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Your Editor.

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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER

The football fever has caught on at Greyfriars and Horace Coker is swept along in its embrace. The burly Fifth-Former offers a silver Challenge Cup to the eleven that emerges victorious from an inter-form contest based on the knock-out principle. Matches are arranged by ballot, and some of the results of the "draw" are ludicrous in the extreme. Line up, chaps, and follow this keen, healthy tussle on the playing-fields of Greyfriars and get ready to acclaim the victors.



The Coker Challenge Cup!

—BY—

Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Merry Meeting!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Coker's at it again!"

Thus, Bob Cherry.

Bob and his chums had just come in from footer practice, and they were looking flushed and cheery. Their jerseys and shorts were plastered with mud—indeed, they seemed to have brought the football-ground into the building with them! At any rate, the floor of the Hall was not improved by their muddy boots.

On passing through the Hall Bob Cherry had caught sight of an announcement posted on the notice-board. He could scarcely help catching sight of it, for the huge, sprawling letters seemed almost to leap at him.

Only one person at Greyfriars could have written a notice in that style in big, bold letters, with blots and smudges here and there. That person was Coker of the Fifth.

"What's Coker got to say, I wonder?" grunted Harry Wharton.

"Let us detectfully discover, my worthy chums," said Hurree Singh, as he followed Bob Cherry to the notice-board.

What Coker had to say was very brief. It could well have been written on a half-sheet of notepaper. But Coker's huge writing had covered an entire sheet of drawing-paper, which practically monopolised the board.

"NOTISS!

There will be a gathering of the clans in the Fifth Form Kommon-room to-nite at 8 o'clock. A special meeting has been konvened by me.

(Sined) HORACE COKER."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at that notice, and grinned.

"Coker seems to be awfully sweet on the letter 'k,'" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Wonder he doesn't spell his own name K-O-K-E-R."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Like Coker's cheek, to call a meeting," growled Johnny Bull. "Anybody

would think he was the Head, the way he carries on."

"My dear chap, the Head isn't nearly such a pompous personage as Coker!" said Frank Nugent, with a laugh. "In fact, I've heard Coker say that the Head isn't fit to lace up his footer-boots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why doesn't the silly chump explain what the meeting's to be about?" said Harry Wharton. "Then we should know whether it was worth while attending it or not."

"Some new stunt of Coker's, I suppose," said Bob Cherry. "I expect he's going to ask all the fellows to petition the Head to make him captain of Greyfriars."

"Some hopes!" grinned Wharton. "The question is, shall we roll up to this merry meeting, or give it a miss?"

"Better go and hear what Coker's got to jaw about," said Johnny Bull. "If it's something idiotic we can give him a jolly good bumping."

"Yes, rather!"

At this juncture the notice-board was besieged by a fresh crowd of fellows. The Famous Five made way for them and went along to Study No. 1 for tea.

Whatever the object of Coker's meeting might be, Coker himself was very secretive on the subject. Not a single clue leaked out as to the nature of the meeting. The Greyfriars fellows were in the dark. There was some mystery here, they reflected; and a mystery always excited their curiosity. The majority of them decided to turn up at the meeting.

Long before the appointed time the Fifth Form Common-room was packed to overflowing.

It was a spacious room, but it had not been constructed to hold all Greyfriars. Consequently, the fellows were wedged together as tightly as sardines in a tin.

Every Form was represented at the meeting. Wingate and Faulkner and Gwynne of the Sixth had strolled along to see what it was all about. The Fifth—Coker's own Form—was present to a man. The Shell and the Upper Fourth were there in full muster; likewise the Remove and the three fag Forms—the Third, Second, and First.

There was quite a babel of voices, and shrill demands for "elbow room" could be heard on all sides.

The great Coker was there, of course. He was perched on a table at the end of the room, waiting for the hubbub to die down.

Potter and Greene, Coker's cronies and studymates, were present, to give Coker their moral—and, if necessary, physical—support.

Gradually the din subsided. Coker cleared his throat, and gazed at the sea of faces in front of him.

"Gentlemen—" he began.

"Pile in, Coker!"

"On the ball!"

Coker glared at the interrupters.

"Gentlemen, we are here to-day—"

"And gone to-morrow!" said Skinner of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

If looks could have killed, Coker's frown would have caused Skinner to expire on the spot.

"We are here to-day to discuss a most important matter," exclaimed Coker, his



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deep voice booming through the Common-room. "I won't detain you—"

"As the bobby said when he got the wrong burglar by the ear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put that fag out!" hooted Coker. "I'm fed up with these interruptions!"

No movement was made to eject the humorous Bob Cherry, so Coker gave a snort of annoyance and resumed his speech.

"What I have to say, gentlemen, is very brief, but it will come as a welcome surprise to you."

"Hurrah!"

"You've all heard of my silver cup—the Coker Cup—"

"Yes, rather!"

"It has already been fought for and won, in fierce and frenzied football fray," said Coker, making use of "apt alliteration's artful aid." "And now I'm going to put the Cup up again for competition."

"Oh, good!"

"Bravo, Coker!"

"How perfectly ripping!"

A buzz of excitement ran through the Common-room. Everybody remembered the Coker Cup and the stern struggle for its possession between the rival Forms at Greyfriars. And the news that the cup was to be again put up for competition sent a thrill through the great army of footballers who were present.

Coker's face brightened up when he saw the impression his announcement had made.

For all his clumsiness and absurd conceit, Coker was a good-hearted fellow, and he liked to be the instrument whereby he might bring happiness to his schoolfellows. They were happy now, for there was a glorious prospect of many stirring tussles to come.

"There's no need for me to say much more, gentlemen," said Coker. "The draw for the first round will be held right away. I'm going to ask two of the masters to conduct it, so that everything will be fair and above-board."

So saying, Coker jumped down from the table. He happened to land on Billy Bunter's toes, and a wild wail of anguish floated through the Common-room.

"Yaroooooh!"

Coker glared at the fat junior, who was dancing up and down like a fat golliwog on a spring.

"Why didn't you stand clear?" growled Coker.

"Ow-ow-ow! Beast! You've broken all my toes and fractured my instep!"

"So you won't be able to keep instep in future, Bunt!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving Bunter to nurse his injuries, Coker strode out of the Common-room.

He was back in a few moments, with Mr. Prout and Mr. Lascelles.

The entry of the two masters was greeted with a rousing cheer.

"Now, gentlemen," said Coker, addressing the assembly, "the name of each Form will be written down on a slip of paper, and placed in a hat. Mr. Prout has kindly consented to do this. Mr. Lascelles will then draw the slips of paper in pairs."

There was a hush of expectancy while the preparations for the draw were being made.

The Remove, in particular, were keenly interested. Which Form would they have to meet in the first round of the competition? Supposing they were drawn against the Sixth—the First

Eleven? The thought was almost terrifying.

The Remove had a dashing and skilful side, which could hold its own against any team of the same age and weight. But if they should be called upon to face the Sixth—well, there could be only one possible ending to such a one-sided encounter. A team of Davids could not hope to beat a team of Goliaths.

The excitement was at fever-heat when Mr. Lascelles drew the first pair of slips out of the hat.

"First Form versus Third Form!" he announced.

"A battle between two fag tribes!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That doesn't concern us very much. The Third ought to pull it off all right."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Now for the next pair!" he muttered.

Mr. Lascelles drew two fresh slips.

"Fifth Form versus Shell!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, good!" said Coker of the Fifth, rubbing his hands together in great satisfaction. "We shall lick the Shell all serene."

But the general opinion was that it would be a hard and close game—the sort of match to which any result was possible.

The Fifth had a good team, but it was marred by the inclusion of Horace Coker. Blundell, the skipper, would cheerfully have dropped Coker from the eleven, and there would have been no broken hearts in consequence. But as Coker was the fellow who was giving the cup, Blundell couldn't very well refuse him a place in the team.

The Shell had a sound and workman-like side, and they were bound to give the Fifth a good run for their money.

Mr. Lascelles' next announcement threw the Common-room into an uproar, and peal upon peal of laughter rang out.

The only fellows who didn't laugh were Dicky Nugent & Co., of the Second Form, for they were actually drawn against the high-and-mighty men of the Sixth!

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gurgled Tom Brown of the Remove. "Second versus Sixth! Wingate and his merry men will pile up about thirty goals. It will be more like a cricket-match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a terrible bombshell for the fags of the Second. But Dicky Nugent was a plucky little fellow, and he had no intention of "crying off."

There could be only one possible outcome of such an unequal contest. The Sixth would win in hollow fashion. But Dicky Nugent & Co. were undaunted and they meant to die fighting, so to speak.

Mr. Lascelles drew the final pair of slips out of the hat.

"Remove versus Upper Fourth!" he announced.

Harry Wharton & Co. felt like hugging each other. They had met the Upper Fourth in friendly matches many a time and oft, and they had generally had the better of the argument. They did not doubt that they would once again be able to account for Temple & Co., though the latter were a bigger and heavier team.

The draw was now complete, and the assembly dispersed.

All the first round matches were to be played on Saturday afternoon, and Greyfriars was fairly simmering with excitement.

It was the burning ambition of every footer captain to lead his Form to

victory—to conquer all opposition, and proudly claim that much-coveted trophy, the Coker Cup!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Remove's Recruit!

FOOTER practice was the order of the day at Greyfriars.

The only people who didn't bother to practice were the Sixth-Formers.

"If we were to play blindfolded we should wipe up the ground with those Second Form fags!" was Wingate's confident assertion.

"Faith, an' we should beat them if we only fielded a team of half a dozen men!" said Pat Gwynne.

"The whole thing's too ridiculous for words!" said Faulkner. "We can't very well turn out against a team of dwarfs. It will look fearfully undignified."

Wingate nodded thoughtfully.

"Young Nugent happens to be fagging for me just now," he said. "He'll be along in a minute, and when he turns up I'll ask him to scratch, so that we can have a walk-over into the second round."

"Good idea, be jabbers!" said Gwynne.

The conversation took place in Wingate's study. And the three seniors impatiently awaited the arrival of Dicky Nugent.

Presently there was a tap on the door, and Dicky trotted in. He was grinning cheerfully.

"You want me to go down to the village for you, Wingate?" he asked.

"Yes; but before you go, kid, I should like a word with you."

"Pile in!" said Dicky gaily.

"It's about the footer—the draw for the first round of the Coker Cup," said Wingate. "As you know, your fags' team has been drawn against us. Of course, you realise that you don't stand an earthly?"

"Quite!"

"Well, we won't be hard on you," said Wingate. "We won't make you look ridiculous by piling up dozens of goals against you. We'll give you an opportunity to scratch the fixture."

"Thank you for nothing!" said Dicky Nugent.

"What!"

"We shouldn't dream of crying off, Wingate. We've quite made up our minds to play."

The Sixth-Formers looked quite startled.

"Why, you silly young idiot," said Faulkner, "you'll be licked to a frazzle!"

"Very likely," admitted Dicky Nugent. "Still, footer's a funny game. You can never really tell what's going to happen. Some of your fellows might get crooked, fr'instance!"

Wingate smiled grimly.

"Do you think we should allow ourselves to be bowled over by a parcel of fags?" he said. "Why, we shall simply walk round you! If anybody gets hurt during the game, it won't be us. Look here, kid, do be reasonable. We've given you an opportunity of scratching—"

"Very kind of you," said Dicky Nugent, "but we mean to play!"

He spoke cheerfully enough, but the seniors saw that Dicky was fully determined, and that no amount of coaxing or entreaty would get him to budge from his attitude.

Wingate shrugged his shoulders.

"The Rebel of the Remove!"—next Monday's long complete—

"Very well. Your blood be upon your own head!" he said. "After we've licked you by about thirty goals to nil, you'll wish that you'd wriggled out of it while you had the chance!"

Dicky Nugent merely smiled; and then he trotted off to the village to do some shopping for his fag-master.

It was a bright, sunny afternoon in late November.

On the wide expanse of playing-fields at Greyfriars the thudding of the football could be heard. With the exception of the Sixth, every Form was at practice on its own particular playing-pitch.

Harry Wharton & Co. were there, indulging in shots at goal. Bulstrode and Hazeldene guarded the net between them, and the rest of the fellows bombarded them with shots. Every now and again there was a shout of triumph as the goalies were beaten, and the big round sphere crashed into the net.

Harry Wharton was in good spirits.

Harry Wharton held out his hand to the stranger, who shook it cordially.

"Is your nephew a new boy, sir?" asked Harry.

"No, Wharton. Not exactly that. He has come to Greyfriars for a month. I will explain the circumstances. My nephew belongs to Grandcourt, a big public school of which you have doubtless heard. A few days ago the school was partially destroyed by fire, and all the boys were sent away for a month, whilst the work of reconstruction was carried out."

"Oh!"

"Carfax has no father or mother, and I am his lawful guardian," went on Mr. Prout. "As a rule, he spends his holidays with another of his uncles, but on this occasion he has come to me. Now I do not believe in encouraging boys in idleness, and there is no reason why my nephew should waste his time while he is here. So I have arranged that he shall take lessons with the Remove, and

needed to be taken under anybody's wing. There was nothing shy or sensitive about him. He grinned at Harry Wharton in friendly fashion; and he grinned at the rest of the Remove footballers also.

Mr. Prout glanced at his nephew.

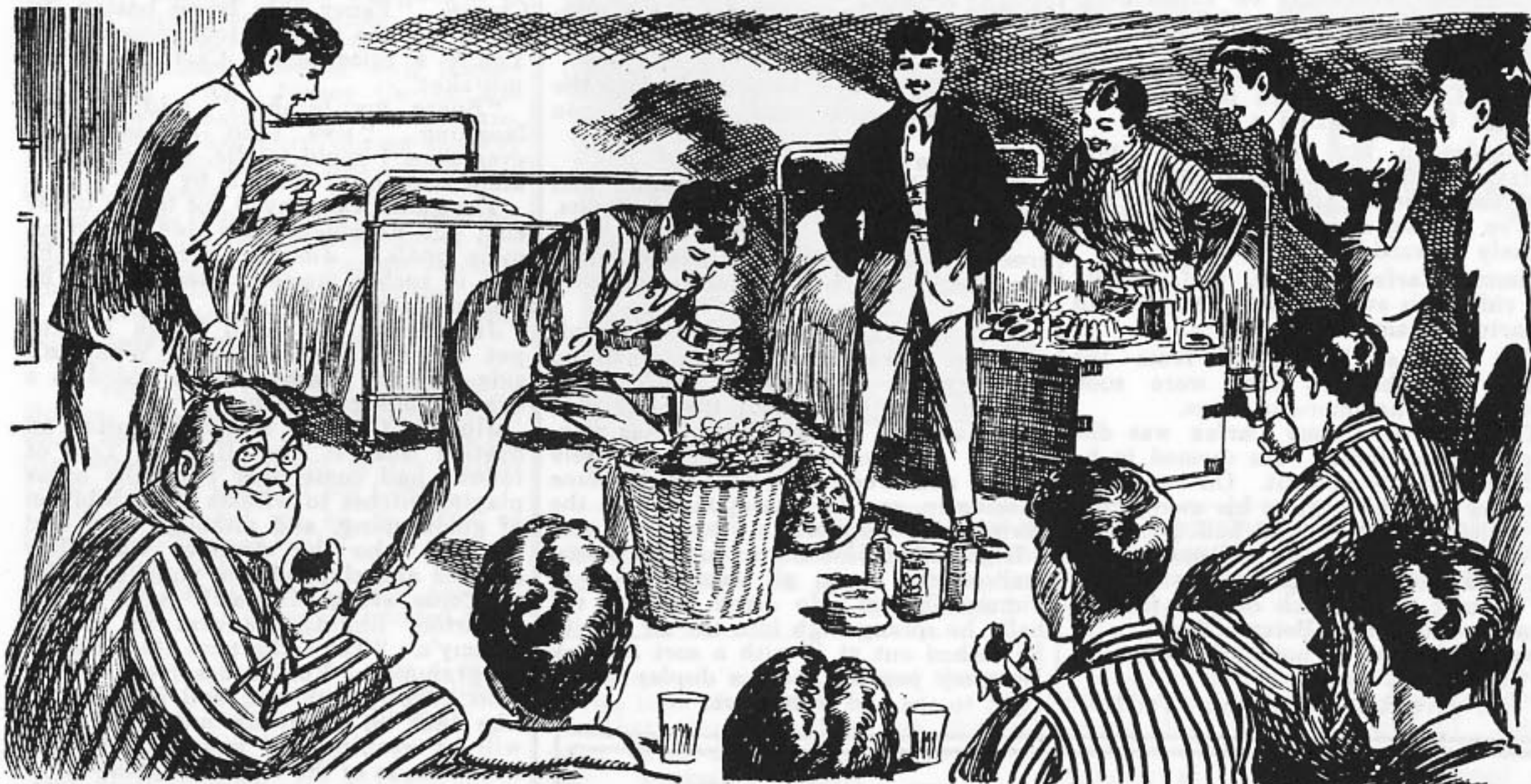
"I will now leave you, James, with the boys who will be your school-fellows during the next month," he said.

"Very good, uncle."

Mr. Prout swept away with rustling gown. He felt that he had left his nephew in good hands.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Prout was rather glad to dodge the responsibility of having to look after Jimmy Carfax for a month. Mr. Prout did not hit it off very well with young boys of a mischievous turn of mind—as Jimmy undoubtedly was.

It was a relief to the master of the Fifth to know that Jimmy Carfax would spend the whole of his time with the Remove. This was far better, he



The hamper was dumped on the floor and candles were lighted. The juniors turned out to take part in the midnight banquet. Billy Bunter entered into the proceedings with rare gusto. As usual, he was the first to start. "This is prime!" he grunted between mouthfuls of jam tart. "Go it, old fat tulip!" grinned Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 3.)

He was well satisfied with the work of his men, and he anticipated a victory over the Upper Fourth, in the first round of the Coker Cup competition.

Presently Bob Cherry paused in the act of shooting. He glanced towards the gate which gave entrance to Little Side.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's the merry stranger?" exclaimed Bob.

Two persons were coming through the gateway. One was Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth; the other was a good-looking youth of about fourteen, with a wealth of dark, curly hair which his cap could not altogether conceal.

The boy was a complete stranger to Greyfriars. His handsome, cheery face attracted the juniors immensely; but it was not a familiar face.

The football stopped automatically, and all eyes were turned towards Mr. Prout and the newcomer.

The master of the Fifth beckoned to Harry Wharton, and the captain of the Remove came up at the double.

"I wish to introduce my nephew, James Carfax," said Mr. Prout.

be regarded as a temporary member of that Form."

Carfax made a wry face at this. Evidently he had been looking forward to a month's holiday at Greyfriars. He had wanted to emulate the lilies of the field, and neither toil nor spin. But Mr. Prout decreed otherwise. He had just interviewed the Head, and it had been arranged that Carfax should become a temporary member of the Remove Form. He was to share Study No. 1 with Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. He was to have all his meals, with the exception of tea, in Hall; he was to sleep in the Remove dormitory; and—this was what Shakespeare would have called the most unkindest cut of all—Carfax was to take his lessons in the Remove Form-room, under the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch.

