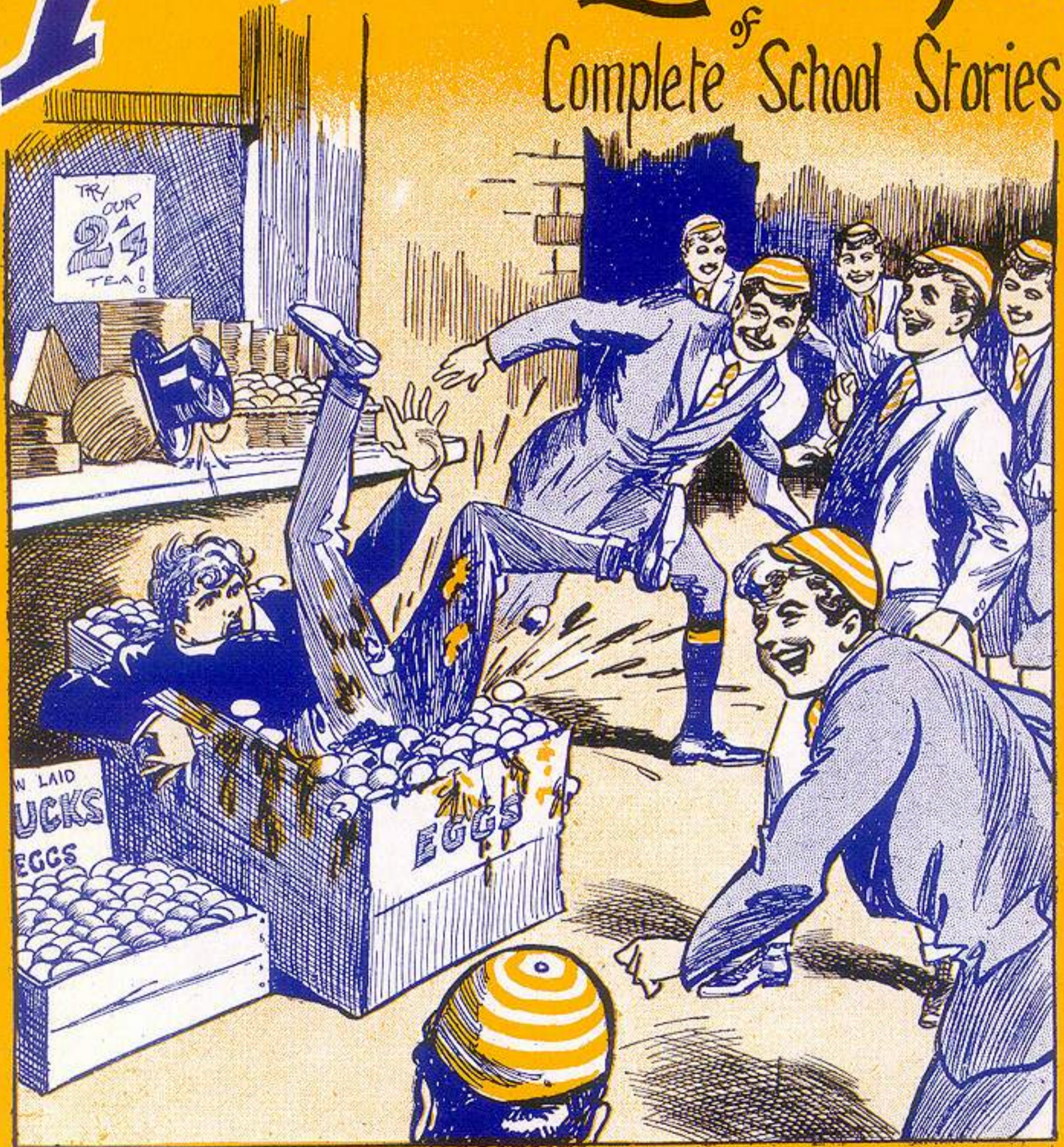


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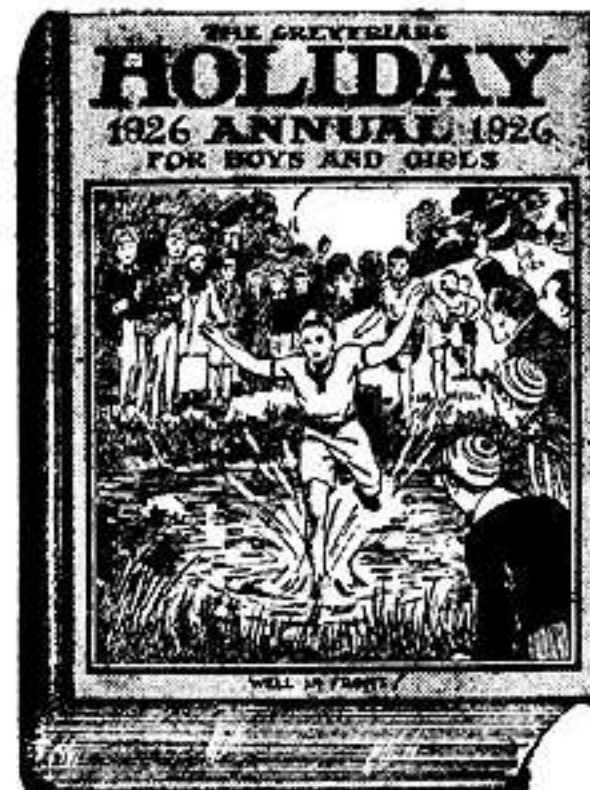
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BY

FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent, New, Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., introducing their rivals from the Council School—Dick Trumper & Co.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Eggs for Five!

"W E'D better take a taxi," said Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"An esteemed taxi is the proper means of transportfulness," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove were passing down Courtfield High Street. They were weary and heavy laden, and they were dressed in their "best bibs and tuckers," as Bob Cherry expressed it. The famous Co. had spent the afternoon at the girls' school, Cliff House, where they had been entertained to tea by Marjorie Hazeldene, Phyllis Howell, and the rest of their girl chums.

Instead of going straight back to Greyfriars, Harry Wharton had proposed a walk to Courtfield for the purpose of buying footer togs, boots, corner flags, and other things that were requisite and necessary for the footer season.

The bargaining and bartering had now been completed, and the big brown-paper parcels which the Co. carried were out of keeping with their resplendent attire. They felt like beasts of burden as they panted along with their parcels.

Bob Cherry's suggestion of a taxi was particularly opportune. Nobody fancied a four-mile tramp to Greyfriars in the circumstances.

Harry Wharton halted. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man—at least, there was no taxi-man.

"Not a taxi to be seen," grunted the captain of the Remove.

"We can get one at the station," said Nugent. "Come on!"

The Famous Five plodded on with their burdens.

"We haven't seen anything of Dick Trumper & Co. lately," observed Johnny Bull. "I know where the giddy flies go in the winter-time, but I'm

dashed if I know where the Courtfield Council School chaps get to in the autumn!"

Frank Nugent glanced up and down the street a trifle apprehensively.

"We don't want to bump into Trumper's mob just now," he said. "I don't feel like a rag. I've eaten too much tea, for one thing; and I don't want my Sunday togs torn to ribbons, for another."

"No jolly fear!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Besides, how could we tackle Trumper & Co. when we're loaded up like pack mules?"

"I don't think we shall see anything of them," said Wharton. "Hope not, anyway."

A feud of long standing existed between the Greyfriars Remove and the County Council schoolboys. It was not a bitter feud, by any means. It was a friendly one—if, indeed, such things as friendly feuds exist. Harry Wharton & Co. and Dick Trumper & Co. were a sort of Mutual Ragging Association.

But there were occasions when "rags" were not to be desired, and this was one of them. Certainly the Greyfriars juniors would have found it very awkward had their rivals pounced upon them at that moment.

But there was no sign of Dick Trumper and his myrmidons. And the Famous Five went on their way reassured.

They were passing the grocery department of Chunkley's Stores, and thinking themselves fairly safe from interference, when suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, an egg landed upon Bob Cherry's resplendent "topper."

Crash!

Bob's headgear was knocked sideways as the eggshell broke and discharged its contents. The streaming yolk sadly marred the pristine splendour of Bob's topper.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob, stopping short. "Somebody's pelting me, by Jove!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Eggs began to arrive in large numbers. The air became thick with them. That first egg, which had displaced Bob Cherry's topper, had been merely a harbinger of others to follow. And they followed thick and fast, in a whizzing fusillade.

