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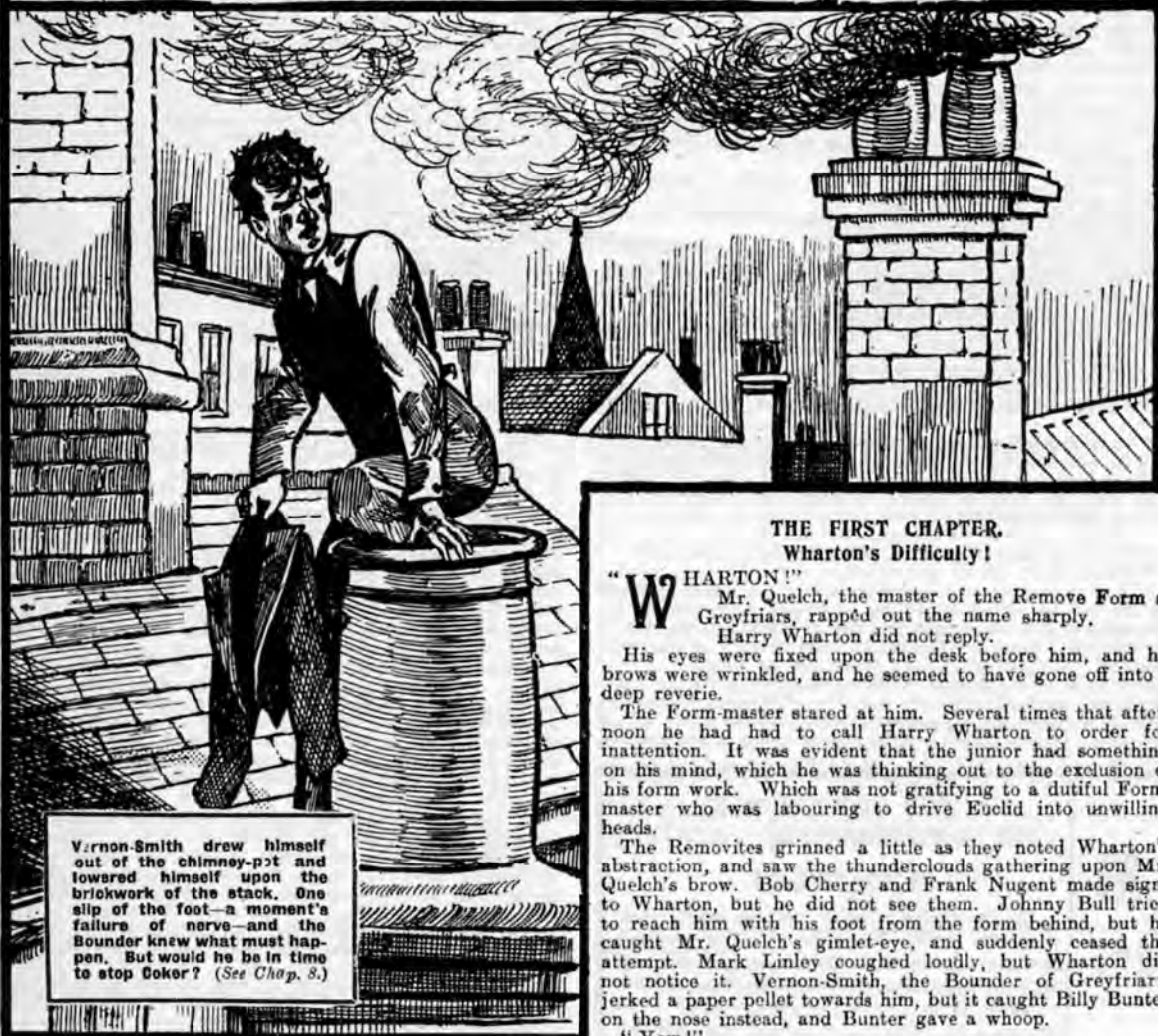
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Game to the Last!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale
dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co.
and Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars.

By Frank Richards.



Vernon-Smith drew himself out of the chimney-pot and lowered himself upon the brickwork of the stack. One slip of the foot—a moment's failure of nerve—and the Bouncer knew what must happen. But would he be in time to stop Coker? (See Chap. 8.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wharton's Difficulty!

"WHARTON!"
Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, rapped out the name sharply.

Harry Wharton did not reply.

His eyes were fixed upon the desk before him, and his brows were wrinkled, and he seemed to have gone off into a deep reverie.

The Form-master stared at him. Several times that afternoon he had had to call Harry Wharton to order for inattention. It was evident that the junior had something on his mind, which he was thinking out to the exclusion of his form work. Which was not gratifying to a dutiful Form-master who was labouring to drive Euclid into unwilling heads.

The Removites grinned a little as they noted Wharton's abstraction, and saw the thunderclouds gathering upon Mr. Quelch's brow. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent made signs to Wharton, but he did not see them. Johnny Bull tried to reach him with his foot from the form behind, but he caught Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye, and suddenly ceased the attempt. Mark Linley coughed loudly, but Wharton did not notice it. Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, jerked a paper pellet towards him, but it caught Billy Bunter on the nose instead, and Bunter gave a whoop.

"Yow!"

"Silence, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"Ow!" said Bunter, rubbing his fat little nose. "Something hit me, sir."

"You take fifty lines, Vernon-Smith."

"Thank you, sir," said the Bouncer, with the cool impertinence that was characteristic of him. It made Mr. Quelch's eyes gleam for a moment, but he took no further notice of the Bouncer. He gave a sharp rap on a desk with his pointer, and called to Harry Wharton again.

"Wharton!"

Wharton started suddenly out of his brown study. He looked up quickly, and coloured as he caught the angry glance of the Form-master fixed sternly upon him.

"Ye-es, sir," he stammered.

"You have not been paying attention to the lesson, Wharton."

"Haven't I, sir? I—I'm sorry."

"I have spoken to you twice, and you did not answer me."

"I'm sorry, sir. I—I must have—have been—thinking—I didn't hear you, sir."

Mr. Quelch assumed his most elaborately sarcastic expression.

"May I venture to inquire, Wharton, into the nature of the extremely interesting matter that claims all your attention this afternoon, and leaves you no time for mere lessons?"

Some of the juniors gave a propitiatory giggle, as in duty bound when their Form-master was ponderously humorous. But Harry Wharton grew redder.

"I—I—I was thinking, sir. I—we—that is—us—I mean to say, we're in rather a fix, sir, and—"

Mr. Quelch's expression relaxed a little. He was a kind-hearted man, although his manners and customs erred a little on the side of severity.

"Indeed, Wharton, if you are in some trouble, that alters the case—but pray tell me what the trouble is. If it is a private matter, you may come to me in my study after lessons, and I may be able to help you."

Wharton's face had been red, but it was scarlet now. Some of the juniors who guessed what he had been thinking about, grinned a little. Mr. Quelch intended to be very kind. He made it a point to be a friend as well as a Form-master to his boys, and he encouraged them to tell him their little troubles.

"If—if you please, sir, it—it isn't exactly a trouble of my own, sir," stammered Wharton. "We—we're all in it. It—it's the football match with St. Jim's to-morrow, sir, and—"

Mr. Quelch's face grew stern and severe again.

"Is it possible, Wharton, that what you are neglecting your lessons for is nothing more important than a game of football?" he exclaimed angrily.

"You see, sir, it's the most important match of the football season—to us, I mean," added Wharton hastily. It occurred to him that there were other matches on that season which, in the eyes of the general public, at least, might seem of more importance than the Remove match with St. Jim's.

"Your football match, Wharton, may be very important to you, but I decline to regard it as being quite so important as your lessons," said Mr. Quelch. "Has it ever occurred to you that you come to school to study, not wholly to play cricket and football?"

"Well, yes, sir. But this match—"

"You will take fifty lines, Wharton."

"Ye-es, sir."

"And if you are careless and inattentive again I shall detain you to-morrow afternoon, and you will remain in the Form-room and write lines instead of playing football."

"Oh, sir," gasped Wharton, in utter dismay at the mere thought.

"Dismiss such matters from your mind while you are in class," said Mr. Quelch severely. "Football has been allowed to interfere too much of late with the work of the Remove. It was once my painful duty to place the football

ground out of bounds for this Form for a whole month. I sincerely trust that such an occasion will not arise again. But I must warn you to be careful."

That warning was quite enough for the Remove.

Harry Wharton fixed his attention upon Euclid as if he loved that extremely disagreeable and troublesome old gentleman of ancient times.

And the rest of the Remove was as good as gold.

For although Mr. Quelch failed to appreciate the full importance of it, the footer match with St. Jim's on the morrow was really an event of the greatest consequence.

It was the hardest match of the season for the Remove. It was a long excursion for the juniors who took part in it. It was an event they had looked forward to from the beginning of the season. They had slogged at practice to get themselves into form for it. The mere possibility of having to scratch that great match made them turn cold.

Mr. Quelch was in great good humour with his class when the lessons ended for that afternoon. Never had the Remove been so good. Even Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer, whose chief delight in class was to worry his Form-master as much as possible, was on his best behaviour.

"Dismiss!" came the welcome word at last, and the Remove trooped out, in great relief, feeling that they were marching out of the danger zone, so to speak.

Harry Wharton lingered behind the others as they left the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch, who was putting away books in his desk, glanced up, noticing that the captain of the Remove had stayed behind.

"What is it, Wharton?" he asked, not unkindly. "Do you wish to speak to me?"

"Yes, sir, if I may!" said Wharton, hesitatingly.

"Certainly, you may."

"I—I hope you—you will give me a chance to explain, sir," stammered Harry. "I—I know the matter doesn't seem so important to you as to us, sir. But—"

"Football again?" asked Mr. Quelch, indulgently.

"Ye-es, sir."

"Well, well; go on."

"We're going over to St. Jim's to-morrow, sir. You know it's a good way from here—in Sussex. It's the biggest match of the season for us—we've been looking forward to it a long time. We want to beat them if we can."

"I am sure I wish you good luck, my boy."

"Only—only, we're in a fix, sir."

"If I can help you—"

"You can, sir," said Wharton eagerly. "It's only you can help us. This is how it is, sir. We play only members of the Remove in the Form team, of course, but the team we meet at St. Jim's is the junior eleven—fellows of the Fourth Form and the Shell as well as the Lower Fourth. Naturally they're a stronger team than we are, and we have to put our very best men in the field to have a chance to win."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Well, sir, Vernon-Smith—"

The Remove master frowned at the name.

"What about Vernon-Smith?" he said, coldly. "You cannot be thinking of playing him, as he is under sentence of detention for all the half-holidays in this term."

"That's what's the matter, sir. Smithy was always a good player, and—but—but he was no good in the team, because he wouldn't toe the line, and he was—was unreliable. But he has turned over a new leaf—he plays up splendidly, and—and we want him, sir. We want him more than any other chap in the team."

"It has always appeared to me, Wharton, that you were on bad terms with Vernon-Smith."

"Well, so I am, sir," said Harry. "We don't pull together. But that's got nothing to do with footer. While he let personal feelings interfere with the game, I never wanted to play him. But as I said, he's dropped all that—he plays up for the Remove like a—a Briton, sir. We rely on him now, and he's our best man. I'd almost as soon stand out myself as leave Smithy out. You should see him come down the wing, sir—"

"I have never had the pleasure of seeing Vernon-Smith come down the wing," said Mr. Quelch drily; "but I have no doubt he is a good player. He seems to be able to do almost anything, when he chooses—although he has the peculiar taste to cause me more trouble in class than the veriest dunce in the form. I am sorry, Wharton, if you are relying on Smith to play for you to-morrow. It is quite impossible. He is under the sentence of detention, and cannot go."

"If you would let him off, sir, just for one afternoon—" hesitated Wharton.

Mr. Quelch lips closed hard.

"Listen to me, Wharton!" he said quietly. "I am sorry

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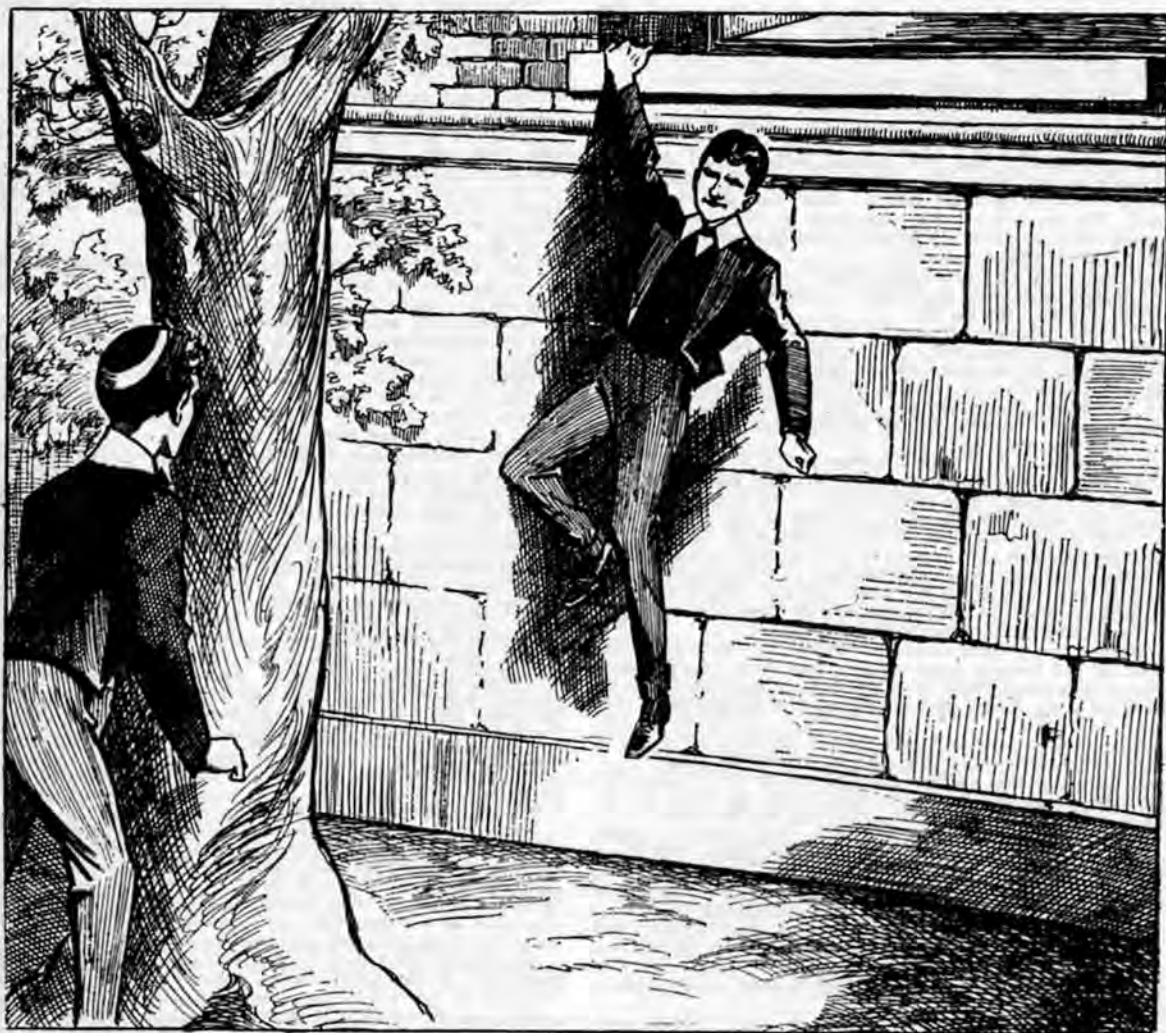
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With a beating heart, but with a head cool as ice, the Bounder dropped from the Form-room window into the Close. (See Chapter 5.)

to cause you and the others disappointment. But it is utterly impossible to release Smith from his punishment. He was guilty of outrageous conduct. He was insolent to the German master, and would have been expelled from the school if Herr Gans had not been generous enough to intercede for him. He was released from detention one afternoon, in order to play in a football match, and instead of so doing, he used his freedom to play another wicked and unfeeling trick upon the German master. How can you possibly ask me to release him again?"

Wharton was silent.

It was a great deal to ask, and he knew it. But he felt that it was the last chance for Greyfriars Remove to win in the match with St. Jim's.

"On that occasion," added Mr. Quelch, "it was pointed out to me, in just the same way, that a football match to which you attached great importance was at stake. But Smith did not, after all, play in it—instead of doing so, he visited Herr Gans' room, and spied into his papers, or attempted to do so. And now you make the same request again. I must say, Wharton, that I am really surprised at you."

"I—I suppose you'd look at it like that, sir," said Harry miserably. "But—but it's our last chance. I don't defend Smithy—he acted like a beast, and we all say so, and he deserved more than he got. I'm not thinking of Smithy—but of ourselves. We've had rotten luck, too—Inky is laid up with a cold—I mean Hurree Singh, sir—and he was one of our best forwards. We can't play him to-morrow. Even

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

with Smithy to help us, we shall have a hard fight for it. We don't want St. Jim's to beat us every time, sir."

"Yes, yes! But if I acceded to your request, Wharton, I think that it is very probable that Smith would fail you—he did on the previous occasion."

"Oh, he won't this time, sir!"

"If any opportunity arose of playing some unfeeling and unmannerly trick upon some innocent and unsuspecting person, I think Smith would forget all about the football-match as he did before. But in any case, Wharton, what you ask is impossible. I did not inflict punishment upon Smith for nothing. You acknowledge yourself that it was deserved. I cannot set aside the discipline of the school for the sake of a football-match—however important to you personally. Pray do not mention the subject again, Wharton."

Mr. Quelch's tone was final. Harry Wharton walked out of the Form-room with a darkly-clouded brow.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

All Up!

VERNON-SMITH was waiting for Wharton in the passage.

He had observed Harry remain behind, and he guessed that it was for. He met him with an anxious look as he came out.

"What luck?"

"None!"

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Vernon-Smith knitted his brows.
"I thought so," he said. "I—I asked him myself this morning, and he was as hard as iron. It's no go!"
"It's pretty rotten!" said Bob Cherry dolorously. "With Inky laid up, too!"

"The rotter!" muttered Vernon-Smith.
Wharton made an impatient gesture.
"He isn't a rotter—he's quite right, so far as that goes. You deserve more than you got, Smithy. You treated Herr Gans infamously, and you treated Skinner like a beast, because he told about you. The wonder to me is that you weren't sacked from the school. And—Quelch knows yes. He let you off one afternoon to play in a footer-match and you didn't play—you played a rotten trick on the German master instead."

"That wouldn't happen this time."
"How's Quelch to know that?" snapped Wharton.
The Bouncer bit his lip.

"I think he might go easy for once," he said.
"He did go easy once, and you didn't play in the match. It's a check to ask him—when a fellow's gated, he never is let off, and we've no right to expect Mr. Quelch to make an exception, simply because we've got a footer-match on. Only—only—I did want to pull off that match at St. Jim's!"
"And you want me?"

"Of course I do!" said Wharton tartly. "Do you think I've been jawing Quelch for the fun of the thing?"
"It's a bit new," said the Bouncer. "It isn't so very long since you wouldn't have me in the team at any price."

"And I wouldn't now, if you played your old tricks!" growled Wharton. "No need to drag all that up again now. I always said you were one of the best at the game, and since you've taken to playing the game fair and square, why, I'd as soon stand out of the team myself as leave you out."

The Bouncer's hard face softened a little.
He had never been much of a sportsman himself—all the time he had been at Greyfriars he had been "up against" Harry Wharton—trying by every trick to oust him from his position in the Form—and more than once he had come very near to success.

Yet Wharton was willing to forget all that, to regard it as if it had never happened, for the sake of the team.

Of late, a better understanding had come to the Bouncer, and the Removites had been very much surprised by his evident desire to be on good terms with his old rival.

He did not pull well with Wharton—they were too utterly unlike for that to be possible. Vernon-Smith, the black sheep of the school—the secret card-player and smoker, was not likely to have much in common with a fellow like Harry Wharton. But on the common ground of football, they were able to meet on cordial terms. And since Vernon-Smith had taken to playing for the side, instead of playing for his own selfish advantage, Wharton had been as keen to get him into the Form team as he had previously been determined to leave him out of it.

"It's rotten!" said the Bouncer at last. "Can't anything be done?"

"Looks not. Quelch won't let you off—we can't really expect him to—I just tried it as a last chance, that's all! And Inky's in the sanatorium. Two of the best men out—and St. Jim's at the top of their form, as I hear."

"It means a licking," said Frank Nugent.

Wharton nodded.

"I'm afraid it does. We'll give them the hardest tussle we can—but I don't see how we're going to keep our end up."

"There's one thing we can do," growled Johnny Bull.

"What's that?"

"We can rag Smithy bald-headed for being such a rotter, and leaving us in a hole like this!"

"Smithy feels it as much as we do," said Mark Linley quietly. "It's no good ragging Smithy. I wish we could get him off somehow."

"But we can't!"

Vernon-Smith set his teeth.

"It's up to me to play for the Remove," he said. "It's no good jawing about whether it's my fault that I'm detained or not. It's too late to mend that, anyway. The question is, how am I to manage to go to St. Jim's with you."

"You can't go without leave."

"If I can't get leave, I shall take it."

Wharton shook his head.

"You can't, Smithy! We couldn't take you in the team without permission."

"Are you afraid of a row afterwards?" said the Bouncer, with one of his old, unpleasant sneers.

Wharton flushed angrily.

"You know I'm not. But—it can't be done! Suppose you dodged out of the school and got to the station with us. Quelch would come after you and fetch you back."

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"I might dodge him."

"That's no good with Quelch. He'd follow you to St. Jim's rather than let you play there, if you went in direct disobedience to his orders. You know him!"

"If he did, he'd get there too late to stop me playing—trains don't run every ten minutes to such a distance."

"But—but you'd be flogged—perhaps sacked!"

"I don't care!"

That was quite in the Bouncer's old style. And it was true, too. When he had made up his mind, the Bouncer was obstinate and utterly reckless of the consequences.

"It won't do!" said Wharton. "Quelch would manage to stop you somehow, and you'd get it in the neck—for nothing."

"I don't see how he could."

"He would! He might telegraph to the Head of St. Jim's—suppose he did that? You'd be sent back—without playing."

Vernon-Smith set his teeth.

"He mightn't think of that. We might intercept the wire if he did. Look here, I'm going to play to-morrow!"

"Can't be done!"

"It can be done, and shall be done. I know I haven't always played the game, but I'm wanted to stand up for the Form this time—and I'm going to do it!"

"Well, that's right enough—I'd give a term's pocket-money to have you along with us. But it's impossible!"

"I'm going to do it! I'm going to St. Jim's to-morrow, and I'm going to play in the match—Quelch or no Quelch! Hang him!"

The Bouncer unconsciously raised his voice as he spoke—and at that moment Mr. Quelch came out of the Form-room. A frozen silence fell upon the juniors.

Even Vernon-Smith, in spite of his nerve, turned a little pale. They all knew that the Remove-master must have overheard the Bouncer's reckless words.

Mr. Quelch's face was like a thundercloud. What the Bouncer had said would have made the best-tempered of masters angry. Mr. Quelch was not the best-tempered of masters. He strode towards the dismayed group of juniors, his gown rustling, his eyes gleaming like cold steel.

"Vernon-Smith!"

The Form-master's voice was like the rumble of distant thunder.

Even the Bouncer faltered at that moment.

The other juniors seemed stricken dumb. Whatever slight chance there might have been of Smithy getting off on the morrow, was certainly gone now. Instead of pardon, he had only further punishment to look for. And he deserved it. No one but the Bouncer would have spoken with such utter disrespect of a master who, severe as he sometimes was, was upon the whole kind and well-liked by the boys.

