

The Magnet 1 1/2 Library

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BOB CHERRY'S LEAP TO DISASTER! (A dramatic incident from the long complete school tale inside.)



The Editor's Chat

Address all your letters to :

The Editor,
"The Magnet Library,"
The Fletway House,
Farrington Street,
London, E.C.A.

I am always pleased
to hear from my chums.

For next Monday we have a magnificent long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co, entitled,

"DRIVEN FROM SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

This story deals with Bolsover minor, of the Third Form, and his brother Herbert, of the Remove Form. For a paltry reason, Herbert becomes exceedingly jealous of his brother's progress at the school, and of their father's consequent gratification. This jealousy leads Bolsover to do things he would never think of doing in different circumstances, and the ultimate result is that Bolsover minor is

"DRIVEN FROM SCHOOL!"

The amazing adventures which follow little Bolsover's exit, make the bully sit up and take notice, and in the end he is not the only one who has to thank Bolsover minor for getting him out of a difficult situation. Harry Wharton & Co. find themselves deep in the debt of the far.

The story is one of Mr. Richards' best, and I am quite sure you will all thoroughly enjoy reading it.

There will also be another grand supplement, edited by Harry Wharton and his chums in the Remove. I am sure all my friends will be feeling very "bucked" at seeing our supplement, the "Greivriars Herald," back in the MAGNET LIBRARY, and I must say, I myself am very pleased to see it.

At the same time, I am convinced we have not seen the last of "Billy Hunter's Weekly." Billy certainly turned out a supplement which was far funnier than Harry Wharton's—but it is you and the juniors who see the funny part, not Billy.

When I mentioned that his "Weekly" was full of spelling mistakes, Billy went off the deep-end with a vengeance. He says I ought to go to night school, and learn to spell. Oh, Billy is a nut of the first water—and I, for one, am looking forward very keenly to his next issue. I believe it will appear in about a fortnight's time, but I cannot definitely give the date. Watch my chat!

AN APPRECIATION.

I have had many interesting letters recently, but by far the most interesting came from a reader in Coventry, Miss Marie Blossward.

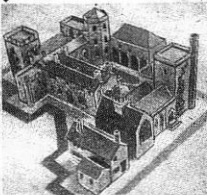
She tells me that she has seldom enjoyed anything so much as she enjoyed making up the model of Greivriars School THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 674

which was given away in "Chuckles," our bright-coloured comic companion paper. She is an ardent reader of the MAGNET, and, if I may say so, a very intelligent reader.

Well, when she had finished making up the model of Greivriars, Miss Marie took a photograph of it, and sent me a print. I have published it on this page so that all my chums can see what a grand model she has made of it.

I have written to "15," No. 3, Street, Radford Estate, Coventry, to thank Miss Marie for the print, and I am supplementing that letter by sending her a small prize of Five Shillings, although I did

THE COMPLETE MODEL OF GREIVRIARS SCHOOL!



A Photograph of the Grand Model
which appeared in
"CHUCKLES!"

not offer any prizes in connection with this model.

Miss Marie, however, is a lady whom I have much pleasure in encouraging, and I am sure all my chums will be glad to see that her industry has been rewarded. Incidentally, I might mention that "Chuckles" still publishes the finest working models ever seen. Next week, in the issue dated January 15th, there is to be given away the first part of a working model of a Giant's Castle—your young brother might like it. Get a copy and see what you can make of it. There are no prizes offered for the best made-up model, because they are given solely for the amusement of my chums.

LETTERS.

Many of my chums have written to me lately asking for advice, and I have, in due course, replied to their letters. Now

I am receiving thanks galore, and expressions of sorrow that my advice was not asked earlier.

In case there is any doubt upon the subject, I should like to tell you all that I am always willing to give advice to my chums on any subject. Of course, I don't know everything, but I have resources at my disposal from whence I can obtain information.

My address is printed at the head of this page—a stamped addressed envelope brings a reply by post. Letters of criticism, appreciation, and the like, will be acknowledged from time to time on this page.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Bilby" (Garforth).—Thanks for your letter. I will consider your suggestion re the "Shining Lights."

H. R. Preston (Morecambe).—I much regret that, owing to correspondents whose names and addresses were published being worried by "quacks," I am unable to print yours. Perhaps we shall see a Cockney character in the MAGNET before long.

F. Evans (R.N.).—Am very glad you took my advice, and that you are now happy and contented. Jolly good!

Rodney Stone.—You will be glad to hear that I am doing my utmost to have special binding-cases made for the companion papers. Watch my "Chat."

Tom Kinnaird.—The trick you so kindly sent me for publication has already appeared in "Chuckles." Many thanks, all the same!

Norman Brett (Paversham).—Many thanks for your letter! Glad you like the Companion Papers. They want some heating, don't they?

Miss Jean Shanks.—Thanks for your jolly letter! Keep your eye on the "Popular," where you will soon find what you want.

W. A. Sayers (Chiswick).—Yours was a fine letter! Many thanks indeed!

"Constant Reader"—Many thanks for your suggestion, but I am afraid I cannot carry it out just yet.

F. Bissenden (Dover).—See the first part of my reply to H. R. Preston.
L. H. Felton (Australin).—Thanks for all you are doing to get new readers for the MAGNET. You're the sort of chum to have! If I hear from a reader who wishes to sell what you require, I will certainly oblige you.

Your Editor



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Drama in the Darkness!

"A LT!"

The word of command rang out sharply through the darkness of the night.

Vernon-Smith of Greyfriars stopped short in the lane. His heart was thumping against his ribs.

The Bounder had no desire to meet anybody just then. For he was in the act of running away from school. And detection and capture would put paid to his plans.

He thought he recognised the voice which hailed him but he was not quite sure. However, when an electric-torch flashed through the darkness, his suspicions were confirmed.

It was Mr. Tozer, the portly and pompous constable from Friarclade, who barred his path.

The Bounder drew a quick breath of relief. He did not regard Mr. Tozer as a man to be feared.

The rays of the constable's torch fell full upon the junior's features.

"My hey! It—it's Master Smith!"

"Just so!" said the Bounder coolly.

"Boastly night, eh, Tozey, old man?"

The constable snorted.

"Wot are you doin' 'ere?" he demanded.

"Taking the night air."

"Which you've broken bounds—"

"Well?"

"An' that bein' the case, it's my dooty, as a representative of lor an' order, to take you back to the school."

"Go hon!"

Tozer advanced a few paces towards Vernon-Smith, who stood waiting for him with clenched fists and a determined gleam in his eyes.

"I should advise you to come quiet, you young rip!" said Tozer.

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"Thanks for your advice, but I don't intend to come at all!"

"Look tery—"

"Stand aside, and let me pass!"

But Mr. Tozer showed no inclination to do that. He congratulated himself that he had made a very good capture. Vernon-Smith, he reflected, had broken bounds in order to visit some place of doubtful repute in the village. And the constable was very pleased to have "caught 'im in the fact," as he would have expressed it. The Bounder had played a good many pranks on him in the past, and this was Tozer's opportunity of revenge. He would march the junior back to the school and report him, and probably receive a substantial "tip" from the Head for his trouble.

"You come along o' me!" he said sternly.

Vernon-Smith wasted no more time in words. He realised that his absence might already have been discovered.

Even at this moment search-parties might be out in pursuit of him. Every second that he wasted, therefore, might be fatal to his own interests.

The Bounder lowered his head, and rushed forward.

The onslaught was so sudden and so unexpected that the constable was taken completely by surprise. He felt as if he had been struck by a battering-ram in the region of his lower waistcoat button, and he sat down very suddenly on the frosty road.

"Yaroooh!"

The astonished constable lumbered to his feet, and brought his electric-torch into action.

Vernon-Smith, however, had vanished. He was swallowed up in the darkness.

"Come back, you young warmint! Come back, I tell yer!"

The constable might as well have addressed himself to a brick wall, for all the response he received.

The echo of his own voice came back to him, and that was all.

"The—th— owicious young rip!" gasped Tozer. "E laid 'ands on me— a hoffer of the lor! Which I'll get 'im fired hout of Greyfriars for this!"

So saying, the portly constable, realising

the futility of hunting for the Bounder, continued on his beat.

Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith, who had darted through a gap in the hedge, was speeding away across the silent fields.

In front of him, he could dimly discern the outline of the cliffs of Peeg.

Why he was going in that direction he didn't know. He had formed no plans for the future; he seemed indifferent, both in regard to direction and destination.

Not that he had anyone to blame but himself. He had gone the pace; he had played fast and loose; he had returned, for a spell, to his former habits—the habits which had earned him the nickname of the Bounder in his latest escapades was not a pleasant one.

To begin with, Vernon-Smith had been accused of selling an important football match—of deliberately letting his side down.

A trial by jury had taken place in the junior Common-room, with the result that he had been found guilty, and made to run the gauntlet, besides being thrown out of the Remore eleven.

And all the while he had innocently!

The harsh treatment he had received at the hands of his schoolfellows had rankled in the Bounder's mind.

He had been wronged. But he ought to have waited patiently until the true facts of the case were brought to light, and his honour was vindicated.

However, what Vernon-Smith ought to have done and what he actually did do, were two very different things.

Instead of waiting patiently, in the hope that his name would be cleared, he had yielded to the sly persuasions of Cecil Pensonby, of Highcliffe, and plunged into a life of reckless folly. He had thrown in his lot with a contemptible set of snobs and cad known as the Society of Good Sports.

The Society of Welshers would, perhaps, have been a better title for the precious concern. For they had cheated

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at cards in a most subtle manner, and had transferred nearly all the Bounder's money to their own pockets.

The climax had come when Mr. Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master at Greyfriars, paid a surprise visit to the society's headquarters late that night.

There had been quite an upheaval.

Mr. Lascelles had taken the Bounder back to Greyfriars in his custody, and the Head had ordered the culprit to be sent to the detention-room, to await a public expulsion.

For some time Vernon-Smith had paced restlessly to and fro in his place of detention. And then he had decided to escape.

It had been a far from simple matter. In the first place, the Bounder had had to fashion a rope by knotting several sheets together; and by this means he had been able to lower himself from the window of the detention-room.

It had proved a perilous business, for had the imprudent rope given way at any part, the reckless junior would have been precipitated on to the flagstones below.

But Fortune sometimes favours the reckless, as well as the brave, and the Bounder's breathless plan had succeeded.

On reaching terra-firma, he had clambered through the box-room window and visited his study, where he had donned his cap and greatcoat, and crammed into the pockets of the latter his most treasured possessions.

And now he was out and away.

But as he hurried across the darkened fields, the fugitive felt far from comfortable in his mind.

Had the tell-tale rope of sheets, which he had left dangling from the window, been discovered?

If so, search-parties would already be on foot, and his position would be precarious in the extreme.

He had little to fear from the seniors. But if Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove happened to be on the scent, they would exercise the keenness of sleuthhounds. They knew the surrounding country like a book, and although they would be handicapped by the darkness, they would leave no stone unturned in their efforts to track down the runaway.

The Bounder realised this, and he set his jaw grimly.

Something seemed to tell him that he was being pursued. And, try as he would, he could not shake off that fear. As he sped on his way, it seemed to his overwrought mind that a foe lurked in every shadow.

On and on he went, never pausing, never looking back, until he reached the wide expanse of grass at the top of the cliffs.

Here he paused, pumping in breath.

He listened intently, but save for the wind and the splashing of the waves far below, all was silent.

He did not stop long, partly because he dare not, and partly because it was intensely cold, and he wanted to keep his circulation going.

For a few seconds only he hesitated. Then he turned his face towards the west, and tramped on through the almost impenetrable darkness.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Calamity on the Cliffs!

VERNON-SMITH'S fears that he was being pursued were well-founded.

The Famous Fire of the Remove were hot on the trail.

The rope of sheets, by means of which THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 674.

the Bounder had made his escape, had been discovered by Mr. Larry Lascelles, when that gentleman was making a final tour of inspection before going to bed; and the young mathematics master had immediately informed the Head of Vernon-Smith's absence.

Search-parties had been formed without delay.

A party of prefects was on the way to Courtfield to make inquiries; and Harry Wharton & Co. were proceeding towards Pegg.

"I can't help thinking that we've come on a wild-goose chase, you fellows," said Johnny Bull. "It's hardly likely that the Bounder would have taken this route."

"It's even less likely that he'd have made for Courtfield, or one of the big towns," said Harry Wharton. "I think we might pick up a clue at Pegg. Anyway, we're not going to turn back!"

"No jolly fear," said Bob Cherry. "We've promised to do our level best to find that mad duffer, and we're not going to give up. That sort of thing's awfully feeble!"

"But it's so beastly dark!" protested Johnny Bull. "You can't see a hand's turn! And I've already bumped into the bank three times!"

"Well, you can keep on doing it," said Bob. "It amuses you, and it doesn't hurt us."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Johnny Bull spluttered with wrath.

"Do you think I've been doing it for fun, you champion as?" he roared.

"Please don't bellow, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "My eardrums won't stand it."

"He wouldn't be a Bull if he didn't bellow!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton, who was walking in front, passed in order to get his bearings.

"It's as dark as Inky's complexion!" he muttered. "I've been along this road hundreds of times, but I have to keep stopping to make sure of my giddy whereabouts."

"The darkness is certainly terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "It reminds me of the words of your English poet:

"The shades of night were fastfully falling,

When through the snow a voice was bawling,

"The darkness is most appalling!"

Excelsior!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh's rendering of "Excelsior" tickled his chums to such an extent that their laughter echoed along the dark roadway.

Then, with startling suddenness, a light flashed out, and an imperious voice exclaimed:

"Alt!"

The juniors stopped short.

"Why, it's Tozer!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as the constable's portly figure loomed into view.

Mr. Tozer stared at the juniors in amazement.

"What are you young rips doin' bout 'ere, at this time o' night?" he demanded.

"We're looking for a fat bobby," explained Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"None o' your cheek!" said Mr. Tozer sternly. "Wot I says is this 'ere—who gave you leave to come hout at 'arf-past one in the mornin'?"

"We're searching for Smith," explained Wharton briefly. "He's bunked from the school, and we've been sent to find him, and bring him back."

"My heye!"

"You've seen nothing of him, of course, Tozer?"

The constable nodded.

"You have?" exclaimed Wharton eagerly. "Where—and when?"

"On this 'ere road, about ten minutes ago."

"Then why the thump didn't you collar him?"

"Which the young warmint was too slippy for me!" growled the constable.

"R butted me in the weesk, an' went off like a streak o' lightnin'!"

"Which direction did he take?" asked Johnny Bull quickly.

