

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR YOU! (See page 15).

No. 625. Vol. XIII.

January 31st, 1920.

The Magnet ^{1 1/2}

Library

20 PAGES.



VERNON-SMITH'S VICTORY!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



THE NEW DAYS.

Oh, they are new days, sure enough! And, somehow, one never gets tired of talking about them. And one thing which is specially attractive about 1920 is the new start it gives. January and February have a clear run, free of all the old lumber of the past year, and they are fascinatingly interesting months, for they lead the way to all the things we like best in the year—namely, the reopening period, which brings more and more keenness for the open air. I have on my desk a recipe for making a weather-glass. That is all very well in its way. What one would like is a recipe for turning out good weather—though it would not do at all; I can hear you saying it. Most likely the general-mix-up, catch-as-catch-can sort of weather we get in the early days of the year—to say nothing of other times!—is best for us. And the grey skies of January and February are not so bad. Have you noticed what a lot of real open weather we get these days? In the country it makes life worth living—I mean, the gleaming, moist times, with buds breaking in the hedges, and the residents of the woods and the hedgerows, who have been cosily tucked out of sight since long before Christmas, showing themselves again, and asking one another whether spring is here yet. Well, in the first weeks of fill dyke February, Spring gives many calls over Dame Nature's telephone. Not all of these are answered, but a good many get a reply. Then we are coming on to the harrier time, and the days when it is good to get a glimpse of the grey land, with the trees standing out bare against the skyline, and the yellow gleam of a primrose here and there on a sheltered bank.

HOW TO WRITE.

I was talking about writing. To a few—a very few—it is something which is born in them. They see the quaint side, and as the years roll on they acquire a certain command of language, so that they can dress their thoughts. A thought, of course, is very little use except to the owner—and not much to him—unless it is smartly turned out in new clothes of the very latest fashion. But what I do notice in myriads of the short stories that come to me for criticism is the absence of the real thought. It is as though the writer had said: "Oh, I can dash off a yarn like old Frank Richards! All you have to do is to make Bunter say: 'Oh, really, Wharton!' and the thing is done." By your leave, it is nothing of the sort. The little personal idiosyncrasies are merely the crinkle-crinkle work on the piecrust. An author has to form characters. It is no use imagining the

business of writing is easily acquired. It means long, hard years of slogging, much suffering, infinite chagrin, and deep thought. It is no use following dead in the footsteps of somebody else. You are not seeing what he has seen. You are only imitating the chance things of his life. It is likewise of little value to make Bunter have a good, square meal. The real writer looks into things—takes the cover off, like Asmodeus did when he wanted to show his friend the world as it really existed. The characters must be thinkers as well as actors. And that's that.

CHEER-UP LETTERS.

A chum at Burnley ladles out the compliments with a big ladle, and sends me some letter as a result. I am much obliged to him for his kindly attention. I can see him perched on the edge of a big cauldron of sympathetic stew, spooning out the flattery bits in my interests, and a very decent job he has made of the business. But when he sets down a few addresses at the end of his splendid note, and says, "Please write to my friends," I own I am done. Because, you see, a letter to be written has to have a real reason, and there is no use writing to fellows who have not written first and told me something about themselves. Yes, this business of letter-writing is rather queer. You start with a blank sheet of paper, and we will take it that you have something you really want to say to the chap at the other end. You desire to let him know that he is doing well, that he might do better, that the world has really quite a good opinion of him, although it seems to be acting a trifle harshly. Perhaps there is concrete advice he needs. Well, all that is easy going; but it is another thing to reel off a note to some individual of whom you know nothing. He may be working in an office, or on a farm. He may prefer mutton to beef, but how can you tell that? No; there must be something to go upon. Now, another thing. I am credibly informed that there is a good fellow living down at Burnley who is bored. Think of it! The fact is, he ought not to be bored. There is the good fight to be seen through, the straight race to be run, and the duties of life should make short work of what is called boredom. The bored statement hit me in the eyes, and was as unpleasant as a half-crown of mud which meets your collar when a taxi gets skittish. There is far too much in the old world to permit of boredom. It does not matter who you are, or what you are doing. Sadness at times—yes, but boredom, never. If you regard life as a railway journey, or as a tramp down a long road, there is always the scenery. There are the wants of others. The victim to boredom

merely shows that he is thinking about himself, not of his fellows. Besides, there are the sparrows on the roof to be looked at, if there is a half-minute to spare. If he is in the country, there are the woods. There is the life of the farm or the village, to say nothing of the sunrise—if he is wise enough to see it. Boredom is waste of time that will never come again. Just look round and see why some chap is hustling so tremendously! Why, just because he realises that in the past he wasted time in this style, and he is trying to make up for the dead loss. If he wires in he may do so.

JOE BECKETT.

A boxing story, coming after the amazing defeat of Joe Beckett, would delight everybody, thinks a correspondent at Penzance. It is not at all a bad notion; and, as far as that goes, I always have my eye on the chance of a yarn about the great art which will always stand out prominently, for the business of self-defence contains something else besides what we all see in a hurry. But I need not go into that part. I was thinking of the comment on the famous boxer who just fell a victim to the chance of war. The more you see of life the more you realise that a certain event in a life does not so much show any failing, any lack of skill, or absence of foresight, as simply the subtle undercurrent which causes happenings we cannot of ourselves rightly explain. This is worth looking into. What this something else does teach is the mistake of passing quick judgments, for be it remembered we have only a part of the truth before us, and the whole is required if a decision is to be worth anything at all.

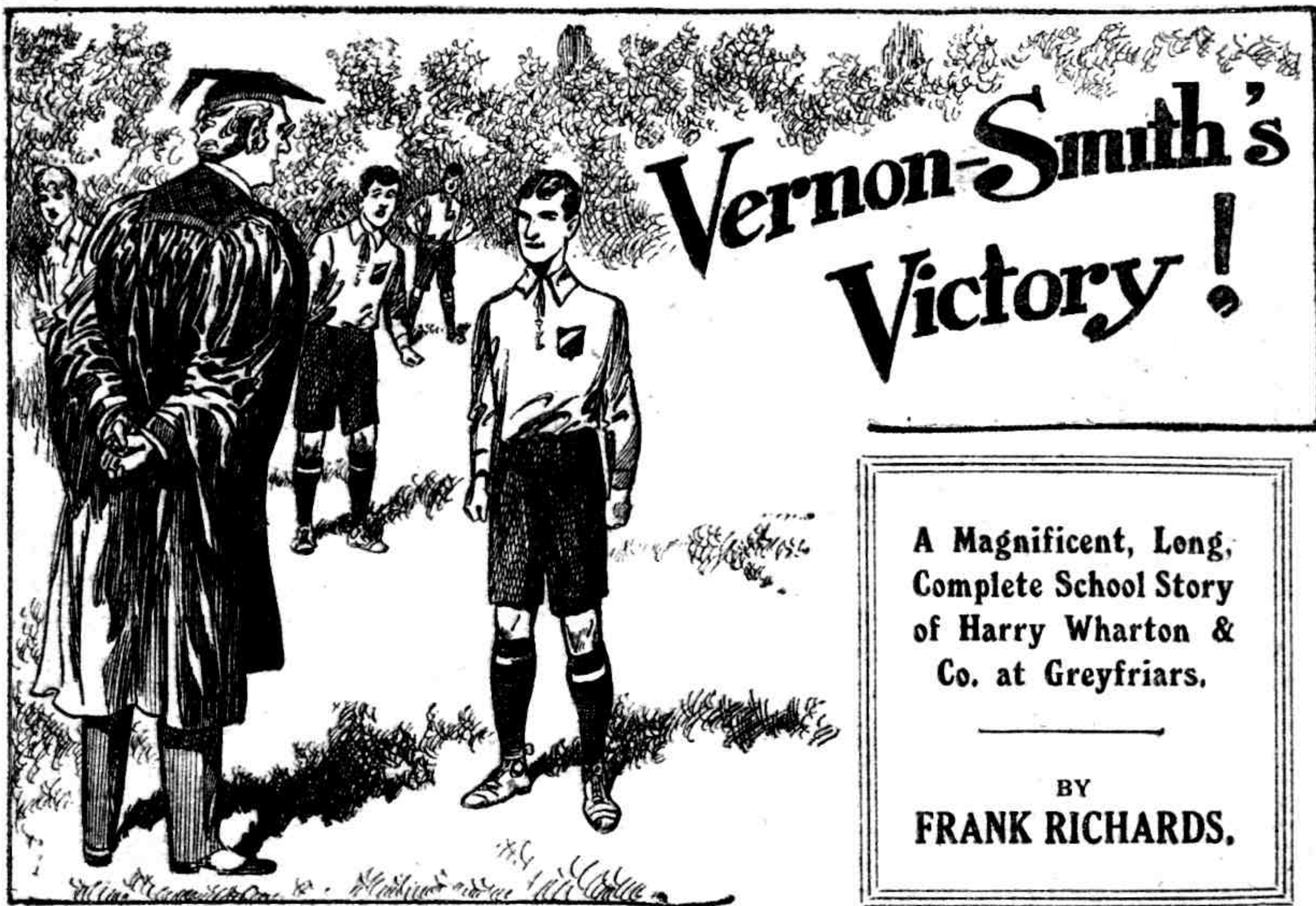
THE LETTER MINUS NAME AND ADDRESS.

Here it is:

"Dear Mr. Editor,—I would like to know if there is any charge for putting notices in the MAGNET and "Gem" with a view to exchanging books?"

My correspondent put it out of my power to let him know that. For the present, at any rate, I am inserting these notices free of charge. I hope he will see this paragraph.

Your Editor



A Magnificent, Long,
Complete School Story
of Harry Wharton &
Co. at Greyfriars.

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Warned Off!

"COME in, fathead!" Bob Cherry of the Remove sang out that cheery invitation in response to a knock on the door of Study No. 1.

The Famous Five were very busy, and not in the humour for interruptions, but they brightened up when they saw that their visitor was Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was no longer dressed in Etons. He wore a grey suit and a soft collar and tie. The change of attire suited him, but it made him look at least a year older than he actually was.

Vernon-Smith was not now a member of the Remove Form. He had been withdrawn from Greyfriars, some weeks before, at the express request of his millionaire father; and, after a number of exciting adventures in London, where he had worked for his own living, the Bounder had come back to Greyfriars, not in his former capacity, but as the personal clerk and assistant of the Head. Vernon-Smith grinned as he stepped into the study. He could not help grinning, for the appearance of the Famous Five at that moment was decidedly comical. They were in their shirt-sleeves, counting out a vast pile of copies of the "Greyfriars Herald."

"You fellows appear to be busy," remarked the Bounder.

"It doesn't need the powers of a Sherlock Holmes or a Sexton Blake to deduce that much!" grunted Harry Wharton. "We've got hundreds of copies of the 'Herald' here, and they've all got to be sorted into piles and distributed."

"And then they say that editors and sub-editors are a lazy crew!" said Johnny Bull. "If that isn't libel I'd jolly well like to know what is!"

"Wish you were back in the Remove,

Smithy, so that you could give us a hand," said Frank Nugent.

"Hear, hear!"

"Are you ever coming back?" asked Bob Cherry. "Or have you decided to remain the Head's secretary for life?"

"Hardly!" said Vernon-Smith, laughing. "The Head can't give me enough work to do, and I'm suffering from stagnation and dry-rot already!"

"Have you written to your pater, and told him all that's happened since he chucked you on the world to earn your own living?" inquired Wharton.

"No."

"You've not written?" gasped the captain of the Remove. "You mean to say your pater doesn't know yet that you're at Greyfriars, employed by the Head?"

"As a matter of fact," said the Bounder, "I was coming in here to write the letter. I thought perhaps you fellows would help me?"

"Like a shot!" said Bob Cherry.

"But you're busy."

"Rats! We can let this work slide for a bit. Squat down, my son, and we'll help you to concoct that giddy letter. Six heads are better than one."

Vernon-Smith made himself comfortable in front of the blazing fire, and balanced a writing-pad on his knees.

"How shall I start off?" he asked.

"My Worthy, Esteemed, and Most Ludicrous Pater," suggested Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear Old Fruit, makes a very affectionate sort of beginning," said Bob Cherry.

"Ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "Smithy's pater will have an apopleptic fit if he's addressed as a rotten pear!"

"What about 'My dear Daddy'?" suggested Nugent.

"I'm not in the nursery now," said Vernon-Smith. "I think 'My dear Pater' will answer the purpose."

"Exactly what I was going to suggest," said Harry Wharton.

"My dear Pater," having been decided upon, silence fell upon the occupants of Study No. 1 for some moments.

It was difficult to know how to proceed.

Bob Cherry was the first to break the silence.

"You can't beat the good old-fashioned way," he said. "Just a few lines hoping you are quite well, as it leaves me at present."

Five separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon Bob Cherry.

"Ass!" said Wharton.

"Dolt!" said Nugent.

"Blithering imbecile!" growled Johnny Bull.

And Bob was completely crushed by this torrent of invective.

"I think," said Vernon-Smith, "that I'd better start off by relating my experiences in London."

"That's the idea," said Wharton. "We can't help you there, though, as you naturally know more about it than we do."

The Bounder nodded, and started to write.

For the next quarter of an hour he scribbled away industriously. Then he paused.

"Now that you've finished the first part of the letter, concerning your London adventures, we'll give you a hand with the rest," said Wharton.

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"Very good of you," he said; "but I've finished."

"You've written the whole letter?"

"Yes. On second thoughts, I decided that I could write it much better without outside help."

"My hat!"

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"I'll read it to you, if you like," said the Bounder.

"Fire away!"
Vernon-Smith cleared his throat and began.

"My dear Pater,—When you sent me away from home to earn my own living, you told me to report my progress to you at the end of the month, so here goes.

"I had rather a thin time of it at first in London. Tramped everywhere in search of work, and there was nothing doing. Eventually, however, I got a job at an institute which dealt with the after-care of discharged convicts. It was an ordinary clerk's job, and the principal of the place—Mr. Locke—was awfully decent to me.