Mr. Quelch seemed at a loss for further speech for some moments. In the deadly silence, a pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room passage. Coker of the Fifth, coming out of the Fifth Form-room, stopped dead, and stared. It seemed to Coker that there was thunder in the air.

"Vernon-Smith!" Mr. Quelch's voice rapped out at last. "How have you dared to speak of me—of me, your Form-master! Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

The Bouncer was stubbornly silent.

"You," said Mr. Quelch—"you are the boy whom I am asked to pardon, to release from his punishment for a serious fault! You, who speak of me in such a disgraceful manner! I shall take care to-morrow, Vernon-Smith, that you have no opportunity for carrying out your intention. Meanwhile, I shall punish your insolence as it deserves. Follow me."

Without a word, Vernon-Smith followed the Remove-master.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The fat's in the fire now!"

"I should say so!" said Nugent, with an uneasy grin.

"Right in it," growled Wharton. "Smithy ought to be licked for speaking of Quelch like that. I was going to jaw him myself. But—but it's all up now. Wild horses wouldn't drag Quelch into letting him off to-morrow—after that!"

"We shall have to play without him."

"We'll do our best," said Harry.

But it was not with high hopes that the juniors thought of the morrow. To meet the St. Jim's junior team on equal terms, they required to be at their full strength—and, with the exception of Harry Wharton, the Bouncer was easily the best player in the side—and the Bouncer would have to be left out.

ANSWERS

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Bouncer Means Business!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were not looking so cheerful as usual when they met at tea in No. 1 Study. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh—otherwise Inky—the Nabob schoolboy, was shut up in the school sanatorium, with a cold. His chums missed his cheery, dusky face and his unfailing smile and good-humour. And they did not like the idea of leaving him out of the team that was to proceed to St. Jim's. But there was no help for it, and Harry Wharton had to replace him on the left wing.

But more serious than the absence of Inky was the enforced absence of the Bouncer. And what made that more exasperating was, that it was the Bouncer's own fault. If he had played the game, and kept his peculiar proclivities in check, the "gating" would not have been imposed upon him. The Bouncer had himself to thank for his exclusion from the team—and the Remove had him to thank for the defeat in prospect.

For although they meant to put up the fight of their lives, all the Remove fellows felt that they were outclassed by the St. Jim's junior eleven. Football is an uncertain game, and they might succeed in snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. They meant to do all they could. But barring a great stroke of luck, they were going to St. Jim's to look for a licking, and they knew it.

As if Wharton was not already sufficiently worried by his troubles as Remove footer captain, he was called upon to deal with various ambitious youths who were generously willing to fill the Bouncer's place in the team. He had already decided upon Inky's substitute, but the new winger in Smithy's place had not been selected. Wharton had left the place open till the last moment, in the hope that the Bouncer would somehow be able to escape detention on that particular afternoon.

Now the last chance of that was gone, there was nothing for it but to fill the place. There was no lack of candidates. Even Billy Bunter offered his services—and was wildly indignant when he was booted out of the study by the exasperated captain of the Remove. Wharton was in no humour to stand Bunter just then. And Bunter had hardly rolled away, spluttering with indignation, when Fisher T. Fish came in on the same errand. Fisher T. Fish "guessed" that he was exactly the "galoot" that was wanted at that juncture. Apparently he guessed wrong; for when he made his offer, there was a general howl from the juniors in the study.

"Buzz off!"

Fisher T. Fish looked at them in surprise.

"I guess you can't afford to leave out a player like me," he insisted. "I guess I want to show the St. Jim's fellows how we play footer over there."

"Shurrup!"

"You've never seen me take a goal, have you?"

"You'll see me take a goal in a minute," growled Johnny Bull; "and I shall be using you for the ball, and the doorway for the goal-posts."

"Now, be reasonable. It's only fair to the St. Jim's chaps to let 'em see some really good footer. I'll show 'em how we kick over there—"

"I'll show you how we kick over here," said Johnny Bull; and he made a rush at the Yankee junior. Fisher T. Fish whipped out of the study just in time.

"I guess you'll get licked!" he yelled, as he fled. "And I guess I shall smile—some."

Wharton breathed hard.

"I wonder how many more silly asses are coming?" he growled.

"Temple of the Fourth mentioned to me that he wouldn't mind playing for the Remove, for once, if we wanted him," grinned Nugent.

"Oh, blow Temple of the Fourth!"

"Hobson of the Shell said the same thing to me," chuckled Johnny Bull. "I told him we'd remember him when we played St. Jim's at hop-scotch or marbles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good many chaps would like to come," said Wharton.

It's a long excursion, and the St. Jim's fellows treat their visitors well. And all exes are paid by the Remove club. We could have the pick of the Fourth and the Shell if we wanted to. But it's a Remove team—we've always prided ourselves on that. If the Remove can't raise a team to win matches, the Remove can be licked—but we're not asking for any outside help."

"Hear, hear!"

"I've got the list here," said Wharton, conning over a scribbled paper. "Bulstrode in goal—he's been in great form lately in goal, and I think it's his best place, and he agrees. Johnny Bull and Tom Brown backs. Can't be improved on."

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull.

"Halves—Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, Mark Linley. I like THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Linley best in the second line, though he's just as good as a forward."

"All jolly good men," said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Forwards—Smithy, Nugent, myself, Penfold, and Inky. That was how it stood. I've had to scratch out poor old Inky and put in Ogilvy. Ogilvy is a good man, and he's got plenty of pace, and he will fill Inky's place very well. The real trouble is to find a man to take the Bouncer's place. We've come to depend on Smithy now, since he's turned over his blessed new leaf, and it's too rotten for him to leave us in the lurch."

"Must put in one of the reserves," said Nugent.

"Reserves—Tom Dutton, Morgan, and Russell. Morgan is the best of the lot, but he's a back, and it's a forward we need. Tom Dutton is good, but nowhere near the Bouncer's form. And he's so awfully deaf, and never hears a word you yell at him. Still, he's a good man, and he will have to go in."

"Nothing like Smithy, though," said Bob dolefully.

"I've asked Peter Todd to bring Dutton here to tea," said Wharton. "I'll give him the place—he's very keen to play, but on the understanding that if anything should turn up so that the Bouncer can play, he stands out for Smithy."

"Good egg!" said a voice at the door.

It was the Bouncer. He came into the study, looking a little pale. Vernon-Smith was hard as nails, and he could take a licking without making a sound, that would have drawn loud yells from most fellows. Only the paleness, and a slight twist in his face, told of the castigation he had just undergone in Mr. Quelch's study.

The juniors looked at him grimly. Much as they wanted Smithy to play, much as they needed him for the sake of the side, they were intensely exasperated with him. It was his own bad behaviour that had caused all the trouble.

"Got it bad?" asked Nugent.

"Yes."

"Serve you right," growled Johnny Bull.

"Thank you!" said the Bouncer, unmoved. "I'm not asking for sympathy. I looked in to tell you that I should play to-morrow all the same."

"Quelch will take jolly good care that you don't get away from Greyfriars, now," said Harry Wharton.

"I intend to do it all the same. Take Tom Dutton, in case I don't bring it off—but I tell you you can rely on me."

Wharton looked uneasy.

"It would mean a frightful row," he said.

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders.

"That's my business. I shan't ask anybody else to stand the racket for me."

"I know. But it will mean a flogging."

"Let it!"

"It might mean the sack!"

"Let it!" said the Bouncer again.

"It's an important match—it means a lot to us," said Wharton slowly. "But I don't want you to risk getting it in the neck like that, for the sake of the match."

"But it's for me to decide whether I take the risk or not."

"Yes, of course. I'm not dictating to you. If you're at St. Jim's to-morrow afternoon, I'll play you, and be jolly glad to. I'm only pointing out to you that you are risking an awful lot to help us through this scrape."

The Bouncer grinned sardonically.

"Well, it's my first essay as a philanthropist," he remarked. "I'm going to bring it off somehow. I have your word that you'll play me if I turn up?"

"Of course."

"That's good enough. I shall turn up. I can stand what comes afterwards. The Form have relied on me for this match, and I'm not going to fail them. I've got my good points, you know, and that's one of them."

And with a short nod the Bouncer quitted the study.

"Blessed if I half like this," muttered Wharton. "I must say it's plucky enough of Smithy to stick it out like this. But what'll he get afterwards?"

"Well, that's his business," said Johnny Bull. "He left us in the lurch in the first place, and it's up to him to find some way out."

"Well, I suppose it's his own business," said Wharton. "Anyway, I've done my best to make him take a sensible view of it. I don't think I'm called upon to refuse to play him, if he runs the risk of getting there."

"No fear. You must play him if he's there."

Peter Todd entered the study with his study-mate, Tom Dutton, at this point.

"Here he is," he remarked. "You'll have to tell him what you want, Wharton. My lungs aren't equal to it. I'll try the sardines."

"Dutton, old man—" began Wharton.

"Eh!" said Dutton.

NEXT MONDAY—**"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"**

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"We want you to-morrow."
 "Sorry!"
 "What! Do you mean to say you can't come?" shouted Wharton.
 "I haven't any."
 "What!"
 "If you want to borrow, you'd better tackle Lord Maulverer," said Dutton. "I'm sorry, but I'm stony. Not the smallest sum."
 "Oh, crumbs! I said I should want you to-morrow!" roared Wharton.
 "Oh, now you're talking!" said Dutton cheerfully.
 "We want you to come to St. Jim's."
 Dutton's face fell.
 "Oh, I thought you meant for the footer match!"
 "I do!" howled Wharton.
 "Then what did you say you want me to sing hymns for?" demanded Dutton.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Not hymns—St. Jim's!" shrieked Wharton. "We want you to come to St. Jim's with us to-morrow, and play if Smithy can't come."
 "All right. You needn't shout. I'm not deaf," said Dutton. "I don't like people shouting at me as if I were deaf. I have some of those sardines, Toddy."
 "Help yourself," said Todd.
 Dutton looked round.
 "Which shelf?"
 "Here you are!" said Wharton, pushing the dish across to Dutton.
 "Todd said they were on the shelf," said Dutton, puzzled.
 "Oh, never mind Todd! Pile in."
 "No, I don't play the violin," said Dutton in surprise.
 "How quickly you do change the subject, I must say." Wharton wiped his perspiring brow.
 "I've heard that deafness is an affliction," he murmured.
 "It seems to me that we get most of the affliction. Fill him up with sardines and keep him quiet."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker Is Kind!

THE next morning, in the Remove. Form-room, Mr. Quelch glanced very significantly at the Bouncer. He had evidently not forgotten Vernon-Smith's rash declaration of the previous day.

The Bouncer was very quiet.

His thoughts were busy. He had said that he would go to St. Jim's for the football match, and he meant to keep his word. And so well was the Bouncer's determined nature known in the Form that most of the juniors believed that he would succeed in doing it.

But how? Mr. Quelch was certain to take the best possible care that he did not leave the school in the afternoon. How was he to escape the lynx eyes of the Form-master? And even if he did elude Mr. Quelch's vigilance, how was he to play at St. Jim's, for the juniors knew well that the Remove-master would not accept a defeat. He would follow the Bouncer rather than allow him to play in the match in deliberate defiance of all authority.

Vernon-Smith had a difficult problem to solve.

He was thinking it out during morning lessons; but he did not neglect his work, and Mr. Quelch had no reason for finding fault with him.

When the Form was dismissed, Mr. Quelch called to the Bouncer.

"You will return to the Form-room immediately after dinner, Vernon-Smith."

"Very well, sir."

"I have given Gosling orders that you are not to be allowed to leave the precincts of the school before dinner."

The Bouncer bit his lip.

He left the class-room with the other juniors.

"Better chuck it up, Smithy," said Bolsover major consolingly. "You're fairly up against it now. Nothing doing."

"I'm going," said Vernon-Smith.

"But you can't, you know."

"I shall!"

"Blessed if I see how."

The Bouncer was silent and moody at dinner. Most of the eyes in the dining-room were upon him. Vernon-Smith loved the limelight, as a rule; but he was getting more of it now than he wanted.

All the fellows, out of his own Form as well as in it, knew of his intention, and were curious to see what would come of it. Fellows in the Fifth and Sixth—seniors who were, as a rule, far too lofty to notice the existence of juniors—glanced curiously at Vernon-Smith as he sat at the Remove table with lowering brow.

It was, in fact, a contest between Vernon-Smith and his

Form-master, with the whole school looking on to watch the result, and that fact alone made it impossible for Mr. Quelch to risk a defeat. If Vernon-Smith eluded him, he would be bound to pursue the truant and bring him back to punishment, for his own authority's sake.

After dinner, the juniors paused to speak in the hall before the Bouncer went to the Form-room.

"You're starting now, Wharton?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes. The train goes in half an hour."

"Take my things with you."

"But—"

"They're all ready in a bag in my study. My bag won't be noticed among the rest."

"I'll take them, if you like," said Harry. "But you won't be able to get away. Quelch is watching you like a cat."

"He will lock you in the Form-room," said Nugent.

"The Form-room has windows."

"Gosling's been told to look out for you."

"I sha'n't leave by the gate."

"I—I say, it's jolly risky," said Bob Cherry uncasily.

"Better chuck it up, Smithy. It's not good enough, you know."

The Bouncer made no reply to that.

"I'll get your bag, and take it along with the rest," Wharton said. "We'll hope for the best. But, mind, we sha'n't think any the worse of you if you give it up. You've started out to do the impossible, you know."

"We shall see. The train goes at two?"

"Yes, the express from Courtfield. We're walking to Courtfield. The local from Friardale doesn't catch that train, and the next would be too late for us."

"I shall join you at Courtfield station in time for the train."

"I hope you will," said Harry doubtfully. "But—"

He broke off as Mr. Quelch came out of the dining-room.

The Remove-master's eyes rested on the Bouncer.

"Go into the Form-room, Smith."

"Yes, sir."

Vernon-Smith left the juniors and disappeared. Mr. Quelch paused for a moment to speak to the glum-faced Removites.

"I am sorry, Wharton," he said quietly, "but you must see for yourself that it is impossible for me to release Smith this afternoon. I cannot allow one self-willed and obstinate boy to triumph over all order and discipline in the school."

"I suppose not, sir," said Harry; and, indeed, he agreed with Mr. Quelch frankly enough. It was "up" to Mr. Quelch to make his authority respected.

"But I regret it, and I wish you good fortune," said the Form-master.

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Quelch passed on, following Vernon-Smith to the Form-room. Coker of the Fifth came out of the dining-room with Potter and Greene, and stopped Wharton as he was about to go upstairs for his bag.

"Hold on a minute," said Coker.

Coker of the Fifth was looking unusually genial. As a rule, he did not take the trouble to be very genial to juniors, and Wharton smiled a little. He thought he could guess what was coming.

"Buck up, then," he said. "We've got a sharp walk to Courtfield before us to catch the train, Coker."

"It seems that you're a man short in your team," said Coker condescendingly, as if it was extremely munificent of him to be aware at all that there was a Remove team in existence.

"Oh, we've got a substitute!" said Harry.

"I hear that it's the junior eleven you're playing at St. Jim's—not merely a fag team like your own."

"Precisely!"

"Fellows in the Shell play for St. Jim's against you, what?"

"Yes; their skipper, Tom Merry, is in the Shell, and two or three of the others," agreed Harry Wharton.

"Rather a big order for you kids."

"Yes."

"I'll tell you what," said Coker, in a burst of confidence, "I'm going to do you a favour."

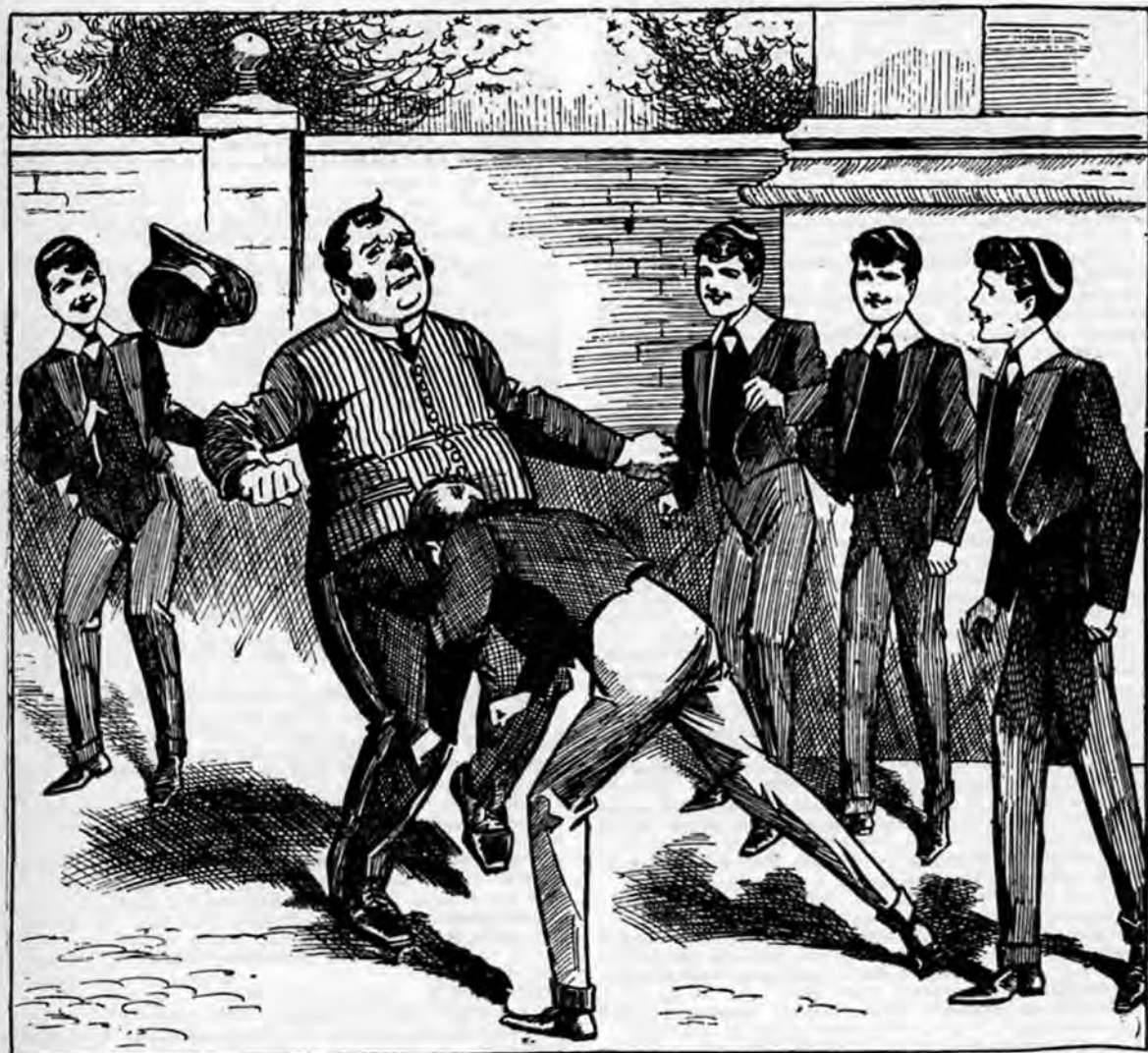
"That's jolly kind of you."

"Well, I mean to be kind," said Coker. "You juniors are cheeky young rascals, but I'm a good-natured chap. I've thought it over, and if there are Shell fellows playing in the match it wouldn't be so very much beneath my dignity to play in your team."

"Oh!"

"So I'll come," said Coker.

"As a spectator?" asked Harry. "Well, that's jolly good of you. Of course, not many of the fellows can afford the fare to St. Jim's, just to see the match. We shall be glad to have a Greyfriars chap there to cheer us."



"Now come, Master Smith," said Gosling, coaxingly. "Wot I says is this 'ere—Yaroooh! Ow! 'Elp!" Gosling had not meant to say that; but Master Smith "came," as he requested—but not in the way that he wanted. (See Chapter 5.)

"Look on!" said Coker. "Cheer you! What do you mean, you impertinent young scoundrel? Of course, I mean I'll play in the team."

"Play what?"
"What! You're going to play football, aren't you?" demanded Coker.

"Yes, we are," said Wharton, with the accent on the "we." "But with us playing footer and you playing the giddy goat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"If it were marbles, Coker," said Bob Cherry, "or if it were kiss-in-the-ring—"

"But it's footer—"
"So we have to decline with thanks!" concluded Wharton. And then he dodged away as Horace Coker rushed at him. And Coker of the Fifth did not do the Remove that great favour of playing for them in the St. Jim's match.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Dash for Liberty!

VERNON-SMITH took his place in the Form-room, sitting down quietly at his desk. Mr. Quelch stepped in at the door and regarded him quietly.

"You will remain here until five o'clock, Vernon-Smith, as usual," he said.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall remain here for a few minutes, until the boys are gone. After that I shall lock you in the Form-room."

"Very well, sir."

The Bounder's tone was low and submissive, and it looked as if he had resigned himself to his fate. But the Remove-master did not trust him. He was busy at his desk for the next ten minutes.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. had taken their bags containing their football things, and gone.

The Bounder, seated at his desk, wrote out Latin verbs with a dispirited look.

Mr. Quelch glanced at him, and quitted the Form-room and locked the door on the outside, taking the key away with him.

The moment the key had turned, a change came over the Bounder.

He rose quickly to his feet.

On tiptoe he approached the Form-room window, which looked out on the green old Close. His submissive manner had been intended to deceive Mr. Quelch, and it had partly succeeded. The Form-master had gone to his study, with the conviction in his mind that the Bounder was safe for the afternoon.

Vernon-Smith quietly opened the window.

Outside, the Close was deserted. There was a crowd of

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

seniors on the football-ground, where the Fifth were about to play the Sixth in a Form match. Dotted about the Close he could see juniors and fags, but there was no one in the immediate neighbourhood of the Form-room.

Vernon-Smith would be seen probably as soon as he climbed from the window; but he did not fear betrayal by any of the younger boys.

A master or a prefect or the school porter would stop him, but so far as the boys were concerned, their sympathy was with him.

Vernon-Smith had asked his chum, Bolsover major, to take his bicycle out and leave it leaning against a certain tree on the Courtfield Road. He had no time to walk to Courtfield, but upon his bicycle he could still catch the train. It would have been impossible for him to wheel the machine out without being seen, but Bolsover major had seen to that for him.

It was a question of getting across the Close and gaining the road undiscovered. Gosling, the porter, would be on the watch at the gates. But Vernon-Smith did not mean to go out by the gates. He intended to climb the school wall, and, once he reached it, he thought he could do it unseen under cover of the old elms.

With a beating heart, but with a head cool as ice, the Bouncer dropped from the Form-room window into the Close.

He skirted along the building for a short distance; and then, taking his courage in both hands, as it were, he started to run for the school wall.

There was an excited buzz from a number of juniors who spotted him.

"There goes Smithy!" muttered Bolsover major.

"Faith, and I wish him luck, intirely!" said Micky Desmond. "Crowd round, you omadhauns, and screen him from the house."

"Good egg!"

Quite a little army of Removites and fags and Fourth-Formers acted upon Micky Desmond's good-natured suggestion.

As it happened, Mr. Quelch was sitting at his study window, and but for that cunning manœuvre he would certainly have sighted the Bouncer crossing the Close.

But the crowd of juniors interposed, and Vernon-Smith's fleeting form was concealed from his view.

Vernon-Smith dashed past the elms and was no longer in danger of being spotted from the windows of the School House.

"Good luck!" said Temple, of the Fourth. "Hop it, Smithy; your bike's outside."

"It's all ready—under the oak," called Bolsover major.

"Thanks!"

"Wot's all this, eh? Master Smith, you ain't allowed to go out!" broke in a crusty voice, as Gosling, the porter, came along. "Wot I says is this 'ere: You go back at once, Master Smith, or I'll 'ave to report yer."

