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- - BY - -

## FRANK RICHARDS.

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Not Nice for Bob Cherry!

BOB CHERRY snorted.

Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, had various ways of expressing his feelings. When he was jolly, he whistled, with a shrillness and untunefulness that set everybody else's nerves on edge. When he was angered, he frowned, and frequently hit out straight from the shoulder. When he was annoyed and disgusted, he snorted. On the present occasion he was evidently annoyed and disgusted, for he snorted—twice!

He was standing in the hall, reading a letter he had taken down from the rack, and just opened. He had just come in from footer practice, and he had a coat on, and two long calves in startling hose showing under his coat, to say nothing of an enormous pair of boots. He had taken the letter down carelessly and opened it, asking Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent to wait while he looked at it. It was a letter from home, and if there was a remittance in it, it meant something extra special for tea in Bob Cherry's study, and he meant to ask Nugent and Wharton to share it.

But it wasn't a remittance.

It was a letter, longer than usual; and the contents evidently disturbed the sunny equanimity of Bob Cherry. He began by frowning, he continued by growling, and he finished by snorting. Harry Wharton and Nugent watched him with considerable interest. Bob finally crumpled up the letter in his hand and delivered himself of a third snort, more emphatic than the previous two. Then he spoke for the first time, and his remark was:

"Well, I'm blowed!"

"Go hon!" said Nugent cheerfully.

"I'm blowed!" repeated Bob, crescendo.

"Not bad news from home?" asked Harry Wharton, looking concerned.

"Yes."

"Major Cherry ill?"

"No; the pater's all right."

"Your mother——"


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"Oh, she's all serene."

"Nobody sick?"

"No!"

"Then what's wrong?"

"Everything."

"Too bad!" said Nugent sympathetically. "But give it a name. What's the matter? Landlord distrained for the rent?"

"Oh, don't be an ass."

"Hire purchase furniture got to go back?"

"Fathead!"

"Your Aunt Jane coming to see you?"

"Chump!"

"Well, I give it up," said Nugent. "I can't guess it. What's the matter?"

"Oh, blow."

"Certainly, if it will do any good. But what has happened, you duffer? Can't you explain?"

Bob Cherry grunted in a most exasperated manner.

"Oh, it's rotten!" he exclaimed.

"But what——"

"I'm jolly well not going to stand it."

"Not going to stand what?"

"It!" roared Bob Cherry. "I never could stand the fellow, and I'm not going to begin now. Why should I?"

Nugent laughed.

"I don't see why you should," he agreed soothingly. "Try sitting down."

"Ass!"

"Thanks. We may as well go up to the study and get tea," said Frank imperturbably. "You can come and sit at our frugal board, Bob, if you like, as the remittance hasn't come. We have shrimp paste and sardines——"

"Oh, ring off," growled Bob Cherry. "It's not fair."

"What—not shrimp paste and sardines?"

"Fathead! I'm not talking about shrimp paste and sardines!" roared Bob; "I'm talking about this letter. I'm not going to stand it. I shall wire to my uncle."

"Do," said Nugent cheerfully. "Wire to your aunt, too, if it will be any comfort. Wire to your pater and mater and your little brother. Wire to——"

"Oh, shut up! I won't have him planked on me! What the deuce does he want to come to Greyfriars for? Eh?"

"Your uncle?"

"No, ass—my cousin."

"Oh, I see," said Frank Nugent. "Now we're getting at it. Your cousin is coming to Greyfriars, is he? That's a letter from your uncle——"

Bob Cherry snorted, for the fourth time.

"No, it isn't; it's from my pater. He says my cousin, Cyril, is coming to Greyfriars; Uncle George has decided to send him here. Pater says that Uncle George hopes I shall be good friends with him. Grooh!"

"Well, you ought to be good friends with your own cousin, surely," said Harry Wharton, looking puzzled. "What's the matter? Don't you like your uncle?"

"Oh, my uncle's all right. Only what does he want to plank Cyril on me for?" demanded Bob Cherry, glaring at Nugent and Wharton as if they were the cause of his trouble.

"Blessed if I know," said Frank. "Wire to him and ask him."

"Oh, don't be a silly cuckoo!"

"Don't you get on with Cyril?" asked Wharton.

"You don't know him!" groaned Bob Cherry. "He's a worm! My earliest recollection of him is punching his head. The last time I saw him I blacked his eye. I've licked him five or six times; and he's deserved it fifty or sixty times. He's a blighter! I can't stand him, and he can't stand me. Make friends with him! Forget all bygones, and stand by him! That's just like the pater! You don't learn wisdom in the Army. How can you make friends with a chap who makes you want to squash him every ten minutes? How can you let bygones be bygones when your sweetest recollection is about getting his head into chancery and pasting him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to gurgle at," said Bob Cherry, very much ruffled. "Cyril is coming to Greyfriars to-day, and he's coming into our Form, it appears. I tell you I can't stand him."

"Then let him alone."

"I can't! I shall have to do as the pater asks me. And I don't want to hurt old Uncle George, either. He can't help being Cyril's father, I suppose. Can he?"

"Probably not," agreed Wharton. "But if you can't let him alone, and you can't do the other thing, what the dickens are you going to do?"

"That's what I don't know," groaned Bob. "Hang it! Blow it! Grooooh!"

"Go it," said Nugent. "Blow it off! It does a fellow good to let off steam sometimes. Go and have a round or two with the punching-ball. Whisper to yourself that it's your cousin's chivvy, and sail into it."

"Oh, rats! He's coming here to-day," grunted Bob Cherry. "Going to get in at Friardale by the five train. Pater says he's just heard about it, and suggests that I go down to the station and meet the beast."

"Oh! Your pater calls him a beast, does he?"

"No, ass; he calls him Cyril; I call him a beast," growled Bob. "I don't know how long this letter's been here, but it's too late to meet the train."

Five was striking, as Bob Cherry spoke, from the clock-tower of Greyfriars. Bob Cherry looked at the letter again, and then thrust it into his pocket. The junior, who was usually the sunniest tempered fellow in the Remove, was disturbed and exasperated.

"Well, I can't meet him at the station," he said. "That's settled. He'll say that I wouldn't—he's a suspicious beast. I suppose I shall have to jaw to him when he comes. I won't say I'm glad to see him at Greyfriars; I'm not going to tell him any whoppers, anyway. I'm not called upon to do that."

"Poor old Bob! It's hard cheese."

"Oh, it's—it's Gorgonzola," said Bob miserably. "You fellows won't be able to stand him, either. Blow! And pater says I'm to ask the Head to put him in my study! Rats! I wonder how he'll get on with Marky! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

And Bob Cherry stamped away excitedly. Harry Wharton and Nugent looked at one another, and laughed. They could not help it. Bob Cherry did not laugh. He stamped away up the stairs with a stamp that could be heard at a considerable distance. He stamped along the Remove passage, and Wharton and Nugent heard the door of his study slam. It was pretty clear that Bob Cherry would not extend a hearty welcome to his relation when he arrived at the old school.

"The chap must be an awful outsider to get Bob's back up like that," said Nugent, with a low whistle. "I wonder what he's like!"

"If Bob receives him like that, he's bound to cut up pretty rusty, whatever he's like," said Wharton. "Look here, suppose we run down the road on our jiggers and meet the chap, and talk to him nicely. I dare say he has his good points, and we may be able to make friends with him, and smooth matters over between him and Bob. It would be rotten for Bob to have a cousin here, in the same Form and the same study, and be on fighting terms with him. We may be able to pour oil on the troubled waters."

Nugent nodded.

"We'll try," he said.

And in a few minutes Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were skimming down the country road towards the village of Friardale to meet Bob Cherry's cousin.

— — —

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Nice Boy!

"PORTER!"

A sharp, acid voice called out from the window of a first-class carriage in a train that had stopped at Friardale station. The sleepy porter looked slowly round. A boy in Etons was looking out of the window, and his face was not amiable. It was a handsome face, with dark hair curling over the forehead, and dark eyes, and a straight, well-cut nose. Handsome enough, undoubtedly; but there was a hard expression upon the well-outlined lips, a hard look in the dark eyes, that could not be called prepossessing.

"Porter!"

"Yes, zur," said the Friardale porter slowly. Everything was slow in Friardale. The Greyfriars fellows said that it was always a surprise to the station-master and the porter if a train came in, and that it took them a long time to get over the shock.

"Is this Friardale?"

"Yes, zur, this 'ere is Friardale."

"The name isn't up," growled the boy in Etons. "Rotten countrified hole of a place! Why can't they put the name of the station up?"

"The name's up further down, zur."

"Well, why can't you call out the name of the station, then? Get my box out of the guard's van, for goodness' sake, and don't stand mooning there."

The boy in Etons jumped out of the carriage, with a coat on his arm, and a rug, and a cane in his hand. The guard had already trundled out a box, as a matter of fact, and the slow porter slowly piled it on a trolley. The youth looked about him discontentedly.

"You be for Greyfriars, zur?" asked the porter.

"Yes. You don't think I've come down here to spend a holiday, do you?" snapped the youth. "Get that box on a cab or something, and don't stand there talking."

The porter's eyes glinted a little as he wheeled the trolley out. Porters have feelings, a fact of which the new boy for Greyfriars seemed to have entirely lost sight.

He followed the porter off the platform. The man was about



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"You'll apologise to Linley at once, Cyril," said Bob Cherry fiercely, "or I'll hammer you till you do! I mean that!" *(See Chapter 6.)*

to place the box on the hack outside, when the new boy stopped him.

"Isn't there a cab here?" he demanded.

"That's the keb, zur."

"Rotten! Isn't there anything else?"

"No, zur."

"Oh, rotten!" That elegant word seemed to be a favourite with the youth in Etons. "You can send my box up to the school, then, and I'll walk. I can't ride in a thing like that. Rotten!"

The porter looked at him, and allowed the box to slide back on the pavement. The owner of the cab looked at him, and sucked at a straw meditatively. He was wondering whether it would affect his connection with Greyfriars, and tips from the fellows there, if he knocked the silk hat off the new boy. He decided that he had better not, and the youth in Etons never knew what a narrow escape he had had.

"Take care of that box," he ordered sharply, as the porter bumped it on the ground.

"Yes, zur."

"And send it up to the school immediately."

"Yes, zur."

"Which is the direction to Greyfriars?"

"Straight ahead, zur—down the street, pass the end of the bridge till you come to the Cross Keys, then keep on through the lane, and——"

"Good heavens! What a rigmarole!"

"Then you gets to the cross-roads, and it's a straight lane."

"But which of the cross-roads shall I take, stupid?"

They say that the worm will turn. The porter of Friardale Station thought that it was time to turn. It was pretty clear that he would get no tip from this extremely haughty and ill-tempered youth.

"Whichever you like, zur," he replied, deliberately.

"What! Do you mean to say that all four roads lead to Greyfriars?"

"No, zur, suttingly not."

"Then which shall I take?"

"You can take your 'ook, zur, for a nasty, cheeky, ill-tempered whipper-snapper, zur!" said the porter, and he trundled the box back into the station.

The youth in Etons glared after him.

"Fellow!" he roared.

The porter did not look back. The driver of the hack chuckled. Several urchins who had gathered outside the station chuckled, too. The new boy glared at them, and frowned, and started off down the village street.

The frown upon his face had deepened. He tramped angrily down the street, and passed the public-house known as the Cross Keys. Outside the building, walking along towards it in the shadow of the trees, was a fellow of about his own age, in Etons, too, with a Greyfriars cap on his head.

"Rotten!" muttered the new-comer. "I suppose that's a Greyfriars boy, though! Here, you!"

It was not a polite hail. The Greyfriars junior under the trees started, and looked round, and stared at the new boy. His



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face flushed suddenly, like that of a fellow caught in some mischief unexpectedly. The new boy had never been to Greyfriars, and so naturally he did not know that the fellow in the school-cap was Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, and that, if he had been seen so near to the Cross Keys by any prefect or master of the school he would have found himself in very serious trouble. Vernon-Smith cast a far from pleasant look at the stranger.

"Did you speak to me?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I did. Which is the way to Greyfriars?"

"Find out!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars turned away. The new boy flushed with anger. It was pretty evident from his manners that he was a spoiled boy, and that he was very much unaccustomed to curt replies. He strode towards Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

"You belong to Greyfriars?" he exclaimed.

"Mind your own business!"

The Bounder only half turned his head as he made that retort. The new boy flushed more deeply, and raised his hand and smote with his open palm across Vernon-Smith's cheek. The Bounder uttered a sharp cry, and staggered back.

"Perhaps you'll give a civil answer now," said the new-comer with a sneer, apparently forgetting that his own manner had not been very civil.

The Bounder recovered himself.

"You cheeky puppy!" he said, between his teeth. "If you are looking for trouble, you've come to the right place for it!"

"I asked you—oh!"

Vernon-Smith's fist, clenched and as hard as iron, smote the new-comer full upon the mouth, and stopped his utterance very suddenly. The new boy gave a yell, and reeled back, and fell at full length in the dusty roadway.

The Bounder stood glaring down at him for a moment in wrath, and then turned away and plunged through the trees, and disappeared.

The youth in Etons sat up. His silk hat reposed in a bed of fern by the ditch, a dozen paces from him. He put his hand to his mouth, from which a stream of red was issuing. He ground his teeth, and dabbed away the blood with his handkerchief.

"Hang him!" he muttered, savagely. "Hang him!"

He rose rather painfully to his feet. The fall had shaken him up, and his jaw was aching from the concussion. He looked round for his enemy, but Vernon-Smith was out of sight. He dusted down his clothes as well as he could, and picked up his silk hat, dusted it on his handkerchief and tramped on sullenly.

He passed the cross-roads. The names on the signpost at the cross-roads had long been obliterated by wind and rain, and he could not read them.

"Rotten!" he muttered. "The pater said that most likely Bob would come to meet me. Of course, he wouldn't take the trouble—not that I wanted him to. It was rotten sending me to Greyfriars at all! Hang them all!"

From the savage glance he cast round, it appeared to be all the world whom the youth in Etons consigned to that fate.

He was standing by the signpost, wondering which way he should go, when there was a sudden buzz of bicycle bells in the lane.

He looked round. Two cyclists were bearing down upon him, and from their caps he guessed that they belonged to Greyfriars.

He waved his hand to them, and they slackened down.

They were Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. They free-wheeled up to him and jumped off their machines, guessing that this was the boy of whom they had come in search.

"Is that the road to Greyfriars?" he asked.

"Yes," said Wharton. "We've just come from the school."

"Thanks."

That word was jerked out sullenly. The boy was in a savage and surly temper, and inclined to wreak it upon anyone who came in his way, especially anyone who tried to do him a service.

Wharton and Nugent exchanged glances. The look of the stranger fully justified Bob Cherry's uneasiness with regard to his coming to Greyfriars. They had little doubt that this was Bob's cousin, but, with a lingering hope that it was not, Harry Wharton asked the question:

"Is your name Cherry?"

The boy stared at him.

"No, it isn't!" he said, sharply.

And he tramped on in the direction of the school.

"Well, my word!" murmured Nugent.

Wharton drew a breath of relief.

"That's not Bob's cousin, at all events," he said. "That's something to be thankful for. A more surly brute I never set eyes on."

"He seems to be going to Greyfriars, though," Nugent remarked, thoughtfully. "He might be Bob's cousin."

"He said his name wasn't Cherry."

"It mightn't be—cousins aren't always of the same name," said Nugent, sapiently. "His name might be Smith, Brown, Jones, or Robinson—but he might be Bob's cousin all the same."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, very likely. It's not much good speaking to him, I suppose—he doesn't look like the kind of fellow to get friendly with easily."

"Not much," said Nugent, promptly.

And the chums of the Remove rode on, to have a spin on their machines before returning to the school.

Meanwhile the new boy tramped on. He had found the way to the school, and a few minutes later the grey old tower rose into view over the trees. The new boy, tired and dusty from his walk, arrived at the gates of the old school. The gates were open, and he tramped in. Gosling, the porter, came out of his lodge. He touched his hat very respectfully to the new boy. New boys generally meant a tip for Gosling.

"Good-hevening, sir," said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere, sir——"

"Oh, don't bother!" snapped the new boy.

Gosling gasped. The new-comer scowled and passed on, leaving the school-porter staring after him blankly.

"Well, my heye!" murmured Gosling. "My heye! Wot I says is this 'ere, that all boys oughter be drownded, and I think that specimen oughter be 'ung, drawed, and quartered fust! Huh!"

And Gosling retreated into his lodge in high dudgeon.

— — —

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Eggs for Bunter.

BOB CHERRY strode into his study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with a very unusual wrinkle on his forehead. He slammed the door behind him, and a boy who was at work at the table gave a jump, and a shower of blots scattered from his pen over the paper. He started up with an exclamation.

"You ass, Bob!"

It was Mark Linley of the Remove—the "scholarship" boy; Bob Cherry's study-mate and best chum. He looked at Bob, and then looked ruefully at the sheet he had been writing, upon which the Greek characters were now mingled with a variety of blots of all shapes and sizes. Bob looked repentant at once.

"Sorry, Marky! Did I make you do that?"

"Yes, you did," said Mark Linley with a rueful grin. "Never mind! But what on earth did you slam the door for?"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Is anything wrong, Bob?" asked Mark, with a look of concern.

"Yes!" grunted Bob.

"I'm sorry. Can I help?"

"No!"

"Then I'll get that sheet written out again," said Mark, quietly.

"Oh, chuck that rotten Greek, when a chap's in trouble," growled Bob Cherry, rather unreasonably.

"But you said I couldn't help."

"You can't! But there's such a thing as sympathy."

Mark Linley smiled, and pushed his pen and paper away. He knew that Bob must be very much disturbed to be in this unreasonable temper.

"Well, tell me what the matter is, old chap," he said.

Bob stood with his hands in his pockets, regarding the Lancashire lad with a gloomy brow. Mark Linley waited.

"It's beastly!" said Bob, at last. "My cousin Cyril is coming to Greyfriars, and he's a worm. I never did get on with him. We hardly ever met without having a fight when we were kids. It was all his fault."

"All?" asked Mark, with a smile.

"Yes; I never punched him unless he irritated me," said Bob. "Look here, my pater's asked me to take him under my wing, have him in this study, and chum with him generally. Of course, I can't do it."


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"Why can't you?"

"Well, I don't want to," Bob amended.

"That doesn't make any difference, Bob," said Mark, quietly. "You must do as your father asks you, as a matter of course. But you know that as well as I do."

"But I can't get on with the chap."

"You must try."

"If I'm gentle with him, he's bound to begin to swank over me. It's his way."

"Put up with it."

"What! When I shall feel like hammering him all the time?" demanded Bob.

"Yes."

"I'm to ask the Head to put him in this study!"

"Well, there are only two of us in here, and most of the studies have three. The Head's sure to do it. Go and ask him. He's in his study now."

"But I don't want the rotter in here!" roared out Bob.

"That doesn't make any difference. Your father does."

"That's all very well!"

"Of course it is," said Mark. "Go and ask the Head. When is the chap coming?"

"May be here almost any minute now."

"Well, he'll be hungry after his journey," said Mark Linley, practically. "We haven't had tea yet; let's get in something a bit special, and give him a feed."

"Funds are out."

"Mine are not. I've got extra pocket-money now, since I had the prize," said Mark Linley, with a smile. "I'll stand the feed this time. Look here, I'll get the stuff in while you buzz off to the Head and ask him about the study."

"You're a good sort, Marky," said Bob Cherry repentantly. "I suppose your advice is jolly good, though I don't like it."

"Of course it is, Bob! You must do your best to pull with your cousin and you'll be able to do a lot of things to help him, and he's bound to feel it. I'll do the same, and between us we'll manage him all right."

"And everything in the garden will be lovely, eh?"

"Just so," said Mark.

Bob Cherry groaned.

"You don't know Cyril Vane!" he said.

Mark laughed.

"I shall know him, and I dare say we shall get on very well if we try," he replied. "Anyway, let us try and see what we can do. I'll go down to Mrs. Mimble's while you go to the Head and see about getting him in this study."

"Oh, all right," said Bob.

And Mark put away his papers, and the two juniors left the study. Mark was not long at the tuckshop. He returned in five minutes with a parcel of provisions, and unpacked them on the study table. It was an unusually good feed for the Lancashire lad to stand, for Mark was poor and did not attempt to disguise the fact. But he felt justified in going a little beyond his usual frugal fare to do honour to Bob Cherry's cousin. Bob Cherry was his best chum, and his friendship had meant a great deal to the one-time factory lad in his uphill fight amid novel surroundings at Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry returned as Mark was building up the fire. There was a downcast expression on Bob's face as Mark turned his head to look at him.

Mark's face fell, too.

"The Head won't put him in here?" he asked.

Bob Cherry grunted.

"No such luck."

"Has he agreed, then?"

"He sent me to Mr. Quelch."

"And what did Mr. Quelch say when you asked him?"

"He said, 'By all means, Cherry,'" grunted Bob.

"Then you've succeeded?"

"Yes."

"What on earth are you looking so downhearted about, then?" demanded Mark.

"Because I've succeeded."

"Oh, come!" exclaimed Mark, laughing in spite of himself. "You can't expect your cousin to take it nicely if you meet him in that spirit. Put on a cheerful face, and try to make out that you're a good-tempered chap."

"Eh?"

"Don't treat him like a gorgon on the war-path," urged Mark.

Bob Cherry laughed ruefully.

"I'll do my best," he said. "I think we may as well have another chap or two into tea to help me stand it. I'll go and look for Wharton and Nugent while you get the tea, if you don't mind."

"Certainly."

Bob Cherry tramped off. He was trying to look cheerful, but the effort was a dismal failure. He tried to whistle, but the whistle died away. Mark Linley, cheerful as was his wont, stirred the fire, and put the frying-pan on it, and broke the eggs ready to poach, and sliced the bacon for frying. It was certainly a very pleasant smell that emanated from the study when the Lancashire lad got to work. A fat face, adorned with a pair of very big spectacles, came sniffing in at the door.

"I say, Linley!"



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Mark Linley turned a ruddy face from the fire.

"Buzz off, Bunter!" he said.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. The smell of frying bacon seemed to have a fascinating effect upon the Owl of the Remove.

"I—I say, Linley, I suppose you were going to ask me to tea?"

"I wasn't."

"Oh, really, you know, I'd come, if you liked. Look here," said Bunter confidentially, "lots of the fellows won't speak to you because you're a factory chap and a low-class rotter. But I've always been decent to you, haven't I?"

Mark Linley coloured.

"I don't think you've ever been decent to anybody," he said curtly. "Will you get out of this study, or shall I kick you out?"

"Oh, really——"

"Outside!"

Mark's eyes were gleaming dangerously, and Bunter retreated to the door. There he stopped, and sniffed in the scent of the frying bacon again.

"I say, Linley, you might let me have some of the eggs. I see you've got five or six more than you've cooked. I'll let you have their value to-morrow. I'm expecting a postal-order the first post in the morning, and I'll settle up before brekker."

"Oh, run away and play."

"Look here, if you won't trust me with a few eggs——"

"Clear out!" said Mark impatiently. "I'd let you come in and feed, only Bob Cherry's cousin is coming, and we're making a celebration for him. Besides, it wouldn't be fair to spring you on a new chap, his first day at Greyfriars."

