lord Mauleverer, who was taking a rest on his study sofa. Nugent looked into his study to inquire.

"Seen Dallas?"

"Yaas."

"Good! Where is he?"

"Don't know."

"You frabjous ass, you said you'd seen him!"

"So I have," said his lordship innocently. "Seen him lots of times—dozens of times!"

"You burbling jabbercock!" roared Nugent. "Have you seen him in the last quarter of an hour?"

"Sorry; no!"

"Ass!"

Nugent stayed only to hurl a cushion at the recumbent Mauleverer, and hurried away, unheeding the howl that followed him from Mauly.

"Where on earth can the fathead have got to?" exclaimed Nugent, as he went down the Remove passage again, in great exasperation.

"Hallo, Temple!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. appeared in sight on the Remove landing. "Seen Dallas of the Remove?"

"No, and don't want to!" answered Cecil Reginald. "We're lookin' for Fishy. Come and help us."

"Bother Fishy!"

"The skinny brute seems to have vanished into the air," said Temple. "He's hiding somewhere. I'm goin' to root him out."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I say, we haven't drawn the Fifth Form studies yet. He may be hiding in the Fifth."

"Good; come on!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. streamed off to the Fifth Form quarters. Nugent was hurrying down the stairs.

It occurred to him that Dallas might have left the House, while he was up in the Remove passage. In that case, finding the charabanc gone, he might have



Paul Dallas spun round, the bat in his hand. Click! "Why—you rotter!" he panted. Paul understood instantly what had happened. Vernon-Smith had followed him to the punishment-room, and turned the key in the lock. "You cad!" Dallas' voice almost choked with rage. "Vernon-Smith! Unlock the door at once!" The Bounder laughed, and withdrew the key from the lock. (See Chapter 10.)

started on his bicycle. Nugent hurried to the bicycle-shed to see if Dallas' machine was gone.

But it was there, on its stand.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

And he tramped back to the House, more and more exasperated, asking every fellow he saw for news of Dallas. But nobody seemed to have seen Dallas; he had vanished as completely and mysteriously as Fisher T. Fish.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Comes in Useful!

PAUL DALLAS stood in the punishment-room, his face white with anger.

The Bounder was gone, taking the key with him.

Even if any fellow came to that secluded room, he would not be able to open the door without the key.

Harry Wharton's latest-recruit was a helpless prisoner.

By this time, he knew, the cricketers must have started. They were expected at Highcliffe, and were not likely to wait long. Doubtless someone was looking for Paul; but that someone would not be likely to look in the punishment-room. Nobody could suspect the trick

the Bounder had played—nobody could guess that Paul was a prisoner there.

He gritted his teeth as he thought of it.

He crossed to the window and stared out. But the window was barred on the inside, and he could not open it.

From the little barred window he had only a distant view; he could not get near enough to the glass to glance down to the ground. Far off, he saw two or three Remove fellows, tiny in the distance, who seemed to be searching round the walls of the old chapel. He wondered for a moment if they were searching for him, and then he remembered Fisher T. Fish. Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were "drawing" the old chapel for the elusive Fishy.

They were too far off for him to hope that a shout would reach their ears.

Paul had thought of getting through the window, and taking the chance of climbing down. But the bars precluded any attempt of that sort.

He returned to the door, and hammered on it with the end of his bat, in the hope of attracting attention. But the hope was faint; there were no occupied rooms anywhere near him.

He ceased at last, almost in despair.

By this time the cricketers would be at Highcliffe. What would they think

of him—what would Wharton think? The captain of the Remove would play another man in his place, if he did not turn up. But Paul knew that he was needed; he had shown great form at the summer game, and in losing the Bounder, Wharton had lost one of his best men. Paul was wanted in the Bounder's place. There was no other fellow anything like his form to replace him. He was letting down the team—all the fellows would think that he had carelessly let them down, until they came back to Greyfriars after the match and learned what had happened. Once before the Bounder had schemed to keep his enemy out of a Remove fixture, and had failed. This time he would not fail.

Paul clenched his hands savagely. He looked from the window again. Bolsover & Co. were trailing away out of sight behind the old chapel.

For a moment a glimmer of hope came into Paul's face. Fisher T. Fish was hiding somewhere, and twenty or thirty fellows were hunting for him. If they came to the punishment-room to search for him—

But that hope died as soon as it rose. Paul remembered that the punishment-room was always kept locked, and the key hanging up in Mr. Quelch's study. Vernon-Smith must have taken the key

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from the Form master's study—choosing some moment when Mr. Quelch was not in the room. The Bouncer's plans had been cut and dried in advance.

The fellows who were hunting Fisher T. Fish would not think of the punishment-room as a possible hiding-place, knowing that it was always kept locked, with no key available.

The hapless junior gave a groan. He was trapped, and there was no hope of escape. He could do nothing but wait. Even when the crickets returned from Highcliffe, they would not know where to look for him; he had to wait till the Bouncer came in, and revealed where he was, or chose to let him out. And that was not likely to be before lock-up.

Paul threw himself into the chair at last, utterly dejected and dismayed. He had been looking forward keenly to the cricket match at Highcliffe. The disappointment was bitter, and still more bitter was the knowledge that his comrades needed him, and would be thinking hard things about him, while he was caged helplessly at Greyfriars.

He sat in dismal silence, trying to think of some means of escape, but in vain.

Suddenly he gave a start. There was a sound in the silent room. It proceeded from the big cupboard in the alcove.

Paul stared at the cupboard. For a moment he supposed that it was some rat scuttling behind the wall. But the next moment he knew that it could not be that. The sound was unmistakable, of someone moving in the cupboard.

Someone else was in the punishment-room with him—hidden in the cupboard. Paul rose to his feet, in amazement.

"Fishy!" he ejaculated.

It could be no one else. The punishment-room, which was not searched by the fellows who were hunting Fishy, because Fishy couldn't have got through a locked door, was, after all, the hiding-place of the American junior. How he had got in was a mystery; but it was certain that he was there. It was unlikely, if not impossible, that the Bouncer had known he was there, when he trapped Dallas in the room; certainly the Bouncer would not have unlocked the door to let him in. But he was there—Dallas could hear him moving. He ran across the room to the cupboard and jerked open the door.

"Yaroooo!" It was a yell of apprehension. "You let up, you jays!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"You silly ass!" Fisher T. Fish blinked out from the shadowy cupboard. He was dusty, and he was dismal.

"Oh! You!" he said. "Ain't you gone over to Highcliffe? I say, Dallas, old chap, be a sport. Don't let those galoots know I'm here. Look here, I'll let you have your three bob back if you keep it dark."

Dallas stared at him. "How did you get in here?" he asked. "How did you get in, if you come to that?" said Fisher T. Fish. "You bagged Quelch's key?"

"Vernon-Smith must have taken the key from Mr. Quelch's study—he tricked me into coming here, and locked me in."

"Gee-whiz!" ejaculated Fishy. He came out of the cupboard, breathing hard. He was dusty, and he had been almost suffocated in his confined quarters.

"Smithy locked you in?" he asked. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,003.

"Yes."

"Keeping you away from the Highcliffe match, what?" asked Fishy, with a grin. "He's some lad, Smithy, ain't he?"

"He's a rotten rascal, if that's what you mean."

"I guess he gave me the jump," said Fisher T. Fish. "I was here, reckoning that I was safe and sound, when I heard a key shoved into the door. I figured it out that Quelch was coming here for something—couldn't think of anything else—and you bet it gave me a jump. I suppose it was Smithy, now, putting the key in the lock ready to lock you in."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled. "I dodged into the cupboard," he went on. "I reckoned it was safer to keep out of sight. Quelch would be frightfully ratty if he found a galoot here when the place is supposed to be locked up safe. After that, I heard voices and hammering, and couldn't figure it out at all—couldn't guess what was happening, only I reckoned those pesky jays were after me, and lay low. Then it was all quiet, and I thought the coast was clear. I was getting cramped with keeping still. I suppose you heard me move?"

