

LEARN TO BE A JUGGLER! See Page 17

No. 623. Vol. XIII.

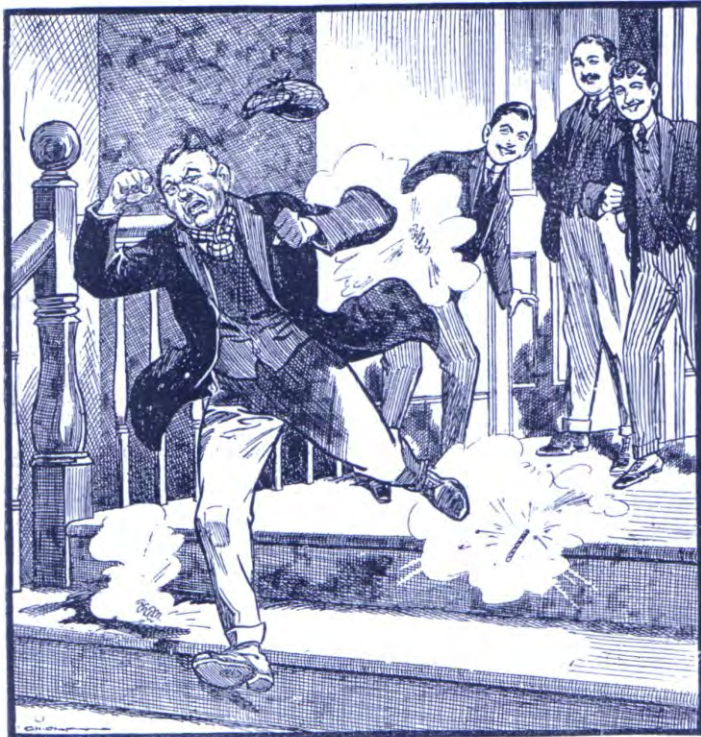
The

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20 PAGES.

January 17th,
1920.



SPEEDING THE PARTING GUEST!

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



A CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY.

The following letter has reached me:

"Dear Mr. Editor.—Why do you not let there be a weekly for the girls at Cliff House? I am certain the paper would be popular, and as Greyfriars has its 'Herald,' surely it would be only reasonable to give the girls a chance at Cliff House. I have been a reader of the MAGNET, the 'Gem,' and the 'Penny Popular' for long past, and I have often asked myself why Clara Trevlyn or Marjorie Hazeldene did not start a paper for themselves.

"Do you not think it is an excellent notion? Of course, they would not want a lot about Bunter. His spelling makes things hard for the printer, but Miss Bessie Bunter might be given a place on the staff if she promised to do her best.

"I wish you would manage something of this kind, dear Mr. Editor. It would be welcomed everywhere, and it cannot be started unless you promise to help.

"You see, there are thousands of things which girls understand, and which nobody else has a chance of knowing. And please remember that there never has been such a paper. I hope you will think it all over, and say something about the subject in your Chat.—Yours, 'WELL-WISHER.'

Thanks. "Well-Wisher"! I consider that your idea is a really good one, and it shall receive my most careful attention. Perhaps my friends will give me their opinions on the suggestion. I should be very glad to hear.

The real fact of the matter is, that there is so much in this suggestion, such a lot that is brainy and far-seeing, that I am feeling quite eager to receive the views of my chums who take so keen an interest in the Companion Papers. There is not the slightest reason that I can see why the girls should not run a paper of their own, just as Harry Wharton & Co. have done and are doing.

The girls are witty enough, clever enough, industrious enough, and if they once put their shoulders to the wheel I am pretty confident they would make a success of it. It is just the sort of New Year notion I like, and, what is more, it breaks new ground. Considering what folks say concerning women writers and their marvellous insight into life, it strikes me we ought to have a very good weekly indeed, if the girls take up the idea with enthusiasm.

That is just precisely it—enthusiasm! Without that, nothing. So roll up, and tell me what you think of the notion. There has not been much chance for Cliff House in the Companion Papers. That's what Cliff House feels. We get side lights, but not sufficient, evidently. Bunter is snubbed. There are glimpses of Miss Primrose and her people, but for

whole weeks on end there is silence, and, obviously, it won't do. I know from going through piles of letters daily how great is the sympathy felt for the Cliff House side of the yarns, and, frankly, I should like to take steps in this matter if I could be quite sure there was a unanimous demand.

JOTTINGS FROM "GIB."

It is always a pleasure to hear again from a chum. A year or so back a friend of mine at Gibraltar wrote to me pretty frequently, and he and I had long chats about Old Spain life and history, and so forth. It was all very interesting, and I came to look for his cheery communications. Then there was a lapse. There must be an end to things, or, at least, a temporary cessation.

To-day my mail brought me a reminder from this correspondent, and he enclosed some rather cleverly turned-out drawings of his own. He asks me if he should take lessons in art. Yes, if he really feels he has a bent that way, as sketching is always an interesting pastime, even if it is not to be regarded from the money-making point of view.

I would never recommend a chum of mine to rush into such an uncertain calling as that of an artist just because of a few happy sketches. There could be no bigger mistake. An art master would soon show the would-be Royal Academician how the land lay, and would set the pupil to the hard, unattractive part of learning the rudiments of line. Certainly nobody can expect to have the glimmering of success, even as an amateur, without hard training.

But that question only forms part of my correspondent's interesting note. He is very keen on hearing more about Bessie Bunter and the Cliff House girls, and I hope to be able to oblige him. Well, as I said, it was pleasant to hear from the silent one. If you come to know anyone by correspondence, and then there is a spell with nothing doing, you start wondering whether all is well—whether he is getting through the world in the same good, old style, whether he takes his walks abroad, sleeps well at nights, reads the papers regularly, and so forth.

Personally, I could have done with a bit more about Gibraltar, the place which has been likened to an Earl's Court Exhibition when the lights are all on. By the way, some of us have forgotten what an Earl's Court Exhibition was like in the merry old days before the Kaiser started writing mad marginal notes on his official correspondence!

FROM SUMMERHILL.

There is a cheery sound about the place, and the letter which comes to hand from that part of the world—Summer-

hill, Sydney—is just what you might look for in the circumstances. I really must quote a few lines:

"Dear Editor.—Thank you very much for your kind letter. I got the best of the Billy and Wally series. Most interesting, especially where Billy began to eat; but the Greyfriars boys were slow. Peter Todd might have guessed. The St. Jim's boys were slow, too. Wally could easily keep a secret, but Billy—"

It is quite clear from this what my chum in the Antipodes thinks of Bunter.

The writer goes on to speak of the controversies raging in his district, disputes which it is to be hoped will eventually lead to a better understanding all round. For this and this purpose alone are disputes defensible. My friend is a real hard worker, a coming musician, and a sportsman. By the way, he refers to the letter from another Sydney reader, which appeared in the Chat some time since. He reminds me that I said if it were not for the sharks and the Spanish flu I was wishing I could make my way to the South. Now, here is the best bit yet: "The flu is almost over, and only senseless people who go out too far ever get caught by sharks; so when we get the new aeroplane service, come out for a couple of weeks in the summer."

It is a cheery sort of invitation, and one that I should like to accept right away; but if my genial correspondent could only see the piles of letters I have to answer before Christmas, and the myriad other jobs to be done in connection with the Companion Papers, he would realise, as I do, that it is all non poss. A whole crowd of us have to do our travelling by imagination, and it is something to be able to accomplish that much. Imagination is quicker in getting to work than an aeroplane, and though it drops you sudden-like at times, still the method, if old-fashioned, has its merits.

RECITATIONS.

There is a question to hand concerning where the famous poem "Christmas Day in the Workhouse" can be obtained. The answer is, from practically any book-seller. It was a fine bit of work, and its popularity was proved twice over by the parodies written of it. Just as Bunter is the small change of esteem, so a literary piece is shown to be predictably successful when it is made the theme of wit.

Your Editor



Exiled from School

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

... BY ...

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Letter from London.

"SOME fellows get all the luck!"

Thus Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove.

Afternoon lessons were over, and the Famous Five had just encountered the postman, plodding his weary way through the Close.

"Any letters?" they had all exclaimed in chorus.

And the postman had delivered up one solitary letter—for Harry Wharton. Hence Bob Cherry's remark about some fellows having all the luck.

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, was standing in the office, so to speak.

The fat junior saw Wharton's face light up with satisfaction as he examined the envelope.

"A remittance, for a cert!" murmured Bunter.

The Famous Five strolled into the building, and went along to Study No. 1.

Billy Bunter rolled stealthily in their wake. He was anxious to find out all about that remittance—who it was from, how much it was for, and so on.

Harry Wharton & Co. passed into the study and closed the door. And within ten seconds Billy Bunter's ear was glued to the keyhole.

"Good old Smithy!" Bob Cherry was saying. "I'm awfully glad he's written!"

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter started.

Then it wasn't a remittance, after all! It was a letter from Vernon-Smith, who had recently been withdrawn from Greyfriars by his father, and ordered to earn his own living.

Bunter was disappointed, of course, at the absence of a remittance; but his curiosity was as keen as ever.

How was Vernon-Smith faring in his fight for existence?

What was the Bounder doing in London? Had he secured a remunerative position? Or was he engaged in the

sordid task of selling papers, or blacking boots?

Bunter was hoping that Harry Wharton would read the letter aloud to his chums. But this hope was not realised.

Apparently the Famous Five were reading Vernon-Smith's letter in silence, for no sound came from within the study.

"Just like Wharton!" reflected Bunter. "He always was a secretive sort of fellow!"

For some moments the fat junior remained with his ear glued to the keyhole.

The letter from Vernon-Smith must have been a very lengthy one, for quite a long interval passed before anyone spoke.

It was Frank Nugent who broke the silence.

"My hat! What an awfully interesting letter!"

"It reads like a chapter of romance!" said Harry Wharton. "Smithy's having some ups and downs, and no mistake!"

"Glad to see his sense of humour hasn't deserted him," said Bob Cherry. "His remarks about Billy Bunter are jolly funny!"

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter gave a snort—which, fortunately, was not audible inside the study.

What had Vernon-Smith been saying about him?

"This letter is of general interest," said Wharton. "and therefore I think it ought to be read aloud to the whole Form. Smithy doesn't say that it's in any way confidential. And the fellows are dying to hear his experiences!"

"That is so, my worthy chum," said Hurree Singh. "And now I propose to suggest that we would make our way to the esteemed footer-ground!"

"Hear, hear!"

Billy Bunter promptly dodged into the next doorway.

He had barely gone into ambush when the Famous Five emerged from Study No. 1 and walked away.

"Now!" muttered the fat junior. "Wonder if Wharton's left that letter lying about? I'll jolly soon see, anyway!"

Bunter emerged from his temporary hiding-place. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man.

"Good!" he murmured.

And then he darted into Study No. 1. After a hasty glance round, Bunter discerned the letter on the mantelpiece. He promptly transferred it to his pocket, and experienced no qualms in so doing.

"After all, Smithy intended the letter for the whole Form," he muttered. "and therefore I'm as much entitled to it as Wharton!"

Billy Bunter vacated the study with infinite caution, and rolled along to No. 7. His stud-mates were out. Fussy Todd and Tom Dutton were playing football, and Alonzo Todd had gone for a gentle ramble by the sea-shore.

The fat junior took off his spectacles and polished them; then he drew out Vernon-Smith's letter and read it. He scowled when he came to the allusion to himself.

"Just like Smithy's cheek!" he muttered.

Bunter threw the envelope into the fire, and was about to restore the letter to his pocket, when the study door opened cautiously and Fisher T. Fish looked in.

The Owl of the Remove gave a guilty start.

"Really, Fishy!" he said indignantly. "Why don't you knock before barging into a fellow's study?"

Fish stepped inside and closed the door. He eyed Billy Bunter with suspicion.

"Say, what have you got there, you fat clam?" he demanded.

"A letter," said Bunter.

"Yep—but whose letter?"

"Mine, of course!"

Fisher T. Fish looked sceptical.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

"I suppose it's from one of your titled relations?" he said, with crushing sarcasm.

"It's from Smithy," explained Bunter. "It starts off, 'My dear Fellows,' but the envelope was addressed to me."

"Oh!"
Fisher T. Fish was silent for some moments. His cute business brain was at work.

The Yankee junior had evolved many money-making schemes in the past; and he was evolving one now.

Presently he put his hand in his pocket and produced the princely sum of two-pence. This he handed to Bunter.

The fat junior blinked at Fish through his big spectacles.

"What's this for, Fishy?"

"Hand it over!" said Fish promptly.

"Eh?"