"Bob Cherry's cousin, eh? Didn't know he had one."

"Well, he has, and he may be here any minute. Get out!"

"I'm willing to have tea with Bob Cherry's cousin——"

"Oh, do buzz off!"

"Look here, you blessed low-down cad——"

Mark Linley grasped a couple of the eggs, one in either hand. He was getting "fed up" with Bunter's insolence. The fat junior was generally allowed to talk as he liked, on the principle that he was not worth licking. But there was a limit—and Bunter was dangerously near it now.

"I wouldn't feed with a cad like you if you offered me untold gold," said Bunter. "I hope I've too much proper sense of my own dignity. A gentleman could hardly feed with a factory cad without lowering himself. It's a rotten shame you're allowed at Greyfriars at all—a fellow who's worked in a factory, and whose mother takes in washing! Yarooh! O-o-o-o-o-p!"

Smash! Smash! Bunter had the eggs.

One of them caught him full upon his large mouth and the other in the ear, and they burst as they struck, and the contents squelched over his fat countenance.

Billy Bunter staggered out into the passage, his fat visage running with the yolk of egg. He was spluttering and gasping wildly.

"Ow, ow! Groo, hoo! Groo! Beast! Yowp!"

Mark Linley picked up a cricket stump and ran towards him. In a second Billy Bunter, still streaming with broken eggs, was racing for his life down the passage.

Mark Linley did not pursue him. He tossed the cricket stump into a corner, and went on with his cooking.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Cherry's Cousin Arrives at Greyfriars.

CYRIL VANE entered the schoolhouse of Greyfriars.

He was tired, and he was dusty, and his jaw was still aching from the blow Vernon-Smith had given him. His temper, never peaceful, was vile now, and dangerous to anyone he met, if it was anyone to whom he could cause injury.

He stepped into the hall out of the red sunset in the Close, and looked about him. Nobody seemed to take any special notice of his coming. New boys were not uncommon at Greyfriars, and nobody was specially interested. There were several fellows talking in the hall, and some of them glanced at him, and grinned at the sight of his scowling face, and that was all.

He looked about him. A big, stalwart senior came down the passage and paused as he looked at him. It was Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars.

"Are you a new kid here?" he asked.

Vane looked up at the sturdy Sixth Former, wondering whether he could venture upon an impertinent reply. He decided that he had better not.

"Yes," he said.

"What Form?"

"I am going to be put in the Remove, I think."

"Very well. Take that scowl off your face."



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"What?"

"Juniors are not allowed to go about here scowling like demons in a pantomime," said Wingate brusquely. "You had better try to look a little more agreeable, or you will get a thick ear. That's all."

He passed on, and Vane gritted his teeth. A fat junior, whose plump face was shining from recent washing, rolled up to the new boy. He blinked at him through a large pair of spectacles.

"You Bob Cherry's cousin?" he asked

Vane nodded, scowling more than before Wingate's admonition. Vane had not a nature that took kindly to even the mildest admonitions.

"Oh!" said Bunter, blinking at him critically. "You are, are you? What's your name?"

"Cyril Vane."

"I'll show you to Bob Cherry's study, if you like."

Vane looked at him suspiciously. Bunter did not look good-natured or obliging, and Vane was of a suspicious nature.

"Oh, it's all right," said Bunter reassuringly; "I'm not the kind of chap to play a jape on a new kid. I'll take you there. They're getting a feed ready for you. By the way, have you any change about you?"

"Change!" said Vane.

"Yes. You see, this is how it is," Bunter said, sinking his voice confidentially. "I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow; and Bob Cherry was going to cash it in advance for me, only he hasn't any change. If you could do it, Bob would settle it with you. Bob's one of my best friends—a bosom chum, in fact."

"I'm not going to lend you any money," said the new boy.

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"Oh, really! Who's asking you to lend me any money? What I want is to have the cash advanced on my postal-order. It's really to oblige Cherry."

"Do you know where my cousin is?"

"Yes, I'll take you to him at once. If you will advance—— Yarooh!"

A hand descended upon Billy Bunter's collar from behind, and he was jerked back. He twisted round angrily, and blinked at John Bull of the Remove.

"Ow!" he roared. "Yow! Look here, Bull——"

"Shut up, you cadging cad!" exclaimed John Bull. "You're not going to screw any money out of the new kid."

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Don't take any notice of him, kid," said John Bull, looking good-naturedly at Vane. "He tries that game on with all new boys. Did you say that you were Bob Cherry's cousin?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm jolly glad to meet you," said John Bull, holding out his hand cordially. "Bob's a friend of mine, and I'm a friend of his. Jolly few fellows at Greyfriars who aren't friends of Bob Cherry's, as a matter of fact. Your cousin's very popular here."

The sturdy junior spoke in his good-natured, impulsive way, never doubting that kind words about his cousin would be pleasant to the ears of the new boy. But praise of Bob Cherry seemed to have quite the opposite effect upon Cyril Vane. The frown upon his brows grew deeper, and he did not appear to notice the outstretched hand of John Bull.

Bull looked at him curiously, but as the new boy deliberately ignored his hand he dropped it, reddening at the same time.

"Is my cousin in now?" asked Vane, without making any reply to what John Bull had said.

Bull bit his lip hard. Had Vane not been the cousin of the most popular junior at Greyfriars John Bull would have hit out at him there and then. But he did not want to greet Bob's cousin in that way.

"I think I saw him go out," he replied quietly. "If you want his study, it's number thirteen in the Remove passage—second passage at the top of the stairs."

And John Bull thrust his hands deep in his trousers' pockets, and turned away. There was a deep red in his cheeks and a gleam in his eyes. It was seldom that the good-tempered Johnny Bull took a dislike to anyone, but he had taken a most intense dislike to Cyril Vane. He was not the first who had done so.

Vane went up the staircase. Russell of the Remove looked after him, and then looked queerly at John Bull.

"Queer customer," he remarked.

"Very," said John Bull shortly.

"Not much like his cousin."

"Not at all!"

And John Bull strolled away with his hands in his pockets. Billy Bunter blinked at him as he went out, and then ascended the stairs after Vane. He overtook the new youth in the Remove passage. Vane was going along slowly, looking at the numbers over the doors.

"I say, you new fellow, it's further on. Look here, I'll come in to tea with you, if you like," said Bunter. "You'll feel a bit down, being a new boy, and I'll cheer you up. I'll sit next to you, and——"

"I don't want you."

"Look here, I'll come, and——"

"Oh, clear off."

Billy Bunter's eyes glittered behind his glasses. Contempt, they say in the East, will pierce even the shell of the tortoise. Billy Bunter had a thick skin, but it was possible to insult him.

"Look here, you rotter, I—I wouldn't come now if you asked me. You can go in to tea with a rotten factory cad, if you like. I shouldn't care to sit down with him. I can smell him frying bacon now—just what he's fit for, the low cad!"

"Whom are you talking about?" asked Vane, looking at the fat junior in amazement.

Bunter sniffed contemptuously.

"Your precious cousin's chum—Mark Linley—the scholarship boy. He's a factory cad, and his mother takes in washing, and his father comes home drunk every night and beats her. Nice associates for a Greyfriars chap, I don't think. I don't care for such company, thank you."

And the fat junior, with his fat nose very high in the air, marched off down the passage.

Billy Bunter was a fool in many things, but he was keen in others—in his judgment of the worst side of a character, for instance. He had taken Cyril Vane's measure almost at a glance. A spoiled and petted nature, a bad temper, grown worse by unchecked indulgence, snobbishness and an admixture of caddishness—that was the measure Bunter had taken of Vane. And Bunter was not far wrong. And the fat junior was satisfied that he had put the new boy's back up already against Mark Linley—and thus had caused the beginning of very serious trouble in Bob Cherry's study. And with that comforting knowledge to console himself for the loss of a feed, Billy Bunter rolled away.

Vane looked after him with a peculiar expression for a few moments, and then entered the study, where Mark Linley turned round a ruddy face from the fire to greet him.

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## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### An Utter Cad!

MARK LINLEY glanced at the new-comer, and gave him a cheery nod. He guessed at once whom it was, of course. There was little resemblance in Vane's handsome, disdainful face to the honest rugged features of Bob Cherry; but Mark knew at once that this must be Cyril Vane. Vane glanced at the Lancashire lad with a somewhat supercilious expression, and then cast a disparaging look round the study.

"Bob's cousin, I suppose?" said Mark cheerfully.

"I'm Bob Cherry's cousin, certainly. Is this his study?"

"His and mine," said Mark. "We're study-mates, you know."

"Oh, are you?"

"Yes, and great friends," said the Lancashire lad. "I understand that you are coming into this study."

"My father said I was to."

"We shall try to make you comfortable here," said Mark, ignoring as far as he could the distinct coldness in Vane's manner. "I suppose you are hungry after your journey?"

"Yes," said Vane discontentedly.

"We have been getting a bit of a feed ready," said Mark, with a gesture towards the poached eggs and the fried bacon, and a very tempting pile of buttered toast. "We wanted to do honour to the occasion, you know."

"Oh, did you?" said Vane.

"Bob doesn't have a cousin come to Greyfriars every day, you know," said Mark, with an attempt at humour, though he was feeling very discouraged by this time. The new boy was certainly not the kind of fellow to be friendly with easily.

"I suppose not," grunted Vane. "Is this poky little hole as large as the other studies?"

"They're all much the same size, excepting Mauleverer's; he has an extra large one."

"Who's Mauleverer?"

"Lord Mauleverer, of the Remove—the only titled chap at Greyfriars."

"Why should he have a larger study?"

"His guardians pay extra fees for him."

"Oh!" said Vane. "I don't see that it's fair."

"Well, it doesn't hurt us—it doesn't make our studies any smaller, his having a larger one," said Mark cheerfully. "And they're not so very small, you know—we get along very comfortably. And if a room is small, it may be made very cosy. This is really a cosy study."

"I'm accustomed to having room to breathe in."

Mark made no reply to that remark.

"My own room at home is about four times the size of this, and it's only a bed-room," said Vane. "Are we bound to have meals here?"



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"Oh, you're here, Cyril?" said Bob Cherry, flinging open the study door. "Yes, and you can clear out," said Vernon Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. "You're not wanted here. Vane's under my wing now." (See Chap. 10.)

Mark laughed.

"We have meals in hall—in the dining-room downstairs, you know," he said. "But we're allowed to have our tea in the study, if we like. In that case we buy the grub ourselves at the tuckshop. Or you can take extra grub into hall if you like. The school-tea is simply bread and butter and tea, and cake on Sundays."

"My hat!"

"But we live pretty well. Tea in the study is supposed to be a treat," Mark explained. "The lowest Forms—Third and Second, you know—don't have studies, and always have to feed at the big tables in hall."

"Blessed if I see where the treat comes in, in a stuffy little den like this," said Vane discontentedly. "I wonder you fellows can stand it."

Mark made himself very busy with the tea-table. For sheer, unadulterated rudeness, he could not help feeling that Bob Cherry's cousin took the cake. And he no longer wondered that Bob was dismayed at the prospect of his arrival at Greyfriars, and of his coming into the same Form and the same study. Mark himself, now that he had seen Vane, looked forward with dismay to his companionship as a study-mate.

"Where's Bob?" asked Vane, after an ungracious pause.

"He's gone to ask some fellows to meet you at tea," said Mark.

"You don't mean to say that more than three fellows can feed at once in a room this size?" demanded Vane.

"We have crammed nine or ten in before now," said Mark, laughing.

"How on earth did you manage it, then?"

"Oh, the chaps are easily satisfied, you know," said Mark. "Some of them sit on the window-sill, and some on the coal-locker, and some stand up."

"I don't see why I should be crowded out the first tea-time here," grunted Vane. "Bob always was a silly ass, I remember."

Mark's eyes flashed.

"Oh, rotten!" continued Vane, looking about him again. "I didn't want to come here, only my pater insisted. He and the mater were set on it. I could have talked the mater over easily enough, but the pater—oh, it's rotten! I believe Bob's father was at the bottom of it. I always hated that stupid old major, and he knew it very well! The old cad!—I owe it to him that I'm stuck in this rotten place, hang him!"

Mark wondered what Bob Cherry would say, or do, if he heard his father spoken of like that. But it was not Mark's place to take up the cudgels for Bob's father against Bob's cousin. He affected not to hear what Vane was saying; but the flush in his cheeks told that his anger was rising, and it seemed to amuse Vane to torment him. It enabled him to work off a little of the angry discontent that was seething in his breast.

"Have you seen Bob's father?" asked Vane.

"Yes."

"Oh, yes, I remember now," said Vane. "The old donkey was wrecked somewhere, and you fellows went and fished him out. Waste of trouble, I call it! I suppose Bob's never taken you home to see his people, has he?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"I mean what I say," said Vane. "I thought I was speaking in plain English. You haven't been home with Bob to see his people, have you?"



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"No," said Mark.

"Ah! I thought not! I suppose even that fathead would draw a line at that."

Mark flushed.

"I don't know what you are driving at," he said. "I suppose Bob would not be ashamed to take his friend home with him."

"Ain't you a scholarship boy?"

"Yes."

"Worked in a factory, and so on," said Vane, watching the varying emotions in the junior's face with much amusement. "Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Rather a change for you, coming to a school like this."

"A great change."

"Bit stiff for you, mixing with decent fellows for the first time in your life," Vane remarked.

"It was not the first time in my life. I knew plenty of decent fellows at home in Lancashire—very decent," said Mark.

"Oh, factory fellows, I suppose," said Vane carelessly.

"Yes, factory fellows," said Mark, in a very quiet tone. "Some of the best."

Vane laughed.

"Of course, a chap can't help being what he is, any more than a beetle can help being a beetle," he remarked. "But it's a bit rough on a fellow like me—excuse me—to be put in here with a board-school bounder."

"Thank you."

"I always speak plainly," said Vane. "I think it's rotten! I don't see why I should be stuck along with Bob, either. I never did get on with him. Of course, it's all his father's doing—that blessed meddlesome old major, confound him!"

"Bob may come in at any minute."

"What of that?"

"He would hardly care to hear his father spoken of in that way."

"Hang his father!"

"But Bob——"

"Hang Bob!"

"Very well," said Mark quietly. "I see it's no use speaking to you. I wanted to be friendly, for Bob's sake."

Vane sneered.

"I don't know that I want to be on bad terms with you," he said. "But friendship, of course, is out of the question. I should hardly be likely to chum up with a fellow who has worked in a factory. You may be very decent, in your class in life, but your class isn't mine, and the two won't mix. You had better understand that at the start."

Mark Linley's hands clenched hard. If the fellow had not been whom he was, he would have been knocked flying through the doorway before he had finished that sentence. But Mark would not hit out at Bob Cherry's cousin.

"I suppose I have to stick in this study, as I'm put here," went on Vane. "It's hard cheese, I think, but I can stand it, I suppose, unless Bob cuts up too rusty. I'm not going to stand his rotten temper, I know that. As for you, Robinson—I think your name's Robinson——"

"My name is Linley."

"Ah, yes, is it? Well, as for you, Linley, I don't see that we need have much to say to one another, and there's no need for us to quarrel."

"I shall certainly not quarrel with you, and equally certainly, I shall not have much to say to you," said Mark.

There was a contempt in his manner that he could not quite conceal, and it brought a flush to the cheeks of Cyril Vane, and a gleam of anger to his eyes.

"Very well, keep to that," he exclaimed angrily. "It's rotten enough for me to be stuck in here with a rotten rank outsider—a blessed bounder from some factory den—without —— Oh! Ow! Yaroooh!"

Vane did not intend to conclude his remarks in that manner. But he did it because a grasp of iron descended upon his collar from behind, and he was shaken, and shaken, till his breath came in jerks, and his teeth seemed to rattle in his head.

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## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Cherry Hits Out!

BOB CHERRY had come into the study. He had entered just in time to get the whole of Vane's speech, and he had stopped, thunderstruck, for a moment, and then he had seized his cousin by the back of the collar, thus suddenly interrupting his remarks.

Bob had returned alone, the juniors of whom he had gone in search being still away. He had returned somewhat calmer in temper by a trot round the Close; but now, as he laid his grasp upon Vane, he did not seem calm. His face had flushed crimson, his eyes were glittering, and he trembled with rage from head to foot. Mark Linley had seen Bob Cherry in a temper more than once, but he had never seen him in such a passion as this.

Bob shook and shook and shook, till his cousin swung in his grasp like a bag of clothes, gasping faintly, stuttering and spluttering helplessly.

Mark started forward.

"Bob! Don't! You'll throttle him!"

"Stand back!"

"Bob! Don't! I don't mind what he said——"

"Stand back!" roared Bob.

Mark stood, undecided. Bob Cherry shook the new junior again, so vigorously that his collar came out, bursting from its stud. But Bob's grasp was on the coat-collar as well, and he went on shaking Cyril Vane as a big dog might shake a rat.

"Bob!"

"Shut up!"

"I tell you——"

"The cad!" muttered Bob, slackening down at last. His arm began to ache with the exertion. "The worm! The rotter!"

"Groo!"

"The miserable cad! Just the same as he used to be! The blighter!"

"Groooooh!"

"Let him alone, Bob!" exclaimed Mark, seizing Bob Cherry by the shoulder at last. "I tell you, you'll hurt him! He's your cousin!"

"The rotten hound!"

Bob Cherry ceased shaking Vane at last. He gave a twist of the arm, and flung him into the corner of the study. Vane rolled helplessly on the floor, panting for breath.

"There, you cad!"

"Do get calm, for goodness' sake, Bob!" said Mark anxiously. "What's the matter with you?"

Bob breathed heavily.

"The rotten cad!" he said.

"Well, it was rather caddish, what he was saying, but I've heard it all before," said Mark. "I've had it from Vernon-Smith, and Skinner, and Snoop, and a good many more since I came to Greyfriars. It's nothing new. I wish you hadn't come in!"

"Were you going to let him talk to you like that?"

Mark was silent.

"You were?" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Why didn't you smash him?"

"Well, you see——"

"Because he's my cousin?"

"Well, yes."

"Rot!" said Bob. "I can't help the cad being my cousin! I'm ashamed of it, anyway! I don't own him! He's a beastly worm! I'll—I'll smash him if he opens his mouth again in this study! The utter cad!"

Cyril Vane sat up, gasping. He did not look a prepossessing object. His collar was hanging by one end, and his tie was gone, and his jacket was dragged up round his ears. His face was crimson.

"So—so that's how you begin, is it, Bob?" he gasped. "You hound! I'll get even with you for this!"

Bob turned upon him savagely.

"Get up!" he exclaimed. "Get up, and put your hands up, you cad! I'll give you the licking of your life, and I'll be jolly glad of the chance!"

Vane did not get up. He was quivering with rage, but he had no desire to face Bob Cherry's big fists. He knew of old how hard the hero of the Remove could hit.

"Hang you!" he muttered. "Hang you!"

"Get up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Shut up, Bob!" said Mark. "He's not in a condition to fight now, even if he wanted to. And you don't want to fight your cousin on the first day he comes to Greyfriars."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"That's just what I want to do," he said, "and it's just what I'm going to do, unless he apologises to you at once!"

"I don't want him to."

"That's not the point. I want him to!"

"Look here, Bob——"

"Rubbish!" said Bob Cherry obstinately. "He's my cousin, and he's not going to disgrace me in this way! You'll get up and apologise to Linley at once, Cyril, or I'll hammer you till you do! I mean that!"

Vane staggered to his feet.

"You won't catch me apologising to a factory cad!" he said, with a bitter sneer.

Bob clenched his hands.

"You heard what I said!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I heard it, hang you!"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to leave this study, and I'm not going to enter it again!" said Cyril Vane. "I sha'n't share this room with you. Let me pass!"

Bob Cherry planted himself in the doorway. His hands were up, and his eyes were gleaming. Vane paused. He could



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have shifted Bob Cherry just about as easily as he could have shifted the walls of Greyfriars.

"Let me pass!" he said thickly.

"Yes—when you've apologised to Mark Linley."

"I won't!"

"Then you'll take a licking!"

Mark Linley looked distressed.

"Do let him go, Bob!" he urged. "I don't want him to apologise—I don't mind what he said. Let him go, and let the matter drop, there's a good fellow."

"He can go when he's apologised," said Bob Cherry obstinately, "and not before! Are you going to do it, Cyril?"

"No, I'm not," hissed Vane. 'And I'll let my father know about this—and your father, too! I won't be insulted by that old fool's cad of a son, I can tell you!"

"Is that my father you're speaking of?"

"Yes!" howled Vane; "the old idiot who persuaded my pater to send me to this rotten place! I know jolly well he was at the bottom of it, the old——"

Vane got no further. Bob Cherry was upon him, hitting out. The new junior was knocked almost across the study, and he crashed into the bookcase. There was a smash of breaking glass, and a shower of books rained down upon him. Vane lay helplessly against the bookcase, dazed by the blow. Bob Cherry stood over him, his eyes gleaming, his hands up.

"Get up!" he roared.

"Ow!"

"Get up, or I'll use my boots on you! You low cad, to talk of a chap's father like that! I'll kick you round the study if you don't get up! I——"

"Bob—Bob——"

"Shut up, Marky! Do you think I'm going to let him insult my father?" roared Bob. "Get up, you cowardly cad! Do you hear?"

He dragged at Vane by the collar. Mark Linley grasped Bob, and whirled him away from the fallen junior.

"Get out of the study, Vane!" he called out.

Vane scrambled dazedly to his feet. He stood blinking at the two juniors. Mark Linley was holding Bob Cherry back, but with great difficulty, for Bob was struggling hard to get at his cousin, and he was quite as strong as Mark. But the Lancashire lad clung to him tenaciously. He shouted to Vane again.

"Get out of the study, quick, you fool!"

"Let me get at him!" roared Bob Cherry. "Let me go! I'll smash him! I'll pulverise him! Let me go, Marky, or I'll hammer you, you fathead! Do you hear?"

"I sha'n't let you go! There's been hammering enough," said Mark. "Do be quiet, Bob! Vane, you fool, why don't you go?"

Vane realised that he had better go. He staggered to the door, while Mark held Bob Cherry, and went out into the passage. But there he was not satisfied to go. He turned back in the doorway.

"I'll make you smart for this yet," he said, "you, and that rotten factory cad as well!"

Then he turned away. Bob Cherry, with a roar, broke loose from Mark, and rushed after him. Mark caught him again in the doorway, and held him.

"Don't, Bob!" he entreated. "Don't play the giddy goat! You don't want all the Remove to see you hammering your cousin, do you?"

"The unspeakable cad——"

"Well, no need to tell everybody," said Mark, dragging his chum into the study, and closing the door.

Bob threw himself into a chair, and thrust his hands deep into his pockets. His anger was passing, and, with it, his excitement, but it was long before the frown died from his forehead.

"You didn't find Wharton and Nugent?" asked Mark, to change the current of his chum's gloomy thoughts.

"No; they'd gone out."

"Let's have tea."

Bob Cherry shook his head. He was too disturbed for tea, though it was very seldom that anything was allowed to disturb his healthy appetite.