"Oh, tare an' 'ounds!" groaned Micky Desmond. "It's all up intirely!"

Vernon-Smith stopped short, grinding his teeth.

He knew that Mr. Quelch had warned Gosling to be on the look-out for him, in case he should attempt to leave the school. He had hoped to dodge Gosling, but Gosling was evidently not to be easily dodged. The sight of the army of juniors crowding to the wall had aroused his suspicions, and he had come upon the scene at an unlucky moment.

"Go back, Gosling!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "I'll make it a sovereign."

Gosling shook his head.

"Can't be done, Master Smith. Which Mr. Quelch's horders was very strict."

Gosling, as a rule, was not impervious to the influences of bribery and corruption; but even Gosling could not take a bribe to neglect his duty in the presence of half the lower school.

"Five quid!" said the Bouncer desperately.

Gosling hesitated. Money was nothing to the Bouncer, who was the son of a millionaire and had all the pocket-money he cared to ask his father for. But the situation was impossible. If Gosling had taken the five, the whole school would have known it, and sooner or later Mr. Quelch must have heard of it. If Smithy escaped, Gosling knew he would be questioned as to whether he had seen him. Gosling felt a very real regret, but there was only one thing that he could do.

"I'm sorry, Master Smith, but you've got to come back."

"I won't, hang you!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere. Mr. Quelch hordered me to take you in by force, if I found you houtside the 'ouse," said Gosling. "Don't make me use force, Master Smith, please."

Master Smith's eyes were blazing. It was pretty clear The Magnet Library.—No. 297.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday.

that force would have to be used to get him back to the School House.

"Now, come, Master Smith," said Gosling coaxingly.

"Wot I says is this 'ere. Yaroo! Ow! 'Elp! Murder!"

Gosling had not meant to say that. But Master Smith "came," as he requested, but not in the way that he wanted. Master Smith came at a terrific rush, with his head lowered, and the top of his hard head smote Gosling on his waistcoat-buttons with almost the force of a battering-ram.

Gosling, with a gasping yell, went over backwards and fell heavily. Vernon-Smith reeled for a moment from the shock, but only for a moment. The next, he was springing for the school wall; one second more and he was clambering over it madly. Gosling staggered up, puffing and blowing furiously, just in time to see him disappear.

"Ow!" groaned Gosling. "Yow! The young villain! Werry near killed me, he 'ave! Ow! My pore inside! Ow! I'll report 'im!"

Gosling puffed away towards the School House as fast as he could go, to report the heinous conduct of the Bouncer. Outside, in the road, could be heard the clink of a bicycle as the Bouncer dragged it from the tree where it was leaning in readiness.

"He's off!" muttered Bolsover major, in a deep breath. "Good old Smithy! Quelchy will be after him in two ticks. It's touch-and-go now."

In the School House, Gosling had rushed, panting, into Mr. Quelch's study with his news. On the Courtfield Road, Vernon-Smith, leaning over his handlebars, was scorching away for the railway-station as hard as he could go, with barely ten minutes to catch the express.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

At the Last Moment!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here comes the train!"

"Great Scott! And here comes the Bouncer!"

"By Jove!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting on the platform at Courtfield Junction. They had reached the station in easy time for the train. As they stood about, chatting, they speculated upon the Bouncer's chance of getting clear and joining them; but they had no real expectation of seeing him.

But just as the express was signalled there was a hurried step at the entrance to the platform, and Vernon-Smith appeared.

The Bouncer was crimson with exertion, panting for breath, with perspiration running down his face.

It was evident that he had had to exert himself to get to the junction in time. He reeled rather than walked upon the platform.

And from the Remove footballers there came a shout of surprise:

"Smithy!"

"I'm here!" panted Smithy. "The train—"

"Less than a minute. It's signalled now," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, good!"

"Then you got clear?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said the Bouncer coolly.

"But Quelchy—"

"I dare say he's after me. I don't know. But he can't reach here before the train goes. No horse could do it."

"And he's not likely to scorch it on a bike," grinned Bob Cherry. "I can't fancy Quelchy caught bending over the handle-bars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Might borrow the Head's car," said Johnny Bull.

"It would be a close thing, even for the car," said Vernon-Smith. "Quelchy couldn't get it out in time, unless it happened to be ready for the Head. Not much chance of his coming after me in the car."

"Then all's plain sailing until you get back to Greyfriars to-night," said Harry Wharton slowly. "We've got leave to stay late, and miss calling-over, but you haven't; to say nothing of having taken French leave."

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," said the Bouncer carelessly. "I'm not thinking of to-night yet."

"Well, if you want to run the risk—"

"That's settled."

"Quelchy can't very well run you down," said Mark Linley thoughtfully. "There isn't another through express for an hour and a half, and even if he followed you to St. Jim's, the match would be pretty well over by the time he got there."

"It would be just like him to march on the field, before all the St. Jim's fellows, and order Smithy off!" said Johnny Bull.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

Our Companion Papers.

"We may be able to guard against that," said Vernon-Smith. "I'll think it out. Here comes the train!"

Outside the station came the sound of a motor-car.

The juniors started. They thought immediately of Mr. Quelch, and the possibility of his having followed the Bounder in the Head's car. In the trap he could not possibly have done the distance in the time, but the Head's car was easily capable of it if it happened to be ready when Mr. Quelch wanted it.

The Bounder set his teeth hard. Were all his hopes to be dashed to the ground again, just when he was feeling certain of his freedom?

"It's all right," muttered Bob Cherry. "There are a good many cars in Courtfield. This isn't Friardale, you know."

Toot, toot, toot!
They heard the car stop outside the station.
"Some Johnny coming to catch the train," said Nugent hopelessly.

The express was rushing in now. The Bounder's eyes were glinting. Even if it was his Form-master in the car there might yet be time to escape. The express stopped, and the Greyfriars footballers rushed for the carriages.

And as they did so a well-known form in cap and gown came dashing on the platform. Mr. Quelch had not even stopped to throw his gown aside before taking up the pursuit of the runaway junior.

"Vernon-Smith!"
The Bounder had one foot in the carriage. He turned his head.

Mr. Quelch ran across the platform and reached out his hand. The Bounder, setting his teeth, sprang into the carriage; but as he did so the grasp of the Remove-master closed on his shoulder, and he was wrenched back.

"Let me go!" shouted the Bounder.
In his rage he clenched his fists, hardly realising what he was doing.

"Smithy, are you mad?" shouted Wharton, from the carriage. "Don't be a fool!"

Mr. Quelch shifted his grasp to Vernon-Smith's collar, and swung the Bounder away from the train at arm's-length.

The guard slammed the doors.
"You will come with me, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder gave him a look of hatred and deadly fury. But he was helpless. The iron grasp of the Remove-master was upon his collar; and the train was moving. Passengers stared curiously out of the carriage windows at the peculiar scene on the platform. Some of the Remove footballers waved their hands in farewell.

Then the express was gone—vanishing at rushing speed down the line.

In the express the Greyfriars fellows settled down for the journey, and gave up finally the idea of seeing Vernon-Smith again before they got home.

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob Cherry commiseratingly. "He's got lots of pluck, and he'll need it. Quelch will make it warm for him for bolting."

Harry Wharton nodded.
"Yes, it's rotten. I wish he'd got clear. It only needed another minute, too! But perhaps it's better for him. He would have caught it very hot if he'd gone to St. Jim's without leave. Better for him, if not for us. We shall miss him."

"Dutton will have to play now," remarked Peter Todd.
"I say, Dutton, you will be wanted, after all."

"Eh!"
"We shall want you, after all!" shouted Peter.

"Smithy's lagged, and you'll have to play in the match."

"What do you want them for?" asked Dutton.
"Eh! What?"

"I suppose you don't smoke?"
"Smoke!" gasped Peter.

"Yes. What do you want matches for, and why can't you pay for 'em yourself? Matches are cheap enough, I suppose," said Tom Dutton.

"Oh, mercy! Not pay for a match—play in the match!" shrieked Peter. "You'll have to take Smithy's place."

"Yes, I noticed his face," said Dutton, with a nod. "He looked rather down in the mouth, didn't he? I'm rather sorry for Smithy. But I suppose you will want me to play at outside-right now, Wharton, won't you?"

Harry Wharton grinned and nodded. He did not venture to reply verbally. But Tom Dutton understood the nod, and was satisfied.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

VERNON-SMITH stepped into the car.
Mr. Quelch followed him in.
The chauffeur turned back in the direction of Greyfriars. The car buzzed away, and the master and the junior sat silent.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.
NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

Mr. Quelch's face was hard and stern. He was very angry, as was natural under the circumstances. The wilful disobedience of the Bounder was too much to be forgiven. And on the junior's side there was equal anger, and bitterness added. He had been so near to success when the Form-master had caught him. Another minute and he would have been speeding in the express westward, too late for pursuit. Once safe in the rushing express he would have snapped his fingers at the Form-master, careless of later consequences.

But it was not to be.
In grim silence they sat as the car drove back to Greyfriars. A crowd of fellows gathered to watch the runaway brought in.

There were sympathetic looks from all the juniors. They admired the Bounder's pluck and determination, and they felt sorry for him. Breaking bounds and defying orders did not seem so serious an offence in junior eyes as in those of a master, naturally. They had all wished the Bounder good luck—even those who did not like him. Skinner, his old chum, with whom he had quarrelled bitterly of late, gave him a look expressive of sympathy. But the Bounder did not notice the glances that were cast on him. He followed with a grim face at the heels of the Form-master, his eyes on the ground.

Mr. Quelch led the way into his study.
The Bounder followed him in, and the Remove-master closed the door. Then he stood for some moments regarding the sullen junior in silence.

"You have disobeyed my orders, Vernon-Smith," he said at last.

The Bounder was sulkily silent.
"You have directly disobeyed me, and defied my authority. Vernon-Smith, I hardly know how to deal with you. If you had reached St. Jim's, and played in the match there without permission, you would have been flogged in public on your return to Greyfriars."

No answer.
"I do not wish to be unduly severe with you, Smith. You have given me a great deal of trouble, and have been guilty of reckless insolence. But if you tell me that you are sorry, and promise to behave better in future, I shall be prepared to look over what you have done this afternoon."

The Bounder started a little. He had expected at least a severe caning, but he hardened his heart. He could stand canings, but he would not stand being confined in the Form-room while his team was playing footer at St. Jim's.

"Well, what have you to say, Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch.
"Nothing, sir."

"Does that mean that you are not sorry for your bad behaviour?" demanded Mr. Quelch, raising his voice a little.

"I don't feel that I have anything to be sorry for, sir."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips tightly.
"I am afraid, Smith, that you are an incorrigible boy. Nothing seems to have any effect upon your hard nature."

"Will you let me go to St. Jim's, sir?"
"Certainly not!"

"Then I've nothing more to say."
Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"Will you give me your word, Smith, not to attempt to quit the school again this afternoon?"

"I can't, sir."

"You mean that you will make another attempt to break bounds?"

Vernon-Smith did not answer, but his silence was as expressive as words could have been. He had not given up hope yet.

"It is not easy to deal with you, Smith. But since you declare that you are determined to break bounds again, and as I cannot spend the afternoon watching you, I must take necessary precautions. Follow me."

The Bounder followed Mr. Quelch out of the study again. He cast a glance down the passage, and at the open door on the Close beyond, calculating the chances of a bolt. Mr. Quelch's hand fell upon his shoulder, and closed there in a grasp of iron. He had read the junior's thoughts.

"I advise you not to give me any more trouble, Smith," he said acidly. "I shall be at the end of my patience soon."

Sullen silence.

The Remove-master marched Vernon-Smith along the passage and up the stairs to a small room on the third floor. The Bounder's heart sank. It was the punishment-room—a room much used in the old days, but completely disused in these times. It was a small room, with bolts on the outside of the door, and bars of iron across the small window.

Mr. Quelch led the Bounder in.
"You will remain in this room until half-past five."

Vernon-Smith," he said. "I shall take away the key. I leave you to your reflections."

The Form-master quitted the room, locking the door after him.

The Bounder stood gritting his teeth.

A locked and bolted door shut him in. Even if some chum ventured to meddle with the bolts, the lock could not be opened. The window was barred—thick, strong bars of iron, that would have taken hours to file away if he had had a file. But he had not. The furniture in the room consisted of a table and a chair. Vernon-Smith dragged the table to the window, and mounted upon it, and looked out.

The barred window did not command a view of the Close. It looked out on the back buildings—bare brick walls and outhouses—the wood-shed, the bicycle-shed, and part of the stables and coach-house. There was no one in sight, but as the Bounder looked down from the window, he observed Bolsover minor and Paget and Tubbs of the Third come out of the bicycle-shed and wheel their machines away. Gosling the porter came out of the stable-yard a few minutes later, and disappeared round the School House on his way to his lodge.

The Bounder's heart was heavy.

What was the use of keeping up the struggle any longer? The train was gone—he had missed that. Even if he left the school, how was he to get to St. Jim's before the match was played? A car might do it—could, in fact, do it easily—if he could get to one—and the Bounder had plenty of money. In his pocket-book was a roll of banknotes, in his purse a clinking little heap of sovereigns, and he would willingly have spent every penny to carry out his object. Indeed, he would not have been displeased to have occasion to "splash" his money about in order to get to St. Jim's. He enjoyed making his Form-fellows stare and wonder. But how was he to escape from the punishment-room, and how was he to get a car? Cars could be hired at Courtfield—the millionaire's son was well known at the garage there—but how was he to get to Courtfield?

It was characteristic of the Bounder that, though all hope seemed to be gone, he did not abandon his project for one moment.

"While there is life, there is hope," and he stuck grimly to his programme.

He tried the bars at the window with his hands, but they resisted his efforts. It was impossible to move them, old and rusty as they were. He stepped down from the table, put his head into the grate, and scanned the chimney.

It was a large, old-fashioned chimney, thick with dust and ancient soot. Far above he could see a round circle of blue.

The room being so high up in the house, he would not have far to climb—if there was room.

He knew that in the old days, when that part of the school was built, the chimneys had been cleaned by means of boys ascending into them, and that they were accordingly built with sufficient space for the purpose. Doubtless that very chimney had often been scaled by little chimney-sweeps in days long past, before the Bounder of Greyfriars was born. There were few fellows who would not have shrunk from such a climb to emerge upon a dangerous, slanting roof a hundred feet from the ground. But whatever the Bounder lacked, he was never likely to lack nerve.

The escape by means of the chimney, to capture a bicycle from the shed, to scorch away once more to Courtfield and hire a motor-car, and dash off for Sussex—that was the wild scheme that worked in the brain of the Bounder.

It was neck or nothing.

A figure smothered with soot, scorching across the Close, would draw the eyes of all Greyfriars upon him. He would be seen, followed, chased. They would run him down long before he could get into a hired car at Courtfield.

But it was the only chance.

He stepped to the window again and looked out. The coast was clear. The seniors were all busy on the football-field, and most of the juniors were on the playing-fields or out of gates. And if any of them happened to come round to the bike-shed and see him, they would not betray him. He would chance it.

Vernon-Smith was about to step down from the window, when he paused. Coker of the Fifth had come in sight, wheeling his motor-bike out of the shed. Coker of the Fifth was the proud possessor of a "stink-bike," upon which, on half-holidays, he sometimes covered unheard-of distances. It was a present to Coker from his rich aunt, who doted on her Horace, and thought nothing too good or too expensive for him—an opinion in which Horace Coker heartily concurred.

Coker leaned his bike up against a post, and bent down before it, apparently going through some mysterious incantations to a heathen god.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

And the Bounder's eyes blazed with a new light.

Coker's stink-bike!

He knew that Coker was always a long time getting his bike ready for a run. He might have time to reach the ground, and then—

He hardly waited to shape the thought into words. He sprang to the chimney, thrust himself into it with his jacket bound over his head, and began to climb.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Robbery With Violence!

BLACK with soot and dust, choking for breath, the Bounder clambered up. To his joy, he found in the chimney a series of iron clamps in the wall, which in long years past had been used by the little chimney-sweeps who climbed up to do their sooty labour. They had not been used, perhaps, for fifty or sixty years, but they were still there—covered with soot, dirt, dust, rotting with rust, but strong still to bear the weight of a climber. Even without them, the Bounder would have forced his way up, by jamming hands and feet against the inequalities of the brickwork. But with the series of irons, his climb was easier and faster.

Choking clouds of dust and ancient soot rose and whirled about him, and he gasped and panted under the jacket he had tied over his face. He was hot, perspiring, crimson with exertion under the black coating of soot. But he climbed furiously on, and at last his head rose into the clear open air above the top of the ancient, broad, red chimney-pot.

From two or three of the chimneys on the stack to which it belonged, smoke was rising. That was enough to conceal the Bounder if anybody had been looking up from below. But no one was likely to be watching the chimney-stacks. Even Mr. Quelch, alert as he was, was not likely to suspect that desperate device of the Bounder.

The Bounder remained a few moments with his elbows on the rim, breathing in deep draughts of the pure air. It seemed as if he could not get enough of it into his lungs. Soot and dust seemed to have penetrated to his very bones. In spite of the jacket he had put over his face, and which he now pulled off, he knew that he was as black as a sweep. Soot and dust were clammy in every pore of his perspiring skin.

Gug-gug-gug!

From far below he heard the gug-gugging of Coker's stink-bike. Coker was evidently getting it into going order.

The Bounder knew that Coker would not mount it within the walls of Greyfriars. That was not allowed. He had to wheel it out into the road first. Having ascertained that the stink-bike was a going concern, so to speak, Coker would wheel it away into the road, and start it there.

The Bounder, as he thought of it, quickly decided to let Coker wheel it out. He would tackle Coker in the road, instead of within the precincts of the school. If he was only in time—

He drew himself out of the chimney-pot, and lowered himself upon the brickwork of the stack. Below the chimney-stack was a ridge of the red roof, and there was a slant on both sides, and at the edge of the slant a sheer drop of a hundred feet or more. One slip of the foot, a moment's failure of nerve, and the Bounder knew what must happen.

A rush through the air, a whirling over and over in mid-space, a frightful crash upon the ground—and instant death!

That was what he was risking.

His position would have made many a strong head swim. But the cool, iron-nerved Bounder did not even seem conscious of danger. He lowered himself from the chimney-stack to the ridge, and worked his way along it to the end of the building, astride. There was another leaded slant before him now, leading to a flat lead, in which was the trapdoor giving admission to the house—always kept unfastened in case of fire. The Bounder had to slide down the slant now to the flat; and he slid without hesitation, and rolled on the level, and reached the trapdoor.

He raised the trap.

Below was a passage, with stairs at the end—narrow garret stairs. The Bounder dropped inside, and there he paused for a moment to take breath, and to shake from him a cloud of dust and soot. He had no time for more than that; every moment was precious now.

He hurried down the garret stairs, and reached the dormitory passage. The house was deserted on the half-holiday. He had little fear of being seen, unless he went further downstairs. And that he did not intend to do.

Leaving a track of soot behind him, the Bounder scudded along the passage to the box-room. From the box-room window it was possible to reach the roof of an outhouse, and

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.



The Greyfriars footballers rushed for the carriages, and as they did so a well-known form in cap and gown came dashing on the platform. It was Mr. Quelch! "Stop, Vernon-Smith! Stop, Vernon-Smith!" he cried. (See Chapter 6.)

thence drop to the ground. The Bounder had used that way for breaking bounds more times than he could remember.

He entered the box-room, and closed the door behind him. To open the window, and jump to the outhouse roof below, was the work of a few seconds. Then he dropped to the ground.

He was at the back of the School House, and in danger now of being observed from a dozen windows. Skinner of the Remove was in the doorway of the bike-shed, and he caught sight of the Bounder, and jumped almost clear of the ground.

"Why—what—" he gasped.

"Shush!"

"My only hat! Smithy!"

"Keep it dark!" said the Bounder hurriedly. "Where's Coker? Has he started?"

"Coker!" stuttered the amazed Skinner.

"Yes. Where is he?"

"He was just wheeling his stink-bike across the Close."

"How long ago?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

"Less than a minute."

"Good egg!"

Without waiting for further words, the Bounder dashed away, leaving Skinner staring after him like a fellow in a dream. Vernon-Smith did not make for the Close. He ran for the tradesmen's entrance at the side of the grounds, and ran out there into the little lane that skirted the walls of Greyfriars. His intention was to cut round the school, and thus reach the road—a much safer way than scudding across the Close, though it took more time.

He dashed out of the side-gate, and down the lane, and came out into the high-road panting.

Gug-gug-gug!

Coker's stink-bike again!

Coker of the Fifth was running it along now, evidently preparatory to jumping into the saddle. The Bounder was just in time. He dashed out into the road, right in the path of the motor-bike.

Coker very nearly ran into him with it, but he stopped just in time, and uttered an indignant roar.

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"Gerrou of the way, you black sweep! Do you want to be made into a hospital case?"

"Coker!"

"Eh?" Coker nearly fell over in astonishment. "What—is that Smithy? I thought you were a sweep! You cheeky young rascal, have you broken bounds again?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've got no time to take you back," said Coker.

"Gerrou of the way!"

"Lend me your bike."

"What!"

"You can have mine," said the Bounder hurriedly. "My stink-bike is as good as yours, but I haven't time to get it out."

"I should say not!" grinned Coker. "Don't be cheeky, young shaver! It's really my duty as a senior to take you by the scruff of the neck and run you in; but I haven't time. Clear off!"

"I want that bike."

"Oh, buzz away!"

"Will you lend me your bike, Coker, old man?"

"Don't 'Coker, old man' me!" growled the Fifth-Former.

"Do you expect a senior to help you to break bounds? I'd run you in if I had time! And, look here, you'd better clear—there comes Walker."

Walker of the Sixth, a prefect, had just stepped out of the school gateway. He stopped to stare at Coker and the sweep—taking Vernon-Smith for a chimney-sweep at the first casual glance.

Vernon-Smith was desperate.

Walker the prefect would certainly collar him the instant he knew who he was; and the Bounder already, in his mind's eye, pictured himself being marched back into the school with the Sixth-Former's grip on his collar, and delivered over to the tender mercies of Mr. Quelch.

There was not a second to waste, and the Bounder was prepared for desperate measures.

"Cut off!" said Coker.

Vernon-Smith stepped aside.

Coker grinned, and ran the motor-bike on again, preparing to mount. The Bounder sprang behind him, and, with a sudden grasp, tore Coker away from the bike, overbalanced him, and sent him rolling into the road. Then he caught the reeling bike before it could fall, and ran it on. It was done in a second.

Coker sat up dazedly in the dusty road, and roared.

"Oh! Groo! Why—what—let that bike alone, you young burlgar! My hat!"

Coker leaped wildly to his feet and rushed after Vernon-Smith. But the Bounder was leaping into the saddle now.

Gug-gug-gug—pop!

Coker put on a desperate spurt.

But the fastest runner at Greyfriars could not have overtaken a motor-bike when it was fairly started.

The Bounder half turned his head, with a yell of defiance and triumph, and rushed away on the gug-gug-gugging stink-bike.

Coker halted in the road, dusty, crimson, breathless, and furious, and shook two big fists after the flying junior.

"You young villain! Stop! Gimme my bike! Yah! Come back, you young scoundrel! Yah! I'll squash you! I'll slaughter you! Oh, my only Aunt Jemima! He's gone!"

Gug-gug-gug-gug died away faintly in the distance.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Coker. "Oh, my hat! I'll scalp him! I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Walker of the Sixth. "Have you let that sweep burgle your bike, Coker?"

Coker snorted.

"Sweep be blowed! It's Vernon-Smith of the Remove!"

"What!" yelled Walker.

"Must have got out of the chimney, by the look of him!" said Coker. "And he's collared my motor-bike—my bike! I'll skin him—I'll pulverise him! I'll strew him round the Close in little bits when he comes back!"