"Tozer shook his head.

"I shen't no foggest notion, Master Bull. I could say 'e went on towards Pegg, but I ain't at all certain."

"And you say it was ten minutes ago that you met him?"

"Yes."

Harry Wharton turned to his chums.

"I believe we're on the right track, you fellows!" he said excitedly. "And Smith's only got ten minutes start of us. Come on!"

And the juniors continued their game of hare-and-hounds. They were the hounds, of course, and Vernon-Smith was the hare.

What with the intense darkness, and the ratty state of the road, progress was necessarily slow. But the juniors had something tangible to go on now. The pursuit had developed into something more than a game of blind man's bluff. Their quarry could not be far ahead, and the Famous Five told themselves that they would soon overhaul him.

Presently Bob Cherry stooped down in order to remove a stone from his shoe.

The stone had been worrying him for some time, and when Bob hurried forward to regain his chums, he saw no sign of them. He hailed them in his stentorian tones, but there was no response.

"The silly asses!" he muttered.

"Where have they got to?"

Bob Cherry hesitated at the spot where the cliff-path commenced.

Had his chums gone that way, or had they continued along the road to the village of Pegg?

That was a puzzle which the junior was unable to solve.

He gave another shout, louder than before. But still there was no response.

"My hat! I must have been a thundering long time getting that stone out of my shoe!" he muttered. "They're right out of carachet!"

After some deliberation, Bob commenced to climb the cliff-path. Something seemed to tell him that his chums had gone in that direction.

A deluge of sleet began to descend. Bob Cherry shivered, and pulled his coat-collar closely about his neck.

It was a tangle and hazardous climb to the top of the cliff. But at last the summit was gained, and then, after pausing to get back his breath, Bob shouted for the third time:

"Aho!"

No answer was borne to him through the darkness.

"Harry! Frank! Where are you?" Still no reply. But Bob Cherry fancied he saw a dark figure moving some distance ahead of him.

He went forward quickly, straining his eyes into the darkness.

Yes! Somebody was walking in front!

Surely it must be one of his chums, unless—

The thought flashed through Bob Cherry's mind that it might be Vernon-Smith. For had it been one of his chums, the fellow would surely have responded to his shout.

Bob quickened his pace, until he was only a few yards from the figure in front.



"A splendid display, by gad!" said Sir Timothy Topham as Vernon-Smith came off the field with the rest of the Spartans. "You're well worth a place in the team, and as there's a vacancy you had better turn out on Saturday!" (See Chapter 4.)

"That you, Smith?" he rapped out. There was a startled exclamation, and Bob Cherry recognised the voice of the Bounder.

"Stop!" he shouted. "You're coming back to Greyfriars, you mad fool!"

A mocking laugh sounded through the darkness. Evidently Vernon-Smith had recovered from his amazement, and was himself again.

"Have you been sent to fetch me back?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"Then I'm afraid you'll be dashed unlucky!"

Saying which, the Bounder took to his heels, and sped away into the shadows.

He did not flee because he feared Bob Cherry, but because he suspected that the other members of the Famous Five might be following up behind. And he had no intention of being captured. He was in as desperate a mood as that of an escaped convict.

As he ran, he heard the sound of purring footsteps. But his eyes were more accustomed to the darkness than Bob Cherry's, and he established a very useful lead.

Presently the Bounder pulled up short. He stood on the edge of an abyss, and instinct had saved his life, for he would not have noticed the yawning chasm in the darkness.

He was at a spot where two cliffs had partially divided—separated by a chasm which was about twelve feet wide. Had

he taken another step, he would have been precipitated into space, eventually to be dashed on to the rocks far below.

"Whew! That was a narrow squeak!" he panted. And he shuddered as he reflected how near he had been to death.

It was necessary to make a wide detour inland, in order to reach the other side of the chasm.

At the end of about five minutes, Vernon-Smith succeeded in doing this, and the yawning gulf stood between him and his pursuer.

He paused, and listened for the sound of Bob Cherry's footsteps.

Yes; they were approaching rapidly.

Dimly through the darkness, the Bounder could discern an oncoming figure.

Then it occurred to him that Bob Cherry would probably be ignorant of the danger; and he gave a warning shout.

"Look out, or you'll be over the edge! Stop! Stop, you mad idiot!"

But the warning came too late!

Bob Cherry was quite unconscious of the fact that a gulf separated him from the stationary figure in front. He concluded that the Bounder had run himself to a standstill, and he told himself that it would be only a matter of seconds before he captured his quarry.

Then came Vernon-Smith's warning shout, and simultaneously Bob Cherry pitched forward into space.

A startled cry escaped him; then there was a terrifying silence.

Vernon-Smith stood rooted to the ground. He clapped his hand over his forehead in his distraction.

He was nearly stunned by what had occurred.

"Good—good heavens!" he gasped. "He'll be killed!"

Usually cool and collected in a time of crisis, the Bounder was trembling from head to foot now. He was appalled to think that Bob Cherry had been dashed on to the rocks below.

A great fear laid hold of him, and it was some time before he was able to master himself sufficiently to creep to the edge of the chasm and peer over.

Far below, he saw the white foam seething among the rocks. But of his schoolfellow there was no sign.

"Bob! Bob Cherry!" he called. And his voice sounded hoarse and unnatural.

No reply came from below—only the incessant splashing of the waves.

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet. The perspiration stood on his beads on his brow. He, who hitherto had scarcely known what fear was, was scared almost out of his wits.

"He—he's gone!" he muttered. "I was too late to save him!"

And then he fancied he heard the murmur of voices in the near distance, and he pulled himself together.

Harry Wharton and the others were evidently patrolling the cliff-top, and they must not find him here.

When they discovered that Bob Cherry was missing, they might think that there had been foul play; that their chum had been deliberately pushed over the edge of the cliff. They would suppose that there had been a pursuit, a struggle, and a calamity.

"I must quit!" muttered the Bouncer.

He was convinced that he heard voices now. And he turned to depart.

For a moment, however, a fearful fascination held him to the spot. He wanted to flee, but an invisible hand seemed to detain him.

But the voices drew nearer, and Vernon-Smith realised that further delay would bring about his undoing. So he sped away with winged feet from the scene of the calamity.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Change of Identity!

LONDON! I'll go to London!" The Bouncer panted out the words breathlessly as he ran.

He wanted to hide; it was imperative that he should hide; and there was no more effectual hiding-place in the world than among the teeming millions of the great metropolis. In no forest, desert, or trackless waste could one become completely lost.

The Bouncer headed in the direction of Friarale village. And presently he paused, and glanced at his luminous wrist-watch.

"I shall just about do it!" he muttered.

He had decided to board the mail-train. It did not stop at Friarale, but it always went through the little station slowly, for there were no gates which had to be opened to permit it to pass.

It was a race against time; and the Bouncer was scarcely in a fit condition for racing, after the exhausting experiences of that terrible night. But he knew that he dare not remain in the district. For all he knew to the contrary, half a dozen search-parties might be scouring the locality.

He streaked across the silent fields like a hare. And he succeeded in boarding the mail-train as it crawled through Friarale Station.

It was touch and go, but the Bouncer succeeded in scrambling into the unattended luggage-van.

He had ample time to rest from his exertions, for the train did not reach the London terminus for an hour.

There were no signs of activity as Vernon-Smith emerged from Charing Cross Station.

London was asleep at this hour, and the Bouncer knew that it would be hopeless to try and find accommodation for what was left of the night. So he tramped about until six o'clock, when the city seemed to awake out of sleep. Vehicles rumbled through the streets, and there were signs of activity on every hand.

Vernon-Smith was utterly worn out by this time. He entered a modest-looking eating-house, and ordered a good square meal.

As he waited for his eggs-and-bacon and coffee, he glanced at himself in the mirror, and was startled to see how pale and worn he looked. In that one night of grim adventure he seemed to have aged a couple of years.

But he was relieved to find that his appearance created no comment.

That was the best of London. Its inhabitants were too engrossed in their own business to want to pry into anybody else's.

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Had he been in a small provincial town, the Bouncer's appearance would have roused suspicion. But the Londoners seemed too preoccupied to wonder who he was, and where he came from.

At the same, Vernon-Smith felt uncomfortable.

His Etons were screened by the great-coat he wore; but his Greyfriars cap advertised him as a schoolboy. And he had no desire for self-advertisement just then.

After his early-morning meal he felt tremendously refreshed.

He paid his bill, and devoted the remainder of the morning to tramping the streets.

At midday he bought a newspaper. He was half-afraid that he would find some reference to the calamity which had taken place in the night. But although he anxiously scanned every column, including the stop-press news, he saw no word about the affair.

So he suppose it's been hushed up, so that the name of Greyfriars shouldn't be dragged through the Press!" he muttered.

He stood outside a hosier's shop at the time, and suddenly an idea occurred to him. He went into the establishment, and purchased a tweed cap, cramming his own school cap into his pocket.

"That's better!" he said to himself, as he emerged. "I feel safer now."

But, safe though he might be, the Bouncer was far from happy.

Over and over again he recounted in his mind the scenes of the night before.

Was it not a coward's trick to run away like this?

Ought not he to have remained, and made investigations, to see what had become of Bob Cherry? Or, at least, should not he have reported the calamity to Bob's chums, or to the school authorities?

His conscience was sorely troubled. Still, now that he had taken this step, there could be no turning back.

Besides, it would not be worth while to go back to Greyfriars, for he would be publicly expelled within a few hours of his return.

No; he had taken the plunge. And he must not think of retreating.

He tramped thoughtfully along, with his eyes on the pavement. And presently he was surprised, and not a little alarmed, at receiving a sounding slap on the back.

The Bouncer looked up quickly. Then a light shone in his eyes.

"Why, it's Maxwell—Billy Maxwell!"

A young, immaculately-dressed man stood before him. He was about two-and-twenty, and he had an honest and kindly face.

"Herbert! Why, what on earth are you doing here? Surely you've not left Greyfriars!"

The Bouncer nodded.

"You—you've been fired out?" gasped Billy Maxwell.

"Practically."

"Come and tell me all about it!"

And Maxwell led the way into a fashionable restaurant.

Vernon-Smith followed. He had no choice in the matter, for his companion had linked an arm in one of his own.

Billy Maxwell had formerly been the secretary to the Bouncer's millionaire father. But a wealthy uncle had died and left him a pot of money, and he now belonged to that much-envied class known as "gentlemen of independent means." He had always had a warm affection for the Bouncer, even in the days of the latter's waywardness and folly; and Vernon-Smith—so far as his peculiar

nature was capable of affection—had always been fond of Maxwell.

They seated themselves at a secluded table, and for a time silence fell between them.

The Bouncer was debating in his mind whether it would be wise to take Billy Maxwell into his confidence, and tell him everything.

Finally, he decided to make a clean breast of the whole wretched business. He felt certain that Maxwell would listen with a sympathetic ear; he felt equally certain that the young man would not betray his confidence.

Presently he spoke.

"Things have been happening during the last twenty-four hours, Billy," he said. "Startling things—things that'll take your breath away! I'll tell you my story, but you mustn't be surprised if it sounds more like a chunk out of a novelette than a series of incidents from real life."

Billy Maxwell gave some instructions to the waitress who hovered near. Then he turned to his companion.

"Fire away, Herbert!" he said.

"To begin at the beginning," said the Bouncer, "I was wrongly accused of selling an important footer-match, and after a mockery of a trial I was made to run the gauntlet, and was chucked out of the Remove team."

Maxwell nodded. His interest had been stirred right away.

"Of course, I was very bitter about the whole business," Vernon-Smith went on, "and I came to the conclusion that it wasn't worth while to play with a straight bat. As you know, for a long time I chucked gambling and smoking, and all that sort of thing, and became a respectable member of society. Well, I decided to go back to the old order of things, and I got linked up with a precious gang called the Society of Good Sports. They met in Courtfield three nights a week.

"And you were bowled out?"

"Yes. It had to happen sooner or later. Last night one of the masters turned up at the place, and the fat was in the fire, with a vengeance! I was taken back to Greyfriars, and given marching orders. Of course, I wasn't going to wait for the chucking-out scene, so I made a rope of knotted sheets, and lowered myself from the window of the detention-room."

"You mad duffer!" said Billy Maxwell. "You might have broken your neck!"

"Don't think many people would have cared."

"Don't talk rot, Herbert! So you bunked from school and came up to town. What?"

"That isn't the end of my story. I only wish it was! My absence was discovered, and search-parties were sent out on my track. I was roaming along the cliffs—I hadn't fixed upon any definite plans at the time—when I was spotted by one of the searchers—Bob Cherry. He chased me for a good distance, and then he—"

The Bouncer paused. For a moment he was quite unable to continue, and in that moment he seemed to be living that terrible night over again.

"Yes, and then?" said Maxwell.

"Cherry disappeared over the edge of a chasm."

"Great Scott!"

"He's certain to have been killed!" muttered the Bouncer. "It—'it's awful!"

"Pull yourself together, Herbert!" said Billy Maxwell. He thought his companion was going to faint. "The key fell over accidentally, I suppose? Here



The Famous Five passed within a foot of Smith; but they did not recognise him. The red hair and the tinted complexion did not suggest the one-time Bounder of Greyfriars. He drew in a deep breath of relief and sauntered off. (See Chapter 6.)

wasn't a struggle, or anything of that sort, I take it?"

"No, it was a pure accident. But—but other people might not have thought so."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if the other fellows had discovered me on the cliff, they'd have thought that I pushed Bob Cherry over the edge."

"So you came away?"

"Like a shot. I managed to board the mail-train, and I arrived in town about three o'clock this morning. Since then I seem to have been doing nothing else but tramp about."

There was a long silence. Maxwell seemed to be weighing the Bounder's story.

"Look here, Herbert!" he said at length. "You've got nothing to reproach yourself with—except that you were a born idiot to join that precious society you spoke about. It's unfortunate—low'lish unfortunate—about that kid Cherry. But, as you say, it was a pure accident. Your conscience is clear—in that respect, at any rate."

"All the same, Billy, I don't want anybody to find out where I am. I should be taken back to Greyfriars, and even if nothing was said about what happened last night, I should be publicly expelled. And I couldn't bear to see all the fellows gloating over me."

"I always thought you were very popular at school."

"Well, I always had more pals than enemies—until that affair of the footer match cropped up."

"And what do you propose to do now—that you're in London?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm absolutely at a loose end."

"Got any money?"

"About enough to last me four or five days."

"If'm! Well, I think I can help you."

"You think you can?"

The Bounder's tone was eager and anxious.