"I don't want tea now," he said. "I'm feeling rotten! How utterly beastly to have that worm planked on us here!"

"Let's take a turn round the Close first, then," Mark suggested.

They left the study. Bob's face was very gloomy, and he hardly spoke at all as he walked in the Close with his chum. Mark was silent, too. He sympathised with Bob, and he could foresee a great deal of trouble ahead for the two cousins.

After they had left the Remove passage, a fat figure rolled into view. Billy Bunter blinked cautiously up and down the passage, and then opened the door of the study, and went in. He closed the door behind him, and his eyes danced with delight behind his big spectacles as he looked at the plates of bacon and poached eggs and toast placed in the grate to keep warm.

"My word!" murmured Billy Bunter. "It would be a pity to let all that get cold! It's a shame to let it spoil like that—and I'm hungry!"

One second more, and Billy Bunter was very busy, and the good things Mark Linley had laid in to entertain Bob's cousin were disappearing at record speed.



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## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Cyril Vane Makes a Friend.

CYRIL VANE stopped in the hall, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets. He had put himself as tidy as he could, but he did not know his way about Greyfriars, and he had not been able to wash. His collar was still loose, his face was dirty, his clothes dusty. He was in the worst temper of his life, but a feeling of depression was creeping over him, too. All his old dislike of his cousin Bob was revived as keenly as ever; but he felt that he had acted foolishly in quarrelling with him and with his chum. For he did not know anybody else at Greyfriars. It was one of his chief pleasures to act in a supercilious manner towards everybody who would put up with it. But at the same time it was not wise to make enemies in a place where he had no friends, or even acquaintances.

Bob Cherry was so popular in the Remove that any of the juniors would willingly have taken some trouble over his cousin. But Vane's manner was not encouraging. His conduct toward John Bull rankled deeply in that youth's breast, although Johnny was not given to bearing malice. Other fellows who had observed the incident made up their minds not to give Vane a chance of snubbing them in the same way.

Many fellows looked at him, and wondered who had been hammering him, but nobody spoke to him as he stood there, frowning. He did not know where to go, or what to do. He was sore and tired and hungry; he did not even know the name of his Form-master, or where his study was, and he felt that he was not in a fit state to present himself to the master of the Remove in any case.

A bitter anger and chagrin swelled up in his breast, a hatred of the place he was in, and of everybody in it, and a bitterness towards those who had sent him there.

Trotter, the house-page, came by on some errand, and Vane called to him. Trotter came up very respectfully at once; a new boy meant to him, as to Gosling, tips, if he could extract them.

"Yessir?" said Trotter.

"I want to write a letter," said Vane. "Where can I do it?"

"'Ere you are, sir. This way!"

Trotter led Vane into the junior common-room. John Bull was there; he walked out as soon as Vane came in. Bulstrode, the captain of the Remove, was there, too. He had not seen Vane before, but he had heard that Bob Cherry's cousin was coming to Greyfriars, and he guessed that this would be the individual. He came over towards him with an agreeable smile. Bulstrode was on very good terms with Bob Cherry at this time, and he was disposed to welcome his cousin to Greyfriars.

"Bob Cherry's cousin, I suppose," he said.

"Yes," growled Vane. "Bob Cherry's my cousin, but I'm not particularly proud of the fact."

"Oh," said Bulstrode, rather at a loss. "I say, have you been in trouble since you've been here. You look rather—well, rather hammered. If any chap has been bullying you because you're a new kid, just tell me, and I'll come down on him. I'm Bulstrode, captain of the Remove."

"I don't want anybody to fight my battles," said Vane ungraciously. "And the chap I've been fighting with is my cousin."

"Oh!" said Bulstrode.

"All I want is to get out of this place," said Vane. "I'm going to write to my father to take me away."

Bulstrode whistled.

"My hat! You haven't given the place a very long trial, you know."

"Quite long enough!"

Vane turned away to the writing-desk. He made Trotter a sign to wait while he wrote a letter. The page stood there, waiting, trying to conceal a grin. Bulstrode looked in a puzzled way at the new junior. He had never heard of a fellow writing to his people to be taken away after being only a few hours at the school, and he wondered what kind of people Vane had to pay attention to such nonsense. It was pretty clear that the new junior was a spoiled boy, and, as a matter of fact, the rough-and-ready life in the Remove was just what he wanted to knock the foolishness out of him.

"I say," Bulstrode said good-naturedly, "I shouldn't write that letter if I were you, kid. Why not stick it for a few days, and see if you like it. You'll shake down here in time, you know. Lots of new boys feel rather rotten at first, but they come to like the place. Give it a trial before you bother your people—that's my advice."

"When I want your advice, I'll ask for it," said Vane, without turning his head.

Bulstrode turned crimson.

He had spoken kindly enough, very kindly for him, and such a rebuff was enough to make anybody angry. He made a step towards the new junior, and then paused. He did not want to trouble Bob Cherry over his cousin.

"Very well," he said, biting his lip, "I won't trouble you with



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my advice again. If you weren't Bob Cherry's cousin, I'd wipe up the floor with you!"

And Bulstrode marched off, looking very cloudy.

Without even looking after him, Vane wrote his letter. It was a brief letter, but very much to the point. It was filled with the complaining of a weak, selfish, and passionate-tempered spoiled boy.

"Dear Father,—I don't like Greyfriars. It is a rotten place, and everybody in it is rotten. I've seen Bob, and he started fighting with me first thing. He has a disgusting low rotter for a chum, a fellow I couldn't possibly stand, and he was the cause of the trouble. I shall be utterly miserable in this place. I want you to take me away."

Vane read the letter over, signed it, and enclosed it in an envelope. Then he gave it to Trotter to post.

Trotter took the letter, and waited. Vane looked at him.

"Go and post the letter," he said.

"Yes, sir—certainly, sir," said Trotter.

"Well, what are you waiting for?"

Trotter breathed hard through his nose. He was waiting for a tip, as Vane knew perfectly well. As Trotter had been very obliging, and had stood, first on one leg, and then upon the other, for a quarter of an hour waiting for Vane to finish his letter, and as he had to walk across the Close to the school letter-box to post the letter, Trotter felt that he was entitled to a tip, more especially from a new boy. Trotter would not have been so obliging otherwise. He was not bound to post letters for juniors, and he knew that a ragging awaited him in the kitchen for having been so long away.

"Go and post the letter at once," said Vane.

"Yessir."

"Well, get off then."

Trotter got off. He walked away in almost a dazed state, the letter in his hand. Vane glanced after him with a sneering smile. Trotter carried the letter to the school letter-box, and posted it. He was greatly inclined to pitch it over the school wall into the road instead; but he did not venture to do that.

Vane felt greatly relieved when the letter was gone. His parents had always been indulgent—over-indulgent—to him, and he felt certain that his father would come down to Greyfriars on the following morning to explain matters to the Head and take him away. That his father was very desirous that he should remain at Greyfriars mattered nothing to Cyril Vane. That he was in poor health, and that the journey down would not be good for him, was a thought that did not even cross the mind of the selfish boy. Vane was not accustomed to think of others.

As he left the common-room, Vernon-Smith came in. They met in the passage, and the Bounder of Greyfriars started as he saw the boy he had knocked down in Friardale Lane.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "So you're here!"

Vane scowled at him.

"Yes, I'm here," he said.

"So you were coming to Greyfriars?" said Vernon-Smith, looking at him with some interest. "What Form are you in?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Do you want another dot on the chivvy, you cad?" said the Bounder, with a gleam in his eyes. "I could knock two of you into little bits, if I liked. Hazeldene has just told me that Bob Cherry's cousin has come to Greyfriars. Is it possible that you're the chap?"

"Yes, I am!"

The Bounder gave a soft whistle.

"Bob Cherry's cousin!" he said. "You're not much like him! Well, Bob Cherry's cousin or not, you'll have to mind your p's and q's in this school! Cherry is the champion puncher of the Remove, and I suppose you'll want to be taken under his wing, and give the other fellows the kind of cheek you gave me! It won't work, my son! You'll get hammered if you begin, and your rotter of a cousin will get hammered if he backs you up!"

Vane's eyes gleamed. Vernon-Smith's speech was offensive enough, but somehow it did not offend Vane. He had found someone at last who, evidently, did not like Bob Cherry, and it was a solace to him.

"You're not a friend of my cousin's, then?" he asked.

"No!" said the Bounder.

"Oh, good!"

The Bounder looked at him curiously.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that I'm not a friend of his, either," said Vane between his teeth. "I've already had one fight with the brute since I've been here——"

"My hat! You started soon enough!"

"It's sickening!" said Vane. "Every chap has been singing his praises, that I've spoken to, excepting you. It's rotten!"

The Bounder laughed.

"If you don't get on with Bob Cherry, you may be able to get on with me," he said. "I'm up against your cousin all the time, anyway. You're looking pretty dusty. Let me show you where to have a clean up."

"Thanks!" said Vane, almost gratefully.

He walked away with the Bounder. Vernon-Smith's eyes were glistening. He thought he saw in Cyril Vane a means of paying off many an old score against the hero of the Remove.

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## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Bolsover Begins!

HARRY WHARTON did not happen to meet Bob Cherry again till bedtime. He tapped Bob on the shoulder as the Removites were going up to the dormitory. Bob Cherry turned his head, with a gloomy brow, and nodded without speaking. It was hardly necessary for Harry to ask the question that was upon his lips; Bob's expression was enough.

"How are you getting on with your cousin?"

Bob Cherry grunted.

"I'm not getting on with him," he said. "I've fallen out with the brute, and licked him, and turned him out of my study."

"My hat! So soon!"

"Yes. It couldn't be helped."

"Bob, old man, that's a bit thick, you know," said Frank Nugent. "A new chap coming here, and your own relation——"

Bob Cherry interrupted him.

"Do you think I haven't thought of all that?" he exclaimed. "I had made up my mind to be decent to him. Marky laid in a feed for the snob. But he had picked up the story about Marky's having been in a factory, and he twitted him with it. And then he began to slang my father——"

"Phew!"

"It seems that it was my father's advice that made his pater send him here," said Bob Cherry. "Father meant it well—I dare say the Greyfriars Remove is the best place for him to have the rot knocked out of him. But——"

"It's better for him than it is for the Remove," said Frank.

"Just so! He's got on the nerves of half a dozen fellows already. You know what a good-temperd chap Johnny Bull is—well, Vane's put his back up already, and Bulstrode's, too. There's only one fellow he's got on speaking terms with."

"Who's that?"

"The Bounder."

Harry Wharton looked serious.

"Vernon-Smith isn't a good friend for a new boy to make," he said. "You ought to give Vane a tip about him, Bob."

Bob Cherry sniffed.

"I should be told to mind my own bizney," he said. "Cyril would stick to him all the closer if he thought it annoyed me. That's the kind of worm he is. They seem to be getting pretty thick already; birds of a feather, you know. Besides, I can't go and give a chap advice just after dotting him on the boko."

Wharton laughed.

"I suppose it would be rather awkward," he agreed. "But the Bounder won't do Vane any good. I wonder if any other chap could speak about it."

"You might, if you like," said Bob. "Not that it will do any good. You don't know Cyril."

Wharton looked curiously at Vane in the dormitory. The new junior was looking a little less ill-tempered and discontented now. He was talking to Vernon-Smith as they undressed, and certainly seemed to be somewhat "thick" with the Bounder.

Vane's supercilious look was a plain enough indication that he was not the kind of fellow to offer advice to; but Wharton turned it over in his mind. Vane was nothing whatever to him, excepting that he was Bob Cherry's cousin. And Harry did not want to see Bob Cherry's cousin going to the dogs, as he was pretty certain to do if he were initiated into the ways of the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, had his eye on Vane also. Bolsover regarded a new boy as a fair object for ragging. And there was something about Vane that put a fellow's back up, even without his speaking. Bolsover had a strong desire to take some of the starch, as he expressed it, out of Cyril Vane, apart from the fact that it was an amusement to him to bully a new boy. He had heard of the trouble in Bob Cherry's study, too, and he did not think it likely that Bob would stand up for his cousin under the circumstances. Bob, indeed, turned in at once without speaking to his cousin or even looking at him.

"New kid, eh?" said Bolsover, coming over towards Vane, and fixing him with a rude stare.

"Yes," said Vane shortly.

"What's your name?"

"Cyril Vane."

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 191.

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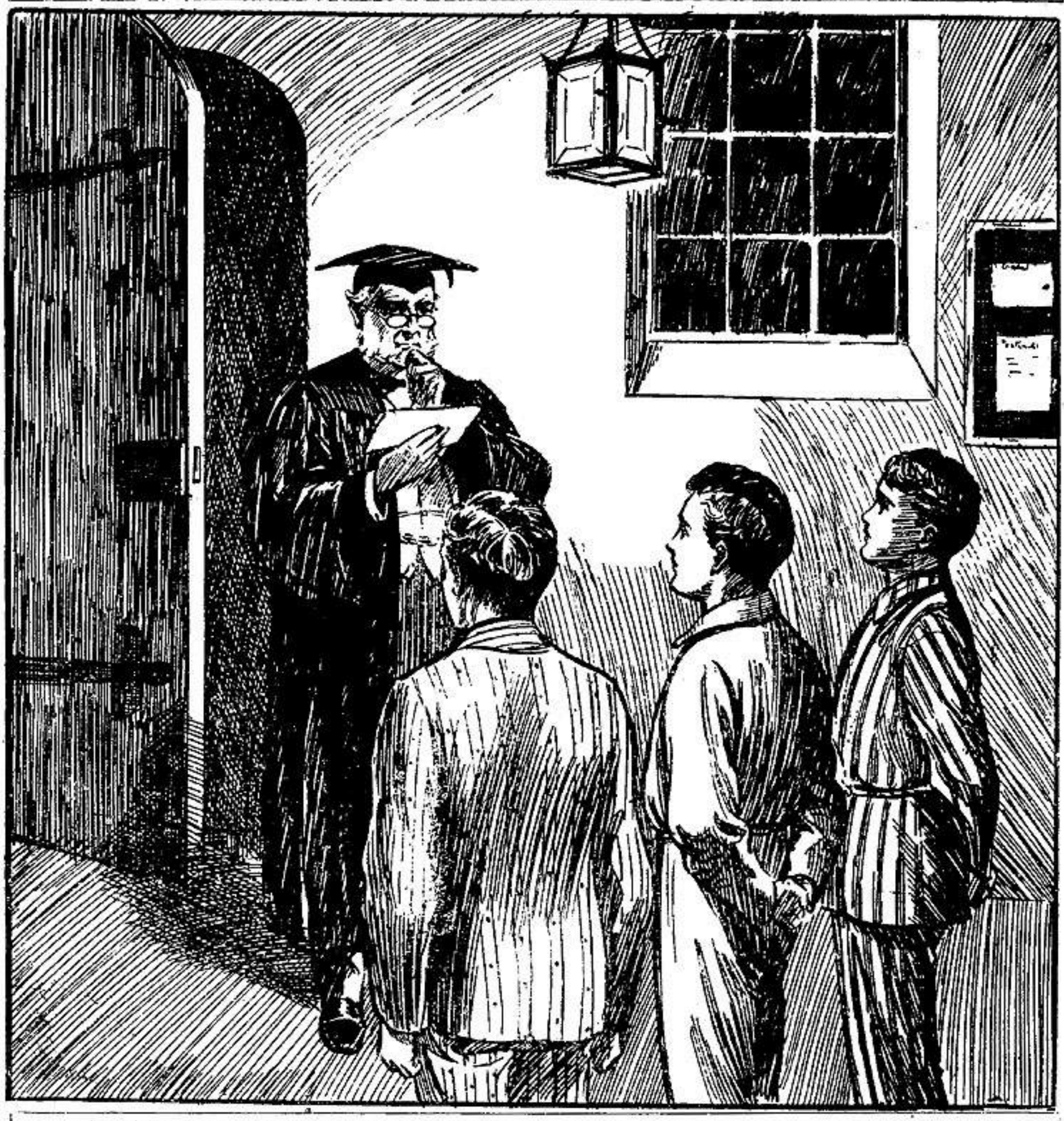

"Boys," cried the Head sternly, "what are you doing out of bed?" "We—we heard the bell, sir," said Lumley-Lumley. "We're anxious about the chaps who are missing, sir. Would you mind telling us if you've got any news of them, sir?" *(An incident in "The Schoolboy Explorers!"—the splendid, new, long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co, at St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford, contained in this week's number of our companion paper, the "Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny. Please order your copy to-day!)*

"Been to school before?"

"No; I had a private tutor!" said Vane haughtily.

"Oh!" said Bolsover. "I suppose he didn't lick you, did he?"

"He was certainly not allowed to do anything of the sort!"

"I thought so. You've got the look of a chap who hasn't had lickings enough," said the Remove bully. "We'll change all that for you here, I can tell you. You won't be allowed to walk up and down here with your nose in the air."

"I shall do as I like!"

"That's where you make a mistake," said Bolsover blandly. "And as a start, to take some of the stuffing out of you, we'll give you a tossing in a blanket."

"You won't!"

Wingate came into the dormitory. As the captain of Greyfriars entered, Bolsover turned away from the new boy. Ragging could not be carried on in the presence of the captain of the school. But Bolsover was far from giving up his idea.

"Now, then, tumble in," said Wingate, good-humouredly. Wingate was always genial to the juniors. There had been trouble lately between the Remove and the Sixth, but Wingate did not allow it to make any difference to his treatment of them.

"Right you are, Wingate," said Wharton cheerily.

The Remove turned in. Wingate extinguished the light, and left the dormitory. As soon as he was gone, Bolover sat up

"Who says toss the new chap in a blanket!" he asked.

"I do!" said Skinner promptly.

"And I! And I!" came from Snoop and Trevor.

"What do you say, Cherry!"

"Go and eat coke!" replied Bob Cherry.

Bolsover laughed.

"Turn out!" he said. "It will do the kid good; I'm convinced of that. Of course, we shouldn't do it otherwise."

The juniors laughed. Bolsover was not likely to trouble himself about doing anybody good. At the same time, all the juniors who had seen anything of Vane were of opinion that a little ragging would do him no harm.

Bolsover lighted a candle. Vane had heard all that was said, of course, and he sat up in bed in some apprehension. He had



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never been tossed in a blanket, and he did not know what it would be like; and he did not care for the prospect, anyway.

"You'd better let me alone!" he exclaimed. "If you touch me I'll complain to Mr. Quelch in the morning!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Bolsover. "You'll sneak, will you? If you do, my son, you'll get something worse than tossing in a blanket, I can tell you!"

"What-ho!" said Bulstrode emphatically.

Bolsover and Skinner and several other fellows turned out of bed. They surrounded the new boy, and Bolsover invited him to get up. Vane did not stir.

"I'm not going to get out of bed!" he said.

"We'll help you out, then," said Bolsover.

"Let me alone!"

"Rats!"

The Remove bully grasped him. Vane clung to the bedposts, and held on, but the raggers had him out of bed in a few seconds, and he bumped on the floor. He yelled as he bumped, and his yell rang through the dormitory.

"Chuck that row!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "You'll have the prefects here soon!"

"I don't care! Let me alone!"

"Take a blanket off his bed," said Bolsover. "Four of you hold it at the corners. Now, then, Vane, get into the blanket."

"I won't!"

"I'll jolly soon chuck you in, then."

And the muscular Removite grasped Vane. The new junior uttered a yell that was echoed down the passage outside.

"Will you shut up?" exclaimed Bolsover. "You'll have the masters here! Another yell like that, and I'll give you something to yell for!"

Vane yelled. Bolsover kept his word. He brought down his heavy hand upon the new boy with a spank that rang out like a pistol-shot. Vane shrieked. Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"Stop that, Bolsover!" he said.

Bolsover turned a furious look upon him.

"Do you want the chap to yell the roof down, and bring old Quelch here with a cane?" he demanded.

"Let him alone!" said Bob.

"We're going to toss him in a blanket."

"Other new boys have to go through it," said Skinner. "Why shouldn't that cad? I've been through it myself, and I never yelled the roof off!"

"Faith, and it's a rotten coward he is, intirely!" said Micky Desmond. "But if yez don't want the masters coming in, ye'd better chuck it."

"I'll spank him every time he yells——"

"You won't spank him again!" said Bob Cherry. "Let him alone. He's not worth tossing in a blanket, anyway; and he might get hurt, as he's got no nerve. Let him go to bed."

"Sha'n't!"

Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed, and he stepped out of bed. Skinner and Snoop promptly returned to their beds, but Bolsover stood his ground. Bob Cherry was the only fellow in the Form—or in the Lower School at all—who could lick Bolsover. But it was not an easy task for Bob, and Bolsover was generally willing to try his luck again.

"Let Vane alone!" said Bob curtly.

"I won't, then!"

Bob said no more: he grasped Bolsover by the shoulders, and dragged him away from Vane. The Remove bully turned upon him immediately, hitting out; and in a second they were fighting fiercely. Vane sank gasping upon his bed.

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## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Sneak!

"STOP that, you duffers!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, sitting up in bed. "Don't play the giddy goat. The fellow isn't worth fighting about!"

"I guess not," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I kinder reckon you should leave him to stew in his own juice, Bolsover. He'll get lickings enough before he's been long at Greyfriars."

"Faith, and ye're right!"

But Bob Cherry and Bolsover did not heed. They were going hammer and tongs, and they did not even hear what was said to them. They tramped to and fro, fighting like demons, and making considerable noise. The other juniors listened anxiously, expecting every moment the entrance of a master or a prefect.

In a few minutes the door opened, and Courtney of the Sixth appeared. He had a cane in his hand, and a frown upon his face.

"What's all this row about?" he demanded.

"Cave!" gasped Nugent.

But the two excited combatants did not heed the warning, or even the entrance of the prefect. They fought on, much to the surprise and anger of Courtney, who had naturally expected that his arrival would put an end to the scene at once.

"Why, you young rascals!" exclaimed Courtney. "How dare you! Stop it!"

They did not stop it. Courtney wasted no more time in words. He took a tight grasp upon his cane, and ran at the two fighting juniors. The cane rose and fell, with great impartiality, upon both of them. Bolsover and Bob Cherry roared, and they separated at last under the lashes of the cane.

"Ow! Oh!"

"Yaroop!"

Bolsover made a plunge for his bed, catching a last lash as he did so that made him roar. Bob Cherry jumped into bed, and pulled the clothes over him, and laughed.

"Chuck it, Courtney!" he exclaimed. "'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"You cheeky young bounder——"

"It's all right—the show's over!" said Bob.

Courtney grinned.

"If you get out of bed again to-night, any of you, I'll have you gated for two half-holidays," he said. "Get into bed, Vane!"

Vane scowled savagely.

"I'll complain about this to Dr. Locke to-morrow morning!" he exclaimed.

The prefect looked at him, his lip curling.

"You can please yourself about that," he replied. "Get to bed now."

"Who are you?"

"I'm Courtney—I'm a prefect. Go to bed."

"I shall take my own time about it."

Courtney stared at him. He was the best-tempered prefect at Greyfriars, but Vane's reply was a little too much for his good temper.

The cane swished in the air, and caught Vane across the back. Vane roared, and bolted into bed. Courtney shook the cane at him.

