



My Tour of Greyfriars!



A Short Complete Narrative
Describing a Visit to Grey-
friars School. By

THE first thing that struck me on my arrival at the famous Kentish school was a bunch of keys.

I deftly caught the keys—with my nose, and then, blinking in the direction of the lodge, I beheld a grumpy-looking old man, with a suspicious-looking bottle protruding from his pocket.

Before I could get a word in edgeways, he started letting off steam.



“Wot I says is this ’ere—you buzz off! We don’t want your sort ’anging around ’ere!”

“Excuse me,” I said, with such politeness as I could muster, “are you the Headmaster?”

“’Eadmater be blowed! I’m the keeper of this ’ere

gate! Which my name is William Gosling, as ever was!”

“Oh!”

The gate-porter wagged a reproving finger at me.

“You get out!” he said. “’Awkers ain’t allowed ’ere!”

“My good man——”

“I’ll ‘good man’ yer! Shunt!”

Your Editor

“I refuse to shunt! I have every right——”

“Take yerself off!”

I smiled at the indignant Gosling.

“You are unaware of my identity,” I said. “How do you know I am not the Prince of Wales?”

Gosling gave a gasp. He looked me carefully up and down, and an awe-struck expression came over his crusty countenance.

“Sir!” he exclaimed. “You—you don’t mean to say——”

“How do you know,” I repeated sternly, “that I am not the Prince of Wales, paying an unofficial visit to Greyfriars School?”

“My heye!” gasped Gosling. And he subjected me to a further scrutiny.

“Come to think of it, you’re jest like I deftly caught the keys—the pictures of the Prince wot appear in ‘The Daily Reflection.’ Oh, ’elp! Wot



'ave I done? I've a-pelted Royalty with a bunch o' keys!"

"I regard you as a very vulgar and ill-mannered person!" I said severely. "Pray let me pass!"

The gate-porter—who was quite convinced by this time that I was no other than the Prince of Wales, fairly grovelled at my feet.

"Yessir! Certingly, sir! Wot I says is this 'ere—I was jest 'aving a little joke when I threw them keys——"

"Get up, fellow!" I said, inserting my boot into Gosling's ribs. "Direct me at once to the Headmaster's study!"

Like a man in a dream, Gosling obeyed.

"You—you won't tell the 'Ead 'ow I greeted yer?" he pleaded.

"No," I said curtly.

"Thank you kindly, sir! You're one of the best!"

And then H.R.H. the Editor passed on to the Head's study.

I had never before met Dr. Locke. I found him to be a benevolent, kindly old gentleman—just as my friend and colleague Frank Richards has so often described him.

"You have come to look over the school, my dear sir?" he said.

"With your permission, Dr. Locke."

"That is readily granted. Unfortunately, the boys are at lessons, and I cannot obtain a guide to accompany you. I would do so myself, but I am extremely busy——"

"I quite understand, Dr. Locke. I shall have no difficulty in finding my way about."

So saying, I thanked the Head for his permission to view the school, and went out into the Close.

Everything was just as I

The gate-porter fairly grovelled at my feet



had pictured it in my mind's eye.

There was the celebrated fountain, in which rascals like Billy Bunter were ducked daily. There was the tempting little tuckshop under the elms—also patronised by Bunter, whether he was in funds or not.

An air of peacefulness hung over the place. Everybody was at lessons.

I decided to run the risk of causing annoyance to Mr. Quelch, and stepped along to the Remove Form-room.

The door was slightly ajar; and as I paused, in the act of entering, the following dialogue floated out to me.

"You were talking, Bunter!"

"Nunno, sir!"

"I distinctly saw your lips frame an articulation!"

"You—you must be imagining these things, sir! You're suffering from mental delusions, and——"

"Bunter!"

"Beyond asking Skinner the time, and telling him that Shakespeare was a silly ass, I didn't say a single word, sir!"

Laughter from the class. An explosive snort from Mr. Quelch.

"Stand out Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir——"

"Stand out at once!"

A shuffling of footsteps; and then—

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Mum-mum-my hand, sir?"

"Yes, immediately!"

At this painful juncture I made my presence known.

"Ahem!"

Mr. Quelch spun round at the sound of my cough. His gimlet eyes seemed to pierce me through and through.

"Who—who are you?" he demanded.

There was a buzz when I explained my identity.



I found Dr. Locke to be a benevolent, kindly old gentleman

"My hat! It's the Editor of the Companion Papers!"

