

GRAND CHRISTMAS-WEEK NUMBER!

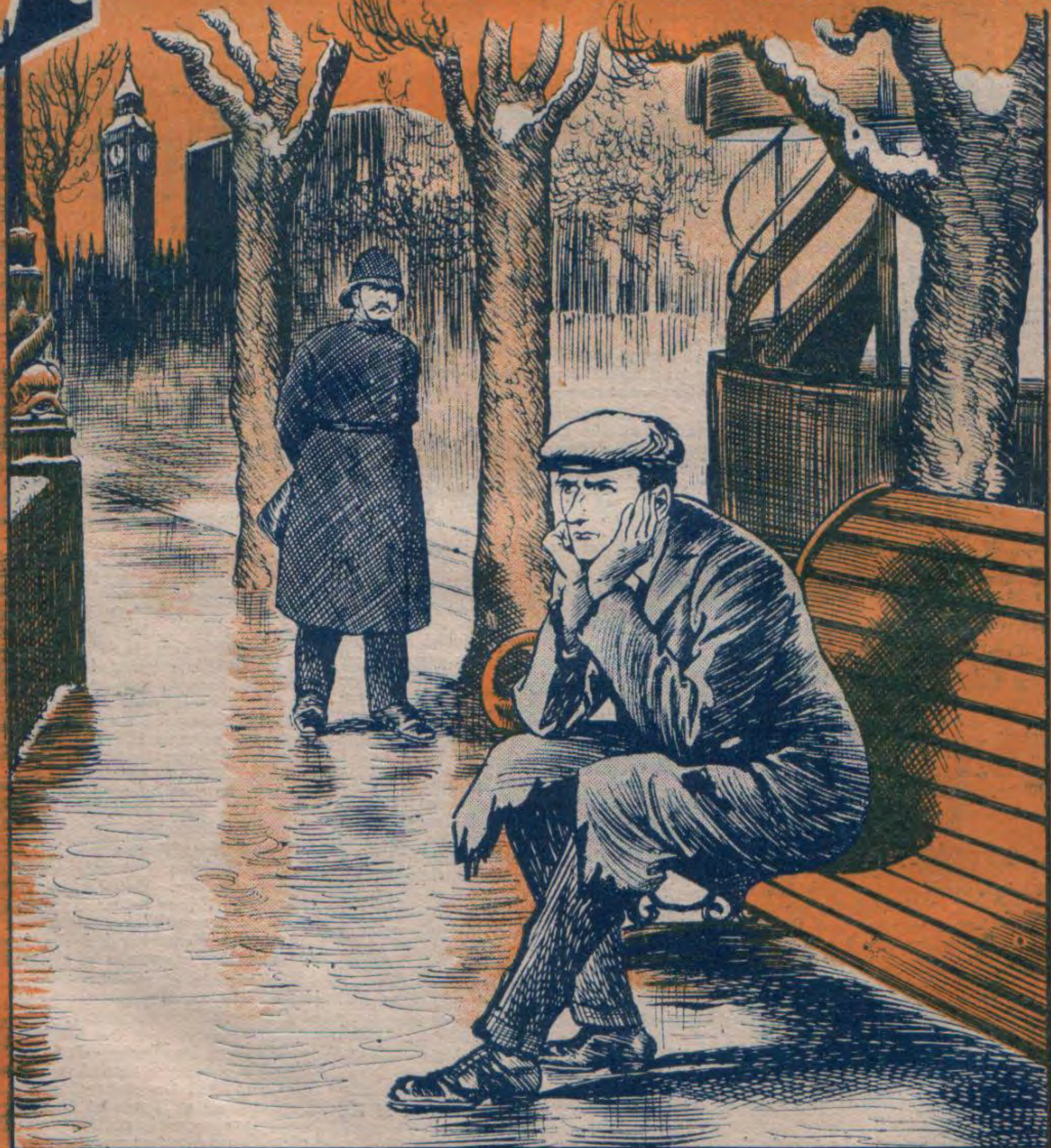
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The Magnet 2^d

Library

EVERY MONDAY.

COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES



DOWN AND OUT!

WHILE LONDON SLEEPS VERNON-SMITH, ONCE A GREYFRIARS BOY, SHIVERS ON AN EMBANKMENT SEAT, HIS ONLY RESTING PLACE FOR THE NIGHT!

(See the grand school story, inside.)

ALONE IN LONDON! Without food and shelter, Vernon-Smith, once a public schoolboy, and now a pauper, tramps the streets of the great metropolis in search of employment. But employment there is none; cruel Fate hits out at him at every turn, and, finally, dealing the wretched junior a knock-down blow, sends him——

FROM GREYFRIARS TO BORSTAL!



A Powerful, Long Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of Herbert Vernon-Smith, once of Greyfriars, in London. By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Good News!

"It's rotten!" Bob Cherry uttered that remark as the Famous Five came out of the Remove Form-room after morning lessons.

"It is rotten!" agreed Harry Wharton, a gloomy frown on his usually cheery face.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" purred Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur. "The absurd Form-room does not seemfully appear to be the samefulness without the esteemed and ludicrous Vernon-Smith."

The rest of the Famous Five nodded.

It was now nearly a fortnight since Greyfriars had first been startled by the news that Vernon-Smith's father, the great City financier and millionaire, had lost his immense fortune, and since his son had left the school, determined to earn his own living.

But still the juniors could not accustom themselves to the Bounder's absence.

"What about poor old Redwing?" remarked Harry Wharton, as the five chums made their way towards the Remove studies. "Of course, he must have read in the papers that Smithy's pater's gone broke; but I reckon he'll have a shock when he discovers that the Bounder's left."

"My giddy aunt! You're right!" agreed Frank Nugent. "And if you ask me, a few other people will get a shock, too, if Redwing hears the tales that are going around about Smithy getting a living by sharpening at cards with Banks and his crowd at the Cross Keys!"

"The shockfulness will be terrific!"

"And Redwing is due back to-night," added Wharton. "He wired the Head to say that his aunt's better, and that he would be catching a mid-day train to London."

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Nugent whistled.

"I think there must be some mistake about—about——"

"About Smithy going back to his old games at the Cross Keys, you mean?" concluded Johnny Bull.

"Y-yes. But as we said at the time, Smithy's probably had a good explanation for his presence there, and everything else."

An awkward silence fell on the five Removites.

"Oh, it's rotten!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, at length. "Only a silly, obstinate ass like Smithy would have got on his dignity and refused a simple explanation of what he was doing when things looked so bad against him—especially as we only wanted the explanation to ram down the throats of the rotters who were talking about him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Anyway, what are we going to do about the match with those Upper-Fourth asses?" demanded Harry Wharton, as the juniors halted outside Study No. 1. "Temple is putting up a pretty good eleven, and I thought we might——"

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! What's the trouble now?" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as Trotter, the school page, appeared round the bend in the passage and made straight for the Famous Five.

"Which it's the Head wants Master Wharton in his study at once," explained the page, with a grin.

"Wants me?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove uneasily. "Sure he didn't want Cherry? Or Bull? Or——"

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

"The wind-up of my worthy chum is terrific!"

"Which he said Master Wharton quite distinctly," grinned Trotter. "Said it was most important, and as how you was to go at once."

And Trotter departed, still grinning.

Not that there was much to grin about, but grinning, with the school page, was a habit more than anything else.

"Better go, I suppose," said Wharton, without enthusiasm, however.

"Ha, ha! Rather!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Wonder what the thump's the matter?" exclaimed Nugent.

"He'll soon find out," grinned Johnny Bull.

"The findoutfulness, I hope, will not be of the terrific order!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton left his chums and made his way to the Head's study. A kindly old voice bade him enter in answer to his respectful tap upon the door.

"Ah!" exclaimed Dr. Locke, his voice trembling with excitement as the Removite entered the apartment. "I have some important news to convey to you, Wharton, which, I feel sure, you will be very pleased to hear."

"About Vernon-Smith, sir?" said Wharton intuitively.

"Yes: about Vernon-Smith," said the Head. "I have just received a letter from his father. But I think you will understand things better if you read the letter for yourself."

And the Head handed the letter in question to the captain of the Remove.

The captain of the Remove took the letter, and, in the precise handwriting of the ex-millionaire, read:

"My dear Dr. Locke.—It is with considerable pleasure that I write to inform you that the state of my finances is not as bad as it was at first supposed. Things are certainly still very uncertain; but with aid from an unexpected quarter I have managed to save something from the wreck, and at the same time to bring off a small coup.

"My collapse, as you may be aware, was, in a sense, artificial, consequent on the market panicking. But if a certain

transaction I have in hand proves successful, I have every reason to hope that things will rapidly mend, and that I shall regain something of my former position in the City.

"This being the case, I hasten to tell you that since the necessity for my son leaving Greyfriars has been removed—for the time being, at least—my desire is that he should continue his studies there as before.

"I am not, unfortunately, in possession of his address since he left Greyfriars, but I trust that if you are, as I have reason to believe, you will inform him of the turn affairs have taken without delay, and induce him to return to Greyfriars immediately, when I will write both you and him more fully.

"Sincerely yours,

"(Signed) SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH."

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Wharton, staring at the letter in amazement. "I—I mean—"

"I thought it would surprise you," said the Head, with a smile.

"My hat! It—it seems too good to be true, sir!" went on the captain of the Remove, handing back the letter.

"However, there seems to be no doubt about it," resumed Dr. Locke. "We must lose no time in getting into communication with your old school-fellow."

"No, sir!"

"No doubt you know where Smith is to be found?"

Wharton nodded.

"I—I think we could find him as near as Friardale, sir," he replied, careful, however, not to mention that the particular place in Friardale was the Cross Keys.

"Then you had better get along and find Vernon-Smith at once. You may take your friends with you if you wish, and I myself will inform Mr. Quelch the reason of your absence, should you not be back in time for afternoon lessons."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir!"

"Very well, Wharton, then waste no time."

The captain of the Remove quitted the Head's study, his brain buzzing with excitement, and broke into a run.

As he neared the Remove quarters again the fat form of William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, loomed ahead of him.

"I say, Wharton—" commenced the Owl of the Remove, attempting to bar the way with his enormous carcase. "Just a minute, Wharton—"

"Out of the way, Bunter!" gasped Harry.

"Really, Wharton—"

But Wharton did not stop for Bunter just then.

Crash

"Ow! Yow! Yooooop!" shrieked Bunter, as he crashed to the linoleum. "I'm hurt! Ow! Yarooooh!"

The captain of the Remove leaped over the sprawling form of the fat Removite and sped on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up now?" demanded Bob Cherry, as Wharton tore down the passage to where the rest of the Famous Five still stood talking.

"Looks as though the Head's after him!" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Listen, you chaps!" panted Wharton, coming to a halt and gasping furiously for breath. "I've got news—"

"And you'll get the stitch in a minute!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't rot!" gasped Wharton. "It's about Smithy—"

"Smithy?" echoed four voices in unison, and the owners thereof were serious at once.

"Yes; he's coming back to Greyfriars!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"My only hat!"

"You're not spoofing?" exclaimed Frank Nugent excitedly.

"No. He's coming back—and we've got to go and fetch him."

"Hurrah!"

In a few words the captain of the Remove explained what had transpired in Dr. Locke's study.

The rest of his chums listened in amazement.

Then, as the full meaning of what Wharton had told them dawned upon them, they emitted a wild yell of joy which echoed and re-echoed up the Remove passage until it could almost be heard in the distant corridors of the lordly Sixth.

"Hurrah!"

"Say, what's bit you guys?" inquired Fisher T. Fish, the American member of the Remove, emerging from a study with Micky Desmond, the Irish youth. "I guess an' calculate—"

The Famous Five quickly explained.

"Jumping Jerusalem!" ejaculated Fish in astonishment.

"Be jabbers—" murmured Micky Desmond.

Fish and Desmond waited to hear no more. The next moment they turned and dashed up the passage towards the Junior Common-room to spread the good news to the rest of their Form-fellows.

"Well, we'd better be going!" exclaimed Wharton, dashing into Study No. 1 for his cap. "Buck up, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"

"The what-hofulness is terrific!"

Half a minute later the Famous Five were striding rapidly towards the school gates. And before they were a hundred yards on the road to Friardale, the news that they had gone to fetch back Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had spread round the rest of the school like wildfire.

Almost without exception, the news that Vernon-Smith was returning was received by the Removites with unalloyed delight, and in the excitement the rumours that had been circulating as to the method by which he had been gaining a living were completely forgotten—except by Harold Skinner & Co., the cads of the Remove.

"I should think the Head wants a job bringing a blessed card-sharper back to the school!" sneered Skinner.

"Contaminating decent chaps, I call it!" said Stott.

"Hear, hear!" agreed Snoop.

A howl of wrath went up from the rest of the juniors in the Common-room.

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"Don't be a bigger cad than you can help!"

"You know it's true," persisted Harold Skinner, with a sneer. "What was Smithy doing at the Cross Keys, if he wasn't—"

"Seat!"

"Cut it out!" hooted Fisher T. Fish, for once unusually warlike.

"There's no proof, anyhow!" snorted Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior.

"Look here—" began Skinner wrathfully.

"We don't believe it!"

"But—" began Skinner.

"Sling him out!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Collar him!"

"Ow! Hold on!" yelled the cad of the Remove in alarm.

But the juniors were fed-up with Harold Skinner and his precious pals.

They made a determined rush at the three black sheep, and they were well and truly collared.

"Yaroorh! Lemme go!" howled Snoop, as several hands closed upon him.

The juniors obliged, but not in the way Snoop had intended. They let him go—and he shot forward out of the Common-room door and landed with a loud bump on the hard and unsympathetic linoleum, followed in rapid succession by Stott and Skinner.

Bump!

"Wow!"

Crash!

"Yoop!"

Bump!

"Yow! You—you rotters!" groaned Skinner, sitting up and shaking his fist at the Removites. "Wow! I'm hurt!"

"Serve you right!" panted Bulstrode. "And if you want some more, just say that all over again about Smithy, and you'll get it!"

And the Removites retreated inside the Common-room, slamming the door behind them.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Banks Explains!

"HERE we are!" The Famous Five came to a halt outside the Cross Keys Inn.

They had covered the distance from Greyfriars School to the village in record time.

"Old Banks will think a giddy war has been declared when he sees the five of us stroll in!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if Smithy hasn't turned up yet I dare say Banks can tell us where he's living," said the captain of the Remove.

"If he wants to," added Johnny Bull thoughtfully. "But after the way some of the fellows treated Smithy a few days ago it's quite on the cards that he'll tip Banks and his crowd the wheeze to keep mum to any Greyfriars chaps."

"Yes, but after all, we've tried to keep friendly with Smithy."

"Well, let's toddle inside then," suggested Bob Cherry. "I— Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes the giddy alarm!"

Bob broke off and pointed to the parlour window where the grimy lace curtains had just fluttered down.

"Cobb!" he exclaimed. "He must have been watching us!"

"Never mind," said Wharton. "Let's get inside!"

The five juniors trooped up the gravel path towards the door of the tavern. But hardly had they covered a couple of yards when Mr. Banks himself suddenly appeared between the doorposts, with Mr. Cobb and a potman close behind him.

But it was not the Mr. Banks the juniors were accustomed to see.

The bookmaker's head was swathed in bandages, his left eye was closed and discoloured, and his nose was bruised and battered. The solitary eye that was in working order glared at the juniors like that of an ogre.

The Removites stared.

"My only hat!"

"What the thump—"

"Git hout!" roared Mr. Banks, shaking a cut and damaged fist angrily at the astonished juniors. "Git hout, I tell yer! I've 'ad about enough of

you young 'ounds from Greyfriars! Git hout!"

"Look here," said Wharton indignantly. "If any Greyfriars fellows put you in that mess, then you must have asked for it. That's not our affair. We haven't come here for trouble."

"The troublefulness has arrivefully come without," grinned Inky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off when you're told," added Mr. Cobb from behind. "Greyfriars brats ain't allowed 'ere—"

"Hallo, hallo hallo! They're getting particular in their old age!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Particularly battered!" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton took a step forward towards the infuriated man in the doorway.

"Listen to me," he said, in a quiet voice. "As I told you a moment ago we haven't come either to cause fresh trouble or to laugh at you. All we want to do is to find Vernon-Smith—"

At the mention of the ex-Removite's name Mr. Banks' fury seemed to increase tenfold. His solitary eye took on a more intense glare, his breath came in gasps, and it seemed for a moment that he was about to burst a blood-vessel.

"Ho! You 'ave, have you?" he roared. "You have, have you? Just wait till I get me hands on Mister Bloomin' Vernon-Smith, that's all—"

"My only sainted aunt! You don't mean to say that it was Smithy who messed you up like that?" demanded Johnny Bull, in amazement.

"The young 'ound!" muttered Banks. And it was obvious from his looks that the Bounder had indeed "messed" him up.

The Removites stared.

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can laugh!" hooted Mr. Banks. "That's what I got arter all I did for him. Found him in the gutter in Courtfield, I did. Down and out he was. But I stood by him like a pal and brought him back 'ere, where I gave him a room and honest work—"

"You gave Smithy work?" gasped the captain of the Remove, in astonishment. "What work was there here you could give him?"

"A billiards-marker," retorted Mr. Banks. "Not that he was much good, though. I only took him out of charity—"

The Famous Five gasped.

"A billiards-marker!" echoed Bob Cherry faintly.

"So that's what he was doing here when Quelchy saw him!"

"My hat!"

"Poor old Smithy!"

"He must have been on the giddy rocks," said Nugent.

"Well, where is he now?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Where is he?" snarled Mr. Banks. "In the blessed workhouse, where he belongs, I 'ope! Got a lot of 'igh-and-mighty ideas in 'is 'ead, and when I made 'im a little business proposition 'e turned and bit the 'and what fed 'im—"

"But where is he now?" persisted Wharton.

Mr. Banks shook his bandaged head.

"I don't know," he repeated. "I slung 'im back in the gutter, where I found 'im. That's all I know. And now you can 'op it! All five of you!"

But the Famous Five had already turned, and were walking away.

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Their visit to the village inn had been without success.

Vernon-Smith had been working there as a billiards-marker.

And now he had left.

"My only hat! This is worse than ever!" groaned Frank Nugent. "And to think old Quelchy thought he was gambling when he was only working! Poor old Smithy!"

The Famous Five regarded each other with mournful faces.

The sort of business proposition the rascally Banks had put to the ex-Removite they could guess easily enough.

But that did not help them.

"Poor old Smithy!" repeated Nugent.

"What are we going to do?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Might call at the station and find out whether he's left the village or not," suggested Bob Cherry. "He might have gone back to Courtfield."

"Come on, then!" said Wharton.

The five chums reached the little village station. The booking-clerk who had been on duty the previous night had just come on again. He knew most of the Greyfriars fellows by sight, but he was not quite certain of Vernon-Smith.

"There was only one passenger who might answer to the description of your friend," he replied in answer to Harry Wharton & Co.'s questions. "He rushed in soon after midnight, with his clothes all torn as though he had been in a fight, and took a third-class single just as the express was moving out for London—"

"London!" echoed Bob Cherry.

"That's him!"

"My hat! He's really gone, then!"

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"Well, we'd better get back and tell the Head," said Wharton at length. "I don't see what else there is we can do."

The captain of the Remove thanked the booking-clerk; and, feeling very miserable indeed, the five juniors slowly retraced their steps towards the old school.

The good news that Dr. Locke had received for the missing junior had apparently arrived too late!

Most of the journey back was covered in silence. The same thought was in the mind of each of the juniors.

And that thought was how Mr. Quelchand certain others had been led to misjudge the missing junior's reasons for being at the Cross Keys. The truth was out at last now—but it was too late!

The injustice could not be righted until Vernon-Smith was found.

The Famous Five passed through the school gates and across the Close. Afternoon classes had already commenced, and, with the exception of one or two seniors going about their various duties, no one was in sight.

But hardly had Harry Wharton & Co. passed the group of old elms a few yards in front of the School House steps than there came a hail.

"Hallo, Wharton!"

"Redwing!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"He's back early!"

"And he knows—about Smithy, I mean!" said Nugent.

The fisherman's son cleared the School House steps at a bound and raced towards the five juniors.

"Where's Smithy?" he demanded, his face drawn and pale.

"Well, you see—" began Wharton.

"I only arrived back an hour ago," went on Tom Redwing in a low voice. "I knew Smithy's pater had gone broke, but I didn't know the Bounder had left the school. They shouldn't have let him go—"

"But he insisted," said Johnny Bull. "We tried on all sorts of stunts to help him; but you know what an obstinate chap Smithy is."

"I know—I know," went on Redwing, unheeding. "It's not all that, though. I've heard that some fellows think Smithy has taken to card-sharping for a living. Smithy never was a cheat. He was always straight in his queer way. But he chucked all those kind of things years ago. My hat! I only wish that I'd been here to stand by him. He must have had an awful time. But thank goodness things have turned and it's all right now! Where is he, anyway? I'm told you'd gone to the village to fetch him."

The Famous Five gazed at each other uncomfortably.

Redwing was taking the misfortunes of his pal harder than they had expected.

"All that about Smithy playing the giddy ox is sheer piffle," said Wharton. "No one believed it—none of the decent chaps, at least."

"Of course not!" exclaimed Redwing heatedly. "But the others—and Mr. Quelch. Quelchy believes it—"

"But Quelch won't when we tell him what's happened," went on Wharton. "We can prove beyond all doubt that Smithy was going straight. We got the proof only twenty minutes ago—"

"But where's Smithy?" repeated Redwing, with an instinctive feeling that all was not well. "Where is he? You were sent to fetch him."

"He's—he's gone!" gasped Wharton.

"Gone!" echoed Redwing. "Gone! Where?"

Wharton explained his interview with Mr. Banks at the Cross Keys.

"And no one knows where—beyond the fact that it's London?" gasped the junior. "Oh, my hat! Poor old Smithy! And he doesn't know yet that things are not as bad as he thought."