"Don't you get up again till rising-bell, or I will make it warm for you," he said. "If that young sweep's your cousin, Cherry, you'd better explain to him that juniors here are not allowed to cheek the prefects."

And Courtney blew out Bolsover's candle, and took it away with him. There were several painful grunts in the dormitory as the door closed after the prefect.

"Ow!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Groo!" said Bolsover. "I'm hurt! It's all the fault of that new cad, too."

"I shall complain to-morrow morning," said Vane savagely.

"Oh, shut up!"

"I shall——"

"Sneak!"

"Cad!"

"Shut up!"

"Go to sleep!"

And those forcible objurgations from the Remove silenced Cyril Vane; but it was some time before he went to sleep. Bolsover's spanking and Courtney's caning had hurt him, and he was not used to being hurt. He did not like pain; and his only consolation was the prospect of complaining to Mr. Quelch or the Head in the morning.

The Remove slept at last, Vane dropping off finally. He did not open his eyes again till the rising-bell was clanging through the morning air, and the sun was stealing in at the high windows of the dormitory. Vane woke then, and he lay idly in bed watching the Remove get up. Bob Cherry glanced at him.

"Better get up, Cyril," he said.

"I'll get up when I choose!"

"You'll be caned if you don't go down."

"That's my business!"

Bob Cherry seemed to swallow something with difficulty, and he said no more. Vane, however, turned out of bed. He was beginning to learn that he could not do as he liked at Greyfriars, and that a school was a very different place from home.

He went down sulkily enough with the rest of the Remove, and he made his way at once towards Mr. Quelch's study. Bob Cherry ran after him.

"Where are you going, Cyril?" he asked.

"Find out!"

"Are you going to Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, I am."

"To complain?"

"Yes."

"Better not," said Bob. "The fellows will all look upon it as sneaking, and they will give you a rotten time afterwards."

"They won't," said Vane. "I'm not going to stay at Greyfriars. I wrote to my father yesterday to come and take me away."

Bob stared at him.

"Well, my hat!" he ejaculated.

"But I'll have that bullying brute punished first," said Vane.

"Look here, Cyril——"

"Oh, let me alone!"

Vane knocked at Mr. Quelch's door. Bob Cherry dug his hands deep into his pockets and walked away. Vane entered the Form-master's study, and found Mr. Quelch there. He



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had seen the Remove-master the previous day, and had not made a good impression upon him. Mr. Quelch looked at the sullen, sulky face now with a rather grim look.

"What do you want, Vane?" he asked.

"I want to complain of Bolsover, sir. He bullied me in the dormitory last night," said Vane sulkily.

"Indeed! What did he do?"

"He struck me because I refused to be tossed in a blanket."

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch quietly; "the matter will be inquired into. You may go."

As a complaint had been made, the Form-master had no alternative but to inquire into the matter. He did so when the Remove were assembled in their Form-room for first lesson. Bolsover was called out before the class. The Remove bully came out with a somewhat apprehensive look upon his face. He had hardly believed that the new boy would really sneak to the Form-master.

"Bolsover, Vane complains that you bullied him in the dormitory last night," said Mr. Quelch. "Is that the case?"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Bolsover.

"Tell me what happened, then."

"Well, sir, we were going to toss him in a blanket just for a lark, sir," said Bolsover. "It's generally done with new boys, sir."

"Did you do it?"

"No, sir; he objected."

"And then you ill-used him?"

"I gave him a spank, sir," said Bolsover.

"You had no right to do anything of the sort. You will take a hundred lines, Bolsover."

"Very well, sir."

"Go back to your place."

"I think he ought to be caned, sir," said Vane.

The Remove gasped. They had never heard a junior offering advice to his Form-master before. Mr. Quelch gave Vane a freezing look.

"I do not require assistance from you, Vane, in carrying out my duties," he said. "Kindly hold your tongue."

"There were others besides Bolsover, sir," said Vane—"Skinner, and Snoop——"

"I think the matter has gone far enough," said Mr. Quelch. "We shall now——"

"But, sir——"

"That is enough, Vane! Silence!"

"I say——"

"Another word, and I shall cane you, Vane!" said Mr. Quelch, his eyes sparkling angrily.

Vane was silent. He did not like the cane. He sat with a sullen face while the lessons proceeded. The rest of the Remove regarded him with dark looks. Whatever he had suffered in the dormitory—and he had not really suffered very much—it was against all schoolboy rules to complain to the Form-master, and the general opinion of Vane was that he was a coward and a sneak. And the Remove, probably, were not very far wrong in their opinion of him.

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## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### A Surprise for Vane.

MORNING lessons were over, and the Remove were out in the Close, when the station cab drove up to Greyfriars, and a gentleman stepped out at the steps of the School House. Bob Cherry was standing on the steps chatting with Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull, and he uttered an exclamation as the gentleman alighted.

"Uncle George!"

Mr. Vane shook hands with Bob. Whatever might be Cyril's feelings towards his cousin, it was evident that Bob Cherry was a favourite with his uncle.

Bob's uncle was a kind-looking old gentleman, with a somewhat pale face, evidently not enjoying robust health. He was looking very tired as he stood on the steps of the School House.

"I am glad to see you, Bob," he said. "Where is Cyril?"

"I don't know, uncle."

"You don't know, Bob?" There was a trace of reproach in the old gentleman's tone, and Bob Cherry coloured.

"I—I wanted to look after him, uncle; but—but—but he didn't like the idea. You see, I—and he—well——"

"I think I understand, Bob," said Mr. Vane. "I want to see Cyril before I see the Head. Perhaps you know that Cyril has written to me asking me to take him away from Greyfriars?"

"Yes; Cyril told me so this morning."

"Will you find Cyril for me, and send him in. I will wait for him in your study. You are sharing the same study with him, I think?"

Bob flushed again.

"I—I was, uncle; but——"

Mr. Vane understood.

"Well, well; I will wait in your study in any case, Bob, and you can send him there."

"Very well, uncle."

Mr. Vane went into the house. Bob Cherry looked at his chums.

"Have you seen my blessed cousin lately?" he asked.

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"I haven't," said John Bull. "He went out with Vernon-Smith after lessons, that's all I know. He may be in Smith's study."

"Let's go and see," said Harry Wharton.

"Come on!"

The juniors waited till Mr. Vane had disappeared upstairs, and then followed more slowly to the Remove passage. Wharton knocked at the Bounder's door, and opened it. A scent of tobacco smoke greeted him, showing that the Bounder was at home. Cyril Vane was there, too, and he was smoking one of the Bounder's cigarettes. Vernon-Smith was evidently initiating the new junior into his own charming manners and customs.

Both the occupants of the study looked disagreeably enough at the new-comers. Vane blew out a cloud of smoke with great appearance of enjoying his cigarette. As a matter of fact, it was proving very trying to him, and he was beginning to feel somewhat of a qualmy feeling inside.

"Oh, you're here, Vane!" said Bob.

"Yes; and I don't want your company," replied his cousin.

"You wouldn't have it if you did. I don't chum with fellows who smoke cigarettes on the sly," said Bob Cherry scornfully. "I want you to come to my study——"

"I won't come! I'm here!" said Vane. "If I stay at Greyfriars I'm going to share Vernon-Smith's quarters. He's asked Mr. Quelch."

"Birds of a feather," murmured Nugent.

"And you can clear out," said the Bounder; "you're not wanted here. Vane's under my wing at present, Cherry."

"I'm sure I don't want him," said Bob. "But his father has just arrived, and he's waiting for Cyril in my study."

"Oh!" said Vane.

He rose, and threw the cigarette away.

"Your father, eh?" said the Bounder lazily. "Can't you keep him waiting?"

"I—I'd better not," said Vane shamefacedly.

And he left the study. Bob Cherry and his friends walked away without speaking to him again, and Vane went along the passage to No. 13.

He entered the study. Mr. Vane was standing by the table, the worn look upon his face showing up in the sunlight from the window. But Cyril did not notice it. He shook hands with his father nonchalantly enough.

Mr. Vane looked at him very closely.

"Sit down, Cyril," he said; "I had your letter this morning, and that is why I am here. You have asked me to take you away from Greyfriars?"

Vane threw himself into a chair.

"Yes, father."

"You are not happy here?"

"No."

"And you really want to leave?"

"Yes."

"Without giving the school a trial, Cyril, or making any effort to get on here?" the old gentleman asked.

Vane shrugged his shoulders angrily.

"I told you how it would be if I were put along with Bob Cherry," he replied. "We have always quarrelled, and we always shall quarrel. I hate him!"

"Cyril!"

"And I hate this place! There is only one fellow in the Form fit to speak to. I've made friends with him. Bob's friends are rotten. His special chum is a cad, who worked in a factory before he came here."

"That might be nothing against him, Cyril, if he behaves himself here," said Mr. Vane gently.

"But he doesn't! He's an out and out cad and a rotter!"

"What is his name?"

"Linley, or some such name."

"I have seen him, Cyril, when I came down here to see Bob, and he struck me as being a very pleasant, well-behaved lad."

Vane grunted

"He doesn't seem like that to me, anyhow He's an impertinent cad!"

"You need not come into contact with him, Cyril, or with Bob either, for that matter, if you cannot get on with him."

"I don't want to stay here."

"What else have you against the school?"

"I hate it!"

Mr. Vane frowned a little.

"Now, listen to me, Cyril," he said. "I must speak to you very seriously. You know that I am not rich, and the fees at this school are heavy. I have paid a term's fee in advance for you, and they will be sacrificed if you leave."

"I suppose it can't be helped."

"You must go to some school, Cyril."

"I got on very well with my tutor."

"You learned very little, I am afraid, and I do not think you got on very well with him. You have had four tutors in six months, and the last left because he told me frankly that he could not endure your temper."

"He was a rotter."



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"The others all left of their own accord, Cyril, although the salary was good."

"They were a set of rotters."

Mr. Vane bit his lip. He was very, very fond of his handsome son, and he had generally been under Cyril's dictation at home, which had been good for neither him nor Cyril. But he seemed to be made of somewhat sterner stuff now.

"Cyril, you cannot go on like this. You were growing past all control at home—a constant worry to your mother, and a great anxiety to me. Your education is not what it should be, and you are approaching a more serious time of life. There had to be some change, and I think a public school the best place for you."

"I don't think so."

"I hoped you would make friends with Bob, and get on here," said Mr. Vane, with a sigh.

The junior grunted discontentedly.

"Well, I haven't!" he said.

"Can't you make an attempt, Cyril—for my sake and for your mother's sake?"

Vane shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I don't want to stay here, father."

Mr. Vane was silent. The selfish, obstinate boy was past arguing with. It was a time for the use of parental authority. But Mr. Vane had always shrunk from that.

"I hate the place," said Cyril. "I don't want to go to school at all, for that matter. I'd rather go on as I was going on."

"But that could not go on for ever, Cyril. You must think of taking up some object in life; you must be trained for some career."

"I don't see any hurry."

"If you would prefer a commercial education, Cyril——?"

"I wouldn't!"

"I'm afraid you do not know your own mind, my boy. You are peevish and discontented, I fear," said Mr. Vane, with a sigh.

"Shall I go and pack my box?" asked his son.

"No!"

"But it will have to be packed. Are you staying here long?"

"No."

"Have you see the Head?"

"No."

"You will have to see him, father, to tell him I'm going."

Mr. Vane seemed to make an effort.

"You are not going, Cyril!" he said.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
### Sharper than a Serpent's Tooth.

VANE stared at his father.

It was the first time that Mr. Vane had denied him anything, and the boy could hardly understand it at first. He was not experienced enough to know that the most patient temper may be worn out in the long run. A look of determination, very new to Mr. Vane's face, had settled there.

"Not going, father!" echoed Cyril.

"No!"

"But I want to go!"

"I cannot help that, Cyril. I have decided to keep you at Greyfriars for this term at least, and you must make the best of it."

"Must!"

"Yes, must!"

"Father!"

"I am in earnest, Cyril. You must make the best of it," said Mr. Vane, gently but firmly. "Be reasonable, my boy. You know that my means are limited, and I could not afford the constant expense of changing your tutors. I cannot afford to lose the term's fees I have paid here. But that is not all. Something must be done for your future, and this is the best I can think of. You have no plan to suggest yourself—nothing but returning home and idling, as you have done for years. Think of it!"

Vane's face was very sullen.

"Does mother want me to stay here against my will?" he asked.

"I have not shown your letter to your mother, and she does not know I have come here to see you," said Mr. Vane. "It is better for her not to know. I do not desire her to be made anxious."

Vane scowled.

"Look here, pater, I can't stay here. I hate the place! I'll try another school if you like. I can't stand Bob, for one thing."

"I cannot afford to try another school, Cyril."

"Oh, don't give me that!" said Vane, peevishly. "I suppose you're not as poor as a church mouse. It's all rot."

Mr. Vane sighed.

"You have never thought of such things, Cyril, and I have always tried to give you a good allowance," he said. "But such considerations are very real, nevertheless. My dear boy, won't you make an effort to get on here?"

"I can't."

"If there is anything I can do to make you more comfortable, I will do it," said Mr. Vane. "If you require a larger allowance——"

"Well, five bob a week isn't much for a place like this," said Vane. "Vernon-Smith has as much money as he chooses to ask his father for."

"Vernon-Smith's father is probably a great deal richer than yours, then," said Mr. Vane. "But I will do what I can. I will allow you ten shillings."

"I don't see why I should stay here. It's rotten!"

"I'm afraid there's no alternative, Cyril. I will speak to Bob, and ask him to befriend you as much as possible."

"Don't! I don't want his friendship!"

"It would be very useful to you, Cyril."

"I don't want it. I only want to get away from this place. If I can't, I suppose I shall have to stay," said Vane, sullenly. "I don't see that you need have come down to tell me that, father. A letter would have been enough to tell me that you wouldn't do what I want."

"I hoped to be able to make you understand that it was for the best, Cyril."

"That's not likely to happen. But if you won't take me away, you won't, I suppose, and there's an end of it, and I shall have to grin and bear it," said Cyril, and he rose from his chair. His manner very plainly indicated that the sooner the interview was over now the better he would like it.

Mr. Vane stood very still.

His kind old face was worn and tired, but his heart was more weary than his body. From Cyril he never, perhaps, expected thanks, but—but every indifferent word from the boy went to his heart. The bitter truth had often been forced home upon him—and never so keenly as now—that the son he lavished his affection upon did not care for him—that he took everything as a matter of course, cared nothing for the sacrifices that were made for him, but was only discontented because they could not be greater.

The moment his will was crossed, the worst side of Cyril's character came to light. He was sullen, ungrateful, discontented. That his father was acting for the best, or, at all events, trying to act for the best, was a consideration that never occurred to Cyril. All he thought of was that he was hardly used.

"Well?" said the boy, as his father did not move.

Mr. Vane sighed.

"I suppose I may as well return to the station," he said. "As I am not taking you away, Cyril, there is no need to see the Head."

"Good-bye, then."

"Would you like to come to the station with me?" asked his father. "You have ample time before school recommences, I think."

"What for?" asked Vane.

"I thought you might like to come."

"It would be a fag," said Vane, sulkily.

Mr. Vane seemed to gulp something down.

"Very well," he said; "it does not matter. Good-bye, Cyril!"

"Good-bye."

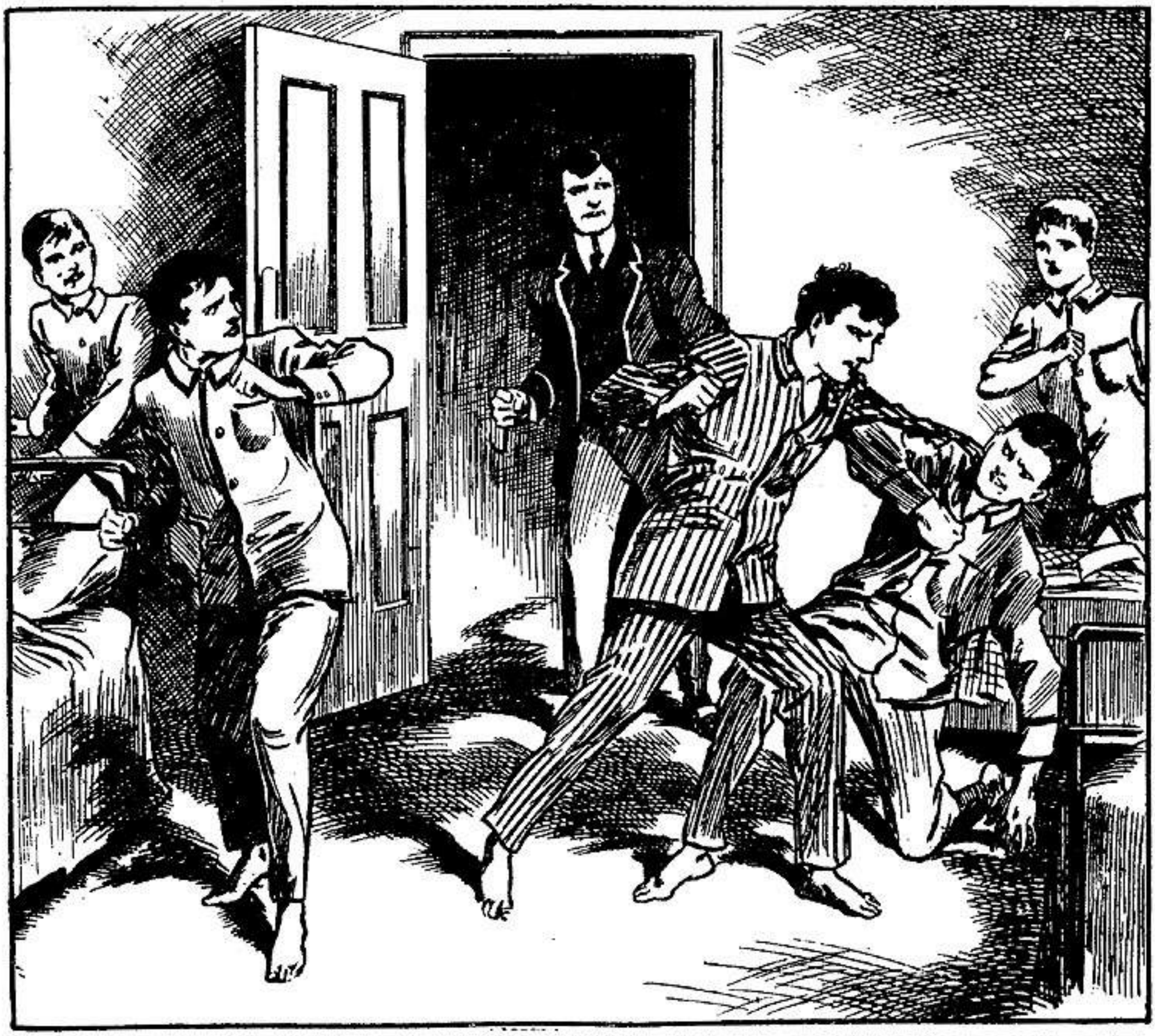
Mr. Vane shook hands with his son. Cyril's hand had about as much life in it as a cold codfish. He did not even offer to go down as far as the school door with the old gentleman.

"Cyril! Try to think that I am acting for the best—that I always have your interests at heart," said Mr. Vane.

**Next Tuesday!**

**FOOTBALL FOES!**

**By Frank Richards.**



**"Why, you rascals!" exclaimed Courtney. "How dare you! Stop it!" But the two fighting Removites did not stop it. Courtney wasted no more time in words. He took a tight grasp upon his cane and ran at the two juniors. The cane rose and fell, with great impartiality, upon both of them.** *(See chapter 9.)*

His son shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I suppose you think so, father," he said.

"I am older than you, Cyril; I have had experience, and I am placing it at your service," the old gentleman said softly. "The way you wished to go on would only lead to unhappiness for yourself and others. Cyril——"

"I've got to stay here, whether I like it or not; that's the long and the short of it," said Cyril. "I don't see that there's any need to talk about it. You won't do what I want, but I want it all the same."

"I'm doing what's best for you, Cyril."

"Very well," said Cyril. "Never mind, then."

Mr. Vane sighed again. He turned to the door, and in the doorway he looked back to take a last glance at his son. Cyril Vane had thrown himself into a chair, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, his legs stretched out, his chin on his breast, his whole attitude indicative of sulky anger and disappointment.

He did not glance at his father again—he did not even know that the old gentleman had looked back. Mr. Vane sighed, and went down the passage.

Bob Cherry met him at the foot of the staircase.

Bob read very accurately the careworn lines on the old gentleman's face, and in his heart a bitter anger swelled up against the ungrateful son who had brought them there. Bob was very fond of his uncle, and he had never felt so much inclined to lick his cousin Cyril as at that moment.

"Seen Cyril, uncle?" he asked.

Mr. Vane nodded.

"Yes, Bob."

"Is he leaving Greyfriars?"

"No!"

Bob gave a soft whistle.

"You're not taking him away, then?"

"No; he will remain at the school," said Mr. Vane. The old gentleman turned a somewhat wistful look upon his nephew. "Bob, I know Cyril's temper is a little trying, but for my sake I wish you'd try to get on with him. You might help him in many ways, and make him see things in a more sensible light. Don't you think so?"

"I—I meant to try, uncle——"

"And you failed," said the old gentleman, with a sad smile. "I need not say that I know which side the blame was upon. But perhaps you may have been a little hasty, Bob; and you may have remembered old quarrels that were better forgotten."

"It wasn't that," said Bob. "It was——" He broke off. "Never mind, I'll do my best, uncle; I'll be friends with Cyril if he'll let me. You can depend upon me to do anything I can to please you, uncle."

Mr. Vane pressed his hand. He thought for a moment how different things would have been if his son had been like Bob Cherry.

"Thank you, Bob. You are a good lad. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, uncle."

Mr. Vane stepped into the station cab and was driven away. Bob watched the cab depart, with a clouded brow.

"Seems a jolly old boy, your uncle," Frank Nugent remarked.

"One of the best," said Bob Cherry. "He's been kindness itself to me since I was a kid. I've always tried to get on with that utter cad, Cyril, to please him, but it never came off somehow. I never could stand Cyril."

"No wonder, from what we've seen of him. It was rotten careless of you to have a cousin like that."

Bob Cherry laughed ruefully.

"I'd give him away with a pound of tea willingly," he said. "It's rotten the way he rags his pater. If Uncle George would only give him a good hiding instead of petting and coaxing him, he would be worlds better for it. But uncle will never do that."

Nugent nodded.

"What is it Shakespeare says on the subject?" he remarked. "'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child.' Old William knew something."

Bob Cherry turned away, his brow very gloomy. He had a difficult and unpleasant task before him—to make friends with his cousin. Bob had never undertaken anything quite so distasteful or quite so difficult before. But he had promised his uncle, and he meant to do it.

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## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Not Much Good!

DURING the following two or three days Bob Cherry tried his hardest to keep the promise he had made to his uncle, and to get on good terms with his cousin. The chums of the Remove, knowing how anxious Bob was upon the subject, did their best to help him, and they were studiously civil to Vane.

But their patience, as well as Bob's, was sorely tried.

Vane did not seem to understand that a fellow could be civil and obliging without having something to gain thereby; and he generally adopted insufferably patronising airs towards those who were kind to him.