"By Jove!"

Mr. Quelch shook hands with a smile.

"I am very pleased to meet you, sir," he said. "Might I ask what is the object of your visit? Do you intend to take over from Mr. Frank Richards the writing of the Greyfriars stories?"

I replied in the negative.

"I don't profess to be able to handle school-boy situations so skilfully as Frank Richards" I said.

Billy Bunter, seeing that Mr. Quelch was engrossed in conversation, slipped back into his seat. It was neatly done, and Mr. Quelch did not notice the movement—or, at any rate, he pretended not to.

"It is a half-holiday this afternoon," said the Form-master, "and you will see more of these boys anon. But do not let them worry you with too many questions."

I smiled at the class, and caught Bob Cherry's eye.

"They are not likely to give me any trouble, Mr. Quelch," I said.

And then, nodding to the class in general, and to Mr. Quelch in particular, I made my way to the Fifth Form-room.

When I entered, I discovered Horace Coker, the most backward pupil in the class, endeavouring to recite a portion of English poetry.

Unfortunately, Coker's brain was muddled—as usual—and he had hopelessly mixed up "The Wreck of the Hesperus" with "Mary's Little Lamb."

He declaimed the following novel passage:

"It was the schooner Hesperus,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter
That lamb was sure to go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

An uncontrollable ripple of merriment burst from the class.

Mr. Prout, with a face like a beetroot, and

with his eyes nearly bulging out of his head, sat at the desk and surveyed Coker more in anger than in sorrow—very much more, in fact.

"Coker, you are a dolt! You are an imbecile, sir! You are fast driving me to distraction! I——"

At this point Mr. Prout caught sight of me, and he at once demanded to know my identity, as Mr. Quelch had done.

I explained that I was Editor of the Holiday Annual and the companion papers.

Mr. Prout beamed.

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance, my dear sir!" he said. "You have dropped in for a little chat?"

"Yes," I said, beginning to wish that I hadn't.

"That's splendid!" said Mr. Prout. "You have doubtless heard of me before?"

"Only through the stories of Greyfriars School that I publish weekly," I said.

"Have you not heard my name mentioned as an intrepid hunter of big game?"

I shook my head.

"Indeed! You cannot be a very well-read man, in spite of the fact that you are an Editor! I have built up a great reputation as a hunter

of squirrels, rats, and other big game. When I was in the Rocky Mountains in eighteen eighty-eight——"

"Oh, help!"

"Did you speak?" exclaimed Mr. Prout sharply.

"I merely made a noise in my throat. Pray proceed, Mr. Prout!"

"When I was in the Rockies—— Blundell! You were laughing!"

"No, sir," said Blundell. "Certainly not, sir!"

"But you were!"

"No, sir," repeated Blundell. "I was merely making a grimace, sir."

"And why, pray?"

"I—I can't help feeling sorry for the poor rats and squirrels, sir!"



"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was loud laughter, as the Court reporters say.

Mr. Prout did not laugh. He frowned ponderously.

"You will take a hundred lines, Blundell!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The master of the Fifth turned to me.

"My class is inclined to get out of hand. I sometimes wish there was no law against the free and unrestrained use of firearms in this country. I should not shoot to kill, of course; but I should certainly wing some of the biggest offenders——"

There was renewed laughter. The idea of Mr. Prout making free use of his Winchester repeater was grimly humorous.

"It so happens," continued Mr. Prout, "that I have brought my rifle into the Form-room with me——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The Fifth shivered in nervous apprehension. The Winchester repeater was standing behind the master's desk, and had therefore remained unnoticed.

Mr. Prout took up the weapon, caressing it lovingly.

"At the risk of neglecting my duties for a few moments, my dear sir, I will now proceed to demonstrate my sureness of aim."

I experienced a cold sensation in the region of my spine.

"Sir!" I protested. "It is not seemly——"

Ignoring me, Mr. Prout strode to the window, the lower part of which he pushed up.

"You see that drooping twig on the withered branch of yonder elm?" he said.

I nodded.

"Very well. I will sever it from the branch with a single shot."

Mr. Prout's eyes were gleaming with an unholy fascination. He worshipped his rifle. Once it was in his grasp, he was oblivious of everything save the desire to shoot.

I caught the would-be marksman by the arm.

"Are you aware, sir," I said, "that the Head is crossing the Close at this moment?"

"Don't be absurd, my dear sir! Dr. Locke will not go within a dozen yards of that withered branch! Now, watch me!"