Redwing gazed at the captain of the Remove with wild eyes.

"We must find him!" he exclaimed. "We must find him! I'll see the Head, and—"

"Steady, old man!" said Wharton in a quiet voice, placing his hand on the excited junior's shoulder. "Dr. Locke will see to it. I don't suppose it will be a difficult matter. After all, the worst is over. Smithy's coming back, and we're all jolly glad! Very likely by the morning we shall hear from him."

"Perhaps you're right," murmured Tom Redwing. "But I can't help thinking about him. What will he do when he gets to London? With no money and no friends— Oh, it's awful!"

The Famous Five led their agitated Form-fellow along to the Remove studies.

"Better stay here with us," said Frank Nugent, pushing open the door of Study No. 1.

"Thanks; you're very decent," said Redwing.

"Well, I'll trot along and see the Head!" remarked Wharton.

The captain of the Remove left his chums and made his way to Dr. Locke's study. The old doctor had left the

Sixth Form, which he usually took himself, in the charge of another master. He rose from his chair as Wharton entered, a smile of welcome on his kindly old face.

Then he observed that the junior was alone.

"Where is Vernon-Smith?" he asked. "I thought you would bring him back."

"I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Wharton.



"But Vernon-Smith's gone! He's left Friardale and gone to London!"

"Gone? Bless my soul!"

And the captain of the Remove informed the Head of all that had passed during the afternoon.

Dr. Locke listened in silence until he had concluded.

"Wharton," he said in an unsteady voice, "this—this is a terrible business! Vernon-Smith, as you know, is a lad of a very peculiar temperament. Of course, I was aware of the things that were being said about him; indeed, Mr. Quelch himself informed me of what he witnessed at the Cross Keys.

"But in my own mind I felt all along that there was some mistake. It is bad enough, in all conscience, that his father's misfortunes should result in his leaving the school; but it is doubly bad that he should be misjudged when he was honestly and bravely battling against adversity.

"I—I trust in his bitterness the poor lad will not do anything foolish. Leave me now, Wharton. I will get into communication with his father and see what can be done. We shall probably find him soon."

"I hope so," said Wharton, and he left the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

"CIGAR lights! Wax-lights!"

The cries of a blind match-seller mingled with the roar and hum of the after-theatre traffic.

Piccadilly Circus was still a blaze of light, although it needed but half an hour to midnight.

The wind was howling round the street corners, and the rain was pelting down on the crowd of home-going London pleasure-seekers scurrying for the buses and tubes.

The night was bitterly cold.

From out of a small side street leading from Soho emerged a youth with his hands thrust despondently in his trousers pockets. His shoulders were hunched with cold.

It was Vernon-Smith!

The ex-Removite gazed at the crowd of hurrying people, his face twisted in a queer smile.

But no one noticed him.

"Curious that I should come to this," he reflected cynically. He stared at the winking lights of a restaurant opposite.

"Many's the time I've tipped ten bob to the waiters in there. My hat! Ten bob! It would be a blessed fortune to me to night!"

And he laughed bitterly.

The rain came down with increased violence.

The son of the ex-millionaire turned and made his way, via the back turnings, towards Tottenham Court Road.

It was three days since he had left the Cross Keys Inn at Friardale—three days of hope and disappointment. What little money he had possessed he had spent in keeping himself while he endeavoured to obtain employment. But no one seemed to require the services of a lad of fifteen without training or experience, and the few pounds he had possessed, despite careful economies, had quickly dwindled.

The Bounder reached Tottenham Court Road, and turned up a side street. Outside a dilapidated house he made out a sign illuminated by a flickering gas-jet, on which appeared the words:

"BEDS FOR MEN.—8d., 10d., & 1s."

Vernon-Smith crossed the road and regarded the house doubtfully. The rain was still pouring in torrents, while the wind seemed to have acquired a colder nip.

"My hat! I can't say I fancy the look of that place!" muttered the junior to himself.



Mr. Banks shook his fist at the Famous Five. "So you've come to find out where Mister Bloomin' Vernon-Smith is, 'ave you? Just wait till I get me 'ands on 'im, that's all!" (See Chapter 2.)

"His mind reverted to Greyfriars. He recalled his old study with its thick carpet and luxurious and comfortable settee, and with the fire burning cheerily in the grate. He wondered what the juniors were doing at the old school now. They were probably sleeping soundly in the long dormitory, with no thought or care of the morrow except for lessons in the Form-room.

He thought of Harry Wharton and his chums, and then of Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove, and his two precious pals, Stott and Snoop.

And the Bounder's face set in a sardonic grin.

He plunged his hand into his trousers pocket and examined his money.

All he possessed was tenpence! "Better chance it," he thought. "I can't stay out in this all night."

The "doss-house"—for such it was—looked far from inviting; but at least it would give shelter from the elements, the rain, and the biting wind. Vernon-Smith crossed the road again and strode up the steps over the area into the dingy hall.

An odour of cabbage-water mingled with the stale scent of kippers, seemed to meet him in a wave, and he shuddered.

At the end of the hall or passageway sat a grimy individual attired in a greasy shirt, minus a collar, and with sleeves rolled up. By his side, on a makeshift table, was an open register and an evening paper.

The man looked up at the Bounder suspiciously.

"Wot yer want?" he demanded, chewing vigorously on a quid of tobacco.

"I want a bed—for one night," said Vernon-Smith shortly. "How much is it?"

"Take yer choice, cully," grinned the lodging-house keeper. "Eightpence or tenpence, or you can 'ave the Royal suite for a bob!"

The ex-Greyfriars boy laid tenpence on the edge of the table.

"Arf a mo!" exclaimed the man, as Vernon-Smith commenced to walk away. "I'll show you where to go. But first of all you've got to sign yer monniker in the book."

"Do what?" demanded the Bounder, with a puzzled expression.

"Yer name," translated the man. "Tain't nothing to do with me, but it's the lor. In all registered kips you have to sign your name. The police come round and inspect sometimes, but it ain't often. Sign any name you like."

"Oh, I see!" replied the Bounder, with a queer smile. "Suppose I sign Smith, or something like that?"

"Good a name as any," agreed the doss-house keeper as the ex-Removite commenced to write. "What have yer been up to, cully?"

Vernon-Smith stared for a moment. "Oh, nothing much!" he said. "Someone thought it was card-sharping."

"Easy!" grinned the man. "This way, mate."

The lodging-house keeper led the way to a room at the back of the house, and pushed open the door. Vernon-Smith followed him inside. Three beds were arranged along one side of the wall and three along the other. Some of the beds were occupied, their occupants being already asleep. On others down-and-out specimens of humanity were sitting undressing, or reading scraps of newspaper by the single incandescent light suspended from the centre of the ceiling.

The apartment was full of the smoke from cheap tobacco and strong shag, and

doubtless a miscellanea of picked-up "fag-ends."

Vernon-Smith coughed as the acrid smoke caught his throat.

The lodging-house keeper indicated a vacant bed in a corner.

"There you are, mate," he said. "Ring the bell if yer want the wafet. Good-night!"

Vernon-Smith glanced about him curiously. But the rest of the occupants, after favouring him with a brief glance, continued their various tasks, and made no remark.

The ex-Removite did not completely undress. He removed his sodden boots and his jacket, and crawled between the grimy sheets just as he was.

Eventually, however, the rest of the occupants of the room got into bed. Twelve o'clock struck, and the light flickered out—cut off for the night from the main.

Vernon-Smith lay awake for an hour, his mind confused with a medley of thoughts. The snores of his companions grew louder, the fumes of tobacco cleared somewhat, and at length, overcome by sheer weariness, the Bounder slept.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Down and Out!

"BY jingo, I could do with something to eat!"

Vernon-Smith uttered that remark as he crossed Oxford Street the following morning. He had left the lodging-house before any of the other occupants were awake, feeling somewhat better for his rest.

He had tasted no food since one o'clock the previous day, and the keen morning air, following the wet night, had given his appetite an even keener edge.

He tried to think of some way of satisfying his hunger. But he was without so much as a single penny. Most of the saleable things he had possessed when he left the Cross Keys he had already disposed of.

The savoury odour of frying sausages and onions was wafted to his nostrils from a cookshop. Vernon-Smith paused before the window and gazed at the enamel pans of cooking food with a watering mouth. Several times he made as though to enter the shop, but hesitated just outside the door.

At length, however, he seemed to make up his mind, and strode inside, to where a fat Italian was beating chunks of steak with a rolling-pin.

"Are you the proprietor of this place?" asked the ex-Removite, addressing the Italian.

"Si, signor!"

"Well, how much will you give me to clean your windows?"

"Nozzing, signor. I clean zem myself."

"Look here!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith desperately. "I'm hungry! Give me a plate of sausage and potatoes, and I'll clean the windows for you. It'll save you a lot of trouble, and it's cheap at the price!"

The Italian shook his head, and regarded the Bounder curiously.

"Is there any other job you want done?" persisted Vernon-Smith, goaded on by hunger.

"Non, signor. You git out queek! Nozzing to-day!"

Vernon-Smith quitted the cookshop, his cheeks burning with shame.

"It's no blessed good!" he murmured bitterly. "I shall have to think of some other scheme!"

Hardly conscious of where he was going, he crossed a bridge over the Thames, and came out eventually into the Waterloo Road. He proceeded about a hundred yards in a southerly direction, when, glancing along a side-street, he noticed a second-hand clothes-shop, over the door of which appeared the legend:

"A. JACOBSTEIN.

Dealer in Gent's Left-Off Clothing.
Wardrobes Bought, Sold, or
Exchanged."

The Bounder stared down at his crumpled clothing. He was wearing a black vicuna jacket and vest, which he had brought with him from Greyfriars when he had started his first fruitless quest for work in Courtfield. But while his clothing had become crumpled and stained since, it was still obvious that it was of good quality.

The Bounder stared at the sign over the shop again, and a sudden idea entered his mind.

"I ought to be able to swop them for something else, and get the difference in cash," he mused. "Anyhow, it's worth trying."

With an expression of hope on his face he entered the shop. He found Mr. Jacobstein busily engaged in washing his hands in soap and water which existed only in the old gentleman's fertile imagination.

"Goot afternoons, ain't id?" greeted Mr. Jacobstein, recognising Vernon-Smith a profitable customer. "Vot can I do you for—no?"

"I believe you exchange clothing?" said Vernon-Smith, not quite certain how to commence.

"Yes—oh, yes!"

"Well, I want to know if you'll give me a change for what I'm wearing, and how much you'll allow me on the difference?"

"Will you follow me?"

Mr. Jacobstein smiled, dried his hands on an invisible towel, and led the way into a little room at the rear of the establishment.

There came the sound of paper parcels being undone, and occasionally the voice of Mr. Jacobstein pointing out pathetically that "business vos business."

About ten minutes later Vernon-Smith emerged from the room at the rear of the shop. But, instead of his old clothes, he was now adorned in a pair of khaki trousers, which had been dyed blue, and which had been frequently but unskillfully repaired in many places.

The upper part of his person was covered in a patched brown tweed jacket, which was split at the elbows and which was at least three sizes too big for him.

The once dandified Bounder of Greyfriars strode over to a mirror in a corner of the shop, and surveyed his reflection with a disapproving frown.

"My giddy aunt! The blessed jacket's miles too big!" he exclaimed. "I told you it was."

"Just a leedle on the full side, berhaps," purred Mr. Jacobstein, gathering the spare folds of the jacket in his right hand, while with his left he smoothed the material over the Bounder's hips. "Just a leedle bit on the full side, berhaps. Oddervise it is beautiful! Nice! Id fit you like a glove, my poy—id fit you like a glove! And tink vot a gift id iss for der monish! Vy, I am giving id away!"

"How much did you say you want for them?" demanded Vernon-Smith, still frowning at his reflection.

"Fifteen schillings I allow you for vod you vos vearing, and thirteen schilling I charge you for vot you haf on. Vy, I am giving id away!"

"My hat! It's a bit expensive for thirteen bob, isn't it?" protested the ex-Removite. "And I haven't a cap!"

"Eggspensive!" exclaimed Mr. Jacobstein, raising his two hands in horror. "Vy, I vould rob meinselfs if I sold it for a bound! But for thirteen schillings id iss a bankrupt! I tell you vat I do—eh? I vill throw in a cap!"

The Bounder grinned.

"Id iss a schvindle to meinself to sell him at der brice," continued the Hebrew gentleman. "Bud v'en you come to me as a frient, vot can I do?"

And Mr. Jacobstein rocked himself to and fro as, possibly, he saw his old age spent in the workhouse through his generosity to a friend.

"Make it twelve bob, and it's a deal, including the cap!" said Vernon-Smith abruptly.

"Bud id iss ruinment!"

"Twelve bob, or I try somewhere else!" said the Bounder determinedly.

"Vot a game, no!" groaned the proprietor of the emporium of the left-off clothing store, washing his hands afresh; but, nevertheless, agreeing to the proposition through sheer kindness of heart. "Der poy vill be der ruinment of me, ain't it!"

"Well, give me the three bob you owe me and the cap, and I'll clear off!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, his mind already occupied with the thoughts of food. "I can't waste any time with you. I've got an appointment."

Mr. Jacobstein vanished into the back room again, and returned a moment later with a ragged tweed cap and two shillings and two sixpences in his hand.

"Dere goes two schillings of my brofit!" he groaned, as he handed the money and the cap to the waiting junior. "Vot a game, no! Come and see me again v'en I can do anyting for you. Goot-mornings, sir! Goot-mornings!"

And the man bowed the Bounder out of the shop.

Vernon-Smith hurried down the side street into the Waterloo Road again, where he invested half of the money he had received from Mr. Jacobstein in a steak-and-kidney pudding, followed by a portion of baked jam-roll and a cup of greasy coffee.

It was certainly not the sort of Epicurean diet Vernon-Smith had indulged himself in the old days. Indeed, for that matter, the quality of the food and the manner in which it was served was little short of disgusting.

But while he was devouring the food it seemed to the hungry junior that no dish ever placed before Lucullus himself could have compared with it.

"Jove, I feel better now!" he gasped, as he finished his coffee and paid his score. "I don't think I've been so blessed hungry before in all my giddy life."

The junior left the sordid district of Waterloo Road and recrossed the Thames over Westminster Bridge.

The remainder of the afternoon he spent scanning the "Situations Vacant" columns in the newspapers of a free library. When he emerged from the library a couple of hours later, dusk was already beginning to fall.

The ex-Removite drifted aimlessly about.

But he observed that while people had taken scant notice of him before, in his changed clothing they now seemed to regard him with suspicion.

Night rapidly approached, and a fresh

breeze sprang up almost as bitter and cutting as the night before.

Several times he debated with himself whether to invest the coppers which remained to him in a cheap lodging for the night and to go breakfastless the next morning, or whether to stay in the streets all night and spend the money on food instead.

Vernon-Smith counted his money.

One-and-sixpence was all that remained.

He calculated that if he went carefully he would be able to have breakfast the next day, and possibly something to eat at the end of the day as well.

Something seemed to draw the shivering junior towards the Thames at Westminster again. The wind, coming up from the river, seemed to penetrate to every bone in his body.

"Heavens, I can't stick this any longer!" he groaned. "I think I'll have a bed somewhere and chance it. Let me see—tenpence for a bed out of one-and-six leaves eightpence. That will prevent me being as hungry as I was this morning."

The ex-Greyfriars boy plunged his hands into his trousers-pocket, with the intention of crossing the river to look for a shelter for the night. But even as he did so a chill sensation shot up his spine as his fingers pushed through a hole in the lining!

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped, trembling with apprehension. "I believe—"

He quickly withdrew his hand and stared at his palm.

All that remained of the money he had received from Mr. Jacobstein was a single sixpence!

The other shilling had escaped through his torn clothing!

The Bounder regarded the gleaming sixpence in silence for a moment, and then he burst into a mirthless laugh. His laugh echoed eerily across the now semi-deserted streets. But he did not stop. He laughed again and again, his voice rising hysterically.

Several belated pedestrians regarded him curiously.

But at length the Bounder seemed to regain control of himself.

"I suppose it's lucky I've sixpence left!" he told himself. "But the bed's off now. I shall have to sleep out. Brrrr! It's cold!"

He turned up the collar of his coat and made his way across the road down on to the Embankment.

A tug hooted somewhere up the river.

Vernon-Smith listened to the gurgling of the stream as it rushed under the bridge and smacked with a dull wash against the bows of some anchored boats. The gurgling of the stream seemed to soothe him, and he paused to watch the light of the moon playing on the dark and swirling waters.

He was down and out with a vengeance!

He continued his slow trapesing up the Embankment, passing several figures huddled together on the iron seats for the sake of the warmth their bodies would give to each other.

Then realisation came suddenly to the junior that he was tired—very tired indeed. He had been on his feet best part of the day. He sought out a seat



"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, surveying himself in the mirror. "The blessed jacket's miles too big!" "Just a leedle on the full size berhaps," purred Mr. Jacobstein, gathering the spare folds of the jacket in his right hand. "But id really fits you like a glove!" (See Chapter 4.)

that was unoccupied and sank down on to it. The gurgling of the river caused him to fall asleep in a very few moments, despite the cold.

Boom, boom, boom!

The hour of midnight tolled slowly from Big Ben.

As the last solemn strokes died away Vernon-Smith awoke with a start as a hand dropped on his shoulder. Raising his head, he found himself gazing into the kindly face of a burly policeman.

"All right, son," said the officer assuringly. "You needn't get nervous. I just wondered whether you could do with the price of a cup of coffee?"

Vernon-Smith smiled faintly.

"It's very good of you, constable," he said. "But I think I shall be all right, thanks. I've got some coppers to carry on with."

At the sound of the junior's voice the constable started slightly. The intonation and accent was not quite what he had expected.

"You're quite sure?" he insisted. "Anything else I can do for you?"

"Nothing, thanks."

The kindly constable passed on, and Vernon-Smith continued to sit listening to the lapping of the water, his head between his hands, his eyes fixed on the pavement.

"I wonder?" he murmured. "It seems hardly worth while."

Back at Greyfriars, Tom Redwing stood staring out of the windows of the silent dormitory into the night.

He could not sleep.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Wait!

"WHAT ch'er! Cold, ain't it, mate?"

Vernon-Smith started up out of his reverie.

Seated next to him on the iron seat he saw a ragged lad of much about his own age.

"Give yer a turn, mate?" inquired the lad apologetically. "Sorry!"

"It's all right," said the Bounder, surveying the newcomer curiously. "I was thinking, that's all."

The boy regarded Vernon-Smith with something approaching awe.

"Ere, you're a toff!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Whatcher doing out here in the cold?"

"Nowhere better to go, I suppose," grinned the Bounder. "I've got to sleep somewhere, you know."

"But you ain't used to this," protested the lad, with a puzzled expression. "You look like what I am, but you don't talk like you was. Sure you ain't one of them newspaper blokes, doing a night-out to write about?"

"I wish I were!" returned the Bounder. "I should be here with a full stomach then, and enough in my pocket to buy myself a decent feed if I needed it."

"Gosh! You put me in mind of a bloke I met down 'ere about a month ago," went on the lad. "A capt'in in the Army he'd been during the War. Got some medals and all. He was a gent like you, but he didn't have any money, and he couldn't get any work. One night a toff came along what knew him. The toff gave me a dollar, and went off with this capt'in bloke, and I ain't seen him any more. 'Ope he's had some luck."

"My hat, but you're a queer card!" said Vernon-Smith, thankful for the lad's companionship. "How long have you been sleeping out on the Embankment?"

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"Oh, I don't do it regular-like!" protested the boy. "Only when I'm 'ard-up, like to-night. Other times I generally manage to get the price of a kip. Then I hang out at old Charlie's doss, over the bridge. All the doss-houses this side of the water is too expensive for me."

"Haven't you a home, or any parents?" demanded the Bounder curiously.

"Never had any—least, not as I remember. Some bloke adopted me when I was a kid. But he used to knock me about, so I did a bunk. Do you blame me?"

"No; perhaps not. What's your name?"

"Alf Johnson. What's yours?"

Vernon-Smith hesitated for a moment.

"Don't tell me if you don't want to," said the lad. "I only want a name to call you by. Must call you something."

"Oh, Smith," replied the Bounder—"Bill Smith!"

"No relation to old Bert Smith, down Lambeth way?"

The Bounder laughed.

"Not that I know of. There are lots of Smiths about, you know."

"Yus, I s'pose so."

The two lads sat silent for a while.

Vernon-Smith was thinking. He had met many curious people in his life, but never anyone quite like Alf Johnson. Brought up to every luxury as the Bounder had been, and given every advantage in life, he had hardly realised that such people as the lad at the side of him existed outside fiction.

The hard-headed and sometimes hard-hearted son of the ex-millionaire felt a curious sense of kinship for the young outcast come over him. The lad was down and out, but he hardly realised it. He counted himself lucky when he slept in a cheap doss-house. Without parents or a home, and with no one who cared two straws about him, he faced life day after day with no prospect of any amelioration of his lot.

The ex-Greyfriars junior thought of what his own life had been; he thought of the happy days at Greyfriars which had closed with such suddenness; of the friends he had left behind. Then he realised that but for a stroke of Fate he might have been even as the lad at his side.

He laughed bitterly aloud.

Alf Johnson looked up in surprise.

"I don't like blokes wot laugh like that," he said, in a low voice.

"What do you mean?"

"I've seen 'em before."

And Alf Johnson pointed meaningly to the river.

"Oh, you needn't worry about that!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Tell me the longest you've ever been without food."

"Don't talk about it, mate!" gasped the lad. "I've 'ad some pretty rotten times when all I've had's been a coffee and a lump of Totten'am in twenty-four hours, but—"

"But what?" urged the Bounder, a curious mood that he did not understand having taken possession of him.