In spite of their wish to help Bob in his difficult task, the chums were frozen off one by one.

They confessed to Bob that they could not possibly stand his cousin, and Bob Cherry ruefully admitted that it was no wonder.

There was one fellow at Greyfriars who contrived to stand the unpleasant new-comer, and that one was Vernon-Smith, the Bounder.

He had asked permission to have Vane in his study; and it had been granted, as Mr. Quelch had learned that Bob Cherry and his cousin did not agree.

The Bounder undoubtedly had his own purposes to serve. He encouraged Vane in every manner and custom that could possibly irritate Bob Cherry, thereby paying off old scores in a way that Bob could not punish.

Yet it must have been difficult for even the Bounder, thick-skinned as he was, to get on with the suspicious, ill-natured junior. But they had many tastes in common. The Bounder found Vane an apt pupil in what he taught him, and he taught him nothing that was for his good. Vane was only too ready to learn anything that was wrong, but his obstinacy and carelessness in class brought down upon him the wrath of the Form-master on many occasions.

The Bounder was not popular in the Remove; Bolsover, the bully, was not popular; and Snoop, the sneak, was little liked. But the unpopularity of all three together did not equal that of Bob Cherry's cousin. The juniors could not forgive him for having complained to Mr. Quelch about the tossing in the blanket in the dormitory, though that was far from being the worst of his offences. A fellow who would sneak would do anything, was the pretty general opinion. And in Vane's case, that opinion was not far wrong.

In a couple of days he contrived to make himself disliked more than any other fellow in the school, and but for the fact that he was Bob Cherry's cousin he would probably have been continually ragged. But out of respect for Bob Cherry, and regard for his feelings, the Removites for the most part let him alone.

Bob Cherry watched his growing friendship with Vernon-Smith with growing uneasiness. He knew that his cousin would get no good from the Bounder, but advice from Bob was not likely to be listened to by the obstinate, arrogant youth. Harry Wharton came to the rescue, as he had suggested, but the result was not exactly fortunate.

Vane had been a few days at Greyfriars when, after a talk with Bob Cherry, Wharton met Vane in the Close, and stopped to speak to him. Vane regarded him with a slightly supercilious smile, which made Wharton long to take him by the shoulders and shake him there and then. But he controlled himself.

"I'd like to speak to you a few minutes, Vane," he said.

"Oh, fire away!"

"I'm an old friend of your cousin's," Harry explained, "and that's why I'm going to speak. It's about Vernon-Smith—the chap we call the Bounder."

"What about him?"

"I should advise you to have a little less to do with him, said Harry quietly. "He is leading you into mischief, and he's doing it to annoy Bob."

Vane shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose I can take care of myself," he remarked.

"I'm not suggesting that you can't," said Wharton. "I only wanted to give you a word of advice, as one who's been here longer than you."

"Thanks; but I don't need it."

"You jolly well do!"

"As to what you say about Vernon-Smith, it would be a bit more decent to say it to his face, I should think, instead of behind his back!" said the new junior, with a sneer.

Harry Wharton turned scarlet.

"I'll say it to his face quick enough!" he exclaimed. "Do you dare to accuse me of slandering him?"

"Well, here he comes."

Vernon-Smith sauntered up with his hands in his pockets. He smiled in a sneering way as he saw the two juniors together.

"Wharton's got something to say to you, Smithy," said Vane with a grin.

"Oh, go ahead!" said the Bounder carelessly. "Something nice, I suppose."

"I was warning Vane to have nothing to do with you," said Wharton, in his direct way. "I don't think you will do him any good."

The Bounder laughed.

"You are very kind to Vane," he said. "You and his cousin seem to think that he is still in leading-strings, and that you're his nurses."

"Nothing of the sort! I would warn anybody against associating with you!" said Harry Wharton scornfully. "Since your last scrape you've been very careful to keep your rotten ways dark, but you haven't changed them! The whole Form knows that. And you are trying to make Vane as bad as yourself, and you're only doing it to worry Bob! You know that, you cad!"

"Pile it on!"

"And when you've made a fool of him, you'll turn your back on him!" said Wharton.

"Any more?"

"No," said Harry. "I felt that I ought to speak to you on the subject, Vane, that's all."

"Thank you for nothing," said Vane. "Smith's my friend, and I don't care to hear anything against him—especially rotten lies!"

"What?"

"You heard what I said."

"It was plain English enough," grinned the Bounder.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"If you weren't Bob's cousin, I'd wipe up the ground with you, you cad!" he said hotly.

The Bounder sneered.

"Any excuse is better than none when a fellow doesn't want to fight," he remarked.

Harry Wharton turned upon him in a flash.

"I'll show you whether I want to avoid a fight or not!" he exclaimed. "Put up your hands, Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh, I say——"

"Put them up, you cad!"

Wharton was coming at the Bounder, hitting out, and Vernon-Smith had no choice about putting up his hands. He put them up fast enough. The Bounder was no coward. In a moment the two juniors were fighting hard, and Vane stood looking on with his hands in his pockets.

"Go it, Smithy!" he exclaimed.

"Boys! How dare you!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice, from above. The juniors had been standing almost under the Remove-master's study window.

The two combatants ceased at once. Mr. Quelch's voice was never disregarded by his pupils. The Form-master stood looking down from the open window, with a dark frown upon his face.

"This is disgraceful!" he exclaimed. "The Head himself might have seen you, if he had looked out of his window!"

"I'm sorry, sir," said the Bounder.

"I'm very sorry," said Harry Wharton.

"Who started this?"

The Bounder did not speak. Wharton set his lips. He had started the fighting, true; but the Bounder had provoked him to it. It was not fair that all the blame should fall upon him But before the juniors could reply, however, Cyril Vane chimed in.

"It was Wharton, sir!" he said.

Mr. Quelch gave him a sharp glance.

"I did not speak to you, Vane!" he said. "However, did you strike the first blow, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will take fifty lines. Now go, all of you, and let there be no more of this!"



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"Very well, sir."

Harry Wharton walked away. He had done his best for Bob Cherry, and his worst for himself. His interference had certainly not been productive of any good. The Bounder and his chum chuckled as they walked away. The Bounder wiped a smear of red from his nose.

"Wharton won't meddle again with us in a hurry, I think," he remarked.

"Ha, ha! No."

"By the way, Vane, I've got rather rotten news for you!"

Vane's chuckle died away.

"About the horse?" he asked.

"Yes. Mr. Cobb put on two pounds for you, as you told me to ask him."

"I stood to win six, at three to one," said Vane.

"Exactly. Only the horse hasn't won."

Vane changed colour.

"Do you mean to say he's lost?" asked the junior, staring at Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder gave a shrug.

"As he hasn't won, it's pretty clear that he's lost," he replied. "Of course, one cannot score all the time. You won your first bet."

"Yes; ten bob. Now I've lost two pounds."

"Better luck next time," said the Bounder carelessly. "I suppose you can stand it?"

"Yes," said Vane, but after quite a long pause.

"Good! I thought I'd tell you, because as you'll be seeing Cobb to-night, he'll most likely ask you to settle up."

"Oh, all right!"

Vane quitted the Bounder, and walked away by himself, with a cloud on his brow. The Bounder looked after him, and there was a derisive sneer upon his face.

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## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Money Wanted!

BOB CHERRY came into No. 13, and sat down at the table. Mark Linley was already there, doing his preparation, and he gave Bob Cherry a cheerful nod. But Bob Cherry did not look cheerful. Most of Bob's sunny lightness of spirits seemed to have vanished since his cousin had come to Greyfriars.

Bob went on with his work without a word. He had just heard about the result of Harry Wharton's well-meant advice to Vane; he had left Wharton doing his lines in his study. And Bob was feeling very gloomy.

There was a knock at the door a little later, and Vane looked in. Bob glanced up, and his eyes rested in surprise upon his cousin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he ejaculated.

"I want to speak to you, Bob."

Vane's tone was unusually civil.

"You can come in," said Bob.

"Thanks. Can I speak to you alone?"

The question was too direct to be misunderstood. Mark Linley rose to his feet, and gathered up his books.

"Hold on!" said Bob, frowning. "I don't see what Vane can have to say that you can't hear, Marky. Stick where you are!"

"It's all right, Bob. Bull will give me room in his study."

And Mark Linley quitted the room without arguing the point. Vane stood aside for him to pass, with a sneering expression upon his face, which the Lancashire lad appeared not to notice. Then he closed the door.

"Well?" said Bob, rather grimly.

He had been trying hard to be agreeable to his cousin for the last few days, but now that an opportunity had come it seemed harder than ever. And he knew Vane well enough to know that he would not have taken the trouble to be agreeable for nothing.

"You've been offering me a lot of advice and assistance since I came to Greyfriars," Vane began.

"I meant it to help you on," said Bob.

"I know you did, and I'm not—not ungrateful," said Vane, with an effort. "But now I want you to do me a favour, Bob."

"That's all right. Any books I can lend you?" asked Bob, more cheerfully.

Vane curled his lip.

"Oh, no; it's not that!"

"Been getting into a scrape with Quelchy?" asked Bob, rather anxiously.

"No, no."

"More trouble with Bolsover? If he's been bullying you, you have only to tell me about it" said Bob. "I have a row with Bolsover every time he bullies a chap who can't hold his own against him."

"Hang Bolsover!"

"Well, what is it, then?" asked Bob, puzzled.

He had run over what seemed to him a good list of possible schoolboy troubles.

"Money," said Vane.

"Oh, money! Run out of cash?"

"Yes, that's it."

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"All serene" said Bob. "You've come at the right time. I've had a remittance from my pater over and above the usual. You can have all the five if you like."

"Pounds?" asked Vane eagerly.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Well, no" he said. "The pater isn't likely to send me five pounds at once. I hardly fancy the finances at home would stand the strain. Five bob, of course."

"Do you mean to say that that's all you've got—five bob?"

"Well, I dare say I could stand another tanner or two if I tried," said Bob Cherry, in surprise. "Do you want more than five bob?"

"Yes."

"Getting a new footer?"

Vane sneered.

"I'm not likely to waste my money on buying a football, if that's what you mean," he replied.

"You might waste it on worse things," said Bob Cherry quietly. "But what is it, then? What do you want a lot of money for?"

"I don't see any need for you to ask the question. I want you to lend me two pounds. If you can't, or won't, there's an end of it," said Vane.

"Two pounds!" Bob Cherry whistled. "Two golden quids! Why, bless your boots, I haven't it! I never have so much money as that, unless it's my birthday, or Christmas. Two pounds! What on earth do you want two pounds for?"

"That's my bizney."

"Well, it's mine, too, if you want me to find the two quid," said Bob good-humouredly. "Really, Cyril, I shouldn't lend you so much money as that, even if I had it, without knowing what it was wanted for."

"Well, I certainly shan't tell you, if you won't lend it to me," said Vane haughtily.

"All serene! Don't."

Vane rose from the seat upon which he had seated himself, and turned towards the door.

Bob resumed his work. Vane paused at the door and looked back.

"Look here, Bob, can't you lend it to me? It's serious. Look here, I'm in debt."

Bob Cherry looked up.

"Two pounds in debt since you came to Greyfriars?" he asked. "That's pretty thick, isn't it? Is it the tuckshop?"

"Don't ask idiotic questions!" said Vane angrily. "Am I likely to run up a bill for ginger-beer and jam tarts, you silly ass!"

"I don't know what you are likely to do," said Bob Cherry. "But it's jolly remarkable to me that you owe two pounds. Will you tell me whom you owe it to?"

"No, I won't!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Bob. "Is this some of the Bounder's doing? Have you been doing any betting, or anything of that sort, Cyril?"

"Mind your own business!"

And he went out of the study and slammed the door, leaving Bob Cherry in a very perturbed frame of mind.

Vane went sulkily and savagely along the passage. He wanted two pounds very badly, but Bob Cherry was the last fellow in the world to whom he would have explained what he really wanted it for. Bob Cherry would certainly not have found him two sovereigns to pay a gambling debt to Mr. Cobb of Friardale; and he might have taken some active steps to stop Cyril's connection with Mr. Cobb. But where was the money to come from? True, he could ask Mr. Cobb for time to pay, but that would be confessing to Vernon-Smith that he had no money. And even so, where was the money to come from by the end of the week, if Mr. Cobb gave him to Saturday to pay? Certainly his pocket-money of ten shillings would not meet the claim.

His father!

That was the only way. He had to write to his father and ask for money. Vane knew perfectly well that his father could not spare two pounds without an effort, but that consideration did not trouble him. All that troubled him was the delay in getting the money, which would be caused by having to write home for it.

He went into the Bounder's study. Vernon-Smith was not there, and Vane sat down to write home. The letter did not take him long.

"Dear Father,—Can you let me have two pounds——"

He paused. Two pounds was exactly the sum he needed to pay his debt to Mr. Cobb, but it would leave him with nothing in hand. And he could not write every day for money. Why not make it a little extra? It was no harder to ask for three pounds than to ask for two, and he was as likely to get it. He took a fresh sheet of paper, and started the letter afresh.

"Dear Father,—Could you let me have three pounds? I want it for a very particular purpose—an expense that I simply must meet. If you can't let me have it, it will come very hard on me. Will you reply by return, if possible?"



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Vane read the letter over, signed it, and sealed it in an envelope. The Bounder came into the study as he was sticking the stamp on.

"Hallo! Writing to your bankers?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a laugh.

"No; home," said Vane briefly.

"Glad you've finished, then," said the Bounder, yawning. "If there's anything I hate, it's letters to home or from home—dative and ablative case equally objectionable. If you've done that rot, I'll take you through a game of poker, and give you some points on how to play."

"Thanks! I'll post this first. I sha'n't be a couple of minutes."

Vane ran down to the school letter-box with the letter, then he returned to the study, and found the Bounder shuffling the cards on the table.

"Shut the door!" said Vernon-Smith. "Lock it! It's necessary to sport one's oak when one is practising draw-poker in this blessed chapel of a place. Now, then, I deal five to you, and five to me, alternately."

And the Bounder went on with his valuable instruction, to all of which Cyril Vane listened eagerly. By the time the lesson was finished, Vane had a very good idea of the game of poker; but whether the knowledge was likely to do him any good or not was another matter.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### No Exit.

BOB CHERRY gave his cousin a suspicious look when they went to bed that night. Cyril Vane did not undress himself fully. He put his pyjamas on over his underclothing, and retained his socks, and did not fold up his clothes. All of which pointed to the fact that he intended to get up again before morning. Vane's manner was so discouraging, however, that Bob did not feel inclined to speak to him. He knew that he would receive in reply nothing but insolence, which he could not resent for the sake of his uncle.

Wingate saw lights out in the Remove dormitory, and after the usual chatter, there was silence, as the juniors dropped off to sleep.

Bob Cherry did not sleep.

He was anxious. The friendship his cousin had formed with the Bounder had worried him, and the news that Vane was in debt worried him still more. It looked as if Vernon-Smith had succeeded in leading his victim into serious mischief.

Bob Cherry did not mean to sleep that night until he was certain that his cousin was asleep.

Half-past ten rang out from the clock-tower, and there was steady breathing in the Remove dormitory.

Then there was a rustle as someone sat up in bed.

"Asleep, Vane?"

It was the Bounder's voice. Bob Cherry smiled bitterly. He had expected it, and he had expected his cousin to reply—as he did.

"No, Smithy."

"Up you get, then."

"Righto!"

"Don't make a row," said Vernon-Smith, in a whisper, as he slid out of bed. "No need to wake the others."

Vane sniffed.

"I suppose the others wouldn't have the cheek to interfere with us?" he asked.

"You never know; someone might sneak, anyway. Some rotten cad might go telling tales to a Form-master," said Vernon-Smith.

Vane winced; he never quite knew whether his friend was secretly sneering at him or not.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"You needn't be so careful," he remarked. "There's someone awake already."

The two rascals started violently at the sound of his voice.

"You!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, you cad!"

"Well, you mind your own bizney," said Vane. "Smithy and I are going out on a little run, and we don't want you with us, do we, Smithy?"

"No fear!" said the Bounder.

Bob Cherry gave a scornful laugh

"You wouldn't be likely to have me with you on a little run to the Cross Keys—for that's where you want to go, I know that!" he exclaimed.

"Mind your own business," said the Bounder.

"That's what I'm doing. You're not going to lead my cousin into such rotten tricks, if I can prevent it," said Bob Cherry, slipping out of bed.

Vane gritted his teeth.

"You're not going to dare to interfere with me," he exclaimed.

"Yes, I am. You're not going out of this dorm., or Vernon Smith either! Here, you fellows—hallo, hallo, hallo—wake up, and see fair play!"

A dozen or more of the Removites started out of slumber at Bob's powerful voice. Frank Nugent struck a match and lighted a candle.

"What on earth's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"What's the row, Bob Cherry?"

"Only a little night excursion I've nipped in the bud," said Bob Cherry. "Vernon-Smith is at his old blackguardly tricks again—he won't be satisfied till he's expelled. And he wants to take my cousin with him."

"The cad!" said Harry Wharton.

"The rotter!"

"Mind your own business, Bob Cherry!" exclaimed Vane furiously. "Do you think you are my father-confessor? I tell you I'm going."

Bob's jaw set squarely.

"And I tell you you're not," he said.

"Who'll stop me?"

"I will!"

"You—you——"

"Yes, rather," said Bulstrode. "You're not going, Vane, and you're not going, either, Smith. It would serve you right, Vane, if we followed your own example, and told Mr. Quelch. Anyway, you're not going. I'm captain of this Form."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Get into bed!" said Bulstrode.

"I won't!"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry, as the Remove captain put one leg out of bed. "Hold on! Leave him to me, Bulstrode, there's a good chap."

"Oh, all serene!" said Bulstrode, with a yawn.

"Cyril, you can't go. Go to bed!"

"I tell you I won't!"

"You must!"

"Hang you! I shall do as I like! Hang you!"

"Look here, Cyril, I promised uncle to look after you a bit. I'm going to keep my promise. He'd rather I hammered you than let you go down to a blackguardly place with a blackguard like Vernon-Smith. I'm sure of that, although I know he doesn't like you to be hammered as a rule. Don't you think so, Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Good! So if you try to leave this dorm., Cyril, I shall hammer you—for your own good. Do you understand?"

Vane clenched his fists angrily.

"You'd better not touch me," he exclaimed.

Bob laughed.

"I don't think you could do much with your hands," he said. "I don't want to touch you if I can help it. But you're going back to bed."

"I'm not!"

"As for you, Smithy, I'd rather thump you than not," said Bob Cherry. "I warn you that you won't be allowed to go out, and so you can tumble in at once."

Vernon-Smith hesitated. But he knew that it would not do. Even if he held his own against Bob Cherry—which was unlikely enough—there were plenty of other fellows ready and willing and able to stop him.

He kicked off the boots he had already put on, and returned to his bed, drawing the bedclothes over him with an air of cynical indifference. Cyril Vane gave him an angry look.

"Are you going to bed at Bob Cherry's order?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said the Bounder. "The game's up for to-night, that's all. There are plenty of other nights—and half-holidays, too."

Vane clenched his hands with bitter anger. But his comrade had deserted him, and he did not want to go alone. Neither, upon reflection, did he want to face Bob Cherry's hard and heavy fists. He had had considerable experience of the way Bob Cherry could hit, and, upon the whole, he did not want any more of it.

"You—you hound!" he exclaimed.

"You can talk as much as you like, and sling out all the pretty names you know," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "I don't mind."

"Hang you!"

"Thanks."

"You—you hound! I hate you!"

"Good!"

"I—I'll make you suffer for this!"

"Hear, hear!"

Vane spluttered with rage. He would have been glad to hurl some taunt at Bob Cherry about his father, but he knew that Bob's good temper and patience would vanish if he did, and that he would hit out—hard! Vane strode towards his bed, and turned in, with a face as black as thunder.

Bob Cherry went to bed, and Frank Nugent blew out his candle end. Darkness reigned in the Remove dormitory again.

"Look here," said Bulstrode, "I don't like being woke up! If there is any more of this, Cyril Vane, you will get a hiding.



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I'm going easy with you because you're Cherry's cousin, but I'm getting fed up. Next time, I shall hammer you, so take that as a warning."

Vane did not reply.

But there was no more disturbance in the Remove dormitory that night; and in the little parlour of the Cross Keys, in Friardale, Messrs. Cobb & Co. waited in vain for the coming of the pigeons they had intended to pluck.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Nothing for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER rolled up to Cyril Vane with a most ingratiating smile soon after morning classes were dismissed the next day. He blinked at Vane through his big spectacles, as if he were a long-lost brother, suddenly found.

"I say, Vane, I hope you feel all right to-day," he remarked.

Vane stared at him.

"I'm all right," he said. "Why shouldn't I feel all right?"

"Well, those rotters worrying you last night, you know," said Billy Bunter sympathetically. "It was rotten! Why couldn't they let you go? If a chap wants to make an ass of himself, what does it matter to Bob Cherry?"

"Look here——"

"I'm sure I sympathised with you very much. By the way, are you expecting a remittance from home, Vane?"

"Yes."

"Good! If it comes, I dare say you could make me a small advance upon a postal-order I'm expecting this evening?" Bunter suggested.

"Oh, rats!"

"As a matter of absolute fact, Vane, there's a letter for you in the rack now. It's a registered letter, too——"

Bunter broke off as Vane pushed rudely by him, and ran to the letter rack. There, right enough, was the registered letter. Trotter had carelessly stuck it there after signing for it, although he was not supposed to do so. Vane took it down at once, and jerked it open, tearing the stout envelope eagerly.

Billy Bunter blinked after him angrily.

"Beast!" murmured the fat junior.

But he worked up a pleasant smile as he followed Vane. It was pretty clear that the junior had received a remittance; and fellows who received remittances were entitled to Bunter's most courteous manners.

Vane took out the letter contained in the envelope, and did not glance at it. His attention was given to three coins wrapped in tissue-paper. He peeled off the tissue-paper, and found himself the richer by three sovereigns.

Bunter blinked at the sovereigns with covetous eyes. Vane was not sorry to let them be seen. It was an incessant worry to him that he was not so rich as some of the other fellows, and when he had any gold he was only too glad to let the other fellows know it.

His father had sent the three pounds he had asked for, and by return of post. It might have been expected that Vane would feel a little touched by the act of affection. But the look upon his face was not grateful or affectionate.

He put the sovereigns into his purse, and opened the letter carelessly.

"A blessed lecture about extravagance, I suppose," he muttered.

He glanced over the letter, and knitted his brows:

"Dear Cyril,—I enclose the money you need. You know that I shall never refuse you anything that you may need, if it is in my power to give it to you. But I must ask you, Cyril, to be very careful in money matters. You know we are not rich, and I have many calls upon me now; and owing to my ill-health I have had to give less attention to business lately, which has caused me losses. I do not wish to cause you undue anxiety, my dear boy, but our affairs are not so well as they were, and it is necessary to be careful. I do not ask you what the money is needed for: I am sure you would not incur any expense that you could not explain to your father. I hope you are now satisfied to stay at Greyfriars. I have been expecting a letter from you. When you write, I hope you will be able to tell me that you like the school.—Your affectionate father,

"GEORGE VANE."