The Famous Five plunged and staggered under the bombardment. It was so utterly unexpected that they were dumbfounded. Eggs crashed and splashed upon them with deadly force.

It was some time before the victims of the bombardment could get their bearings; but presently they saw where the eggs were coming from.

Outside Chunkley's grocery store was a huge crate of cooking eggs. This was being used as an ammunition dump by Dick Trumper & Co., who were ambushed behind the crate. The Famous Five caught a glimpse of their grinning faces. There were three of them—Dick Trumper, his chum, Graham, and Solly Lazarus.

"Pile in!" roared Trumper.

"Go it!" grinned Graham.

"Give 'em thocks!" chuckled Solly Lazarus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trumper & Co. were enjoying themselves vastly. So were the onlookers, who had congregated at a discreet distance to watch the fun.

But the humorous side of the situation was quite lost upon Harry Wharton & Co. Those hapless youths ducked and dodged as a further volley of eggs came over.

"You—you rotters!" spluttered Wharton. "Ooooch! Rush 'em, you chaps!"

The Co. made a concerted rush towards the crate, behind which their assailants were ensconced. But before they had advanced many yards another volley of eggs sent them staggering back.

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Trumper & Co. were "piling in" for all they were worth. Helping themselves from the crate, they kept up a deadly fire.

The eggs in that crate were by no means new-laid. Even Chunkley's had not dared to make that extravagant claim for them. They were simply marked "Best Cooking Eggs," and were going cheap. Certainly they were well past their prime. Dick Trumper, as he gleefully plunged his hands into the crate, likened those eggs to "Macaulay's 'Lays' of Ancient Rome." The effluvia they emitted was horrible.

"We ought to have worn gas masks for this job!" grinned Trumper.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By this time the victims of the bombardment were in a pitiful plight. Their clothes, their faces, their hats, their boots, were streaming with the yolks of those prehistoric eggs.

Had Harry Wharton & Co. been wise they would have taken flight. But they remained on the pavement in the vain hope of being able to get to grips with their attackers.

"Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Johnny Bull, as an egg caught him full in the mouth.

"Ooooooch!" gasped Harry Wharton, as a missile smashed into his ear.

"Yaroooooch!" yelled Frank Nugent, as he slipped on the yolk-spattered pavement and went sprawling.

"Keep it up!" panted Dick Trumper.

"Rapid fire, you fellows!"

"Thith ith thomething like a rag!"

lisped Solly Lazarus. "Thock it into them!"

"We'll make their Sunday best look worse than their weekday worst!" chuckled Graham.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bombardment continued merrily. A startled shop-assistant came rushing out, to remonstrate with the attacking party. Dick Trumper waved him back.

"It's all serene, old top," he said.

"We'll settle up afterwards. You ought to be jolly grateful to us for getting rid of these eggs for you. You'd never have sold them!"

The assistant retired with a grin. He knew that Dick Trumper & Co. would keep their word.

Meanwhile, the Famous Five made a last desperate effort to get to close quarters with the enemy. With one accord they fairly charged towards the crate, but only one of them succeeded in reaching it. This was Bob Cherry. Bob's chums were beaten back by a veritable hailstorm of eggs.

Having reached his objective, Bob Cherry clenched his hands, and made a fierce rush at Dick Trumper & Co. They were ready for him. Bob was promptly pinioned by three pairs of hands, and then whirled off his feet, and heaved bodily into the crate.

There were still several layers of eggs in the crate, and the unfortunate Bob landed fairly in the midst of them. There was a series of crackings and squelchings as the eggs gave way under Bob's weight.

"Yah! Ooooooch! Gerooooogh!" spluttered the hapless Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Trumper & Co.

Bob Cherry floundered in a yellow, clammy pool of smashed eggs. He had, in fact, a sort of egg-bath; and it was a long time before he managed to extricate himself from the crate. When he did so, peal upon peal of laughter rang out from the convulsed onlookers. Bob was plastered from head to foot with egg yolks. They clung to his hair and face; they streamed down his clothing. Bob

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was so excessively eggy at that moment that his own chums found difficulty in recognising him.

Bob scrambled out of the crate, and bestowed an eggy glare upon Dick Trumper & Co.

"Oh, you villains!" he panted. "I—I'll jolly well burst you for this!"

And he made a furious rush at his foes.

But Trumper & Co. had no desire to come into close contact with Bob Cherry. The aroma from his eggy person was more than they could stand. They promptly turned, and rushed into the store; and Bob, who followed full pelt, had the door slammed in his face.

Bob paused for a moment, breathing threatenings and slaughter. Then he retreated, and joined his discomfited chums.

"Let's get out of this!" muttered Wharton.

"We are the laughful-stock of the town!" groaned Hurree Singh, dabbing at his eggy exterior with a handkerchief.

"Those cackling street-urchins want their heads banged together!" growled Johnny Bull. And he made a threatening movement towards a group of ragamuffins, who promptly, turned tail.

"Come on!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Let's get a taxi."

The Famous Five fairly bolted down the High Street. They ran the gauntlet of a yelling crowd of sightseers.

It was only a matter of a few hundred yards to the railway-station; but to the unhappy Co. it seemed miles.

A taxi-cab stood outside the station. Bob Cherry led the way towards it.

"Greyfriars!" he panted to the driver. And he was about to throw open the door of the vehicle, when the man jumped down from his seat and beckoned Bob back.

"Nothin' doin'!" he said firmly. "You ain't goin' to ride in my kebab, not if I knows it!"

"We'll pay you double fare if you'll run us to Greyfriars!" said Wharton persuasively.

The taxi-driver shook his head.

"I wouldn't take you, not if you was to pay me treble fare!" he said.

"You'd ruin my kebab, as ever was! It would smell of heggs for hages! Jest you get along orf out of it, or I'll fetch a p'liceman! Phew! Wot a whiff!"

And the man whipped out a large coloured handkerchief and clapped it to his nose.

Harry Wharton turned to his chums in dismay.

"There's nothing for it but the train, I suppose," he said.

"They'll never let us on to the platform in this state!" groaned Nugent.

"Let's try our luck, anyway."

Laden with their parcels, which they had managed to collect after the fracas outside Chunkley's, the Famous Five approached the booking-office. The stationmaster saw them coming, and he promptly waved them back. He could recognise some of them, in spite of their dreadful appearance.

"Sorry, young gents," he said, "but I can't let you travel on the company's lines in that state. Better go and get a bath first. If you were to get into a carriage like that you'd cause a riot among the passengers!"

The Famous Five turned away. Train and taxi were alike out of the question. There was nothing for it but to walk back to Greyfriars.

It was a nightmare journey for the unfortunate quintette. Motorists grimaced at them; pedestrians guffawed at them; one elderly lady bolted into a hedge on their approach.

Even when the gates of Greyfriars came in sight, the juniors' troubles were not over.

As luck would have it, the Close was thronged with fellows. They saw Harry Wharton & Co. come in; and, like the explorers of old, they looked at each other with a wild surmise. Then they looked again at their egg-bespattered schoolfellows, and a roar of laughter went up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What an eggs-traordinary spectacle!" chuckled Skinner of the Remove.

"And what an awful effluvia, by gad!" drawled Temple of the Fourth, placing a cambric handkerchief to his nose. "Stand clear, you fellows, if you don't want to be asphyxiated!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five, covered with eggs and confusion, staggered through the Close with their parcels. They were given a wide passage. Fellows fell back on either side, clasping their handkerchiefs to their noses.

Mr. Quelch suddenly appeared on the School House steps. He nearly lost his equilibrium when he caught sight of the eggy juniors.

"Who the—what the——" gasped the astonished Form master. "Wharton! Bull! Nugent! How came you to get into that disgusting state? You are scarcely recognisable!"

"We—we had a bit of a tiff with some fellows in Courtfield, sir!" stammered Harry Wharton.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Go and cleanse yourselves at once!" he commanded. "B-bless my soul!"

And out came Mr. Quelch's handkerchief.

Harry Wharton & Co. tottered up the steps, and disappeared into the building, in quest of a bath and a change of attire. And their feelings towards Dick Trumper & Co., the cause of their discomfiture, were almost homicidal.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Council of War!

THERE was quite a gathering of the clans that evening, in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage. The Famous Five had removed, as far as possible, all traces of their encounter with Trumper & Co. But there was still a suspicious odour of stale eggs about their persons.

Harry Wharton had called a meeting of the leading lights of the Remove Form, in order to discuss reprisals against the Courtfield Council School fellows.

A dozen fellows turned up in Study No. 1. There were not a dozen chairs, but the window-sill and the coal-scuttle did duty as substitutes.