"Hand over that letter, and I'll give you tuppence!"

Bunter laughed scornfully.

"Not much!" he said. "This letter's worth a jolly sight more than tuppence! Besides, it's a private and confidential letter from Smithy to me, and I shouldn't dream of selling it!"

"Supposing I offered you a fanner for it?" said Fish.

"It would leave me cold!"

"Would a bob leave you cold, too?"

"Yes!"

"Two bobs?"

"It's no use, Fishy!" said Bunter.

"You're not going to bribe me into parting with this letter?"

Fisher T. Fish produced a half-crown. Bunter's eyes bulged at the sight of the coin. Probably he was reflecting how many jam-tarts could be procured for that sum.

"Here's half-a-dollar!" said Fish persuasively.

"It's yours, in exchange for that letter."

"What do you want with Smithy's letter?" asked Bunter suspiciously.

"Never you mind! Is it a deal?"

Bunter hesitated, and finally gave in.

The half-crown changed hands, and so did Vernon-Smith's letter.

With an expression of satisfaction on his lean face, Fisher T. Fish omitted the study, leaving Billy Bunter with the half-crown in his fat palm, and a puzzled expression on his flabby face.

"Wonder why Fishy stumped up half-a-crown for that letter?" he murmured. "He doesn't like parting with money, and I'm 'dressed if I can understand it!"

But Bunter did not know that Fisher T. Fish was hoping to get that half-crown back, with considerable interest!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble for Two.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry entered his

familiar exclamation as the

Famous Five, returning from

their game of footer, halted in front of the notice-board.

A new announcement had been posted up, and one glance was sufficient to show that Fisher T. Fish was the author of it.

"WALK UP! WALK UP!"

WALK UP!

EXCLUSIVE NEWS OF

VERNON-SMITH!

AMERICAN CITIZEN'S GREAT SCOOP!

"Fisher T. Fish begs to inform the Remove that he is in possession of a lengthy letter from Vernon-Smith, set-

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

ting forth all his adventures and experiences in London. This letter contains

SENSATIONAL DISCLOSURES.

and will interest and fascinate everybody who is interested in Smithy. The thrilling and absorbing document in question will be read aloud to all who care to turn up in the junior Common-room at eight o'clock. The reader will be Fisher T. Fish, and

A CHARGE OF TWOPENCE

will be made for admission.

"Come in your thousands, and bring your pals with you!"

WALK UP! WALK UP!

WALK UP!"

The Famous Five perused this extraordinary notice in astonishment.

"My only Aunt Sempronilla!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Of all the barefaced cheek—"

"This is another Fishy scheme!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Absolutely!"

"Fishy's trying to pretend that he's in possession of a letter from Smithy!"

exclaimed Wharton. "Of course, that's all rot, Smithy would never write a personal letter to Fish!"

"No, rather not!"

"The Fishy individual is attemptfully trying to pull our esteemed legs!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"He's probably faked a letter, and he's going to read it aloud to the fellows," said Nugent.

"At a charge of twopence per head!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were annoyed and indignant.

Not so the rest of the fellows, however.

Dozens of juniors were eager to hear news of Vernon-Smith, who had been one of the most popular members of the Remove Form. They wondered what had befallen the Boulder in London—whether he had come a cropper, or whether he was successfully earning his own living, in accordance with his father's curious whim. And for the pride of hearing this news, the majority of the fellows were quite prepared to pay twopence. They knew, of course, that this was another of Fishy's money-making schemes; but they were willing to overlook that in their anxiety to hear what Vernon-Smith had to say.

"Good old Smithy!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Wonder if he's making good?"

"He vowed that he would come back to Greyfriars!" said Squiff excitedly.

"And perhaps this letter will tell us that he's been able to wangle it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Wonder if Fishy would let us see the letter before eight o'clock?" said Ogilvy.

"Not he!" chuckled Dick Russell.

"He means to make it a public affair, and he wants to collect as many twopences as possible. It's rather rotten to have to wait Fishy's pleasure; still, eight o'clock will soon be here."

The crowd at the notice-board was rapidly swelling. And the excitement was intense.

Fisher T. Fish was very far from being a genius, but he certainly knew how to draw up an arresting advertisement.

The "sensational disclosures" of the "thrilling and absorbing document" were eagerly awaited.

Vernon-Smith's movements in London were a mystery, except to the Famous Five; and everybody wanted to hear of the "adventures and experiences" mentioned by Fisher T. Fish.

"You silly chumps!" exclaimed Bob

Cherry, turning to the excited crowd. "Can't you see that this is a spoof? Can't you see that Fishy's having you on a bit of a string? This is nothing more nor less than a dodge for getting rich quick!"

But Bob's words quite failed to convince the crowd.

"Oh, come on!" said Johnny Bull, in disgust. "Blow Fishy and all his works! Time we had some tea!"

The Famous Five went along to Study No. 1, where a cheerful fire cracked and spurted in the grate.

Hurree Singh set the kettle on the hob, and the others bustled about to prepare the afternoon meal.

The name of Fisher T. Fish was not mentioned during tea; and it was not until afterwards that Harry Wharton made a startling discovery.

"Smithy's letter!" he exclaimed.

"What about it?" asked Nugent.

"It's gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes. I left it on the mantelpiece, if you remember, just before we went down to footer."

"My hat!"

Bob Cherry's brow grew dark.

"If that worm Fishy has been tampering with our property—" he began.

"I don't suppose he has," said Wharton. "Fishy's several sorts of a fat-head, but he's not a thief."

"And yet the letter's gone!" said Johnny Bull.

"Wonder if that burglar Bunter knows anything about it?"

"We'll jolly soon find out!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

And the Famous Five went in search of Bunter.

Searching for Bunter was not usually a lengthy or a baffling process. The fat junior seemed to live, move, and have his being in the tuckshop. Whether he was in there or out, Bunter haunted the little establishment in the Close. If he had money to spend, he spent it; if not, he hung about on the chance—the very slender chance—of getting "tick."

It was to the tuckshop, therefore, that Harry Wharton & Co. made their way.

But for once they drew a blank. There was no sign of the Owl of the Remove.

"Has Bunter been here, Mrs. Mumble?" inquired Wharton.

"Yes, Master Wharton!" replied the dame. "He left a few minutes ago, after spending half-a-crown. I hope nothing is wrong, young gentlemen!"

"Nothing serious," said Bob Cherry, "except for Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better try Study No. 7," said Johnny Bull.

The juniors did so; but Peter Todd informed them that Bunter was not at home.

"He hasn't been in to tea," said Peter. "Who said the age of miracles was past?"

The Famous Five withdrew, and proceeded to hunt high and low for Bunter, but they found him not.

"It's nearly eight o'clock," said Nugent at length. "Time we went along to the Common-room."

Harry Wharton nodded.

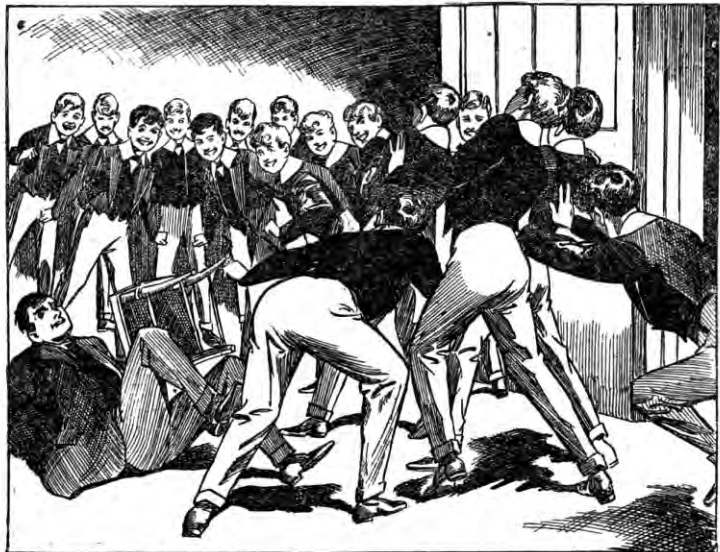
"We must certainly put a stopper on Fishy's little game," he said. "Buck up!"

The Famous Five found, however, that it was no easy matter to gain entry to the Common-room.

A long queue had lined up outside, and Bolsover major was seated on a chair in the doorway, collecting twopences, and allowing the members of the public to enter one at a time.

Fortunately for Bolsover, the public, for the most part, happened to be good-tempered.

The hully of the Remove had evidently



At a signal from Harry Wharton, about a dozen juniors threw their united weight upon the fellows in front. The result was appalling. Chair and Bolsover were overturned in the rush, and coppers flew in all directions. (See this page.)

been persuaded by Fisher T. Fish to sit at the receipt of custom. And Fish could not have chosen a better man for the job. With the exception of a few of his choice pals, Bolsover allowed no one to enter without paying.

Presently, however, the waiting queue began to show signs of impatience.

Pressure was applied from the rear, with the result that the fellows in front were hurled forward.

"Stand back!" bellowed Bolsover, in his avuncular tones. "Stop shoving, there!"

But Bolsover was powerless to check the crush.

At a signal from Harry Wharton, about a dozen juniors threw their united weight upon the fellows in front.

The result was appalling.

Chair and Bolsover were overturned in the rush, and coppers flew in all directions.

In vain Bolsover appealed and protested. The crowd swept past him like an avalanche, and surged into the Common-room.

"You haven't paid!" hooted Bolsover. "And we don't intend to!" replied Bob Cherry, over his shoulder.

Bolsover realised that he had no remedy. He could not very well offer to fight half the Remove, so he dropped on to his hands and knees with a grunt, and devoted the next five minutes to collecting up the "gate-money."

Meanwhile, all eyes in the Common-room were directed towards Fisher T.

Fish, who was proudly perched on the table, monarch of all he surveyed.

Boom!

The first stroke of eight sounded from the clock-tower.

"Pile in, Fishy!" exclaimed a score of voices.

"Out with Smithy's letter!"

The Famous Five stood together in a bunch, ready for action.

Fisher T. Fish cleared his throat.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I guess I have called you together on this lyrical auspicious occasion—"

"Cut it out!"

"No formality!"

"Get on with the washing!"

Fish saw that the crowd was very impatient, and that it would not do to beat about the bush.

"Guess I'll start in right away, gents," he said, "and read Smithy's letter!"

"Hurrah!"

"Order, please!" rapped out Skinner.

"Silence for the scarcrow on the table!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The din soon died away, and a hush fell upon the audience—a hush of expectancy.

Fisher T. Fish impressively produced the letter from his pocket, and Harry Wharton uttered a sudden exclamation.

"That's our letter—the one that I left on the mantelpiece!"

"My hat!"

Fish started to declaim the letter, but he got no farther than "My dear Fellows."

With one accord the Famous Five darted forward, and the Yankee piece was seized and dragged down from the table.

"Steady on, you silly jays!" howled Fish. "What's the little game?"

"Stand back, you silly asses!" shouted the crowd.

With a deft movement Harry Wharton snatched the letter from Fish's hand.

"I guess that's my property!" hooted Fish.

"Rats!" retorted Bob Cherry. "That letter belongs to Wharton!"

"It doesn't! It was Bunter's, and I bought it from Bunter for half-a-dollar!"

"What?"

"I guess that letter now belongs to me! I've bought it outright, together with the sole rights of publication and recitation!"

Harry Wharton jumped up on to the table.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "I will explain in a few words what has happened. The letter which Fishy was about to read belongs to me. It was delivered by the postman this afternoon. I left it on the mantelpiece in my study, and Bunter bagged it and sold it to Fish, who thought he saw a good chance of making money!"

The audience waxed highly indignant.

"Shame!"

"Turn 'em out!"

Fisher T. Fish was hustled to the door without ceremony by the Famous

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

Five, whose boots clumped together in his person, causing him to travel through the doorway at express speed.

"Pity Bunter isn't here!" remarked Bob Cherry. "We'd serve him the same."

"Bunter's here all right!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "He regrets, however, that he can't stay long!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat junior, who had tried to make himself inconspicuous by stooping to tie his bootlace, was frog-marched to the door, yelling and protesting at the top of his lungs.

Bunter met with a worse fate than this, for after being propelled through the doorway by many boots, he collided heavily with Bolsover major, who, after sorting himself out, dribbled the fat junior along the passage.

That section of the crowd which had paid for admission began to clamour loudly for Bolsover.

The bully of the Remove reappeared when he had dealt with Bunter.

"What's the trouble?" he growled.

"We want our money back!"

"Pay up!"

"We've been spoofed!"

The attitude of the crowd was beginning to say the least of it. And Bolsover major decided to pay up, though he found it difficult to look down.