"In a very short time I was appointed private secretary to Mr. Locke. The work was hard, but jolly interesting, and the life was never monotonous.

"Discharged convicts used to call on Mr. Locke for financial help. The deserving cases got it—the undeserving went empty away. Among the latter there were some desperate characters—particularly a fellow called Bodger, who threatened Mr. Locke, and caused an ugly scene. With the aid of the office-boy, however, I chucked him down the stairs; and the aforesaid office-boy exploded a volley of fireworks behind him, to give him a good send-off."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

"Jolly useful kid, that office-boy," said Bob Cherry. "Wish we had somebody like him on the staff of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"Yes, rather!"
"Carry on, Smithy!"
And Vernon-Smith continued:

"Bodger vowed revenge on me for causing him to be chucked out, and that same evening he managed to spoof my landlady into believing that I was a dangerous criminal—a boy cracksman, to be precise. The result was that I was turned out, and compelled to tramp the streets all night, my funds being practically exhausted.

"In the course of my tramp I happened to pass your house, and was sorely tempted to go up the steps and ring the bell. But you had ordered me not to come back for a month, so I fought down the temptation, and continued my tramp."

"That ought to make your pater feel a bit sick," said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!" said Harry Wharton. "If anything had happened to you that night he would have been held responsible."

"Next morning," continued Vernon-Smith, "I had the surprise of my life.

"Dr. Locke, of Greyfriars, happened to be very much overworked. He had far too much correspondence to tackle single-handed. So he telephoned to Mr. Locke—who happened to be his cousin—and asked if there was any chance of getting a clerk or a secretary to come to Greyfriars and help him. Result—I was selected for the job!

"Needless to say, my arrival at Greyfriars caused no end of excitement.

"Dr. Locke nearly fell down when he saw me. I had gone under the assumed name of Jack Harper in London, and the Head almost had a fit when he found that Jack Harper was in reality Vernon-Smith. When I had explained matters, however, he engaged me as his secretary, and in that capacity I am still working."

"Slacking, you mean!" said Nugent.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head is paying me a jolly decent salary, and I am very pleased to be able to inform you that I have carried out your wishes, and am earning my own living.

"I now await your further instructions. Do you wish me to continue in my present job, or to come home to you?"

"Your affectionate son,
"HERBERT."

"How's that?" said the Bounder, when he had finished reading.

"Quite good!" said Wharton. "But you've left out the most vital and important thing of all."

"Namely?"
"You haven't urged your pater to let you come back to the Remove as a scholar."

"That's so," said Nugent. "Surely you want to come back, Smithy? Surely you're not thinking of dry-rotting in the Head's study for the rest of the term?"

"I want to come back—in fact, I'm simply dying to come back!" said the Bounder. "But I'm not going to cadge for the pater's permission. If he's got an ounce of savvy he'll see for himself that I should be happier as a scholar than a secretary."

"I don't see that it would be cadging," said Bob Cherry. "Just tack on a postscript, something like this: 'Now that I've made good, and proved to you that I'm capable of earning my own living, will you allow me to return to the Remove?'"

But Vernon-Smith's pride—idiotic pride, Bob Cherry called it—would not permit of his adding that postscript.

"I'll leave the letter as it stands," he said. "Anybody got a stamp?"

Hurree Singh obliged, and the Bounder, after sealing and stamping the letter to his father, rose to his feet.

"Not going, surely?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Afraid I must. I've got to go and get some tea at my digs."

"Don't be an ass!" said Johnny Bull. "You're going to have tea here, with the nobility and gentry."

"But the Head says—"

"Bother the Head! We see little enough of you, goodness knows, and now that you're here we want to make the most of it."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "Pop out and post your letter, Smithy, and then come back to tea. There's some of last week's kippers left, so it will be a high tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder saw that he would offend the Famous Five if he refused the invitation. So he accepted.

The letter to Mr. Vernon-Smith was duly posted, and then the youthful secretary returned to Study No. 1.

"What about all these copies of the 'Herald'?" he asked. "They've got to be distributed through the school, haven't they?"

"Oh, we'll let 'em rip till after tea!" said Harry Wharton. "By the way, I hope we can still count on you as a regular contributor, Smithy?"

"Of course you can! I'll still do the sports column every week."

"Good!"

The Famous Five bustled about and prepared the tea, and it was a very merry party that eventually sat down at the table.

Bob Cherry's remark about the ancient kippers was not altogether justified. The kippers were very fresh, and quite palatable.

"This is quite like old times!" said Vernon-Smith, his eyes sparkling. "It

makes me wish more than ever that I was back in the Remove for good."

"It's in the footer team that we miss you most," said Bob Cherry. "Ever since your pater took you away from Greyfriars we've been losing matches. Can't get the forward line into shape, somehow. We've been licked by Rookwood and St. Jim's, and to-morrow we play the return match with the Saints."

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands. "If only I could turn out!" he said, with a deep breath.

"Why not?" said Wharton.

"The Head would never allow it. He's always drumming it into my noddle that I'm no longer a member of the Remove, but a private secretary. He doesn't like me to mix too much with the fellows. If he knew I was having tea here there would be the very dickens to pay!"

"I think it's a rotten shame that you can't play for the Remove!" said Johnny Bull. "Wish the Head wouldn't be such an interfering old buffer. I—"

At that moment there was a tap on the door, which was promptly thrown open, before Bob Cherry had time to say "Come in, fathead!"

The Famous Five gave a gasp, and so did Vernon-Smith.

For the intruder was the Head!

Johnny Bull was in an agony of apprehension.

Had Dr. Locke heard himself described as an interfering old buffer?

The Head's first words relieved Johnny's anxiety, for they were not addressed to him, but to Vernon-Smith.

"Smith! What are you doing here?"

The Bounder rose respectfully to his feet. So did the Famous Five. They had been too paralysed by the Head's sudden entry to do so before.

"I'm having tea, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"So it seems!" said the Head, spluttering a little, owing to the scent of the grilled kippers. "I have repeatedly told you, Smith, that you are to obtain all your meals at your lodgings in Friar-dale."

"Ahem! I thought it wouldn't matter, sir, once in a way—"

"This is not the first time I have found you having tea in a junior study. This practice must cease! I do not deem it desirable that my secretary should be constantly associating with junior boys."

Vernon-Smith said nothing. There seemed to be nothing further to say.

"You will accompany me to my study, Smith!" said the Head. "I have some letters to dictate to you."

"Very well, sir."

As the Head turned to go Harry Wharton addressed him.

"Will you take your copy of the 'Greyfriars Herald' now, sir?"

"No, Wharton, I will not!" replied Dr. Locke, with some asperity. "I have other and more important things to do than to peruse a humorous journal. Come, Smith!"

And the Head and his secretary quitted the study, leaving the Famous Five to finish tea without their chum.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout on the War-path!

VERNON-SMITH seated himself at his typewriter—or, rather, Mr. Quelch's typewriter—with a bored air.

At first he had fairly revelled in his new job as secretary to the Head.

The glamour had now worn off, however, and the Bounder would have given anything to be back in his old place in the Remove.



Mr. Prout's manner was very excited, and he flourished in his hand a copy of the "Greyfriars Herald." "Dear me, Prout!" gasped Dr. Locke. "What ever is the matter?" (See Chapter 2.)

Now that the rush of work was over, and Vernon-Smith spent half the day in leaning back in his chair and staring vacantly at the typewriter, he began to feel that his new job wasn't so very attractive after all. He had a vast amount of energy to work off, and as he was not allowed to play football the energy remained unexpended.

"Now," said the Head briskly, "we will get to work!"

As there were only two letters awaiting replies, however, Vernon-Smith reflected that the "work" would only occupy a few moments.

"Take down a letter to the Vicar of Friardale," said the Head. "Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. 'Dear Mr. Lambe.—I very much regret that, owing to extreme pressure of work—'"

The Bounder chuckled.

"Did you speak, Smith?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"That is very strange," said the Head. "I was almost positive I heard you make an articulation. What have I said?"

"Owing to extreme pressure of work—'"

"Yes, yes! 'Owing to extreme pressure of work, I shall not be able to play golf with you on Saturday next. Nevertheless, I thank you for your kind invitation, and trust you will be able to find another partner in my place.'"

"In other words," reflected the Bounder, "the Head's funky of being licked!"

"Have you got that, Smith?"

"Yes, sir," answered the secretary, twiddling his pencil impatiently.

"The next letter," said the Head, "is to Bunter's aunt. Let me see. The address is Miss Prudence Bunter, Antipon Villa, Plumpton-on-Sea. 'Dear Madam,—I am in receipt of your letter, in which you suggest that your nephew, W. G. Bunter, is not receiving sufficient nourishment to keep body and soul together.'"

The Bounder chuckled again. Dr. Locke heard him this time, but he made no comment.

"I have made inquiries," he continued, "and find that your nephew enjoys four substantial meals per day, and also consumes a vast quantity of food between meals. His Form-master describes him as 'a youth of gluttonous tendencies,' and his appetite is truly enormous.

"If the boy has been complaining to you that he is suffering from malnutrition, I can only say that such a statement is entirely without foundation.

"With regard to your request that your nephew may be allowed to visit you at Plumpton-on-Sea for a month, I regret that I cannot see my way to grant this concession. Bunter is a particularly backward boy in class, and to send him on a month's holiday would be most inadvisable. I—"

Before the Head could proceed with the dictation of the letter to Billy Bunter's Aunt Prudence, there suddenly occurred what a theatrical manager

would describe as "a loud commotion off."

Heavy footsteps sounded in the passage, accompanied by a violent snorting noise.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the astonished Head. "Who—what—?"

The next instant the door was thrown open, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, stamped into the study.

Mr. Prout's manner was very excited, to say the least of it, and he flourished in his hand a copy of the "Greyfriars Herald."

The furious Form-master stumbled against the wastepaper-basket, and he would have fallen had not the Head's hand shot out to support him.

"Dear me, Prout! What ever is the matter?" gasped Dr. Locke.

"Matter enough, sir!" roared Mr. Prout, brandishing the copy of the "Greyfriars Herald" aloft, as if he were sweeping cobwebs off the ceiling. "I have been insulted—grossly insulted and affronted, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I have been made the butt—the target, sir, of a so-called humorist! I have been libelled and caricatured in this trashy and puerile production, sir!"

"Are you referring to the 'Greyfriars Herald,' my dear Prout?"

"I am!"

"But you write for it yourself! I remember to have read the first few paragraphs of a Redskin story which appeared

under your name. I was unable to read further—"

Mr. Prout nearly choked.

"That is neither here nor there, sir! I wish you to take instant action against the boy or boys who perpetrated this—this abominable outrage!"

So saying, Mr. Prout smacked the copy of the "Greyfriars Herald" on to the Head's desk with such force that the inkpot turned a complete somersault, and a steady stream of blue-black fluid trickled amongst the Head's private papers.

Dr. Locke picked up the offending periodical, and he saw at once the reason for Mr. Prout's annoyance.

One of the youthful artists on the staff of the "Herald" had drawn a caricature of Mr. Prout.

The master of the Fifth was seen to be resting his flabby cheek against the butt of his celebrated Winchester repeater. He was taking very careful aim at a bird of some sort which had perched on the edge of the fountain-bowl in the Close.

Evidently, however, the bird was not doomed to fall a victim to Mr. Prout's marksmanship, for the shot, instead of going anywhere near the fountain, found a billet in the Head's mortar-board. The Head was depicted leaping about two feet from the ground in his alarm.

Underneath the picture was a verse, which ran as follows:

"Poor old Prout one day went out
To shoot a harmless swallow;
But, lo! the Head was shot instead,
And there's a storm to follow!"

"There, sir!" panted Mr. Prout. "That is the nature of the insult to which we have both been subjected! Look, sir, at the hideous and grotesque portrayal of your face—and of mine!"

The Head did, and he almost had a fit.

"I agree with you, Prout," he said, "that this sort of thing should not be tolerated. We have both been made to look ridiculous in the eyes of all who read this journal! I have no objection to an occasional harmless joke at the expense of one of the masters, but this is really too bad!"

The Head rang for Trotter.

"I wish to see Master Wharton," he said. "Also every member of the editorial staff of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"Werry good, sir!" said Trotter.

And the school page hurried along to Study No. 1 and delivered the message.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Wonder what the Head wants the entire staff for?"

"Which he was lookin' werry ratty, Master Wharton," said Trotter.

"Oh crumbs!"

"I can guess what's happened, you fellows," said Nugent. "Prout's been kicking up a shindy about my cartoon."

"That's about it," said Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton dismissed Trotter, and proceeded to round up the staff. Johnny Bull and Hurrec Singh were not members of it, being merely occasional contributors; but they insisted upon facing the music with the others.

Tom Brown and Mark Linley and Lord Mauleverer were summoned from their respective studies, and quite a procession of juniors wended their way to the Head's study.

"Look here," muttered Frank Nugent, "I drew that sketch of Prouty, and you fellows had nothing to do with it—see?"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll take an equal share of the blame, of course!"

"That's so," said Harry Wharton. "Franky was the artist, but we were all parties to it—except Mauly. Mauly's too lazy to be a party to anything!"

"My dear fellow," drawled Mauly, "I'm quite willing to take my share of the punishment—"

"You may be willing, but we're not going to let you," retorted Wharton. "The rest of us knew all about the cartoon, but you didn't."

The juniors halted outside the door of the Head's study. They could hear Mr. Prout raving and ramping within.

"Now look out for squalls and cataracts!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton rapped on the door, and the Head's voice bade him enter. The next moment the amateur journalists trooped into the study.

"Ha! These are the boys! These are the young rascals who had the fernerity to make me the butt of their feeble and foolish witticism! I trust, sir, that you will administer a painful—"

"One moment, Mr. Prout!" interposed the Head.

Then he turned to the delinquents.

"Which of you is responsible for this sketch?" he demanded, indicating the offending picture.

Frank Nugent spoke up at once.