Vane's lip curled as he crumpled the letter and put it into his pocket.

"Always like that," he muttered. "Always the same. Can't part with a half-sov. without a tremendous long lecture to accompany it! I wonder whether every chap's father is as much worry as mine?"

He walked away discontentedly. Billy Bunter touched him on the arm, and Vane looked round angrily.

"What do you want, you fat rotter?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Vane——"

"Let me alone!"

"Oh, very well," said Bunter, with dignity. "I was thinking that you might care to lend me a sovereign——"

Vane laughed.



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"Yes, that is likely!" he said.

"I'm expecting a remittance this evening from a titled friend of mine," Billy Bunter explained. "I simply want the sovereign off it. I will hand you the postal-order as soon as it comes. Simply a small business transaction."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Look here, Vane, I think you might——"

"Shut up!"

"You rotten swanking cad!" went on Bunter, suddenly changing his affections apparently. "You ought to be kicked out of any decent school! You rotter!"

Biff!

"Yarooh!" roared Billy Bunter.

He sat down suddenly on the steps, and Vane's knuckles caught him full upon his fat chin. Cyril Vane walked away, and Bunter blinked after him in great wrath and indignation.

"Beast!" he murmured. "Ow! Beast! Yow! Beast!"

And Bunter slowly picked himself up, and rolled away, but not in the direction taken by Vane. He had been compelled regretfully to abandon his designs upon the three sovereigns Vane had extracted from his father.

Vernon-Smith came upon Vane a little later in the Close.

"It was a rotten frost last night," he remarked.

Vane grunted.

"I'd have gone all the same, if you'd have stood by me," he said. "What utter rot to let my cousin dictate to us! Rotten!"

"The other fellows would have backed him up. Bulstrode has turned mighty good lately, since his brother died, you know. Oh, you weren't here, then. Well, it's no good bucking against the crowd of them," said Vernon-Smith. "This afternoon is a half-holiday, and we can go out for a stroll. As a matter of fact, breaking bounds at night is a rather serious bizney, and if the prefects caught a chap he would be expelled."

"What did Cobb and the rest think of our not coming, I wonder."

The Bounder laughed.

"Oh, they know a fellow can't always get away. That's all right. But we can manage it easily enough this afternoon. I suppose you've got the money to settle with Cobb?"

"Of course I have."

The Bounder looked at him narrowly.

"That's all right, then," he said. "Of course, a chap can't go the pace at all unless he has the tin in his pockets to stand it."

"I've got the tin, all serene."

"Good. Then we'll get out after dinner."

"Right!"

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Hard Hit!

BOB CHERRY had no eyes for his cousin that afternoon. The Remove were playing the Upper Fourth at football, and Bob Cherry was a mighty man in the Remove team.

When he was on the football field, Bob Cherry generally forgot that there was any other place in existence; and he was certainly worth his weight in gold there.

Temple, Dabney & Co. generally showed a lot of condescension about playing the Remove, but as the Remove generally licked them they could afford to smile at the condescension of the Upper Fourth.

On the present occasion the Remove were in great form, and they walked over the Upper Fourth in fine style.

Temple, Dabney & Co. left off swanking after three goals had been scored by the Remove, to nil, and exerted themselves to turn the tide of defeat. But they exerted themselves in vain. In the second half, the Remove added two more goals, to one by Dabney, and the match finished with a score of five for the Remove against one for the Upper Fourth.

And Temple, Dabney & Co. sang considerably smaller as they walked off the field, amid grins and smiles from crowds of elated fags.

Bob Cherry towelled himself down, and rubbed his face, that glowed like a freshly boiled beetroot, in a state of great satisfaction.

"Jolly good game!" he remarked, "if the Upper Fourth would only put a bit more beef into the play. This is what my cousin wants, you know—a jolly good game of footer, to clear the rot out of his silly head. I wonder whether I could get him to take the game up?"

"Make him!" said John Bull.

Bob Cherry laughed ruefully.

"Cyril's rather an awkward customer to make to do anything," he said. "I should like to see him playing footer, though. It would do him worlds of good; much better than hanging round with that cad Vernon-Smith."



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"Faith, man, ye're right," said Micky Desmond. "He went out with the Bounder just before the match, and sure they both looked mighty keen about something. If that cousin of yours belonged to me, sure I'd wallop him regularly every day for his own good."

Bob Cherry looked anxious.

"Gone out with the Bounder?" he asked.

"Yes, Cherry darling."

Bob finished his changing in silence. His good spirits seemed suddenly to have left him. He walked out into the Close with Wharton, and Nugent, and John Bull, and there was a wrinkle upon his brow, and his eyes were on the ground. The other fellows knew well enough what was preying upon his mind.

"No good bothering, Bob," said John Bull. "The chap will go his own way till he comes a mucker. You can't stop him."

"No, I suppose not," said Bob.

He strolled away by himself, his hands in his pockets. The early autumn evening was drawing in, and the other fellows were going in to their tea. Bob Cherry strolled down to the gates of Greyfriars, and looked down the shadowy road. He was anxious, and he was angry. It seemed that he was incessantly interfering with his cousin, and yet, after his promise to his uncle, what could he do? Could he see a fellow who was related to him going the way that Cyril was going, without trying to stop him? But what could he do? Bob Cherry's mind was a practical one, and he generally decided upon the most obvious and straightforward course when he was in doubt.

Vernon-Smith's friendship was doing his cousin harm; there could be no doubt about that. If it continued, Vane would be in great danger of being expelled from the school. The Bounder would be cunning enough to save himself, whatever happened—Bob felt pretty sure of that. If a scapegoat were needed, it would be the foolish and conceited Vane. Was Bob to stand by while his cousin was made a fool of, and disgrace brought upon the family?

To Bob, there seemed to be only one way of breaking off that ill-omened acquaintance—and it was by hammering Vernon-Smith till he agreed to leave Vane alone. It would be a high-handed proceeding, perhaps. But, to stop the evil that the Bounder was doing, it would surely be justifiable?

Bob Cherry thought that it would, and the idea suited him, as being easy and direct. He waited for the Bounder to come in, in a very grim mood. But it was Vane who came in.

As a junior came along in the dusk of the road, just in time to avoid being locked out, Bob started forward. He recognised his cousin.

But Vane did not look as usual. His face was deadly pale, and there were deep lines upon his forehead, and his eyes were haggard.

Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation of surprise and alarm. His anger vanished in a moment at the sight of his cousin's harassed face.

"Cyril, old man! What's the matter?"

Vane looked at him without replying.

"What has happened, Cyril?"

"Nothing!" muttered Vane.

"You are looking frightfully seedy."

"That's my affair, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Bob, gently. "But you make a fellow feel anxious. Can I do anything for you, Cyril? I wish I could."

"Yes," said Vane.

"What is it?"

"Lend me some money."

"I've still got the five bob postal-order——"

Vane laughed harshly.

"I want seven pounds!"

"Cyril!"

"I know you can't lend it to me," said Vane, sinking his voice. "But, look here, you're on good terms with John Bull and Lord Mauleverer, and they're rolling in money. Mauleverer especially would never even miss it."

"What do you mean?"

"Borrow it for me. They don't like me, for some reason, and I can't ask them—but you could borrow it of them if you liked. They'd lend it to you."

"But I should have to pay it back!" said Bob.

"If you didn't, they wouldn't ask you."

Bob Cherry took a step back.

"Cyril! You're not asking me to borrow money which I couldn't possibly pay back? It's next door to becoming a thief!"

Vane gave an angry shrug of the shoulders.

"You asked me if you could do anything for me?" he said.

"Yes, but not that. I can't steal for you, I suppose," said Bob Cherry, warmly, "and that's practically what you're asking me to do."

"You won't do it?"

"I can't!"

"Say you won't, and have done with it!" said Vane, bitterly. "Very well, let me alone, then, and don't bother me with your rotten offers of friendship. I suppose I can ask you to leave me alone, at least."

"Do you owe all that money, Cyril?" asked Bob Cherry, following Vane into the Close.

"Yes, I do."

"You must have been gambling, then."

"That's my business!"

"You're not bound to pay," said Bob. "They've been cheating you, most likely; and, anyway, if a man gets a boy to play cards with him, he's a thief to take the money he wins. If it's Cobb, I wouldn't pay him a penny."

"I haven't asked you for your advice," said Vane, "and I shall pay the money. It's only a question of waiting a little; I can get it from my father."

"Your father must be richer than mine if he can plank down seven pounds for the asking."

"He will do it, anyway. I shall write to-night."

"It's rotten caddish asking your father for money to pay a debt like that," said Bob Cherry. "You're not bound to pay a thief like Cobb."

"You fool!" muttered Vane. "I've given him a paper for it—and signed it! I told him I should have to ask him to wait, and when he found I wanted him to wait weeks, he said if I couldn't pay, he'd send the paper to the Head."

"The rotten cad!"

Vane shrugged his shoulders.

"He wouldn't do it," said Bob Cherry. "It was only a threat."

"I can't risk it, and he knows that."

"And that's the kind of man you choose to associate with!" said Bob.

Vane did not reply. He walked on and disappeared in the shadow of the Close. Bob Cherry did not enter the house after him. He remained standing in the doorway, with a grim look upon his face. He was waiting for the Bounder to come in.

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## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Cherry Puts it Plainly.

VERNON-SMITH whistled cheerily as he came up to the house through the shadows of the Close. He was whistling a catchy refrain from a comic opera, and he seemed to be in cheerful spirits. The ill-luck of his wretched companion and dupe did not seem to worry the Bounder of Greyfriars in the least.

Bob Cherry's brows knitted as he saw the Bounder, and heard him. It only needed the liveliness the Bounder was displaying to fill Bob Cherry's cup of wrath to the full. It seemed too heartless, too utterly "rotten" even for the Bounder, to lead his victim into a miserable scrape, and abandon him there, and display the same lighthearted carelessness as before.

Bob Cherry did not know that the Bounder was feeling particularly satisfied at that moment because he had accomplished his object, which was, to hit hard at Bob Cherry through his cousin.

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder halted.

He had no choice about doing that, because Bob Cherry had planted himself directly in his way, and evidently meant to remain there.

"What do you want?" asked the Bounder.

"You."

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Well, here I am," he said.

"I want you to come into the gym."

"Thanks; I don't care for any exercise this evening," said Vernon-Smith. "I've had a rather tiring afternoon."

"I suppose so—a close atmosphere, the smell of tobacco and brandy-and-water, and so on?" suggested Bob Cherry, contemptuously.

"Possibly."

"And the same for my cousin, you cad!"

"Still harping on that string!" said Vernon-Smith, with a yawn. 'What a grandfather you'd make, Cherry. You've missed your vocation."

"Will you come into the gym. with me?"

"No."

"Very well; if you don't, I shall follow you into your study, and lick you there!"

"So you're going to lick me, are you?" said the Bounder, with perfect coolness. "May I venture to inquire what for?"

"For what you've done to my cousin. Besides that, I'm going to stop your acquaintance with him."

Vernon-Smith raised his eyebrows.

"How are you going to do that?"

"By hammering you every time I see you speaking to him," said Bob.

"My hat!"

"Mind, if you ever so much as say good-morning to him, you'll have to reckon with me!" said Bob Cherry. "You



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sha'n't speak a single word to him. You sha'n't recognise his existence in any way. Every time you do, you'll have a fight on your hands."

The Bounder's coolness vanished. An angry light gleamed in his eyes, and his teeth showed between his tight lips.

"You meddling hound!" he said. "Let me pass!"

"Will you come into the gym.?"

"No, I won't!"

"Very well!"

Bob Cherry stood aside, and the Bounder strode in. He hesitated whether to go into the common-room—but Harry Wharton & Co. were there, and the Bounder knew how they would back up Bob Cherry. He tramped up the stairs to the Remove passage, and entered his study.

Bob Cherry followed him in.

The Bounder turned upon him with a savage look.

"Get out of my room!" he muttered thickly.

"I've told you what I'm going to do," said Bob Cherry, steadily. "If you prefer to fight here instead of in the gym., well and good. Put up your hands."

Vernon-Smith seized a heavy paper-weight from the table.

"If you lay a finger on me," he said, in a low, concentrated voice, "I'll brain you. Keep your distance!"

Bob Cherry smiled contemptuously. He was not likely to be scared by a threat of that sort. But Vernon-Smith was in savage earnest. He swung up the paper-weight as Bob Cherry advanced upon him.

"Stand back!" he exclaimed fiercely.

"Rats!"

Vernon-Smith brought the paper-weight down savagely as Bob Cherry sprang upon him. But a blow on the wrist struck it from his hand. Then Bob Cherry was upon the Bounder. Left and right, right and left!

Crash! Crash!

Vernon-Smith reeled to and fro from the heavy blows. Bob Cherry's blood was up, and he was hitting his hardest.

The Bounder set his teeth hard, and began to fight. He had plenty of pluck, and although Bob Cherry was stronger, the Bounder was a dangerous antagonist for anyone to tackle. They closed, and fought furiously, staggering about the study.

Bob Cherry received a good deal of punishment, but it was nothing like what he inflicted. One of Vernon-Smith's eyes were closed up, and his nose was streaming red, and his mouth had a strange sideways look.

He broke loose from Bob, and made a frantic grasp at the inkstand on the table, the nearest weapon to his hand.

Crash!

Bob Cherry's fist came crashing upon his jaw, and he staggered and fell in a heap upon the floor of the study.

He lay there gasping, the single eye that he could see from glittering with hate and malice.

Bob Cherry staggered breathlessly.

"Get up!" he muttered.

Vernon-Smith groaned. He was no malingerer; he would have risen, and continued the fight, if he had been able. But he was not. He lay panting and groaning, completely knocked out. Bob Cherry stood over him, in little better condition himself, but quite ready to go on.

"Will you get up?"

"Hang you!" muttered the Bounder. "I can't! Hang you! Hang your cousin! Anyway, I've done him in pretty completely! Hang you."

"You'll let my cousin alone," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose you're knocked out now, and I'll leave you. But I mean every word I've said to you. If you speak a word to Cyril again I'll smash you."

"Get out of my study."

Bob Cherry went to the door without another word. He left the study, closing the door after him, and went up to the dormitory to wash his face. When he descended to the common-room, however, the signs of conflict were too plainly visible to be missed by the other fellows.

"Hallo," said Bolsover. "Been teaching your cousin the good and proper things to do, Cherry?"

There was a laugh.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"Been quarrelling with a lawn-mower, or anything?" asked Skinner.

"Go and eat coke."

Bob Cherry was evidently not in a communicative mood. He did not even explain to his chums, but they could guess very well what had happened. They were not surprised to find that Vernon-Smith did not come down that evening.

When the Bounder went to bed, however, the state of his features was seen by all, and a grin went round the Remove. The Bounder was looking "sicker," as Fisher T. Fish expressed it, than he had ever been seen to look before. And it was observed that he did not speak a word to Cyril Vane.

Vane said good-night to him, and, instead of answering, Vernon-Smith turned his back.



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Vane flushed, but did not speak further.

"Another giddy friendship broken off," murmured Bulstrode, with a grin.

"And a jolly good thing, too," said Nugent.

"Yes—for Vane, at all events."

And in the morning Vernon-Smith preserved the same manner towards Cyril Vane—he did not speak to him, or seem aware of his existence. Bob Cherry's drastic lesson had not been lost upon the Bounder of Greyfriars.

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## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.
### A Sudden Shock!

VANE was observed to be considerably anxious that day on the subject of the post. He asked Ogilvy how many posts there were a day at Greyfriars; and he attended the arrival of the postman each time he came. It was not till the delivery after school, however, that a letter arrived for him. And then it was not a registered letter, as he had expected.

Vane changed colour a little as he took the letter. If it was not a registered letter, it certainly did not contain money. There might, however, be a postal-order inside, or perhaps a cheque; and he opened the letter eagerly.

There was a letter in it, in his father's hand, and nothing more. Vane clenched the letter in his hand.

What did it mean? Was the money not to be sent? Was his father intending to refuse him, as he had already refused him his request to be taken away from Greyfriars? The wretched junior turned almost sick at the thought. Was his influence over his father coming to an end, then?

He strode out into the Close, the letter tightly clenched in his hand. Several fellows had seen him open the envelope, and they glanced after him curiously. Vane noticed nothing. He did not want to read the letter. What was the letter to him? What was wanted was money—and there was no money!

He sat down on one of the wooden benches under the elms and looked at the letter. The hand it was written in was very shaky as if the writer were ill—but he did not notice that, or care about it.

"Dear Cyril,—I was surprised, and very much displeased, to receive your letter asking for money again so soon. And so much, too! What can you possibly want with seven pounds, when you had three pounds early this week? I do not understand it. Have you been getting into habits of extravagance? It is quite impossible for me to send the money. If you are in some difficulty, write and tell me all the particulars, and I will do my best to extricate you from it. But I cannot send you the money. I do not wish to hurt you, but it is really inconsiderate of you to ask so much when you know what my circumstances are. My health is very bad now, and I fear it is getting worse and really your letters should be a comfort to me, and not a fresh worry every time I receive one. My dear boy, you know I am not accustomed to reproach you, but I do ask you to reflect. If you really and truly need the money, write and tell me exactly what it is for, and I will see what can be done. Your affectionate father,

"GEORGE VANE"

The boy crumpled the letter in his hand again.

"Oh!" he muttered. "A lecture again—instead of the money! This is Major Cherry's influence, I suppose—most likely he's with the pater now. Hang him!"

And now what was he to do? He dared not face Mr. Cobb without the money—he dared not keep away from him unless he sent the money. He was in terror of his note of hand being sent to the Head! What would happen if Mr. Cobb carried out his threat?

Where was he to turn for money, now that his father had failed him? Lord Mauleverer—John Bull. He had offended them both by his manner; and besides, why should they lend money, which could never be repaid, to a fellow they hardly knew?

That was futile to think of. There remained the Bounder! The Bounder had got him into this—and at that moment Vane hated the Bounder more than anybody else at Greyfriars. Hatred came easily to him. Was the Bounder likely to help him?

Vane rose and went to look for the Bounder. Likely or not, Vernon-Smith was his only hope.

He found Vernon-Smith in the common room. The other fellows were out of doors, and the Bounder had the room to himself. He was looking over a paper which the junior caught a

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glimpse of—it was a list of horses. He slipped it into his pocket as Vane came in. He glanced at Vane's haggard face, and regarded him with a look of cool insolence.

"Vernon-Smith, old man——"

"May I trouble you not to talk to me?" said the Bounder.

"What!"

"Your cousin has threatened to hammer me every time I speak to you," said Vernon-Smith, "and as I don't want a fight on my hands every day, and as I'm sick of you, anyway, I've decided to let him have his way."

"Hang my cousin!"

"With pleasure. But don't talk to me."

"Hang you, Vernon-Smith—I must. I'm in a hole."

"Sorry!"

"You got me into it, and I want you to help me out," said Vane. "I owe old Cobb seven pounds, and he's threatened to show me up to the Head if I don't pay."

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Well, you want to leave Greyfriars," he said. "You'll leave it sharp enough if the Head finds that you have been playing cards with Cobb. It's what you want, ain't it?"

"I don't want to be expelled. It's being branded for life."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Besides, there are my people to think of," muttered Vane.

"Yes, you think a lot of them, don't you?" said the Bounder.

Vane winced.

"Perhaps I don't think enough of them," he said. "But never mind that now. Will you help me out of this hole, Smithy?"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Lend me seven pounds."

"Give you seven pounds, you mean," said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer. "You know jolly well that you wouldn't be able to pay it."

"I may be able to get it from my father later."

"My dear chap, I haven't sovereigns to throw away," said the Bounder. "Go and ask your cousin for it. He has taken you under his wing."

"Bob hasn't any money. He wouldn't lend me money to pay Cobb, anyway. Look here, Smithy, you have plenty of money; you might help a fellow."

"I might—but I'm certainly not going to give you seven pounds for nothing."

Vane gritted his teeth.

"You'd better help me," he said.

"Better!" The Bounder wrinkled his brows. "Why?"

"Because if I'm shown up to the Head, I'll take jolly good care to show you up, too," said Vane savagely. "I'll tell him that you took me to the Cross Keys in the first place."

The Bounder laughed contemptuously.

"Do you think I didn't know you were a sneak, and that I haven't guarded against that?" he asked scornfully. "I should deny it—and Cobb would deny it as well. You would be set down as a rotten slanderer, as well as a swindler. That's all."

Vane turned pale.

"You hound!" he muttered.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I've had enough of you, and of your precious cousin," he said. "I'm sick of the pair of you. Get out of the scrape the best way you can; don't come whining to me for help. If you're expelled from Greyfriars, all the better for Greyfriars."

"Do you mean to say you don't care?"

"Why should I?"

The cool, cynical question seemed to dumbfound Vane. He could only stand and stare at the Bounder, speechlessly.

"I don't care a rap," went on Vernon-Smith coolly. "You are a week-kneed rotter, and you've been trying to play the giddy goat! You! Do you think I should ever have bothered my head about such a weak, cowardly worm as you are, if it wasn't that I wanted to score one against Bob Cherry? That was all! My dear chap, you've outlived your usefulness—and you can clear! I don't want to have anything more to do with you!"

"Oh!"

"Now kindly get out, and leave me alone."

Vane did not speak. He clenched his hands and sprang like a tiger at the Bounder. But Vernon-Smith was ready for him. He knocked up Vane's lashing fists, and hit out, and the wretched junior rolled over on the floor.

"Now get out," said the Bounder, "or I'll kick you out. Do you hear?"

Vane staggered to his feet, and quitted the room. The Bounder burst into a contemptuous laugh, and sat down again, and buried himself in his precious paper. He did not give his miserable dupe another thought.

Vane went out unsteadily into the sunset in the Close. What was he to do? Too late he realised what an utter fool he had been! He had chosen the Bounder's friendship, instead of Bob Cherry's, with this result—to find that he had been fooled, duped, made use of, all the time—only to be scorned and mocked at the finish.

It was a lesson for him—but it came too late! What was he to do?

The miserable junior tramped down to the post-office and sent a wire to his home. He came back to the school with a heavy heart, and a face so harassed in expression that it made the other fellows stare at him.

Vane hardly observed it. He waited in bitter suspense for the reply wire. He had told his father that he must have the money, or he would have to leave Greyfriars. Surely Mr. Vane would not fail him after that!

The reply came at last.

The telegram was brought into the junior common-room by Trotter later in the evening. Telegrams for juniors were not common, and most of the fellows there had their eyes on Vane as he opened it.

He glanced at it, and the room seemed to swim round him. The wire was not from his father, it was from Major Cherry. And it ran:

"Your father dangerously ill. Come home at once."—R. CHERRY."

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## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Lesson for a Lifetime.

CYRIL VANE sank back in his chair with a gasp. The telegram fluttered from his hand and fell to the floor. He sat white, speechless.

His father ill—dangerously ill! Dangerously ill when he had received that wire asking him for money! Dangerously ill when his son had been worrying him, troubling him with his endless selfishness!

Vane groaned aloud.

At that moment it seemed to him as if a veil lifted—as if a cloud that had obscured his vision had rolled away, and he saw his conduct in its true light.