"Yes. You've no intention of going home, of course?"

"Of course not! The pater would be furious, and he'd only send me packing. The Hoag of Greyfriars has sent him a wire by this time, I expect, telling him what's happened."

"Well, the best suggestion I can make, Herbert," said Billy Maxwell, "is that you start afresh."

"How?"

"By putting an end to yourself."

"What?"

The Bounder stared at his old chum in amazement.

"Are you suggesting suicide?" he gasped.

"In a way. But not in the general meaning of the word. I suggest that from this hour—from this moment, if you like—Herbert Vernon-Smith ceases to exist."

Light dawned upon the Bounder.

"I can see what you're driving at, Billy. You think I ought to change my name?"

"That's it. And—if you've no objection to plain speaking—I think you ought to change your ways, too. Gambling, and all that sort of business, fairly speeds a fellow to ruin. I'm not a plaster saint myself, and I've no right to preach. But, honestly, Herbert, there's nothing like playing straight. And if you'll promise to do this, then I, for my part, will promise to help you by every means in my power!"

Billy Maxwell spoke earnestly, persuasively. And he won the Bounder over.

"You're quite right, Billy," said Vernon-Smith. "Gambling's a beastly business at best, and I shall chuck it. But I should have to do that, in any case. I haven't any superfluous cash to fling about now."

"I'm going to lend you enough to meet all your requirements," said Billy Maxwell.

"I say, Billy, that—that's awfully decent of you!"

The Bounder had the reputation of being hard and unemotional. But his eyes were brimming with tears now. He realised that Billy Maxwell was not a fair-weather friend, but a chum in the truest sense of the word.

"Besides changing your name, you

must change your make-up," Billy went on. "You must discard those Etons, or they'll be giving you away. A smart grey suit is what you want. I see you've got a tweed cap, and that's all to the good. You must also get your hair dyed."

"What?"

"I suggest a flaming carrot colour,"

"My hat!"

"And you must have your face tinted. You can have it done by an electrical process, and the tint will be guaranteed to last for six months. You won't be able to wash it off, and it's completely alter your appearance. A tinted chivey, and ginger hair, and the Vernon-Smith of old will be unrecognisable. You'll be able to move about freely, without exciting suspicion."

"It's certainly a topping plan, Billy," said the Bounder. "But I'm not in love with the ginger hair stunt. I should almost prefer to be bald!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Billy, laughing. "Ginger locks will suit your style of beauty. I've never been able to understand why people jeer at ginger hair. Why, it gives its owner a personality—it's distinctive. Red-headed people aren't such clumps as you might imagine. I've no axe to grind in saying this. My own hair's as black as a raven's feathers."

"Oh, all right!" said the Bounder. "I suppose I shall be able to remove the dye, if ever I want to change?"

"Of course!"

"Now, what about a new name?"

"I suggest Rufus—Rufus Koppa-nobb!"

"Don't be a champion idiot, Billy! I couldn't possibly go to bed with a name like that, or go about with it, either."

"What's in a name?"

"A great deal more than old Shakespeare supposed. Now, let me think. How would Newman do—Bob Newman?"

"Not so dusty," said Billy Maxwell grudgingly. "But I prefer Koppa-nobb. Sounds like a Russian coat."

"Rats!"

"We'll make it Bob Newman, then. And I'll address you as Bob in future, so's not to cause confusion. You're quite willing, I take it, to alter your appearance in the way suggested?"

"Quite!"

"Well, why are you looking as miserable as a boiled egg?"

"I'm worried about the future—about what I'm going to do, I mean. I must get a job of some sort, and the real job will be how to find one. You see, I've got no references—no credentials—no nothing!"

"Billy Maxwell smiled.

"I love everything to your Uncle William!" he said.

The Bounder looked steadily at his chum.

"Look here, Billy! You've already helped me enough. And I can't sponge on you to the extent of asking you to find me a job."

"There's no question of sponging, Herbert—I mean Bob. I can get you a job—a job after your own heart—and it'll be to our mutual advantage."

"This is no end decent of you—"

"Shucks! Now, you're a ripping good footballer, I believe?"

"Passably good."

"From what I've heard of you, you're a tip-top player. When nasty things are said about people, you can take it that Rumour's a lying jade. But when complimentary things are said, they generally happen to be true. You call yourself passably good, but I've reason to believe you're in the very first rank."

"The Magnet Library.—No. 64.

"But what's all this leading up to?" asked the Bounder, leaning eagerly across the table.

"I'll tell you. I happen to be the secretary of a flourishing club known as the London Spartans. You've heard of them, perhaps?"

"Well, I think—no, I'm sure—that I can get you an engagement with the club. You shall have a trial, and if you're the sort of player I believe you to be, it'll mean a permanent place in the team. I've a pretty strong pull with the directors, and it'll be fairly easy to work the oracle. What do you say, Herbert—confound it!—I mean, Bob?"

The Bounder closed with the offer at once.

Nothing would suit him better than to become a footballer by profession. He had had visions of a struggling career in a City office—a drab, humdrum life—but those visions were now happily dispelled. He thanked his lucky stars for this chance meeting with Billy Maxwell.

"We'll call it settled, then," said Billy.

"And now we'll get to business, Master Bob Newman. Come on!"

And the Bounder, as he quitted the restaurant with the good-hearted Billy Maxwell, felt that, in spite of everything, life was still worth living.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The New Life!

VERNON-SMITH—alias Bob Newman—spent a very busy afternoon.

He rigged himself out, at his chum's expense, in a ready-made grey suit. It fitted perfectly, as if it had been made to measure.

Following this, the Bounder was taken to an establishment in the West End, where his hair was dyed.

At first he could not imagine himself as the possessor of red hair. But when, after the dyeing process had been completed, he surveyed himself in the glass, he saw that the ginger locks were not altogether unbecoming. But they altered his appearance to a startling extent. He scarcely recognised himself.

"I hardly think it'll be necessary for me to have my face tinted," he remarked to Billy Maxwell.

"Oh, yes, it will. We mustn't do things by halves."

"How long will the electrical treatment take?"

"A good time. Still, it'll be worth it."

The Bounder was then put in the hands of an expert in the art of electrical massage.

By the time this gentleman had finished with him, his complexion was tinted all over—and, what was more, the tint looked perfectly natural. There was nothing to suggest that the Bounder's appearance had been deliberately disguised.

As he emerged from the establishment with Billy Maxwell, Vernon-Smith felt that his old self was dead—that he was an entirely new being. And if it was true, as the poet observed, that men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things, then the Bounder had a rosy future before him.

Dusk was descending, and the thoroughfares were swept by a biting east wind.

"What's the next move?" asked the Bounder.

"You're going to spend the night with me at my flat," said Billy Maxwell. "And a good many more nights, too, I hope."

"I say, Billy, I've done nothing to deserve all this kindness!"

"What? Didn't you back me up in the old days, when your pater was always finding fault with me, and saying I was the most wooden-headed secretary he's ever struck? Didn't you stick up for me that time when he gave me the sack, and persuade him to give me another chance? You may have forgotten these things, but I haven't. I never forget a good turn. And now that I've got an opportunity of repaying you, I mean to take full advantage of it."

Billy Maxwell hailed a passing taxi, and a few moments later they arrived at his cosy flat in Kensington.

The Bounder frequently found himself wondering whether it was all a dream.

It was an amazing piece of good fortune that he had come into contact with his father's former secretary. He shuddered to think of what might have happened but for Billy Maxwell's generous help.

When he awoke in the morning, and blinked around him, he half expected to find that he was in the Remora dormitory at Greyfriars.

But it was not so. He was in a cheery bed-room in his chum's flat, and he had been aroused by a rat-tat-tat on his door.

"Your tea and shaving-water are outside, sir," said the maid.

The girl had not seen Vernon-Smith overnight, and she therefore supposed that he was of a shaving age.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Thanks!" he called out. "I say! You'd better put a label on the tea, and another label on the shaving-water!"

"Why, sir?" exclaimed the maid.

"So that I can tell which is which!"

"If you insult my tea like that, sir, I shall report you to Mr. Maxwell!" said the girl, with a laugh.

And then she withdrew.

The Bounder was surprised to find that it was nearly eleven o'clock. He had slept the clock round; and well he needed to, for he had not slept a wink the previous night.

He felt as fit as a fiddle now, though when he looked at the mirror he gave a violent start. He had temporarily forgotten the fact that his hair had been dyed red and his complexion tinted.

"It's a perfect disguise!" he muttered. "Why, I hardly know myself! There's only one thing that would ever give me away, and that's my voice. I shall have to practise speaking in a deeper tone—a sort of Johnny Bull grunt!"

Billy Maxwell greeted the Bounder cordially when he came down.

"Had a good night, Bob?" he asked.

"Topping!"

"Do you feel up to a game of football this afternoon?"

"Rather!"

"All serene! We'll have a sort of breakfast and lunch combined, and then I'll take you along to the Spartans' ground and introduce you to the directors."

There was a surprise in store for the Bounder when he reached the ground.

In the private room which was set apart for the club officials, he came face to face with a dapper little gentleman who held himself erect, as if to make the most of his stature, and who sported a twirling moustache.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped the Bounder.

For the dapper little gentleman was Sir Timothy Topham, who was a governor of Greyfriars, and who was

(Continued on page 9.)

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 2.

January 8th, 1921.

The

Staff



HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR



FRANK NUGENT
Sub-Editor



TOM BROWN
Sports Editor



VERNON SMITH
Sports Editor



LORD MAULEVERER
Fashion Editor



MARK LINSLEY
Sub-Editor



BOB CHERRY
Editor

EDITORIAL!

By

Harry Wharton.

"Billy Bunter's Weekly" is dead—dead as a doornail! And in its place has appeared the good old "Greyfriars Herald," or which I am proud to be the editor. For which I will explain, as my readers will naturally be curious to know why Billy Bunter's "little little journal" began and ended with the first issue.

The fact of the matter is, Bunter had nearly beaten the brains nor the energy to get beyond No. 1. He billed nearly the whole issue himself, and the effort exhausted him. The pen fell from his chubby fingers, and he dropped back in his editorial chair like a deflated balloon. When the printers asked him for the "copy" for No. 2, he told them to go and eat coke.

Naturally, we didn't want our loyal "Magnet" readers to be disappointed at seeing no supplement in this week's issue, so we—the staff of the "Greyfriars Herald"—came to the rescue, and we hope that the stories and articles contained herein will "delite the hearts of thousands," to again quote Billy Bunter.

Billy is very upset about the whole business, but we have given him a crumb of consolation by allowing him to fill one column per week in our paper.

And now, what about an epitaph for "Billy Bunter's Weekly"? How will the following do?

HERE LIES

(as its editor was in the habit of doing)
the remains of

"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY," which came to an untimely end on January 1st, 1921. Being a weekly, it couldn't be expected to go strongly, and it has now disappeared off the market, and off the face of the earth lamented by none.

"Weep, gentle reader, weep and wail,
And shed your tear-drops meekly;
For left to rot beneath this spot
Is 'Billy Bunter's Weekly.'"

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be able to address you all once more. I feel that there is a strong and enduring bond of union between editor and readers. For my part, I shall leave no turn unturned—I mean, stone unturned—to provide the very best and choicest fare for my chums. And if you, for your part, will accept the good things that an issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" is being presented free with each copy of the "Magnet Library," you will be doing a real good turn to your editor and chums.

HARRY WHARTON.

Stop Press:—My "Weekly" gon for good, has it? Weight and acc!—W. G. B.

SOCIETY SNAPSOTS.

By Bob Cherry.

BARON COKER contemplates spending the week-end with his relatives at Colney Hatch.

MR. WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER is in the sanny, suffering from lack of amurishment. Unkind people express the hope that he will follow the example of his "Weekly," and expire!

MR. GEORGE TUBB washed his neck last Friday morning, and also donned a clean collar. The people who saw him do it are not expected to recover.

THE HON. HERBERT PLANTAGENET MAULEVERER is spending a quiet and restful week-end at his home at Stumbersville.

MR. PAUL PROUT proposes shortly to go on a rabbit-shooting expedition. Members of the public are warned to take cover!

MR. FISHER T. FISH, the well-known angler, recently caught a crab when rowing on the River Sark.

MR. MONTAGUE NEWLAND, an ardent photographer, was caught taking photographs in Friarisle the other day. He was ordered to put them back again.

MR. RICHARD NUGENT's book, "How to Rear White Mice," will shortly be published. The publishers claim that what the author doesn't know about white mice isn't worth knowing. We reply, "Rats!"

OUR WEEKLY CARTOON.



"HOP-HI!"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(NOTE.—The Editor does not necessarily share the views of a fly asses who do not know what they're talking about.—Ed.)

NOT GUILTY!

"To the Editor.

"Sir,—In all my fifteen years on this planet, I've never seen such appalling drivel, halderdash, and tommy-rot as that contained in your last issue.

"I don't know whether the Defence of the Realm Act is still in existence. If it is, you ought to be arrested and put in a padded cell.

"If you continue to publish such outrageous tosh, your readers will be obliged to place themselves under police protection!—Yours in disgust.

"Frank Courtenay (Highlife School)."

(Evidently Brother Frank's letter was intended for Billy Bunter, and relates to that podgy youth's priceless "Weekly." If, however, Courtenay's remarks are intended as a slur on our official organ, the "Greyfriars Herald," his own official organ—of the nasal variety—will be put out of joint!—Ed.)

BILLY BUNTER'S OUTBURST.

"To the Editor of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'
"Dear Wharton,—I think it's a jolly shame that you should sneer my pitch, just as I was going grate guans with my 'Weekly.' Sum feloes are never happy unless their barbing in where their heart wanted. You mite have had the decency to keep off the grass!

"However, now you're hear, you're hear, and it's no use crying over spilt milk. But mind you keep to your promise, and allow me to kontribut a kolturn each week. Wunce again, will you faithfully prommis me this?—Yours trewly,
"W. G. Bunter."

(Yes, Billy—'onner brite!—Ed.)

A CONDRUM FOR LODER.

"To the Editor of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'
"Sir,—Some preconcious lunatic, who ought to be in a strait-jacket, has had the audacity to screw the following riddle, in whitewash, across the looking-glass in my study:

"'Why is Loder of the Sixth like a candle?'
"I presume that the idiot who wrote that belongs to your Form. What's the solution to the beastly thing, anyway?—Yours,
"Gerald Loder."

(The solution, old top, in this: Because he sometimes goes out at night when he ought not to!—Ed.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 574.

BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT!

A Splendid Complete Story of Greyfriars School.

By BOB CHERRY.