"I am, sir!" he said. "I drew the sketch, and wrote the verse that's printed underneath."

"We were all in it, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "All, that is to say, with the exception of Lord Mauleverer, who knew nothing whatever about it."

"Very well," said the Head. "You may go, Mauleverer."

Mauly did not budge.

"Do you hear me, boy?"

"As a member of the editorial staff, sir, I insist upon takin' my share of the punishment," said Mauly.

"Just as you wish, Mauleverer," said the Head. "Now, I have nothing to take exception to, as a rule, in the contents of this paper. A sense of humour is not to be disparaged, provided it is not carried too far. On this occasion you have seen fit to hold your headmaster and one of the senior Form-masters up to ridicule. I therefore propose to punish you."

So saying, the Head picked up a cane, and signalled to Frank Nugent.

Frank received three severe cuts on each hand without flinching.

All the others received two strokes on each hand, and they took their punishment in turn without a murmur.

Vernon-Smith looked on in unconcealed admiration of his chums' pluck.

"There!" panted the Head, when he had finished. "Let that be a lesson to you. If there are any further outrages of this nature, I shall give instructions for the suppression of the paper."

Mr. Prout, whose face was still as red as a boiled beetroot, did not seem satisfied.

"Is the matter to rest here, sir?" he exclaimed. "Do you not deem it desirable to inflict a heavy imposition on each of these young rascals?"

"No, Mr. Prout, I do not!" said the Head shortly.

"But they have been abominably impertinent—"

"And their impertinence has been adequately punished!"

Mr. Prout snorted.

"I do not regard a few trifling cuts with the cane as a sufficiently heavy punishment—"

"The matter is now closed," said the Head quietly but firmly. "You may go, my boys."

And Harry Wharton & Co. went—only too glad to escape from the scene of their punishment.

Although they had made no murmur in the Head's study, they were groaning and squeezing their hands as they crossed the Close.

"Yow! I believe the Head's been practising club-swinging!" moaned Bob Cherry. "Instead of his whacks getting feebler as he grows older, they get worse and worse!"

"Ow-ow-ow!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "I almost wish I had cleared off when I had the chance, begad!"

"Serves you jolly well right for stayin'!" said Harry Wharton, without sympathy.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Prout emerged from the Head's study, still fuming.

Mr. Prout regarded himself as a very useful man with a gun, and when mockery was made of his marksmanship he was apt to grow very angry indeed.

As for the Head, he was about to resume the dictation of his letter to Miss Prudence Bunter, when it occurred to him that it would be a good idea to glance through the entire issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," in case there were any more cartoons calculated to give offence.

There were no more, as it happened;

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Vernon-Smith darted out of the study and dashed along the passage. In his hot haste, he failed to observe Mr. Queleh approaching. The result was a sudden and violent collision. "Smith! How dare you! Stop at once!" rapped out Mr. Queleh. (See Chapter 4.)

but Dr. Locke frowned deeply when he caught sight of the heading:

**"OUR FOOTBALL COLUMN,
Conducted by H. Vernon-Smith."**

"Smith!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir?"

"Have you not severed your connection with this paper?"

"No, sir."

"Then I must insist upon your doing so at once. I wish you to give your undivided attention to your work, and to take no part in matters which purely concern the Remove Form. You are no longer a schoolboy, with a schoolboy's interest. You are my secretary, and as such you should rise above such petty concerns as these."

"But, sir—"

"I am not angry with you, Smith. Do not suppose that for a moment. I am speaking to you for your own good. Although you are not very old, you are filling a man's place in the world, and must therefore put away childish things. I do not care to see you mixing so freely with the boys. It is bad for discipline. Do you understand me?"

"Not quite, sir," said the Bounder. "But I'm willing to admit that you know best. I can't promise never to mix with the Remove fellows. Many of them are personal chums of mine. But I'll undertake to see as little of them as possible."

The Head nodded, and the conversation closed.

"We will now conclude the letter to Miss Bunter," said Dr. Locke. And they did.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Ructions in the Remove!

GENTLEMEN—

"Hear, hear!"

"On the ball!"

"Gentlemen," repeated

Harry Wharton, who was mounted on the table in the junior Common-room, "we are here to-day—"

"And gone to-morrow!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence for the chair!" bellowed Bob Cherry, in his stentorian tones. "Go ahead, Harry!"

"We are here to-day to discuss a burning and vital question!"

"Should Form-captains be abolished?" sneered Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton frowned.

"Another interruption from you, Bolsover," he said, "and you'll go out of this room on your neck or on an ambulance!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The burning and vital question to which I refer," continued Wharton, "is this: Shall Vernon-Smith play footer for the Remove to-morrow or not?"

"Not!" said Skinner promptly.

"Why does my Skinny friend take that view?" demanded Wharton.

"Because Vernon-Smith isn't a member of the Remove Form any longer, and therefore he isn't eligible!"

"Rats!" growled Johnny Bull. "Smithy may not actually be a member of the Form at present, but he jolly soon will be, when his pater climbs down and allows him to come back!"

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton faced the excited throng of juniors.

"Does anyone else object to Smithy playing for the Remove?" he inquired.

"Yes!" said Billy Bunter, "I do!"

"On what grounds?"

"I've got a very poor opinion of Smithy's football ability," explained the fat junior. "If you want a really good man, Wharton, you needn't look any further than—"

"W. G. Bunter!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's argument, like Bunter himself, is a wash-out!" said Harry Wharton. "I see no reason, gentlemen, why Smithy should not represent us on the football-field, as of yore!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Smithy's the man!"

"Ask him to play!"

"I've already put it to him," said Wharton, "and he says that he's afraid the Head wouldn't agree. Now that he's a full-blown secretary, the Head

doesn't want him to take any further part in the affairs of the Remove."

"What utter rot!" said Peter Todd. "I agree with you, Toddy. And I've called this meeting for a very important reason. Smithy's presence in the team will make all the difference between victory and defeat. With Smithy on our side, we shall put the kybosh on St. Jim's. Without Smithy, we're almost certain to go under. And I therefore propose that we should petition the Head for Smithy's services."

"Good!"
"That's the way!"
Harry Wharton's suggestion was received with great acclamation.

"If I draw up the aforesaid petition," said the captain of the Remove, "how many of you are willing to sign it?"
Quite a forest of hands went up, the only fellows who took no part in the demonstration being Skinner and Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton saw that he had an enormous backing, and he was more than satisfied.

"All serene!" he said. "I'll go along to Study No. 1 at once, and draw up the petition to the Head. Then I'll come round and collect signatures."

Wharton stepped down from the table, and his chums accompanied him to Study No. 1.

Drawing up a petition to the Head was a very delicate matter.

"We shall have to be very tactful," said Nugent.

And Hurree Singh remarked that the tactfulness would have to be terrific.

Harry Wharton produced an impressive-looking sheet of paper, and filled his fountain-pen ready for action.

"Now," he said, "how do we begin?"

"Like this," said Bob Cherry. "We, who have written our names at the foot of this document—"

"We, the undersigned, fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, all right!" said Bob. "We, the undersigned fatheads—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," protested Harry Wharton, "this isn't a humorous farce in one act. It's a very serious occasion. Let's see if I can set the ball rolling. 'We, the undersigned, hereby demand—'"

"Steady on!" said Nugent. "You can't start demanding of the Head, you know!"

"Request," then.

"That's better!"

"We, the undersigned, hereby request that Vernon-Smith be allowed to turn out—"

"Don't say turn out," said Johnny Bull. "Sounds too much like getting up in the morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Suggest something better, then!" growled Wharton.

"Right you are!"

And Johnny Bull took command of the paper and the fountain-pen, and wrote as follows:

"We, the undersigned, hereby request that Vernon-Smith be allowed to assist the Remove in their match with St. Jim's to-morrow.

"We feel most strongly that Vernon-Smith's presence will prove a stimulus to the side, and will make all the difference between victory and defeat.

"We sincerely hope that the Head will see his way clear to grant this request. In the event of the request not being granted, we shall be deeply disappointed."

"There!" said Johnny Bull, surveying his handiwork with considerable satisfaction. "How's that?"

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"Stimulus is a jolly good word!" said Bob Cherry. "What does it mean?"

"An incentive, fathead!"

"And what's an incentive?"

"Oh, help!" groaned Johnny. "You'd better go back to the First Form again, Bob! An incentive means a spur."

"But spurs aren't used in football!" protested Bob.

"Dry up, you two!" said Wharton. "That petition reads quite well—though I wish it could be worded a little stronger. If it started off 'We hereby insist,' instead of 'request'—"

"The Head would insist on giving us a thundering good licking!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," said Wharton. "Let's get the thing signed, so that it can be presented to-night. I'll start off with my signature, and you fellows can follow on."

No. 37.—CLAUDE HOSKINS.



The long-haired musical genius of the Shell. By those who do not understand, he is suspected of being "potty." At the same time, he can hold his own at games, so cannot be very far wrong. Has written several compositions, which he inflicts upon the Shell juniors from time to time. Gets on well with Hobson, with whom he shares Study No. 5.

Harry Wharton affixed his signature, and the other members of the Famous Five signed in turn.

The petition was then taken into every study in the Remove passage, and at the end of an hour over forty signatures had been obtained. That vast array of signatures looked, in fact, far more imposing than the actual petition.

"So far so good!" said Wharton.

"Now, who's going to present this to the Head?"

"Ahem! As captain of the Remove," said Bob Cherry, "I consider that it's your duty to beard the Head in his den."

"Hear, hear!"

"Wharton's just the man for the job!" said Nugent.

"Oh, am I?" growled Wharton.

"Either we all go together, or the thing's a washout!"

"Let the whole Form go!" suggested Nugent.

"Ass! How could the whole Form squeeze itself into the Head's study?"

"Well, as many as possible could get

in, and the overflow could line up in the passage."

This plan was eventually decided upon, and the fellows who had signed the petition were paraded in the Remove passage at Harry Wharton's direction.

Ogilvy and Wibley and Morgan, Squiff and Russell and Penfold, Tom Brown and Tom Redwing and Peter Todd—all these, and many more, turned out of their studies to take part in the important function of presenting the petition.

"Is everybody here?" shouted Harry Wharton, running his eye over the crowd.

Everybody was, apparently.

"Now, understand," said Wharton. "I'm going to read this petition aloud to the Head, and you fellows are to remain as mum as mice. Don't interrupt or cough, or shuffle your feet. I want you to be on your best behaviour. Is that clear?"

"Clear as mud!" said Peter Todd.

"Lead on, Macduff!"

Harry Wharton led the way, followed by the vast crowd.

The Removites were very excited, and not a scrap alarmed. They realised, of course, the possibility of the Head being annoyed at such a big deputation. But there was safety in numbers, and it was hardly likely that Dr. Locke would punish the whole Form.

On the other hand, there seemed quite a reasonable chance that the Head would be favourably disposed towards the petition, in which case Vernon-Smith would resume his place in the Remove team, amid great rejoicing.

When Harry Wharton reached the door of the Head's study he halted, and held up his hand to enjoin silence.

Then, scanning the petition for the last time, to make sure it was all in order, the captain of the Remove tapped on the door.

There was no response from within.

Wharton again tapped, and still there was no response.

"Open the door, Harry," whispered Bob Cherry, "and see if the Head's in."

Very gently, Wharton pushed open the door.

The Head was in, right enough, but he was engrossed in a telephone conversation. So engrossed was he that he had quite failed to hear the two separate taps which Harry Wharton had given.

The captain of the Remove entered the study very quietly, and those behind him followed in like manner, until over a dozen juniors were inside. The remainder thronged the doorway and the passage.

Dr. Locke concluded his telephone conversation, and, replacing the receiver on its hooks, he turned round.

"Why—what—good gracious—" he gasped.

The Head's back had been turned, and he had neither seen nor heard what was going on.

The result was that Dr. Locke nearly had a fit on seeing over a dozen juniors in his study, and over a dozen more wedged in the doorway.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

"I can scarcely credit the evidence of my eyes! Wharton! Cherry! Nugent! Bull! How dare you enter my study in this stealthy and unauthorised manner?"

"We—we—" stammered Wharton.

"We—we—we—" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"This is not a French lesson!" said the Head drily. "What is your object in thronging my study in this unprecedented manner?"

"We—we've come, sir—" faltered Wharton.

"That is only too apparent!" said the Head, his stern glance passing from one

to the other of the members of the deputation. "What I wish to know is, why have you come?"

"To—to read to you, sir—" began Wharton, who was feeling very uncomfortable.

The Head frowned.

"Do you imagine, Wharton, that I am a bedridden invalid?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then why have you come here with the intention of reading to me?"

"I—we—it's a petition, sir!"

"A petition?"

"Yes, sir. I—"

"Get on with the washing, you chump!" muttered a voice in Wharton's ear.

In desperation the captain of the Remove held the petition up to the light, and recited it in a hurried, gabbling manner.

"We, the undersigned, hereby request that Vernon-Smith be allowed to assist the Remove in their match with St. Jim's to-morrow."

Dr. Locke looked grim.

"We feel most strongly that Vernon-Smith's presence will prove a stimulus to the side, and will make all the difference between victory and defeat."

Dr. Locke looked grimmer.

"We sincerely hope that the Head will see his way clear to grant this request. In the event of the request not being granted, we shall be deeply disappointed!"

Dr. Locke looked grimmer still.

"Signed: H. Wharton, R. Cherry, F. Nugent, J. Bull, Hufree Singh, P. Todd, A. Todd, T. Dutton, R. Penfold—"

"That will do, Wharton!" interjected the Head. "Your audacity leaves me amazed!"

All the juniors were looking very uneasy by this time.

Those who had flocked inside the study were fervently wishing that they had remained in the passage, and those who were in the passage melted away like snow before the noontide sun.

"Upon my soul, I have never heard of such effrontery!" continued the Head. "Can it be possible, Wharton, that you and your companions have so far forgotten yourselves as to play a practical joke on your headmaster?"