But Walker did not wait to hear what Coker would do to Vernon-Smith when he came back. He hurried indoors to acquaint Mr. Quelch with the fact that the Bounder was once more out of bounds. And in the meantime Vernon-Smith was speeding away for St. Jim's as fast as Horace Coker's stink-bike would carry him.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Neck or Nothing!

GUG-GUG-GUG!

Vernon-Smith knew how to handle a motor-bike, and how to get the last ounce of speed out of it.

He flew along the long road at a speed that would have made Coker dizzy. He knew he was exceeding the speed limit—by how much he did not know, and did not care. He had to risk that. It was no time to think of speed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 237.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

limits. If a policeman tried to stop him—as certainly one would if one spotted him—the Bounder did not intend to stop if he could help it. He was utterly reckless now.

He knew that the stink-bike, fast as it was, could not carry him to St. Jim's in time for the match; but he hoped that it would enable him to reach a certain point, where he could catch an express for Wayland Junction, in Sussex—an express he had travelled in on a previous occasion, and knew all about. He had forty-five miles to cover to reach a station where he knew the Southampton express stopped for one minute. If he could catch it, it would drop him at Wayland a considerable time later than Harry Wharton & Co.'s arrival there, but in time for the footer match at St. Jim's.

Gug-gug-gug!

The white road flew under the tyres.

Fast as he went, the Bounder's mind was busy. He was keeping eyes and ears keenly open, but all the time his brain was working busily.

What would Mr. Quelch do?

Follow him to St. Jim's by the next express from Courtfield? If he did, the match at St. Jim's would be nearly over when he arrived.

Wire to the Head of St. Jim's to send him back?

That was more probable.

But it might be possible to intercept a telegram. And the Bounder was prepared for any measure, however desperate.

That Mr. Quelch would allow him to play in the match after what had happened was impossible—if Mr. Quelch could prevent it by any means whatever. But could he prevent it? That was the question.

Gug-gug-gug!

Fields and meadows and trees, villages and hamlets, flew by him. People stopped and turned to stare after the motorcyclist. Drivers and pedestrians yelled furiously at him as he swept by like a rocket.

He did not reply—he hardly heard them. The fierce exhilaration of wild speed was in his very veins; he was risking his life at every revolution of the wheels, and he knew it—and he did not care.

A man in a hedge waved a flag, a policeman leaped into the road from the cover of a clump of trees, and raised a majestic hand. He had just time to leap aside again as the Bounder rushed on. For the desperate rider had not slackened a whit, and the policeman was quite pale as he looked after the thundering stink-bike, which vanished so fast that he could not even take the number.

"Dangerous lunatic!" gasped the policeman.

Gug-gug-gug!

Round corners with a quarter of an inch to spare, whisking past market-carts so close that he grazed them—causing horses to rear and snort, and drivers to swear luridly, the Bounder rushed on.

Through sleepy villages, which he woke up on the spot, he tore on desperately.

He was not clad for that speed, and the wind cut at him like a knife, but he hardly noticed it.

Would he catch the express?

That was the only thought that troubled him now, and he believed that he would catch it. The ground raced under his wheels, the countryside sped past him like a cinematograph.

Gug-gug-gug-gug!

Mile after mile—mile upon mile, and upon mile! Faster and faster! There was a town ahead of him now—roofs and smoke—streets thicker with vehicles and pedestrians. And here at last the Bounder had to slacken.

He whirled past a church, and spotted the clock in the tower as he passed. It was twenty minutes to three.

Five minutes more for the express!

He knew that he could do it now, and he slackened down in the streets of the town, though still going at the full limit of safety.

The station at last.

He gugggugged to a halt, and jumped off the stink-bike.

He caught the shoulder of a porter lounging outside the station. The man stared at him in astonishment.

"The Southampton express?" gasped the Bounder.

"Not in yet."

"How many minutes?"

"Two!"

"Good egg! Shove this bike into the baggage-room—here, take this—look after it for me—must catch the express—case of life or death!"

The Bounder slipped a sovereign into the man's hand, and left him with Coker's bicycle. He did not care much what became of it—it had served his turn. He dashed into the station. The man in the booking-office stared blankly at the sooty face with the wild eyes.

"First-class to Wayland—quick!" gasped the Bounder, slamming a sovereign down.

"Just coming in!"

The Bounder grasped his ticket and rushed for the platform. On all sides stares greeted the sooty, dusty, perspiring junior. Vernon-Smith knew that he was an extraordinary figure, smothered with the soot of the chimney, the dust of the road, hatless, ruffled, wild-eyed. He reached the platform—the express was signalled, but was not in yet. He caught a porter.

"I want to send a telegram," he said hurriedly. "Take it for me. Case of life or death—uncle dying!"

A little prevarication did not cost much to the Bounder's tough conscience. He wrote in his pocket-book, tore out the leaf, and gave it to the porter with a sovereign.

"Keep the change!" he said. "Send it at once!"

"Suttingly, sir," said the man, open-eyed. It was the first time he had received so gorgeous a tip, even for sending a telegram in a tremendous hurry.

The express came thundering in.

Vernon-Smith jumped aboard.

"Stops at Wayland?" he called out to the guard.

"Yes, sir."

And the Bounder plunged into the train, and sat down gasping.

The express steamed out of the station, and the Bounder burst into a chuckle. He had done it. His telegram to Wharton at St. Jim's would keep his place open in the match, and he would be there very soon after the time originally arranged for the kick-off. He had succeeded.

The startled stares of the other passengers recalled to him the extraordinary figure he made.

Fortunately it was a corridor train, and the Bounder passed down the corridor to the lavatory, and there he succeeded in removing the worst traces of his hurried flight along the dusty road.

He washed and rubbed, and scrubbed, and returned to his carriage looking and feeling much better.

He sat down quite calmly to rest in the carriage, as the express raced on.

He had won!

The struggle was not over yet, perhaps, but he had won so far. The Bounder grinned with satisfaction as the train rushed on, and he grinned again when the porters called "Wayland Junction," and he alighted.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. At St. Jim's!

"RYLCOMBE!"

Harry Wharton rose in the carriage.

"Here we are!" he said.

The Greyfriars footballers poured out of the train. They had changed at Wayland Junction and taken the local train to Rycombe, the station for St. Jim's. Their long journey was over. St. Jim's and the football match were before them now. On the platform of the little local station several St. Jim's fellows were waiting for them. Outside was a brake ready to bear them to the school.

Tom Merry of the Shell, the captain of the St. Jim's junior eleven, came forward to meet them, with a welcoming smile upon his handsome, sunny face. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, swept off his silk topper and bowed gracefully. Figgins, of the Fourth, was also there.

"Jolly glad to see you, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Same to you, and many of 'em," said Bob Cherry, shaking hands with the swell of St. Jim's so heartily that D'Arcy wriggled with anguish.

"Ow! Bai Jove!"

"We've got a brake here," said Figgins. "Hope you had a good journey."

"Oh, ripping!" said Harry Wharton. "Glad to see you. This way, you fellows!"

And the Greyfriars footballers streamed out of the station. "Here's the brake!" said Figgins.

Tom Dutton turned his head.

"Oh, good!" he said. "I don't mind if I do!"

Figgins looked at him.

"Where is it?" asked Dutton.

"Here," said Figgins, puzzled. "We brought it to meet you."

"Well, I don't see it," said Tom Dutton, looking round.

"Can any of you fellows see a cake?"

"Cake?" said Figgins. "I didn't say cake. I said brake."

"Eh?"

"Brake!" roared Figgins.

"Certainly; I'll break the cake if you haven't got a knife," said Dutton. "But where is the cake—that's what I want to know."

"Don't mind Dutton—he's deaf!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Bai Jove! Poor old chap!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's all wight, Dutton, deah boy—bwake, you know, not cake."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

"Sorry!" said Dutton. "Have you been to the dentist about it?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass fell from his eye in his astonishment at that unexpected question.

"The—the dentist!" he gasped.

"Rotten thing to have the tooth-ache, I know!" said Dutton sympathetically. "Do you suffer from it very much?"

"Oh, cwums! I didn't say I had the tooth-ache, deah boy!"

"Not much joy in the tooth-ache, I should think," said Dutton, in surprise. "I suppose it's all the better for you if you like it."

"Oh, my only hat! Gweat Scott!"

"I don't find it so!" said Dutton. "I dare say it's hot walking. Is this brake for us?"

"Yass, waciah!"

"Good! I'll tackle the cake as we go, then, if you've got it," said Tom Dutton, turning to Figgins again. "What are you grinning at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, if you haven't got a cake, why can't you say so?" demanded Tom Dutton. "If it's a joke, I can take a joke as well as anybody."

"Ha, ha! It wasn't a joke!" howled Figgins.

Tom Dutton turned red.

"Well, if you consider it polite to call a visitor a moke, I can only say that I don't agree with you!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, bai Jove! What a vewy unfortunate misapprehension!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in distress. "I must explain to Dutton. It weally would not do to allow him to suppose that a St. Jim's chap could be guilty of such bad manners!"

"Better not try it," said Frank Nugent. "It only makes things worse—confusion worse confounded, you know!"

"Pway let me twy. Dutton, deah boy, Figgins did not call you a moke. He would nevah be so wude as to tell a chap what he thought of him, if the chap was a visitah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle, deah boys! This is weally a sewious mattah. Pway give me a chance to explain to Dutton. You see, Dutton, deah boy—"

"Eh?"

"There is no question of a cake at all. You misapprehended Figgins's remark in the first place. In the second place—"

"Quite as good as yours, anyway," said Dutton.

"Bai Jove! What?"

"What's the matter with my face?"

"Face! I didn't say anythin' about your face, deah boy. I remarked—"

"Is my face marked in any way?" demanded Dutton, turning to Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then what is that ass telling me it is for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I weally considah—"

But Peter Todd grasped Dutton and rushed him into the brake before Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could attempt any further explanation. Tom Merry and Figgins and D'Arcy followed the Greyfriars fellows in, and the brake rolled away to St. Jim's.

The juniors chatted cheerfully as they drove on, though Tom Dutton still looked a little grimly at Figgins, and regarded D'Arcy with evident suspicion.

The grey old tower of St. Jim's came in sight over the trees. Harry Wharton, who was on very friendly terms with Tom Merry, mentioned the Bounder and his bad luck as they chatted on the way. The St. Jim's juniors were interested at once. They had seen the Bounder, and, as a matter of fact, they had not liked him very much; but his attempt to get away from Greyfriars without permission interested them.

"Wathah a pluckay beggah," said D'Arcy. "I don't weally approve of diswespect to a mastah—I wegard it as bad form—but, weally, that chap Smithy is vewy pluckay. I suppose he will get it in the neck—what!"

"Most likely," said Wharton. "Quelchy is rather a tartar. I wish he could have come. He's a wonderful winger. But he won't be able to get away again, I expect. If he does come, though, I've promised to play him."

"Bai Jove! I wish him luck!" said D'Arcy.

"But as he's lost the train he can't get here in time, if he does get out," Tom Merry remarked.

"I don't know. He's jolly deep," said Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised to find the Bounder at St. Jim's when we get there. It would be just like him."

Figgins chuckled.

"I hope he'll come," he said. "We want you to be at the

top of your form. But surely he would get it pretty stiff when he got home afterwards?"

"He wouldn't care for that."

"A vewy pluckay chap!" commented Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But weally, I think it would be cawwyin' week-lessness a little bit too fah. Howevah, I hope he will get through, for your sakes, deah boys, if he's a good playah, and is playin' on the wing. I'm on the wing myself—the left wing—and the chap opposite will hear fwom me, I assuah you."

"Bet you he won't!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Dutton's in Smithy's place," Bob explained. "He won't hear anything."

"Not bad news?" asked Tom Merry.

"No. It's from the Bounder—Smithy, I mean. He says he'll be here half an hour after us," said Harry. "Read it."

The telegram was read aloud to all the brakeload of juniors.

"Handed it in at Lexham," said Tom Merry. "Where's that?"

"Lexham? It's a place forty or fifty miles from Greyfriars. The Southampton express stops there," said Wharton. "How the dickens has the Bounder got to Lexham? But he's there, right enough, as he sent the wire from there."

"Queelchy's been done!" grinned Tom Brown.

"Done right in the eye!" remarked Bob Cherry. "But—but won't Smithy get it hot to-night! My word!"

"Do you fellows mind waiting a bit for our man?" asked Harry. "It will only mean putting off the kick-off a quarter of an hour or so."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Right you are," he said. "There will be plenty of light. Make it later than that if you like."

"That's all right. We'll kick off as soon as the Bounder gets here," said Wharton. "I must say I'm glad he's got away. It means a lot of difference to us. I'm sorry for what he'll get to-night, that's all. Good old Bounder!"

The telegram from Vernon-Smith had a perceptible effect on the spirits of the Greyfriars eleven. The presence of their best winger in the team was only too likely to make all the difference between victory and defeat. They changed for the match, and Wharton placed the Bounder's things ready for him in the dressing-room. And then they waited for the arrival of Vernon-Smith.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith's Little Game!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

A cheer from the Greyfriars fellows greeted Vernon-Smith.

A taxi-cab from Wayland Junction came tearing into the school gateway, and Vernon-Smith jumped out of it. He had not waited for the local train. The taxi had cost him nearly a sovereign, but it had cut across country and saved time, and money was nothing to the son and heir of Samuel Vernon-Smith, the millionaire financier. The Bounder came running towards the pavilion.

"You've waited for me?"

"Yes."

"Good egg!"

"How did you get away?" demanded Bob Cherry.

And the Bounder concisely explained. The St. Jim's fellows listened with interest as keen as Harry Wharton & Co.

"My only hat!" said Bob.

"Bai Jove! I must remark that it was awf'ly pluckay!" said D'Arcy. "Pway allow me to congwtulate you, deah boy!"

The Bounder grinned. He was elated with his triumph, and he enjoyed the sensation he was making. The glances of wonder the St. Jim's fellows exchanged was meat and drink to the Bounder. He dearly loved the limelight.

"Better rest a few minutes, anyway," said Tom Merry considerably. "We needn't break our necks about kicking off. There will be lots of light."

"Oh, I sha'n't keep you many minutes," said the Bounder. "It won't take me long to change. Ey the way, you have a

GOOD TURNS—No. 14.



A boy reader of the MAGNET seeing a poor, weary washerwoman struggling along with a couple of heavy clothes-baskets, caring nothing for appearances nor what his chums might think of him, gallantly shoulders the bulkiest basket, and does a really good turn for the overladen woman!

"Oh, I see! That is a joke!" said D'Arcy. "Ha, ha, ha!" he added, as an afterthought.

The brake rolled in at the gates of St. Jim's. Taggles, the porter, made a sign to Tom Merry. Taggles had a telegram in his hand.

"Young gentleman named Wharton 'ere?" he asked.

"Here you are!" said Harry.

"Then this 'ere is for you, sir."

Taggles handed up the telegram. It was addressed to Harry Wharton, care of Tom Merry.

Wharton guessed, as he opened it, that it was from the Bounder.

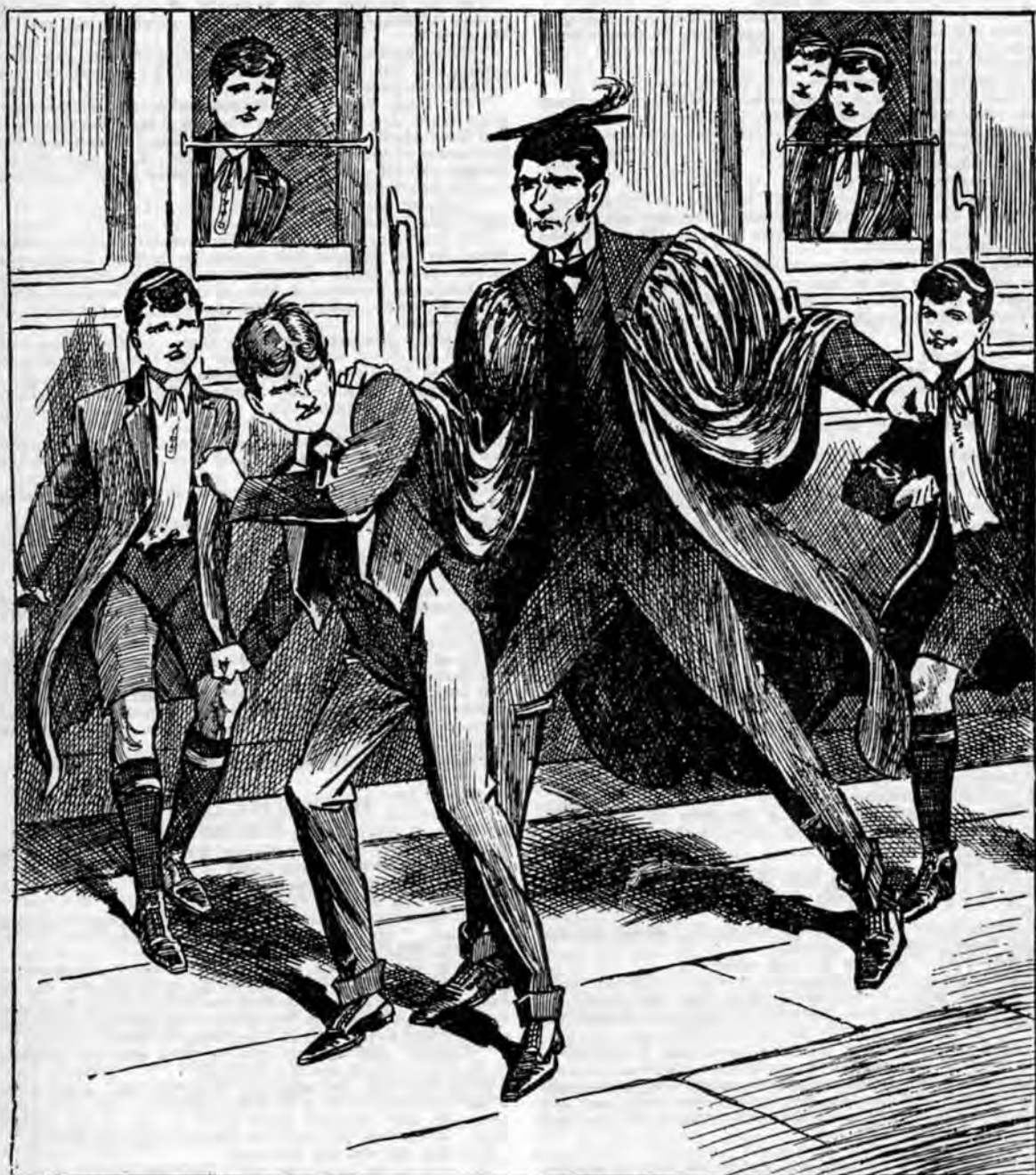
And it was. It ran:

"Wait for me. Arriving half an hour after you."

"VERNON-SMITH."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.



"You will come with me, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, shifting his grasp to Vernon-Smith's collar, and swinging the Bounder away from the train at arm's length. (See Chapter 6.)

chap at this school who used to belong to Greyfriars—a chap named Levison?"

"Yes," said Jack Blake. "He's in my Form—the Fourth."

"Is he in the eleven?"

"No fear!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Levison isn't likely to be in the team," he said. "He's a first-class slacker. More likely smoking in the box-room."

"That's his sort," said Bob Cherry. "I remember him! But what on earth do you want with Levison now, Smithy?"

"I want to speak to him if he's here. Will one of you

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

chaps find him and ask him to come in while I change? Tell him it's important."

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry.

Vernon-Smith went into the dressing-room. He could see from the looks of the St. Jim's fellows that Levison, formerly of Greyfriars, was not popular there. But Tom Merry hurried away at once in search of the fellow whom St. Jim's generally called the cad of the Fourth.

Vernon-Smith was in his football clothes when Levison entered the dressing-room. Levison was looking surprised. He had not the faintest idea what this junior from his old school could possibly want with him.

Vernon-Smith shook hands with him with a heartiness that surprised Levison of the Fourth still more.

"Jolly glad to see you!" he exclaimed.

Levison grinned in his somewhat unpleasant way.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Well, I want you to do me a favour," said Vernon-Smith. "From the reputation you left behind you at Greyfriars I fancy you're just the chap I want."

Levison scowled.

"If you're getting at me—" he began.

"Not at all. You're a chap who's got all his wits about him. And you used to be hard up, I believe—little habits of backing gee-gees that always came in tenth or eleventh, and that kind of thing."

"Look here—"

Vernon-Smith closed the door.

"I shall have to buck up!" he said. "Look here, Levison! You know I've got plenty of money, and I dare say you have been backing gee-gees as usual. Would a fiver be any good to you?"

"What-ho!" said Levison, his eyes opening wide. "Have you asked to see me to lend me a fiver, for the sake of old times? I must say that's jolly decent of you!"

Vernon-Smith laughed. He was not exactly a philanthropist.

"There's the fiver," he said, taking a crisp and rustling note from his well-filled pocket-book. "I only want you to do me a little favour."

"I'd do you a big one for that," said Levison, as his greedy fingers closed on the banknote. He had no scruples about taking it.

"You've heard how I got here?"

"The fellows have been talking. You'll get it in the neck when you get back—unless old Quelch has changed very much since I left Greyfriars," grinned Levison.

"I don't care about that. I'm only thinking of the match. I'm pretty certain that Quelch will wire to the Head of St. Jim's to stop me playing. He can't get here in time to stop me himself—and he'd move heaven and earth to prevent me from doing what I've come here for. It's a question of personal dignity with him now."

"I suppose so."

"What would your Head-master do if he got such a wire from Quelch, do you think?"

"He wouldn't have any choice, I suppose. He'd have you yanked off the footer ground before you had time to say rum-and-water."

"That's what I thought. So if a wire comes for your Head-master this afternoon, will you intercept it?"

Levison's jaw dropped.

"Intercept it?" he faltered.

Vernon-Smith nodded coolly.

"Yes. I suppose the porter or the page will take it in. You can get at it somehow—tip 'em—I'll stand the tin—or, grab it."

"My hat!"

"Read it, and if it's not from Quelch, let it go in to the Head, if it is from Quelch, keep it back till the match is over."

"Great Scott! And what do you think I should get for doing that?" exclaimed Levison.

"Five quid!" said the Bounder coolly.

"Well, that's true," said Levison slowly. "The tin would be awfully useful to me now, and Griggs, the bookie, is beginning to bother me. But—but—I should be flogged for interfering with a telegram for the Head!"

"Well, you can stand a licking, can't you, if it's worth your while? Besides, you can make up some yarp—sticking to an old Greyfriars chum, you know—or pretend you thought the telegram was for some kid you've rowed with, and you only pretended to play a trick on him—dash it all, you used to be a good liar."

Levison chuckled.

"If I play right through the match I'll make it another fiver," said the Bounder.

"My hat! Do you mean to say a footer match is worth ten quid to you?"

"It's worth every stiver I can raise, to have my way, and win," said the Bounder, between his teeth. "Besides, you know my pater's a millionaire. I can get it all again from him. He will simply chuckle over this when I tell him."

"I'd change paters with you with pleasure," said Levison.

"Well, will you do this for me?"

"I'll do my best. Got that other fiver about you?"

"I've got six or seven. And, look here, Levison, if you stand by me now and help me through this, I'm your friend, and you'll find a friend like me pretty useful—unless you've changed all your old ways."

"None of them," said Levison, calmly. "I'll stick to THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 297."

you, Smithy. If it's within the bounds of possibility to do what you want, I'll do it. Mellish will help me, and I think I can manage it."

"Good enough; it's a go!"

And the Bounder, with a weight off his mind, ran out of the dressing-room; followed more slowly by Levison of the Fourth.

"We're waiting for you," said Harry Wharton, a little gruffly. "You might have put off your jaw with Levison till after the match, Smithy."