In addition to the Famous Five, the assembly included Peter Todd, Mark Linley, Vernon-Smith, Tom Redwing, Tom Brown, Bulstrode, and Wibley.

Harry Wharton looked unusually grim as he rose to address the meeting.

"Gentlemen!" he began. "You have all heard of the indignity which was showered upon five of our number this afternoon."

"Was it indignity?" asked Vernon-Smith. "I understood it was eggs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, Smithy! You heard how we were waylaid in Courtfield High Street by Trumper and his pals, and pelted with ancient eggs. Our best clobber has been ruined; but we don't mind so much about that. Togs are bound to suffer, in a rag. That's understood. But what we

do mind—and mind very much—is the insult and humiliation we've suffered at the hands of those bounders. They had matters all their own way. We tried to rush them, but it was no use. It was a complete score for Trumper & Co. They've collared all the giddy spoils of war, so to speak. Now, the question is, are we going to take this lying down, and leave those beggars to crow over us?"

"Never!"

"No jolly fear!"

"Our slogan shall be r-r-revenge!" said Wibley, rolling his R's.

"Exactly!" said Wharton. "We've got to get our own back on Trumper & Co. We've got to pay them back with interest for what happened this afternoon. No ordinary, common or garden jape will meet our purpose. What we've got to do is to plan a super-rag—a rag that will be the talk of the term!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Now, has anybody got a brain-wave?" asked the chairman. "Don't all speak at once."

They didn't. A silence followed Wharton's words. The juniors sat with their chins in their hands, and their brows corrugated in deep thought. Each of them was seeking a happy inspiration—an extra-special, gilt-edged wheeze for making Trumper & Co. sit up. And thus the juniors remained for some moments, pondering deeply.

"I say, you fellows——"

The familiar voice of William George Bunter broke in upon the juniors' cogitations. The silence was rudely shattered by that high-pitched voice; and the ample form of the Owl of the Remove fairly filled the doorway.

Twelve separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon the intruder.

"Cut!" snapped Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Roll away, old fat man!" said Vernon-Smith. "Can't you see we're busy?"

Billy Bunter did not roll away. He was fairly bursting with news and importance, and his spectacles glimmered upon the gathering.

"I've got some news for you fellows!" announced Bunter. "You've all heard of Tyneside Rovers, of course?"

"I seem to have heard the name somewhere," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "Team of hop-sotch players, I believe?"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" said Bunter scornfully. "Tyneside Rovers are the finest footer team in the north of England. And they're coming here!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"C-c-coming here?" stuttered Wharton.

"Well, not exactly here," said Bunter, "but they're coming to Pegg for the week-end, to train for their mid-week match with Lantham Argyle. They're staying at the Jolly Sailor."

"My hat!"

Billy Bunter's information caused something of a stir. Some of the juniors were inclined to disbelieve it, but the majority accepted it as a fact. After all, it was quite feasible that the famous League team from the north should be spending the week-end at the little fishing village of Pegg. Football managers and trainers believed in their men getting a breath of sea air occasionally.

Harry Wharton consulted a list of League fixtures and he saw that Tyneside Rovers were due to meet Lantham Argyle at Lantham on the following Wednesday. That part of Bunter's information was correct, at all events.



"You'll do nicely," said Wibley, surveying his handiwork with considerable satisfaction. "It's a job to decide which is the most desperate-looking scoundrel of the lot. Now, you know what you've got to do. You're to lie in wait for me in the alley-way at the side of the Courtfield cinema, and when I give you the signal you are to attack me!" (See Chapter 5.)

"How did you come to hear of this, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"I happened to bump into the Rovers' manager," explained Bunter.

"You bumped into him?" said Vernon-Smith. "Did he survive the concussion, or did they take him on an ambulance to the Cottage Hospital?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—— I met the manager—Billy Blythe his name is—outside Friardale station. He asked me to direct him to the Jolly Sailor, at Pegg. He looked a pretty prosperous merchant, so I offered to walk along with him, in the hope of getting a tip for my trouble."

"Just like Bunter!" sniffed Peter Todd.

"Did you get your tip?" inquired Nugent.

"Yes—but not the sort of tip I expected," said Bunter, snorting at the recollection. "I fagged all the way to Pegg with this blessed football manager—I even carried his bag for him—and when we got to the Jolly Sailor I expected at least five bob for my trouble. But Blythe simply took his bag from me and said 'Thanks very much!' I glared at him and didn't walk away, so he said, 'What are you waiting for?' I told him I hadn't fagged all the way out to Pegg for nothing. I said I wanted a tip. I insisted on it. And what do you think the rotter did?"

There was a shaking of heads, and the juniors glanced inquiringly at Bunter.

"He said to me, 'Here's my tip. Back Tyneside Rovers to lick Lantham on Wednesday!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a giddy sell!"

"And so the poor dog had none!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter glared at his hilarious schoolfellows.

"I don't see where the joke comes in," he said peevishly. "I told that bounder Blythe exactly what I thought of him and his precious tip. I called him a minging, stingy beast! And I said I hoped Tyneside Rovers would be licked by about ten goals to nix on Wednesday."

"What did he say to that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"He didn't say anything; he just put his boot behind me. He's got a kick like a mule, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Tyneside team's arriving tomorrow," Bunter went on. "I hope they get it in the neck good and proper when they play Lantham! Are you fellows going over to see the match?"

"Of course!" said Wharton. "It isn't every day that we get a chance to see a League team in action."

"I'm going over, too," said Bunter. "I sha'n't have to pay for admission, because one of my titled relations is a linesman at Lantham."

"Oh, my hat! Fancy a giddy duke dashing along the touchline with a flag in his hand and a coronet on his napper!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "My titled relation doesn't wear his coronet when he's acting as linesman. He does it for sheer love of sport; he doesn't accept a penny piece for his services. He'll wangle me into the ground all right."

"And arrange for you to have the grand-stand all to yourself, I suppose?" said Vernon-Smith sarcastically.

Billy Bunter scowled.

"I'm going to boo those Tyneside bounders and put 'em right off their game," he said. "And I hope you fellows will join in."

"But why?" asked Wharton, in astonishment.

"Why? Because their beast of a manager has insulted me—that's why!" said Bunter. "He took a running kick at me, and I sha'n't be able to sit down in comfort for days!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I look to you fellows to back me up and to boo the Tynesiders for all you're worth. And we might take a few bad eggs along and pelt the bounders!"

Harry Wharton & Co. frowned. Bunter's reference to bad eggs was unfortunate. It revived unpleasant memories of the recent affray in Courtfield High Street.

"We shall do nothing of the sort, you silly owl!" said Wharton. "Why should we make a dead set at Tyneside Rovers? I'm jolly glad their manager put his boot behind you! That's what you get for being a rotten sponger! Now get out!"

"Oh, really——"

"Get!" roared a dozen voices in unison.

Billy Bunter blinked reproachfully at the meeting. He lingered for a moment in the doorway. Then he saw that Johnny Bull's hand had strayed towards a cricket-stump. That was a sinister hint to the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter "got."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wibley's Wheeze!

"GOT it!" exclaimed Wibley, when the door had closed behind Bunter.

Wibley was on his feet, his eyes sparkling with excitement. His schoolfellows stared at him.

"You've got a wheeze for getting even with Trumper & Co.?" asked Wharton.

"Exactly!"

"Let's hear it, then."

"Chuckfully get it off your esteemed chest, Wib!" said Hurjee Singh.

Wibley fairly beamed upon the gathering.

"It's a gilt-edged, eighteen-carat, tip-top wheeze, though I say it who shouldn't!" he said. "Bunter's news about Tyneside Rovers coming down gave me the idea. Now, I don't know whether you fellows are aware of it or not, but old Trumper has got a particular pet ambition. It's an idiotic ambition, that no sane fellow would entertain for a moment. But, then, Trumper's not sane. He's a blithering imbecile!"

"We all know he's got bats in his belfry," said Bob Cherry. "But what's this wonderful ambition of his?"

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"To fix up a match between Courtfield Council School and a pukka League eleven."

"Great Scott!"

"Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it?" said Wibley. "As if one of the big League teams would condescend to play a match with Trumper's mob! But Trumper takes his ambition jolly seriously. I've heard him jawing about it heaps of times. It's the dream of his life, to coax one of the big League teams down to Courtfield for a match."

Harry Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, now you come to mention it, I've heard Trumper harping on that chord myself," he said. "But I don't quite see where your wonderful wheeze comes in, Wib."

