

"THE BOUNDER'S FEUD!"

This week's powerful and dramatic school story.

No. 998. Vol. XXXI.

Week Ending April 2nd, 1927.

The Magnet

LIBRARY

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EVERY MONDAY.



FROG'S-MARCHED OFF THE FIELD!

(Read the fine long complete story of the adventures of the Grenfriars' Champ in this issue.)



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

NEARING A RECORD!

IN another two weeks' time we shall be celebrating our thousandth number—a record, you will admit, and one that speaks eloquently of the popularity of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars. Magnetites all over the world have helped to bring about this record achievement, and my thanks go to them for their loyal support and encouragement. The MAGNET has led the way now for twenty years. Its attractiveness makes a greater appeal than ever. And that is as it should be. A good thing is deserving of success, and the MAGNET is indubitably a "good thing." Look out, then, chums, for this record-making issue of your favourite paper in a fortnight's time. That formidable number "1,000" will certainly give you something to talk about when you bump into a non-reader.

HE'S "MOLLY-CODDLED"!

R. W., of Leeds, writes and tells me that he is an only son, and that his parents spoil him. He's not allowed to do this or that in case something untoward happens to him. Now R. W. hates this molly-coddling, for he appears to be a typical British boy with typical British ideas of life. He wants to get out and mix with his school-mates; he wants to play footer. If he gets a biff on the shins he's prepared to take it smiling. But his parents, so he declares, reckon footer to be a very dangerous game, and they make it their business to see that he doesn't run the "terrible" risk of a biff on the shins. I can quite sympathise with R. W. There's nothing worse than for a boy with high spirits to be wrapped in cotton wool. I suggest that R. W. may have given his parents the impression that he is a weakling, in which case their "molly-coddling" has sprung from a natural parental feeling of protection. I'm almost prepared to wager that R. W. will be able to convince his parents that he can get along like any other ordinary boy without the cotton wool treatment if he talks to them as clearly and earnestly as he has written to me. Have this little talk, R. W., and drop me a line again. Meantime,

when you get these fits of the blues—to which you refer in your letter—take up the MAGNET. That'll drive 'em away, you know!

THE UNLUCKY HORSESHOE!

"Ted," of South Wales, tells me that he used to believe, in common with many other people, in the good luck a horse-shoe brought its owner, but just recently he has had cause to change his views. It appears that "Ted" possesses a horse-shoe which he used to keep on a nail in the wall near his bed. For weeks that particular shoe seemed to bring him luck, and then one dark night "Ted" came out of his slumbers with a terrific yell, for something had struck him on the side of the head with considerable force. It turned out to be the horse-shoe, which, of course, had slipped from its lucky perch. "Ted" is convinced now that the horse-shoe isn't lucky to him, and he wants to know what to do with it. Should he, he asks, throw it over his left shoulder and thus get rid of it? I'm blessed if I know. But if "Ted" is going to part company with the horse-shoe in this fashion, I earnestly recommend him to see that the road is clear first, otherwise the "luck" that hit "Ted" in the silent watches of the night might hit some other innocent being with perhaps disastrous and "unlucky" consequences to both. If it were my horse-shoe I rather fancy I should shove it in the dustbin!

For Next Monday:

"CONDEMNED BY THE FORM!"

By Frank Richards.

This is another powerful and dramatic story in the special series "starring" Herbert Vernon-Smith, the millionaire's son. It's a real peach of a yarn, chums, take it from me.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

There's another rattling fine instalment of this popular adventure story, too, boys. Mind you read it!

"THE SHADOW OF THE SACK!"

By Dicky Nugent.

And this "short complete" by our youthful Dicky is enough to make a cat laugh! Don't miss it, or you'll be missing the laugh of the week. Chin, chin, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

"THEY'RE ALL FRESH!"

"What a lot o' beauties, eh! Just caught 'em! I've had a real day out, I have; been down the river with a rod I made myself. I spent all the morning reading the REALM—comes out on Wednesdays, you know. I couldn't sort of fish an' read as well, so I got dug into the yarn about Jack, Sam, and Pete—and talk about laugh! They say Pete's a champion mirth-maker—a proper old side-splitter, I call him! All the chaps in my footer club read the REALM now; some of 'em say Pete's real, an' some say he ain't! But I don't care one way or another—he keeps me laughing! I reckon hearin' me chuckle must ha' put the fish in a good humour. Because when I dropped the old hook, up the little beauties came—sort of falling over one another to bite. Yes, I've had a corking day—always do o' Wednesdays, when the REALM comes out. It's worth tuppence of anybody's money!"



Every
Wednesday

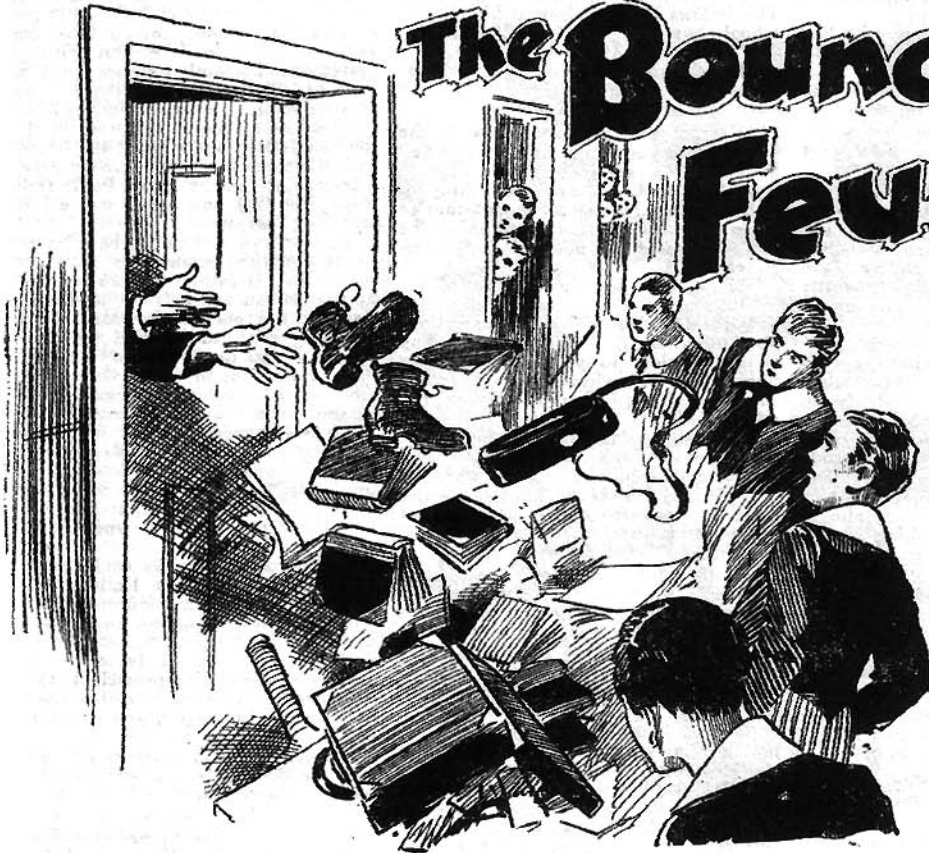
The Boys'
REALM
OF SPORT & ADVENTURE

Price
Twopence.

JEALOUSY! All that is evil in Vernon-Smith's nature seems to have been aroused by his father's generous action in "taking up" and befriending the orphan Paul Dallas and sending him to Greyfriars, for Smithy is firmly convinced that Paul is a scheming outsider—an interloper! He is neither of these things, however, but that doesn't alter the Bounder's decision. At all costs Paul Dallas must be driven from Greyfriars!

The Bounder's Feud!

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS.**



A Powerful and Dramatic Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, with Herbert Vernon-Smith—better known as the Bounder—in the limelight.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The High Hand!

A NYBODY seen a moving job?" sang Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Bump! Thud!

It looked something like a "moving job" in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

A shower of books, flung out of the doorway of Study No. 4, scattered far and wide. A pair of football boots followed them, and then a camera. A box came next, with a heavy thud. Then several more articles, bumping and thudding.

Half a dozen Remove fellows had gathered to look on. Several more were looking out of their study doorways.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, who was clearing somebody's property out of his study in that unceremonious manner, took no heed of the spectators.

It was time for prep, and most of the Remove had gone to their studies. But most of them left prep and looked out as they heard that unaccustomed bumping and thudding in the passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, from the door of Study No. 13.

"What's that little game, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith made no answer. He hurled out a chair, and it crashed on the other goods that had accumulated outside Study No. 4.

"It's a moving job!" explained Skinner. "Smithy's moving the new fellow's things for him! Are you charging Dallas anything for this job, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry came along the passage, his face rather serious.

"Are they Dallas' things you are hoofing out, Smithy?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Getting shut of him!"

"Isn't that rather thick?" asked Bob.

"I don't see it! I'm not going to have the cad in my study, and I'm not going to have his things here!" said the Bounder of Greyfriars coolly. "I'm fed-up with him!"

Bob stared at him. The Bounder was a rather high-handed fellow, but this was rather out of the common, even for the Bounder.

"Is Dallas changing out of the study?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"I mean, has he agreed to change out?"

"Not that I know of."

"You're doing this without his permission?"

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"I'm not likely to ask the permission of a charity cad!" he answered. "What rot!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bob, in disgust. "Can't you leave the kid's charity school alone?"

"I don't choose to!"

"Well, if I were Dallas, I'd jolly well take you by the neck and make you shift all those things back into the study!" said Bob hotly.

The Bounder laughed.

"Lucky you're not Dallas, then. You

might be able to do it. Dallas couldn't to save his life."

"It's rather rotten to treat a fellow like this because he can't stand up to you with the gloves on!"

"Think so?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes, I do!" snapped Bob.

"Much obliged for your opinion!" said the Bounder, unmoved. "But I'll ask for it next time I want it!"

There was a chortle from Skinner & Co.

Bob Cherry compressed his lips.

Paul Dallas, the new fellow in the Remove, was nothing to him, and he had no right to interfere. But he was strongly tempted to interfere, all the same.

"It's a rotten trick!" he said.

"You've said that before!"

"Absolutely rotten!"

"Dear ma, you're beginnin' to repeat yourself!" said the Bounder.

"Put on a new record!"

"I've a jolly good mind——"

"Glad to hear it!"

"What?"

"I fancied you had no mind at all, or none to speak of! This is news!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner.

Bob Cherry's rugged face flushed, and he clenched his hands and made a step towards Vernon-Smith. The Bounder, having deposited all Dallas' property in the passage by this time, was lounging in the doorway of Study No. 4, with his hands in his pockets, and a sardonic grin on his face. Evidently he did not care a straw what Bob Cherry or

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anyone else thought of his high-handed proceedings.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who had followed his chum from Study No. 13, laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"Give it a miss, my esteemed and ridiculous Cherry!" he murmured. "It is not your business to punch the excellent and disgusting Smithy! And there is prep."

Bob Cherry nodded, and followed the dusky junior back to Study No. 13. After all, it was no concern of his. But there was a frown on his face as he sat down to prep. Smithy's bitter feud against the new junior was generally condemned in the Remove, and by no one more than Bob.

"It's rotten!" growled Bob.
"The rottenfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh amicably.
"But there is prep."

"Br-r-r-r!" grunted Bob.
But he gave his attention to his prep. Vernon-Smith lounged in his study doorway, and several more fellows had joined the crowd in the Remove passage.
"I say, you fellows, where's Dallas?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking round through his big spectacles.

"Keeping out of sight!" chuckled Skinner. "Smith's licked him once, and he knows when he's had enough!"
"That's rot!" said Ogilvy. "Dallas won't stand this!"
"Won't he?" sneered the Bounder.
"I fancy he will have to!"

"He won't!" said Ogilvy. "A fellow can't be turned out of his own study! Mr. Quelch will jolly soon chip in!"
"Give him a home in your study if you're fond of charity cads!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows, here comes Redwing!" giggled Billy Bunter.
Tom Redwing came along from the Remove staircase. He looked rather surprised at seeing a crowd gathered outside his study, and still more surprised at the sight of the goods scattered on the floor.

"What the dickens—" he began.
"Moving job," explained Skinner.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Dallas is changing out," said the Bounder. "I've shifted his rubbish for him!"

"Has he said so?"
"No. I've said so!"
"Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing.
"Got anything to say against it?"
"Yes, a lot!" exclaimed Redwing indignantly. "You've no right to treat the chap's things like that!"

"Dear me!" said the Bounder.
"For goodness' sake, Smithy, don't play the goat like this! Look here, the chap will be coming up to his prep soon!"

"Not in this study!"
"I'll help you put the things back," said Tom.
"If you put any of that stuff into this study, Redwing, you'll have a fight on your hands!"

Vernon-Smith's face hardened, and his eyes glittered unpleasantly. He seemed to have forgotten that Tom Redwing was his chum—the only pal he had at Greyfriars.

But Redwing had not forgotten. He compressed his lips, and went into No. 4 without a word.

The Bounder shut the door when he was inside.

"Prep now," he remarked.
"Dallas won't stand it, Smithy. He can't."

"What will he do?" sneered Smithy.
"Sneak to the Form master? That

won't do him any good in the Remove. The fellows have swallowed his charity school, but they won't swallow sneaking."

"If you asked him civilly he might change into another study, as you don't want him here," said Redwing.

"I'm not wasting any civility on the rotter who's got round my father to pay his fees at Greyfriars. I don't suppose any other study's keen to take him in, either. The fellows make out they're down on me for treating him as he deserves, but they don't want him themselves."

"Mr. Quelch put him in here—"

"Like his cheek!"
"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Tom impatiently. "Are you setting up to give orders to your Form master now? And Mr. Quelch thought you'd like him here, as your father has adopted him."

The Bounder laughed sardonically.
"Quelch didn't display his usual knowledge of human nature, when he thought that," he said. "A fellow can't quite be expected to like an interloper who's set his own father against him."
"Oh, rot!" said Redwing.

But he did not argue the matter further. He knew that argument was wasted on Herbert Vernon-Smith when the Bounder's suspicious, unreasoning temper was in the ascendant. He settled down to prep, with a clouded brow, and the Bounder followed his example.

But the juniors in the passage were not thinking of prep. Every fellow in the Remove had come up now, excepting Paul Dallas, and his coming could not be long delayed. Skinner suggested that he was keeping away, finking the inevitable trouble with the Bounder; but some of the fellows knew that Dallas had gone to Mr. Quelch's study. Anyhow, prep had to be done, and Dallas had to come up sooner or later. And the juniors waited to see what would happen when he came. Billy Bunter stationed himself at the top of the Remove staircase to watch.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter a few minutes later, in great excitement, "he's coming!"
"Now for the giddy circus!" chuckled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And there was a buzz of excitement as the adopted son of Samuel Vernon-Smith, millionaire, came along the Remove passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Hunting for Trouble!

PAUL DALLAS looked a little surprised as he came up the Remove passage. He was watched by a dozen or more juniors as he came, and most of them were grinning, and all looked expectant. The new fellow could see at once that something was "on," though he did not yet know what it was.

Dallas had been only a few days at Greyfriars. His rather good-looking face bore a few traces still of the fight he had had with the Bounder on his first day at the school. Excepting for Vernon-Smith, he had made no enemies. Skinner and his friends affected to look down on the fellow who had been to a charity school, and whose fees were paid at Greyfriars by a man who was not related to him—an old friend of his father's. But Skinner & Co. did not count for very much in the Remove, and they did not care to make themselves too unpleasant, either.

Dallas had been licked in his fight with the Bounder; but he had put up so good a fight that Skinner would have been very reluctant to face him with the gloves on. Certainly Skinner would not have had Smithy's good fortune in such an encounter. Harry Wharton & Co., the leaders of the Form, were civil to the new fellow, and most of the Remove took their cue from the Famous Five.

Only one enemy had Paul Dallas made, but that one enemy was a bitter and relentless one.

All that was evil in Herbert Vernon-Smith's nature seemed to have been roused by his father's action in taking up the orphan and befriending him. It was unusual enough for Mr. Vernon-Smith to perform so kind an action; indeed, it was the first time that his son had known him to do anything of the kind. That circumstance seemed to give Smithy some reason for his belief that Paul had somehow pulled his father's leg, and twisted Samuel Vernon-Smith round his finger. The fellow was looting his father, according to Smithy, and he made his belief thoroughly well known in the Remove, and in other Forms for that matter.

Nobody at Greyfriars could possibly remain unaware that Dallas of the Remove was there on a different footing from the other fellows; that his fees were paid by Smithy's father. Still less could anyone fail to be aware that Smithy strongly disapproved of it, and regarded his adopted "brother" as an outsider, an interloper, and a scheming rascal.

Skinner & Co. affected to sympathise with the Bounder's point of view, chiefly because Harry Wharton & Co. took the other side of the question.

The Famous Five agreed that Smithy couldn't, perhaps, be expected to be overjoyed at being suddenly landed with an adopted brother whom he had never seen before, without being consulted on the subject. But his father's wishes and authority ought to have counted with him; and anyhow, Paul had given no offence. So far as the Co. could see, he was a decent fellow enough, in a very awkward position. The Bounder might at least have been barely civil, if he did not like the fellow or make friends with him.

But the Bounder had started as the new fellow's enemy, and his hard and unforgiving spirit had shown no change in the days that Paul had been at Greyfriars.

Smithy seemed to have expected that all the fellows would share his view of the "charity cad." He was deeply irritated when they did not, and when some of them remonstrated with him for his treatment of the "interloper." If anything was needed to intensify the Bounder's detestation of Dallas, that would have done it.

Harry Wharton was standing at the door of Study No. 1 as Paul came up, and he gave the new junior a nod as he passed. Wharton and Nugent had been at prep in Study No. 1, and were not yet aware of the "moving job" that had been going on. But the buzz in the passage had caused the captain of the Remove to look out at last to see what was on.

"What's the merry joke, you fellows?" called out Wharton. "You're kicking up a thumping row there. What about prep?"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Never mind prep now! This is better than prep!"

"What is, fathead?" asked the captain of the Remove.

Bunter chortled.



Harry Wharton shoved unceremoniously between Vernon-Smith and Paul Dallas as they were closing in conflict. "Stop that!" he rapped out. "Stand back, Dallas! Smithy, keep your paws to yourself!" The Bouncer scowled at the junior captain. "What are you chipping in for, Wharton?" he asked savagely. "Can't you mind your own business?" (See Chapter 2.)

"Smithy's chucked all Dallas' things out of the study."

"What?" exclaimed Wharton.

"He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton left his study doorway and followed Paul Dallas along to No. 4. There was a frown on his brow.

Dallas stopped, in the midst of a grinning crowd, and stared at his possessions scattered in the passage. He recognised them, but he did not understand at once what had happened.

"These are my things!" he exclaimed, looking round at the Removites. "How did they get here?"

"I wonder how!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody seems to have shifted them," remarked Snoop. "They didn't walk out of the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A gleam came into Paul's eyes. He turned on Skinner, with a look that made that youth back away rather hastily.

"Is this one of your little jokes, Skinner?" he demanded. "If it is—"

"Keep your wool on, old bean!" answered Skinner coolly. "I haven't touched your rubbish!"

"Who did, then?" demanded Dallas.

"Can't you guess?" jeered Skinner.

"Vernon-Smith?" exclaimed Dallas.

"Just that."

"The rotter!"

Dallas grasped the door-handle of Study No. 4, and hurled the door open. His face was blazing with anger.

"Vernon-Smith! Did you pitch my things out of the room?" he shouted.

The Bouncer looked round coolly from the study table.

"Yes!" he snapped.

"What do you mean by it?"

"I should think the meaning was clear enough. You're not wanted in this study."

"That's not for you to decide."

"I've decided it, all the same."

"And do you think I shall stand this?" demanded Dallas.

"Yes, I think so."

Paul Dallas clenched his hands hard. The Bouncer rose to his feet, and stood facing him, with a mocking grin on his face. He was quite ready for trouble; indeed, he was keen to force the new junior into another fight, which could only have ended like the first encounter.