So saying, Mr. Prout rested his repeater on the window-sill. It was supposed to be levelled at the withered branch of the elm.

To my startled mind, however, it seemed to be pointing direct at the Head!

The Fifth were all agog with excitement now. They craned forward eagerly to witness the developments.

Mr. Prout bent forward, rested his flabby cheek against the butt of the rifle, and then pressed the trigger.

There was an empty click.

"Bless my soul!" muttered the marksman. "I have overlooked one trifling detail. The rifle is not loaded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The class fairly rocked with laughter.

Mr. Prout frowned, and hurriedly made good the omission.

By the time he levelled the repeater again, the Head had made substantial progress, and he seemed to me to be in the line of fire.

With an exclamation of horror, I snatched at Mr. Prout's arm. But I was too late!

Crack! Then a sharp report, followed by an acrobatic performance on the part of the Head, who seemed to be giving a faithful imitation of the latest variety of Jazz.

The bullet had gone clean through the top of the worthy gentleman's mortar-board.

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Prout. "Whatever can be the matter with Dr. Locke?"

"You—you nearly added him to your casualty list of rats and squirrels!" I exclaimed. "Step back at once, before the Head spots you!"



"It so happens," continued Mr. Prout, "that I have brought my rifle into the Form-room with me——"



But again my warning was too late.

The Head, with anger in his face, turned towards the window of the Fifth Form-room. He caught sight of Mr. Prout's florid face, and of the Winchester repeater, and he fairly went off the deep end.

"Mr. Prout! What does this mean? Have you suddenly taken leave of your senses?"

"I—I——" stuttered Mr. Prout.

"You had the temerity, sir—the outrageous audacity—to discharge a loaded firearm at me!" rumbled the Head. "I have repeatedly told you to keep that dangerous weapon under control. This is the last straw! I am afraid I have no alternative, Mr. Prout, but to request you to tender your resignation——"

I saw that things were taking an ugly turn for poor Mr. Prout—who, after all, is quite harmless; so I spoke up for him.

"I am to blame for this regrettable occurrence, Dr. Locke. I contracted a wager with Mr. Prout to the effect that he would not succeed in hitting a certain twig on a branch of one of the elms. I have won my wager, but it has been at the expense of a serious risk to yourself. This incident is entirely the result of my own folly.

"Really," said Dr. Locke, "I should have thought that a man of your years would not have stooped to suggest such a feat of horseplay——"

"I beg to express my profuse apologies, sir."

"In that case," said the Head, who had simmered down by this time, "I will say no more about the matter."

With which he stooped to recover his mortar-board, and continued his interrupted stroll.



"We mean to have a great celebration in your honour," said Bunter. "I'm in charge of the catering arrangements"

Mr. Prout turned to me with an expression of genuine gratitude on his countenance.

"Thank you," he said, in a low tone. "You have, by your intervention, saved me from an untoward fate."

"Don't mention it," I replied. "I should advise you, Mr. Prout, to keep your Winchester repeater under lock and key in future. You may, as you remark, have done great things in the Rocky Mountains in eighteen eighty-eight, but since that far-off period your hand has lost much of its cunning."

So saying, I turned on my heel, and quitted the Form-room.



There was a sharp report, followed by an acrobatic performance on the part of the Head!

II

AFTER wandering through a maze of corridors, and seeing all that there was to be seen, I heard a noise as of a menagerie of wild beasts being suddenly let loose.

"What on earth——" I began.

And then I remembered that lessons were over for the day, and that it was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Happy voices boomed along the corridors.

As I stood listening my thoughts turning to my own schooldays, I became aware of a squeaky voice at my elbow.

"I say, Mr. Editor!"

Turning, I confronted Billy Bunter.

"I'm so glad you took it into your head to come to Greyfriars," said the fat junior. "We mean to have a great celebration in your honour after the footer match this afternoon."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. It's going to be a gorgeous bust-up—positively gorgeous! I'm in charge of the catering arrangements."

"Really!"

"Of course," continued Billy Bunter eagerly, "you won't object to giving me a hand, Mr. Editor?"

"In what way?"

"Ahem! In providing the funds for the purchase of the grub."

I stared at the fat junior in astonishment.

"There will be rather a lot to buy," he went on. "A dozen veal-and-ham pies, a couple of cold chickens, a score of doughnuts, and a couple of hundred mixed pastries, to say nothing of the ginger-pop. The whole lot will run into about a fiver. I'll have it in currency notes, please."