"Well, you're in the same boat, so I don't mind telling you. I'll admit the last twenty-four hours I ain't had a single blessed bite."

"Great Scott!"

"And I ain't coddling you, neither. Straight I ain't. You can stand it fair to middling in the summer, but this cold weather it gits you down."

"Do you mean to tell me that you haven't had a scrap of anything for twenty-four hours?" demanded Vernon-Smith, in amazement. "Not even a cup of tea or coffee and a roll of bread?"

"No, I ain't," said Alf Johnson earnestly. "And what's more, me last meal was a bloater and some bread a watchman gave me after I'd gone all day with nothing. I ain't had such a time as I've had lately. I can tell you, mate, it's been awful. But if you tell anyone they don't believe you—and you might get pinched for begging."

"My giddy aunt!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith, in astonishment.

"Well, I ain't coddling you. But you ask me, didn't yer?"

"I'm not doubting what you say," returned the Bounder. "I've had some pretty rough times myself."

He thought of his interview with the Italian keeper of the cookshop.

"Look here!" exclaimed the Bounder suddenly. "We're both in the same boat, as you remarked. I could do with something myself. I've got a little cash left. Let's go over to the coffee-stall and see what we can get."

"Gosh, do you mean it, mate?"

"Of course!"

"But I thought you was broke?"

"Not quite."

"Come on, then!" exclaimed Alf Johnson, his eyes gleaming hungrily. "I'm with you."

The son of the ex-millionaire and the boy outcast rose to their feet and made their way to a coffee-stall a yard or so up a side-street, against which a small crowd of curiously assorted people were gathered.

There were several men engaged on night road repair work, a carman or so whose van stood drawn up near the kerb, a knot of revellers from a dance-hall, and a couple of homeless men like themselves.

Vernon-Smith pushed his way through the crowd to the flap of the stall and basked in the heat from the fire glowing cheerily beneath the great copper urn.

"What's the best we can get?" he demanded of his ragged companion.

"How much you got?"

"Sixpence."

"Coffee, hot saveloy, and a chunk of bread," recommended Alf Johnson, with the knowledge of an expert. "That's three-ha-pence the coffee, a penny the sav, and a ha'penny the bread. Three-pence each."

Vernon-Smith gave the order and paid for it with the last penny he possessed in the world. What he would do on the morrow he did not know. He did not think very much about that, however. Already the son of the ex-millionaire was beginning to know something of the philosophy of the outcast—to live for the moment and to let the future take care of itself.

"Wade in," he said, indicating the steaming red sausage balanced on a thick chunk of bread. "Not so bad for threepence, I must say."

But Vernon-Smith's companion needed no urging.

He reached out for the saveloy and bread, and commenced to devour it greedily. That the lad was starving there was no doubt, and he took no trouble to conceal the fact—even if he thought anything about it at all.

The Bounder sipped at his coffee and regarded him curiously.

The crude relish with which the lad tore at the food reminded him of a starved mongrel. Vernon-Smith experienced a feeling of disgust mingled with pity.

"Is it all right?" he inquired.

The lad grunted something through his mouthful of food and went on eating. And within a few moments of their arrival at the stall he had disposed of

every crumb that had been placed before him. He then turned his attention to the coffee, which he commenced to swallow in huge gulps. But it was scalding hot, and burnt his mouth.

"Ow! 'Sot!" he spluttered.

"Sip it," advised Vernon-Smith. "It will do you more good."

A taxicab pulled up at the kerb, and a man in evening clothes descended. His shoulders were draped in an Inverness cape, and in his eye, below his crush hat, gleamed a monocle. He ordered a coffee, and invited the cab-driver to join him.

"Gosh! A toff!" ejaculated the Bounder's companion beneath his breath.

The man in evening clothes sipped at his coffee, ignoring the existence of the motley crew about him. Alf Johnson sipped at his coffee, too, and edged nearer.

But apparently the young outcast's coffee was still too hot to drink comfortably. He placed it on the flap of the stall, and, hunching his shoulders, rubbed his grimy hands together.

Vernon-Smith watched his companion absently—his mind at that moment was elsewhere.

The man in evening dress rested his cup on the flap and reached in his vest-pocket for his cigarette-case. Even as he did so he started violently.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated suddenly. "I've been robbed!"

"Robbed!"

Several voices repeated the word.

Vernon-Smith came out of his reverie with a start and stared. Out of the tail of his eye he observed his companion slink back into the shadow at the side of the stall.

"My watch! It's gone!" exclaimed the stranger excitedly. "I had it when I got out of the cab a moment ago."

He turned and pointed an accusing forefinger at Vernon-Smith, who was next to him.

"You're the thief!" he exclaimed heatedly. "You young scoundrel! Give me my watch! Do you hear me, you confounded young thief!"

"My hat! What do you mean?" gasped the Bounder, startled almost out of his wits. "I haven't stolen your watch!"

There came an angry murmur from the crowd, and several men closed around the ex-Removite almost before he had time to realise what was happening.

"Give me back my watch, you young thief!" hooted the man, shaking his fist in the junior's face, "or I'll call a constable!"

"But I haven't got your watch, I tell you!" snapped the Bounder, his face going purple and white in turns with anger. "You've made a mistake—"

"Thief!"

"Hold him!"

A carman reached out and grabbed the ex-Greyfriars boy by the arm.

"Take your dirty paws off me!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Do you hear, or I'll—"

Biff!

Vernon-Smith's fist shot suddenly out and caught the carman full in the face.

"Ow! You—"

"Come on! Call me a thief and touch me if you dare!" panted the Bounder, his back to the coffee-stall, and his fists raised. "Come on, I—"

Pheweeeeeep!

There came the shrill blast of a police-whistle.

Vernon-Smith gazed about him in alarm. The whole incident had happened so quickly that even now he had

hardly time to realise the seriousness of his position. All he knew was that he had not stolen the watch.

There are times when the human brain works with cyclonic rapidity. In a flash, the Bounder recalled the curious behaviour of his companion. If the watch had been stolen at all, it must have been stolen by Johnson.

"I haven't got it, I tell you!" gasped Vernon-Smith, secure in the knowledge of his innocence.

"Now then, what's all this about?"

Two policemen pushed their way through the crowd.

"That young scoundrel's stolen my watch!" accused the man in dress-clothes, glaring at the pale and twitching face of the Bounder. "Officer, I give him in charge. Do your duty, and take him to the station!"

"I've not!" panted Vernon-Smith, his heart thudding violently against his ribs. "I haven't seen the watch. I know nothing about it—"

"We'll soon see about that," interrupted one of the constables. "You come along to the station, young feller. We'll soon prove whether you've got the watch or not when we search you."

"As quick as you like!" gritted the Bounder savagely. "I have nothing to be afraid of. We'll see what will happen afterwards when you find out there has been a mistake."

"Come on!"

Between the two constables, the ex-Greyfriars boy was dragged through the deserted streets, several of the stragglers from the crowd round the coffee-stall following curiously behind.

As for the lad Johnson, with the arrival of the police, he had faded away silently into the night.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

An Unkind Fate!

"HALLO, what is it this time?"

A police-sergeant seated at a desk with an open book before him asked the question as Vernon-Smith was thrust into the charge-room of the police-station by the two constables.

"Pickpocket!" replied the senior constable laconically.

"Who's making the charge?"

The man in dress-clothes stepped forward.

"I am," he replied. "There's my card—James Sark."

"Any witnesses?" asked the sergeant, writing rapidly in the charge-book as he spoke.

Mr. James Sark hesitated.

"No; but I think I can get them, if necessary," he said grimly.

"Good! Give me the details, please, sir."

Mr. Sark gave an account of what had happened at the coffee-stall, which was brief enough, in all conscience.

"Name?" snapped the sergeant, turning to the Bounder. "And age and address? Occupation, if any?"

"Smith—William Smith," answered the Bounder, his usual cool self-possession rapidly returning. "Age fifteen. No permanent address."

The charge-room sergeant continued to write without glancing up.

"William Smith," he droned, at length, reading from the charge-sheet, "you are charged with stealing from Mr. James Sark a gold watch valued at £10 outside a coffee-stall situated at Embankment Street at two a.m. this morning. Do you understand?"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"I must warn you that all you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you. You need not say anything unless you wish. After you have been searched, you will be detained in the cells until you come before the magistrate in the morning."

"I understand," repeated Vernon-Smith. "And all I have to say is this: I am innocent. I know nothing about the theft. It's a case of giving a dog a bad name because he looks like a bad dog!"

"Well, if you're innocent, you needn't worry," said the sergeant, relaxing his official manner for a moment. "You'll be all right, son. But if you're guilty, you won't make it any better for yourself by giving everybody a lot of trouble."

"There's no doubt about his guilt, sergeant!" snarled Mr. James Sark savagely. "I felt the young hooligan deliberately push up against me—"

"That's all right, sir," said the sergeant soothingly. "No one's guilty in this country until it's been proved. Must say, though, the kid don't look a thief," he concluded, to himself.

The sergeant signed to Vernon-Smith to step closer to the tall desk.

"Turn out your pockets," he ordered. "Let's see everything you have—money, as well."

The junior's face twisted into a hard smile.

"I haven't a blessed thing of any description on me," he declared. "I only got these clothes yesterday morning. Out of eighteen-pence I had, a shilling dropped through a hole in my trousers' pocket, and the other sixpence I spent at the coffee-stall."

"Search him!" commanded the sergeant to the two constables.

The police officers ran their hands skillfully over the pockets of the Bounder's clothing.

Vernon-Smith, his two hands raised above his head, watched them with an ironical grin.

"Seems as though he's telling the truth," muttered one of the constables.

Mr. James Sark, who was watching the operation closely, gritted his teeth.

"I told you I hadn't got the watch," said Vernon-Smith. "There was no need to drag me here like this—"

"Hallo, what's this?" exclaimed one of the constables suddenly. "My 'at! Look!"

And as he spoke, the officer suddenly drew the missing watch from the side pocket of the Bounder's jacket and laid it on the sergeant's desk.

"That's it! That's my watch!" rasped Mr. Sark triumphantly. "I knew he'd got it!"

Vernon-Smith started violently, and stared at the watch in amazement.

"G-great Scott! How d-did that get there?" he stammered.

The ex-Greyfriars lad stood and stared at the watch as though unable to believe the evidence of his own eyes. His throat contracted and his face turned the colour of old ivory, while beads of perspiration broke out on his brow, despite the coldness of the night.

An impressive silence followed the startling discovery.

"Oh!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

He stood for a moment, his eyes riveted on the telltale evidence unseeingly. A horrible suspicion had already entered his mind, that nearer approached a certainty with every passing second. He recalled the suspicious behaviour of his companion, the lad Johnson, when Mr. Sark had first arrived at the coffee-stall, and how he had slunk away into

the shadows a moment after the accusation and the arrival of the police.

There was only one explanation of what had happened.

And that was that the lad Johnson had stolen the watch.

At the last moment his nerve must have failed him, and in a panic he had disposed of the stolen trinket by placing it in the pocket of the lad who had befriended him.

"Oh!" murmured the Bounder again. "I—"

"Take him away!" ordered the sergeant. "Take his finger-prints first, though."

The gaoler entered the room, and took charge of the miserable lad, while Mr. Sark, having promised to attend the police-court at ten o'clock the next morning, took leave of the sergeant and drove away in a cab.

Vernon-Smith was led to a corner of the police-station. The gaoler produced a small board, covered with a specially-prepared black ink, and a couple of forms where squares had been ruled out for the registration of finger-prints.

"Clean your fingers with this," ordered the gaoler, handing the dazed Bounder a piece of damp rag. "That's right. Now roll the tips carefully from right to left over the ink."

Vernon-Smith obeyed as though in a dream. When he had finished the gaoler took the inked finger in his own, and carefully rolled it across the square prescribed on the finger-print form.

The same procedure was followed until the prints of the rest of the junior's fingers had been taken. He then signed his assumed name at the bottom of each form, and was led below.

The gaoler opened the door of a cell, and, handing the junior a couple of coloured blankets, thrust him inside.

Clang!

The door slammed to, and Vernon-Smith sank down on to a wooden bench which ran the length of one side of the cell.

A smell of strong carbolic pervaded everywhere.

The smell of the antiseptic seemed to have an invigorating effect on the junior.

He gazed at the white-glazed bricks with which the cell was built, and for the first time that night the full meaning of his position came home to him.

Boom, boom!

Four o'clock chimed from the neighbouring churches, the strokes echoing eerily across the cold and deserted city.

A cock crowed in the backyard of an adjacent slum dwelling.

Vernon-Smith shivered and wrapped the blankets the gaoler had given him round his shoulders.

What should he do?

He realised that if he told the truth of his suspicions concerning the lad Johnson it was highly improbable that he would be believed. The story sounded too tall. And no doubt it had been told many times before.

Vernon-Smith realised that he stood to gain nothing by telling what he suspected. Indeed, for that matter, he only stood to lose. More likely than not he would be more severely dealt with for wasting the time of the court and the police.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"What does it matter, anyhow?" he asked himself bitterly. "There's only one thing to do, and that is to hope for the best. Perhaps I shall be treated as a first offender and bound over. If not—"

One thought consoled him. And that was that he had been quick-witted enough not to give his own name. After

all, there were many Smiths about, and no one would be likely to connect William Smith, the Embankment outcast, with Herbert Vernon-Smith, the son of the ex-millionaire, and late of Greyfriars.

Vernon-Smith resolved to protest his innocence, and to let it go at that. After all, he reflected, nothing could be much worse than sleeping on the Embankment, with an empty stomach and with no prospects of a meal ahead.

There came the sound of heavy boots scraping on the wooden floor of the charge-room above, and the raucous voice of a prisoner mingled with that of a policeman.

"Sounds like another guest!" grinned the Bounder to himself.

He fell asleep.

When he awoke the sun was streaming in through the bars of his cell.

There came the sound of a motor-van being backed into the police-station yard.

His cell door opened, and the face of the gaoler peered in. The officer gave him a can of sweet tea and a ham sandwich.

"The van's leaving for the court in five minutes," he announced. "You'll have to buck up."

Vernon-Smith was starving hungry. But he did not eat the food.

Eventually he was led out into the yard, and ordered into a small compartment of the prison-van. Other prisoners were ushered in, too. A police-sergeant took up a position on a stool in the gangway, between the little cubicles of the van, and the journey to the police-court commenced.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sentenced!

"NEXT case!"

The clerk of the court uttered the words in a brisk voice.

A door slammed, and the court jailer thrust a lad forward into the dock.

It was Vernon-Smith.

The ex-Greyfriars boy gazed fixedly before him and remained silent. But no one appeared to notice him. The magistrate continued to read some papers before him while the reporters in the Press-box went on writing rapidly.

The junior experienced a curious sense of unreality.

The quiet but clear tones of the clerk broke the silence.

"You, William Smith," he said, looking straight at the junior, "aged fifteen, and of no fixed abode, you are accused of stealing from James Sark, at two o'clock in the morning, outside a coffee-stall situated in Embankment Street, a gold watch, valued at ten pounds. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty!" responded Vernon-Smith in low tones.

"The prisoner pleads not guilty, your worship."

The magistrate nodded his head, without speaking, and the constable who had made the arrest entered the witness-box.

He described briefly what had happened, both at the time of the arrest and subsequently at the police-station.

"Any questions to put to the officer?" demanded the clerk.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

The second constable entered the box, and after taking the oath gave evidence which hardly varied in a detail from that of his colleague. Mr. Sark followed, and gave his version of the affair.

Vernon-Smith listened to the droning of voices indifferently.

The cry of a milkman in a street at the back of the court reminded him that outside life was going on as usual.

"Any questions?" asked the clerk when the evidence was finished.

"No!"

"Do you wish to make any statement?"

"Only this," said Vernon-Smith, becoming aware for the first time of the curious eyes of the public at the back of the court. "I am not guilty. I did not steal the watch, nor did I have any hand in the stealing of it. I know nothing about the affair. I am innocent!"

A silence followed the junior's speech.

"Any previous convictions?" asked the clerk of a police-sergeant.

"No, sir."

The magistrate coughed.

"Your worship, I am not guilty!" burst out Vernon-Smith in a sudden frenzy. "I ask you to believe me. I know the watch was found in my pocket, but I don't know how it came to be there. It may look black against me, but I am innocent—"

"That will do!" snapped the clerk.

"We've heard that tale before!" grunted one constable at the back of the court to another in a quiet voice. "Ain't got no originality, none of 'em!"

The magistrate looked at Vernon-Smith for the first time.

"Boy," he exclaimed in a steely voice, "according to the evidence which has been given in this court, I have no alternative but to find you guilty!"

Vernon-Smith's frenzy seemed to leave him as suddenly as it had come. His face set in a grim, twisted smile. All the worst of him was coming to the surface.

It was, after all, no more than he had expected.

"I am amazed that a lad of your type should be brought before me on such a charge," continued the magistrate sternly. "You have apparently deliberately chosen to enter into a career of crime. The theft you have committed is made worse by the indifference and sullenness you are now displaying. Have you no remorse or shame for what you have done?"

"No, sir," replied the Bounder coolly.

"Not a scrap. Why should I have? I am innocent!"

The magistrate half-rose from his chair.

"You are a hardened young scoundrel!" he exclaimed, pointing his forefinger at the junior. "You are a hardened young scoundrel, sir! Were you older, I would send you to prison. But as it is I will attempt to cure you. You are sentenced to three years' Borstal treatment. Next case."

There came a dull murmur from the court.

Vernon-Smith bowed ironically to the magistrate.

"Permit me to thank you, sir," he said.

The gaoler gripped him by the arm and hurried him away.

"Hard luck, mate!" he said sympathetically. "You ought to have owned up and saved trouble. You'd have got off lighter then."

"Oh, I'm quite satisfied!" returned the Bounder grimly.

Within ten minutes of having received his sentence Vernon-Smith was led from the cells where he had been lodged beneath the court, out to the prison van again.

But most of the other prisoners who had been sentenced that morning were

already inside, the doors of their cubicles locked on them.

"Who's this one?" demanded the van-sergeant, staring at the Bounder.

"He's a special," replied the gaoler. "He's joining the party for Borstal next week, but in the meantime he's got to stay at Stoneville."

H.M. Prison, Stoneville!

Vernon-Smith had heard of Stoneville Prison before. But never in his wildest dreams had he ever imagined that one day he would become an inmate of the place.

At a word of command from the court gaoler he jumped into the van and entered a cubicle. The door was shut, the sergeant took up his position on a stool in the gangway again, and the van rumbled out of the yard with its cargo of convicts.

Through the grille of his cubicle door the Bounder could see the eyes of his fellow-prisoners staring out into the gangway. Some of them were silent, but some were singing merrily, as though they were commencing a bean-feast instead of a term of imprisonment.

"What's hard labour like, George?" inquired one of the prisoners, addressing the police-sergeant.

"You'll soon find out!" grinned the officer good-humouredly.

"How long yer got, Bert?" demanded another voice from the far end of the van. "I saw yer in court, but didn't get a chance to say how-do."

"Twelve months' 'ard," responded Bert cheerfully.

"What for?"

"Knocking the narks about!"

"Haw, haw, haw! You've clicked it 'ot!"

The van rumbled on.

At length the coarse conversation died down, and the prisoners joined their voices and commenced to sing:

"There is a happy land, far, far away—"

"Go easy, you fellows," warned the police-sergeant. "Nearly there now. You'll be out of the hands of the police in a few minutes."

"Twelve months out of their hands guaranteed," came the cheerful voice of the gentleman who was being incarcerated for the violence with which he had shown his disapproval of the police.

The van passed through the great prison gates, and came to a halt in a small yard. One by one the prisoners descended and stood in a line. Many of them recognised each other and grinned.

But several, including a man in morning-dress and a silk-hat, who had been arrested in the City on a charge of fraud, finding themselves in the grip of the law for the first time, stared dejectedly at the ground.

Vernon-Smith, on account of his age and the fact that he was destined for a Borstal institution, was kept a yard or so apart from the other prisoners.

From a room in a small shed on their left, where particulars of their sentences and previous convictions were taken, the party, including the ex-Greyfriars boy, were marched in single file to the prison baths.

The bath over, Vernon-Smith emerged from the water and dried himself on a coarse towel which nearly tore the skin from his flesh.

His own ragged garments were taken from him, and he was given in their place a bundle of prison clothing, into which he was told to get as quickly as he could.

And when, five minutes later, he

shuffled out into a hall, very few people indeed would have recognised in him the once dandified member of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

He was attired in a drab-grey pair of knickerbockers, and a tunic-like jacket of the same material, a pair of coarse worsted stockings with red stripes around them, a boat-shaped convict's cap was perched on his head, while his feet slid uncomfortably about in a pair of odd shoes, which were covered with grease to preserve them.

"Cell No. 10, B Ward, you," said a warder, handing to the ex-Removite a yellow-coloured cloth disc. "Fasten the badge on the button provided for the purpose on your tunic. You'll only be here a day or two. Fall in with the others."

There followed the usual preliminaries, the reading of the prison rules, the issue of a bag containing a brush and comb, a blue handkerchief, and a fork and knife made of blunt tin.

After that, one behind the other, with Vernon-Smith at the end of the line, the party of convicts were marched from the reception ward into a hall of the prison. One warder marched in front, one behind, and one each side.

Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle!

Vernon-Smith found walking in the ill-fitting prison shoes no easy matter. But somehow he managed to keep pace with the rest, staring curiously about him at the doors of the cells on either side of the hall, and the tiers of cells opening out on to iron galleries three stories above.

"Fall out, Ten!"

Unaware that he was being addressed, Vernon-Smith continued on.

ACCUSED
OF
THEFT!



"My watch!" exclaimed the man in evening dress. "It's gone! I had it when I got out of the cab a moment ago!" He turned on Vernon-Smith. "You're the thief!" he said excitedly. "Give me my watch or I'll call a constable!" (See Chapter 5.)