"You're a cheeky cad!" panted Dallas.

"The opinion of a scheming fortune-hunter doesn't worry me," said the Bouncer coolly.

Paul turned away, and picked up a handful of books, and carried them into the study. The Bouncer struck them

from his hands, and they were scattered on the floor.

The next moment, Paul was springing at him.

The Bouncer grinned as his hands went up like a flash. That was what he wanted.

"Come on!" he said.

Harry Wharton had reached the study. He strode in, and shoved unceremoniously between the two juniors as they were closing in conflict.

"Stop that!" he rapped out. "Stand back, Dallas! Smithy, keep your paws to yourself!"

"What are you chipping in for, Wharton?" asked the Bouncer savagely. "Can't you mind your own business?"

"This is my business, as captain of the Remove."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"You've chucked Dallas' things out of the study—"

"Yes, and I'm going to chuck Dallas after them, unless he chooses to walk out, and keep out."

"You're not going to do anything of the kind," said the captain of the Remove. "You've had one fight with Dallas, and proved that you can lick him. That settles that. You're not going to bully him, Vernon-Smith, because he's not a match for you with the mittens."

"Is the funk goin' to hide behind you?" sneered the Bouncer.

"Dallas is not having fair play. You're not going to touch him, and

you're not going to touch his property."

"Who's going to stop me?" shouted the Bouncer.

"The captain of your Form—who happens to be me," said Harry, with a glint in his eyes. "I'm not going to fight you, Smithy—this isn't a matter for scrapping. You'll toe the line like a decent fellow, or you'll get a Form licking."

"You cheeky cad—"

"Better language, please," said Wharton. "Bolsover major's had a Form licking for bullying, and it's done him good. You're going to get the same if you start the same game."

"I don't call it bullying, to turn a scoundrel out of my study."

"You can call it what you like—but every decent fellow calls it bullying. If the chap could handle you, you couldn't do it! If you're fed-up with Dallas in the study, get him to change out, as other fellows do when they can't pull together."

"I'd be glad to change out," said Paul. "I'm sorry enough that I was put in this study."

"I daresay it can be fixed," said Wharton. "Have a little sense, Smithy. Who the thump are you to ride the high horse like this?"

The Bouncer gritted his teeth.

"I'm not standing that rotter here. He's going out, and his things are keeping out."

"Rats to that!" said the captain of the

Remove. "Dallas, put your things back in the study."

"I'll shift them fast enough, if he does," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth.

"You won't!"

Paul's face was crimson, and he hesitated.

His anger and resentment were deep enough; but it was gall and wormwood to him to take advantage of another fellow's protection. The captain of the Remove intended to see fair play; that was his duty as head of the Form. But it was a humiliating position for Dallas. "Go ahead!" said Wharton.

"I'm not asking you to protect me, Wharton," said Paul, at last. "I know I'm no match for Vernon-Smith; but I don't want to be protected."

Harry Wharton laughed. "Can't be helped," he said. "I should get into a thumping row with Quelch, if he found out that I allowed a fellow to be turned out of his study. And you can't handle Smyth."

"I know I can't. But—" "Put your things back, and don't jaw, old bean. Form captain's orders," said Wharton. "When you've been at Greyfriars a bit longer, you'll understand that the captain of your Form gives orders."

"I—I know. But—" "Dear man," murmured Skinner, from the passage. "Don't you know that Wharton is the Lord High Panjandrums—the only genuine goods. When Wharton says turn, we all turn."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You can drop that, Skinner," said Harry, with a glance at the cad of the Remove. "You seem to be backing up Smyth—"

"So I am," said Skinner. "I think Smyth's right, and I'd do the same in his place."

"Well, I could lick you as easily as Smyth can lick Dallas," said the captain of the Remove. "Do you want me to?"

Skinner retreated a pace. "If you're going to bully—" he began.

Wharton laughed again. "So it would be bullying in my case, but not in Smyth's case!" he said. "You seem to think that Smyth can turn a man out of his study because he doesn't like him there. Well, I don't like you in the Remove passage. Would you like me to turn you out?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Skinner. He did not seem to like that turn of the argument.

"You see, it won't wash," said Wharton. "You can see that, Smyth. If a fellow can't live in peace because another fellow's hefty enough to lick him if he chooses, it's time something was done. That's all very well for hooligans in a slum; but it won't do for the Remove passage at Greyfriars. You won't lay a finger on Dallas again."

"So you're setting up to protect him?" Wharton nodded.

"Yes—just as I should set up to protect Bunter, if you started bullying him—or Skinner, for that matter."

"Thanks, O Mighty One!" sneered Skinner.

There was a laugh in the Remove passage.

"Very funny," agreed Wharton. "But I had to do it once, all the same, when you were rowing with Smyth, Skinner. You were jolly glad when I clipped in and stopped Smyth from walloping you."

Skinner backed out of the crowd and disappeared into his own study. He did

not seem to be enjoying these reminiscences.

"Now, chuck it, Smyth, old man," said Wharton amicably. "You're playing the goat, you know, and it won't wash. Chuck it like a good chap, and let me get back to my prep."

It was the olive-branch, if the Bouncer had cared to accept it. The captain of the Remove was offering him an easy retreat from an untenable position.

"What's the good of rowing?" went on the captain of the Remove. "Chuck it, like a good fellow—just to oblige a chap who only wants to live a quiet life, old bean."

It was easy enough for Smyth to retreat then, and "save his face." Wharton, knowing the Bouncer's obstinate pride, wanted to make it easy for him.

But it was all in vain. The bitterness in Smyth's heart was not to be appeased by soft words.

"You can jaw till you're black in the face!" he said. "That charity cad isn't stopping in this study!"

"What is he to do, then?" said Harry, still patient, though his temper was rising.

"Anything he dashed well likes, so long as he keeps clear of me!"

"I've asked you to chuck it, Smyth, but—"

"And I've refused!" said the Bouncer coolly.

"Very well; that's that! Now I order you to chuck it, as your Form captain!" rapped out Wharton.

"You can order!"

"Dallas, put your things back in the study!" said Wharton quietly. "I shall stay here till it's done!"

Dallas was hesitating; but he picked up his books at last and brought them in. He laid them on the study table, Vernon-Smith watching him with gleaming eyes.

Smith stepped forward and laid his hands on the books, with the evident intention of hurling them through the doorway again. Harry Wharton's voice rapped out sharply:

"Put those books down, Vernon-Smith!"

"Rats to you!" Wharton set his lips hard.

"Put them down!"

With a defiant laugh, the Bouncer hurled the books through the doorway. They crashed down in the passage.

"That for your orders!" he jeered.

"Very well; that does it!" said the captain of the Remove. "It's a Form licking now!"

"Not while I can hit!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

Perhaps the Bouncer realised that he had gone too far; but he was not the fellow to retreat.

"Nugent!"

"Yes, old chap!"

Frank Nugent was looking in, among the other juniors.

"Will you fetch the fives bat from my study?"

"What-ho!"

Nugent hurried away, and was back in a few seconds with the fives bat. He handed it to the captain of the Remove.

"Now put Smyth across the table!" The Bouncer clenched his teeth.

"Hands off," he hissed, "or—"

Johnny Bull, Nugent, Squiff, and Ogilvy came at him at once, and the Bouncer struck out furiously. But the sturdy juniors grasped him, and Vernon-Smith was whirled off his feet, struggling savagely. Redwing, with a pale and troubled face, stepped back from the table. He was Smyth's chum, but

he was utterly ashamed of his friend at that moment.

"Shift those books, Reddy, old bean!" said Wharton.

Redwing cleared the table.

"Let me go!" yelled the Bouncer, black with rage. "I'll thrash any one of you!"

You can pick your man afterwards if you want more trouble!" said Wharton. "At present it's a Form licking! Put him across!"

With a thud the Bouncer landed across the table. He was still struggling, but he was held by his arms and his ankles, and he was securely held, face downward. And there was a breathless buzz in the Remove passage as the captain of the Form stepped towards the struggling, writhing Bouncer, bat in hand.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Form Licking!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH twisted his face round towards the captain of the Remove. He was panting with rage.

"If you dare—" he breathed.

Whack!

"Oh!"

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "It's six, Smyth, and you insisted upon it!"

"You rotter!"

Wharton made no reply to that.

The fives bat rose and fell, and it fell with vigour. Vernon-Smith made a desperate effort to break loose.

But the four juniors held him fast.

The Remove passage was crammed now with juniors outside the door of Study No. 4.

Hardly a fellow there had any sympathy to waste on the Bouncer. His high-handed insolence was too much for the patience of the Removites. Even Skinner & Co. were not sorry to see the Bouncer's lofty pride taken down a peg or two.

The Bouncer, writhing savagely, had to take the six to the last stroke.

He was white with rage when it was over.

"That's that!" said the captain of the Remove, as he tucked the bat under his arm. "Let him go!"

The Bouncer was released.

He slipped from the table, and stood quivering from head to foot with fury.

"You rotter!" he breathed.

And he turned on Wharton, his fists clenched, his eyes blazing.

The captain of the Remove eyed him coolly. Smyth's fury had no terrors for him.

"You've been licked, Smyth!" he said. "You asked for it, and you've got it! If you're not satisfied with what I've done as Form captain, you can come along to the Rag and put the gloves on!"

The Bouncer tried to control himself. He had no desire to turn his feud with Paul Dallas into a fight with the captain of the Remove. That would not have suited his purpose at all.

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

"Only too pleased!"

Wharton left the study at once.

The Bouncer slammed the door savagely shut after him in the faces of the Remove crowd.

Then he fixed his eyes on Dallas.

"You're staying here?"

Paul shook his head.

"No," he answered. "I shall not stay here under Wharton's protection. I shall not stay in this study until I can protect myself!"



With a thud Vernon-Smith landed across the table, where he was securely held, face downwards. There was a breathless buzz as Harry Wharton stepped towards the struggling, writhing Bounder, bat in hand. Vernon-Smith twisted his face round towards the captain of the Remove. "If you dare——" he breathed, panting with rage. (See Chapter 2.)

The Bounder stared at him.

"And when will that be?" he sneered.

"Soon, I hope," said Paul quietly.

"You're no better a man than I am,

Vernon-Smith; only you can box, and

I've had no training in that line!

You've taken a rotten advantage of it!

I shall not stay in this study under

another fellow's protection!"

And he went to the door.

"But what are you going to do?"

asked Redwing. "A fellow must have a

body."

"I can work in the Form-room."

Vernon-Smith burst into a harsh

laugh.

Dallas did not heed him. He left the

study without another word, and closed

the door.

"The rotten funk was afraid to stay

now Wharton's gone!" sneered the

Bounder.

"Rubbish!" said Redwing.

"Look here——"

"You've acted disgracefully, Smity!"

said Tom Redwing hotly. "You ought

to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!

If ever a fellow asked for a Form lick-

ing, you did!"

"So that's your idea of it?"

"Yes, it is. Dallas doesn't funk stay-

ing here, and you know it! You know

that you won't take another batting, and

he knows it; and you know jolly well

Wharton would chip in again if you

turned Dallas out! What's the good of

talking rot?"

The Bounder gritted his teeth. This

was unusually plain talk from Tom

Redwing. It seemed as if even Red-

wing's almost inexhaustible patience

was wearing thin.

"He's gone, anyhow!" said the

Bounder at last.

"The best thing you can do is to step

out and ask him to come back again,

before Quelch hears anything about

it."

"You think he will sneak to

Quelch?"

"I don't think so, and you don't!"

retorted Redwing. "But if Mr. Quelch

finds him working in the Form-room,

he will want to know why."

"That's what he's counting on, of

course?"

"Have you given him any choice?"

demanding Redwing. "You've acted

like a bully and a rotter. The kid's

done nothing to you, and you've set

out to make his life a burden at Grey-

friars."

"And I'll do it, too," said Vernon-

Smith, between his teeth. "I'll make

the cad sorry he ever came here. I'll

make him glad to go!"

"He can't go, unless your father

takes him away, and you know it!

You're talking like a fool!"

"Look here, Redwing——"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Redwing. "I'm

fed up with it, Smity!"

"And you're my pal?" said the

Bounder bitterly. "That scheming cad

is turning you against me, as he's

turned my father!"

"Nothing of the kind: I don't care

twopence about him, but there's such

a thing as decency and fair play. It's

absolutely rotten of you to take the

upper hand of him like this, because

you licked him in a scrap. I never

believed you would do such a thing.

Even Bolsover major would stop short

of such rottenness!"

"Oh, ring off!" snapped the Bounder.

And he turned to his prep, with a

black brow.

He was sore and savage; the batting

had not been a light one. All, or

nearly all, the Remove were against

him—and it seemed that even his own

chum was turning on him.

It was bitter enough to the Bounder.

All this had come about since Paul

Dallas had arrived at Greyfriars.

Vernon-Smith put it all down to

Dallas' account. He did not choose to

attribute it to his own jealous and un-

governable temper.

Prep went on in Study No. 4 in a

very tense atmosphere.

Both the juniors were glad when it

was over. Redwing finished earlier

than usual, and rose from the table.

He gave his study-mate a glance; and

received only a black scowl in response.

Without a word he left the study.

The Bounder was left alone.

He pushed his books away, and rose

from his chair, and paced restlessly

about the room. His eyes glinted under

his contracted brows. Everything

seemed to be wrong with the Bounder

now, and certainly he was not happy.

But his obstinate pride would not bend;

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and the Bounder of Greyfriars was determined to go on in the path he had marked out for himself.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Cherry is Willing to Oblige!

BOB CHERRY came along the Remove passage, after prep, whistling shrilly. Bob was in cheery spirits, as he generally was. As he was passing the door of Study No. 4, he remembered Dallas. There was no sign now in the passage of Paul's property, which the Bounder had flung out of the study. Bob grinned. His idea was that the Form licking had done the Bounder good, and that Smithy had realised that he had to toe the line. He tapped on the door of Study No. 4 and looked cheerily in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The Bounder was alone there. He stopped in his restless pacing, and gave the cheery Bob a dark look.

"Well, what do you want?" he snapped.

"Nothing, old bean!" answered Bob amiably.

"Then out!"

"Where's Dallas?"

"Hang Dallas!"

"Your manners are improving, old scout," said Bob Cherry. "When it comes to real, polished politeness, you leave Lord Chesterfield and Beau Brummel standing! Where did you pick up this polish?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Bob Cherry laughed, and turned back into the passage. He tramped along to Study No. 1, with footsteps that woke every echo in the Remove passage. There never was any doubt when Bob Cherry was coming.

The door of Study No. 1 flew open as if a battering-ram had struck it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You fellows finished?"

"Just!" said Harry Wharton.

"Coming down?"

"Yes," said Nugent, putting his books away and yawning. "We should have been finished before, but for that ass Smithy kicking up a shindy. Is it all peaceful and serene in Study No. 4 now?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I looked in. Smithy's on his own, looking like a giddy tiger in a cage. That chap's got a nice temper!"

"Dallas there?" asked Harry.

"No."

"It's rotten, Smithy being down on that chap as he is," said the captain of the Remove. "Blessed if I understand Smithy lately. A fellow oughtn't to let his silly temper run away with him like that."

The three juniors went downstairs together. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh and Johnny Bull joining them as they went. In the Rag, where the juniors generally gathered after prep, the Famous Five looked round for Dallas. He was not there.

"Seen Dallas, you fellows?" asked Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Well, what's the cackle about?" asked Bob, looking at the Owl of the Remove. "What's up?"

"He's in the Form-room!" chuckled Bunter.

"What the dickens is he doing in the Form-room now?"

"Prep!" chortled Bunter.

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"What rot!"

"He funks being in the study with Smithy!" grinned the Owl of the Remove. "He's afraid Smithy may bite!"

Bob Cherry strolled out of the Rag, and went along to the Form-room. A light was burning there, and as he entered he saw the new junior sitting at his desk with his books.

Paul Dallas was working—but slowly, and with effort, and with a clouded face.

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

Dallas looked up quickly and coloured.

Bob Cherry came along, and seated himself on the end of the desk, eyeing the new junior curiously.

"What's this game?" he asked.

"I'm doing my prep here," said Paul.

"You must be an ass," said Bob.

"You've a right to use your own study. Rather a mistake of Quelch to put you there, as it turns out; but there it is. You can't keep this up."

"For the present, anyhow," said Paul.

"Rot! If Smithy wants another Form licking, he will get one," said Bob. "Mean to say he's turned you out again?"

"No, no!" said Dallas hastily. "That's all right. Vernon-Smith would have left me alone if I'd stayed. He didn't want to bring Wharton on the scene again."

"Probably not!" grinned Bob. "Six from a fives bat would last most fellows for one evening, without another half-dozen to follow. Smithy's got his ears up too much. But why didn't you stay in the study, then, if Smithy was keeping the peace?"

Paul made no answer.

"Cough it up!" said Bob encouragingly.

"I—I couldn't!" said Paul. "Wharton did quite right, of course—it was his duty as captain of the Form to see fair play. But—but—"

"But what?"

"Well, I'm not a fellow like Bunter, to be protected," said Paul, his colour deepening to crimson. "I'm keeping out of Study No. 4 until—"

"Until?" repeated Bob.

"Until I can take care of myself there," said Paul. "I may be conceited, but I think I'm as good a man as Vernon-Smith. Only I've never had any chance of getting any boxing practice. The—the school I was at before wasn't much like Greyfriars."

"I suppose not," said Bob sympathetically. "I suppose you had rather a rough time before you came here, old bean?"

"Very rough," said Paul quietly.

"Rougher than you can imagine, I think. I was left with nothing, and I was lucky to get into the charity school—and it wasn't much of a school. When Mr. Vernon-Smith found me there and took me away, it was like—like—" He paused. "Well, you can imagine that it was a big thing for me. You can imagine how bucked I was when he told me I was to come to Greyfriars. My father was a Greyfriars man."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"I—I thought I should be good friends with Mr. Vernon-Smith's son," went on

Paul. "Goodness knows I wanted to be. I can't understand why he should be so bitter. What I cost his father is nothing to him. Smithy's father has more money than he will ever want. Besides, he has told me it is a debt he is paying—in return for something that my father did for him long ago. The money he is paying for me here is money that he owes my father from a long time ago. He told Smithy so."

"Then you've a right to it," said Bob.

"If I hadn't a right to it I should leave Greyfriars, even without Mr. Vernon-Smith's permission," said Paul. "But he has told me that he has a thousand pounds belonging to my father—much more than is needed to see me through here. But Smithy is determined to believe that I am taking charity from his father, and he grudges it. He even suspects that I am influencing his father—cutting him out, as he calls it. He thinks I want to get into Mr. Vernon-Smith's will." Paul's lip curled. "If his father left me anything, I should refuse to take it. It is base of him to think of such things. When I leave Greyfriars I can look out for myself. I do not want Mr. Vernon-Smith's money; only what my father left in his hands when he went to South America. That is my right."

"Of course it is," said Bob.

"I wanted to be friends with Mr. Vernon-Smith's son," muttered Paul, "but of course that's impossible. I did not know what he was like. I can't imagine anybody being friendly with him."

Bob smiled.

"Smithy's got his good points," he remarked.

"I have not seen any of them."

"N-no, I suppose not; but he has them," said Bob. "He can play a splendid game of footer, and he's a good boxer. He's chummy with Redwing—and that's always surprised the fellows. You see, Reddy's here on a scholarship, and hasn't any money to speak of; and Smithy's rolling in it. He spends more money in a week than Reddy does in a whole term. But they're great pals all the same. He always stood by Redwing like a brick, and doesn't care a rap that his pater's just a sailorman before the mast. He's not a snob—and that's something, isn't it?"

Paul did not reply.

It was evident that he was unable to see much good in Herbert Vernon-Smith, which was not surprising in the circumstances.

"But Smithy's certainly got his rag out in your direction, kid," went on Bob. "It's rather unfortunate. But look here. To come to business, you can't keep this up. Mr. Quelch will stop it as soon as he learns that you are shut out of your study."

"I am not shut out of the study. Wharton has made that all right," said Paul. "But—but it won't last long. You—you could do me a favour if you liked."