The responses were handed back to their original owners, and order was gradually restored.

As for Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish, those two precious rascals were engaged in diligently searching for a bottle of embrocation. They needed it!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Adventures of Smithy.

HARRY WHARTON remounted the table in the Common-room.

"My dear Fellows—" he began.

"Eh?"

"Wharton's getting very affectionate all of a sudden!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly clump!" shouted Wharton. "I was starting to read Smithy's letter."

"Oh!"

"Carry on, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove made a fresh start.

"My dear Fellows.—This is the first opportunity I have had of writing to you since shaking the dust of Greyfriars from my feet."

"What does he mean by the dust of Greyfriars?" interjected Ogilvy. "That's a slur on the maids. They sweep the place out every morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order, there!" rapped out Bob Cherry. "The next person who interrupts will be slung out—"

"On the neckful portion of his anatomy!" added Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When some sort of order had been restored, Harry Wharton resumed.

"First of all, I should like to thank you most awfully for the ripping send-off you gave me. The farewell feed was top-hole. But I prefer not to call it a farewell feed myself, as I am determined that it shall not be my last feed at Greyfriars—"

"Cheers!"

"As I said to you on parting, I am resolved to get back to Greyfriars by hook or by crook."

More cheers, louder than before.

"You insisted that I should write and tell you of my experiences in London, so here goes! In the first place, I called on the pater, and politely inquired if he was potty."

"What do you mean, Herbert?" he said, with one of his paternal frowns. I replied that I thought it was a jolly queer whim on his part to withdraw me from Greyfriars.

"Not at all, my boy," he said.

"I have taken you away from that place because I consider you have been wasting your time there. You have devoted far too much attention to sport, and in other respects you have been slack and idle. When I was a boy of your age I had to earn my own living, and you shall do the same."

I told the pater that I was doing very well at Greyfriars, and that it was a mistake to take me away. But no amount of argument would convince the old man—

"Shame!"

"What a beastly tyrant!"

Feeling ran high in the Remove.

From what they had seen of Mr. Vernon-Smith, they had not liked him; and they liked him still less now.

Wharton continued to read:

"Don't you think," said the pater, "that because you are a millionaire's son you need do no manner of work. I want

you to fill a useful place in the world—not to sit idle. I want you to pace your worth, Herbert!" And then he asked me how much cash I had. "About three quid," I told him. "You are lucky," he said. "In my early days I had to start off without a penny!"

"Sizziker!" growled Peter Todd.

"That's how all these so-called self-made men talk!" said Bob Cherry, in disgust. "You often hear 'em say,

'When I was a boy I rode in a Tate's sugar-box on wheels. Now I sport my own Daimler car.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please!" exclaimed Wharton. And he went on with the letter.

"The long and short of it was, the pater ordered me to clear out, and report to him within a month that I was earning my own living."

"My conduct may appear harsh and unnatural to you, Herbert," he said, "but, believe me, I am acting for the best. I want you to fend for yourself, and to make your own way in the world, for that is the only way in which you will develop character and backbone. As soon as you have proved your mettle, I will decide what further steps should be taken."

Then the pater shook hands, and a couple of minutes later I was shut out of my own home."

There was another outcry from the audience in the Common-room.

"I don't want you fellows to get the impression that my pater is a Prussian, and an unreasonable old stick, because he isn't. I dare say there's a good deal to be said for his point of view. I know that if I were a millionaire I shouldn't like my only son to grow up without any backbone. Mind you, I think it was rather thick that I should be withdrawn from Greyfriars; but I suppose the pater knows best. Anyway, I'm merely regarding my absence from the school as a holiday—rather a grim holiday, perhaps; but I've a firm conviction that I shall come back to you."

"Smithy keeps emphasising that point," said Frank Nugent. "His letter fairly reeks with 'I shall return,' but I'm dashed if I can see how he's going to do it!"

"Perhaps, after he's made good in London, his pater will let him come back," said Mark Lunley.

"That's hardly likely," said Squiff.

"The old bird seems to have got quite a false impression of Greyfriars. He thinks we play footer from sunrise to sunset. He forgets that we spend half the day in the Form-room, under Quelch's gimlet eye!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Smithy's trying to whitewash his pater," said Tom Brown, "but it won't do! All the whitewashing in the world won't make a tyrant really tame, or a black man really white."

"Hear, hear!" said Dick Russell.

"Smithy's pater's nothing more nor less than a blasted Bolshevik—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And I'm surprised at Smithy knocking under to such treatment! Why, if my pater wanted to withdraw me from Greyfriars, I'd refuse to go! He'd have to come and take me away by force, and he'd find me a hot handful!"

A general laugh followed Russell's statement.

"Carry on with the good work, Harry!" said Bob Cherry. "Smithy hasn't described his adventures yet. Listen, you fellows! This is going to be interesting."

"Put that pea-shooter in your pocket, Bolsover, and pay attention!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

Bolsover major, who had been amusing himself by firing a volley of peas at the

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Ferrin was gripping the arms of his revolving chair, and staring in a bewildered sort of way at his blotting-pad. Vernon-Smith stared, too, for a huge frog was leaping to and fro on the blotting-pad. "Take it away!" implored Ferrin, as Vernon-Smith came and looked over his shoulder. "I daren't touch the beastly thing! Ugh!"

(See Chapter 5.)

back of Alonzo Todd's head, promptly put pea-shooter and ammunition out of sight.

"I am all ears!" he said.

"So we've noticed!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton waited for the laughter to subside; then he plunged once more into the letter.

"I left my pater's house like a fellow in a dream. I hardly knew which way to turn—"

"Forgotten his drill already?" murmured Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton beckoned to Bob Cherry.

"Kindly remove that nuisance from the room, Bob!" he said. "That's not the first time he's interrupted, but it's going to be the last!"

Bob Cherry strode towards Skinner, and Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent followed up, in case their services should be required.

No action was taken, however, for on promising not to interrupt again, the end of the Remove was bound over to keep the peace.

"I hardly knew which way to turn—" repeated Wharton. And he paused ominously.

But Skinner wisely kept his mouth closed on this occasion.

"What was to be done? Which should I seek first—a situation, or some

digs? I decided at length to get lodgings first, and a job afterwards. I had to tramp about a good deal before I could find what I wanted. You see, I couldn't very well put up at the Ritz or the Waldorf, with only three quids in my pocket. Eventually I fixed up some digs in the neighbourhood of Waterloo. Ripping spot—charming view of river, etc. The landlady—Mrs. Perkins—is a charming soul. Looks after me like a mother—I don't think! She demanded a week's rent in advance, and she declares that if ever I get behind with the rent she'll get behind me—with a poker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy can still see the funny side of things," said Bob Cherry. "But I'm dashed if I know how he does it! If I were in his shoes, I should feel inclined to take a header off Waterloo Bridge on a dark night!"

"No, you wouldn't, Bob!" said Johnny Bull. "You'd grin and bear it, like Smithy's doing. I expect he cheers himself up with the hope that he'll be back at Greivars before long."

"Yes, rather!"

"Go ahead, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove continued:

"Having rented a charming garret for the winter season, I went in search of a job. And, by Jove, I never knew jobs were so scarce! There were scores of fellows at the same game—and some of

them had been job-hunting for months. Ex-soldiers, most of them were! They had done their bit in the trenches, and now they were ready to do their bit in civil life, but nobody wanted them. I've since heard that there is a campaign on foot to find employment for ex-officers and Tommies. Jolly good luck to it, I say!"

"Hear, hear!" echoed the crowd in the Common-room.

"Well, I tramped here, there, and everywhere, but without success. My funds got low, and my spirits lower. I couldn't understand it. Here was I, young and keen, backed up by a decent education, and yet I wasn't wanted. I suppose most of the employers thought I was too much of a kid. Anyway, there was nothing doing, and I soon began to feel pretty desperate."

"And then, after a few days of this sort of thing, I was tramping along aimlessly, thinking of the old school, and getting quite sentimental, when I was stopped by an elderly, benevolent-looking gent."

"Excuse me," he said, "can you tell me the way to Wessex Street?"

"I knew the street in question quite well, because I had gone there after a job, and come empty away."

"I shall be pleased to direct you, sir," I said. "But it's rather a long way from here. We'd better take a 'bus."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

"No, no!" said the old gent. "I much prefer to walk. You see, I am from the country, and, to tell you the truth, I am rather nervous of riding in omnibuses."

"So we walked along together, and chatted as we went."

"I hope I am not keeping you from your duty, my boy," said the old gent.

"I replied that I had no duty."

"The old chap looked at me in astonishment."

"What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"And then I explained that I had hunted high and low for a job, but without success."

"Bless my soul!" gasped the old gent. "And what do you propose to do now?"

"Keep on hunting, I suppose," I replied. "I've got to earn my own living somehow, and I'm not going to throw up the sponge."

"The old boy fairly beamed."

"Well spoken, my boy," he said. "Rest assured you shall not be out of employment much longer. Can you do anything in the clerical line?"

"I told him that I had a smattering of shorthand, and that I could type at a rate that made sparks fly. He seemed to be quite impressed."

"I have some influence with the principal of the Wessex Institute, whom I am about to visit," he said. "And I think you may safely count on getting a situation."

"I could have shouted with joy."

"What is the Wessex Institute, sir?" I inquired.

"The old gent explained that it was the headquarters of an association which dealt with the after-care of discharged convicts. It didn't sound very appetizing; but I reflected that any sort of job would be better than no job at all."

"What is your name?" asked my companion.

"For a moment I hesitated. If I gave my real name, it might reflect upon the pater, so I decided to give an assumed one."

"Jack Harper," I said.

"Very well, Harper. I have no doubt that something can be arranged for you."

"We arrived in due course at the Wessex Institute in Wessex Street."

"After shooting upwards in a lift, we emerged into some very decent-looking offices."

"I was then introduced to the principal—a charming old boy called Locke. May be a relation of the Head of Greyfriars, but it's not likely. After all, the world is full of Lockes, as the crackman said when in the act of picking one."

"The old gent whom I had shown the way proved to be a director of the association; and he sung my praises to such an extent that I believe I blushed."

"Mr. Locke rang for one of the clerks, and told him to test my shorthand and typewriting speeds. I thereupon adjourned to another office, and went through rather an ordeal."

"The shorthand test was the stiffest hurdle to negotiate, but I came through all serene, and the rest was easy."

"The clerk who had tested me told Mr. Locke that I was an expert. I knew I was nothing of the sort—but how I blushed that clerk! I believe he knew I was driven to the wall, and desperately in need of a job."

"The result was that Mr. Locke offered me a junior clerkship, and I've been instructed to commence work to-morrow morning. Hurrah!"

"I am writing this letter—the longest I've ever written in my life, by the way—from my humble lodgings. And I must look up and finish, or I shall never catch the post."

"I expect you fellows will be bored stiff by this long sigmarole, but you asked for it, you know, and now you've got it, with a vengeance!"

"How are things going at Greyfriars? Are you winning your footer matches? And has Billy Bunter succeeded in working off any of his superlative rolls of fat? Is Mauly as lazy as ever? Is Bob Cherry as lively as ever? And does Bolsover major still go about pulverising people?"

"Talking of pulverising, I intend to pay a visit to the Ring to-night, to celebrate having got a job. There are some thrilling fights down for decision, and I'm looking forward to a real good time—though I wish you fellows could be there, too!"

"To-morrow I start to make good."

NO. 29.—TOM REDWING.



Tom Redwing—from Hawkscliff. Came to Greyfriars "In Another's Name." Previously spent his days in caulked nets for fishermen. Has become the best friend that Vernon-Smith ever had, and has taught him many lessons. Had to endure much persecution from the cads in his early days. The son of a "true-blue" sea-captain. A good all-round athlete. Sharee Study No. 4 with the Bounder.

and I feel positive it won't be long before I'm back again at good old Greyfriars."

"Au revoir, everybody!"

"Your old pal,
"SMITHY."

Harry Wharton was quite husky by the time he reached the end of that epistle, which produced quite a sensation among the juniors.

Shouts of "Good old Smithy!" and "Bravo, the Bounder!" arose on every side.

"Thank goodness he's got a job!" said Peter Todd fervently.

"Yes, rather!"

"If he keeps it for a month, and reports favourably to his pater, he might be allowed to return to Greyfriars," said Mark Lively.

"We need him badly enough," said Harry Wharton. "Smithy's one of the best!"

"Hear, hear!"

The meeting then dispersed.

And as the fellows trooped out of the junior Common-room they chanted the time-honoured ditty:

"For he's a jolly good fellow!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Exciting Evening!