THE "Personal Column" of our local paper, the "Courtfield Gazette," generally makes dry reading. As a rule, there's nothing "personal" in it at all. You are advised to buy Bloegs' Boots for Comfort, or to hair permanently removed from your chivvy by electricity.

In the latest issue of the rag, however, quite an interesting "par" appeared in the "Personal Column." It ran thus:

"While skating on Friar's Lake on Wednesday afternoon, Major Marmaduke Moggs, O.B.E., had the misfortune to fall into the water. He was gallantly rescued by an unknown schoolboy, who modestly retired from the scene before the major could realize his identity or express his gratitude. If the hero in question will communicate with Major Moggs, Box S.O.S., office of this paper, he will hear of something very much to his advantage."

It was Skinner who showed us the paragraph, while we were playing chess in the hall. Instantly there was a buzz of voices.

"My hat!"

"There's a reward going for somebody."

"Has anybody here been going round saving people's lives?" asked Johnny Bull. "Own up, Harry!"

"Not guilty!" said Wharton, with a grin. "Who's this Major Moggs, anyway? I inquired."

"Nobody appeared to have heard of this gentleman."

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter had just finished reading the paragraph. He was fairly bubbling over with excitement.

"What's up, porpoise?" growled Nugent. "Would you fellows like to know who the modest hero was? It was me!"

There was a general gasp.

"Nobody had ever suspected Bunter of being a hero, and not even his best friend could have called him modest."

"We were simply speechless for the moment. And Billy Bunter went on:

"Yes, it was me! You needn't blink at me like a lot of Doubting Thomases you fellows! I'm the chap who fished Colonel Bloegs out of the water on Friday afternoon!"

Harry Wharton was the first to find his voice.

"Colonel Bloegs is dead in this act," he said. "It was Major Moggs who was rescued. And the rescue took place on Wednesday—not Friday."

Billy Bunter nodded calmly.

"A mere slip of the tongue on my part," he said. "But it's a fact that I'm the modest hero mentioned in that paragraph. I was out skating on Saturday afternoon, and I saw General Moggs get into difficulties—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I plunged into the gap in the ice, and—"

and rescued him. The T. cheered off before he could ask any questions."

"Did you take his gold watch and chain with you?" asked Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha, Bolsover—"

"Bunter, you burbling clump," said Harry Wharton, "do you suppose that we're going to take you seriously? It's obvious, even to a fellow of the meanest intelligence—the speaker's eyes rested on Bolsover—that you couldn't have performed this gallant rescue stunt. In the first place, you didn't budge from Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon. Secondly, you can't skate. And if you saw a fellow take a nose-dive through a hole in the ice, you'd let him get on with it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Not one of us took Billy Bunter seriously, or even half-seriously. Had it been Wharton, or Smyth, or Toddy, who claimed to have rescued the major, it would have been a different matter. But Bunter isn't of the stamp of which heroes are made.

"You can cackle!" said Bunter wrathfully. And he flourished a fat fist in our faces.

"But I tell you it was me who rescued Captain Bloegs on Monday afternoon. And now that he's put this paragraph in the paper, don't see why I should hide my light under a bushel any longer. I'll write to him to-night, and tell him that he owes his life to me—that I fished him out of the—ahem!—icy depths. That's a solid fact!"

"A freezing fact, I could say!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wonder what sort of a reward the old buffer will give me?" Bunter went on. "A cheque for fifty quid, perhaps?"

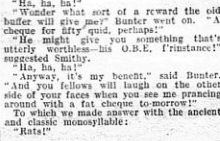
"He might give you something that's utterly worthless—his O.B.E. 'frinstance!" suggested Smyth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyway, it's my benefit," said Bunter. "And you fellows will laugh on the other side of your faces when you see me prancing around with a fat cheque to-morrow!"

To which we made answer with the ancient and classic monosyllable:

"Rats!"



"Yarook!" Billy Bunter yelled and squarred as the thong of the hunting crop descended upon his shoulders.



"Yarook!" Billy Bunter yelled and squarred as the thong of the hunting crop descended upon his shoulders.

II.

BILLY BUNTER only wrote and despatched his letter to Major Moggs, and then he awaited developments.

"They came rather sooner than he expected."

We were punting a footer-ball about in the Close on the following afternoon, when a dapper little man, of erect military bearing, came strutting in at the school gates.

Were civilian togs, but the curl of his moustache and the braced-back shoulders suggested a retired Army officer.

"Major Moggs?"

"We entered the name simultaneously. The major gave us a curt nod.

"Master Bunter here!" he inquired, in a deep, gruff voice.

Bunter was answered at once. Billy Bunter had witnessed the major's arrival from his study window, and he came hurrying out into the Close.

"Lieutenant Nobbs?" he asked breathlessly, halting in front of the victor.

The major frowned.

"I'd have you know, begad, that I'm Major Marmaduke Moggs, O.B.E.! Who are you—?"

Billy Bunter smiled modestly.

"I'm Bunter, you know," he said. "I'm the chap you've come to see, major. I saved you from a gray water—I mean, a watery grave!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A pair of searching eyes scrutinized Billy Bunter from beneath a pair of very bushy eyebrows.

"Before I start fallin' on your neck, an' thankin' you in husky tones for your gallantry, says the major, 'I should like you to establish your claim. If you succeed in doin' so, you shall have a liberal an' adequate reward—in fact, you shall have a reward in any case, begad!"

And then the major's hand seemed to be fumbling with something in his overcoat pocket.

"I'll tell you exactly what happened, sir," said Billy Bunter. "And then you'll be satisfied as to my bona fides."

"Go ahead!" said the major.

"Ahem! It—it was on Sunday afternoon," began Bunter. "I was skating on Friar's Lake, and I saw the major—"

pondering about on the ice. I could see at a glance that you were a novice—that you couldn't skate for tefice and—"

"So I kept my eye on you, knowing that if there was a hole in the ice you'd be sure to find it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The more, by my horror, I saw you suddenly disappear. Whipping off my boots and kicking off my coat—I mean, booting off my kicks—oh, dash it, you know what I mean—I plunged in to my rescue. It was an awful job! I had to burrow about on the bottom of the lake for quite a long time before I found you. But I grabbed hold of you, and hauled you up on to the sound ice. It's holy dole of you to want to reward me, but I'm not an avaricious sort of chap, and, instead of keeping the cheque for fifty quid that you're going to give me, I shall make a donation of it to the Cottage Hospital."

Billy Bunter waited, breathless with expectation, for the major's reply.

The nature of the reply staggered everybody—Bunter most of all!

Major Moggs addressed the fat junior, not with a nod, but with a hunting-crop which he whipped out of his pocket.

Lash, lash, lash!

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter yelled and squarred as the thong of the hunting-crop descended with stinging force upon his back and shoulders.

We were too amazed to interfere. We looked on, with our agape while the major's arm rose and fell.

The castigation was over at last, and the major stepped back, panting with his exertions.

"You are an impostor, sir," he spluttered, "a brazen, barefaced impostor!"

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You've been posin' as a hero, an' swankin' to your schoolfellows about your alleged gallantry, an' you know very well that you performed no rescue at all!"

"But I—I did!" wailed Bunter. "I saved your life, Major Moggs—"

"There is no such person as Major Moggs!"

"Wha—?"

"And no calamity of any sort occurred on Wednesday afternoon!"

"M-m-my hat!"

The gruff, deep tones of the "major" changed suddenly to a boyish treble, as he added:

"I put that paragraph in the paper for a spoof!"

For a moment there was an amazed silence. Then all about, in unison:

"Whibley!"

Sure enough, it was the impersonator of the Remove. He removed his disguise by instalments, and Billy Bunter stood goggling at him as if he were a ghost.

"My only aunt! What a priceless jewel!" gasped Bolsover major.

And everybody agreed—with the exception of the modest hero!

THE END.

PLEASE
tell all your Chums about
this splendid number,
Chappies!
H. Wharton.

A THEEF IN THE NITE!

A Short Complete School Story with a Thrill in Every Line.

By DICKY NUGENT.

(NOTE.—We have made no attempt to correct our contributor's spelling; neither do we propose to offer a prize to the reader who discovers the largest number of errors, technical and otherwise, in the following narrative!—Ed.)

I.

BOOM! Minnie fell over the anemone krippit and kloteters of St. Bill's.

The grate bliding toward in solum mite against the sky. The wind roared round the old turrits and chimney, and the fog of the gull swept many a worbling tom-cat off the terris.

Mingled with these sounds came the booming of the angry brakers as they bounced upon the beach.

Upon the quadrangle of St. Bill's all was silent as death. No sound could be heard save the moaning of the wind (and of the tom-cats a-moanched), and the boom of the thunder as it flashed across the somber sky.

In the 3rd Form dormitory all was peaceful and serene.

Jack Japer and his chums were sleeping the sleep of the just. Their faces were buried in the pillows, and the sound of their snoring shook the bliding to its foundashuns.

Nearly had the last stroke of midnight died away, when Dick Demon, the cad of the 3rd, sat up in bed.

"You felos awake?" he mermcred.

"Their was no response.
"Ha, ha! The roast is klenr!" said Dick Demon, with a villanus larf. "I can now get bizzy."

Slipping into his close, he stipt out of the dormitory and skated down the stairs.

All was dark save for the reflecksun of his brittle red nose.

His hart was pownding against his ribs as he went to his Form-master's study.

Tom plaise was deskered.

"Good!" muttered Dick Demon. "Now, I wonder where old Licker keeps his stamp-elum?"

He paused, liscening intently. But no sound came to his cars save the fierce beeting of his hart.

"Why am I such a covered?" he murred, ashamed of his own weakness. "Their's nothing to fear. Old Licker has gone to bed ous ago. If my becally hart keeps hammering away like this I shall rowse the hole bliding!"

Telling his hart to make a noise kwietly, Dick Demon stole towards the Form-master's desk. It was locked, but a few jentle swipes with the poker soon prized open the lid.

"Ah, hear it is!" he cried.

Their, svre enuff, was Mr. Licker's preshus stamp-elum.

Mr. Licker had been a stamp-collector from berth, and his collecksun was yoneck. Sum of his stamps dated back to the rane of Kween Victorior.

But their was one stamp which was of more value than all the rest put together. It was the Timbuctoo War Stamp, and was said to be worth at least one-and-forence.

This was the stamp that Dick Demon had come to stool!

With feverish fingers, he turned over the pages of Mr. Licker's elbum. Then a cry of rascher burst from his thin lips.

"The Timbuctoo War Stamp!"

Turning a hasty glance over his sholder, and hurling a cautious look round, Dick Demon maid a grabb at the trezzured stamp.

Then, closing the lid of the desk with a jentle slamm, he maid his way silently to his own 1st.

The dark and deddy deed was dunt!

II.

JACK JAPER awoke with a start. He fancied he heard somebody moving about in the blackness of the dormitory.

"Who's that out of bed?" he cried.

Silence!

"Answer me!" roared Jack Japer. "Agane their was silence, save for the thundring of hevvy footmarks."

But Jack Japer was not to be denyed. He groped for his electric-torch, and switched it on.

The cool rays of the torch fell fool upon the startled feebbers of Dick Demon!

"Ah! So it's you, you rotter!" said Jack Japer grimly. "I knew their was somebody out of bed. Where have you bean?"

Dick Demon's eyes flashed with an powerful lile as Jack Japer's electric-torch.

"Go and eat koke!" he growled.

"As kaptin of the 3rd, I insist upon knowing where you're bean!" said Jack.

"Mind your own bizness!"

"If you don't tel me, I'll wake the other fellos, and we'll toss you in a blankitt!" said Jack.

Dick Demon remained silent.

Trick to his word, Jack Japer aroused his chums by throwing boots at their heads.



"I have been robbed!" repeated Mr. Licker. "During the nite my Timbuctoo War Stamp was stolen from my desk!"

"What's up, Jack?" inquired Sammy Stunter, karrassing his injured kranium.

"Dick Demon's up!" was the reply. "And he refuses to say where he's bean."

Their was a rore of indignashun.

"Bump him!"

"Biff him!"

"Burr him!"

Dick Demon terned dethly pall.

"Look hear—" he began. "If I like to take a midnite stroll, what's the odds?"

"About ten to one that you've bean up

OUR WEEKLY LIMERICK.

No. 2.

There was a young lord named Mauleverer,
Who at slacking grew clever and cleverer,
A charming young "sho"
He found tied to a tree,
And the chump was too lary to sever!

to sum shady game or other!" said Jack Japer. "And we want to no what it is!"

"My lips are seced!" replied Dick Demon dramatically.

"Very well. Toss him in a blankitt!" rapped out the kaptin of the 3rd kertyly.

The sean which folloed was a verry paineful one for Dick Demon. Time and agane he was bownced against the seeling, and he felt verry stiff and soar when the ordeel was over.

But his sekret remained locked in his own breast. And his midnite movements were rapped in mistery!

III.

"MY boys, I have been robbed!"

There was a tremmer in Mr. Licker's voice; the inspiration stood out in beads on his brow.

The 3rd-Formers were in the act of washing their nex when Mr. Licker appeared on the sean. The rising-bell had tinkled out its larsh armony long since.

"I have been robbed!" repeated Mr. Licker.

"During the nite my Timbuctoo War Stamp, valed by an expersert filletalist at one-and-forence, was stolen from my desk!"

"Grate Scott!"

"My harr!"

"My only ant!"

Mr. Licker rang his hands in his afflition.

"Can any boy hear throw any lile on the matter?" he demander.

For a moment their was silence.

Then a thortid cry burst from the lips of Jack Japer.

"Sir," he cried, "it was Dick Demon who done it!"

"What?"

"He was absent from the dormitory in the nite, and he refused to say where he'd bean!"

All eyes were fokused upon the tremmin end of the 3rd.

"Demon!" Mr. Licker's voice rang out like a pistol-shot. "Where is my priceless, preshus War Stamp?"

"How should I no?" growled Dick Demon sulkily.

"You visited my study in the nite?"

"I never!"

"You did!"

"I never!"

"I tell you you did!"

"I tell you I never!"

"Look hear—"

"Look hear!"—cried somebody.

With a cry of triumf, Jack Japer maid a grabb at Dick Demon's boot.

"Hear's the stamp, sir!" he cried. "It's stuck on the sool!"

Their was a breathless hush.

Dick Demon gave one loud glance at the sean around him; then he fell across his bed in a state of coma. His kareer at St. Bill's had come to a full-stop!

That verry mourning the station hook rolled away with its verryman burden. Dick Demon had looked his larst upon the old skool!