Dallas nodded. "Well, you keep it dark that I'm hyer, and I'll shell out your three bob, what?" said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "Money talks!"

"Never mind that," said Dallas. His face was bright with hope now. "How did you get in?"

"That's telling," said Fisher T. Fish, with a wink.

"The door was locked when I came in," said Dallas.

"Sure!"

"Then you must have a key."

Fisher T. Fish grinned, and rattled his celebrated bunch of keys in his pocket.

"Just a few!" he remarked.

"Oh!" exclaimed Dallas. He understood now.

The Remove merchant always had a second-hand key ready if any fellow wanted one—for a consideration. Obviously, among the innumerable keys on Fishy's bunch was one that fitted the lock of the punishment-room. That accounted for Fisher T. Fish's mysterious disappearance from the eyes of Greyfriars after dinner.

Dallas burst into a laugh.

"Then you can unlock the door if you want to?" he asked.

"Yep! I guess I don't want to, though," said Fisher T. Fish. "I calculate I'm staying hyer, where I'm safe."

"Unlock it for me," said Dallas.

Fishy hesitated.

"Look hyer! You've been after me, like the rest," he said. "You're not going to bring those galoots on a fellow's tracks? Not much!"

"Fathead!" said Dallas impatiently.

"You can go and eat coke! I want to get over to Highcliffe for the cricket. Open the door and let me out!"

Fishy still hesitated.

"You'll keep it dark that I'm hyer?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes."

"Without givin' you your three bob back?" said Fishy cautiously.

"Yes, you silly ass! Open the door."

"I guess—"

"No time for guessing," interrupted Dallas. "Open that door, or I'll bang your silly head on the wall till you see stars. Got that?"

"I guess I'm ready to oblige a galoot," said Fisher T. Fish hastily.

"Don't get mad. I shall have to charge you sixpence for the key."

Dallas clenched his hands and advanced on the Remove merchant with a gleam in his eyes that alarmed Fisher T. Fish. Fishy made a jump for the door.

"Hold on! I guess I'll let you out for nothing! Keep your wool on, you mug-wump!"

And Fish selected a key on his bunch, and unlocked the door of the punishment-room. Dallas, hardly able to believe in his good luck, dragged the door open and darted out.

"Mind you keep it dark 'bout me being hyer!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. But Dallas was going down the long passage, his bat under his arm, as if he were on the cinder-path, and he did not even hear Fisher T. Fish's anxious injunction. Fishy grunted, and closed the door again, and relocked it.

A half-holiday in the punishment-room was neither grateful nor comforting. But Fisher T. Fish preferred it to running the gauntlet of the Remove and the Fourth. And he found a little solace in looking from the barred window, and watching Bolsover & Co. rooting about the old chapel, growing more and more exasperated as they rooted in vain.

Paul Dallas did not waste another thought on the Transatlantic junior. He scudded away, and out of the House, to rush out his bicycle and start for Highcliffe.

"Dallas," Frank Nugent shouted to him in the quad, "you ass, where have you been all this time?"

"Never mind that now; couldn't help it!" gasped Dallas. "I suppose the team's gone?"

"Long ago, fathead! Get your bike!"

Five minutes later Dallas and Nugent were pedalling hard for Highcliffe.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bravo, Dallas!

HARRY WHARTON frowned. Greyfriars were batting first at Highcliffe, and they had not started well.

Courtenay and his men were in great form, and one member of the Highcliffe junior team was displaying great powers as a bowler. That member was Rupert de Courcy, otherwise known as the Caterpillar. The Caterpillar, when he liked, was a great man at games, and it looked as if he liked now, judging by results. He had dismissed Harry Wharton for five runs, which was a painful surprise to the captain of the Remove, and he had sent out Mark Linley for a duck's egg, which was another painful surprise, and he had caught out Hurree Jamset Ram Singh at cover-point, which was a still greater surprise. Courtenay had clean bowled Johnny Bull for a handful of runs, and Tom Brown had had bad luck.

Five Greyfriars wickets were down for 15 runs, which was a bad beginning, and had a rather disheartening effect on the Remove cricketer.

Paul Dallas was next man on the list, and the fact that Dallas was not there, caused the frown on Wharton's brow.

The latest recruit in the Remove team had had ample time to follow the eleven to Highcliffe, but he had not come.

Wharton frowned with annoyance.

He did not regret having left out the Bouncer, but he was sorely conscious of the fact that Vernon-Smith, had he still been a member of the team, might have stopped the "rot." The Bouncer, at his best, was a tower of strength, and he was just the fellow to put up a grim



Dallas ran across the room to the cupboard, and jerked open the door. "Yaroooh!" It was a yell of apprehension. "You let up, you jays!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "You silly ass!" said Paul. The Transatlantic junior blinked out from the shadowy cupboard. "Oh, it's you!" he gasped. "Don't let those other galoots know I'm hyer!" (See Chapter 12.)

fight in a losing game, and pull it out of the fire. But regrets on that subject, even if Wharton had felt any, were futile. The Bounder had forfeited his place in Remove cricket, and that was that! But the new recruit, the fellow who was fully able to supply the loss, ought to have been there—and he was not there.

"Man in, Toddy!" said the captain of the Remove. "We can't wait for that fathead Dallas!"

Peter Todd nodded, and went out to join Bob Cherry at the wickets. Bob, at least, was doing well. He had opened the innings with Wharton, and he was still safe and sound, though many runs had not yet come his way.

Wharton watched with a rather grim face.

Highcliff were displaying unexpected form, especially that usually slack and elegant youth, the Caterpillar. Toddy was a good and steady batsman, but Wharton was rather anxious as the Caterpillar went on to bowl against him.

Nothing spreads so fast as "rot" in a batting side, and unless a stiff resistance was put up at this stage, it was probable that the whole innings would tail off dismally.

Paul Dallas was wanted, and wanted badly. It was absolutely exasperating that he was not there.

Wharton wondered savagely what had kept him away. He could not be ass enough to be looking for his missing bat all this time. Something had happened to prevent him from coming over to Highcliff after the team; and it was his business not to let anything happen to prevent him.

"There goes Toddy!" said Johnny Bull dismally. "I say, that Caterpillar chap is out for blood to-day."

"Looks like it!" grunted Wharton.

"We want the old Bounder here now," said Tom Brown rather dolorously. "Smithy would have put paid to him!"

"That can't be helped!" said Wharton rather sharply.

"I know, old bean. All the same, the Bounder would be no end useful," said the New Zealand junior. "We shall all be down for next to nothing soon. What rotten luck!"

Wharton compressed his lips. The Bounder could have stopped the rot; he was the man to do it. But so could Paul Dallas had he been there.

Peter Todd came dismally out. Wharton glanced round, in the hope of seeing Dallas; but he was not to be seen. He signed to Squiff to go on.

"The fathead! Why isn't he here?" muttered the captain of the Remove. "He must be off his chump to leave us in the lurch like this!"

"Has the Bounder been up to his tricks again, I wonder?" said Peter Todd.

Wharton started. "The Bounder?" he repeated.

"Well, you know how he tried to keep Dallas out of a football match last term," said Peter. "He may be playing the same trick over again in the

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cricket. I don't believe he cares two-pence for a win for Greyfriars, so long as he dishes Dallas."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"By Jove, if that's it—" He drew a sharp breath. "Of course, that's it! Nothing else to account for it. Dallas is being kept away somehow!"

"If that's it, we'll jolly well make Smithy sorry for himself!" said Johnny Bull savagely.

"That won't pull this match out of the fire!" said Wharton bitterly. "And—Look!"

Squiff, the mighty batsman, was out! The "rot" had set in with a vengeance!

There was a roar of cheering from the Highcliffe crowd. Even Pousonby & Co., the slackers of Highcliffe, had gathered on the cricket field, and were cheering.

"Seven down!" groaned Wharton. "This isn't cricket—it's a procession! I've never seen the Remove put up such a rotten show—and mine as rotten as any! What filthy luck!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Man in!"

