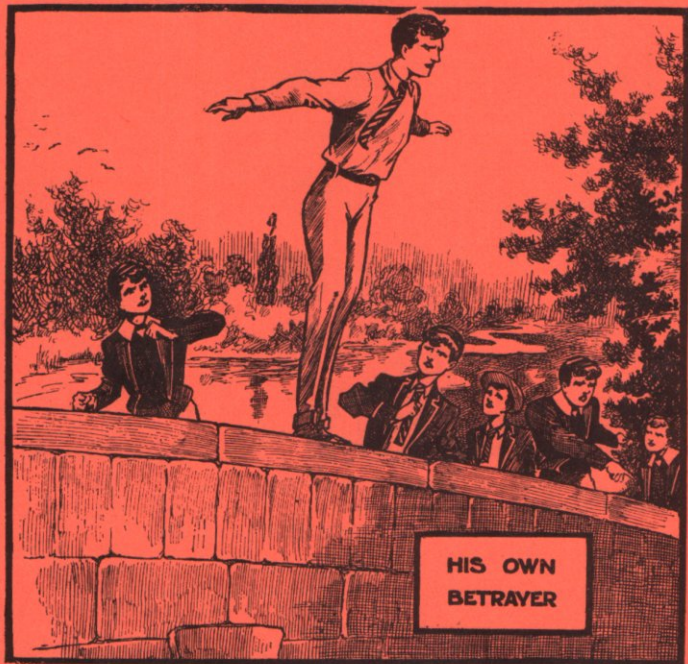


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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Denounced!

THE new boy was standing by the open window of the junior common-room, alone. He was looking out into the Close of Greyfriars towards the distant playing-fields, where the shouts of the cricketers and the merry click of bat and ball could be heard. There was a shadow on his face. He was alone—and he was feeling lonely.

He sighed involuntarily as he stood there, and that sigh caught the ear of Bob Cherry of the Remove, who had come into the common-room. Bob looked round in surprise, and spotted the new boy.

Bob Cherry was in flannels, having just come in from the cricket. Fry of the Fourth had taken his wicket with the first ball of the over, and Bob Cherry had strolled into the house to escape sarcastic inquiries from his Form-fellows as to the market price of duck's eggs. That was how he came to happen upon the new boy.

Bob Cherry had the kindest heart in the world. He had never seen the new fellow before, the latter having doubtless arrived while

the cricket-match was going on. But Bob understood how he was feeling—as most new boys feel at first at a big school, amid a throng of strangers—lonely in the midst of a crowd. And Bob bore down upon the lad standing at the window, and slapped him on the back by way of greeting.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob cheerily.

The new boy spun round. He was gasping a little from the vigour of Bob's salute, and for a moment did not know whether the attack was a hostile one or not. But Bob Cherry's ruddy, good-humoured face reassured him.

"New chap?" asked Bob affably.

"Yes."

"Name?"

"Cleveland."

"Form?"

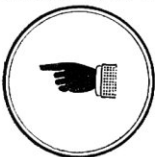
"Lower Fourth."

"Good egg!" said Bob. "That's my Form—the Remove we call it here. I see you're watching the cricket. Play cricket?"

"No."

"Footer?"

"No."



"Oh! Swim?"

"No."

"Row?"

"No."

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose thoughtfully. He had never listened before to such a list of "noes." They were strong on games and all athletic sports at Greyfriars, and a fellow who did not play any of them was not likely to be popular. It was also difficult to find a topic for conversation.

"Play anything?" asked Bob, rather dismayed.

"Yes; draughts."

"Draughts!" said Bob faintly. "Oh, my hat! Why don't you say dominoes?"

The new boy smiled. He was a handsome fellow, and his smile was very pleasant. Bob Cherry looked him over. He was very handsome, but not at all "soft" in his looks. His form was remarkably well-developed for a lad of his age, and he had a deep, strong chest, and his head was well-poised upon strong shoulders. At a glance, Bob Cherry, who was versed in such matters, would have set him down as a surprise-packet for any fellow who should thoughtlessly attempt to handle him.

"Box, I suppose?" asked Bob.

"No."

"Ever have the gloves on?"

"No."

"Run, jump, or hop?" asked Bob, growing sarcastic.

Cleveland laughed.

"No."

"My only summer bonnet! Don't you do anything?" asked Bob. "You look as if you've got some muscle, too! Been to school before?"

"No."

"Oh, that accounts, perhaps. You'll learn some things here," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Cricket is compulsory, you know, unless you've got a doctor's certificate for slacking. And I'll teach you how to box."

Cleveland coloured.

"Thank you, I'd rather not," he said.

"You don't want to learn to box?"

"No."

"But you'll have to, if you're going to find life worth living in the Greyfriars Remove," grinned Bob Cherry. "Fellow who can't look out for himself will get it in the neck. Why, if you can't put your hands up, even Bunter and Snoop will bully you! Now, I've got nothing to do till Wharton's wicket goes down, and the fellows come in, so I'll show you how to stop a drive at the nose."

The new boy backed away.

"Please don't!" he said. "I never fight."

"You'll learn different here!" chuckled Bob. "I'm a nice quiet boy, but most of the chaps here would dot you on the nose if you told them you couldn't fight. I'm going to dot you on the nose, but only in the way of kindness. Now, stop that one!"

Bob Cherry launched out a large fist.

Cleveland's arm came up, as if involuntarily, and the blow was stopped. Bob Cherry stared at him.

"You guarded that one jolly well for a fellow who doesn't know how to box," he said suspiciously. "Have you been pulling my legs, young shaver?"

"No, no!" exclaimed Cleveland hurriedly. "That—that was a fluke!"

"See if you can do another fluke like it, then."

And Bob Cherry punched again.

This time his knuckles came upon the new boy's nose, and Cleveland sat down on a chair with a bump. He put his hand to his nose, and Bob looked concerned.

"Oh! Did that hurt you?"

"Ow! Yes!"

"Sorry! I thought you were going to stop it. Now, take off your jacket and stand up to me, and I'll show you my

special upper-cut—the one I knocked out Bolsover major with."

"I—I'd rather not."

"But, look here—"

There was a trampling of feet in the doorway, and a crowd of fellows in flannels came in. The cricket-match was over. Harry Wharton tossed his bat on the table.

"Hallo, Bob! Fighting the new kid already?"

"No," said Bob, laughing. "Only dotting him on the nose to show him how it's done. Have you licked the Fourth?"

"Of course!"

"Ha, ha! Temple and Dabney and Fry wouldn't say 'Of course!'!" grinned Bob Cherry. "How many wickets in hand?"

"Three. So you're the new kid?" asked Harry Wharton, turning to Cleveland. "I heard there was a new chap coming into the Remove."

"And his name's Cleveland, and he doesn't play cricket or footer, or swim, or row, or jump, or box!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

"My hat!"

"Daddy's baby boy, I suppose!" said Bolsover major, with a sneer. "Well, we'll knock all the spooniness out of him here."

"Bolsover's beginning already!" grinned Bob. "You'd really better let me teach you that upper-cut, Cleveland. You remember that upper-cut, Bolsover? I gave it to you just under the chin, and you—"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bolsover major, as the juniors laughed. "Cheese it! I say, Smithy, here's the new kid—fellow who doesn't play cricket or footer, or anything else, and doesn't box, or jump, or do anything but suck his thumb!"

Vernon-Smith, whom Bolsover addressed, had come into the room after the cricketers. He was not in flannels. Vernon-Smith, the bouncer of Greyfriars, was not in the Form team. He was a good cricketer when he chose; but he did not always choose, and he was too unreliable for Wharton to depend on him. But the Bouncer did not take his exclusion from the Remove eleven pleasantly, and he was in a very bad temper at the present moment. He had asked for a place in the team that afternoon, and he had received a refusal; and he had watched the match in the hope of seeing his Form beaten, and he had been very much disappointed. He looked round with a frowning brow as Bolsover spoke to him.

"New kid?" he growled. "I'm fed up with new kids! He can go and eat coke!"

Then, as his eyes fell carelessly on the new boy, the Bouncer gave a start.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo! You know him?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Know him? My hat!"

Vernon-Smith strode through the crowd of juniors, and came face to face with the new boy. Cleveland looked him in the face. The juniors gathered round curiously. There was nothing surprising in Vernon-Smith knowing the new boy, so far as that went. But the Bouncer's expression was very peculiar. He was evidently astounded to see the new boy there—utterly astounded. He gazed at Cleveland as if he could hardly believe his eyes. He scanned the new boy's face feature by feature. Cleveland seeming strangely uneasy under his searching gaze.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated the Bouncer at last.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Frank Nugent.

"I suppose you don't take him for a ghost, Smithy?"

"Might as soon have expected to see a ghost here as that chap!" said Vernon-Smith, with a sneering curl of the lip. Cleveland flushed red.

"If that's the way you treat new boys here, I can't say I think much of your manners," he said in a low, even voice.

"Oh, don't mind Smithy; he always was a pig!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The pigfulness of the esteemed Smithy is terrific," purred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior.

Vernon-Smith burst into a scoffing laugh.

"You fellows will stare when you know who he is!" he exclaimed.

"What do you mean?" demanded Bob Cherry hotly. "I know his name already, if that's what you mean. His name's Cleveland."

"Cleveland rats!" said the Bouncer contemptuously.

"Do you mean his name isn't Cleveland?" demanded Bob in astonishment.

"Yes, I do. His name's no more Cleveland than mine is Thompson. I tell you I know him. His name's Hubert Osborne, and he was expelled from St. Wode's for theft!"

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"That's the chap!" said the Bounder, pointing a dramatic finger at Cleveland. "He was expelled from St. Wode's for theft, and he's come here under an assumed name!" Cleveland stood rooted to the floor, and there was a murmur round him. "Speak up!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll stand by you!" (See Chapter 2.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER. The Bounder's Accusation!

"OH!" The Remove fellows all uttered the exclamation at once.

All eyes were fixed upon the new boy. Cleveland—if Cleveland was his name—had become crimson; but the colour ebbed from his face, leaving him deadly pale.

But he stood firmly there, with his head erect, and his eyes did not fall before the mocking gaze of the Bounder.

Silence fell upon the juniors. Ten minutes before, the new boy had been unknown and unseen, and nobody had cared twopence who he was or where he came from. But he had leaped into publicity all of a sudden. All attention was centred on him now. New boys arrived at Greyfriars often enough, and fell into their places, sooner or later, without attracting any special attention. But a new boy under an assumed name—a boy who had been expelled from his last school for theft—that was decidedly something new if it was true! But after the first gasp of surprise, most of the fellows shook their heads. They did not believe that it was true!

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry, breaking the painful pause that followed the Bounder's accusation. "I don't believe a word of it. Not so jolly easy for a chap to get into Greyfriars THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 279.

under a name that isn't his own. Do you think the Head's asleep?"

"Let's hear what Cleveland has to say," said Nugent. "Go it, Cleveland!"

"Tell Smithy he's a silly idiot, and he's made a mistake," said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder's lip curled. "I've not made a mistake," he said coolly, "and he can't deny it. Look at his face—white as a sheet. Does he look as if he's fair and square?"

"That he doesn't!" said Bolsover major. "Rot!" said Wharton again. "It's enough to knock any fellow off his balance to have this sprung on him before he's been in the school an hour. I think you're acting rottenly, Smithy. If you think he's the fellow you say, you might have spoken to him quietly, not dragged it out before a crowd. Not that I believe it."

"It's true!" said the Bounder. "Speak up, Cleveland," said Bob Cherry, patting the new boy on the shoulder. "There are some decent chaps here to give you fair play."

"It is a mistake," said Cleveland quietly. "This boy is mistaken. My name is entered on the school books, and anybody can see it off—Frank Cleveland."

"Smithy's off his rocker," said Tom Brown, the New

Zealand junior, "or else this is one of his little jokes. I don't care for that kind of joke myself."

"I'm not off my rocker, and it isn't a little joke," said the Bouncer calmly. "I say that that fellow is Osborne, and he was expelled from St. Wode's for theft, and I'll prove it. I'll prove it up to the hilt. He's deceived the Head, somehow, and wormed into this school; and it's my duty to show him up."

"My hat! When did you first think of doing your duty, Smitty?" asked Nugent, with a look of great astonishment. "This is the first I've heard of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Smitty can do his duty, if it makes things jolly rotten for somebody else," said Bob Cherry, with a snort; "but he's off-side this time!"

"Buck up, Cleveland," said Harry Wharton, with a compassionate glance at the new boy's white, strained face. "We know it's all rot, and we'll see you through."

"If you want to back up that thief, Wharton—" began Vernon-Smith savagely.

"I don't want to back up a thief; but I don't believe he's anything of the sort, and I think you are acting like a cad, as usual," said Harry. "You've made an accusation against this chap, a stranger here, and it's up to us to see fair play, and see that he has a chance to defend himself. If you've got any proofs, trot them out. In the first place, where is St. Wode's, and what do you know about it?"

"St. Wode's is a school in Devonshire—a jolly good long way from here, which I suppose is the reason why the chap has selected Greyfriars," said the Bouncer scornfully. "I know a chap at St. Wode's, and he asked me there for the sports day, and that was when I saw that chap Osborne. He was the champion athlete of the Lower School at St. Wode's, and everybody was looking at him. He beat everything hollow—at running, jumping, swimming, and a lot of other things, and beat even the seniors in events that were open to Upper and Lower School. So you can be sure he was well looked at, and I saw him plainly enough. I hadn't anything to say to him, as the chap I was with wasn't on speaking terms with him. But I saw him as close as I see him now, and I saw him when he took his prizes. I saw him in the swim and on the cinder-path. Do you think I'm likely to make a mistake after that? He was the most-talked-of chap in the place. If he had been just an ordinary junior, I shouldn't have noticed him. As it was, he was forced on my attention. And I know I haven't made a mistake!"

The Bouncer concluded, a little breathless, and all eyes were fixed upon the new boy.

Vernon-Smith's account was circumstantial enough. There was no doubt that it had happened as he said, and that he believed he had recognised Hubert Osborne, of St. Wode's, in the new boy at Greyfriars.

But the Bouncer was given to believing very easily in anything that was disagreeable to others. The fact that he believed it did not prove that it was true. The general impression still was that it was a case of a resemblance and mistaken identity.

"And you say that chap Osborne was expelled from St. Wode's?" asked Nugent.

"Yes."

"Not the kind of chap to be expelled, from the way you've described him, I should think. I should have thought the school'd be proud of him."

"He turned out a dead wrong 'un. My friend wrote to me later and mentioned him, the chap who'd knocked out seniors and juniors in the athletic competitions, and told me he'd been found out to be a thief, and sacked from the school. He just gave it to me as an item of news. He had never liked Osborne, and I didn't like him, either, the little I saw of him on sports day at St. Wode's."

"Rather a compliment for him!" grunted Johnny Bull. "That's the chap!" said the Bouncer, pointing a dramatic forefinger at Cleveland. "He was expelled from St. Wode's for theft, and he's come here under an assumed name."

Cleveland stood rooted to the floor. His tongue seemed to cleave to his mouth as he tried to speak.

There was a murmur round him. "Speak up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We'll stand by you. We know it's all rot! Speak up, old man!"

"Let him deny it if he dares!" said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

"I deny it!" said the new boy.

"You hear him, Smitty?"

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose lying would come easy to him after stealing?" he said.

"Oh, shut up!" "It is not true," said Cleveland in a low, steady voice, the colour coming back into his cheeks. "This fellow has described a boy who was keen on all sports—well, I am not

a sportsman at all. I had already told this chap"—he nodded towards Bob Cherry—"that I don't play footer, or cricket, or swim, or anything in that line."

"So he had," exclaimed Bob Cherry triumphantly, "before you came in, Smitty, with your precious yarn?"

"I never heard of St. Wode's, and the name of Hubert Osborne is quite strange to me," said Cleveland calmly. "I hope that will be enough. But if this fellow, Vernon-Smith, persists in uttering this charge against me, I shall appeal to the headmaster for protection."

"Better give Smitty a licking," said Bob Cherry.

Cleveland shook his head.

"I'm not a fighting chap," he said. "I shall have a right to be protected from such accusations, and I shall appeal to the Head."

"Sneak!" said several voices.

"Oh, dry up!" said Bob Cherry, glaring round. "Is a chap to be called a liar and a thief, and keep mum? Smitty's made a mistake, because Cleveland happens to look a bit like some other chap, and instead of stopping to make sure, he's blurted out a rotten accusation before the whole Form. I call it disgusting."

"I am sure!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, rats!"

"He's not a fighting chap, he says!" said Vernon-Smith scoffingly. "Osborne was the best junior boxer at St. Wode's. I know that. He could lick any chap in the school below the Sixth. He's lying now!"

"Rot!" said Bob. "If he could do all that, he'd lick you now, for your cheek."

"I should imagine so," remarked Wharton.

"Well, he would find me rather tough," said the Bouncer, "and he's afraid of giving himself away, I suppose? But I hold to what I said—that chap is named Osbourne, and he's a thief!"

There was a tense pause.

The Remove at Greyfriars was a rough-and-ready Form. In reply to such words as the Bouncer's there was only one possible answer—a blow, or a meeting in the gym, with the gloves on. A fellow who allowed himself to be insulted was likely to get nothing but contempt from the rest of the Form.

Cleveland looked round at the faces of the juniors. He understood. They did not believe that the Bouncer was in the right. But they knew what Cleveland ought to do. He had to stand up for himself, or else fall at once into the place of a wretched funk, who could be bullied to any extent by any fellow who felt that way inclined.

"I've said I'm not a fighting chap," said Cleveland, "but I'll fight you, Vernon-Smith! I say you are a liar and a slanderer!"

And he reached out and struck the Bouncer across the cheek with the open palm of his hand.

Smack!

The Bouncer started back.

"Bravo!" said Bob Cherry. "Now come along to the gym!"

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

"I'll come to the gym fast enough," he exclaimed. "I'll make the cad pay for that!"

"I'm ready," said Cleveland.

And the juniors crowded out of the common-room, and made their way to the gym.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Fight!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had gathered round the new boy.

He had no friends at Greyfriars, and he needed somebody to see him through this. And the chums of the Remove meant to see him through.

It was "up" to them to see that the stranger within the gates had fair play. And they were on the worst of terms with the Bouncer, and naturally disposed to side with a fellow the Bouncer was attacking. And there was something about Cleveland they liked. He had a pleasant and frank face, and he looked a wholesome and good-natured lad. And this sudden persecution, in the very first hour of his arrival at Greyfriars, moved the indignation of the Famous Five. They wanted to show the new fellow that all the Remove were not of the Vernon-Smith brand.

Vernon-Smith was surrounded by his friends, too, as he went into the gymnasium—Bolsover major, and Snoop, and Stott, and Skinner, and some more. Glove fights were allowed by the rules of the school, so long as they were not carried to excess—or if not exactly allowed, they were taken no notice of. The prefects were very much down on combats with the bare fist. Bolsover major helped Vernon-Smith off with his jacket, and Snoop brought the gloves. There was a sarcastic grin on the Bouncer's face.

"You thank you'll lick him?" said Bolsover, with a glance across at Cleveland.

The new boy was stripping well. He had rolled back his sleeves, and he displayed a pair of arms that were remarkably well developed, and seemingly as hard as iron.

"I don't know," said the Bounder. "But he can't lick me without giving himself away. He's told Bob Cherry that he can't box."

"He looks like iron."

"He's as hard as nails," said the Bounder; "but if he stands up to me, it will prove he's the fellow I take him for."

"That's right enough."

"I don't care if I'm licked if I prove my point. I'm acting from a sense of duty in this matter," said the Bounder loftily.

Bolsover major chuckled, and Vernon-Smith scowled at him.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing," said Bolsover, with a grin. "Step out; the chap's ready!"

Cleveland was ready to begin. He was quite cool and calm. He had fumbled with the gloves in putting them on, and his backers were very doubtful about his chances with the Bounder.

"I wish I had time to show you that upper-cut," said Bob Cherry regretfully. "Look out for Smyth's left. He's a demon with his left. Keep as close to him as you can, and hit your hardest. He doesn't like being hurt, and he's afraid of getting his face marked. He's a bit of a dandy, you know, and dislikes a thick nose. Pile in your hardest, and look out for his left!"

"All right," said Cleveland.