He could not trust himself to speak. Now the excitement of the proceedings at the police-court was over his coolness seemed to be deserting him.

"You'll be all right," said the warder, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "Just do as you're told the first time of asking, without any back answers, that's all. Don't forget, though, that all prison officers must be addressed as 'sir.' That's a rule."

"I'll remember, sir," muttered the Bounder.

The warder departed and slammed the door, which locked automatically.

Ten minutes later there came the sound of a convict's shuffling footsteps without. A key turned in the cell door, and the warder peered in again.

"Supper!" he announced.

From a large wooden tray carried by a convict-orderly the warder took a small loaf of brown bread, and measured out a pint of gruel from a can, which he poured into the enamel plate he had ordered the Bounder to hold out for the purpose.

Once again the door slammed.

The heavy tread of the warder and the shuffling of the convict vanished up the great, stone-paved hall of the prison as they continued their rounds issuing supper.

Vernon-Smith sank down on to his wooden stool, his elbows resting on the wooden bench which served as a table.

"To think I should come to this!" he murmured softly. "And all for something I didn't do!"

An involuntary tear started to the unhappy junior's eyes, and, dropping mingled with the mess of coarse food before him.

But the next moment he recovered a grip on himself.

"Hang 'em!" he snarled through gritted teeth. "Hang 'em! The whole confounded lot of them! What do I care?"

The Bounder paced savagely up and down his cell.

His food remained untasted.

The little shutter outside the spy, or Judas-hole, outside his cell door moved back, and the eye of a warder gleamed in at him.

"Put your bed down, Ten!" ordered a voice.

Vernon-Smith placed the three bed-boards on their trestles, arranged his blankets, and, after undressing, got in between them.

The lights of the prison were extinguished.

There sounded the measured tread and the jingling of keys as the night warders made their patrol of the great stone halls.

As Convict No. 10, Vernon-Smith slept his first night in H.M. Prison Stoneville.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Photograph!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Brought your mug, Redwing?"

Bob Cherry asked that question as Tom Redwing entered Study No. 1 of the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with Harry Wharton close behind.

The rest of the Famous Five were already there, except Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

Redwing grinned.

"Jolly good of you chaps to invite me to tea!" he exclaimed, sinking into the study armchair, which Nugent thoughtfully vacated for him.

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"Not at all!" said Bob Cherry generously. "Wharton's the founder of the giddy feast, but it was my bright idea to ask you to come. I always give a tea-party when Harry's in funds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we sha'n't be long now," remarked the captain of the Remove. "We're only waiting for Inky to come back with the grub."

"He's a blessed long time!" observed Johnny Bull. "I wonder whether he's been waylaid and robbed by Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's very likely."

"Perhaps Bunter rolled on him and crushed him to death!" chuckled Wharton.

"That's more likely!"

The juniors roared again.

The study door opened, and Inky, a basket heavily laden with good things from Mrs. Mimble's little tuckshop, grinned in at the crowd.

"As my chums can see fully observe, I have arrivefully come," he purred in his quaint English.

"Good!"

"Did you get the jam?" asked Johnny Bull.

"My absurd chum will find the esteemed jamfulness stowfully packed beneath the worthy cake," replied the dusky member of the Famous Five, as he placed the basket on the study table. "Also, my worthy chums, I have boughtfully secured the 'Evening Echofulness.'"

"Oh, good! I want to see how that Yorkshire team got on with the Wizards," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Better have some grub first," said Harry Wharton, who had recently received a remittance from his uncle, Colonel Wharton, which he was celebrating with a first-class study feed. "Can't keep a guest waiting all night, you know."

Johnny Bull busied himself with making the tea, Bob Cherry unloaded the supplies from Mrs. Mimble's, Nugent cleared the study up, while Wharton laid the table. Inky's share had been the journey to the school tuckshop for the supplies, so now he seated himself opposite Tom Redwing while the remainder of his chums did the work.

Within a few moments a fragrant odour of freshly-made tea filled the study, and the five chums and Redwing seated themselves round the table. It was rather a tight squeeze, but they managed somehow.

"Pass the tarts, Harry."

"And the jam."

"I'll have another doughnut."

"The sardines are of the ripping order," said Inky.

"Well, what was the result of that match against the Wizards?" asked Nugent, reaching across the table for a fresh helping of cake. "I hope the Tikes knocked the giddy spots off 'em."

"Dunno! Wait a minute, I'll soon see," grinned Bob Cherry.

He opened the paper and scanned the brief report of the event in question.

"It's not all here," he said. "Half a jiffy, though! This is an early edition. There might be some more in the 'Stop Press' on the back page."

So saying, he turned the paper to where the "Stop Press" box was wedged in between two columns of advertisements.

"It doesn't seem to be here," he remarked, his eyes travelling about the page. "I—Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the thump's this? I seem to know this blessed face!"

The remainder of the Removites looked up inquiringly.

"What's up, Bob?"

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry, still staring at the paper.

The remainder of the juniors, unable to wait for their chum to break the startling news which the paper evidently contained, jumped to their feet and crowded round Bob Cherry's shoulder.

Bob Cherry pointed to a smudgy reproduction of a photograph.

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"It can't be!"

"I—I think it is," said Bob Cherry in a subdued voice. "The picture looks like him, and the report with it seems to back it up. But, all the same, I can't understand it!"

"It must be a mistake!"

The six juniors gazed at the paper, dumbfounded with astonishment.

At the top of the page appeared a half-column block of a youth who bore a striking resemblance to Herbert Vernon-Smith. And in the caption beneath appeared the two-worded description:

"William Smith."

The accompanying report, into which the block was inset, read:

"EXEMPLARY SENTENCE ON YOUNG PICKPOCKET."

"Before Mr. Steele, at the Strand Police Court, this morning William Smith, aged fifteen, described as of no occupation and no fixed abode, was sentenced to three years' Borstal treatment for the theft of a gold watch, valued at £10, the property of James Sark, outside a coffee-stall, in Embankment Street, at two o'clock in the morning.

"Evidence was given that the stolen watch was found on the prisoner whilst being searched by P.-c. Robinson on arrival at the police-station. Despite this, however, the prisoner protested his innocence. The prisoner throughout the proceedings displayed an indifferent sullenness.

"In passing sentence, Mr. Steele, the magistrate, observed that he was amazed that a lad of prisoner's type should be brought before him on such a charge. Asked by Mr. Steele whether he possessed any remorse or shame for what he had done, the prisoner answered, 'No, sir. Not a scrap! Why should I have? I am innocent!' On receiving sentence Smith bowed ironically to the magistrate and thanked him for the sentence.

"He has, the 'Evening Echo' understands, been removed to H.M.S. Prison Stoneville pending his transfer to a Borstal institution."

"My giddy aunt!" murmured Wharton, in a low voice.

"It can't be our Smithy!"

"What do you think about it, Redwing?" asked Nugent, turning to the fisherman's son.

But if Redwing heard he did not heed. He stood clutching at the study mantelpiece, his face pale and drawn with an expression of horror.

"My hat! He's queer!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, springing forward.

"Oh, it's—it's all right!" mumbled Redwing, in a husky voice.

He sank back into a chair.

"I—I had a feeling something was wrong the past couple of nights," he stammered. "I spent all night looking out of the dorm window because I couldn't sleep. That's why you noticed I looked seedy to-day."

"Of course, it's probably a mistake," said Bob Cherry, with a pitiful attempt

at cheerfulness that deceived no one, least of all, Redwing. "This chap's described as William Smith—"

"It's Vernon-Smith right enough," groaned Tom Redwing. "It's easy to guess he's given a false name, but you can't get away from the photograph. It's not as we used to know him, but the likeness is there."

A silence fell on the six juniors. They could understand exactly how Redwing felt. Vernon-Smith had been Redwing's greatest chum. Redwing's affection for the cynical Bounder was almost that of a brother. The Bounder had stood by the fisherman's son more than once in days gone by. Indeed, it was due in a very large measure to Vernon-Smith that Redwing ever came to Greyfriars at all. And Redwing had never forgotten.

"Of course he's innocent!" exclaimed Redwing almost fiercely. "He said so

"You have?" echoed Bulstrode. "About this chap William Smith, do you mean?"

"Yes!"

"My hat!"

"We're sorry, Redwing, old man."

"Who else knows?" demanded Wharton, frowning.

"It's all over the blessed school!" ejaculated Bulstrode. "Ogilvy saw it first—"

"There's no doubt it's Vernon-Smith!"

"Rot!"

"It might look like him," said Penfold, without conviction.

"But it can't be him!"

"Great Scott! Here's a fine kettle of fish," groaned Johnny Bull. "I suppose the Head knows, too?"

"Dunno!" answered Bulstrode. "As soon as we saw it we came right along to tell Wharton. What are we going

The Famous Five made their way out into the passage. But for once the Remove quarters seemed strangely quiet. A hush seemed to have fallen on the school. The Famous Five passed several of their Form-fellows on the way. But none of the usual chaff was indulged in.

The Common-room was the same. Juniors sat about in groups with downcast faces. Even Skinner & Co., the cads of the Remove, seemed strangely quiet and reserved. Not even Vernon-Smith's worst enemies could believe him guilty of picking pockets. It was absurd; it was more than absurd. It was grotesque.

And now he was in prison!

Everyone knew!

And the old college seemed to be stunned with the knowledge.

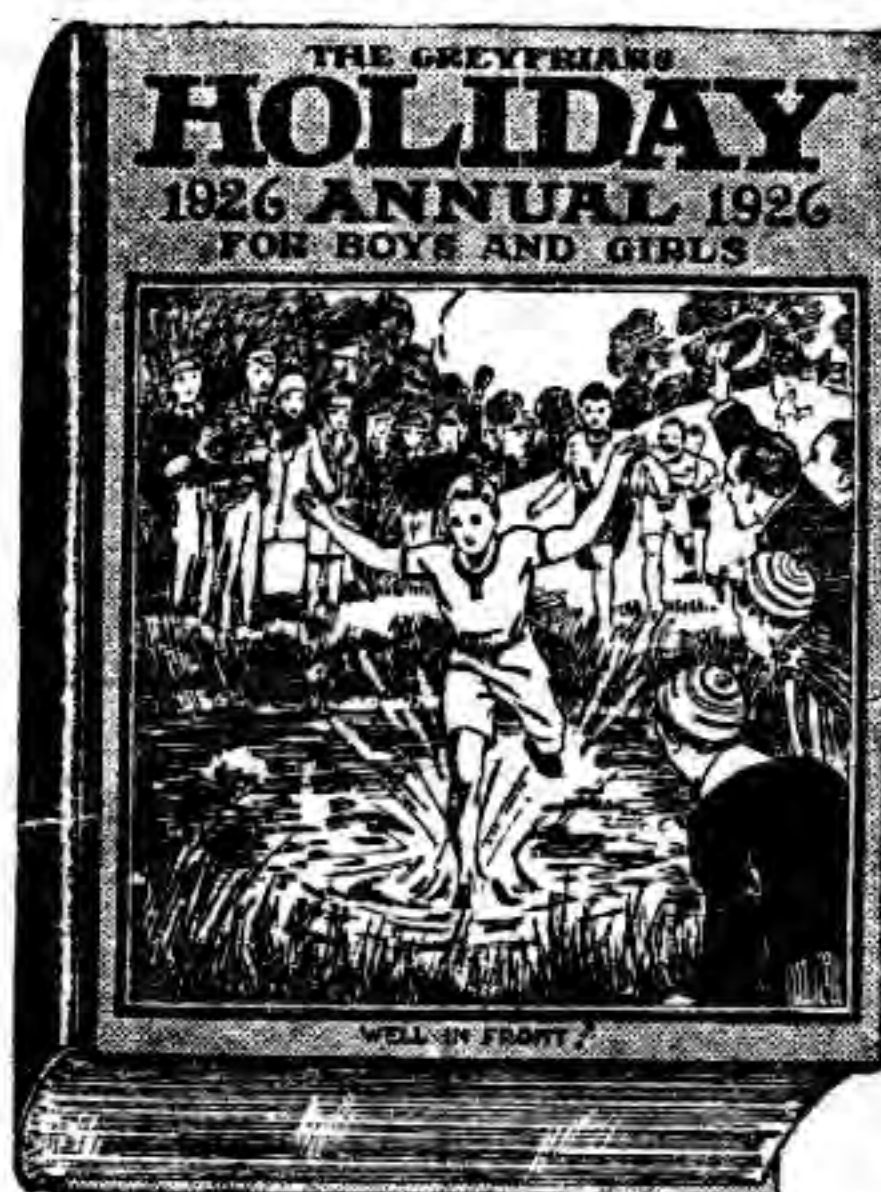
Half an hour later William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, burst excitedly into the Common-room.

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ADVENTURE

himself, and Smithy wouldn't tell a lie. The magistrate must be a fool—"

"I don't see how you can blame the magistrate, though," said Frank Nugent, deeply puzzled. "After all, if, as the police say, the watch he was accused of stealing was found in his pocket it must have looked black against him."

"I wanted the Head to let me go up to London to see if I could find Smithy," went on Redwing. "If he'd let me go, this wouldn't have happened. My hat! It's awful!"

There came a sound of running feet and excited voices in the passage without. The door of the study was flung violently open, and the next moment a crowd of juniors, headed by Bulstrode, commenced to stream into the room. But when they observed Harry Wharton & Co. were not alone, they stopped short.

"Oh, sorry!" gasped Bulstrode.

"Wrong study," added Peter Todd.

"It's all right," said Redwing, in a husky voice, his eyes travelling to the newspaper Bulstrode had attempted to hide behind him. "I can guess what you've come about. We've seen it."

to do about it? It's the blessed, rotten uncertainty, you see—"

"I'm going to see Dr. Locke straight away," said Redwing, rising to his feet. "I've stood the suspense long enough!"

He pushed his way through the crowd round the doorway, and made his way towards the Head's study. Many sympathetic glances followed him. One and all, the juniors felt as sorry for Redwing as they did for the unhappy Vernon-Smith—or, at least, nearly so.

"He's taking it badly," remarked Tom Brown.

"Oh, it's rotten!"

"Poor old Redwing!"

"Poor old Smithy!"

The crowd melted away.

"What do you make of it, Harry?" asked Frank Nugent, when they had gone.

"It beats me!" replied the captain of the Remove. "I hope to goodness it's not our Smithy, though."

"Hear, hear!"

"The hopefulness is terrific!"

"Let's get along to the Common-room and see if we can hear anything fresh," suggested Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Really, you chaps," bleated the Owl, blinking rapidly through his big spectacles. "I've got some news—"

"Keep it!" advised Bolsover gruffly.

"About Smithy," persisted Bunter.

Every junior stiffened.

"Redwing's convinced the Head that it's our Smithy who's been pinched, and they've just left the school to visit the prison together—"

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"You're not spoofing, you fat fraud?" demanded Bulstrode.

"I suppose I can believe my own ears?" replied Bunter, in an injured tone.

"Did the Head tell you, then?"

"Nunno! You see, I happened to be passing—"

"Oh, sling the fat spy out!" snorted Bob Cherry in disgust. "He's been sneaking about outside the Head's study with his ears cocked at the keyhole as

(Continued on page 18.)

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No. 254.

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Dec. 26th.



Work!

By
DICK FENFOLD

WHEN the sun is shining brightly, and your comrades gay and sprightly
Are rejoicing on the Greyfriars footer ground;
When their feet go pitter-patter, and you hear their noisy chatter

As they watch the frisky football bounce and bound.
When you hear the mighty roaring, as the centre-forward's scoring,

And his head propels the leather with a jerk;
When all Nature's gay and smiling, it's abominably riling

To be writhing in the cruel grip of WORK!

When the game is fought and ended, and the twilight has descended,

And the fellows troop in breathless from the fray;

When they hold a celebration, with terrific jubilation,

And are busy tucking tarts and things away.

When you hear their merry laughter, as it shakes each lofty rafter,

And you've got to scribble lines you dare not shirk;

It's enough to set you scowling, and to keep you fiercely growling

At the everlasting drudgery called WORK!

When the Toms and Dicks and Michaels go a-scorching on their cycles,

To revel in an afternoon of freedom;

When the slacker is reposing, on his study sofa dozing

With his books—but he's too jolly tired to read 'em!

When the fags are playing ping-pong, or indulging in a sing-song,

While the lazy masters in their studies lurk; [happy

How on earth can any chappie feel contented, gay, and

When he's got to tackle reams and reams of WORK?

Oh, this beastly imposition! Why, the Spanish Inquisition

By comparison with this would be delightful;

I go on scrawling, scrawling, in a scribble so appalling

That the Quelchy-bird will say, "Your lines are frightful!"

[nigger

I must slog with vim and vigour, like a galley-slave or

(Though I feel about as lazy as a Turk) [pleasure,

Not for me a life of leisure, nor a round of giddy

I am chained to the grindstone known as WORK!

Oh, this job is just the limit, and I'd like to scamp and skim it,

For the impot's as colossal as a mountain;

But I needs must go on scribbling, while the blobs of ink are dribbling

From a pen that keeps on spurting like a fountain!

Oh, the lucky lads of leisure, they have fun in fullest measure,

They can jolly well afford to smile and smirk;

For, unlike their wretched neighbour, they've no need to sweat and labour,

Or to shudder at the very name of WORK!

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EDITORIAL!

By
HARRY WHARTON



SOME people will shudder at the subject I've chosen for this week. Lord Mauleverer will, I know. The mere mention of the word "WORK" is sufficient to send cold shivers down Mauly's spine.

On one occasion, in the Remove Form-room, we were asked to write an essay on "WORK." Lord Mauleverer's essay began as follows: "Work is a jolly nice thing to get away from." And Billy Bunter, who is also lazy at heart, wrote: "Work is what causes nervuss brakedowns, fizzical collapses, and early deths."

Now, whatever our views of work may be, we cannot subscribe to the opinions of Mauly and Bunter. It is overwork which cause "nervuss brakedowns," and "fizzical collapses," and other unpleasant things. Hard work never killed anybody. On the contrary, there are people who never do a hand's turn, who toil not, neither do they spin, yet who die of sheer boredom and inaction. Our minds and muscles were meant to be used, and used regularly; and no fellow has a right to let them run to seed.

"What's the use of going to school?" I have often heard fellows say. "What's the use of grinding away at Latin verbs, and spending weary hours in a stuffy Form-room, when we ought to be out on the footer-field, revelling in the sunshine?"

I can assure these dissatisfied ones, on no less an authority than Shakespeare, that

"If all the year were playing holidays.

To sport would be as tedious as to work."

How frightfully "fed-up" we should get if we had to spend all our days on the playing-fields! We should come to loathe the sight of football, just as we now loathe the sight of a Greek primer. The fact is, sport is never really enjoyed unless we have earned it by hard work. After a hard, slogging day in the Form-room, it's grand to change into our footer togs and enjoy an exciting game. But if we were overdosed with footer, and played it day in and day out, we should soon be crying out for a diversion, in the shape of Latin or Greek!

There are times, of course, when work is mighty unpleasant. But if we tackle it in a cheerful spirit—go for it baldheaded, so to speak, and get the unwelcome task over and done with—we shall enjoy our leisure all the more.

Some fellows at Greyfriars are positive gluttons for work. Talk about the busy bee and the industrious ant! Mark Linley has got both these insects licked to a frazzle. Lessons are not a drudgery to the lad from Lancashire. He throws himself heart and soul into the routine of Form work, and he frequently sits up swotting till a late hour.

I am fond of work myself, or I should never have undertaken the editorship of the "Greyfriars Herald." For, believe me, this merry little supplement entails plenty of hard work. You can't sit down and twiddle your thumbs. Articles and stories have to be planned and commissioned; manuscripts and printers' proofs have to be read and corrected; long-haired poets and artists have to be interviewed—in fact, there are a hundred-and-one things to be done before we can write "Finis" to our labours. And no sooner is one issue disposed of than the next has to be thought about. But it's pleasant work, and I have an editorial staff which bubbles over with energy, and whose cheery motto is: "Work, work, work, and be contented!"

HARRY WHARTON.

The Man-Of-All-Work!

An Interview with GOSLING the PORTER
By Our Special Representative
— TOM BROWN —



“WHICH I'm too busy to see you now, Master Brown!” said Gosling, as I poked my head round the door of his parlour.

Gosling's appearance gave the lie to his words. He was reclining at full length on his horsehair couch. His feet—those “pore tired feet” of which he so often complained—were encased in carpet slippers. He seemed at peace with the world.

“Busy?” I echoed in astonishment. “Is that supposed to be a joke, Gossy?”

“Not at all. When I says I'm busy, I means that I'm busy. I says wot I means, an' I means wot I says.”

“But—but if you are supposed to be busy,” I gasped, “what particular job are you doing at the moment?”

“Mendin' this 'ere sofa,” explained Gosling. “What!”

“You see, Master Brown, summat went wrong with the springs, an' there was a bit bump in the middle of the sofa. It was all unched-up like. So I thought I'd lay on it for a bit till it was pressed back into position again.”

“Oh, my hat! And you call that being busy! How long will the job take, Gossy?”

“Until bed-time,” was the reply. “The bump will either be flattened out by then, or it will 'ave bored an 'ole in the middle of me back!”

I laughed.

“Well, of all the soft jobs!” I exclaimed. “I've never heard of a sofa being mended in that way before.”

Gosling gave a snort.

“None of your himperence, Master Brown! If I told you wot a gruellin' day I've 'ad you'd shed tears of simperthy, instead of standin' there sniggerin'. I've been on me

feet since five o'clock this mornin', except for a few seconds this afternoon, when I fell off a pair of steps an' stood on me 'ead!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“If you're goin' to laugh at my misfortunes—” began Gosling angrily.

“Sorry, Gossy! But I couldn't help being tickled—”

“I'll tickle you with this 'ere poker, if you ain't careful. I ain't goin' to be grossly consulted by you, after all wot I've been through to-day.”