"If that ass Dallas—"

"Here!" came a panting voice.

"Here he is!" shouted Squiff.

Paul Dallas came up, panting.

"I'm ready," he gasped, "if it's not too late!"

Wharton gave him a grim look.

"I was kept away!" panted Dallas.

"I came over as quick as I could. But I'm ready to go on if you want me, Wharton!"

"Take a rest," said the captain of the Remove curtly. "You're winded. Man in, Pen!"

Penfold went to the wickets.

Paul sank down in a chair at the pavilion, panting for breath. He had ridden hard and fast to Highcliffe, and he was gasping, and the perspiration streamed down his face. Nugent had been left far behind on his bicycle.

Dick Penfold held the openy for a time. Bob Cherry was hitting hard now, and the runs were coming. But when Pen had the bowling again Wharton's brow grew anxious.

"Feel fit to go in next, Dallas?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, yes!" said Paul.

"What the thump kept you away?"

Paul's eyes gleamed.

"Smithy!" he said laconically.

"But what—"

Paul explained in a few words. There was a murmur of wrath from the Greyfriars cricketers round him.

"By gum, we'll give Smithy the ragging of his life for this!" said Johnny Bull. "The cheeky cad! The awful rotter!"

"Fishy came in useful," said Peter Todd. "Fancy that chump having a key to the punishment-room! Quelch would like to know that!"

"No wonder he vanished out of sight after dinner!" grinned Squiff. "Nobody thought of the punishment-room, as it's always kept locked up. Jolly lucky, as it turns out, that Fishy was there!"

"They're still hunting for him at Greyfriars," said Paul, with a smile. "I couldn't give him away, after he'd done me such a good turn. I sha'n't kick Fishy any more!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No; I think we might let Fishy off now, and let Smithy have it instead. Hallo! There's Pen down!"

He looked at Paul anxiously.

"Sure you feel rested? I'll leave you for last man if you like."

"I'm as right as rain."

"Then get going."

"Right-ho!"

And Paul went out with his bat. Frank Nugent joined the little crowd at the pavilion as Paul stood up at his wicket. Nugent was crimson with haste and gasping for breath. He dropped into the chair that Paul had vacated.

"How's it been going?" he asked.

"Rotten!" said Harry. "Eight down for twenty-four!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Still, Dallas is in time to bat. If he's in form we shall see a change, I hope. Bob's fixed for good, I think."

"Dallas looks all right," said Johnny Bull.

"He does, thank goodness!"

The Caterpillar, put on to bowl against Dallas, gave him a keen look. He had met Paul, but not as a cricketer. But he saw at a glance that the new recruit would not be an easy man to shift.

All the Greyfriars eyes were keenly on Paul. He had shown wonderful form at

the wickets, and if he was at his best now, the innings might yet be saved from disaster.

He soon showed that he was at his best.

The Caterpillar's bowling was as good as ever, but Paul knocked it away for runs every time. The over gave him twelve.

"Bravo!" roared Wharton.

"Good man there, old bean," the Caterpillar remarked to Courtenay, when the field crossed over.

The Highcliffe skipper nodded; he had already recognised that fact.

Paul Dallas was at his best, and it was a wonderful best. Bowler after bowler tried him in vain. And Bob Cherry, with a good man at the other end, was going stronger than ever. The Greyfriars batsmen, whose luck had been so bad, forgot their own bad luck as they watched the innings, and they cheered again and again. The runs went up as if by magic.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, knocking about the billiards-balls at the Cross Keys, in an atmosphere of smoke and dingy, beery faces, little dreamed of what was passing on the cricket ground at Highcliffe. His scheme had succeeded, as he believed, and it was not likely to occur to him that it had failed, as a result of Fisher T. Fish's latest money-making stunt. He had forgotten the existence of Fisher T. Fish.

"Hurrah!"

"Well hit!"

"Bravo!"

The Highcliffe field were getting more leather-hunting now than they wanted. Bob Cherry and Dallas seemed "set" for the day. The Greyfriars men fairly chortled when the board showed 100. And the runs were still going up.

Dallas was out at last, in a gallant attempt at four. He received quite an ovation as he came back to the pavilion, breathing hard, with a flushed and smiling face. Last man went in; but last man did not last long, and Bob Cherry was "not out" at the finish of the innings. The Greyfriars score stood at 110.

Bob Cherry thumped Dallas on the back when he came off.

"Good man!" he said. "Good man! I was going to scalp you for not turning up sooner! Now I won't."

Paul laughed.

"All serene now," said Harry Wharton. "They won't find us easy to beat after this!"

And Harry Wharton was right. When the Greyfriars charabanc rolled homeward under the setting sun, it carried a victorious team, and Paul Dallas was the hero of the hour in the cheery crowd.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith Takes His Punishment

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH came in too late for call-over that evening, and was duly given lines by Mr. Quelch and a sharp reprimand, which he received with his usual sardonic indifference. Then he walked into the Rag, where most of the Remove were gathered.

A shout greeted his entrance.

"Here's Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith faced the crowd of Remove fellows with a sneering grin. But his look changed as he saw Paul Dallas among them.

He started violently.

The Bouncer had supposed that Dallas was still locked up in the punishment-room. He could scarcely believe his

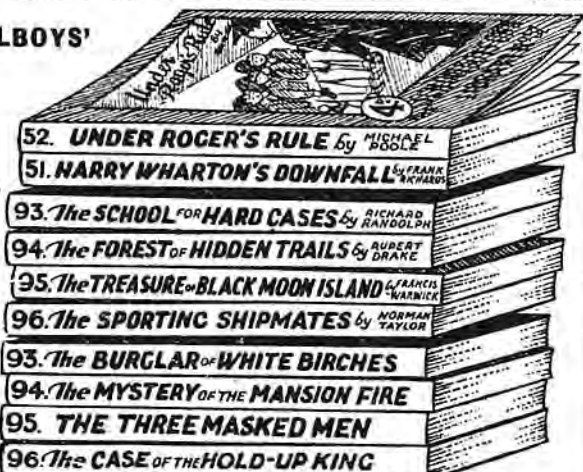
(Continued on page 27.)

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GRIT ALL THROUGH! "I can climb like a monkey, and swim like a fish," declares Jim Snow. And he can, too, and no error! What's more, he's got the sort of memory that doesn't forget a good turn. He loses mighty little time, anyway, in getting on the track of a precious gang of rogues who have carted off his best pal!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

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Jim Volunteers!

BILL seemed to recognise the wisdom of this statement, for some of the angry colour vanished from his cheeks, and that old look of perplexity crept into his eyes.

"Well, you've got a bloomin' lot to say, Dirk! What's your plan?"

"We want to watch where they're going to take that case. We'll find a boat and row out. If they take it aboard a ship we'll pass the word to the river police. If they land it somewhere we'll see the place they take it to, and I reckon I can raise enough boys to get Jack out of it. That's what we must do, and the sooner we get a move on with it the better. You and me and the kid will go, Bill. We'll have to leave the dog here, because they might recognise him."

Having decided on this course of action, they left the Emerald, entrusting Squall to Mrs. Bowker's care, and made their way to the riverside. There Dirk had no difficulty in borrowing a small rowing-boat.

"Just want to show this kid how the river looks at night," he remarked to the owner. "I'll bring her back all right."

They pushed off into the tide, Dirk rowing, with his uncle at the tiller. The river was on the ebb, and they passed swiftly across its dark, oily waters. Suddenly Bill made a gesture with his hands, and instantly Dirk stopped rowing, and began to back gently with his oars. There was the barge with the huge case on its deck not fifty yards away. It was anchored, and was lying some sixty yards from an old, decrepit quay. Jim cast one look about him, and then whispered in an agitated voice to Dirk:

"That's the place what I was taken to—where that Chinaman was, and Black Michael—where they was going to strangle me if Jack hadn't come."

Dirk backed the boat cautiously into the shadow of an empty barge.