"I will leave my nephew in your care, Wharton," said Mr. Prout. "I feel sure you will willingly take him under your wing, and make him feel at home."

"With pleasure, sir," said Harry. Jimmy Carfax did not look as if he

reflected, than letting the boy run wild.

Jimmy lost no time in making friends with the Removites. They warmed to him at once. He was one of those fellows with a lovable personality—not unlike Bob Cherry. His sunny smile, and his happy, healthy outlook on life swiftly endeared him to Harry Wharton & Co. They felt that Jimmy Carfax was a fellow after their own heart.

"Do you play footer, Carfax?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Of course!"

"P'raps you'd like a game now?" suggested Harry Wharton. "You've brought your footer-togs with you, I take it?"

"Yes."

"Well, run along and change, and in the meantime we'll pick up sides."

Jimmy Carfax sprinted away towards the building. Wharton, as he stared after him, was struck by his athletic bearing.

"Carfax might be a useful recruit for our eleven," he said. "Anyway, we'll see how he shapes."

—Greyfriars story—right in the net!

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith picked sides, and the captain of the Remove made Jimmy Carfax his first choice. It was rather a risky thing to do, for the newcomer was an unknown quantity, so far as football was concerned. He might turn out to be a youthful edition of Steve Bloomer; on the other hand he might prove an utter failure.

"I've taken a fancy to Prout's nephew," said Frank Nugent. "In the language of the classics he's a sporty boy."

"I hope he will turn out to be a rod in the esteemed and ludicrous pickle!" said Hurree Singh. "He looks as if he knows how to kickfully shoot, and dodgefully dribble."

"We've a strong team, as it stands," said Wharton. "But if we can make it any stronger, so much the better."

"Yes, rather."

After a brief interval, Jimmy Carfax rejoined the footballers on Little Side. He was wearing the rather striking colours of Grandcourt School—red, white, and blue, with a dash of orange, as Bob Cherry described them. Over his arm Carfax carried a sweater.

"You're on my side, Carfax," said Harry Wharton. "Sling your sweater over the railings; you won't want that. You're playing at inside-right—you look a likely forward."

Jimmy Carfax nodded, and, having got rid of his sweater, he lined up with Wharton's team.

The ball was kicked off from the centre, and the two sides were soon "going it" hammer-and-tongs.

The form of Jimmy Carfax was distinctly disappointing. He seemed to be right out of his element. On two occasions he had the goal at his mercy, but he failed to gather the ball properly, it was an easy matter for one of the backs to chip in and clear.

"I don't think much of that fellow's form," muttered Peter Todd. "I thought they were hot-stuff footballers at Grandcourt, too!"

"Oh, give him a chance, Toddy!"

said Wharton. "He's in strange company. He hasn't got used to all our tricks and stunts yet."

There was a distinct weakness in the forward line of Harry Wharton's team. The weak spot was at inside-right, where Jimmy Carfax operated. The juniors had hoped for great things from Mr. Prout's nephew, and they found it difficult to conceal their disappointment.

At half-time Vernon-Smith's team led by a goal to nothing.

Harry Wharton clapped Jimmy Carfax on the shoulder during the "breather."

"Don't think I'm out to find fault," he said, "but you don't seem to fit in quite in the forward line. What is your usual position?"

"Goal," was the reply.

"My hat! No wonder you didn't shine at inside-right, if that's the case! Why didn't you tell me before that you kept goal?"

"I simply played where you told me to play," said Jimmy Carfax. "A newcomer's got no right to pick and choose."

"Well, you can keep goal for the second half, and we'll see how you shape."

"Thanks!"

Jimmy Carfax donned his sweater, and took up his position between the posts.

The Greyfriars fellows were then treated to an exhibition of goal-keeping, the like of which they had never seen before.

Vernon-Smith and his fellow forwards were in great form, but they had no chance whatever of getting the ball past Carfax. The fellow had the skill of a magician, and his anticipation was wonderful. He seemed to know precisely where and when the ball would come rushing in, and he was upon it with the spring of a panther.

High shots, low shots, cunning shots, and curling shots, all came alike to Jimmy Carfax. He dived low for the ball; he sprang high into the air for it; he rushed out at it with a sort of Jack Dempsey punch; and his display was a sight to see and wonder at.

Bulstrode of the Remove was a good goalkeeper. So was Hazeldenc. But both Bulstrode and Hazel frankly admitted that they had met their master. They were raw novices by comparison with Jimmy Carfax.

"No hope of scoring!" grunted Vernon-Smith at length. "It's like trying to boot the ball through a brick wall. That fellow's a giddy marvel!"

Harry Wharton was fairly beaming.

"We sha'n't need to look far for a goalie on Saturday," he said. "I was puzzled whom to play out of Bulstrode and Hazel, but I reckon that both of them will be willing to stand down now. Jimmy Carfax is our man!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "I say, Carfax, do you keep goal for Grandcourt juniors?"

Jimmy nodded.

"How many goals have you let through this season?"

"Six—and three were penalties."

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Fancy only being beaten six times, and the season's four months old! You're a prize-packet, Carfax, and no mistake!"

"Spare my blushes!" said Jimmy, laughing. "I've been keeping goal ever since I could toddle, so I ought to know something about it by now."

The game was played out to the bitter end, but Vernon-Smith's side scored no more goals. Jimmy Carfax held the fort in such a masterly manner that he was unbeatable.

Just before the finish Frank Nugent put the ball in for Harry Wharton's side, and the practice-match ended in a draw of one goal each.

Jimmy Carfax received quite an ovation when it was all over. Lots of fellows had come over from the other playing-pitches to witness his exhibition of goalkeeping, and although they had no idea who the stranger was, they cheered and clapped him right heartily.

"Come along, Carfax!" said Harry Wharton, linking his arm in one of Jimmy's. "Tea's the next item on the programme. You've deserved well of your country, my son, and if you play like that on Saturday methinks there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in the ranks of the Upper Fourth!"

"The weepfulness and the gnashfulness will be truly terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I don't want to shove in, you know," protested Carfax. "You've already got two goalies—"

"Shurrup!" grinned Bulstrode. "Hazel and I have already decided to make way for you—good of the Form, you know!"

"Oh, if that's the case I shall be delighted to play," said Carfax.

"Done!"

It was a happy company of footballers that trooped up to the school building in the gathering dusk. And not the least happy was Jimmy Carfax, who had started his month at Greyfriars in such a sensational style.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Revelry by Night!

JIMMY CARFAX quickly adapted himself to his new surroundings.

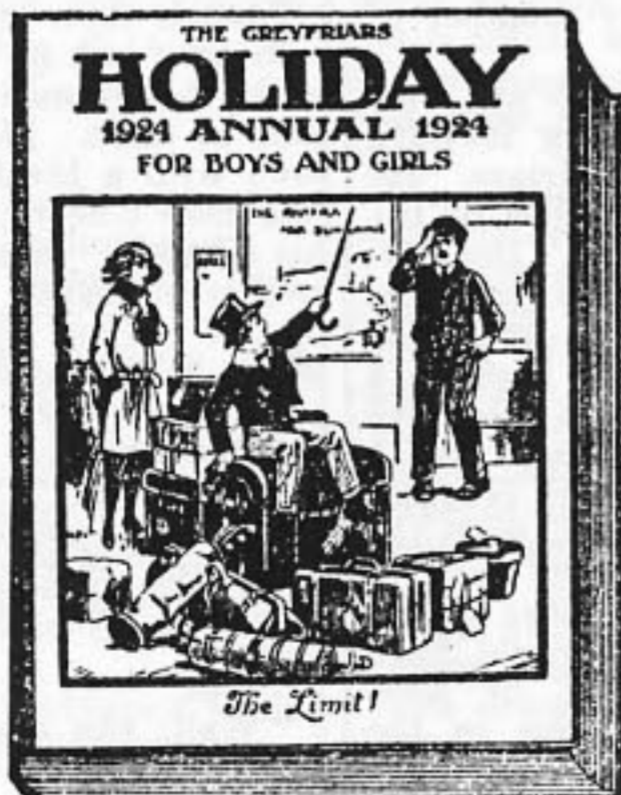
His own school, Grandcourt, was very similar to Greyfriars, and the customs and the routine were much the same.

Mr. Prout's nephew made himself at home from the outset. It had taken

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him about five minutes to settle down, whereas the average newcomer took about five weeks.

It really seemed as if Jimmy Carfax had been at Greyfriars several terms. He picked up his school-fellows' names with surprising quickness, and he fell into their ways and entered into their japes with refreshing zest.

Jimmy's first night at Greyfriars was a very eventful one. To begin with, there was a pillow-fight between the Remove and the Fifth.

The Remove carried the war into the enemy's camp, so to speak, and did great execution with their pillows and bolsters. And Jimmy Carfax proved himself a valuable man in a scrap. He laid about him right lustily with his pillow, and he had the honour of flooring the mighty Coker.

What Mr. Prout would have said had he caught his nephew in the act of pillow-fighting could only be conjectured. But Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout was sound asleep in his own room at the time, and the battle was fought to a finish without interruption.

The Remove retired from the Fifth Form dormitory, covered with honour and glory. And Jimmy Carfax was covered with feathers, into the bargain, for his pillow had burst during the fray and a cloud of feathers had settled over his silk pyjamas.

"'Twas a famous victory!" chortled Bob Cherry, as the juniors trooped into their own dormitory. "Carfax, my boy, you fought like a giddy Trojan! If V.C.'s were awarded for pillow-fights you'd have about half a dozen!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I say, you fellows," piped Billy Bunter, "I don't see why you should make such a fuss of Carfax. It was me that bore all the brunt of the battle. Didn't you see me floor old Coker?"

"No. We must all be as blind as bats!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter wasn't there at all!" growled Johnny Bull. "He's never budged from his bed!"

"Oh, really, Bull—I was a giant in the fray! You'd never have licked the Fifth if it hadn't been for me!"

"Rats!"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"I don't see why you should make a sort of tin god of this fellow Carfax," said Bunter. "Disgusting, I call it, toadying up to a chap just because he happens to be a Form-master's niece—I mean, nephew!"

Whizz!

A slipper sang through the air, and Billy Bunter stopped it with his nose.

"Yaroooooh!" roared the fat junior. And he promptly pulled the bedclothes over his face lest a further consignment of slippers should arrive.

It was Bob Cherry who had thrown the slipper, and Bob had been dead on the mark.

"Say, you chaps," said Jimmy Carfax, "it's a pity to turn in so soon. I propose a midnight feast—if it's possible to get the grub from anywhere. As for the expense, I happen to be in funds, and I'll cheerfully stand the racket."

Billy Bunter's opinion of Carfax changed as if by magic. The fat junior's head popped up from beneath the bedclothes.

"I say, Carfax, you're a real brick!" he said, with enthusiasm. "I take back everything I said about you just now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A midnight feast is the proper caper," said Bob Cherry. "But I don't



Mr. Prout gave a jump when he saw what was happening. He had stepped into the Remove Form-room at the tail-end of the execution, as it were, and could scarcely believe his eyes. His nephew Jimmy was actually being thrashed by Mr. Quelch! (See Chapter 4.)

know how we're going to get the grub at this time of night."

"What about knocking up the old dame down at the bunshop in Friar-dale?" suggested Nugent.

"Too risky," said Bob. "Old Tozer, the bobby, will be on the prowl."

In spite of the risk, Jimmy Carfax volunteered to go. He seemed to be quite indifferent to danger. After all, he had little to fear, for he could not very well be "sacked" from a school to which he did not rightly belong.

Harry Wharton, however, thought of another plan.

"It will save a lot of time and trouble," he said, "if we raid the school tuckshop, and leave enough money to pay for everything we take. Of course it's not quite the thing, I know, but I'll hop round to Mrs. Mimble in the morning and explain matters."

"But how can we get in, when the shutters are up?" asked Johnny Bull.

"There's a way of getting in at the back," replied Wharton. "You leave it to your Uncle Harry."

Jimmy Carfax insisted on accompanying the captain of the Remove to the tuckshop. And they set off together on their risky mission, for risky it certainly was. There might be masters on the prowl, and it happened to be a bright moonlight night.

Everything worked like a charm, how-

ever. Wharton and his companion employed infinite caution, and they managed to reach the tuckshop without being detected. They stole round to a little window at the back, and effected an entrance that way. Wharton had brought his electric torch, and he led the way into the shop.

"This is where we help ourselves!" chuckled Jimmy Carfax. "There's an empty hamper here, behind the counter. We'll cram it with tuck. Pile in!"

They set to work to fill the hamper, a task which was soon completed. Jimmy Carfax left a five-pound note in the till, together with a list of the articles taken and a brief message to Mrs. Mimble explaining what had happened. The five pounds more than covered the cost of the tuck which had been taken.

It was no easy task to convey the loaded hamper to the Remove dormitory; but the adventurous couple managed it without mishap, and great was the rejoicing when they staggered into the dormitory, bearing the heavy hamper between them.

"So you've worked the giddy oracle?" said Squiff.

"Yes!" panted Wharton.

"Hooray!"

"Jolly good of Carfax to stand a feed to the Form!" said Billy Bunter. "I was going to stand treat myself, only—"

Don't forget—only one more set of pictures, boys!

"You've been disappointed about a postal-order," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On the day you stand us a feed, Bunter, the world will come to an end!" said Tom Brown.

"Really, Brown."

And there was a fresh ripple of laughter.

The hamper was dumped on to the floor, and candles were lighted up and down the dormitory. Then the juniors turned out to take part in the midnight banquet. Sheets were converted into tablecloths, and willing hands proceeded to empty the tuck hamper.

It was a royal repast. Jimmy Carfax had shown excellent taste in selecting the supplies. There were cakes and tarts and buns of every description, and there were bottles of ginger-pop and lemonade.

Billy Bunter entered into the proceedings with rare gusto. As usual, he was the first to start and the last to finish.

The members of the Remove eleven ate sparingly. They were due to play a hard match on Saturday, and they meant to keep themselves fighting fit. As Bob Cherry pointed out, a diet of doughnuts and jam-tarts was hardly a suitable preparation for a tussle on the football field.

Although they ate little, however, the footballers thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was a right merry feast, and Jimmy Carfax was the life and soul of the party. His merry jests set the company in a roar; and at times the uproar was so great that it was surprising that no master or prefect appeared on the scene.

When the feast was over, and not a crumb remained to tell the tale, the empty hamper was thrust under Harry Wharton's bed, and the juniors stayed awake for another hour, telling ghost stories.

The Removites told Jimmy Carfax all about the ghost of Greyfriars—the alleged apparition of an old monk who glided through the corridors in the stilly night; and the atmosphere of the Remove dormitory became so "creepy" that the juniors half expected to see the spectre suddenly appear in the doorway.

Then Jimmy Carfax told them about the ghost of Grandcourt—the phantom knight who clanked through the corridors in a suit of mail, and who was supposed to have lived at Grandcourt in the days when it was an Elizabethan manor house.

At last, feeling heavy-eyed and drowsy, the juniors dropped off to sleep. And their last thoughts before closing their eyes were that this was the jolliest night they could ever remember.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Stormy Scene!

BEASTLY bore, having to go in to lessons!" said Jimmy Carfax.

It was the morning after.

The Removites, having lost at least a couple of hours of their beauty sleep, were yawning drowsily as they wended their way to the Remove Form-room.

"Lessons are always a bore," grunted Johnny Bull. "Why don't they abolish them, and have nothing but sport?"

"If they did that," said Mark Linley, with a smile, "I'm afraid we should be all brawn and no brains!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I came here in the hope of having a month's holiday," said Jimmy Carfax. "But Uncle Paul doesn't believe in a

fellow eating the bread of idleness. He says I've got to take lessons with the Remove, and these uncles have got to be obeyed, more's the pity. What's Mr. Quelch like? I haven't had the pleasure of making his acquaintance yet."

"You soon will!" said Bob Cherry, grinning. "Quelch isn't a bad old bird, but he's a stickler for discipline. When old Quelch's on the warpath the slackers cease from slacking, and the weary find no rest."

"Yaas, begad! I can testify to that," said Lord Mauleverer, with a sigh. "Quelch gives a fellow no peace. He's bubblin' over with energy himself, an' he expects his devoted pupils to be the same."

The juniors filed into the Form-room. They were a minute before time, and Mr. Quelch had not yet arrived. But the Remove master was punctual to the very second, as he invariably was. On the first stroke of nine o'clock he swept into the Form-room with rustling gown.

"Good-morning, my boys!" he said briskly.

"Good-morning, sir!" groaned the sleepy Remove.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"You all appear to be very drowsy this morning," he said. "Some of you can scarcely keep your eyes open. How do you account for it?"

"It's the relaxin' climate, sir," ventured Lord Mauleverer.

"Nonsense, Mauleverer! Our climate is very much maligned, but there is really nothing wrong with it."

Billy Bunter rose in his place.

"Well, Bunter?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Ahem! The fact is, sir, we don't get nearly enough sleep," said the fat junior.

"Not enough sleep? Preposterous, Bunter! Nine and a half hours' rest is ample for any healthy lad."

"But we never get it, sir. Bolsover snores like a ship's siren, and keeps us all awake."

"Why, you fat rotter—" began Bolsover fiercely. For the truth of the matter was that Bunter himself was the champion snorer of the Remove.

"Be silent, Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Resume your seat, Bunter. I cannot fathom the reason for this drowsiness on the part of my class, but I shall expect you all to be wide-awake during the lesson."

Mr. Quelch's expectations were not realised.

The juniors were ordered to study their history books, the subject being the Stuart period. Many of them yawned over their books, and after about ten minutes a booming snore echoed through the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch gave a jump. He could scarcely believe his ears.

Snore!

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Remove master. "What boy has had the audacity to fall asleep?"

The culprit was Billy Bunter. Skinner, who sat next to the fat junior, brought Bunter back to earth, so to speak, by inserting the business end of a pin into his calf.

Billy Bunter started up with a wild yell.

"Yaroooop!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Bunter!" he roared. "You were asleep, sir!"

"Nunno!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "I was—I mean I wasn't, sir!"

"What!"

"I was merely closing my eyes, sir,

while I tried to think whether it was Oliver Cromwell or Charles the First who signed the Magna Charta!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a titter from the class, which Mr. Quelch instantly suppressed by producing his cane.

"Stand out, Bunter!" he thundered.

Very reluctantly the fat junior rolled out in front of the class.

"I will endeavour to restore you to a state of wakefulness, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Ow!"

Swish!

"Wow!"

"Now go back to your place!" commanded Mr. Quelch.

And Bunter went, determined not to be "caught napping" again.

There were other fellows who found it difficult to keep awake. Jimmy Carfax was one. Jimmy knew that if he continued to study his history book he would doze off. So he kept his brain active by scribbling poetry. For Jimmy was a bit of a bard, and he liked stringing rhymes together. It was certainly a pleasanter occupation than studying English history.

So far, Jimmy had written one verse:

What's the use of public schools?
What's the use of learning Latin,
And spilling pints of ink in pools
Deep enough to drown a rat in?"