"Lend me your ears!" said Wibley.

"I think it's up to us to let Trumper realise his precious ambition. He's simply dying to meet a team of pro's, and we'll give him his heart's desire. We'll fix up a match between Trumper's team and Tyneside Rovers."

"What!"

The juniors stared at Wibley in blank amazement.

"Not the genuine Tyneside Rovers, of course," Wib went on. "The team that Trumper plays will be our noble selves, suitably disguised as a team of pro's from the north. You fellows will have to swot up the dialect a bit. You'll have to say 'Ba goom!' instead of 'My hat!' and all that sort of thing. You can leave the disguises to me. I'll rig you up in first-class style, with wigs and flesh-masks and false eyebrows and all the rest of it. Trumper will take us for Tyneside Rovers on sight. We'll fix up the match for Saturday afternoon, and we'll let his team lick us to a frazzle. He'll be wild with delight to think that he's trounced a real League team. He'll crow about it no end—send the town crier round to proclaim the victory, I dare say. And then, just as he's swelling with success and blowing his own trumpet in full blast, we'll let him know the truth—that it wasn't Tyneside Rovers he played, but little us!"

Wibley paused, glancing triumphantly at his schoolfellows.

"Well, how's that for a wheeze?" he chortled.

"Top-hole!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Right on the wicket!" said Nugent. And similar expressions of approval were echoed on every side.

Harry Wharton, however, looked a trifle dubious.

"It would certainly be a great stunt to disguise ourselves as a team of pro's and play a match with Trumper, and let him think he's beaten the Tyneside Rovers," said Harry. "But there are a few difficulties——"

"Name them!" said Wibley.

"Well, in the first place, the disguises would have to be awfully clever——"

"Set your mind at rest on that score, old scout. They will be. I'm a giddy past-master in the art of disguise and make-up. It will be quite simple for me to transform you fellows into a grown-up footer eleven."

"But we're not tall enough——" objected Wharton.

"Oh, I don't know! Tyneside Rovers aren't giants, by long chalks. Most of 'em are midgets. Their skipper, Turvey, is a fellow of about my own height and build. I've got a photo of the team in my desk. Believe me, there won't be any need for us to add a cubit to our stature. What are the other difficulties, Wharton? Trot 'em out. We've got to get this thing settled!"

"The question is, how are we going to arrange the match with Trumper?" asked the captain of the Remove. "It will have to be done jolly tactfully. The request for a match should come from Trumper—not from us. If we ring him up on the telephone, and propose a match, he'll smell a rat. The real Tyneside Rovers wouldn't dream of phoning a County Council School chap and fixing up a match with him."

Wibley smiled.

"I see your point," he said, "and I've thought of a wheeze for getting the match fixed up."

"Another wheeze!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes. It's a wheeze within a wheeze, so to speak. Now, supposing the skipper of Tyneside Rovers was strolling down Courtfield High Street to-morrow night and was suddenly set upon by a number of hooligans in the presence of Trumper & Co.? They'd promptly rush to the rescue of old Turvey, the skipper, and save him from assault and battery. Turvey would bubble over with gratitude and clasp Trumper warmly by the hand, and all that sort of thing, and that would give Trumper his great chance. Turvey would say: 'You've rescued me from the clutches of those scoundrels. What can I do for you by way of return?' Then Trumper would confess his great ambition, and beg Turvey to play a match with the Council School. Do you twig the bright idea?"

Wibley's schoolfellows looked rather perplexed.

"I don't quite catch on," said Wharton. "Turvey, the Tynesiders' skipper, isn't likely to be strolling in Courtfield to-morrow night, and he's still less likely to be set upon by hooligans."

Wibley gave an impatient snort.

"Fathead!" he said. "Can't you see what I'm driving at? I shall bo Turvey!"

"You?"

"Of course! The real Turvey will be taking his ease in his inn. He'll be sitting down to supper in the coffee-room of the Jolly Sailor at Pegg. I shall impersonate him, and take a stroll in Courtfield at a time when Trumper & Co. will be about. They're generally hanging around the cinema when it opens. Trumper will take me for the Tynesiders' skipper at once. He's seen Turvey's photo—though he's never seen the other members of the team. I shall be ambling aimlessly along, when suddenly a crowd of roughs will dart out of an alley-way and rush at me, with the intention of relieving me of my money and watch. The roughs will be you fellows—suitably disguised for the part."

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors stared breathlessly at the propounder of this amazing scheme. They were beginning to "catch on" at last.

Wibley grinned cheerfully.

"As soon as you fellows set on me Trumper & Co. will rush to the rescue," he said. "You must offer a half-hearted sort of resistance and then scatter in all directions and bunk for your lives, leaving Trumper & Co. masters of the situation."

"And then——" began Wharton.

"Then I shall express my gratitude to Trumper—who will have taken me for Turvey, of course—and he'll beg me to agree to play a match against his team. I'll pretend to pooh-poo the idea at first, and then, remembering that Trumper & Co. rescued me from the dastardly hooligans, I'll show a sudden burst of generosity, and agree to grant his request. We'll fix the match for Saturday afternoon, at Courtfield, and

everything in the garden will be lovely!"

A buzz of enthusiastic approval followed Wibley's speech.

It was, undoubtedly, a capital wheeze which the schoolboy impersonator had planned. Whether it would pan out quite as successfully as Wibley anticipated remained to be seen. At all events, the wheeze was well worth trying.

Even Wharton was enthusiastic now, though he had raised obstacles at first.

"It's a great stunt, Wib!" declared Bob Cherry, clapping Wibley on the shoulder. "I'm quite looking forward to to-morrow night!"

"Same here!" echoed the others. "Of course, this must be kept awfully, awfully dark," said Wibley. "If a cad like Skinner were to get wind of our plans, and put Trumper wise, the bottom would be knocked out of the whole thing."

Wharton nodded. "Mun's the word!" he said. "We can trust everybody here not to blab, thank goodness!"

"I'll see about the disguises to-morrow," promised Wibley. "I'll take them along to the old shepherd's hut on Courtfield Common. We'll meet then to-morrow night, and I'll make myself up as Turvey and convert you fellows into a gang of giddy desperadoes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "And if Dick Trumper isn't made to sing small by the time our merry capers are over I'll eat my Sunday topper!" declared Wibley.

After further discussion of Wibley's astounding wheeze, the meeting in Study No. 1 dispersed.

The juniors fondly imagined that no inquisitive ears had listened to their private councils. Had they but known it, however, the ear of William George Bunter had been glued to the keyhole ever since he had left the study.

As soon as he heard the sound of chairs being pushed back and footsteps approaching the door, Billy Bunter had

scuttled away down the corridor, chortling with satisfaction to know that he was in full possession of the plot against Dick Trumper & Co.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Drastic Measures!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Harry Wharton & Co. frowned. They were wending their way down to the school gates when Billy Bunter's voice hailed them, and Billy Bunter's fat little legs pursued them.

"I say, you might wait for a fellow!" bawled Bunter.

The juniors halted impatiently. "Bless Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. But his tone did not suggest that he was breathing a benediction on the fat junior. Quite the reverse, in fact.

Billy Bunter was not wanted just then. Bunter's room was at all times to be preferred to his company, and this was particularly the case at the moment.

Harry Wharton & Co. were setting out for Courtfield, where Wibley of the Remove was waiting for them in the shepherd's hut with the disguises. They had no desire to be followed by the inquisitive Bunter, and they turned upon the fat junior with resentful glares as he came panting up.

"Buzz off, Bunter!" said Wharton tersely.

"Oh, really——" "Seat!" growled Johnny Bull. Billy Bunter halted and blinked at the frowning faces around him.

"I'm coming along," he said. "I don't see why I shouldn't be in this."

"Eh? In what?" asked Wharton, with a slight start.

"This stunt of yours, of course!" said Bunter. "I'm jolly well coming along to see the fun."

Harry Wharton stared speechlessly at the fat junior. He was looking quite alarmed now, and so were his companions.

How much—if anything—did Bunter know? And how had he acquired his knowledge?

"Surely that fat toad hasn't heard about our arrangements?" muttered Frank Nugent.

"If he's been listening at the keyhole——" began Bob Cherry fiercely.

"Oh, really, Cherry——" Harry Wharton recovered his voice at last.

"What stunt, Bunter?" he asked grimly.

"Why, this wheeze of Wibley's, of course!" answered Bunter, with a smirk. "It's not a bad wheeze, though I could have thought of a better. I want to see what you fellows look like dressed up as hooligans. And I want to see Trumper & Co. rush to Wibley's rescue, thinking that it's the skipper of Tyneside Rovers who is being attacked."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter Todd, in dismay. "He knows all about it!"