Bulstrode was selected at timekeeper. He had a watch in his hand.

"Seconds out of the ring," said Bulstrode, in a business-like manner. "Now, then! Time!"

And Cleveland and Vernon-Smith stepped up for the first round.

"It's a rotten shame!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The chap must be fired after his journey, and it's beastly to pick on him like this!"

"Just like Smyth!" growled Frank Nugent; and Hurree-Jamset Ram Singh said that the likefulness to the esteemed Smyth was terrific.

"Look! There he goes!"

Bump!

Vernon-Smith was attacking, and Cleveland's defence was clumsy. He did not seem to know what to do with his hands. The Bounder's blows came like lightning, tapping here and there on the face and chest of the new boy; and suddenly Smyth's left came crashing home with a terrific drive, and the new junior went down.

He lay on the floor for some moments dazed.

"Time!"

Bob Cherry picked up the new boy and sat him on Wharton's knee in a corner of the ring. Cleveland blinked at him. The gloves had softened the force of the blows, but Vernon-Smith had hit hard, as hard as he could, and the new boy was hurt. His lip was bleeding, and his nose was swelling visibly.

"I say, this won't do, you know," said Bob, in distress. "You can stand up to him better than that, Cleveland! Put your beef into it." Bob felt the new boy'siceps. "Plenty of beef here, if you use it. Go for him!"

Cleveland smiled faintly.

"I told you I wasn't a fighting chap!" he said. "But I'm not a coward. If I'm going to be licked, I can take it."

"But you needn't be licked if you stand up to him," said Bob. "Get close to the ead, and hit hard."

"I'll try."

"Time!" sang out Bulstrode.

Cleveland stepped up again. He was hard hit, and he did not seem to know how to take care of himself in a fight. But he was evidently plucky. He was not afraid to face the blows of the Bounder, though he seemed unable to stop them.

The Bounder simply played with him in the second round. There was a cruel strain in Vernon-Smith's nature, and he liked a situation like this—a fellow at his mercy, to be hit again and again, as hard as he liked. And the Bounder made good use of the two minutes the round lasted. He finished the round by knocking the new boy reeling into the arms of his second.

Bob Cherry fanned Cleveland's crimson face with a towel.

"May as well chuck it up!" he growled.

"I'll fight as long as I can stand!" said Cleveland.

"If you had as much sense as pluck you'd make rings round him," said Bob.

"Time!"

The Bounder followed the same tactics in the third round. But that round contained a surprise for him. Cleveland suddenly seemed to break out, and he closed in on the Bounder with a rain of blows, and the ead of the Remove was knocked right and left. Right and left, left and right,

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came Cleveland's crashing blows, and Vernon-Smith staggered back dazed and confused. Bob Cherry gave a roar of approval.

"That's it! Go it—go it! Pile in!"

"Bravo!"

But Cleveland's sudden energy left him as suddenly as it had come. Vernon-Smith recovered as the attack slackened, and finished the round by knocking Cleveland on his back.

Bob Cherry picked him up.

In the fourth round Vernon-Smith attacked savagely, and the new boy was driven right round the ring, fumbling feebly in his defence.

Bump!

He was down again, stretched gasping on the floor. Bulstrode began to count.

"One, two, three, four, five, six—"

All eyes were upon Cleveland. He made an effort to rise, and then sank down again, gasping for breath.

The Bounder regarded him with a sneering smile. His expression showed that he believed that the new boy was malingering; that Cleveland could have risen if he had chosen to do so. If the new boy was acting, he was doing it very well, and the Removites were not disposed to believe that any fellow would allow himself to be licked if he could help it.

"Seven, eight, nine—out!"

Cleveland was still upon the floor. He had been counted out, and according to the rules the fight was over, and the victory was with the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith stepped out of the ring, and threw off the gloves with a scoffing laugh.

"He could go on if he liked!" he said.

But there even his own friends murmured. "Hang it all!" said Bolsover major. "The kid's put up a good fight, and he knew he hadn't a chance from the beginning. Let him alone."

"I tell you he could keep on—"

"Oh, rats!"

Harry Wharton helped Cleveland to his feet. The new boy seemed dazed and confused. They took off the gloves, and helped him on with his jacket. Then he was taken to the tap to bathe his flushed and burning face.

"Thank you," said Cleveland gratefully. "You're very kind, you fellows."

"You're a good plucked 'un, kid!" said Johnny Bull. "But what you don't know about fighting would fill a book."

Cleveland smiled.

"I know that," he said. "I suppose I'm what you'd call a swot. I'm pretty good at my lessons, you know, but I'm not a fighting chap."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"You'll have to learn," he said. "A chap who can't take care of himself is no good here. We'll give you some boxing of an evening in the gym."

"Thank you very much; but I shouldn't care for it," said Cleveland, with a shake of the head. "I fought that fellow because they'd all have thought me a funk if I hadn't. But I don't like fighting, and I don't intend to fight again if I can help it. I want to work. This kind of thing puts me off my work, and I want to pass exams."

"Well, you're a queer fish, that's all," said Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I could see how Smyth could fancy for a minute that you're the chap he was describing. Not much of a champion athlete about the way you handled that scrap."

"We're going to have tea in the study, Cleveland," said Harry Wharton. "Will you come?"

"Thanks! I shall be very glad."

And when Cleveland had removed, as far as possible, the signs of the combat, he was taken into No. 1 Study by the chums of the Remove. The tea in No. 1 Study was very pleasant, and the juniors liked Cleveland very well upon further acquaintance. When the guests were gone, and Wharton and Nugent were left alone in No. 1 Study, Harry Wharton remained very thoughtful for some time. Nugent looked at him inquiringly.

"What do you think of the new chap, Harry?" he asked, at last.

"I think he's the right sort," said Harry.

"So do I! And about Smyth's yarn—"

"I think it's all rot."

"Same here! Do you think Smyth believes it himself?"

"I suppose so. But it's all rot. If this chap had been the chap Smyth was describing, he could have knocked the Bounder out. Wouldn't he have done it if he could?"

"I should say so!"

"Of course he would! It's just a case of a resemblance, that's all. It's pretty clear that Smyth took a dislike to,



that chap Osborne at St. Wode's—you know he dislikes every chap who's popular, and who's decent. That's Smithy all over. He's got his knife into Cleveland—and he believes that yarn just because he wants to believe it. But he won't get the other fellows to swallow it in a hurry. And if the Bounder's going to be down on Cleveland, this study is going to back him up!

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Quite Satisfactory.

CLEVELAND of the Remove came in for a great deal of attention that day, and the next. New boys generally dropped into their places without exciting much remark. But with Cleveland it was different.

Nobody but the Bounder believed the accusation he had made. But it drew the general attention to Cleveland.

Vernon-Smith stuck to his own opinion. If he addressed Cleveland at any time, he would call him "Osborne." He always spoke of him as Osborne. But even Smithy's own friends did not pretend to swallow the story. Bolsover major told him bluntly that he'd better chuck it if he wasn't looking for trouble; and, indeed, the Bounder, never very popular, was growing more unpopular on account of it. The fellows did not hesitate to tell him that he was picking on the new fellow like this simply because the new fellow had shown that he was a duffer with his fists. If he had been able to lick the Bounder, the Bounder would have had to shut up. And the Remove voted it a shame.

The queer story spread to the whole school and Fourth Form and Shell fellows looked at Cleveland inquiringly when they met him, and asked him questions. To all questions Cleveland gave the same direct answers. His name was Frank Cleveland. He was sent to Greyfriars by his great-uncle, Colonel Cleveland, who was in India. He had never been to school before. He had had a tutor. He wasn't a sporting chap, but he was strong on Form work; indeed, the fellows soon pronounced him, with great disgust, to be a "swot." It could not be denied that he answered frankly and readily, and Vernon-Smith's accusation was laughed at.

The Bounder gritted his teeth over it.

It was not often that he was bothered with a sense of duty. And on this special occasion, when he had done what he had chosen to consider his duty, he had made the biggest mistake of his life. Instead of branding the new boy as an impostor, he had branded himself as a reckless slanderer. And there were a good many fellows in the school who were quite ready to tell him so.

But, in spite of the general disbelief, such a story was not easily forgotten. It came to the prefects' ears, and Wingate, the head prefect of Greyfriars, and captain of the school, felt it his duty to question Cleveland. But Cleveland answered Wingate to his perfect satisfaction, and Wingate sought out Vernon-Smith in his study.

"You have been setting a yarn on foot about a new kid in your Form, Smith!" said the captain of Greyfriars sternly.

Vernon-Smith scowled. Bolsover had warned him to look out for trouble if he persisted in his story; and it looked now as if the trouble had come. But the Bounder was not a fellow to give in easily.

"I've told the truth about him," he said sullenly.

"You think you recognise him as a fellow you saw at some other school under another name?"

"I know I recognise him.

"Cleveland has proved that he is all right."

"He has taken the fellows in. He can't take me in."

"So you stick to it?" said Wingate, frowning.

"Yes, I do."

"I suppose I can't tell you what you're to think," said Wingate grimly. "But I can tell you what you're not allowed to say. You're to drop this."

The Bounder looked sullen.

"Cleveland seems a very decent kid—a bit of a swot, but that's not a fault. You're not going to slander him simply because he can't knock you down for it. If I hear anything more of this, I shall see you about it, Smith."

And with that warning Wingate left the study, leaving the Bounder sullenly silent. Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth savagely when the captain of Greyfriars was gone.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "It's true—it's true! And I'll prove it somehow—I'll show him up!"

And the Bounder's mind worked in that direction, after

his interview with Wingate. His feelings towards the new boy had been indifferent at first. He had a vague dislike for him, perhaps, but that was all. But he hated him now. Through Cleveland Vernon-Smith had been set down as a slanderer, and had been called over the coals by the captain of the school. And the Bounder was intensely anxious to prove his case, in order to justify himself, and to avenge himself upon the new boy, and prove to all the fellows that he was right after all. And it would be a fall for the Famous Five, if it were proved that the fellow they had taken up was an impostor and a cheat.

The Bounder was less disposed than ever to recede from the position he had taken up. But there was more trouble in store for the fellow who had chosen so unfortunate an occasion for developing a sense of duty.

When the Remove went in to morning lessons a couple of days later, Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, did not proceed to business as usual.

The grave expression upon his face warned the Remove that something out of the common was coming.

"Something's up!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"My boys!" said the Remove-master, "I have something to say to you before we commence this morning. A most unpleasant matter has come to my notice."

The Remove were deadly silent. Many of them were running hastily in their minds certain delinquencies which the Form-master might possibly be referring to. Billy Bunter was observed to turn very red. The cook had missed a pie from the pantry the day before, and Billy Bunter was generally suspected of knowing what had become of that pie.

"The matter concerns a new boy who has recently joined this Form!" said Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter breathed again.

The fellows all glanced at Cleveland. The new boy started, and the colour changed in his cheeks.

"It appears that a most unpleasant story has been going round the school," went on Mr. Quelch very severely. "A boy in this Form has declared that Cleveland is here under an assumed name, and that he was expelled from some other school before he came here!"

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room.

The juniors understood now. The tale had been going the rounds up and down the school, and it had been certain to reach the ears of the masters at last. And Mr. Quelch had evidently heard it.

Vernon-Smith shifted uncomfortably in his seat. But there was a steely glitter in his eyes, and he met the glances of the fellows near him defiantly.

"Vernon-Smith, stand up!"

The Bounder stood up.

"You have made a certain accusation against Cleveland!"

"Yes, sir. His name isn't Cleveland!" said the Bounder grimly. "His name is Hubert Osborne. He was expelled from St. Wode's—"

"That is the accusation," said Mr. Quelch. "When it was brought to my notice, I inquired into the matter immediately. Cleveland is the ward of his great-uncle, Colonel Cleveland, now in India. He is in England in charge of Colonel Cleveland's family lawyer, who sent him here. I have communicated with the lawyer, and have received a reassuring reply from him. There is nothing whatever in your statement, Vernon-Smith. I hope you have been mistaken—deceived by a chance resemblance. I should be very sorry to believe that you had invented this story from sheer malice." Mr. Quelch paused impressively. "I have received the assurance of Mr. Brough, the solicitor, that Frank Cleveland was placed in his charge by Colonel Cleveland, to be sent to this school. At the time, Colonel Cleveland himself wrote to the Head from India. Everything is fair and above board. You see for yourself, therefore, that there is nothing whatever in your suggestion."

Even the Bounder was staggered.

"You understand me, Vernon-Smith?"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"You admit that you have made a mistake?"

Vernon-Smith was silent.

"Own up, Smithy!" murmured Bol-over major. "Nothing to be ashamed of in making a mistake. It's the best way out of it."

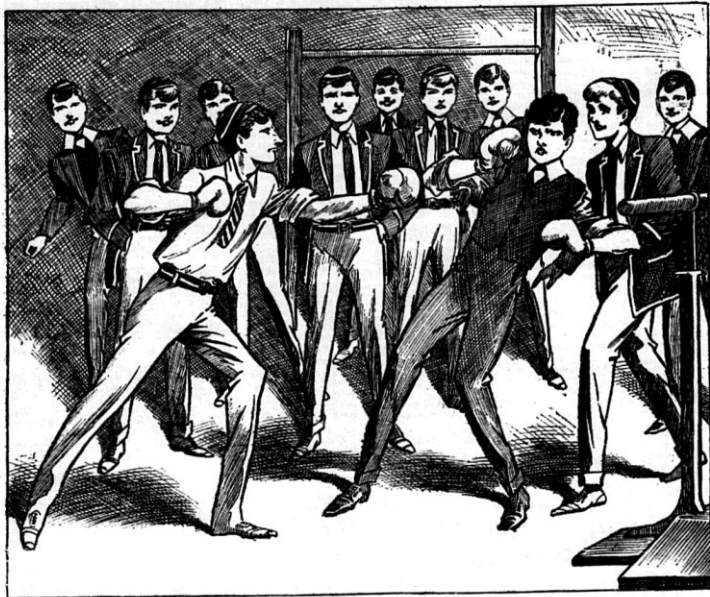
Vernon-Smith did not heed this friendly counsel. He was staggered, but he was not convinced—probably because he did not choose to be convinced. Vernon-Smith could be very obstinate when he liked.

"I am waiting for your reply, Smith," said Mr. Quelch icily.

"I don't think I was mistaken, sir."

"What?" Mr. Quelch raised his voice a little. "After what I have said to you, Smith, do you dare to repeat your charge?"

ANSWERS



The Bouncer made good use of the two minutes the round lasted, and finished up by knocking the new boy reeling into the arms of his second. "May as well chuck it up!" growled Bob Cherry. "I'll fight as long as I can stand!" muttered Cleveland. (See Chapter 3.)

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I shall not argue with you further, Smith," he said. "I believe that this is simply obstinate impertinence on your part. You will beg Cleveland's pardon for having made this unfounded accusation."

The Bouncer set his teeth.

"Let it be proved, then, sir," he said thickly. "Ask the headmaster of St. Wade's to come and see the fellow—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Smith. I am hardly likely to request a complete stranger to make a journey of three hundred miles to satisfy an obstinate and ill-natured boy. The matter is proved beyond a doubt. I am willing to believe that you were mistaken; but in that case you must make amends by telling Cleveland you are sorry for the mistake. If you persist, Smith, I can only conclude that you are actuated by personal dislike, and that you are a deliberate slanderer."

Vernon-Smith turned quite white.

"Now speak to Cleveland, Smith!" said Mr. Quelch, less harshly.

"I don't know anybody here named Cleveland, sir," said the Bouncer grudgingly. "I know a fellow named Osborne!" There was a murmur in the class. Some of the fellows admired Vernon-Smith's nerve in "standing up" to his Form-master in this way. But the general feeling was against him. He had made a mistake, and he ought to have owned up.

Mr. Quelch's frown was terrific as he heard Vernon-Smith's audacious reply.

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE SCHOOLBOY DRAMATISTS!"

"Smith! You dare to repeat this, after what I have said?"

"It's the truth, sir."

"I order you to beg Cleveland's pardon. Otherwise I shall punish you as a slanderer and a spreader of malicious falsehoods."

The Bouncer was silent.

"Will you speak to Cleveland now?"

"I can't, sir; I know I'm not mistaken."

"You deliberately persist, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well! Step out here, Vernon-Smith!"

Vernon-Smith stepped out, and Mr. Quelch took the cane from his desk.

"I shall cane you severely, Smith," he said. "I shall cane you for malicious slander against an unoffending boy, and for impertinence to me. Hold out your hand."

Vernon-Smith was tough, and he prided himself upon being tough. But the caning he received then and there from his Form-master made him writhe. He went back to his place with a white face and burning eyes.

The matter dropped, and lessons went on their usual course. The Bouncer sat quivering, his eyes burning. When the Remove were dismissed, he strode up to Cleveland in the passage. The new boy faced him calmly.

"You've got me a licking!" muttered the Bouncer. "I shan't forget it. And I'll prove yet that you're what I've said you are—an expelled thief! I'll prove it, and show you up to all Greyfriars!"

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of Greyfriars. Order Early.

And then the Bouncer strode savagely away; and a murmur from the other fellows followed him.
"Shame!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. No Good at Cricket.

"COMING down to the cricket?"
Bob Cherry clapped Cleveland on the shoulder as the Remove came out after lessons that afternoon. It was a glorious summer's day, and the lengthening of the days gave the juniors plenty of time for cricket practice after last lesson.

Cleveland shook his head.
"I don't play cricket!" he said.
"But you'll have to here," explained Bob. "The prefects are down on any kid who tries to cut the practice. You have to do a regular amount, and more if you like. We generally like. Come and have a go at the nets."
"I—I've got some work I want to do. I'm doing Greek with Linley—"

"Marky's coming to cricket practice now," said Bob. "Ain't you, Marky?"

Mark Linley, the scholarship junior, nodded and smiled.
"Yes, rather," he said. "Better come, Cleveland. We shall do the Greek better after an hour in the open air."
"Besides, you have to," chimed in Harry Wharton.
"No good leaving it till Wingate hears that you're slacking, and hunts you out with a cane."

Cleveland laughed.
"I'll come, then," he said. "But I—I've hardly touched a cricket ball, you know, and—and you'll find me an awful duffer."

"You look like a chap who could play, too," said Wharton, with a glance over the new boy's well-set figure. "We'll see what you can do, anyway."

And the new boy was marched down to the cricket-ground in the midst of a cheery crowd of juniors. Vernon-Smith watched them go with a sneering smile.

"That crowd are awfully taken up with Osborne," he remarked to Skinner.

Skinner coughed.
"Why don't you drop that, Smitty?" he expostulated.
"I—I dare say it's all right, but the fellows don't believe it, and they don't like it."

"Don't you believe it?" demanded the Bouncer, staring at him angrily.

"Well, you see, I—I think you've made a mistake."
"Am I the kind of fellow to make a foolish mistake like that?"

"Well, no, you're not," admitted Skinner. "But you've made a regular howler this time, and that's a fact."

"I suppose you've got a fellow-feeling for the cad, because you were expelled once yourself," snarled the Bouncer.

Skinner flushed.
"You needn't rub that in," he said. "The Head let me come back, anyway. I don't care twopenny about the fellow, one way or the other; but I don't believe he's the fellow you take him for, Smitty. Nobody believes it excepting you—if you do!"

"You think it's just obstinacy, if you must have it," said Skinner, and he walked away without pursuing the matter further.

The Bouncer was left alone, with hatred and uncharitableness running riot in his breast. He joined Bolsover major. Bolsover was not very cordial. Vernon-Smith had made himself so unpopular that even his own friends were beginning to give him the cold shoulder. The Bouncer understood what Bolsover's manner implied, and he flushed a little.

"So you're turning your back on me, too?" he said bitterly.

Bolsover major gave a grunt.
"I'm not doing that," he said; "but I'm fed up with your yarns about Cleveland. Why can't you let the matter drop."

"I'm not going to do that till I've shown him up."
"You won't do that!"

"I shall! I'm not going to let up on him; it's up to me now to prove my case. I'm getting a copy of the St. Wode's school magazine. I remember that there was a portrait of Osborne in it, from a photograph, as winner of the swimming swimming championship. I shall have it here to-morrow."