WHILST Vernon-Smith's letter was being read aloud to the Remove, Vernon-Smith himself was setting out from his London lodgings.

Fog hung like a pall over the streets; but the Bounder didn't care. He was on his way to the boxing tournament, and he stopped out fearlessly through the yellow haze.

Vernon-Smith had always been keen on boxing, and he himself was no mean exponent of the noble art. He hoped to witness some good sport that evening.

On reaching the Ring, the Bounder discerned, through the fog, a long, black line. Further investigation showed that it was a queue of people waiting to enter.

The prices of admission were rather high, and Vernon-Smith's funds were rather low.

"I can't run to a good seat," he murmured. "Still, standing-room will suit me."

And he tacked himself on to the end of the queue.

The men waiting in front of him were talking very excitedly.

Vernon-Smith gathered that there was a full programme of events, but that the "star turn" would be the bout between "Tiny" Burke, of London, and an Irishman named Barney Doyle.

"I've put my last cent on Tiny," remarked one of the men.

"An' you're quite safe!" rejoined his companion. "Tiny's the finest 'heavy-weight' that ever was! 'E's bound to win—an' with a good bit to spare, too!"

"What's this feller Doyle like?" inquired somebody.

"Ain't never 'eard of 'im," said the man who had been shouting the odds about "Tiny" Burke. "E comes from Ireland, an' that's all I know about 'im. But 'e won't be able to take a candle to Tiny. Tiny can wallop anythin' on two legs!"

"Tiny must be a giddy marvel!" murmured the Bounder.

Gradually the members of the queue moved on, until Vernon-Smith found himself at the entrance.

"Standin'-room only!" shouted an attendant. "But I can wangle you an 'alf-crown seat!" he added, in Vernon-Smith's ear.

"Good!" said the Bounder.

And presently he found himself squashed between two formidable-looking men, one of them being a particularly hefty customer.

But Vernon-Smith didn't mind the discomfort of his position. His eyes were fixed upon the ring, which was vacant, but only for a few moments.

One of the officials came forward at length, and announced the first fight.

It was a purely local affair, and the boxing was tame. It seemed as if the two contestants had mutually agreed not to hurt each other.

The audience waited impatiently for a knock-out, but none came. Instead, the boxers went the whole of the allotted number of rounds, and one of them gained a verdict on points.

The man seated on Vernon-Smith's right expressed his disgust in measured terms.

"They call this boxin'!" he said scathingly. "To my mind it's more like

a game of kiss-in-the-ring. If they don't switch on to someone, a bit more exciting, I shall demand my money back."

"Tiny Burke will wake things up a bit, by all accounts," remarked the Bounder.

"Ah, that he will!" said the hefty-looking man. "He's a livin' wonder, is Tiny. You can take it from me, young shaver, that there ain't no flies on Tiny. I've put my shirt on him."

"You—you've what?" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"Backed him to the last penny! Can't you understand English?"

"Only when it's plain English," said the Bounder.

The man glared, and he looked for a moment like committing assault and battery on his critic. But just then the next contest was announced, and Vernon-Smith escaped.

The second bout was a great improvement on the first, but it was all too short.

A couple of middle-weights came into action, and the bigger of the two floored his opponent with a couple of sledgehammer blows to the jaw.

The referee counted, and the victim of the sledgehammer blows failed to respond.

Several more bouts followed, but they received scant applause from the audience, who were on tenterhooks to see the real big fight of the evening—the fistic duel between Tiny Burke, of London town, and Barney Doyle, of the Emerald Isle.

And at last they had their heart's desire.

A terrific shout went up as the two men entered the ring.

They were duly introduced to the audience, and Vernon-Smith could not repress a smile when he identified Tiny Burke. For Burke was anything but tiny. He was a massive fellow, with a bulldog type of face, and the muscles of a Samson. Small wonder that the chances of such a giant should be fancied by the crowd.

Barney Doyle was also on the hefty side, but he was no match for his opponent in bulk. Still, he did not look like a man who was shortly expecting to be pounded to a jelly. There was a quiet smile of confidence on his face, rather an attractive face, Vernon-Smith thought.

"It won't be long before Tiny knocks that grin off his chivvy!" said the man on the Bounder's right.

And then came the brisk, incisive command:

"Seconds out of the ring!"

Then, after an impressive pause:

"Time!"

A variety of shouts went up from the densely-packed throng of spectators.

"Go it, Tiny!"

"Wallop him!"

"Pulverise him!"

"Knock him into the middle of next week!"

But the shouts were not all for Tiny. An enthusiastic band of Irishmen at the back thundered the name of Barney Doyle.

The officials appealed for silence, and the shouting died away.

All eyes were fixed upon the couple in the ring.

Vernon-Smith was half out of his seat, his face glowing with excitement. He could not help thinking that Barney Doyle hadn't the ghost of a chance against his powerfully-built opponent, but he hoped that the Irishman wouldn't cave in too soon.

In the first round Tiny Burke monop-

olised the fighting. Again and again he drove his man to the ropes, but Doyle kept his feet, and what was equally important, kept his head.

Vernon-Smith noticed that Burke possessed a terrific punch, but that his foot-work was on the slow side.

Doyle, on the other hand, was very nippy, and some of his defensive work was highly praiseworthy.

The Bounder judged, and rightly, that it was a case of brute strength versus science.

The first round ended largely in favour of Tiny Burke, and the hefty-looking individual on Vernon-Smith's right was rubbing his hands and chuckling.

"Good old Tiny! He's never let me down yet, an' he's not goin' to start now! He's got the Irishman tied up in knots, bless him!"

Vernon-Smith said nothing. He was feeling a little less elated now. He didn't

No. 30.—MR. PAUL PONTIFEX PROUT M.A.



Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, M.A.—a curious character. A man with courage, pompous, and with a quick temper. A capable Form-master and a kindly man. A constant danger to the community with his gun: a fearless motor-cyclist. Fond of talking about the way in which he used to kill bears and wild buffaloes in the Rockies. Considers himself a crack shot.

like to see brute strength score over science, but he was afraid it was going to on this occasion.

In the second and third rounds Barney Doyle received a severe drubbing, to the delight of many of the spectators.

The Irishmen at the back were silent now. They realised that their fellow-countryman was fighting a losing battle.

And yet it said much for Barney Doyle that he had been able to stand up to Burke's sledgehammer punching for three rounds. And he seemed to have sufficient spirit to stand up to it for another three. There was nothing of the weakening about Barney.

In the fourth round, after receiving special attention from his second, the Irishman fared better. He landed one or two blows with wonderful accuracy. They were powerful blows, too, but not sufficiently powerful to floor the giant who received them.

Vernon-Smith's heart was beating faster than usual.

Was there yet hope for Barney Doyle?

In the next round Barney made a gallant attempt to force the fighting, but he was beaten back, and then Tiny Burke came into the picture with a number of smashing blows.

The Irishman was in a sorry plight at the end of this round. He tottered rather than walked to his corner.

"His number's up!" chortled the man seated next to Vernon-Smith. "Tiny's great! He'll make mincemeat of him in the next round!"

But Tiny didn't.

Barney Doyle stuck to him gamely, and, midway through the round, he sailed in with a truly tremendous drive, which Burke failed to stop.

Crash!

The giant went to the boards, and there was a whoop of exultation from the Irishmen, who had been silent so long.

Vernon-Smith joined in the applause.

"Well hit, sir! Oh, well hit!" he exclaimed.

The man seated on the Bounder's right spun round upon him fiercely.

"You shut up!" he growled. "D'you hear? That was nothin' more'n a fluke!"

"Fluke be hanged!" said Vernon-Smith excitedly. "It was a well-timed blow, straight from the shoulder, and it beat your pal Tiny all ends up!"

The hefty-looking man glared, and he might have done something more than glare had not Tiny Burke risen to his feet at that moment.

There was a very ugly expression on Burke's face. He took his reverse badly, and his eyes glinted with a dangerous light as he hurled himself at his opponent.

Barney Doyle sprang clear, cleverly dodging the blows rained upon him. And then Burke, who felt that he was being made a fool of by his humble opponent, completely lost his head—and his temper. Lumbering forward, he committed the unpardonable offence, that of striking below the belt.

"Foul! Foul!" cried the Irishmen at the back.

But there was no need for them to shout.

The referee had observed the incident, and he at once stopped the fight.

Tiny Burke having so far forgotten himself as to foul, the verdict was accordingly awarded to Barney Doyle.

The man next to Vernon-Smith was on his feet now. His face was working convulsively.

"Get on with the fight!" he shouted.

"You ain't got no right to shout Tiny!"

Vernon-Smith was on his feet, too.

"Serves him jolly well right!" he exclaimed. "The low-down cad! He deserves to be lynched!"

This was more than the hefty-looking person could stand.

With a snarl of rage he hurled himself at Vernon-Smith, who would probably have received a rough handling but for the intervention of the stewards.

A couple of men seized the aggressor, and swung him back.

"Out you come!" said one of them.

The man struggled violently in the grasp of the stewards, and he made frantic efforts to get at Vernon-Smith, but without success. He soon found himself being hustled from the building, and he shook a grimy fist at the Bounder as he went.

"I'll settle with you another time!" was his threat, a threat at which Vernon-Smith merely smiled.

The programme was now at an end, and the audience, a very disgruntled audience for the most part, began to stream out.

The Bounder kept his eyes open as he

emerged into the fog, lest his assailant should be lying in wait for him.

But there was no sign of the hefty-looking gentleman, and Vernon-Smith tramped back to his lodgings, chuckling to himself from time to time as he reviewed the events of the evening.

A frugal supper of bread and cheese awaited the Bounder when he arrived at his temporary home. But Vernon-Smith was ravenously hungry, and he enjoyed that bread and cheese almost as he had enjoyed certain study feeds at Greyfriars.

It was of Greyfriars that he was thinking as he lay awake that night. His schooldays rose vividly before him, as if thrown on a screen.

Were those schooldays over? Or would there be a continuation of them later on? And then Vernon-Smith remembered his vow, the vow that consisted of three words:

"I shall return!"

And he told himself, ere his eyes closed in slumber, that his return was only a matter of time.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

By the Sweat of his Brow!

VERNON-SMITH awoke early next morning.

He was conscious of a feeling of fitness and cheerfulness such as he had not known since his arrival in London.

To-day he started work.

No more blank, cheerless days, no more tramping around in search of employment. Those bitter experiences belonged to the past; and the Bounder had emerged from the shadows into the sunshine.

Even his landlady's burnt toast and weak tea—so weak that it could scarcely stand up in the pot—failed to damp Vernon-Smith's spirits.

And when Mrs. Perkins tackled him on the subject of his next instalment of rent, he replied quite cheerfully that she should have it on Friday.

The morning was gloomy and depressing—a typical winter morning in London. The Bounder's heart was light as he stepped out through the drizzle.

He arrived early at the Wessex Institute, and a drowsy lift attendant conveyed him to Mr. Locke's offices on the top floor.

Vernon-Smith went into all the rooms, and found them empty. Evidently the office staff didn't believe in rising with the lark. They preferred to rise with that somewhat lazier bird, the sparrow.

The Bounder hung up his cap and coat and waited, seating himself at one of the desks in the clerks' office.

It was nearly half-past nine when foot-steps sounded in the corridor.

The door was stealthily pushed open, inch by inch, and a pale-faced young man insinuated himself into the room.

Vernon-Smith glanced curiously at the new-comer, whose face wore a hunted, almost a desperate look, as of a man who was slowly being driven mad.

"Good morning!" said the Bounder cheerfully.

"Er—good-morning!" replied the other. "You are the new clerk, I believe."

Vernon-Smith nodded. The pale-faced young man crossed over, and shook hands with him.

"Your name is Harper, is it not?"

"Right on the wicket."

The young man removed his overcoat and his filthy hat, and, whilst he was hanging them up, he explained to Vernon-Smith—alias Harper—that his

name was Perrin, and that he was the personal secretary to the principal, Mr. Locke.

"Excuse me," said Vernon-Smith, "but why did you sink into the room so curiously just now? I should have thought that a private secretary would march in boldly, as if he owned the earth."

Perrin smiled ruefully.

"It's that young bounder Cox!" he explained.

"Eh? Who's Cox?"

"Our office-boy. And, believe me, he's a lark! terror! He sends me in fear of my life! Some mornings he gets to the office in advance of everybody else, and on those occasions the young rascal rigs up a booby-trap on the door. Twice during the past week I've received a bulky volume on my cranium. It's awful! I've no doubt that before the month is out I shall go into hospital as a direct result of that kid's practical jokes."