His father ill—dangerously—dying, perhaps!

The wretched boy covered his face with his hands. The hot tears trickled between his fingers.

Bob Cherry ran towards him. The other fellows were all staring—some of them smiling contemptuously. Bob put his hand on his cousin's shoulder.

"Cyril! What's the matter? Bad news from home?"

"Read it."

Bob picked up the telegram, and read it. Then his own ruddy face changed colour.

"Uncle George dangerously ill! Cyril! Good heavens! Oh, you miserable cad! It's your fault as much as anything else!"

"Do you think I don't know that?" groaned Vane.

Bob Cherry looked at him sharply.

"I shouldn't expect you to," he said scornfully. "But if you do, all the better. You'll have to go home at once."

"Yes, yes."

"Get your things on—quick! There's a train at Friardale at eight-fifteen, and you can catch it if you hurry. I'll go and tell the Head for you, if you like."

"Thanks!"

"Hurry up!"

Bob Cherry dragged Vane to his feet. He hurried him out of the common-room, leaving the room in a buzz. Wharton and Nugent followed them. Bob Cherry explained in a few words, and while he ran off to speak to the Head, Wharton and Nugent helped Vane to get ready for the journey.

Vane seemed helpless.

The shock had thrown him quite off his balance, and he moved like a fellow in a dream. But he had his hat and coat on, and a bag in his hand, by the time Bob returned.

"It's all right," said Bob. "The Head had a wire from my father at the same time. He knows. You're to go at once."

"All right."

"Got money for your fare?" asked Bob.

Vane shook his head.

Bob Cherry went through his pockets hastily. Wharton and Nugent did the same, and all the money they found was pressed upon Vane. Then he was hurried down to the gates.

"I'm going with him to put him into the train," said Bob. "For goodness' sake, Cyril, pull yourself together!"

"I—I'll try."

Wharton and Nugent stood looking after them as they went. Harry Wharton looked very thoughtful.

"There must be some good in the fellow, if he feels it like that," he said.

"I suppose so. I shouldn't have thought it, though," said Nugent drily.

Bob Cherry hurried his cousin along the lane. He could not understand Cyril. The junior did not speak a word all the way, and he seemed in the same dazed state when they reached the railway-station.



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"Train's not in yet," said Bob. "You're all right, Cyril?"

"Yes."

"Buck up, old man. It mayn't be so bad, after all."

Vane groaned.

"He is dying," he said. "I feel it—here! Oh, what a fool—what an utter brute I've been! It was my fault! I never saw how ill he was. Yes, yes, I did see, but I didn't care! I'm rightly punished for it—oh!"

Bob Cherry's face softened.

"Don't expect the worst till you know for certain," he said. "People have been dangerously ill before, and have recovered. Buck up!"

The train rattled into the station.

Bob Cherry had taken Vane's ticket for him, and he thrust the junior into a carriage and closed the door.

"Change at Courtfield" he said. "Don't forget! Change at Courtfield! Good-bye!"

Vane nodded dazedly.

The train rushed out of the station. It rushed on through the night past dark woods and shadowy villages. It stopped at Courtfield, and Vane, still like one in a dream, changed his train. Then more rushing and rattling and bumping—would the journey never end? Two hours at least before he was home—two long hours—two centuries! What if it was the worst—what if he never saw his father again alive? What if the kind patient eyes were closed before he reached his home?

A dry sob shook him at the thought.

Would the journey never end?

Lights flashed from stations, from villages—voices were heard, but he did not see—he did not listen! His thoughts were all in the sick chamber at home—all he saw was a kind face stricken with death.

Would he never be home? Would he be too late?

The station at last! He sprang from the train and threw himself into a cab. The rattle of the horse's hoots rang in his ears as the vehicle dashed away. They seemed to be beating out a tune to him of which the burden was—too late! too late!

The cab stopped—he ran up the steps of a house! The house was in darkness save for one window where a light gleamed. It was the sick chamber.

He knocked softly. The cab rattled away down the street, and the tattoo of the hoofs rang out that dread refrain to his ears again—too late! too late!

He looked eagerly at the servant who admitted him. But he asked no questions. He ran on, and a sobbing woman caught him in her arms.

Vane choked for words.

"Mother! How is he—how is father?"

"He wants to see you, Cyril?"

The boy gasped.

"Then—then—oh, let me see him."

He trod softly into the sick chamber. A muscular man with an old military look was seated beside the bed there. It was Major Cherry. His brows were bent sternly upon the boy, but Vane did not see him. All he saw was a ghastly face over the white coverlet. His father's face!

"Father!"

The invalid turned his head.

"Cyril!"

His voice was low and soft. A hand groped out to meet Cyril's, and the boy sank upon his knees, burying his face in the coverlet, which was stained with his tears.

"Cyril! My boy! Don't! Thank heaven I have seen you again!"

"Father! Father!"

It seemed that Vane could say nothing else. But in that one word he spoke all that was in his heart—of fear and remorse and affection. The sick man understood, and a light came into his face.

A man in black touched Cyril's arm at last, and led him from the room. In the adjoining room his mother was waiting. Vane grasped the physician's hand.

"There is hope?" he muttered.

"I hope so."

"Oh!"

Vane heard his mother's voice. She was speaking to him between sobs: telling him what he ought to have known—of his father's many business troubles, added to failing health. How he had borne up bravely, till at last he had broken down suddenly, hopelessly, and completely. Vane listened dazedly. During the past few days matters had been worse, and Vane groaned with remorse as he thought how much worse he had made everything.

Would he have a chance to atone—to show that he repented? The terrible words rang in his ears, as if someone had spoken them aloud—too late! too late!

Was it too late?

"Oh mother, mother!"

Afterwards, Vane had but an indistinct recollection of that terrible night. His father was battling with death, and it seemed to the boy that he could feel the grim chill and shadow of the dread angel's presence in the silent house.

Would the night never end?

Morning came at last—cold and grey. Vane was haggard with sleepless watching. What was to be the news of the morning. Unless his father took a turn for the better before dawn, he knew that all was over. What was it to be? He scanned the doctor's face with haggard eyes.

"Better?" he whispered.

The physician nodded gravely.

"Yes. Better. There is hope now."

Vane tried to speak, but only a sob came forth. The physician patted him on the shoulder. The boy threw himself into a chair. Oh, if only this danger passed—if only his father lived—he would prove by his conduct that the lesson had not been lost on him; he would make up, somehow, for the indifference and ingratitude of long years. If only he had the chance!

And he was destined to have the chance. For his son's coming, and the change he saw in him, seemed to have a wonderful effect upon George Vane. It was three more long and terrible days before the danger was past, but at last the doctor pronounced the welcome words, and the weight was lifted from the boy's heart.

. . . . . .

Bob Cherry waited for news at Greyfriars with the keenest anxiety, and to him also the good news brought relief. It was some time, however, before Cyril Vane returned to the school. When he came, he was changed. He met Bob Cherry with a grasp of the hand, and a quiet, almost humble look.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"Sorry for what?" asked Bob.

Vane smiled faintly.

"I've enough to be sorry for, I think," he said. "And I'm sorry, and if you care to speak to me again, Bob, you'll find me a bit different."

"That's all right, old man," said Bob Cherry. "Bygones are bygones; don't let's think any more about it."

Vernon-Smith, too, was unexpectedly decent. The Bounder was not quite heartless. He spoke quietly to Vane at the first opportunity.

"You needn't worry about that affair with Cobb," he said. "I've settled with him, and you won't hear any more about it. And you'd better keep clear of him—and of me, for that matter. You're not the kind of fellow for a wild time, Vane. You've played the giddy goat, and you've had a lesson; and now my advice is—chuck it!"

"I mean to," said Vane. "But you yourself—why don't you chuck it, too."

The Bounder laughed, and shrugged his shoulders. But Vane, at least, meant what he said. The lesson he had had was enough for his lifetime, and his path in future days was a straight one.

THE END.

***("FOOTBALL FOES!" is the title of next week's long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Please order your copy of "The MAGNET" Library in advance. Price 1d.)***


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# ATTRACTIVE TALES.

*(Told by "THE MAGNET.")*

## TRY AS THEY MIGHT.

Old man Jones had never seen a football fray before, and when he returned from witnessing that between the two local teams, his criticism was far from complimentary.

"Bah!" he exclaimed. "All a lot of nonsense! First t' comes a lot o' big fellows, dressed in little knickers, and then there's a funny-shaped ball, like an old bladder blowed up. Somebody kicks t' ball, an' then they all runs after it; and one o' t' fellows cops 'old on it, and runs down the field, wi' t'others after him. When he gits past the posts he falls on t' ball, an' t' fellows behind him fall on him. Then all the spectators shout 'Try! Try!' But, try as they might, they couldn't bust it!"

## RANGE AND RAGE.

The lieutenant of the Dreadall rushed on to the captain's bridge, and saluted.

"Well?" roared the captain. "What do you want?"

The shriek of artillery on every side was deafening.

"Captain," cried the lieutenant, "the enemy has got out range!"

The captain frowned.

"Confound the luck!" he growled morosely. "Now, how will the cook be able to get our dinner?"

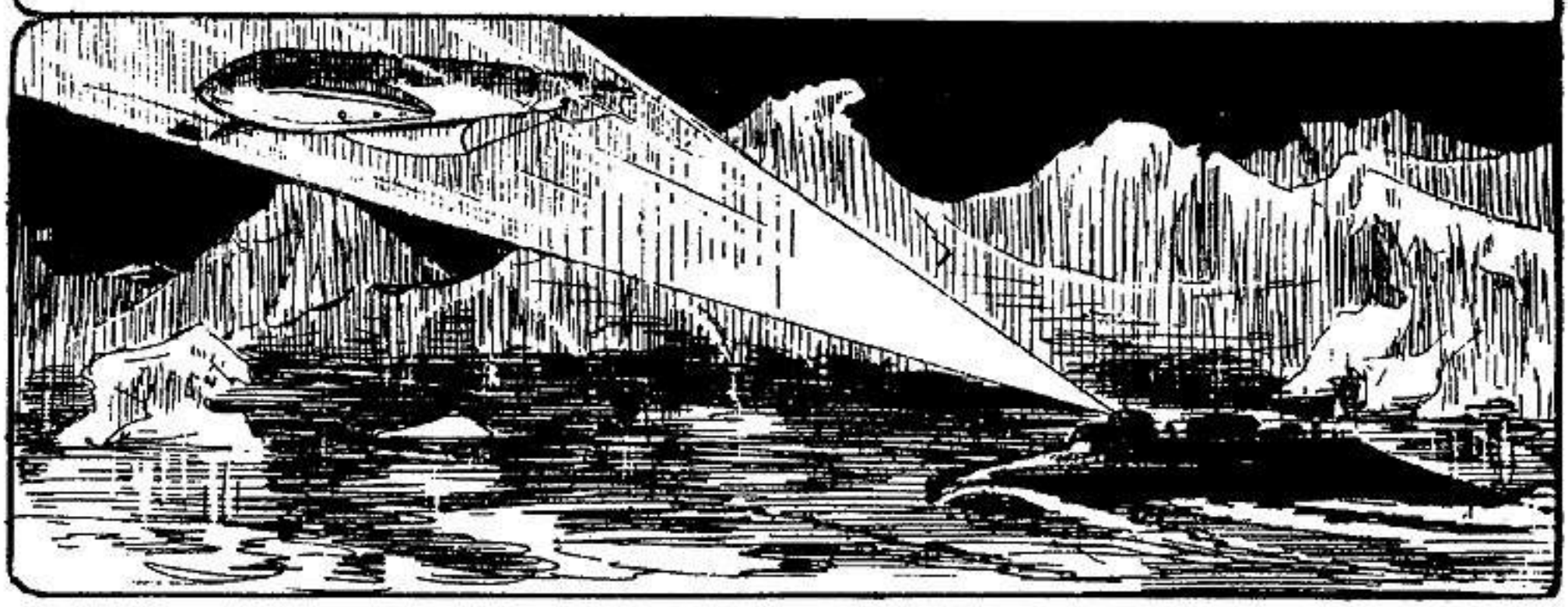



NEXT TUESDAY: **"FOOTBALL FOES!"** A Splendid New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

# "BEYOND THE ETERNAL ICE!"

**A Thrilling Story of the Amazing Adventures of Ferrers Lord, Millionaire, Ching-Lung, and Rupert Thurston.**

**By SIDNEY DREW.**



## THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

When Professor Hugley, the renowned American scientist, startles the world by announcing that he is off to find the North Pole in his wonderful air-craft, the Cloud King, there is only one man who dares to enter the lists against him on behalf of Great Britain, and that man is Ferrers Lord, the famous millionaire and inventor. Lord pits his wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep, against the Cloud King in the most amazing race the world has ever seen; the goal is the North Pole, and the prize a million pounds!

The preliminaries are soon settled, a judge is appointed to accompany each of the competitors, and the great race commences.

With Ferrers Lord are Ching-Lung, Rupert Thurston, and Gan-Waga, an Eskimo, while Hugley is accompanied by Pariara, a Cuban, and Estebian Gacchio, a huge negro. These latter soon show themselves in their true colours, and the Cloud King no sooner reaches the region of ice than Hugley, and such of the crew as are loyal to him, are murdered, and Paraira and Gacchio assume control of the airship.

In the meantime the Lord of the Deep is being attacked by a race of dwarfs —dwellers in a mysterious chain of caves which Ferrers Lord has discovered, and which he believes to constitute a means of gaining the Pole.

The dwarfs are repulsed with loss, and beat a retreat, all except one, a small boy, who is picked up out of the water by the submarine's launch, in charge of Ching-Lung. From the dwarf-boy's strange gibberish, Tom Prout, the steersman, christens him Yalleroo.

(Read on from here).

---

### Gan-Waga brings a Visitor on board the Lord of the Deep—Ching-Lung Meets His Foe!

Van Witter was much better, and the news of Gan-Waga's rescue did him more good in five minutes than the skill of fifty doctors. Ching-Lung was the bearer of the good tidings.

"Waal," drawled the Yankee, "I've heard some yarns, but this licks creation. That book will sell like hot cakes when I do write it. And so you pulverised the dwarfs, and smashed them up into little bits. Bully for you, my lad. Well done, all of you! Don't I wish I'd been there to do my little bit!"

Extra grog was served that afternoon, and all the men were let off duty to celebrate the happy ending of an adventure that might have culminated in a tragedy. Even Ferrers Lord relaxed a little, and Ching-Lung, to his unbounded amazement, entered his state-room unexpectedly, and found the millionaire teaching Hunk to sit up and balance a biscuit on his nose.

"Ha'lo, old chap!" said the prince. "Have you set up in business as a wild animal trainer?"

"Well, I trained you!" said the millionaire, smiling.

"So you did, old fellow. Well done, Hunk! The little beggar seems to understand every word you say, doesn't he? By Jove, Lord, I feel as merry as a cricket now that we've found Gan-Waga once more!"

"Then someone will suffer. Let us smoke a cigarette together."

"With pleasure, Lord!" said Ching-Lung. "Is it anything particular?"

"In a way—yes," drawled Ferrers Lord. "I was thinking about the waterfall. To blast it away will cause us a good deal of trouble and waste much time. There must be a way round, for whales cannot jump like salmon. We must find that side channel if possible. It is terribly dangerous to explode a mine in a cavern. The shock might bring down millions of tons of rock for good and all. Thurston and I intend to explore to-night. As you are tired, I shall leave Prout in command. Please play none of your antics, prince, but restrain yourself for a few hours."

"Right, old chap!" said Ching-Lung. "You may rely on me. But don't be too long."

At six o'clock the launch left the Lord of the Deep. They took several diving-dresses with them, for there was a chance that the side channel, of whose existence the millionaire was convinced, might have its entrance under water. Maddock and eight men went with them.

The sky was dark and threatening, and even the snow looked dull and grey. The sea-birds clamoured restlessly, as if to give warning of an approaching storm.

Ching-Lung stepped out of the wheelhouse, with the bear at his heels, and winked at Gan-Waga, who was smoking his dirty clay pipe.

"It's going to blow, Gan."

"Bad 'nough," gurgled the Eskimo. "I'm going over dere."

"What for?"

"Get seal," answered Gan-Waga. "Clothes bad 'nough. Look, Hunk!"

He was almost in rags, and the fur was worn down to the bare hide.

Ching-Lung looked at the ominous sky again, half inclined to keep the Eskimo aboard. He knew how cleverly Gan-Waga could handle his kayak, and the distance was barely a mile. A few seals were showing their black heads as they pursued the fish.

"Very good, Gan," he said. "Hurry up and get back. We'll have dinner together."

The Eskimo launched his frail canoe and pegged down the watertight apron, then, placing his harpoon ready to hand, paddled away, the waves breaking over the kayak at every stroke of the long paddles.

A call from the engine-room took Ching-Lung below. They had discovered a flaw in one of the piston-rods, and Ching-Lung had the key of the store-room where extra rods were kept.

Gan-Waga, in search of a couple of skins to make his suit, slackened his pace, and cautiously approached the ice. The seals were strangely shy. They seemed to scent danger, and made for the sea in long dives that made pursuit utterly hopeless. Thinking to find one lying out on the ice, he lay forward to hide himself as much as possible, and paddled up a narrow channel.



DON'T MISS the special new story of the Chums of St. Jim's, entitled; "THE SCHOOLBOY EXPLORERS," in this week's "GEM" Library. Price One Penny.

He clutched a harpoon. A seal was swimming lazily ahead of him. The harpoon leapt from Gan-Waga's hand and struck home. The seal dived, and rose close to the canoe, and one thrust of the long lance ended its sufferings. Gan-Waga looked at it in disgust. It was an old male, and its coat was old and mangy. He wrenched out the harpoon, and paddled higher up the creek.

Great hummocks of ice shut in the shore on either side. Gan-Waga uttered a soft gurgle of satisfaction, and again the harpoon darted through the air. A short struggle, a thrust from the lance, and it was over. He towed the dead seal behind, and left it upon the ice.

He had gone a second mile before a second victim fell to the harpoon, and a mile further before he found a third. He pulled the last out of the water, and drew his knife. Snow was falling in feathery flakes, and the wind moaned among the icebergs and hummocks. The darkness grew deeper and the air more chill. Almost before the seals had ceased to flutter the frost had stiffened its body. A crust of ice had formed over the creek.

A shot, followed by a fierce howl, made the Eskimo spring back, startled. A shaggy monster appeared before him on the summit of a block of ice, and rolled down headlong. Then he was on his back, fighting, panting, stabbing, in the grip of a wounded bear.

A dozen times his knife sank hilt-deep in the bear's side. They rolled over and over. Then came a second shot, and Gan-Waga scrambled to his feet and shook himself. He opened his mouth; his knees knocked together in superstitious dread. A giant figure stood before him, leaning on a smoking rifle—a giant with a black face. As he stood quaking, the man bent over the body and saw the gashes in the skin.

"Caramba!" he growled. "The fool has ruined a grand skin! Here, come back, you rascal!"

Gan-Waga, frightened almost out of his wits, turned to fly. The threatening click of a rifle brought him back.

"No shoot—no shoot!" he screamed. "I'm comin'! Bad 'nough, black man! No shoot!"

Estebian Gacchio bared his teeth and laughed.

"So you speak English, eh? Caramba! One can travel the whole world and never get out of earshot of that tongue. Well, my friend, you don't look happy. I won't hurt you. Come here and tell me where you come from."

"Then you not bad spirit?"

Gacchio laughed again as he reloaded his rifle.

"I hope not."

"Then why you got black face?" asked the Eskimo, his little eyes still dilated with fear.

"I hardly know," said Gacchio. "I suppose I was born like it. I am very pleased to meet you, all the same; for I'm lost, hungry, and thirsty. Is your hut near here?"

"Hunk!"

"Hut, you wild beast—not hunk! Where are your people—your relations? Where do you live?"

Gan-Waga had got over his fright. He wiped his knife on the bear's shaggy hide, and pointed towards the sea.

"Live on ship, black face. It ober dere. Good 'nough ship, and nice man. You come 'long."

Naturally enough, the negro imagined that the Eskimo belonged to some whaling vessel. He glanced at the lowering sky, but the Cloud King was not in sight. The bear he had followed had led him over miles of dreary snow and over wearying hummocks. He was almost fainting for want of food.

"Bueno!" (good) he said, shouldering his rifle. "You are a most docile subject, but if you try to play any tricks on me I'll make bearmeat of you! Do you smoke, Senor Eskimo?"

Gan-Waga grinned as he put the cigar into his huge mouth and lighted it.

"Me like you, black face. Come 'long ice. Kayak stuck, but chop him out. No ice down near sea."

The canoe, so keen was the frost, had frozen hard, and the ice on the creek was strong enough to bear their weight.

Gan-Waga sent the splinters flying with his axe, and freed the kayak. He dragged it after him over the slippery surface. Snow was whirling down.

There was open water below, and Gan-Waga launched his canoe.

"You get in," he said, "and I'll take you to ship."

Again Estebian Gacchio stared upwards through the whirling flakes. He was brave—even his bitterest foe had to admit that—but he had to summon up all his courage to enter that frail craft. The prolonged absence of the Cloud King caused him no uneasiness. Pariara and two of the crew had probably followed a trail leading north and west. The vessel had descended for a few simple repairs to be carried out, and she would come in quest of him later. What he needed urgently was food, and he distrusted the kayak.

"There is only room for one," he said. "Caramba, a pretty cockleshell to carry my weight!"

"Good 'nough! I show you. No get 'fraid, black face."

Very cautiously, while Gan-Waga steadied it with both



EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

hands, Gacchio entered the kayak. The Eskimo pegged down the apron, and, placing himself astride the canoe, in front of the negro, his legs in the water, he plied his paddle. All went well until they shot out into the open sea, and then Gacchio received a drenching.

He cursed in voluble Spanish as the green waves swirled over his arms and dashed the freezing spray over his face. The kayak lay so low that the waves towered like glassy mountains above their heads. In some miraculous fashion Gan-Waga managed to keep his cigar alight. A towering wave tossed the canoe upwards upon its crest, and before it shot into the valley of surging waters Gacchio caught a glimpse of the Lord of the Deep through the falling snow and flying spray.

He whistled, and for a second the thought rushed through his brain to compel the Eskimo to turn back, but only for a second.

What had he to fear from Ferrers Lord? Nothing! He was on board the Cloud King as the guest of Gomez Pariara, and he was not afraid to face the millionaire. When the race was over, and the wager lost and won, there would be war to the knife between them, but not until then. Coming as he did he was quite safe.

There was a shout. The kayak was alongside, and Prout, with a boathook, was keeping her from being dashed against the vessel's side.

"By hookey, Gan," he roared, "what's the luggage you've brought?"

"Black face, good 'nough!" said the Eskimo. "Want some grub. Got lost on ice, and big lot hungry."

"Oh, all right!" growled Prout, who detested negroes. "I dare say we'll find you a dog-biscuit aboard somewhere, Sambo."

"And I'll find you a noose and a gallows, you impudent hog," snarled the negro, "if I had my will! Go and tell your captain that Senor Estebian Gacchio asks his hospitality."