"Give it a name."

"I've heard that you're the best boxer in the Form."

"One of the best," said Bob, laughing.

"What about that?"

"If you'd have the gloves on with me a few times," said Paul diffidently. "I'm a duffer at boxing. I've never had any chance in that line. If you'd give me a few tips—"

"My dear man, only too willing to oblige," said Bob cheerily. "If you asked me to help you with your Latin, I'd have to beg to be excused. But if you want to know how to handle the

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mitten, I'm the very merchant you've been looking for."

"You'll do it, then?" asked Paul, his face brightening.

"Yes, rather! For Smitty's benefit?" grinned Bob.

Dallas' eyes gleamed.

"I don't want any trouble with him," he said. "I want to keep clear of him, for his father's sake. But if he persists in ragging me, I want to be able to handle him."

"That's right enough," said Bob. "You're a fairly hefty fellow, and I know you've got pluck. It's a go. We'll begin to-morrow, and by the time you're able to stand up to me you'll be able to make rings round Smitty."

"Thanks!" said Paul, with a smile.

And Bob Cherry, with a cheery nod, quitted the Form-room, leaving the new junior to finish his prep.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Smitty Climbs Down!

"SOCCER! That cad?"

Vernon-Smith made that remark loud enough for a good many fellows to hear, among them Paul Dallas.

Dallas did not turn his head, however. He was speaking to Harry Wharton on Little Side, and he took no heed of the unpleasant voice behind him, close at hand. He was quite well aware, however, that the Bounder was alluding to him. Skinner & Co. gave a little snigger. Needless to say, it was a "compulsory" day, or Skinner & Co. would not have been on Little Side at all.

Harry Wharton was about to pick up sides for a practice game, and he had given the new junior a nod of welcome as he turned up in football rig. As it was regular practice, Dallas had to turn up with the others. But he looked quite keen—very different from Skinner, and Snoop, and Bunter, and Fisher T. Fish. The slackers of the Remove always groused at compulsory footer, and it was clear that Dallas was not a slacker.

The Bounder had come down with Redwing, and it was to Redwing that he had addressed his remark.

Tom coloured uncomfortably, and affected not to hear. He was Smitty's chum, but he certainly did not want to be drawn into Smitty's feud with the new fellow. The discomfit in his face probably tempted the Bounder to go on.

"Is that fellow joining up?"

"I suppose so," said Redwing impatiently. "It's compulsory to-day, anyhow. Do cheese it, Smitty!"

"But I didn't know they had footer at charity schools," said the Bounder. "I shouldn't have expected the fellow to know a football when he saw one."

"You know a billiards-ball when you see one, don't you, Smitty?" put in Squiff.

Some of the footballers laughed.

"What is Greyfriars coming to?" said the Bounder, unheeding Squiff's remark. "I don't care, myself, for joining up with an outsider like that!"

"Oh, cheese it!" muttered Redwing. "The chap can hear all you're saying!"

"I know that," said Smitty coolly.

"Well, then, chuck it!"

"I'm not staying on the ground if that fellow does!" said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove glanced round, not very amicably. He, too, had heard all that Smitty had said.

"Well?" he rapped.

"Is that fellow joinin' in the pick-up?"

"What follow?" snapped Wharton. "Dallas. You know whom I mean."

"If you mean Dallas, you can call him by his name," said the captain of the Remove. "And of course he's joining up."

"Then I'm not!"

"Don't be an ass!"

"I draw the line at playing games with charity cads!" said Vernon-Smith, and he turned to walk away.

There was a murmur from the footballers. Fellows who did not care one straw about the new junior, one way or the other, were getting fed-up with Smitty's incessant, bitter persecution. As Lord Mauleverer had remarked, it was not only rotten bad form, but it was beginning to be a bore.

"Smitty!" shouted Wharton.

"Well?"

"Stay where you are!"

"I've said that I'm not playing games

after Herbert Vernon-Smith. His departure was suddenly stopped as Bob Cherry grasped him and whirled him round.

"Hands off!" yelled the Bounder.

"Take his other arm, Brown!"

"You bet!" grinned Tom Brown.

"You rotters! Hands off! I—I—I—" spluttered the Bounder.

"Oh, don't play the goat!" said Bob. "You know jolly well that you've got to join up like the rest! This way!"

The Bounder resisted savagely.

But Squiff and Hazeldene and Wibley, and two or three more fellows, collared him, and he was walked forcibly back.

Wharton fixed his eyes on him.

"That's enough of your cheeky rot, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "You'd better let it drop now! Now pick up sides!"

"I'm not playing!" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

"You are!" said the captain of the Remove grimly.

"You cheeky rotter!"

"Hold your tongue!"

"Smitty!" murmured Redwing.

"Oh, you shut up!" hissed the Bounder.

And Redwing flushed crimson, and turned away in silence.

Wharton, taking no further notice of the Bounder, proceeded to arrange the sides. He had intended to ask Smitty to skipper one side, but in the Bounder's present humour he did not care to do so. He called on Peter Todd. The Bounder was assigned to Todd's side, as Dallas was in the team Wharton was to lead. The farther apart they were kept the better, was Wharton's opinion. "Now get going!" said Wharton.

And as the practice evenings lined up, Vernon-Smith made a rush to escape. He was over the touchline in a moment.

"My hat! Stop him!" shouted Wharton angrily. "Get hold of the silly idiot!"

Paul Dallas made a step towards the captain of the Remove.

"I will get off, if you like, Wharton," he said in a low voice.

Wharton stared at him.

"Don't be an ass! I can't let you off any more than I can that silly fat-head! Take your place!"

"Oh, all right!"

Dallas stepped back.

Bob Cherry had cut after Smitty and run him down. They were struggling at a little distance. The Bounder's reckless temper had evidently got the upper hand again.

"What's all this?" Wingate of the Sixth had spotted trouble on the junior ground, and he came over to Little Side. "Is this football practice or scrapping, Wharton? You're supposed to keep order here!"

Wharton flushed uncomfortably.

"Only Smitty playing the goat!" he answered.

Wingate looked at him, and then walked across to Vernon-Smith. The Bounder had hooked Bob's leg, and rather unexpectedly sent Bob Cherry to the ground. He was about to scud away to the House when Wingate came up.

"Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder stopped, setting his teeth. Cheeking his Form captain was one thing, but cheeking the captain of the school was quite another. Even the reckless Bounder hesitated at that.

"Why aren't you lining up with the others?" demanded Wingate.

"Because—"

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with a charity cad!" answered the Bounder coolly.

"You're joining in practice this afternoon! You know very well it's a compulsory day!" rapped out Wharton.

"Yes, I know that."

"Then stay where you are."

"Rats!"

And the Bounder walked off.

Harry Wharton's eyes blazed.

He did not want to quarrel with the Bounder, but Smitty was not leaving him much choice in the matter. It was the Form captain's duty to see that all the fellows turned up on compulsory days. He had no right and no power to excuse any fellow who was fit. And he was answerable to Wingate of the Sixth, as head of the games, for the execution of his duty.

"Smitty, come back!"

The Bounder walked on without answering or even turning his head.

"Fetch him back, some of you!" rapped out Wharton.

"What-ho!"

Five or six of the footballers rushed

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Foul!

Smithy paused.
"Well?" rapped out the captain of Greyfriars sharply.

"I don't choose to play games with a charity cad!" said the Bounder at last, sullenly.

"What!" roared Wingate.

"You asked me!"

"And whom are you speaking of in those terms?" asked the Greyfriars captain, with ominous quiet.

"That cad Dallas!"

Wingate glanced round at Paul Dallas.

"Isn't that the kid who's been adopted and sent here by your father, Vernon-Smith?"

"He's the fellow who has butted into my home and bamboozled my father into sending him here!"

"So that's the view you take of your father's proceedings?"

"Yes, just that."

"And you think that you, a Lower Fourth schoolboy, are entitled to set up in judgment on your father?"

The Bounder was sullenly silent.

"I've nothing to do with your family affairs, Vernon-Smith," said the Greyfriars captain, after a pause. "But you're a disgraceful young blackguard to talk like that, and if you do so again in my hearing, you'll be sorry for it! Now get back to the footer!"

Vernon-Smith did not move.

All eyes were upon him.—Redwing's almost beseechingly, Skinner's mockingly. Some of the fellows were grinning. The Bounder's arrogant pride was to have a fall now.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?" said Wingate, his voice rising a little. "Get back to the footer at once!"

Still the Bounder did not move. Under so many eyes he would not surrender, hopeless as the struggle was against the head of the Sixth. Wingate's brow darkened. He had his ashplant under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand.

"Bend over!" he rapped out laconically.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard, and clenched his hands.

The next moment Wingate of the Sixth grasped him with his left hand, and, with a strength the Bounder was quite unable to resist, bent him over. The ashplant rose and fell with loud whacks that echoed across the football field almost like pistol-shots. Six times the ashplant rose and fell, and every stroke was a hefty one. It was not a time, in Wingate's opinion, for gentle measures, and doubtless he was right.

"That's six!" he said quietly, releasing the crimson, infuriated Bounder. "If you want another six, they're ready! Go and join up at once!"

For a moment the enraged Bounder was disposed to resist further. But the hopelessness of it was borne in even upon his furious mind, and, with bitter rage in his breast, he returned to the pick-up.

"If there's any more of this, you are to report to me, Wharton!" called out the Greyfriars captain.

"Very well, Wingate!"

And Wingate of the Sixth tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked away. But there was no more of it. Even the angry Bounder had learned his lesson, and he joined in the football as the practice game started.

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"FOUL!"
"Chuck that, Smithy!"
The Bounder grinned breathlessly.

Paul Dallas lay stretched on the ground, looking dazed. He had been fairly knocked out by a charge that had taken him quite unawares. The Removees were not gentle players, and a good many hard knocks were often given and received in the Lower Fourth pick-ups. But a deliberately rough and unfair charge was very rare on any Greyfriars ground—very rare indeed.

"You cad, Smithy!" shouted Peter Todd.

"Hooligan!" bawled Hazel. Dallas tried to pick himself up, but fell back again. Harry Wharton ran up and gave him a hand, and the new junior staggered to his feet.

He gave the Bounder a look; but did not speak to him. But most of the other fellows were speaking all at once. And the names they called the Bounder brought a flush even into Herbert Vernon-Smith's hard face.

"So that's your game, Smithy?" exclaimed Wharton, his eyes flashing at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. "It was a fair charge," he said.

"It was nothing of the kind. If it happened in a match, I'd send you off the field!"

"Send me off now, if you like."

"You utter rotter!" exclaimed Wharton, in disgust. "You've tried to hurt Dallas, in football practice, because you dislike him. I think that's about the limit! What sort of a blackguard do you call yourself?"

"Is the fellow made of putty?" sneered the Bounder. "Are you going to keep him in cotton-wool?"

"Fellows get knocks in footer," said Skinner. "I don't see what Dallas is complaining about."

"I am not complaining," said Paul quietly.

"The complainfulness of the esteemed Dallas is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "But the rottenness of the disgusting Smithy is great."

"You'll stop that kind of game, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove. "You can settle your differences with Dallas off the football ground. If there's another foul, you'll find yourself in trouble!"

"Why not put him in a handbox and have done with it?" jeered the Bounder.

"Get on!" snapped Wharton.

The pick-up was resumed. Paul Dallas had to keep out of it for a few minutes, and he rested in touch; but he very soon joined up again. Paul was displaying a good knowledge of Soccer, and it was plain that he was keen on the game. As it happened, he was on the wing of Wharton's crowd, facing the Bounder on Peter Todd's side, and that gave Vernon-Smith his opportunity. The Bounder did not venture upon another open and palpable foul; but he played a game that was seldom seen at Greyfriars. It was not merely rough; it was bitterly and persistently savage.

In football practice there were, of course, many accidental hacks, and the Remove fellows made light of them as a rule. But whenever a chance came Smithy's way, he hacked his opponent in a way that could scarcely be described as accidental.

Every fellow on the ground could see

that it was the Bounder's intention to "lay out" the new boy, if he could.

Fellows who had personal differences, sometimes declared their intention of "laying out" so-and-so in footer; but such declarations were generally a mild form of gas, and seldom materialised. In Smithy's case it was not "gas"; he was deliberately trying his hardest to lay Dallas out.

But Paul was on his guard now, and the Bounder did not find it so easy again.

Most fellows, in the circumstances, would have given back for back, and levelled things up that way. But Paul did not. He contented himself with keeping a very watchful eye on Smithy; and as Vernon-Smith was thinking more of hacking the opposed winger than of playing the game, Paul robbed him of the ball more than once. Smithy's tactics were not likely to benefit his side; and Peter Todd, though it was only a practice pick-up, wanted to lead at the finish if he could, as was natural to a keen footballer. So Peter's temper was rising.

There was a sudden yell from Paul Dallas, and he hopped on one leg, clasping the other. He had been almost disabled by a kick on the shin—a kick so palpable that it was clear that the Bounder was losing his temper and his discretion together.

"That does it!" roared Peter. He rushed up to the Bounder and grasped him. There was a yell from Smithy as he came down on the ground with a crash.

"You fool! Let go!"

"I'll let you go when I've finished!" panted Toddy. "I'll jolly well show you whether you can hack a man's shin on a Greyfriars ground, you hooligan!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Peter Todd and the Bounder rolled over together, thumping furiously. Dallas stood with a white face. A big bruise was forming on his skin, and the pain was excruciating. Wharton ran up.

"You'd better get off, Dallas!" he said. "Lend him a hand, Hazel. Better see to that bruise at once."

Dallas limped off.

"Chuck it, Toddy," said Wharton. "All of you lay hold of that hooligan, and run him off the field. Give him the frog's-march."

"Hear, hear!"

Many hands were laid on Vernon-Smith. He was swept off the ground, breathless from Toddy's energetic thumping. Across the football ground he went to the "frog's-march"—not an enjoyable method of locomotion. Hisses and boos accompanied him. Outside the ground he was bumped down heavily.

He sat, spluttering.

"You—you rotters—"

"You can cut off, Vernon-Smith!" said the captain of the Remove sternly. "If you're asked why you're not at practice, you can say that you've been kicked off the field for foul play."

The Bounder panted, red with rage.

"Now kick off!" said Harry.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!" said Hurree Singh.

"You—you rotters—you—" panted the Bounder.

"Get up, you cad!" snapped Wharton.

The Bounder staggered to his feet.

"Hook it, you rotter!" said Bob Cherry.

"I won't! I—"

"Oh, get out!" exclaimed Squiff.

"You make a fellow sick, Smithy!"



"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?" said George Wingate, his voice rising a little. "Get back to the footer at once!" The Bounder did not move. Under so many eyes, he would not surrender, hopeless as the struggle was against the Head of the Sixth. Wingate's brow darkened. (See Chapter 5.)

"I—I— Hands off!" yelled the Bounder.

He was spun round in Bob Cherry's grasp, and half-a-dozen football boots landed on him at once. The Bounder staggered away.

"Dribble him off!"

"Kick him out!"

"Follow on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no choice in the matter for the Bounder. It went sorely against the grain with him to run; but with a dozen footballers kicking, there was nothing else for it. The Bounder ran for it, and the footballers followed him half way to the Close. There they left him to his own devices, and returned to the pick-up.

Dallas was in the field again by that time.

"You'd better cut off, Dallas," Wharton called to him. The new fellow was limping, and his face was white.

"I'm all right," said Dallas.

"You've got a big lump there," said Bob Cherry. "Hook it!"

"I'd rather stick to it!"

"Well, you're game, anyhow," said Wharton. "Stick to it, if you like, of course."

And Paul stuck to it till the finish of the pick-up, when he limped off with the footballers.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bitter Blood!

"FOOL!"

The Bounder was addressing that complimentary remark to himself, when Tom Redwing came into the study.

Smithy gave him a black look.

He was in a savage temper, but he was more angry with himself than anyone else.

Smithy had had time to reflect, and he had realised very clearly that he had made a serious mistake that afternoon. His intense dislike of the new junior seemed to have robbed him of his prudence, and indeed of his common-sense.

It was no part of the Bounder's game to make himself unpopular in the Remove, and to make Dallas an object of sympathy.

But that was precisely what he had done.

Foul play on the football field was the very last thing the Remove fellows were likely to condone or tolerate.

To do the Bounder justice, he was not the fellow to play foul; he was rather hard and ruthless, in football as in other matters; but he knew how to play the game, and generally played it fairly enough. His passionate temper had carried him away, and he had lost all

discretion; and he was ashamed, too, of the way in which he had acted. Worst of all, in Smithy's estimation, was the mistake in tactics. He had been kicked off the football ground for foul play; and Dallas had played on to the finish, in spite of his hurt; the Bounder had in point of fact afforded his enemy a chance of proving that he was game to the backbone. That certainly had not been the Bounder's intention.

Angry with himself, and with everyone else, Vernon-Smith retired to his study and was left there to himself for a long time.

Redwing did not come up to tea.

He was ashamed of his chum, and angry with him; he could not back him up against the general condemnation, and he condemned him as much as anyone else. That was a very uncomfortable position for Redwing, who asked nothing better than to stand by his pal at all times. Redwing had had his tea in hall, and did not come up to Study No. 4 till prep.

His face darkened a little as he met Smithy's black scowl.

Patient as he was, and loyally attached to the Bounder, Tom was getting fed-up with the constant trouble in the study, to ceaseless recriminations and black looks.

His face showed as much; which did

not improve Smithy's temper. He was in a mood to quarrel with anyone, friend or foe.

"Had your tea?" he sneered.

"Long ago."

"In hall?"

"Yes."

"You didn't want to feed with me?"

"Not till you get into a better temper," snapped Redwing.

"I don't say my temper's at its best, these days," said the Bounder sardonically. "But you used to stand it, somehow, before that cad Dallas came to Greyfriars."

"For goodness' sake, give Dallas a rest," exclaimed Tom impatiently. "I'm fed-up with that subject."

"You're down on me, I suppose, like the rest, for what happened this afternoon?" said the Bounder, with a dark look at Redwing.

"Do you expect me to be anything but down on foul play?" snapped Redwing. "It was a dirty trick."

"The rotter asked for it."

"Oh, don't talk rot. You can dislike a fellow, I suppose, without hacking his shins at footer practice." Redwing breathed hard. "You've made every fellow in the Form down on you. Even Skinner and Snoop think it was too thick. You ought to understand how low you've sunk, when Skinner thinks that. Fellows won't be keen to play football with you, when you may hack a fellow's shin if you happen to be in a bad temper. If such a thing occurred in a match, you'd be turned out of the football for good, and serve you right."

"Fellows have been hurt in football before, without such a song being made about it," muttered Smithy sullenly.

"I know that. An accidental hack can't be helped. You kicked Dallas deliberately. A dozen fellows saw it."

"Serve the rotter right," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "I'm not sorry I did it."

"Then you ought to be."

"Look here, Redwing—"

"Oh, give it a rest," said Redwing. "I'm fed-up with the subject, I tell you. Chuck it!"

And Redwing sorted out his books, and sat down to prep.

The Bounder did not follow his example.

He stood for some minutes, eyeing his chum morosely, and then stalked out of the study and slammed the door.

"I say, you fellows, here's Smithy!" squeaked Billy Bunter, in the Remove passage. "He's waxy! Mind your shins."

Vernon-Smith gave the Owl of the Remove an angry shove, and there was a roar from Bunter as he collapsed.

"Yaroooh!"

"You cheeky fat rotter—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Bunter. "Keep off, you beast!" The fat junior dodged into Study No. 7, where Peter Todd and Dutton were at prep. There the fat Owl felt safe enough to tell the Bounder what he thought of him. "Yah! You go and eat coke, Smithy! Foul play! Yah! Who hacks a fellow's shins at footer?"

Vernon-Smith, with a black brow, strode at him and Bunter backed promptly round the study table.

Peter Todd rose to his feet, with a grim look, and interposed between the Owl of the Remove and the angry Bounder.

"Outside, Smithy," he said tersely.

"That fat rotter—"

"I heard what he said," answered Peter. "I endorse it! Get out."