"That will only prove a resemblance; and we know that already, if there's anything at all in your yarn," said Bolsover. "The fact is, Smitty, you're doing the worst possible thing for yourself in sticking to this. Why don't you drop it?" And Bolsover, like Skinner, walked away without waiting to hear any more on the subject.

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Meanwhile, the juniors were on the cricket-ground, and Cleveland was being put to practice. The Bouncer strolled down to watch him. Firmly convinced as he was that Frank Cleveland was really Hubert Osborne of St. Wode's, the Bouncer was sure that he would catch his enemy tripping sooner or later. Hubert Osborne had been the best junior cricketer in his school. And it is not easy for a good cricketer to pretend to be a bad one. But if Cleveland was pretending, he was doing it remarkably well.

"Don't stand in front of the wicket," said Bob Cherry. "This isn't a game of skittles, with your legs as skittles, you know. Stick him in his place, Harry!"

Wharton posted Cleveland in his place. Then Nugent sent down a ball, and the wicket was knocked over.

"Why didn't you stop that ball?" demanded Bob.
"I—I didn't see it coming."

Bob grunted.
"Well, see the next one coming, fathead!"
Nugent sent down an easy ball. Cleveland just stopped it. But at the third ball he let out the bat, and the red leather sphere went skimming away.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That was a jolly good hit! Why, you'll pick up the batting in no time."

Cleveland flushed.
It was the only good hit he made. He fumbled with the ball every time, till at length even the good-natured Bob Cherry's patience was exhausted.

"You'd better run off and play marbles," he said at last, in disgust. "Blessed if I ever saw such a duffer!"

"I told you I couldn't play, you know," Cleveland murmured.

"Well, you told the truth. It will take about ten centuries to make a cricketer of you," said Bob.

Cleveland laughed, and gave up the bat. The juniors settled down to practice, and the new boy walked off the field. He paused and looked back, with his hands in his pockets, and a shadow on his handsome face. For a long time he stood there, eyeing the cricketers, and he sighed at last as he turned towards the School House.

He did not observe Vernon-Smith watching him. But the Bouncer's eyes were upon him, and the Bouncer was thinking.

"He nearly gave himself away in the fight in the gym, and he's nearly given himself away on the cricket-ground. He will give himself away completely sooner or later, and then I shall have him!"

He followed Cleveland with his eyes. Billy Bunter came out of the School House, and ran into the new boy. Bunter grunted, and blinked at Cleveland angrily through his big spectacles.

"Can't you look where you're going?" he demanded.
"You ran into me," said Cleveland mildly.

"Silly ass! What did you want to get in the way for?" growled Bunter, setting his spectacles straight on his little fat nose. "I've a jolly good mind to give you a thick ear, you dumsy ass."

Cleveland laughed.

"Don't cackle at me!" said Bunter. "I'd give you a thick ear as soon as look at you!"

"You fat duffer!" said Cleveland.

Bunter turned red with anger. He knew all about the fact that the new boy was a duffer at fighting, and he fancied Cleveland would be a safe subject for bullying. And Billy Bunter, being a funk of the first water, was frequently bullied himself, and so he had a natural inclination to pass it on.

"Do you want a thick ear, you rotter?" he bawled.

Cleveland laughed again. There was something funny in the little fat junior threatening the muscular, outstanding fellow a head taller than himself. Billy Bunter charged at the new boy, and his fat palm came with a smack upon Cleveland's ear.

"Take that, and—Yah! Ow! Oh! Yarchoh!"
Bunter, to his great astonishment, felt himself picked up, and swept off the ground, and dumped down with a concussion that knocked all the breath out of his fat body. He groped wildly for his spectacles, and glared at Cleveland. The new boy was standing over him with flashing eyes, and evidently inclined to handle him further.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Yow! I—I didn't mean that, you know. It was only a j-j-joke! Ow! Lemme alone! Help! Ow!"

"You fat fool! You're not worth licking," said Cleveland contemptuously. And he turned his back on Bunter, and went into the house.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter, as he picked himself up. "Yow! All the fellows said he couldn't fight—yow—and he's as strong as a beastly horse—grooh—I'm hurt! Ow! I'll jolly well let that beast alone in future! Ow—ow!"

to himself.
"He'll give himself away sooner or later—sooner or later—and then I shall have him!" muttered the Bounder. "Sooner or later—and rather sooner than later, if I can work it."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Strange Discovery.

MARK LINLEY came into his study, fresh and ruddy from cricket. Cleveland was there, with his books on the table; but he was not working. He was gazing from the open window upon the cricket-field. He turned round as the Lancashire lad came in. "Watching the cricket?" said Mark cheerily.

"Yes, I'm ready to begin now, if you are."
"Quite ready."
Mark Linley had taken very much to the new boy. Mark had won his scholarship to Greyfriars by hard work, and he liked hard workers. And the new boy was a hard worker. Greek was not a compulsory subject at Greyfriars, but the new boy had taken up Greek, and Mark was only too willing to help him. Mark did not quite understand his new friend. Cleveland worked hard, very; but he did not seem to be naturally what the fellows called a "swot." More than once it had seemed to Mark Linley that Cleveland was forcing himself to his task—that he would gladly have escaped from it into the open air. But if Cleveland had other tastes besides swotting, he kept them strictly to himself, and he worked very hard, whether willingly or not.

"Brought your Greek lexicon?" asked Mark. "I haven't one. I usually borrow Mr. Quelch's when I want one. He is very kind. But I think you said you had one."
"Here it is," said Cleveland, taking the lexicon from a pile on the table. "Liddell and Scott abridged—that's the one you want."

"That's it."
The two juniors settled down to work. They were going through a speech of Demosthenes, and the lexicon would be required. As they worked, Cleveland's eyes wandered to the open window many times. The cool breeze of evening came in, and it bore to their ears the shouts of the fellows on the distant cricket-field.

"You don't feel up to it now," suggested Mark. "After all, there's plenty of time. If you'd rather be out—"

Cleveland shook his head.
"No, I want to work. I've got to work—to get on, to prove that there's something in me. I've promised my uncle."

Mark nodded.
"Are you thinking of a scholarship?" he asked. "It means hard work, but there's a lot of kudos if you get it, especially if you're a rich chap, and don't need it," he added, with a laugh.

"I want to show that I can work, and satisfy my uncle," said Cleveland.

"Well, that's good enough. Pile in!"
Mark Linley opened the dictionary to look out a word. He wanted the letter S, and he turned the pages to come to it. Suddenly he paused.

His eyes remained riveted upon a pencilled scrawl on the margin of the lexicon page open under his eyes.

Cleveland looked up suddenly.
"Found it?" he asked.
"N-n-no!" stammered Mark.
"What's the matter?"
"N-nothing!"

"You've got the B's there, not the S's," said Cleveland, in wonder. "What are you staring at in the book?"

Mark Linley hesitated a moment.
"I'd better show you, I think!" he said. "Look at that!"
He pushed the lexicon towards the new boy.
On the margin was scrawled, in Cleveland's handwriting, or a handwriting very like it, the name, "Hubert Osborne!"

Hubert Osborne!
The name Vernon-Smith had declared was Cleveland's own, written in Cleveland's lexicon, in Cleveland's hand.

Mark Linley felt as if the study was turning round him.
He had been one of the firmest supporters of the new boy against the Bounder's accusation. He had refused to believe a word of it. Now, for the first time, a terrible doubt shot into his mind. How came that name to be written there? He knew Cleveland's hand well enough. Cleveland had written a great deal in his study. How came that name to be written in Cleveland's hand in Cleveland's book? It looked as though it had been carelessly scrawled there in a moment of idleness, and forgotten.

Cleveland looked at it, and then very pale.
His face went very red, and then very pale.
Mark Linley looked at him steadily.

"Well?" he said.
Cleveland faltered.
"That's the name Vernon-Smith was mentioning the other day," he said.

"Yes."
"And it's been written in my book. I suppose this is a little joke of Vernon-Smith's."

Mark breathed again.
"Oh, you didn't write it!"
"I should not be likely to write any name but my own, I suppose," said Cleveland. "You'll find my name, Frank Cleveland, written on the fly-leaf."

Mark turned back to the beginning of the volume.
"I mean the title-page," said Cleveland.

The fly-leaf was gone. It had been torn out; but Frank Cleveland's name was there, on the title-page, and it was in the same hand as the "Hubert Osborne" scrawled on a page of the book.

"You think Vernon-Smith wrote that?" asked Mark, after a long pause.

"Somebody did."
"Whoever wrote it imitated your hand?"
"Looks like it."
Another long pause.

"It's a trick of Smith's," said Cleveland at last.
"He shows I work at Greek with you, and that I should be using this volume. Sooner or later you'd be bound to see the name written there, you see."

"I—I suppose so."
Cleveland looked at him quickly.
"You believe me, I suppose?" he asked sharply.

"Ye-es, I believe you. But—but it looks as if it had been scrawled there carelessly, some day when you were bored with lessons; and—and the ink is old!" said Mark.

Cleveland scanned the writing. He was perfectly calm now. Mark looked at his quiet face, and felt ashamed of the doubt that had crept into his breast in spite of himself. The boy was honest. It was a trick of the Bounder's, and Mark knew that the Bounder was fully capable of such a trick. He had played worse tricks than that on fellows he disliked. Mark had not forgotten how the Bounder had plotted and schemed to get him sent away from Greyfriars. He did not trust Vernon-Smith one inch, and he would not have been surprised at any baseness on the part of the cad of the Remove.
"It looks like my fist, and somehow he's made the ink look old," said Cleveland. "It's a rotten trick!"
Mark was quite convinced now.

"Rotten isn't the word!" he exclaimed indignantly. "It's simply revolting! He ought to be shown up to all the fellows. I'll take this book down to the common-room—"

Cleveland laid his hand on the arm of the indignant Lancashire lad, as he rose excitedly from his chair.

"Don't do that!" he said quietly. "He would deny it, and there's no proof. I'd rather keep it quiet."

Again Mark felt, for a moment, that miserable, creeping doubt; but he drove it away, as if it had been an unclean thing.

"Just as you like," he said. "But I think you'd do better to show him up, and let the fellows see what a cad he is."

"I couldn't prove that he had done it."
"Oh, nobody would be in any doubt about that, they'd know."

"Better let it drop," said Cleveland. "I'm sick of that matter—I only wish Vernon-Smith would drop it, and let me alone. Better say nothing about it. I'll cut off that margin, and burn it, and it will be all right."
"Very well!"

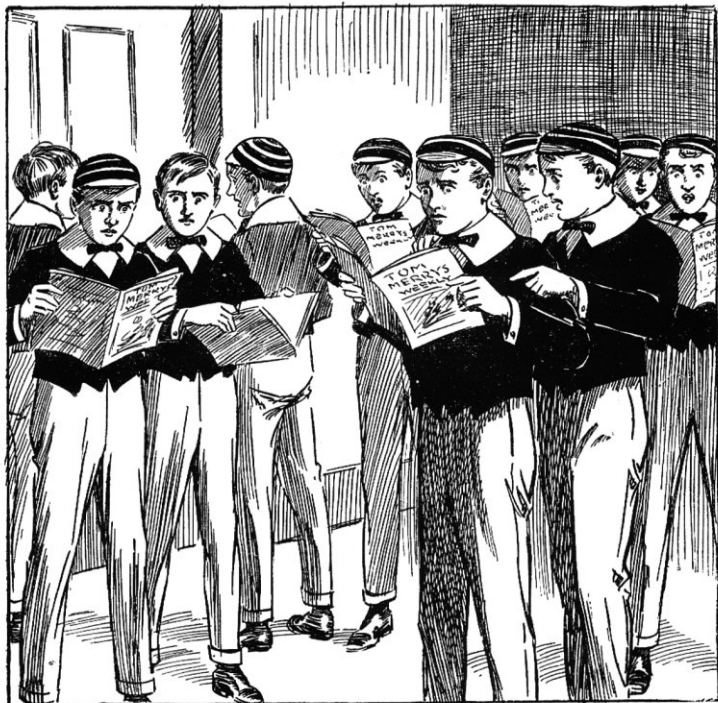
Cleveland cut the margin of the page off, and lighted a match, and carefully destroyed the strip of paper bearing that tell-tale name. Then the juniors resumed their work. Cleveland worked away hard, and the matter was not mentioned again, and at last, when the task was done, the new boy left the study. He took his books with him. He returned to his own study, which he shared with Russell and Ogilvy. Russell and Ogilvy, however, were out-of-doors now, and he had the room to himself.

He laid his books on the table, and took out several more from the bookcase, and sat down at the table, and turned over the leaves. He was not reading. He was examining every page of every book, with persistent patience. Once, across a leaf of Virgil, he came upon a scrawled name again—Hubert Osborne. In another place, there were the initials "H. O." In each case he burnt the page, careless of the damage to the book. Then for a long time he sat silent.

His head rested upon his hand, his elbow on the table. He was plunged in deep thought, and his face was white and strained.

"Is it any good—is it any good?" he muttered, aloud.
The study door opened, and Ogilvy came in. He stared at Cleveland.

"Penny for your thoughts!" he said.
Cleveland started, and flushed, and jumped up.



Tom Merry opened the "Weekly" and turned at once to the limerick column. An expression of amazement and incredulity came over his face, and then horror and dismay. "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Figgins must be mad. He might be sacked for this!" And there was a chorus of similar horrified exclamations from the rest of the fellows. (For this incident, see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "TOM MERRY'S SPECIAL NUMBER," by Martin Clifford, which is contained in our companion paper "THE GEM" LIBRARY. On sale on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

not swim, the Bounder had thrown him into terrible danger by pushing him off into deep water.

"Well?" said Bob Cherry. "Are you satisfied now, you cad?"

"No, I'm not," said Vernon-Smith savagely. "I'm not satisfied! I—"

"Neither are we!" said Harry Wharton. "As Smithy is so fond of shoving chaps into the river, I vote that we shove him in—clothes and all!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hauds off!" yelled the Bounder furiously, as the juniors grasped him. The Bounder did not come down to bathe, and he was in his ordinary clothes.

But the juniors did not take their hands off. They were fed up with Vernon-Smith, and his attacks upon the new boy. The Bounder was swept off his feet, and swung in the

air, and tossed out bodily upon the glimmering waters of the Sark.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith came up panting and gasping. He struggled to the landing-raft, but the juniors lined the edge of it, and pushed him off.

"You can swim!" said Bob Cherry blandly. "Get along somewhere else. You're not coming back here. We're fed up with you!"

"Fed up to the chin!" growled Johnny Bull. "If you put your paws on the plank, Smithy, I'll tread on 'em!"

And the Bounder, white with rage, swam along the raft, and landed on the shore near the boathouse. Followed by jeers, he tramped away towards the school, leaving a trail of water behind him as he went.



THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fed Up.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's that?"
 "Looks like a school rag!"
 "What is it?"

A number of juniors had caught sight of it at once. It was pinned up on the wall in the common-room, where it caught the eyes of the fellows on entering. It was a small magazine, with shiny leaves and large print well spaced. Bob Cherry turned over the cover and read the words, "St. Wode's School Magazine." It was pinned open, however, and on an open page a portrait was printed.

Bob took the book down and laid it on the table, and the juniors gathered round it. They understood now. Someone—evidently the Bounder—had obtained a copy of the school magazine published at St. Wode's, containing a portrait of the boy Hubert Osborne, whom he suspected Cleveland to be. The fellows gathered round thickly, looking at the portrait. It was taken from a photograph, evidently, and it showed a handsome face with clear-cut features—a face that was remarkably like Cleveland's, and might, indeed, have passed for his, his portrait. Under the picture was printed "H. Osborne, Lower IVth, Winner of the Swimming Championship!"

"H. Osborne!" said Harry Wharton. "That's the portrait of the chap Vernon-Smith took Cleveland for, then."

"Looks awfully like him!" said Nugent.

"The likeness is terrific!"

The juniors could not help being struck by it. The Bounder's assumption was easily accounted for now. The likeness was remarkable. Indeed, some of the juniors, as they gazed at it, felt a creeping doubt. Mark Linley remembered the name written in the Greek lexicon. Vernon-Smith might have written that, even imitating Cleveland's writing for the purpose. He could not have produced this likeness. Had the Bounder, after all, written that name in Cleveland's lexicon, or— Mark drove the thought from his mind.

"It's extraordinary, the likeness," said Johnny Bull.

"Still, it's only a likeness. There have been such things before, and will be again."

"Yes, rather," said Wharton. "I heard about a chap at St. Jim's getting into trouble because of a fellow just like him, who was seen going into pubs and places. Such things will happen."

"Still, it's remarkable," said Tom Brown, rather uneasily. "Jolly unlucky for Cleveland to have a double who was expelled from a school for stealing."

"That's a reason why we should stand by him, and not why we should be down on him, isn't it?" said Mark Linley.

"Quite so. It's rotten for him."

"If—if it isn't the same chap!" said Morgan.

"It isn't!" said Harry Wharton. "Look here! Winner of the swimming championship! You saw what a duffer Cleveland was in the water to-day. He'd have been drowned if we hadn't pulled him out."

"Begad, yaas," remarked Mauleverer. "He can't swim for toffee."

Vernon-Smith pushed him in on purpose, to make him betray himself if he could swim," said Wharton. "He didn't swim a stroke. He was going down like a stone when we pulled him out."

And the juniors were satisfied. The Bounder, much against his intention, had proved the new boy's case by that ill-natured action on the raft. The fellow who had been so utterly helpless when he fell into the water was not likely to be the same fellow who had won the swimming championship of his school.

"It's as clear as daylight," said Nugent. "Smithy has proved the case—against himself. I suppose he's still sticking to his guns, to judge by this rag being pinned up here. He ought to be talked to plainly."

"Let's talk to him, then," said Buletred. "We'll make him eat this magazine."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll talk to him, then," said Harry Wharton. "Come along, we'll all go together. He's in his study now, and we'll talk to him. It's about time he learned that we're fed up to the chin with his blessed rot about Cleveland."

And the juniors proceeded in a body to Vernon-Smith's study. Bob Cherry in advance carrying the St. Wode's school magazine in the tongs from the common-room.

Johnny Bull kicked open the Bounder's door, and Bob Cherry marched solemnly in, the magazine held out in front of him with the tongs.

The Bounder started up.

"We've brought you your property," said Bob, depositing the magazine on the table, and giving Vernon-Smith a playful dig on his fancy waistcoat with the tongs.

"Ow! You fathead!"

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"We found it in the common-room, and we don't like it in the way of mural decoration, so we've brought it back."

"Look here—"

"You put it there, Smithy?" said Wharton.

"Yes, I did! I thought when you saw Osborne's portrait, you'd know that he was the fellow who's calling himself Cleveland here."

"That's a little mistake—we know that he isn't! We've all come together to tell you we're fed up. 'Nuff as good as a feast."

"Quite as good, or better," said Frank Nugent. "You've got to chuck it, Smithy. Understand? We're not having any more of it. Mr. Quech told you to chuck it. Now we tell you. If you keep on, you'll get it in the neck."

"Then you're not convinced yet?" asked the Bounder, with a bitter sneer.

"No—only that you are a slanderer," said Nugent.

"You're going to burn that magazine, before our eyes, and shut up on the subject," said Bob Cherry. "That's the programme."

"I won't!"

"It's by order of the Form!"

"Hang the Form!"

"Oh, that's the way the wind blows, is it?" said Bob.

"Gentlemen, is this rank outsider going to obey the order of the Form, or isn't he?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The rutherfordness is terrific!"

"Yaas, begad."

"Take up the magazine, Smithy, and put it in the fire!"

"Collar him, kids, and I'll take his proboscis in the tongs. When I've given it a little squeeze, I dare say he will come to reason."

"Look here—"

"Nuff said! Collar him!"

The Bounder was promptly collared. And as he stood struggling in the grasp of the juniors, and glowering with rage, Bob Cherry extended the tongs, and took a grip upon his nose with the end of them. The Bounder gave a snuffling yell.

"Now, then," said Bob Cherry cheerfully, "are you going to burn that rag?"

"No!" snorted the Bounder.

Bob Cherry compressed the tongs, and the Bounder's nose was squeezed hard. The nip of the tongs brought the water to his eyes.

"Grooch! Oh!"

"Grooch! Oh! Yes!"

"Are you going to burn that rag?" demanded Bob.