I hastened to pour oil on the troubled waters.

“Tell me your troubles, Gossy,” I said soothingly. “You can count on getting the sympathy of the ‘Greyfriars Herald’ readers, anyway.”

Gosling proceeded to pour out a catalogue of woes.

“Which I'm the 'ardest-workin' man in the British Isles!” he declared. “There ain't a nigger, nor yet a galley-slave, wot 'as put in such a lot of work as I've put in to-day. When I got up at five o'clock this mornin' I found it 'ad been snowin' 'evvings 'ard. It lay three inches deep in the Close, as ever was! An' I 'ad to clear a dozen pathways—one from 'ere to the 'Ead's 'ouse, one from 'ere to the tuckshop, one from 'ere to the main hentrance of the school, one from 'ere to—”

“Enough!” I said appealingly.

“Enough?” echoed Gosling. “It was more than enough, if you ask me. There was I a-sweepin' and a-scrapin' from five o'clock right up to breakfuss-time. Then, before I could sit down to me 'ard-earned breakfuss, the 'Ead sends for me. ‘Gosling,’ says 'e, ‘my chimbley is choked up with

soot, an' I can't get me blinkin' fire to burn.’ Them wasn't 'is hactical words, but that was wot 'e meant to himply. So I 'ad to do the chimbley-sweep stunt, an' poke a broom up the chimbley. I got smothered with soot, an' I 'alf-smothered the 'Ead into the bargain. It was as much as I could do to bottle my mirth.”

“What happened then, Gossy?” I asked.

“Well, I finished the 'Ead's chimbley, an' then 'e sent me on a herrand to Courtfield. I 'ad to tramp all them miles through the snow, an' when I got back I nearly 'ad a fit. The pathways which I'd cleared earlier in the mornin' 'ad disappeared. They was choked up with snow again! So I 'ad to get busy with me broom an' me spade, an' I never 'ad a bite of breakfuss till nearly dinner-time!”

“Rough luck, Gossy!” I murmured.

“The mornin' was bad enough,” Gosling went on, “but the arternoon was ten times wusser. I was handied about from pillar to post—ustled 'ere, there, an' everywhere. An' now, when I ought to be restin' me weary limbs in peace, I've got to mend this 'ere sofa!”

So saying, the injured Gosling settled himself more comfortably on the couch and closed his eyes.

“I 'ates work!” he murmured drowsily. “Why should an honest man 'ave to work for 'is livin'? That's wot I says. 'Ere am I, a-slavin' at this 'ere sofa, when I ought to be sleepin' the sleep of the just! Would you mind lowerin' the light, Master Brown? Thanks! I can work better in the dark! Wot I says is this 'ere—”

Snore!

The Greyfriars man-of-all-work was resting from his labours.



MY IDEAL JOB!

Dame Mimble, I should stave off the starvation which threatens me, and begin to build myself up with fattening and new-trishus foods, such as doe-nutts, cream-buns, merrangs, an seterer, an seterer. I should have about three brekkers, and at least half a duzen dinners, and the customers who came to the tuckshop would be lucky to find any stock left!

HAROLD SKINNER:

What's the matter with the Head's job? Talk about a giddy bed of roses! I'd swop with the Head to-morrow, if he was willing; but, of course, he wouldn't be. I rather fancy myself in a gown and mortar-board, running amok with a birch-rod! Birching seems to be the only hard work the Head ever has to do, and I should fairly revel in it. I'd introduce Flogging Parades, and put all my enemies through the hoop. And in my leisure hours I should bask in the Head's armchair, before a blazing fire, smoking fat cigars, and reading. Not the works of Thucydides, or any other wise old buffer, but a pink sporting paper. And I should draw my salary of ten thousand pounds a term—or whatever it is the Head gets—and be at peace with all the world. I've a good mind to ask the Head if he'll change places. No, I won't, though. There's just a faint possibility that he might regard my request as an impertinence!

(Yes, there's just a remote shadow of a possibility that he might.—Ed.)

LORD MAULEVERER:

There's nobody at Greyfriars I'd particularly care to change places with. You see, everybody has to work, begad! Gosling, the porter, is like a human dromedary, carrying hefty burdens all day long. Trotter, the page, has to run errands, and black boots, and clean windows. The cook has to cook, the gardener has to garden, the masters have to master, and the fags have to fag. There's nobody at Greyfriars who lives a life of complete idleness, and that's what I'm after. I should like a job like my uncle had during the Great War. He was Assistant-Director of Slumber at the War Office. They sacked him eventually, because he snored so loudly that he kept the rest of the officials awake! Poor old nunky! But he's got a glorious job now. He's a sleeping partner to a firm of stock-brokers!

GEORGE WINGATE:

Weighed down as I am with all manner of worries and responsibilities, I'd give a kingdom to be a fag in the Second again!

DICKY NUGENT:

I'd give the whole world, with Mars and Jupiter thrown in, to change places with Wingate of the Sixth!

ALONZO TODD:

Being very anxious to increase my physical and muscular development, I should be quite willing to change places with the Fighting Editor of the ‘Greyfriars Herald.’ Will Cherry kindly let me know if he consents to this arrangement?

(Why, you fragile duffer, you wouldn't be able to eject an intruding bluebottle from my editorial sanctum!—Ed.)

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(Editor's Note.—I put the following question to a number of Greyfriars celebrities: “If you were allowed to change places with anybody else at Greyfriars, whose job would you prefer?” The replies are given below.)

BILLY BUNTER:

Who would I change places with, if I had my choice? Why, with Dame Mimble, of course. Of all the glorious jobs at Greyfriars, that of running the school tuckshop is far and away the best. The mere thought of it makes my mouth water. Fancy being able to enjoy a snack just when you feel like it! Fancy having free axvess to all the tarts and cakes and sweets in the school shop! If I were to change places with

By DICKY NUGENT.

IT'S an ill wind that blows nobody food.



AND MAKE A SUCCESS OF IT. By HARRY WHARTON.

THERE'S nothing like an amateur magazine to keep alive enthusiasm in a club, of the kind often described in previous issues of this paper, or a School House, or Form. Writing for an amateur magazine is, too, a fine outlet for a fellow's powers of self-expression. Writing about a subject shows you exactly how much you do or don't know about that subject, so that to write about your favourite hobby or pastime is the finest way of thoroughly understanding it.

In every group of fellows who join together for social or hobby purposes, one or more will stand out above the others in literary and artistic accomplishments, however humble. Find the best writer—or, rather, the best scholar—and the best artist in your group, and appoint them to form the editorial staff.

An editor, to be successful, should be sufficiently sure of his grammar and the other practical points of writing to be able to spot the faults of others and to avoid making mistakes himself. He should also be a good organiser, and it is a great help if he has the power of winning supporters. His job is to get his companions to conquer their timidity and to put something down on paper for the mag.

The secret of success in writing is to write only about what you know by heart; then your writing will be full of knowledge and life, and will have the power to hold your readers. That's why every fellow can write interestingly about his hobby or, say, last week's football match.

When Wireless Wilfred or Fretwork Fred writes in the mag about his home-made set or his latest model, then your mag will be doing some good by circulating knowledge.

Granted that we are all here to help each other, then surely the finest way of doing so is for each member of a club or society to write about his favourite topic for his club magazine. It ought to be a duty as well as a pleasure.

So much for the "why" of an amateur mag; now for the "how," "when," and "where" of it.

There are two main types of magazine—first, the "single copy" type, and, second, the "duplicated" type. For the single copy type, all the contributions—letters, articles, drawings, paintings, and photographs—are made by the individual contributors on sheets of equal size. The whole of the contributions are then bound together in a cover, and the magazine is either placed on the club table or passed round in turn to the various members. This is the type of mag which allows of the greatest variety of contents, and is most suitable for a small club with no desire for publicity.

When you want other people to know about your club and its doings, or you feel you can make a little cash by selling the mag to friends, then you must find some method of duplicating your efforts.

Printing suggests itself, but unless you can ensure a very good sale for the mag, it is too expensive. Small printing outfits can be bought, of course, and a lot of fun is to be got with them, but you need a large supply of type before you can do anything worth looking at.

Hectographs and the composition duplicators which are sold by most of the large stationers are useful. You can make a hectograph yourself from the following recipe:

Procure a biscuit-tin lid that is thoroughly watertight. Obtain 1 lb. of ordinary gelatine and put it into a saucepan. Cover the

gelatine with water and place the saucepan to boil until the gelatine has melted. Then add two teaspoonfuls of glycerine, and stir the mixture well.

Now place the tin lid on a perfectly flat table, and pour the mixture into it, being sure that the surface of the mixture is quite level before allowing it to set.

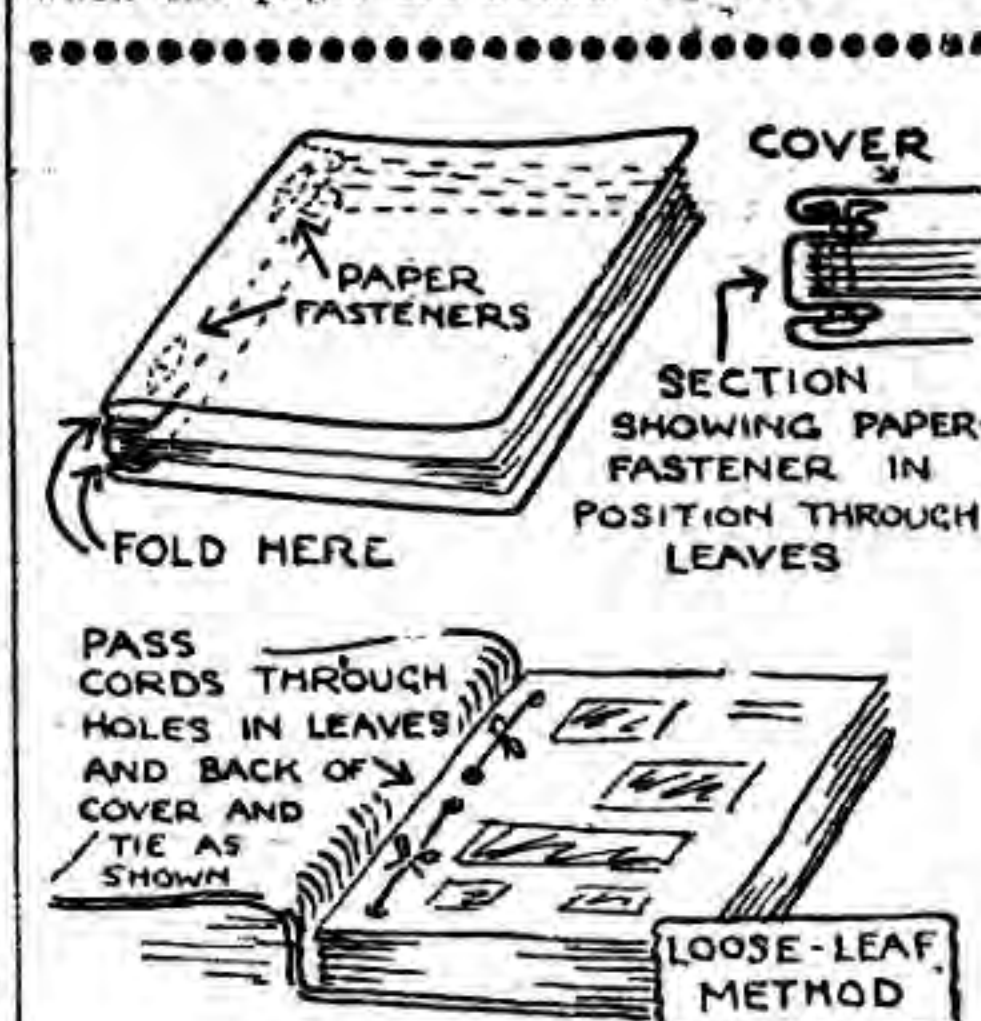
Copying is quite a simple matter. Obtain some aniline ink from your stationer's, and, using a gilt pen, write out your "copy" rather thickly, but in a clear hand. Then wipe the hectograph with a damp flannel. Lay your copy face downwards upon the composition and press firmly and smoothly. Leave it for a few minutes to allow the writing to transfer. Finally print off copies by laying slightly absorbent paper on the composition, pressing each sheet firmly, and then lifting carefully off. To remove the writing, wipe the composition with the flannel, rubbing one way only, and then leave for a few hours before copying again.

The one disadvantage of a hectograph is that, as the ink is soaked up by each sheet, the impression on the composition becomes fainter and fainter, so that if a large number of copies are printed, the latter ones may be difficult to read.

After a good deal of experience with all methods, the writer has found that an office cyclostyle, using wax stencils, is the most efficient apparatus for duplicating copies of a magazine. You can probably get the loan of one through an office friend, and the cost of stencils and ink is not very high.

The manuscript is transferred to the wax stencils either by hand with a metal style or by typewriting—a job for the clerk of your club. The typing should be done evenly, and letters such as "o" and "c" should be carefully struck to avoid punching holes in the stencils, and causing the printed page to look spotty. Headings and thumbnail sketches may be drawn on the stencil with the style before the typewriting is begun.

The artist of the magazine staff can display his powers by drawing a cover design on a full sheet of the stencil paper, and, if desired, the cover can be printed in a different colour from the text. To give the magazine a neat appearance, each page of typescript should be of the same depth, so that the margins of opposite pages are even when the pages are bound together.



Two methods of binding a "single copy" magazine.

The binding of duplicated copies can be done by stitching with needle and thread, by using ordinary paper-fasteners, or with the tiny metal staples punched in with what is known as a "Hotchkiss" machine. The latter is the neatest and quickest method. The sketch shows two methods of binding a "single copy" magazine for library use.

Undoubtedly the best way to learn to produce a magazine is to start in and produce one. You'll find all kinds of problems to be solved, but solving them will add to the fun, and give the magazine that touch of individuality which is required to make it a "live" and interesting production.

Photographic transfer papers, which your dealer will get for you, can be used to transfer photographs to the paper on which your magazine is printed. It is rather a slow process for a big number of copies, but gives some interesting results.

As editor, you should appoint a special day for receiving contributions and one for going to press, according to whether your mag is a weekly or a monthly. Try to keep your contributors alive to the necessity of writing brightly and concisely. There is no room for unnecessary words in a duplicated magazine.

Think out bright, snappy, and attractive titles for the contributions, and a novel title for the mag itself. You'll get lots of ideas from the magazines at the free library or from your daily paper. Study the way professional journalists write an account of an event, and try to imitate them. Fellows nowadays want something more than a bald statement of facts in a report. There is room for good-natured chaff; never descend to spitefulness in "writing up" an account, say, of a club social.

If you are blessed with a capable artist and photographer, in addition to contributors who can write well, you can plan your mag on the lines of a professional magazine, with articles, sketches, perhaps a serial story, a photographic supplement, competitions, etc.

Advertisements from local tradespeople are interesting, and, if the magazine has a sufficient sale, can be made a source of revenue. Otherwise an exchange column, in which readers advertise goods wanted or for sale, could be run to pay expenses.

CRACKERS!

SAFETY FIRST.

The old man from the country stopped in front of a picture-palace plastered with posters of lions, tigers, elephants, and other wild animals.

"Just look, Henry!" he said to his companion. "I'm glad I am going home on Saturday afternoon!"

"Why are you so anxious to get away?" asked the old man's nephew.

Pointing to the notices, the other read out the words: "To be released on Saturday night."

THE EDUCATED YOUTH.

Sam went to the country to visit his aunt. Three weeks afterwards he wrote to his mother: "Dear Ma,—I got here. I rode on a meul from the stashun. It warn't a meul, sho nuff, but I don't know how to spell the thing it wuz. I ast Jim if hoss wuz rite. Jim is the colord boy who goze hunting with me, and rides behind me on the meul. He said he didden know, so I thort I'd better rite meul, as I cood spell meul. Jim ain't egercated, but he noes all about dogs, and traps, and huntin'. I'm having a bully time. I killed 2 squirrels, and 5 duvs, and 3 potridges—I was very ill on the trane comin' here—and also 6 rabbits, and 1 snake. I like Jim better ennny boy I know. Pleeze send me some pants like Jim's, those that won't wear out behind. Your feckshunate son, Sam Bates."

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(Continued from page 13.)

usual, I suppose. So they've gone up to the blessed prison! My giddy aunt!"

"Then the Head must think there's something in it."

Finding there was no credit to be obtained for his valuable information Bunter rolled away, grunting.

For the rest of the evening the Removites sat discussing the latest stunning news of the Bounder in hushed voices.

Vernon-Smith—a convict!

They could hardly credit it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Explains!

"ALL change!"

The raucous voice of the guard, as the train steamed into the London terminus, caused Tom Redwing to awake from a troubled dream with a start.

Dr. Locke, who was with him, descended from the carriage and hailed a taxicab.

"I think our best course is to engage rooms at an hotel," he said, as the cab whizzed through the busy streets.

"Shan't we be able to see him to-day, then, sir?" asked the junior.

"I'm afraid not, my boy," returned the old Head kindly. "It is not customary to permit visits to prisoners until they have served a certain portion of their sentence."

Tom Redwing shuddered.

"Fortunately," resumed Dr. Locke, "Major Worth, the Governor of Stoneville, is an old friend of mine, and I am hopeful that he will aid me. I will speak to him on the telephone, and if possible call and see him before the day is out."

A few minutes after their arrival at the hotel, a small, private establishment near Bloomsbury, Dr. Locke telephoned to the prison. But his surmise proved correct. It appeared that in the ordinary way at least two months must elapse before Vernon-Smith—should the mysterious William Smith prove to be he—could be permitted any visitors.

Major Worth promised to get in touch with the proper quarter, however, and see whether on this occasion the rule might be waived.

Finding there was nothing more that could be done until the morrow, Dr. Locke and Redwing retired to their respective rooms half an hour or so after dinner.

Soon after breakfast the next morning, however, Dr. Locke received a telephone call from Major Worth inviting him, together with Redwing, to go along to the prison right away.

As through the windows of the cab Tom Redwing glimpsed the great gloomy grey pile of the fortress-like prison for the first time, a shudder passed through him.

"Fancy Smithy being in that awful place!" he gasped involuntarily. "It's awful!"

"Bear up, my boy," said the old Head, his own face drawn and haggard

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with care. "I feel certain that if it is your old schoolfellow we are about to see you would not wish to depress him further. We are there now."

The cab came to a halt in the middle of a gravel drive running parallel several yards back from the main road. Dr. Locke and Redwing emerged, the Head ordering the driver to wait. Dr. Locke then tugged at the bell which hung down at the side of the great iron-studded gates.

In a few seconds a small wicket gate before them opened, and they were subjected to the close scrutiny of a turnkey.

"Who do you want, sir?" asked the warder gruffly. "Too early for visitors yet."

"Kindly take that to Major Worth," replied Dr. Locke, handing the prison-officer a card. "I believe he is expecting me."

"Come this way, sir," replied the man, touching his cap.

Dr. Locke stepped through the wicket gate, Tom Redwing close behind. The warder led them to a waiting-room, the windows of which gave out on to a yard where a number of convicts, under the guard of warders, were repairing the stone paving.

"Bless my soul! What a terrible place!" murmured the old Head, gazing curiously about him.

"Terrible isn't the word for it, sir," returned Tom Redwing.

A file of convicts passed by, shuffling rather than walking, on their way to work in one of the prison workshops. Several of them turned their brutal and unshaven faces in the direction of the window behind which Dr. Locke and Tom Redwing were standing.

"Keep your eyes to the front, Fifty!" rasped a warder.

The man shuffled on with a scowl.

Five minutes passed, after which the warder returned.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, sir," he apologised. "Major Worth's been called away for a while, but Mr. Ling, the deputy, told me to take you through. You want to see No. 10, the special. This way, sir."

"Why do you call him a special?" asked Dr. Locke, following the warder out into the yard.

"Oh, because he's not staying on here, sir! He's only being temporarily accommodated 'ere until the next party goes down to Borstal. We keep lads like that apart from the rest of the prisoners, though."

Dr. Locke and the Removite followed the warder round a block of gloomy buildings, the walls of which were pierced with barred windows every few feet, until they arrived at a kind of stone shed adutting from the main building.

"Here we are, sir!"

There came a jangle of keys as the warder unlocked the door.

"Just wait there, sir," he said, indicating a couple of wooden chairs. "You'll see No. 10 in a moment."

The warder left, and locked the door behind him.

Dr. Locke and Tom Redwing found themselves in a stone-floored apartment with whitewashed walls, bare save for the two chairs. At the far end, however, they made out a steel grille about four feet square. Between the grille was a narrow passage-way at the end of which they could make out the shadowy form of a warder. And on the opposite side of the passage-way, which was only a foot wide, was yet another grille.

Dr. Locke and the junior waited in silence for some minutes.

At length there came a shuffling sound the other side of the grille, and the next moment a figure dressed in drab grey with red rings round its worsted stockings and a convict's cap on its head loomed up behind the bars before them.

The figure turned a hard and haggard face to the two visitors, and ejaculated a sharp, low exclamation.

"My dear boy!" gasped Dr. Locke, a lump rising in his throat.

"Smithy!" whispered Tom Redwing brokenly.

He stretched out his hand to grip his pal, but the iron bars of the two grilles prevented him from reaching.

"Dr. Locke!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "What are you doing here?"

There was a harsh and bitter note in the Bounder's voice which neither Dr. Locke nor Tom Redwing could fail to notice. Vernon-Smith seemed to have aged considerably since they had seen him last, and in his ill-fitting convict garb it was not a little difficult to recognise him.

He stared at Tom Redwing and the Head out of two unnaturally bright eyes.

"What are you doing here?" he repeated.

Dr. Locke endeavoured to reply. But the words seemed to stick in his throat.

"I—we've come to help you, Smithy, old man!" burst out Redwing huskily. "We read what had happened in the papers, and we guessed it must be you. Of course, we don't believe a word of it. There's some horrible mistake. None of us at Greyfriars believe you guilty."