"I'm ready now," said Vernon-Smith. He did not explain to the Greyfriars fellows what his "jaw" with Levison had been about. He did not expect Harry Wharton & Co. to approve of the measures he had taken. Their approval or disapproval did not matter to the Bounder; but he did not want to risk interference.

"Come on, then."

And the teams went into the field.

Tom Dutton remained among the spectators, looking a little blue. As the Bounder had turned up in time, Dutton was only a reserve again. Greyfriars looked very fit when they lined up; the Bounder, in spite of the excitement and stress of the afternoon, looked as fresh as paint. He seemed to be made of iron.

St. Jim's, too, were in great form. Tom Merry had selected his eleven with great care from the juniors of both Houses at St. Jim's. The list was: Fatty Wynn, in goal; Herries and Reilly, backs; Redfern, Noble, and Lowther, halves; Kerr, Figgins, Tom Merry, Blake, and D'Arcy, forwards.

Darrel of the Sixth had consented to act as referee, and Harry Wharton won the toss, and gave the home team the wind to kick off against.

Vernon-Smith gave a glance round before the match started.

From the playing-field he could see part of the quadrangle.

His lips came tightly together, and a steely glitter shot into his eyes, as he saw a lad in the uniform of a post-office messenger crossing the quadrangle.

He guessed that he brought a telegram.

Telegrams might arrive at St. Jim's for anybody, from anybody, of course. But the Bounder knew that the probability was that the wire was from Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars, and that it was addressed to the Head of St. Jim's, and that it contained a request that Vernon-Smith should be sent back immediately to the school he had run away from.

But there was nothing the Bounder could do. He had taken what precautions he could, and he had to rely on Levison.

The ball rolled, and the game started.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The First Half!

LEVISON of the Fourth met the telegraph boy as he came into the School-house.

"For Dr. Holmes?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"He saw you coming from his study window," Levison explained. "He sent me to fetch it for him."

And he held out his hand.

The boy handed the telegram over unsuspiciously. He knew that the Head had been at his study window, for he had seen him as he came towards the house. If the Head was expecting a telegram, it was natural enough that he should send Levison to meet the lad, and bring it to him at once.

"Thanks," said Levison, and he went with the telegram in his hand towards the Head's study.

From the hall, the telegraph boy, who had stopped for a few moments to tie a boot-lace, saw him. As he turned away, he saw Levison's hand raised to tap at the Head's door. After that, he could not possibly have any doubts.

But that tap was not delivered.

As soon as the telegraph boy's back was turned, Levison lowered his hand, without knocking at the door.

He grinned a little, but his face was pale, and his heart was beating hard. He thrust the telegram into his pocket, and walked on quickly.

By a circuitous route, he reached the Fourth Form passage upstairs, and went into his study. His study-mates were not there—they were out of doors watching the football match. Levison had the study to himself. He locked the door and ignited a little spirit stove, with a kettle on it.

As soon as the steam was proceeding from the kettle, he melted the gum of the flimsy envelope on it, and opened it.

If the telegram was not from Mr. Quelch of Greyfriars, Levison intended to seal it up again, and take it to the Head, explaining that he had met the boy and brought it in.

But it was from Mr. Quelch!

Levison's eyes glinted as he read it. He had painful recollections of Mr. Quelch from his old days at Greyfriars, and he was more than ready to serve the Remove master an ill turn if he could. And the wording of the telegram—which showed by its length how deeply in earnest Mr. Quelch was—showed him that it would be a very ill turn indeed to the Remove-master to keep it back from Dr. Holmes.

"Dear Dr. Holmes,—A boy of this school named Vernon-Smith has followed the Greyfriars football team to your school, against orders, and in defiance of authority. May I request you to intervene, and not allow him to play in the match. I shall arrive by the next train, and shall take him back with me.—HENRY QUELCH, Greyfriars."

Levison whistled softly.
"Just like old Quelch!" he murmured. "Not changed a bit. He was always down on me, and he seems to be down on Smithy in the same way. Oh, my hat! If he's coming on by the next train, he'll be here before the match is half over—as they left the kick-off so late. Poor old Smithy."

Levison gummed the envelope, and carefully sealed it up again.

He slid it into his pocket, and left the study, and made his way down to the football field. Levison was keenly interested in the matter now. He wanted that second fiver, and he wanted to defeat Mr. Quelch, and he felt very friendly towards the Bouncer, and wanted to help him. Lawlessness and defiance of authority appealed very much to Levison of the Fourth.

The game was going strong.
The two sides seemed to be very well matched, and as yet no goals had been scored.

But the Bouncer was showing first-class form, and again and again Harry Wharton congratulated himself that Smithy was in the team.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who played outside left for the Saints, was opposed to Vernon-Smith, on the right wing of the Greyfriars team.

And D'Arcy, though a keen player, was only too evidently out-matched by the Bouncer.

Tom Merry & Co. had already "marked" Vernon-Smith as one of the most dangerous of their adversaries, and they were giving him very special attention.

Levison joined the crowd of interested fellows who were watching the match.

He caught the Bouncer's eye as the winger came down the touch-line, and made a sign to him, and the Bouncer made a responsive sign. It was not possible to do more then. But he knew that Levison wanted to speak to him at the first opportunity, and that it might be too late if he waited till half-time.

That was enough to warn the Bouncer that a telegram had arrived from Mr. Quelch, and that Levison had succeeded in intercepting it.

For the moment, at all events, he was safe, and he played on as if there were not the slightest worry on his mind.

The Removites of Greyfriars were making a brilliant attack, and the ball came down the field with a splendid exhibition of short passing, at which Harry Wharton & Co. were at their best.

They left the home forwards stranded, they beat the halves, they bore through the backs, and only the goalkeeper remained to beat.

And the goalkeeper, an extremely fat youth, who seemed on the point of bursting out of his footer shirt, did not impress the Greyfriars fellows as dangerous; but they did not yet know Fatty Wynn, of the Fourth.

The fat Fourth-Former seemed all eyes, hands, and feet. The ball whizzed in from Harry Wharton's foot; but a fat fist met it, and it came whizzing out again, only to meet Frank Nugent's head and return.

But Fatty Wynn's head was ready for it, and it shot forth like a pip from an orange; and there was a roar from the crowd:

"Well saved!"
"Bravo, Fatty!"
"Well cleared, Herries!"

But was it cleared? Herries had sent it almost to the touch-line, and almost to midfield; but the Bouncer was on it in a flash.

St. Jim's were almost swamping upon him, and there was no time to pass.

With a lightning kick from that distance, there was a bare possibility of bringing off the longed-for goal—just a chance! And the Bouncer tried it.

Whiz!
Then a roar!
"Oh, well kicked!"
"Goal! Goal!"

The leather was in the net—that miraculous kick had come off, and the Greyfriars fellows nearly danced with joy. Wharton rushed up to the Bouncer and slapped him on the back. Bob Cherry dug him in the ribs ecstatically.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"Oh, ripping, Smithy!"
"Good old Bouncer!"
"Bravo!"
"Hurrah! Hip-pip!"

The Bouncer's eyes danced with elation. He had scored a goal that looked impossible to almost every fellow on the ground, and it had come off. He had proved that he was worth his salt—that it had been worth while to run so many risks to take his place in the team for that great match! And the applause of his comrades was like wine to him. It was a new thing for Harry Wharton & Co. to be cheering and congratulating the Bouncer on the football field; but there they were doing it. The St. Jim's crowd roared with cheering, though the goal was against their side. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy confided to Jack Blake that he could not have taken that goal better himself; and Blake fully agreed with him.

"My hat," said Levison, rousing himself to 'unwonted excitement and keenness, slacker as he was, "that chap can play! It would be a sin and a shame if he were yanked off the field in the middle of the match."

And Levison felt quite virtuous in the knowledge that he was doing his best to prevent that sin and shame from coming to pass.

Before the goalkeeper had tossed the ball out, Vernon-Smith scudded to the ropes where Levison was standing.

"Tell me—quick!" he breathed.
Levison lowered his voice as he replied, and the St. Jim's fellows near at hand drew back politely as they saw that Vernon-Smith wanted to speak privately to the junior who had once belonged to his school.

"It's come. I've got it."
"The Head hasn't seen it?"
"No—and he won't."

Vernon-Smith drew a deep, deep breath of relief.
"Oh, good egg—good egg!"
"But Quelch's coming."

"What!" The Bouncer's brightening face fell again.
"Coming here!"
"By the next train."

"Hang him!" The Bouncer made a rapid mental calculation. "Hang him! He'll be here before half-time, then."

"Yes, as the kick-off was left later; but he would have been here before the finish, anyway."

"Line up!" called out Harry Wharton, staring in surprise towards the Bouncer.

Vernon-Smith did not hear him. He clutched Levison's arm in his excitement.

"Stop him, Levison—stop him somehow! Go to the station. Get the hack away; there is only one there. Do anything! Gain time. Play some trick. You're full of them. Ask me anything you like afterwards. Save this match for me, and I'm your friend for life!"

Levison looked curiously at the flushed, excited face.
"By Jove," he said, "rely on me, Smithy! I'll do it!"

"Vernon-Smith," called out Wharton sharply, "what are you jawing there for? Can't you see we're waiting for you?"
"Coming!"

Vernon-Smith ran back to his place in the line. St. Jim's kicked off, and the tussle re-started. Levison walked away out of the gates of the school.

Tom Merry & Co. were on their mettle now, and they fought hard for the remainder of the first half. But the Greyfriars fellows were equally keen. The next goal that was taken was taken for Greyfriars by Harry Wharton.

"Two up!" chuckled Bob Cherry, as they lined up again.
"Looks like being a giddy victory for us—what?"

But within five minutes fortune smiled on the home team. With a determined rush, the Saints brought the ball up the field, and in spite of Bulstrode's defence, it went from the foot of Tom Merry. And then the whistle went with the score 2 to 1. Greyfriars finished the first half one up!

As they towelled their damp faces and sucked lemons, the Removites exchanged mutual congratulations. Bob Cherry slapped Vernon-Smith heartily on the shoulder.

"Good man!" said Bob joyously. "That goal was a daisy—a regular corker! And the way you've passed, my son—it was a sight for blind men! You gave Wharton the pass that came out a goal, didn't he, Harry?"

"He did!" said Harry Wharton heartily. "I can't say how glad I am you're with us, Smithy. It's pretty clear from the form these chaps are showing that we shouldn't have had a look in without you. We'll beat them now."

"Yes, rather!"
"I hope so," said the Bouncer quietly.

He did not tell them what he was thinking. But he knew that Mr. Quelch must have arrived at Rycombe before this, and that at any moment he might come striding in at the

gates of St. Jim's. But the Remove-master was not in sight when the sides lined up for the second half, and the Bounder still hoped!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Long Cut!

MR. QUELCH stepped out of the train at Rylcombe with contracted brows.

The Remove-master was bitterly angry.

When Walker of the Sixth had reported to him that Vernon-Smith had fled on Coker's motor-bicycle, Mr. Quelch had been hardly able to believe his ears. Walker's description of the junior's appearance indicated the way he had escaped by way of the chimney. He had risked his neck in doing it, and the Form-master, as he thought of that, was all the more angry with the obstinate and determined junior. And he was all the more determined that the Bounder should not set authority at defiance and carry his point. It was a question of personal dignity with Mr. Quelch now. The struggle was between him and the black sheep of the Remove, and his prestige in the school was at stake. He would leave no stone unturned to recapture the runaway.

As the train was gone from Courtfield, Mr. Quelch was a little at a loss to divine in which direction Vernon-Smith would flee. He could not hope to cover the distance to St. Jim's on Coker's machine in time for the match. The Remove-master consulted time-tables, and soon guessed the facts. Vernon-Smith was pretty certain to make for LEXHAM Junction, where the Southampton express stopped. Mr. Quelch ordered out the car and started for LEXHAM.

He reached LEXHAM five minutes after the express had gone, with Vernon-Smith safely inside it. Inquiry at the station revealed Coker's motor-bike, and the fact that it had been left there by a grimy junior.

Mr. Quelch's face was hard and grim as he motored back to Greyfriars. His afternoon, which he had intended to occupy very differently, was being expended in this fruitless chase of the truant, and he felt a bitter and rankling sense of defeat. He stopped in Courtfield on his way back, despatched the telegram to the headmaster of St. Jim's, and caught the express for Wayland.

He had, of course, no doubt that his telegram to Dr. Holmes at St. Jim's would be attended to, and that he would find Vernon-Smith ready to accompany him back to Greyfriars without having played in the match.

The Remove-master changed at Wayland, and caught the local train to Rylcombe. He was feeling very angry and very exasperated. The sedate Form-master did not like rushing off on sudden and unexpected journeys. The vials of his wrath were all ready to be poured out upon the devoted head of the Bounder of Greyfriars. There was only one satisfaction to his mind—the truant had not played as he had determined to do—for Mr. Quelch had not, of course, the slightest suspicion that his telegram had been intercepted at St. Jim's.

He strode out of Rylcombe Station, and looked round for a vehicle to carry him to St. Jim's. He knew that the school was at some little distance from the station, and he wanted to arrive there at the earliest possible moment.

A boy he knew by sight was outside the station—Levison, once of the Remove at Greyfriars. Levison was chatting with old George Hopkins, the driver of the one and only hack that Rylcombe boasted. Old George was a red-faced, beery old fellow, who spent all his leisure time, and all his spare cash, at the Red Cow, opposite the station. If Mr. Quelch had been a little earlier, he might have seen money passing between Levison and old George. Old George had a perfectly beatific expression on his face. He had a sovereign in his pocket—and the promise of another to cheer him up—if a certain traveller failed to reach St. Jim's before half-past six. Old George was a good-hearted man, in his way—and the account of how a tyrannical master was coming to St. Jim's to lay complaints against a perfectly innocent chap whose only fault was that he was a thorough sportsman—quite touched old George's beery old heart, and made him feel quite virtuous in endeavouring to earn those two sovereigns. To keep back that disagreeable master until the victim had had time to get away from St. Jim's, seemed to old George a most laudable proceeding—and an evidently profitable one. With a sovereign in hand, and a sovereign in the bush, so to speak, old George had a prospect of unlimited gin before him—Levison had played his cards well. He could afford to be generous with Vernon-Smith's money—and he knew that the Bounder would not grudge it, or twice as much.

Levison's keen green eyes spotted Mr. Quelch the moment the Remove-master stepped out of the station. He nudged old George, and closed one eye.

"That's the chap!" he whispered.

"Right-ho!" said old George.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

"Mind—half-past six!"

"You rely on me," said old George, with a beery wink.

Levison raised his cap politely to Mr. Quelch. He assumed an expression of astonishment at the sight of the Remove-master.

"How do you do, sir?" he exclaimed. "You remember me, sir?"

"I remember you, Levison," said Mr. Quelch, with a very curt nod.

"So glad to see you, sir. You've come over to see the match, of course? The fellows will be pleased, sir!"

"I have not come over to see the match," said Mr. Quelch.

"Is it far to the school, Levison?"

"Well, it would be a jolly long walk, sir—uphill, too!" said Levison calmly. "Not very long if you take the cab."

"Keb, sir?" said old George, touching his battered high hat. "Keb, sir? Get you to St. Jim's in nex' to no time, sir!"

"Please drive as fast as you can," said Mr. Quelch, entering the hack, after an extremely disparaging glance at the ancient horse.

Old George put in a beery face at the window.

"In a 'urry, sir?"

"Yes, yes; please start at once!"

"If you're in a 'urry, sir," said old George, with calm deliberation, "I'll take the short cut, sir."

"Please do!"

"Very well, sir. Now, gee-up."

Old George cracked his whip, and the old horse started off at a snail's pace. Levison looked after the hack and grinned.

"I rather fancy Quelch won't get to St. Jim's in time to worry Smithy!" he murmured. "It's cost Smithy two quid—but I daresay he'll think it's worth it. He, he, he!"

And Levison strolled away to St. Jim's feeling well satisfied with himself.

Mr. Quelch put his head out of the hack as it lumbered at an exceedingly leisurely pace through the old High Street of Rylcombe.

"Cannot you go a little faster, my man?" he asked sharply. "I could walk as fast as this!"

"Suttinly, sir. But bless your 'art, sir, it ain't very fur, not if I takes the short cut, sir!"

"Please make haste!"

"Werry well, sir!" said old George, winking at his old horse's off ear. "Right yar, sir!"

The hack rumbled out of the village, with a slight increase of pace, and rolled on into the lane. The white road ran almost straight to St. Jim's. There was, indeed, a short cut through the wood, for pedestrians. But that was not the short cut old George was thinking of. He turned out of the lane into a muddy, rutty track cut up by heavy cart-wheels, and the hack rumbled heavily on.

The road vanished from sight. The hack rolled on groaning and grumbling over bumpy ground, and the pace of the old horse soon slackened to a walk. Mr. Quelch put his head out again very impatiently. Round him were fields and meadows, with a haystack in the distance, and no sign whatever of a habitation—much less of St. Jim's.

"Are we near the school?" he demanded.

"Gettin' that way, sir!"

"Pray go faster!"

"Which the ground is werry rough for a 'orse, sir!" said old George apologetically. "I'm afear'd of the boss goin' lame, sir, if I 'urry too much!"

"You should have kept to the road, then!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "I am in a hurry to reach St. Jim's College. Pray make haste!"

"Werry well, sir!"

Old George indulged in another beery wink at his horse's ears, and cracked his whip, and urged his ancient geegee onward. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation, and the hack came to a halt. The angry face of the Greyfriars master looked out again.

"What is the matter now?" he snapped.

Old George looked greatly distressed.

"I'm afear'd that he's gone lame, sir," he said apologetically. "I was afear'd of it if I 'urried 'im over this 'ere rough ground, sir."

The Remove-master uttered an angry exclamation.

"Lame! Do you mean that he cannot proceed?"

"I mean that he can't go on, sir."

"How intensely exasperating!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, leaping from the hack. "Are you sure, my man, that the horse cannot proceed?"

"Only at a very slow walk, sir," said old George firmly.

"I think I'd better take 'im out of the tracee, sir, and see wot I can do for him."

"Bless my soul! I suppose that means that I must walk to the school! However, it cannot be far from here."

Quelch gazed round him. "In which direction is the school, my man?"

Old George pointed.

"You see that there windmill, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Surely the school is not so far away as that?"

"You pass that there windmill, sir, and then you keep on till you get to Farmer Giles' paddock—you know Farmer Giles' paddock?"

"Of course I do not!" exclaimed the angry master. "I'm quite a stranger in this neighbourhood. Cannot you give me any clearer direction than that?"

Old George rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Everybody 'ereabouts knows Farmer Giles' paddock," he said. "O'wever, p'raps you know the barn where the soldier 'anged 'isself?"

Mr. Quelch snorted. The barn where the soldier hanged himself was as utterly unknown to him as Farmer Giles' paddock.

"I tell you I am a stranger here," he exclaimed.

Old George had recourse to rubbing his nose again.

"Well, you ask the miller," he said finally. "The miller'll tell you. Everybody 'ereabouts knows the barn where the soldier 'anged 'isself, sir. It was only forty years ago—"

Mr. Quelch did not wait for any more of old George's reminiscences. He paid the hack-driver, with a frowning brow, and started to walk towards the windmill. Old George winked solemnly at his horse, who was browsing on the grass. When Mr. Quelch was out of sight, old George dragged his horse round, mounted his box, and drove away at a leisurely pace for Rylcombe. The horse was not showing any signs of lameness now.

Mr. Quelch strode on at a very fast walk. But the windmill was not easy to reach. The dismayed Form-master found his path suddenly barred by a tributary of the River Ryll—a dozen feet wide, and minus a bridge—which old George had somehow forgotten to mention when he was giving directions. Mr. Quelch breathed hard through his nose, and set out along the stream—till he was stopped by a barbed wire fence, and a board that hinted that trespassers would be prosecuted with the full rigour of the law.

The Remove-master stopped in utter dismay.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured. "The man was probably intoxicated—I am lost—actually lost in what appears to be an uninhabited country! Dear me!"

Twilight was falling on the fields now—and Mr. Quelch began to be seriously alarmed lest he should be lost and have to spend the night wandering about among hedges and ditches, and barbed-wire fences, and boards announcing that trespassers would be prosecuted.

Fortunately he fell in at last with an aged countryman plodding home from his work, who kindly informed him that he was miles out of his way, and gave him directions by which he could reach Wayland town—from which, as he added, he could catch the local train to Rylcombe, when it was an easy walk to St. Jim's. Mr. Quelch listened with feelings too deep for words.

He walked into Wayland at last, footsore and weary—and he did not catch the local train. He was "fed up" with local trains and Rylcombe. He took a taxi-cab, and ordered the driver to take him to St. Jim's as quickly as possible—and the driver gave him a rather curious look. He had already taken one passenger to St. Jim's in a great hurry that afternoon. The tired and weary Form-master sat in the cab as it whizzed away by dark roads and lanes—and his feelings towards Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, were of a kind easier to imagine than to describe.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. The Second Half!

"**P**LAY up!"

"On the ball, Tom Merry!"

"Goal!"

The St. Jim's crowd were roaring and cheering. The second half of that great match was ten minutes old—and again the leather had gone in from the foot of Tom Merry of the Shell.

The score was level.

Two goals to two—and both teams fresh and keen, and at the top of their form. Round the football ground the crowd was thickening. Not only juniors but seniors had come to look on. The Sixth Form had finished a match, and Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, could be seen in cap and muffler, standing in the crowd and cheering heartily that fine goal by Tom Merry. And he cheered just as heartily, too, when there was a bit of good play on the other side. And there were a good many such "bits." Greyfriars Remove were playing the game of their lives.

The teams lined up again, and Harry Wharton kicked off. Vernon-Smith unconsciously cast a glance towards the gates of the school. But the dreaded form of Mr. Quelch did not appear.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT MONDAY—**"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"**

EVERY MONDAY, **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Certainly he had arrived at Rylcombe, there could be no doubt about that. But Levison had done his work. As the game was resumed, Levison came strolling down to the footer ground, with a grin on his face.

The Removeites of Greyfriars were going strong now.

Right up to the home goal they rushed the ball, and Vernon-Smith centred to Wharton, who slammed the leather in, but again Fatty Wynne was "all there."

The ball came out again and was cleared by Herries away to midfield.

There was a tussle in midfield, and then Tom Merry & Co. brought the ball along the touchline, and charged home.

Bulstrode in the visitors' goal was very busy for the next few minutes. But he saved, and saved again, and Tom Brown captured the ball and sent it out far on the right wing. Mark Linley was ready for it, and he passed it to Vernon-Smith, and Vernon-Smith took it forward.

There was a rush of the Remove forwards to support him.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy strove to rob him of the leather, but the Greyfriars winger simply walked round him, and ran on.

"Baj Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Monty Lowther, left back, charged at Vernon-Smith, but the ball went in to Nugent, and as Noble of the Shell tackled Nugent, he centred to Wharton. Harry Wharton ran the ball right up the field, and made a motion of passing out to the left as the backs rushed at him. But it was to the right that he passed, and Vernon-Smith, who was all eyes, was ready for the pass, and captured it, and ran on with nothing to beat but the goal-keeper, whose eyes were not so sharp as usual upon him.

Whiz!

Fatty Wynne, in goal, made a wild bound. His friends congratulated him afterwards on his success; but really there was a great deal of luck in that save. By the skin of his teeth, as it were, Fatty saved that goal, and the leather came out, and found Nugent's foot ready for it, but it struck a goal-post and fell into play. And then Herries rushed in and cleared.

Away to the half-way line again.

The teams seemed equally matched; and the visitors were playing against the wind after the change of ends. In that keen struggle every trifle counted, and the wind gave the home players an advantage. Once more they came hotly on, and Harry Wharton & Co. had to defend strenuously.

Fellows now were looking up at the clock-tower over the trees.