Harry Wharton hastily assured the Head that nothing was farther from his mind. And Bob Cherry added, in an undertone, that he would as soon joke with his own grandmother.

"I accept your word, Wharton," said Dr. Locke. "At the same time your conduct is unpardonable! You swarm into my study with a demand—"

"A request, sir!" amended Johnny Bull.

"Silence, Bull! As I say, you swarm into my study with a demand that I should allow Vernon-Smith to play for the Remove, when he is in no way connected with that Form! Your absurd petition is refused, flatly and finally!"

"Oh!"

The expressions of the juniors were indicative of the deepest dismay.

Johnny Bull, who had been rather proud of that petition, having drawn it up himself, had not expected it to be hurled back in his teeth, so to speak.

"Hand me that ridiculous document, Wharton!" rapped out the Head.

Harry Wharton obeyed.

"Every boy who has affixed his signature to this paper will take a hundred lines!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And if there is any repetition of this conduct I shall make a public example of the ringleaders! Now you may go!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stumbled out of

the Head's study, almost falling over each other in their eagerness to escape.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, when they were out in the passage. "Carry me home to die, somebody!"

"The petition was a failure!" groaned Johnny Bull. "A mouldy wash-out!"

"And it's all your fault!" growled Nugent.

"My fault? Well, I like that! What do you mean?"

"If you had drawn it up sensibly and decently this would never have happened!"

Johnny Bull almost foamed at the mouth.

"Why, you—you—" he spluttered.

"Oh, bump him!" said Peter Todd.

And Johnny Bull, greatly to his surprise, wrath, and consternation, found himself suddenly swept off his feet by a crowd of his schoolfellows, and bumped three times in succession on the linoleum.

"Yaroooh!" howled Johnny.

No. 38.—JAMES HOBSON.



The muscular and robust skipper of the Shell. A thoroughly decent sort, and popular with all the best fellows at Greyfriars. A capable half-back and a good cricketer—in fact, a fine, all-round sportsman. Though vastly different in temperament to Hoskins, is a true friend to him. Used to be a chum of Coker's; is not now! (Study No. 5.)

"The next time you draw up a petition to the Head," said Nugent, "you'd better telephone for the ambulance! You'll need it!"

And the crowd passed on, leaving Johnny Bull to sort himself out.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

To Play or Not to Play!

VERNON-SMITH was up with the lark next morning.

He went first of all for a brisk walk along the country lanes, and returned to his lodgings with an appetite which would have done credit to Billy Bunter.

The Bounder's quarters, specially selected for him by the Head, were cosy and comfortable, and his landlady was a kindly and sympathetic soul, a vast improvement on the landlady he had known in London.

After a thoroughly enjoyable breakfast Vernon-Smith set out for Greyfriars.

"Wonder what the programme will be to-day?" he muttered. "The usual thing, I suppose—a few paltry letters to answer, and nothing more. Such is life! But it's a topping day for the St. Jim's match, by Jove!"

The Bounder knew nothing about the Remove's petition to the Head. He had been home in his lodgings when it had been presented.

Bidding Gosling, the porter, a cheery "Good-morning!" to which Gosling replied with a loud snort, Vernon-Smith proceeded to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke was going through his correspondence, which was very scanty.

"Good-morning, Smith!" he said, as the Bounder entered. "I am afraid I have very little work for you to do to-day. You may take the afternoon off, if you wish!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"Oh, and there is one thing I should like to impress upon you, Smith. You are not to play football for the Remove Form this afternoon under any consideration!"

"Very good, sir!"

"Last night a number of misguided boys came to me with an absurd petition, requesting that you should be allowed to play. As you are no longer a member of the Remove Form, I refused to give my consent. I shall expect you to abide by my decision, Smith."

"Certainly, sir!"

The Bounder was not greatly disappointed, for he had not anticipated for a single instant that the Head would allow him to play.

At the same time he felt very pleased that Dr. Locke had given him the afternoon off, since it would enable him to watch the match from the touch-line.

The morning dragged slowly by. The Head dictated a few letters to his secretary, who typed them in record time, and had nothing to do for the rest of the morning.

Dinner-time came as a welcome relief.

Vernon-Smith walked to his lodgings, and disposed of a first-rate dinner. Then, after informing his landlady that he would not be in to tea, he went back to Greyfriars, arriving at the school gates simultaneously with the St. Jim's brake.

Tom Merry & Co. clambered down from the vehicle, and greeted the Bounder cordially.

"What's the meaning of this clobber?" inquired Tom Merry. "Have you decided to give up wearing Etons?"

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "I'm not a schoolboy now."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Are you attempting to pull our legs, deah boy? If you're not a schoolboy, what are you?"

"A private secretary."

"Oh, come off!" said Jack Blake.

"It's a fact, you fellows," said Harry Wharton, coming up with the other members of the Famous Five in time to hear the last part of the conversation.

And the St. Jim's fellows listened in great surprise while Wharton related Vernon-Smith's strange experiences.

The Bounder accompanied the rival teams to the football-ground.

At first he had quite resigned himself to the prospect of attending the match as a spectator.

But as time went on a feeling of restlessness and revolt surged up within him.

He was a footballer born and bred. He loved the game. And, that being so, how could he possibly stand and look on when his chums had need of him?

Why should he be debarred from taking an active part in the match?

It wasn't fair. The Head had no right to take away his privileges like this!

It was the most important match of the term, and he—Vernon-Smith—was to be a mere looker-on.

The more the Bounder reflected on the situation the stronger grew the spirit of revolt within him.

That same reckless impulse which had got him into so many scrapes in the past came to him now.

After a brief mental conflict his mind was made up.

"I'll play!" he muttered.

The two teams were about to line-up when Vernon-Smith dashed up to Harry Wharton.

"Delay the start for five minutes while I go and change into footer togs!" he said.

Harry Wharton looked amazed, as well he might.

"Smithy!" he gasped. "You—you mean to say you're going to play?"

"Yes."

"You're going to defy the Head?"

"That's what it amounts to."

"My only aunt!"

The rest of the Remove footballers crowded round, and they shared Wharton's amazement when they heard of the Bounder's decision.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's a risky thing to do, Smithy. You might lose your job if the Head sees you!"

In the excitement of the moment Vernon-Smith ignored this possibility.

"I've made up my mind to play," he said.

"Faith, an' that means that I shall have to stand down!" said Micky Desmond, who had been brought into the team as eleventh man. "But shure, an' I don't mind standin' down for you, Smithy darlint!"

"Can anybody lend me some togs?" asked the Bounder quickly.

"You can change into Micky's," said Harry Wharton. "Back up!"

Vernon-Smith and Micky Desmond sped off towards the building, and it was arranged to delay the start for five minutes, Harry Wharton explaining the situation to the St. Jim's fellows.

In Micky Desmond's study a lightning transformation took place.

The Irish junior changed back into his Etons, and his football togs were handed to the Bounder, who found them a perfect fit.

Having donned the jersey and shorts and boots, and laced the last-named, Vernon-Smith darted out of the study and dashed along the passage.

In his hot haste he quite failed to observe that Mr. Quelch was approaching. The result was a sudden and violent collision between the Bounder and the Form-master.

Mr. Quelch staggered against the wall, gasping; and Vernon-Smith, with a muttered word of apology, ran on.

The Remove-master's voice hailed him as he ran.

"Smith! How dare you! Stop! Stop at once!"

But the Bounder sped on, unheeding.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "Such clumsiness and disobedience on Smith's part is unpardonable! I shall have to mention the matter to Dr. Locke!"

Regardless of everything save the fact that the game was being held up for him, Vernon-Smith sprinted at top-speed to the football-ground.

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There was a cheer from the touch-line as he arrived—a loud and prolonged cheer.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Smithy!"

"He's going to win the match for us!" The Bounder couldn't promise that much; but on one point he was resolved—he was going to play the game of his life!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Match—and the Sequel!

"PLAY up, Friars!"

It was not a shout; it was a perfect howl.

The ball had been kicked off by Harry Wharton, and the ding-dong tussle had begun.

There was a sensational start.

Straight down the field swept the Greyfriars forward-line; and Harry Wharton flashed the ball across to Hurree Singh, with the terse command:

"Shoot, Inky!"

Not often did Fatty Wynn, the St. Jim's goalie, make a mistake. But he made one now. Instead of remaining in his goal, he rushed out with the intention of taking the ball from Hurree Singh's toes. But the dusky junior dodged round

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him in a flash, and drove the ball into the gaping net.

Then the crowd gaped, as well as the net!

"Goal!"

The Friars had opened the scoring in the first minute!

Fatty Wynn implored his comrades to kick him as he fished the ball out of the net; and they very nearly took him at his word!

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in tones of concern. "We shall weally have to pull our socks up, Tom Mewwy!"

"Yes, rather!"

The ball was set in motion once more, and the Friars, inspired by the presence of Vernon-Smith in their ranks, again attacked.

This time, however, they had no luck. Fatty Wynn, determined to retrieve his blunder, was as active as a squirrel, and he brought off a number of saves which bordered on the miraculous.

For twenty minutes the home forwards swarmed like bees round Fatty Wynn's goal. But the fat junior was unconquerable.

At length play was transferred to the other end, and the nippy forward-line of St. Jim's, led by Tom Merry, showed that they, too, could be dangerous when they liked.

Bulstrode was keeping goal for the

Remove, and although he was not up to Fatty Wynn's weight, he was no mean performer. However, he was beaten at length by a fast and clever shot from Talbot.

"Goal!"

"Level, deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "That's tons bettah!"

The Saints improved wonderfully as the game went on. They hemmed the Greyfriars players in their own half, and set up a bombardment which caused Bulstrode considerable anxiety. However, the goalie succeeded in keeping his end up till the interval, when the score was one all.

"It's going to be a close thing!" remarked Harry Wharton. "Enjoying it, Smithy?"

"I've never enjoyed a game better!" answered the Bounder truthfully.

The only cloud on Vernon-Smith's horizon was the thought that the Head or Mr. Quelch might arrive on the scene, in which case there would undoubtedly be ructions.

Presently the whistle blew, and the teams lined up for the resumption of the struggle.

If the first half had been keen and thrilling, the second half was trebly so.

It was Vernon-Smith who provided the first sensation.

The ball had been sent out to the wing by Harry Wharton, and no one supposed that the Bounder could get to it.

But the Bounder did. And then, cleverly eluding Figgins, the long-legged back, he set in a cross-shot from a most difficult angle.

Fatty Wynn saw the ball coming in; but he did not stop it. Its flight deceived him altogether. He made a grab at it, missed, and the next instant he heard an ominous crash behind him.

The ball was reposing in the net!

"Goal!"

Cheer upon cheer rang out for Vernon-Smith's benefit.

That goal had been one of the best ever seen on the Greyfriars ground. And even the St. Jim's players were quick to congratulate the fellow who had scored it.

"Two to one in our favour!" chanted Bob Cherry. "Let the merry welkin ring!"

"What's a welkin?" asked Peter Todd.

"I don't know, and I don't care! Let it ring, anyhow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The game was resumed in hurricane fashion.

Shortly afterwards Vernon-Smith again put the ball into the net, but he was adjudged to be off-side by the referee, and the point was disallowed, greatly to the relief of Tom Merry & Co.

Then a startling change came over the game.

Jack Blake scored twice in quick succession for St. Jim's, who thus led by three goals to two.

Blake's brace of goals had been the result of sterling work by Tom Merry and Talbot, who had made the opening for him on each occasion.

Harry Wharton & Co. now began to get seriously alarmed.

Were the Saints going to score a run-away victory?

There was no doubt that, at this stage of the game, Tom Merry & Co. were far superior to their opponents.

Johnny Bull and Tom Brown played heroically at back; but they could not stem the repeated rushes of the St. Jim's forwards.

For the next twenty minutes the Saints monopolised the play, though they did not add to their score.



"My boy!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith, clasping the Bounder warmly by the hand. "I am proud of you! You have shown that you are made of the right stuff! I ordered you to earn your own living, and, by George, you've done it!" Vernon-Smith smiled. "I did my best, dad," he said simply. (See Chapter 7.)

The crowd on the touch-line was silent now.

It seemed as if the Friars were doomed to defeat. They might be able to force a draw, but they would have to buck up about it, for time was fleeting fast.

Two minutes from the end, just when the spectators were regarding the game as "all over bar shouting," Harry Wharton gained possession of the ball.

Starting from the half-way line, the captain of the Remove threaded his way through a massed throng of opponents, and concluded his clever tactics by scoring a grand goal.

The applause which greeted this equalising goal was truly terrific.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"You've saved the game!"

Yes, Wharton had indeed saved the

game. But that was not all. Somebody else was out to win it!

With scarcely half a minute remaining for play, Vernon-Smith darted away on the wing.

The Bounder was robbed of the ball by an opponent, but he ran back and recovered it, and then raced towards the St. Jim's goal with all the speed at his command.

"Shoot, Smithy, shoot!" yelled the delighted crowd.

The Bounder needed no second bidding. He hesitated for one second only, and then slammed the leather past Fatty Wynn.

"Goal!"

After ninety minutes of thrills, the Friars had won on the post. And the

winning goal had come from the foot of Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed at the Bounder, and nearly tore him limb from limb in their frantic excitement. They wrung his hands like pump-handles; they thumped him on the back; they bellowed their applause in a manner which nearly deafened him.

"Oh dear! Oh, help!" panted the Bounder breathlessly. "I can sympathise now with the fellow who said, 'Save me from my friends!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. ran off the field, defeated but not disgraced, and a number of juniors went to see them off. They had a long journey to undertake, and could not stay for tea.

Vernon-Smith, his face flushed and radiant, was escorted from the field by his chums.

When the party reached the touch-line, however, they stopped short in dismay.

"The Head!" muttered Bob Cherry. Dr. Locke bore down upon the juniors, with a very wrathful expression on his face.

Vernon-Smith stood rooted to the ground, wishing it would open and swallow him up.