"So they know?" said the Bounder.

Dr. Locke inclined his head.

"I believe with Redwing that you are innocent despite the dreadful evidence that was given against you—despite the fact that the watch was found in your pocket," said the old doctor.

"The magistrate didn't seem to think so, anyway," retorted the Bounder bitterly.

The Head was silent for a moment.

"Did you give them any explanation?" he asked at length. "The court did not know you as we know you, and it was bound to go by the evidence offered."

"They ought to have known without explanations that Smith wouldn't do a thing like that!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Thanks, Tom!" said Vernon-Smith, brightening for a moment.

"We believe in you, Vernon-Smith," said Dr. Locke kindly. "Redwing and myself believe in you implicitly. Why not tell us all that happened at the time the accusation was made against you. We may be able to help you."

"What's the good?" laughed the Bounder. "You might believe me, but the Court wouldn't. My story sounds too tall—and I know it."

Tom Redwing wrung his hands desperately.

"We can do nothing on our own," he protested. "You must help us, Smithy."

The Bounder hesitated.

"Oh, well, there's no harm in telling you what I think happened," he said at length.

And in a low voice he described his adventures in the Metropolis up to the time he met the lad Johnson on the Embankment seat. From there he led on to the meal at the coffee-stall up to the time the accusation was made against him and he was arrested.

"Is it likely I should have gone so willingly to the police-station if I had placed the watch in my pocket myself?" he concluded. "Then, as I say, when

the police arrived, the fellow who was with me cleared off.

"If I hadn't been such a fool I would have denounced him as being the real thief. He had the watch all right. I guessed that pretty well, although I was not sure of it. But since I knew—or thought I knew—that I hadn't got it I didn't worry."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the old Head when the ex-Removite had finished. "Your story is most amazing, my poor lad—most amazing!"

And under pretence of blowing his nose, the old doctor dabbed furtively at his eyes.

The shadow of the warder moved nearer to the grille.

"Time's up, sir," he said. "But you can have another minute," he added graciously.

"As far as I can see, there's only one thing that can clear me now, and that's a confession from this fellow Johnson," said Vernon-Smith. "But how you're going to get that I don't know."

The Head and Tom Redwing made no reply.

They realised only too well that to find the waif who had betrayed his benefactor would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack. And even, if by some lucky chance they did discover him, to prove that he stole the watch

and planted it on Vernon-Smith would be next to impossible.

As for the idea of extracting a confession from him, that was a thing they could not hope for even in their wildest dreams.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the old Head despairingly. "I—I— This is terrible!"

"Well, we must do something!" exclaimed Redwing, in a determined voice. "We've got to do something. Otherwise——"

"Time's up, please, gentlemen."

The voice of the warder cut in on the junior's sentence.

"Back to your cell, Number Ten."

"Good-bye—for the present, my dear lad!" called Dr. Locke, peering through the bars.

"Good-bye, sir——"

"Good-bye, old man!" murmured Redwing huskily. "Things'll soon be all right. Keep your pecker up!"

But the Bounder had gone. Only the sound of his shuffling footsteps as he made his way over the stone floor came back to the old Head and the Removite.

Five minutes later Dr. Locke and his companion were speeding back to their hotel.

The entire journey was covered without them exchanging so much as a single word.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Waif's Remorse!

"THIS seems to be the one, sir." Tom Redwing uttered that remark as the car Dr. Locke had hired for the evening purred to a standstill at the foot of Embankment Street.

As he spoke the junior indicated a coffee-stall a few yards up the street, where a small crowd was gathered enjoying the warmth given out from the fire beneath the gleaming urns.

It was not far from midnight.

Persuaded by the anxiety of Redwing, Dr. Locke had earlier in the day wired to Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars, informing him not to expect them back that night. Redwing had some sort of a hope that by paying a visit to the coffee-stall where Vernon-Smith had been arrested he might discover some additional information that could be used to aid his chum.

Certainly the junior was not at all certain what information he expected. But Dr. Locke, although he felt that the errand would be a disappointing waste of time, had nevertheless agreed to the proposition, and had accompanied him.

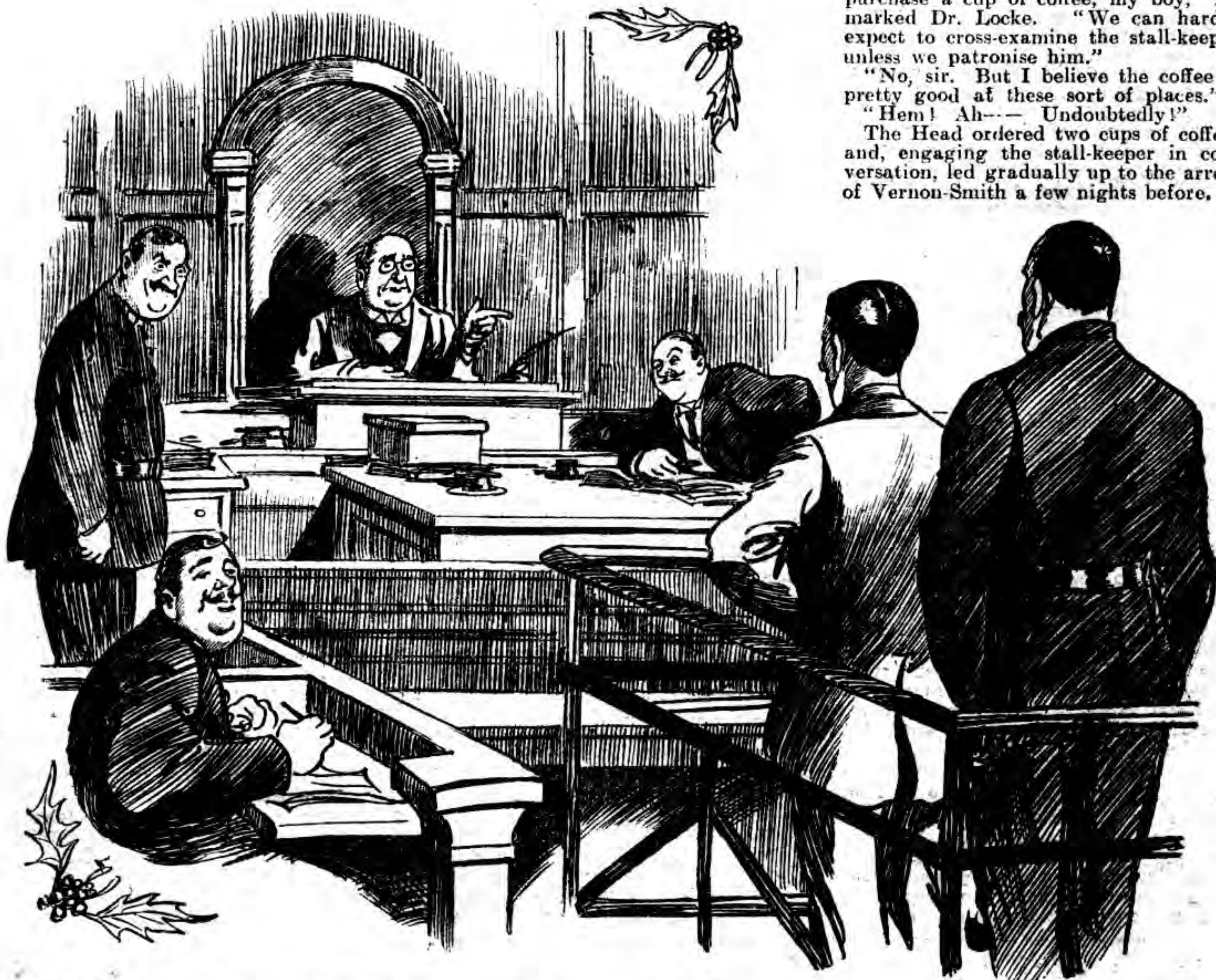
The headmaster and his pupil emerged from the car, and, giving the driver instructions to wait, approached the stall.

"I suppose we shall be expected to purchase a cup of coffee, my boy," remarked Dr. Locke. "We can hardly expect to cross-examine the stall-keeper unless we patronise him."

"No, sir. But I believe the coffee is pretty good at these sort of places."

"Hem! Ah—— Undoubtedly!"

The Head ordered two cups of coffee, and, engaging the stall-keeper in conversation, led gradually up to the arrest of Vernon-Smith a few nights before.



"You are a hardened young scoundrel!" exclaimed the magistrate, pointing his forefinger at the junior in the dock.
"You are sentenced to three years' Borstal treatment. Next case!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Can't understand it myself, sir," observed the stall-keeper. "I saw the youngster standing up near the end of the flap—just like you are now. But, with the light shining full on 'im he must have been a real nippy one to do a lift like that."

At the first mention of the robbery a lad at the far end of the stall started suddenly.

It was the lad Johnson.

He gazed nervously at Dr. Locke and the junior accompanying him, and slunk further into the shadow to listen.

Since the night of the robbery Johnson had kept well away from the stall until that evening; for he it was indeed who had lifted the watch, and then, fearing discovery, had planted it on Vernon-Smith.

"There are many things I cannot understand about it," said the Head in reply to the stall-keeper. "You see, it so happens that I am well acquainted with the lad in question—"

"Gosh! You are, are you?" ejaculated the stall-keeper. "I didn't know that, mister, but if I'm any judge of 'uman nature—and I ought to be at this job—I'll say that kid the coppers took up didn't collar the watch any more than I did. And I say that even if they did find it in his pocket when they got him to the police-station."

"My hat! That's the way to talk!" exclaimed Tom Redwing.

"I agree with you," Dr. Locke told the stall-keeper. "Your judgment of the lad's character is accurate. I may say that until recently he was a pupil of mine at school—"

"Jingo! I thought he wasn't no ordinary street kid!" gasped the stall-keeper.

"He was one of the best," put in Tom Redwing enthusiastically. "He used to be my pal—so I ought to know."

At the side of the stall the lad Johnson was listening to the conversation with mixed feelings. He listened to Redwing's glowing tributes to the Bouncer's character—and as he did so he began to think of Vernon-Smith for the first time since the night of the robbery.

"Three years' Borstal treatment is not a light punishment," Dr. Locke was saying. "I fear that it will sour the lad's mind. Until quite recently he had been accustomed to an extremely comfortable life—"

Three years' Borstal treatment!

In the shadow of the end of the stall the lad Johnson gasped.

He knew, of course, that the lad who had found him and shared his last coppers with him had in all probability been sent to imprisonment.

But three years' Borstal!

It was certainly an exemplary sentence.

In the mind of the boy outcast a stern battle was raging. The fragments of conversation he had overheard had set him thinking. It was not often the homeless lad did so, for the simple reason he was always trying to forget.

A feeling of remorse came over him.

After all, Vernon-Smith—or Bill Smith, as he knew him—was the first real pal he had ever had. He had given him sympathy and understanding. More than that, although he was hungry and without shelter himself, he had shared what little he did possess with him.

And now he was in prison!

"Lumme! If only someone'd tell me wot to do," the lad muttered to himself. "I've—I've never felt like this before."

Apparently, Vernon-Smith was a lad who had been used to a far different life from that the lad Johnson had been accustomed to. He had friends who were worried and distressed about him; friends who could, and would, no doubt, help him. So thought the lad Johnson.

He realised just a little of what Vernon-Smith was suffering.

And he was suffering all because of the good turn he had done the young outcast when his need was greatest. He was suffering because the lad he had helped had repaid him by planting the stolen watch in his pocket and betraying him.

"I—I wouldn't mind the clink so much myself," Alf Johnson told himself. "I could stick it all right. It would mean a bed every night and regular grub, anyway. But it must be awful for that other bloke what I dumped the watch on—he's a toff!"

The lad Johnson, his mind torn with conflicting thoughts, listened to the conversation of Dr. Locke and the coffee-stall keeper again.

"What we are hoping to do is to find the lad who was with my unhappy pupil that night," Dr. Locke was saying. "And that is why we came to you. We thought possibly you might be able and willing to help us."

The lad Johnson edged farther round the stall, completely out of sight. His face was stricken with fear. He wanted to clear off right away from the stall before anyone recognised him. But some unknown force seemed to hold him rooted to the ground, his ears alert.

"I didn't notice who he was with," returned the stall-keeper, in answer to Dr. Locke's question. "I know he paid for two lots of food. There was several other customers 'ere at the time."

"But if what he says is true, about this kid planting the watch in his pocket on the quiet 'cause he got the wind up," went on the stall-keeper, "all I've got to say is, that it's about the most rotten, low-down trick I've heard in all me puff, especially after your pal had stood him the feed like I told you I served, too."

The lad Johnson winced.

At any other time, he would more probably have grinned, and considered that he had done a very smart stroke of business. But Vernon-Smith's personality seemed to have made an impression on him.

"I—I'll go and tell the cove I did the lift!" he gasped to himself. "They can jug me, if they like—"

The outcast conjured up a mental vision of prison, and his resolve to confess dissolved as quickly as it had formed. After all, he thought, why should he confess? True, Smith was innocent! But lots of innocent people had to suffer for the sins of the guilty. Let the chap who was dressed in rags, but spoke like a toff, put up with it; he was unlucky, that was all.

Meanwhile, having got all the information they were likely to from the coffee-stall keeper, Dr. Locke and Tom Redwing were preparing to take their departure.

"Good-night, sir!" called the stall-keeper, as the Head stepped into his car at the edge of the kerb.

"Good-night!" responded Dr. Locke.

Once again the young outcast's brain seemed to whirl. There was something

about the haggard face of the old doctor and the cheerless expression of the Removite with him that gave him an unexplainable feeling of remorse such as he had never experienced before.

These two were the friends of the boy who had befriended him, and who he had betrayed! The better side of the outcast's nature once again came to the surface.

He made a step round from the end of the stall, his coffee-cup still in his hand.

"Wait a minute, guv'nor!" he called, in a husky voice, his mind at length made up.

But Dr. Locke did not hear. Followed by Redwing, he stepped into the waiting car, and a moment later it moved swiftly away.

The coffee-stall keeper stared at the outcast lad in amazement, vainly trying to recall where he had seen his face before.

Crash!

The coffee-cup the waif had been holding smashed in fragments on to the hard pavement, and the next moment the lad Johnson darted after the fast-moving car.

"Hi! Stop! Wait a minute!" he bawled.

But his voice was drowned in the roar of the exhaust.

The lad Johnson put on every ounce of speed he possessed. Foot by foot he gained on the car, and, gripping the luggage-grid at the back, drew himself up, where he clung like a leech while the car gathered speed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fresh Start!

"WAIT a minute, guv'nor!"

Dr. Locke, who had just descended from the car outside the door of his hotel, stopped short.

The lad Johnson, frozen with the cold after his swift ride through the night air, appeared from the rear of the now stationary car.

"Do you want me, boy?" asked the Head, in some surprise, thinking no doubt he was being accosted by a beggar.

"It's about the bloke what's in prison," explained the outcast.

"Bless my soul! What do you mean, boy?"

Johnson explained how he had overheard the Head's conversation from the side of the coffee-stall.

Tom Redwing listened in amazement, his face taking on an expression of hope.

"But what light can you throw on the terrible affair, boy?" asked the doctor.

"How does it concern you?"

"I'm the bloke wot was with the young gent the night he got pinched," he said.

"My hat!" gasped the Removite excitedly. "He's the chap we've been trying to find, sir!"

"This is most extraordinary!" gasped the Head, wondering at the back of his mind whether it was a clever scheme that was being worked on him for the purpose of obtaining money. "I think you had better come into the hotel out of the cold and tell me what you know."

"All right, guv'nor."

The trio passed up the steps of the hotel, and were subjected to a suspicious glance from the night porter. But the Head ignored the man's questioning looks, and asked whether he could have coffee and sandwiches for three sent to his sitting-room.

"I'll see to it, sir," replied the porter.

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

And a few minutes later, after the refreshments had been served, Dr. Locke settled himself down to hear the lad's story.

"That's all there is, gov'nor!" exclaimed the lad Johnson, at the conclusion. "The temptation came sudden-like, and I pinched the watch because I was cold and 'ungry. Then when the toff I pinched it from went for his cigarette-case, I got the wind-up, and shoved it in the young gent's pocket."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the astonished Head. "Your story is most amazing."

Dr. Locke drew a fountain-pen from his vest-pocket, and obtaining some paper from the writing-table, quickly proceeded to place on paper the amazing story the young outcast had just told him. When he had finished, the outcast signed his name at the bottom.

"I suppose it'll mean quod," he groaned, some of his former fear returning. "But I don't mind that, if it gets the young gent off. He treated me like a real toff, he did!"

"My poor lad," said the Head kindly. "You have done a terrible wrong! A terrible wrong! But perhaps you are not altogether to be blamed. However, while you cannot quite undo the wrong you have done, you have at least done all that lies in your power to make restitution. I will accompany you to the police-station to-morrow, but you may rest assured that I will do all in my power to make things as easy as may be possible for you."

The following day, Dr. Locke lost no time in placing the confession of the miserable outcast before the proper authorities. Meanwhile, the lad Johnson, after appearing for a few moments before the magistrate, was remanded on bail, supplied by Dr. Locke, for a week, and returned to the Head's hotel.

By now, however, Vernon-Smith had been removed from H. M. prison Stoneville to a Borstal Institution. The Bounder's father, who had been wired for before the Head had departed from Greyfriars, came along post-haste to the hotel, where he learned of what had happened to his son for the first time.

At first he was numbed with grief. Only the knowledge that his son had at last been cleared and would soon be released helped him to bear up in his great grief.

But the machinery of the law works slowly.

It was several days later before the Bounder was released from the Borstal Institution to which he had been sent.

He was hollow-eyed but happy.

He was met at the gates of the institution by his father, Dr. Locke, and his chum, Tom Redwing.

Later that day, in company with Dr. Locke, his father, and his chum, he arrived back at Greyfriars. The school had been warned to expect them in advance, and nearly the entire college turned out to greet them. Ringing cheers rent the air as countless juniors swarmed round the car which had driven the party down from London. Nearly every member of the old school, it seemed, juniors and seniors alike, endeavoured to thrust their hands through the window to shake hands with the junior at once.

"Good old Smithy!"

"Here he is!"

Vernon-Smith smiled happily—but there was a lump in his throat.

During the interview he had had with Dr. Locke in Stoneville Prison, both the Head and Tom Redwing had forgotten to mention to him the glad news they had received from his father. He had

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 17—Wun Lung (of the Remove).



A cheery, impish young scamp from China, who, despite his present English surroundings, retains all the traits, good and bad, of the Oriental. Has a happy knack of saying "No savvy" when he chooses not to understand—undoubtedly a useful dodge when he is in a tight corner. Has not much regard for the truth, and openly admits it. But he is sincere in his likes and dislikes, and is passionately devoted to Bob Cherry and Mark Linley. Small and wiry of stature, Wun Lung is a gymnast of the first order, although he hardly shines at footer and cricket. Can hold his own, by employing the tricks of the typical Chink, with the biggest of bullies, as Bolsover and Gerald Loder, the prefect, have found to their cost. Possesses a weird originality in the matter of practical jokes—but these jokes are generally put into practice for the purposes of revenge, Wun Lung seldom being disposed to forgive or forget an injury. Shares Study No. 13 with Mark Linley, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh. Has a minor in the Second Form—Hop Hi.

only learned that after he had emerged from the Borstal Institution.

Later that evening one of the most terrific "feeds" that had ever been heard of at Greyfriars was given in the School Hall—at the expense of Vernon-Smith senior. Dr. Locke was there, all the masters—including Mr. Quelch. Members of all Forms had been invited to come along.

And they had all accepted.

Towards the end, after the Removites, raising their voices above the rest, called for a speech, Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

In a few words he thanked them for the reception they had given him—and the trust they had reposed in him throughout his terrible experiences in the hands of the police and later in prison.

His father followed him, and announced that things had taken a considerable turn for the better as far as his fortune was concerned. Things were rapidly on the mend, he said, and he hoped before long to re-establish himself where he had stood before.

As for the lad Johnson, when he surrendered to his bail a few days later, owing to the intercession of Dr. Locke and Vernon-Smith senior, he was bound over and discharged.

And a fortnight after that, dressed in the first decent suit of clothes he had ever possessed, and with a fifty pound-note in his pocket, he took his leave of Vernon-Smith, the lad he had wronged.

The Bounder's father had played the part of fairy godfather to him, and Johnson went aboard the R.M.S. Hope, of the Royal Colonial Line, bound for Canada to take advantage of the new opportunity in life that had been presented to him.

Vernon-Smith soon settled down at Greyfriars again. As his father had anticipated, it was not many months before he had defeated the group of financiers who had all but wrought his ruin. After a series of spectacular coups, and aided by his old business associates who now quickly rallied round him again, that, as he rose, they might profit, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith once again assumed his old position in the realm of finance.

But it was a long time indeed before Vernon-Smith—or any of the Greyfriars fellows for that matter—ever forgot the time when he had gone from Greyfriars to Borstal!

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's story—"Bowling Out Bunter!" It's a winner! Order your MAGNET early, boys.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 933.

HARES AND THE HOUND! With Tom Travers a prisoner amongst them and with the coveted Green Spider in their possession, the Wolves seek to throw Ferrers Locke off the trail. Across land and water the chase extends, but always close at the heels of his quarry is the detective who has sworn to solve—



The Clues in the Snow!

LOCKE halted the White Hawk a hundred yards away and jumped out.

"Jove, what a mess!" breathed Jack Drake. "And no sign of Silva and the other members of the Wolves! Or of Tom!"

"Whoever was driving must have been pitched into the water!" put in Locke grimly. "A chilly business for a night like this!" He pointed to the marks in the snow. "See where they skidded, young 'un? They tried to take the bend too fast, and in trying to rectify the side-slip, the driver dragged the front wheels round and charged the wall fair and square."