Bunter gave a cackle. "There's not much that escapes me, Toddy!" he said. "I knew all about it last night. And if you fellows refuse to let me come along, I shall feel it my duty to warn Trumper of what's going to happen."

"You—you——" spluttered Bob Cherry, bestowing the glare of a basilisk upon Bunter. "The fat worm has been caves-dropping!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "When we had our confab last night he must have listened at the keyhole. He knows everything."

"Everything!" confirmed Bunter cheerfully. "You've arranged to spoof old Trumper good and proper. You're going to wangle it that he rescues Turvey—alias Wib—from a gang of hooligans—alias yourselves. And then you're going to fix up a match for Saturday, and disguise yourselves as Tyneside Rovers. Not at all a bad wheeze—if it comes off!"

Harry Wharton & Co. clenched their hands with fury. They had not bargained on Billy Bunter being in possession of their secret plans. They darted the blackest of black looks at the fat



"Come on!" shouted Trumper. "Those rotten hooligans are setting about old Turvey. They're trying to rob him!" "Help!" With one accord, Dick Trumper & Co. rushed to the rescue, and the unusually quiet High Street of Courtfield became plunged into a pandemonium. "Pile in!" roared Trumper. "Give 'em thocks!" panted Solly Lazarus. The Courtfielders fairly swarmed to the attack, hitting out right and left. (See Chapter 5.)

junior; and they could cheerfully have slain Bunter on the spot, and pleaded justifiable homicide.

Whenever a secret came to Bunter's knowledge, it remained a secret no longer. It was utterly impossible for the Owl of the Remove to keep his own counsel. He was bound to talk. And it really began to look as if the carefully-conceived plot against Dick Trumper & Co. would be nipped in the bud by Bunter's prattling tongue.

Bunter grinned in response to his schoolfellows' glares.

"Well, what about it?" he said. "Am I coming along to see the fun? Or would you prefer me to ring up Solly Lazarus, at his pater's shop, and tell him what you've planned?"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged grim glances. They were not prepared to allow Bunter to accompany them. His presence would give the whole show away.

On the other hand, if they refused to let Bunter join them, he would telephone to Solly Lazarus, and thus put Dick Trumper & Co. on their guard.

It was a galling situation for the juniors, especially as they had been at such pains to prepare that gigantic jape against their Courtfield rivals.

"What's to be done?" muttered Harry Wharton helplessly.

"We'll keep Bunter from blabbing to-night, anyhow!" said Bob Cherry savagely. "Let's collar him and shut him up somewhere until we get back. The coal-cellar will make a jolly good prison. I'll go and borrow the key from Gosling."

"Look here——" began Bunter, backing away in alarm.

"Collar him!" rapped out Wharton.

There was a rush of feet towards the fat junior, and he was promptly seized, and marched away in the direction of the coal-cellar. Bob Cherry hurried into Gosling's lodge to borrow the key of that dingy underground recess.

"Leggo!" roared Bunter, struggling in the grasp of his captors. "If you dare to kidnap me, you rotters, I'll report you to Quelchy! I'll tell the Head, and get you a flogging all round! Leggo! Help! Rescue!"

"Gag him!" panted Johnny Bull. "We shall be having one of the beaks here in a jiffy!"

A hand was promptly clapped over Bunter's mouth, and he was hustled along, making muffled protests, to the steps which led down to the coal-cellar.

William George Bunter was rolled down the steps as if he had been a sack of "Derby Brights." He landed at the bottom with a bump and a roar, just as Bob Cherry came racing up with the key.

It was the work of a few seconds to unlock the door, and to usher Billy Bunter into that cheerless, subterranean prison, where the darkness was so intense that it could almost be felt.

"Yaroooh!"

There was a fiendish yell from Bunter, as he landed in a sprawling heap on a pile of coals. Then the door was slammed behind him, and the key grated in the lock.

William George Bunter was a prisoner, until such time as Harry Wharton & Co. returned from their expedition to Courtfield.

The fat junior would probably attempt to advertise his plight to the upper world, by yelling for deliverance; but it was improbable that anybody would hear him, save perhaps Gosling the porter; and Gosling had been tactfully "squared" by Bob Cherry.

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Billy Bunter was left to the darkness and to his meditations, which were far from pleasant.

Harry Wharton & Co., having lost valuable time, hurried out of gates.

"Well, we've kept Bunter's mouth shut for to-night," said Harry Wharton.

"But what's going to happen to-morrow? He'll be ringing up Solly Lazarus, and telling him what we've planned for Saturday afternoon."

"We must stop him from blabbing, somehow," said Nugent. "Even if it means giving him a loan on the strength of his postal-order, we must do it, just to keep him quiet."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"No use buttering up to the fat worm," he said. "The only way we can stop his tongue from wagging is to keep guard over him to-morrow morning, and see that he doesn't get a chance to speak to anybody. To-morrow's Saturday, and if we can keep Bunter away from the telephone during the morning we shall be safe. We'll take it in turns to guard him—an hour each. And the fellow who happens to be on guard will stick to him like his own shadow. Then he won't be able to split."

"Good!" said Wharton. "That's quite a happy idea, Bob. But what about to-morrow afternoon? Supposing Bunter should turn up at the match? That would put the kybosh on everything."

Bob Cherry looked grim.

"Bunter won't get a chance to turn up at the match," he said. "We'll shut him up again—in one of the upper box-rooms this time, for a change!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors recovered their cheery spirits now. If Bunter could be kept from "blabbing," the jape against Trumper & Co. would be played to a finish. And if Bunter was kept under strict watch and ward throughout Saturday morning, and imprisoned throughout Saturday afternoon, he would be powerless to carry out his threat of telephoning to Solly Lazarus.

It would be rather a nuisance, having to shadow the fat junior wherever he went, and prevent him from "letting on" to anyone about the projected jape. But it had to be done; and it was a far better way than by paying a price for Bunter's silence, and "buttering up to him," as Bob Cherry expressed it.

Harry Wharton & Co. were soon striding along the road, in the deepening dusk. They dismissed William George Bunter from their minds, and left him to languish in the Stygian darkness of the coal-cellar.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Gallant Rescuers!

"YOU fellows are late!" said Wibley.

Harry Wharton & Co. swarmed into the lonely shepherd's hut on Courtfield Common. Wibley was there; but he could no longer be recognised as Wibley of the Remove.

By the light of a couple of bike lanterns, and with the aid of a mirror, Wibley had disguised himself as Turvey, the skipper of Tyneside Rovers. He wore a tweed suit, a man's collar and tie, a turned-down velour hat, and a raincoat. His facial appearance made him look ten years older than he was; and in the subdued light he would certainly have been taken for the Tynesiders' skipper. So perfect was Wibley's disguise that even in the daylight it would have been difficult to penetrate.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at their ingenious schoolfellow in undisguised admiration.

"Wib, you're a giddy marvel!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "If you hadn't spoken, we should almost have thought it was the real Turvey!"

Wibley smiled.

"Of course, I shall disguise my voice for Trumper's benefit," he said. "I shall speak in deep, manly tones—like this." And Wib spoke in a deep bass voice by way of illustration.

"But what makes you fellows so late?"

"It was Bunter," explained Wharton. "He wanted to come with us."

"He hasn't followed you here?" asked Wibley in alarm.

"No jolly fear! We've left him locked in the coal-cellar, to meditate on the folly of listening at keyholes."

Wibley gave a start.

"Surely that fat toad doesn't know of our plans?" he exclaimed.

"Unfortunately, he knows everything. And he's threatened to give the show away to Trumper & Co. But we've kept him quiet for to-night, and we'll keep him quiet to-morrow morning."

"But how?"

"We're going to take it in turns to guard him, so that he won't be able to breathe a word to a soul."

"But that's an awful nuisance!"

"Rotten! But it can't be helped. We ought to have remembered, when we had our confab last night, that walls have ears—and so do porpoises."

"Blow Bunter!" growled Wibley.

"Blow him sky-high, by all means," said Bob Cherry. "But never mind Bunter now. Let's get to business. I see you've got our togs ready, Wib."

Wibley nodded and grinned. On the floor of the hut was a pile of tattered and dilapidated garments, such as "gentlemen of the road" might be expected to wear. Wibley also had charcoal and grease paints, as well as a selection of shaggy beards and whiskers.

"Now," said Wib briskly, "one at a time. I'll take you first, Wharton."