The second half was wearing away, and the score was still level. Was that historic match to end in a draw?

Never!

Every fellow on the field thought, and felt, never! But as both sides were equally determined, the result was very doubtful.

And then one of the little strokes of ill-luck that may happen at any time befell the Greyfriars team. Frank Nugent rolled over from a charge, and failed to rise again. He had hurt his ankle, and the referee's whistle rang out at once. The players gathered round Nugent as the play ceased. Harry Wharton knelt beside him anxiously.

Frank gasped.

"Sorry! My ankle—"

Wharton was examining it before he spoke.

"Only a twist—all right in a minute or two!" Nugent panted.

Vernon-Smith took advantage of the pause to hurry to the ropes and speak to Levison, who was signing to him.

"Did you find him?"

Levison grinned.

"You bet!"

"And—" breathed the Bounder.

"He won't get here till after dark," Levison quickly explained. "It's all serene—you'll be gone before he comes. Cost you two quid."

"I don't care if it cost twenty."

Levison felt a momentary pang of remorse for not having said five. It occurred to him too late that he might have made a little personal profit out of the transaction.

"Good for you, Levison," said the Bounder, gratefully. "I'll remember this. I hope you won't get into too much trouble over that telegram."

"That's all right—I can stand it. I shall take it in to the Head the minute the match is over, and he may not inquire just when it came," grinned Levison. "Buzz off—they're at it again."

Frank Nugent had limped to the side of the field. He could not go on for some minutes, but play was resumed, the Greyfriars front line closing their ranks. But in that keen tussle a man short made a great deal of difference.

even for a few minutes. The St. Jim's attack was hot and strong, and the Remove had to pack their goal for defence. The struggle was now entirely in the visitors' half. Frank Nugent joined in again after five minutes or so, but he was still limping a little, and was not of much use to his side.

The hopes of the Greyfriars team had sunk almost to zero; it looked as if the best they could hope for was to make the match a draw. But it was a fight to a finish, and every fellow put his beef into it.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. The Winning Goal!

THE Bounder was at the top of his form now.

He realised how slim the chances of success had become; but the knowledge only spurred him on.

Ten minutes more to play—and the score level—and a man croaked. A keen team and an almost invincible goalkeeper to beat! But the Bounder meant that it should be done. Not that he was excited or hurried in any way. Never had he been cooler, never more self-possessed. The knowledge that he had no interference from Mr. Quelch to dread, bucked him up; he could give all his thoughts to the game now. Even Harry Wharton, fine player as he was, did not make the display of first-class football that the Bounder now provided for the admiring eyes of the crowd. Whenever the ball came into the home half, almost every time it was the Bounder who brought it there.

And now the gruelling game was telling upon the players—half the team on both sides had "bellows to mend" more or less.

But the Bounder, who had had a harder day than any other fellow there, was as fresh as paint, and hard as iron, to all appearance.

Fellows in the crowd pointed him out to one another with notes of admiration, so to speak. He was in the limelight now with a vengeance. Tom Dutton, forgetting his own disappointment, yelled with delight whenever the Bounder got away with the ball.

"Ripping player, that chap!" said Kildare of the Sixth.

"First chop!"

"Al at Lloyd's."

"Pick of the bunch," said Cutts of the Fifth. "He would give the First Eleven some trouble—what?"

"I think he would," said Kildare, with a smile.

"Bravo!"

"On the ball!"

"What a pace on him!" said Cutts. "Look how he beats the halves—winds round 'em like a giddy snake! My only hat! He'll get through this time."

"Hurrah!"

Five minutes to play—four! Time was getting very close now. But the Bounder was watching for his chance, and it came at last. He was away with the ball, and the Greyfriars front line came sweeping up the field.

Nugent was behind—Vernon-Smith had lost the aid of the inside winger. And just as he was about to centre to Wharton for an almost certain shot, Wharton came into violent contact with a home man, and rolled over him.

And the Saints were coming at the Bounder like wolves.

How he got through them he hardly knew. It seemed a miracle to the eyes that watched. But he did—that was the great point. Only Herries at back, and the fat figure in goal, to beat; but Herries reeled from the winger's shoulder, and Vernon-Smith rushed on.

"Look out in goal!"

"Look out, Fatty!"

"Oh, well kicked!"

"Saved! By Ginger—saved!"

The crowd were in a roar. Fellows waved their caps or their hats, and yelled with excitement. Never, or seldom, had a match come to such an exciting finish—and there was hardly a fellow on the ground who did not half wish that Smithy would get through with that goal, though it meant defeat of St. Jim's, so splendid was the effort, so magnificent that single-handed attack upon the citadel.

But Fatty Wynn was all eyes and hands.

In came the leather—but two fat hands clasped it, and Fatty Wynn stepped forward to fling it out.

And there and then Fatty Wynn, for once, was at fault—or rather, the Bounder was hotter stuff than he had dreamed.

For Fatty Wynn was outside the line, and the Bounder hurled himself through the air, and came crashing upon the fat Fourth Former like a four-point-seven shell.

Back into the goal reeled Fatty Wynn, and the ball rolled from his hands.

There was an almost delirious yell from the Greyfriars players:

"Goal!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Vernon-Smith had done it.

Fatty Wynn had been charged into goal, and the Bounder had scored the winning goal.

It was the winning goal, for it was almost on the stroke of time. There was no hope, no chance, for the home team to equalise again.

Vernon-Smith reeled back.

Harry Wharton caught him, and thumped him almost hysterically on the back, his face ablaze with delight.

"Good old Smithy! Good old Bounder! Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Smithy, my deah chap, that was a wippin' charge! I couldn't have done that!"

The whistle sounded.

The great match was over.

Greyfriars Remove had beaten the St. Jim's junior eleven by three goals to two.

The St. Jim's fellows took their defeat like good sportsmen, as they were. Tom Merry grasped Vernon-Smith's hand, and Fatty Wynn clapped him on the shoulder.

"Ripping!" said Tom Merry. "Gorgeous! It's no disgrace to be beaten by a goal like that! I say, Smith, are you made of indiarubber?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith gasped.

"It was a near thing."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "But a miss is as good as a mile—only it wasn't a miss, of course—I mean, a mile is as good as a miss—that is to say—"

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah! Huwwah, deah boys!"

"Good old Bounder!"

And the teams went off the field. Vernon-Smith's face was glowing. His day had been a success. He had the consequences to face, but the consequences counted for little in that thrilling moment of triumph.

"How jolly lucky that Quelch didn't come!" Harry Wharton remarked, as he sponged his heated face in the dressing-room.

The Bounder grinned.

"Quelch did come," he said.

"He came!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"Not here?"

"To Rylcombe, before the second half started," said Vernon-Smith quietly.

Wharton and the rest stared at him in amazement.

"Then why didn't he come on here?" exclaimed Nugent, who was sitting on a locker and rubbing his ankle with embrocation.

"He couldn't."

"But what—what—" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment. "Where is he now, then?"

"Wandering about somewhere," said the Bounder coolly.

"I fixed it up with Levison, and Levison was a regular brick. Quelch's caddy has lost him in the fields."

"Oh, great Scott!"

"My hat!"

"So that was what you were talking to Levison about?" exclaimed Wharton.

"That was it."

"He will get here later, then?" said Johnny Bull.

"Not till after we're gone, I hope," said Vernon-Smith. "I'd rather have it out with him at Greyfriars. We don't want a scene here before the St. Jim's chaps."

"No fear! But I should have thought he'd have wired here," said Harry Wharton. "He could have done that, and you'd have been stopped."

"He did wire."

"Then how—"

"I fixed it up with Levison to intercept the telegram," the Bounder explained calmly. "It wasn't a time to stick at trifles. The end justified the means, you know."

Wharton's face became very grave.

"I—I say, that's jolly serious," he said. "I can't say anything. You've won the match for us, Smithy. We should have been beaten to the wide if you hadn't been with us. We all know that. But—but—"

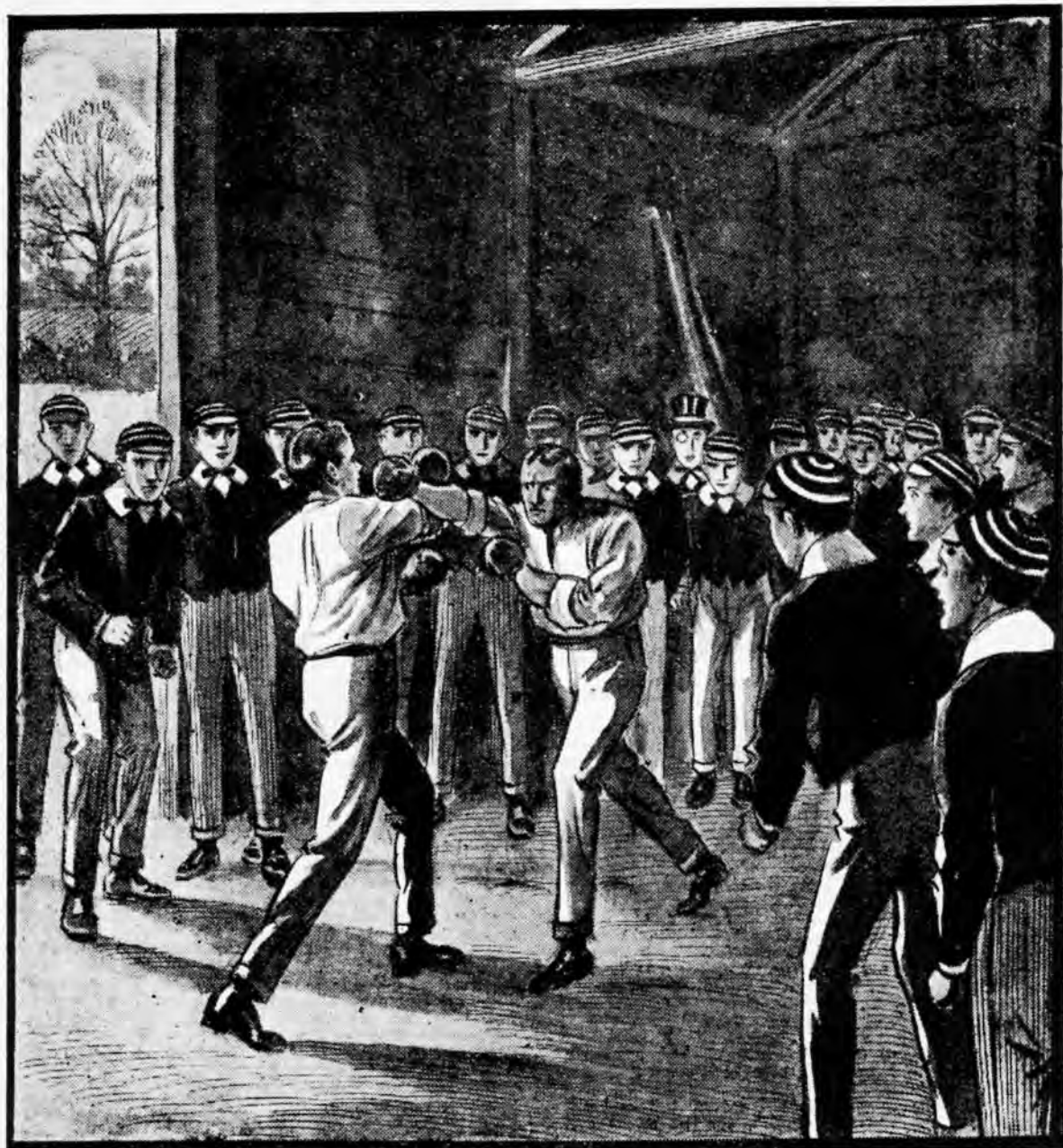
"What a frightful row there will be at Greyfriars!" said Mark Linley.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I knew there would be. I don't care! We've won the match."

"We shall all stand by you, anyway," said Wharton. "We'll go to the Head in a body, and put it to him. I hope it won't mean the—the—" He paused.

"The sack!" said Vernon-Smith, wincing a little. "I'm afraid it will, Wharton. Quelch will be feeling murderous after tramping about in the fields. But I've beaten him all



BLACK SCHOOLBOY VERSUS WHITE SCHOOLBOY! Round the walls of the old barn the juniors stood looking on, giving the combatants plenty of room. "Time!" called Kerr, and then the great fight commenced! (This picture appears on the cover of our companion paper, and is an incident taken from the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "A DISGRACE TO HIS HOUSE!" by Martin Clifford, in "THE GEM" LIBRARY. On sale at all newsagents' on Wednesday. Price One Penny.

along the line, and I can take my gruel afterwards without whining, I hope."

A hush fell on the juniors. Vernon-Smith had won the match for them—there was no doubt about that. But if he was to be expelled from Greyfriars—

The flavour of their triumph had lost its sweetness at the thought. It was too high a price to pay even for that longed-for victory, and they knew it. It was the Bounder's recklessness that he had to thank for it. His hardy, reckless nature had carried him too far this time. But their sympathies were all with him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

Meanwhile, Levison of the Fourth had sauntered into the House, and made his way to the Head's study. Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, was writing busily, but he stopped as Levison came in. Levison had the telegram in his hand, and the Head was not likely to observe that it had been opened and re-gummed.

"A telegram for you, sir," said Levison.

"Thank you, Levison!"

The Head took the telegram, and Levison left the study. Dr. Holmes opened it, and read the long message, and stared blankly. Then he hurriedly left his study.

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Late!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were coming out of the pavilion, after changing, when Tom Merry joined them. There was a shade of anxiety on the brow of the St. Jim's junior captain.

"The Head's coming down," he said. "I think he's had a wire."

"Now for it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I trust you are not going to get into a row, Smithay, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "Anyway, our Head can't whack you, that's one comfort."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"No; that's a pleasure in store at Greyfriars," he replied.

The Greyfriars juniors saluted Dr. Holmes respectfully.

Dr. Holmes was looking very worried and very anxious.

"Is there a boy among you named Vernon-Smith?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. That is my name."

Dr. Holmes fixed his eyes scrutinizingly upon the Bounder.

"I have received a telegram from Mr. Quelch, of Greyfriars. He informs me, Vernon-Smith, that you have left your school without leave to come here."

"That is correct, sir."

"I am asked to interfere, and to stop your playing in the football match. Unfortunately, the telegram has arrived too late for that. Had I received it in time, I should certainly have done as Mr. Quelch has requested."

"Yes, sir."

"Your master is coming here for you," said Dr. Holmes.

"He has not arrived yet. He has apparently been delayed on the journey."

Vernon-Smith smiled cheerfully.

"Looks like it, sir," he agreed.

"Perhaps you had better not go. Under the circumstances it would be better to wait till Mr. Quelch arrives."

"There's only one train for our school to-night, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "I have to return by that."

Dr. Locke would not like me to remain away all night. I suppose Mr. Quelch will have to do so if he comes here. But he may change his mind about coming."

"It is very odd that I did not receive the telegram earlier—"

"I intercepted it, sir."

The Bounder knew that when the Head compared notes with Mr. Quelch it must come out that the telegram had been intercepted, and he did not want Levison to suffer. Levison, who was standing among the juniors, looking on, caught his eye, and winked. He understood. It did not do the Bounder any harm to take that upon himself, along with the rest that he had to answer for, but it would save Levison from very unpleasant consequences.

Dr. Holmes raised his eyebrows.

"You intercepted my telegram!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir."

"Really, I—I—"

"I got it from the post-office boy," said the Bounder coolly, lying with the ease and fluency that comes of long practice. "He thought I was a St. Jim's chap. I kept it back, and asked Levison to bring it to you after the match."

The Head glanced at Levison.

"Is that the case, Levison?"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not know that Vernon-Smith had purposely kept my telegram back when you brought it to me?"

"He didn't say so, sir."

"Very well. Naturally you could not guess," said the Head unsuspiciously. "Vernon-Smith, are you aware that you have done a very serious thing?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I ask what your object was?"

"I wanted to play for my school, sir. I was needed in the team."

"Well, well, the matter does not concern me," said Dr. Holmes. "You will be dealt with by your own Headmaster, I presume. So far as I am concerned, I overlook your action."

"Thank you, sir!"

Dr. Holmes rustled away.

Harry Wharton's brows were contracted. The Bounder had played up wonderfully, and the sympathy of all the Greyfriars fellows was with him. But their sympathy was considerably chilled as they heard him uttering falsehoods to Dr. Holmes. It was to save Levison, who had helped him. But—a lie was a lie, and it was both wicked and mean. The Bounder's nature was a strange compound. It seemed that, even when he was at his best, he could not run quite straight.

"We've got a spread ready for you chaps!" Fatty Wynn. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

exclaimed, coming up as the Head turned away. "Lots of time before your train goes."

"Right-ho!"

In the autumn twilight the juniors walked away to the School House.

Tom Merry & Co. had done very well in the way of providing a feed for their guests. If Billy Bunter had been there he would have revelled in joy. The Greyfriars fellows did it full justice, and they parted at last with the St. Jim's juniors on the best of terms.

The brake came round to carry them to the station, and as many of the Saints as could cram into it accompanied them there. Vernon-Smith had had a little interview with Levison, and settled his account with that enterprising youth, leaving Levison of the Fourth in a state of great satisfaction.

The brake-load of juniors rolled away to the station in high spirits. The Bounder seemed to be in as high spirits as anybody. If he had any secret misgivings, he kept them to himself with great success. His manner was gay and lighthearted, as if his home-coming to Greyfriars did not trouble him in the least.

Vernon-Smith looked out quickly for Mr. Quelch in Rylcombe and at the station, but there was no sign of the Remove-master. The Bounder grinned at the thought that Mr. Quelch was probably still wandering in dark and muddy lanes.

The juniors crowded into the train, and good-byes were said.

Tom Merry & Co. waved their hats as the train rolled out of the station.

They walked back to St. Jim's, and reached the school just as a taxi-cab came rattling up to the gates. In the taxi was seated a severe-featured man, and they had no difficulty in guessing whom it was.

"Chap after old Smithy!" murmured Tom Merry.

"He's come too late!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Looks watty, doesn't he?"

Mr. Quelch did indeed look "ratty." He was feeling ratty. He alighted from the taxi outside the School House, and was shown into the presence of Dr. Holmes.

The Headmaster of St. Jim's greeted him with great courtesy. He sympathised with the Greyfriars' master, and, as a matter of fact, he was feeling an inward satisfaction that Vernon-Smith was not a St. Jim's boy. Mr. Quelch apologised for the trouble he had given, and inquired after the Bounder.

"The boys have gone," Dr. Holmes explained. "It appeared that the seven o'clock train was the last by which it would have been possible for them to return to Greyfriars to-night."

"That is true," said Mr. Quelch.

"You have lost it, I fear," said Dr. Holmes, consulting his watch. "Yes, it is considerably past seven now. Pray allow me to offer you the hospitality of St. Jim's for to-night."

Mr. Quelch thanked him. There was nothing else to be done, and he felt that it would be unwise to go to the Wayland Hotel. His original scheme had left him plenty of time to catch the train, but his unfortunate drive with old George had changed all that. He would not be back at Greyfriars until the morning.

"You received my telegram?" he asked.

"Yes; late, unfortunately."

"Then this boy, Vernon-Smith—"

"The match was finished before I received the telegram."

"That is very odd. It was despatched in good time."

"I am sorry to say that Smith has confessed to intercepting it," said Dr. Holmes. "It was owing to his intervention that the telegram did not reach me in time."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

The Remove-master spent that night at St. Jim's, after sending a telegram to Dr. Locke at Greyfriars to say that he was detained.

He had been beaten by the Bounder all along the line. He realised that. His telegram intercepted—and that drive—the lame horse—the incorrect directions given him by the beery cabman. Mr. Quelch was no fool, and he began to guess pretty correctly that the Bounder had been at the bottom of that too. He remembered seeing Levison talking to the hack-driver in Rylcombe; probably he had helped Vernon-Smith in playing that trick—for that it was a trick Mr. Quelch felt assured now. As he thought of that long and weary tramp in the fields and lanes his feelings towards Vernon-Smith were very bitter indeed.

The Bounder had triumphed, but only for a time. His triumph would be short-lived. As soon as the Remove-master arrived at Greyfriars the triumph would be reversed. The cool and determined junior would discover that authority

could not be set at defiance with impunity. When the reckoning came he would find that he had a heavy price to pay for his temerity.

Early in the morning Mr. Quelch was upon the homeward journey, and his face was very grim as the express bore him towards Greyfriars.

He had let the sun go down upon his wrath, and sunrise had found it undiminished. There would be no mercy from Mr. Quelch when the hour came for the Bouncer to face the reckoning. And now it was close at hand!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Game to the Last!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. arrived at Greyfriars at a late hour—just in time for bed, as a matter of fact. They found an eager crowd of fellows waiting for them.

All the Lower School wanted to know how the match had gone, but, above all, whether the Bouncer had escaped "old Quelch," and succeeded in playing in the match.

And there was a roar of cheering when the news was told. Greyfriars had won, and the Bouncer had kicked the winning goal—or, rather, charged it. The Bouncer was the hero of the hour, all the more because of the heavy punishment that was undoubtedly in store for him.

Coker of the Fifth gave the Bouncer a grim look. But he was not vengeful. He had spent most of his half-holiday in getting his stink-bike back from Loxham. But in view of the torrents of wrath that were about to pour upon the Bouncer's devoted head, Horace Coker magnanimously forgave him.

"You're going to get it in the neck, so you don't want any from me, you cheeky young scoundrel!" said Coker. "Blessed if I ever heard of a kid having such nerve! Blessed if I'm not sorry for you! Honest Injun!"

The Bouncer expected the Head to send for him, but no summons came. Dr. Locke was evidently letting the matter rest till Mr. Quelch returned.

"It's a night out for Quelch!" said Skinner when they went up to the dormitory. "He will be pink with fury when he gets back."

"Flogging or the sack, I wonder?" said Bolsover major meditatively. "Which do you think it will be, Smythy?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. "Must be one or the other; perhaps both," said Skinner. "Oh, shut up, you blessed Job's comforters," said Bob Cherry. "If it's the push, we'll all go to the Head and beg Smythy off."

The Bouncer gave a short laugh. "The Head wouldn't be likely to listen to you," he said. "We'll try!" said Wharton.

"It won't be any good." "I guess it's all U.P.," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "But I reckon you knew all along how it would work out, Smythy."

"Yes, I did." "Yet you did it," said Mark Linley.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders again. The juniors turned in. Wingate of the Sixth looked at Vernon-Smith very curiously when he came to put the lights out, but he did not speak to him. The Bouncer understood his look. Wingate regarded him as "sacked" already.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth. But he slept quite soundly, and looked perfectly fresh and cool in the morning when he turned out at the sound of the rising-bell.

The Remove lacked a master for first lesson that morning, and a prefect was placed in charge of the class. But during second lesson they heard the sound of wheels in the Close, and knew that Mr. Quelch had returned.

"Now for it!" murmured Skinner. Trotter, the page, looked in at the door five minutes later.

"Master Vernon-Smith's wanted in the 'Ead's study!" said Trotter.

"Buzz off, Smith," said Walker, the prefect. The Bouncer rose. Harry Wharton rose too. Walker stared at him.

"You're not sent for, Wharton," he said. "I think I ought to go with Smythy."

"Well, you can if you like," said Walker; "but it won't do Smythy any good. It may get you a licking."

"I don't mind that." The two juniors left the Form-room together, and proceeded to the Head's study. But before they entered Vernon-Smith stopped and touched Wharton lightly on the sleeve.

"No good your coming in," he said quietly. "I'm going to get it bad, and you can't help me. You may get licked for playing me yesterday at all, as I took French leave."

"I'll do my best, all the same." "You're a good sort," said the Bouncer, a little moved. "I'm sorry I've been up against you so much while I've been here."