Of course, not a few fellos thort that Jack Japer had sneaked to Mr. Licker, but then, as he sed, dooty is dooty. A fello, says Jack Japer, cannt go pinching valuable property like a Timbuctoo War Stamp with impewitly.

"Why," says Jack Japer, with frowning brow, "the necks thing he would have done would be to pinch the milk from our tee!"

And as most of the fellos had sweet teeth, their didn't see the fun of letting Dick Demon bean let loos upon the skool.

Thus ended the skool career of a norfil demoa!

THE END.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 674.

OUR AGONY COLUMN.



TEETH skillfully and painlessly extracted by up-to-date methods! No garden-hoes or nibbleks used. Victims receive every consideration. No long-drawn-out torture! No piercing screams! And no "gas" during business hours—except of the laughing variety! Come and get rid of that maddening molar!—I. Tuggitt, Dentist, Friarade.

It is only fitting that Mr. Tuggitt should have addressed his advertisement to the "Agony" column—Ed.)

MY SWEET PET!—Return at once to your sorrowing Alonzo!

(Last any of our readers should jump to the conclusion that Alonzo Todd has fallen in love, we hasten to explain that the "sweet pet" referred to is a small lap-dog, which has wandered away from Greyfriars.—Ed.)

BOB CHERRY.—Pmuhc yllis a era uoy tait ceiton ekal.—Bolsover major.

BIZZNESS PARTNER wanted for flourishing concern. Must be prepared to sink all his kappital in the vecher. No one whose totle funds amount to less than fourpence need apply. Checks should be made payable to W. G. Bunter, and crossed "Tuckshop Branch." Reply —by letter only, and not with cricket-stumps—to W. G. B., Study No. 7.

DICKY NUGENT.—Come back, snivelling imp, to your remorseful fagmaster! We are freely forgiven for burning the toast and for pouring a quart of scalding tea down the back of my neck!—Pat Gwynne.

LATE PASSES faked and forged by expert. Nobody will twig that they are not genuine. Go out of gates whenever you wish by sending a tanner postal-order to F. T. Fish, Study No. 14. (Used stamps not accepted.)

FAMUS POET gives lessons in verseriting at a bob a time. Guaranteed to tern out Shakespeeres and Miltons by the duzzen. No more rejekshun slips! Everything you submit to the "Greyfriars Herald" will be taken. (Internally by the office mastiff!—Ed.)—Apply for perspectus to the Greyfriars Littery Sossiety, h. ecker, proprietor.

A THRILLING LECTURE on "Big-Game Hunting" will be given in the junior Common-room on Wednesday evening at 8 by Mr. Paul Prout, M.A. (Modern Antelope-killer).

(We are of the opinion that the audience will consist solely of the lecturer—Ed.)

WILL the yung gent wot removed a junjer-beer bottle from my lodge 'ave the goodness to rotern the same, or I'll report 'im!—William Gosling.

(All serene, Mr. Pussyfoot!—Ed.)
HAIR permanently removed from face—

(Dry up, Fishy! We don't want any more of these barbarous stunts!—Ed.)
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 674.

MY FOOTBAWL KOLLUM.

By Billy Bunter.

I described in this kollum larst week the merrits and failings of the Remove players, and, in konsekwense, I have received a very ruff handling.

1st of all, Johnny Bull came up to me in the Close, and asked me what I ment by saying that he couldn't play footbawl for toffy.

"It was a plane statement of fact," I replide. "I always speak out strate from the sholder."

"And I always hit out ditto!" said Johnny Bull. Wearuppon he smote me in the chest with such violence that I began to koff like a hoarse.

Then Bob Cherry came on the scen, "Protectk me!" I cride.

"Protectk my grandmuther!" he retawited. "What do you mean by saying that my feet are two bigg, and that I charge aboot like a nellyfan?"

"Ahem! That—that was merely a figger of speech!" I stutered.

"I'll teach you to make personal remarks aboot the sighs of my feet!" rored Bob Cherry.

And he lit me on the noze with such force that my spectackles bounced off!

Then Frank Nugent came up. His eyes were fokused upon me in a ferreo glare.

"You said in yore footbawl kollum that I was N.G.!" he rored.

"That's so," I replide. "I always make it a point to tell the trooth, the hole trooth, and nothing but the trooth!"

"Why am I N.G.?"

"You can't pass, you can't dribbel, and you can't kick," I said. "Excuse my kander!"

"I'll jolly soon show you weather I'm able to kick and dribbel!" said Nugent.

And then he prosceded to toe me akross the Close. I rored and groned in my angst, but he didn't desist until, with a final klump of his foot, he sent me spinning throu the skool gateway.

When I had manniked to krawl away to my studdy, I fownd Hurree Singh waiting for me. He held a big jar of black ink in his hand.

"Now, my esteemed and loodikrus Bunter," he said, "what do you mean by describing me in yore footbawl kollum as a nigger?"

"Well, you can't deny that you're a chookit-coloured coon!" I said.

Hurree Singh lookt grim.

"We'll soon see who's the nigger!" he grouled.

And then he swamped the kontents of the ink-jar all over my divvy!

"Gerooogoh! Gug-gug-gug!" I cride —or wurd to that effect.

"Don't you dare to alludefully refer to me as a nigger agane!" said Hurree Singh.

As I rolled away to the nearest bar-room, I reflected that the life of a footbawl-reporter was not all bier and skivvies.

"Why not resine from yore jobb?" did I hear sumbuddy say?

No jolly fear! A Bunter never throws up the spunj!

I shall have more to say aboot the Remove footbawl team neckast week, so don't forget to order yore copy of the "Greyfriars Herald" a forfinte in advance!

MY DIARY FOR THE WEEK.



By Bolsover Major.

MONDAY.—Rose with the lark—what a lark! Did some Indian-dub swinging to get my biceps in trim. Accidentally struck Skinner on the nose. He protested. I heaved him out of bed, and licked him. During the day I administered over two dozen thick cars to various fags who checked me.

TUESDAY.—Decided to try my hand at weight-lifting. Attempted to hold Billy Bunter over my head for two minutes, but dropped him at the end of five seconds. In falling, he did considerable damage to the floorboards in the Remove dormitory. Clumsy porpoise! Administered a further dose of thick cars, and licked a small fag for smoking. (He was smoking herrings in the fags' Common-room!) N.B.—My biceps are rapidly resembling Joe Beckett's!

WEDNESDAY.—Bob Cherry called me a beasly bullying Bolsby. I returned the compliment. Cherry challenged me to a fight. I accepted. We are to meet in the gym on Saturday. I'm rather doubtful if I can lick him in a fair fight, though. I'd prefer to nelt him with stones. I'm a good hand at stoning "Cherries"! Still, I must get into training, and then we shall see what we shall see—and feel what we shall feel!

THURSDAY.—Went into strict training. Did some skipping in the Close, and my legs got entangled in the ropes. In falling, I clutched at the legs of Quelchey, who happened to be passing, and, like Humpty-Dumpty, he had a bad fall. He was jolly ratty about it, too—fairly breathing fire and slaughter! Told me to write a hundred times, "Skip before you trip." But a hundred lines isn't much. I shall soon skip through 'em! Pulverised six punching-balls this evening.

FRIDAY.—Everybody in the Remove is very excited about to-morrow's scrap. The rumour is going the rounds that Bob Cherry will lick me to a frazzle. But then, Rumour's a lying jade! Cherry's scalp will be reposing on my study mantelpiece to-morrow afternoon!

SATURDAY.—Terrible earthquake took place. Haven't got over the shock of it yet. Stood up to Bob Cherry for three rounds, and then—the earthquake happened! Bob Cherry's scalp remains intact; but my own is covered by about a dozen yards of strapping-plaster! Moral: Never count your "Cherries" before they are picked—I mean, hatched!

The Runaway's Return!

(Continued from page 8.)

known far and near as "the sporting baronet."

Vernon-Smith's heart almost ceased to beat.

To his intense relief, however, Sir Timothy Topham looked at him without any sign of recognition.

This was the first time that the Bounder's disguise had been put to the test, and it withstood the test well. The baronet had not the slightest suspicion that the young fellow in the grey suit had until recently been a member of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

"I've brought a new recruit, sir," said Billy Maxwell. "You've always been keen on new blood, and you prefer youthful players of the dashing order to veterans who can't raise a gallop."

Sir Timothy eyed the Bounder keenly.

"Your name?" he rapped out.

"Newman, sir—Bob Newman."

"Where do you come from?"

"London, sir."

"H'm! London's a mighty big place. What district?"

The Bounder mentioned the district in which his father resided.

"An' you're a footballer—what?"

"I love the game, sir!"

"Of course you do! Is there any young Englishman worthy of the name who doesn't? What I mean is, are you an expert player?"

"If you'll give me a trial with the Spartans, sir, you'll be able to judge for yourself."

The baronet reflected for a moment.

"Very well, Newman," he said, at length. "There's a trial match startin' in half an hour, an' you'll have an opportunity of showin' what you can do."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

Billy Maxwell escorted his chum to the dressing-room, and the Bounder made ready for the fray.

He found that the other players were mostly young fellows scarcely out of their teens, and they were a jolly and good-humoured crowd. They clipped the newcomer rather mercilessly on the colour of his hair; but when they saw him performing on the field they expressed the opinion that "Ginger" Newman was "hot stuff."

The Bounder was right on the top of his form. He was fortunate in having a partner on the wing who swiftly cottoned to his style of play.

There were only a few club officials looking on, but the two teams played spirited football.

Vernon-Smith was well supplied with passes, and he never wasted one of them. His speed was wonderful, and he always came off best in his frequent duels with the opposing backs.

The practice-match ended in a draw of two goals each, and the Bounder had had a hand in both the goals which had been scored for his side.

"A splendid display, by gad!" said Sir Timothy Topham, when Vernon-Smith came off. "You're well worth a place in the team, an', as there happens to be a vacancy at outside-right, you will be able to play on Saturday in the match with Hampstead Warriors."

Billy Maxwell, in his exuberance, clapped the Bounder on the back.

"Bravo, Herbert!" he exclaimed.

Sir Timothy Topham looked up quickly.

"I understood that Newman's christian name was Bob!" he said.

"Ahem! So it is, sir. That is to say, it's Robert Herbert!" stammered Billy Maxwell, realising that he had put his foot in it.

The baronet accepted the explanation—greatly to the relief of the two chums, who returned to Billy's flat in high spirits.

"You've made a ripping start, Bob!" said Billy Maxwell approvingly. "Sir Timothy's taken quite a fancy to you. You'll be carving out a great future for yourself with the London Spartans."

"If I do, the credit will rest with you, Billy!"

"Fiddlesticks, man! By the way, why did you look so startled when you first saw Sir Timothy?"

"He's one of the governors of Greyfriars, and he knows me—at least, he knew me as Vernon-Smith!"

"Great pip!"

"My disguise must be perfect, or he'd have twigged who I was."

Billy Maxwell nodded.

"Even your own father wouldn't know you now," he said.

Vernon-Smith turned aside to purchase an evening paper. Again he scanned the headlines anxiously, but he saw no reference to the calamity on the cliffs. The name of Bob Cherry did not crop up anywhere.

Three days later, however, just before the match between London Spartans and Hampstead Warriors, Vernon-Smith came across the following poster in front of a newsagent's:

"DISAPPEARANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLBOY."

He purchased a paper, and read from a paragraph:

"A young named Herbert Vernon-Smith has disappeared from Greyfriars School, Kent, under peculiar circumstances. It appears that he was confined to the detention-room for some nocturnal escapade, and he made his escape by means of knotted sheets."

"All efforts to find Vernon-Smith have proved unavailing. Detectives, instructed by the father of the missing boy, are still at work, but no developments have yet taken place. It is strongly feared, however, that Vernon-Smith boarded an outgoing vessel as a stowaway. The fact that he proceeded in a coastal direction lends colour to this assumption."

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That was all. There was no reference to Bob Cherry—no mention of any calamity which had followed the Bounder's departure.

Vernon-Smith showed the paragraph to his chum.

"They seem to think I've gone away to sea," he said.

"Good! Nothing could be better!"

"I say, Billy, don't you think I ought to write to my pater, and assure him that I'm safe and well?"

"No; not just yet, at any rate."

"But he may be getting anxious—"

"Rats! He knows you can take care of yourself. And now we must be getting along to the ground. What's more, Bob, it's up to you to play the game of your life this afternoon!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Dazzling Display!

"HERE we are, Bob!"

The taxi which had been chartered by Billy Maxwell came to a halt outside the London Spartans' football-ground.

As he alighted from the vehicle, the Bounder glanced around him with interest.

At the practice-match, a few days before, there had only been a few club officials present. But things were different now.

The turnstiles were clicking merrily, and quite a long queue had lined up for admission.

The ever-increasing interest in football on the part of members of the fair sex, was apparent here. For in the queue were several dozen young ladies.

Vernon-Smith commented on this fact.

"Didn't know girls were so keen on football, Billy," he said.

"My dear fellow, they're keener than a good many men. I believe I'm right in saying that the Spartans have more lady admirers than any other London club. You'll be hearing lots of feminine cries of 'Play up, Ginger!' from the stand!"

"Stop it, Billy!" said the Bounder, laughing.

Many curious glances were turned upon him as he passed through the players' entrance with his chum.

"Who's that copper-nobbed kid?" he heard someone say.

"Dunno," was the reply. "He's not a Spartan anyway. Must be one of the Hampstead Warriors."

"Well, if all the Hampstead men are his size, I wonder they don't call themselves the Hampstead Lilliputians, or the North London Pigmies," said the man who had first spoken.

Billy Maxwell chuckled as he overheard the remark.

"Those merchants seem to think that it's necessary to be a six-footer in order to play good football," he said.

"They'll be disillusioned this afternoon, I'm thinking!"

"You mustn't expect miracles of me, Billy," said the Bounder. "I mightn't be able to do myself justice, in front of such a terrific crowd."

"Rot, dear boy! You're not suffering from stage-fright, surely!"

"I'm afraid so."

"You don't want to take any notice of the spectators," said Billy Maxwell.

"Forget 'em! Of course, if you go on to the field with the idea that you're playing before crowned heads, you're bound to make a hash of things. Shut the crowd right out of your mind, and concentrate on the game."

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THERE IS STILL TIME
TO SECURE A COPY OF

**"THE HOLIDAY
ANNUAL!"**

The finest volume
of stories, tricks,
puzzles & articles
for boys and girls
ever published!

GET A COPY TO-DAY.

"I'll try to," said the Bounder.