The captain of the Remove put himself in Wibley's skilful hands, and he was presently transformed from a good-looking schoolboy into a distinctly evil-looking ruffian. He donned a suit of tattered garments over his Etons, and Wibley saw to his facial make-up.

Wharton's appearance was so repulsive, by the time Wibley had finished, that his schoolfellows involuntarily shrank from him. Presently they looked just as ruffianly and repulsive as Wharton. Indeed, it would have been difficult to picture a more sinister-looking gang of hooligans. Certainly they were not the sort of people one would have cared to encounter on a dark night.

The juniors looked each other up and down, and chuckled.

"Don't we look beauties?" chortled Bob Cherry. "Hope we don't run foul of P.-c. Tozer. He'll arrest us on sight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall be charged with being suspected persons, loitering in Courtfield with intent to commit a felony," grinned Nugent. "But we're not likely to bump into old Tozer in Courtfield, thank goodness."

William Wibley surveyed the result of his handiwork with considerable satisfaction.

"You'll do nicely," he said. "It's a job to decide which is the most desperate-looking scoundrel of the lot. Now, you know what you've got to do. You're to lie in wait in the alley-way at the side of the Courtfield Cinema. I shall be wandering up and down the High Street, as if waiting for somebody. When I stop at the top of the alley, and

look at my watch, that's the signal for you to attack."

"Good!" said Johnny Bull.

"But no real violence, mind!" said Wibley. "I don't want to be torn limb from limb. You can pull my clothes about as much as you like, and pretend to give me an awful pasting. But if you forget yourselves, and start punching me on the nose—"

"That's all right, Wib," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "It will be a pure accident if we do."

"Ass! I don't want any accidents of that sort to happen. Now, are you all ready?"

"The readyfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"Come on, then!"

The party trooped out of the old shepherd's hut, and set off through the gloom across the common. On reaching the outskirts of the town Wibley left his companions, and made his way towards the High Street.

Harry Wharton & Co. also made their way towards the High Street, but by a devious and circuitous route. They had no desire to be seen in their tattered and grotesque garb.

Ten minutes later the bearded and be-whiskered desperadoes were safely ensconced in the alley-way beside the picture-house. They crouched in the shadows, watching out for Wibley. Presently he passed them, but he did not glance in their direction, nor did he stop.

Several times after that Wibley passed and re-passed, but the promised signal did not come.

"What a sell if Trumper & Co. aren't about," murmured Nugent. "We shall have had all our trouble for nothing."

"I fancy they'll be hanging about outside the cinema," said Wharton. "I expect Wib will pass close to them several times, to give Trumper a good chance to recognise him as Turvey. Then we shall get the signal."

For five minutes the party remained concealed in the alley-way. They were beginning to grow restive, when suddenly Wibley appeared again at the top of the narrow passage. This time he stopped, and casually pulled out his watch.

"The signal!" breathed Bob Cherry.

Eager to be up and doing, the disguised juniors made a sudden rush towards the stationary figure of Wibley. They closed in upon him, and there was a wild scuffle, in which arms and legs appeared to be inextricably mixed.

Bob Cherry bashed Wibley's velour hat down over his head; Frank Nugent snatched at Wibley's gold watch; and Harry Wharton clung to Wibley's collar.

"Go through 'is pockets, mates!" he growled in a low voice. "These 'ere professional footballers is always pretty flush with tin."

Wibley grappled with his assailants, rather too zealously at first, for a hefty punch, which was intended for the empty air, took Peter Todd on his somewhat prominent nose.

"Yaroooh!" said Peter, sitting down with great suddenness on the pavement.

"Sorry, old man!" murmured Wibley. "That part wasn't in the programme. But it makes it look jolly real."

Then Wibley raised his voice.

"Help! Help!" he roared.

He did not call in vain.

Dick Trumper & Co. had been astonished eye-witnesses of that amazing scene. They had been standing on the front steps of the cinema, chatting with the commissionaire. They had seen a young fellow, in a raincoat and a velour



Billy Bunter gasped and panted, like a survivor from the Black Hole of Calcutta. He flourished a fat fist in the faces of the laughing juniors. "You rotters!" he roared. "It's been simply awful, stuck in that beastly hole. I thought you were never coming to let me out. I've made myself hoarse with shouting for help, and I'm simply smothered with coal-dust. I shall have to wash myself now!"
(See Chapter 7.)

hat, strolling up and down the street, and had shown no interest in him at first. Then Trumper had caught a close glimpse of him, and had whispered excitedly to his companions that the young man was no other than Turvey, the captain of Tyneside Rovers.

From that moment the County Council School fellows had not been able to take their eyes off the young fellow in the raincoat. They had watched him as he walked to and fro, and Dick Trumper had been trying to summon up courage to go and speak to him.

Nothing would have delighted Trumper more than to be honoured by a handshake from the captain of the famous League team.

In his little bed-room at home Trumper had a photo of Turvey, cut from a sporting paper. He fairly idolised the Tynesiders' skipper, and had often longed to meet him in the flesh. Moreover, there was Trumper's great ambition—to induce one of the big League teams to play a match against the council school.

Trumper had been wondering what would happen if he approached Turvey with that request. Would his proposal be laughed to scorn, or would it be smilingly accepted? Would the great Turvey tell Trumper, good-humouredly, not to be a silly young ass? Or would

he show annoyance at Trumper's suggestion, and box his ears?

Trumper had been trying to decide which of these things would be likely to happen, when suddenly Turvey had halted at the head of the alley-way, and pulled out his watch. Then, quick as a lightning flash across a summer sky, the attack had taken place. A number of unkempt, sinister-looking ruffians had suddenly darted out of the alley and hurled themselves upon Turvey.

Dick Trumper & Co. had looked on spellbound at first. The suddenness, the unexpectedness of it all had temporarily deprived them of the power of action.

But when that cry for help rang out—that urgent S.O.S. call—Trumper & Co. were roused out of their inactivity.

"Come on!" shouted Trumper. "Those rotten hooligans are setting about old Turvey! They're trying to rob him!"

"Help!"

The cry was fainter now. It seemed that Turvey's strength was failing, and that he was powerless to grapple, single-handed, with that gang of desperadoes.

With one accord Dick Trumper & Co. rushed to the rescue. And the usually quiet High Street of Courtfield became plunged into a pandemonium.

"Pile in!" roared Trumper.

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"Give 'em thocks!" panted Solly Lazarus.

And the Courtfielders fairly swarmed to the attack, hitting out right and left.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Attainment of a Great Ambition!

DICK TRUMPER & CO.—if they had time to think about the matter at all—expected a stern and desperate tussle with the hooligans who had attempted robbery with violence. Certainly they had not expected the roughs to scatter in panic, after a few minutes' fierce fighting. Yet this was precisely what happened.

The Courtfielders did great execution with their fists, and the fellow whom they took to be Turvey gave them valuable support. He had been felled to the pavement by his assailants, but now he staggered to his feet and joined in the fray.

"Smash 'em, boys!" he roared. "They were after my watch and money, ba goom!"

Trumper & Co. rose to the occasion in valiant style. They did plenty of smashing—far more, in fact, than the "desperadoes" had bargained for. There was a howl of anguish from one shaggy-bearded ruffian as Trumper's fist found a billet on his nose. There was an ever louder howl when Solly Lazarus grasped one of the roughs by the leg and up-ended him on the pavement. And Graham, charging here, there, and everywhere with lowered head, like a demented bull, caused quite a panic.

One by one the ruffians took to their heels and fled, yelling, down the dark alley-way.

Trumper & Co. were agreeably surprised at the feeble resistance offered by the hooligans. The louts seemed to have no fight in them. But then, hooligans were often like that. They were cowards when it came to a stand-up scrap with bare fists. They had not hesitated to hurl themselves upon the defenceless Turvey, but when it came to a tussle with a number of hard-hitting, resolute schoolboys, they showed their yellow streak and melted away like mist before the autumn sun. That was how Trumper & Co. looked at it, anyway.

It was all over in five minutes. The last of the roughs disappeared down the alley and became swallowed up in the gloom.

Trumper paused, panting.

"Shall we chase them, Mr. Turvey?" he asked.

Mr. Turvey shook his head.

"I'm afraid they've got clear away by now," he said. "Reckon they thought I was a pigeon worth plucking: But they've drawn blank, thanks to you kids. Gosh! You know how to use your fists. I'm downright grateful to you, ba goom!"