He was fairly caught. "Smith!" exclaimed the Head. "I am astounded—amazed—that you should cross my wishes this way, and set my express commands at defiance! I ordered you to take no part in this game, and you assured me that you would not do so. And now I find you guilty of flagrant and direct disobedience! As for you, Wharton, and your companions—"

"They had nothing to do with my playing, sir," said the Bounder quickly. "They couldn't possibly have prevented me. I hope you don't think that they influenced me to play, because they did nothing of the sort, sir."

"Very well, Smith. I accept your assurance on that point. I am very annoyed and hurt to think that you should behave in this manner. I scarcely know how to deal with you, since you are not a pupil here, but an individual employed by me personally. I am afraid that the only fitting form of punishment will be to dismiss you from my service."

The Bounder's face was very pale now. "I will consider the matter in all its bearings," continued Dr. Locke, "and will acquaint you with my decision later in the evening. But I fear I shall have to remove you from Greyfriars, since you have betrayed the trust and confidence I had in you. I will say no more for the present."

And the Head turned away, looking very agitated.

But his agitation was not greater than that of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder.

"It's all up!" said the latter, trying to keep his voice steady. "This means the sack, you fellows!"

"Perhaps not," said Wharton hopefully. "The Head didn't say definitely that he'd dismiss you."

"No; but you bet he will!" "It's awfully bad luck!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ghastly!" said Johnny Bull. The Bounder squared his shoulders.

"I must grin and bear it, I suppose," he said. "After all, I had a jolly good run for my money. And you know what the poet said: 'One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.' Well, I've had my crowded hour, and now I must face the music."

The juniors accompanied the Bounder into the school building, and they parted from him outside Micky Desmond's study.

Bob Cherry said that they must hope for the best, though in his heart he feared the worst. And so did the others.

And meanwhile, the Bounder's fate hung in the balance.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Somebody Turns Up!

WHEN he had changed into his ordinary attire, Vernon-Smith set out for his lodgings in Friardale—not to have tea, but to pack his belongings in anticipation of the Head's sentence.

He whistled as he went along, though

his heart was far from light. He was like the man who laughed in order that he might not weep.

What a fool he was, he reflected! What a stupendous idiot!

He had defied the Head's express commands, without stopping to count the cost.

Only the day before he had written to his father, intimating that he had made good and was earning his own living.

And now he was well in the running for the sack!

True, he was rather "fed up" with secretarial work in the Head's study, but that did not increase his desire to go back to London and to start again from the beginning.

Having arrived at his lodgings, the Bounder went up to his room without disturbing the landlady, and proceeded to pack his things.

It did not occur to him that he would not have to move off at once, but would

tired as a result of the strenuous football match with St. Jim's, and after a time he dropped into a doze.

When the Bounder opened his eyes he was astonished to find that he had been asleep.

"This won't do!" he muttered. "It was being in the dark that did it, I suppose. Think I'll switch on the light."

Vernon-Smith yawned, stretched himself, and glanced at his wrist-watch, luminous in the darkness.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Surely it can't be eleven o'clock?"

But the boom of the school clock confirmed the fact.

"The Head can't be coming in to-night," reflected the Bounder.

He was about to cross over to the electric light switch, when he heard a stealthy sound, as of the window being opened.

The Bounder stood stock-still in the dark study, and glanced towards the window.

Yes. The lower sash had been raised, and a burly figure was engaged in clambering through the aperture.

Vernon-Smith rubbed his eyes, as if to make sure he was not dreaming.

But the reality of the situation was soon brought home to him.

The Head's study was about to be raided by a burglar!

Peering intently through the gloom, without revealing his presence, the Bounder caught sight of an instrument in the man's hand—an instrument which appeared to be a jemmy.

It was too dark to discern the raider's features, but Vernon-Smith could see that he was a powerfully-built man.

Now was the time to tackle him, reflected the Bounder—now, when he would be taken unawares.

There was a length of cord lying at Vernon-Smith's feet. It belonged to a large package which had arrived that afternoon for the Head.

Without wasting another second, the Bounder snatched up the cord and hurled himself at the marauder as the latter was in the act of stepping into the room.

There was a short, swift struggle, and the burglar, taken completely by surprise, was overpowered and sent sprawling to the floor, with the Bounder's knee pressed firmly into his back.

Having secured his captive, Vernon-Smith strung him up with the cord, pinning his arms to his sides.

The man's legs were free, and he made vigorous use of them. But the Bounder kept clear of his savage kicks.

Satisfied that the victim could not escape, Vernon-Smith stepped across the room and switched on the light.

The prisoner blinked in the sudden glare, and the Bounder blinked, too—with surprise.

"Bodger!" he exclaimed. The burglar was none other than the ex-convict who had been Vernon-Smith's sworn foe in London.

Bodger was surprised, too, when he recognised the Bounder. And he felt somewhat relieved, being under the impression that the Bounder would let him go.

But Bodger's expectations were not destined to be realised. He whined, he pleaded, he entreated; and, these measures having failed, he threatened Vernon-Smith with all sorts of pains and penalties unless he was instantly released.

"Nothing doing!" said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "Evidently you're sickening for the sight of prison walls again, Bodger. Well, you won't be disappointed!"

No. 39.—PIET DELAREY.



From South Africa, and the bearer of a famous Boer name. Quite a good fellow, though not so easy to read as Tom Brown or Bob Cherry. A useful all-round athlete, and more than commonly good with the gloves—or without! Gets on quite well with Maul-everer and Sir Jimmy Vivian, with whom he shares Study No. 12—Remove.

probably receive a week's notice from the Head.

His box was packed, at length, and he walked slowly back to Greyfriars to hear his sentence.

The winter dusk had fallen, and a cold, bleak wind swept across the countryside.

The Bounder wore no overcoat, but he scarcely noticed the intense cold. He was in a state of raging suspense—eager to hear his fate, even if it were the worst, and to get it over.

When he reached the Head's study he found it in darkness, save for the last flickering embers of the fire.

Without troubling to switch on the light, Vernon-Smith seated himself at his desk and waited.

The Head's arrival would only be a matter of moments, he supposed.

But the time passed and Dr. Locke did not appear.

The Bounder leaned back in his chair, reviewing the past and speculating as to the future.

Although he was on tenterhooks to learn the Head's decision, he was very

"Lemme go!" whined Bodger. "Show a little mercy, gov'nor!"

"Mercy!" echoed Vernon-Smith. "Why, you don't know the meaning of the word! You showed me no mercy in London, when you told a cock-and-bull yarn to my landlady, and got me kicked out of my lodgings!"

"I don't remember nothin' about that," said Bodger.

"Then all I can say is that you've got a jolly short memory!"

"Lemme go!" pleaded the ex-convict again. "I wasn't doin' no 'arm!"

"Oh, no!" said the Bounder, with crushing sarcasm. "You were quite justified in trespassing on the school premises and breaking into the Head's study. Perfectly justified! But I think you'll have a job to convince the magistrate on that score!"

Bodger grew desperate. He thrashed his legs wildly in the air, and made several attempts to rise to his feet. But the Bounder mounted guard over him, giving him a playful flick with the Head's cane every time he struggled. And at last Bodger subsided, and resigned himself to his fate.

Shortly afterwards footsteps sounded in the passage, and the Head swept into the study.

Dr. Locke stopped short in astonishment on catching sight of the hefty ruffian lying on the floor beneath the window-sill.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "Smith, what does this mean?"

"It means, sir," said the Bounder calmly, "that this scoundrel broke into your study, and had designs on your safe. Fortunately, I was able to collar him. With your permission, sir, I will telephone for the police."

"Yes, yes!" said the Head. "By all means! Dear me! It is extremely fortunate that you were able to intercept this scoundrel, Smith!"

Bodger began to pour out a tale of woe to the Head, but the latter cut him short.

"I am not prepared to listen to any plausible excuses!" he said. "You have broken into my study with intent to steal, and you shall be handed over to the representatives of the law."

Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith had succeeded in attracting the attention of the sleepy operator, and he soon got through to the equally sleepy officials at Court-field police-station.

Inspector Grimes, on hearing that a burglar was awaiting arrest in the Head's study at Greyfriars, promised to send a couple of constables without delay.

When the constables arrived, half an hour later, Bodger's bonds were untied, and he was handcuffed.

The ex-convict became very abusive at the finish, and he uttered wild threats of revenge.

"Take him away!" said the Head.

Bodger was marched away under the escort of the burly policemen, and the Head and Vernon-Smith were left alone in the study.

"Smith," said the Head, "I have been spending the evening in Mr. Quelch's study, and your recent act of disobedience and defiance came up for discussion. I had fully decided to give you a week's notice, but in the circumstances I feel compelled to cancel that decision."

The Bounder's emotions were akin to those of a man getting a reprieve at the scaffold.

"By your prompt and plucky action in

overpowering that scoundrel," the Head went on, "you have protected my property and saved me from serious loss. I am grateful to you, Smith; and in view of what has happened, I propose to overlook your rebellious conduct, and to give you another chance."

"Thank you, sir!"

Vernon-Smith's eyes were shining. He began to feel very grateful to ex-convict Bodger for having been the means of saving his bacon, so to speak.

"You may go, my boy," said the Head. "Bless my soul! It is nearly midnight! Your landlady will be getting anxious on your behalf. Good-night, Smith!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And the Bounder returned to his lodgings in a state of great elation.

The unexpected had happened. And the situation was saved!

No. 40.—DAVID MORGAN.



A cheery, bright junior from Wales. A sterling, good fellow, liked by most at Greyfriars. Has a quick temper, but bears no malice. A very capable fellow. Shares Study No. 6 in the Remove with Rake, Wibley, and Desmond. Has always been a chum of Desmond's, but gets on well with all of them.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Another Arrival!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were waiting for their chum next morning in the school gateway.

"Here he is!" said Bob Cherry at length, as the Bounder approached with his athletic step.

"What's the verdict, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton anxiously.

Vernon-Smith smiled.

"I'm to have another chance," he said.

"Oh, good!"

"Jolly good!"

"To tell you the truth," said Johnny Bull, "I didn't expect this. I thought you—"

"You thought I'd be sacked—what?" said the Bounder. "So did I. It was a jolly near thing. The Head had made up his mind to send me packing, but as I was lucky enough to bag a burglar last night, he let me off."

The Famous Five gasped.

"You bagged a burglar?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes—my old friend Bodger—that convict fellow I was telling you about. Late last night he broke into the Head's study. Luckily, I was on the spot, and I managed to collar him."

"My hat!"

"The Head came in, and gave me his blessing, and there you are!" said the Bounder.

"Ripping!"

"What I want to know is," said Bob Cherry, "when are you coming back to the Remove?"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull. "This private secretary business has lasted quite long enough. And the sooner your pater comes to his senses, and does the decent thing, the better it will be for all concerned."

"Yes, rather!"

"The pater hasn't replied to my letter yet," said Vernon-Smith.

"Well, give him a chance!" said Harry Wharton. "You only wrote the day before yesterday."

"What do you think he'll have to say when he does write?" asked Nugent.

"Goodness knows!" said the Bounder. "He may want me to continue as the Head's secretary. On the other hand, he may want me to work for him in his London office."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Or he may permitfully allow you to come back to the esteemed Remove," suggested Hurree Singh.

"By Jove! It will be simply great if he does! But it seems too much to hope for."

Vernon-Smith nodded to the Famous Five, and passed on to the Head's study.

The correspondence was particularly heavy that morning, and the Bounder was glad. He hated to be idle.

Dr. Locke dictated a number of letters, and the Bounder's nimble fingers fairly raced over the keys of the typewriter.

He was feeling very happy this morning—happy in the knowledge that he had not lost his job.

But his cup of happiness was not complete.

There was still the old longing to be back once more in the Remove.

As things stood at present the Bounder would be unable to indulge in any more study feeds, or to assist his chums on the football-field.

If only his father would do the decent thing!

But, as the Bounder had said, that seemed too much to hope for.

The youthful secretary raced through his work—though he did it accurately, all the same. And by dinner-time the letters were duly completed.

"You are such a rapid worker, Smith," said the Head, "that you sometimes leave me amazed! I really cannot find sufficient work to absorb your extraordinary energy. I have nothing more for you to do, and you may consider yourself free for the rest of the day."

Vernon-Smith smiled as he expressed his thanks. And he mentally resolved to go for a long cycle spin that afternoon. He remembered that there was a big Cup-tie due to be played at a town about twenty miles distant, and he made up his mind to go and see it.

But he never did.

For at that moment the familiar hoof of a horn sounded in the Close.

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet and darted to the window.

"What is it, Smith?" exclaimed the Head, in surprise.

The Bounder turned a flushed face from the window.

"My father's arrived, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

Dr. Locke looked rather perturbed.

He had had a good many interviews with Mr. Vernon-Smith in the past, and the majority of them had been unpleasant ones.

What would be the millionaire's attitude on this occasion?

Would he resent the fact that his son was earning his living in the capacity of Dr. Locke's secretary?

The Head anticipated a storm. Happily, however, his anticipations were not fulfilled.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was all smiles when he entered the study a moment later. He shook hands very cordially with the Head, then he turned to his son.

"My boy!" he exclaimed, clasping the Bounder warmly by the hand. "I have received your letter, and I am proud of you! You have shown that you are made of the right stuff! I ordered you to earn your own living, and, by George, you've done it!"

Vernon-Smith smiled.

"I did my best, dad," he said simply.

"And your best was very good indeed, Herbert!" said the millionaire. "When I dismissed you from my house and ordered you to go and make good, I frankly expected that you would come back to me inside a week, complaining that I had set you too severe a task. Instead of which you stuck it out, my boy—you stuck it out gamely!"

"This son of mine, sir"—the millionaire turned to the Head—"is a son worth having! The father who could not be proud of such a son, sir, would be a cur!"

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the Head.

"He has been through fire and water, sir! He was cast upon the world to make his own way, and he has emerged from the ordeal with flying colours! Never once did his courage fail him. He stuck to his guns, and saw things through!"

"Stow it, dad!" said the Bounder, flushing. "There's nothing to make a song about!"