But, cool and collected though he usually was, he felt strangely awed now. He had seldom appeared before such a vast "gate" as this.

Sir Timothy Topham was in the players' dressing-room. He nodded affably to Vernon-Smith.

"Feeling fit, Newman?"

"Fit as a fiddle, sir!"

"That's good! If you can only reproduce your form of the other day, the Spartans will have a walk-over."

"I shouldn't go so far as to say that, sir," chimed in the skipper of the Spartans, who was lacing his football-boots. "Hampested Warriors are hot stuff. We've never managed to lick them yet."

"But the tide will turn to-day, and you'll register your first win," said Sir Timothy, who was a pronounced optimist. "Buck up and get changed, Newman! They're kicking off in five minutes."

The Bounder donned the familiar red-and-white colours of the London Spartans, and a few moments later the captain of the home side led his men on to the field.

A roar went up which almost paralysed Vernon-Smith for the moment. It was a deafening volume of sound, and as he looked round at the sea of faces he felt almost dazed.

But the feeling soon passed. He remembered Billy Maxwell's advice—to shut the crowd right out of his mind. And this, with an effort, he succeeded in doing.

Shots at goal were indulged in before the match started, and the Bounder was able to feel his feet, as it were.

Then the Hampested Warriors came out. They did not get such a good reception as the Spartans, but they were undoubtedly a fine side. Vernon-Smith was a dwarf by comparison with their stalwart backs and halves.

The rival captains met in the centre of the field, and shook hands. And the referee stood by with a beaming countenance, as if he was giving them his blessing.

Then the whistle sounded, and the teams lined up.

Once again a babel of voices arose.

"Spartans! Spartans!"

"Play up, Spartans!"

"Show us what you can do, Ginger!"

The crowd took a great interest in the red-headed winger, who was described on the programme as "R. Newman."

They marvelled at his smallness of stature, yet they knew that he must be a good player, or the Spartans would never have included him.

The ball was kicked off, and in the first minute the Bounder was put in possession. He went away with the speed of a hare, and the crowd egged him on with great enthusiasm.

"Go it, Ginger!"

"Take it through!"

"Good old William Rufus!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder was travelling at express speed, and he was about to swing the ball across to the centre when an earthquake seemed to happen. He found himself sprawling on the hard turf, and the burly back who had successfully tackled him, punted the ball up the field.

It had been a perfectly fair charge, but it had lacked nothing of vigour; and Vernon-Smith felt like a limp rag as he picked himself up.

He soon pulled himself together, and the next time he was given an opening he didn't wait for the burly back to bowl him over. He deftly steered the

ball through the fellow's legs, and then dodged round him, and gained possession again. Then he raced on towards goal.

The Spartans' centre-forward clapped his hands quickly.

The Bounder knew the signal, and he promptly passed the ball.

Crash!

The leather whizzed into the net with a velocity which nearly broke the rigging.

"Goal!"

There was a tremendous demonstration from the crowd.

Vernon-Smith had a vision of waving hands and hats, and he didn't need telling that he had made a favourable impression with the crowd.

The centre-forward had actually scored the goal, but it was the Bounder who had made the opening, and the spectators were not slow to appreciate the fact.

Vernon-Smith's cheeks were aglow with satisfaction as he walked back to his place.

He wondered what Harry Wharton & Co. of Grefyriars would have said had they seen him now, and realised his identity. He had been banished from the Remove team. He wasn't good enough for the Grefyriars Removes, but he was good enough for the London Spartans. He laughed aloud at the irony of it.

Play was resumed at a fierce pace.

The exchanges were fast and thrilling, and both goalkeepers were severely tested. Once the Warriors very nearly equalised, but the home goalie brought off a magnificent save, turning the ball round the post when it seemed certain that he would be beaten.

Vernon-Smith's lack of weight was a big handicap to him. Time and again he was swept off his feet without ceremony. But he played on pluckily. He was very relieved, however, when the whistle sounded for half-time.

During the interval he had a few words with Billy Maxwell.

"You're shaping splendidly, Bob!" said that worthy. "Sir Timothy Topham's awfully bucked about you. He says you're worth your weight in banknotes!"

The Bounder laughed breathlessly.

"The pace is jolly warm!" he remarked. "I only hope I shall be able to stick it out in the second half."

"Of course you will! And, what's more, the Spartans are going to win! My hat! It was jolly lucky that I came across you, Herbert."

"Shush!" said the Bounder warningly.

"It's all right," said Billy Maxwell. "Nobody heard me, thank goodness! That's the second time I've nearly given the show away. It's the worst of getting so excited. If I call you anything but Bob again, tread on my pet corn, will you? That'll jolly soon cure me."

The interval was a fairly long one, and the Bounder had ample time to get his second wind. When the time for the resumption came he felt as fit as when he had started.

The second half was a grim and gruelling affair.

No quarter was asked or given by either side. The teams were all-out—the Spartans intent upon victory, the Warriors determined to avert defeat.

Vernon-Smith was often in the picture, and the crowd applauded him wholeheartedly.

"He's only a little 'un, but I've always maintained that a good little 'un is as good as a good big 'un!" he heard one man say.

The Bounder had been standing on the touch-line during the conversation, but he was soon in action again. The ball came across to him, and he took it in his stride, and sped goalwards.

On this occasion the rest of the forwards were far behind, and Vernon-Smith knew that the time was ripe for a solo effort. He cleverly dodged past three opponents in turn, and found himself with only the goalie to beat.

The Bounder steadied himself, and sent in a fast low drive into an unguarded corner of the net.

"Goal!"

"Two up, by Jove!"

"Bravo, Ginger!"

The enthusiasm was immense. Hats and caps went careering in the air, their owners being apparently indifferent as to whether they recovered them or not.

The Spartans now enjoyed a lead of two clear goals, and the game was drawing to a close.

But the pace did not slacken. The Warriors played up with the strength of despair. They swarmed round their opponents' goal, which seemed to bear a charmed life.

Try as they would, the visiting forwards could not get through.

The Spartans' goalie was on the top of his form, and he defended gallantly until the final whistle rang out.

Vernon-Smith came in for a tremendous ovation as he accompanied his fellow-players to the dressing-room.

So deafening, in fact, was the applause, that it almost frightened him. He was unused to such overwhelming demonstrations.

"You won the match, kid!" said the skipper of the Spartans, clapping him on the shoulder. "Strictly speaking, you're not heavy enough for this class of football, but you played up like a Trojan!"

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Billy Maxwell, coming up in time to hear the remark. "You were great, Bob—simply stunning! Old Topham's raving about your performance. Says it's one of the best he's ever seen. You deserve the V.C. almost—an O.B.E., at any rate!"

The Bounder laughed happily.

"This way, Bob! Sir Timothy's beckoning to you from the stand. He wants to congratulate you."

The next moment the sporting baronet had seized Vernon-Smith's hand, and was shaking it like a pump-handle.

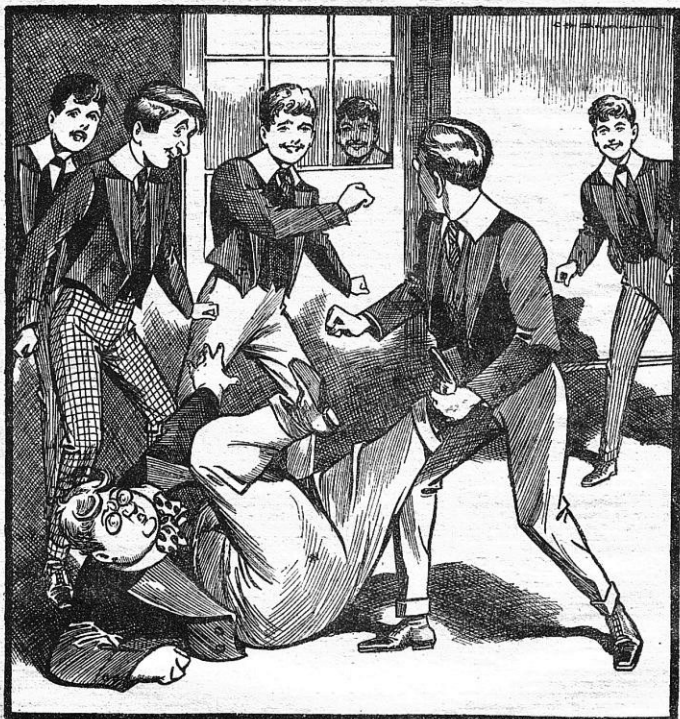
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Bunter found himself on his fat back and being dragged along the corridor by his heels, the new junior taking little notice of his yells of anguish. Harry Wharton & Co., who had just emerged from the Common-room, stared in surprise at the strange spectacle. (See Chapter 7.)

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Progress of "Ginger" Newman!

SIR TIMOTHY TOPHAM was greatly interested in the fellow who went by the name of Bob Newman.

He had only spoken to him once or twice, but he had been greatly impressed by the Bounder's bearing and intelligence.

"You put up a capital show, Newman," he said—"a capital show! 'Pon my word, I've never seen a youngster shine so much as you shone this afternoon!"

"It's kind of you to say so, sir," said the Bounder quietly.

"You're deservin' of all the praise I can give, an' more," said Sir Timothy. "By the way, have you any special engagement for this evening?"

"No, sir."

"Then I should like you to come an' dine with me. Here's my address."

And the baronet handed Vernon-Smith a card, bearing an address at Baron's Court.

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said the Bounder, his cheeks glowing. "What time shall I come?"

"Make it seven-thirty, my boy."

Sir Timothy strolled away, and when he had gone Vernon-Smith felt strangely uneasy.

He wished he had not jumped so readily at the baronet's invitation.

Questions—awkward and searching questions—might be asked concerning his past. And he would be compelled to make false answers.

The Bounder could lie skilfully when the occasion demanded. All the same, he hated doing it.

It was with great trepidation, there-

fore, that he made his way to Sir Timothy Topham's residence later in the evening.

He arrived at the appointed time, and a magnificent flunkey showed him into the drawing-room. Here he was welcomed by Sir Timothy and Lady Topham.

They greeted him cordially, and soon made him feel at home.

After a few commonplaces had been exchanged they adjourned to the dining-room.

To Vernon-Smith's relief, no questions were asked during the meal. The conversation was centred upon the achievements of the London Spartans.

Afterwards, however, Sir Timothy and the Bounder were left together.

"I've been thinkin' a great deal about you, Newman," said the baronet, puffing at his cigar.

"Ye-es, sir?" said the Bounder nervously.

"It seems to me a great pity that a boy of your ability and promise should lack the advantages of a public school education."

"There are thousands of fellows in the same boat, sir," said Vernon-Smith, "so I shouldn't worry about that. After all, a public school education isn't everything. All honour to the fellow who makes good without it."

Sir Timothy nodded.

"Those are my sentiments exactly," he said. "All the same, a public school education is a fine thing—a splendid thing, by gad! What does your father think about it?"

"My father?" stammered the Bounder.

"Yes. Isn't he keen on your going to a public school?"

Vernon-Smith flushed.

"I—I happen to be living apart from my father at the moment, sir," he said.

"Oh! There's been trouble in the family, what?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well. I don't want to pry into your private affairs. But look here, Newman. Since your father doesn't appear to be alive to his responsibilities, I'm going to make you a sportsman. How would you like to go to Greyfriars?"

The Bounder started violently at the mention of his old school. He was afraid that Sir Timothy would notice his confusion. But the baronet regarded his surprise as natural.

"I—I—" stammered Vernon-Smith.

He felt that he was in danger of giving himself away.

What would Sir Topham say if he knew that he was not Ginger Newman at all—that he was playing a part? He would probably be hounded out of the house, and out of the London Spartans' football team. He would be regarded as a base impostor.

"You needn't look so dismayed, Newman," said Sir Timothy, "I am making the suggestion entirely for your benefit, and the whole thing can be easily arranged. You see, I'm a governor of Greyfriars. A word from me, and your admission to the school would follow as a matter of course. I am deeply interested in your welfare, my boy, and nothin' would please me better than to see you at Greyfriars. You'd make your mark there, by gad, you would!"

The Bounder was silent. He was afraid to speak, lest he should commit himself in some way.

"Come, Newman! What do you say?"

"I—I— It's awfully good of you, sir!" stammered Vernon-Smith. "But I'm afraid I can't accept your offer." The baronet frowned a little.

"I am puttin' in your way a splendid opportunity for advancement," he said.

"Yes, I quite realise that, sir. But—but I can't take it."

"Why can't you?"

"I—I'd rather you didn't press me for an explanation, sir."

Sir Timothy looked long and searchingly at the Bounder.

"Very well, Newman," he said at last. "I won't ask you to explain, but I'm very disappointed that you won't close with my offer. I should like to see you at Greyfriars, makin' a name for yourself in class and playin'-field."

Vernon-Smith would have liked it, too. Truth to tell, he felt a feeling akin to home-sickness whenever he thought of Greyfriars.

But he dared not accept the baronet's offer. He could not go back to the school, after the calamity that had befallen Bob Cherry.

The remainder of the evening passed pleasantly enough, and Sir Timothy made no further reference to the subject.

A few days later the Bounder received a shock—a very pleasant shock.

He was standing on the platform of one of the big London railway-stations, ready to accompany the London Spartans to an away match, when he saw a party of schoolboys alight from a train which had just steamed in.

He recognised the Greyfriars colours in a twinkling, and then he saw that the juniors were Harry Wharton & Co.

And Bob Cherry was among them, looking as fit and cheery as ever.

For a moment the Bounder's head seemed to swim.

He could scarcely realise that Bob Cherry was alive and well. How had he managed to escape death? Surely the great miracles had returned!

The Famous Five passed so close to him that he could have touched them. But, of course, they had no suspicion of his identity. The red hair, the tinted complexion, the grey suit, did not suggest the one-time Bounder of Greyfriars.

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath of relief.

He was overjoyed to know that Bob Cherry was still in the land of the living, and that he had suffered no ill-effects from the cliff disaster.

Snatches of the juniors' conversation came to his ears.

He gathered that it was a whole holiday at Greyfriars, and that the Famous Five had received permission to come up to town for the day.

Then he happened to hear Harry Wharton mention his own name—not scornfully or derisively, but sadly, almost affectionately.

"If only we could find Smithy!"

They were not the words of an enemy. They were spoken by one who had the Bounder's welfare at heart.

Frank Nugent brook his head.

"Afraid it's no use, Harry," he said. "We shall never see Smithy again. I believe, like everybody else, that he's gone abroad."

"Still, we'll look out for him," said Bob Cherry. "London's a big place, but there's just a chance—"

Vernon-Smith heard no more of the conversation.