"Do you hear that, Bill? Jim here says that's the Chinuk's place where he was taken to. That seems to show right

enough that Black Michael's in this. If Jack's in that case, they'll get him out later on and take him into the place, and then Heaven help the poor lad!"

It was Jim who pointed out that the gang might not necessarily follow this course. It might be just chance that they were anchored off the Chinaman's opium den. The case might be taken to a ship later on. As he pointed out, how was anyone to know, if the case were taken to a ship, that Jack was still inside the case? That might be simply a bluff, and while they thought the boy was aboard a ship, he might have been smuggled into the opium den.

"You're right there, Jim, but I don't know how we're going to find out what they do," Dirk exclaimed, scratching his head.

The boy caught him by the arm. His pale face twitched eagerly.

"I can swim same as a fish, guv'nor, and I can climb like a monkey. I bet

I could get to that barge's anchor chain and board her. If only you'll let me, guv'nor, I'd like to have a shot."

Dirk grinned at him appreciatively.

"That's got the right stuff in thee, lad. What do you say, Bill? Shall we let the kid have a shot at it? It's about our only chance of keeping track of what their game is."

"They'll skin him if they catch him," Bill objected.

"But they won't catch me, mister—no! If I'm looking out. I'll be over the side before they can touch me. You'll let me go, won't you?"

Without waiting for their permission—as if taking it for granted that they would consent—Jim Snow stripped off his torn shirt and removed his boots. When he had done this his only other garment was his trousers.

"We'll hang about down stream, so as you won't have a hard swim of it, Jim, and be ready to pick you up," Dirk whispered. "Good luck to you, son."

Jack slipped noiselessly into the water, and then, releasing his hold of the gunwale, allowed himself to drift with the tide past the barge. Presently they saw him swimming directly across the river. Then, once he was in a direct line with the barge, he allowed himself to float down towards the chain. A few minutes later and he had grasped it. The two men watched him anxiously as he raised his emaciated little body out of the water and, hand-over-hand, climbed up the chain.

"Gosh, he's done it!" Dirk exclaimed. "We'd better get to a position down stream and wait for him. He's a good kid that, and I hope nothing happens to him."

Perhaps neither of the two men were in a position to estimate properly the courage with which Jim Snow was inspired. He had not minded the swim nor his acrobatic climb up the chain. It was when he reached the black bows of the barge that he began to grow anxious. Over there on his left was the sinister house which screened behind its mouldering brick walls the infamous Chinese den where he had so very

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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

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

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

JIM SNOW, a wail whom Jack has befriended, promises to keep a watchful eye on Black Michael and his gang.

Later, having carried out a commission to take a huge packing-case to Linchouse, Bowker makes the startling discovery that Jack Horner has vanished. Then Bill is led to believe from the strange antics and obvious agitation of Squall that the boy is in the case. This suspicion develops into a certainty from information supplied by Jim Snow, and Bowker at once determines to board the barge to which the case has been transferred. But they won't let you get within a mile of 'em!" says his nephew. (Now read on.)

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nearly met his end. He was going now deliberately back to where that gang, who had threatened his life, were stationed. If they caught him there would be no Jack—no Squall to come to his rescue. He had only his wits and his quickness to help him.

There rose before his eyes a vision of the terrifying figure of Black Michael. He felt again the man's fingers about his throat. A momentary panic seized upon him. There was still time to go back. And then Jim remembered how Jack had not hesitated to come to his aid. He must repay that debt. As he clutched at the bows he summoned together all his courage. He knew that the moment of extreme danger had arrived. There might be men on board keeping watch, and if they caught him they would be utterly pitiless—utterly without mercy.

But he must take the risk. Drawing in a long breath—thinking for one moment of his mother in that attic in Coram Alley which he had been taught to regard as home—Jim drew his head above the gunwale.

Now he could see the deck of the barge, and at the sight that presented itself before his eyes he almost released his hold and slipped back into the water. There was quite a dozen men on the deck. For a panic-stricken second he was firmly convinced that they had seen him. Only presently did he realise that they all had their backs to him, and were too busily occupied even to think of keeping a look-out. In a flash he had slipped a leg across the side of the barge, and, landing on the deck, had slid noiselessly to the shelter of the canvas-covered donkey-engine. Lying there at full length, he could see everything that was going on.

There were, he discovered, when he came to count them, no less than thirteen men standing on the deck—an unlucky number, he reflected. They were gathered about the great case, the sides of which were illuminated by hurricane lamps placed on the deck. One man stood somewhat apart, his hands behind his back, watching the operations of another man who was on his knees by the side of the case, apparently trying to force an entry. Jim had no doubts as to who that man was, and he was prepared for the shock when he saw him presently turn his head, and he recognised Black Michael.

The leader of the gang was evidently in the last stages of impatience. There had been obviously some hitch in his plans. Jim could hear his voice—sharp and bitter and sneering, like the lash of a whip.

"I thought you had some reputation as a cracksman! You don't seem to have deserved the seven years you served, if you make such a bungling job as this."

The man on his knees looked round apologetically.

"I'm doing my best, guv'nor!"

"Don't talk, man. Get on with the job. Somebody ought to have had the sense to realise, when this case was constructed, that there ought to have been a means of opening it from the outside as well as from the inside."

The man renewed his attack upon the case. Two or three minutes went by, and then Jim heard a click, followed by an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Done it, guv'nor!"

Jim saw a portion of the side of the case slide back, disclosing a dark aperture. Into this, at an order from Black Michael, three of the gang climbed. There was silence for a moment, and

then the sound of a voice that sent a thrill through Jim. It was Jack's voice.

"You brutes! Why have you brought me here? What am I supposed to have done that you should treat me like this?"

The only reply was an outburst of brutal laughter. Now Jim watched those three men appear again. As they crossed the threshold of the case he saw that they were holding between them the figure of a boy in a long flannel shirt. Even at that distance he could make out the freckled face and the shining eyes and square shoulders of his friend.

Jack was struggling violently, demanding to know where he was being taken, but his captors made no reply. They had brought him on deck now. Suddenly they twisted him about. The rest of the gang had stepped back, leaving the space about the case clear except for the figure of Black Michael. Jack was still struggling.

And then Jim saw an amazing thing happen. As Jack was forced to face the leader of the gang, Black Michael made a gesture with his hands.

"Stand still!" he commanded.

Instantly Jack's figure stiffened. He stood erect in his flannel nightshirt, looking straight in front of him, moving neither hand nor foot. And as Jim Snow saw that he realised that Black Michael had once again cast his sinister, mysterious influence over his friend.

The Gang's Headquarters!

JIM SNOW shivered with horror. He would like to have shut his eyes, but that strange, eerie scene that was being enacted on the deck of the barge gripped him with a dreadful fascination. He could see the members of the gang watching their leader with an air of awe and admiration. It was clear that it was these mysterious powers employed by Black Michael that gave him his sway and authority over these brutes.

"You will keep asleep, my lad, until I want you to wake up. And I shall want you to wake up. I've something to pay you back for all the trouble you've caused me."

There was the very venom of hate and cruelty in the velvety voice of the man. Jim Snow found himself wondering what was to be the next detail in this programme of horror which he was witnessing. He was not left long in doubt.

"We'll take the boy ashore in a quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Black Michael, looking at his watch. "We shall have no trouble with him now. I shall want four of you men with me. The others can deliver this case to the Ostend. We must carry the farce through to a finish to throw anyone off the scent who may have suspicions—though I don't know what Messrs. Lamond & Co. of Brussels, will think when they receive this empty."

It had pleased Black Michael so far to relax from his stern, aloof attitude as to condescend to make a mild jest. The gang laughed like a class of syphantic schoolboys at the feeble joke of their master's. To Jim Snow what mattered in that speech was not its malevolent humour, but the information it contained. The case was to be put aboard the steamship Ostend for transport in Brussels, in order to pull the wool over the eyes of the police should there be any inquiries. The boy, however, for whom that case had been constructed, was to be taken ashore in a quarter of an hour to a destination which Jim Snow had no difficulty in guessing.