Vernon-Smith laughed. The antics of Cox rather appealed to him. He was glad to hear of such happenings at the Wessex Institute. They would relieve the monotony of existence.

"Why can't you keep the kid in order?" he asked.

Perrin snorted.

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"The man who can keep Cox in order," he said, "is yet to be born!"

"Wouldn't it be any use to threaten him with the sack, if he kicks over the traces?"

"Not a scrap! Mr. Locke would never sack the kid. He finds him so useful in dealing with the ex-convicts."

Vernon-Smith stared.

"I—I don't quite understand," he stammered.

"It's like this," said Perrin. "This place, as you know, is a benevolent institution which deals with the after-care of discharged convicts. That is to say, if a man serves a term of penal servitude, and finds it difficult to get an honest living when he comes out, we give him financial assistance, and so forth."

"My hat!"

"Of course, we don't chuck money away indiscriminately. Every case is investigated up to the hilt, and if we find that a man is really in want, we do the needful."

"But where does Cox come in?"

"Why, we sometimes have some ugly scenes in the office. Certain unscrupulous rascals come up here with their tales of woe—purely imaginary—and try to get money by false pretences. If the money is refused them, they get nasty. And that is precisely where the infant Cox comes in. He's only a shrimp in size, but he's got the pluck of a terrier. And he helps to eject anybody who stakes a false claim."

"Oh!"

"For that reason," continued Perrin, "Mr. Locke considers the kid worth his weight in gold, and he won't part with him under any consideration. He'd rather part with me—and I've been his secretary ever since the Armistice was signed."

"I suppose you find the kid rather a trial?" said Vernon-Smith.

"A trial!" almost screamed Perrin. "Why, he's turning my hair grey! If I stay here much longer to be made a target for his practical jokes, I shall have a nervous breakdown. I've been a sufferer from shell-shock, and that young imp hasn't improved my condition. Things have become so bad that I've put in for another job."

"Great Scott!" gasped the Bounder.

"As a matter of fact, I'm in the running for a jolly good situation—secretary to an M.P. I expect to be called away any day."

"That's fine!" said Vernon-Smith. "If you're a politician's secretary you won't find it a hard life. You'll toil not, neither will you spin."

Perrin laughed.

"It's the salary I'm after," he said. "And the salary in this case is a jolly good one."

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"What about starting work!" he said. "Don't be in too big a hurry." And Perrin, dropping into a revolving-chair, "Mr. Locke will be late in turning up this morning. He went down to Greyfriars last night to see his cousin."

Vernon-Smith managed to conceal his surprise; but only by a great effort. He did not deem it advisable to let Perrin know that he had belonged to Greyfriars.

"That's a public school in Kent, isn't it?" he said.

"Yes," said Perrin. "And the headmaster is Mr. Locke's cousin."

"I see."

Vernon-Smith decided to keep that fact in mind for future reference.

He was very keen on getting back to Greyfriars, of course, and he realised that he might be able to do so through the medium of Mr. Locke. Not yet, but as soon as he had made good in his job.

A few moments later two more members of the office staff arrived together.

Vernon-Smith recognised one of them as the clerk who had tested his shorthand and typewriting proficiency.

The other was a youth of fifteen, with an abundant crop of black hair, twinkling blue eyes, and a peculiar grin. The grin was a fixed one, and its possessor seemed to regard life as a sort of musical comedy.

Cox—for it was he—made a sweeping bow.

"Top of the morning, gentlemen!" he observed.

"You are late again, Cox," said Perrin reprovingly.

"That's so, old fruit!" said the office-boy, with cool insolence. "You see, I usually walk up to the office, but this morning I took a train instead—hence my late arrival."

This slur upon the tramway system rather tickled Vernon-Smith.

Perrin, however, was not amused.

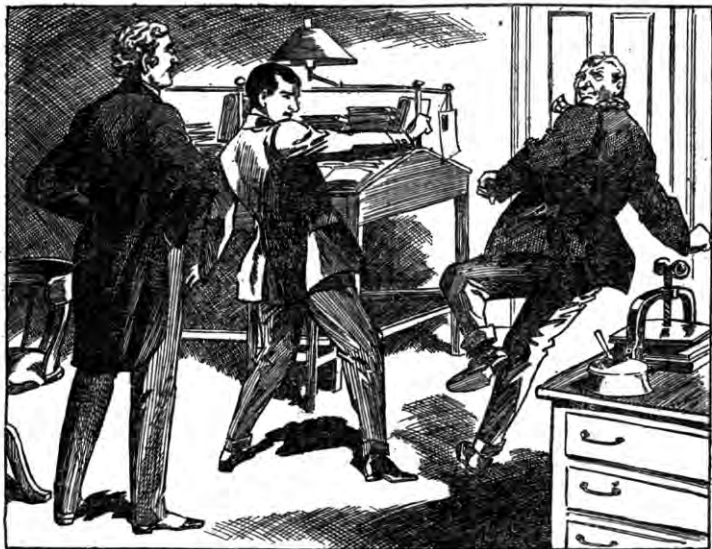
"Look here, Cox," he said, "I've got a job for you!"

"Good!" said Cox. "I feel a positive glut for work this morning. I always do, when I've had gilded kippons for breakfast."

"What's that in your hand?" demanded Perrin.

"The latest issue of the 'Boys' Friend.'"

"A very good paper," said Perrin; "but not intended to be read in office."



"Then take that!" So saying, Bodger clenched his massive fist, and would have dashed it into Mr. Locke's face, had not Vernon-Smith promptly intervened. The Bouncer darted forward, seized the ex-convict by the collar, and swung him back. (See Chapter 7.)

hours. You can leave it on my desk, and collect it when you go to lunch."

"Fig! I believe you want to read it yourself!" growled Cox, as he laid the periodical on Perrin's desk. "Now, what's the job you were babbling about?"

"I want you to look up the record of an ex-convict named Bodger. He has applied to the institute for help, and I want to find out whether he's a deserving case."

"No relation of yours, by any chance?" queried Cox.

Perrin nearly choked.

"You cheeky young rascal!" he spluttered. "Get on with your work!" "Oh, all right!" said Cox. "Don't get excited. I'll soon rake out all the information about old Bodger!"

And Cox crossed over to a large cabinet, which contained photographs and particulars of all the ex-convicts on the books of the institute.

The other clerk settled down to work, and so did Perrin.

"Look here," said Vernon-Smith. "isn't there anything I can be getting on with?"

"You'll have your hands full when Mr. Locke comes," said Perrin, "so don't worry."

The principal didn't turn up for another hour. During that interval Vernon-Smith had amused himself by taking a typewriter to pieces and putting it together again. It was not a very

successful operation, for several "spare parts" were missing at the finish.

Presently a bell rang. Perrin gathered up his papers, and went into Mr. Locke's office.

He returned in a few moments, and signalled to Vernon-Smith.

"Mr. Locke wants you to take down some letters, Harper," he said.

The Bouncer nodded, picked up a notebook and pencil, and a moment later he was standing on the principal's carpet, worn threadbare by the tread of numerous ex-convicts.

"Good-morning, Harper!" said Mr. Locke cordially. "Ready for work—eh?"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"There will be rather a lot to do here, I'm afraid. Mr. Perrin, my secretary, has been badly overworked, and I intend to relieve him by dictating all my correspondence to you."

Vernon-Smith assured the principal that he wasn't afraid of work. His only fear was that he might not get enough to keep him going.

Mr. Locke smiled and proceeded with his dictation. He spoke clearly and slowly, much to the relief of Vernon-Smith, whose shorthand was, to use his own words, a trifle "wonky."

The Bouncer took down about a dozen letters before he was dismissed.

"Try and let me have those before lunch, Harper," said Mr. Locke.

"Very good, sir."

Vernon-Smith passed out into the clerks' office, where he stopped short in astonishment.

Perrin was gripping the arms of his revolving-chair, and staring in a bewildered sort of way at his blotting-pad.

Vernon-Smith stared, too, for a huge frog was leaping to and fro on the blotting-pad.

"Take it away!" implored Perrin, as Vernon-Smith came and looked over his shoulder. "I daren't touch the beastly thing! Ugh!"

The Bouncer shot out his hand, and it closed over the frog which had given Perrin such a scare.

"Why," he ejaculated, "it isn't a genuine frog at all; it's an artificial one!"

"What!" shouted Perrin.

"I've seen these things before," said Vernon-Smith. "They're very cleverly made, and they perform all sorts of antics."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Cox.

Perrin gave a groan.

"Cox again!" he muttered. "That kid will be the death of me! Why do they allow him to be at large, I wonder?"

Vernon-Smith handed the imitation frog back to its owner.

"Put it in your pocket," he said.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

"And if you set it going again I'll bif you!"

"All right, Jack Johnson!" said Cox cheerfully, restoring the frog to his pocket.

"Have you finished that job I gave you?" demanded Perrin.

Cox nodded.

"Here we are!" he said, producing a sheet of paper covered with hieroglyphics. "Ex-convict William Bodger, Age 40. Served five years at Parkhurst Prison for robbery with violence. Applied to this institute for help on his discharge."

"Did we help him?" inquired Perrin.

"Yes. We got him a job as a navvy on the Great Southern Railway, and gave him ten quid to start a savings-bank account."

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed Perrin. "And now he's got the brazen cheek to write and say that he's paying us a visit, with a view to getting further financial assistance."

"What will you do when he comes?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Kick him out?"

Perrin nodded.

"Cox will see to that part of the programme," he said. "Those are the only occasions on which he makes himself really useful."

"Can I go to lunch, please?" inquired Cox.

Perrin glanced at his watch, and gasped.

"Why, it's only half-past eleven!"

"Yes; but the effects of the grilled kippers have worn off, and I'mavenous!"

"Then you'll jolly well remainavenous until one o'clock!" said Perrin, without sympathy.

But the office-boy had no intention of fasting. He slipped out of the room as soon as Perrin's head was bent over his desk.

When Cox returned, some moments later, he carried a large and greasy paper bag, from the top of which steam was emerging.

"What the thump have you got there?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Doughnuts, my son, hot from the oven, or the frying-pan, whatever they make 'em in. Like one?"

"No, thanks!" said the Bounder hurriedly. "They look as if they've been let loose in the traffic!"

"It's only grease," said Cox. "Makes you fat. Sure you won't have one?"

"Quite sure, thanks!"

Cox seated himself on the window-sill, and commenced operations on the doughnuts, while Vernon-Smith's fingers raced nimbly over the keys of his typewriter.

The dozen letters which Mr. Locke had dictated were typed in record time. Vernon-Smith was about to take them in for signature when Mr. Locke came out.

Cox was still seated on the window-sill, with his teeth buried in a doughnut. He nearly fell off the sill on catching sight of the principal.

"Cox," said Mr. Locke sternly, "when I engaged you as my office-boy I did not expect you to devote your time to the consumption of indigestible compounds."

"M-m-m-m!" mumbled Cox.

"Throw that bag into the waste-paper-basket!" commanded Mr. Locke.

The office-boy obeyed, and the principal turned to Vernon-Smith.

"How are you getting on, Harper?"

"I've finished your letters, sir," said the Bounder.

"What! You mean to say you have completed them already?"

"There were only a dozen, sir."

"Bless my soul! This is exceptionally quick work! I am extremely pleased with you, Harper!"

"THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

Not until now did the Bounder realise how closely Mr. Locke resembled his cousin at Greyfriars. In appearance, in speech, in manner, he was closely allied to Dr. Locke.

The principal retired to his own room with the letters, and Vernon-Smith then obtained from Perrin a job which lasted him until lunch-time.

Thus ended the Bounder's first morning as a junior clerk, and he was agreeably surprised at his experiences. The morning had fairly whizzed by.

Vernon-Smith had always been under the impression that the life of a clerk was a dull and dreary affair. But he now saw that it was possible to get quite a lot of enjoyment, and even excitement, out of the daily routine.

No office in the world, the Bounder reflected, could possibly be dull when it was in possession of an office-boy like Cox.

No. 31. SAMUEL TUCKLESS BUNTER.



Samuel Tuckless Bunter—Bunter minor, and a smaller edition of his brother, the great William George. There is no need to say much more, for every reader knows W. G. B. Just as zealous as his major in the everlasting search for tuck, and just as short of the wherewithal to purchase it. Is looked upon in the Second just as is Billy Bunter in the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith's Chances.

Vernon-Smith was invited to lunch by Perrin, but he declined. He was afraid that Perrin might be in the habit of launching at an expensive place, in which case the Bounder might find it impossible to meet the bill. And he hardly liked the idea of Perrin standing treat.