"Good! I thought I should be able to bring you to reason, with argument and a pair of tongs," said Bob, with a grin, as he released the Bounder's nose. "Now burn it, and no more talk!"

The infuriated Bounder clutched up the magazine, and jammed it into the fire. It blazed up merrily. The juniors grinned. On either side of the Bounder's nose was a patch of black left by the tongs, and it looked funny.

The St. Wode's school magazine was consumed.

"That's done!" said Bob Cherry. "Now, you remember the order of the Form, Smithy—you're to stop this rot—we're fed up!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"And I should recommend you to rub the soot off your nose before you go down," added Bob.

The Bounder rubbed his nose with his handkerchief, and drew two long streaks of soot across his cheeks.

"Ha, ha, ha! That hasn't improved matters!" roared Bob Cherry. "Better try soap and water!"

And the juniors crowded out of the study, leaving the Bounder rubbing his nose furiously. Vernon-Smith was left alone in savage mood. Every move he made against the new boy seemed to recoil upon himself, and it was only too clear that the Remove had not the slightest intention of listening to him on the subject any further. They were, as Bob Cherry had said, as clear as daylight. He was not thinking of obeying the order of the Form and ceasing his persecution of the new boy. He was thinking of ways and means of bringing his charge home against Cleveland, and any ways and means that had occurred to his mind would have been good enough for the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Unexpected!

"W"ERE in for it, my sons," said Bob Cherry.

It certainly looked like it.

Bob and Harry Wharton were sauntering along the lane from Friardale village to the school, when half a dozen youths of about their own age came into sight

in front of them. The juniors knew them at once—they were fellows of Highcliffe School—Ponsonby, and Gadsby, and Monson, and Vavasour, and others.

There was a very bitter feeling between the juniors of the two schools, and though Harry Wharton & Co. were not exactly faultless, it was undoubted that the fault was on the Highcliffe side. As the Greyfriars juniors complained, the Highcliffians never would play the game. They played even footer and cricket as unfairly as they could, with the result that Greyfriars had scratched all their fixtures with the neighbouring school. That was a slight that rankled very deeply in the Highcliffe mind, and feeling had been more bitter since.

The rival juniors seldom or never met without a row; but the Highcliffians were not given to fistfights unless the odds were on their side. On the present occasion the odds were very much on their side, and the chums of the Greyfriars Remove were right in their anticipation of trouble.

Ponsonby & Co. grinned at one another as they sighted the two. They quickened their pace, and bore down upon the chums of Greyfriars.

Wharton and Bob Cherry halted, and drew together in the middle of the lane. They could have dashed through the hedge and escaped, for the baby youths of Highcliffe were by no means up to their form in running. But they disdained to run. They had a hearty contempt for the Highcliffe fellows. Ponsonby & Co. were "blooms," as they called themselves, and their idea of doggishness was not at all in accordance with Harry Wharton & Co.'s ideas. Ponsonby had a cigarette between his lips at the present moment, in the open road, careless of observers, and Gadsby had a pink sporting paper under his arm. Under old Dr. Vovsey's rule, in fact, Highcliffe was in a state of "rot," and the Highcliffians did with impunity what would have brought floggings, if not expulsion, upon Greyfriars fellows.

The Highcliffians stopped quite near to the chums of the Remove, and all of them raised their silk-hats at the same moment, with an air of exaggerated politeness. Ponsonby & Co. prided themselves upon their extreme urbanity, and upon the exceeding high class of their school. Highcliffe fairly reeked with titles, and in all Greyfriars there was but one lord. And Ponsonby & Co. were very proud of the fact. The elegant young gentlemen were the salt of the earth, in their own opinion, and if they could not play cricket or footer without making observers smile, it was really because such trifles were beneath their lordly notice.

"Dear me!" said Ponsonby. "Our young friends again!"

"So glad to meet you!" simpered Monson.

"Absolutely!" yawned Vavasour.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry in his direct way. "If you're looking for trouble, come on; if you're not, get out of the way."

"What a nice, civil, well-bred manner the dear boy has!" said Ponsonby. "So like a Greyfriars chap—picked up, no doubt, from the aristocratic factory lads who come there on scholarships."

And the Highcliffians chuckled together.

Wharton glanced down the lane. There was going to be trouble, and he wished that some other Greyfriars fellows were at hand. But there was none in sight. Another Remove had been in the village; but it was only Cleveland, the new boy in the Remove, and he was of no use in a fight.

The two chums had to depend on themselves, and the odds against them were very heavy. And it was not a good-natured rag they had to expect from their old enemies, Ponsonby & Co., in spite of their assumed elegance of manner, could be hoodlums and ruffians when they liked, and when they had force on their side.

"Is it worth while wasting a few minutes in teaching these kids how to speak to their betters, dear boys?" asked Ponsonby.

"It would be for their good," remarked Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour. Vavasour found it too great a fag to talk, and he frequently confined his remarks to that one word.

"Then I think we had better pile in," said Ponsonby. "We'll duck them in the ditch, and stamp on their hats, and split their jackets, but we won't hurt them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Bob Cherry, "we'll give you some thick ears to take back to Highcliffe, you worms!"

The Highcliffians made a sudden rush at a signal from Ponsonby. In another moment, a wild and whirling fight was raging in the lane.

There were six of the Highcliffe fellows, and only two of the Greyfriars, but the Highcliffians did not have it all their own way.

Vavasour was put hors de combat at the start by a terrific drive from Bob Cherry, which sent him spinning along the road. He collapsed into the dust, and lay there moaning and holding his chin, and wondering dimly whether a comet had suddenly struck the earth and brought all things to a violent end.

But before Bob could hit out again he was grasped by THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 279.

NEXT MONDAY: "THE SCHOOLBOY DRAMATISTS!"

Monson and Gadsby, and dragged down, struggling, to the ground, and they sat upon him and kept him there.

Harry Wharton was fighting the other three, and holding his own gallantly against the odds. Ponsonby had gone down under a right-hander, and Merton dropped under Wharton's left; but another fellow was clinging to him, and before he could shake him off, Ponsonby and Merton were up again and attacking him from behind. Wharton rolled over in the midst of the Highcliffians, amid a cloud of dust and a chorus of gasps and yells.

"Got the cads!" panted Ponsonby.

"Duck them!"

"You've rotten funks!" panted Bob Cherry. "We'll take you two at a time, and give you the licking of your lives! Yah! Fair play, you cads!"

Smack!

Gadsby's hand descended upon Bob Cherry's mouth with a loud smack, and Bob Cherry gasped and struggled furiously. But he could not throw off his assailants.

"Greyfriars! Rescue!" yelled Wharton, in the faint hope that some Greyfriars fellow might hear him.

There was a sound of rapid running in the lane.

A junior in a Greyfriars cap came dashing along at top speed from the direction of the village.

He did not stop to speak.

He dashed headlong into the fray, hitting out right and left, and with terrific blows.

Ponsonby & Co. jumped up from their prisoners to defend themselves, piling savagely on the new-comer.

But he was hitting out with terrific force.

Ponsonby rolled in the dust, and Vavasour followed him. Gadsby was knocked headlong into the ditch, and splashed into a foot of muddy water. And then Wharton and Bob Cherry were on their feet—dusty and rumpled, and breathless, but still in fighting form. They piled in vigorously.

The Greyfriars fellows were only three against six now; but they were three of the best, against six of the worst. Ponsonby & Co. had no taste for hard-hitting. Vavasour was the first to run, and Monson followed him; and then the rest dashed after them down the road, ignominiously yielding the field. Gadsby dragged himself out of the ditch, squealing out mud and slime, and ran the last, Bob Cherry's heavy boot helping him to get a start.

"Licked!" roared Bob Cherry, as the breathless and discomfited Highcliffians disappeared down the road. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Then the juniors looked at their rescuer. In the excitement of the combat they had not given him a glance, knowing only that he was a Greyfriars chap. But now they uttered a simultaneous exclamation of amazement.

"Cleveland!"

"Great Scott!"

It was Cleveland!

The new boy—the duffer who had been so easily licked by Vernon-Smith in the fight in the gym! Cleveland, who did not know how to box, and who had dealt the Highcliffe fellows blows that would have done credit to a youthful prize-fighter! Wharton and Bob Cherry could only stare at him blankly.

Cleveland laughed.

"I heard you yell, and sailed in," he said. "Glad I came along in time."

"I'm jolly glad, too," said Bob Cherry. "But——"

"Thanks awfully," said Wharton. "But——"

Their evident amazement recalled Cleveland to himself. He gave a little start, and coloured awkwardly. There was a very awkward pause.

"If you can fight like that, why did you let Smithy lick you?" demanded Bob Cherry, who was not a fellow to think things without saying them right out.

Cleveland's flush grew deeper.

"Well, I—I'm not a fighting chap!" he stammered. "I—I was excited just now when I heard you call for rescue, and—and I just rushed in, you know."

"You knocked them right and left," said Harry.

"I don't think I hit very hard."

"I'll bet Ponsonby & Co. think you did!" chuckled Bob. "Why, you lifted Gadsby right into the ditch with one wipe—I saw you."

"I—I was excited."

"Then you'd better get excited next time Smithy rags you!" grinned Bob. "My hat! I should like to see you handle the Bouncer like that!"

Wharton and Bob Cherry dusted their clothes down, and the three walked away towards Greyfriars. Cleveland was very silent. Bob was in a state of great surprise at the unexpected prowess the supposed duffer had shown. But Harry Wharton was thinking a little more deeply than Bob on the subject. He liked Cleveland, and Cleveland had just rendered

him a service in the most plucky way. He hated himself for the miserable suspicion that crept into his mind. But—

There was a "but." If Cleveland could fight like this, how was it that he had been licked so easily by the Bouncer? Vernon-Smith had maintained that the new fellow could have put up a good fight if he had liked. And certainly what had just happened seemed to bear out the Bouncer's statement.

Was it possible, after all, that Cleveland was playing a part—that he was pretending to know nothing about boxing, or swimming, or cricket, simply in order to make the distinction more marked between himself and Osborne of St. Wode's?

Osborne of St. Wode's had been famous in his school for all athletic sports—the junior champion in every line. Cleveland of Greyfriars was a swot, and never went in for sports. That had been a complete answer to Vernon-Smith's charge, sufficient to discount even the remarkable resemblance to the portrait in the school magazine.

But—but—but if Cleveland was only pretending—if he could fight well when he chose—as was undoubtedly the case after this—what then? Was his fumbling at cricket, and his helplessness in the water, equally deceitful appearances, kept up for purposes of his own? Was the Bouncer right after all? Right or wrong, nothing could excuse the rancorous bitterness the Bouncer had shown. But was he right?

At a moment when he should have been feeling grateful for the timely aid the new boy had given him, Wharton hated himself for the doubts that forced themselves into his mind. But he could not drive them away. Bob Cherry, too, fell very silent as they neared the gates of the school. Something of the same sort had evidently come into his mind, and was troubling his thoughts.

Cleveland broke the silence.

"I—I suppose I've rather surprised you chaps!" he said.

"You have!" said Wharton.

"It was jolly lucky you came along," said Bob awkwardly.

"Lucky for you, you mean," said Cleveland. "But it's given you an impression that I am a bit of a humbug, I'm afraid. Look here, I'll tell you how it is. I'm sent to this school by my uncle, and he's rather a hard man. I've got to get on or get out—see? I've got to work—and work hard. I can't afford to let time go by as you chaps do; it wouldn't do for me. I've no time to take up sports, and I don't want to get mixed up in rags and rows. They would put me off my form for my work. You think I could have put up a better fight against Smith the day I came here—"

"We know you could have—now!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "There's no sense in mincing words. We know

it. You were spoofing. You could have knocked Vernon-Smith all round the gym, with one hand if you'd chosen to."

"I—I must say it looks like it!" stammered Bob Cherry. "It's rotten to say so, after what you've done, Cleveland. But—but—a chap can't help his thoughts."

"I hope you won't think badly of me, just because I chipped in to help you," said Cleveland. "I could easily have kept away, you know. But when I heard you call for rescue, I piled in without stopping to think."

"It was jolly decent of you," said Harry. "I know you've got plenty of pluck. We all like you, and think you're the right sort. We don't believe a word of Smith's rotten yarn about you. But why did you spoof us all? Why did you let that cad lick you, when you could have wiped up the ground with him?"

"That's what I'm trying to explain. I came here to work—to swot—to drive away as hard as a fellow can. If I'd licked Smith, I should have had rows with him without end—he would never have been satisfied, and other fellows would have tackled me, and I thought it simplest to take a licking and get it over. I wanted a quiet life, and I didn't want to score over anybody. That's all!"

It was a lame explanation. But it was spoken frankly enough, and the juniors had no choice but to believe it. For if they had doubted it, they would have had to admit that they had been deceived in Cleveland, and that the Bouncer, with his hateful accusations, was in the right.

"Well, I think you're an ass, and that you went the very worst way to work, if you wanted a quiet life," said Harry. "But I suppose every fellow's entitled to go his own way with his own methods."

"You believe me?"

"Of course I do!"

"I'm glad of that. And"—the new boy hesitated—"the less that's said about this in the school the better I shall like it. I don't want to be dragged into prominence, and I don't want to have to keep on explaining. All I want is to be let alone—to work. If I don't get a first-class report from the Head at the end of the term, my uncle is going to take me away from Greyfriars. He wanted a lot of persuading to give me this chance. I simply dare not run any risks!" Cleveland's face had grown white and strained, and his voice was almost husky. "I've got to prove that I can work—that I can do something creditable—everything depends on that—all my future—all my chances for a lifetime. I don't know if you fellows can understand, but I depend entirely on my uncle, and I've displeased him once—and he'll never give me another chance!"

"I understand!" said Harry. "About this we won't say

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"I say, Bunter, what would you do if you fell off the raft suddenly?" asked Bob Cherry. "Swim like a fish," said Bunter. "Good! Go fit!" And Bob Cherry playfully hooked away one of Bunter's fat legs, and the Owl of the Remove fell over the edge of the raft with a tremendous splash! (See Chapter 7.)

anything, if you like—only, it would make the fellows think better of you, you know."

"I don't care about that. I want to be left alone, that's all. I've been talked about too much in the school as it is."

"Just as you like, then."

Afterwards, in the study, Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton exchanged a long and silent glance, full of trouble.

"He's a good chap!" said Bob, at last.

"One of the best!" said Harry.

"He handled those cads first-rate."

"He did."

"I suppose he's an ass; he hasn't gone the right way to work—but a fellow can't help being a bit of an ass!"

"Quite so!"

"Look here, Harry!" blurted out Bob, reddening. "You believe him, don't you?"

"Yes," said Harry, with a deep breath.

"So do I! He's the right sort. But I—I wish it hadn't happened," said Bob.

"I—I wish he had gone a different way to work. We believe him—we know he's all right. But

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—but a lot of the fellows would be suspicious. Upon the whole, he's right—it's better to say nothing about it!"

And the chums of the Remove said nothing about it. They believed Cleveland. But the incident had left them with an uncomfortable feeling that refused to be banished.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Upper Hand.

BOB CHERRY looked into No. 13 Study, where Mark Linley and Cleveland were at work. The two swots of the Remove had finished their preparation, but they were still at work—on Greek. Bob Cherry granted at the sight of the weird characters on the sheets before them. Latin was bad enough, in Bob's opinion, and wild horses wouldn't have dragged him to the study of Greek.

"Do you two grinders happen to know that it's bedtime?" he asked. "Loder will be along in a minute to remind you."

Mark Linley sighed, and rose.

"Must chuck it for to-night, Cleveland," he said.

"I suppose so," said Cleveland. "I think I'm getting on, though, Linley. Do you think I shall have a chance for the junior Greek paper?"

"I do—quite as good as mine."

"Then we shall be rivals in the exam.—and you're helping me," said Cleveland.

Mark laughed.

"Like the best man win," he said. "I'll help you all I can. All right, Bob, we're coming—don't growl!"

"Blessed if I can see what you see in that rot," said Bob Cherry. "For goodness' sake leave those giddy spiders alone for a bit—they're spiders I suppose?"

"They're Greek letters, fathead!"

"My mistake!" said Bob. "Come on!"

Mark turned out the light, and they left the study.

"I think I shall have another grind after lights out," said Cleveland, as they went to the dormitory. "I've got to get in. I suppose it will be safe enough to come down to the study without being spotted."

"I've done so at times," said Mark. "Mind the prefects don't catch you out of the dorm., that's all."

"I'll be careful."

The Removites went up to their dormitory. The Bouncer glanced at Cleveland, and the new boy caught a malicious gleam in his eyes—a gleam of triumph. The Bouncer did not speak to him; but it was evident, to Cleveland's quick perception, that Vernon-Smith had some thought in his mind that made him feel triumphant—some new scheme, perhaps, to prove his curious accusation against Cleveland. The Bouncer had said less about the matter of late; the Remove fellows had given him very plainly to understand that they were "fed up" with it. But the Bouncer had not given in. He was more determined than ever to prove his point.

Cleveland did not sleep. He was not thinking of the Bouncer, however, but of his work. Greek characters danced before his eyes in the darkness, as he lay thinking. If he could get top marks on the Greek paper—that was his ambition. And he had a chance—a good chance. It was only a question of grinding hard. And he was prepared to grind—to sacrifice everything else to his grinding.

Ten o'clock chimed out from the clock-tower. By that time Cleveland considered that it would be safe to descend to his study for another hour's work. Senior boys were allowed to burn the midnight oil as long as they liked—not that they generally liked. But if a junior wanted to carry his studies late into the night, it had to be done with caution. A junior found out of his dormitory after lights out would be caned, whether he sallied forth to raid the other dormitories, or to grind at Greek in his study.

Cleveland was about to move, when he heard a sound of another fellow rising. The Remove had all dropped off to sleep by that time, with the exception of Cleveland—and one other. Cleveland did not rise, as he heard someone else doing so. He had confided his intention of late study to the Lancashire lad, but he did not want to confide it to all the Form. Swots were not popular in the Remove.

Cleveland guessed that it was the Bouncer who was rising—the sounds came from the direction of his bed.

A dim form crossed the dormitory towards the door.

There was a glimmer of clear moonlight in at the high windows, and a faint glow on the face of the junior passing towards the door, and Cleveland saw it clearly. It was the face of Vernon-Smith.

He passed out of the moonlight the next moment, and Cleveland heard the door open and close again softly.

The new boy's lip curled.

It was not difficult for him to guess where the Bouncer had gone. Vernon-Smith was not the fellow to burn the midnight oil unless it was at a card-party. He had not gone down to grind in his study. New as he was to Greyfriars, Cleveland had heard the gossip of the Remove, and Vernon-Smith's little manners and customs were much talked of in his own Form. The Bouncer had risen to break bounds, and for no creditable motive—in all probability a card-party village. He was risking disgrace and expulsion by his conduct; but he had risked it before, and long impunity had made him reckless.

Cleveland stepped quietly out of bed, and, without waiting to dress himself, hurried to the door and passed out of the dormitory.

He crept along the passage towards the box-room at the end, and as he did so, he heard a door softly open and shut. He smiled grimly in the darkness. The Bouncer had gone into the box-room. Cleveland waited a few minutes, and his keen ears caught the sounds of a sash cautiously raised and lowered. He opened the door of the box-room and passed in. The window was shut, but it was not fastened. Windows had been fastened up for the night by Trotter, and the UNCLE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.

fastened catch was therefore not likely to be discovered. The Bouncer had left by that window, reaching the ground by means of the outhouse below. And he evidently intended to return that way.

Cleveland fastened the catch.

Then he returned to the Remove dormitory, and dressed himself, and then went down to his study. The lights were out in the passage, and he reached his study unobserved. He closed the door, laid a rug along it to keep the light from penetrating into the passage, drew the blind closely, and lighted the gas.

Then he settled down to work.

While the rest of the Remove were fast asleep in their beds, and the Bouncer was absent upon his unknown errand, the new boy at Greyfriars bent over his task, working away with grim determination.

Eleven o'clock sounded!

Cleveland was still grinding away—with all the more grimness and determination because he did not like the work, and it was distasteful to him. Cleveland was not by nature a "swot." But he had no choice in the matter. Whether all that he had said was true or not, certainly he had spoken the truth when he told Wharton and Bob Cherry that he had come to Greyfriars to work, and that it was his only chance. And he worked with almost feverish determination.

Twelve o'clock!