The fragment he had heard interested him immensely.

Evidently his old schoolfellows were anxious to see him again.

Why?

Had anything come to light since he had left Greyfriars? Had it been discovered that he was innocent of selling the match?

Whatever had happened, Harry Wharton & Co. had not spoken of him to a rank outsider—a waster whom they never wished to see again. They still referred to him as "Smithy." They were even going out of their way to search for him.

What did it all mean?

The Bounder had no time to think about the matter just then, for the footballers' train came in, and he boarded it with the rest of the Spartans.

When he was on the football field he banished everything else from his mind, with the result that he gave a sparkling exhibition.

The Spartans were only able to draw, but they would undoubtedly have lost had it not been for Vernon-Smith's brilliant display on the wing.

Billy Maxwell had accompanied the

team, and he found the Bounder very quiet on the return journey.

"Anything wrong, Bob?" he inquired anxiously.

"No. But—"

"You've got something on your mind. What is it?"

"Don't be surprised if I leave London soon," was the reply. "It seems jolly cheerful and grateful of me to clear out, after all you've done for me. But the long and short of it is, I've been offered a chance of going back to Greyfriars."

"Then I wouldn't stand in your way for worlds!" said Billy Maxwell. "But tell me, Bob, how did this come about?"

"I dined with Sir Timothy Topham the other evening, as you know. He seemed awfully interested in me, and he said it was a great pity I couldn't have a public school education."

He offered to send me to Greyfriars, but I had to say no. I couldn't think of going back after—after that Bob Cherry affair. But I happened to see Cherry this afternoon, while we were waiting for our train; and he's alive and well."

"Oh, good!"

"So I think I'll tell Sir Timothy that I've altered my mind. And I'll go back to Greyfriars."

"As Vernon-Smith?"

"Of course not! If I did that, I should be fired out within five minutes of my arrival. No, I mean to go there as Bob Newman. What's more, I mean to make good, and to wipe out the past. No more card-parties, no more little flutters. I've had enough of that sort of thing to last me—well, a lifetime!"

Billy Maxwell looked thoughtful.

"You've got a difficult part to play," he said.

"You think the fellows will suspect who I am?"

"Not from your appearance. You look as different from the old Vernon-Smith as chalk from cheese. But you might easily give yourself away—in conversation, for instance."

"I don't think I shall. Why, even my voice has altered! My tones are quite deep now."

"Rather too deep to be natural," said Billy. "Don't think I'm putting obstacles in your way, old man. I should like to see you go back to Greyfriars as 'Ginger' Newman, and make a name for yourself. But you'll have to go warily. If you make a slip, and your identity leaks out—well, I wouldn't be in your shoes for a pension!"

Vernon-Smith's jaw set squarely.

"I shan't make a slip," he said.

"Then you'll go back?"

"If Sir Timothy Topham will renew his offer."

Billy Maxwell grasped his chum by the hand.

"Good luck!" he said heartily. "I shall be sorry to lose you—your going will leave quite a gap; but, after all, it's for the best. And it'll be a great experience for you, to go back to Greyfriars as a new kid. Jove! If you work the oracle successfully, it'll be one of the most thrilling romances of modern times! Fancy a fellow who's been practically expelled going back as a new boy!"

The two chums continued to discuss the Bounder's plans; and that evening Vernon-Smith called on Sir Timothy Topham, and informed him that he had changed his mind, and that he was quite willing, after all, to go to Greyfriars.

The baronet was delighted.

"I knew your common-sense would prevail, Newman," he said. "Greyfriars will make a man of you, by gad! I'll get into touch with the headmaster

right away, an' I think you can count on goin' practically at once.

"Thanks ever so much, sir!"

"The Spartans will miss you," said Sir Timothy. "You've been a valuable acquisition to the side. But, after all, the game of life is more important than the game of football, and you've got your career to carve out. I wish you well at Greyfriars, my boy. 'Pon my soul, I'm as keen on your welfare as if you were my own son!"

Vernon-Smith seemed to be walking on air as he walked back to Billy Maxwell's flat.

He was going back to Greyfriars! Not as Herbert Vernon-Smith, the outsider, the gay dog, the Bounder, but as Bob Newman, a perfectly straight and sound fellow.

He did not fully realize that he would be living and acting a lie. He had almost come to regard Vernon-Smith as dead, and Bob Newman had sprung up from his ashes. He felt, as well as looked, a new fellow. He had got used to his ginger hair and his tanned complexion.

He reflected, however, that some of the more observant of the Greyfriars fellows might detect something familiar in his features; so he decided to wear glasses. By so doing, he would render his disguise almost impenetrable.

The Bounder sat up far into the night with Billy Maxwell, talking of the future.

All has plans were laid with extreme care; and at the end of the long discussion with the fellow who had befriended him, he was prepared for all eventualities.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing New Boy!

GOSLING, the porter at Greyfriars, stood outside the door of his lodge in the winter dusk.

There was a rumble of wheels, and the station hack lumbered through the school gateway.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," grunted Gosling. "This is a fine time for a noo boy to arrive!"

The hack rumbled to a halt, and a youth in Etons stepped out.

"Sorry, old top!" he said. "Couldn't possibly get here earlier. I've had to go round saying good-bye to my maiden aunts and my aged grandmother."

Gosling eyed the new boy keenly. He was a lithe, athletic-looking fellow, clad in Etons, and even in the dusk his red hair and tanned complexion were visible.

"Young rip!" grumbled the porter. "Which I calls it disgraceful, turnin' up at this 'our! Got any luggage?"

"It's coming along later," said the new boy. "Will you see that it's brought in as soon as it arrives, old pudding-face?"

Gosling gasped. Accustomed though he was to "check" from the fellows already at the school, he didn't expect it from new boys.

"You—you—" he spluttered. "'Ow dare yer? 'Ow dare yer, I say? 'I'll report yer!"

"Report away!" said the new boy cheerfully.

He paid his fare, together with a substantial "tip" for the driver of the hack; then he slipped a half-crown into Gosling's horny palm.

"That's for seeing to my luggage," he said.

Gosling was considerably mollified by this unexpected act of generosity on the part of the newcomer. He even went so far as to call him "sir," and to direct

him to Mr. Quelch's study. Not that that particular new boy needed any directing.

The corridors were deserted. The fellows were either in their studies or in the common-rooms.

Vernon-Smith—for it was he, of course—entered the Form-master's study with a fast-beating heart.

Gosling, the porter, had had no suspicion of his real identity. But then Gosling had only seen him in the dark.

He was now called upon to face Mr. Quelch in the full glare of the electric light, and it would be a big ordeal, for the Remove-master was popularly reputed to have eyes like gimlets.

But the Bounder did not falter. He nerved himself for the interview, and felt confident that he would be able to play his cards successfully.

Mr. Quelch was working at his typewriter as the junior entered. He looked up sharply, and was somewhat startled to see a spectacled youth, with ginger hair, standing meekly before his desk.

"Who—who are you?" he gasped.

"I'm the new boy, sir," came the reply, in deep tones.

"Ah! You are Robert Newman?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you seen Dr. Locke?"

"No, sir, but I was instructed to report to you immediately on my arrival."

"Very well. Take a chair, Newman, and I will examine you as to your capabilities."

The Bounder seated himself as far away from the Form-master as he conveniently could.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I cannot converse with you at that absurd distance!" he said. "Draw your chair up closer, boy."

Vernon-Smith obeyed, and Mr. Quelch's keen eyes seemed to be reading his very soul. He felt decidedly uncomfortable.

"Have you been abroad, Newman?" asked the Remove-master, at length.

"No, sir."

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"Indeed! Judging by your complexion, I should imagine you had," he said.

"I've led an open-air life, sir."

"H'm! Sir Timothy Topham informed Dr. Locke that you excelled at football. But I trust that football is not the be-all and the end-all of your existence. What facilities have you had for studying?"

"I had a tutor, sir," said the Bounder.

He did not add that he was referring to the dim and distant past.

"There seems to be some mystery attaching to you, Newman," said Mr. Quelch.

Vernon-Smith gave a start.

"I—I don't understand you, sir."

"I mean, nothing seems to be known about your parents or your past life. Your history, so far as we know it, dates from the time that you came into contact with Sir Timothy Topham. What happened before then?"

"Excuse me, sir, but I—I'd rather not talk about my past life."

Mr. Quelch looked astonished.

"You speak as if you have something to hide," he said. "I trust you have not disgraced yourself in any way?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Very well. I will not press you for details of your early life, since you appear to be so reticent," said Mr. Quelch.

And Vernon-Smith's relief could be better imagined than described.

The Remove-master then examined him at considerable length in Latin, geography, history, and mathematics.

And the new boy's intimate knowledge of these subjects, and his ready answers, pleased Mr. Quelch immensely.

"Evidently your tutor did his work thoroughly," Newman," he said at length. "I shall recommend you for the Upper Fourth Form."

Vernon-Smith looked dismayed.

"This was not what he wanted at all. He wanted to get back into the Remove, among his former companions. It was in the Remove that he had got into disgrace; and it was in the Remove that he intended to make good.

"You do not seem best pleased, Newman," said Mr. Quelch. "Did you expect to be assigned to the Fifth Form?"

"No, sir. But I'd much prefer to go into the Remove. You see, I'm rather weak on certain subjects that you've not examined me in—French, Prinaunce—and if I go into the Remove I sha'n't feel such a hopeless dunce."

"Do you really mean that, Newman?"

"Yes, sir. I feel that I don't deserve to go into a higher Form than the Remove."

"Very well. You will be allotted to the Remove—my own Form—until the end of the present term."

"Thank you, sir."

"Now, the question of a study arises. We are none too well off in the matter of accommodation. Stay! There is room for you in Study No. 4—the one which Vernon-Smith used to share with Redwing. You will therefore take up your quarters there."

"Very good, sir."

"That is all, Newman. You may go."

Vernon-Smith experienced a feeling of elation as he quitted the Form-master's study.

His disguise had not been probed by Mr. Quelch, who was one of the most discerning individuals at Greyfriars; and it was therefore safe to assume that it would not be penetrated by anyone else.

The Bounder made his way in the direction of the junior common-room.

A plump junior, whose face was adorned by a pair of enormous spectacles, came rolling toward him.

"I say, are you a new kid?"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"What's your name?"

"Bob Newman."

"May I call you 'Carrots'?"

"You'll get a thick ear if you do!" grunted the Bounder.

"Oh, really, you know! Don't get huffy! Look here, my name's Bunter—Billy Bunter."

"Are you the boots?"

"Certainly not!" said the fat junior indignantly. "I belong to the Remove. I'm not captain of the Form, but I'm far and away the most popular fellow in it."

"And the most corpulent. I should think!" grinned the Bounder. "Don't you find all those rolls of fat jolly inconvenient?"

Billy Bunter glared at the new boy through his big spectacles.

"You—you cheeky vater!" he roared.

"I—I'll wipe up the floor with you!"

The fat junior was not a fighting-man, but he anticipated being able to get the better of this slim, red-headed youth.

He had originally intended to ask the new boy for a loan, to be repaid out of his time-honoured postal-order. But that intention was forgotten now.

Clenching his plump fists, Billy Bunter rushed at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith jumped nimbly to one side, and Bunter's fist smote the wall with a grinding impact.

"Yaroooooh!"

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The victim's yell of anguish echoed along the passage. Then, almost before he could realise it, he found himself on his back, while Vernon-Smith proceeded to tow him along by the legs.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow!" gasped the Owl of the Remove, as he whirled along the passage.

The door of the Common-room opened, and a party of juniors came out. They stared in astonishment at the strange spectacle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "A new kid, by Jove!"

"What's the little game, Ginger?" asked Peter Todd, in amazement.

Vernon-Smith looked up.

"This fellow—Grunter or Slautner, or whatever his name is—is wiping up the floor with me!" he explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It appears to be on the other foot bootfully!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

"What's the new kid mean by chucking his weight about, anyway?" demanded Bolsover major. "Hi, you ginger-headed, goggle-eyed gargoyle, what's your name?"

The Bounder released his plump victim, and stared coolly at Bolsover.

"My name's Newman," he said. "And yours?"

"I'm Bolsover major—and I don't stand cheek!"

"Nonsense do I. You'll take back the remarks you made a moment ago, or you'll find yourself in Queer Street, Master Bolshevik!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. Bolsover scowled fiercely. He felt that the laugh was against him, and he was furious.

"You—you—" he spluttered. "I—I'll burst you!"

"You're welcome to try!" said the Bounder. "Better come along to the gym, hadn't we? That's where most of the bursting's done, I believe!"

"Look here, kid," said Harry Wharton, stepping to Vernon-Smith's side.

"You seem to have plenty of pluck, but you'll find Bolsover a different proposition from Bunker. I shouldn't like to see you reduced to a pulp on your first night at Greyfriars."

"I fancy I can look after myself," was the quiet reply. "Whereabouts is the gym?"

"Follow your uncles!" said Bob Cherry. "But you're a silly ass, you know. Bolsover will make shavings of you!"

The Bounder was smiling as he accompanied the others to the gym.

Nobody had the slightest suspicion that he had been to Greyfriars before. He was accepted without question as Bob Newman. His voice, too, had altered, so as not to be recognisable as the voice of Vernon-Smith.

He knew that he would find Bolsover major rather a handful. But he did not falter.

Fellows came flocking up from all sides to see the fun. For the news that "a ginger-headed new kid" was going to fight Bolsover major had spread like wildfire.

"It is to be gloves?" inquired the Bounder.

"Yes, I think we'd better have 'em," said Bolsover. "Otherwise, you won't have a chivvy left!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover donned the gloves without taking the trouble to remove his coat. He anticipated a short fight and a gay one—with the gaiety on his side. One good straight punch, he reflected, and this presumptuous new kid would go down for the count.

Vernon-Smith, however, took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves.

Despite the new boy's slinness, the onlookers saw that he had plenty of muscle. But the fact that he wore spectacles did not suggest that he was a fighting-man.

"You've better take your glasses off, Newman," said Harry Wharton.

"Is it necessary?"

"Of course it's necessary! You don't want to be blinded, do you?"

The Bounder was very reluctant to remove his glasses. He would be running a risk by so doing. Still, he could not fight with them on, so he took them off and handed them to Mark Linley.

Immediately afterwards, the fight began.

Bolsover major rated his opponent lightly. But he soon realised his folly, for the new boy's fist came crashing past his guard, and he recoiled from a powerful blow to the jaw.

Following up, the Bounder hammered at his opponent's ribs, and the bully of the Remove was soon wheezing like a pair of old bellows.