"Why, you cheeky freak—"

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"Who hacks a fellow's shins at footer?" yelled Bunter, feeling quite safe behind Peter's lanky form. "Yah! Foul play!"

"Do you think I'm going to stand cheek from that fat fool, Peter Todd?" roared Smithy.

"You've asked for it. You did play foul, and the more you hear about it, the better," said Peter coolly. "Get out of this study, Smithy! You can't scare me with your black looks. Who the thump are you, anyway?"

For a moment, the Bounder seemed about to hurl himself at Peter Todd. But he restrained his rage, and strode out of the study.

He went down the stairs, and headed for the Remove Form-room, where since his exclusion from Study No. 4, Paul Dallas was accustomed to doing his evening preparation. Vernon-Smith flung open the Form-room door, and strode in. To his surprise the Form-room was dark and untenanted. Dallas was not there.

The Bounder gritted his teeth, and went along to the Rag. But the Rag was deserted; the juniors had all gone up to prep.

"Seen the new cad?" he asked, meeting Hazeldene on the stairs as he came back to the Remove passage.

Hazel grinned.

"Do you want to ask him how his shin's getting on?" he inquired.

"Don't be a fool! Do you know where he is?"

"In Wharton's study, I believe. He's got a bruise as big as an egg," said Hazel. "Are you going to give him another on the other leg to match it?"

Smithy shoved rudely past Hazel without replying. It seemed likely to be a time before he heard the end of that afternoon's incident.

He threw open the door of Study No. 1 without knocking.

Paul Dallas was there, working at the study table with Wharton and Nugent. All three of the juniors looked up as the door flew open. The Bounder surveyed them with a bitter smile.

"So you've taken that fellow into your study, Wharton?"

"Pro tem," said the captain of the Remove. "He can't do prep in the Form-room without Mr. Queleh getting on to it, and wanting to know."

"Hasn't he sneaked to Quelch yet?" sneered the Bounder.

Wharton looked at him steadily.

"I know your game, Smithy," he said scornfully. "You want to put Dallas into the position of bringing the Form master into a row, and make out that he has sneaked. Well, Dallas is going to work here till he comes back to Study No. 4."

"And when will that be?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Can't he come back now under your protection?"

"He can if he likes; but he doesn't choose. Shut the door after you."

"I've been looking for him," said Vernon-Smith.

"If you want to apologise for what you did to-day—"

Smithy interrupted the captain of the Remove with a savage laugh.

"The charity cad asked for what he got. I'm going to give him some more. That's why I'm looking for him. Are you going to put up your hands, Dallas, or are you going to hide behind Wharton?"

Paul rose to his feet.

"Sit down, Dallas," said Wharton quietly. "Vernon-Smith, get out of this study. You're interrupting prep."

"I'll get out when I choose."

"You'll get out now."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet, and came towards the Bounder, with a glint in his eyes.

Smithy eyed him savagely.

"Have a little sense, Smithy!" urged Frank Nugent. "What's the matter with you? Have you set up to run the Remove?"

"Another time will do!" said Vernon-Smith; and he turned and tramped out of the study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fixing It Up!

"MIND if you're hurt a bit?"

"Not at all!"

"That's right!" said Bob Cherry approvingly.

Paul Dallas smiled.

As a matter of fact, he had had some hard knocks already, in his boxing lessons with Bob.

Bob was keeping his word with the new junior; and every day he gave Paul boxing instruction. He found the new junior a keen pupil.

Dallas was a strong and sturdy fellow, very active and very light on his feet; and he certainly was not the funk that Smithy would have liked to believe. But even had he been otherwise, probably he would have been just as keen on learning to use his hands.

In the peculiar circumstances, his life at Greyfriars was not likely to be enjoyable until he had learned to take care of himself. Already, after a few days, he showed progress that delighted his instructor. He was never likely to be a match for the champion fighting-man of the Remove; but it was very probable that he would soon be a good boxer and a match for the Bounder. And he was passionately desirous of reaching that point.

He was turned out of his study, and his pride forbade him to go back under the protection of his Form captain. But he could hardly be satisfied with the present state of affairs.

"Come on, then," said Bob.

In the gym the two juniors threw off their jackets, and donned the boxing-gloves. The Famous Five were all there; they were rather interested in Dallas' progress.

"You see," explained Bob, with a grin, "as soon as you tackle Smithy you will have to face some punishment. Smithy will go all out; and he's a good man with the mittens. So you'd better get used to getting some hard knocks, see?"

"I see," assented Paul.

"Now I'm going for your nose," continued Bob. "Every time I hit your nose you'll understand that you've still got something to learn in the way of defence."

Paul smiled.

"I'll do my best," he said.

"That's right," said Bob. "And you can slog me as hard as you like—don't make any bones about it. When you get a chance, pile in, and put your beef into it. Now, I'm going to lay you out with a tap on the boko, and you've got to stop me."

"Right-ho!"

"I'm not quite sure that I should care to learn boxing by that method," said Frank Nugent, with a laugh.

"Best way," said Bob.

"The bestfulness is great!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the painfulness is likely to be terrific!"

"No good a fellow being soft," said Bob. "Now, look out for your boko, kid!"

"Go it!" said Dallas.

And Bob Cherry went it, vigorously, as he did everything.

It was only a friendly spar; but all the same Bob's slogging attack was one that few fellows in the Remove would have cared to face.

But Dallas stood up to it quietly and coolly. Three times in succession Bob's glove tapped his nose, in spite of his best efforts at defence, and each tap was something like that of a coke-hammer. But the new junior stood up to it gamely.

Bob was about to administer a fourth tap, when something unexpected happened.

Something that felt like the hind hoof of a mule jarred on Bob's own nose, and he went spinning backwards.

Crash!

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man down!" chuckled Wharton,

"The downfulness is terrific!"

Bob Cherry sat up dizzily.

"Great tip!" he gasped. "D-d-d-did you do that, Dallas?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You told me to hit as hard as I could," said Paul. "I—I hope I haven't hurt you much, Cherry."

"What a hopeful nature!" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry picked himself up, with quite a peculiar expression on his face. Not only had Dallas come through his guard, but the force of the blow was a surprise to Bob. There was evidently plenty of "beef" in the new fellow in the Lower Fourth.

"Well," said Bob, with a deep breath.

Paul looked a little distressed.

"I'm sorry," he said. "But you said—"

Bob burst into a laugh.

"All serene, young 'un! See if you can do that again."

"Sure you don't mind?"

"Fathead!"

"Well, I'll try."

Bob came on again, a good deal more cautiously. For several minutes Paul had a feeling as if a hurricane had burst upon him, however. If it was Bob's object to teach him to endure punishment, certainly he was doing that.

But a change came suddenly.

Bob Cherry staggered back, every tooth in his head jarred by a sudden, lifting upper-cut.

"Grooogh!"

Dallas followed up the attack, taking Bob at his word, and putting in all he knew.

Bob stalled him off as well as he could; but his head was singing, and Dallas was pushing hard. Right and left, left and right, came home on Bob, and he sat down with a bump.

"The kid's getting on," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh.

"He is, and no giddy error!" gasped Bob, as he rose rather painfully to his feet. "You've got more in you than meets the eye, Dallas. Tired?"

"No!" grinned Paul.

"Then go it again."

A good many fellows were gathering round now to watch the boxing. It was a surprise to the Remove to see the new junior standing up so gamely to the champion boxer of the Form.

"That kid will be a surprise packet for Smitty, one of these days," remarked Bolsover major.

"And pretty soon, I think," said Hazel.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast!" said Bob Cherry, stopping at last, and peeling

off the gloves. "How do you feel now, Dallas?"

"As if I'd been under a traction engine," answered Dallas.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's all right. Smitty isn't so hefty as a traction-engine," said Bob, with a chuckle. "I think we might fix a date, next time Smitty is hunting for trouble. He won't be happy till he gets it."

The juniors left the gym together, and walked back into the House. Paul was tired, and he was hurt in a good many places; but he was feeling very satisfied. All Bob's punches were delivered with the greatest good-humour, and with the kindest of intentions; but they were very hefty punches, all the same; and it seemed to Paul that the hardest fight with Vernon-Smith was not likely to be much severer than practice with the energetic Bob.

He came into the Rag with the Famous Five. The Bounder was there, and he glanced round, with his usual sneer, at the sight of the new junior.

Redwing was with him, and he made a detaining gesture, as the Bounder was moving towards the newcomers. Smitty shook off his hand.

"Smitty—" exclaimed Redwing.

"Rats!" snapped the Bounder.

And he strode across to the Famous Five and their companion. There was an evil glint in his eyes.

"I've been looking for that funk since classes!" he said.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Just the man I want to see!" he exclaimed. "Will Saturday suit you, Smitty?"

"Suit me for what?" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Licking!" explained Bob.

"Is Dallas getting you to take up his scrap for him?" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"It's like him!"

"Not at all. I'm Dallas' second."

Vernon-Smith laughed harshly.

"Is he screwing up his courage to the sticking-point at last?" he asked. "Pulling your leg, more likely!"

"I will fight you on Saturday, Vernon-Smith," said Paul quietly. "You will not find it so easy as last time!"

"Last time I licked you, and I'll lick you again on Saturday, if you've got the pluck to stand up to it!" said the Bounder contemptuously. "Not that I believe a word of it! You'll be dodging again on Saturday!"

"Oh, cut that out, Smitty!" said Harry Wharton. "Dallas will meet you on Saturday, and we shall all be there to see fair play."

"And what if I don't choose to wait till Saturday?"

"You'd better, if you know what's good for you!" answered the captain of the Remove. "There's been enough foul play from you, Vernon-Smith! No fellow in the Remove but you would crow over a chap after licking him as you've done! You'll keep clear of Dallas till Saturday, or you'll get a ragging that will teach you manners!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And when he dodges away on Saturday—" sneered Vernon-Smith.

Paul's eyes flashed.

"I shall not dodge away on Saturday," he said, very quietly. "I don't know whether I'm a match for you yet, Vernon-Smith, but I shall do my best. If you lick me again, I shall keep on training, and try you again later. If I lick you, I shall come back to Study No. 4!"

"I'll leave it till Saturday," said the Bounder, between his teeth, "and on

Saturday I'll give you such a hiding that you won't be able to crawl!"

"Well roared, lion!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder bit his lip, and rejoined Tom Redwing.

"You've heard," he said. "You'll be my second on Saturday, I suppose, if that funk really comes up to the scratch?"

"He will come up to the scratch," said Tom. "He isn't a funk, and you know it, Smitty! But he's a peaceable chap, and he would be willing to call it off if you'd let him alone. I wish you would!"

"Are you going to be my second?"

"Yes, if you want me."

"That's settled, then," said the Bounder.

"I wish you'd think better of it," said Tom. "He isn't a funk, and you know it, Smitty! But he's a peaceable chap, and he would be willing to call it off if you'd let him alone. I wish you would!"

"Do you think I care about that?"

"Well, I suppose you do. You ought to."

Vernon-Smith snapped his fingers.

"That's how much I care!" he said. "My father's turned me down for that pushing cad, as you know."

"It's your rotten temper makes you think so! I can't see that Dallas is to blame in any way. Everybody here thinks him decent. Do you think a chap like Bob Cherry would take him up if he were the rank outsider you imagine?"

The Bounder did not answer that. Indeed, he would have found it rather difficult to answer. He shrugged his shoulders angrily and walked out of the Rag.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Smitty Stands Out!

I SAY, you fellows, Smitty will like that!"

There was a chuckle.

On Tuesday evening a number of fellows had gathered round a paper posted up in the Rag. It was the list of players for a football match on the morrow. That match was not an important fixture by any means—it was a Form match with the Fourth, and the Fourth Form team, in the opinion of the Removites, was very small beer. Fellows who had no chance of getting into big fixtures often found their names down for the Form matches.

Although Temple & Co. of the Fourth fancied themselves greatly at Soccer, the Remove had the cheek to regard matches with the Fourth as something like practice matches, worth while just to keep in form, and victory a foregone conclusion. So second-rate players in the Remove were often more interested in such a list than in the list for a school fixture.

Hazel found his name down for goal, and frowned a little. He knew that Squiff would be keeping goal when Rookwood came over to play; but the Form match was not worthy of the mighty Squiff's powers, so Hazel was going between the posts. Bolsover major was glad to see himself down for back. Kick and shove was Bolsover's style in football, and the finer shades of play were quite lost on him. But kick and shove was good enough for a match with the Fourth. William Wibley's name was there, too, much to Wib's satisfaction, he was keener on amateur theatricals than on games, but

(Continued on page 17.)

"HIGH JINKS AT ST. SAM'S!"

(Continued from previous page.)

brigade, when there's no fire?" cried Bright, agast. "You'll be fanded and sumounded! And you'll get into an awful row with the Head. Don't be a mad idiot, Fearless!"

But Frank had already dashed away to the nearest tellyfone. This happened to be the one in the prefects' room.

Burleigh and Tallboy, of the Sixth, were there, engrossed in a game of noughts-and-crosses. Before they could check the eggstified junior who rushed in, Frank Fearless had wipped off the tellyfone receiver.

"Number, please?" said the operator. "I want the grocery stores or the post-offis," said Frank. He knew that if he asked for either of those places, he would get the fire-brigade. He was an old hand at tellyfone tricks; and his motto was: Always ask for the wrong number; then you'll be certain to get the right one!

Sure enuff, a deep base voice sounded over the wires.

"Fire-station here!" "Come quickly!" cried Frank Fearless. "Terrible fire at St. Sam's! The school's in flames! The Head's being roasted! If you're not here in two minnits, the whole place will be gutted!"

"Good hevvens!" gasped the man at the other end. "Coming at once, sir!" And Frank heard him give the alarm to the brigade.

Burleigh and Tallboy were on their feet, their faces white as doth. They blinked at Frank Fearless in horror and dismay.

"Where's the fire?" jerked out Burleigh.

"In your study!" said Frank, with a chuckle.

The two seniors rushed pannick-stricken from the prefects' room. When they got to Burleigh's study, they certainly found a fire there; but it was in the grate!

Meenwhile, Frank Fearless had rejoined Jack Jolly & Co. in the quad.

"I've called the brigade," he said. "They'll be along in two shakes of a donky's tale."

Even as he spoke, a loud clamour and clanger arose on the evening air.

A large motor fire-engine, fully up to date, for it was equipped with brimming buckets of water, came tearing in at the school gates. Two firemen in uniform were ringing hand-bells; that was what caused the clamour and clanger.

The arrival of the fire-brigade had an electrifying effect upon St. Sam's. Masters and boys came pouring out of the building like ratts from their holes.

"Where's the fire?" everybody was asking.

"Yes! Where is the fire?" cried Mr. Lickham, dancing two and fro like a cat on hot brix. "Tell me where it is, my boys! I am on fire with eggstement!"

The startled face of the Head protruded from his study window. He overheard a part of Mr. Lickham's remark, but not all. In a twinkling he rushed to the place where the fire-hose was kept. He uncoiled it and dragged it out into the quad.

Halting in front of Mr. Lickham, the Head then turned the hose full upon the Form-master.

Swish! Swoosh! A violent jet of water took Mr. Lickham full in the chest, bowling him over backwards like a skittle.

"Yarooooo!" yelled the astonished Form-master.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Jolly & Co.

Mr. Lickham scrambled to his feet, his garments soaked and streaming. He glared at the Head as if he would eat him.

"Sir!" he cried. "Have you suddenly taken leave of what few senses you possess? You have assaulted me, sir! I am soaked and swammed and sodden!"

It was the Head's turn to glare.

"Well, of all the black ingratitude!" he cried. "I heard you make a remark to the effect that you were on fire, Lickham, so I promptly came and eggstinguished you. And you seem quite 'put out' about it!"

Mr. Lickham snorted angrily.

"I did not say I was on fire," he cried. "I said that I was on fire with eggstement—which is a very different thing."

"Oh! In that case, I am sorry to have poured cold water upon your enthusiasm," said the Head. "But if you are not on fire, Lickham, where is the fire, pray?"

"Ekko answers 'Where?'" chuckled Jack Jolly.

"I will find out!" cried the Head. And he went charging through the quad, playing the hose-pipe continually on the school walls.

It was unforchunitt for anybody who happened to be standing in the line of fire. Jack Jolly & Co. hopped out of the way in the nick of time; and so did Frank Fearless and Molly Birchemall. But others were not so lucky. Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth, was swept off his feet by a powerful stream of water. Herr Guggenheimer, the German master, took a volley in the chest, and sat down on the flagstones with a bump that shook every bone in his fat body.

Whilst all these scenes of commotion and confusion had been taking place, Frank Fearless had eggspained to the chief of the fire brigade the reezon why they had been called.

Ladders were reared up to the old tower, and a cuple of nirable firemen climbed up to recapture Percy, the parrot, who squawked deloyance at them, but was finally induced to give himself up.

"Got you, my bewty!" cried Frank Fearless, when the parrot was restored to him. "You'll be confined to your cage for a week, with short rations, for causing all this trouble!"

"Bah!" said Percy scornfully. The chief of the fire brigade, a flurried and florrid faced man of portly dimensions, strode up to the Head.

"Ere! Are you the 'Ead?" he demanded.

"Hi ham!" said the Head.

"You've brought us 'ere on a fool's errand!" roared the chief fireman. "This is a bad night's work for you, Doctor Birchemall. It'll cost you five pounds. That's the sum you'll be fanded by the local Bench."

"But—but I never called the brigade!" stuttered the Head.

"Well, weather you did or didn't, you're the 'Eadmaster 'ere, an' are therefore responsible for any boguss calls made to the fire brigade. If you want to dodge goin' afore the magistrates, you can 'and me the five pounds 'ere an' now."

For private reezons of his own, the Head had no desire to appear in a court of justiss. He handed over the five pounds—which was all the munny he possessed in the wide world—and reflected that he would recover the amount later, from the father of the wretched boy who had dared to summon the fire brigade.

When the Head found out that it was Frank Fearless who had caused all the trouble, he nashed his teeth and tore his hair, and vowed dire venjence upon the cockless junior who had already caused him so many sleepless nights.

Undoubtably there were brakers ahead for Frank Fearless!

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's screamingly funny yarn by Dicky Nugent, entitled: "THE SHADOW OF THE SACK!" It's packed with thrills and amusing situations.)

The BOATRACE!

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"Foul Play!"

By **OWEN CONQUEST,** appears in



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(Continued from page 13.)

he liked to show the fellows that he could play football too.

Billy Bunter was blinking over the list, perhaps in the hope of discovering the name of W. G. B. there; but there was a limit, even for a match with Temple, Dabney & Co. Bunter's name was not there. But a new name was there that surprised some of the fellows — P. Dallas.

"Smithy will like that—I don't think!" chuckled Bunter. "The other day he refused to play in practice with the charity chap. Wharton's doing this to pull his leg."

"Looks like that!" said Hazel.

"What rot!" said Bolsover major. Finding his own name in the list had made Bolsover revise his opinion of Harry Wharton as a football captain. He felt that Wharton was a wiser skipper than he had hitherto supposed. "What utter rot! Why shouldn't the new kid play?"

"He hasn't been here long," said Hazel.

"Well, he's not down for a big fixture. Wharton often tries new men in the Form matches, and it's a jolly good idea, too!"

"Dallas has shaped jolly well in practice," remarked Wibley. "He could play before he came to Greyfriars. And he's game. Look at the way he kept on the other day after Smithy had nearly crippled him!"

"Game enough," agreed Bolsover major. "I back up Wharton in giving him a chance, and I don't see that it matters a rap whether Smithy likes it or not. Who's Smithy, anyhow?"

"He's in the team," said Hazel.

"Well, he isn't all the team and some over, is he?" asked Bolsover major sarcastically. "I don't see why he's so down on that new kid. He thinks the kid is after his pater's money. Smithy is always thinking of money!"

"Well, he's got lots to think of!" said Ogilvy, with a laugh. "Wish I had some of it!"

"We can't all be moneylender's sons!" sighed Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy will be wild," said Bunter. "I believe Wharton's only done this to get his rag out. I know jolly well Smithy will think so, anyway."