Tom Brown happened to be sitting next to Jimmy Carfax. He glanced over Jimmy's shoulder, and saw what he had written.

"Chuck that, you ass!" he muttered warningly. "Quelch will be down on you like a thousand of bricks!"

Jimmy turned a deaf ear to the warning, and promptly tackled the second verse:

What's the use of learning dates
When our Kings and Queens were wedded?
Or writing down on dusty slates
The date King Charlie was beheaded?"

"Not a bad verse, that," whispered Jimmy Carfax. "Alone I did it!"

"You'll do it once too often, you duffer!" murmured Tom Brown. "I've seen Quelch glance in your direction once or twice. If he finds out what you're doing he won't spare you because you happen to be Prout's nephew."

Mr. Quelch rapped sharply on the desk with his cane.

"There is a great deal of muttering going on," he said. "It must cease instantly!"

Tom Brown despaired of persuading Jimmy Carfax to stop scribbling poetry. Jimmy went merrily ahead with the third verse:

Hope old Quelch won't see this page,
Written during morning lessons;
If he does, he'll roar and rage,
And punish me for my transgressions!"

Alas for the hopes of Jimmy Carfax! Mr. Quelch had been watching him for some time, and he was convinced that Jimmy was doing those things which he ought not to have done.

The fact that Jimmy Carfax happened to be a nephew of Mr. Prout did not weigh with Mr. Quelch. He had his duty to do, and he did it. He took a quick stride towards Jimmy, and snatched up the sheet of paper without so much as "By your leave."

Hadn't you better order your "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" now?

Mr. Quelch perused the poem, and at each verse his frown grew more fearsome.

For some moments the Remove master stood petrified, unable to move or speak. When he did speak his voice resembled the rumble of thunder.

"Boy—Carfax, have you nothing better to do than compose this nonsensical drivel?"

Jimmy Carfax looked up in pained surprise.

"Drivel, sir?" he murmured reproachfully.

"Yes, drivel!" roared Mr. Quelch. "You are here to take your lessons with the other boys, not to waste your time in this manner! Moreover, you have grossly libelled me in this impertinent effusion! I am aware that you are not a regular member of my Form, and that you are the nephew of one of my colleagues, but these circumstances shall not save you from condign punishment. I shall cane you, Carfax!"

"Very well, sir," said Jimmy meekly. He was ordered to hold out his hand, and Mr. Quelch brought the cane down with stinging force.

Jimmy Carfax received three cuts on each hand—cuts which would have made most fellows dance with anguish and utter loud yelps. But Jimmy, setting his teeth, stuck it out with Spartan fortitude.

Just as the last fierce cut was being administered the door of the Form-room opened and Mr. Prout looked in.

The master of the Fifth had left his own Form-room for the purpose of inquiring how his nephew was progressing in the Remove.

Mr. Prout gave a jump when he saw what was happening. He had stepped into the Remove Form-room at the tail-end of the execution, as it were, and he could scarcely believe his eyes. His nephew Jimmy was actually being thrashed by Mr. Quelch on his very first morning with the Remove!

Mr. Prout's first impulse was to ask Mr. Quelch what he meant by it, and to

protest vigorously against his nephew being caned. On second thoughts, however, Mr. Prout decided that it would be wiser to "have it out" with his colleague in private. It would not do to make a scene in front of the Remove.

The master of the Fifth gave a snort of wrath, and quietly withdrew.

Mr. Quelch, having dealt with Jimmy Carfax, went back to his desk, and morning lessons proceeded.

It seemed an endless morning to the Removites. They stifled their yawns, and kept glancing at the Form-room clock, the hands of which seemed to be standing still.

At last the welcome word of dismissal came, and the juniors filed out with sighs of relief.

After a stroll in the Close with Harry Wharton & Co., Jimmy Carfax went along to Mr. Prout's study, in order to have a chat with him.

On reaching the study, Jimmy heard a heated altercation going on inside the apartment.

Mr. Prout was "letting off steam" to some purpose.

"You had no right, Quelch, to belabour my nephew in that manner! It was disgraceful—it was infamous, sir! I looked into your Form-room and saw you in the very act. You were chastising my nephew James without mercy!"

"Be calm, my dear Prout—"

"Calm!" hooted Mr. Prout. "Would you be calm, sir, if you had a nephew in my Form, and you saw me in the act of brutally castigating him? I am annoyed, sir! I am overflowing with righteous indignation!"

It was Mr. Quelch's turn to get angry. "The punishment I meted out to your nephew was fully deserved."

"Nonsense!"

"W-w-what?"

"Fiddlesticks, sir! My nephew is certainly a young jackanapes at times, but he would never do anything to merit so severe a punishment. I consider, Quelch, that you acted in a very heavy-handed manner!"

Mr. Quelch was about to make a heated reply when Jimmy Carfax tumbled into the study, with the intention of pouring oil on the troubled waters. Jimmy was afraid that the two masters would be at each other's throats unless he quickly intervened.

"I couldn't help hearing what you were saying, Uncle Paul," said Jimmy. "I want to tell you that it was all my fault. Mr. Quelch was quite right to punish me as he did."

"Really, James—"

"I wrote a poem about him during the lesson, and libelled him fearfully," Jimmy went on. "He simply had to cane me. It's a wonder he didn't take me to the Head."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "Then you admit that you were in the wrong, James?"

"Absolutely, uncle!"

Mr. Prout's wrath simmered down at once, and he turned apologetically to his colleague.

"I am afraid I was too premature in my judgment, Quelch. I have taxed you with brutality, but I now see that you were quite justified in punishing my nephew as you did. I withdraw my remarks without reservation. Will you shake hands?"

Mr. Quelch's face cleared, and he smiled, and cordially grasped the proffered hand of his colleague.

Jimmy Carfax smiled, too, happy in the knowledge that harmony was restored between the two masters.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Cup-ties!

FOOTBALL fever had Greyfriars in its grip on Saturday afternoon. There were four matches to be decided. They were not all starting at the same time. The first match on the programme was Sixth versus Second—or Giants versus Pigmies, as Bob Cherry styled it.



A peal of laughter rang out as the rival captains met together in the centre of the pitch. Wingate towered over Dicky Nugent like a Colossus. The captain of Greyfriars spun a coin. "Heads!" cried Dicky. "Heads it is!" said Wingate. "Good—we'll kick with the wind!" said Nugent. "Line up, Second!" (See Chapter 5.)

Special Boating Supplement next week! A winner!

Everybody flocked down to the ground to see the fun.

"It will be worth a guinea a box to see my minor crawling under Wingate's legs!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

"Your minor's a silly young ass not to have scratched," said Harry Wharton. "The result's a foregone conclusion. The only question is, how many goals will the Sixth pile up?"

"Well, if they score at the rate of a goal a minute they'll win by ninety to nil!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The quaint match attracted an enormous crowd of spectators. They stood two deep all around the touchline.

Dicky Nugent led his team on to the field amid a burst of ironical cheering.

"Hurrah!"

"Play up, the midgets!"

"Let the Sixth down lightly, and don't bag too many goals!" bellowed Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dicky Nugent had a smart little team, and the fags were looking very grim and determined. They had precious little hope of winning, or even of forcing a draw, but they meant to keep the Sixth-Former's rate of scoring within reasonable limits.

The fags indulged in pot-shots at goal whilst waiting for the great Wingate to march his men on to the field.

But the Sixth were a long time coming. It was rumoured that there was trouble in their ranks, and that a heated argument was in progress in the dressing-room. The subject of the argument was, "to play or not to play?"

Wingate was in favour of playing, partly because he had set his heart on the Coker Cup coming to the Sixth—partly because he wanted to teach the precocious fags a lesson.

Gwynne and Faulkner and Hammersley, and several others, supported Wingate; but Loder and North and Carno and Walker were all against playing. They had rather hoped that the fags would "scratch" at the last moment.

The crowd began to wax impatient.

"Come along, the Sixth!"

"Hurry up, there!"

"We're waiting for you, Wingate!"

The captain of Greyfriars put an end to the argument by leading his men on to the field. But he only led seven of them. Four remained behind in the dressing-room.

Wingate turned his head.

"You fellows coming?" he asked.

"No!" growled Loder. "We're not going to make ourselves look ridiculous before the whole school!"

"Very well," said Wingate. "I've no doubt we shall be able to lick the fags without your help."

Dicky Nugent & Co. brightened up considerably when they saw that they had a team of seven opposing them instead of a team of eleven.

"We've got a sporting chance, after all, you fellows!" said Dicky. "Four of the seniors are standing down."

"Oh, good!"

A peal of laughter rang out as the rival captains met together in the centre of the pitch.

Wingate towered over Dicky Nugent like a Colossus. They shook hands, and the captain of Greyfriars spun a coin.

"Heads!" cried Dicky Nugent.

"Heads it is," said Wingate.

Dicky clapped his hands gleefully.

"We'll kick with the wind," he said.

"Line up, you fellows!"

The fags took up their positions with alacrity. They were on tip-toe with eagerness and enthusiasm.

The Sixth-Formers lined up in a very curious manner. There was a goalkeeper, one full-back, two half-backs, and three forwards. It was a mere skeleton of a team. Even with four absentees, however, it seemed only too probable that the seniors would trounce the fags.

Mr. Larry Lascelles was the referee. He blew his whistle, and the ball was set rolling.

There was a roar from the touchline.

"Go it, the Lilliputians!"

"Put your beef into it!"

The fags started off with a determined dash. Their forwards dodged round the long legs of the Sixth-Formers, and made a concerted movement towards the goal.

Dicky Nugent sent the ball whizzing in, but Hammersley, who held the fort, fielded the leather with ease, and punted it up the field.

But the fags were not to be denied. They came again, with another of their lightning rushes.

The seniors were made to look rather foolish. They were too clumsy to cope with the nimble-footed fags, and they hesitated to charge them for fear of hurting them.

Pat Gwynne, at back, was tricked in a manner that evoked roars of laughter from the crowd.

Dicky Nugent tapped the ball between Gwynne's legs; then he dodged round the Sixth Form giant, and recovered the ball, and fired it in with all his force.

It was a fast, low shot, and Hammersley dived a fraction of a second too late. The ball evaded his frantic clutch and crashed past him into the net.

"Goal!"

The roar which went up might have been heard in Friardale.

Within five minutes of the start Dicky Nugent had scored! True, the Sixth had a depleted team, and they had not yet got into their stride. At the same time, Dicky's achievement was worthy of high praise.

"Two to one on the fags!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Go it, ye cripples!"

The Second-Formers warmed to their work, and the Sixth had some very anxious moments. But at last the tide of battle turned, and Wingate raced away with the ball. The juvenile backs tackled him fearlessly, but they could not dispossess him. Wingate shook them off like a bull flicking flies from its tail; then he ran on, and drove the ball into the net.

"Goal!"

After that equalising goal the Sixth had all the play. But they could not add to their score.

The fags packed their goal, and every time a shot came it was charged down or headed away.

Half-time arrived with the score at 1-1, and the plucky fags received quite an ovation.

But Dicky Nugent & Co. could not hold out for ever against their weighty opponents.

In the second half the tired fags were played to a standstill, and the Sixth-Formers put on three goals without

much trouble. The fags broke away occasionally, but they could not score, and were roundly and soundly beaten by four goals to one. But they had played like heroes, and Wingate was the first to congratulate them when the game was over.

The other three cup-ties were now played, on three separate fields.

The tit-bit of the matches was the meeting of the Remove and their old rivals, the Upper Fourth.

It was a hard, gruelling game, but Temple & Co soon realised that they hadn't a hope. Time and again they bombarded the Remove goal, but Jimmy Carfax gave a startling display and refused to be beaten. All sorts and conditions of shots were rained in upon him, but he never faltered.

Meanwhile, the Remove forwards were not idle. Harry Wharton scored in the first half from a perfect pass by Vernon-Smith; and in the second half Frank Nugent scored number two.

Temple & Co. fought gamely to the end, but Jimmy Carfax brought all their efforts to nought. He kept his citadel intact throughout; and everybody agreed, when the match was over, that Jimmy was the finest junior custodian Greyfriars had ever seen.

The other two matches resulted in a victory for the Third Form over the First, and a runaway win for the Fifth over the Shell.

Harry Wharton & Co. were surprised, for they had expected the Shell to hold their own.

Blundell of the Fifth happened to pass the Removites. His face was flushed and radiant.

"I say, Blundell!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How did you manage to lick the Shell with a burbling duffer like Coker in your team?"

Blundell halted.

"Coker played the game of his life!" he said.

"What!" gasped the juniors in chorus. They had always regarded Horace Coker as the biggest duffer who had ever donned football boots.

"Fact," said Blundell. "We were expecting old Coker to play a putrid game. He generally does, as you know. We expected him to charge his own men off the ball and all that sort of thing. But we tried an experiment this afternoon, and it worked like a charm. Instead of sticking Coker in the forward line, we put him at right back. He threw his weight about, and defended like a Trojan!"

"My hat!"

"I could kick myself for not having thought of playing Coker in that position before," said Blundell. "He generally plays in the forward line, and makes an unearthly hash of things. But we've now discovered that Coker's a defender—not an attacker. Of course, he isn't a polished player. His methods are rather crude. But he held up the Shell forwards, and bowled 'em over like skittles every time they tried to force their way through."

Bob Cherry gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"Wonders will never cease!" he said. "Fancy old Coker covering himself with glory on the footer field!"

"It's a fair staggerer!" said Vernon-Smith.

Blundell rubbed his hands with keen satisfaction.

"We won how we liked," he said. "It was a walk-over. We were two up at half-time, and five up at the finish. I tell you, my infants, the Fifth are going to lift the Coker Cup!"

ANSWERS
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"Never!" exclaimed Harry Wharton & Co. in chorus.

"You wait and see!" said Blundell, who seemed to be simply bursting with confidence. "I don't care who we have to meet in the next round—Sixth, Remove, or Third. We'll wipe up the ground with them!"

And Blundell passed on, looking mightily pleased with himself.

The cup-ties formed the one topic of conversation that evening in study and dormitory, Common-room and corridor.

Two features stood out prominently in connection with the games. One was the wonderful goalkeeping of Jimmy Carfax, the other was the sudden and surprising improvement of Horace Coker.

The first round of the struggle was over. Four teams had bitten the dust, and four remained in the competition. And everybody awaited with eager impatience the draw for the second round, which would also be the semi-final.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Battle of the Giants!

"**G**REAT news!" Jimmy Carfax burst into Study No. 1 like a whirlwind. Jimmy's handsome face was glowing with delight.

The Famous Five were assembled in Study No. 1 talking footer.

Bob Cherry was seated on the table, swinging his legs to and fro like pendulums, and suggesting a suitable place to keep the Coker Cup—when the Remove had won it!

Bob seemed to forget the old adage that there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

The boisterous entry of Jimmy Carfax caused Bob Cherry to stop short in the middle of a sentence.

"Great news!" repeated Jimmy breathlessly.

All eyes were turned towards the speaker.

"What's all the excitement about?" asked Harry Wharton. "Week's holiday for Greyfriars?"

"No."
"Bunter's postal-order arrived at last?" suggested Nugent.

"Bless Bunter's postal-order! The draw for the next round is just out—and the Remove play the Third!"

The Famous Five danced around in high glee.

This was indeed good news! It presaged an easy passage into the final, for, barring accidents, the Remove eleven were certain to beat the fags of the Third.

"Loud cheers!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We're in clover, and no mistake!"

"Dame Fortune has smilefully beamed upon us!" said Hurree Singh, beaming himself. "We shall mopfully wipe up the ground with the esteemed and ludicrous fags!"

"Yes, rather!"

Bob Cherry, in his exuberance, put his arm round the waist of Jimmy Carfax, and waltzed him round the study, sending the chairs flying, and almost putting his boot through the glass panel of the bookcase.

When order had been restored, Jimmy Carfax explained that he had just come from his uncle's study, where the draw had taken place.

"If we're playing the Third, then the Fifth are playing the Sixth—what?" said Johnny Bull.

Jimmy Carfax nodded.



A DELIBERATE FOUL!

Loder despaired of beating his man by fair means, so he resorted to shady tactics. He "made a back" for Blundell, and the Fifth-former went sprawling. There was a roar from the onlookers. "Foul!" "Play the game, Loder!" (See Chapter 6.)

"The battle of the giants," he said. "The two matches are coming off on Wednesday."

Harry Wharton became suddenly grave.

"Of course, the Sixth will wallop the Fifth, and then we shall have to meet 'em in the final," he said. "Afraid we sha'n't have a hope!"

Even Bob Cherry, genial optimist though he was, had to agree with his chum.

The Remove had a great team—a dashing, determined, never-say-die combination—but how could they humanly hope to beat the giants of the Sixth in the final?

Still, football was a game of surprises, and the Remove would go into the fray with stout hearts—in the same dauntless spirit that the knights of old rode into the tourney.

The result of the draw spread like wildfire through the school. It dealt a death-blow to the hopes of the fags of the Third. They could not reasonably expect to defeat the Remove. But then, as their skipper, George Tubb, remarked, it was better to meet the Remove than the Fifth or Sixth.

When Wednesday afternoon came round all roads led to the playing-fields.

The games were to be played separately, the Remove v. Third match being the first to be staged.

The fags played pluckily enough, but they were run off their feet.

Harry Wharton & Co. didn't believe in leaving anything to chance. They piled

up as many goals as possible. They found the net five times before the interval; and in the second half they ran riot, and goals were as plentiful as blackberries.

The fags' defence crumpled up completely under continuous pressure; and the Remove ran off winners, with the remarkable score of 14 to 0!

The game had been a farce. Jimmy Carfax, in the Remove goal, had not once been called upon to handle the ball!

"Well, we've romped into the final all right," said Bob Cherry. "Now we'll go and see the Sixth put it across the Fifth."

"I'm not so sure that they will," said Vernon-Smith. "The Sixth are below strength. Faulkner's down with the 'flu, and Gwynne's been called away. If the Fifth play like they did against the Shell, they might pull it off!"

"Rats! The age of miracles is past!" said Frank Nugent.

The two senior teams were lining up for the fray.

There was an air of confidence about the Fifth-Formers. They were trained to concert-pitch, and were eager for the game to start. They had a grim task in front of them, but they faced it in the right spirit.

The Sixth, on the other hand, were looking a trifle anxious and uneasy. The absence of Gwynne and Faulkner would be seriously felt. There were two substitutes in the team, of course; but the substitutes were not nearly so good as

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the fellows whose places they were taking.

Blundell tossed with Wingate for choice of ends. He won the toss, and the Fifth kicked off with a strong wind behind them.

There was a roar from the touchline. "On the ball!"

"Go it, the giddy giants!"

The Fifth started off with tremendous dash.

Blundell and Hilton and Fitzgerald indulged in a clever bout of passing, and they ran the ball well down the field.

Hammersley, in the Sixth Form goal, had to be on his guard.

The backs were Loder and Walker, and they were unsteady under pressure.

Blundell tricked Loder easily, and fired in a great shot. But Hammersley brought off an equally great save.

"Well stopped, sir!"