He had a quarter of an hour, and it would not be one second too long for what he had to do. It was obviously time for him to be going. On hands and knees he crawled back from the shelter of the donkey-engine to the bows, slipped like a shadow across the side, and grasping the anchor chain descended hand-over-hand until he reached the water. He was in such haste now—consumed with such anxiety to take the news he had discovered to Bill Bowker and his nephew—that he forgot his caution. Before he quite realised what was happening his feet had made a splash in the water. From the barge he heard Black Michael's voice.

"What was that?"

A rush of feet along the deck reached the ears of Jim Snow. Without a moment's hesitation the boy released his hold of the chain and allowed himself to sink some feet below the surface of the water. Keeping at that depth, he swam with all his strength, helped by the tide, and never ventured to come to the surface until his lungs seemed near to bursting. Even then he lay on his back with only his nose and mouth above water. In that position he could watch the barge receding into the distance.

He began to realise how cold it was. If he could have swum, he could have kept himself more or less warm, but he dared not swim for fear of attracting the attention of Black Michael and his gang. So much depended on his not being seen or caught. And then when he felt his body becoming cramped, he heard the faint sound of an oar on the water a few yards to his right. With his hands he steered himself in the direction of that sound. Some minutes elapsed, and then he caught a glimpse of the outline of a boat. The next instant a huge hand was reached out of the blackness, and he was gripped and pulled into the boat. As he lay there shivering with the cold, Bill and Dirk questioned him.

"He was in that case, I seed 'em take 'im out. And that there Black Michael has done something to him. He's standing there on the deck, all stiff and funny-like, looking straight in front of 'im."

"Hip!" began Dirk, and then paused. "Blowed if I can ever remember that name, but you know what I mean, Bill. Carry on, Jim!"

"And they're going to take him ashore in a quarter of an hour. The case is to be taken to Ostend and then to be sent to Brussels, just to kid anyone who might be suspicious. It was a quarter of an hour when I left the barge, but it can't be more than ten minutes now."

"How many men are they taking with them—do you know that?" Dirk inquired.

"I heard 'em say as they'd want four. The others are to take the case to the ship."

Uncle and nephew exchanged glances. It was Bill who expressed what was in both their minds.

"If we can't tackle four of 'em, with that there Black Michael thrown in, then I'm a Dutchman, Dirk. It ain't as if you'd got time to go and get any of your pals together. It seems to me as if we've got to tackle this job by ourselves."

Dirk grinned.

"What a regular old fire-eater you are, Bill! Nobody'd take you for the quiet, law-abiding skipper of the monkey-boat Emerald, or the husband of Aunt Maggie."

"Don't you say anything against your aunt, my lad! That I won't ave! And, anyway, it's no time to be talking. We've got to act, and act smart. Seems to me



As the trio stared at the gruesome figure, they heard a splash, followed by a scream of pain. Then, looking up, they saw in the ceiling the end of a small pipe from which some liquid dripped. It was so placed that the drops fell on the back of the man. "This is some Chink's torture!" growled Dirk. (See Page 26.)

as we'd best tackle 'em as they're landing."

He turned to the boy, who had now drawn on his shirt and boots.

"When you was took to that Chink's den, where did they land you?"

"On that bit of a quay, guv'nor!" Jim replied. "The house is just at the back of the quay. It ain't got no windows or doors, as you can see, but there's a trap-door painted to look like the brickwork that opens from the inside."

He described the opening to the chute which led down into those underground rooms which Brilliant Sing used as an opium-den.

"Well, we can't land on the quay or they'll see us and alter their plans!" Dirk broke in. "Best thing we can do is to make what they call a detour, Bill, if you know what I mean—land somewhere below this here place and then make our way along the bank until we get to it. I guess we've got to hurry."

He bent to the oars and sent the boat flying across the river until the bows struck a stretch of mud. Waiting only to throw out the anchor, he stepped overboard, followed by Bill and Jim. They had a long wade through the mud, into which they sunk almost to their knees till they reached terra firma. Even then they found that their difficulties were not over. Between the quay outside the opium den and the place where they found themselves there were interposed innumerable obstacles—fences, walls covered with broken bottles and, in one particularly bad place, barbed wire.

Jim Snow took no time in surmounting these obstacles, but it was quite a different matter for Bill Bowker and

Dirk. Agility was not their strong point, and they growled and puffed as they dragged themselves painfully over these difficulties.

"You took us too far down, Dirk," Bill grumbled, as he dragged himself with difficulty over a fence. "It seems to me as we're going to be late."

Bill looked hastily at his watch. The time specified by Jim was already up.

"Come on," he said desperately; "it can't be much farther!"

They slipped across some muddy ground piled with garbage, to find themselves confronted by a fence. Through the bars of that fence they saw at last the objective towards which they had been struggling. There was the mouldering quay backed by the blank wall of the house, whose screen of decrepit bricks hid so many sinister mysteries. And they saw something else. A boat was alongside the quay. Four men were already standing there—one of them in the act of opening the trap-door, while a fifth was just landing followed by a strange, stiff little figure in a long flannel nightshirt. And then it dawned upon all of them that they were too late. Another moment and Black Michael and his party would have disappeared through the trap-door, and Jack's fate would have been sealed.

Dirk sprang desperately at the top of the fence, trying to pull himself over. As he did so a portion of the rotting woodwork gave way in his hands, and he fell backwards on the ground. Bill made an attempt, but his progress was very slow. Only Jim managed to negotiate that last of the obstacles. He was alone there at the end of the quay in the shadows, utterly helpless to aid

the unfortunate boy who was being led forcibly into that den of infamy.

The trap-door was open. Already one of the men had disappeared into the interior at an order from Black Michael. Bill and Dirk were still struggling to surmount the fence. It seemed to Jim Snow that nothing could save his friend. He was just on the point of risking everything and dashing forward in a vain attempt to save Jack, when round the corner of the house at the other end of the quay, appeared an unexpected apparition.

Chinese Torture!

UP in the sky a watery moon, veiled by wisps of cloud, shed its light upon the scene. It illuminated the long, gaunt figure of what looked like a wolf that had strayed from its primeval pack in some distant part of the world. It came along the quay with its nose to the ground. Jim felt an almost uncontrollable desire to cheer.

It was Squall—how he came there he could not think—but it was Squall. Jack's wolf-dog, a match for four unarmed men, with a ferocious courage that nothing could equal. If only Bill and Dirk could surmount that fence and join him, they had an ally now which made victory certain.

He watched breathless. Squall was no longer running by scent now. He had seen his quarry. He lifted his head, and the boy could see the red gleam in his eyes. Through his open mouth

glistened his bared fangs. Swiftly he bore down on the unconscious figure by the trap-door. Suddenly he sprang almost vertically into the air, coming down with his fore-paws on the back of one of the waiting men. There was a scream of terror as the man measured his length upon the ground, followed instantly by a ferocious uproar.

The wolf-dog was getting to work, twisting rapidly on his feet. He slashed at arms and neck and legs. The three men about Black Michael and his captive had broken. As if scenting his main enemy the huge animal backed for a moment to spring.

And then happened an extraordinary thing. Jim could see that Black Michael was not looking at the dog, but had his eyes fixed upon Jack. The boy turned swiftly, with a curious, trance-like movement.

"Down. Squall," he exclaimed—"Down!"

Instantly Squall crouched on the mouldering brickwork of the quay. Jim heard Black Michael laugh. Then he spoke to Jack.

"In with you, my lad—and quick about it."

Jack disappeared through the trap, but as Black Michael sought to follow him the wolf-dog, still obediently motionless, growled ominously.

"Here, you fools. You've got knives—use them on that dog, and throw his carcass into the river!"

Having given that order, and disregarding Squall, Black Michael stepped through the trap and vanished. Jim saw the three men draw their knives. One of them stepped cautiously in front of the crouched dog, while the others approached him from behind.