"Nothing to make a song about—eh? Why, you have performed magnificently! Your letter to me was one of the most entertaining documents I've ever read! You didn't tell me all your exploits—modesty, I suppose—but I could read between the lines, and I was satisfied that you had put up a splendid show."

The Bounder's heart beat quickly.

What would be the next move?

Would his father take him away from Greyfriars? Would he be allowed to continue in his present job? Or—happy thought!—would he be permitted to resume his old place in the Remove?

Never had Vernon-Smith seen his father in such a cheery and boisterous mood.

The millionaire rattled on merrily, extolling the merits of his son to the Head, who nodded from time to time in agreement with the speaker's remarks.

"It was a test, sir!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "A test which precious few boys would have survived so well!"

Again the Head nodded.

"I have only one criticism to make, Mr. Vernon-Smith," he said.

"Well?"

"As I remarked to you in the first instance, the withdrawal of your son from Greyfriars was totally unnecessary. You sent him out into the world to prove his worth, but such a step was superfluous. He had already been proven."

The millionaire looked remorseful.

"You are right, sir," he said thoughtfully. "Yes, by George, you are right!"

"You imagined," continued the Head, "that he was idling away his time here. You said, if I remember rightly, that the boy lacked a commercial education, and was devoting the greater part of his time

to sport. That was not correct. Shorthand and typewriting and a knowledge of office routine form part of a commercial education, and your son was familiar with each of these subjects, or he could never have undertaken secretarial work."

Mr. Vernon-Smith nodded.

"As far as typewriting is concerned, your son is self-taught," Dr. Locke went on. "But the other subjects form part of the school curriculum. It is, I believe, to Mr. Quelch that you are indebted for your knowledge of shorthand and office routine, Smith?"

"Yes, sir," said the Bounder. "I owe all my success in that line to Mr. Quelch."

"Not all, Smith! Mr. Quelch's tuition would not have been of much use had you not proved an apt pupil."

"I can see only too clearly," interposed the millionaire, "that I made a bad blunder. I thought that Herbert was fooling away his time here, and that he would be neither use nor ornament when Greyfriars had finished with him. Moreover, I was very much impressed at the time by a book I was reading, entitled 'Letters of a Self-Made Millionaire to His Son.' This book advocated that every boy of fifteen ought to be making his own way in the world. I was influenced by the book to such an extent that I decided to take Herbert away from Greyfriars and throw him upon his own resources. It was a cruel and a callous thing to do. I can see it now, but I could not see it at the time."

"We are all of us prone to mistakes," said the Head. "Let us be thankful that events have terminated so satisfactorily."

"Yes, yes! I am indeed thankful!" said the millionaire.

And he looked it.

"What do you propose to do now, Mr. Vernon-Smith?"

"First of all, sir, can you spare Herbert?"

"I have already told him that he is free for the rest of the day."

"Splendid! We will motor over to Courtfield, Herbert, and have lunch."

Dr. Locke interposed.

"Will you do me the honour of lunching with me?" he asked.

"That is immensely good of you, Dr. Locke; but I have already booked a table for two at the Elysian Cafe, in Courtfield. I will call upon you again this afternoon. Come, Herbert!"

And the millionaire and his son passed out of the study together.

The Removites had just been released from morning lessons, and there was quite a stampede into the Close to see the Bounder and his father get into the latter's car.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Smithy's pater has arrived!"

"Looks more like a departure than an arrival, if you ask me," said Harry Wharton.

"Wonder what's happened?" remarked Nugent.

Everybody was wondering, as a matter of fact.

The fellows could see that Vernon-Smith and his father were on the best of terms; but beyond that they had no inkling of what had transpired, or of what was likely to transpire.

"It rather looks," said Johnny Bull gloomily, "as if Smithy's going back to London with his pater."

"Shouldn't think so!" said Bob Cherry. "He'd have a face as long as a fiddle if that was so."

The big Daimler car moved off, and vanished a moment later through the school gateway.

And some of the juniors were wondering if they had looked their last upon Vernon-Smith.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

All's Well!

LUNCH in Courtfield was a sumptuous affair.

Mr. Vernon-Smith believed in doing himself well, and his enemies hinted that he also believed in "doing" others well. But then, a self-made millionaire always has to contend with cheap sneers of that sort.

Vernon-Smith's appetite, unlike that of his father, was very feeble.

He was feeling too excited to eat. He was longing to learn his fate, and he wished his father would buck up and say what plans he had made for the future.

But the millionaire, although he kept up a running fire of conversation, never once referred to the future. It was of the past that he spoke chiefly—of his son's plucky battle against circumstances in London.

More than once Vernon-Smith was on the point of asking his father the all-important question, "What do you intend to do with me?" But somehow he could not bring himself to speak.

Mr. Vernon-Smith prattled gaily on, plunging from one subject into another, until the Bounder was bored stiff.

Why didn't his father speak of the one thing which mattered—namely, the future?

Lunch over, the millionaire lighted a cigar, and for over an hour he chatted and smoked alternately.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed at length. "How time flies! It's getting on for four o'clock, and I promised to give Dr. Locke another look-in. Come, Herbert!"

The Bounder accompanied his father only too readily.

The millionaire settled the bill, which was a gigantic one, and a moment later the Daimler car was heading for Greyfriars.

Presently Mr. Vernon-Smith spoke, with a suddenness that quite startled the Bounder.

"Herbert! How would you like to work at my office in the City?"

For a moment Vernon-Smith hesitated. Then he said:

"I should like it immensely, dad—later on!"

"Later on, eh? You wouldn't like to start to-morrow?"

"Hardly!"

"I see. You'd prefer to continue as Dr. Locke's secretary—what?"

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"You wouldn't? Then what the dickens—"

The Bounder said what he had been wanting to say all along.

"I want to stay on at Greyfriars, dad, not as the Head's secretary, but as a scholar."

The millionaire looked incredulous.

"Is that honest, Herbert? You really prefer to return to your old place in the Remove?"

The Bounder nodded eagerly.

"There's nothing I should like better!" he exclaimed.

"Then, by George, you shall have your wish!" said the millionaire. "You shall go back; you shall rejoin your friends. But I thought you would prefer being a secretary and a wage-earner."

"My heart's not in the work, dad. I can tackle it all right—I could tackle a job three times that size—but I should be wanting all the time to be back in the Remove."

"I understand, my boy. I will make arrangements for your immediate return to your former position."

In a few incoherent sentences the Bounder expressed his gratitude.

He was going back!

He was going to discard the ordinary civilian attire he was now wearing and resume his Etons.

He was going to abandon the position of private secretary and become a light-hearted, care-free schoolboy once more!

The great car swung through the gateway of Greyfriars, and slowed up in the Close.

"Now, Herbert," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, "we will see what Dr. Locke has to say on the subject!"

And father and son passed in to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke looked up with a smile as they entered.

"I have been having a chat with my son," explained the millionaire, "on the subject of his future. He appears to be desirous of going back to the Remove Form as a scholar, and I feel that it is only fair to let him have his wish. How soon could you release him from his present duties?"

"I could release him at once," answered the Head.

"Splendid! Then I take it he can return to his old position this afternoon?"

Dr. Locke nodded.

The Bounder's face was radiant. He was wondering what Harry Wharton & Co. would have to say about it all.

The Head and his visitor remained in conversation for some moments. Then the millionaire shook hands and took his departure, Vernon-Smith accompanying him to his car.

"Good-bye, my boy!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, taking his son's hand in a tight grip. "I repeat, I am proud of

you! I realise that it was rank folly on my part to withdraw you from the school, and I'm sorry."

"You needn't apologise, dad. I gained heaps of experience during the short time I was away, and the hardships weren't so very terrible, either."

Mr. Vernon-Smith extracted a wallet from his breast-pocket, and produced a ten-pound note, which he handed to his son.

"This will enable you to celebrate your return to the Remove, Herbert," he said with a smile.

"Thanks awfully, dad!"

At that moment there was a sudden rush of feet.

The Remove, dismissed from afternoon lessons, came swarming into the Close.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, seated in his car, nodded cheerily to the Famous Five, and the Bounder called to them.

"I say, you chaps, the pater's a brick! I've chucked the secretary job for good, and I'm back again in the Remove!"

These words fell like music on the ears of Harry Wharton & Co.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "This is the best news of the whole giddy term!"

"Three cheers for Smithy!" shouted Wharton. "Hip, hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

The sound of the cheering attracted practically the whole of the Remove to the spot, and when they heard the joyful news they joined in right lustily.

"Bravo, Smithy!"

"Welcome back to the fold, old sport!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors were wildly excited. Having cheered until they were husky, they surged up to the Bounder, and swung him off his feet and on to their shoulders. Then they tramped through the Close in a triumphant procession, waving their hands and letting off steam with what little reserve of lung-power they had left.

Mr. Vernon-Smith watched the scene from his car, and he made no attempt to conceal the pleasure he felt at this demonstration of his son's popularity.

To and fro the fellows marched, with the Bounder rocking and swaying on their shoulders; and fellows of other Forms, when they learnt what was afoot, added their quota of cheers.

Presently Mr. Vernon-Smith moved off in his car, waving farewell to the Bounder as he went.

Never again was the millionaire likely to doubt the worth of his son. Nor would he ever again take the unnecessary step of withdrawing him from Greyfriars and setting him to earn his own living.

Vernon-Smith had amply proved his worth. He had successfully passed a test which would have floored a good many fellows. And this was his moment of victory!

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter made his voice heard amid the uproar.

"Dry up, porpoise!"

"I think we ought to give Smithy an ovation," said the fat junior.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.



This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Salisbury, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

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We reproduce here a small line drawing of a magnificent coloured plate which every reader of THE MAGNET has an equal chance of securing. All you have to do is to secure the names and addresses of SIX of your friends who are non-readers of THE MAGNET. When you have done this, write them down on a postcard and post them to the Editor of THE MAGNET, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4. All postcards should be marked "Free Plate" in the top left-hand corner. Names and addresses of regular or occasional readers must on no account be sent, otherwise your application for a Plate may be rejected. Before sending in your list, make sure that the names are of non-readers.

Only one plate will be sent to any one reader.

"What do you imagine we've been doing for the last twenty minutes, you fat idiot!"

"I don't mean that sort of ovation," said Bunter. "I mean a feed—a first-rate, stunning, gilt-edged feed!"

"Oh!"

"If you fellows will have a whip round for this laudable object, I shall be pleased to go and do the shopping for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter greeted Bunter's generous offer.

"You'd go and do the scoffing, you mean!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The suggestion of a feed is top-hole," said Harry Wharton. "We'll make it a really big affair, for the whole Form. We won't have it in the study. There isn't one-tenth of the necessary accommodation. What about the Rag?"

"Good wheeze!"

"Look here!" said Vernon-Smith. "This is my treat, you fellows!"

"Rats!"

"But the pater's given me a tenner for the express purpose of standing a feed!"

"Oh!"

"Your pater's quite a reformed character, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "He's done the decent thing in letting you come back to the Remove. Moreover, he's handed over the wherewithal in order that the event may be duly celebrated."

"The pater's one of the best!" said Vernon-Smith loyally. "When he took me away from Greyfriars he thought it was for my own good. But look here, what about this spread?"

"If you'll hand over the tenner, Smithy—" began Billy Bunter.

"I'll hand over a thick ear if you don't dry up!" said the Bounder. "I haven't forgotten the act, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way to the tuckshop!" said Bob Cherry.

And the surging, jostling, boisterous crowd of Removites made their way to Mrs. Mimble's little shop under the elms.

Vernon-Smith rapped on the counter, and the dame appeared. She was astonished to find her shop besieged within and without.

"Ten pounds' worth of tuck, please, Mrs. Mimble!" said the Bounder briskly.

Mrs. Mimble wondered if she had heard aright.

"Did—did you say ten pounds' worth, Master Smith?" she gasped.

"Yes! We'll take a dozen rabbit-pies, a dozen plum-cakes, six dozen assorted pastries—"

"One moment, Master Smith! You are going too fast for me altogether! I'll serve the items one at a time."

And the good dame did so, with the result that when the ten pounds had been

expended her stock had dwindled down to practically nothing.

The Famous Five took charge of the purchases, ignoring Billy Bunter's repeated offers of assistance.

Then the whole crowd flocked into the building, and surged into the junior Common-room, otherwise known as the Rag.

Tables and tablecloths were requisitioned from the various studies, and Billy Bunter was given a table all to himself.

The feast was soon in full swing, and the juniors were in high spirits.

The Bounder occupied a place of honour, of course, and his schoolfellows fell over each other for the honour of waiting on him.

And when at last the feast was over—when only a few crumbs remained to tell the tale, and Billy Bunter lay back dozing in his chair—there were cries of "Speech! Speech!"

"Pile in, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder rose to his feet. His face was radiant with happiness and good will.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I'm no great shakes as an orator, but it would be jolly ungrateful of me if I failed to thank you for the ripping reception you've given me. I'm as pleased as Punch to be back with you all—"

"Hurrah!"

"And I hope you will never have occasion to regret my return."

"Never!"

"I had a pretty thin time of it in London, but that only makes me appreciate Greyfriars all the more."

Loud and prolonged cheers.

"Once again I thank you, one and all, for your kind welcome, and I hope—"

But what the Bounder hoped was never made clear. For at that moment Harry Wharton exclaimed, in ringing tones:

"Three cheers for good old Smithy!"

And "good old Smithy" was compelled to stop his ears, so deafening was the din which followed.

Thus happily ended the Bounder's strange adventure.

The thing which he had longed for had come to pass. He was back amongst his old chums—the chums who would never fail him.

That evening Vernon-Smith slept in the Remove dormitory as of yore, and the following morning he took his place in the Form-room.

His withdrawal from Greyfriars, and his subsequent adventures in London, now seemed nothing but a dream.

But it was a dream that the Bounder was never likely to forget!

THE END.

(Another grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "THE JAPE OF THE TERM!" Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance!)