The spectators were amazed.

"The new kid's no duffer with his fists," said Frank Nugent. "Just look at him! He's simply making rings round Bolsover!"

"Ginger-headed fellows are generally good fighters," said Harry Wharton. "And his chap's no exception to the rule."

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

Bolsover major was in full retreat now. The wind had been taken out of his sails, and he realised that he had met his master.

However, he fought gamely, and with a little more agility he might have won. But he was too slow and too cumbersome in his movements, and at the end of five minutes he went down before a smashing straight left from the new boy.

"Going on?" inquired Vernon-Smith pleasantly.

"Ow! No jolly fear! I—I feel as if I've got mixed up with an earthquake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder assisted the fallen bully to rise.

"Will you shake?" he said. "I bear no malice, and I'm sure you feel the same."

Bolsover readily shook hands, and there was a loud murmur of approval from the onlookers.

The new boy had already won their hearts. In spite of his rather peculiar appearance, he was a sportsman.

Mark Linley handed him back his glasses, and he hastily put them on. Then he donned his coat, and walked away with the Famous Five.

"Seen Quelchey yet, Newman?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"And you're coming into the Remove, of course?"

The Bounder nodded.

"Will you come along to the study and have some grub? You must be feeling awfully peckish after your journey."

Thanks awfully!

And the Famous Five piloted the new boy along to Study No. 1.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

As it was in the Beginning!

WHICH study are you going into, Newman?" inquired Bob Cherry, when the juniors were seated round the table.

"No. 4—the one that a fellow called Vernon-Smith used to have.

A wistful expression came over Bob Cherry's face.

"Poor old Smithy!" he murmured.

The Bounder didn't move a single muscle. He looked steadily at Bob.

"Why do you say that?" he asked.

"Because we'd like to see Smithy back. He left Greyfriars under a cloud, and we haven't the foggiest notion of his whereabouts."

Vernon-Smith raised his teacup to his lips with a steady hand.

"Tell me all about it," he said. "I'm jolly interested!"

"It's a fairly long story," said Bob Cherry, "but in a nutshell it's this: When he first came to Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith was a wild sort of fellow. He used to smoke, and gamble, and paint the town red. Then he reformed. It took time, of course, but he eventually became one of the best and straightest fellows in the Form. Well, some little time ago we played an important footie-match against Highcliffe, and Smithy was accused of selling the match. The evidence against him seemed absolutely conclusive, for he played far below form, and what was more, a letter was found in his study—a letter ordering him to let his side down."

"Go on," said the Bounder quietly.

"Well, there was a trial by jury, and Smithy was found guilty. We didn't spare him. We made him run the gauntlet, and we chucked him out of the team. Of course, it made him jolly bitter, and he went back to his old ways. He joined a society of gay dogs in Courtfield, and one night he was bowled out, and given the order of the boot."

"He was sacked?"

"Practically. But he didn't wait till the morning. He bunked from the school that very night. Search-parties were sent out to bring him back, and I happened to see him on the cliffs, and chased him."

The Bounder's heart was beating overtime now. Outwardly, however, he was composed and collected.

"Yes, and what then?" he said.

"I pitched headlong over the edge of a chasm."

"Great Scott!"

"It so happened, though, that there was a fairly wide ledge jutting out about a dozen feet down. I landed on this ledge, and I suppose I became unconscious. Anyway, the next thing I realised was that I was in one of the fisherman's cottages at Pegg. These fellows"—Bob Cherry indicated his chums with a wave of the hand—"had found me and rescued me."

"By Jove! You had a lucky escape!" said the Bounder.

"Jolly lucky!" said Bob Cherry. "It's a wonder I'm alive to tell the tale!"

"And what became of Vernon-Smith?"

"He hasn't been seen from that day to this. And we found out, shortly after he went, that he was innocent of selling the match. The reason why he put up such a poor game was because he'd been scrapping with some Highcliffe bouncers just before the match, and he wasn't fit."

"But what about the letter that was found in his study?"

"It was a trick, to get him into a row. Pensonby of Highcliffe had it put there. He bribed Skinner, one of our fellows, to do it. Of course, we gave both Pon and Skinner a fearful licking."

"Yes, rather! We were simply furious about it," chimed in Johnny Bull. "You see, we'd given poor old Smithy an awfully rough time, and he could

hardly be blamed for going back to his old ways."

Vernon Smith nodded.

"Does the Head know all about this?" he asked.

"Well, he knows that Smithy has been wronged, and that he had plenty of provocation for going back to his old habits."

"If Vernon-Smith were suddenly to turn up at Greyfriars, do you think the Head would be prepared to give him another chance?"

Johnny Bull looked doubtful.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that," he said. "Gambling, and breaking bounds at night is a serious business, and the Head couldn't very well blink at it."

"I think if Smithy promised to play with a straight bat in future, he'd be given another chance," said Harry Wharton. "Still, what's the use of talking about it? Smithy's gone, and we shall never see him again."

"Never's a long day," said the Bouncer. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he were to turn up unexpectedly. Excuse my curiosity, you fellows, but I'm over so interested in this."

The subject was not referred to again, but Vernon-Smith had found out all that he wished to know. It had been proved that he had not sold the match, and his schoolfellows would now be prepared to welcome him with open arms.

But the time was not yet ripe for him to reveal his true identity. He must continue to be "Ginger" Newman until such time as he had won the respect and liking of everybody at Greyfriars. He must work and play like a Trojan; he must win for himself a high place in the Form.

Seldom had any new boy made such a profound sensation as Bob Newman. Right from the outset he proved himself a good scholar, an excellent sportsman, and a renowned fighting man.

Occasionally he made a slip of the tongue, and caused his schoolfellows to wonder. But he made no serious mistake, and his identity remained hidden. On more than one occasion, however, he was told that his style of play on the football field was very similar to that of Vernon Smith. And one day Peter Todd alarmed the Bouncer by remarking that but for the colour of his hair, his tanned complexion, and his rather deep voice, he was identical with Vernon-Smith.

"If your hair were dark, and your complexion paler, you'd pass for Smithy's twin brother," said Peter. "Poor old Smithy! I expect he's at the other end of the globe by now."

And Peter Todd was greatly surprised when Bob Newman hurried away without speaking.

By dint of unflagging energy and perseverance, the Bouncer succeeded in becoming top of his class. He had even overhauled such brilliant scholars as Mark Linley and Dick Penfold.

On the football-field, too, his displays amounted almost to genius. He pulled many a game out of the fire by his own individual efforts; and Harry Wharton & Co. came to like him immensely.

As for Mr. Quelch, he was overjoyed at the success of his new pupil.

To crown all, Bob Newman was straight—straight as a die. He was not a prig or a Puritan; at the same time, he did nothing that savoured of bad form.

So popular did the Bouncer become that many fellows openly said that he would make an ideal Form captain, and that Harry Wharton would have to look to his laurels.

One day the Head sent a message by

Trotter, the page, to the effect that he wished to see Newman of the Remove.

It was with a fast-beating heart that the Bouncer made his way to Dr. Locke's study.

Why had he been summoned? Did the Head suspect that he was sailing under false colours?

He was speedily reassured.

"I sent for you, Newman," the Head began, "to congratulate you upon the splendid progress you have made in the short time you have been at Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch has told me all about it, and I have not been blind to your ability myself. I am proud of you, my boy."

And the Head held out his hand.

The Bouncer looked up into Dr. Locke's kindly face, and as he did so a feeling of shame swept over him.

In his grim determination to make good, he had not fully realised the extent of the deception he was practising. But now—now that he saw he had won the Head's trust and approval—he began to see things in their true perspective.

He was an impostor—he was a living lie.

There was only one course open to him. He must make a clean breast of everything.

"I repeat, I am proud of you, Newman," said the Head.

And then the Bouncer exploded his bombshell.

"My name isn't Newman, sir," he said.

"What?"

The Bouncer hesitated a moment. A great struggle was going on in his mind.

But the struggle was only momentary.

"I am Vernon-Smith!"

The words rang out clearly, and with dramatic emphasis.

Dr. Locke looked utterly flabbergasted.

"Newman!" he gasped. "What ever has impelled you to make such a wild and absurd statement? You—you must be ill!"

"I'm perfectly fit, sir, and perfectly sane," said the Bouncer, taking off his spectacles. "Look at me, sir—look at me!—do you know the colour of my hair? My hair has been dyed, my complexion tanned, and my name changed. But I'm Vernon-Smith!"

The Head blinked at the junior in growing bewilderment.

"I—I don't understand!" he stammered. "What mystery is this? I cannot believe that you are the boy who left Greyfriars under such deplorable circumstances some time ago!"

The Bouncer produced from his pocket the last letter he had received from his father. He laid the document on the desk in front of the Head.

"This will convince you, sir," he said.

"I'm an impostor—a fraud. I deceived Sir Timothy Topham. I deceived you—I've deceived everybody."

Dr. Locke was thunderstruck. The Bouncer's startling information fairly took his breath away.

He glanced at the letter in front of him, and recognised the handwriting and signature of Mr. Vernon-Smith. Then he glanced at the junior who had made such an amazing confession, and for a moment he was incapable of speech.

This gave the Bouncer his chance.

He told the Head the whole story, commencing from the time when he was alleged to have sold the match.

He did not spare himself. He did not try to defend or excuse his line of conduct. In simple, telling language he described all his experiences. He added, however, that since returning to Greyfriars he had tried to atone for the past and to make good.

"But I couldn't keep up the miserable pretence any longer, sir," he concluded.

"I simply had to speak out, when you were so—so jolly decent to me just now. And now I suppose you'll expel me, sir? Well, I deserve it."

For some moments the Head was silent. He seemed to be weighing everything the Bouncer had told him.

At last he looked up.

"Leave me now, Vernon-Smith," he said, and there was no trace of harshness or reproach in his tone. "I must have time to think. At present I am in too bewildered a frame of mind to be able to judge your conduct fairly and impartially. I will send for you later."

The Bouncer went back to his own study.

He felt certain that he would be sacked; yet a great load had slipped from his mind. He was no longer playing a part. He had told the truth without reserve; and whatever happened to him now, he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he had done the right thing—that he had played the man.

He began to pack his things, in readiness for his departure from the school.

Scarcely had he completed his task when Trotter, the page, looked into the study, and announced that the Head wished to see him.

And then Vernon-Smith received the surprise of his life.

The Head forgave him fully and freely.

"I have pondered over all that you have told me, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly. "I have tried to put myself in your place, and to picture what I should have done in like circumstances. You have erred greatly; but you have also made ample atonement. I fully realise what that confession must have cost you. You were prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of truth. Well, you shall not be a loser by your manliness. I have decided that you shall remain at Greyfriars—as Vernon-Smith, of course!" concluded the Head, with a smile.

At that generous summing-up, the Bouncer fairly broke down.

"I—I don't deserve it, sir!" he said humbly. "I don't deserve it! But I'll try to deserve it—I'll try to make myself worthy of this kindness."

"I am sure you will, Vernon-Smith," said the Head.

And his own voice was strangely husky as he clasped the hand of the fellow who had made good.

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars.

The news that "Ginger" Newman was in reality Vernon-Smith caused a sensation as had seldom been known at the old school. And everybody rejoiced to know that the Bouncer had received the Head's pardon, and that he was to stay.

Shortly afterwards, Vernon-Smith was given permission to spend a day in London. And when he came back his hair was no longer a flaming red, and his appearance had undergone quite a transformation. His complexion was still tanned, and he smilingly explained to his schoolfellows that other portions of his anatomy deserved to be tanned as well. But the massage expert had told him that the tan would wear off in a few months.

And thus ended one of the most thrilling adventures that had ever befallen Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

THE END.

(Look out for another grand long complete school tale, *Harry Wharton & Co.*, entitled "Driven from the School!" next week.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 674.

SPORT TOPICS.

An Interesting Article, dealing with every kind of Sport.
Written specially for the "Magnet." By "SPECTATOR."

FOOTBALL.

We are now starting upon the second half of the football season, and even now the championship of the three divisions of the English League is still as open as ever it was this season. Clubs at the very bottom of the tables are yet in the running, although, of course, it is possible to pick out the ones with little or no chance of gaining the honours. It is different, however, with the Scottish League, for in this competition Glasgow Rangers as champions is practically a foregone conclusion; even the redoubtable Celtic cannot hope to catch them now with seven points the lead—it is well-nigh an impossibility!

A word concerning the English Cup, which we are all looking eagerly forward to, and hoping against hope that our favourite will succeed in bagging the coveted trophy, will be of interest. The First Round (proper), which takes place a few days hence, applies to sixty-four exempted, fifty-two of which have been exempted, until this round, whilst the other twelve had to play at least one match in the qualifying competition, which actually commenced on September 11th of last year.

To my way of thinking, it is never really safe to pick out any particular club as the ultimate winners of the Cup until after the Second Round, and even then it is a very difficult problem, for form is

not always to be relied upon.—Perhaps you will all remember that I hinted the "Sparas" as probably the team to receive the trophy on April 23rd, but I admit that I can easily be off the track—they may succumb in the very first round! That they will go all out to win their Cup-tie matches I am sure, and if by chance they prove to be successful, good luck to them—no one will dream of begrudging them the honour then, will they?

By the way, a reader living in Birmingham wrote me a short time back saying that I did not know what I was talking about when mentioning the "Sparas" for the Cup. "Aston Villa will get it," he declared. He may prove right, but I have my doubts. Nevertheless, for all that, I am glad to see this staunch supporter of the Villa standing for them. It shows the right spirit, and shows the what is wanted in the football world.

CRICKET.

Is the M.C.C. tour proving itself a success? This is a question which a reader writes to ask me for my candid opinion upon. As up to the present, the tourists have not figured in a Test Match, it is rather a difficult subject to discuss. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that our representatives suffered defeat at the hands of New South Wales, I still hold that their prospects are very ray indeed.

BOXING.

The fight at the National Sporting Club for the Bantam-weight Championship of Great Britain, between Jim Higgins, of Glasgow, (holder) and Bill Eynon, of Merthyr, proved to be a very excellent affair, and well worth travelling many miles to see. The two boxed each other over the full distance, and this caused many people present to wonder who would gain the referee's decision. Higgins received it, and this was quite a fair result as far as the points were concerned. I must be said that the Welshman was a gallant loser, who would make many a boxer of his weight take notice.

I understand that a return match is being arranged right away, and to judge the victor of this would be a hard task. Both have experience of each other now, and it would not, surprise me in the least to see the verdict given on points again.

(Another of these chatty articles next week.)



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