Jack was moving forward, but the detective's hand gripped his arm, holding the youngster back.

"Careful!" warned Locke. "There's a good deal more to learn yet from these marks on the snow! We've got to be thundering careful not to foul them!"

"Looks as though there was a struggle just there!" cried Jack, a note of excitement in his voice. "See the trampled snow, guv'nor? The dickens of a scrap, I should say!"

"Yes," put in Locke, frowning. "Queer!"

The detective's eyes ran over the expanse of snow-covered road. There was a maze of footprints there, bewildering to Jack, trained in such matters though he was. Other marks, too, that puzzled him. And here and there he saw small red patches in the snow—blood-marks.

Advancing slowly, careful to obliterate nothing, Locke advanced inch by inch, his eyes examining every square foot of the ground. Suddenly he gave an exclamation, and stooped, picking up something from the snow.

It was a small piece of cloth that had been lying in the shadow of the wall.

"Recognise this, Jack?"

Jack nodded.

"Why, yellow and purple! That's the colours of Larkham City!"

"Yes," murmured Locke. "A piece of Tom Travers' football-shirt. Here's another bit, on the wall, caught on this piece of stone."

A few minutes later Locke called Jack to his side. Stepping carefully,

the youngster joined the detective by the wrecked car.

"What do you make of that, Jack?"

Ferrers Locke was pointing to a curious mark in the snow—a tiny circle, clearly cut, with a larger circle, very faint, interlinked with it. Near at hand lay a short length of thin string, trampled into the snow.

Jack scratched his head.

"Beats me, guv'nor," he admitted.

Without comment Locke continued his searching examination. At last he drew a deep breath of satisfaction and stepped to the edge of the road, after having scrutinised the snow-covered mud at the water's edge.

"Pretty clear what's happened here, Jack—and it wasn't so long ago, either. About fifteen or twenty minutes—not longer. You see, the wind cutting across the water is slowly blunting the clear-cut condition of these tracks. But they are still too clear-cut to have been here long, with that wind to reckon with. The radiator of the car has gone cold, but that is because it was smashed in breaking through the wall, and the hot water has run out long ago."

"I see." The youngster nodded. "But what do those rum marks mean?"

"Simply that Travers put up a thundering good fight. Evidently he's not been badly hurt. No doubt he had been sitting inside that van with one of the Wolves covering him with an automatic most of the time, so escape has been impossible. But when the crash came he saw his chance."

"There was a regular scrap just over there. Tom knocked one of 'em spinning. He crashed against the tail of the van, and must have hurt himself. He collapsed just there, and it was a good time before he got up again. But two more were on him, and they very soon overpowered our young friend."

"It looks as if Travers was hit on the head from behind, and dropped like a log, stunned. See, he was hit with that piece of splintered wood yonder from the front part of the van, broken off in the smash."

"Well, there was no fight in Travers any longer, and Silva now doubtless had the ring in his possession. I should judge those footmarks are Silva's—he has unusually small feet, I've noticed. There was a consultation what to do now with the wrecked car."

"And what did they do?" cried Jack. "As far as I can see, they've vanished into thin air! For I've seen that there are no footmarks leaving this section of the road in either direction."

Locke laughed, and nodded to the water.

"You're right, Jack. That's the way they went!"

The detective strode across to the wall, pointing over it.

"There was a small boat moored here. See the marks half-way up the bank? The tide's dropped a bit since they went off, of course. You can see, by the way, where they dragged Tom Travers over the wall, tearing his football shirt and knocking off the snow in the process."

Jack stared away down the wide stretch of water rippling darkly in the moonlight.

"What are we going to do, guv'nor?" he muttered.

"Follow, of course," answered Locke laconically. "A sleuth who doesn't play the sleuth is no good, is he?"

Locke turned and hurried back to the car, Jack on his heels. A minute later the White Hawk was purring away down the road, while Jack's eyes watched keenly for a boat. It was not long before they came upon several dinghies drawn up on the mud at the other side of the wall, while a number of small yachts were anchored in the stream.

"We'll commandeer one of those," said Locke. "Jack, hop out and run one of those dinghies down to the water's edge, and get the paddles out, if you can find any left out."

They were close outside a small village now, and it did not take the detective long to run his car into a garage, much to the surprise of the sleepy man he had awakened from his beauty sleep. A few minutes later Locke was back at the spot where he had dropped Jack.

The youngster had found paddles in one of the boats, but they had been chained and padlocked. But that padlock was no preventative where Jack was concerned, for in helping Locke fight crime for so long the youngster had long ago found it necessary to be able to master a simple lock when need be.

The paddles splashed into the water as Locke jumped in, and with brisk, strong strokes Jack sent the little craft dancing out towards the anchored yachts.

Suddenly Locke fixed his eyes keenly on one of the moored vessels.

It seemed at first as though the little yacht had a dinghy tied up to its bowsprit. But he saw as they drew nearer that the dinghy had simply become wedged in that position, having evidently drifted down under the bowsprit with the current. Locke told Jack to row towards it, and as they drew alongside the detective chuckled.

"Good! We are learning a good deal of the movements of Silva and his friends," murmured Ferrers Locke. "This is the boat they took from higher up the backwater, Jack. Once again Tom's football shirt comes in useful. In lifting him either in or out of this dinghy they caught one of the ragged bits of it on this nail—and here it is!"

"Then where are they now, guv'nor?" said Jack, bewildered. Suddenly he lowered his voice, glancing over the dark, deserted decks of the little yacht. "You don't think they are aboard one of these craft?"

Locke shook his head.

"No, they're not wasting time here. What they've done is to collar one of these yachts. Probably there was one moored higher up, opposite the spot

where they bagged the dinghy. But when they sailed off down the backwater, either they left the dinghy to drift its own sweet way, or else the chap who was supposed to hitch its painter to the stern of the yacht made a bad job of it and the dinghy broke loose. Anyway, it drifted downstream, of course, and landed up here."

"So Silva & Co. have got Tom prisoner on a yacht?" muttered Jack.

"Yes, and there's no time to lose in following!" cried Locke briskly. "I'm afraid the owner will be annoyed to find his boat missing, but we're going to take this craft in pursuit. We'll return it when the time comes—with thanks and apologies! But it's a question of 'in the name of the law' to-night!"

Locke sprang up on to the deck of the yacht, and Jack followed him.

It was a trim little vessel of ten tons or so, named the Marian, and Locke's eyes ran over her slim lines and up the tapering mast with the appreciative look of an expert yachtsman, which the detective was.

"A fast little tub, Jack." He drew a deep breath of the sea wind blowing up from the mouth of the river, not so far away. "Now, lively does it! Hitch up the dinghy at the stern—we'll moor the other here. I'll be getting up the main-sail—"

In what seemed an incredibly short space of time to Jack, the Marian was slipping away down the backwater in the moonlight, the ripples chuckling round her, the wind filling main and foresail as she ran, close-hauled, under the hand of Ferrers Locke.

Locke's eyes were bright and gleaming.

The detective loved the feel of water beneath him, loved the motion of a well-handled yacht, and the smell of the sea, with which the wind was laden.

"This is great, Jack!" he murmured. "I shall have to thank Silva for giving us the chance of a bit of cruising to—"

INTRODUCTION.

TOM TRAVERS, a clever goalkeeper playing for Larkham City.

ADAM GUELPH, his miserly uncle, owner of Lone Manor.

ARMITAGE, Guelph's butler.

FERRERS LOCKE, the celebrated detective of Baker Street.

JACK DRAKE, his boy assistant.

SILVA, SCARAMANGA, and DROOD, a blind man, members of the Wolves, a powerful secret society.

Adam Guelph mysteriously disappears, and Tom Travers enlists the aid of Locke and Drake to find him. This they eventually do, for the old man has been kidnapped by the Wolves. But Guelph's rescuers are unable to discover the motive of the Wolves in capturing him, for the old miser is suffering from brain fever. Locke and his companions therefore set themselves the task of unravelling the mystery. After a series of thrilling hand-to-hand encounters with the Wolves, Locke & Co. learn that the Green Spider—an emerald ring resembling in shape a spider—holds the secret of the whereabouts of a vast hoard of treasure, and that it is this ring and the treasure it will lead to that the Wolves are seeking. This ring is given into Travers' keeping by Armitage, the butler, who knew of its hiding-place.

The Wolves, however, eventually kidnap Travers during the progress of a match between Larkham and the Spurs, and drive off with him in a black van. Locke and Drake lose no time in getting on the trail. They are speeding along the riverside in Locke's racing-car when they pull up suddenly, to find—smashed up against a brick wall, with its front wheels hanging over the water's edge—the black van, now deserted. (Now read on.)

night! Jove, but this is a ripping little craft!"

"She's spanking along!" agreed Jack, with a laugh. "At this rate, guv'nor, we ought to overhaul Silva and his crowd pretty quickly. But aren't we trusting to luck a bit in trying to pick up their trail on the water like this?"

Locke moved the helm, bringing the yacht closer into the wind.

"There is always the element of chance, of course," returned Locke coolly. "But I don't think it is likely to enter into our plans very much to-night, Jack. You see, the only object in Silva's flight by water is his fear of pursuit—he wants to cover his tracks. Therefore, when he thinks he has done so, he will land again some distance farther on. By keeping near shore, on the look-out for any yacht that might arouse our suspicions, we shall be fairly certain of picking up the trail once again."

And then suddenly Jack Drake, standing on the windward side of the mast, peered ahead.

They were already nearing the point where the broad backwater met the main river. Beyond the great waste of water the farther shore was lost in dimness. To their left the snow-covered coast sloped down to the river, and hugging it, half a mile ahead, there had leapt out to the youngster's eyes for a moment the gleam of moonlight on white sails.

"There's a small yacht running down straight ahead, guv'nor!" he cried.

Locke peered forward.

"I see it," he murmured. "I'll wager a thousand pounds to a gramophone-needle that it's got Silva and the other three Wolves and Tom Travers aboard!"

A strong gust of wind sent the yacht heeling over, and Jack Drake chuckled, to feel the little craft go shooting on through the tumbled water like a living creature.

They had picked up the trail again, thanks to the deadly skill of Ferrers Locke. Once more the hound was hot on the heels of the hare!

At Grips!

DRIFTING over the water from the church clock of some waterside village came the hour—midnight.

For a long while the Marian had been overhauling, foot by foot, the rather larger yacht ahead. That the fugitives knew they were being pursued was certain now. They had altered course continuously, in a vain attempt to throw Locke off the track by slipping away through the patches of light mist that had come drifting over the water. But, grim and relentless, the little yacht had hung upon their heels, creeping nearer and nearer.

Ferrers Locke was in splendid spirits. The thrill of that night chase by land and water had entered his blood, as with the youngster.

"There they go!"

Jack, up for'ard, flung out a pointing hand.

The yacht ahead had vanished a minute ago into the drifting mist. But now she had reappeared, heading away on a starboard tack towards the fairway. Locke promptly put the helm hard-down, with a warning shout to the youngster. The little craft came round into the wind's eye, her foresail shaking for a moment with a deep pattering noise. Then the sails filled out, and the Marian smashed out towards the deeper water in pursuit of the flying craft ahead.

"My hat, we're overhauling 'em like one o'clock now!" muttered Jack Drake.

The lights of vessels could be seen shining green and red and white through the night; they were drawing nearer the centre of the river now, where the traffic passed between the sea and Eastcrouch, the famous Essex port and dockyard.

A sharp crack came cutting across the water, and from the deck of the yacht ahead could be seen the splash of flame. Instinctively, Jack ducked. But the bullet whined past yards away, and drove into the water with a hiss and a jet of spray.

"The beggars!" grunted Jack. He moved back towards the well, and slipped down beside Locke. "They're taking pot-shots, are they? Shows they've got the wind-up, anyway!"

"Keep your head down, young 'un!" said Locke. "They'll pot again—Ah, would you?"

Even as he had spoken, a second bullet came humming over the intervening stretch of water. Glancing up, Jack saw a clean hole cut in the canvas of the mainsail. But a third shot went wide.

"They are trying to scare us off, I suppose," muttered Ferrers Locke grimly. "They'll be disappointed if that's their little plan. We're hanging on to 'em like grim death, and they're not fast enough to throw us off."

"Wonder what Tom Travers is thinking of it all?" chuckled Jack. "He must know we're buzzing along after 'em!" He broke off, to add quickly: "I say, guv'nor, they're coming round again!"

The yacht ahead, though not so fast as the slim-built Marian, was obviously very quick in answering her helm. She came swinging round splendidly, not on to a port tack, but right about, till she was running back on a starboard tack, straight towards the pursuing craft!

Jack drew a quick, startled breath at the unexpectedness of the manoeuvre. He gripped Locke's arm.

"They're coming at us!"

Locke gave a cool laugh.

"Silva is going to take the bull by the horns," he said. "I suppose he thinks he can afford to, with three men behind him!" The steel jaw tightened. "But I'm hanged if I feel like bolting, though we could slip off and away. What d'you say to keeping our course, Jack, and meeting 'em fair and square?"

"I'm game!"

Locke nodded approvingly. He had taken from the motor-car a couple of automatics, one of which he had already handed to Jack Drake. Now his hand went to his pocket, and he took out the blunt-nosed weapon, and Jack did the same. The two automatics glinted dull blue in the moonlight.

Swiftly the distance between the two yachts was decreasing. Driving through the waves with a welter of spray, Silva's vessel was storming along with the wind behind her. They could see the crouching figures on the deck.

"There's Silva!"

Jack had seen the slim, panther-like figure of Silva himself, leaning gracefully against the mast, as the yacht came plunging on. There was that cold, silky smile upon the man's handsome face—Jack could see it clearly in the moonlight. He saw, too, Scaramanga, the Greek. The other two men, their heads showing above the well, were unknown to him, but the youngster started to see that one was a Japanese.

"All nationalities in the Wolves!" came the voice of Locke in his ear. "Keep down—there'll be some hot work in a jiff! We're just running by."

The two yachts were almost level.

And then it was as though a storm had burst. Four shots crashed out in quick succession from the decks of the larger yacht, and the lead came cutting through the canvas above Locke and Drake's head as the Marian plunged down into a trough of the waves. They were in rough water.

An instant later Locke's automatic spoke. He had fired coolly, deliberately. But from the well of the reeling little vessel it was impossible to hope for accuracy. The detective had wanted to scare Silva from his coolly daring position against the mast. Instead, the bullet sang past the ear of the Japanese in the well, and caused the dark face with the slanting eyes to vanish abruptly.

Jack fired a moment after Locke, and the lead buried itself in the mast above Silva's head. Even in that moment the Spanish-Englishman gave a mocking bow as the larger craft came sweeping past. Then he turned his head, calling out to the man at the helm.

Ferrers Locke saw the man jam the helm hard down in answer. The big yacht came nosing round instantly. Jack gave a cry to see the bowsprit for'ard of Silva driving at them amidships. Silva was charging them, straight as a die!

Locke saw the danger, put up his helm in a flash, and the Marian wheeled. But too late.

There was a scraping sound above the hiss of the waves, and suddenly the little yacht shook and staggered. The other had struck; the long bowsprit had come smashing across her stern, slashing through the mainsail. Above the other sounds came a clear, cool laugh, in the voice of Silva.

A dark figure came leaping over on to the deck of the Marian. In an instant Locke was up out of the well, and it was not his automatic that he used, but that traditional weapon of the Briton—his clenched fist.

Straight from the shoulder it drove, clean into the face of the man who had boarded. Blinded, the fellow staggered back, then went splashing into the water between the two yachts. And then Locke turned to meet the attack of Silva.

Silva had boarded the Marian with his automatic in his hand, but before he had got his balance on the deck it was wrenched from his hand. The next moment he and Locke were at grips.

Silva's cool nonchalance had fallen from him like a mask now. As he struggled in the detective's grip, the man's dark face was drawn with passion and hate. Jack, leaping to Locke's rescue, decided that there was no need for his interference there, and turned his attentions to Scaramanga, the Greek.

"Psefti!" gasped Scaramanga, as Jack leapt across a yard of lapping water on to the decks of the other craft, and closed with him. A hard young fist smacked on to Scaramanga's jaw, and he staggered back. Then Jack felt himself seized from behind, and a sudden terrible pain went shooting down his back.

The Japanese had leapt upon him. A master of ju-jitsu, the yellow man had the English youngster utterly at his mercy.

A scream broke from Jack Drake as again that torturing spasm wracked his spine. Scaramanga, the Greek, laughed.

"Good, Kyushu! Make him yell! Oh, very good!"

With a dreadful purring, crooning sound, Kyushu, the Japanese, again pulled slightly on the youngster's arms, which were twisted round behind him in a diabolically cruel way known to the yellow man. Again that ghastly pain brought a cry to Jack's lips.

Scaramanga laughed again. "Clever little beggar, Kyushu!" he said admiringly. Then he glanced anxiously across to where Locke and Silva were struggling fiercely.

Silva was amazingly wiry, but his strength was no match for that of Ferrers Locke. A loaded automatic was far more to Silva's taste than bare fists. Seizing an opportunity, he sprang away, and turned a dark face towards Scaramanga.

"Shoot him down, you fool!" The gasped words brought a laugh to Locke's lips. But to Jack, pinned face-down on the deck of the other yacht, the words brought a cold agony of fear for the detective.

He heard Scaramanga snatch out a weapon—heard the sharp report.

There came a cry, and a heavy fall, and from Silva's lips broke an exultant laugh, soft and silky.

"Oh, good man, Scaramanga! That's knocked him out—for good! A bad day for Mr. Ferrers Locke, I fear, that he matched himself against the Wolves!" Jack's heart seemed to stop beating.

He forgot his own plight, with the fiendish little Japanese kneeling over him, at the mercy of the yellow man's ju-jitsu! He had forgotten Travers, a prisoner beneath the decks. One thing only filled his brain—Silva's gloating words:

"That's knocked him out—for good!"

The Secret of the Green Spider!

"THAT'S knocked him out—for good!"

Silva's gloating words were like a knife in Jack Drake's heart.

Pinned as he was face-down on the deck of the yacht, he could see nothing. But he heard the crash that had followed the report of the Greek's automatic, and had heard Locke's cry. In that ghastly moment the youngster fully believed that Ferrers Locke was dead.

The two yachts were rolling and scraping together, the bowsprit of the larger vessel interlocked with the Marian. The light mist was spreading over the great estuary, hiding either shore. From somewhere up the river the eerie wail of a ship's siren came floating over the black waters.

Kyushu, the Japanese, still bent over Jack, holding him by his diabolical

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ju-jitsu, so that if the youngster moved a finger that terrible pain went shooting down his spine as though his very back might break. The little yellow man was purring softly, like a cat, in a way that had turned Jack's heart cold a moment before. But now—

Jack cared for nothing now.

"That's put him out—for good!"

Silva's silky words were beating in his brain.

Scaramanga, the Greek, signed to Kyushu, and Jack was forced to his feet, still held by ju-jitsu, so that he could not even struggle. Instantly the youngster's eyes sought the deck of the Marian, where the detective lay in a crumpled heap.

In the misty moonlight Jack saw the red smear on Locke's temple. Silva was bending over him, his handsome face smiling coolly, the moonlight gleaming on his black glossy hair. Jack was reminded suddenly of a panther crouching over its prey.

Silva straightened himself, and his teeth gleamed across to the others. Already the fourth man, whom Locke had knocked into the water, was scrambling on board the larger yacht, dripping wet and with chattering teeth.

"No," murmured Silva softly, "he is not dead. Half an inch more, Scaramanga, and you would have had the honour of removing from the world one of its greatest pests. As it is—"

Silva shrugged his shoulders. The Spanish blood within him was well on the surface.

"As it is," he continued, in a nonchalant drawl, "he lives still. Perhaps it is as well. It will be amusing to see how this man, Ferrers Locke, can bear himself when looking death straight in the eyes. By all accounts, he is a cool customer."

"We know him to be cool," purred the Japanese. "He should give us sport!"

Such a wave of relief passed through Jack at the knowledge that Locke still lived that the youngster's brain was almost dazed for the minute. But now it was as though icy fingers were again entwined round his heart!

For it was clear enough that these human fiends, true to the reputation of the Wolves, were decided upon Locke's death; and with Kyushu to have a word, what manner of death lay before the wizard detective?

Locke's uncanny cleverness had been the means of his own undoing! But

for the detective's strange skill in tracking down these men all the way from the football ground at White Hart Lane to the estuary of this Essex river, he would have been well and safe! But now—

Between them, Kyushu and Scaramanga and the fourth man transferred the unconscious detective to the larger yacht—the River Ghost, as it was named.

It was no easy matter to get loose from the Marian; but Scaramanga proved himself a skilled man at the handling of a boat, and at last the River Ghost was free. With her sails filled, the larger yacht went slipping out into deep water. The ill-fated Marian was swallowed in the mist, drifting, uncontrolled, away down the dark estuary, sails flapping and filling as she twisted on her loose rudder. As she vanished finally, Silva laughed softly and went below.

Locke had been carried down into the fair-sized cabin already, and Jack had been led down, too. The youngster's hands were lashed behind him. But he had fooled the man who roughly tied his hands; after that night at Lone Manor, when Locke had been able to free himself from his bonds, the detective had shown Jack the method whereby the trick was worked. By holding his wrists crossed in a certain way, unless the cord were uncommonly well tied, the youngster knew that when the time came he could slip his hands free.

He had very little hope that he would be able to benefit by the use of the ruse to-night; but it was good to know that he was not so helpless as he appeared to his captors.

And in the cabin Jack came face to face with Tom Travers!

The Larkham City footballer looked white and ill. His eyes were burning brightly, though the ghost of a smile flickered across his face to greet Jack. His hands, too, were lashed.

Locke had been laid on a locker against one side of the cabin. Jack was flung into one corner beside Tom Travers. Silva closed the cabin door and moved across to Locke's side.