Billy Bunter blinked at me expectantly. He blinked in vain.

"You young scoundrel!" I exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"You will have to think of something better than that before you persuade me to part with five pounds."

"Oh, really, you know, I was only going to borrow it for a few hours. I'm expecting a postal-order by the afternoon post——"

"A postal-order for five pounds?" I said sarcastically.

"Ahem! I—I mean a money-order."

"You can't pull the wool over my eyes, Bunter. I've read of your little games in my papers, and I've got you weighed up."

"Look here——"

"Nothing doing!" I said curtly.

And I passed out into the Close, leaving Billy Bunter staring after me in speechless wrath.

The Close seemed to be deserted. I marvelled at this, because only a few moments before the various classes had been dismissed.

"Where is everybody?" I murmured.

It was not until I reached the open space behind the chapel that the riddle was solved.

On this familiar fighting-ground, practically the whole of the Remove had assembled.

"What's going on?" I inquired.

Harry Wharton explained.

"It's a scrap," he said. "Bolsover major

called Squiff a foolish ass, and Squiff called Bolsover an asinine fool. This is the result. Bolsover challenged Squiff to a fight behind the chapel."

"Will you referee, Mr. Editor?" urged Bob Cherry.

I hesitated.

"I'm not sure that I ought to aid and abet——"

"Yes, do referee!" chorused a dozen Removites.

So I gave in, and advanced into the human circle, in the centre of which Bolsover major and Squiff faced each other.

I could not help drawing a contrast between the pair. Bolsover major was big and beefy and burly, and his lower jaw stuck out prominently.

Squiff, on the other hand, was fairly slim, and it looked as if Bolsover would make mincemeat of him. Still, it isn't always size and weight that counts in boxing.

"Are you ready, you two?" I asked, taking out my watch.

Squiff and Bolsover nodded.

"Very well, then. Time!"

A perfect babel of voices arose.

"Go it, Bolsover!"

"Mop him up, Squiff!"

"On the ball!"

Squiff had a bad time in the first round. I experienced a strong temptation to call "Time!" before the three minutes had expired but I fought it down, and meanwhile Squiff took plenty of punishment.

Bolsover's sledgehammer fists did great execution. Squiff's defence was faulty, and when Bolsover broke through his guard—which he did pretty frequently—it was as much as the Australian junior could do to keep his feet. But he showed heaps of pluck, and there was still plenty of fight left in him when the round ended.

Bolsover major walked to his corner, muttering savagely.

"I'll prove that I'm no asinine fool! My hat! Fancy being cheeked by a whipper-snapper like that! I'll knock him into the middle of next week!"

And I must confess that I considered Bolsover quite capable of carrying out his threat.

Squiff had bellows to mend, and I didn't envy his chances. I don't think the other fellows did, either. The prevailing impression seemed to be that Bolsover major would carry the day.

"Buck up, Squiff!" said Bob Cherry. "Keep pegging away!"

Squiff nodded grimly, and in the second round he showed to better advantage.

However, it was not difficult to see that Bolsover major held the upper hand; and I began to feel rather sorry for Squiff. He was fighting gamely and pluckily; but he seemed to be no match for the bully of the Remove.

My sympathy for Squiff grew as the fight advanced.

I felt like taking Bolsover by the scruff of the neck, and making him frog's-march from the scene of the conflict. He must have known Squiff was not up to his weight, yet he continued to force the fighting.

In the fourth round things got altogether too bad.

Squiff recoiled from a smashing right-hander, and before he had recovered from the effects of it he got another—straight between the eyes. He measured his length on the ground, and the partisans of Bolsover gave a shout.

"Hurrah!"

"Bolsover wins!"

I had begun to count; but by the time I reached five, Squiff was on his feet again, fighting like a tiger. Even so, I knew that this was his dying effort. He could not last another round against his powerful adversary.

I felt that I would do anything for Squiff at this juncture—anything to save him from the disgrace of defeat. Of course, it would not be disgrace really; but Bolsover's cronies would think it so.

At the end of the round, whilst Bob Cherry was nursing the damaged Squiff, my opportunity came. Billy Bunter had rolled on the scene. I beckoned to the fat junior, and drew him aside.

"You're going to help me buy the grub, after all?" he said eagerly.

"No," I said. "But would you like to earn five bob all for yourself?"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

"I'm on!" he said. "What do you want me to do?"