Mr. Turvey's northern dialect was not so pronounced as Trumper & Co. might have expected. But he peppered his remarks with "Ba goom!" and he said "nowt" instead of "nothing," and later, when speaking of the Tyneside Rovers' trainer, Billy Blythe, he referred to him as "t'owd lad."

Mr. Turvey shook hands all round with his gallant rescuers, and he was quite profuse in his thanks. His expressions of gratitude rang like music in the ears of Dick Trumper. One of Trumper's fond dreams had come true, at any rate. He had not only seen the great Turvey in the flesh, but he had conversed with him, and he had enjoyed the honour of rescuing him from the clutches of a gang of ruffians. This was a red-letter day in Trumper's calendar, a day of days indeed!

Rescuers and rescued chatted together for quite a long time on the pavement outside the picture-house. Then Mr. Turvey announced that he would have to be going.

"I reckon I should like to give you kids something in the shape of a reward," he said graciously. And he pulled out a wallet from the breast-pocket of his coat.

Trumper flushed.

"That's all right, Mr. Turvey," he said. "We're only too glad to have been of service."

"Ay, but you simply must let me acknowledge my debt to you. I should have been robbed of every penny, and my gold watch into the bargain, if you hadn't happened along when I shouted for help. I'm sure you won't be offended if I offer you a quid apiece—"

"No, no," said Trumper hastily. "We couldn't take it, Mr. Turvey—really, we couldn't. It's awfully kind of you, but—"

"It's thimply thplendid of you!" chimed in Solly Lazarus. "But we wouldn't dream of taking money in return for our modest services."

Mr. Turvey looked perplexed.

"But I can't let you go without showing my gratitude in some tangible form," he said. "Is there no favour you would like to ask of me? I don't mind what it is; I'll be happy to grant it if it's in my power."

Dick Trumper drew a deep breath.

Here was the opportunity for which he had ardently longed. It had long been Trumper's ambition to arrange a football fixture with a famous League team—Tyneside Rovers, for preference. And Fate had now placed a lever in his hands whereby his long-cherished ambition might be realised.

Trumper turned an eager face to Mr. Turvey.

"I say—" he began breathlessly.

"Well?" said Mr. Turvey.

"I—I hope you won't think it awfully cheeky of me, Mr. Turvey, but you asked if there was any favour you could do for us. And there is. We belong to the County Council School here, you know, and we've got a rattling good footer eleven, of which I have the honour to be skipper."

"Quite so," said Mr. Turvey, with a nod and a smile.

"We understand that your team is staying at Pegg for the week-end to train for your match with Lantham Argyle, next Wednesday," said Trumper.

Mr. Turvey nodded.

"Tyneside Rovers are staying at the Jolly Sailor," he said. "They arrived this afternoon."

Trumper thought it a trifle odd that Mr. Turvey should say "they" instead of "we," but he made no comment about it.

"We should feel most awfully honoured," he went on, "if you'd bring your team over to Courtfield to-morrow afternoon and play a match with us. I'm not ashamed to confess that it's been the dream of my life. Schoolboys versus

Pro's! Why, it would be a glorious match!"

Mr. Turvey looked amused.

"Would you seriously fancy your chance against a team like Tyneside Rovers?" he asked.

"Well," said Trumper, "I won't go so far as to say that we should lick you to a frazzle, but we'd give you a jolly good run for your money."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Turvey.

Trumper looked a little hurt.

"I don't quite see where the joke comes in," he protested.

"Don't you, ba goom? Well, I reckon it's the richest joke I've ever heard. Beats anything I've heard on the halls. A team of schoolkids trying their luck against a First Division club! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He theems to think it awfully funny," murmured Solly Lazarus.

Undoubtedly Mr. Turvey seemed to think it funny. He simply shook with deep-throated laughter.

The Courtfielders felt rather piqued. They had anticipated that Mr. Turvey might possibly "turn down" their request as impracticable, but they had not expected him to go into convulsions of merriment.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Mr. Turvey. "You want me to fix up a match with a parcel of schoolkids! Why, our lads would simply swamp you, ba goom! You'd be run off your feet."

Dick Trumper frowned slightly.

"Just you give us the chance and we'll show you that we're better footballers than you take us for, Mr. Turvey. We licked the Greyfriars Remove last season, and we licked Highcliffe, and we finished up the season with a fine record."

Mr. Turvey mildly pointed out that between junior school football and professional League football there was a great gulf fixed.

Trumper's face fell.

"Then there's nothing doing, Mr. Turvey?" he said. "You won't play us?"

Mr. Turvey appeared to ponder the situation.

"Well," he said at length, "I won't go back on my word. I said just now that I'd grant you any favour that it was in my power to grant, and I'll keep my promise. You saved me from being robbed, and perhaps badly mauled into the bargain. The least I can do, by way of return, is to humour this whim of yours. We'll fix up for to-morrow afternoon, if you like."

Dick Trumper fairly beamed. And his companions uttered a loud whoop of delight.

"Oh, ripping!" exclaimed Trumper.

"Jolly thporting of you, Mr. Turvey!" cried Solly Lazarus.

Mr. Turvey smiled.

"Where do you play?" he inquired. "Have you a real football ground?"

"Of course!" said Trumper. "It's one of the best grounds in Courtfield—level as the top of a billiards-table."

"Good!" said Mr. Turvey. "And what time do you want me to bring my team over?"

"Would two o'clock suit you?"

"Yes, that will do nicely. I'm afraid you'll be sorry you arranged this match, young fellow. Why, you'll be simply annihilated! But we won't pile on the agony more than we can help. We'll bag about a dozen goals, just by way of shooting practice. Then we'll ease up, and simply play the goat."

"Will you, by Jove!" said Trumper warmly. "You won't get a chance to play the goat, Mr. Turvey! You'll have to go all out against my team, I

can tell you! As for getting a dozen goals, why, you'll have all your work cut out to bag a couple!"

"Hear, hear!" said Trumper's chums. Mr. Turvey's deep laugh boomed forth again. He seemed vastly amused at Trumper's remarks. Then he shook hands once more with his gallant rescuers, and bade them good-night, and turned away, striding athletically down the street.

Trumper & Co. gazed after Mr. Turvey's retreating figure. Then they linked arms, and fairly pranced away, to acquaint their schoolfellows with the great news—the glorious news—that the famous Tyneside Rovers were coming over to Courtfield on the morrow to play a match with Trumper's eleven.

At long last Dick Trumper's ambition was on the threshold of realisation. To-morrow the famous team of Tynesiders would come, and see—and conquer?

Not if Trumper knew it!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Bath for Bunter!

IT was a flushed and breathless Mr. Turvey who turned up shortly afterwards at the shepherd's hut on Courtfield Common.

Harry Wharton & Co., having discarded their dilapidated garments, and their beards and moustachios, hailed the newcomer eagerly.

"Hallo, Wib!"

"Have you worked the oracle?"

Mr. Turvey—alias Wibley of the Remove—nodded gleefully.

"It's all fixed up," he said. "We play Trumper's eleven to-morrow afternoon, at two o'clock."

"Oh, good!"

"Trumper swallowed the bait beautifully," said Wibley, with a grin. "He took me for Turvey, and he implored me, on bended knees almost, to fix up a match with his eleven. Of course, I pretended to scoff at the bare notion. I said it was ridiculous for a professional League team to play a parcel of mere schoolkids. And then I remembered that I owed Trumper & Co. a debt of gratitude for rescuing me from the clutches of those awful hooligans—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I consented to bring my team over to Courtfield to-morrow afternoon. Trumper's simply overjoyed at the prospect. He went prancing off with his head hitting the sky, almost. He won't get a wink of sleep to-night; he's nearly crazy with excitement, to think that the famous Tyneside Rovers are coming along to play his team."

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

"Wib, you're a wonder!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "You're a born actor, if ever there was one!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Wibley modestly. "It was as easy as falling off a form to spoof Trumper & Co. They didn't suspect for a moment that I was any other than Turvey, the Tynesiders' skipper. I'm afraid my north-country dialect was a bit shaky, but that didn't matter."

"Hurry up and change your togs, Wib," said Harry Wharton. "We must nip back to Greyfriars in time for call-over."

Mr. Turvey was speedily transformed into Wibley of the Remove again, and then the party hurried back to the school. They made an unobtrusive entry into the building, and adjourned to the bath-rooms, in order to remove the grease-paint and charcoal from their

faces. They had arrived in good time for call-over.

So elated were the juniors at the success of their jape against Dick Trumper & Co. that they had quite forgotten the existence of a certain hapless youth who was languishing in the coal-cellar.