"You—you think it's the finish, then?" "I know it is."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

NEXT MONDAY—**"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"**

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"I hope not," said Harry. But he felt that Vernon-Smith was right. After what Mr. Quelch had gone through, there was only one punishment that would seem adequate to his mind for the rebellious junior—and that he was certain to demand from the Head for Vernon-Smith. And the Head was not likely to refuse, for there was a long, long list of delinquencies against Vernon-Smith's name; he had long been in the Head's black books. His culminating offence would mark the finish of his reckless career at Greyfriars.

Wharton tapped at the door, and the two juniors entered the study. Mr. Quelch, looking very tired and very grim, was with the Head, and there was an expression of unusual severity upon the usually kind old face of Dr. Locke.

He glanced sharply at the captain of the Remove. "I sent for Vernon-Smith, Wharton, not for you!"

"I—I hoped you would allow me to say something for him, sir," faltered Wharton.

Dr. Locke raised his hand. "There is nothing that can be said in defence of such conduct!"

"Smythy knew we were in a fix. We wanted him badly. He broke bounds, I know, but—but it wasn't to do anything rotten," stammered Harry. "It was to help his Form out of a fix, sir!"

"I understand your feelings, Wharton," said the Head kindly enough. "But no defence can be made for Vernon-Smith's conduct. Nothing you can say will weigh with me. You may go."

There was nothing more to be said. Harry Wharton quitted the Head's study, and the Bouncer remained alone to meet his doom.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon the cold, calm, unrepentant face of the Bouncer.

"You left the school yesterday, Vernon-Smith, in direct defiance of your Form-master's orders?"

"Yes, sir." "You intercepted a telegram he had sent to the head-master of the school the junior eleven visited?"

"Yes, sir." "A trick was played upon Mr. Quelch to prevent his arrival at that school in time to take you away from the match. Were you concerned in it?"

"Yes, sir." The Bouncer's answers came quietly and firmly. He was about to receive his punishment, but no one should be able to say that he was not "game."

The Head paused for some moments. "You are surely aware, Vernon-Smith, that such conduct on your part cannot possibly be pardoned?"

Vernon-Smith was silent. "Have you any defence to offer?" Silence.

"Mr. Quelch demands that you shall be expelled from the school. His report of you is that you are the most disobedient and troublesome boy in his class. You seem to have no respect for authority, and what you practise yourself you teach to others. You cannot expect to remain at Greyfriars after what has happened, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bouncer's lips closed a little more tightly. He had expected it, but it was a blow.

Expelled!

It was scarcely possible for the Head to take any other course. If the Bouncer had had any hope, it was shattered now. He was expelled, and he was to look his last upon the old school where he had done much ill and little good.

He did not speak. There was nothing to be said. But he stood erect, with shoulders squared. Game to the last.

"I shall write to your father immediately," said Dr. Locke quietly. "You will leave Greyfriars to-day, Vernon-Smith."

"Very well, sir!" The Bouncer did not flinch.

"You may go!" Vernon-Smith walked out of the study.

When morning lessons were over the school was buzzing with the news. Vernon-Smith had been "sacked," and his father was coming to fetch him away. But in the midst of faces that were excited, gloomy, or concerned, as the case might be, there was one that was cool and careless, and that was Vernon-Smith's.

The Bouncer of Greyfriars was game to the last!

THE END.

(Next Monday's grand, long, complete tale of Vernon-Smith and the Chums of Greyfriars is entitled "The Vanished Schoolboy!" by Frank Richards. Order your "MAGNET" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

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By SIDNEY DREW, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rourke, Gan-Waga the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, and the adventurers at last catch sight of "Mysteria." The mysterious island—bare and ghostly-looking—appears to be floating in the sky. It is a mirage, but, as Ferrers Lord points out, there can never be a mirage without a substance. The millionaire determines to start in pursuit of the floating island at once, but a terrific volcanic eruption occurs, in the course of which a blazing fireball falls on the Lord of the Deep, passing through her from deck to keel. The millionaire runs the submarine aground in the bay of the nearest island, and sends Ching Lung and Thurston with a party of men in the launch to cut some logs. On landing the party are confronted by a curious figure in a red tam-o'-shanter, who warns them that the island belongs to Germany. They ignore the warning, and Redcap—by name Julius Faber—returns with a party of ragged-looking ruffians, and forces them to leave the island by swimming, under cover of the fog. Ching-Lung, remaining behind, is captured and imprisoned in a cave. One of his captors, a man named Bullock, less brutal than the rest, refreshes him with some water. While his captors are in a drunken sleep, Ching-Lung manages to get free, and securely ties them up. In the meantime, Ferrers Lord and some of the crew go in search of him. They are on their way back to the submarine when Ching Lung is seen to be running along the sands, hotly pursued by his former captors. He is taken aboard the boat, the members of which immediately open fire at the ruffians on the beach. After several minutes the latter fly. Julius Faber announces his intention of mining the creek so that the submarine cannot get out without being blown to pieces. Hal Honour is still at work on the damaged plates of the vessel, and Ferrers Lord and his friends go down to watch the engineer at work. While they are down at the bottom of the sea a terrific explosion takes place, a boatload of Faber's ruffians having fouled one of their own mines, and been blown up. Unaware of this, however, Ferrers Lord having rigged up a canvas boat, prepares an expedition with the object of capturing Faber's vessel. Meanwhile, Gan-Waga is asleep in the swimming-bath.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Recovery of the Launch—Afloat Again—The Figure on the Cliff.

"No bloodshed if you can avoid it, lads," said Ferrers Lord. "Where's the Eskimo, Ching?"

"Asleep and snoring. He knows nothing about it."

"Let him sleep."

He jerked back the lever. Barry winked at Maddock. They were pretty sure that Gan-Waga would soon waken up when he found his bed vanishing. The water rushed out, and the submarine rose to the surface. As he glanced through the glass Ferrers Lord uttered an exclamation of satisfaction. The sky was starless, and the night quiet and calm.

The door of the conning-tower closed behind them, locking itself automatically. They quickly launched the boat.

"All aboard, and be very careful," came the millionaire's quiet voice. "Let her go!"

Very gingerly they took their places. Prout, whose eyesight was magnificent, knelt on the bows on watch. There was no hurry, and they pulled gently and silently. What little tide there was ran inshore.

"If she shows no lights it will be a bit difficult to find her," said Thurston.

"It will not be so dark out there. The cliffs make it more gloomy than it really is."

"We'll find her, if we have to borrow a bloodhound to track her down by scent," grinned Ching-Lung. "I expect Barry will be able to do that, though, if there's any whisky aboard. He's got a marvellous nose for grog."

"So Oi have, sor, so Oi have," admitted the Irishman. "Ut's a gift in our family, be jabers, and my Uncle Dennis

"Starboard all!" cried Prout warningly.

The order was promptly obeyed, and some dark object glided past them.

"Pull round!" said the millionaire. "What was that?"

It was a mass of floating wreckage. Maddock clutched it with a boathook. A ray of light shot from the flash-lamp in Ferrers Lord's hand.

"Thurston," he said, in his cool, even way: "I am sorry to say there will be no sea-trip for you. Your yacht has been blown to bits."

The heap of splintered wreckage drifting up the creek told the story of the disaster as plainly as if the inanimate wood and iron had possessed the gift of speech. The biter had been bitten with a vengeance; the assassin had been stabbed with his own knife.

"And to think," muttered Barry, in accents of disgust and disappointment, "that we lost our blissful rist sittin' up at noight buildin' this rag-boat all for nothin'! And, which is enough to make a Dutch doll shed tears, there'll be no fight. Oi knowed at wud be loike this, bad luck to ut!"

Barry's remarks, made in a gruff undertone, were incoherent, and unheard by the others.

"I hope there were not many of the poor wretches aboard her!" said Thurston sadly.

"I hope not; and it is probable that there were only two or three. Well, this has put an end to half our troubles and all our present plans," said Ferrers Lord. "It is a great pity, in one respect. Pull round!"

This sudden finish to what had promised to be an exciting adventure was a great disappointment to them all. Fate, always resistless, had ruined a very pretty little scheme.

Barry sighed heavily. There would be no fighting that

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night, at least, and to miss a fight was pain and grief to the warlike son of old Erin.

They pulled on gently, showing no lights. Faber and his men might be lying in ambush ashore.

"This ought to knock all the heart out of those fellows, Lord!" said Ching-Lung.

"That wholly depends on the kind of stuff they are made of, Ching," answered the millionaire. "They will either give way to despair or pull themselves together and strain every nerve to capture us. Such a disaster would not take the heart out of us. We have often been in tighter corners."

"That's true, souse me!" grunted Maddock, whose Christian name was Benjamin.

"Faith, O'd sooner be in a tight corner than in tight boots!" remarked Barry O'Rooney's voice. "O' wance bought a pair o' boots—"

"Then the shopman must ha' been lookin', or you'd ha' pinched 'em, by hokey!" said Prout, from the bows. "Easy! Starboard this time. There's another floatin' timber yard ahead!"

They slid past another tangle of floating wreckage that the steersman's keen eyes had discovered. After such an impolite interruption, and this slight upon his honesty, Barry declined to continue the anecdote. The lamp flashed cautiously forward, and flickered on a buoy, to which an electric button was attached.

"T-r-r-ring! T-r-r-ring! T-r-r-ring!" rasped the bell in the submarine's conning-tower.

A submerged lamp gave three flickers, and the divers left their work and entered the diving chamber. The boat shot back out of danger, and, sending a surge of water down the creek, the Lord of the Deep rose to the surface.

"This is a jolly stale finish!" said Ching-Lung. Can't we do something else? If I'm anything of a prophet, Red Nob and his gang will all be drunk to-night. They're the proper brand for that sort of thing. If they're miserable, they get drunk to celebrate the event; and if they're happy, they do likewise. They all belong to the rum-and-tobacco brigade, and they're pretty sure to celebrate this Guy Fawkes business with a regular beanfeast."

"And the launch is still up yonder, by hokey!" said Prout, pointing into the gloom.

"Unless they've smashed her to tin-tacks," added Maddock. "The brutes may have done it, souse me!"

Ferrers Lord gave an order, and the men brightened up magically. Prout flew up the ladder and down into the store-room. His arms were loaded with canvas, cordage, and tow when he returned.

"Pull!"

The boat stole into the gloom of the Pillars, and the Lord of the Deep sank silently. Every man strained his sense of hearing and of sight. If Faber had laid an ambush, they felt that they were very close to it. But the boat moved on unchallenged through the dark.

"I have an idea that you are something of a prophet, Ching, after all," said Ferrers Lord, in a low voice.

"You bet I am, old man! I don't include Red Nob, however. He's not the sort of man to drink, by the look of him, but he won't be able to keep the others in hand to-night. The trouble will be to locate the launch."

"Oh, we shall manage that," said the millionaire confidently. "That is nothing to worry about. But I still have a healthy respect for your chum of the scarlet head-gear. If he has any more gunpowder at his disposal he might still shut us in by blasting the cliffs near the bar. A big fall of rock would cause us endless trouble."

"Admitted, dear boy; but it won't happen to-night," answered the prince, with a chuckle. "They'll be too busy."

"And to-morrow we shall drop into deeper water, and finish the repairs there."

"What are you two muttering about?" asked Thurston.

"Is there some dreadful conspiracy afoot?"

"Rats!" said the elegant Ching-Lung. "Don't insult us. What do you take us for? Do you fancy we're such old-fashioned dodderers as to have our conspiracies afoot? We ride our conspiracies in ninety horse-power motor-cars these times. Stop blowing on my neck, Gan-Waga, my Eskimos. I don't want a stiff neck, thank you kindly!"

"I not's blowing, Chingy!" retorted Gan-Waga.

"Well, don't do it again, that's all I ask, dear," said his Highness. "You'll blow a hole through the iron-plated bottom of this man-of-war, and then we shall get our tootsies wet. Pull a bit harder, if you're not tired."

They quickened their stroke, and the tide was in their favour.

"How far up did you go, Ching?"

"Right to the top of the tree, and then the branch gave—I beg your pardon, old man. I was thinking you meant the time I went to take the cow's-nest out of the tomato-tree. We went about a mile and a half, if I remember. I'd left my six-inch rule at home, so I can't tell to a barley-corn, and there aren't any milestones in this river. If you'd switch the sun on I could tell you more."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

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"Absolute idiot!" said Rupert Thurston.

"Poor old Tommy! I know he is, Ru!" grinned the prince. "He reminds me of the old lady who put her cow on the cottage roof to eat the grass off. I'm glad it's so dark, because he won't be able to hear what we are saying about him. Do you know how he got that bald head? Do you know why it's so smooth and shiny?"

"We'll land here," said Ferrers Lord quietly.

The boat gently touched the bank, and Maddock clutched a bunch of grass, seized the rope, and sprang ashore. A faint hint of grey in the eastern sky warned them that the dawn was not far away.

"Divide, lads, and beat the bank," said Ferrers Lord. "We have not much time to spare. I'll stay with the boat. Keep looking this way. One flash will be the signal to return."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Thurston, Prout, and Maddock turned up-stream, and Gan, Barry, and Ching-Lung went in the other direction. The dense shadow swiftly hid them from the millionaire. He paced up and down on the soft, dewy grass, listening to the ripple of the water, and the distant cries of the sea-birds. Then he halted and bent forward. The next instant, uttering a quiet laugh, he was standing beside the object of their quest, the stolen electric launch.

She lay on her side. The lamp, held above his head, emitted one vivid flash.

"What's amiss?" called Ching-Lung cautiously.

"Nothing at all. I have found the boat. Hold your coats so as to hide the light while I examine her."

Stripping off their coats, they gathered round him.

"The canvas," said Ferrers Lord. "We can plug this hole in a makeshift way."

"Is that all the damage, sir?" asked Prout eagerly, for he regarded the launch as his own property.

"All I can see at present. Be quick there."

They set to work by the light of the carefully screened lamp, Prout as happy as a sandboy. Two floorboards were lashed inside and out, and oily tow was rammed tightly between them. Then a sheet of canvas was drawn under her bows.

"She'll do it, souse me," said Maddock. "Wi' a bit of bailing she'll do it easy."

The perspiration rolled from them before they had got her nose into the water, for, in order not to shift the canvas and packing, they were compelled to keep her bows clear of the ground. The east was rapidly whitening. She slid into the river at last, and only a strong effort of self-restraint kept the men from giving a lusty cheer. A mist was rising with the dawn, as it generally did on the island of the Twin Pillars.

"That is something in our favour," said Ferrers Lord, glancing over the ghostly landscape. "We had better make a sharp dash for it. Tumble in, Maddock, and bail if it is necessary."

A little trickle of water squeezed its way through the plugged hole, but very little. Ferrers Lord seized the long-barrelled repeating pistol that hung at his hip, a weapon almost as long-ranged and deadly as a rifle.

"Go!" he cried.

Balancing himself in the flimsy craft, he peered through the grey swathes of fog. If they were attacked in the narrow channel between the pillars, he knew that some of them would not live to see the sunrise. They shot on towards the cluster of rocks where Faber had ambushed his men the day he had made Ching-Lung a prisoner.

The mist rolled round them, and their tops showed up like reefs in a grey sea.

"Look!" gasped Ching-Lung. "Look there, old man!"

A round red object seemed to float on the crest of the fog some ninety yards away. Ferrers Lord rested the pistol on his left wrist. It spat spitefully three times. A cry came back, and the red object vanished.

"Pull!" shouted Rupert Thurston.

They needed no bidding. The light canvas boat and her heavy consort hissed through the water.

"I fancy our friend of the red tam-o'-shanter is hurt," said Ferrers Lord. "He came at an unlucky moment."

"It's a pity, though, if you've spoiled his hat by boring a hole through it, old man," said Ching-Lung, almost brutally. "I wanted that trophy for my special museum, as I told you. How careless of you!"

"That's a pretty way to talk even of a foe if he's down, Ching," said Thurston.

"Who said—"

A bullet dashed the water into Ching-Lung's face. Julius Faber was not down yet. He burst out of the fog, and dropped prone on the bank, but he had discarded his tam-o'-shanter, a dangerous mark for a bullet. Again the spiteful

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

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pistol cracked three times, and the report of a rifle bellowed through the fog.

"A dead wide that time," said Ching-Lung. "It's a peanut to a pony I was right, old man. All the rest are fast asleep, and a mighty lucky thing for us. Didn't I tell you old Red Nob was the only sober one in the pack?"

Was the man hit? The boats swept on rapidly, and rushed through the pillars. On the bank Julius lay cursing and writhing with pain, for a bullet had almost severed the thumb from the scoundrel's right hand.

"T-r-r-ring! T-r-r-ring! T-r-r-ring!"

At the signal from above the divers were recalled, and the pumps forced the water from the submarine's tanks. As her shining conning-tower broke the placid surface of the water into a thousand ripples, the sun rose above the horizon. How they cheered! Swiftly both boats were taken aboard, and Joe, in his leaden boots, actually danced a hornpipe.

"Well, Honour, report progress," said the millionaire.

The engineer had been divested of his helmet. He smiled and uttered one word:

"Excellent!"

"I am rather nervous that they will attempt to block up the bay. Can you finish in deeper water?"

The man of deeds and silence answered with a nod, and took the wheel. There was another tremendous cheer as they heard the unfamiliar music of the engines. The Lord of the Deep was no longer a semi-helpless cripple. She was recovering her strength fast, and was once more a thing of life. As her mighty shafts beat to and fro, she moved slowly out of the bay that had threatened to be her grave.

"To celebrate this glorious event of history, boys," said Ching-Lung, who was celebrating the event himself by smoking two cigars at once. "I'll go to the expense of giving each of you a special medal."

"Gold medales, hunk, Chingy?" inquired the blubber-biter.

"No, my son. Tin medals cut out of sardine-boxes with mottoes on. The motto on Tommy's will be, 'There's air.' On Barry's I shall inscribe—"

"Look up yonder, sir!" cried Joe.

The vessel had cleared the bar. On the summit of the left pillar stood a human figure.

"Red Nob, by Jupiter," said Ching-Lung. "And he's still wearing my hat."

It was Faber, watching the escape of his foes. His castles in the air had crumbled to dust. He was marooned.

Gan-Waga asks a Riddle and gets a very Wrong Answer—More Queer Visitors.

To repair a vessel injured below the water-line sufficiently well to tow her into port and dry-dock her is one matter, but to repair her thoroughly and place her in working order without a dry dock is something very different indeed. Few men would have grappled with such a task except Hal Honour, but the dauntless engineer loved difficulties for the sheer desire to conquer them.

All experienced a sense of relief and security when the submarine settled down in fairly deep water far out of reach of Julius Faber and his myrmidons.

"We have been rather hampered in our chase after Mysteria," said the millionaire, as they sat down to breakfast with raging appetites; "but we shall soon be en voyage in earnest again, I trust."

"And what about our high, mighty, and most illustrious Red Nob, sonny?" asked the Prince of Kwai-hal.

"Oh, let him stay where he is. We may make a call on him another time."

"That's all very well," said Ching-Lung. "What about his hat? I want that hat particularly, and in the meantime it may be worn out. It's a queer thing the fancy I've taken to that sham-o'-tanter. The thing would suit old Ganny-Wagtail down to the very ground. In that hat the blubber-biter would look like a—like a—here, what would you look like in that red hat, Eskimoses?"

"I look just like an Eskimo in a reds hat, Chingy," answered Gan-Waga truthfully.

"My yes; there's some sense in that remark. I reckon you would. You're getting sharp. Can you tell me why Rupert bought that red necktie he's wearing?"

"Not knows, Chingy. Why, hunk?"

"Because the gentleman in the shop wasn't such a ham-faced donkey as to give it him for nothing," said Ching-Lung, "that's why he bought it. If you can't answer an easy riddle like that you ought to stick your left foot in your right ear and squeal like a cucumber, Wagtail. You're a juffy-muff."

Gan tittered as he thought it over and drank the remainder of the succulent gravy out of the bacon-dish. He fancied the riddle was altogether too good to waste, so he waddled out

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to find a victim. Close to the galley he ran against Herr Schwartz, who was indulging in an early cigarette. The little German fixed a rather distrustful eye on Gan, for he was not passionately fond of the Eskimo. Things had happened between them that had practically dried up the well of the cook's affection. Gan greeted him with a beaming smile and a sweeping bow.

"Mornings," he smiled. "Yo' looks butterfuls handsomer, hunk! Yo' was good 'nough healthy, hunk."

"B-r-r-r! I was alrude, is ut," said the chef. "I was none petters for dot I see you, not von leetle pit."

"Dids he, hunk?" said Gan. "Yo' answers funny giggles, hunk? Why yo' buys dose checks trousers, hunk? Dey butterfuls trousers, awfuls good 'nough, buts why yo' buys dems, hunk?"

Herr Schwartz glared at him, but Gan's expression was as sweet as honey, and as mild as milk.

"Dunder, I dem dit py for dot I like dem, und vy nod, is ut?"

"Noes, yo' didn't," grinned the Eskimo. "Yo' buys dems because de ole mans in de shops not fam-haced donkeys 'nough to gives dems yo' fo' nuffin. Ho, ho, ho, hoo! Dat whys yo' buys dems. He, he, he, hee! If yo' nots ables answer easy giggles likes him, yo' stick you lefts ear in yo' rights foot and squeal like a cucumbers. Ho, ho, ho, hoo-oo-ow! Yo' a fluff-muffs. He-he-hee-ee-oooh! Ha, aaa-aa-ahh!"

Gan-Waga, in high delight at having fired off this witicism so successfully, laid a hand on each of his knees and rocked to and fro with laughter. An arm closed round his neck, and Gan was shot through the doorway of the galley before he could offer any resistance. Then, with a terrific "B-r-r-r!" expressive of intense wrath and a fierce desire for vengeance, the little German chef bounded into the air and brought both hands down on the back of the Eskimo's head, driving Gan's face deep down into a pan of dough—so deep, that the white mass welled over his ears.

With the same display of struggle and agility and a whole volley of "B-r-r-r-r's!" Herr Schwartz hurled Ching-Lung's prize beauty out into the cold corridor and banged the door behind him. Gan sat down wearily and scraped.

"Allo! Souse me! What 'ave you been doin'?" asked the gruff voice of Maddock. "Where have you been pushin' that shipwreck of a face of yours? Hare you a snowman, souse me, or is it only paleness through over-eatin'?"

He stirred up the blubber-biter with his boot. One sparkling eye gleamed through the white mask.

"I beens axings giggles, Benjamins!" sighed a mournful voice. "Ow, bad 'nough! Ow, awfulness bad 'nough! I axes silly cook a butterfuls riggle, and he bash my faces wid dis. I break him faces fo' doings it! Ow, beautiful!"

"Are it dough, souse me?" inquired the bo'sun, taking a portion of the mixture between his finger and thumb. "Or are it thick whitewash? Axin' riddles, was you? I reckon you've got the answer, then. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Peel it orf afore it bakes into bread. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Sarves you right, you taller-shifter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Rumbling with merriment, the burly bo'sun went off about his business. With one movement Gan-Waga scooped the whole mass from his face. With hardly less celerity he moulded it into a ball, and hurled it after Maddock with accurate aim.

It is said that every bullet finds its intended billet, and that particular bullet was not ordained for Maddock, if the saying is a true one. It ought to have struck Maddock squarely on the back of the head, but Fate intervened. The bo'sun of the Lord of the Deep stooped to light his pipe, and Thomas Prout stepped down the ladder.

Prout stopped the flying ball of dough with his left ear, and it spread over his face and round his neck with a sharp, clacking noise like the crack of a whip. Gan-Waga removed himself hastily as he heard the steersman's anguished bellow, and saw him clawing at his face.

"Souse me!" panted Benjamin Maddock, aghast.

"What the—Ow! Drat it! I've done it!"

In his astonishment he had bitten the stem of his short clay pipe, and he nearly swallowed the bitten piece.