Cleveland sighed, and rose to his feet. He was tired and sleepy, and the Greek characters were dancing before his weary eyes.

He was not satisfied with what he had done, but he had done what he nature would allow. He put his books away, and turned out the light, and left the study. But he did not return immediately to the Remove dormitory. He made his way to the upper box-room, and closed the door after he had entered it, and stationed himself at the window. It was turned midnight, and time that the Bouncer should have returned. Perhaps he had returned already, and found that he could not enter. Cleveland pressed his face to the glass and peered out into the darkness. He started a little as he caught sight of a face also pressed to the glass, peering in. It was the Bouncer's.

Vernon-Smith had evidently returned. His face was white with anger and fear as he peered in at the window. The finding of the window fastened had given the Bouncer a painful shock. He could only suppose that a prefect had found it unfastened, and had fixed the catch—and perhaps his absence had been discovered, too. Vernon-Smith had spent very unpleasant ten minutes on the roof of the outhouse, wondering what he should do, when he saw the dim face peering at him from within.

It was evidently not a prefect. A prefect would have opened the window, and ordered him into the house at once. Vernon-Smith tapped on the glass.

"Is that you, Snoop?" he whispered.

The sash was raised an inch.

Vernon-Smith caught hold of it, and endeavoured to push it up; but it did not move further. It was being held from inside. The Bouncer breathed very hard.

"Is that you, Snoopy?" he whispered.

"No."

Vernon-Smith started, electrified by the voice. He knew it was—

"Osborne!"

"It is I—Cleveland."

"What is your Osborne!" said the Bouncer bitterly. "What have you played this trick on me for, you cad? Open the window!"

The Bouncer made another effort to push up the window, but the grip of the new boy held it fast in its place.

"You may as well give it up," said Cleveland coldly. "You cannot open it unless I choose."

The Bouncer gritted his teeth.

"You've been spying on me, you rotter!"

"I came down to study, and saw you go out, by chance."

"And you fastened the window?"

"Why?" asked Vernon-Smith, as much puzzled as enraged.

"Because I intended to catch you," said Cleveland calmly. "We're going to make terms before I let you in, Vernon-Smith. If you are found out there, you will be exposed—as you deserve—and expelled from the school. And unless you come to terms, you are going to be shut out and fastened out. Do you understand?"

The Bouncer almost choked with rage.

"I'll make no terms with an expelled thief!" he muttered, between his teeth.

"You will make no terms with me!"

"Never!"

"Very well. Remain where you are."

The window closed down, and Vernon-Smith heard the click of the catch as it fastened.
The dim figure inside disappeared.

EVERY
MONDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

In Black and White.

VERNON-SMITH panted with rage. He was shut out. He could not possibly open the window, and there was no other mode of entrance. He was shut out—to remain out for the rest of the night—to be discovered out of the house in the morning—to be exposed and expelled from the school! That was what it came to.

His fate was in Cleveland's hands—in the hands of the boy who had been his friend. If the Bouncer had had a bitter enemy at his mercy in the same way, he knew what he would have done. He would have secured the window, and gone back, chucking, to bed. He did not expect anything better from Cleveland. But— He tapped on the window as the dim form of the junior disappeared within. At all and any cost, he must make terms with this boy whom he hated and had injured. Cleveland alone could save him from the punishment he richly deserved, from the results of his folly and baseness.

Tap—tap—tap!
There was no sound from within, and Vernon-Smith's very heart turned cold within him at the thought that Cleveland had gone, and left him to his fate. He dared not call out, but he tapped more loudly upon the glass.

Tap—tap—tap!
He breathed with relief as he saw a dim face reappear inside the window. There was a click of the catch again, and the sash of the window was raised an inch, as before, and Cleveland bent down to it.

"You tapped?" he said.
"Then you weren't gone, after all?" said the Bouncer, between his teeth. He was crouched on the roof of the out-house, his hands clutching the sill, his face on a level with the partly-open sash.

"I was going," said Cleveland. "What do you want?"
"I want you to let me in, you sneaking cad!"
"I will let you in on conditions. Otherwise, I shall leave you here. When you are found out you will be expelled. It will be a good deal easier for me here when you are gone."

The Bouncer trembled, with a mingling of rage and fear. It was quite true—it was all in Cleveland's interest to leave him to his fate. And Vernon-Smith could not help wondering why the fellow did not do it.

"Will you let me in?"
"On conditions."
"Well, what are they? Do you want money?" sneered the Bouncer. "You know I'm rich, and I've got more than a suspicion that you are as poor as a church mouse."

"You know I don't want that," said Cleveland quietly, "and you are a cad to suggest it. I want you to leave me alone. All the time I've been at Greyfriars you've been against me, persecuting me all the time. You will never let that old story rest."

"You know it's true."
"True or not, I'm having no more of it."
"You admit it, then?" muttered the Bouncer.

"I admit nothing. I'm not going to argue with you. I tell you that you've got to make it pax, and stop troubling me. Otherwise, I'll take the chance I've got, and you'll be sacked from the school. You'll have to let me alone then. Take your choice."

The Bouncer was silent for a moment.
"Do you know that you're giving yourself away?" he said. "I know you were duffing in the gym. I know you lied when you said you couldn't swim, though you played the game out to the end very cleverly. I know you are Hubert Osborne. If you were what you pretended to be, you wouldn't have thought of a trick like this. This is a criminal's trick to save himself from being shown up."

"You can look at it how you like. You've got to promise me, however bright, to let that matter drop, and say nothing about it in future; not to call me Osborne again, or to make any move to prove your case. You've got a scheme on now—"

The Bouncer started.
"How do you know?"
"I do know. I'm no fool," said Cleveland. "I know you have some scheme for showing me up, as you call it; and I'm nipping it in the bud."

"You want me to give my word?" asked the Bouncer, his eyes glimmering strangely in the darkness. He reflected that Cleveland, cunning as he had shown himself, was a fool after all. A promise cost Vernon-Smith very little.

"Yes," said Cleveland.
"Well, I give it. Now let me in."
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NEXT
MONDAY:

"You will promise to let the whole matter drop, to make no schemes against me in any way, and, in fact, to let me alone altogether?"

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth.
"Good!"

"Now let me in!"
Cleveland laughed.

"I am hardly likely to take your word," he said. "I haven't known you long, but I know you too well for that."

"Honour bright!"
"That wouldn't bind you," said Cleveland contemptuously.

"In writing!" said the Bouncer, in amazement.
"Yes."

"What—what do you mean? I don't understand."
"I have a fountain-pen here, and a sheet of paper," said Cleveland grimly. "I will pass them to you. You will write at my dictation."

"You—you cunning rotter! I won't!"
"Very well!"

The window closed down, and the Bouncer tapped upon it in alarm. Up went the sash again.

"Well?" said Cleveland.
"I'll write what you like," said the Bouncer, grinding his teeth.

Cleveland passed the paper and the fountain-pen through the narrow slit under the sash.

The Bouncer opened the pen, and prepared to write, resting the sheet on the window-sill.

"Write," said Cleveland, "after me— In consideration of Cleveland keeping secret the fact that I have broken bonds at midnight to go to the Cross Keys to a card-party, I agree to stop my persecution of him in the future. And sign it."

The Bouncer breathed hard.

"That's enough to get me expelled from Greyfriars, if the Head saw it!" he muttered.

"That's what I want. If you keep your word, that paper stays locked up in a secret drawer in my desk. If you bring trouble on me, that paper is placed in the headmaster's hands, and we go down together. Understand?"

"You—you plotting villain!"
Cleveland laughed.

"One rogue makes many," he said. "I did nothing to you; I have never harmed you in any way, and you have persecuted me ever since I came to the school. You have tried to drive me out in disgrace. I can't afford to be too particular in dealing with a fellow like you. I must deal with you how I can."

"I—I'll write it."
"And in your own hand," said Cleveland calmly. "I shall light the gas, and examine it, after you've written it. I've got a specimen of your handwriting with me. I shall compare them, and if you've tried to disguise your hand in any way, I shall make you write it over again; and you will not get in till I am satisfied."

The Bouncer ground his teeth in helpless rage. He was trapped at every point. And this was the simple new boy whom all the Remove fellows regarded good-naturedly as a kind of duffer—the fellow, who had calmly over-reached him at every point—over-reached the Bouncer, whose cunning was proverbial in the Lower School. And he was helpless; he had to yield. With gritting teeth and blazing eyes, the Bouncer wrote the paper, and passed it in to Cleveland.

"Are you satisfied now, hang you?" he said.
"Wait!"

Cleveland closed and fastened the window; evidently intending to leave nothing to chance. He lighted the gas-jet in the box-room, and carefully examined the paper. He was satisfied, and when the ink was dry he folded it up and placed it in his pocket. The Bouncer tapped impatiently on the window. Cleveland turned out the gas, and came back.

"I will let you in in five minutes!"
Vernon-Smith heard his voice, and then Cleveland disappeared. The Bouncer, choking with rage, waited. His last hope was gone. He had intended, when he was admitted, to make a sudden attack upon the new boy, and deprive him of the paper by force, and destroy it. But Cleveland was too much on his guard to give him a chance of that.

The Bouncer waited.
Five minutes had elapsed when he saw Cleveland's face glimmering at the box-room window again. The sash was lifted, and the Bouncer climbed in. He closed the window after him, and fastened it, and then turned to Cleveland in the darkness, trembling with fury.

"You cad! Wher have you done with that paper?"
"It is locked up in a safe place."
"I—I'll make you give it back to me—I'll—"

The Bounder, so enraged that he hardly knew what he was doing, flung himself furiously upon Cleveland.

There was a low laugh in the darkness, and the new boy gripped him. It seemed to the Bounder that he had been caught in arms of iron. He was swept off his feet, and dumped down on the floor, almost unresistingly. Cleveland bent over him.

"You had better not try that game," he said, in a low, even voice. "You will get the worst of it, Vernon-Smith."

"You—you are Hubert Osborne!" panted Vernon-Smith. "You are giving it away."

"You may think what you like. But you had better take care in the future, unless you want to be sacked from the school."

And Cleveland left the box-room without another word. Vernon-Smith rose to his feet, pale, breathless, trembling with rage. He went slowly to the Remove dormitory. Cleveland was already in bed when he arrived there; and the Bounder, with feelings too bitter for words, turned in. He had been defeated—over-reached and mastered—and the power had passed from his hands into those of the boy he had made his enemy.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Holds His Hand.

CLEVELAND did not look at Vernon-Smith when the Remove turned out next morning.

He seemed to have forgotten the Bounder's existence. He chatted freely and cheerfully with the other fellows, without a glance in the direction of Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder wondered, as he dressed himself, whether it was not all a dream. Cleveland, so calm and cheerful now, so merry in his talk with the other fellows, did not look much like the cool, hard, determined fellow who had cornered the Bounder the previous night, and forced him to write that confession which would be sufficient to get him expelled from Greyfriars, if it should ever come into the hands of Dr. Locke.

Perhaps some doubt had crept into the Bounder's mind, of

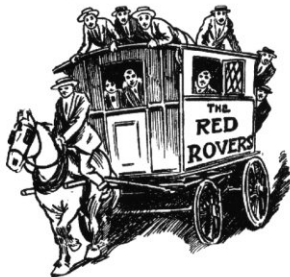
late, as to whether he might not have been mistaken after all; whether it might not be a case of mistaken identity. But if he had had any doubts, they were gone now. What had happened in the night was a proof, to the Bounder's mind, of the truth of his accusation. What had happened was not in keeping with Cleveland's character, as the Greyfriars fellows knew him. But it was quite in keeping with the character of Hubert Osborne, expelled from St. Wode's for theft. That was how the Bounder looked at it. It was as if Cleveland had placed a proof in his hands—at the same time making it impossible for him to use it.

For the Bounder was at Cleveland's mercy now. That paper, written in his own hand, was enough to condemn him. It would be useless to say that someone else had written it; the handwriting would stand any test. And how could he have come to write it, excepting under the circumstances that had actually occurred, and which Cleveland, of course, would relate, if he handed the paper to the Head? The Bounder's fate was now bound up with Cleveland's; they were to stand or fall together. If the Bounder should prove his case now, and Cleveland were compelled to leave Greyfriars, then Vernon-Smith would be compelled to leave, too. Indeed, if the schoolboy's shameful secret came to light by chance, he might still turn upon the Bounder, and expose him, in revenge for the long persecution he had suffered. The Bounder realised, with fury and dismay, that he must put his personal feelings aside, and that he must help Cleveland to keep his secret—if he had one—at all events, until he had recovered possession of the tell-tale paper.

The Bounder was almost dazed as he thought it over. He, the cunning and unscrupulous fellow whom many feared, the fellow it was impossible to catch, had been caught napping—had been cornered—trapped—and his teeth had been drawn! And all by that quiet-looking boy whom half the Form looked upon as a duffer! The Bounder almost felt that he respected Cleveland, now that he suspected him of being as big a rascal as himself.

At breakfast, some of the fellows noticed a change in the Bounder's manner. Vernon-Smith had always made as many opportunities of calling Cleveland "Osborne" as he could.

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He would say: "Pass the salt, Osborne, or 'Good-morning, Osborne!' This morning at breakfast the name of Osborne did not pass his lips once. He spoke to Cleveland on one occasion, and addressed him as Cleveland.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry broke out. "Are you really giving up playing the giddy goat, Smithy?"

The Bouncer made no reply. Bolsover major joined him as the Remove went out into the Close after breakfast. Bolsover major was puzzled.

"What's the little game, Smithy?" he asked.

"What little game?" said Vernon-Smith shortly.

"About Cleveland. Do you believe in him now?"

"No, I don't."

"You called him by his right name this morning."

"I called him by his wrong name. The fellows want me to," said the Bouncer, with a sardonic grin. "I'm trying to please them."

"That's not it," said Bolsover. "Blessed if I understand you, Smithy? What about that scheme you were hitting at the other day?"

"What scheme?"

"About asking that chap you know at St. Wode's to come here for a week-end, so that he can identify Cleveland."

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders.

"That's off," he said.

"Off?" said Bolsover, in amazement.

"Yes; for the present, at any rate."

"You've given up the idea?"

"Yes—just now."

"Why?"

"Oh, I'm following the crowd," said the Bouncer.

"They've swallowed Cleveland whole, and it isn't my business to open their eyes. I'm done! I dare say they'll find him out in time—when he steals something here, perhaps, as he did at St. Wode's."

Bolsover shook his head.

"Better not try that game, Smithy," he said warningly. Vernon-Smith glared at him.

"What do you mean, confound you?" he exclaimed angrily.

"I mean, that the fellows would smell a rat at once. If anything were found on Cleveland, or in his traps, they wouldn't believe he'd taken it. They'd think that you had planted it on him. Better be careful."

"Do you think I was thinking of anything of the sort?" demanded the Bouncer, in a tone of concentrated rage.

"Well, if you weren't, all the better," said Bolsover major, quite unflustered. "I only gave you a word of warning, as a friend."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled the Bouncer.

Bolsover's words had made the Bouncer feel something very like terror. The fellow was a thief; and if he had been a thief at St. Wode's, he might be a thief at Greyfriars. And if he were found out, suspicion would turn upon the Bouncer of having "planted" it on him—as Bolsover put it. For his own safety, the Bouncer felt that the fellow must be shown up in his true colours. But his teeth were drawn now—he dared not make a move against Cleveland. He withdrew with helpless rage as he thought of it. He had been outwitted, and there was an end of it.

"Not that Cleveland showed any sign whatever of departing from the straight and narrow path. The new boy had settled down to be a 'swot,' and he was working hard for the Greek exam.—working so hard that even Mark Linley, a terrific worker himself, remonstrated with him more than once.

"You're over-doing it, Cleveland," Mark said, as they finished work at tea-time one afternoon, having put in an hour after last lesson. "No good doing that, you know, or you'll be ill before the exam. comes round."

Cleveland smiled faintly.

"I sha'n't be ill," he said. "I'm as fit as a fiddle. Though this way of life doesn't agree with me much. I've got to get through—I must get through. If I can get the Greek prize I shall satisfy my uncle."

"He must be an awfully exacting old chap, from the way you speak," said Linley, rather puzzled.

"He's giving me this chance," said Cleveland. "If I don't make something of it, I shall be done for. He won't trust me again."

"But why shouldn't he trust you?" said Mark.

Cleveland coloured.

"I—I displeased him once," he said. "In fact, I—I was a slacker before I came here."

"You a slacker?" said Mark, with a whistle.

"Yes. It doesn't look like it now, does it?"

"My hat! it doesn't."

"Well, I was. I was a careless ass. But I've got more sense now. If the Head sends a good report at the end of the term I shall be all right; and if I get the Greek medal that will clinch it. Perhaps I might be able to take things a little bit easier after that. But I daren't let anything slide now."

Mark had an uncomfortable feeling for a moment. Cleveland's MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 279.

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land spoke and acted like a fellow who had to make up for some grave fault—who had given his uncle and guardian good reason to distrust him. But Mark would not let that thought linger in his mind.

Snoop met them as they left the study, and he grinned at Cleveland.

"Still swotting?" he asked.

"Yes," said Cleveland.

"I hear that Smithy's going to have a visitor," said Snoop, with his light, shifty eyes fixed upon Cleveland's face.

"Is he?" said Cleveland carelessly. "I don't see that it matters to me, Snoop. What do you mean?"

"You're not coming for a week-end," said Snoop.

"What?"

"Seems to surprise you," said Snoop. "Why shouldn't Smithy have a chap from St. Wode's to see him if he likes?"

"Why not?" agreed Cleveland. "It doesn't interest me." And he walked on with Mark Linley. The Lancashire lad was frowning.

"That's another trick of Smithy's, I suppose," he remarked. "I thought he had stopped that rot, but he seems to be beginning again. Of course, he's getting this chap from St. Wode's with some idea of identifying you, the silly ass."

Cleveland laughed.

"I dare say it's all gas, and the fellow won't come," he said. "It's a good step from Devonshire to here."

Cleveland was right—the St. Wode's fellow did not come. But Mark Linley would have been very much surprised if, about an hour afterwards, he had seen and heard his new chum. Cleveland had called in on Vernon-Smith in his study. The Bouncer was smoking a cigarette—one of his pleasant little habits. He scowled at the new junior through a blue haze of smoke.

Cleveland closed the door, and came towards the Bouncer, and looked at him steadily.

"I hear you have a friend coming here, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"Who told you that?"

"Snoop."

"Is a mistake," said the Bouncer uneasily. "I talked it over with Bolsover and Snoop. But—but I've given up the idea now."

"When did you give up the idea?" asked Cleveland calmly.

"After you got that paper out of me, you rotter!"

Cleveland smiled.

"Very well. You're at liberty, of course, to have all the friends to see you that you want; but I've explained to you that I'm fed up with your stories about St. Wode's and what happened or did not happen there. If a fellow comes from St. Wode's to visit you, I shall take it as a sign that you are looking for trouble."

The Bouncer's eyes fell before Cleveland's.

"He's not coming now," he muttered.

"Mind that he doesn't."

Cleveland quitted the study without another word. The Bouncer ground his teeth. He looked on Cleveland's words as practically an admission that the charge against him was true. But he was helpless. The power had passed from his hands.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Swot!

"COME and see the match, Cleveland, old fellow!" It was Saturday afternoon. Brilliant sunshine was pouring down upon the Close of Greyfriars, and

plouring on the wide green playing fields.

Almost all the Greyfriars fellows were out of doors.

The Sixth Form were playing a match with a visiting team of cricketers from Redclyffe School, and there was a match on between the Fifth and the Shell. The Remove, of course, were playing cricket that afternoon. They seldom allowed a half-holiday to go by without a match, weather permitting.

A visiting team from Courtfield was coming over to play the Greyfriars Remove, and as the Courtfielders were "hot stuff," the best players in the Remove had been selected for the team. Mark Linley was in flannels, with a bat under his arm, as he looked in at Cleveland's study door.

Cleveland was at his table, bending over his work. He looked tired, but he was intending to spend the hot summer's afternoon in the confinement of the study, grinding Greek.

He looked up with a smile at the Lancashire lad.

"Sorry, can't be done," he said. "I'm going to have a steady three hours at this."

"You're over-doing it," said Mark anxiously.

"I'll have a rest after the exam."