Therefore, Vernon-Smith went out to lunch on his own. He obtained a moderate meal at a moderate charge; and, after a brief stroll, in the course of which he examined the shops, he went back to the office.

He was the first clerk to return to duty. The others apparently believed in a lengthy interval for lunch. Cox certainly did, for he had left a slip of paper on Perrin's desk bearing the words:

"THE OFFICE-BOY IS AT LUNCH.
HE WILL BE BACK IN TIME
TO PREPARE TEA."

"The cheeky young bounder!" laughed Vernon-Smith. "I don't wonder at poor old Perrin being nearly off his rocker!"

Seating himself at his desk, Vernon-Smith fingered the keys of his typewriter, impatient for more work.

Suddenly he pricked up his ears.

Mr. Locke was pacing to and fro in the next room, and Vernon-Smith could hear him muttering to himself.

Men who pace to and fro and mutter to themselves usually have something on their minds, and the Bounder wondered if all was well with Mr. Locke.

The footsteps ceased at length, and Vernon-Smith stepped cautiously towards the principal's door, which was slightly ajar.

Peering into the room, he had the shock of his life.

Mr. Locke was seated at his desk, still muttering to himself. And he was fingering a revolver!

One thought leapt to Vernon-Smith's mind.

The principal was contemplating suicide!

A crisis had evidently arisen in Mr. Locke's private affairs, and the old gentleman had resolved to put an end to himself.

Vernon-Smith's heart was thumping against his ribs as he continued to peer into the room.

He must take action at once, he reflected. He must save Mr. Locke from himself!

The revolver was being poised in the principal's hand, and at any second he might fire the fateful shot.

Realising the folly of delay, Vernon-Smith burst into the room, rushed straight at Mr. Locke, and snatched the weapon from his grasp.

The principal looked thunderstruck.

"Harper," he gasped, "are you mad?"

"It's you that's mad, sir!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, his voice quivering with excitement. "Think it over, sir, and I'm sure you'll decide that your life is too valuable to be thrown away!"

"M-m-m-my life thrown away!" stammered Mr. Locke. "What do you mean?"

"Surely, sir, you were on the point of—of putting an end to yourself!"

For a moment the principal stared at Vernon-Smith in blank astonishment, then he leaned back in his chair, rocking with laughter.

"Oh dear! This is too funny for words! Did you seriously imagine, Harper, that I was about to commit suicide?"

"Of course, sir! I was watching you from the other room, and it seemed to me that you were in trouble of some sort, and meant to put an end to it all."

"You silly boy! You should not have jumped to such a ridiculous conclusion!"

Vernon-Smith gasped.

"You—you mean to say that you had no intention of shooting yourself, sir?"

"Not the slightest! I have no desire to quit this life just yet."

"But—but the revolver, sir?"

"I always keep a revolver on my desk," explained the principal. "It is advisable, in case I should ever be attacked by an ex-convict to whom I refuse help."

"Oh!"

Vernon-Smith understood at last, and he blushed as he realised what an absurd mistake he had made.

There was one point, however, on which he was not yet satisfied.

"Why were you pacing backwards and forwards, sir, and muttering to yourself?" he asked.

Mr. Locke smiled.

"It is a habit of mine to talk to myself, Harper," he said. "A dangerous habit,

perhaps; but I have not yet been able to break myself of it. It is also habitual for me to pace up and down. And a third habit of mine is to finger that revolver. I do it almost unconsciously."

Vernon-Smith replaced the revolver on the desk.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir, that I barged in like that," he said. "But I quite thought there was something wrong."

The principal cheerfully accepted Vernon-Smith's apology, and the Bounder returned to the clerks' office.

He had barely seated himself at his desk when Perrin came in.

Perrin did not enter in his usual slinking manner. Instead, he burst into the room like a cyclone.

"Good news!" he chorled, his face glowing like that of an excited school-boy. "Great news! Stunning news!"

"Have they decided to hang the ex-Kaiser, after all?" queried Vernon-Smith.

"Bless the ex-Kaiser! I've got my job!"

"Congratulations!" said the Bounder. "I've had a message from Mr. Potter-Sloley—the M.P. I'm going to be secretary to—and he wants me to start at once!"

"That's topping! But will Mr. Locke let you go?"

"Like a shot! He knows how keen I am to get away from that young demon Cox!"

Perrin stepped into the principal's room, and emerged at the end of ten minutes.

"Everything's fixed up," he said, "and I leave at once. When Cox gets back from lunch he'll find that I've gone for good, and he'll have to fix upon a fresh victim for his practical jokes."

"Well, I'm sorry you're going," said Vernon-Smith. "We were getting on famously together."

"I'm sorry, too, in that respect," said Perrin. "But I'm glad—ever so glad—to get clear of the clutches of Cox. That child was slowly driving me mad."

Vernon-Smith smiled, and Perrin held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Harper! From what I've seen of you, you won't have any difficulty in keeping your end up in this show. I shouldn't be surprised if Mr. Locke appoints you as his secretary in my place."

The Bounder's eyes sparkled.

Perrin's words bucked him up immensely.

What a triumph for a fellow of fifteen to become a private secretary!

Surely such an achievement would more than satisfy the demands of Mr. Vernon-Smith!

And what a sensation the news would cause when it reached Gryffriars!

"Do you really mean that?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Of course I do!" replied Perrin. "You're well qualified for the job. The other clerk, Channing—the fellow who tested you when you first came—hasn't one-tenth of your energy and ability. I wish you luck, kid. You deserve to get on. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Vernon-Smith.

He wrung Perrin's hand warmly, and the newly-appointed M.P.'s secretary took his departure.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Exit Bodger.

HALF an hour later the office-boy returned from lunch. He nodded cheekily to Vernon-Smith.

"My hat! You've got dashed cheek, and no mistakes!" said the Bounder. "Do you know that you've been out two hours and a quarter!"

"That's nothing!" said Cox. "Isn't it, by Jove! Instead of calling it a luncheon-hour, it ought to be called a luncheon vacation!"

"I've been shopping," explained Cox. And he displayed to view a brown-paper parcel.

"What have you got there?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"Fireworks!"

"Eh? What sort of fireworks?"

"Jumping crackers and squibs. For Perrin's benefit, you know!"

Vernon-Smith smiled grimly.

"Afraid you won't be able to work off any more paper on Perrin," he said.

Cox's blue eyes opened wide.

"Why's that?"

Perrin's got another job. You've driven him out of the office with your confounded practical jokes!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I mean to keep you in order, my son," continued Vernon-Smith. "You blighted poor old Perrin's existence, but you're not going to blight mine! Just you behave yourself in future!"

No. 32.—ROBERT DONALD OGILVY.



Robert Donald Ogilvy—a sturdy Scot from the Eastern Highlands. Cool, resolute, courageous, and able. Can be very obstinate in a good cause, or what he considers one. Shares Study No. 3 in the Remore with Dick Russell, who, though somewhat weak, has been considerably strengthened by his comradeship with the Scotch junior. Level-headed and thoughtful, and a good scholar.

"I'll be as good as gold!" promised Cox.

"Gold isn't good. It's the root of all evil. What are you going to do with those fireworks?"

"Put 'em aside for a rainy day."

"All serene. If you start letting them off in this office I'll scrag you. See?"

"Very well, Harper."

Cox was as lively as a cartload of monkeys, but he was no fool. He saw that the new clerk was not a fellow to be trifled with, and he regarded Jack Harper with respect.

The work of the office proceeded as usual.

Perrin's absence was sorely felt; but Vernon-Smith and Channing put their backs into it, and kept pace with the work.

The Bounder felt immensely grateful to Channing, for it was he who had shouted the Bounder's praises to Mr. Locke in the first instance.

Quite a number of people called at the Wessex Institute during the afternoon. They were not members of the nobility and gentry, but men who had recently been discharged from his Majesty's prisons.

Mr. Locke interviewed the men in turn, helping the deserving applicants, and sending the undeserving ones empty away.

Late in the afternoon, whilst Vernon-Smith was taking down letters at Mr. Locke's dictation, Cox opened the door and announced Mr. Bodger.

"Show him in!" said the principal.

A hefty-looking man, with repulsive features, stamped into the room.

Vernon-Smith gave a sudden start.

For Mr. Bodger was the person who had molested him at the boxing tournament.

In the same instant that the Bounder recognised the man, the latter recognised Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Bodger, however, soon took his eyes off the clerk, and fixed them upon Mr. Locke.

"Which I've come to you, sir, to see if you can 'elp me out of a tight corner. I'm out of work, and I'm findin' it a hard job to keep the wolf from the door. A few quids, sir, would come in verry handy."

"I dare say they would!" said Mr. Locke. "But if I remember rightly, Bodger, you have already been given assistance. Regular employment was obtained for you, and you were handed the sum of ten pounds. If, as you say, you are out of work, it can only mean that you have misconducted yourself in some way. I refuse to help you any further."

Bodger began to whine.

"I'm starvin', sir!" he declared. "Likewise my wife and family. We ain't got enough to keep body and soul together!"

"I regret I cannot believe you, Bodger. You do not look like a starving man. Moreover, you have been drawing good money from the Great Southern Railway, and if you have expended it in drink or gambling, that is entirely your own fault."

"Which I'm a puffy sober man, sir. And as for gamblin'—why, I've never gambled so much as a penny-piece in my life!"

"Why, you awful fibber!" broke in Vernon-Smith. "When I saw you at the Ring last night you told me that you'd backed Tiny Burke to win with every penny that you had!"

Bodger scowled.

"You mind yer own business!" he snarled.

Mr. Locke turned to the Bounder.

"Is your statement correct, Harper?"

"Quite correct, sir."

"Then this man is utterly worthless, and quite undeserving of help."

"It's like this 'ere, sir—"

protested Bodger.

"Leave this office at once!"

"Now, be a sport, sir—"

"Go!"

An ugly expression came over the ex-convict's face.

Vernon-Smith guessed—and rightly—that there was going to be trouble.

Bodger lumbered up to Mr. Locke.

"Are you goin' to 'elp me, or are you not?" he demanded.

The man's tone was no longer whining, but aggressive.

"For the last time, I refuse to assist you in any way whatever!" exclaimed the principal.

"Then take that!"

So saying, Bodger clenched his massive fist, and having dashed it into Mr. Locke's face, he turned to the door.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 623.

Locke's face had not Vernon-Smith promptly intervened.

"The Bounder darted forward, seized the ex-convict by the coat-collar, and swung him back.

Bodger prevented himself from falling, and a fierce hand-to-hand struggle ensued.

Vernon-Smith fought pluckily, and he succeeded in beating a tattoo on Bodger's ribs, causing the man to gasp with pain.

Presently Bodger broke away, and the expression of ferocity on his face boded ill for the Bounder.

But at that moment the door of the principal's room was thrown open, and Cox and Channing rushed in to Vernon-Smith's assistance.

A wild and whirling struggle ensued, in the course of which the redoubtable Bodger was badly knocked about. And presently the ruffian went to the floor with a crash.

"Sit on his chest!" panted Vernon-Smith.

Cox and Channing promptly obeyed. One of them sat on Bodger's chest, and the other on his legs, which had been wildly thrashing the air.

Vernon-Smith flicked the dust from his clothes, and turned to Mr. Locke.

"Shall I fetch a policeman, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Thank you, Harper! This man is a dangerous scoundrel, and the sooner he is delivered into custody the better!"

Bodger struggled desperately to regain his feet; but Cox effectively put an end to his struggles by banging the back of his head on the floor.

Vernon-Smith hurried down into the street. He returned to the office a few moments later, accompanied by a powerfully-built constable.

The latter glanced at the prostrate form of Bodger; then he turned to Mr. Locke.

"You wish to give this man in charge, sir?"

"Yes."

"Not this time, guv'nor—not this time!" wailed Bodger. "I won't give no more trouble—honest, I won't! Let me off this once, and it shan't never happen again! I've just come out of clink after five years, and I don't want another dose!"

Mr. Locke hesitated.

"Very well, Bodger," he said, at length. "You shall be given another chance. See to it that you do not transgress in this way again."

The ex-convict was allowed to rise to his feet.

"On second thoughts, I shall not charge this man, constable," said Mr. Locke.

He slipped a coin into the hand of the policeman, who saluted and withdrew.

"May we show Mr. Bodger the way out, sir?" inquired Cox, with a grin.

Mr. Locke nodded; whereupon Bodger was promptly hustled out of the room.

His escort halted him at the top of the stairs.

"Half a jiffy, you claps," said Cox. "I've thought of a good wheeze for speeding the parting guest!"