"Bother Smithy!" said Bolsover. "He's in the team, and his pal Redwing's in it. What more does he want?"

Tom Redwing came along to look at the list. He was glad to see his own name there, but he looked a little disconcerted as he read Dallas' name. The other fellows were watching his face, and some of them grinned.

"Break it gently to Smithy!" suggested Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redwing walked away without answering. He knew that there would be an outburst of anger from the

Bounder when he found the "inter-lopers" in the Remove team for a Form match. He was growing tired of Smithy's outbursts of anger on the subject of Paul Dallas. The new fellow had shown up so remarkably well in games practice that the football captain had been bound to give him a chance in a second-rate match, at least. Wharton's selection of his men could hardly be governed by Vernon-Smith's likes and dislikes. But Redwing had no hope that Smithy would take a reasonable view of the matter.

When a fellow so openly paraded his enmity to another fellow as Smithy was doing, it was not likely that mischievous persons would lose the opportunity of adding fuel to the fire. Skinner was doing his best to embitter the feud, from the sheer love of mischief-making; and less malicious fellows than Skinner found amusement in pulling the Bounder's leg on the subject.

To speak a favourable word of Dallas in Smithy's hearing was enough to make him colour with vexation, or grit his teeth with anger. So there were not wanting fellows who found it entertaining to do so.

If Smithy wore his heart upon his sleeve, for days to peck at, it was his own fault. His feud with Dallas, bitterly and seriously as Smithy himself took it, was more or less of a jest in the Lower Fourth. There was something absurd in keeping up a bitter grudge day after day, week after week, and never letting it rest, though Smithy could not see it.

"Here comes Smithy!" murmured Russell; and there was a subdued laugh among the fellows standing about the Rag.

They were prepared to derive a little more entertainment from the sight of the passionate Bounder getting his rag out again.

Smithy glanced at the fellows sourly as he came up. He understood that he was the subject of the suppressed merriment, though he did not yet know why.

He looked carelessly at the football list.

The Bounder was a mighty man in the Remove eleven, and it was taken as a matter of course that he played in all big fixtures, such as the matches with Highcliffe, Rookwood, and St. Jim's. Whether he played in the Form matches or not, Smithy did not care two straws. In a game with the Fourth, Wharton would leave three or four good men in the eleven, and give the second-rate players a chance in the other places. On the present occasion Wharton was captaining the eleven, and of the front-rank men in the Remove he had kept in Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Vernon-Smith.

Smithy read his own name there, and shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. He did not care whether it was there or not.

But his eyes fixed suddenly on Dallas' name, and his expression changed. A glint came into his eyes.

The other fellows were watching him and exchanging glances. They grinned at the look on his face.

"Fireworks now!" murmured Ogilvy. "So Wharton's playing that cad?" said the Bounder.

"Which?" asked Ogilvy innocently. "There's more than one cad in that list."

The Bounder gave him a dark look, and turned away. He went direct to Study No. 1 in the Remove, where three juniors were at tea. Paul Dallas was quite at home in Study No. 1 now.

Wharton and Nugent had got used to him there, and Paul, finding that his presence was liked, and that he was welcome, used the study as his own. Certainly it was a much more agreeable spot than Study No. 4 was ever likely to be to Mr. Vernon-Smith's adopted son.

The Bounder gave Dallas no heed. He had agreed to let the new junior alone till Saturday, when the fight was to come off. It was that or a ragging, and the Bounder had taken the wiser course. He fixed his eyes on the captain of the Remove.

"I've just seen the football list," he said abruptly.

Wharton nodded.

"Your name's there," he said.

"I've seen another name there."

"Ten others," said Wharton, with a smile.

"Only one that matters to me. Are you really playing Dallas against the Fourth to-morrow?"

"Naturally, as I've put his name in the list."

"Then you can take mine out."

"Just as you like," said Wharton indifferently. "We don't need you to beat the Fourth, Smithy; and I'll give Russell a show."

Smithy set his teeth.

"The fellow's a new kid, and plays rotten football," he said. "You've done this up against me, Wharton, and I know it."

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Wharton unceremoniously. "Dallas is a new kid, certainly; but he plays a jolly good game. And the Form match is practice for new men. We don't need first-class men to beat the Fourth; in fact, I was thinking of leaving you out. We don't want whales against the minnows. But you're getting so jolly touchy, you see. If I'd scratched your name, you'd have got your back up about that, too. But have it as you like."

"Leave me out, then."

"Done!"

"And leave me out of any match when you put Dallas in!" added the Bounder bitterly.

"Dallas isn't likely to play in any just yet where you're really wanted, Smithy. But if it should happen, you'll be expected to play up. Likes and dislikes don't count in games."

"They do, as far as I'm concerned," said Vernon-Smith. "I shall never play in the same team with that outsider!"

Wharton opened his lips for an angry reply; but closed them again.

"Well?" sneered Vernon-Smith, watching him.

"We'll leave that till the time comes," said Harry. "What's the good of rowing over something that may never happen?"

"You're so fond of the cad," said Smithy. "I shouldn't wonder if you found him a place for the Rookwood match."

"I should, fast enough, if I thought he would do better than any man in the team," said the captain of the Remove.

"And perhaps you'll make it a point to think so!" sneered Smithy. "Well, if Dallas plays against Rookwood, he can have my place—I sha'n't want it, in that case."

"There's no question, at present, at any rate, of Dallas playing in the Rookwood match—and it's not due yet, anyhow. You seem to be doing nothing but hunt for trouble lately, Smithy."

"Do you want me in the match to-morrow?"

"Yes, if you care to play."

"With Dallas left out?"

"Dallas plays, as I've said."
"That means that you don't want me?"

"It means that I'm fed-up, Smithy! Chuck it!"

The Bouncer turned out of Study No. 1, and went down to the Rag. He heard a chortle in that apartment as he approached it.

"I say, you fellows, here comes Smithy, as waxy as anything! He, he, he!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith walked up to the football notice. He took an indelible pencil from his pocket.

"Here, draw it mild!" exclaimed Ogilvy sharply. "You're not allowed to meddle with the notices, Smithy."

Unheeding the Scottish junior, Vernon-Smith drew a line through his own name on the paper. Then he put the pencil in his pocket again, and walked away.

"Cheek!" said Russell.

"Thumping cheek!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "If I were footer captain, fellows wouldn't meddle with my notices, I can tell you. I'd make Smithy sit up for that!"

A little later the Famous Five came down to the Rag. Billy Bunter greeted them with an excited squeak.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's altered the football notice!"

"What's that?"

"Look!" chortled Bunter.

The captain of the Remove glanced at the paper and frowned. But he did not proceed at once in search of the Bouncer and an explanation, as the fellows expected, and some of them hoped. Quickly he wrote in Russell's name under the scratched name of Vernon-Smith.

"Good man!" said Russell.

"Smithy oughtn't to have touched the notice!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, it's saved me the trouble!" said Wharton. "Never mind."

And the matter dropped with that.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Left on His Own!

"ARE you coming out, Redwing?" It was the following afternoon. That Wednesday afternoon the Form match was taking place, in which Paul Dallas was

to play for the Remove for the first time.

The Bouncer watched Paul strolling in the quad with some other fellows, after dinner, looking very cheery and pleased; and his brow darkened as he watched. His bitter enmity blackened the new junior in Smithy's eyes, and he could not understand how it was that Paul made friends in the Form. He had expected, somehow, that every fellow would be down on the "interloper," as he was himself, but nothing of the kind had come to pass. It puzzled and exasperated the Bouncer.

Had Paul made friends with fellows like Skinner and Snoop, he could have understood it. That would have been in keeping with the character he attributed to his enemy. They would have been birds of a feather, in the Bouncer's opinion. But it was with the Famous Five, and Squiff, and Tom Brown, and Mark Linley, and other such fellows, that Paul had become friendly. Not one of them was a fellow to make friends with an interloper, schemer and rascal, as Smithy considered Dallas.

That alone should have been sufficient to cause the scales to fall from Smithy's eyes, and to make him realise that he was mistaken. But it was a case of none being so blind as those who would not see. He knew that Redwing felt friendly towards the new fellow, and was only prevented from making friends with him, by the awkwardness of his position as Smithy's chosen pal. And the Bouncer knew, he could not help knowing, that Tom would have had nothing to do with a scheming rogue. But evidence was of no use to the Bouncer. He believed what he wanted to believe.

He chose to take the view that the interloper was pulling the wool over the fellows' eyes, as he had pulled it over the eyes of Smithy's father. Smithy was the only fellow who could see through him, and read him in his true colours!

Redwing was sauntering in the quad with his friend, and found him very bad company.

Loyal as he was to his chum, Tom was growing more and more fed-up with the state of affairs. He began to wonder whether he had made a mistake in chumming with Smithy at all. Certainly he had never supposed that there was so much evil in his chum's nature as Smithy was now displaying. Only by entering heartily into his hatred of Dallas could he have remained on cordial terms with Smithy; and that was impossible. How was he to hate a fellow who had never harmed him, and who had evidently never given Smithy any real cause of offence? The Bouncer seemed to expect it; but it was putting friendship to too severe a strain.

Vernon-Smith's harsh voice broke in abruptly on Redwing's unpleasant reflections. He started a little.

"What did you say, Smithy?"

"Are you coming out?" repeated the Bouncer moodily.

"It's kick-off in half an hour," said Tom. "I can't very well."

"You're playing in the Form match, then?"

"Well, you know I am, old chap."

"I've stood out of it," said Vernon-Smith.

"I'm not a big man in footer like you, old fellow," said Tom, with a smile. "Form matches are nothing to you. But I like a game of football when I can get one."

"I don't think a friend of mine ought to let me down in this," said the Bouncer. "I'm standing out because

that charity cad is in the game. I think you ought to back me up."

"I don't see why I should cut the footer. I hardly ever get the chance excepting in a Form match."

"Will you come out of the gates with me this afternoon?" asked Vernon-Smith, in concentrated tones.

"I can't, Smithy."

"You can if you like. Yes or no?" snapped the Bouncer.

"No!" said Tom quietly.

"That's enough, then." And the Bouncer turned away, with a black brow.

"Smithy! Have a little sense! I tell you—"

The Bouncer was gone.

Tom Redwing drew a deep, deep breath. The Bouncer had said, more than once, that Dallas was coming between him and his chum, as he had come between him and his father. His own obstinate wrongheadedness was making his words come true.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time to change, old bean!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, clapping Redwing on the shoulder.

"Right-ho," said Tom, forcing a smile. And he went into the changing-room with the other fellows.

But his brow was clouded. Smithy had succeeded in depriving his chum of the pleasure he had expected in the football match.

Some of the juniors went down to Little Side to watch the game. Rather to Redwing's surprise, Herbert Vernon-Smith appeared among the onlookers. The Bouncer had not gone out of gates after all.

Doubtless he was curious to see how the new junior shaped in his first match at Greyfriars. Being determined to see no good quality of any sort in Dallas, the Bouncer held to the opinion that he was no footballer. On that point Wharton's judgment mattered nothing to him; nothing mattered save his own intense dislike.

He watched the start of the game with a sarcastic grin, fully expecting to see Dallas fumbling hopelessly. He would have been very glad to see Temple, Dabney & Co beat his own Form that afternoon.

Cecil Reginald Temple and his merry men went into the field, and Cecil Reginald's manner was confident, indeed lofty. Seldom or never did the Fourth beat the Remove in games; but hope springs eternal in the human breast.

Every time he lined up against the Lower Fourth, Cecil Reginald expected to beat them; and every time a game finished with a margin of goals against him, Cecil Reginald had remarkable and wonderful explanations to give to the phenomenon. As a matter of fact, Temple & Co had not beaten the Remove since the occasion when the Bouncer, at loggerheads with his own Form, had played for them, and put a very unusual amount of beef into the team.

Temple was as hopeful as ever now. Most of the Remove men were, as he told Dabney, duds—barging duffers like Bolsover major, unreliable slackers like Hazeldene, silly new kids like Paul Dallas. Cecil Reginald was prepared to walk all over them.

But a change came o'er the spirit of his dream, as the match started. There were only three really good men in the Remove team—Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull. Really, at long last, Cecil Reginald should have had a chance of pulling it off. But another unexpectedly good man cropped up as the game proceeded, in the person of

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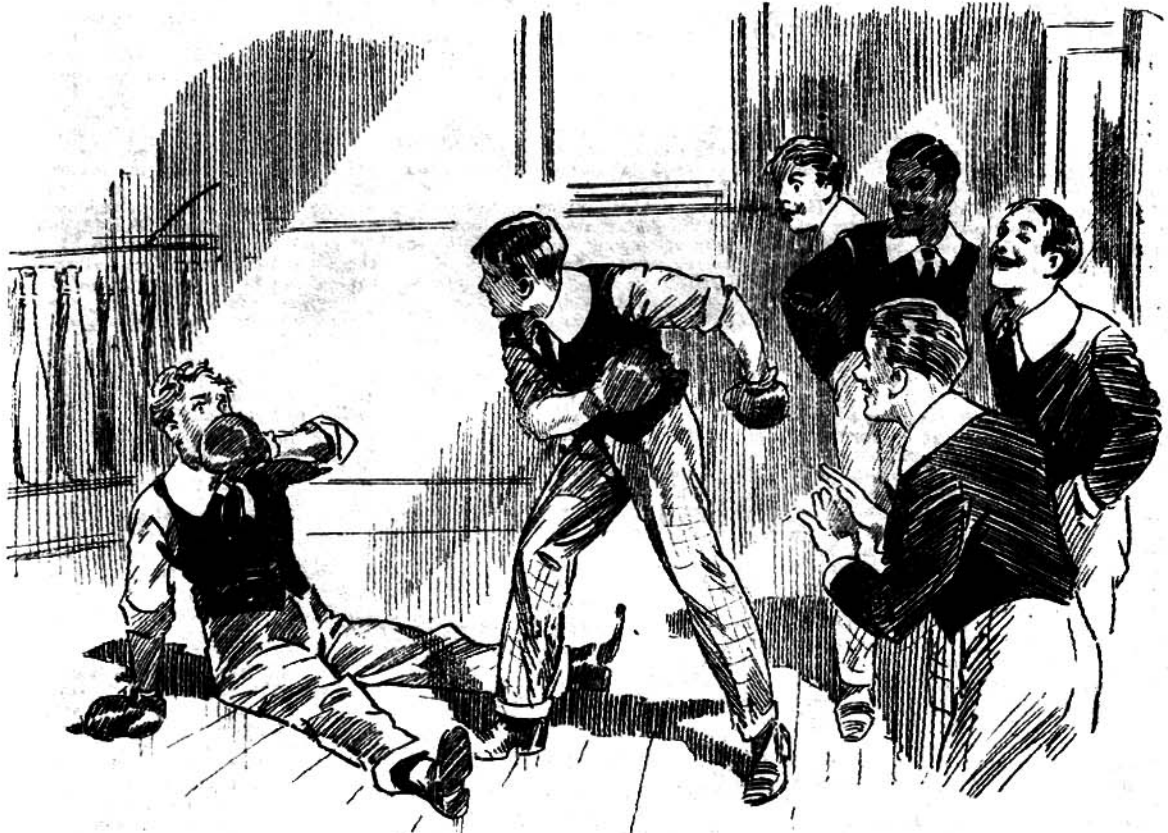
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Something that felt like the hind hoof of a mule jarred on Bob Cherry's nose, and he went spinning backwards. Crash! "Oh!" He sat up dizzily. "Great pip!" he gasped. "D-d-did you do that, Dallas?" The Removites, looking on, laughed. "You told me to hit as hard as I could," said Paul Dallas. "I hope I haven't hurt you too much, Cherry!"
(See Chapter 8.)

Paul Dallas, the new junior, Dallas was playing at outside-right, and he was proving himself a very good winger. Vernon-Smith watched him, but the expected fumbling did not materialise. Tom Redwing was not playing his usual sound game; which was a bitter satisfaction to the Bounder. But Paul Dallas was showing up in a way that soon drew attention upon him.

Vernon-Smith hit his lip hard. He was resolved to believe Dallas a "rotter" in every imaginable respect. But Smithy was a footballer himself, and he knew good play when he saw it. The angriest prejudices could not blind him to the fact that Dallas was putting up a great game.

He watched the new junior making a run up the field, with the ball at his feet, beating Temple's halves hopelessly, and watched him centre to Wharton, who was up and ready to take the pass.

The ball was passed with scientific precision, and the captain of the Remove drove it into the Fourth Form goal.

There was a shout.

"Goal!"

"Good man, Dallas," the captain of the Remove called out.

Vernon-Smith set his teeth hard.

"I say, Smithy, Dallas is playing up jolly well, ain't he?" chuckled Billy Bunter, blinking at the Bounder through his big spectacles.

Smithy did not answer.

"Ain't you pleased, Smithy?" chortled Bunter. "I say, Wharton won't want you in the team, now he's got such a jolly good man. He, he, he!"

The next moment Bunter roared, as Vernon-Smith smote.

"Yooooop!"

The Bounder walked away and left him roaring.

With black bitterness in his breast, the Bounder strode out of the gates. It would have been a savage satisfaction to him to see his enemy fumble in the game; but he did not want to witness Paul's triumph. He turned his back on the football, and went out of the gates. Redwing was in the game; he had lost his pal's company for the afternoon. The expression on his face did not encourage any other fellow to join up with him. Even Skinner looked the other way, when the Bounder came on him in the road, and paused.

"Going my way?" muttered the Bounder.

Skinner had to become aware of his presence then. But he did not like the Bounder's look, and he eyed him doubtfully.

"Which way?" he asked.

"I'm going to Friardale."

"I was just thinking of strolling down to Courtyard," said Skinner politely.

The Bounder smiled sarcastically.

"I'm going to the Cross Keys!" he said.

"Oh!" Skinner was interested then.

"Kicking over the traces—what?"

"Why not?"

"Certainly, why not?" said Skinner cordially. "I'll come with pleasure! It will be like old times, Smithy! But what will Redwing say?" he added, with a grin.

"Haug Redwing!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Skinner.

"Are you coming?" demanded the Bounder savagely.

"Yes, rather!"

And they walked down the lane together, Skinner smiling, the Bounder scowling blackly.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"FRANKY!"

Nugent looked up. It was Friday evening, and prep was just finished in Study No. 1. Dallas, who had done his prep as usual in Study No. 1, had gone along to speak to Bob Cherry up the passage. Wharton had rather a thoughtful expression on his face.

"About Dallas—" he said.

"What about him?" asked Frank, with a smile.

"According to what Bob says, he's jolly likely to give the Bounder more than he expects to-morrow."

"More power to his elbow!" said Frank.

"Yes. I wish him luck! If he licks Smithy he's going to claim his study. But Smithy will be like a wildcat—worse licked than unlicked!"

"Much worse!" said Nugent, laughing.

"It will be a cat-and-dog life for Dallas, and he seems a harmless, decent sort of chap enough," said Harry. "We seem to pull all right in this study. If you don't object, I shouldn't object to

the chap staying on here. The less he sees of Smithy at close quarters the better for all concerned, and it would be much better for him not to dig in Study No. 4. Of course, he must have a study."

Frank Nugent smiled. "The fact is, I was thinking the same," he said. "I was going to mention it. I can stand Dallas here if you can."

"Then it's a go," said Wharton. "He has a right to his own study, of course; but in the circumstances he's bound to be glad to change out, I think. Shall I put it to him?"

"Do!" said Frank. "He's coming back when he's spoken to Bob about the fight to-morrow."

"Done!" said Wharton. The captain of the Remove had, in point of fact, been giving the matter a good deal of thought. According to Bob Cherry—who was rather an authority on such matters—Dallas had more than a sporting chance of defeating the Bounder when the fight came off on Saturday. He would be able to claim his own study without needing protection from his Form captain or anybody else. But the state of affairs in Study No. 4 would be extremely unsatisfactory for all three occupants of that study. The obvious thing to do was for Dallas to change out of Study No. 4, and there was little doubt that he would be willing. And as Wharton and Nugent had found him quite a likeable fellow, there was no reason why he should not "dig" in Study No. 1.