"It's a pity you don't play cricket. It would set you up for your work," said Mark. "There's nothing like it to clear the cobwebs out of your brain, you know, and make you feel fit for study afterwards."

"May take it up next term."

"You won't come and see the match, then?"

"I think not."

"Come out for a stroll after, then," said Mark. "You've simply got to get some fresh air, and if you fag here all the afternoon, you will have to take some exercise afterwards. Might have a dip in the river. Ah, I forgot! You don't swim. Look here, if we're finished the cricket early enough, come out and I'll give you a lesson in swimming."

Cleveland shook his head.

"I don't care for it," he said. "I don't like the water, and I shall never make a swimmer. But I'll come out for a stroll, with pleasure, when I'm finished."

"I shall come in for you, then."

"Right-ho!"

And Mark Linley went down and joined the rest of the team on the cricket-field.

"Why didn't you bring Cleveland out?" asked Bob Cherry. "I tried to," said Mark ruefully. "But he won't come. He's swotting again. He seems to be in a regular fever, to get fit for that exam."

"It's rotten!" said Harry Wharton. "He'll make himself ill if he goes on like this. And he ought to make a good cricketer; he's just the build for it. Anybody would have taken him for an all-round athlete, to look at him."

"And he's only a swot!" said Ogilvy.

"Well, there are worse things than swots," said Harry, laughing. "I dare say we shall make a cricketer of him in time. Where's Bolsover?"

"What do you want Bolsover for?" asked Nuge.

"I'm going to put him in. Bulstrode's gone home to see his people this afternoon, and Bolsover has been looking up lately. I think he ought to have a chance, now there's a place in the team."

"He doesn't seem anxious for it," growled Johnny Bull.

"Here he comes!"

Bolsover major came down to the field, with a flushed face.

"We want you, Bolsover," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, I know; I've been looking after that bothering minor of mine," said Bolsover. "The young ass wants to go swimming with Paget and Tubb—after nearly getting drowned the other day. He would have been done in if old Wingate hadn't fished him out. I can't find the young ass anywhere; but I've warned the boatkeeper to see that he doesn't go down to the bathing-pool, and tipped him a bob to lam him if he tries to bathe. I suppose he will be all right now."

"Minors are always a trouble," said Frank Nugent oracularly. "I've got a minor that I would give away with a pound of tea. Hallo! Here comes Courtfield!"

The Courtfield cricketers had arrived, and all attention

now was given to the cricket match. Wharton tossed with Trumper, the Courtfield captain, and won the toss, and the Greyfriars fellows batted first. Trumper and his merry men went out to field, and Wharton and Bolsover major opened the innings for the Remove.

From a study window in the distant School House a face looked out towards the cricket-field.

Cleveland had left his work, and he watched the starting of the match with longing eyes. Anyone who had seen him as at that moment would not have doubted that he was a cricketer at heart, whether he could play the game or not.

He had stayed in to work, but he was not working. Xenophon, Demosthenes, and Liddell and Scott lay unheeded on the table.

The junior, leaning on the window-sill, had his eyes upon the cricket-field, and he had forgotten everything else.

It was a good match, and worth watching. The Remove fellows were very keen cricketers, and the fellows from Courtfield County Council School were keen as mustard. Solly Lazarus was bowling, and Solly had a way of delivery that was very tricky, and very troublesome to the batsmen. Bolsover major's wicket had gone down for two, and Nugent was in his place. Wharton was facing the bowling now, and Solly Lazarus was giving him some hard work to do, but the captain of the Remove was defending his sticks gallantly.

The last ball of the over was a regular twister, and the Courtfield fieldsmen looked on in joyous anticipation, but their anticipations were not realised. Wharton played the ball in a masterly manner, and it went soaring away, and the batsmen ran. Once, twice, thrice, before the leather came whizzing in from Graham.

There was a ripple of hand-clapping round the field, and a roar:

"Well hit!"

"Well run! Bravo!"

And Cleveland, distant as he was, joined in the cheering unconsciously.

"Bravo! Well hit! Good man!" he shouted.

Then, in the next over, came a boundary hit, and the crowd shouted again, and Cleveland shouted with them:

"Well hit! Good man! Bravo, Wharton!"

"Ahem!"

Cleveland swung round.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was in the study doorway, regarding him with a somewhat curious smile. Cleveland flushed hotly.

"I did not know you were so enthusiastic about cricket, Cleveland," said the Remove-master, evidently a little surprised.

"Yes—no—no, sir!" stammered Cleveland, hardly aware of what he was saying in his confusion.

"You are not a cricketer, I understand?"

"No, sir. I—I was just watching."

"If you would like to watch the match, Cleveland, do so. I will give you your coaching another time," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Cleveland eagerly. "I want to work, sir. I was just watching the match for a minute or two, but I want to work. I wasn't certain you'd be able to come and help me with the Greek, sir."

"I can give you half an hour," said Mr. Quelch, seating himself.

"After that I have to go out. Let us begin."

"Thank you, sir. You are very kind."

"Not at all," said Mr. Quelch benignantly. "I am always glad to help a boy who is willing to help himself, Cleveland. The only fault I have to find with you is a most unusual one. I am afraid you work a little too hard."

"I—I want to pass the exam, sir. I—I must make my uncle satisfied with me."

"Your uncle should be more than satisfied with the term's report, if you continue as you have begun, Cleveland," said Mr. Quelch.

And the Form-master and the junior sat down to work. Cleveland lost his attention, fixed on his studies, as long as the Form-master was with him, but when Mr. Quelch's time was up, and he was gone, Cleveland left his books. He turned from them with a weary sigh, and went to the window. Outside, brilliant sunshine and a cool breeze, the shouts of the cricketers, and the merry clink of bat and ball!

"I—I can't stand it!" muttered Cleveland miserably. "I can't! It serves me right, but—but I can't stand it!" His eyes looked dim for a moment as he looked towards the green playing-fields, dotted with white figures, and heard the merry shouts. "But it's my own fault—my own fault! It's work now—work, and I'm lucky to get the chance."

But he did not work—he did not turn back to his books till the last Remove wicket was down. And then it was with an effort and a heavy heart.

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"W'ERE orl right now," said Bolsover minor. Bolsover minor, of the Third Form, had been at Greyfriars some time, but he had not quite lost the peculiar accent he had acquired at the time when he was lost in London, and lived the life of a street- Arab. Bolsover minor was looking out of the window towards the cricket-ground.

"It's orl right!" repeated Bolsover minor. "Percy's playing this afternoon, and he won't be on our track. Come on, young Tubb! Come on, Paget!"

"Got the bathing things?" asked Tubb.

"Yes; 'ere they are!"

And the three fags sallied out. They made their way down to the river. The chums of the Third Form were getting on swimming. Bolsover minor, as a rule, was very obedient to his major—to whom, indeed, he looked up with very great awe. But in a matter of this kind, Bolsover minor felt that he was entitled to follow his own judgment—especially as Tubb and Paget thought so, too. Because a fellow had had cramp once in the water, it didn't follow that he would have cramp again—it was all rot, as Billy put it! It was very kind of Percy to be so concerned about him—and to save his major the worry, he wouldn't mention the matter to Percy. But he was going to bathe in the river with Tubb and Paget. The three fags were going to enter the swimming competition on sports day, and they couldn't afford to neglect practice.

And so, with their bathing-costumes hidden under their jackets, Tubb & Co. made their way down to the river, giving the cricket-field a wide berth.

There were a good many boats out that afternoon, and some swimming going on from the raft, but a disappointment awaited the heroes of the Third. As they came out on the floating raft, the boatkeeper hailed them.

"Master Bolsover!"

"Allo!" said Bolsover minor.

"Your brother has been here," said the boatkeeper.

"He's give partickler instructions as you're not to go in."

"Oh, my 'at!" said Bolsover minor, in dismay. "It's all right, Potts. I'm only going in for a bit of swimming practice."

The boatkeeper shook his head.

"Master Bolsover's orders," he said. "I've promised him that you shan't go into the water."

"Look here, Potts," said Tubb; "you've no right to interfere. You go and eat coke!"

"Yes, and chop chips!" growled Bolsover minor.

Potts grinned.

"If you goes in, I shall call a prefect," he said. "You 'ad cramp the other day in the water, Master Bolsover, and it ain't safe for you."

"Oh, that's all piffle, you know! Chap can 'ave cramp without 'aving it again!" said Bolsover minor, in an aggravated voice.

"We're going in," said Paget. "Potts, my man, you can turn your head the other way, and I'll stand you a tanner when my allowance comes."

"Can't be done, Master Paget. I'm responsible if there's an accident."

"But there won't be any accident!" howled Bolsover minor. "Do you think I can't swim, you juggins. I could swim your 'ead off!"

"Come on," said Tubb. "Potts can talk till he's dry!"

"Yes, come on, Billy," said Paget. "Potts can go and eat coke!"

Potts called out to a group of seniors on the raft, who were watching a sculling race:

"Master Wingate!"

"Hallo, Potts!"

"Master Bolsover ne'er 'ave asked me not to let his minor go in, owin' to his cramp the other day," said Potts.

"I leave it to you, sir."

Wingate frowned.

"Clear off from here, Bolsover minor," he said. "You're not to go into the water here, excepting when the instructor is on duty, or your brother is with you. Clear off!"

"Oh! I say, Wingate."

"Buzz off!" said the Sixth-Former, with a wave of the hand.

The three Third-Formers looked at one another disconsolately, and trudged off the raft, simmering with anger and disappointment.

"It's too bad of Percy!" said Bolsover minor. "He means it only in kindness, but he's spoiling our swimming practice, and we've got to keep it up."

"More ways than one of killing a cat," said Tubb. "If we can't swim here, we can swim somewhere else."

"Wingate said—" began Paget dubiously. But Tubb interrupted him.

"Wingate said that Billy wasn't to go into the water here THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 279.

unless the instructor was present," he said. "That's what Wingate said. He didn't say anything about not going into the water anywhere else, did he?"

"Well, no," said Paget, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "He didn't. But he must have meant—"

"Never mind what he must have meant," said Tubb. "We only know what he said, and we're not bound to guess at what he must have meant or mustn't have meant. We're going to obey orders, and not bathe here. But we can go in somewhere else."

"Good egg!" said Bolsover minor. "Course we must do as Wingate says. But we're not bound to do what he doesn't say."

And the fags started down the towing-path.

"But where are we going in?" asked Paget.

"There's a lovely place just above the bridge," said Tubb. "Sheltered by trees, too—a nice quiet spot we can have to ourselves."

"Just the place!" said Bolsover minor.

"If a chap should happen to get carried under the bridge, it's dangerous," said Paget. "There's the Pool on the other side of the bridge, and a fellow was drowned there once. They never found his body—the currents had sucked it away under the weeds."

Tubb snorted.

"Well, you're a cheerful sort of silly am to come out for a swim," he exclaimed indignantly. "Got any more merry reminiscences?"

"I was thinking of Billy. He suffers from cramp—"

"I don't!" shouted Bolsover minor.

"Well, you did the other day."

"One swallow doesn't make a summer, fathead! That was just a little twinge, and it wasn't really so bad, after all," said Bolsover minor.

"Besides, we shall be with him," said Tubb. "If he has cramp—"

"I shan't have cramp!"

"But if you should—"

"There ain't any if about it!" persisted Bolsover minor obstinately. "I shan't 'ave it!"

"Well, if anything should happen," said Tubb pacifically. "I'm a jolly good swimmer, and I'll look after the pair of you."

"You'll get a thick ear if you start looking after me, young Tubb!" said Paget, with a sniff.

"Same 'ere!" said Bolsover minor. "I'm all right! I'm more likely to 'ave to pick you out than you me, Tubb."

"Well, as you suffer from cramp—"

"I don't!" roared Bolsover minor.

"Look here, Billy—"

"Look 'ere, Tubb—"

"Oh, shut up, both of you, and get on!" said Paget. "If you're going to jaw all the afternoon, we shan't get time for a swim. We've left it pretty late already."

The three fags followed the towing-path to the bridge. It was a quiet and secluded spot. Under the bridge the water ran less deeply, but on the other side of the old stone structure the river widened and deepened into the Pool. It was a spot carefully avoided by swimmers. The banks were high and steep, the current hard and treacherous. All the Greyfriars fellows had heard of the boy who had been drowned there—sucked under by the current and choked in the weeds, powerful swimmer as he was. They knew, too, the story of how Harry Wharton had saved Frank Nugent's life in that deadly place on the day he came to Greyfriars for the first time, and so laid the foundation of the steady friendship that had never been broken since. But the fags of the Third were not swimmers like Wharton, and Wharton had only escaped with his life almost by a miracle.

Tubb & Co. had no intention of venturing near the dangerous spot. The place they had selected was well above the bridge, where the current was not strong enough to be dangerous to any fellow who knew how to swim.

In the westerling sunlight, under the old trees, hidden by thickets, the fags stripped, and donned their bathing-bags, as they called them, and plunged into the cool water.

They splashed merrily in the shining river, splashing water over one another, plunging, swimming, and thoroughly enjoying themselves. And, tired of gentle sport, Tubb was the first to propose a swim to the opposite bank, the last ashore to stand a feed at the Turk-shop as a penalty.

Tubb's proposition was agreed to at once, and they lined up and started. Tubb, who was a powerful fellow for his years, was soon far ahead. Paget and Bolsover minor kept level. Tubb was close to the shore when the other two had reached the middle of the river. Then Paget shot ahead.

Swimming his hardest, Paget did not hear a faint cry behind him. He knew that Bolsover minor had fallen

behind, but he supposed simply that he was beating him in the race.

Tubb reached the bank, and was looking back. A sudden yell from Tubb first warned Paget that something was wrong. He ceased his efforts, and swung round in the water to look for his chum.

"Billy!" he called out.

But there was no reply, Bolsover minor was nowhere near him.

Paget's terrified glance swept the shining water towards the deep, dark arch of the stone bridge.

He caught an instant's glimpse of a white face on the water, of a hand thrown up into the air.

Then it vanished from his sight as Bolsover minor was swept away under the shadows of the bridge.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Betrayed by Himself!

"COME out, you bouncer!" Cleveland rose from his study table. He was looking tired and weary, but his face lighted up with a smile as he caught Mark Linley's cheery glance from the door.

"Finished the cricket?" he asked.

"Yes. We've drawn with Courtfield. Now for that little trot. You want some fresh air after being stuck in here all the afternoon," said Mark.

"Yes; I do, indeed! But"—there was satisfaction as well as weariness in Cleveland's face now—"I'm getting on with this. I begin to think I shall beat you for the Greek prize, Linley."

"Good man!" said Mark, laughing. "Best man wins, and I wish you luck! Anyway, one of us is pretty certain of it, I really think, and the other one will get the second prize, I believe. So, in any case, you'll have something to show your uncle."

"Yes; thank goodness!" Cleveland closed his books, and picked up his cap. The two juniors strolled down the passage together, and passed Vernon-Smith on the landing. The Bouncer looked at them, and his eyes glistened. But he did not say "Going out, Osborne?" to Cleveland, as he would have said a few days earlier. He did not speak at all.

"The Bouncer seems to be letting you alone," Mark Linley observed, as they went out into the Close.

Cleveland smiled.

"Yes; that's a relief, too. He was getting on my nerves. He was getting on all our nerves, I think, and I'm glad he's dropped it. He was bound to find out sooner or later that he had made a mistake."

"He certainly made a mistake in some ways," said Cleveland, half to himself. Then he laughed. "And his friend from St. Wode's has not come, after all?"

"No. That shows he's given up the idea. Blessed if I can see how he could be so obstinate about it, when it was clearly proved that you were no more Hubert Osborne than you were Lloyd George."

Cleveland laughed, and changed the subject.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you bouncers going?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting them in the Close.

"Walk down the towing-path," said Mark.

"Good! I'll come with you. Wharton and Nugent have gone to Friarale, and we may meet them coming back."

"I say, you fellows, if you're going to the tuck-shop, I'll come with you if you like. I want to see Uncle Clegg—"

"Good! Come on!" said Bob. "Let's give Bunter a sharp walk. It will do him good."

The three juniors grinned, and set off at a sharp walk, and Billy Bunter's little fat legs had to go at a great rate to keep pace with them. By the time they reached the towing path, Bunter gave it up.

"I say, stop for me, you fellows!" he called out. "If you don't walk a bit more slowly I shan't come with you!"

"Oh, don't be so slow, Bunter!" implored Bob.

"Good-bye, porpoise!"

And the trio walked on, leaving Bunter gasping and growling on the bank.

"We'll go by the bridge, and back round the lower bridge," said Mark.

"Right ho!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Some kids out there swimming!" said Bob Cherry, glancing down from the old stone bridge, as they were crossing it.

"Third Form fags?" said Mark. "They'd get into a row if a prefect saw them swimming in this part of the river."

"It's dangerous if they should get carried under the bridge. Keep your eyes peeled, hallo! What is Tubb yelling about?"

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The three Removets halted, and looked down. Tubb was standing on the bank, and Paget had just joined him there. Bob shouted down to the fags.

"Anything wrong, Tubb?"

Tubb started, and looked up at the bridge.

His face was white as chalk.

"Bolsover minor!" he gasped.

"Is he with you?" asked Bob.

"He was—oh—he—he's been carried through under the bridge!" panted Tubb.

"What!"

For a moment the three juniors on the bridge felt frozen with horror. Carried under the bridge—and on the lower side—the Pool, with its unknown depths and its treacherous currents and its death-trap of clinging weeds!

"Come on—quick!" muttered Cleveland.

They ran across the bridge to the stone parapet on the other side.

Leaning on the low stone parapet, they watched the glimmering surface of the river, thirty feet below, scanning it with anxious eyes for a sight of the fag who had been swept away.

A wide, deep reach of water, with steep crumbling banks—here and there a shoaling shallow where the water foamed.

Their faces were white as they looked down.

"Can you see him?"

"Poor kid!" muttered Bob Cherry hoarsely. "The young ass! He's done for. A strong swimmer wouldn't have a chance there, and that kid—"

"Look!"

Cleveland pointed.

Far down on the glimmering waters appeared a dark spot—the head of the fag! Bolsover minor was there, struggling for life under their eyes.

He had no chance!

He was almost overcome. He had caught a floating branch by good luck, but it was not sufficient to support his weight; but by clinging to it, and swimming also, he was able as yet to keep afloat.

But the treacherous under-currents were dragging him down, and his strength was well-nigh spent.

A few minutes more—

And there was no chance. He was fifty yards from the bank, and the bank was high and steep, and crumbling, offering no hold for the hands if he had reached it.

"Good heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry, white as a sheet.

Mark Linley began to peel off his jacket. Bob was mechanically doing the same. It was death to dive there—grim death! But to see the boy perish under their eyes, without lifting a hand to save him, that was impossible!

Cleveland did not move or speak.

His face was like chalk; his heart seemed turned to ice.

Wild thoughts were racing through his brain. Under his eyes was a boy in the grip of the merciless waters, and he could be saved by a strong swimmer—a swimmer who had strength and skill and courage—at least, there was a chance.

Not by Linley, or by Bob Cherry, but by a swimmer who was strong and skillful beyond his years—by the swimmer who had won the swimming championship of St. Wode's School.

The boy's look was bitter.

He had lived down that story—he had met his enemy's cunning with cunning more skilful and had outwitted him. His way at Greyfriars was clear now. The Bouncer silenced, if not convinced, that wretched story nipped in the bud—a prospect of winning the Greek prize, and standing well with his uncle—all the future was fair.

And now—

Cleveland groaned aloud.

But he dragged himself from his bitter thoughts. He peeled off his jacket, and threw down his cap, and kicked his boots off. Bob Cherry caught him by the arm.

"Don't be an idiot, Cleveland!" he exclaimed. "You can't go in. Pluck's no good if you can't swim."

"I'm going to try, Cleveland," said Mark hurriedly.

"Don't be an ass! No good throwing your life away! Run along the bank, and see if you can help us there!"

Cleveland's face set hard.

"Stay where you are!" he said. "You can't do this! I don't know if I can, but I'm going to try. I can't see that kid drowned."

"But you can't swim!" roared Bob.

"I can swim!"

"What—what?"

"I can swim better than you, better than any fellow at Greyfriars, senior or junior," said Cleveland wearily. "Get me alone! I'm going to save that kid, or be drowned along with him. I don't much care if I am, either."