Scaramanga and Kyushu were in the

cabin with him, leaving the fourth man, who seemed to be a less important member of the gang, at the helm of the yacht.

Even as Silva stooped over the detective, Locke's eyes flickered open.

"He's come round," laughed Silva. "Good!" said Scaramanga, and rubbed his hands.

The little Japanese nodded and grinned.

Jack's eyes met Tom's. Though they spoke no word, each could read in the other's eyes the bitter hopelessness of heart within.

Locke stared round a little dazedly. But almost instantly, though his hand went to his head, he seemed to realise the situation. He met Silva's mocking glance with a steady gaze.

"Welcome," smiled Silva, "to the River Ghost, Mr. Ferrers Locke!"

Ferrers Locke did not answer. He glanced across with an expressionless face to the corner where Jack and Tom Travers were seated with their backs to the cabin wall. His keen eyes ran round the cabin; instinct was asserting itself, and the detective was even now following his habit of observing every little thing around him. His searching gaze passed from Silva to Scaramanga, then from the Greek to Kyushu. Suddenly he smiled.

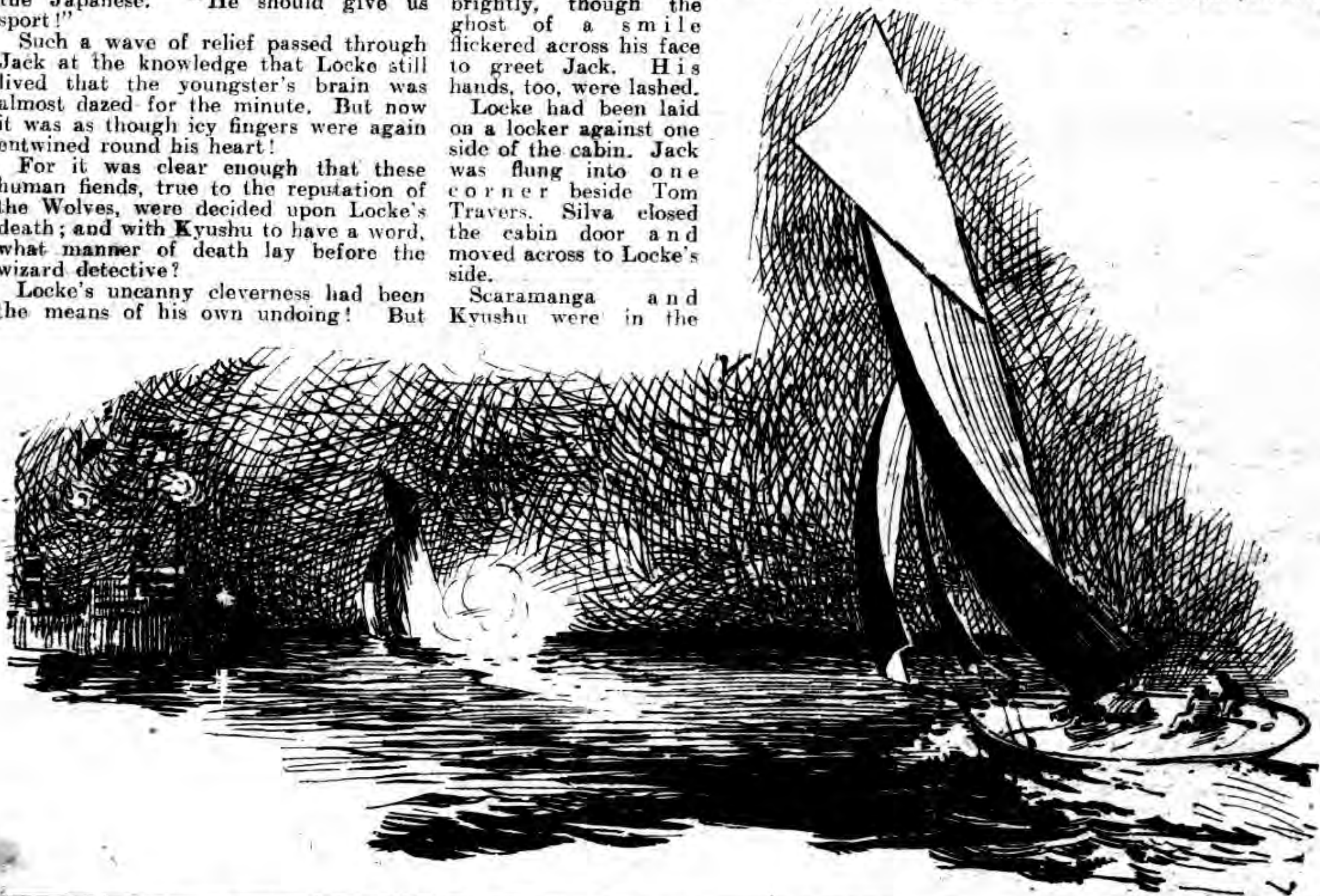
"It would almost seem, Mr. Silva," said Locke easily, "as though for the moment the situation is under your control!"

The amazing coolness of the man took even Silva, himself a master of the art, aback for an instant. There was a grudging admiration in the man's eyes as he bowed mockingly.

"You realise that, Mr. Locke?"

He leaned back against the table, and lit a cigarette.

"But let me assure you that you have



A sharp crack came cutting across the water, and from the deck of the yacht ahead could be seen a spurt of flame. "Keep your head down, young 'un," said Ferrers Locke. "They'll be potting at us again!" (See page 24.)

only yourself to thank for that fact," he went on, in his soft, drawling voice. "You have one very bad habit, Mr. Locke—the habit of minding other people's business for them! Believe me, it is a most deplorable habit!"

"Minding other people's business—eh?" Locke smiled ironically. "You consider the rescue of my friend, Mr. Travers, not to be my business?"

Silva shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps that was natural," he answered. "But if, in the first case, you had not interfered with the Wolves, there would have been no occasion for us to kidnap your friend, you see. That little coup of ours, by the way, should have warned you that the Wolves are far too clever for you, and that you should not have attempted to follow us. I fear there is a reckless streak, as well as an inquisitive streak, in your nature, Mr. Ferrers Locke."

"Possibly," said Locke laconically. "Yes, I admit that the way you kidnapped my friend under the watching eyes of thousands was a stroke of real genius. I trust you were successful in

round the lamp. "Let me tell you. It is a most interesting story!"

"It is the amassed jewels, is this treasure, of a number of Russian Grand Dukes who had to flee from Russia at the time of the Bolshevik revolution. They joined forces, but were pursued from the land of their birth by emissaries of the revolutionaries."

"So they decided to separate, for safety's sake, and hide in different odd corners of Europe and America for a few years. Each took with him a few valuables for his immediate needs, but the vast majority were lumped together and hidden, so the Wolves believe, in England. You will ask why these men did not entrust their treasures to a bank, say to the Bank of England? The answer is that they did not know—they were no lawyers—how they would stand, in that case, with the English Government. You see, Britain had recognised the Bolshevik Government by that time, and the Bolshevik Government had declared the property of these Grand Dukes forfeit. So they feared that an English bank might be compelled by law

got to hear of this ring and its secret. I am speaking of the Wolves!"

"So I realised," put in Locke dryly. "Their name is well deserved."

"It was in South America that Mr. Guelph was given the ring to guard for his Russian friends," drawled Silva. "Out there we nearly got him, but he slipped through our fingers, to our annoyance, and escaped to England. It was not immediately that we got upon his trail, but the Wolves are never beaten, and in the end we tracked him down to Lone Manor. I fancy you know the rest."

"Perfectly," murmured Ferrers Locke.

"Our only regret at the moment," continued Silva casually, "is that we do not quite understand as yet in what way this strange ring can tell us the secret of these hidden jewels. It has puzzled us. But we shall find that out very soon now, of course, with it in our possession at last. Mr. Travers here, by wearing the ring on a string round his neck, even during an important football match, hoped to keep it safe from us. But, as I say, the Wolves never fail."

"We had intended, by the way, to leave him somewhere by the roadside to-night after we had taken the ring from him. But it occurred to my friend, Mr. Kyushu, that he would be of use as a hostage, had you still interfered with us, Mr. Locke. It had not occurred to us for a moment at that time that we should have the excellent luck of—er—being able to entertain you yourself to-night."

"Your story of this treasure is very interesting," drawled Locke coolly. "But I am surprised at receiving these confidences. They should prove most useful!"

Silva smiled his silkiest smile. He blew a thick, coiling smoke-ring, and watched it float to the cabin ceiling before replying. When he spoke his voice was very soft.

"I think not, Mr. Ferrers Locke. You see, there will be, I fear, no opportunity for you to use this knowledge. All three of you are going overboard within the hour!"

Out of the Fog!

JACK DRAKE choked back a cry of horror. The youngster heard the swift, hissing intake of breath between Tom Travers' tightly clenched teeth. But Ferrers Locke did not betray by so much as the flicker of an eyelid any emotion he may have felt. Scaramanga laughed harshly.

"You have been a nuisance in the past, Locke," he sneered. "Not a danger—simply a nuisance to the Wolves! But that is all in the past. In the future we shall be rid of you."

From Kyushu, the Japanese, came an evil, purring chuckle. The slit-eyed little yellow man was smiling a bland smile.

"Quite rid of you, my charming sir," he droned in his excellent English. "And, too, of the charming young men!" He glanced for a moment with his inscrutable black eyes at Jack and Tom. "Quite rid!" he repeated, in a dreadful gloating sing-song, and turned towards the cabin door. Softly he opened it. "Quite rid!" he whispered again, flashing his horrible complacent smile upon Ferrers Locke.

The door closed noiselessly behind him. Kyushu was gone.



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gaining your ends? But I know you were. The ring of the green spider left its mark upon the snow."

Silva nodded, and drew from his breast-pocket the ring itself. He slipped it on his finger, and turned it in the light of the cabin lamp.

The great emerald set in the spider's back gleamed brightly in the yellow light, as did the gold setting, so strangely shaped. Both the Greek and the Japanese had their eyes riveted upon the ring with a greedy, gloating light.

"A pretty little toy," murmured Silva. "Still, it is not for itself that I desired it. It is for the secret it contains. But possibly you know? The secret, my dear Locke, of a very vast fortune indeed!"

"I know," said Locke casually.

He was sitting up on the locker now, his hands in his side-pockets. There had been no attempt to bind him. But, unarmed as he was, and with his face deathly white from the wound he had received, there was little enough chance of his giving his captors trouble.

"But I dare say you do not know what this treasure is?" went on Silva, watching the smoke from his cigarette curl

to hand these treasures to the Russian Government upon demand.

"Well, there was always the possibility that some, or even all, of these few Russian gentlemen might die, or be caught and dragged back to Russia for trial on some charge or other. It was obviously necessary that some records should be taken of the hiding-place of their treasures. This was done—this ring, in fact, holds the secret of that hiding-place."

Silva took the ring from his finger, tossed it into the air, and caught it.

"But the ring, too, had to be safe from the Bolsheviks, or otherwise the treasure might be located. So it was entrusted to a certain Englishman by these Russians—a man who had helped and befriended them, a man they knew they could trust. A gentleman, in fact, named Adam Guelph!"

Jack Drake heard a sharp breath from Travers at the mention of his grandfather.

"But, unfortunately for Mr. Guelph," went on Silva softly, "a little band of most excellent fellows, with a world-wide reputation for taking what they want,

Silva took from his pocket a snub-nosed automatic with a careless air. "Better tie him up, Scaramanga."

Locke made no attempt at resistance; he knew only too well that resistance was utterly useless, with that menacing weapon in Silva's hand.

For a moment it seemed to Jack that the time had come for him to cast off the cords lashing his wrists, and spring at Silva. He was on the point of beginning to slip his hands free, when he sank back with an inaudible groan of bitter hopelessness. He had realised how utterly futile such an attempt would be. Silva would shoot him down like a dog in a moment, and then he would be useless to Ferrers Locke for all time.

He watched eagerly as the Greek took a length of stout cord and lashed the detective's wrists. If Scaramanga left it at that, Jack knew, Locke would be able to free himself at will.

But Scaramanga was leaving nothing to chance. To the youngster's bitter chagrin, the Greek, after tying Locke's wrists behind his back, lashed the detective's arms about the elbow, drawing the cords cruelly tight. With the remaining length of cord he pinioned Locke's arms to his sides, winding it round and round his body, knotting it securely.

"There!" muttered the Greek. "That's well done, Silva! It needs well doing with a slippery customer like Ferrers Locke!"

The cabin floor was at a steep angle. The River Ghost was well out in the estuary now, and the mist-laden wind from the sea was blowing strongly. Jack could hear the water bubbling past as the yacht went driving through the night.

A little later, Silva went on deck, leaving Scaramanga to guard the prisoners.

Seated at the farther side of the cabin table with an automatic in his hand, Scaramanga watched the three captives like a lynx. Despite their bonds, the Greek seemed to fear that they might yet escape beneath his very eyes. Despite his taunts, Scaramanga had a very wholesome respect for Ferrers Locke.

The curtain over the porthole behind Scaramanga's head was only partly drawn. Jack could see the streaming mist pressed white and ghostly against the glass. The wailing sirens of ships in the fairway came to the youngster's ear, indescribably mournful.

Jack Drake shuddered.

Scaramanga saw the movement, and laughed.

"You shake?" he muttered. "You shudder? You may well shudder, my friend! The river is waiting for you! Think of it, and shudder again! It is very cold, the river, to-night. The chill will strike through to your bones as you sink down, down, down through the darkness to the mud below! You hear her, the river, calling to you? Hark!"

There was a dreadful smile upon the man's face as he raised a hand and turned his head, as though to listen.

They heard the wash of the waves hissing past, and Scaramanga laughed again.

The door opened, and Silva came in.

"The time is ripe, Scaramanga," he smiled, his silky voice icy cold.

Kyushu entered after him, and crossed to Jack Drake.

"Come!" he purred.

Jack felt the yellow man's talon-like fingers on his arm, and a wave of repugnance and horror seized him. But he felt that he could not resist. In Kyushu's slanting eyes was a strange, compelling, hypnotic power. The

youngster rose to his feet quietly, and Kyushu led him from the cabin and up on deck.

It was bitterly cold, with the clammy mist swirling past his face. The River Ghost was slipping through the gloom over the dark bosom of the estuary, far from either shore. Though he strained his eyes, Jack could see scarcely a few yards from the yacht's sides.

Travers was led roughly to his side by Scaramanga. The Greek disappeared below again, and a little later he and Silva appeared, carrying Ferrers Locke between them. Locke's ankles had been lashed together.

The man at the helm turned to Silva. "I've taken soundings again," he called. "Five fathoms."

Silva nodded.

"We are well out?"

"That we are! An' the sooner we get this job done the better I shall like it, with this fog," growled the man. "I want to get in, quick!"

"We shall not be long now," laughed Scaramanga. "Where are the weights?"

Almost dully Jack watched as the Greek began to tie a heavy block of lead to Ferrers Locke's ankles. The detective's face was white and drawn, with the wound on his temple showing an ugly red patch. But his bearing was splendid. He might have been a marble figure for all the emotion he showed.

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Locke," said

gripped Locke's shoulders, forcing him to the edge of the yacht's deck. Again the wailing siren came out of the fog.

"In with him!" growled Silva. "We'll make sure of him this time!"

As he spoke Silva struck the detective a savage dig in the face with his clenched fist. A hoarse cry escaped Tom Travers as he witnessed that cowardly blow.

"You cur!" gasped the footballer, struggling furiously with his bonds. "Oh, if I were free!"

Silva laughed fiendishly.

"You'll be free enough soon," he snapped, "likewise Locke's meddling puppy of an assistant! Mr. Locke, take your last view of this world."

The great detective's eyes blazed in such a manner that Silva shrank back from him, bound though the detective was. Then the Spanish-English villain turned savagely on Scaramanga.

"In with him, I said!" he snapped. "Don't wait, you fool!"

With a quick jerk Scaramanga sent the helpless figure of Ferrers Locke hurtling off the deck. There was a



Seated at the cabin table with an automatic in his hand, Scaramanga watched the three captives like a lynx. (See this page.)

Silva coolly. "As you realise, you are to be first. We must make very sure of you! It was with great regret that—"

The words snapped off.

Jack Drake had suddenly sprung to life. With a choking, despairing cry, the youngster had slipped the cords from his wrists, and was springing for Silva with blazing eyes.

The man reeled back with a startled exclamation. But in a moment a lithe figure had slipped forward. Kyushu, the Japanese, leapt at Jack like a cat. The desperate youngster felt himself seized, and cried out as a stabbing pain contorted his whole frame. Kyushu's judo had saved Silva!

Jack fell to the deck, the Japanese on top of him, purring like a cat. Silva laughed, though a little shakily.

"How in blazes did the young cub get free?" he muttered. "Well, he shall go next! Hold him, Kyushu!"

The scream of a ship's siren came to them through the fog, muffled and weird. Silva glanced over his shoulder, peering into the mist, his face suddenly anxious.

"That sounded near," he said abruptly.

"The fog plays tricks with these sounds," said Scaramanga.

The Greek stepped forward, and

splash and Locke vanished beneath the water. From Tom Travers broke a passionate cry, and, bound though he was, he flung himself at Scaramanga. With a scream, the Greek tried to leap aside, but Travers' shoulder caught him, and he reeled, shouting, over the edge of the deck. There was a second splash as the Greek struck the water.

Again the wailing siren, shrill and insistent, sounded suddenly loud and near. There was a cry of fear and consternation from Silva. He flung out a pointing hand, and his face was abruptly grey.

And out of the fog, cutting through it like a knife, towering high above the River Ghost as it bore down upon her, less than a dozen yards away, came the mighty cutwater of a great steamer, groping its way through the gloom. It was on them in a moment.

High above their heads shrieked the steam-siren, like a messenger of doom.

(What fate is in store for the villainous Wolves aboard the River Ghost? And what is to happen to Drake and Tom Travers, now that Ferrers Locke has been thrown overboard? These questions are answered in next week's fine instalment. Don't miss it!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 933.

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

CHRISTMAS CAROLLING!

WHEN the snow lay on the ground— Those words from one of our popular Christmas Carols (if, indeed, any are popular) will, by the look of things, be appropriate this year. There's a sharp nip in the air even while I am writing this Chat that has given a wonderful art shade of blue to my nasal organ. One of my subs very gallantly said that the colour suited me. I don't know whether he's looking for a thick ear or a Christmas present! But to return to the carol. Several Magnetites have written me announcing their intention of "Carol Singing" at Christmas. Well. Note the pause. I'm travelling back over a few years to the time—the only time—I warbled Christmas carols for the benefit of "other" people. Unconsciously my hand has strayed to the tip of my nose—just where the wondrous art shade of blue has descended upon it. And the only time I ever went carol singing a beautiful brick descended on it—from a second-storey window! Some people are unappreciative; they don't like music, unless, of course, I have misinterpreted the action of the donor of that brick. He might have been generous, really; the brick might have been his particular method of showing appreciation. But to the story. There were ten of us—ten last-lunged young fellows who thought they could sing. The cause in which we risked our lives, as it turned out afterwards, was a noble one—I was collecting for the local hospital. I'll tell you what we collected in a moment.

AND ITS CONSEQUENCES!

We set out when indeed the snow was thick upon the ground. No, no; it wasn't summer-time! We had arranged to sing the carols in parts. I think I was alto. One of my pals very facetiously remarked that I was "Alto"gether rotten. He dropped out of that party, if I remember rightly. The first place we came to was the house of the village butcher. We struck up "Noel." My memory is none too good, but I really think we rendered that famous old carol top-hole. But somehow or other the butcher didn't like it. From inside the house came the sounds of an angry bellow, then a window was flung up. "Clear off!" yelled the butcher, shaking a leg-of-mutton fist at us. "I'll give you 'Noel!' There's no peace with that confounded row going on!" The window slammed down, and the butcher faded from view. But we were stickers. We kept on until we had finished the carol. We had just reached the last note, and, with youthful disregard of measure, were sustaining that note as long as we could, when the window opened again. The butcher's head popped out. But what is more to the point, a couple of old boots flew out. They landed on two of my friends, who commenced to carol a composition of their own. We decided to move on after that, especially as the butcher told us that he'd got lots more boots left, and accordingly went along to the next house. "Noel" was laid aside for the nonce, and "Good King Wenceslaus" was our next vocal effort. But the village undertaker wasn't a bit interested in King Wenceslaus; perhaps it was because that famous king had not lived long enough to be buried by him. To cut it short, all we collected from the undertaker was a glue-pot, a string of angry abuse—and a bucket of cold

water. But we were stickers, as I have said before. We moved on. Our next carol seemed to please the greengrocer's dog, for he chimed in, and the din was terrific. Windows went up all around us, angry heads looked out, and angry voices bade us "Shut up!" We weren't obedient to those commands. We were stickers! "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night" was our next item, and, incidentally, our last. We had set out to collect coppers for the hospital, but we seemed to collect everything in the wide world except coppers. And when that brick landed on the tip of my nose I decided that it was time to fly. We all did, for that matter, and vowed, before we departed for the night, never to sing carols abroad—not even for such a good cause as the hospital.

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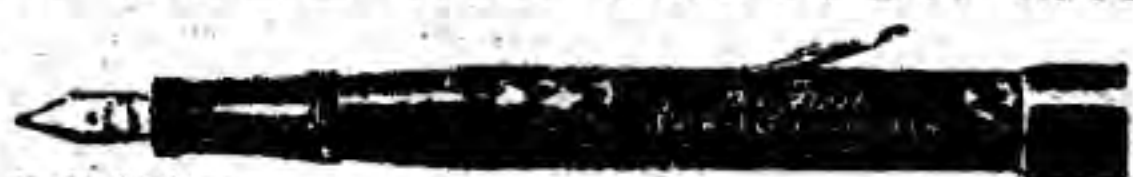
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