It was at that critical moment, when Squall's fate seemed sealed, that a huge, bulky figure flashed past Jim. It was Dirk, and in his brawny hand was a stake that he had torn from the fence. With the moonlight illuminating his fair hair and his big blue eyes, he rushed down the quay like some Viking of old landing from his dragon ship, to storm a defending foe.

He was among those three men before they were aware of his coming, and he dealt with them thoroughly and completely. The man who was standing with his back to him he knocked into the water with a blow of his fist. Avoiding Squall by a miracle, he sprang straight at the two men who, with knives in their hands, were standing there. The next they weren't.

Jim rushed forward, and as he did so Bill Bowker came rumbling past him. Dirk called cheerfully to his uncle.

"Sither, Uncle Bill, just prop you chap against the wall and start squeezing the life out of him until he tells you what his name is. Look sharp, old son!"

Bill stooped down and made a dive with his hand. When he stood erect he was holding one of Black Michael's gang by the throat. Following the directions he had received from his nephew, he placed his victim with his back to the wall, and proceeded to slowly tighten his grip.

"Spit out your name, lad, and look sharp about it! What did they call you in this here gang? Out with it!"

"Jock!" the man spluttered.

"Nevvey—he says his name is Jock!" Bill exclaimed.

"He'll be a Scotchman likely," replied Dirk, who was now engaged in a similar operation on another

member of the gang. "Pawse him over the head, Bill, and chuck him in the river for a wash. We ain't got no time to lose. This ugly-eyed son of a sea-cook says his name is Reub, and I should think it was."

Bill jerked his victim forward, hit him a resounding smack on the point of the jaw with his disengaged hand, and, as the man sank forward, losing consciousness, he twisted him round and flung him without any apparent effort over the side of the quay into the water. There was a splash followed instantly by another, as Dirk dealt similarly with his man.

"What do we do now, Dirk?" Bill inquired simply.

"Guess we're for the bogey hole, uncle. That's where Jack's gone, and we've got to get him out. There's going to be a rough house in this Chink's den before we're through."

As Dirk made for the open trap-door Bill stopped him.

"What about Squall, Dirk?"

"Bring him along with you, Bill, and remember if you meet anybody in the dark that your name's Jock, and you've got a Scotch accent and you live on whiskey and porridge. And if you're ever talking to your old pal here, he's Reub."

Without more ado, Dirk launched himself through the trap-door and disappeared. Jim Snow, who had been given no part in this performance, did not wait for permission, but slid after him. He had hardly reached the bottom when Bill Bowker, holding Squall by the collar, collapsed on the top of him.

"Crums! What's this here game?" roared Bill in a tone of exasperation.

Out of the darkness came Dirk's voice:

"Garn, you silly old juggins! What do you want to be shouting for? That ain't Scotch, besides, Jim, where do we go now?"

Jim disentangled himself from Bill, and, holding Dirk's hand, led the way down the twisting passage. He had just got to the corner where he remembered it ran at right-angles, when from somewhere hard by came a sob of pain. They all halted.

"Gosh! What was that?" exclaimed Dirk in an awestruck voice.

Again that sobbing moan broke on their ears, Dirk fumbled in his pocket for his box of matches.

"I've got to see what that is!" he muttered.

A little patch of yellow flame lit up the passage. On their immediate right was a door flush with the wall, from the other side of which came those moans of pain.

Dirk grasped the handle and turned it. The door opened inwards under his pressure. Now those sobs of pain were more distinct. Before the match expired they glimpsed the shadowy outline of a man, and then abruptly the light went out.

"Who's there?" Dirk whispered.

"It's me, Curly! For goodness' sake, mate, let me loose! I can't bear no more!"

"Where are you? I can't see you." There was another agonised moan of pain, and then again Curly's voice spoke.

"There's a switch on the left. But close the door, mate, before you turn the light on, and don't let the guv'nor see you!"

They all crowded into the darkened

room and closed the door. It was Jim who, fumbling along the wall, found the switch and turned on the electric light.

A room about ten feet square, with a cement floor, walls, and ceiling, sprang out of the darkness. But it was not the room itself upon which their attention was riveted. It was the figure in the centre of the room.

He was stripped to the waist and bound by his wrists and ankles to a steel triangle that kept him immovable. His bare back was lacerated and bleeding, and, mingled with the blood was some curious saline liquid that was coating his bruised and lacerated flesh with a film of white.

Even as they stared at that gruesome figure spellbound, they heard a splash, followed by a scream of agonising pain. Looking up, they saw in the ceiling the end of a small pipe, from which some liquid dropped. It was so placed that the drops fell upon the back of the man.

"This is some durned Chink's torture!" growled Dirk.

Springing forward, with a knife in his hand, he cut the bonds that bound Curly.

"What's this mean?" Dirk demanded.

"Salt and some acid," Curly sobbed. "Black Michael give me a hundred lashes 'cos he said I'd messed that job at Weald Park, and then that durned Chink turned on one of his Chinese tortures, though it was him whose fault it was that that kid got away. If you only knew what I've been suffering, mates!"

He began to cry like a child. Bill went across to him and put a hand on his shoulders.

"You're the bloke wot shoved your gun in my ribs, ain't yer?"

The man looked at him dazedly through his tears. They could see the utter astonishment in his face.

"How did you get here?" he gasped.

"We got here all right, and we're going to play old Harry in this place before we leave. Black Michael give you a hundred and treated you to this here torture, did he? You can't be exactly loving him, and if you want to get your own back, now's your chance!"

An expression of almost diabolical hate crept into the man's face.

"Just give me the chance, mate. I'd like to be alone with him with everything square between us. I'd roast him slow over a fire!"

"He ain't half a nice, well-brought-up young gent!" exclaimed Dirk. "But here, we can't waste time talking. If you want to get some of your own back on Black Michael, will you put us wise as to what you think they'll be doing and where we'll find 'em? They've got that boy, and we mean to have 'im back!"

Into the anger and hate that Curly's face expressed there crept now a look of awe.

"You'll never do it, mate. You don't know Black Michael. You done me a good turn, and I don't want to see no harm come to you. You beat it while you've got the chance!"

"Not on your life!" retorted Dirk. "We know how to deal with that guy. Bill and me here has got a punch that'll put domino to any little game of his!"

(Now look out for next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums. You'll enjoy every line of it.)

THE (OMPLETE OUTSIDER!

(Continued from page 22.)

eyes as he saw him in the Remove crowd in the Rag.

"You—here!" the Bounder exclaimed. "Yes, you cad!" said Dallas scornfully.

"But—how—" The Bounder almost stammered.

"I guess I was the galoot that worked the oracle, Smithy," chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Put it down to little me."

Smithy stared at the business man of the Remove.

"You've failed, you end!" said Harry Wharton contemptuously. "Fishy had a key to the punishment-room, and that was where he had hidden himself. He was hiding in the cupboard there when you put Dallas' bat in the room, and when you locked Dallas in. Do you understand now, you rotter?"

The Bounder's eyes burned.

He had failed—by a chance that could not possibly have been foreseen or guarded against—as he seemed fated to fail in all his cunning scheming against the fellow he chose to regard as an enemy.

"So—so Dallas played at Highcliffe after all?" he muttered thickly.

"Yes, and won the match for us," said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, pile it on!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"That's the fact," said Bob Cherry. "You didn't care if you chucked away a School match, you awful rotter!"

Vernon-Smith's lip curled. "You could have had a better man in the team if you'd wanted him," he sneered. "You needn't tell me that Dallas was any good against Highcliffe, as I sha'n't believe it!"

"Believe it or not as you like," said Wharton, "but it was Dallas who pulled the game out of the fire and saved us from a defeat. We should have been beaten if Fishy had not let him out of the punishment-room in time to come over to Highcliffe. We're letting Fishy off, but you've got to answer for what you did, Smithy. You can keep up your feud with Dallas, or any other fellow, as much as you like, but when you start to muck up School matches, it's time you had a lesson. Collar him!"