He climbed on to the stone parapet.

Bob Cherry stood dumb. Mark panted.

"Then—then you are—you are—"

"I am Hubert Osborne of St. Wode's—an expelled thief, and a bigger fool at this minute than I've ever been in my life before!" said Cleveland, in a hard, dry voice.

And he put his hands together, and dived.
Deep down in the glimmering waters there was a splash.

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley's eyes met.

"Osborne!" muttered Bob.

"It was true!"

"I don't care—I don't care! He's a splendid chap—a ripping chap!" said Bob. "He's giving himself away; he's risking his life; he's a splendid chap!"

Mark put on his jacket. It was useless to dive now. He would only add to Cleveland's task by going in. If anything could be done, the swimming champion of St. Wode's could do it. Mark caught Bob's sleeve.

"Come along the bank. We may be able to help them out there. It's the only chance."

They dashed down from the bridge, and scrambled along the bank—a steep, rough slope, with rushes and thickets clothing it. There was a hail from the distance.

"Hallo! What's the matter, Bob?"

"This way, Harry. Bolsover minor's in the pool, and Cleveland's gone in after him!"

Wharton and Nugent came tearing up. They scrambled down the bank, as far as they could go without falling into the water. Their eyes were upon the strong swimmer. Cleveland had reached Bolsover minor. The fog, his strength exhausted, had let go the branch, and gone under the surface, when Cleveland reached him. But the strong grasp of the junior brought him up again. Holding the almost insensible fog, Cleveland was fighting for his life, and the life of his burden.

"Cleveland!" muttered Harry Wharton, in dazed wonder. "Look how he's swimming! Cleveland! He said he couldn't swim!"

"He's Osborne!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Then—then the Bounder was right!"

"Yes, hang him!"

There was a crowd along the bank now. The news had spread by magic. "Fellows had come from all quarters—a hundred eyes were upon Cleveland in his fight for life. Some had rushed for a boat, some for ropes or a plank. But before help could come, that struggle would be ended—one way or the other!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Shadow of Shame!

CLEVELAND'S face was white, set, hard. He did not see the juniors clustering on the bank—he saw nothing but the grasping, merciless waters, and the insensible fog. He was fighting for his life, and another life, and the fight was hard. With strong strokes he swept towards the steep bank, and the eddy swept him out again, with his burden, into the middle of the river. There was a groan from the watching crowd as they saw him go under, under the swirling waters; but he came up again, white as chalk, but hard as nails, fighting on grimly.

"I—I can't stand this!" Wharton muttered. "I'm going in!"

"No good!" muttered Bob. "You could never reach him! And you couldn't help him, Harry! He's the best swimmer I've ever seen. If he can't get Bolsover minor ashore, you couldn't get him ashore."

Wharton realised the truth of that: yet to stay there and watch—it was impossible! Could nothing be done?

Again Cleveland swept to the bank. He was growing exhausted now, and if he lost third chance, he would not have another.

"I'm going to chance it, Bob, and you fellows help me!" muttered Harry.

Closer and closer came Cleveland, still supporting the senseless fog. He was within three yards when the eddy whirled him away again, and then there was a plunge as Wharton went in. He grasped the swimmer, and held him fast, fighting noddly with the swirl of the water. Another and another plunge—Mark Linley and Nugent were in, too. There was a shout on the bank as Wingate of the Sixth came tearing up, with a rope in his hands.

"Look out—catch the rope!" shouted Wingate.

The rope thrashed on the water. It was Wharton who caught it, and held it fast. Then the other swimmers got a grip on it, and all the fellows on the bank dragged at it, and they were drawn to the shore.

There many hands were ready to help them.

Bolsover major had just arrived, with scared horror in his face. He grasped his minor, and dragged him from the exhausted Cleveland.

Wingate seized Cleveland, and pulled him from the water.

Cleveland lay in the deep grass on the bank, gasping, panting. It had been a very near thing for him.

Wingate gave him a strange glance.

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NEXT MONDAY:

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ONE PENNY.

"The fellow who couldn't swim!" he said.

Cleveland smiled in a strange hard way.

"The game's up, now!" he muttered. "It must all come out! I'm Osborne of St. Wode's—thief, liar, and impostor! I shall be kicked out of Greyfriars, as I was out of St. Wode's, and serve me right! You'd have done me a favour to leave me in the river."

"Good heavens!" said Wingate.

But there was no time for talk. The drenched juniors were hurried back to the school, and Cleveland and Bolsover minor were bundled into bed, the other fellows having a hard towelling, which set them right again.

Greyfriars was in a buzz with it.

The Removites could hardly believe the news at first! Cleveland, the duffer who could not fight, or play cricket, or swim, was Osborne of St. Wode's, the champion athlete, and he had been playing a part all the time he was at Greyfriars.

It seemed incredible, but it was true. The Bounder had been right. He had known the truth, he had stated it, and he had not been believed.

Had the discovery been made under any other circumstances, had the Bounder proved his case, only scorn and contempt would have been felt for the impostor, the fellow who had entered the school under false colours, under an assumed name, after disgracing himself at his own school.

But it was impossible to despise the fellow who had risked his life for another, who had betrayed his secret himself, to save that life. If Hubert Osborne had chosen to leave the fog to drown, his secret would have been safe still. Vernon-Smith had been unable to prove anything against him; but he had proved it against himself, for the sake of a lad he hardly knew.

"He's a splendid chap!" said Bob Cherry, with a choke in his voice. "I don't care what he's done. When we know all about it we shall know there was some excuse for him. Anyway, he did what lots of fellows wouldn't have done; and he's a splendid chap!"

"I was right," said the Bounder, who was looking unusually subdued. "But—but I'm sorry I ever said a word against him now."

"I should think you are!" growled Johnny Bull.

"But he—~~was~~ was able to stay here now," said Skinner. "It's rough on him, but the Head can't let him stay now he knows."

And the juniors felt glumly enough that that was true.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Cleveland.

CLEVELAND was in bed. He was not hurt, but the doctor had advised his keeping in bed for the remainder of the day. But the fellows were allowed to see him, and Vernon-Smith was the first. The Bounder was looking shamed-faced as he came to the bedside, and looked at the white face of the boy he had persecuted.

Cleveland gave him a grim smile.

"Well, you've got your way now," he said. "I'm going to-morrow."

"I'm sorry," said the Bounder.

"Sorry I'm going?"

"Yes; and that I was against you. I knew you were Osborne. I knew what you'd been expelled from St. Wode's for, and—and I felt that you ought to go. But I don't deny that I disliked you too, and wanted to get you sacked. I'm sorry."

"It's all right," said Cleveland wearily. "You haven't done me any harm, after all; only made me tell lies that I didn't want to tell. I don't bear any malice. I've given myself away now. You didn't do it, though you wanted to."

"You did a splendid thing."

"Not for myself," said Cleveland, with a bitter smile. "I've been a fool all my life, and a bigger fool than ever to-day! That's all. About that paper. Take the key from my waistcoat-pocket there—it opens the desk in my study. You'll find your paper inside, and you can burn it."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder, and his voice was a little unsteady. "You're more decent to me than I've been to you, Cleveland. I can only say I'm sorry."

"It's all right."

And the Bounder took the key and went.

Cleveland remained alone, with bitter thoughts in his mind, a bitter look upon his face. He looked up wearily when Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

"How is the kid?" he asked.

"He's all right," said Harry. "And you?"

"Oh, I'm all serene. I'm going by the first train in the morning."

(Continued on page 26, column 2.)

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars, Order Early.

READ OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL.

'Mysteria'



Ching Lung & his 'Chums
in search of
THE LOST LAND.

By **SIDNEY DREW**

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Roonsey, Gan-Waga the Eskimo, and Prouf & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk, which he has picked up in an East End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proves to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small ward of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island, inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately obtrudes the phantom island "Mysteria," in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. On their way the submarine gets entangled in a net lost by fishermen. Ching-Lung and Hal Honour, the engineer, free the submarine, and much to Gan-Waga's delight, they capture an enormous dogfish. The Eskimo insists upon keeping the creature, which he calls a Barry O'Roonsey, as a pet, and it has the run of the swimming-bath, in spite of Rupert Thurston's protests.

(How go on with the story.)

Tapping the Cable.

There was a delicious scent emanating from the cook's kitchen, and Gan, looking almost smart in his thin flannel suit, sniffed it, and smiled. The Eskimo was, of all the crew, permitted to breakfast and lunch in the saloon if he chose to do so.

He did what he liked, went where he liked, and said what he liked.

Sometimes he got hurt. That only happened, of course, when he fell foul of Prouf, Maddock, Jew, or O'Roonsey. But Gan was seldom hurt—there were others.

"Smellies whittings, Ching?" he gurgled. "Smellies 'em, hun?"

And Gan-Waga lingered, to get the benefit of the odour.

"That fair, fat youth has got more appetite than brain, Ching!" said Thurston.

"My dear chap, that's where you blunder badly. If you had half the brains of Gannus the Fat, you'd be a millionaire. I taught him, sunny, and I never struck better material. I love Gan, and Gan loves me. We understand each other. He's the hottest stuff that ever came off the ice. Rupert, my boy, you're a dear old chum, but you don't know everything if you think Gannus doesn't. They're all grand boys, and it's hard to pick and choose. I found Gan-Waga sitting on a chunk of ice without a word of English to his name.

Why does Lord let him have the run of the ship? Why do all the boys take as much trouble from him as they do from his greatness the Prince of Kwaihai, and snipe at the time? Gan is Gan. There's only one Waga; and, in spite of the dogfish, Ru, you're as fond of him as I am."

"A fact!" laughed Thurston. "I can't dispute it, Ching. I am immensely fond of the stout rebel. His tastes are somewhat odd, but I like him. All the same, it is rather upsetting to see him at table scooping out the butter-dish with his fingers."

"Well, that's better than seeing him do it with his toes, chappie. You ought to be jolly grateful for small mercies."

Ching-Lung squeezed the last drops of water out of his pigtail as they entered the saloon. He had dressed in the swimming-bath, and Rupert went into his cabin.

Ferrers Lord looked up from the book he was reading. His face and eyes—it was seldom that they did so—softened as he saw the prince.

"You look as fresh as a spring flower, Ching!"

"I'm as fresh as new-mown hay, old man, and as hungry as a shark. I'm always peckish when I'm in this rusty tin."

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"

Every Friday.

tank of yours. We don't get much salt breeze or much of the rolling ocean; but there's a lively wind when we open a soda-water bottle and the bubbles come up. What's the news?"

"Only that the coffee is getting cold, and the cutlets are not improving. Take the post of honour, Ching. The gong sounded minutes ago."

"Then where's Hal Honour, the exact, the time-to-the-second Johnny?"

"Still working, like the machinery. He has not been to bed all the night. Ah, here is our silent aut!"

The engineer looked none the worse for his night of sleeplessness and toil, and his appetite had not suffered.

Rupert was late. Breakfast was almost over when he came in, with many apologies.

"If you ever want to be in time, my child," said Ching-Lung, "you ought to get up before you go to bed. Will you have a leg or a wing of autton-cutlet? I can't give you a breast-cut, because the tailor is just coming round to measure their chests for new waistcoats. Coffee? Right! It's got down to the thick part, but you'll be able to eat it with a knife and fork. I wonder where Gan has sloped to? Oh, and that reminds me. In the name of everything abominable, Lord, where did you find that cook with the tiny little name?"

"You mean Schwartz?"

Ching-Lung folded up his serviette, but he was thinking.

"Schwartz, of course," he answered. "I fancied it was Shovefardenheimerplot, or something. My yes; what is life without a foot-warmer? If anybody has a cigarette, I don't mind burning it. Honour, I thank thee! What a fat one! I reckon, old sport, you can't buy any better than these for five a penny. I'm insured, so I'll smoke it, or die!"

The millionaire stretched out his long arm and pressed a small brass switch. The pace of the vessel immediately slackened. At the same time, the mirrors and pictures that covered the left-hand wall of the saloon glided swiftly out of sight, leaving only a sheet of glass eight inches thick, and as clear as crystal, between them and the sea.

Little could be seen. Now and again a frond of seaweed brushed past the panes, or a frightened fish slid into the gloom.

"You seem in a deuce of a hurry, Lord!" said Ching-Lung. "What's the terrific speed?"

"Six knots."

"Awful!" said Ching-Lung. "Supposing we ran into a kipper and wrecked ourselves?"

Ferrers Lord lighted a cigarette at the electric-torch, and smoked lazily. He kept switching the current of the little silver stand on and off in a nervous fashion strange for him. Queer spectral shapes glided by, objects that few human beings could ever witness. Lying back in his easy-chair, the millionaire gazed at the pangs through a cloud of fleecy smoke.

"You look quite bored, Lord," said Rupert. "Have you been up all night, too, like Honour?"

"Not at all. Honour has worked longer by exactly eighty minutes. I am not tired, nor am I bored." He touched the brass switch again, and the screws turned astern. "I am waiting for a wire from Sir Wilfred Graythorpe."

"What? Are you studying earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, chappie?" said Ching-Lung.

Sir Wilfred was the greatest authority alive on both subjects, so far as the public knew.

"I have a wager with him, that is all," said Ferrers Lord.

"What is it?" cried three voices, for even the taciturn engineer joined in.

"Nothing—a new hat. I have wagered that, under certain conditions and at periodical times, a floating island may exist.

Ching-Lung rose from the table.

"I'd like to bet you a million, old chap, that, under certain conditions—a—"

"What?" asked Rupert, almost eagerly. "What conditions?"

"I must have water for a start," said Ching-Lung. "That's the first condition."

"Yes."

"Then I'll bet you a million pounds to fourpence that a cork will float."

Thurston did not even smile. He shook the prince's hand.

"Done and witnessed," he said. "I take that bet, and put down the stakes. There's your money."

Ferrers Lord's eyes were still fixed on the glass. The submarine was merely crawling. He brushed his hand over his thick, black hair.

"If you will be less frivolous," he said, "I will tell you the story of the narwhal's tooth. When I speak of frivolity, Honour, I do not include you. I only refer to those two brainless idiots who share your fodder. Once upon a time I had hoped that Thurston might make something. I am disappointed. Of Ching-Lung I never had a hope. He is utterly ridiculous."

"Thanks awfully," said Ching-Lung. "Anything else nice?"

"Nothing at present. Wait for me."

The Lord of the Deep came to a standstill, and, with a gentle quiver, touched the bottom and rested there. A few minutes went by and then the hazy form of a diver loomed into sight. He knelt down. A few yards of a submarine cable were visible. The diver stood up again and walked away.

"I'm no betting man," said Thurston, "but that's Maddock, I know his waddle."

"Yes, that was Maddock. Wait a moment."

Ferrers Lord's fingers began to work on the telegraphic instrument. He had tapped the cable. A few seconds later he uttered an exclamation of disgust.

"What's the news?" inquired Thurston.

"The Marquis of Clairbourne and his blushing bride, the late Sarah Josiah Van Voorder, widow of Josiah Van Voorder, the pickled-pork magnate, have left New York for Coney Island, where they will spend their honeymoon," said the millionaire, laughing. "As they have paid a dollar a word for it, I must send it along."

He swiftly transmitted the interrupted message. Again the instrument ticked.

"This is our busy day," said Ching-Lung. "Is that the washing-bill?"

The millionaire made no answer. The needle swung to and fro with its monotonous ticking. Honour's dark eyebrows came together until they almost met. Like Ching-Lung he could read by the very sound. Ching-Lung struck a match noisily, and then upset a cup. It fell to the floor with such a crash that the last few ticks of the needle were unheard. Presently Ching-Lung and Ferrers Lord were alone. The millionaire extended his hand.

"Thanks, Ching," he said. "I have no secret to hold from you, dear las, and few from Rupert and Honour. Did you hear the name? You turned over the cup in the nick of time. Did you hear it? Did they hear it?"

"I did not hear it, old man, and they did not hear it," said Ching-Lung. "But I can guess it."

The millionaire shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," he answered, "we cannot help it. I hate notoriety. They may make it unpleasant for us." He laughed, and added: "Ching, old man, I cannot help being frivolous. Do you know—to put it vulgarly—that I am broke?"

"Cart' along the microscope and see if there's a ton or two of green in my eye," said Ching-Lung.

"I'm not joking. It is a fact."

"If a few hundred thousands or so—" began Ching-Lung, but not at all seriously. "My banking account—"

"Bosh! I'm broke, without any jesting. Perhaps I do not look very miserable under such distressing circumstances. Why should I? Dear Ching, I see that you are laughing at me. The fact is there. I have plenty of money and yet I am bankrupt. Perhaps I have twenty or thirty millions, perhaps even more. But still I am bankrupt."

Even Ching-Lung, the confident and friend, could not thoroughly fathom this strange enigma of a man.

"Old chap," he said, "you puzzle me. I gave you up long ago. What's the trouble?"

An electric bell whirred noisily.

"Maddock is getting tired," said Ferrers Lord. "I'll tell you later, Ching. Ah, here comes Sir Wilfred's message—'Good luck!' We are queer creatures. Money, money is what I want; and yet, Ching, I think I would rather win that new hat and absolutely stagger Sir Wilfred and all the other hairy-headed geographical scientists, than find a billion in gold. But money I must have. And I hold the key—the only key—to the treasure chamber of the universe—the ocean. I am the king—I am Neptune."

"Then we'll go halves, old boy," said Ching-Lung.

At the millionaire's touch a lamp winked three times. Maddock's shadowy form passed into view. He disconnected the wires and vanished. Presently a bell rang again. The vessel rose and sped onwards.

Mr. Benjamin Maddock, whose business it had been to tap the cable, had not been absolutely idle. The "tapping" was a mere matter of ten minutes.

Ben, however, had not been recalled at once. The cable, owing to bad soundings, dipped and dropped over various rocks. These rocks were a little lobster farm, and Ben, with his thick gloves of rubber, was less afraid of a lobster than a cat is of a mouse. At any time, a lobster is a slow and clumsy crustacean, otherwise it could escape its most deadly foe, the octopus, who is a lazy beast at all times. In the ledges of the rocks Maddock described the quivering tentacles of many lobsters. He jerked out the saucy crustaceans one after the other. He was not afraid of their claws, for he was shod in armour. Maddock strung up thirty-two of them on an ordinary sea-fishing line and brought them safely aboard.

"Well, I'm blistered!" said Joe, the carpenter, when he saw the catch.

"I ain't blistered," said Maddock; "but my little feet are cold, sose me! Them's crabs—what?"

Joe scratched his nose.

"If I loves anything on earth, Ben," he stated, "it's lobsters. Let's go and bile 'em."

Maddock wriggled out of his massive boots and shook his head.

"No."

"What? Ain't ye goin' to bile 'em?"

"Later," whispered Maddock, "Hush! A word in your fat ear. Hush! Hush! Hush!"

"What is it?"

Maddock bent and whispered, and a smile crept over Joe's face.

"Yes."

Ginning broadly they took up the lobsters.

"To the swimmin'-bath," said Joe.

"I guess these 'ere fleas'll bite," said the bo'sun. "If they don't they ought to, kiddy."

And then they trotted to the swimming bath, their faces radiant with joy.

Does Mysteria Exist?—Gan-Waga After the Lobsters.

Rupert Thurston rested his chin on his hand, and fixed his eyes thoughtfully on the glowing lamps of the electric stove. The paper containing the translation of the narwhal's tooth which he had just read over had fallen from his fingers. Ferrers Lord blew out clouds of cigarette smoke.

"Well, Thurston, am I to receive your valuable comment and opinion, or do you prefer to keep the silence that is golden?"

Thurston laughed.

"My opinion won't be worth much, old chap," he answered. "I never professed to have brains. Two brainy ones like your noble self and Honour are quite enough on one vessel. As I remarked before, the coincidences are utterly staggering. The tooth itself and the document it

contained might have been a hoax, but the thing fits in so well with the story of Tonks and the lasciar fellow that—

"Finish, my boy. Don't pull up like a jibbing horse."
"I was merely going to add, with the hideous vulgarity of a Ching-Lung, that the whole thing is a knock-out."
Ferrers Lord clasped his hands over his knee.