"Good try, Blundell!"

"Keep it up, the Fifth!"

But it was now the turn of Wingate's men to put in a spell of attacking.

The captain of Greyfriars raced through on his own, and he looked a certain scorer, when Coker seemed to spring up suddenly from nowhere, and dispossess him of the ball.

The onlookers fairly gasped. They were too astonished to cheer.

Horace Coker had always been looked upon as a duffer of duffers, so far as football was concerned. Yet he had actually beaten the captain of Greyfriars in a tussle for the ball!

Wingate looked dazed. He had been in the very act of shooting when Coker had robbed him in that amazing manner.

"My only aunt!" gasped the skipper of the Sixth. "Either you've come on a lot at footer, Coker, or else that was a howling fluke!"

Coker laughed breathlessly.

"Not much fluke about it," he said.

"I'm a jolly sight better player than I used to be, Wingate! I admit that I was always a failure in the forward line. I was neither use nor ornament. But when they tried the experiment of playing me at right-back, it worked like a charm!"

Wingate looked grim. He could clearly see that the Sixth would have all their work cut out to win the match.

For a long spell after this the ball bobbed about in midfield.

The halves on each side were playing a spoiling game, and the respective forwards found it difficult to get the ball away.

At last, however, Blundell got clear. He made a bee-line for goal, and Loder of the Sixth loomed up to intercept him.

Loder despaired of beating his man by fair means, so he resorted to shady tactics. He "made a back" for Blundell, and the Fifth-Former went sprawling.

There was a roar from the onlookers.

"Foul!"

"Play the game, Loder!"

The referee had seen the infringement. He blew his whistle, and promptly awarded the Fifth a penalty-kick.

Blundell, who had fallen very heavily, scrambled to his feet, and he took the kick himself.

Crash!

The ball came red-hot from Blundell's boot, and whizzed over the goalie's shoulder and into the top of the net.

"Goal!"

The Fifth had drawn first blood against their doughty opponents, and the crowd cheered them to the echo.

Wingate, his face flushed with anger, went striding up to Loder.

"You made them a present of that goal!" he said wrathfully. "That was a deliberate and beastly foul on Blundell. If you do it again I shall ask the referee to send you off the field!"

Loder scowled, but said nothing. He had nothing to say.

The interval arrived shortly afterwards, with the Fifth leading by a goal to nothing.

Wingate rallied his men with rousing words during the "breather." On the re-start, the Sixth played a storming game. They had the wind behind them now, and they made the most of it.

"Now we shall see some fireworks!" said Bob Cherry, who was standing with his chums on the touchline.

"Yes, rather!"

"The esteemed Wingate will kick-fully score a goal!" murmured Hurree Singh.

Scarcely had the dusky junior spoken the words when Wingate received the ball from the right wing, and crashed it into the net with terrific force.

"Goal!"

The Sixth were having all the play hereabouts. They penned the Fifth in their own half and attacked fiercely.

Coker did his best to hold up the attackers, and he succeeded for a time. But he could not prevent Tom North putting the ball in for the Sixth, who were now on top.

"It's all over, bar shouting!" said Harry Wharton.

"Afraid so," said Johnny Bull, making a wry face. "The Sixth will win, and we shall have to meet them in the Final."

But the juniors proved to be poor prophets.

The Fifth had not yet shot their bolt. They had got over their bad patch, and they now rallied with rare spirit.

After Blundell had forced Loder to concede a corner, Fitzgerald placed the ball with fine judgment, for Hilton to head it into the net.

"Goal!"

The scores were level again. And they remained level until ten minutes from the end.

Then Potter tried a long shot, from thirty yards out.

Loder saw the danger, and he got his head to the ball. Unfortunately, however, he headed it the wrong way, and it was deflected into the net.

"The—the Fifth are on top!" gasped Harry Wharton, like a fellow in a dream. "Give 'em a cheer!"

"Hurrah!"

The Sixth rallied desperately in the closing stages.

Wingate came within an ace of scoring, his shot skimming the cross-bar. Then North fired in a fierce shot which Coker charged down.

The Fifth kept their lines intact until the final whistle rang out; and they ran off winners by three goals to two, after one of the sternest tussles which had ever taken place on Big Side.

It was a proud moment for Blundell and his men, and it was a humiliating moment for the mighty men of the Sixth.

The air rang with cheering, and the Fifth-Formers were given a tremendous ovation. They had played with rare dash against heavier and more experienced opponents, and they had won the day. The words of the poet aptly described their great performance:

"It was a famous victory!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Jimmy's Jape!

JIMMY CARFAX was strolling under the old elms in the Close. He was in gay spirits, and he hummed a merry tune as he patrolled to and fro in the darkness.

It was the eve of the Final for the Coker Cup. There was great excitement at Greyfriars; but it was generally believed that the Remove would never be able to hold the greatly-improved Fifth Form eleven. A team that had beaten the Sixth could surely account for the Remove!

It was very chilly in the Close, but Jimmy Carfax was well wrapped up, and he was enjoying the exercise.

All the other fellows were within doors, and in a few moments it would be bed-time for the Remove.

Suddenly the purring of an automobile came to Jimmy's ears. He glanced towards the school-gates, and saw that a car was drawing up outside them. The gleam of the headlights was almost dazzling.

The driver of the car tooted impatiently at his horn.

Gosling had locked the gates long ago, and he seemed to be deaf to the repeated tooting.

"That johnnie wants to come in, evidently," murmured Jimmy Carfax. "I'll go and give Gosling a yell."

He sprinted down to the porter's lodge and stepped inside.

William Gosling, the keeper of the gate, was sitting before the fire in his parlour. His hands were folded in the region of his lower waistcoat-button, and he was fast asleep.

Toot-toot! came from without.

Jimmy Carfax hailed Gosling with a mighty shout. But the only response was a deep snore.

Jimmy strode towards the slumbering porter, and gave him a violent shake.

Gosling opened first one eye, and then the other, and he blinked drowsily at the intruder.

"Wharrer marrer, Master Carfax?" he mumbled.

"Chap outside wants to come in," said Jimmy. "He's in a car. Can't you hear him toot-tooting?"

Gosling settled himself more comfortably in the chair.

"Which 'e can keep on toot-tootin' till 'e gets tired!" he said. "I'm goin' to 'ave forty winks."

"But he might be a governor of the school!" shouted Jimmy Carfax.

"Eh?"

Gosling shot bolt upright at the suggestion.

"You'd better go and open the gates," said Jimmy. "Whoever the merry visitor is, he's getting more and more annoyed every minute. Just hark at him!"

The driver of the car was not only tooting the horn, but he was giving vent to a flow of expletives.

"Where's that scoundrel Gosling? Why doesn't he come an' open this confounded gate, begad? The lazy hound! I'll lay my huntin'-crop across his shoulders!"

Gosling rose to his feet in alarm.

"Why, that's Sir 'Ilton Popper!" he muttered.

"A governor?" queried Jimmy Carfax.

"Yes, an' a barrow-net. Which 'e don't like bein' kept waitin'."

"Then you'd better hustle."

You've solved the pictures? Good! Go in and win!

Gosling lighted a lantern, and took a bunch of keys off the nail near the door. Then he shuffled out into the darkness.

"Oh, there you are!" boomed the irate voice of Sir Hilton Popper. "I've been waitin' here ten minutes, by George! What d'you mean by it, hey?"

"Which I'm main sorry, sir," stammered Gosling; "but I was jest 'aving a nap."

"Sleepin' at your post, hey? I'll report this to Dr. Locke. It's high time you were pensioned off an' somebody more active was put in charge of the gate!"

Gosling fumbled with the keys, and the big gates were swung open. Sir Hilton steered his car slowly into the Close.

"Good-evening, sir!" sang out Jimmy Carfax cheerfully.

The baronet gave a snort.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Mr. Prout's nephew, sir. I'm staying at Greyfriars for a month. If you want to garage your car in the shed, I'll go and open the doors!"

"Thanks!" said Sir Hilton gruffly.

Jimmy Carfax sped off through the darkness.

Adjoining the bicycle-shed was another and a more spacious shed, which was used for the housing of cars.

Jimmy swung open the doors, and Sir Hilton Popper manoeuvred his car into the shed. Having stepped out and switched off the lights, he joined Jimmy Carfax in the Close.

"I have come to see this cup final which is to be played to-morrow," he confided to Jimmy.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"I hoped to get here in time to have dinner with Dr. Locke, but I had a breakdown on the road. I'm tired, begad, an' I'm anxious to turn in. You might acquaint the Head of my presence and tender my apologies. Do you happen to know which room has been prepared for me?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy briskly. "Step this way!"

A demon of mischief had entered into Jimmy Carfax. He was seized by an irresistible impulse to play a practical joke on the irascible baronet, and on his own uncle.

In that reckless moment Jimmy did not stop to weigh the possible consequences of his action. He led Sir Hilton Popper into the building, and up the main staircase.

The baronet followed in silence. He was feeling tired and irritable. He had attended a governors' meeting in London that day, and had then motored down to Greyfriars. The breakdown on the road had delayed him considerably, and he was thoroughly weary. Early though the hour was, Sir Hilton was anxious to get to bed.

It was to Mr. Prout's bed-room that Jimmy Carfax led the unsuspecting baronet.

Jimmy opened the door and switched on the electric light.

"Here you are, sir!" he said cheerfully.

Sir Hilton glanced round the neat, cosy apartment, and Jimmy's heart was in his mouth for a moment.

Did the baronet recognise this room as being Mr. Prout's bed-room?

Apparently he did not, for he stepped into the room with a muttered word of thanks.

Jimmy Carfax withdrew, chuckling



Gosling gazed upwards with terror-stricken eyes. Mr. Prout had set foot on the top ladder. Then, with the ladder swaying dangerously, he climbed down hand under hand. "Oh, jeminy!" exclaimed the porter. "He'll break 'is neck!" (See Chapter 8.)

A HAZARDOUS DESCENT!

softly to himself as he descended the stairs.

There was a sudden hum of voices, mingled with the sound of footsteps, as of an army approaching.

The Remove were coming up to bed. They swarmed up the stairs, and Jimmy Carfax, realising that it was bed time, turned to accompany them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You seem jolly amused about something, Carfax. What's the merry joke?"

Jimmy gave another chuckle.

"I suppose you fellows have heard of Sir Hilton Popper?" he said.

"Yes, rather!" said Frank Nugent. "Awful old martinet!"

"Well, I've just put him to bed."

"W-w-what?"

"He turned up just now, in his car, and told me he had come to see the Cup Final to-morrow. He seemed pretty fagged, and wanted to get to bed, so I've taken him along to my uncle's bed-room."

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared blankly at Jimmy Carfax.

"You—you've put old Popper in Prout's bed-room?" gasped Harry Wharton.

Jimmy nodded.

"Oh, my hat! There will be an unholy row about this!"

"I should like to see Prout's face when he finds a giddy interloper in his bed!" chuckled Tom Brown. "It will be worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's a jape I should never have the nerve to play," said Mark Linley. "Your uncle will have you on the carpet in the morning, Carfax."

"Who cares?" said Jimmy lightly-heartedly.

The Removees flocked into their dormitory. Some of them were looking highly amused, but the others looked a trifle scared. Japing a master and a governor of the school at the same time was likely to have serious consequences.

It was not until midnight that Mr. Paul Prout betook himself to his bed-room.

Mr. Prout had been sitting up late in his study, poring over the works of Thucydides and other learned men of old.

The master of the Fifth yawned portentously as he climbed the wide staircase and passed along the corridor to his room.

Mr. Prout opened the door and stepped inside. All was peaceful and serene. Sir Hilton Popper had long ago passed into a deep sleep—full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

So weary was Mr. Prout, and so anxious to get into bed, that he did not even bother to switch on the light. He undressed in the darkened room and groped for his pyjamas, which lay on a chair.

Having donned his pyjamas, Mr. Prout started to punch the bed, as was his custom, to make it nice and cosy in the middle.

Biff! Thud!

Mr. Prout started back with a gasp of alarm, and simultaneously a roar of anguish boomed through the darkness.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Prout. "Some interloper—some audacious intruder—has got into my bed!"

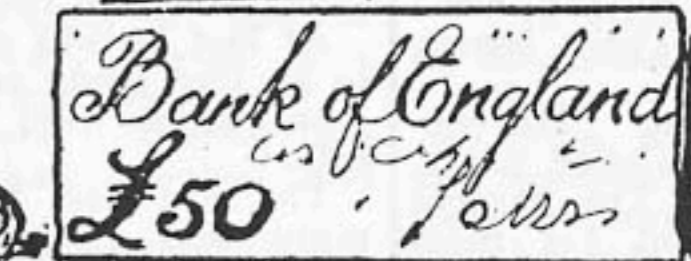
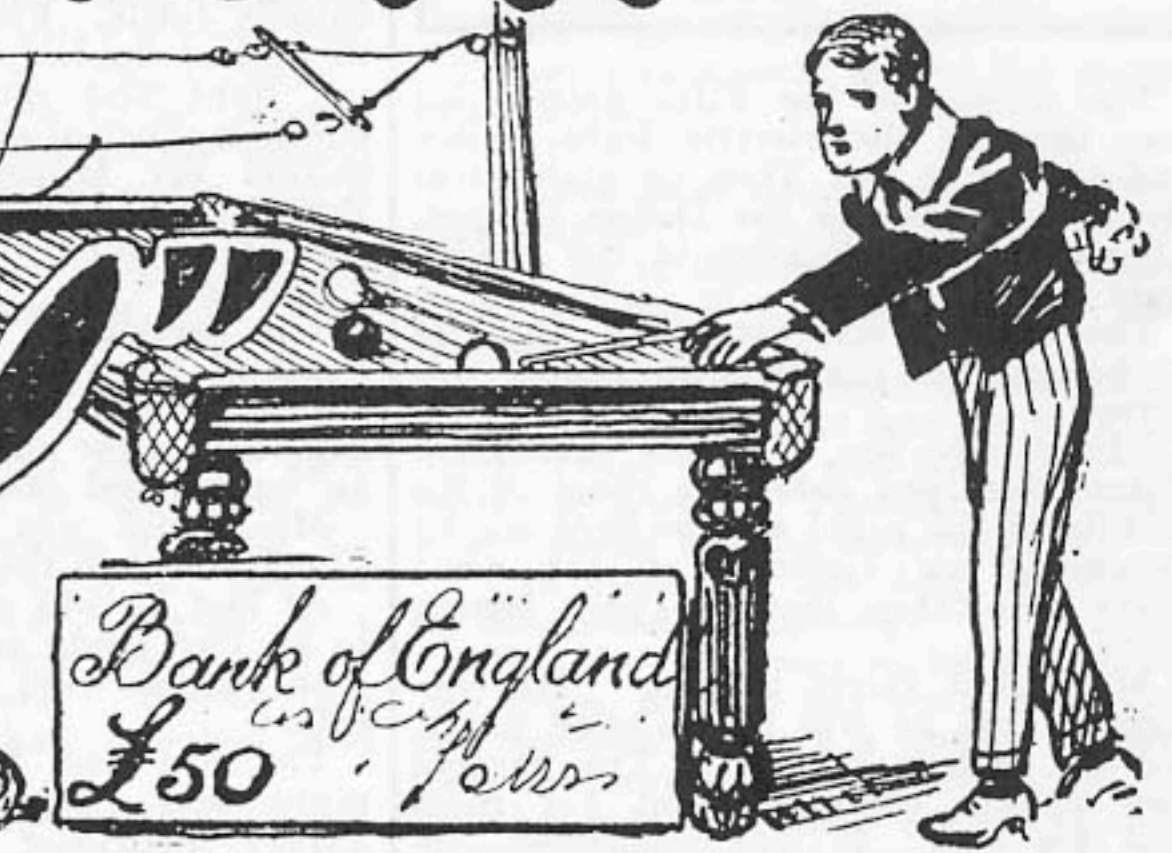
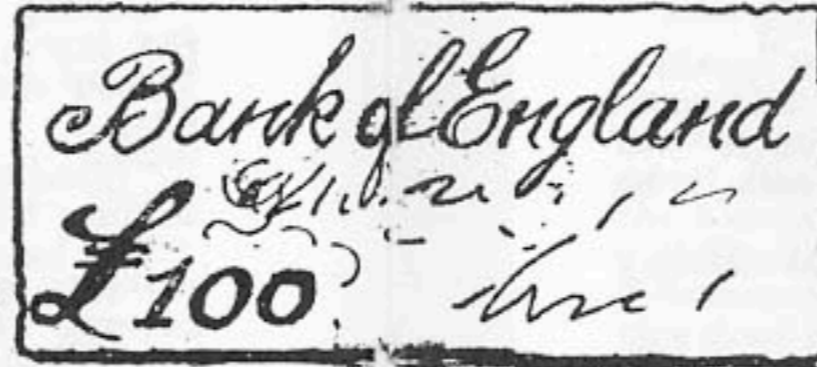
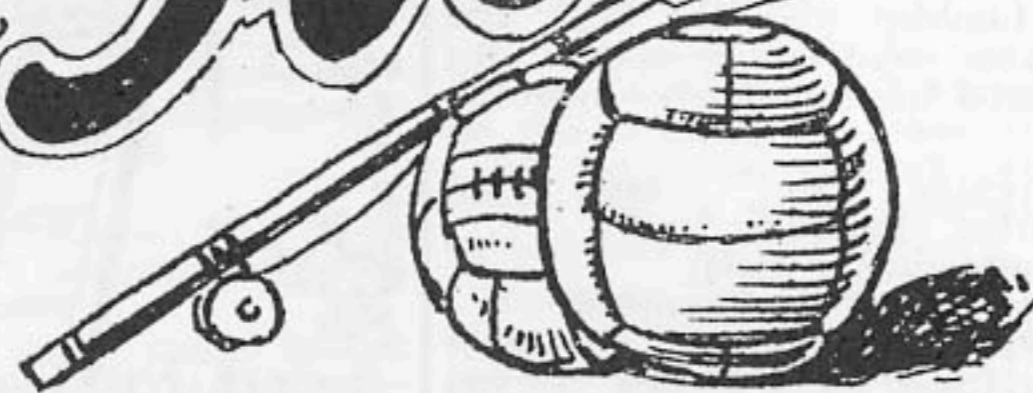
(Continued on page 16.)

The author at the top of the tree—Frank Richards!

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which must be strictly adhered to.

1.—The First Prize of £100 in cash will be awarded to the competitor who sends in the correct, or most nearly correct, solution of all eight sets of the pictures according to the Editor's official solution.

2.—The Second Prize of £50, and the others in the splendid variety of prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

3.—All the prizes will be awarded. If two or more competitors tie, however, the prize or prizes, or their value, will be divided, and the Editor reserves full rights in this respect.

4.—No solutions may be sent in until all the sets of the pictures and the necessary coupon have been published. Full directions will then be given.