"I understand you're a ventriloquist?"

"That's so."

"Well, I want you to turn your ventriloquial tap on, for Bolsover major's benefit, soon after the next round starts. I want you to cause the fight to come to an untimely end."

So saying, I slipped a couple of half-crowns into Bunter's fat palm.

"That's soon done," he said. "Leave it to me."

The fifth round began. Bolsover was still the attacking force; Squiff was pale and shaken, holding on by sheer force of will.

Bolsover's lower jaw protruded more prominently than ever. He knew that he had his opponent at his mercy, and he meant to polish him off with all speed.

"Now's your chance, Bolsover!" chortled Skinner.

The faces of Harry Wharton and Co. were gloomy. Squiff was their chum, and they did not want to see him go under. But it was becoming more and more apparent that he was at the end of his tether.

And then, just as Bolsover was preparing to launch his final attack, a voice, sudden, sharp, and incisive, exclaimed:

"Bolsover! How dare you bully a boy smaller than yourself?"

It was the voice—or it seemed to be the voice—of Mr. Quelch.

There was a startled gasp from Bolsover, and from the majority of the spectators.

"I—I——" faltered the bully of the Remove.

"Do you hear me, Bolsover! Answer my question!"

Bolsover blinked round dazedly.

"Where—where are you, sir?"

"Never mind about my exact locality at the moment. Suffice it to say that I have



It was not difficult to see that Bolsover major held the upper hand!

seen and heard all that has passed. You are nothing more or less than a young hooligan, Bolsover! Such scenes of violence are not to be tolerated. You will follow me at once to my study!"

And there was a rustle, as of a master's gown. Bolsover pulled on his coat like a fellow in a dream.

He couldn't understand it at all. And he had no notion that Billy Bunter had been responsible for the voice, because the fat junior took care to keep well in the background.

The rest of the fellows looked rather startled, too.

"Where on earth was Quelchy?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Give it up," said Harry Wharton. "But that was his voice, right enough. It's a wonder he didn't drop on us as well."

"Hard luck, Bolsover, old chap!" said Skinner. "Just as you were about to deliver the knock-out, too!"

Bolsover glanced towards the panting Squiff.

"There's still time!" he muttered.

"I should advise you to go along to Quelchy's study," said Harry Wharton. "Quelchy doesn't like to be kept waiting."

So Bolsover, with a black scowl, slunk away; and Squiff was spared the knock-out if nothing else.

What happened in Mr. Quelch's study I cannot say. I expect Bolsover major was idiot enough to betray to his Form-master the fact that he had been fighting; in which case, he probably received a licking.

But I have no sympathy to waste upon Percy Bolsover. I agree with my friend, Frank Richards, that the bully of the Remove is emphatically not a nice person to know!

III.

HALF-AN-HOUR later, Squiff had removed as many traces of the combat as possible, and was in football garb



"I'm Coker, you know! Everybody knows Coker!"

"There is a match this afternoon, is there not?" I asked.

"Yes," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "We're playing the Fifth."

"Then you're asking for trouble! Why, the Fifth must be far above your weight!"

"They certainly are," chuckled Bob.

"But we shall romp home with the giddy spoils, right enough."

"You are very confident."

"I've got reason to be. Coker's playing for the Fifth. And when Coker plays, it's always as good as a couple of goals to us in advance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is Coker such an ass as all that?" I asked incredulously.

"You'll soon see!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Would you like to referee the match, Mr. Editor?"

"I seem to be refereeing everything to-day," I said. "Still, if there's going to be a first-class comedian on the football field, I don't mind in the least."

At that moment, Coker himself strolled up, in a football jersey wrought in divers colours, and with an expression of pleasant anticipation on his rather rugged face.

"Jolly pleased to meet you, Mr. Editor!" he said. "I didn't have a chance to introduce myself to you in the Form-room. I'm Coker, you know. Everybody knows Coker!"

"Sole surviving son of the late Baron Furnace!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker shook an admonishing forefinger at the chums of the Remove.

"Dry up!" he growled. "You'll be laughing on the other side of your chivvies soon, when the Fifth have mopped up the ground with you!"

"Rats!"

"Of course," said Coker, turning to me, "we don't usually have matches with the fags, but it's necessary to give them an object-lesson now and then."

"An object-lesson on scoring goals for the wrong side?" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When is this hand-to-hand warfare to commence?" I inquired.