And the office-boy disappeared, returning shortly afterwards with the fireworks which had been originally intended for Perrin.

Cox lighted a number of jumping-crackers and squibs, and Bodger tore himself away from Vernon-Smith and Channing, and fled down the stairs. The fireworks were hurled after him, and the victim's yells fairly awakened the echoes.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The squibs and jumping-crackers did their work well. They certainly struck terror into the heart of Mr. Bodger, who went down the stairs at such a rate that

he eventually lost his balance and rolled down the bottom flight.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" chorled Cox. "The bottom step's the lowest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith and Channing laughed heartily; and the former, as soon as Bodger was gone, returned to Mr. Locke's office.

"Bless my soul, Harper! What ever was the cause of that commotion I heard just now?" exclaimed the principal.

"Ahem! We were showing Bodger out, sir," said the Bounder.

Mr. Locke laughed.

"I am much obliged to you, Harper," he said, "for coming to my assistance in such a plucky manner when that scoundrel was about to attack me. But for your prompt intervention I fail to see how I could have escaped injury. Although this is only your first day here, you have already proved yourself a valuable acquisition, Harper."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, sir."

"I appreciate your energy and industry very highly," continued the principal.

"And I intend to show my appreciation in a tangible form. I herewith appoint you, Harper, to take Mr. Perrin's place as my private secretary."

Vernon-Smith tried to express his thanks, but only a few faltering words would come.

MICK O' THE MOVIES!

A THRILLING NEW
SERIAL OF CINEMA
LIFE STARTS IN THIS
:: :: WEEK'S :: ::

PENNY POPULAR.

DON'T MISS IT!

Perrin's prophecy had been fulfilled, and the Bounder had already had greatness thrust upon him. He had been a junior clerk for a few hours only; he was now a private secretary!

"Your work will be increased," said Mr. Locke, "but so will your salary. And I see no reason why you should not be associated with this office for many years, Harper."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

He liked his job immensely; but he had no intention of retaining it for years and donkeys' years.

His keenness to get back to Greyfriars had not worn off, nor was it likely to do so.

It was very nice to be a private secretary; but it was far nicer to be a public schoolboy!

That evening was one of the most strenuous that Vernon-Smith had ever spent.

He had often worked hard at school, preparing his contributions for the "Greyfriars Herald"; but those occasions had been picnics by comparison with the present one.

Mr. Locke took his departure at about six o'clock; but before he went he dictated about thirty letters to Vernon-Smith, with instructions that they were to be placed on his desk for signature first thing in the morning.

"I am afraid I am putting an excess of work on to your shoulders, my boy," said the principal. "But I have already advertised for two more clerks, and as soon as they arrive the pressure will be relieved."

"As I told you before, I'm not afraid of work, sir," answered the Bounder.

"But you will be robbed of your evening's enjoyment."

"I hadn't anywhere to go, sir."

"Are you not fond of theatres and cinemas?"

"I'm fond of them, sir; but I mean to give them a miss for a week or so."

Vernon-Smith did not explain that until he received his first week's salary he would be practically "stony."

"I trust you are in comfortable lodgings," said Mr. Locke.

"Very comfortable, thank you, sir," replied Vernon-Smith.

But he wondered what Mr. Locke would have thought—and said—had he been able to see the wretched garret in Waterloo, and the sour-faced Mrs. Perkins.

"Good-night, Harper!" said Mr. Locke.

"Good-night, sir!"

When the principal had gone, Vernon-Smith returned to the clerks' office, resolved to type the whole of the thirty letters before setting out for his lodgings.

Cox greeted the Bounder as he came in.

"Channing's gone home," he explained. "He clears a bit off colour."

"You can hear off, too, if you like," said Vernon-Smith graciously.

But Cox shook his head.

"I'm going to stay and give you a hand," he said.

And the office-boy kept his word.

Vernon-Smith was agreeably surprised at the energy displayed by Cox. Hitherto he had not regarded him as one of the world's workers; but he found that Cox could be quite energetic when he cared to bestir himself.

For three solid hours Vernon-Smith's fingers raced over the keys of the typewriter. Some of the letters he had to transcribe were very long and intricate; but not once did the Bounder pause. And while he typed, Cox got through a tremendous amount of necessary clearing-up work.

Nine o'clock was striking when Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

"Finished?" asked Cox.

"Yes."

"Good! So have I!"

"You're a brick for helping me out!" said the Bounder.

"Rot! Time was toddled home, I think. Do you live anywhere near me?"

"Where's that?"

"Kings-on-Thames."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"I certainly live near the river," he said, "but not at quite such a charming resort!"

"Putney?" queried Cox.

"No; Waterloo."

Cox gave a gasp.

"That's a queer sort of place to live at," he said. "Still, I'm coming the

same way as you. I always catch my train from Waterloo Station."

And so the office-boy and the private secretary act out together. Yet a stranger would have been hard put to it to tell which was the secretary and which was the office-boy. In dress, height, and age Cox was the Bouncer's equal.

It was not a nice night. The rain fell in torrents, and the motor-buses and other vehicles churned up mud as they passed.

Vernon-Smith, however, chatted cheerily to his companion, blissfully unaware of the fact that the couple were being followed.

Yet such was the case.

A hefty-looking individual was slouching along in the rear, taking care not to lose sight of the two fellows in front of him.

Vernon-Smith parted from Cox outside Waterloo Station. He bade the office-boy good-night, and playfully warned him not to be late in the morning; then, fagged with the exertions of the day, he sought his lodgings.

Mrs. Perkins opened the door to him; and, before the landlady could close it again, a burly figure came up the steps.

"One minute, ma'am!" said a voice. "I want a word with you."

Vernon-Smith halted in the narrow, dimly-lighted passage.

He recognised the voice as belonging to Bodger, the ex-convict.

"What do you want with me?" demanded Mrs. Perkins.

"I want to warn you against that lodger of yours," was the reply. "He's a wrong 'un!"

"Goodness me!" gasped the landlady. Vernon-Smith strode to the door.

"You bound to be late in the morning," he said. "What do you mean by talking me to my dig?"

Bodger ignored Vernon-Smith, and continued to address Mrs. Perkins.

"He's a wrong 'un!" he repeated. "A dangerous young criminal—that's what he is!"

The landlady turned quite pale.

From the outset she had been rather suspicious concerning her new lodger. To begin with, he was well-dressed, and it was very unusual for well-dressed people to patronise her.

Was it possible that she was harbouring a swell crackman—a fugitive from justice?

Bodger's next words confirmed the landlady's fears.

"That youngster," said Bodger, extending a grizzled forefinger in Vernon-Smith's direction, "has been brought up to crack cribs. He's a burglar and a shopbreaker—and jolly cute at the game, too! The police have been on his track for a long time!"

Vernon-Smith laughed. He was

angered by Bodger's absurd fabrications; but he was amused also.

"Don't take any notice of the scoundrel, Mrs. Perkins!" he said.

The landlady, however, was greatly impressed by what Bodger had told her. She saw no reason to doubt his statements. After all, there were a good many youthful crackmen making merry in London, and she did not doubt that her latest lodger was one of them.

"I should strongly advise you, ma'am, to send him packing," went on Bodger. "If he starts bringin' his loot here, the police might think that you're a receiver of stolen property."

"What awful piffle!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Excuse me a minute, Mrs. Perkins, while I kick this bouncer down the steps!"

The landlady turned to her lodger with an accusing eye.

"Young reprobate!" she said, in shrill tones. "So that's what you're be-a-doing of! Cracking cribs, and making my house your headquarters!"

Vernon-Smith gasped.

"You mean to say you believe that idiotic yarn?"

"Yes, and I've a good mind to hand you over to the police!"

"My hat!"

"I shouldn't go so far as that, ma'am, if I was you," said Bodger. "Just kick him out. That oughter be sufficient!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Perkins. "Out you get, me lad! I'm not going to have my house turned into a thieves' kitchen!"

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands with annoyance.

"I'm not a thief!" he shouted. "I'm private secretary to Mr. Locke, at the Wessex Institute!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Bodger. "That's one of the richest jokes I've heard for a long time! Private secretary indeed! Ho, ho, ho!"

Vernon-Smith made a rush at the hilarious Bodger, but the landlady stood in his path.

"No, you don't!" she said sternly.

"You'll fetch your belongings, and clear out of my house within five minutes! And if you ain't out of it by then I'll call the police!"

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" chorled Bodger.

Vernon-Smith was exasperated beyond measure. But he saw that he would have to go. And the prospect of being turned out of his lodgings, humble though they were, was far from pleasant.

To refuse to quit would be worse than useless. The police would be called in, and he would be remanded until inquiries were made. The police would be satisfied in the long run, of course; but the news of the Bouncer's arrest might filter

through to his father. And that was not desirable.

"Very well," said Vernon-Smith, hating come to a decision. "I'll clear out, but it's unfair, horribly unfair! That scoundrel is lying, and he knows it!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Vernon-Smith felt that he could not bear to hear Bodger's taunting laugh again. He went up to his own room—a miserable hotel, but far preferable to the open streets—and gathered up his belongings.

Then he carried his box downstairs, and the landlady held the door open for him to pass.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" was her parting words.

Vernon-Smith tottered down the steps with his box. He set it down on the pavement, and looked round for Bodger. But his enemy had made himself scarce.

What was to be done now?

The Bouncer had been in some tight corners in the past, but none so tight as this.

He was cast out of his lodgings with nowhere to go!

It was useless to start off in quest of fresh "digs," for the simple reason that the Bouncer was not in a position to pay a week's rent in advance.

Vernon-Smith stood motionless for some minutes in the pelting rain, trying to think things out.

Bodger's revenge was certainly complete and crushing. He could not have chosen a more cruel plan than that which had resulted in Vernon-Smith being turned out of his lodgings.

"First of all," muttered the Bouncer, "I must get rid of this box. I can't tramp about with it all night. I'll leave it in the cloak-room at the station, I think."

With a heavy heart Vernon-Smith moved off with his belongings.

He was glad to find himself in the shelter of the railway-station, and still more relieved when he had disposed of the heavy box, which he intended to collect later.

The Bouncer had a shilling or two left in his pocket, but pay-day was a long way off, and he would need to husband his resources.

However, the pangs of hunger became so acute that he was presently compelled to obtain sandwiches and coffee at the refreshment buffet.

After this he felt a little better, though the problem of the immediate future was still unsolved.

Vernon-Smith sat down on one of the seats in the chilly waiting-room, and tried to think of a way out of his present sorry plight.

There was only one place in London where he could obtain a night's lodging.

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"Tubby Wiggins"—the St. Ives fat boy who appears every week in one of Jack Lewis's famous school stories.

His father's house!

Surely if he went home and explained the circumstances to his father he would not be turned away?

But Vernon-Smith shrank from taking such a step.

"I must stick it out somehow!" he muttered. "I won't accept help from the pater!"

Having forced this resolve, Vernon-Smith realised that he would have to pass the night as best he could. He would remain in the waiting-room at the station until he was ordered out, which would not be until a very late hour. The remainder of the night he would spend in tramping the streets.

It was an appalling prospect, but it was the only thing to do, since he declined to seek hospitality from his father.

The outcast, for such he felt himself to be, devoted the next hour to watching the people as they came in and went out of the waiting-room. Most of them were on their way home from the theatres.

At length the place was deserted, save for himself.

The last train had rumbled on its way, and most of the lights on the station had been extinguished. But those in the waiting-room were still burning.

Vernon-Smith took out his pocket-book, from which he tore out a few leaves, and then he began to write a letter to his chums at Greyfriars.

He found wonderful consolation in writing that letter.

Not a word did he write concerning his troubles. He did not mention to Harry Wharton & Co. that he had been turned out of his lodgings, that he was scribbling

the letter in the waiting-room at Waterloo Station.

It was an heroic letter, a letter such as few fellows could have written under such gloomy and depressing conditions.

The Bounder described his first day at the office. He told his chums all about Perrin and Mr. Lorke, and the irrepressible Cox. He also mentioned, but not in a boastful way, that he had secured the post of private secretary.

In due course the letter to Harry Wharton & Co. was finished.

Vernon-Smith had an envelope and a stamp in his pocket, and he sealed and stamped the missive. Scarcely had he done so when the lights in the waiting-room went out. The Bounder thought he had better do likewise.

To his relief, he found, on quitting the station, that the rain had abated.

For a couple of hours the Bounder tramped, having no regard either to direction or destination.

At length his surroundings appeared to be familiar. The tall, stately-looking houses, the wide thoroughfares—he had seen them before.

Presently he stopped short, his heart beating quickly.

In a flash he realised where he was. He stood outside his father's house!