Dallas came back into the study a few minutes later. There was rather a clouded expression on his face.

"Seen Bob?" asked Wharton. "Yes. He's going to speak to Redwing to arrange time and place to-morrow," said Paul. "Redwing is Vernon-Smith's second. Bob thinks I've got a two-to-one chance of beating Smithy."

"I agree with him," said Harry. "You've come on wonderfully well with the boxing as well as with the footer. You don't look particularly braced by his opinion, though."

Paul smiled faintly.

"I'm bound to go through with it," he said. "A fellow must have a study, and Smithy can't be allowed to carry on with a high hand. Only"—his brow wrinkled—"I—I'd give a good deal not to be fighting Smithy! You fellows won't think it's a case of cold feet," added Paul, flushing a little. "But after what his father's done for me, it's rotten to be scrapping with the chap! It can't be helped, though."

"I quite understand that," said Harry.

Mr. Vernon-Smith would be angry if he knew," said Paul. "I dare say he would think I might have put up with Smithy's temper considering how much I owe Smithy's father. And—and if he blamed Smithy, that wouldn't be any better. It's rather rotten to be the cause of trouble between father and son. I'd rather he blamed me."

"It's awkward," said the captain of the Remove. "But Smithy is so keen on trouble that I'm afraid the scrap couldn't be called off, anyhow. Still, so far as the study is concerned—"

"That's rotten, too!" said Paul. "I can't go back to Study No. 4 unless I can hold my own against Smithy, that's certain. Only—only if I lick him, going back after that will look a good bit like crowing over a fellow who's licked, and, goodness knows, I don't want that! I—I

wish Smithy would be a bit more reasonable!"

"What about digging with us, then?" said Wharton. "I've just been speaking about it to Franky, and we'd both like you to stay in this study if you'd care to."

Paul's face brightened. "Well, I don't care to," he said. "I don't want a cat-and-dog life in Study No. 4 if I can help it. Mr. Quelch would put me in another study if I asked him, but that would look like complaining about Smithy. If you fellows really don't mind—"

"We'd like it," said Frank.

"Sure?" asked Paul.

"Quite!" said Wharton.

"Then it's a go, and I'm jolly obliged to you!" said Paul, his face very bright. "I'd a thousand times rather be here, of course! I—I think the fight needn't come off, after all; there's nothing to scrap with Smithy about if I keep clear of his study. I—I suppose some of the fellows will think it's funk, but I can't help that. I'm bound to remember that Smithy is the son of the man who took me out of a charity school."

"Quite right!" said Harry.

"And if I'm chipped for funking, I don't mind fighting any other chap," added Paul. "That will settle that point, I suppose."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's all right," he said. "It's an awkward position; but, in your place, I'd keep out of a fight with Smithy if I could. As Bob's your second, you'd better tell him to call it off if he can."

"I'll do it," said Paul.

And he left Study No. 1 again with a much brighter face.

A quarter of an hour later Bob Cherry thumped at the door of the Bounder's study and went in.

Tom Redwing was finishing his prep there. The Bounder was seated in the armchair, smoking a cigarette.

Bob Cherry glanced rather expressively at the cigarette, and Smithy blew out a cloud of smoke, with a sardonic grin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that the way you get yourself fit for a fight?" asked Bob.

"I fancy I'm fit enough to thrash that charity kid!" said Vernon-Smith.

"You'll want all your wind for it!" said Bob.

"Oh, rats!"

"But, as a matter of fact," went on Bob, with a grin. "I've dropped in on a peace-making mission."

The Bounder's lip curled.

"Is Dallas funking again?" he asked.

"Not at all. But he's willing to call the fight off."

"More than willing, I expect!" said the Bounder, satirically. "Eager—what? Keen? I expected that, and you can tell him there's nothing doing!"

"Let me explain, dear man," said Bob. "The fight was fixed up because you turned Dallas out of the study."

"I'm keepin' him out!"

"Exactly! He's willing to stay out. Wharton's letting him into his study. So the giddy *casus belli* vanishes," said Bob amiably. "Nothing to scrap about, as Dallas is prepared to keep out of the study."

The Bounder laughed mockingly.

"The fellow's a rottener funk than I supposed," he said.

"It's not a case of funk," said Bob. "I shouldn't be acting for Dallas if it were. It's rotten bad form, to say the least, for you to be fighting the fellow your father sent to Greyfriars. That's how Dallas feels about it."

"Gammon!"

Redwing looked up. "That's right enough," he said. "For goodness sake, Smithy, let it drop! There's nothing to row about, if Dallas is willing to keep out of the study."

"Isn't there?" sneered the Bounder. "Lots, old lad! Lots and lots! This study isn't all that he's got to give up if he wants me to let him alone. He's got to give up pulling my father's leg, and he's got to get out of Greyfriars and go back to where he belongs."

"That's rot, of course!" said Bob.

"Is it?" said Vernon-Smith. "Well, those are the terms, if Dallas wants to squirm out of a thrashing to-morrow!"

"You're quite sure you can lick Dallas?" inquired Bob sarcastically.

"Quite!"

"You might be making a little mistake, you know. I know something about scrapping, and my opinion is that Dallas will pull it off."

"I know you've been teaching him to box," said the Bounder, with a nod.

"But you can't teach him not to funk."

"He isn't a funk."

"I'll keep my own opinion about that, thanks."

"Well, what's the verdict?" asked Bob impatiently. "Dallas has sent me here to say that he prefers to call off the fight. Is it a go?"

"No!"

"You're determined on it, then?"

"Quite!" said the Bounder grimly.

"Then there's no need to say more, excepting to fix up time and place," said Bob.

"There's no footer to-morrow. Will three o'clock suit you?"

"Any time will suit me."

"Three, then—in the gym."

"Not in the gym," said the Bounder coolly.

"In the gym we shall be a bit too public. A perfect might chip in. Dallas isn't getting off so easily as all that. Somewhere out of gates."

"Look here, Smithy—"

"I think I'm the challenged party," said the Bounder, with a grin.

"As challenged party, I have a right to choose the place."

"That's so, of course."

"Well, then, I choose a place outside the school gates, where we can't be interrupted by masters or prefects. The paddock of Friardale Lane is a good quiet place. That will do."

"Just as you like, of course," said Bob. "Three o'clock in the paddock, then."

"That's all right."

The Bounder lighted a fresh cigarette; not because he wanted to smoke, but because the expression on Tom Redwing's face entertained him, in his present mood.

"You'd better chuck that, Smithy!" said Bob, in disgust. "I can tell you I've had the gloves on with Dallas a good bit lately, and you'll want all your wind when you stand up to him."

"Thanks! Shut the door after you!"

Bob Cherry left the study, and shut the door after him, with a slam. He went along to Study No. 1.

"Nothing doing!" he announced.

"Smithy's keen on it?" asked Wharton.

"Keen as mustard. He quite misunderstands why you want to call it off, Dallas," said Bob. "As a matter of fact, it's just as well—Smithy isn't the only fellow in the Remove who would misunderstand."

Paul coloured.

"I shouldn't care for that," he said. "But if Smithy is resolved on it, of course the fight must come off. It's settled, then?"

"Quite settled. Come and have a



Vernon-Smith made another effort and rose to his knees. His face was convulsed with fury. "I'm not licked!" he said hoarsely. "You rotters! I'm not licked! I'm going on!" "But you're counted out!" said Wharton. Paul Dallas glanced at the Bounder, but his face expressed nothing of the exultation of victory. (See Chapter 12.)

round or two with the gloves in my study before we go down."

"Good!"
In the Remove dormitory that night the Bounder gave Paul Dallas a sarcastic glance. There was no doubt that he completely misunderstood the new fellow's motives in desiring to call off the fight; no doubt that he was anticipating an easy victory on the morrow. But in that matter it was probable that the Bounder of Greyfriars was booked for a surprise.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish!

ON Saturday afternoon quite a large number of Remove fellows might have been seen, as a novelist would say, making their way out of the school gates. There was a first-eleven match going on, on Big Side, Wingate of the Sixth and his men meeting the Lantham Ramblers; but hardly a Remove fellow stayed in to see that great game. Something much more attractive was to take place in the paddock by Friardale Lane. Even Lord Mauleverer took the trouble to lounge along after the rest; and even Billy Bunter made the necessary exertion for the walk.

The fight between Herbert Vernon-Smith and the new junior keenly interested all the Remove.

The Bounder was not, perhaps, much liked in his Form, and his evil temper of late had made him less popular than ever. But, liked or disliked, Smithy always filled a prominent place in the Remove; he had a strong character, whether for good or for evil, and in Remove affairs the Bounder always mattered. On Dallas' first day at Greyfriars the Bounder had licked him ruthlessly, and without much trouble; but

much water had passed under the bridges since then.

Bob Cherry's opinion of Dallas and his chances was no secret, and Bob knew what he was talking about in all matters appertaining to boxing. So it was known that Vernon-Smith, doughty and determined fighting-man as he was, would not have it all his own way; the scrap would be worth watching, at least; and it was quite on the cards that the Bounder would be defeated. He was very unlikely to accept defeat while he could stand; so the "mill" was certain to be a desperately-contested one, recalling the time when the "Game Kid" had been at Greyfriars.

Nobody in the Remove wanted to miss it; and long before three o'clock the Lower Form of Greyfriars had almost all congregated in the paddock.

The Bounder came along quite early with his second, Tom Redwing. His manner was cool and confident, indeed contemptuous; but Smithy was the only fellow there who looked on the defeat of the new junior as a forgone conclusion.

Three o'clock loomed out from the village in the distance, and the Bounder grinned sardonically.

"Dallas isn't in a hurry to show up!" he remarked.

"Here he comes!" answered Redwing quietly.

Paul came through the trees with his second, and the rest of the Co. Many eyes turned on him curiously. He showed no sign of the Bounder's cool confidence, but on the other hand there was no hesitation in his looks. Having no choice about fighting Mr. Vernon-Smith's son, Dallas had made up his mind to it, and dismissed all other considerations. Certainly he intended to do his very best to beat the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are

again!" sang out Bob Cherry cheerily. "Looks like a full house!"

"Everybody's here, I think," said Hazeldene, with a laugh. "Even Mauly's left his sofa."

"Yaas, begad!" assented Lord Mauleverer. "Has anybody brought a camp-stool? Nothin' here to sit on." "No sitting down for you, old bean," said Bob. "You're going to keep time. We can trust the nobility to see fair play."

"Here's the gloves," said Harry Wharton, opening his bag.

"Gloves are not wanted!" snapped the Bounder.

Wharton looked at him.

"This is a scrap, not a prize-fight," he said. "The gloves will be wanted."

"Oh, if Dallas is afraid of getting hurt—"

"I don't care whether we have the gloves on or not," said Paul.

"You don't count," said Bob cheerily. "You're only a principal. That's for the seconds to settle. Gloves, Reddy!"

"Certainly," said Redwing.

"You'll be glad of them before you're through, Smithy," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Possibly the gladfulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The Bounder scowled.

"Cut out the cackle, and get to the horses," he said. "I'm ready, if that funk has screwed up his courage."

"Is the screwfulness terrific, my esteemed Dallas?"

Paul laughed.

"Quite!" he answered.

"Then the proceedfulness is the proper caper."

"Get on with it," growled Vernon-Smith.

The opponents removed their jackets, and donned the gloves. The crowd of Removites made a thick ring round

them. A tin bowl was unpacked from Wharton's bag, and filled with water from the ricklet at the bottom of the paddock. Two sponges were forthcoming. Lord Maulvever took out his handsome time-keeper.

"You fellows ready?"
"Yes!" snapped the Bounder.
"Waiting."

"You ready, Dallas?" asked his lordship, unmoved.

"Quite ready."
"Seconds out of the ring."
Bob Cherry and Redwing stepped back to their corners.

"You're shakin' hands?"
"No!" snapped Smithy.

"Rather had form, dear boy—"
"Cheese it!"

"Your manners would make the second form blush, Smithy," said Lord Maulvever.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, give the word, and dry up," said Vernon-Smith.

"Yess! Time!" said his lordship, at last.

And the fight began with a savage rush by the Bounder, hitting out hot and hard.

Paul Dallas retreated from that savage attack, and the Bounder's eyes glinted as he followed him up.

It was to be as easy a victory as the last, in Smithy's opinion; but Paul was not to escape so cheaply. Whether he fought or not, he was to be thrashed without mercy.

But the other fellows observed that though Paul gave ground before the Bounder's slogging attack, he kept perfectly cool, and his guard was perfect, too. Not one of the Bounder's slogging blows reached him.

The Bounder pressed the fighting, and got close, and there was an exchange of blows; and to Smithy's surprise, he found himself staggering back, gasping for breath under a heavy drive. Paul followed him up, and it was the Bounder who gave ground now. Only the call of time saved him from going down.

"Time!"
Vernon-Smith was glad of the relief. Paul dropped his hands and stepped back, breathing quietly and evenly, while Vernon-Smith was gasping for breath.

There was no doubt that the Bounder had lost his temper. His unexpected check was a surprise for him, and intensely exasperating. As soon as Lord Maulvever called time for the second round, Smithy rushed on again, striving to beat down his opponent by sheer slogging force. He was throwing away, in his angry passion, all the advantage his skill in boxing gave him.

"Crash!"
"Man down!" yelled Skinner.

But Vernon-Smith was up with an elastic spring, and rushing at his enemy, almost blind with rage. But he found Paul Dallas cool and scientific and steady. His furious attack wasted itself upon a defence that was not to be penetrated by such methods, and almost on the call of time, Paul came through again, and a hefty drive right on the chin sent the Bounder spinning. He was on his back when Lord Maulvever called time.

Redwing picked him up, and made a knee for him. The Bounder sank down on his second's knee, gasping and panting.

"Keep cool, old man," whispered Redwing, as he sponged his man's heated face. "You're chucking it away."

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The Bounder nodded without speaking. He was realising that himself now. The opponent he had contemptuously despised was no funk—he had to admit that; and he was at least a match for Smithy with his hands, the Bounder had to admit that, too. Instead of an easy victory, Smithy understood at last that he had a hard fight before him, with success by no means certain.

"Time!"
The Bounder's tactics were very different in the third round. His face was hard and set, and his eyes glinting, his upper lip drawn back from his teeth in a snarl. But he was cool and collected; his temper was not allowed to betray him again.

And in that round the Bounder's quality showed, and Paul received some hard punishment. It was he who was glad of the call of time now.

In the fourth round Smithy again had the advantage; and in the fifth, honours were easy. Both the combatants came up readily enough for the sixth round.

The real April Fool is the chap who forgets to read this grand story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's.



IT'S OUT ON FRIDAY!
Make sure of your copy now, chums!

But it was easy to see that Paul was the fresher of the two. The Bounder, with bitter rage, realised that the cigarettes of the evening before were taking their revenge now. He needed all his wind to keep this up; and he had less than he wanted.

Seventh round followed sixth; and in the eighth, both the juniors were looking much the worse for wear and tear. It was seldom that a junior "scrap" was so obstinately contested, and some of the fellows looked rather serious now. It had gone on long enough in the general opinion.

As Lord Maulvever called time after the eighth round, Harry Wharton made a step forward.

"I suggest chucking it now," said the captain of the Remove. "It's been a good fight, and honours are even. Let it drop."

"I'm willing," said Dallas at once.
"Mind your own business, Wharton!" rapped out the Bounder. "This is going on to a finish."

"Look here, Smithy—"
"I tell you that rotter isn't getting out of it!" snarled the Bounder. "Shut up!"

The captain of the Remove shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if you want it, go ahead and get it!" he answered; and he stepped back among the spectators.

Smithy gritted his teeth. He knew what Wharton's words meant—the captain of the Remove looked upon him as already beaten. But he was not beaten yet; and in the ninth round he fought with savage pertinacity, and Paul, in spite of a steady defence, was knocked right and left, and finished the round in the grass.

The Bounder's eyes blazed. It was to be victory, after all; he was going to defeat the interloper.

"Time!"
"Tenth round!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Looks like being a case for the jolly old hospital if they keep it up much longer."

Paul Dallas was attacking hotly now, and the Bounder, with all his efforts, could not stall him off. Smithy went down with a crash and lay panting.

"Count!" rapped out Wharton.
Lord Maulvever began to count. He had reached seven before the Bounder staggered to his feet. He stood unsteadily, at his opponent's mercy if Paul Dallas had pressed the attack. But the now junior stepped back, and gave him time.

"Come on, you funk!" panted Vernon-Smith.

It was the bitter knowledge that his enemy was sparing him that called the taunt from his lips.

Dallas did not heed.

"Time!"
Vernon-Smith almost collapsed on his second's knee. Tom Redwing sponged his blazing face.

He would have advised his principal to stop at that point; but the Bounder was evidently in no mood to take good advice. By this time the consciousness of coming defeat had forced itself into Smithy's mind, but nothing would have induced him to give in.

"Time!"
Herbert Vernon-Smith was almost staggering as he came up to the scratch. But he forced himself to attack, and in the eleventh round the fighting was hard and fast. It finished suddenly, with the Bounder going down in a heap.

"One, two, three, four, five, six—"
counted Lord Maulvever.

There was a breathless hush.
The Bounder made an effort to rise—a terrible effort. But his head was spinning and his strength failing. He sank back blindly in the grass.

"Seven, eight, nine—"
And then came the fateful verdict:

"Out!"
Lord Maulvever closed his watch, and put it in his pocket. Vernon-Smith had been counted out, and the fight was over.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's licked!" squeaked Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"
Vernon-Smith made another effort, and rose to his knees. His face was convulsed with fury.

"I'm not licked!" he said hoarsely.
"You rotters! I'm not licked! I'm going on!"

"You're counted out!" said Wharton.
"I'm going on!"

The Bounder was on his feet again; but he staggered and would have crashed down had not Tom Redwing caught him. Counted out or not, Smithy was obviously incapable of going on.

Paul Dallas pulled off his gloves. He had been hard hit, though he was good

(Continued on page 23.)

BILL BOWKER TO THE RESCUE! Jack Horner has cause to bless the day he fell in with burly Bill Bowker, for it is only Bill's timely intervention that saves him from a horrible fate at the merciless hands of Black Michael!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

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A Powerful New Serial that will keep you enthralled from beginning to end.

A Friend In Need!

As Jack uttered Squall's name, Curly turned upon him, an ugly snarl upon his lips.

"Knock his teeth down his bloomin' throat and stop him talkin'! It's that durned 'ound!"

One of the men obligingly made to sit Jack across the face with the back of his hand, but the boy, turning his head quickly, received the brutal blow on the muscles of his neck instead of his mouth. He pursed together his lips, and gave vent to a shrill whistle.

At that, panic seized upon the men. Those who held the rope abruptly let their end go, so that Jack dropped in a heap on the ground. Curly rushed to the door of the barn, and forced some a rusty bolt that creaked and groaned as it entered its socket.

"Durn that brute!" he muttered. "There ain't any other doors, is there, so this blamed barn?"

Apparently, there were no other doors. Having satisfied themselves on this point, the men let the lights of their torches wander across the great wooden walls. Jack, who by this time had slipped the rope from around his waist, saw those rays of light come to a focus on a window, covered with cobwebs, about six feet from the ground. The discovery appeared to make the gang curiously uneasy. They stood listening. The whimpering and scratching had ceased now.

"Better put something in front of that window," Curly muttered. "You never can be sure with a dog like that. If I catches hold of him this time I'll hang him proper. Gosh! But I wish Black Michael would come."

Their threats to hang Squall if they caught him, roused Jack's dazed brain. Where his own personal danger had left him helpless and almost resigned, the possibility of anything happening to the wolf-dog urged him to action. He looked about him. To hang Squall a rope was necessary, and as far as he could see, the only rope available was the one which was dangling over the beam. Suddenly a means of saving Squall from death by strangulation and

at the same time, postponing his own fate, flashed into his mind.