"Now!" said Squiff promptly. "This way!"

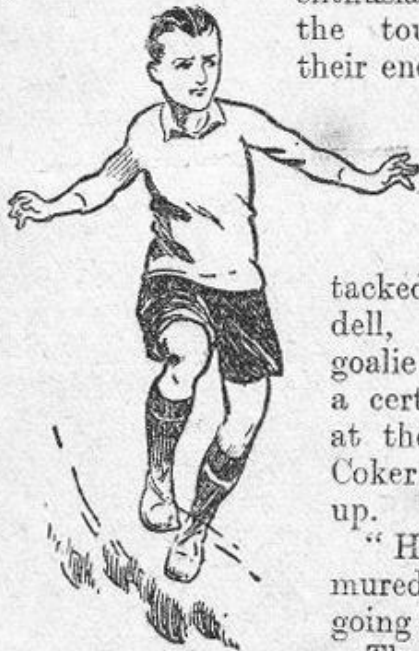
And we all adjourned to the football ground.

When I blew the whistle for the teams to line up, I was struck by the disparity between the rival forces.

The Remove looked sturdy and vigorous enough; but they were as pigmies by comparison with the team captained by Blundell.

"I'm afraid you've bitten off more than you can chew," I remarked to Wharton. But the latter merely smiled. He seemed to have his own ideas about the possibility of beating the Fifth.

The ball was soon set in motion, and an enthusiastic crowd round the touchline bellowed their encouragement.



"Come along, Fifth!"

"Go it, Remove!"

The Fifth attacked furiously. Blundell, with only the goalie to beat, looked a certain scorer; but at the crucial moment Coker came charging up.

"Hallo!" I murmured. "Things are going to happen now!"

They did!

Coker performed two feats of valour: (a) he charged Blundell off the ball; and (b) He took a flying kick, and ballooned the ball high over the crossbar. Blundell regained his equilibrium, and glared at Coker.

"You dummy!" he spluttered. "You Champion idiot!"

It was Coker's turn to glare.

"I don't understand you, George Blundell!" he said loftily. "Fancy slanging a fellow who jolly nearly scored!"

"What!" hooted Blundell. "Do you imagine the goal is situated somewhere in the clouds?"

"I know this much," said Coker. "The ball would have been in that net if only you had given me a free hand."

"I'll give you a boot, in a minute!" growled Blundell.

"Look here——"

"Br-r-r!"

The game was resumed, and once again the Fifth attacked. Again, however, a brilliant movement was utterly spoilt by the well-meaning but clumsy Horace, who got in the way just as the ball was whizzing at top speed towards the yawning net.

Very little had been seen of the Remove forwards, so far. They were too helplessly doubled up with laughter to do much in the way of attacking.

However, they pulled themselves together, and Vernon-Smith raced away with the ball. When within shooting distance, he swung the leather across to Harry Wharton, who scored with a fine first-time effort.

"Goal!"

"First blood to the Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

After that early reverse, everything went wrong—for the Fifth. They struggled hard to get on terms, but Coker generally managed to nullify their efforts. To see Coker playing, one would imagine that he had been bribed by Harry Wharton & Co. to assist the Remove. Every performance of his was a glaring example of misdirected energy.

Vernon-Smith raced away with the ball—and then swung the leather across to Harry Wharton

At half-time the Remove lead by a solitary goal.



Blundell of the Fifth advanced towards me with a harassed expression on his face.

"If we were to put Coker out of the way, Mr. Editor," he said, "they'd bring in a verdict of justifiable homicide, wouldn't they?"

"I shouldn't try it on, if I were you," I replied, laughing.

"Coker's the limit and the last straw rolled into one!"

"I quite agree. I suggest you communicate with the authorities at Hanwell."

"That wouldn't be much use. He'd make the present inmates pottier than ever!"

Blundell moved off. But he did not go near Coker. He could not trust himself in the vicinity of the great Horace. Had he not kept a firm restraint upon himself, I am convinced that the ground would have been strewn with little pieces of Coker.

Early in the second half, the Fifth managed to score.

Coker was engaged in tying up his bootlace at the time, so he could not butt in.

"That's better!" murmured Blundell. "I only hope that Coker's bootlace continues to come undone every five minutes or so!"

But the hope did not materialise. Coker was very wide-awake after that. He followed on the heels of his Form-fellows like Mary's little lamb.

The scores remained level until five minutes from time; and then Harry Wharton & Co. applied strong pressure.