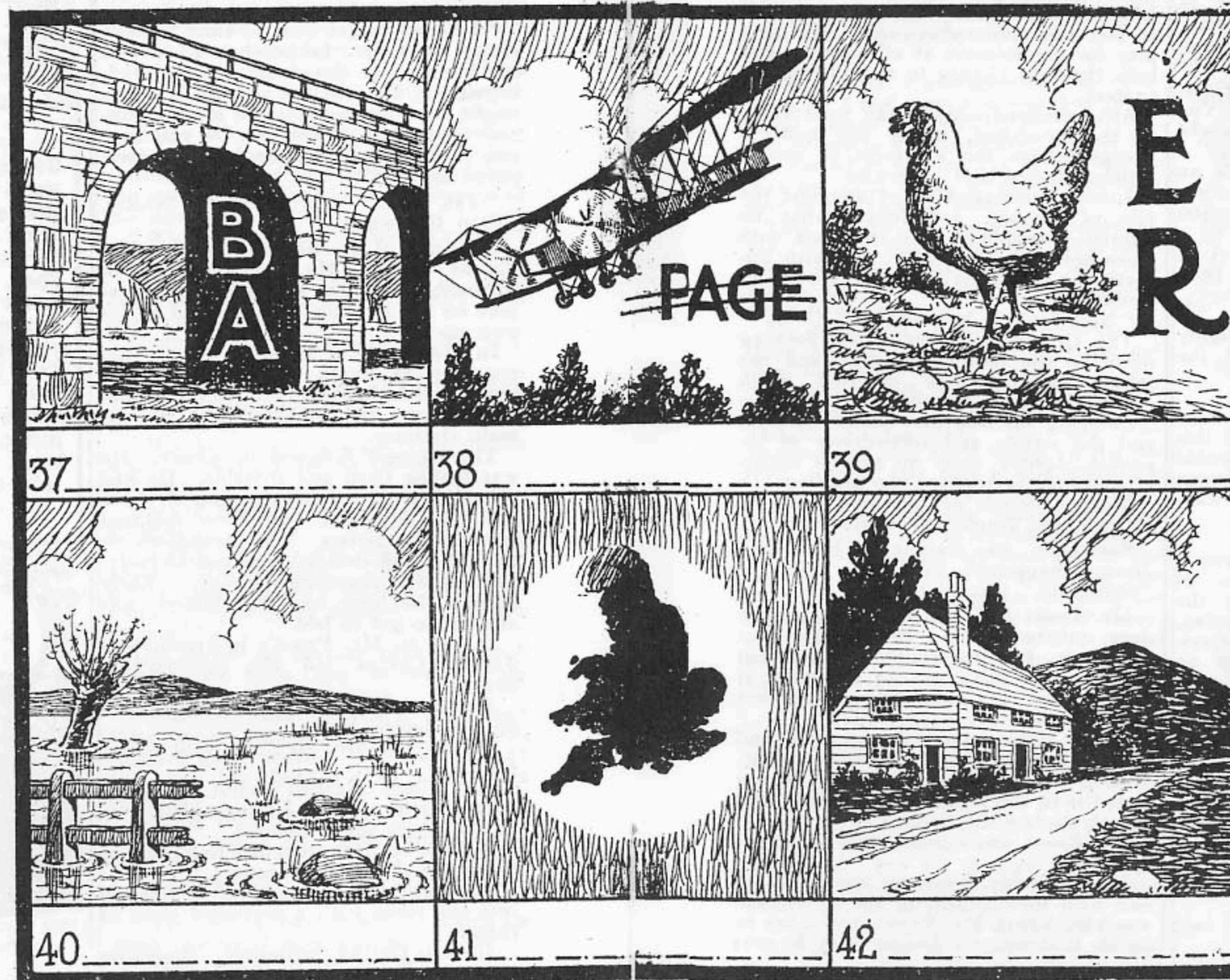
5.—The names under the pictures must be written IN INK.

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SET No. 7.

ONE MORE SET TO COME!



ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

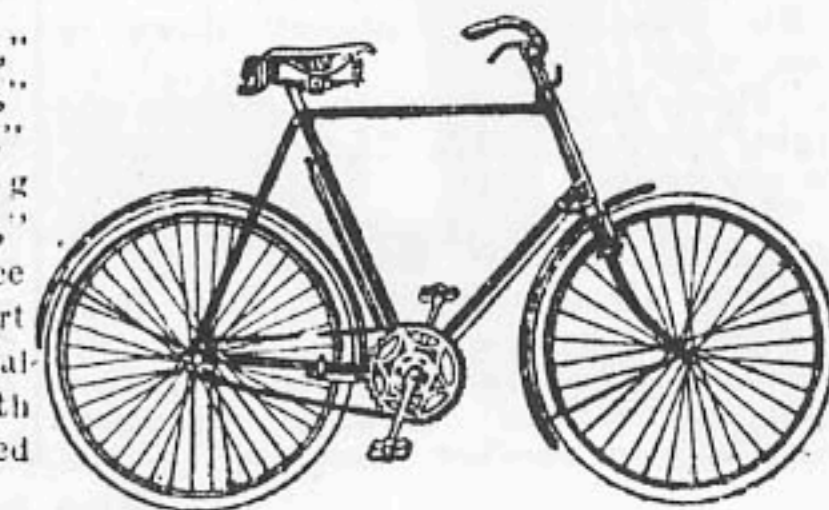
is to write IN INK in the allotted space under each of the puzzle-pictures the name of the footballer which you think the picture represents. Surely a simple enough task—only six names to discover each week!

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Readers of the "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Union Jack," "Boys' Friend," "Pluck," "Boys' Cinema," "Young Britain," "Popular," "Gem," "Rocket," and "Nelson Lee Library" are also taking part in the Contest, so that additional attempts may be made with the pictures from these allied journals.



REMEMBER, 800 PRIZES MUST BE WON! LOOK OUT FOR THE LAST SET OF PICTURES!

THE COKER CHALLENGE CUP!

(Continued from page 13.)

The master of the Fifth groped his way towards the electric light switch and turned it on. Then he glanced at the bed and beheld Sir Hilton Popper, sitting up and blinking in the sudden light.

The baronet was extremely wrathful at having his slumbers so rudely disturbed.

"How dare you, sir?" he thundered. "How dare you enter my room in the middle of the night and awaken me by thumping me violently in the ribs? Have you taken leave of your senses, sir?"

Mr. Prout fairly gasped. He considered that he was the injured party, not Sir Hilton Popper. The baronet had calmly commandeered his room and his bed. It was monstrous—unheard-of!

Sir Hilton was spluttering with wrath. "I am surprised at you, Prout! To think that you, a master—a man of mature years—should play a schoolboy prank of this nature! You have disturbed my slumbers, sir, and I shall find it impossible to get to sleep again to-night! Leave my room at once!"

It was Mr. Prout's turn to get angry. "Your room?" he shouted. "Since when has it been your room, sir? This is my bed-room—my own private room—which you have invaded!"

"Oh, gad!"

The baronet stared blankly at Mr. Prout.

"You have violated my sleeping quarters, sir!" hooted the incensed master of the Fifth. "Had you asked my permission to sleep here it would have been readily granted. But you did not ask. You have calmly commandeered my room and occupied my bed! Do you call that the conduct of a gentleman, sir?"

Sir Hilton Popper was temporarily at a loss.

"I—I—" he began.

"I must ask you to vacate my bed immediately!" stormed Mr. Prout.

"But—but I was escorted to this room on my arrival—"

"By whom?"

"By your nephew."

"Oh!"

Mr. Prout began to see daylight. He knew that Jimmy Carfax had a penchant for playing practical jokes, and he could see Jimmy's hand in this.

"We have been fooled, Sir Hilton!" said Mr. Prout, after a pause. "My nephew, who is a rather flippant and facetious youth, has conducted you to the wrong room."

"The dickens he has! Well, he couldn't have conducted me to a more cosy room," said the baronet. "I am quite comfortable here, and I don't propose to shift."

"What!" gasped Mr. Prout.

Sir Hilton settled himself down in bed, with a yawn.

"Have the goodness to turn out the light," he murmured. "I find it dazling to my eyes."

"But—but this is my room, sir!" almost shrieked Mr. Prout.

"I'm afraid you must find fresh quarters for the night," said the baronet. "I've no intention of gettin' up an' walkin' through draughty corridors to another room, an' gettin'

into a cold bed. I'm quite happy where I am."

Mr. Prout raved and stormed and protested, but all to no purpose. Then he tried entreaties, but these were equally futile. Finally, he was obliged to gather up his clothes and turn out the light and retire from the room. Nothing short of sheer force would have shifted Sir Hilton Popper, and Mr. Prout, furious though he was, could not possibly employ force against a governor.

The master of the Fifth set off in quest of fresh sleeping quarters. He roamed about in his pyjamas, exploring room after room, but never finding an untenanted one.

Mr. Prout was hopelessly stranded, like Ishmael in the desert.

At last he was compelled to go back to his own study and to spend the night—or, rather, what was left of it—on the sofa.

The fire had burned low, and the night was chilly. It was therefore hardly surprising that Mr. Prout did not sleep a wink. And he mentally resolved to make matters warm for his nephew in the morning.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Prisoner!

"HOW many?"

Bob Cherry, asked the question, with a note of sympathy in his tone.

Jimmy Carfax had just emerged from Mr. Prout's study, rubbing his hands tightly together, and the Famous Five were waiting for Jimmy in the corridor.

"Three on each paw!" he said, in reply to Bob Cherry's question. "Uncle Paul laid 'em on good and hard, too! Still, the jape was well worth it!"

"I reckon you've got off jolly lightly, Carfax," said Harry Wharton. "You caused no end of a rumpus last night by putting Popper in Prout's room."

Jimmy Carfax grinned, and made an examination of his burning palms. Three distinct weals could be seen on each.

"Of course, this was only a part of my punishment," he said. "I've been detained for the afternoon."

"What!"

The Famous Five were thoroughly alarmed. Jimmy's statement had the effect of a bombshell.

"Detained!" gasped Nugent.

"Yes; I pointed out to Uncle Paul that I was playing in the cup final this afternoon. I asked him if he could detain me some other afternoon instead. But he was in a fearful wax, and wouldn't consent."

"Oh crumbs!"

The juniors groaned aloud in chorus.

Gone were their fond dreams of defeating the Fifth and winning the Coker Cup. Without Jimmy Carfax, they would be as a ship without a steersman. They had been counting on Jimmy to give a great display in goal, and to keep the Fifth Form forwards at bay. But with Jimmy absent their hopes of winning sank down to zero.

Bulstrode, the regular Remove goalie, was a good man. But he lacked the genius and wizardry of Jimmy Carfax. Bulstrode was fairly sound and fairly reliable, but he could not perform miracles. Jimmy Carfax could; at any rate, it seemed like it, judging by his previous displays.

"Well, that's fairly caused it!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's good-bye to the Coker Cup!" said Johnny Bull lugubriously.

"Let us girdfully put on sackcloth and ashes, and mournfully weep!" said Hurreo Singh.

Jimmy Carfax laughed.

"Don't be a set of Dismal Jimmies!" he said. "Each of you wants to be a Jovial Jimmy, like me! Trust me to find ways and means of dodging detention!"

"But your uncle will never relent—"

began Nugent.

"I don't suppose he will, for a moment. He's in a ramping rage about what happened last night. But I've quite made up my mind to play this afternoon, so you needn't worry!"

Harry Wharton stared at the speaker.

"But if you break detention and come down to the ground, your uncle will follow you and bring you back," he said.

"Oh, no, he won't!" said Jimmy confidently.

"What's to prevent him?"

"A cute little wheeze of mine. I've hit upon one already."

The juniors pressed Jimmy Carfax for details, but these he refused to give.

"Now, you're not to worry about me," said Jimmy. "You'll find I shall turn up at the match all serene. Hallo! There goes the bell for morning lessons."

The juniors trooped along to the Remove Form-room, and nothing more was said on the subject of Jimmy Carfax breaking detention.

Jimmy, however, had his little scheme all cut and dried. It was a desperate scheme; but desperate situations required desperate remedies. Jimmy was pretty certain to get into a far more serious pickle than he had got into already; but he was quite prepared to face the music afterwards. He must play for the Remove at all hazards, and help them to victory in the Coker Cup contest.

After dinner Jimmy Carfax went along to the woodshed, which was quite a dumping-place for all sorts of quaint articles, useful and otherwise.

Jimmy rummaged about amongst the pile of lumber, and found what he wanted—a couple of stout iron bars, with screw-holes at each end. He also unearthed a screwdriver and a handful of screws.

"Now for it!" he muttered.

The Greyfriars fellows were flocking down to the football ground, and the school building was deserted when Jimmy Carfax re-entered it.

Carrying the iron bars under his arm, and the screws and screwdriver in his pocket, Jimmy went up several flights of stairs till he reached the top floor.

Muffled sounds of splashing came to his ears, and Jimmy chuckled softly.

Somebody was having a bath, and Jimmy happened to know that the "somebody" was his uncle.

Mr. Prout had bolted the bath-room door on the inside. But he had not locked it, for the simple reason that the key was missing. As a matter of fact, the key was reposing in the pocket of Jimmy Carfax.

Jimmy tiptoed along the corridor, and halted outside the bath-room door. Taking the key from his pocket he inserted it in the keyhole, and swiftly and silently locked the door.

Mr. Prout was a prisoner in the bath-room.

Jimmy Carfax, however, was not satisfied with merely locking the door. He was afraid that Mr. Prout might try to break it down, on finding that he was

Who helps himself to Mr. Quelch's cake—

a prisoner. And Jimmy meant to leave nothing to chance.

The iron bars were placed across the door, and screwed into the wall on either side.

This operation took some little time. It was not a noiseless operation, either.

Mr. Prout, sitting bolt upright in his bath, became aware of strange sounds outside the door.

"Who is there?" he called out.

No answer. Jimmy Carfax was busy with the screwdriver.

"There is someone outside this door!" shouted the master of the Fifth. "I insist upon knowing who it is!"

Still no answer.

Mr. Prout gave a snort, and stepped out of the bath. He threw a large bath-towel round him, and crossed to the door. He shot back the bolt, and turned the handle, but the door refused to open.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Someone has had the audacity to lock this door on the outside!"

The sound of a subdued chuckle came to Mr. Prout's ears.

"Good gracious! I verily believe that is my nephew!" he exclaimed. "Am I right, James? Is it you?"

Still no answer from Jimmy Carfax. At such a moment silence was golden.

Jimmy's task was soon completed. The last screw was driven home, and the stout iron bars precluded all possibility of escape from the bath-room. Mr. Prout was a close prisoner.

Jimmy Carfax hurried away to change into his footer togs.

"Rather rough on Uncle Paul!" he ruminated. "Still, it had to be done. I'll let him out directly the cup final's over."

Meanwhile, Mr. Prout was beating his fists furiously against the door of his prison.

"This—this is outrageous!" he spluttered. "I feel certain it was that young rascal James who cut off my exit. It was evidently a preconceived plan of his. He wished to get me out of the way so that he could break detention and take part in the football match."

This theory was speedily confirmed. Mr. Prout threw up the bath-room window, and looked out. He saw Jimmy Carfax, in footer garb, sprinting down to the ground.

Mr. Prout gave a stentorian shout, but there was no response. Jimmy did not even turn his head.

From the little window of his prison Mr. Prout had a good view of the distant playing-fields. He saw the Remove and the Fifth lining up for the fray, and he saw that a vast multitude of spectators had assembled.

Masters and prefects, juniors and fags, had all turned out to witness the final.

Mr. Prout thrust his head out of the window, and bellowed for assistance. But the football-ground was too far away for the master's shouts to be heard there. And there was nobody in the school building to come to the rescue of the unfortunate prisoner.

"Help—help!"

Mr. Prout repeated the call until he was husky. He might have saved his breath, for there was none to hear him.

Another man would have resigned himself to his fate. But Mr. Prout paced to and fro in his little prison like a caged animal. He raved and stormed and spluttered; but his ravings and stormings and splutterings were wasted on the desert air, so to speak.

Once again he halted at the window.

A mighty roar announced that the cup final had commenced. Mr. Prout could

see the twenty-two players quite plainly. The Fifth wore red jerseys and black knickers, and the Remove sported light-blue jerseys and white knickers. The Fifth Form goalkeeper wore a green sweater, and Jimmy Carfax a white one.

Mr. Prout wrung his hands despairingly. There seemed to be no loophole of escape for him. He hurled himself against the door time and again, but it refused to budge. Mr. Prout was expending his energy to no purpose, for the stout iron bars outside the door were firm and unyielding.

Escape by way of the window was impossible.

Even had Mr. Prout been an agile climber, like Tarzan of the Apes, he could not have descended to earth, for there was nothing to cling to; and the bath-room window was situated at a tremendous distance from the ground.

Fully an hour passed. During that interval Mr. Prout had towelled and dressed himself.

Then, going once more to the window, and thrusting his semi-bald pate through the aperture, he caught sight of a figure down below—the figure of Gosling the porter.

"Gosling!"

Mr. Prout's voice would have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

Gosling stopped short. He looked first to the left, and then to the right; then he directed his gaze skyward, with his mouth wide open with wonder. Finally he caught sight of the frantic figure at the bath-room window, high overhead.

"My heye!" muttered Gosling. "Wot's wrong with Mr. Prout, I wonder? 'Ope 'e ain't goin' to commit suetside, a-lean-in' out of the winder like that there!"

"Gosling!" bawled Mr. Prout.

"'Allo!" grunted Gosling.

"I am a prisoner!" hooted the master of the Fifth.

"Ho!"

"Do not stand there making ridiculous observations!" hooted Mr. Prout. "Come up to this bath-room, on the top floor, and see if you can open the door from the outside."

Gosling nodded his head slowly. Then he turned and shuffled into the building.

Mr. Prout fumed and fretted for the porter to arrive. Presently he could hear Gosling moving about outside.

"Can you open this door, Gosling?" he demanded impatiently.

"No, sir. It seems to be locked, for one thing, an' the key ain't 'ere. Furthermore, there's a couple of iron bars 'ere, screwed into the wall, and it'll take hours to shift these 'ere screws. The hedges are all burred over!"

"Bless my soul! I will have no mercy on that young rascal James! He shall pay dearly for this outrage! I must request you, Gosling to fetch a ladder, and rear it up to the bath-room window."

"Ain't got no ladder wot'll reach, sir," said Gosling.

"Then you must join two ladders together. Rouse yourself, man! Do my bidding at once!"

Gosling withdrew, grumbling to himself.



Willing hands lifted Jimmy Carfax from the ground and he was carried off the field of play. Mr. Prout caught sight of his nephew's white face. "Wh-what has happened?" he asked. (See Chapter 9.)

—and who locks himself in the box-room and defies authority?

"Which I'm a porter, that's wot I am—not a rescuer of imprisoned Form-masters!"

It was some little time before Gosling turned up with the ladders. But he arrived at last, and with great difficulty he reared the ladders against the wall. The topmost ladder was almost on a level with the outer sill of the bath-room window.

It needed a good deal of nerve for Mr. Prout to make the descent.

The ladders seemed none too secure, despite the fact that Gosling stood on the bottom rung and kept them steady.