The tall, imposing-looking residence was in darkness. But Vernon-Smith knew that he had but to ring the bell in order to rouse a servant. And the servant, in turn, would rouse his father.

Again the temptation came to the Bounder, stronger and more insistent than before.

Why not ask his father to take him in?

For a long time he stood hesitating.

Then, glancing at his luminous watch, he saw that it was past three o'clock.

"I'll stick it out!" he said, though his teeth were chattering with the intense cold. "I won't cave in! The pater told me to return in a month, and I agreed. Very well. I won't break the compact!"

The Bounder turned, and trudged slowly away.

Hours passed, long, dreary, bitter hours. And then the first grey gleam of dawn appeared in the eastern sky.

The Bounder was back in the neighbourhood of Waterloo by this time, and, to his unbounded joy, he saw that the proprietor of a coffee-stall was about to start his morning's work.

A large cup of steaming coffee worked wonders, and, having refreshed himself, Vernon-Smith set out for the office.

Fortunately, the cleaners had already arrived, and the Bounder was able to enter the building. He went up to the office in which he worked, and applied a match to the fire, which had already been laid.

After which he seated himself in his chair, with a cushion at his back, and in a few moments he was fast asleep.

He was worn out with the adventures of the past twenty-four hours, adventures of a sort he had never experienced before.

But many more adventures were destined to befall Vernon-Smith ere he resumed his place in the Greyfriars Remove!

THE END.

(Another grand, long story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars School, next week, entitled: "Vernon-Smith's Return." Order your copy early.)

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WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO SECURE A BEAUTIFUL ART PLATE :: :: ::

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

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JUGGLING

HOW TO MASTER THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ART.

THERE is no reason why any boy possessed of an average amount of dexterity should not be able to perform many juggling tricks after a certain amount of careful and patient practice. By a close study of the following instructions a clear idea of the principles of the art can be obtained; and when these principles have been mastered the beginner should have no difficulty in elaborating the tricks to suit his own fancy.

As the system of juggling with knives, plates, or clubs is founded entirely upon the methods employed in manipulating balls, the simplest plan is to learn the tricks with these last before adapting them to larger objects.

Any kind of ball may be employed for juggling, but the specially prepared balls, made of heavy metal, are the best, and can be purchased for a few shillings the set of four from any dealer in games.

THE VERTICAL FALL.

A ball should be thrown into the air in such a manner that it will descend to the exact point from which it was projected, as in Fig. 1. It is quite unnecessary to throw the ball higher than four feet. By an observation of the usual method of catching a ball it will be noticed that the hand usually follows the



Fig. 1.—The Vertical Fall.

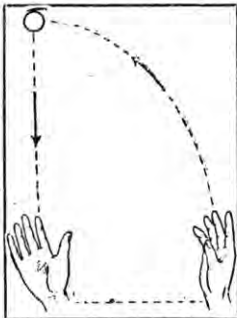


Fig. 2.—The Inside Fall.

course of the ball; but the great object of the juggler is to learn to catch without moving the hand from the position it occupied when throwing the ball into the air.

The great point of the vertical fall is to teach the beginner to move his hands as little as possible, and for this reason the exercise should be practised with both right and left until such precision is acquired that the movement can be accomplished with the eyes closed.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE FALLS.

The inside fall is done by throwing the ball with the right hand in such a way that it describes a curve and drops towards the left, as in Fig. 2. But instead of catching it with the left hand, catch it with the right by a rapid movement of the hand across the body. The ball being held in the right hand, it should be thrown back from left to right in a similar way, as in Fig. 3. The latter is called the outside fall.

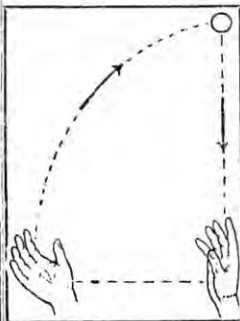


Fig. 3.—The Outside Fall.

This exercise is intended to teach the beginner to throw the ball several times in succession from side to side without its deviating from its course. The principle involved is very important for jugglery, and must be thoroughly acquired before proceeding with other tricks.

THE PARALLEL FALL.

This fall presents greater difficulties. The ball should be thrown with the right hand, as in the vertical fall, although the hand must be kept in a line with the shoulder. As soon as the ball has been caught, the hand must be rapidly brought into line with the left shoulder, the ball thrown from that position, and caught (Fig. 4).

Having learned the trick with the right hand, it is essential to become accustomed

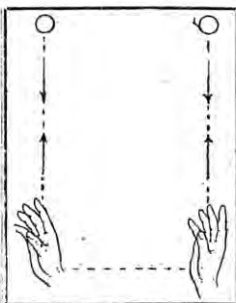


Fig. 4.—The Parallel Fall.

to perform it equally well with the left hand, moving it to the right shoulder.

FALLS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.

Both hands are required for these falls, which are simply an adaptation of what has just been described. The ball should be thrown exactly as described in No. 2; but instead of moving the right hand across the body to catch the ball when it

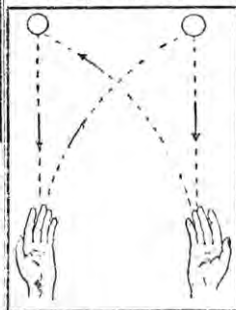


Fig. 5.—Falls from right to left.

falls on the left side, the left hand should catch it as in Fig. 5, and should immediately return it by means of the outside fall to the right hand. But little practice is required to learn this perfectly, and when skilfully performed it makes a pretty display.

(To be continued next week.)



A Stirring New Tale of the Ring. By PERCY LONGHURST.

SYNOPSIS.

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

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

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

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

Harry, his father, and Bertram Godfrey go to London, where Harry defeats Jules Meander, Parisian light-weight champion, in a private contest, which is witnessed by a Royal Prince.

An attempt to kidnap the Prince is frustrated by Harry, who saves the Prince's gratitude.

The next morning Conrad Bowman, manager of the National Boxing Club, calls on Harry, and promises to give him a show at the Club.

(Now read on.)

The Anarchists.

"I RECKONED I had a pretty strong nerve, but you've shaken it," Bowman went on. "I didn't know any better then, but it was a wrong opinion I'd formed of you. Well, that's altered now, and I'm going to do my best to prove it. If you can reproduce the form you've already shown, you're going to cause a sensation, I can promise. And I'll put in all I know to help. You'll be given a chance such as no other unknown man who's come up to London has ever had. The National stands for everything that's sound in boxing as well as sensational, and it'll be my job to see that the Club's whole resources are made use of to make you entry into the boxing world as notable as possible and advantageous to yourself."

"Not forgetting the reputation and prestige of the Club itself, my dear Bowman," said a voice from the doorway. "All the same, it's jolly decent of you."

The three swung round, to see Bertram Godfrey advancing into the room, a smile on his face, his eyes dancing with merriment and triumph.

"I couldn't help it," he said. "I came home, and Collier told me who were in the library. The door wasn't closed, and when I heard what you were saying,

Bowman, I couldn't resist the temptation to listen. It was fine. I congratulate you, Connie. And I cheerfully accept without any reservation or lingering malice the apology to myself which is implied in the alteration of your opinion of Harry Rhodes has undergone. Bowman—Harry, I congratulate both of you."

Bowman listened with a very smile. Godfrey had contrived to make him look somewhat of an ass, which Mr. Conrad Bowman particularly detested, much as it amused his friend.

"You haven't played fair, Godfrey," he protested, shaking his head. "You set a trap for me, and I couldn't help falling into it. It wasn't fair."

"But it was too funny, though!" laughed Godfrey.

"To you, yes. Well, maybe I'll get quits with you one of these days. As it is, I congratulate you on your discovery. And, Jimmy Rhodes, I congratulate you on having such a son. And now, if you don't mind, I'll be off. There's a lot of work for me to get through to keep my promise about this lad. I'm expecting a cable every day telling me that Ed. Walker has left New York!"

"Walker! The coon! Fellow they call the 'Galveston Terror'!" Godfrey asked.

"That's the chap!" Bowman turned to Harry Rhodes. "Do you draw the colour line? Any objection to fighting the nigger?"

"Personally, I don't mind," Harry answered promptly.

"And you don't think it's trying your boy too high?" asked the manager of James Rhodes.

"Until I see it happen, I don't believe there's a man of his weight in the world good enough to whip him!" replied Rhodes emphatically.

"I am willing," said Harry.

"Right! And now I'll get busy."

And Bowman took his departure.

Harry Rhodes was a modest youth, and his head did not begin to swell immediately the discovery was made that he was looked upon with more than average interest by a few persons of importance. The kindness and gratitude of the Prince pleased him immensely, and the interest Conrad Bowman had suddenly developed in his career he found gratifying. But neither happening had caused him to order a larger size in hats.

But he would have discovered very little pleasure and nothing of gratification could he have been made aware of the interest in himself existing among four men seated in earnest conversation in the front room of a well-appointed house

situated in a good thoroughfare in the Brixton district. Again and again his name was mentioned, and about his personality, character, and intentions, it was made abundantly clear that there existed in these men—three of whom he had never seen in his life nor ever heard of—a curiosity and thirst for information that would have much surprised him.

Commonplace, ordinary individuals in appearance these three were. One would have passed them on the pavement without seeing anything to warrant more than the most casual of glances. One might have sat and talked to any one of them for an hour, and have gone away without having discovered in them anything worthy of remembrance.

One, who appeared to exercise a faint—though it was very real—authority, might have been taken for a schoolmaster. The front of his head was quite bald; he wore dark spectacles, gold-rimmed, and he spoke slowly and with precision, as though his listeners should make no mistake as to his meaning. He wore a short, dark beard and moustache, and was shallow of complexion. Like the other two, he was respectfully dressed, quietly, with nothing about him of which the eye would take special note. He seemed older than the others.

These two were stout and comfortable-looking, both fair. One had a thick moustache, the other was clean-shaven. He wore eyeglasses. There was something about them to suggest that they were not Englishmen, although they spoke English easily and correctly; but, otherwise, they were of the ordinary type of which one may see hundreds of examples leaving the City of London every evening between six and eight o'clock by train or tramcar.

That they formed the inner, executive committee of as dangerous a gang of Anarchists—Republicans they called themselves—as might be found in any European capital would never have been dreamed of by a casual companion.

The fourth man was Anthony Hanna, one-time professional boxer.

To most of the questions being asked in that comfortably-furnished room he was finding the answers.

"And do you feel sure that this boy called Rhodes did not recognise you?" the schoolmaster-looking man—he had actually been a professor in a Continental University—asked for the second time.

Hanna screwed up his eyes.

"I knew him all right; but he didn't know me, that I can swear to," he answered.

"Doesn't sound conclusive," the

monstrated man asserted, shaking his head.

"But it is so," Hanna declared obstinately. "The lamps wasn't turned up high, 'n' I'd got th' peak of my hat down over my face so that he couldn't get a fair look at me. Besides, think he'd be expectin' to see me on that car, in a shaver's clobber? But I knew him, though."

"He is a man that you do not like much?" suggested the ex-professor, looking at Hanna keenly.

Hanna spat out a mouthful of vile words suggesting that his feelings towards Harry Rhodes were those of intense hatred.

"He's th' cove that done me in proper. 'N' I ain't forgot it—nor likely to!" asserted Hanna viciously. "Some day I'll get even with him. That plop on th' jaw last night's a bit extra to remember. Lucky I come to quick enough t' hide as close that when they came searching around afterwards they didn't drop an eye on me."

"And you know where to find this boy, Harry Rhodes—where he lives?" queried the leader.

"Yes, that will be well," agreed the other. "Ritz, what would you say?"

The clean-shaved man had turned to him with an anxious expression.

"This, chief. Can we be sure, should we rely utterly upon the word of our comrade here"—glancing at Hanna—"as to the identity of the person whose interference last night made ruin of our scheme? Might we not do well to get corroboration? Wolff, who is waiting in the next room, he may have brought recollection away with him from last night of the appearance of this person. Let him describe the boy. If his word agrees with what Hanna says, well and good."

"It is a good idea," agreed the leader. "Call Wolff. Hanna, do not go away."



"Wolff, tell us what you remember of the appearance of the young man who caused our plans of last night to miscarry," commanded the chief. (See this page.)

A bell was rung, and there came into the room a stout man, his face pale and his mouth badly swollen and discoloured. Harry Rhodes would have recognised the fellow and his handiwork, for this Wolff was the ruffian whom he had fought, and who had escaped from the grip of the chauffeur.

"Wolff, tell us what you remember of

"Ach! With my mouth so, as he made it!" answered the man.

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

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