The men were searching about the floor for some boards to place against the window. Though there were eight of them, their recollection of Squall's prowess was quite enough to fill them with a kind of panic. The dog was out there, and trying to get in. The sooner they closed the only other means of entry the better. They paid no attention to Jack.

As quietly as he could, Jack inserted one end of the rope through the loop which had been tied round his body; then he pulled on this running noose, until it was taut about the beam above his head. This done he wasted no time, but began to swarm up the rope. A few seconds, and he had gained the beam. He had just time to swing himself astride it, when one of the men discovered that he had disappeared.

"Gosh, boys, where's the kid?" he stammered.

Instantly the gang forgot all about

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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

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

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

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

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

BRILLIANT SING, single-handed, however, Jack rescues the waif, and makes good his escape. Not to be outdone, Black Michael gets on Jack's trail again and catches the youngster while he is out shopping for Mrs. Bowker. The lad is taken to a nearby barn. Black Michael's confederates are about to belt Jack unmercifully when Squall, who meantime had been despatched to Bowker for help, is heard scratching on the door. "Squall!" gasps Jack. "Squall!"

(Now read on.)

the window. Like one man they turned and stared at the spot on the floor where they had left Jack. A second perhaps elapsed before they realised what had become of their prisoner. Then, as if by mutual agreement, they rushed towards the dangling rope.

But Jack was quick to see the danger that threatened him. Let them get hold of that rope, and one of them could swarm up to the beam and secure him. Bending down he hauled up the rope hand over hand, snatching it just in time from their grasp. Another second and he had the whole length of rope safely coiled about the beam.

His spirits rose. The beam was quite twenty feet above the floor. The only possible means of reaching it was by a ladder, and it hardly seemed likely that the barn contained a ladder. Jack was safe for a time. As long as he could sit astride there, no one could reach him unless it was with a gun. Looking down he could see the rage and disappointment in the upturned faces of the gang. He laughed exultantly.

"You haven't got me yet," he shouted down in his shrill voice.

"Heave something at him, and knock him off that perch," Curly roared, "and look quick about it! We don't want the gov'nor to find him there."

The thought of Black Michael acted like a spur upon the men. They began at once to search among the litter on the floor of the barn for some suitable missiles with which to dislodge the boy from the beam. A growl of satisfaction from Curly told Jack that they had found what they wanted. He saw some of the men with bricks in their arms which they had removed from the floor of the barn.

"Keep the lights turned on him, lads, while we has a shot at the little blighter!" Curly exclaimed.

Those who had secured bricks backed some distance down the barn away from the beam. The others standing at the side brought the beams of their electric torches to bear upon Jack's stocky figure. The boy realised the immensity of his danger.

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"Look out!" Curly bawled.

As he spoke a brick left his hand, and, curving through the air, struck the beam just to the left of Jack. Another following almost immediately nearly hit him on the head. It was only by ducking swiftly that he was able to avoid a blow which must have knocked him insensible from his lofty perch. It was quite clear to him now that he could not escape.

Once more Jack's only hope lay in Squall. But the wolf-dog was outside the barn, prevented from coming to his aid by seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It was perhaps just despair that made Jack purse up his lips and give that shrill whistle to which he had never known the wolf-dog fail to respond.

A brick hit him on the ankle hurting him painfully; again Jack whistled, more shrilly—more despairingly now, for a regular barrage of missiles had been let loose. And the gang had found the range now, for the bricks no longer went wide of their mark. To shield his head Jack fastened his arms tight about the beam and let his body hang down on the side farthest from his assailants. But though he could guard his head by this means, his body remained unprotected, and one missile after another struck him, pounding his ribs and bruising his arms. There came a moment at last when he felt that he could no longer hold on—that the best thing for him to do was to uncoil the rope, slip to the ground, surrender, and meet with what courage he could, all that Fate and Black Michael's gang had in store for him.

At that critical moment there was a crash of glass and the sound of something dropping softly on the litter of straw that strewn the floor of the barn. Glancing down from his perch Jack saw, with a sudden quickening of his heart beats, a sight that he was never to forget.

He glimpsed the long grey body of the wolf-dog springing through the gap of the broken window; he saw him leap at the men who held the torches immediately below the beam; he heard a scream of pain—a string of foul oaths—and then the lights went out and pandemonium was let loose in the barn.

It was darkness that gave the wolf-dog his chance. He alone could see, or sense, the whereabouts of his opponents, and he took full advantage of the position. Viewed from above—though it was hardly "a view" for Jack could see nothing—it was as if a terrier had been let loose among a number of squealing rats. Jack could hear men rushing backwards and forwards, their voices rising to screaming sobs as Squall's jaws found their mark.

Bill Bowker's Sacrifice!

CONFUSION was added to the scene by the conduct of Curly and his companions, who seemed to be inspired with just one idea—to keep the dog from attacking them at all costs. With this object they used the bricks they had intended for Jack without hesitation, and, as they could not see where they were throwing, a number of those missiles hit other members of the gang, adding to the general panic and confusion.

That scene must have lasted for several minutes before there came an abrupt and startling interruption. Above all that panic-stricken uproar there broke abruptly the sound of some-

one knocking violently on the door of the barn. And then Jack heard a voice that made the blood turn cold in his veins.

"Hang you! Open this door!" Black Michael's voice shouted.

Even in their terror that voice had the power to influence the gang. Jack heard the scraping of a rusty bolt, and then a square of light opened in the wall of the barn as the door was swung back. At that moment Jack thought not of himself, but of Squall. With Black Michael there the dog would be caught and hanged. He must send him away—send him to get help. Squall had done now all that he could do, and the most useful purpose he could serve was to bring aid from Bill Bowker. He whistled shrilly, and, peering down, he could see, by the light of the door, the form of the wolf-dog looking up at him, his jaws agape, his red tongue rolling, his great throat stretched out.

"Home, Squall!" he shouted. For a moment Squall crouched there irresolute. It was the only occasion on which Jack had ever known him hesitate. He repeated his command.

"Home, Squall! Good dog! Go back home—quick!"

The dog sprang round swiftly. As he did so a beam of light from an electric torch, directed from the doorway, stabbed the darkness.

"Quick! Shut that door!" Black Michael's voice exclaimed, in frantic urgency.

Jack could see that square of light suddenly contract as someone hastened to close the door. But before it disappeared altogether there was a crash. The boy glimpsed a long grey body shooting through the gap, and he knew that Squall, at any rate, was safe.

"You muddle-headed fools!" Black Michael exclaimed. "You can't do anything without making a mess of it. I wanted that dog. I wanted particularly to have the pleasure of hanging him. And now, where is that confounded boy?"

Curly's voice, sunk to a whine, answered him.

"There's no holding the darned kid, guv'nor. We got him here safe, according to orders, plonked him down there on the floor, and afore you could say Jack Robinson he had swarmed up the rope to that there beam. We was just knocking him off his perch when that darned brute came through the window."

"So that's you again, is it, Curly? That's the third time you've made a mess of my orders. I'll deal with you afterwards. We've got to have discipline, by thunder, in this gang! I'm not going to keep you, and pay you, and think for you, and not have my orders carried out properly. But we'll settle with this brat first."

Jack could hear the rustle of his feet in the straw as he approached the spot under the beam. The light from his torch struck vertically up into the boy's face.

"Now then, my lad, come down!" Jack dug his nails into the beam and tightened the grip on his legs. There was something terrifyingly compelling in that voice.

"Do you hear what I say?"

And now from below Jack saw those eyes. He would have scrambled back to an erect position on the beam, but it was too late. Those twin pools of fire seemed to hold him. Once more that curious sensation which had possessed him twice already before, swept over him—a drowsiness, a weakening of his will power—a curious feeling, as if nothing mattered to him any more.

"You have a rope there. Unwind it and come down!" that voice continued.

Why was it, Jack wondered drowsily, that he, who had climbed to that beam with such determination, prepared to stay there until he was taken away by force, now actually wanted to get down? From below those eyes held him in a hypnotic trance. He no longer saw the barn, or the faces of the gang. He was unconscious of everything save the all-compelling power of those eyes. Automatically his fingers sought the rope. He unwound it from the beam and let it hang to the ground.

"Come!" said that commanding voice. He gripped the rope and swung himself clear of the beam. He was beginning to descend, hand over hand, when suddenly something checked him. When he tried to describe afterwards what happened he could only think of the sensation created by an electric current suddenly cut off.

The power that Black Michael exercised over him ceased abruptly, and as it ceased there flashed into the boy's mind exactly what he was doing. He was deliberately descending the rope to place himself in the hands of the gang. Why he was doing it he couldn't think; but now that he realised the incredible folly of his action he scrambled up again and resumed his old position astride the beam.

It was only then that he saw what was happening. The door of the barn had been flung open. There were a number of men there in blue jerseys, carrying hurricane lamps. Then Bill Bowker's voice echoed like a thunderclap through the barn.

"Slosh 'em good and hard, boys! There's a skunk as calls himself Black Michael here. Give it 'im in particular!"

Who his rescuers could be, with the exception of Bill Bowker, Jack had not the slightest idea, but there were over a dozen of them, and they clearly outnumbered the gang by two to one.

"Scatter!" cried a voice in the darkness below.

It was Black Michael who spoke, in a tone of furious exasperation and disappointment. Jack saw that little square of light that marked the window suddenly obscured by a human body. As the man turned for a moment to draw his legs across the sill Jack saw that it was Black Michael himself. A fraction of a second later, and he had disappeared.

And now the gang, lumped together in the darkness, were fighting for their lives. In the role of commander-in-chief of the attacking forces, Bill Bowker was perhaps not at his best. Indeed, he was so concerned to come to grips with Black Michael, and to find Jack, that he failed to observe the most ordinary precautions. Having once told his followers to hit "good and hard," he left further tactics to their discretion. As a result, the men followed him into the barn, leaving the door completely unguarded. The gang, seeing their chance, did not miss it. Huddled together, heads down, they charged for that opening. A moment later, squeezing and struggling, they had forced their way through, and were scattering through the night across the fields.

"Jack, my lad—Jack, where the blazes are you?" Bowker roared, in a tone of genuine alarm.

"I'm quite all right, Mr. Bowker. I'm up here," Jack called back.

By the light of one of the hurricane-lamps, Jack saw old Bill staring up into the shadows of the roof, mopping the sweat from his forehead as he did so with one of those big red handkerchiefs



The door of the barn was suddenly flung open and Jack, from his position on the rafter, saw a number of men appear, carrying hurricane lamps. Then Bill Bowker's voice echoed like thunder through the barn. "Slosh 'em good and hard, boys! There's a skunk as calls himself Black Michael here! Give it 'im in particular!" (See page 24.)

that Mrs. Bowker usually wore over her head.

"I dunno where 'there' is, but wherever it is, for the love of Mike come out of it, my lad!"

Jack gripped the rope, and, swinging himself clear of the beam, slid down to the ground. Bill Bowker caught him in his arms.

"Lor' love us, laddie, 'tis you, isn't it? What have they been trying to do to you? You give me and mother such a turn with that message that you sent me, that I didn't know rightly whether I was standing on my head or my heels!"

Jack explained breathlessly just what had happened, and all the while he was speaking old Bill held him firmly by the collar of his coat, as if he were frightened that, even now some unseen power might take Jack from him.

"Them skunks—them yellow livered skunks! Lor' lumme, great, big men taking a kid like you and a-treatin' 'im that way! I wish we'd got some of 'em! I'd tie 'em up to the tiller and give 'em two dozen, and chance what the rozzers said afterwards!"

Bill's further remarks were interrupted by the sudden appearance of Squall. He went straight at Jack, and, putting his saws on the boy's shoulders, began to rub his face as if it were his intention to give it a thorough washing—as indeed it needed.

"Good old dog! Down!" Jack exclaimed, and then, turning to the skipper of the Emerald, he added: "He brought you the message all right, didn't he, Mr. Bowker?"

"He brought it me, all right, my lad, but I didn't cotton on to what he was after. He leapt into the cabin, and began to behave funny like, shovin' his

head against me. When I wouldn't take no notice of him, he started catching the sleeves of my coat in his teeth and pullin' my arm. I says to mother: 'What ails the dog? He ain't goin' barmy, is 'e?'"

"He wanted to call attention to my note, Mr. Bowker."

"I knows that now, Jack, but I couldn't make head or tail of what he was after at first. It must have been the better part of ten minutes before I tumbled to it, and 'e in such a way all the time! It was mother as saw the note, and as soon as she starts to untie it, callin' me a silly juggins, your little dawg stood as still and quiet as a blessed lamb. But, as I say, I wasted the better part of ten minutes, and that's why, and other reasons as well, I didn't get along before to join in this 'ere barney."

He stopped abruptly, and cleared his throat.

"But blow me if I ain't forgetting my orders. Mother said as I was to bring you straight back when I found you. Last time I sees her she was putting on the saucepan to boil you a brew of cocoa. So you come along, my lad, or else she'll be chewin' my ear off."

Putting his hands under Jack's arms, Bill hoisted him with one swing on to his broad shoulders.

"You sit there, my lad, and I shall know I've got you."

Half an hour later Bill Bowker stepped from the towpath on to the Emerald, and set Jack down on the deck.

"There you are, mother, safe and sound!" old Bill exclaimed to his wife, who appeared from the cabin, and, rushing at Jack, seized him in her arms. "Nothing much the matter with him,

either, except that he's a durned sight heavier than I thought he was!"

Down in the cabin, seated on the edge of the bunk, sipping a steaming cup of cocoa and munching thick slices of bread-and-butter, Jack listened to that part of the night's adventures in which he had had no share.

"Mother got the wind up proper when we read that note of yours, Jack. She wouldn't wait. She says to me, 'You go and get what men you can, while I take Squall along and see if I can find the lad.' She goes up the towpath along of the dog—"

"It was more like Squall taking me for a run," Mrs. Bowker broke in. "There was no holding him. When we got to the bend at the end of Sandham Reach, he sniffed about on the ground, and then, tearing himself free from my hold, jumped over the hedge, and was gone like a streak of lightning."

"It was just at the bend that Black Michael caught me," said Jack.

"I reckoned it was that!" Mrs. Bowker exclaimed. "I waited there to see which way he went, and when I'd seen him making for the barn, I reckoned I'd learnt all there was to be learnt—so I comes back to Bill."

At this point her husband took up the narrative. Jack, looking up at him, saw that he had grown very red, and noticed that his voice had become suddenly very gruff.

"It ain't easy to pick up men on a lonely spot like this, and I was thinking I'd maybe best walk into Sandham, when one of them nasty, stinking, oily butty's came by."

He regarded Jack very fixedly. "I don't hold with butty's. They've
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spoil the canal game. I don't hold with them, I tell you!"

"I know, Mr. Bowker," Jack remarked soothingly.

Old Bill cleared his throat.

"But there are times when a man has to sink his prejudices, though it goes agin his nature. As I was standing on the deck a-scratchin' of my head, wondering what I could do—as mother here had told me to get these men, and I ain't one to set myself up agin the old woman—what should come along but one of them there butties—two of 'em, I should say, with one of them nasty, stinking petrol-boats a-pulling them, doing honest horses out of their oats."

"Have you left us room to pass, Pie-face?" the bloke that was steering the tug shouted at me.

"I was going to give 'em a proper answer, when I remembered what mother had told me. For your sake, Jack, I done what I never have done before. I let one of them butty blokes wag his jaw at me without spoiling his face. I did straight!"

He looked at Jack steadily, as if he wanted to make sure that the boy realised the immensity of the sacrifice he had made on his account.

"It was most awfully kind of you, Mr. Bowker," Jack replied gravely.

Old Bill nodded, as if he thought the compliment no more than his due.

"Instead of making any reference to his mother, or his father wot ought to have been hanged, and probably was, I just says, 'Good-evenin', skipper! Can I 'ave a word with you a moment?'"

Again Bill treated Jack to that solemn stare. The boy, who was possessed now by an almost uncontrollable desire to laugh, hastily gulped down some of the boiling cocoa, and then coughed violently.

"What—what did he say, Mr. Bowker?"

"He was fair taken aback. 'I ain't got any money to lend,' 'e says; 'and there ain't no liquor aboard as I can spare.' And I'm not saying that he mightn't have spoken rougher than that," old Bill added judiciously.

"It's all right," says I; 'I've got all the money as I want; and I'm as near a teetotaller as to make licenced victual-keepers keep awake at night worrying how they'll live. What I wants to know,' I says, 'is—ow would you and the parties you've got aboard like to lend a hand to put it across some dirty dagoes what have kidnapped my lad with intent to murder?' I dunno,' I says, 'if blokes aboard butties like a bit of scrapping—not knowing much about butties, and caring less. Maybe, you find life too soft, just paddling about in one of them blamed things where there ain't no work to do; and, maybe, I shall have to wait till another monkey-boat comes along and I can find some real men,' I says, 'to save my poor lad from 'aving his throat cut.'"

The sternness of his face suddenly relaxed into a broad grin.

"That flicked him on the raw, Jack. That touched him on the right identical spot! He was that proper riled that it's my belief, if I hadn't been watching him, he'd have bitten a mouthful off the Emerald with his teeth. I don't remember rightly what he says; but he got the boys together all right—a dozen of 'em—and off we sets across the fields, mother havig pointed out the way for us. And we met Squall coming back, and he turns round and takes us to the place. And that's about all there is to it."

A voice from outside broke into their talk.

"Emerald, ahoy! What do you want to leave your blamed old hulk lying all over the canal for? I'm trying to pass you!"

Weald Manor!

OLD Bill sprang to his feet, his face flushing, the light of battle flashing into his eyes. Then he suddenly bit his lip, glanced at Jack, and made his way up on deck.

"Mooring-rope must have got slack," he muttered.

The monkey-boat moved slightly as he tightened the ropes and drew the Emerald closer towards the bank.

"Got a clear channel now, ain't you?" he grunted.

"All right, mate!" the skipper of the tug shouted back. "You want to sell that old 'oss of yours to a beef-juice firm and get yourself a butty, and be a little more slick and up to date."

Bill Bowker advanced to the side of the Emerald. His big fists were clenched and his face flaming.

"I'll tell you wot I thinks of you and your butties—" he began, and then checked himself abruptly. "No, I won't, after all. You and your lads did me a good turn to-night, and I'm much obliged to you. There's one skipper of a butty as can sauce me after this—but, by gosh, there's only that one!"

The man on the tug grinned at him. "Cheerio, Bill! Glad we were of service to you. 'Ow's the boy?"

"Sittin' up and takin' a little nourishment. He'll be as right as a trivet in the morning."

"Wish we'd caught some of them blokes. What's the name of their big noise, did you tell me?"

"Black Michael—"

"Well, if I ever catches Black Michael on this canal I'll ram him, and I won't bother to pick him out, either! So-long, Bill! We'll watch out for these lads, and if we catches any of 'em we'll let you know."

The tug, with its attendant butties, steamed past the Emerald and disappeared round the corner of Sandham Reach. Old Bill returned thoughtfully to the cabin.

"Mother," he said solemnly, "it's a rum world! If you was to have told me this morning that I'd been speaking civil to the crew aboard a butty I'd have had you locked up in the first asylum we came to!"

Utterly worn out though he was by all he had gone through, Jack was up the first thing in the morning. He had overheard a conversation overnight, in which Mrs. Bowker, thinking he was asleep, had informed her husband that the boy must have a rest, and that he must get the horse from the stable in Sandham.

Without disturbing the skipper and his wife, determined not to shirk his job, Jack slipped on his clothes, and, as dawn was breaking, made his way down the tow-path. The light of day seemed to rob the place of all its terrors. It was almost with a feeling of elation that he retrieved the groceries that he had dropped.

Some two hours later he returned, riding astride the well-groomed, well-fed horse, to find Bill Bowker had just emerged from the cabin. He stared at Jack in amazement.

"What, you've fetched the horse, then, Jack? I was just going to stop

over for him myself. Missis said as you were to have your sleep out."

"It was my job to get the horse, wasn't it, Mr. Bowker? And I want to do my job properly."