Mr. Prout, however, was so eager to get to grips with his nephew that he tackled the perilous task without hesitation. He crawled out of the window, not daring to glance downwards, and he set foot on the top ladder. Then, with the ladder swaying dangerously beneath his weight, he went down hand-under-hand.

Gosling gazed upwards with terror-stricken eyes, fearing lest Mr. Prout should come hurtling down on top of him. But fortune favoured the Form-master, and he reached terra-firma in safety.

Without waiting to give Gosling a word of thanks, Mr. Prout made his way with rapid strides in the direction of the football-ground.

There were breakers ahead for Jimmy Carfax!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Cuptle Champions!

"**S**AVED, sir! Oh, well saved!" Not once or twice, but many times, had that shout greeted Jimmy Carfax.

Jimmy was performing prodigies of valour in the Remove goal.

All through the first half the Fifth were attacking. Their forwards had never been in better trim. They combined with perfect understanding, and Blundell led them with rare dash.

Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, the Remove backs, worked like Trojans to keep their opponents at bay. But they were frequently beaten for pace, and on such occasions only Jimmy Carfax stood between the Fifth and the goal.

But Jimmy was a great stumbling-block. Try as they would the Fifth Form forwards could not get the ball past him.

Jimmy was bang on top of his form, and he had need to be. He was not a bit worried by thoughts of his uncle, imprisoned in the bath-room. Had his thoughts wandered for a moment it would have been all up with the Remove.

All through the first half of that stern game Jimmy Carfax had scarcely an idle moment. He was for ever fisting out shots, or diving to gather the ball, or leaping up to cope with high shots.

It seemed a fearfully one-sided game. The Fifth had all the weight, and they did not scruple to use it.

The Remove forwards were bowled over like skittles whenever they attempted to break away. It was a heart-breaking business. Never once did the Remove attack get going, and but for the dazzling display of goalkeeping by Jimmy Carfax the Fifth would have been several goals up at the interval. As it was the score-sheet was blank.

When the "breather" came Jimmy Carfax threw himself at full length in the grass and relaxed his limbs. Harry Wharton & Co. crowded round him with their congratulations.

"You're putting up a great show, Carfax!" said Wharton. "Where should we be without you, I should like to know?"

"Echo answers, 'Nowhere'!" said Bob Cherry.

"By the way, Carfax," said Vernon-Smith, "you haven't explained to us how you managed to break detention. You turned up just in time for the kick-off, and we hadn't a chance to ask you then. How have you got your uncle out of the way?"

Jimmy gave a sigh.

"It's a sad, bad business!" he murmured. "But there was no help for it. My respected avuncular relative—"

"Where is he?" almost howled Bob Cherry.

"Locked in one of the bath-rooms on the top floor."

"Oh, my sainted aunt!"

The juniors regarded Jimmy Carfax with startled faces. They knew that he was reckless, and inclined to deeds of dare-devilry, but they had not dreamed that he would go to such lengths as this.

"You—you've locked old Prout in a bath-room?" stuttered Harry Wharton.

"Yea, comrade."

"But—but it's a wonder he hasn't broken the door down."

"He can't! I've fixed a couple of stout iron bars outside the door."

"Oh, jiminy!"

"There will be the very dickens to pay for this!" said Nugent.

Jimmy Carfax nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, I dare say Uncle Paul will be slightly annoyed," he said.

"Slightly annoyed!" echoed Bob Cherry. "Why, he'll break a blood-vessel, or have an apoplectic fit, or something! I wouldn't be in your shoes for worlds, Carfax! Still, I'm awfully glad you turned out."

"Same here!" said the others in chorus.

"So long as we win the Coker Cup, I sha'n't care if it snows!" said Jimmy.

"And we're going to win it, or I'm a Dutchman! If only you fellows can bag a goal in the second half, everything in the garden will be lovely. I'll see that the Fifth don't bag any."

The referee blew his whistle, and the teams lined up again.

For the most part the spectators supported the plucky Removeites. Their sympathies were strongly in favour of the smaller and younger team. But it was generally anticipated that the Remove defence would break down in the second half. Jimmy Carfax could not hold out for ever against such determined opposition.

The game was resumed at a fast and thrilling pace.

By sheer dash Blundell forced his way towards the Remove goal, and fired in a fierce, low shot.

Jimmy Carfax flung himself full length and grabbed at the leather. Then he rose to his feet, bounced the ball, and punted it far up the field.

Peter Todd, at centre-half, gained possession, and sent the Remove forwards away.

Vernon-Smith showed the defenders a clean pair of heels, and raced along the touchline.

"Go it, Smithy!"

A few yards from the corner-flag Vernon-Smith paused. Coker and Greene, the two backs, expected him to pass to Harry Wharton, and they closed in on Wharton accordingly.

But, instead of passing the ball into the centre, Vernon-Smith steadied himself and fired in a scorching shot from an extremely awkward angle.

The goalkeeper was on the alert. He got his hands to the ball, but it came rushing in with such stinging force that he failed to hold it.

There was a roar as the sphere crashed into the net.

"Goal!"

Instantly there was a rush of feet in Vernon-Smith's direction, and his exuberant comrades thumped him on the back, and wrung his hands, and went into ecstasies of delight.

The Remove were on top! And on top they remained, though the Fifth moved heaven and earth to score an equalising goal. They set up a spirited and sustained attack, and their shots were well on the target. But Jimmy Carfax was equal to every emergency. He gave an exhibition of goalkeeping the like of which had never been seen before.

When Johnny Bull accidentally handled the ball inside the penalty area it seemed that all was lost.

The referee ordered a spot-kick, and Blundell took it. He shot hard and true, but Jimmy Carfax, by a superb effort, got the tips of his fingers to the ball and deflected it over the cross-bar. It was a thrilling save.

And so the ding-dong struggle went on. The game had resolved itself into a duel between Jimmy Carfax and the Fifth Form forwards. And Jimmy's wonderful work "between the sticks" earned him the constant plaudits of the crowd.

Time was flying fast now.

With only five minutes remaining Blundell & Co. redoubled their efforts to score.

Hilton, who had been playing an exceptionally clever game at inside-right, suddenly tricked Tom Brown and cut in towards goal. The ball was at his toes, and all he had to do was to steer it into the net. Jimmy Carfax could never have stopped it at such short range.

But Jimmy's anticipation was wonderful. He did not give Hilton a chance to get in his shot. He leapt forward like a panther, and then dived low, in order to take the ball from Hilton's toes.

(Continued on page 20.)

FREE

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Don't miss this great GIFT Boys! Every copy of this week's PICTORIAL MAGAZINE (on sale Tuesday, Nov. 27th) contains an 8-page album of the chorus words and music of the pick of this year's Panto Songs. It also contains the opening chapters of a wonderful story entitled "THE BLACK MANDARIN," by SAX ROHMER, that master writer of Eastern mystery. Make sure of this week's

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

Supplement No. 151. HARRY WHARTON EDITOR Week ending December 1st, 1923.



Some of our contributors state their views in connection with this raging controversy.

GEORGE WINGATE:

No—a thousand times no! A fag is not qualified to be a study-owner. He has no sense of responsibility, and his study would soon go to rack and ruin. Some time ago I happened to be called away from Greyfriars for a week. I told my fag that he could make use of my study during my absence. When I came back and gazed into my familiar apartment I had several sorts of a fit! That grubby young fag had got my study into a terrible state. There were great splashes of ink on the walls, the ceiling, and the carpet. All my priceless ornaments on the mantelpiece had been broken to bits. Somebody had put his boot through the glass panel of the bookcase. The carpet had never been beaten; the furniture had never been dusted; the window-panes were thick with grime; and in the fireplace there was a mountain of ashes, which had never been cleared away. Moreover, the tea-things had not been washed up for a whole week. Never again shall I hand over my study to the tender mercies of a fag. And never shall I advocate that fags should be allowed to have studies of their own!

ALONZO TODD:

I must take up the cudgels on behalf of the oppressed. Why should the dear little fellows in the First, Second, and Third Forms have to wander about in a homeless state, like so many Ishmaels? Most certainly they should have studies, and cosy and comfortable ones, too. A new wing should be added to the school building, and every fag should be given a study of his own. My Uncle Benjamin, I feel sure, would give his blessing to such an arrangement. As for me, it has my whole-hearted approval.

BOB CHERRY:

If fags had studies they would be unbearably cheeky and "superior." They would start strutting around as if they

owned the earth and all that therein is. I can't say I favour this proposal at all. Let the members of the inky-fingered tribe remain as they are!

DICKY NUGENT:

this is a burning queschun and one which i have very deeply at hart. me and my mates have suffered far too long from tirrorany and oppression. why shouldn't we have studies, indeed? it's a crool shame that we should all have to herd together in one room. i have spoken to my pals about it, and gatty says here-here and tubb says i quite agree with you dicky old bird. so we're going to put up a petition to the head, and if he duzzent give us a fair hearing there will be a Fags' Rebellion, so Greyfriars can look out for skwalls!

GERALD LODER:

I don't know about fags having studies, but all studies should have fags—a box of a hundred Turkish! I can understand smoking being prohibited among the smaller fry; but why a man of the world, like myself, should be debarred from this luxury passes my comprehension!

TOM BROWN:

Every fag should have his own furnished, self-contained flat, comprised of two reception-rooms, one large bedroom, a bath-room, a kitchen, and all the usual offices. Moreover, every fag should have a motor-car of his own, and he should be allowed to do what he jolly well likes. This is supposed to be a free country. Very well, then. Do not deprive the harmless, necessary fag of all the little luxuries of life. He has to work hard enough in fagging for his seniors. Let him, therefore, enjoy his leisure by having a cheery, cosy flat to go into, and a magnificent touring-car to take him for a joy-ride whenever he feels so disposed. Finally, every fag should be presented with a gratuity of a thousand pounds from the school funds. If the Head promises to do all

this, I'll try and wangle to get dropped from the Remove into the Third, so that I shall be a fag myself!

MR. QUELCH:

There seems to be considerable agitation—a raging controversy, in fact—as to whether small boys should have studies. I confess I am not at all in sympathy with the idea. Those in the higher Forms should always have more privileges than the infants in the First and Second. If a small boy were given a study he would at once start to ape his superiors. He would give himself airs, and there would be no holding him. Further, he would probably neglect his study, and allow it to get into a dreadful state of chaos and confusion. All things considered, I think the allotment of studies had better remain as at present.

EDITORIAL!

By **HARRY WHARTON.**

"STUDY" is not used in the swotting sense in this issue. We refer to the studies in which the Removites, and those in higher Forms, have their habitation.

Personally, I regard it as one of our greatest privileges to be allowed studies. How awful it would be if we were all herded together in one general room, like the inky-fingered fags of the Second and Third!

Of course, the Remove studies—with one exception—are anything but palatial. They are rough-and-ready sort of rooms, and the furniture is of the knock-about variety.

The exception is Lord Mauleverer's study. There have been changes in his lordship's fortunes, I know; but when he happens to be rolling in riches, his study is indeed a place of luxury, fit for an Eastern prince.

The one great drawback to the Remove studies is the overcrowding. Some studies have three occupants; some four. It would be ever so much nicer if each fellow had a study to himself.

At present we are rather handicapped when we hold a study celebration. We invite all our chums; and when the merry guests turn up we don't know where to put them! The window-sill and the coal-scuttle come in handy on such occasions; and I have even seen guests sitting in a row in the fireplace!

Besides serving as a study, my apartment is also the editorial office of the "Greyfriars Herald." The carpet is worn threadbare by the tread of numerous callers and contributors. It is no uncommon sight to find a dozen of them present at the same time, shouting and gesticulating, and making a row that would put the Tower of Babel to shame.

"Three Fags in a Boat!"—by Dicky Nugent—next Monday!



Black for Bulstrode!

By
TOM BROWN.

STUDY No. 2, in the Remove passage, is the joint property of Bulstrode, Hazeldene, and your humble servant. But the curious part of it is, Bulstrode has a sort of obsession that the study belongs solely to him. He always refers to it as "My study," instead of "The study I share with Tom Brown and Hazeldene."

When a fellow gets an absurd notion like that into his noddle, and imagines that the study is entirely his own, to do what he likes with, there's bound to be trouble.

One day Bulstrode took a mad fit into his head. He thought the study would look much nicer, and be a place fit for heroes to live in, if he introduced some startling colour-scheme.

Now, I shouldn't have minded very much if he had chosen a sensible colour, such as blue. It would be jolly nice to walk into a blue study, with a blue

carpet, blue wallpaper, blue chairs, and so forth. The doctors tell us that blue has a soothing effect on the nerves; and I see no reason to doubt that statement.

Bulstrode, however, went and chose the abominable colour of black. Goodness know what made him choose it, or why he wanted to interfere with the study at all. But Bulstrode is subject to periodical fits of lunacy; and this was one of them.

Now, I shouldn't have objected to a black-and-white colour scheme; because a study looks jolly nice when these two colours blend. But black by itself is a most sombre, dismal, depressing colour. Makes you think of funerals, and other sad things.

However, Bulstrode didn't consult me in the matter at all. One half-holiday, when I had gone over to Courtfield to see a footer-match, he set to work to carry out his scheme.

First of all, the mad imbecile bought some black rolls of wallpaper and a black carpet. He also obtained some black polish for the furniture. The mantelpiece and bookcase were black already, so these were all right.

Having papered the walls, and laid down the black carpet, and blackened the table and the chairs, Bulstrode turned his attention to the ceiling.

You may believe me or not, as you like, but the thundering idiot went and blacklead the ceiling!

By this time, the study presented a very mournful appearance. Black predominated. All the bright ornaments had been removed from the mantelpiece and put away in the cupboard. And the cupboard itself had been given a coat of black.

Black window curtains were hung, and a black cloth was laid on the table. You can guess what my feelings were when I came back from Courtfield and stepped into the study. It was like entering a photographer's dark-room.

Bulstrode was there, looking very pleased with his handiwork.

"Hallo, Browney!" he said cheerfully. "I thought I'd carry out a few improvements to my study. How do you like my colour-scheme?"

"It isn't complete!" I said grimly, clenching my fists.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"We might as well have everything black while we're about it!" I said.

And I rushed at my insane study-mate and presented him with a beautiful pair of black eyes!

Needless to state, Bulstrode's colour-scheme wasn't allowed to remain. It was changed to something brighter; and Bulstrode won't be in a hurry to make any drastic "improvements" again!

THE COKER CHALLENGE CUP!

(Continued from page 18.)

The rest of the forwards came running up, and there was quite a melee on the ground in front of the Remove citadel.

It was like a Rugby scrum. Jimmy Carfax was almost lost to view in the centre of the struggling mass. But he lifted the ball clear, and hurled it out to Johnny Bull. And at the very instant that he did so Jimmy received an accidental kick on the side of the head that knocked him silly.

Instantly the game was stopped.

"Make way, you fellows!" panted Blundell. "The kid's hurt, and badly, if I'm not mistaken!"

Mr. Lascelles was the referee, and he came hurrying to the spot.

Jimmy Carfax was indeed badly hurt. He had lapsed into unconsciousness, and he lay white and still.

"Faith, an' I believe it was I that kicked him, sir!" said Fitzgerald, in great distress. "It was an accident entirely."

"Of course!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Nobody would dream of thinking otherwise. Carfax must be removed to the sanatorium at once."

Willing hands lifted Jimmy Carfax from the ground, and he was carried off.

It was at this moment that the furious and enraged Mr. Prout arrived on the scene.

But when Mr. Prout caught sight of

his nephew's white face and closed eyes, his fury ebbed away on the instant.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "What has happened?"

"Carfax was accidentally kicked on the head, sir," said Blundell. "We're taking him along to the sanny."

Mr. Prout said no word, but an expression of grave anxiety came over his face, for he was extremely fond of his nephew, despite the fact that Jimmy Carfax was such a scapegrace in many respects.

The master of the Fifth followed the procession to the sanny, and the doctor was sent for. He arrived in his car shortly afterwards, and by this time Jimmy Carfax had regained consciousness.

Fortunately, the injury was not so serious as had at first appeared likely. But it would keep Jimmy Carfax in the sanny for several days.

Having satisfied themselves that Jimmy was not in danger, the footballers returned to the field to play out the remaining few moments of the game.

Tom Brown took the place of the injured goalie, and there were some anxious moments for the Remove. But the New Zealand junior kept the citadel intact until the final whistle rang out.

The Remove had beaten the Fifth by one goal to nil, and had won the Coker Cup. And the scenes which followed that memorable match beggared all description!

That night Mr. Prout kept a rather anxious vigil by the bedside of his nephew.

Jimmy Carfax passed a very troubled night, but next morning he sank into a deep and refreshing slumber, and when

he awoke he looked better and felt better, and was obviously well on the way to recovery.

Nobody ever knew what passed between uncle and nephew. They had a long conversation in private, and the upshot of it was that harmony was restored between Mr. Prout and Jimmy, and they mutually agreed to let bygones be bygones.

A few days later Horace Coker presented his silver challenge cup in Big Hall.

Harry Wharton, the captain of the team that triumphed, received the cup at Coker's hands. And the great Horace made a very happy little speech for the occasion. It wasn't the speech that he had written down beforehand. That had clean slipped his memory. But his impromptu remarks made a much happier impression than any prepared speech could have done. And Horace Coker was voted by one and all to be a jolly good sportsman.

In the fullness of time Jimmy Carfax bade good-bye to Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sorry to see him go. Greyfriars' loss would be Grandcourt's gain. And the Remove chums will ever retain lively recollections of Jimmy Carfax and of his glorious goalkeeping, which enabled the Remove to win the Coker Cup!

THE END.

(You've enjoyed this yarn? Of course you have! Well, then, next Monday's long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. is even better. The title "The Rebel of the Remove!"—is sufficient indication of the treat to come. Don't miss it!)

"Bunter's Boat!"—specially recounted by Dick Penfold!



Knocked Out!

THE Rangers crowded into the dressing-room close on the heels of Ronald Swiveller, the raucous shouts of the enraged spectators who were desirous of getting to close quarters with the inside-left floating in after them.

But Swiveller was safe enough in the dressing-room, and he knew it. He faced his fellow-players, a sneering smile upon his thin lips.

Jim Blakeney approached him.

"That was a dirty trick you played me, Swiveller," he said quietly. "And I think it demands an explanation."

"No such thing," retorted the inside-left aggressively. "It was a pure accident."

"That's a lie!" interposed Digby, the centre-half. "I witnessed the whole incident. To my mind, it was a deliberate attempt at injuring Jim. You're a worm, Swiveller!"

Several of the remaining players nodded in assent, and Swiveller was quick to note those who kept silent. Being Mornington Hardacre's nephew, he had a certain following amongst the eleven who toadied to him, with the idea, as they thought, of keeping on the right side of the managing-director of the club.

"You can say what you like, Digby," growled Swiveller; "but I still choose to call it an accident. What's more," he added, turning to Blakeney, "you'll get no further explanation from me."

"For the gracious way in which you pass off the affair," said Blakeney, a hard gleam in his blue eyes, "I'll repeat what friend Digby called you. You're a worm!"

Smack!

Swiveller's hand shot out and dealt the centre-forward a stinging slap across the face.