The Fifth Form backs set up a sound defence. They did not mean the Remove to get through. They reflected that a drawn game would be far better than a defeat.

In the last minute of all, Frank Nugent shot hard for goal.

The goalie got his fist to the ball, and it came whizzing out again, to alight at the foot of Coker.

And what did Coker do? Did he immediately boot it to the other end of the

field? Not a bit of it! He booted it, certainly, but in the wrong direction.

The ball travelled into the net, and the Remove had won, thanks to Coker!

I was so convulsed with merriment that it was with difficulty that I sounded the final whistle.

After that, there was no holding Blundell and his companions in misfortune.

They made a bee-line for Coker, and promptly proceeded to roll him in the mud.

"Gug-gug-gug!" gurgled the hapless Horace. "Give over, you rotters!"

The Fifth-formers seemed in no hurry to desist. They rolled Coker in the mud with such thoroughness that after a time it was difficult to tell which was mud and which was Coker!

"Poor old Coker!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He's always putting his foot in it, and now he's putting his whole carcass in it—or, rather, the others are doing it for him! What price the human mud-pie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Weird and guttural sounds came from Coker; but we did not linger to listen to them all. I was informed that a bumper spread had been prepared in No. 1 Study, and the victorious Remove eleven escorted me to that famous apartment.

What a glorious repast it was! And how the faces of the feasters glowed in the ruddy light!

Although I am no longer a boy, I still possess a boy's appetite, and I did full justice to the good things that were set before me.

Mid-way through the celebration, Billy Bunter loomed on the near horizon.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Say on, old barrel!" remarked Johnny Bull. "But you'll oblige us by finishing your remarks in the passage!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

It was not a polite request. It was a howl.



And what did Coker do? Did he immediately kick the ball to the other end of the field? Not a bit of it! He kicked the ball in the wrong direction——

"Look here, I want a whack——"

"Anything to oblige!" said Bob Cherry, picking up a cricket-stump.

"Where will you have it, my fat porpoise?"

"Really, Cherry——" began Billy Bunter.

"Come on," said Bob Cherry grimly.

"Name a spot. I can start at once, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked round the crowded study.

Quite apart from the menace of Bob Cherry's stump, he saw that Frank Nugent held a cushion ready to throw, and that Johnny Bull poised a good-sized loaf in his capable hand.

The fat junior backed towards the doorway in alarm. There was such a doleful expression on his face that I could not help feeling sorry for him.

"Oh, let him stay!" I said.

"All serene," said Bob Cherry. "But only on condition that he has his grub either on the mat or in the coal-scuttle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

So Billy Bunter stayed; and his infinite capacity for stowing away the maximum amount of tuck in the minimum amount of time was never so ably demonstrated as at that feed.

The window-sill had to serve both as a table and a chair for the fat junior; but Bunter didn't seem to mind in the least. He would cheerfully have consumed his portion on the carpet.

It was a merry meal. Tales were told; experiences were exchanged; and jests cracked and spurted like the logs on the study fire.

At length, I consulted my watch.

"Time I was on the move," I remarked.

There was a chorus of exostulation.

"Don't go yet, Mr. Editor!"

"Needs must when the devil drives," I said.

"Who's the

devil,?" inquired Bob Cherry with a merry laugh.

"The printers of the companion papers!" I said, with a chuckle. "They want me to get ahead with next week's numbers of the companion papers."

"Well, if you must go, you must," said Harry Wharton. "Far be it from us to keep you from the path of duty. But before you go, would you mind signing your name in my autograph-book?"

"And mine?"

"Likewise mine?"

"To say nothing of mine?"

Nearly every fellow in the study seemed to possess an autograph-book. They were all set before me, and I duly inscribed my signature in all of them.

Some books were big, some small, some fat and some thin; but I scribbled away, and one by one the pile melted away.

Even Billy Bunter produced a grubby-looking scrap-book, in which he requested me to sign my name. He also pressed me to give my address—probably with the object of soliciting a loan at some future period. Needless to say there was nothing doing, as I have heard of William George Bunter's promises to pay back his debts when that famous postal-order turns up. There are too many side-whiskers on that postal-order!

The signatures were finished at last; and I bade farewell to Harry Wharton & Co. in the dusky Close.

And thus happily ended my tour of Greyfriars.

THE END



—And the ball travelled into the net, and the Remove had won, thanks to Coker!



And thus happily ended my tour of Greyfriars School!