"Do you think I didn't know what to expect?" sneered the Bounder. "And if I've failed this time, I sha'n't fail next time!"

"There won't be any next time after what you're going to get this time!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Collar him!"

The Bounder, with set teeth and gleaming eyes, struck out savagely as he was collared by the crowd of Removites. But his resistance was not of much avail.

For the next ten minutes the Rag was a scene of wild excitement, and the Bounder went through such a ragging as he had never experienced before.

When it was over and the juniors streamed out of the Rag, the Bounder was left breathless and gasping. He sat up dizzily. It was some time before he was able to limp away to his study. There, he flung himself into a chair, with a black brow and a bitter heart. He had failed—failed once more, and was more an Ishmael than ever in his Form. No one came to the study—even Skinner kept away—and the Bounder, as he sat aching and dizzy, in solitude and misery, felt that he was at the end of his tether. The thought was in his mind of writing to his father to ask to be taken away from Greyfriars.

But at that thought, of going, defeated, disgraced, and leaving his enemy in possession of the field, a blaze came into his eyes. He shook his head. His indomitable spirit was still unconquered and his chance would come yet! It should come—it must come!

THE END.

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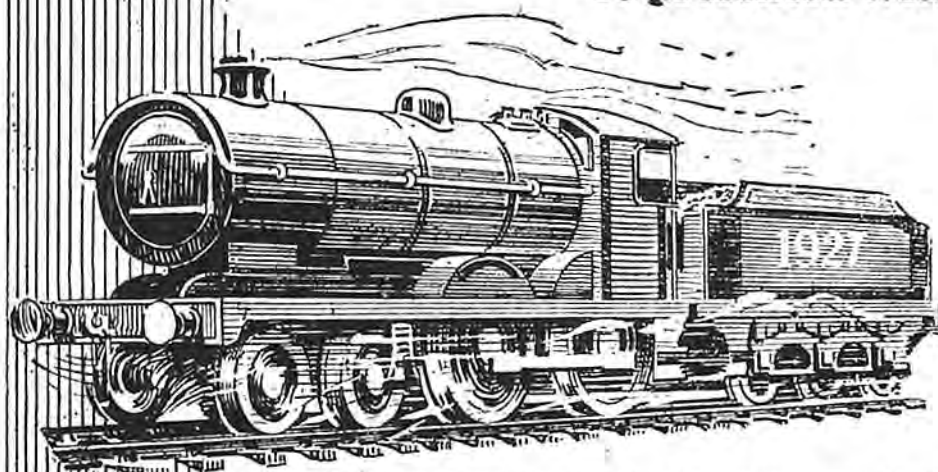
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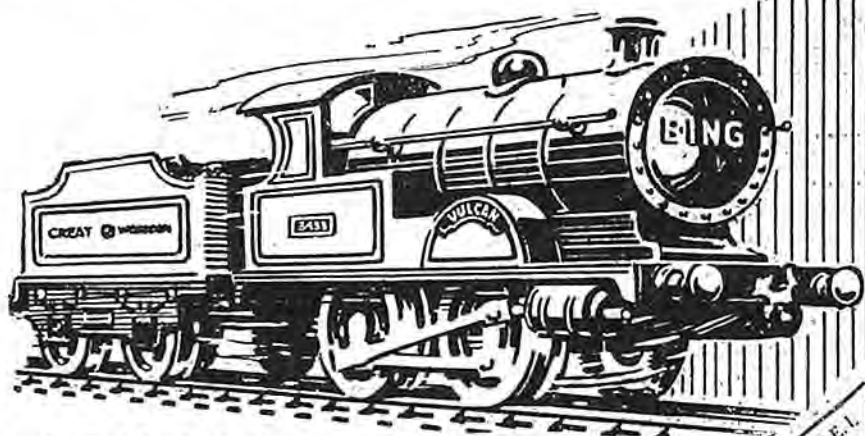


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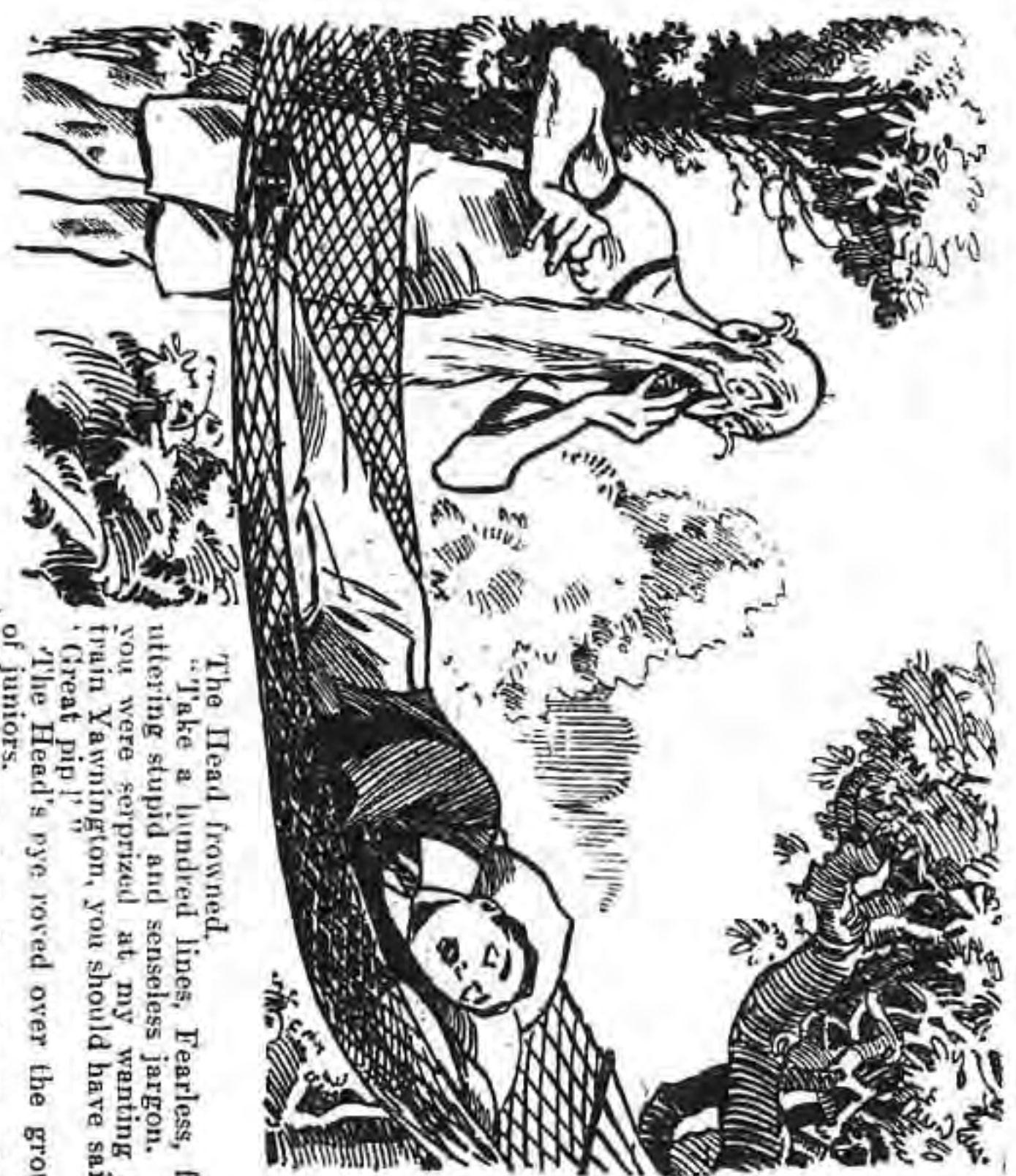
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Stirring Up The Snacker!

Do you think you could win a race if my energetic well-wisher helped you along with a birch? Grooooooh! Reckon Yawnington of the Fourth at St. Sam's ought to know something about that! Read his adventures—and misadventures—in this week's special "shocker," by the one and only DICKY NUGENT.