The players, scenting trouble, formed a circle. All eyes were turned on Jim to see how he would take the affront.

"Right, you worm!" he rapped out, a red flush mounting his cheek where the inside-left's palm had struck. "You'll fight me for that!"

Swiveller laughed scornfully.

"Come on, Mister High-and-Mighty Blakeney!" he sneered. "I'll knock some of the conceit out of you!"

In a moment the two were fighting hammer-and-tongs. Although Swiveller had the advantage of height, weight, and reach, Blakeney was as light as a feather on his toes. His attitude suggested a

natural fighter, whilst the crouch adopted by Swiveller was anything but a scientific pose.

Thud!

The inside-left staggered back from a straight left that seemed to dart out like a piston-rod. Before he could recover his balance a right swing caught him full on the chin. He lashed out blindly with his fists, but they landed on nothing more vulnerable than the empty air, what time his opponent was dancing out of danger.

"Go it, Jim!"

"Into him, Swiveller!"

The cries of the rival parties resounded through the dressing-room. Old Jeff Dunstan, the trainer, eyed the

HOW THE STORY OPENS.

JIM BLAKENEY, the eighteen-year-old centre-forward of the Middleham Rangers, who is a nephew of

TIGER SLEEK, a notorious criminal, who has escaped the clutches of the police, and who now has designs upon a secret wireless ray invented by

MORNINGTON HARDACRE, the managing-director of the Middleham Rangers.

RONALD SWIVELLER, inside-left in the Rangers eleven, and nephew of Mornington Hardacre.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective, and his clever young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, are engaged upon a case connected with the theft of a valuable pearl necklace. By a strange series of circumstances Ferrers Locke is thrown into contact with Jim Blakeney, who confides in the famous sleuth. It transpires that Tiger Sleek seeks to compel Jim Blakeney to steal the specifications of Mornington Hardacre's invention, and, when he finds the lad obstinate, resorts to brutal methods of persuasion. Ferrers Locke, who has rescued Blakeney from the River Twee, into which he had been thrown by six members of the Tiger's gang, offers to take a hand in the case, and announces his intention of residing in Middleham in the guise of Colonel Challis.

An exciting match between the Rangers and Ashdale United sees Ronald Swiveller, who resents the familiarity between Blakeney and Mornington Hardacre, eager to do the young centre-forward an injury. The crowd, taking exception to Swiveller's shady tactics, swarms over the pitch at the conclusion of the match with the intention of "mobbing" him. In fear and trembling, Swiveller races full pelt for the dressing-room, in the sanctuary of which he is safe from the enraged crowd. Once there, he pauses to shake his fist at an imaginary Jim Blakeney, and swears that he will be revenged.

(Now read on.)

proceedings with a peculiar smile on his wrinkled face.

"He's sure some lad!" he muttered to Digby. "Why, Jim'll knock spots off him!"

But there was a lot of pent-up hatred in Swiveller's breast to deaden the pain of those terrific blows. He rushed in at his slim opponent, his big fists striking home with deadly effect. His superior weight began to tell against Jim Blakeney, who was obliged to retreat. Swiveller ran away with the impression that his opponent was weakening, and, in his eagerness to deal the winning blow, dropped his guard.

Thud—thud!

Jim Blakeney was quick to seize his opportunity. He darted in, and dealt two stinging blows that took Swiveller upon the chin and ribs respectively. It was the famous "one-two" punch, which, strangely enough, the Tiger had taught him years ago.

Swiveller clawed the air for one fleeting second, and then pitched in a dazed heap to the floor.

"Good for you, Jim!" yelled Digby encouragingly. "Let him have some more of those!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, Swiveller!"

The friends of the inside-left beseeched their man to get to his feet. But Swiveller was already repenting of his desire to "knock some of the conceit" out of his slim opponent. He showed great reluctance to continue the combat until the jeers of the players compelled him to get to his feet.

Jim Blakeney stood back whilst he did so, although the centre-forward could with ease have sent Swiveller to the boards again the moment he had straightened up.

"I'll smash you!" muttered Swiveller thickly, obviously in no hurry to do the "smashing," however, judging by the way he kept out of range of those deadly fists for the next moment or so.

"Into him, Jim!"

Seeing that his opponent was inclined to adopt defensive tactics, Jim became the aggressor. And for the next three minutes Swiveller hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. Blows came at him from every angle, and his lean face was soon puffed and swollen—ample testimony to the strength of those slim shoulders of Blakeney's.

The young centre-forward did not emerge from these rushes unscathed. Swiveller could hit hard—Jim had found that out to his cost. But the honours

Don't miss a line of next week's instalment, chums—it's ripping!

were with him. Feinting with a right swing, Blakeney drew his opponent's guard, and swung over a left. The thud as it landed could be heard all over the dressing-room.

Swiveller fell into a clinch, throwing his full weight against Blakeney, who was again obliged to retreat. He was brought up sharp by the ring of footballers, who were pressed against the wall of the dressing-room. Swiveller saw his opponent turn his head for the fraction of a second as he crashed into Digby, and immediately rained in a wild succession of blows on the unguarded face.

They carried all the weight of his body behind them, and Blakeney toppled over and crashed to the floor.

Some of the players began to hiss. Strictly speaking, Swiveller had not infringed the rules of boxing in taking advantage of his opponent's lapse, but he had infringed the rules of chivalry. The conditions under which the two were fighting were not normal, and the footballers were not slow to voice their disgust.

"Foul! Why don't you hit him when he's looking, Swiveller?" roared Tony Williams.

"He can't!" exclaimed Digby, the skipper of the eleven, with crushing sarcasm.

Swiveller bit his lip, and glared down at the prostrate figure of his adversary. Anxious eyes watched Jim Blakeney struggle to rise, and a round of cheers broke out when the plucky centre-forward succeeded in reaching his feet.

Swiveller leaped in, his very eagerness evoking the disgust of the sportsmen present, who remembered Blakeney's chivalry when the positions had been reversed. But there was no cause for alarm. Jim's footwork stood him in good stead. He side-stepped neatly, and danced away to safety, leaving the baffled Swiveller beating the air.

"Good lad, Jim!"

Evading a succession of wild rushes, Jim began to feel his strength returning. He fought back, blow for blow, and the spectators began to get wildly excited. Then came the opening Jim had been playing for.

Swiveller lowered his guard, and it cost him dear. A straight right, carrying behind it all the strength that Jim could muster, caught him flush on the jaw. The inside-left's knees sagged, his eyes almost started from their sockets, his big fists beat a frenzied tattoo on the air, and then he crashed to the floor, unconscious.

"Bravo, Jim!"

"A fair knock-out!"

"Get up, Swiveller!"

The Rangers echoed their applause and entreaties, according to the principal the rival parties favoured; but the majority of the shouts were for Jim.

Swiveller, sprawled on his back, was oblivious to the cheers acclaiming the victor. That last blow had fairly "put him to sleep."

And in the midst of the wild confusion that obtained, Mornington Hardacre, the managing-director of the club, walked into the dressing-room. A hush fell upon the footballers as they became aware of Hardacre's presence, and the circle broke away for him to approach.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "A fight! Hardly the place for that kind of thing, boys!" he added.

Then for the first time he became aware of the combatants. A glance at the sprawling heap of humanity on the

floor told him that it was his nephew Ronald Swiveller. Another glance at the ring of faces round him singled out the bruised countenance of Jim Blakeney.

"What's the trouble, Jim?"

Before the centre-forward could answer the director's question Harold Digby strode forward.

"I think I can best answer that question, sir," said the Rangers' skipper firmly. "The trouble started with that rotten trick Swiveller played just before the close of the match."

Mornington Hardacre frowned. As a matter of fact he had been a witness to the scene on the field of play, and had shared the opinion of the spectators. He had mentally registered a censure for his nephew, and with that object in view had visited the dressing-room.

"I see!" he said slowly. "A very regrettable business, very."

Digby then told of the inside-left's aggressive and insolent manner when Jim had called upon him to explain, and Hardacre's frown deepened.

"Then I hope you've taught him a lesson, Jim!" he said at length.

"I'm sorry for what happened, sir," replied the centre-forward. "But—but I—"

"You could hardly do otherwise than fight, eh?" concluded Hardacre. "Never mind, now—forget it. Dunstan," he added, turning to the trainer, "you'd better look to Swiveller. He seems to be in need of some attention."

The trainer hurried over to the fallen man.

Swiveller's senses were slowly returning, and he had heard Hardacre's remarks about the "lesson." He was consumed by an inward burning hatred of the man who had brought him so low in his uncle's esteem, for it was obvious to him that Hardacre favoured the cause of Jim Blakeney.

The managing-director of the club, without a further glance at his nephew, quietly vacated the dressing-room, leaving behind him a buzz of conversation.

"He's a jolly good sport," declared Digby enthusiastically.

"One of the best!" said Tony Williams fervently.

Jim Blakeney bit his lip. He was conscious of the awkward position Mornington Hardacre must have felt himself to be in when he had seen his nephew sprawled out unconscious on the floor.

"Cheer up, Jim!" exclaimed Digby, slapping the centre-forward heartily on the shoulder. "I know what you're thinking about, but don't worry, old man Hardacre is first and last a sportsman. And between you and me," he added, lowering his voice, "he doesn't think too much of that nephew of his."

Jim Blakeney nodded and walked over to his clothes.

The Rangers changed into their ordinary attire, what time Jeff Dunstan administered restoratives to the crest-fallen Swiveller—a task the old trainer would sooner have seen fall to the lot of someone else.

Swiveller slowly dressed himself without even a word of thanks to Dunstan for his services. The inside-left was the last of the players to leave the dressing-room.

"Thank goodness he's gone!" muttered Dunstan, watching the receding figure of Hardacre's nephew. "He's a wrong 'un if I knows anything about 'em!"

Swiveller lounged away from the ground, keeping a watchful eye open for any lingering spectators. But the indignant crowd had now departed, and

the inside-left was able to reach his quarters without molestation.

That same evening he could have been seen staring moodily into the fire in his sitting-room, his imaginative brain conjuring up the smiling face of Jim Blakeney, the young man whom he already hated to the exclusion of all else.

"The young cad," he murmured half-aloud. "I'll make him sorry he crossed my path. I'll crush him!"

Menzine Pulls the Strings!

"SWIVELLER'S late!"

Michael Menzine, commission agent, leaned back in his arm-chair and contemplated a huge diamond ring that glittered on the little finger of his left hand. A glance at that ring on occasions when the wealthy bookmaker was annoyed seemed to have the effect of restoring his good humour.

The present instance proved no exception to the rule. With a fat, oily smile Menzine dismissed his head clerk an hour before his allotted time, a circumstance which evoked just as greasy a smile in return. Corbett and Menzine had much in common, both mentally and physically. Both lived, rolled, and had their being, so to speak, in a super-abundance of fat; both possessed double chins, beady, crafty eyes, and each distrusted the other on every possible occasion.

"Thank you, sir," murmured Corbett suavely. "I have balanced the day's accounts, sir, and if I may be permitted to say so, sir, we've done exceptionally fine business."

"Hum!" Menzine could not trust himself to say more. Like many another man who makes money easily, he hated to be reminded of his success by his subordinates. And this dashed clerk of his always seemed to think that he had had a hand in the "good business."

"Good-night, Mr. Menzine!"

The oily voice of his clerk interrupted the bookmaker's reflections. He bestowed a condescending nod upon Corbett, and watched his fat cumbersome figure roll out of the room.

"Hum! Corbett seems to be getting fat," muttered Menzine. "He's living too well, which means that I am paying him too much. I think a reduction in salary is indicated. Huh!"

Michael Menzine stretched his fat legs comfortably, and settled down to wait for his expected visitor.

Half an hour passed thus, and the bookmaker's good temper was beginning to wane again. He had just reached that point in his reflections where he half regretted having dismissed his head clerk an hour earlier, when a discreet knock sounded on his office door.

"Come in!" boomed Menzine, having first straightened his fat figure in the big red-leather chair.

The door swung open, and the office-boy from the outer room appeared.

"A Mr. Ronald Swiveller to see you, sir," he announced.

"Ah! Show Mr. Swiveller in here, my boy!"

The office-boy retired, and Menzine dragged some papers before him and began to study them with an affected air of interest. The door opened again and Ronald Swiveller was ushered in.

"Ah, Swiveller," said Menzine, extending a clammy hand in greeting, "take a seat."

The office-boy pushed forward an arm-chair and again retired. Swiveller waited for the door to close, and then he leaned forward in the chair.

What happens to Ronald Swiveller next week?—

"I'm sorry, Mr. Menzine," he exclaimed, "I can't raise the money to settle my account!"

Mr. Menzine was a trifle taken aback at this straight-to-the-point outburst. He hated shocks of any kind, and this was a shock, for he had counted on receiving the hundred pounds Swiveller owed him. His oily, persuasive manner vanished on the instant, and he regarded his visitor coldly.

"That's the third time you've postponed settlement, Mr. Swiveller," he said. "It won't do, you know."

Ronald Swiveller bit his lip and fidgeted nervously with his hat.

"I'm sorry," he repeated, "but—but the old man won't stump up any more—not for the moment, at any rate."

"I always thought that Hardacre was a generous man where you were concerned," said the bookmaker slowly. "Anything happened?"

"He's not half so generous now that that cub Blakeney has turned up in the team," growled Swiveller. "The old man's taken a violent fancy to him, and I'm receiving the cold shoulder in consequence."

"A fine player, Jim Blakeney," said the bookmaker in a tone that conveyed regret. "A very fine player!"

"Yes, hang him!" ground out Swiveller. "I'd like to fetch him down a peg."

Michael Menzine elevated his bushy eyebrows a half inch or so, and steadily regarded his visitor. He could read all the burning animosity that rang behind that outburst of Swiveller's, and he was thinking deeply.

For the space of five minutes there was silence in the room. Then Menzine spoke.

"You wouldn't like me to apply to your uncle for redress, would you, Mr. Swiveller?" he asked. "You wouldn't like me to tell him that you are a gambler—that you back horses and waste his money in paying your debts—"

"What the deuce do you mean?" demanded Swiveller, rising to his feet. "You wouldn't dare tell him! It would ruin my chances. He's no children, and—and—"

"You think you'll be his heir, eh?" grinned Menzine. "I see your point. But listen here, Swiveller"—Menzine's voice was harsh—"I can't wait until Hardacre dies before I get my money. I've an alternative to offer!"

"And that is?" said Swiveller harshly.

"You're playing a return match against Portdale next Saturday," said Menzine in a whisper. "Do you think you'll win?"

"Of course," answered Swiveller. "We beat them three nil on their own ground a month ago. But what's the game?"

"A game that will enable you to pay off the hundred quid you owe me," replied Menzine with a cunning smile. "Don't you think the Rangers could lose?" he added significantly.

Ronald Swiveller leaped to his feet in horrified amazement. To do him justice he was not such an out-and-out rogue as Menzine had given him credit for. He picked up his hat and made for the door.

"You scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "You cur!"

"Stop!"

Michael Menzine was holding aloft his bejewelled hand, and Swiveller turned. "Don't hurry away like that," continued the bookmaker in the same oily voice. "Besides, you are forgetting your uncle. He wouldn't like to hear of



A straight right caught Swiveller full on the chin. He sprawled on his back, oblivious to the cheers acclaiming the victor: "Good old Jim!" "A fair knock-out!" In the midst of the confusion Mornington Hardacre walked into the dressing-room (See page 22.)

his nephew's gambling propensities, now, would he?"

Swiveller walked back to his chair and sank wearily into it. He realised that the bookmaker held him in the hollow of his hand.

"There's no need to upset yourself, my dear friend," went on Menzine ingratiatingly. "We can arrange matters without any unpleasantness, I feel sure."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" asked Swiveller in a quavering voice.

"Just see that the Rangers don't win!" returned Menzine, his narrow eyes almost receding into his head. "There's nothing difficult about it. You are in the forward line—chances come your way to score, you understand?"

"Yes, but—but what about the other players?" faltered Swiveller. "One man can't upset the team's play."

"I've thought of that," said the rascally bookmaker, with a cunning smile. "You appear to have no friendly regard for Jim Blakeney. Well, here's your chance to wipe out the debt to me and score off him into the bargain. Listen here!"

For the next ten minutes or so the footballer and the bookmaker conversed in low tones. At the expiration of that time Swiveller rose to his feet, a hard glitter in his eyes.

"I'll do it, Menzine!" he muttered

hoarsely. "By heavens, it's an opportunity I've been longing for!"

Rubbing his fat hands with satisfaction, the bookmaker bowed his visitor off the premises, and then returned to his comfortable armchair.

Swiveller had bitten at the bait dangled before his eyes. Menzine considered the achievement as worthy of some celebration. He selected a choice Havana from his case and carefully lit it. Then he poured himself out some refreshment. Glass in hand, a complacent smile upon his oily features, he toasted to the success of the plan he had evolved.

The Anonymous Letter!

"JUST a moment, Jim!" The Rangers' eleven were coming off the ground after a stiff hour's exercise, when Mornington Hardacre button-holed Jim Blakeney. "Free for an hour or so?" he asked. "If so, we'll drive home for lunch and a chat."

"Thanks very much, Mr. Hardacre!" replied Jim. "I sha'n't be a moment changing."

Mornington Hardacre nodded and turned on his heel.

He was rejoined some few moments later by Blakeney, who had changed into ordinary attire. Together they entered

—And why does a certain bookmaker "pack up his traps"?

the former's Daimler car, which speedily ran them to the Myrtles—Hardacre's fine old Georgian mansion on the outskirts of the town—unconscious of the fact that the vengeful face of Ronald Swiveller had watched their departure from the ground.

Swiveller ground his teeth with rage. His uncle had severely rebuked him for his unsportsmanlike behaviour on the football field, and at the same time had impressed upon him the necessity for changing his extravagant ways—a course of action that was rendered extremely difficult by the fact that already a host of Swiveller's creditors were clamouring for settlement of their accounts. On the strength of that lecture which had taken place the morning after the fight with Blakeney, Swiveller had not possessed the "cheek" to ask his uncle for the necessary cash to clear his debts. In his blind rage Hardacre's nephew laid the blame of his present untenable position at the door of Jim Blakeney—the man, who, at that moment, was eating at Hardacre's table.

"The cad!" hissed Swiveller. "I'll make him sorry he ever saw Middleham! If he thinks that the old man will leave him his money he's backed a loser; I'll see to that!"

The object of these unreasonable observations was unaware of the fact that in Ronald Swiveller he had made an implacable and bitter enemy. During the lunch that followed his arrival at the Myrtles Jim Blakeney laughed and

chatted with Mornington Hardacre as if he hadn't a care or an enemy in the world.

But when the managing director of the club had seen his cigar well alight he fell into a deep and lengthy silence, that Jim found rather disconcerting.

"I've been troubled this last two days, Jim," said Hardacre at length, "about an anonymous letter I have received concerning you."

"Concerning me?" gasped Jim incredulously.

For answer Mornington Hardacre took from his pocket a letter and handed it to the young footballer.

"Read that!"