His educated tones made Prout stare at him. He did not like the man, and distrusted him at once. He winked at Gan-Waga.

"Tell the prince a black beetle has blown aboard, Gan," he growled. "And ask him if we shall kill it or not."

The negro's hand went to the hilt of his hunting-knife.

"By St. Anselmo of Madrid," he hissed, "mind what——"

"Silence, beetle!" roared Prout. "I'm second officer aboard this vessel, and I don't allow a man—much less a dirty nigger—to threaten me with a knife! Yer looks don't give yer much of a character. If you're hungry and lost there's good grub and quarters here. But, by Jericho, stranger, take that ugly look off your ugly face, or I'll knock it off wi' my fist! And don't you get orderin' Thomas Prout, Esquire, about. He does the orderin'—and don't forget it, beetle!"

Gacchio's blood boiled with rage, but he was compelled to swallow his rage.

"May I see your captain?"

"Well, you may very like," said Prout, "if you can do a ten-mile swim; for I reckon he's about that far off now. If you're hungry I'll show you the way to the fo'c's'le."

The forecastle! Gacchio absolutely writhed at the insult. So they took him for a common sailor!

"If Senor Ferrers Lord——"

Prout clutched his beard wildly. Had he made a mistake? Was this fellow an acquaintance of Ferrers Lord's? The burly steersman did not want to be hauled over the coals for incivility.

"Look here, Gan," he whispered, "did you tell this fellow the captain's name?"

"No, no; neber speak at all."

"Then he knows the chief; and I've been calling him 'beetle!'" groaned Prout. "I'll get a pretty wiggin' for this! Wait here, Moosoo Tar Visage, and I'll see the orficer-in-command. Look after yer watch and chain, Gan."

The Eskimo did not possess a watch and chain; but the remark, which threw grave doubts on the negro's honesty, set Gan-Waga and a few of the seamen who had gathered round grinning like Cheshire cats.

Then Prout tramped away and rapped at the state-room door.

"What a red neck you have, Thomas!" said a voice, like unto that of Joe. "Why don't yer paint it blue?"

Prout jumped round, but no one was there.

"Why, it's old Ching," he muttered, "up to one of his games! May I come in, sir?"

"Yes, Prout."

Ching-Lung was actually blowing bubbles—and wonderful bubbles they were. The air was full of them slowly floating round and round. There were black ones, blue, green, red, yellow, and crystal, and they were all created from the same saucer of soapy water Prout looked on in wonder and admiration.



NEXT TUESDAY: "FOOTBALL FOES!" A Splendid New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Ching-Lung whistled, and every bubble burst.

"You couldn't do that, Thomas—eh?" he said. "It took me a jolly long time to learn it. Anything the matter?"

"Why, sir," growled Prout, "we've got a visitor!"

"A what?"

"A visitor, sir; and I don't like the sight of his build. Gan went ashore, you see, to get a noo pair of trousers—that is, to collar a seal or two, which amounts to the same thing in a place where people have to wear suits wi' whiskers all over 'em. Wery good! He meets a chap ashore wi' a face like a frying-pan, and, instead of doing the sensible thing and pitchin' the cove into the creek, Gan brings 'im along."

"And quite right, Tom!"

"P'r'aps you'll think it quite wrong when you see his ugly mug!" growled Prout. "The strange thing is he knows the chief's name, sir. I was a bit nasty wi' him. And if he should grumble, sir, and turn out summat different to what I took him to be, you'll put in a word to the chief for me? He arsked for the chief."

"Send him to me, Tom."

Ching-Lung hid the clay pipe and soapy water, and sat down to await his unknown visitor, looking as grave as a row of stone idols.

Prout threw open the door.

"Senor Estebian Gacchio to see your Highness!"

A shrill, tigerish cry broke from Ching-Lung, and his little eyes gleamed as he saw the brawny negro.

Gacchio reeled back and whipped out his knife.

With one bound, his own knife flashing, Ching-Lung cleared the table, wounded though he was. He had met his foe.

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### "Open Sesame!"—Aladdin's Cave—In a Fair land of Silver—Imprisonment.

Flashing her lamps before her, the launch entered and sped on through the cavern. When Ferrers Lord and his crew of nine men reached the cave of fire the dwarfs yelled and danced, but a single rifle-shot sent them burrowing like rabbits into shelter. They had learned their lesson at last.

Ferrers Lord smoked lazily in the stern, and the men were watching the walls on either side for an aperture. Presently they heard the roar of the falling torrent, and white-topped waves began to dance round the launch.

"Keep her well away, Maddock," said the millionaire. "That will do. Steady!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Thurston.

"Take a few photographs for Van Witter. He made me promise faithfully to do so. This cascade ought to make a pretty thing. Lights out, there!"

Ferrers Lord lifted the camera and exposed the plate in the pitchy blackness, which, of course, had no effect on the sensitive plate.

Thurston held the ball of the pneumatic flash-lamp in his hand.

"Ready!"

Rupert squeezed the ball, and the flame touched the pile of magnesium powder, which exploded, emitting a dazzling light.

A murmur of admiration came from the men. The instantaneous flash had shown them a silver torrent of tumbling water, half hidden by a glittering curtain of spray.

"A passage on the left, sir!" said one of them.

"You have sharp eyes," drawled Ferrers Lord. "I saw it, too. Burn a couple of blue lights."

The ghastly glare showed the water hissing into a tunnel to the left of the fall.

Cautiously Maddock piloted the boat between huge boulders.

"This must be the place, Rupert," said the millionaire. "By Jove, there is room for the Lord of the Deep twice over! What depth there?"

"Eleven fathoms, sir!"

"That's ample water. And now?"

"Thirteen, sir!"

"Try once more in five minutes."

The five minutes passed, and the lead-line registered eighteen. To give more light, more than a hundred Chinese lanterns were tied to the rails and lighted. She sailed along like a vessel decorated for a regatta or water carnival. The compass showed that the tunnel led north-west.

"By the way," said Thurston, "this must bring us into the mushroom forest where we saw the whale."

"Exactly," drawled Ferrers Lord. "It is the way round, and I am delighted that we have found it."

"And when do we start in earnest?"

"To-morrow. Lend me your matches, please. Look at that rock. Do you see those wide white streaks? That is silver, and a rich lode. If our poor Yankee friend were here, he would be arranging to float the 'North Pole Silver Company' with a capital of fifty million dollars. By jove! Stop there! Pull her in!"

A cleft appeared suddenly in the cliffs, and close to the water they saw what appeared to be a beaten road edged with large squares of granite.

Amazed and excited, Thurston and the millionaire seized two lamps and sprang out. The wavering light had not deceived them. They stood upon a paved road, now thick with dust—a road that came out of the darkness—and vanished into it again. Ferrers Lord scraped away the dust. Every piece was nicely squared and fastened into its bed, with cement so hard that his knife would not scratch it.

"Here is a mystery of mysteries, Rupert!" muttered the millionaire. "This is the work of skilled hands, but the hands that built this road and the brains that planned it have long been dust. Ah, look again!"

Strange hieroglyphics were carved on the rock.

"Can you make anything of them?" asked Thurston eagerly.

"No,—well, not yet Let us see where this long, untrodden road takes us to. It seems to follow the water, so the launch can keep up with us. Don't get far ahead, Maddock."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Maddock.

The white dust of ages rose like smoke as they advanced.

"I wonder who built this wonderful road?" said Thurston. "Why, here's a bridge with carved pillars!"

Ferrers Lord examined the carving and whistled softly. It represented a crowd of oddly-dressed figures kneeling at an altar. Above them, throwing out shafts of light, were four suns, and the metal cylinder given to him by the diver spoke of the Land of the Four Suns.

The bridge was built of massive slabs, strong enough to support a tremendous weight. But who had built it, and why had it been built? The unbroken dust of ages proved that the road had not been used for centuries at least. In the windless cavern such dust may have been the accumulation of perhaps even thousands of years.

Veins of silver gleamed on the walls, and a streak of darker metal caught Ferrers Lord's eye. It was a fragment of metal similar to that which composed the jar.

Rupert, in his eagerness, had gone on ahead. He shouted: "The road ends here, old chap!"

Ferrers Lord hurried forward. The rocky wall twisted suddenly at right angles, barring the way. The road had ended.

"This is a jolly odd thing," said Thurston. "They seem to have built the whole thing for fun!"

"It seems so," drawled the millionaire, "but it cannot be. Surely they would not hew out and pave such a road as this for nothing? By Jove, those are fine!"

He threw his light on two monstrous figures of bears carved out of the living rock. They stood side by side, their paws wide apart, as if guarding their secret, and warning the intruder to beware. Thurston guessed their height from forefoot to shoulder at thirty feet, and the sculpture was magnificent. Behind them the rocks were covered with hieroglyphics from summit to base.

"I'd give a lot to know who chipped those out, and what they mean," said Thurston.

"Then I'll read them to you!" drawled Ferrers Lord quietly.

"What! Can you translate that stuff?" gasped Thurston.

"I think so. Listen and learn, my boy!"

He threw a brilliant beam of light upon the writing at his feet and read upwards.

"'This is the storehouse of the white and grey metals, and, by command of Nuam Gol, king of kings, hath this road been built, in the six and thirtieth year of his reign.

"'And these great bears did our king have carven, to tell how his ships of fire smote the dwarfs till the dark seas here below were gutted with their bodies. Great store of metals took he from the cavern, so that his people from the Land of the Four Suns were gladdened exceedingly.

"'Twice in his reign did the dwarfs of the darkness, led by Vann-lal-or, their chief, bring their armies against him, and he slew two score, and two thousand by bursting the great dam of Oimass, which utterly destroyed their boat of skins.

"'And then did dissension arise, and Fajan-Gol did slay his father, the king, with poison, and seize the throne. He warred with the men of Gaga, who pressed the city of the Four Suns hotly. Then did I, Ampsar, the king's magician, seeing that our king was weak, and that the dwarfs would utterly devour us, make a great door of rock, close to the cavern of metals. We are toiling still at the great tunnel, but it is a great task and wearisome.

"'Mayhap our king will not forsake us, for, if he forgets us, we must perish. We shall shut ourselves within the



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**Ferrers Lord clutched the bear's ears, and drew himself up. He lay on the head, then, crawling forward, thrust one leg into the gaping mouth. Then, exerting all his strength, he forced down the tongue. There was a hoarse rumbling sound, and the great rock in the opposite wall was seen to sink lower and lower.** *(See below.)*

cavern, not fearing the dwarfs, for, like the seals and the beast, they cannot read. And if we perish (yea, they press us sorely now!) know ye, oh, children of the suns, that the secret to open the treasure-chamber lies in the throat of the male bear, and in the tongue thereof. And to close——' "

The hieroglyphics ended abruptly in a half-formed figure. Apparently the sculptor had had no time to finish the work. Perhaps the fierce dwarfs had attacked just then.

Thurston, his eyes round, was staring at the millionaire.

"Look here, old chap, haven't you been making up that rigmarole as you went along?"

"No, Thurston, I have not. Throw me a rope. Two men here. Find me a stone."

With wonderful skill the millionaire tossed the rope over the neck of the male bear. The weight of the stone as he paid out the line brought the end to the ground. He made a noose, and, thrusting his foot into it, called:

"Haul away!"

He swung into the air, the rope running over the bear's neck. Ferrers Lord clutched the bear's ears and drew himself up. He lay on the head, then, crawling forward, thrust one leg into the gaping mouth. Then, exerting all his strength, he forced down the tongue.

There was a hoarse rumbling sound. The great rock sank lower and lower before their astonished eyes.

"Open sesame!" said Ferrers Lord, with a laugh. "Steady me down, lads!"

He sank to the ground and advanced boldly to the void of blackness. Thurston and two men followed him. As the powerful lamps flashed round cries of admiration rose to their lips.

It was Aladdin's cave—a fairyland of gleaming silver. They trod on silver, the walls were silver, the roof was silver, and before them rose a mighty statue of a man carved out of the same precious metal. He wore a tunic of chain armour, and brandished a battleaxe that must have weighed tons. He bore a shield of burnished silver, fashioned in the shape of a sun, and heavily studded with gems.

"Nuam Gol," said Ferrers Lord, reading the inscription. "King of the Land of the Four Suns!"

"Great Scott," gasped Thurston, "just look at that diamond on his finger! I must have that for a trophy. Lend me your knife, old chap, and give me a back!"

He scrambled on the millionaire's broad shoulders, and caught the statue by the wrist.

Again came the hoarse rumbling sound.

"Run, run!" shouted Ferrers Lord.

They were too late. The mighty rock had risen into its place. Thurston had discovered the secret which the sculptor had failed to write—the secret that closed the way. They were prisoners in the silver cavern. Thurston laughed.

"We'll have to yell to Maddock to pull the bear's tongue," he said. "You might have let me down gently, old chap. I've given my funny bone an awful bang. If you had——"

A sudden crash interrupted him, and the rock quivered. Ferrers Lord clenched his hands spasmodically. He knew what had happened only too well. The mysterious machinery which had raised and lowered the rock had given way.



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**Prout Strikes Home — A Little Cooking — Prout and Joe Receive a Present—Ching-Lung Manipulates a Rope's-end with Satisfactory Results.**

Prout dragged Ching-Lung back, and with an oath Gacchio pulled out a revolver and fired. A click sounded, but no report. The cartridge saturated with sea-water had missed fire. Then, flinging Ching-Lung back, Prout sent his great fist crashing into the negro's face, and Estebian Gacchio fell through the doorway, bleeding and unconscious.

"Pretty doin's!" growled the steersman, blowing his smarting knuckles. "Pretty doin's! I've barked all my fist agen his ugly teeth. What's it all about? You seem to love each other. What's it all about?"

All Ching-Lung's anger had gone. He calmly rolled a cigarette and lighted it.

"I'm ashamed of myself, Tom," he said. "Right down ashamed of myself, and sorry. I owe the black beast a grudge all the same. But he came here asking for hospitality. A ship's like a man's own house; and if your bitterest foe comes to your house cold and hungry, you ought not turn him away. I let my temper get the better of me."

"But what has he done to you, sir?"

"Ho pitched me out of a window," said Ching-Lung, with a grin. "It was a liberty on his part, you must own."

Prout opened his big mouth and chuckled.

"And I've pitched him out of the door, sir. That ought to square it—eh? It was a smasher, too—just like punchin' a wooden post with nails stuck in it. Here, rouse up, Sambo! Wake up, and play your bones, sonny!"

He shook the negro with no gentleness.

Gacchio groaned.

"You've hurt him, Tom."

"Well," giggled Prout, holding his leg-of-mutton fist up for inspection, "d'ye think anything but a copper-lined india-rubber image could get punched with that and not have a bit of a dent left in it? If he's hurt, serve him right. The murderin' villain tried to shoot you!"

A few of the men had run down the corridor, alarmed at the noise. They growled indignantly when they heard Prout speak of the revolver. Joe, the fat carpenter, suggested they should lynch the negro, as an act of common justice; and Gan-Waga handled his harpoon threateningly. Lugard, one of the engineers, recognised Gacchio.

"He sailed aboard the Cloud King, sir," he said, touching his cap to Ching-Lung. "I saw him talking to the professor just before the race started."

"So did I, sir!" put in another man. "I know him well, sir. He was a gun-runner when Spain was having trouble with the Cubans; and he's as big a blackguard as ever walked. There was a big price on his ugly head. If ever the Spaniards get hold of him, he'll have his neck broken in the garotte.* He don't deserve no better."

Ching-Lung was more than amazed. He had been puzzling his brains in vain to find out why he should meet his foe in such a place.

"Get a sponge and some brandy," he said, "and do your best for him. We cannot put him ashore in a snowstorm, whoever he is, and whatever he has done. Look after him, Lugard, and don't let him out of your sight. Perhaps something has gone wrong with the Cloud King. I do not want to see him again. Treat him well, for he came to ask for shelter. Pump him, too, if you can. If the weather clears, give him ammunition and plenty of food, and send him ashore."

He went back to the cabin and proceeded to blow bubbles, to the joy and wonder of Gan-Waga, who sat on the floor, with eyes that threatened to fall out of his head. Everything in the state-room aroused his wonder.

Ching-Lung soon grew tired of his bubbles, and began to feel hungry.

"Peckish, Gan?" he asked.

"What mean dat? Not know peckish. What is it, hunk?"

"Are you empty inside?"

"Bad 'nough!" gurgled Gan-Waga. "Always empty. Could eat sawdust, feel so 'ungry!"

"Then we'll make pancakes," said Ching-Lung. "I love pancakes. Wait here, you candle-eater!"

Gan-Waga had not the remotest idea of what kind of affair a pancake was. Ching-Lung found the cook's galley deserted, and in the twinkling of an eye he had a frying-pan, a couple of dozen eggs, an egg-beater, some salt, and a large tin of mustard concealed about his person. Then he borrowed a bowl, a few lemons, and some flour, and glided back to the state-room.

A bright, red fire was burning—just the thing for cooking.

"Evel scence chappee makee pancake, Gan?" he cooed, in pidgin English. "Me showee you. Filst thing you wantee are some eggs. Air fullee of eggs, only you not see 'em. I tellee'm to come first chopee. Watchee youl uncle. Put the basin on de floor and sayee, 'Pigglee-wigglee-wagglee-wogglee-woo!' What-ho!"

Splash came an egg into the basin. Gan-Waga's eyes searched the ceiling in wonder.

"Keepee youl mouthee shut," said Ching-Lung, "or pelaps one dlopee in. Good glacious!"

Plop! Another egg whizzed down, and bounced off Gan-Waga's nose into the basin. Then came a shower, each striking the edge of the bowl, and breaking neatly in half. Not an atom of either white or yolk was spilled, and the shells fell in a neat pile on the rug.

"Now, you have a tly!" chirped Ching-Lung. "Mind you not sayee it wlong. It 'Pigglee-wigglee-wagglee-wogglee-woo!' If you sayee it wlong you gettee solly. Now tly!"

Gan-Waga was not clever at pronouncing words; but to learn a talisman that would bring eggs out of the air was worth taking some trouble about.

"Say it slow," he said.

"'Pigglee-wigglee-wagglee-wogglee-woo!' It fitsee chop easy. Go on, candle face!"

"'Pigglee-wigglee-woogglee-wum-wum—ow!'"

Gan-Waga must have made a mistake, and, as Ching-Lung had said, he was sorry. He yelled as two eggs, instead of falling in the basin, smote him, in quick succession, above the left eye. They smashed, of course, and the yolks began to run a steeplechase down his face, the winning-post evidently being his neck. It was a dead-heat at the finish. But Gan-Waga objected to having his face turned into a racecourse.

"Oh, you silly muff!" roared Ching-Lung. "Why you not sayee 'Pigglee-wigglee' plopely? You spoilee evelyt'ing now. We get no mole eggses."

"Don't want 'em!" growled the Eskimo. "I say it right!"

"No, you notee. You sayee 'Wum-wum.' Dat wlong. Nebel mindee. We gotee noughtee. Want some floul now."

"How you get dat?"

"Likee dis."

Ching-Lung spread out his hands, and caught a paper-bag filled with flour, which apparently fell from the ceiling. Gan-Waga recovered his good humour, and was as happy as a child with a new toy when Ching-Lung set him to whisk the eggs. He yelled with delight as the yellow froth rose higher and higher. Ching-Lung yelled up the chimney, and the frying-pan descended. Butter was placed in it, and then, fork in hand, Ching-Lung presided over the cooking of the first pancake.

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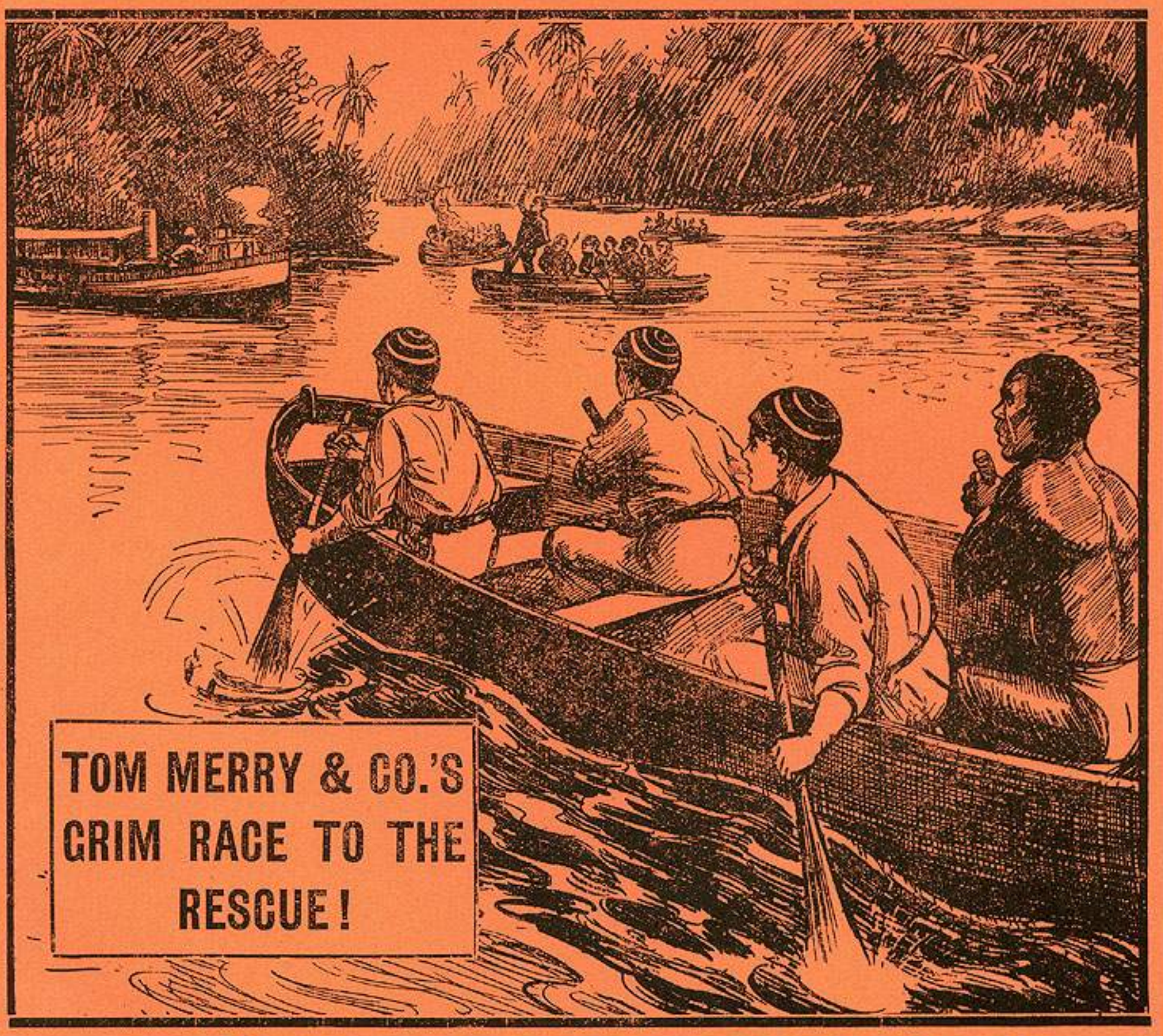

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