The Head frowned.

"Take a hundred lines, Fearless, for uttering stupid and senseless jargon. If you were seized at my wanting to train Yawnington, you should have said, 'Great pip!'"

The Head's eye roved over the group of juniors.

"Does any boy here know where Yawnington is?" he demanded.

There was a general shaking of heads. Jack Jolly & Co. had a pretty shrewd idea where Yawnington was, but they didn't say so. The Snacker of St. Sam's was doubtless curled up on his study sofa, dreaming away the golden hours of youth. For Yawnington, as his school-fellows affectionately called him, was an incurable slacker. He was always the first fellow to retire and the last to rise; and he was in the habit of going to sleep at strange times, and in strange places. He had even been known to take forty winks in the Form-room, while lessons were proceeding, and on one occasion he had actually dozed over his dinner. "It's the little daily doses that does it," was Yawnington's motto. And he took so many little daily doses that Jack Jolly & Co. had begun to wonder whether he was afflicted with sleepy sickness.

"Yawnington must be found at once!" said the Head. "You boys will assist me in finding him. Come along!"

Doctor Birchmell stalked into the building, with a grinning crowd of juniors at his heels. "I've got a bit of 'community hawling,'" said the Head. "Now, all together! YAWNINGTON!"

"YAWNINGTON!" eked the juniors, at the top of their lungs. "Yawning!" roared the Head.

"Where the merry dickens are you?" shouted the Head.

"Yes, where the merry dickens are you?" eked the juniors faithfully. The procession passed through the Hall, and along the Fourth Form passage; and their "community hawling" was so effective that it could be heard from one end of St. Sam's to the other. Study doors opened up and down the passage, and startled fellows peeped out, looking even more startled on catching sight of the Head in his novel attire.

"Help me to find Yawnington, my boys," said the Head a little hoarsely. "I've nearly broken a blood-vessel shouting his name, but the young rascal has not put in an appearance. Which is his study?"

"Here we are, sir!" said Jack Jolly, kicking open a door.

The Head frowned into the apartment; but if he expected to see Yawnington reclining on the sofa he was disappointed. The study was empty. "Oh, blow!" growled the Head. "This is most egg-spectating! Am I to wait the whole of the afternoon searching for that wretched boy?"

"Try the dorm, sir," suggested Jack Jolly. "Try the tuckshop," suggested Merry. "Try the bath-rooms," suggested Bright. "Might be Yawning's annual bath day."

The Head frowned. "This way, my pippins!" he said. He led the way to the Fourth Form dormitory, but drew blank. He tried the tuckshop, and the library, with no better success. Then he tried the jimmy nasium, and the box-rooms, and the Junior Common-room. But Yawnington of the Fourth was not to be found. It really seemed as if the earth must have opened and swallowed him up.

St. Sam's was ransacked from end to end, and still there was no sign of Yawnington—not so much as his shadow. The Head's brow grew black, and he clicked his false teeth with annoyance. "Really, really, this is too bad!" he declared. "Where is my wandering boy to-night—I mean, this afternoon?"

"Must be out of gates, sir," said Frank Fearless. "Impossible!" said the Head. "I gave Fossil, the porter, strict injunctions that Yawnington was not to pass out of the school premises this afternoon. Nevertheless, I will question Fossil."

The Head marched down to the school gates, his long beard waving in the breeze. By this time his wrath was equal to the wrath of Jove of old. Fossil, the porter, was standing by his lodge.

"Have you seen Yawnington?" demanded the Head.

"No, sir."

"He has not passed out of gates?"

"Not likely, sir, after your destruction to me that he wasn't to be abroad out!"

The Head scratched his bald pate in perplexity. "Well, this is a rum go!" he ejaculated. "We've hunted high and low for the young weep. We've left no turn unturned—I mean, stone unturned—in our efforts to find him. But he's a sassy rascal! I shall have to abandon my intention of coaching him this afternoon. But wait till I see the young rascal! I'll birch him black and blue for giving me all this trouble!"

The Head waved his hand towards Jack Jolly & Co. "You can resume your game of football, my boys. The quest for Yawnington is a wash-out."

The juniors scuttled away; and the Head, in high dudgeon, stalked off to his garden, with the intention of playing croquet with his daughter Molly.

Suspended between two apple-trees was a cosy hammock, which swayed slightly in the breeze. The hammock was occupied, and the Head concluded that his charming daughter was enjoying an afternoon nap.

With a mischievous twinkle in his eye, Doctor Birchmell plucked a blade of grass, with the idea of tickling Molly into wakefulness. On reaching the hammock, however,

he reserved the shock of his life. For, instead of the charming Miss Molly, the hammock was occupied by Yawnington of the Fourth!

"My only aunt!" gasped the Head. "Of all the blessed nerve! This young rascal has had the brazen audacity to trespass in my garden, and commandeer my hammock! And I've spent the best part of an hour tramping up and down the school, hunting for him! It's the absolute giddy limit!"

All unconscious of the fact that his headmaster was bending over him, Yawnington slumbered. It was a pleasant slumber, he was enjoying—"full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing," as the poet Keats says in his poem.

But Yawnington's slumbers were not destined to proceed without interruption. The Head saw to that. Pouncing upon the hammock with a savage snarl, he promptly turned it upside-down.

Crash! Yawnington shot out of the hammock like a stone from a catapult. He was sprawled on the grass, and sat up dazedly, blinking at the strange apparition of the Head in running-shorts.

"Begad! This must be nightmare!" murmured Yawnington. "And this ugly monster, dressed in running togs, is the Head."

Doctor Birchmell fairly danced with rage. "Enuff!" he thundered. "Do not dare to utter another word of treason! I am no shadowy dejection, Yawnington. I am your headmaster, in flesh and blood!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Come with me!" rasped the Head. "I'll learn you! I'll learn you to trespass upon my private property, and to pass yourself in my hammock! Come!"

So saying, the Head grabbed Yawnington by the ear, and hauled him to his feet, and marched him away to his study. It seemed to Yawnington, at first, that he was in the throws of a nightmare; but he soon realized that it was the grim reality. Snorting with rage, the Head piloted him through a crowd of wondering juniors.

"Hallo!" eggshelmed Jack Jolly. "Yawning's found! Where's he been hiding, I wonder?"

The Head looks perfectly dumfounded. "It's a flogging for poor old Yawning, I guess."

And a flogging it was, laid on with all the vigour of Dr. Birchmell's right arm.



Swish, swish, swish!

If anything was needed to restore Yawnington to a state of comatose wakefulness that birching did the trick. Yawning squirmed and squealed, and his legs thrashed the air like flails. He felt quite limp by the time the Head had finished.

"There!" panted Doctor Birchmell. "Let that be a lesson to you, you lazy, good-for-nothing scamp! You will go now and get into your running attire and wait upon me in the quad."

"Yow-ow-ow!" groaned Yawnington. "What's the bright idea, sir?"

"I'm going to put you through your paces," eggshelmed the Head. "I promise your great-grandfather, Sir Frederick Fungus, that I would train you for the Junior Sports, and enable you to win the Silver Cup which is being offered by the Grovers to the best individual athlete. If I succeed in making you the junior champion, Sir Freddie has agreed to reward me with a liver. But I am running past myself. I did not mean to suggest that there was any bribery or corruption about this business."

Yawnington looked quite taken aback. "Good gad, sir," he gasped, "you'll never make a champion of me! I'm no good whatever at sports."

The Head grinned. "It's wonderful what can be done with roat material!" he chuckled. "Under my valuable tuition you will soon be able to do the hundred yards in half an hour, and the mile in a single morning. Back up and get into your togs! I shall be waiting for you in the quad!"

With a rye and roofful commenance the dismayed Yawnington limped out of the Head's study.

II.

YAWNINGTON fell asleep over his changing, which was now scripping, for he fell asleep over most things.

The Head sent a junior to fetch him; and Yawning was discovered reclining on his bed, in a state of "drib-bill—that is to say, he had changed into his study."

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