Wonderingly Jim took the typewritten missive and scanned it. As he did so a gasp of amazement escaped him. The letter ran:

"Dear Mr. Hardacre,—As a friend and supporter of the Rangers, I warn you to be on your guard against Jim Blakeney, who has wormed his way into your good graces. His presence in the team is explained by the arrival of a bookmaker in the vicinity who intends to make money out of the results obtained by the Rangers in their forthcoming matches. Jim Blakeney has been bribed to miss chances—in other words, to frame the results. You will scoff at this letter, as any sensible person would coming from an anonymous source. But for positive

proof watch carefully his play in the match against the Portdale Club on Saturday.

"A Loyal Supporter of the Rangers."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jim.

He seemed incapable of further speech for the moment.

"Don't take it to heart, sonny!" said Hardacre kindly. "I don't believe a single word of it, I assure you. There"—taking the letter and tearing it in fragments—"that's how much I believe in it."

"I can't understand it, sir," said Jim at length. "I know no bookmaker in Middleham. In fact, I don't know a bookmaker anywhere in England. I give you my word, sir," he added, looking the director straight in the face, "that there's not a particle of truth in the whole thing!"

Mornington Hardacre rose from his chair and crossed over to his protege. He patted the young man on the shoulder and smiled kindly.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have shown it to you, Jim," he said. "I must confess it worried me exceedingly. Already people in the town are beginning to talk scandal about you. Someone has taken great pains to spread these foul lies, and, as a natural consequence, there are plenty of idiots ready to believe every word."

"It fairly staggers me," said Jim blankly. "I can't imagine who would be rotter enough to resort to such dirty methods of injuring me."

"Blot it from your mind, my lad," continued Hardacre kindly. "Show them on Saturday what a centre-forward you are!"

"I'll play as I've never played before!" said Blakeney, a grim look settling on his handsome features. "Rely on me, Mr. Hardacre."

For the remainder of the afternoon the subject was dropped; but as Jim, having taken his leave of Hardacre, stepped out for his own rooms, the anonymous letter and the scandal it contained recurred in full force.

"I'll drop along to Ferrers Locke!" muttered the young footballer. "Perhaps he can get to the bottom of it."

Accordingly Blakeney walked through the town until he came to the Hotel Central. Remembering the great detective's instructions to ask for Colonel Challis, the young footballer carried them out, and was eventually shown to that gentleman's suite of rooms.

Prepared as he was to find the sleuth in a disguise of some sort, Jim started involuntarily as his keen eyes rested on the white-haired, soldierly-looking individual seated at the table. He quickly recovered his composure, however, and advanced.

"Glad to find you in, Mr. Locke—I mean, Colonel Challis," he greeted, as he shook hands with the famous detective. "My word, sir, one wouldn't recognise you in that get-up. It's marvellous! But to get to business, sir. I'm rather worried—"

"Yes, my lad," smiled the detective. "I can quite believe it. This scandal running the round is decidedly injurious to your reputation. Do you think it is another move of the Tiger's?"

"Not for one moment," replied Blakeney. "It wouldn't suit his book at all to injure me in that way unless—"

"Unless," interrupted the sleuth, "he has found someone else in the team willing to do his bidding."

A VEILED PROPOSAL!

"Don't you think the Rangers could lose?" said Menzine significantly. "You scoundrel!" shouted Swiveller, leaping to his feet and making for the door. "You——" "Stop!" The bookmaker waved aloft a bejewelled hand. "Hadn't you better think over things before you decide to go?" (See page 23.)



Don't forget—Frank Richards writes only for the MAGNET and the "Popular"!

Jim Blakeney started.

"I'd never given a thought to that possibility," he said.

Briefly he outlined the trouble with Ronald Swiveller which had ended in a fight between them, and concluded with the anonymous, typewritten letter Mornington Hardacre had received.

The sleuth listened very attentively, and a grim smile played about his lips.

"Swiveller is the fellow we must keep an eye on," he said at length. "I should imagine that he's capable of any villainy. It's a pity, though, Hardacre destroyed that anonymous letter—it might have helped us. There was nothing peculiar about the missive, I suppose?"

"No," replied Jim thoughtfully, "unless you would call the fact of the letter 'r' being out of alignment—wherever it appeared—with the rest of the letters as peculiar."

"Ah!" exclaimed the detective. "That is a small point, but it may be useful."

For another half-hour or so the footballer and the pseudo Colonel Challis discussed the situation; and then Jim took his leave.

"There's something pretty deep here!" muttered the sleuth when Jim had departed. "The words of the anonymous letter drawing Hardacre's attention to the match against Portdale on Saturday would suggest that between now and then something is likely to happen to Jim to upset his play. Hum!"

For ten minutes the sleuth leaned back in his chair, to all intents and purposes idly smoking. But his keen brain was busy with the problem of the anonymous letter and the scandal concerning Blakeney already running like wildfire through the town. At the end of that time he rose to his feet and walked out of his rooms.

Five minutes later Locke was idly pacing the main street of Middleham, when his attention was aroused by the appearance of Ronald Swiveller—whom he knew by sight—walking hurriedly down a back street.

With a muttered ejaculation Ferrers Locke turned on his heel and followed the footballer. Keeping a distance of fifty yards behind his quarry, the detective saw Swiveller dart down another side-turning. Locke quickened his pace, but when he arrived at the street in question it was deserted.

"Hum!" he ejaculated. "Friend Swiveller has evidently entered one of these buildings. He couldn't possibly have reached the end of the street in that short time, even if he had run."

Carelessly looking at the name-plates outside the houses the sleuth went up and down the street until he came to a brass-plate bearing the name, "Michael Menzine, Commission Agent."

"So far so good!" chuckled Locke. "The only book-maker in the whole thoroughfare seems likely to be the person upon whom Swiveller has called. I'll make sure."

The detective entered the building, and found the offices he sought. A tap at the "Enquiry" door brought a clerk upon the scene.

"Mr. Menzine?" asked the sleuth. "Ah, he's at home? Good! Kindly inform him that Colonel Challis would like to see him for five minutes if it's convenient."

"Very good, sir," replied the clerk, taking the piece of pasteboard Locke handed him. "Will you kindly step into the waiting-room? Mr. Menzine is engaged for the moment."

"Oh, I can wait!"

Ferrers Locke selected a chair in the waiting-room near another door marked "Private," and waited. From the office beyond he could hear the muffled sounds of conversation, but was unable to distinguish anything. Five minutes later the door opened, and Mr. Menzine appeared on the threshold, bowing obsequiously to his departing visitor, who was none other than Ronald Swiveller.

Ferrers Locke, from the corner of his eye, identified the visitor and then yawned.

"Good-afternoon, Colonel Challis!" greeted the fat book-maker pleasantly. "Will you step inside? Take a seat."

The "colonel" plumped himself into an armchair, making a pretence at breathing hard after his exertions. His quick eye, however, was taking in every detail of the room.

"I would like to open an account with you, Mr. Menzine," said the "colonel" at length. "I am rather fond of a bit of racing; don't you know, and as I'm staying at the General for a month or so—"

"Certainly, sir," smiled Menzine, rubbing his fat hands together. "I will instruct my clerk to put you on the books straight away."

(Continued on page 26.)

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HORNBY AND ZULU TRAINS ARE GUARANTEED



MECCANO LTD. BINNS RD. LIVERPOOL



Quick as lightning the disguised Ferrers Locke rose to his feet and stood gazing down at the typewriter on the bookmaker's desk. Suddenly the office door opened, and the fat, cunning features of Michael Menzine peered in. (See this page.)

He crossed the room, and, asking his visitor to excuse him for a moment, disappeared upon the other side of the office door. It was an opportunity that Locke would never have dreamed possible. Quick as lightning, the sleuth rose to his feet, and stood gazing down at the typewriter on the bookmaker's desk. He was just in time to see that the "r" in the type-bar of the machine was out of alignment when the office door opened and the fat, cunning features of Michael Menzine peered in.

"Dashed handy little machine you've got there," remarked the "colonel," with an engaging smile, as he noted the suspicious look on the bookmaker's face. "Pardon my asking, but are they reliable—these portable machines? They always appear to me to be rather frail."

The suspicious look faded from Menzine's face, and he laughed.

"I find this particular machine very useful for carrying backwards and forwards with me when there's a lot to be done, Colonel Challis. As for being frail—well, I'm no typist, rather heavy on the keys, as a matter of fact; but it seems to stand up to my treatment all right."

"Does it, indeed!" murmured the visitor admiringly. "A very dandy little machine, very!"

After a few more pleasantries the "colonel" took his leave, being assured by the rascally bookmaker that every

commission would receive his personal attention.

Once outside in the street Ferrers Locke smiled.

"A very lucky afternoon!" he muttered to himself. "Swiveller and this fat rascal Menzine in confab together and a machine with the 'r' in the type-bar out of alignment. Hum! Methinks I know now who wrote the anonymous letter. With Swiveller and this fat scoundrel Menzine working hand-in-glove, the Tiger and his precious gang hovering in the background, Middleham seems likely to afford some excitement."

Behind the Scenes!

"LISTEN here, boys!"

Tiger Sleek motioned to his rascally confederates to draw near. The scene was an underground room in one of the worst tenement houses in Middleham. Thus far it had afforded an excellent hiding-place for the gang.

The "boys" drew up their chairs to the table and gave their attention.

"It's time we got busy again," said the Tiger. "I 'phoned up Ferrers Locke's place to-day to find out the lie of the land, and that cub Jack Drake—his assistant—informed me that his master had been called away to the Continent on urgent business, and was not likely to be returning to London for a month or so."

A murmur of relief ran round the gathering at this piece of news.

"Things are working very well for us in Middleham," continued Sleek. "Hardacre's nephew—I've taken pains to find out—is a bit of a goer. He hates Jim like poison, and I rather fancy that all this rumour about Jim's playing a double game and his being hand-in-glove with a bookmaker is a piece of Swiveller's handiwork. Well and good. What Jim wouldn't do for us perhaps Swiveller will. So far as I can find out, Swiveller is reckoning on inheriting Hardacre's money when the old chap pegs out, and he's rather funky of Jim stepping in and scooping the spoils, so to speak. Well, so far as I'm concerned, it matters little whether Jim Blakeney is in the Rangers or not. Swiveller will serve my purpose just as well—in fact, I think he will be much easier to handle than Jim. Moreover, that young cub I've taken all the trouble to educate will get his deserts for turning upon me. He'll be booted out of the club in disgrace."

"So you reckon there's something in this scandal, goy'nor?" asked Bill Stubbins. "You think somethin' is going to happen in the match on Saturday between the Rangers and Portdale?"

"I feel sure about it," retorted the Tiger. "I've not been idle this last two days. I've heard about the trouble Swiveller had with Jim and the subsequent fight. And I've taken pains to probe into Swiveller's history. But wait until Sam arrives—he's shadowing Hardacre's nephew now—and he may have something good to report."

"I've heard tell as 'ow that feller Swiveller is up to his eyes in debt!" growled one of the roughest seated at the table.

"Exactly!" replied the Tiger. "And that points to there being another merchant behind Swiveller—one of his greedy creditors, no doubt—who is egg-ing him on for reasons of his own. According to form, the Rangers should win easily on Saturday. If this scheme against Jim—for there is a scheme on hand, I feel certain—turns out correctly, the Rangers will lose, mark my words."

"And some chap's goin' to make a pot of money over it!" exclaimed Bill Stubbins brightly.

"Your perspicacity does you credit, Bill!" smiled the Tiger.

Even as he spoke a treble knock sounded at the door. The leader of the gang crossed the room, moved aside the small shutter that concealed the grille, and peered through the grating.

"It's only Sam," he announced.

The door was opened, and the sixth member of the Tiger's choice band of confederates swaggered into the room.

"Well?" asked Sleek. "What news?"

"I've shadowed Swiveller from early morning!" growled Sam. "And I was about to chuck up the job in disgust when he made tracks for the back end of the town. I followed him, and he entered the business premises of a Mr. Michael Menzine—"

"What, the bookmaker?" exclaimed Sleek excitedly.

"Yes."

"Good!" The Tiger's satisfaction was very evident. "Good! Mr. Michael Menzine is the chap who's pulling the strings through Swiveller, I'll wager. You've done well, Sam!"

Sam Moates grinned at this unusual compliment and helped himself to a bottle of liquor on the table.

"I suppose Swiveller returned to his home after that?" was the Tiger's next question.

"He did, chief," muttered Sam. "And I've returned to mine."

"Haw, haw!"

The gang saw something funny in the remark, and they laughed uproariously. The "home" consisted of one rickety kitchen-table, seven bentwood chairs, that had seen better days, and sundry piles of blankets for sleeping purposes.

"Anyone else visit Menzine about the same time?" asked the Tiger.

"Yes, chief—a peppery old gent who looked like a retired Army officer. He was harmless enough, though—eaten up with gout, I should say."

The Tiger smiled.

"I've a toast to propose," he said, lifting his glass. "Here's to the overthrow of that ungrateful cub Jim Blake-ney, and here's to Ronald Swiveller! He's our man now!"

"And a marked man, too!" grunted Stubbins. "Here's to 'im!"

Seven glasses were raised and emptied, with a heartiness that bespoke more enthusiasm for the liquor contained therein than the toast the Tiger had proposed.

"Boys," said Sleek, "we've got to act quickly. The right move at the right time and the million quid for old Hardacre's invention will be ours."

"Here's to it!" growled Bill Stubbins, already imagining his share of the "swag."

"Ear, 'ear!"

(There is another thrilling instalment of this powerful serial next Monday, boys. Be sure to read it!)

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BUNTER BORROWS A BIKE!

Adapted from the famous old song, "Whiddicombe Fair,"
by Dick Pentold.

Tom Brown, Tom Brown, your bike you might spare,
All along, down along, out along lea;
For I'm wanting to go to Burchester Fair,
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), my Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

"And when shall I see again my new bike?"
All along, down along, out along lea;
"By locking-up time, or by tea, if you like,
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), my Old Uncle Toddy, and all!"

So Bunter set out on that handsome machine,
All along, down along, out along lea;
And his corpulent form in the distance was seen
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), his Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

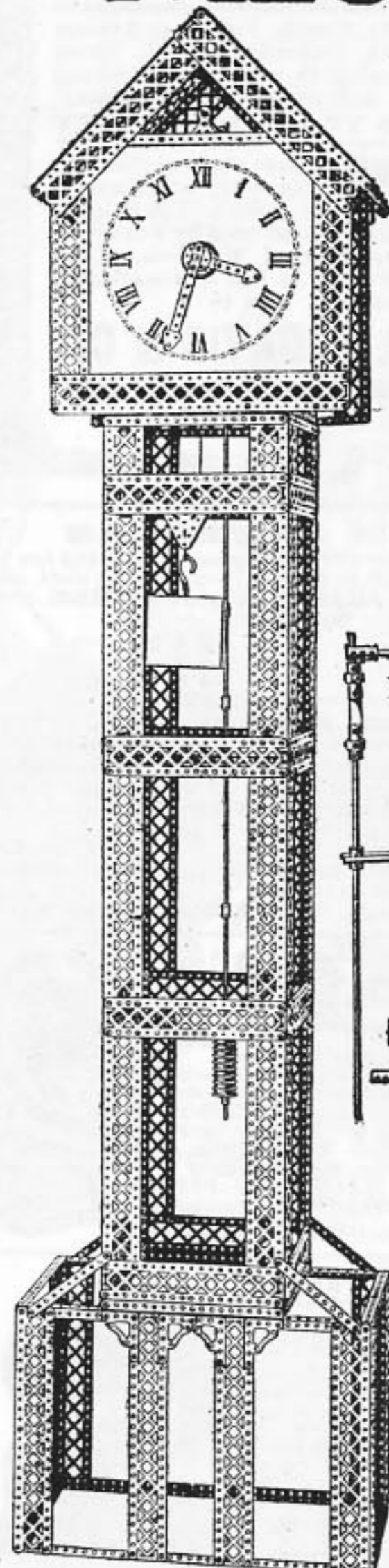
And then they descended a jolly steep hill—
All along, down along, out along lea;
Bunter tried to keep pace (without having a spill)
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), his Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

But the saddle collapsed, with a terrible crash—
All along, down along, out along lea;
And Bunter shot into the ditch with a splash,
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), his Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

Then Browney raced up to the top of that hill,
All along, down along, out along lea;
And he saw Billy Bunter a-making his Will,
With Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), his Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

"Oh, never again shall you ride on my jigger,
All along, down along, out along lea!"
So saying, Tom Brown punched the porpoise with vigour!
So did Squiffy and Smithy, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull,
Horace Coker (the joker!), his Old Uncle Toddy, and all!

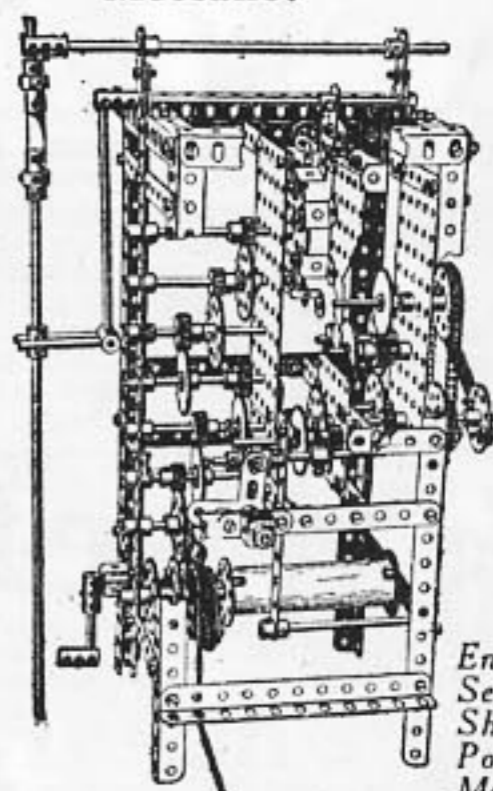
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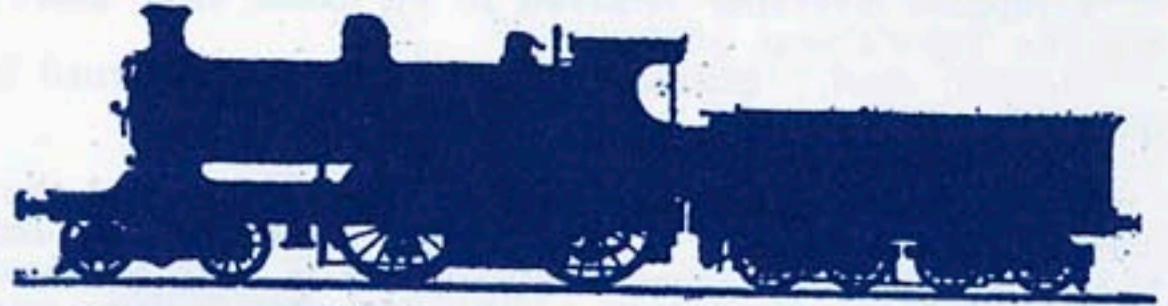
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