Thomas Prout cleared his eyes and mouth, and glared at the innocent steersman like a wild beast glares at its prey.

"Luff!" roared Maddock, expecting an immediate attack. "Avast! Belay! It warn't me, souse me! I didn't do it, Tommy! I reckon he meant it for me, but missed. It was that woolly Heskimo, souse me!"

"I'll eat him!" shrieked Prout. "Where is he?"

"Where is he? D'ye think he'd stop to kiss you better? He's clapped on all sail and sloped, in coorse. I seed him sittin' down yonder wi' all that stuff tied round his face and he telled me the cook done it, souse me! You'll 'ave to save it hup for him, the candle-chewin' freak. Tommy, I'm sorry as you stopped it, but I'd ha' been a sight sorrier

to ha' pushed my own face agen it like you did. Did it 'urt?"

"No, it didn't!" yelled Prout. "I like it. I did it myself a-purpose, you great grinnin' gawk! I does it often, by hokey, just for fun! I'm laughin' my 'ead off! It's funnier than a pantomime, ain't it?"

Maddock shook his head sadly, and left him to scrape. He was still scraping and growling when Ching-Lung found him.

"Good gracious me and lawk-a-mussy!" said Ching-Lung. "Have you been bleaching your whiskers, Tommy?"

"No, sir!" snarled the steersman. "I've been down a coal-mine lookin' for sparrers' eggs!"

"Find any?"

Prout squared himself. With pieces of the dough clinging to his shaggy eyebrows, his ears, and his beard, it was hard for the steersman to look dignified or stern.

"Look 'ere, sir," he said, smiting his left palm with his right fist, "this 'ere has got to be finished quick!"

"Then why don't you use soap and water? You'd finish in half the time," said Ching-Lung.

Then Ching-Lung passed on, and as he passed he winked at nothing in particular—a sly and crafty wink.

The wearied toilers took a well-earned rest, and so did Gan-Waga. He did not want to drop across Mr. Thomas Prout for some time.

Before turning in, Hal Honour looked over the engines to see that all was snug and shipshape. The ship was wrapped in slumber as he came up the steps, and he saw no living soul except Gan-Waga, who had crept out of the swimming-bath now that the coast was clear, in search of something to eat.

"Not in bed?" asked the engineer laconically.

"Bad 'nough hungrys!" gurgled the Eskimo, trying the door of the galley. "Can't sleep. Want somes grub."

The door was locked, however, and Herr Schwartz had taken away the key.

Honour pointed towards his own cabin.

"Biscuits," he said.

Gan-Waga preferred butter to biscuits at any season of the year, but he accepted the offer gratefully. As he was far too wet to enter any respectable cabin, he waited outside.

The door swung to. An instant later Gan-Waga was startled by a piercing yell, followed by a burst of diabolical laughter and a loud, pounding noise. Another yell followed, accompanied by a tremendous crash, and the door swung open again.

The Eskimo stood almost stupefied, his eyes big with bewilderment and terror. Hal Honour had gone suddenly mad. He was dancing, swinging his arms, yelling and laughing in the middle of his cabin, with such a look on his face as Gan had never seen on mortal man's. He leapt on the low bed with a shriek of insane laughter, and from it sprang clean over a chair.

Then the madness seized Gan-Waga. He, too, began to dance and howl. His limbs felt as light as air, and the blood ran like quicksilver through his veins. He capered, kicked, and screamed.

A figure in pyjamas rushed down the corridor—Ferrers Lord. In a moment the alarm bell was clanging and clattering, and the water was rushing out of the tanks.

The Lord of the Deep was afloat, and the fresh air poured in.

"Open all the ports," shouted Ferrers Lord, "and bring these two on deck! One of the oxygen tanks is leaking!"

Hal Honour and the Eskimo were almost exhausted. Too much oxygen is as fatal as too little. Its first effect is a feeling of delight and exultation, then comes raving lunacy; after that exhaustion and death. When the submarine was under water an artificial atmosphere had to be provided. By some mishap an oxygen tank beneath the engineer's cabin had begun to leak badly.

Once in the fresh air both men speedily revived, and could laugh at the queer adventure.

An inspection showed that the valve of a large tank was thoroughly out of order, and that thousands of cubic feet of the gas had escaped. With unlimited apparatus at their disposal for manufacturing more, the loss was a minor matter.

"Drop the anchor, Prout," said Ferrers Lord. "We may as well be up here as below."

A calmer sea could not have been imagined, and the island, in the bright sunshine, looked superbly beautiful. Most of them, however, were too tired to enjoy scenery. Hammocks were what they needed, and to their hammocks they went.

(Another powerful instalment of this grand serial
next Monday.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 297.

SPECIAL FEATURE!

Greyfriars Lyrics

BY

"The Magnet" Library's Own Rhymster.

No. 12.—PERCY BOLSOVER.

A burly brute we now behold,
A bully overpowering;
And kids on whom he has a hold
Before him oft are cowering.
Though good to have a giant's strength,
And stand aloof, defiant,
He goes to a tyrannic length
Who wields it as a giant.

The bully, since the days of yore,
Has been the Bounder's warrior;
And those who formed the Famous Four
Have made him feel the sorrier.
Full oft to fight the foes have dashed,
And seldom stopped or slackened,
Result: Six nasal organs smashed,
And twenty orbits blackened!

In deepest depths of London's slums,
'Mid scenes that none can smother,
Where roughs regale with gins and rums,
There lived the bully's brother.
A pleasant lad, with honest eyes,
Though evil reigned around him;
And great was everyone's surprise
When those at Greyfriars found him.

The youngster, in great eagerness,
Arrived at school with Percy;
The latter, though, did not possess
The quality of mercy.
He made the little fellow's life
A cause of endless pity,
Until the lad preferred the strife
That waged within the City.

When all were wrapt in sleep one night,
Forth did the junior sally,
Resolving on a speedy flight
To those at Angel Alley.
He sped away in eager haste,
Eluding "Tubby" Tozer;
And how his movements could be traced
Appeared a perfect poser.

Poor Billy for a time seemed doomed
To dreary isolation,
And, battling bravely, he resumed
His former occupation.
With "News" and "Star" he dashed around,
Proclaiming each edition,
Until at length the lad was found
In quite a weak condition.

His major, stricken with remorse,
Repented long and fully,
And rarely now resorts to force,
Or seeks to beat and bully.
Yet spite of such a change, I fear
His ways will not be sounder
Until he ceases to revere
The cute and crafty Bounder.

LOOK OUT FOR GRAND NEW FEATURE ON THIS PAGE NEXT WEEK!



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY.
 EVERY WEDNESDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
 is always
 pleased to
 hear from
 his Chums,
 at home or
 abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

This magnificent complete tale of school life at Greyfriars deals principally with the efforts made by Vernon-Smith—the Bouncer of Greyfriars—to get the sentence of expulsion, under which he is lying, rescinded by the Head. The resourceful Bouncer leaves no stone unturned to remain at Greyfriars, and the school authorities have a lively time indeed! It is Mr. Quelch himself, the Remove Form-master, who is finally made the unwilling instrument whereby

"THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY"

gains the end he so fervently desires.

TWO MORE "MAGNET" LEAGUES.

The following two readers are anxious to hear from any fellow-readers willing to join a "Magnet" League in their respective districts:

Master John Reay, "The Northern League," 95, George Street, Willington Quay-on-Tyne.

Master W. H. Bresford, No. 16, Dyvathy Street, Swansea.

FIVE COPIES TO ONE HOUSE!

In the course of an interesting letter, another correspondent, G. R., of Maida Hill, mentions that he would like to join a League in his district, though he is not able to start one himself. I give this correspondent's letter below, except for a few lines in which he is kind enough to compliment me so highly that I have cut that part out simply to spare my blushes!

"Maida Hill, London, W.

"Dear Editor,—Seeing that so many of your readers write to you, I'd thought I'd follow their example. I think the "Gem" and "Magnet" and "Penny Popular" are absolutely the three best books ever written, or likely to be written. Allow me to congratulate you. I am very anxious for a reader to start a 'Magnet' or 'Gem' League in this district. I would myself but I think it's a bit above my weight, and I'm very busy trying to pass an examination. I've read every 'Magnet' that has been printed, and there is not one that I've not been loth to leave. All my brothers read the Trio, and every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, five books, all yours, are delivered here. None of us are content to wait for the other to read his first, and then to borrow it.

"We send our favourites to the local school, where they go within five seconds from the time they are placed on the table. One master told my elder brother that one day he had an absolutely model class because, he said, the best boys would receive one of the 'Magnets.' Wishing your paper every success, I remain, yours sincerely—G. R. (A loyal reader of the Trio.)"

Many thanks, G. R.! You and your brothers are loyal readers indeed! I wonder if that is a record for one house, to have five copies of each of "The Invincible Trio" delivered each week? Can any of your fellow-readers beat this, think you?

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Note.—Will Miss Mabel Godfrey (Catford) please note that Master Chas. Engel has removed from his former address in Limehouse to 204, Burdett Road, Bow, London, E?

C. W.—I cannot promise to do what you ask.

W. N. (Wood Green).—(1) Smoking is a very bad habit, and it interferes with the health. (2) Not only is it against the law to smoke before a lad is sixteen, but to start smoking at that time of life means you will ruin your wind for life. (3) The wage you mention is quite good considering you have no expenses.

"Rangiorian".—Very many thanks for your letter. I am very pleased to hear your mother approves of your reading the famous companion papers. Why not send along your name and address, and I will put it in the Correspondence Exchange in the "Gem" Library? Thousands of readers abroad have done so, and have benefited from it.

A. J. P. (Kensington).—Very many thanks for your interesting letter. I am very pleased to hear you are going to continue trying your luck at "Poptets." As regards the matter of boxing, etc., I am afraid I cannot find room for this at present.

"Cumberland Reader".—Thanks for your letter. I should advise you to write to the "Connoisseur," Maddox Street, Regent Street, London, W., who will be able to give you the exact value of your book.

SOME FOOTBALL RECORDS.

The Money in the Game.

Hampden Park is the ground that has held the greatest number of spectators that ever attended a football match in the United Kingdom. This was on March 23rd, 1912, when Scotland tied with England, a match that was witnessed by 127,307 people.

The gate receipts were £5,197 15s., to which must be added £1,800 taken at the stands and enclosures, making a total of £6,997 15s.

The biggest gate, however, ever taken at a football match in the United Kingdom, was at the English Cup Final between Aston Villa and Sunderland at the Crystal Palace, April 19th, 1913. The amount taken was £9,406 9s.!

The highest cheque ever paid to F.A. Cup Finalists was paid to Barnsley in the season of 1909-10. The amount was £5,390 9s. 8d.

Old Trafford holds the record for a mid-week attendance, which is 66,646. This huge crowd assembled to witness the match between Bradford City and Newcastle in the replayed English Cup-tie Final, April 26th, 1911.

The record attendance for an English League match was at Stamford Bridge on December 27th, 1909, when Chelsea played Newcastle United, and is estimated at 66,000.

Goal-Shooting Extraordinary.

W. Davies—Blackburn Rovers—on two occasions scored four goals in succession whilst playing in League matches in the season 1908-9. Once against Everton and once against Bristol City. Both matches were away.

The match between the Football League and the Irish League, played at Anfield, on October 16th, 1911, resulted in a win for the former by four goals to nil, all of which were scored by Harry Hampton—Aston Villa. Hampton also scored five goals for Aston Villa in a League match against Sheffield Wednesday, at Aston, October 5th, 1912.

William Townley—Blackburn Rovers—created a record for English Cup Finals when he scored three goals against Sheffield Wednesday at the Oval in the season of 1899-90. The "hat-trick" was performed three times in one month (January, 1909) by Holford—Manchester City—at Hyde Road. The opposing teams were Bradford City, League; Tottenham Hotspur, English Cup-tie; and Everton, League.

Bert Freeman—Everton—scored three goals against Chelsea on March 20th, 1909, and by so doing broke the League record of 31 goals, previously held by S. Raybould, of Liverpool. Freeman's goals for the season, in League matches only, totalled 33.

me here. Duty will keep me. But I must have drugs. Without them I am absolutely powerless to save a single life. 'Tis enough to drive a man mad, after all the trouble and expense I have been put to to bring those drugs into the stricken town, to have them stolen by a lot of villains to whom they are not of the slightest use!"

"Suppose we give you our services to help you to recover the drugs?" said Jack.

"Men do not usually give their services for nothing."

"Still, I suppose there are exceptions to that rule. For instance, your case."

"Well, I have the interest of science at heart. By remaining here even for one night you will be risking your lives."

"I reckon we are prepared to take that risk," said Sam.

"Dat's so!" exclaimed Pete. "We hâb travelled about dis country too long to catch fever."

"Don't you make too sure," said Hake, glancing with admiration at Pete's magnificent frame. "I have seen strong men rendered as weak as infants in a few days. I, myself, have been stricken down three times by it. Still, if you are willing to help me in the cause of humanity I dare not refuse such an offer."

"We will help you in any way in our power," said Jack.

"Why, suttinly!" exclaimed Pete. "It's mighty bad to see little children die like dat."

"Come this way, then, and I will introduce you to Kala, the chief," said Hake. "He is the most sensible man in the tribe, but even he is afraid of the medicine-man, Dafu. The old rascal pretends I have brought the pestilence upon them by offending a hideous-looking idol before which he makes incantations. I wish the thing was smashed up. Kala speaks English, so does Dafu, and you will hear the sort of thing I have to contend with."

The little doctor led them to a spacious building on the shore of the great lake. The chief's palace was of sandstone, which was worn away by age and storms, especially on the southern side, where the waves from the enormous lake burst upon it in tempestuous weather. But the inside of the building was in a state of good preservation, while it was furnished with a luxury that somewhat surprised the comrades.

Kala, the chief, was a man of imposing appearance, and he received the comrades in a very friendly manner. Then he called his medicine-man—Dafu—forward.

He was of abnormal breadth across the shoulders, while his arms, which were bare to the shoulders, were exceptionally long and muscular. His face was of a deep bronze, and there was a very evil expression in his small, deeply-set black eyes, while his forehead was low and receding.

"Kala, chief of the Tuarecks," he cried, pointing at the comrades, "I warn you that you will bring disaster on your people if you allow those meh to remain here. Even now Tor's anger is aroused, and it will need all my skill to propitiate him."

"Who is Tor, old hoss?" inquired Pete.

"Behold! There he stands!" answered Dafu, pointing at a hideous-looking idol, with huge, downward-curved tusks in place of teeth. "Beware how you arouse his passions!"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Why, you don't tink dat chunk ob wood can hurt you?"

"He will lay you lifeless at his feet!"

"Like to know how he's going to start on dat little job, too!" cried Pete. "Should advise you to light your fires wid dat joker, Kala. 'Spect it's made ob wood, ain't it?"

"If you touch Tor your hand will wither!" declared Dafu, as Pete stepped forward to examine the ridiculous-looking figure.

"Tink so?"

"I am sure of it."

"Suppose I was to gib him a clump on de nose wid my fist, do you tink it would annoy him?"

"You would not live to see the sun rise."

"Spect I'll try," answered Pete, dealing a heavy blow on the side of the idol's long nose which smashed it off.

"He don't seem to mind dat much," said Pete. "I 'spect he will be able to smell quite as well widout dat nose as wid it, and it ain't damaged his personal beauty."

"Dog! Your death is near!" cried Dafu. "And terrible dat death shall be, for you have enraged Tor!"

"Don't 'spect so. De old hoss looks mighty amiable. You can easy stick dat nose on wid a bit ob glue. But it seems a mighty pity to waste him. Should chop him up for firewood. He ain't no mortal use like he is. Suppose I gib him a smash wid my axe, Kala?"

"I wish you would," growled Hake. "If ever I want anything done Dafu goes and consults that block of wood, then swears it tells him it is not to be done."

"Golly! Dis child will alter dat ugly ting!" cried Pete, drawing his axe and dealing such a terrific blow on the great head that it smashed it in half.

Then he dealt a second blow on the trunk which buried the axe to the head, and, wrenching the axe sideways, he split the body down.

"Yah, yah, yah!" he roared. "Ain't Tor habing a mighty rough time ob it, Sammy? Look dere! Rory has retrieved his nose!"

"Dog!" yelled Dafu. "Tor has told me to take your life!"

As he uttered the words he sprang at Pete, raising a long knife above him.

"Nunno, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, dealing him a terrific upper-cut beneath the jaw. "You hab mistaken Tor's orders. He likes being chopped—"

"Certainly! I like it immensely!" came a voice apparently from one of the halves of the head.

"So do I," sounded a voice from the other half.

"Seems as dough bofe halves were satisfied," observed Pete. "Dunno 'bout de body—"

"I like it."

"It's a shame why we are not chopped up," came a voice from the legs.

"Soon oblige you, gentlemen," said Pete, in his natural voice.

Then he let fly with his axe, chopping away until he had made chips of the idol.

"Are you quite satisfied now—?"

"You are to make chips of Dafu," came a voice from the pieces.

"Dat's easily done!" exclaimed Pete, making a rush at the medicine-man, who darted round the apartment and tried to get out of the door, only Pete got there first and locked it. "Soon make chips ob dat man. Yah, yah, yah! Don't go so fast. How am I to hit you if you run away?"

"Save me, great Kala!" yelled Dafu.

"You have told me that Tor must be obeyed," Kala retorted. "Now I have heard him order you to be put to death, and it must be as he commands. That is what you have always declared."

"Golly! Nearly caught you dat time, old hoss!" cried Pete, giving the terrified wretch a rap over the head with the flat of his axe.

Rory appeared to think that his master really wanted to capture the terrified man, so he went to help by fastening his teeth in the calf of Dafu's leg, and giving him a bite that caused him to yell worse than ever. Then he went sprawling to the floor.

"Dat's all right!" exclaimed Pete, placing his knee upon him. "Can get at you nicely now!"

"Mercy! Would you murder me?" shrieked Dafu, who really believed that Pete was about to take his life.

"It's Tor's fault."

"He did not utter the words. How can a wooden idol speak?"

"'Bout as easy as it can tell you what is going to happen," answered Pete. "If he can't do one he can't do de oder. Do you tink he would like me to strike you on de noddle first? May make it a little more pleasant for de chopping up operations!"

"Do not strike me! Kala, do not let him injure me! Should you do so, a terrible curse will fall on your people and on you. Your death will be certain!"

"Seems to me, old hoss, dat if I strike you your death is a lot more likely to be certain," said Pete, holding up his axe menacingly. "You see, it would do a lot ob good to dis town if you were chipped up like dat chunk ob wood. Shouldn't wonder if you hab killed a few dozen people."

"The orders of Tor had to be obeyed."

"Yah, yah, yah! You wouldn't hab much work to do if you only obeyed de orders dat block ob wood gave. You don't suppose we are going to believe those chips eber gabe any orders? Fact ob de matter is, Dafu, you am de biggest humbug dat eber told lies; and if I was Kala I'd knock your nose off, same as I did dat Dutch doll's!"

"Will you fight me to the death?" demanded Dafu, when Pete allowed him to rise.

"Suttinly! Only dere's no fight in you. Just you buzz off while we talk to Kala."

"You shall fight me now!"

"Is dat so?" exclaimed Pete, unlocking the door. "'Spect I'll be de one to tell you when we are going to fight. Out you go! You won't? Well, den, dis child will soon frow you out!"

Pete grappled with him, and, lifting him from his feet, pitched him headlong through the doorway.

(You can continue reading this thrilling complete adventure story of the three famous comrades in the issue of our companion paper, "The Penny Popular," now on sale at all newsagents. It also contains splendid long complete stories of Sexton Blake, Detective, and Tom Merry & Co., the popular chums of St. Jim's. Get "The Penny Popular" to-day.)



THE MEDICINE MAN!

A Grand, Long, Complete Tale Dealing with the Thrilling Adventures of the Three Famous Comrades, JACK, SAM, & PETE.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.



"You know where that medicine is!" roared Pete at the Arab. "And I will make you speak! I'll flog you till you do!" "Stop, old comrade," said Jack. "Murrah! Rory has found what we were looking for! Look!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Doctor's Rage—A Plague-Stricken City—The Comrades Vow to Lend their Aid—The Stolen Drugs—How Pete Dealt with the Idol—Pete Tackles the Medicine Man.

ON the northern shore of Lake Chad lies the town of Kanu, and it was to this wild spot Jack, Sam, and Pete's wanderings had led them.

The principal inhabitants consisted of Tuarecks, a warlike race of savages, who pass their time by fighting with their neighbours the Tibboes, trading with the Jews and Arabs, and plundering caravans that cross the Sahara or Great Desert.

"I dunno 'bout dis town, boys," observed Pete. "Don't care for de look ob dat yellow mist rising ober it. Smells like fever, and I wouldn't like Rory to catch it."

"He won't catch it," said Sam.

"I dunno. Dere ain't much dat dog can't catch, from a rabbit to a rabbi. Suppose dose inhabitants won't murder us?"

"You are getting very timid all of a sudden, Pete!" exclaimed Jack. "There are a lot of white men amongst them, so we are bound to be safe. I should like to see what sort of place it is."

"Den suppose we enter dis house for a start," suggested Pete, stopping at a large wooden building. "Tink I can hear de sweet sounds ob a white man's voice inside."

There could be no doubt of this, and, to judge by the noise the man was making, he was in a towering passion. The door of the building being open, they entered, to find a small, spare man, with very brilliant black eyes, striding up and down the apartment, raging at a tall, calm-looking Arab.

"You silly dog!" yelled the little man. "I have a good mind to vivisect you! How dare you three maniacs come here?" he added, turning on the comrades.

"We are Jack, Sam, and Pete, and dis dog is Rory."

"Well, I don't care who you are! But go! Get away, and never come here again!"

"Golly! Who are you?"

"Dr. Tatton Hake, to my misfortune. Look there!" yelled the excitable little man, pointing to a large medicine-chest which lay on the table.

"Don't see much de matter wid dat box." "That's because you are an idiot! Are you Jack?"

"Yes," answered that worthy.

"Well, can you see anything the matter with it?"

"No."

"Can you, Sam?"

"No. I reckon it's neatly made."

"So may a coffin be, but it's not much use as an ornament. You would scarcely care to shove it on your drawing-room mantelpiece, or give it to your wife as a birthday present to let her keep her gloves in. The fault of that medicine-chest is exactly the same as with your three heads—it's empty! Look at that calm-faced thief Abu! Well, he's my guide, and now he wants me to pay him for stealing all my drugs. I'll vivisect him first! Isn't it bad enough to travel across an abominable desert to come to this death-trap, without being robbed by a pack of swindling guides?"

"Tink dey hab drunk your medicines, sah?" inquired Pete.

"I don't know; but if they have I sincerely hope they will be poisoned. Now go away, and never come here again!"

"But we have no intention of going," said Jack.

"More fools you! Light your pipes and follow me, if you dare!"

The strange little man strode from the building, not troubling to look if they were following him. He entered one of the mud huts, and pushed Jack back as he was about to follow.

"Do you see that?" he demanded, pointing to the floor, on which were stretched three children and two grown people, and all were dead. "It does not matter what hut we enter," said the little doctor. "All are

the same, or worse, because in some the wretched creatures are still living. They expect me to help them, because I saved their chief's life. How can I help them when the supply of drugs I brought for that purpose has been stolen? I tell you this pestilential miasma will mow them down as though a blast of fire had swept through the town. Now go, unless you want to share their fate!"

"Dr. Tatton Hake," exclaimed Jack, "I am proud to make your friendship if you will allow me! Like you, we feel sorry for these wretched creatures, and would help them if we could."

"You can't! You had better go while you have the chance. To-morrow may be too late."

"But you are staying here!"

"It is my duty. A medical man has something more than his fees to consider. Chance and the love of travel brought

(Continued on page iv. of cover.)

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