"It is curious in the extreme, but not impossible by any means. More than a century ago, this Greek vessel, an avowed pirate and filibuster, is carried hundreds of miles out of her course and dashed upon a floating island. The sea at last gives us the secret scratched on that piece of bone. Then, not two years since, a pearling boat meets the same fate. From the lips of two men I hear a similar tale of a drifting isle peopled by nameless monsters. The locality is vague, but a circle of a thousand miles' radius would cover it. The waters are fairly well navigated now, and have been for years. The puzzle comes here. How is it that 'Mysteria,' as you have called our will-o'-the-wisp, has not been seen and described?"

"My dear Lord, I was never good at riddles. Your question seems to knock the bottom out of the whole thing. Can you answer it?"

"I have a theory, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord. "My theories are generally sound, as you must admit."
"So have I. My theory is that it's all a myth, a wild-cat hunt, a chase after shadows. But I'm not grumbling, old boy. As long as I hear those engines buzzing, I'm happy. Mysteria may go to pot. We're sure to find something to do to keep us from dying of that tired feeling." My first move is a shave, if I can find any razors. I shall see you presently."

Rupert went to his cabin to remove the superfluous hair from his chin. In the forecabin, Joe, the man of many parts, was shaving Barry O'Rooney. At the last moment it had been decided that lobsters were far too good to be wasted on Gan-Waga. Another reason also had prevented their delivery—a locked door. Joe splashed on the lather, and stropped the razor.

"Aisy, aisy, bedad!" spluttered O'Rooney. "O'im no inimy to soap, but it isn't good to eat!"

Joe was an expert barber. He shaved, sponged, and powdered the Irishman in quick time. As no more of the crew put in an appearance to be operated upon, the two perched themselves on a couple of lockers to chat and smoke.

"Ye've heard we're in search of a floatin' oiland, Oi reckon, Joey?" remarked Barry. "Ut's a lovely oiland wid a cork bottom, and sails to wind an' along. The odd ones of the say steers it, and makes a mighty lot o' dollars takin' trippers out at a tanner an hour. Bedad, it's a jool of a business he's got intoire."

The carpenter closed one eye knowingly, and murmured something about seeing any green in that particular optic.

"Oi only see a squint," grinned Barry. "Ye've lovely orls, Joe. Lind me your 'bacey-hov-just-jaw minute."
"I've lost things like that afore," said Joe. "Let's go to the point. Where's them lobsters?"

"In the locker you are recliniu' your graceful forrn on," said Barry.

"Right you are. I'll bile 'em myself, for ten to one that greasy-wigged Dutchman'll mcs' 'em up. Then we'll have a little select party in the corrin'-tower, d'ye see? My! Ain't they prime?"

Joe smiled and smiled gratingly at the toothsome crustaceans. Barry took one out—the largest of all.

"Troth, Oi cud kiss ut!" he said. "Bile them as if ye loved them, sonny. Bile them a gintle pink."

Joe promised to do his best. He was wise enough to turn the key in the lock before going about his usual duties. He had not left the place ten seconds before Gan-Waga glided in. Gan placed his ear to the locker and listened. He heard odd scraping noises. He placed his snub nose to the keyhole and sniffed. A kick from behind elicited a yell.

"What are you doing there—rattin'?"
Gan fondled his nose, and smiled. It was Ching-Lung. Gan could not be angry with his darling Chingy. That was utterly impossible.

"Ye've got to wild nossons, Chingy," he said. "Only gots one, and nots like him bustededs. Ooh, Chingy! Not rattings. Ho, ho, ho! Morer butterfuls dan dats. Smells 'em! Sniffs the holekeys! Ho, ho, he! I sniffes 'em! Ooh! Butterfuls—good 'noughs!"

"What are they, lard factory?" asked the prince. "I can hear 'em scratching. Are they micees?"

"Dey lobsterstashes!" cried Gan, dancing first on one leg and then on the other. "Sawed silly Barry loonnetics kissin' ones. Ooh! Gets 'em out, Chingy. Ole Joe lock de holekeys, but you yets 'em outs, Chingy, easy as pies. Oh, do collars 'em, Chingy!"

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand

new serial next week.)

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"THE BEN" LIBRARY,
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HIS OWN BETRAYER

(Continued from page 23.)

"Have you seen the Head?"

Cleveland nodded.

"He won't let you stay?"

"Can't stay—for this! I've got some sense of shame," said Cleveland grimly. "The Head was all kindness. He offered to let me stay. But it wouldn't do. Before long the fellows would forget this, and would only remember that I'd been expelled from my school for dishonesty."

"You are a decent chap," said Harry. "I can't understand how—how you got sacked from St. Wode's."

Cleveland made a weary gesture.

"I was a fool, that's all. You see, St. Wode's is an expensive place, and I was poor. I went in for all the sports—I was pretty good at them—made quite a figure there. It cost money, and kept me away from my work. I had expensive tastes, too; and I got into debt. My uncle wouldn't pay my debts; he would have been more likely to cast me off if he'd even heard of them. He's not a rich man, you see, and he's hard."

I was in a rotten position—cock of the walk in some things and a miserable dog in other things; dunned by tradesmen, worried by fellows I owed money to, champion of the school in the sports, and hardly knowing where to turn to for a penny. And I was treasurer of the sports fund; I had the handling of a lot of money. You can guess how it ended. I used the money, intending to put it back—goodness knows how I meant it. But I couldn't raise it. Then I had to use more and more. Then I got reckless, and plunged—tried to get it back on a race, and the lot went; and I was found out, and expelled for theft. My uncle threatened to throw me off entirely, but agreed to give me another chance—one chance. I took his name—legally Cleveland is my name now; that part's true enough. He had to go back to India, and he left me with his lawyers—people who didn't know anything about his having a nephew named Osborne. He placed me with them simply as his nephew, Frank Cleveland. When Mr. Quech wrote to them, you see, they answered in good faith that I was Frank Cleveland, the nephew of Colonel Cleveland. They didn't know the story. It was to me a fresh start under a new name. I came here meaning to do it. I gave up everything—everything I was fond of—cricket, swimming, outdoor sports of every kind—and settled down to be a swot. Might have gone well enough if Vernon-Smith hadn't recognised me. This school is so far from St. Wode's that I never even thought of the possibility of that.

"I had to face it. I had intended to be straight as a die. I had to lie and humbug—I was driven to it—to defend myself. I found a way of stopping Smithy's tongue, and all was plain sailing after that. Only—only I had lied a little too thoroughly." Cleveland's lip curled in a bitter smile.

"I wanted to put the past behind me. I wanted to be a kind of fellow quite distinct from Osborne, of St. Wode's. It was safest. But I overdid it. I couldn't forgive this. I couldn't guess that I should be idiot enough to give myself away."

"Good fellow enough, here enough, you mean," said Wharton. "It was the best thing I've ever heard of. You betrayed yourself to save that kid. It was splendid!"

"Well, I'm not sorry I did it," said Cleveland, after a pause. "I saved his life, anyway; that may count as a set-off to the other things I've done. My uncle may give me a chance again when he knows the reason I've failed here. It can't be called my own fault. But I'm done with lies. I shan't go through this again."

"That's the best thing you can decide on," said Bob Cherry. "And when you go you'll leave some good pals here, Cleveland old man, who will stand by you if ever you want them."

"Yes, rather!"

"Thanks!" said Cleveland quietly.

The next day he was gone.

It would have been a triumph for the Bounder, if he had regarded it as one. But he did not. For once the hard, cynical heart of the Bounder had been touched, and he was sorry for what he had done.

And there were few fellows at Greystones who did not retain kindly recollections of Cleveland, of the Remove, though he had come to the school under false colours.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "The School-boy Dramatists!" by Frank Richards. Order at once to avoid disappointment.)



My Readers' Page

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The Editor is always pleased to hear from his Chums, at home or abroad.

Readers writing to these addresses for particulars of these leagues should enclose a stamped and addressed envelope for reply in every case.

A TASMANIAN LEAGUE.

While I am on the subject of "Magnet" Leagues, I must make mention of one that has been formed in Hobart, Tasmania—evidently a very go-ahead town indeed, where I have many loyal readers. In a very welcome letter from Masters Frank Alcock and Harold Chambers—president, and vice-president, respectively of the League—I am given particulars of the rules of the club, which are few and excellent; especially No. 4, which runs down that "a member's promise is to be relied upon." I am sure my Tasmanian chums League has a successful future before it, and I wish it all prosperity.

HOW TO KEEP FIT.—No. 6.

By a Sergeant-Instructor.

To Strengthen the Back.—Stand firmly on both feet, heels close together. Raise the arms above the head, fingers extended, and thumbs together. Now bend the body from the hips in a forward direction, keeping the arms extended, and try to touch the toes without bending the knees. You will not be able to do this at once, but by constant trying you will find that you can very easily touch the ground with the tips of the fingers. Still keeping the arms extended, raise your body to an upright position, separate the hands outwardly, and, throwing the chest well forward, allow the arms to sink slowly to their first position. Six to twelve times every day will soon give you plenty of proof that your back is getting both strong and straight. Make a practice of throwing your shoulders well back as you walk. By this means you will get into the habit of carrying yourself well, and, of course, improving your appearance generally. There's nothing so mean to look upon as a boy who walks with his shoulders humped up, arms hanging down as if they did not belong to him, and his head dropped forward as if he was afraid to look a person in the face. Many a lad has lost the chance of a good job by reason of his general slovenly carriage; and many have made a favourable impression by the smart, manly way in which they have held up their heads when applying for a position. Indeed, to carry oneself properly is a grand physical-culture exercise in itself. Now, about nine out of every ten boys that one meets on the street are so tightly vested that the chest cannot expand. Have your vest made so that when your chest is expanded you will not feel any tightness from that one garment. I am very serious in this, for there is little use in expanding your chest and lungs a few times every morning if you are bent on cramping them up all the rest of the day.

To Cure Round Shoulders.—Round shoulders come not naturally, but as the result of carelessness in carrying oneself, or as the result of some occupation. There is great need for exercise when one is forced to bend all day, either over a desk or a bench in a workshop. Here's the remedy: get a boy scout's staff, or some other piece of wood of similar design. Stand with feet slightly apart. Grip the staff so that the space between your hands is twice the width of your chest. Now raise the staff up over your head, and down on to the shoulder-blades. Let it rest there for a few seconds, then raise it, and bring it to its former position. Do this twelve times every day regularly. In time you will be able to bring the hands closer together, and in the end chop up the staff for firewood. You'll be as straight as the staff ever was.

(This grand series of helpful articles will be continued next week.)

THE EDITOR.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE SCHOOLBOY DRAMATISTS!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next splendid long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled as above, is one of the most amusing and interesting that has ever appeared in "The Magnet" Library. Through the gallantry of Harry Wharton & Co., three sailormen are rescued from a watery grave in Pegg Bay. All their belongings are lost, however, and the juniors feel that it is "up to them" to relieve the destitution of the rescued men. Coker of the Fifth has the same idea, but his plan proves a failure, and it is left to

"THE SCHOOLBOY DRAMATISTS!"

to save the situation. This they succeed in doing, in spite of Coker & Co.'s opposition.

THIS WEEK'S STORY SUPPLEMENT.

The number of our splendid companion paper, "The Penny Popular," just issued contains, in addition to the great "POPLET'S" Competition, which is making such a stir, three complete stories of such super-excellent quality that I have felt justified in adopting a novel method of bringing them particularly to the notice of my Magnetite chums. On the following three pages, therefore, I am giving my chums an opportunity of reading the opening chapters of these three magnificent tales, so that the evidence of their own judgment may prove to them that to miss reading these three great stories from beginning to end would mean missing a real treat—a veritable feast of the best and soundest, most interesting and wholesome reading matter ever offered by a penny story-paper.

The contents of the issue of "The Penny Popular" now on sale are simply "ripping"—there is no other way of describing them. That, at least, is your Editor's opinion; and all I ask of my chums is to read this magnificent issue of our grand companion paper, and then judge for themselves whether they do not emphatically endorse that opinion.

NEW "MAGNET" AND "GEM" LEAGUES.

I am asked to give notice this week of a number of "Gem" and "Magnet" Leagues that enthusiastic readers are forming. Here are the names and addresses of the prime movers in the formation of these latest Leagues.

Miss Mabel Edwards, The Nursing Home, 196, Clapham Road, S.W. would be glad to hear from fellow-readers of either sex willing to join a league in her district.

Alexander Stothart, 49, Duke Street, Glasgow, N.B., would like to hear from those willing to join a combined "Gem" and "Magnet" League and Cricket Club in Glasgow.

Miss Maria Denman, 89, Mansfield Road, Hampstead, London, N.W., is president of a London league which has vacancies for some more members.

W. Wilson, 33, Havelock Crescent, Bridlington, Yorkshire, is forming a "Gem" and "Magnet" League in combination with a sports club, and would like to hear from prospective new members.

Miss Emily W. Foote, 1, Northumberland Avenue, Kingstown, County Dublin, Ireland, wishes to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League, specially for Welsh readers, she herself being of that nationality.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE SCHOOLBOY DRAMATISTS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

YOU SHOULD ALSO READ PAGES III. AND IV. OF COVER. 

THE LONG LANE MYSTERY!

A Thrilling Long, Complete Story, dealing
with the further Amazing Adventures of

Sexton Blake, Detective.



A man came swiftly into the room, glanced down at the sleeping child and then threw something that jingled metallically on to the table. "Dick," the woman gasped in horror. "You haven't robbed?" "Ay, I have" he answered between his teeth.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Michael Stern—A "Job" for Sexton Blake—A Bargain with Spearing.

MICHAEL STERN paced up and down his dingy little office, muttering to himself. It was a habit of his, but it had never as yet brought him harm; for he muttered in so low a tone that no one could hear what he said. And there were many who would have liked to know Michael Stern's secrets, for report had it that he was a rich man.

Certainly this office of his, situated in a mean street in the East End of London, did not look the kind of place where a wealthy man would do business; yet it was said that large sums changed hands—principally from other people's into Michael Stern's—in this office, where the window was patched with paper and grimed with dirt, so that the light had difficulty in entering, and even the sun shone in it in a faint-hearted way.

There were people, too—envious ones probably—who said that the transactions carried out in the office would not bear too much light, but that did not trouble its owner. It was enough for Michael Stern that his liberty had never actually been threatened, and that he still schemed and plotted, and carried out his plans in the grimly-furnished office in Moon Street.

The man himself was meagre, short, and spare, and with a back so curved that many people believed it to be humped. His clothes were shabby and old, linen none too clean, and the only white thing about him was his face, which always looked

bloodless. It was waxen, dead-white, devoid of whisker or moustache. The eyebrows, heavy and white, thatched forward over the eyes, which, for all their somewhat misty appearance, were keen enough to see a baryton.

Michael Stern stopped by his desk, the only really good piece of furniture in the room, and was about to light the candle standing on it, when there came a soft knock at the door. He at once snuffed the burning match between his fingers and turned sharply, so that his back was to the light, though there was hardly enough coming through the grimy panes of the window even to show up the lines of his face.

"Come in, can't you?" he snapped, in a harsh voice. "Come in!"

The door opened slowly, and a great, heavily-built man came slowly into the room. He had the shoulders and chest of a Hercules, while his arms were certainly longer than the average. Yet he stood just inside the doorway, twirling a rough cap in his hands, and looking sheepishly at Michael Stern. Strange though it may seem, this giant looked absolutely frightened of the little man with the bent back.

"Well?" Michael Stern snapped. "Watched the 'ouse all day, sir," the big man answered gruffly, but with a kind of nervous respect. "Drew went out and looked for work!"

Michael Stern glanced round sharply, at the same time motioning the big man to close the door.

"You have made no mistake—you are sure it is the right house?"

"Dead sure, sir," the big man assured him confidently. "I was with Sam just afore 'e got 'isself nabbed, an' got that three years' stretch, an' 'e blabbed that—"

"Stop, you fool!" Michael Stern snapped, his thin fingers gripping nervously at the edge of his desk.

"Lor', it's safe enough 'ere!" the big man growled.

"No place is safe for fools to wag their tongues in!" Michael Stern said acidly. "I've had trouble enough to keep clear of the police all these years, despite their suspicions, and I don't want trouble now."

"Well, you ain't likely to come to nothin' the big man remarked.

"Get through me."

Michael Stern bent forward, as if to bring his face closer to that of his visitor.

"No," he answered slowly; "I don't think I am. You're not such a fool as to not to know that if anything happens to me—anything, mind you—the same will happen to you! You've got a record, too, Ned, that wouldn't look well—"

Michael Stern stopped abruptly, a finger on his lips. "I heard the stairs creak," he whispered. "Best go the other way."

The big man nodded, stepped swiftly across the floor, jerked aside a curtain, and passed out through a doorway that lay behind. As the door closed a knock came at the other door.

"Come in!" Michael Stern cried; and struck a match and lit the candle on his desk.

In answer to this permission the door opened, and a man entered the room. He shuffled in, hat in hand, and touched his ragged grey forelock. Michael Stern eyed him keenly, and apparently the scrutiny satisfied him, for his face relaxed.

Perhaps it would not have done so had he known that the ragged, dirty man was none other than Sexton Blake. The great detective was masquerading as a broker's man, and it was in that capacity that he had called at the office of Michael Stern in Moon Street.

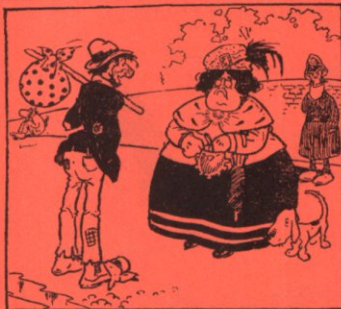
(The rest of this story—one of the finest detective yarns ever written—appears in the latest issue of our new companion paper, "The Penny Popular." On sale at all newsagents. Buy a copy!)



1. Things were slack with Laurie, when suddenly he spotted a poster of a White City rickshaw, which set a sparkling idea sizzling in his brain-pan.



2. And in less time than it takes to tell you to spell "Poplets" he'd constructed a first-rate rickshaw out of his old boat, and was doing a roaring trade in sixpenny rides.



The Lady: "Well, I'll give you twopence, not because I think you deserve it, mind, but because it pleases me."
Tramp: "Thanks, mum! Couldn't you make it sixpence, and thoroughly enjoy yourself!"



"See here! Didn't I tell you not to dare to venture out o the door for another month?"
Tommy: "It's all right, auntie, I climbed out of the window."

HE MUST HAVE!



Gabe: "Jones has a wonderful constitution, hasn't he?"

Steve: "I should say so. Why, he can read a whole patent medicine booklet and feel perfectly sound!"

VERY HARD LUCK!



"Stop crying, Bobbie! Now tell mamma how that brute of a Jimmy Smithers hurt you."

"Just as I was going to punch him he ducked, and I skinned my fist on the wall."

A CANDID OPINION!



Chappie: "Do you know I'm smoking an awful lot of cigars lately?"

Smith: "Well, if that one you gave me yesterday was one of them, they certainly are an awful lot."

THE FRONT GARDEN BEAUTIFUL!



1. "What a grand bit of luck!" cried the small boylet, as he caught sight of the barrow laden with choice flowers which had got firmly stuck in the deep rut.



2. "Yes, it's no good, my man!" he cried to the owner. "Your barrow is a goner. Take the donkey home, and come back next week to move the cart." Meanwhile his chum was busy.



3. Now you see the awful caper. Those boylets completely covered that poor old barrow with mud, turning it into a lovely flower bed, and they took the first prize with it.

HEE-HAW!

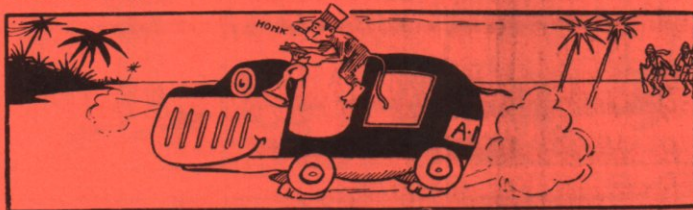
Farmer Giles (having heard that a brother farmer wants to buy a donkey) writes: "Dear Jack,—If you are looking for a really good donkey, don't forget me."



PARP! PARP!



1. "I must be up to date!" quoth Jacko, the monklet. "If I can't get a motor-car, I must bounce people I've got one." So he decorated the hippo.



2. And now, when he takes his rides abroad he's the envy of all the other monkeys in the colony, and that's a fact!