READERS' NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED, ETC.

B. Ess, 1273, Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore, S.S., wants "Bolsover Minor's Last Sacrifice," "The Outlaws of the School," "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," and "Through Thick and Thin." 2d. each offered.

C. Adams, 32, Truman's Road, Stoke Newington, N.16, wants "Nelson Lee Libraries."

Miss N. Prior, 45, St. Lawrence Road, Clontarf, Dublin, has for sale "Penny Populars," Nos. 1-36. 2d. each.

E. J. W. Elcome, 16, Douglas Road, Tonbridge, Kent, has for sale a large number of the Companion Papers.

A. Samuels, 240, Euston Road, London, N.W.1, has for sale a great number of the Companion Papers at ½d. each.

S. W. Norman, 79, Talfourd Road, Peckham, London, S.E.15, has for sale "Magnets" and "Gems" 448-610, "Boys' Friends" 862-962, and "Penny Populars" 1-40. 1½d. each, post free.

W. Edwards, 29, Clarence Road, West Park, Chesterfield, has for sale about 500 "Magnets" and "Gems." Write first.

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JUGGLING



HOW TO MASTER THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ART.

THE TRIPLE OVER PASS.

The only difference between this and the triple pass is that each ball, as thrown, passes over instead of under the ball that precedes. This is shown in Fig 11, where No. 2 passes over No. 1, whilst No. 3 is thrown highest of all. This trick is usually combined with the ordinary triple pass, and from the spectators' point of view presents no difference.

THE SHOWER.

This is one of the prettiest of all the tricks of juggling, and should be learned with two balls. Take a ball in each hand and throw the right one in the air towards the left, whilst, as soon as it is in the air, pass the left-hand ball to the right hand, as in Fig. 12. The moment this latter ball has been caught it must be thrown up in the wake of the first

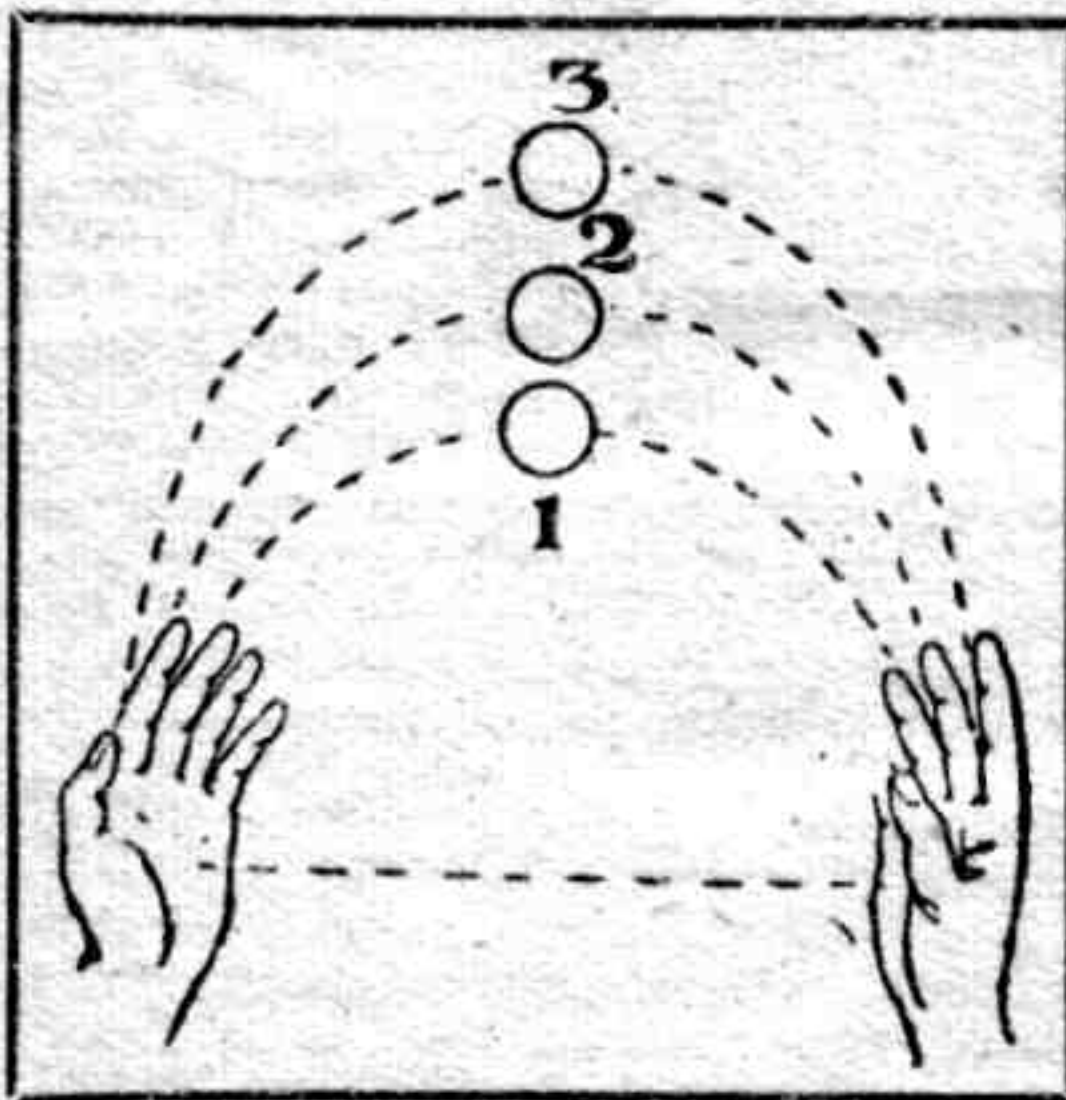


Fig. 11.—The Triple Over Pass.

ball, and the whole trick continued as quickly as possible, so that one ball is always in the air.

This should be practised continually until perfection is attained, as it forms an introduction to:

THE TRIPLE SHOWER.

Two balls must be taken in the right hand and one in the left. The first two should be thrown in rapid succession from the right to the left, the ball in the latter hand being passed to the right, as in the simple shower. As each ball reaches the left hand pass it rapidly across, as in Fig. 13, and start it off in the air once more.

The trick has the effect of making the spectators imagine that you have a large number of balls in your hands, and the more quickly the trick is done the greater the deception. By starting with three balls in the right hand and one in the left a still prettier display can be provided with little extra trouble. In this case, however, the balls will have to be thrown rather higher, to give the left

hand more time to catch the balls and pass them successfully.

As a final exercise the beginner should learn:

THE DOUBLE OVER FOUNTAIN.

Four balls are required for this, a couple being taken in each hand, Nos. 1

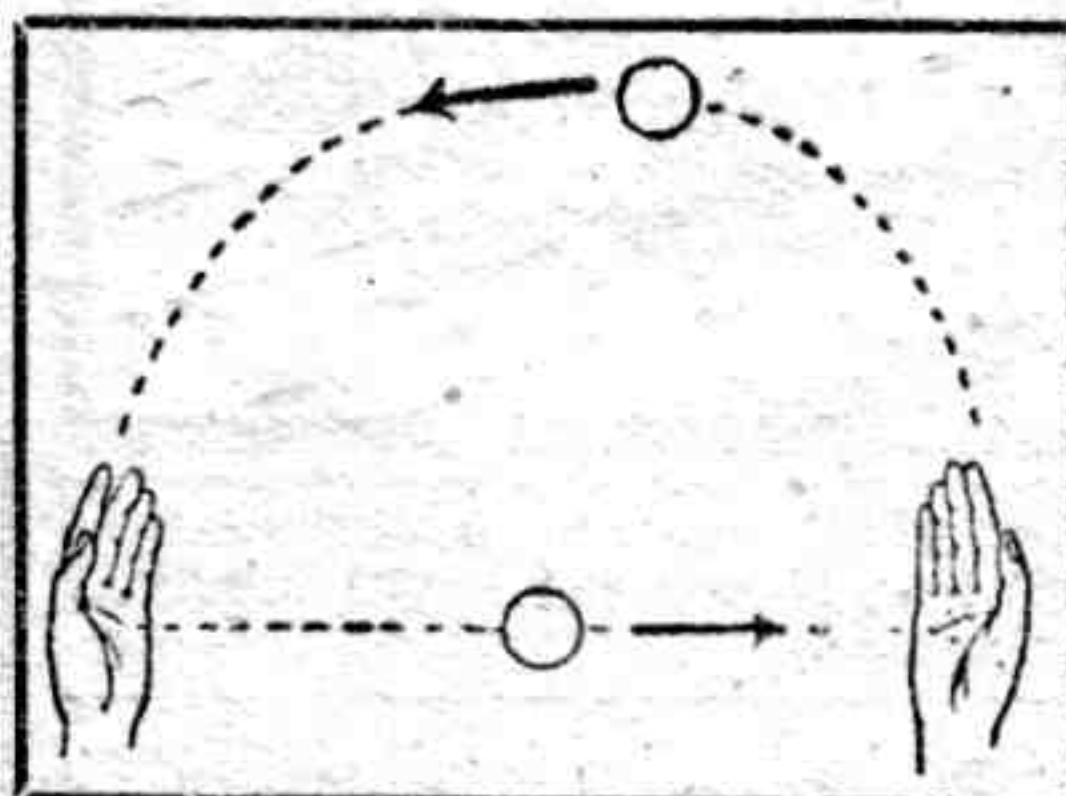


Fig. 12.—The Shower.

and 3 being in the left, and Nos. 2 and 4 in the right hand.

Nos. 1 and 2 are thrown up simultaneously in the simple vertical fall, as in A, Fig. 14. The hands are then rapidly moved apart, and balls Nos. 3 and 4 are thrown over the first two balls in such a manner that they cross each other and are caught in the opposite hands, Fig. 14. The volley with those two balls is immediately returned, and the hands are brought nearer together to catch and throw Nos. 1 and 2 again. Thus the fountain is kept up indefinitely. It will

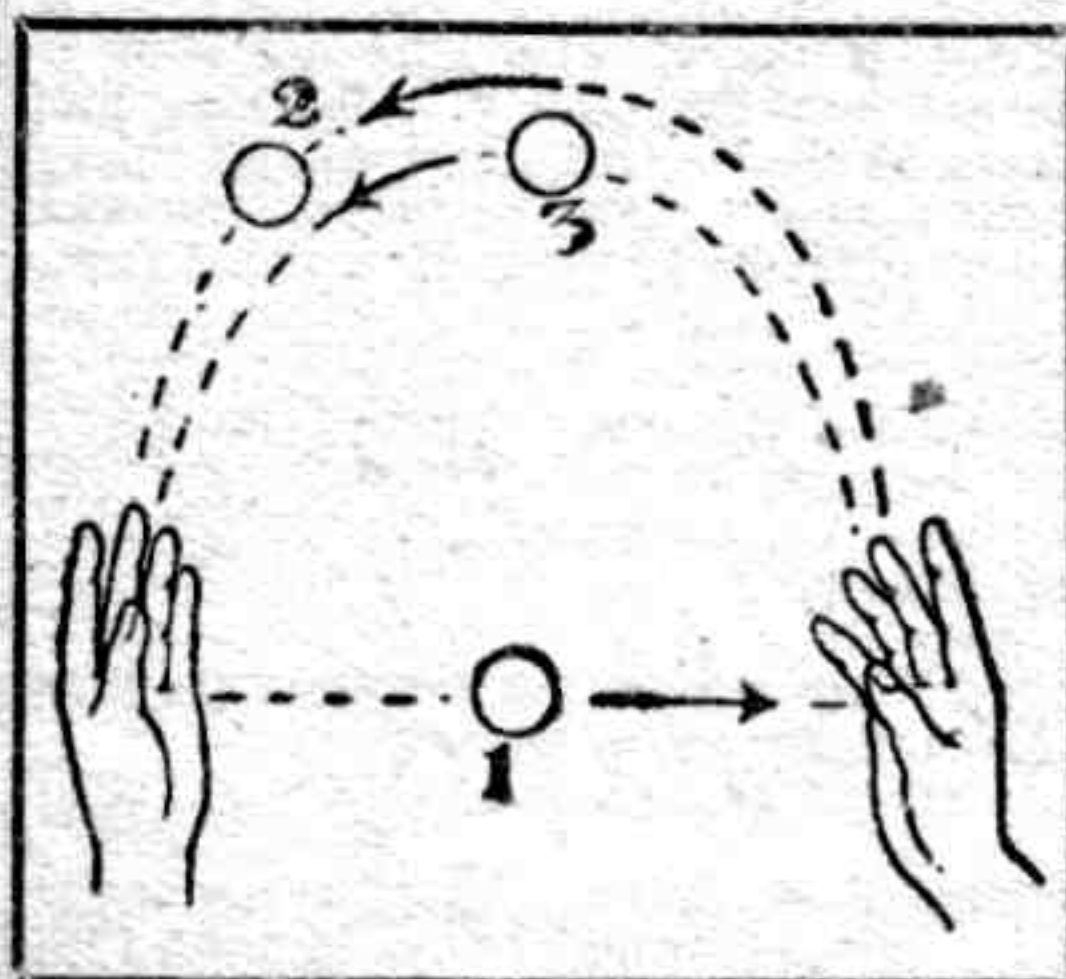


Fig. 13.—The Triple Shower.

be observed that the two hands constantly approach and separate as the two sets of balls are caught in turn, and such action must be very smartly performed.

The substitution of clubs or knives for balls can be easily effected, although the performance is none the better for the change. In using knives, the juggler should see that the handles are well weighted to ensure that part of the object falling into his hand. The substitution of knives is not sufficiently interesting to

compensate for the additional risk, and the amateur may very well dispense with them.

Plates and clubs are equally unwieldy, and the juggler can scarcely do better than content himself with the plain balls, the manipulation of which is certain to provide a pretty and interesting entertainment at all times.