"That's the spirit, my lad!" old Bill replied approvingly. "That's what I like about you. You're some considerable trier. But now you just leave the 'oss to me, and I'll get under way while you're having your breakfast. You didn't see anything of Black Michael and his crowd as you went along, did you?"

"Not a sign, Mr. Bowker."

"And I don't expect you will again. I reckon as they've given up trying to pinch you as a bad job. I'll tell you what it is, my lad—they must have heard of how you can add up and subtract, and what a hand you are at calculatin', and I 'specs they thought how useful you could be to them. That's why they're tryin' to pinch you. But I reckon they'll see it's no use after the bashin' they got last night."

Jack thought this a rather too flattering explanation of Black Michael's attentions; but as there seemed no other—indeed, he couldn't conceive why Black Michael was pursuing him in this ruthless way—he let old Bill hug this solution to his soul without offering any protest.

Before he had finished his breakfast the Emerald had started once more on her voyage. Two days later she arrived without mishap at Tellingham, and duly discharged her cargo of bricks. Here their luck was in, for they secured the contract for the removal of a large quantity of sand from the local pits to Bristol; and, this job completed a week later, they filled up the Emerald's hold again with a load of sleepers for London. To Jack there was great fascination in following their course on the map and seeing how they passed from the Avon to the Thames at Reading.

On the fourth day out from Bristol the canal cut its way through some of the most beautiful country the boy had ever seen—deep woodland glades, lush rolling meadows, with a background of smooth, chalky downs. On the evening of that day they moored the Emerald some six miles from the nearest village. On the right bank they had an uninterrupted view of a large stretch of parkland, on the crown of which stood a huge, many-windowed house.

"Nice little place that, ain't it, Jack?" old Bill remarked, jerking his finger in the direction of the mansion. "Funny thing the way blokes put up great masses of masonry like that, and then, maybe, go and live in some poky little place in London!"

"Why, doesn't anybody live there, Mr. Bowker?" Jack inquired.

"There's nobody lived there, to my certain knowledge, this seven year or more. All them blessed rooms shut up, and hundreds of people tumbling over themselves to try and find somewhere to sleep in! Weald Park is what they call this place, and the house Weald Manor. It belongs to some real nobb what have got the bad taste not to like it, seemingly."

As Jack lay on the deck of the Emerald that evening, when the day's work was over, he stared across the park and, boy-like, dreamed dreams of the great house. He would make a lot of money—he didn't quite know how—and then go to these "nobbs" old Bill spoke of, and offer them anything they liked to mention for the place. Then

he would live there with old Bill and Mrs. Bowker. It would be nice for Bill, he reflected, for when he was feeling rather bored he would only have to walk down to the canal side and exchange greetings with the passing monkey-boats, or exercise his skill at repartee with the skill of some butty.

He was lost in these castle-buildings, when Squall, who was crouched by his side, suddenly lifted his head and cocked his ears in an attitude of attention.

"Hallo, old fellow, what's the matter?"

The dog rose stiffly to his feet and stood there, the raff about his neck bristling, his ears backed, his whole manner expressive of impending danger. Jack followed the direction of his gaze, but could see nothing to account for the dog's remarkable behaviour. Like a very wide avenue cut between the woods, the park stretched from the canal side up a gentle slope to the terraced gardens and the house. Save for a few forest trees that had been left standing, the park was quite bare, and in that space Jack could see no one moving. And yet, undoubtedly, Squall was unusually ruffled.

"What is it, Squall?" he whispered.

The dog looked round at him a moment and then returned to his strange attentive watch of the bank. Jack put his arm about the dog's neck and with his face close to the animal's, tried to focus his gaze on the object that the other was watching.

And now, at last, he saw something. In the woods on the left of the park something was moving. The sun had already sunk, and in the deepening dusk it was impossible at first to make out any definite object; but there was something moving there. He heard the rustle of leaves and the snapping of twigs. Then Squall gave a most unwelcome sound—a low, ominous growl. Jack looked at the dog in amazement. It was only on very rare and special occasions that Squall emitted any sound at all. Clearly, the dog must be very agitated about something.

"What is it, Squall?" Jack whispered, and even as he asked that futile question, he was conscious of a strange, creepy sensation.

Something was moving in the woods—something that seemed to throw out sinister waves of evil that to which the sensitive intelligence of the dog responded with the accuracy of a wireless crystal. And now, Jack, staring at that fringe of woods, saw that it was edged with a high iron railing, decorated with spikes, evidently constructed to keep out trespassers; and at a certain part of this railing was a tall gate.

Even as his eye lighted upon that gate, he saw the outline of a man's figure standing there behind the bars. So still was the evening that even at that distance he could hear the scraping of a key and the turning of a rusty lock. The gate was opening.

And now Squall's agitation became even more marked. He looked round at Jack with what almost seemed like a question in his eyes. A little low whimper escaped him. He seemed to be telling the boy that here was some mysterious danger that threatened him. "Be quiet, Squall," Jack ordered.

His eyes were still fixed upon the opening gate. The man's figure, that before had seemed like a shadow behind the bars, now became clearly visible as he stepped across the threshold of the woods into the park. Jack stared at that figure, his lips agape. Somehow it seemed familiar—horribly familiar. The man bent down to

relock the gate. Squall seemed to gather himself together as if to spring. Only just in time Jack caught him by the collar with both hands and dragged him back. The man turned to continue his walk. As he did so the outline of his face became visible. Jack's heart began to beat furiously.

The man who had come through the woods into Weald Park, and was even now walking in the direction of the great house, was no less a person than Black Michael!

Jack lay flat on the deck, forcing

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Squall to crouch by his side. What was Black Michael doing in Weald Park? How came it that this man, whom he knew from bitter experience was, for some secret purpose of his own, his enemy, had arrived in the neighbourhood of the Emerald's mooring ground?

In the first shock of the discovery he had made, Jack's answer to that question was clear and decided. Black Michael had tracked him down across the network of canals, and was now intending to make another attempt to get him into his power. The gang must be somewhere in the neighbourhood. There could be no other explanation of Black Michael's presence there.

But presently as he watched Black Michael's figure crossing the park, this

answer to the question he had asked himself seemed hardly so satisfactory. The man wouldn't show himself in this way—so openly—if he were plotting another attack.

And he paid no attention to the canal. There was the monkey-boat in full view if he cared to turn his head. The fact that he did not turn his head, but walked steadily on towards the great house, suggested that, for the moment at least, the Emerald and Jack Horner were not occupying his thoughts.

Then what was he doing there, Jack asked himself? Suddenly it flashed through the boy's mind, that supposing Black Michael was there for some other purpose, then here was the chance to learn something about his mysterious enemy. So far Black Michael had hunted him; now was the opportunity for reversing the roles.

Jack forgot in a moment his terror of Black Michael. He was filled with a sense of adventure. If only he could track the man down—discover what he was doing—perhaps learn something about him. With boyish rashness he had no sooner formed this resolve, than he acted on it. His work for the day was over; he was free, nominally, to do what he liked; and so, without a word to Bill Bowker, he crept on hands and knees across the deck and gained the tow-path. Arrived there, he took the precaution of descending the bank so that he made his way westward for a quarter of a mile until he reached a bridge that spanned the canal.

Across this bridge was a road which gave admission to the woods on the Weald Estate. There was a notice threatening anyone who was found trespassing, but Jack, risking the terrors of the law, climbed the gate and dropped on to the turf path that ran among the trees. Once there he took to his heels. It was obvious that the track ran parallel to the park, and his object was to draw level with Black Michael before he reached the house.

Beyond the stirring of birds in the branches, and the occasional hooting of an owl, everything was very still in the woods. On the soft turf Jack's feet made no sound. He had covered nearly half a mile when, glancing to the left, he saw through the trees the side of the great house. At the same moment he caught a glimpse of Black Michael's sinister figure in the very act of entering the house by a side door which he had unlocked.

Jack stood irresolute. It was one thing to trespass in Weald Woods; it was another thing to follow Black Michael into Weald Manor. The excitement and feeling of adventure which had inspired him up to that moment, ebbed rapidly. He felt rather small and silly. How absurd it had been for him to imagine that he could track down Black Michael and wring his secret from him alone and unaided.

"I think we had better go back, Squall," he muttered disconsolately.

But Squall seemed in no hurry to return. At that point the long, straight stretch of turf track through the woods turned sharply to the right. The wolf-dog was standing in the centre of this walk, his head on one side, his ears cocked almost as if he were suggesting that round the bend was something in which his master might be interested.

"All right, Squall, we'll see what it is," Jack exclaimed.

(Look out for some startling developments in next week's grand instalment, boys.)

"THE BOUNDER'S FEUD!"

(Continued from page 22.)

for another round or two if they had been needed.

His face expressed nothing of the exultation of victory; it was clouded. He glanced at the Bounder as he lay helplessly in the grass, his head resting on Tom Redwing's knee. He hesitated, and then stepped towards his defeated enemy.

"Smithy!" he said, in a low voice. "You cur!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "I never wanted this," said Paul. "I'd have done anything to keep clear of it. Now it's over, let's forget about it, and—and, if we can't be friends, keep clear of one another."

"Shake hands and forget all about it," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm more than willing, Smithy!"

And Paul Dallas held out his hand. The Bounder made a movement, and, with an effort, he reached out and struck Dallas in the face with his open hand.

"That's my answer!" he said.

"Shame!"

"You rotter, Smithy!"

Dallas stepped back quietly. He did not speak another word; Bob helped him on with his jacket, and he left the scene of the combat with the Famous Five.

The crowd broke up, and the Removites cleared out of the paddock, only the defeated Bounder remaining there with Redwing. Tom was patiently bathing his flushed, bruised face.

"You still sticking to me, what?" sneered the Bounder.

"Yes," said Redwing quietly.

"You needn't."

Redwing made no answer to that; and when the Bounder left the paddock at last he was leaning heavily on his own arm. In the hour of defeat and humiliation his one friend remained loyal and faithful. But the Bounder was not thinking of that, and he drew no solace from it. He was thinking of his defeat, and envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness ran riot in his breast as he limped back wearily to Greyfriars.

THE END.

(It is humiliating, to say the least, for Vernon-Smith, but the Bounder of Greyfriars is not finished yet—not by any manner of means! Be sure you read "Condemned By The Form!" the next powerful and dramatic story in this splendid series. You'll enjoy every line of it, chums.)

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“BUTSY, old fellow?”

Jack Jolly asked the question, as he nudged into his study with Merry and Bright. The heroes of the Fourth were plastered with mud from head to foot; and a Shyllock Holmes would have deduced that they had been muddanking. He would have deduced wrongly, of course. They had been playing football.

Frank Fearless, their new study-mate, had not joined them. Frank was a fine, fearless footballer; but he had something more important than football to think about this afternoon. He sat at the study table, with Jerry, his pet parrot, perched on his shoulder; and he certainly looked as if he had been busy. His hair was matted, his eyes were wild and rolling, and there was a great blob of ink on his nose, dripping down on to the paper in front of him. Thoughtfully he mumbled:

“I’m up to my highbrow in work!” he said, in reply to Jack Jolly’s question. “Writing an impromptu for old Lickham?” asked Merry, simplistically.

Frank Fearless shook his head. “I’ve been trying my hand at writing a love-sonnet,” he said, a blush spreading over that part of his cheek where no ink had been splashed.

“My hat!” Jack Jolly & Co. stared at the new boy in amazement. They liked Frank Fearless. He was a daring, dashing, do-it-yourself fellow after their own hearts. But they had not dreamed, until now, that there was a romance in his life—that he had fallen a prey to the charms of some bewitching beauty.

The fact that Frank Fearless was composing a love-sonnet, however, clearly showed that he had been “smitten” by some fair creature, and Jack Jolly & Co. wondered who it was that had snatched them away from their studies.

“They were soon to learn,” you follows,” said Frank. “I’ve been trying to get a rhyme, but it’s snowing. My efforts are a frost.”

Jack Jolly laughed. “So Miss Molly has captured your heart, eh?” he said. “Well, she’s a stunning girl, and no mistake! But goodness knows where she inherited all her charming ways from. The Head hasn’t got any.”

“And she’s ever so good-looking, too,” said Bright, “whereas the Head has got a face like a shrivelled pancake!”

Frank Fearless nodded.

“I wish she had a simpler name than Bitchemall,” he said. “If her name was Jolly, or Franchise, it would rhyme with ‘Oh, golly!’ If her name was Merry, it would rhyme with ‘Yes, very!’ And if it was Bright, it would rhyme with ‘silly kido.’ But I defy anybody to find a rhyme for ‘Bitchemall!’”

“You want Lirrick of the Fourth on that job,” said Jack Jolly. “He can turn out rimes like some of the mashesmen. But only when he’s inspired.”

“And when does he get his moments of perspiration—I mean, inspiration?” asked Frank Fearless.

“When he’s eaten about half-a-dozen doo-nuts, and an equal number of jam-tarts.”

“My hat! He’s a pretty eggespensive poet to engage!”

“But it will be worth it, if you want your love-sonnet to be the real goods,” said Jack Jolly. “Shall we go and find Lirrick, and bring him along?”

“Please!”

“Back up!” Back up!” shrilled Percy, the parrot, nodding his head vigorously at Jack Jolly & Co. The bird had been conversing with an owl-like gravity to the eggespensive what it had been about.

The trio hurried away. They were back in a few minutes, with Lirrick of the Fourth. Lirrick looked a poet to the life. His long hair, which was neither bobbed nor banged, fell loosely over his shoulders; his dreamy blue eyes had a far-away look, there was a quill pen stuck in one ear, and an inedible pencil in the other.

“What a guy! What a guy!” piped Percy, the parrot.

“Shush, Percy!” muttered Frank Fearless. “Master’s inside our guest, you know. Trot right in, Lirrick, and make yourself at home. I want you to give me a hand with a love-sonnet I’m writing. Do you feel inspired?”

“Not at the moment,” said Lirrick.

“But when I’ve polished the doo-nuts and jam-tarts on the table—I shall be in fine form!”

So saying, the Shakespeare of St. Sam’s sat down to table, and scooped the tarts and doo-nuts at an amazing rate. Lirrick wasn’t one of those poets that despise the fleshpots of Egypt.

“Now,” he mumbled, when the last cut of the jam-tarts was disappearing, “what cut I do for you, Fearless?”

“I want a rime for Molly Bitchemall,” said Frank.

Lirrick pucker-eyed his brows in thought, for a few seconds, and then his

“There’s schools galore on England’s shore, And though a chap may search ‘em all, He will not find a maid so kind as I.”

“How wow!” said Percy, the parrot. Frank Fearless scowled at his pet.

“Another word from your ego, my lad, and back you go into your cage!” he said. “I say, Lirrick, that’s quite a ripping verse—just the sort of sentiment I wanted to express myself, only I couldn’t find a beeky rime. Just jot down that verse, and I’ll see if you can manufacture some more.”

Lirrick removed the inedible pencil from his ear, and chewed it for a minute. Then he wrote his verse on a sheet of impromptu paper. This done, he rolled his eyes, and winked his ears, and performed himself of the second verse.

“She is a peach beyond my reach, A peach for whom I pine; The apple of her father’s eye, With a pear of eyes divine!”

“Ripping!” cried Frank Fearless, clapping his hands. “That’s what you might call a nice, brooky sort of sentiment, too true! Molly is the finest peach I’ve met up to date, and I wouldn’t give a fig for any other girl. Go ahead, Lirrick!”

“I’m struck,” said the poet. “The inspiration has failed. I can’t go on unless I have some more jam-tarts.”



“FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!”

Who ever heard of anyone turning out the Fire Brigade to rescue a runaway parrot? Wants a bit of nerve, doesn’t it? Yet Frank Fearless has nerve enough to do it!



“Smile Awhile, and while you smile, another smiles, until there’s miles of smiles and life’s worth while when everyone smiles!” (Dick’s Mergat’s motto.)

through his flowing locks. Then he came out with the following:

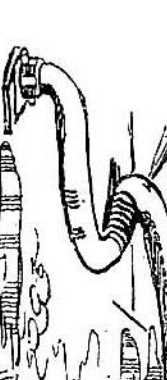
“There’s schools galore on England’s shore, And though a chap may search ‘em all, He will not find a maid so kind as I.”

“How wow!” said Percy, the parrot. Frank Fearless scowled at his pet.

“Another word from your ego, my lad, and back you go into your cage!” he said. “I say, Lirrick, that’s quite a ripping verse—just the sort of sentiment I wanted to express myself, only I couldn’t find a beeky rime. Just jot down that verse, and I’ll see if you can manufacture some more.”

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in your praise. If you would be gracious enough to accept my humble rimos—

Molly nodded her pretty head, and took the verses. When she read them, her eyelashes drooped, and she flushed as pink as a pony. It was not the first “billy-do” of this sort that Molly had received. Lots of fellows had sent love-sonnets to her, at different times; but never had she been so visibly moved as on this occasion. She tucked the poem into her dress and dived away like a hare, calling to Frank Fearless to follow.

“Quickly!” she panted. “My father is coming! If he catches you on this lawn—if he finds that you have been writing love-sonnets to me—I tremble for your fate! I have saved you twice, but the third time will be fatal!”

They dashed away at top speed, crashing through the thick shrubbery which bordered the lawn. And when Dr. Bitchemall came striding on the scene, there was not a soul to be seen.

“Bless my sole!” murmured the Head. “I must be suffering from a Lirrick-nation. I could have sworn I saw Molly here, talking to one of the boys!”

But Molly and Frank were safely out of site by this time. Lirrick was galloping their way by a roundabout route to Jack Jolly’s study; for Molly had cheerfully accepted Frank’s invitation to tea. But there was no destined to be a merry tea-party, after all; for on reaching the study, they found Jack Jolly & Co. in an awful flutter.

“Fearless!” cried Jack Jolly. “I have brought news for you, old fellow. The bird has flown!”

“Eh?”

“I opened the window for a minute, to get a breath of fresh air, and something flapped past me over my shoulder. The thing has escaped!”

“My hat!” gasped Frank Fearless. “At that alarming news, even Molly Bitchemall was forgotten. For Frank was terrified to his pet parrot, and he wouldn’t have lost Percy for worlds. In a flash he bounded out of the study, and raced down into the quad. There he passed, peering around him in this gathering dusk, and wistling for his pet.

“Coo-oo! Coo-oo! Where are you, Percy?” And he strained his ears for a reply.

staff, Percy the parrot was perched, monarch of all he surveyed.

“Grato pip!” gasped Frank Fearless. “Fancy old Percy getting right up there!”

If he was to fall, he’d break his neck!” Frank Fearless was too eggespensive to reflect that Percy had a pair of wings, and was therefore in no peril. He waved his arms like windmills, and shouted to the parrot.

“Hold on, Percy! Stay where you are, old chimp! I’ll get Fossil, the porter, to bring a couple of ladders, and fetch you down!”

“No need for that,” said Jack Jolly, who had come on the scene with the others. “Percy can fly down all right, if you call him.”

“By Jove! I hadn’t thought of that,” said Frank Fearless.

And he called to Percy to come down. But the parrot was enjoying his spell of freedom, and he was quite happy where he was, thanks very much! His master entreated him, and pleaded with him, and threatened him, but all in vain. Even the sweet, coaxing voice of Molly Bitchemall failed to move him.

“Go and eat cold!” said Percy. He had picked up that expression since he came to St. Sam’s, and he knew no meant something defiant.

Molly Bitchemall rang her hands. “You cannot leave your parrot where he is, Frank. If he stays on the top of the flag-staff all night, he will die of exposure!”

At this dreadful possibility, Frank Fearless lost his usual calm exposure. “Ladders!” he eggespinned. “We must go up and fetch him down!”

“There’s not a ladder in the place,” said Merry. “The Head ran short of freewood, and he had them all chopped up this morning. I saw old Fossil on the job. The only ladder at St. Sam’s—and that won’t help—is the ladder in Miss Jolly’s stocking!”

“Really, Merry—” protested Molly, thinking; Frank made a last desperate attempt to coax Percy to leave his perch. He wistled to him; he crooned to him; he promised him lots of sugar. But Percy was not to be drawn.

(Continued on page 16.)