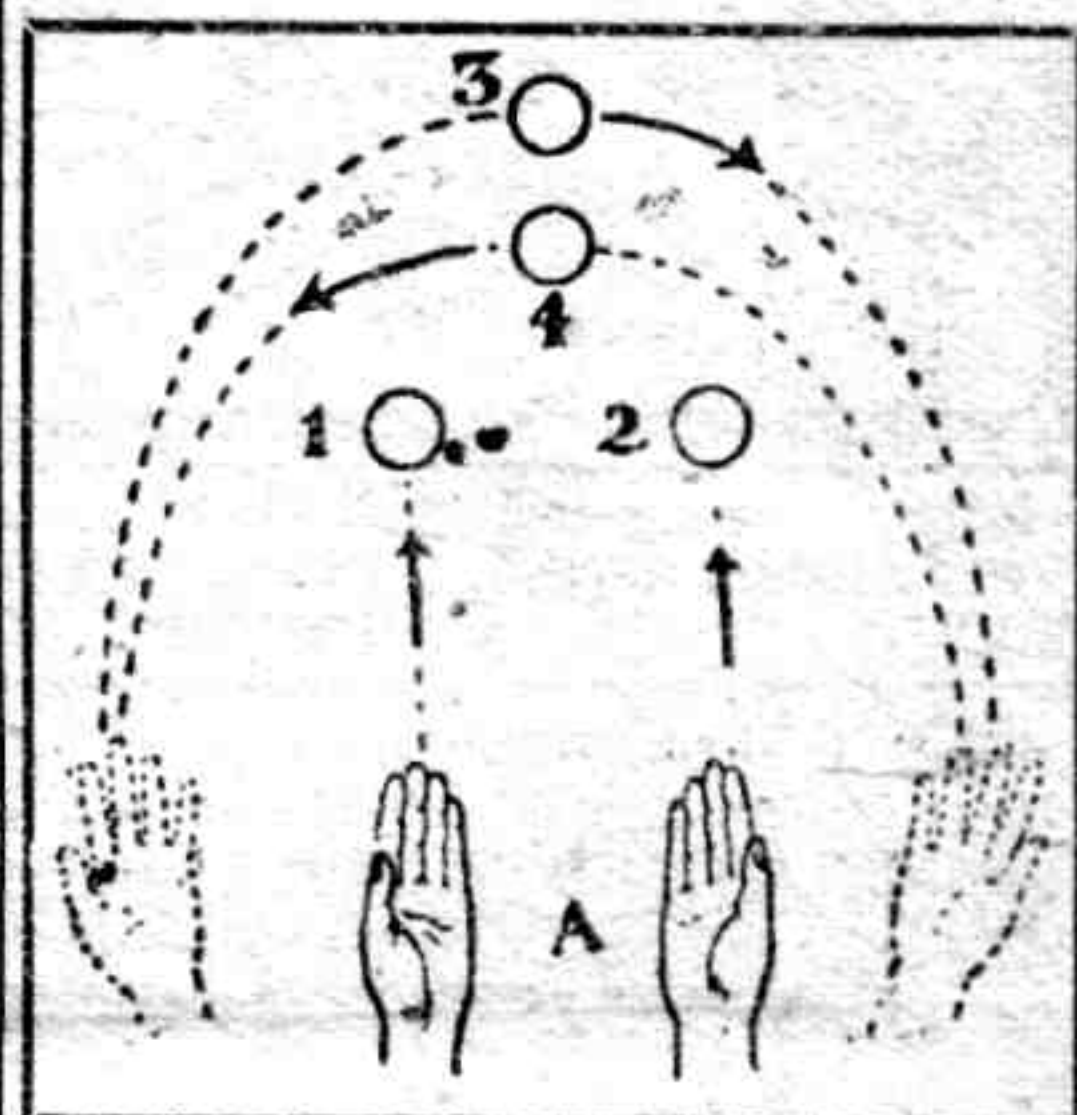


Fig. 14.—The Double Over Fountain.

My readers have now had explained to them the art of juggling. I hope that everybody has found this series of articles of great interest.

I have had letters, inquiring as to the best way of keeping the articles for reference. One reader suggests that the page containing the articles should be pasted on to thin cardboard.

That is a good suggestion, but the sheets are apt to get dirty if kept in that manner. I think quite the best idea is to carefully cut out the articles and insert them in a copy-book. Better still, write out the directions for each trick, and your copy of the MAGNET will still be intact.

I put forward this suggestion, knowing that quite a large number of my readers have their copies of the MAGNET bound into volumes, and to cut out any page is to spoil the book.

During the long evenings the copying of the articles into the copy-book, and then carefully tracing the many diagrams into the same book, will provide my readers with an enjoyable pastime.

I would once again ask my readers to bear in mind that no performer can expect to leave his juggling alone for a week or more, and then expect to be able to perform the tricks right away when called upon to do so by visitors.

Once you have mastered the art of juggling—practice!

There is no sounder advice than that, and anybody who cares to try will endorse my opinion that practice makes perfect!

By the way, next week I shall be starting a splendid series of articles on "Safe Scientific Experiments," which can easily be carried out by any reader.



Harry threw the medicine-ball full in the face of his assailant. Instantly there was a terrific explosion, which lifted Harry from his feet and hurled him six feet away. (See this page.)

SYNOPSIS.

Harry Rhodes, a miner and amateur boxer, of Lexborough, a mining village, meets Joshua Martin, the manager and principal backer of Anthony Hanna—"Cast-Iron Tony"—a wonderful Scottish light-weight boxer, who had come to Lexborough to train. Harry lives with an uncle, James Rhodes, who has trained him, and who had himself been a boxer years before. He had left the Ring through some tragedy of which Joshua Martin knows the facts, much to James Rhodes' alarm.

Hanna, who is a thorough scoundrel, becomes Harry's sworn enemy.

Bertram Godfrey, a friend of Mr. Durham, the owner of the mine at which Harry worked, interests himself in Harry Rhodes.

Harry learns that James Rhodes is his father, and that he was responsible for the death of a boxer some years previously.

Harry, his father, and Bertram Godfrey go to London, where Harry defeats Jules Meunier, Parisian light-weight champion, in a private contest, which is witnessed by a Royal Prince. An attempt to kidnap the Prince afterwards is frustrated by Harry.

Harry is matched to meet Jules Meunier at the National Boxing Club.

The kidnapers seek vengeance on Harry, and Hanna is set to discover his whereabouts.

(Now read on.)

The Medicine-Ball.

KNOWING nothing of the interest taken in them, those in the khaki car made the journey in the best of spirits, the black limousine never close enough to excite attention, not far enough away to lose sight of its quarry.

Noting the house where Godfrey halted, the ex-professor allowed Hanna to carry him a half-mile beyond. Stopping the car, he got out.

"I am going to find and walk in the Highgate Woods: I understand they are very pleasant," he said. "You will meet me, where the railway crosses the road, in two hours from now. Your time you will occupy by learning, without exciting curiosity, all that you can concerning

those who live in the house of Mr. Godfrey, and as much as you can of the habits of the inmates. But be careful that you excite no suspicion. You are part gipsy, therefore you will be cunning and bold; also you are part Scottish, which should teach you to be prudent."

After which instructions this quietly-spoken man, who had risked his own life a score times, was equally indifferent to the lives of others, and had calmly made up his mind to murder Harry Rhodes, of whom he knew nothing save that he had been the means of frustrating an attempt to carry out one of the absurd and callous schemes of which the professed object was the furtherance of the cause of liberty, strolled back along the road until he reached the entrance to Bertram Godfrey's house, where he deliberately turned into the garden. No one was about to observe him, and, slipping into a thick shrubbery between the house and the road until he gained a point from which he could view the building without being seen by any chance passer through the garden, he took out pencil and paper and made an accurate sketch.

This done, he gained the path, which he followed to the house, where an inquiry for a wholly non-existent person enabled him to make useful observations upon the door and lower floor windows. Having apologised, he went away, well satisfied.

Two nights later Harry was aroused by a noise—a dull, heavy sound that seemed to come from the big studio that Godfrey had converted into a gymnasium, the roof of which was immediately below his own bed-room, the window of which, as usual, was wide open. Without arousing his father, who slept in an adjoining room, or Godfrey, whose bed-room was not far distant, Harry went softly downstairs in his bare feet, gripping the rhinoceros-hide stick which had been given him by the Prince.

Outside the door giving entrance to the

THE MINERS' CHAMPION

A Magnificent Serial
Story of the Ring.

BY

PERCY LONGHURST.

gymnasium he waited a few seconds, listening intently. His ears assuring him someone was within, he threw the door open suddenly and dashed inside, his fingers catching and pressing down the electric-light switches, flooding the big studio with a dazzling illumination.

Within was a surprising sight. A dozen sets of boxing-gloves lay scattered about the middle of the floor, where burned a powerful, shaded electric lamp. From beside the heap the figure of a man arose as Harry entered and backed swiftly towards one of the long French windows, which was partly open.

But, the window reached, either that he had overcome the instinctive impulse to escape, or, recognising Harry, a deadly intention was swiftly formed, the man abruptly halted for an instant; then, drawing a long, narrow-bladed weapon from within his coat, he rushed towards Harry, who, stick brandished, hurried to prevent his escape.

His foot alighting on one of the scattered gloves, Harry slipped, and came down headlong, the stick flying from his fingers. By the time he had recovered himself and was again on his feet, the man with the stiletto was not ten feet away.

Bare hands against such an ugly weapon seemed too big a chance, and, stooping quickly, with both hands Harry seized and lifted a medicine-ball that lay on the floor. Without checking the lift, as a Rugby half-back gathers the ball and transfers it swiftly to the hands of the waiting three-quarters, Harry sent the big, heavy globe full at his assailant. The latter had no time to evade the missile, which struck him squarely on the body.

At the instant of impact a stunning explosion burst upon the studio, lifting Harry completely from his feet and hurling him, deaf and dazed, six feet away.

When Harry had come to his full senses again, still thick of head and dull of hearing, but otherwise not a penny the worse—there wasn't even a scratch or bruise to show—for his amazing experience, the explanation he was able to give to Godfrey and his father, and a police-inspector who had been hastily sum-

moned, was anything but satisfying. He could only repeat what had taken place, what he had seen, and that had been so little as to be worth nothing from the officer's point of view.

The damage done to the studio was not great, though much of the glass had been blown out by the violent concussion. Some queer things were found; the queerest, perhaps, being a pair of pointed scissors, a couple of stout needles, and a spool of fine thread.

What the burglar—if burgling had been the purpose of the intruder—could have wanted such articles for was a mystery; until the inspector found a small splinter of steel embedded in the floor, which he declared to have been part of a bomb-case. Whereupon, as though suddenly seized by an idea, James Rhodes snatched up one of the boxing-gloves lying around, and, handling it very carefully, ripped the sewing-thread away, to disclose the padding surrounding the knuckle part. A shout brought Godfrey and the policeman to his side.

"Look at it! Look at it!" he cried.

And it was seen that embedded in the stuffing was a tiny steel cylinder with a movable head.

"Don't you see?" exclaimed the ex-boxer impatiently, staring at the blank faces of his companions. "It's a bomb!"

And so it was. Examination afterwards proved the cylinder contained fulminating mercury, one of the most excitable and destructive of high explosives.

"That swine yonder!" And James Rhodes pointed to something covered with a rug. "He wanted to kill Harry! So he cut open the glove, shoved this infernal machine inside, and sewed the glove up again. Soon as that glove hit a man he'd 've been blown to bits!"

And James Rhodes' explanation, far-fetched as it sounded, proved correct.

Of the many gloves lying about, three were found to contain bombs. Plainly, the miscreant had been disturbed by Harry while engaged in converting every glove he had been able to find in the gymnasium into an instrument of death.

"It's the most diabolically ingenious attempt at murder I've ever come across!" the inspector declared. "But what was it for? Who was to be murdered?"

"Why, Harry, of course!" declared his father.

"But why? Who was that man—when he was alive?"

But neither James Rhodes nor anyone else could ever answer that question.

What was left of the scoundrel who had been so justly "hoist by his own petard"—for it was a bomb secreted within the medicine-ball that had sent him to his account—was buried afterwards; but to this day the police authorities remain unaware of the identity of the man so justly slain by the means he had contrived to kill Harry Rhodes.

There were Scotland Yard inquiries of Harry, but so far as he and the rest of the Highgate household was concerned, the matter ended there. It is the fact, however, that neither Wildman nor Ritz ever again clapped eyes upon their chief, and they took the earliest opportunity of leaving England.

As for the other members of the precious republican society, they simply disbanded, perhaps to join themselves to other similar villainous organisations.

But Tony Hanna remained. Fearful for his own safety when the sound of the explosion in the studio reached his ears, he incontinently abandoned the black limousine with which he had been waiting outside Godfrey's house, and fled for a secure hiding-place, there to await the

time, and a further opportunity for accomplishing his revenge upon Harry Rhodes.

"And Harry Rhodes—at the moment, anyhow—has every right to consider himself an extremely fortunate young man."

That was the sentence with which a writer in the "Sporting Daily" concluded his notice of the match made at the National Boxing Club between Jules Meunier and Harry Rhodes.

It was a better match than Conrad Bowman had thought he was making when he 'phoned so hastily to Highgate to ask if Harry was prepared to accept the offer Meunier had made through his manager. There was more than a touch of mystery in it.

It was the one topic of conversation at the National, and the astute manager congratulated himself on a lucky stroke of business.

Not that he believed for a moment that Harry Rhodes stood the remotest chance against the formidable Frenchman.

Had Harry Rhodes been a name familiar to the public as that of a second-class, even a good, boxer, not a half of the excitement had been raised. It was just because he was wholly unknown that people used every kind of influence and cajolery, traded on friendship, and offered unheard-of sums of money, that they might obtain a seat within the club.

Some persons roundly declared that Harry Rhodes was really a well-known amateur with a well-deserved reputation who, ashamed that none of the professional crowd would risk a battle with Meunier, and in defence of the honour of English boxing, had thrown down a challenge under an assumed name.

(There will be another splendid instalment of this grand boxing story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy in advance.)

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