Fortunately, the existence of William George Bunter was called to mind in the nick of time. It was Peter Todd who remembered it. Peter found it impossible to forget Bunter for long. He had the misfortune to have Bunter as a study-mate, and Bunter haunted his waking hours as well as his nightly dreams.

"I say," said Peter breathlessly, as he towelled his streaming face in one of the bath-rooms; "what about Bunter?"

"Eh?"

"We've forgotten the merry prisoner!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors exchanged startled glances.

"Buck up and let Bunter out, Bob," said Wharton. "You've got the key."

Bob Cherry hurried away to the coal-cellar, and Nugent and Hurree Singh accompanied him. Bob fairly plunged down the steps, and unlocked the door. There was not a second to be lost. Bunter was bound to be rather black and grimy after his incarceration in the cellar, and it would be necessary to

clean and scour the fat junior before call-over, or awkward questions might be asked.

Bob Cherry held the door open, and from the cavernous gloom emerged the plump form of William George Bunter.

Bunter tottered, rather than walked, out of the coal-cellar. He presented an appalling spectacle. Little Polly Flinders, who sat among the cinders, could not have looked more black and begrimed than Billy Bunter looked at that moment.

"Pity there isn't a fancy-dress ball this evening," said Bob Cherry. "Bunter would be able to go as the ace of spades!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gasped and panted, like a survivor from the Black Hole of Calcutta. He flourished a fat fist in the faces of the laughing juniors.

"You rotters!" he roared. "It's been simply awful, stuck in that beastly hole. I thought you were never coming to let me out. I've made myself hoarse with shouting for help, and I'm simply smothered with coal-dust. I shall have to wash myself now!"

Bunter spoke in sorrow as well as in anger. The prospect of having to wash himself on such a chilly evening was anything but pleasant. Bunter regarded soap and water with as much aversion



Bob Cherry got busy with the scrubbing-brush, and he fairly made the lather fly. Soapsuds flew in all directions as Bob rubbed and scrubbed. "I've no time to do this job thoroughly," he panted. "What you really need, Bunter, is a curry-comb!" "Yow!" Bunter gave a doleful yell. It seemed to him that Bob Cherry was doing the job very thoroughly indeed! (See Chapter 7.)

as another fellow might regard the dentist.

"It's all right, Buntie," said Bob Cherry. "You needn't trouble to wash yourself. We're going to do that for you."

"The scrubfulness and the rubfulness, when we give Bunter the tubfulness, will be terrific!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glowed at the juniors.

"Don't you dare to lay your paws on me!" he said. "I've suffered enough for one night. I'm going to report you to Quelch for shutting me up in this awful place!"

"If you do," said Frank Nugent, in measured tones, "it will mean a Form-licking. We've a short way with sneaks."

Bunter quailed at the prospect of a Form-licking—one of the severest forms of punishment extant. He quickly decided that he would not mention the matter to Mr. Quelch after all.

The fat junior ceased to threaten, and started to plead.

"Don't rag me any more, you fellows!" he entreated. "I'll wash myself with pleasure—well, not exactly with pleasure, but with soap and water—but I won't be washed by anybody else. My constitution won't stand it."

"Can't help your constitution, old fat man," said Bob Cherry. "We're going to present you at calling-over in a respectable state. Clean, sober, and properly dressed, as they say in the Army. Come on!"

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh fairly leaped up the steps of the coal-cellar. Billy Bunter, owing to circumstances under which he had no control, accompanied them. They whirled him away across the Close and into the building, and brought him to a breathless halt in one of the bath-rooms.

"We've only got five minutes!" panted Nugent. "We shall have to hustle!"

"Off with his togs!" said Bob Cherry.

It was true that Bunter's bathing-attendants had only five minutes in which to transform him from black to white. But five minutes proved quite long enough for Bunter. They were five of the most painful minutes he had ever spent.

Hurree Singh turned on the hot-water tap, and the water splashed into the bath in a cascade. Bob Cherry disrobed Bunter with his nimble fingers. Frank Nugent procured a clothes-brush, and got busy on Bunter's garments as soon as they were removed. Certainly they needed a brush. Bunter seemed to have brought half the contents of the coal-cellar to the bath-room with him.

The Owl of the Remove was not a willing party to these operations. He protested loudly and shrilly; but the door had been locked, and there was no escape for him.

"Hop in!" said Bob Cherry, when the water had risen to a convenient height.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Jump in slick, or we'll chuck you in!"

Billy Bunter gave one despairing blink and jumped in. Then he jumped out again—in a great hurry and with a yell that would have done credit to a Red Indian on the warpath.

In the hot haste of the proceedings, Hurree Singh had omitted to turn on the cold-water tap in addition to the hot one. Consequently, the temperature of the water was at boiling-point, or thereabouts. Certainly it was too torrid

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for Bunter. The unfortunate Owl fairly bounced out of the bath, and he danced around in wild anguish.

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm scalded! I'm nearly flayed alive! Yaroooooh!"

Hurree Singh politely apologised for his sin of omission. He promptly turned on the cold-water tap, and let it run for a few seconds; and then back went Bunter into the bath, assisted by Bob Cherry.

The cleansing, scouring, and renovating of William George Bunter was then embarked upon in grim earnest.

Bob Cherry got busy with a scrubbing-brush, and he fairly made the lather fly. Soapsuds flew in all directions as Bob rubbed and scrubbed.

"I've no time to do this job thoroughly," panted Bob. "What you really need, Bunter, is a curry-comb!"

Billy Bunter gave a doleful yell. It seemed to him that Bob Cherry was doing the job very thoroughly indeed.

The several stages of Bunter's ablutions—the scrubbing, the rinsing, and the towelling—were carried out with lightning swiftness.

By this time Frank Nugent had managed to remove most of the coal-dust from Bunter's garments, and he was promptly hustled into them. Just as his necktie was being switched into its place the bell rang for call-over.

"Just in time, by Jove!" panted Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter was whirled out of the bath-room and whisked along the passage and hustled into Big Hall. His face resembled a boiled beetroot as he took his place in the ranks of the Remove.

Several grinning glances were turned in the fat junior's direction.

"Great Scott!" murmured Skinner. "Bunter's had a bath! The world's coming to an end to-morrow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, who was taking calling-over, promptly quelled the laughter. And when all the names had been called from the school roster, and the fellows were filing out of Big Hall, the master of the Remove beckoned to Billy Bunter.

"I am very pleased to observe, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, "that you are at last commencing to take a pride in your personal appearance. Never have I seen you look so clean. Is it possible, Bunter, that you have permitted yourself the unusual luxury of a bath?"

"Oh, really, sir! I have a bath every evening."

"Then all I can say is, its effects have never been so pronounced!" said Mr. Quelch. "I trust you will continue in your present state of cleanliness, Bunter. That is all."

Billy Bunter rolled out of Hall after the others. He was still stinging and smarting from the effects of the scrubbing-brush which Bob Cherry had wielded. And the only consolation which William George Bunter derived from his bath was the knowledge that it would not be necessary to wash himself next morning!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Keeping Bunter Quiet!

THERE was the usual buzz of conversation in the Remove dormitory that evening, both before and after lights-out.

William George Bunter did not contribute to the conversation. He might have wanted to; but, however much he may have wanted to, he wasn't allowed to. Harry Wharton & Co. saw to that.

The juniors did not want their secret plans against Dick Trumper & Co. made common knowledge in the Remove. There were fellows who could not be trusted to keep their mouths shut; and if so much as a whisper of warning reached the ears of Dick Trumper, the carefully planned jape would prove a "wash-out."

Bunter, unfortunately, knew all. But he was not to be allowed to pass on his knowledge to others. However much he might have been bursting to impart details of the great jape to his school-fellows, Bunter was not even permitted to broach the subject.

Every time Bunter opened his mouth he was promptly silenced, either with a glare from Wharton or a growl from Bull, or a slipper from Bob Cherry. He never got any further than "I say, you fellows—" And after Wingate had extinguished the lights the fat junior abandoned his abortive efforts to join in the conversation. He gave a grunt and rolled over in his bed, and was soon sleeping the sleep of the unjust.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny. But there was a keen nip in the air which made the conditions ideal for football.

The problem of keeping Bunter quiet had to be tackled with greater resolution than ever now. He was to be guarded all the morning and imprisoned all the afternoon.

Vernon-Smith, with a callous disregard for any inconvenience which Bunter might suffer, suggested that he should be shut up all day—from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof, so to speak. But Harry Wharton & Co. considered that would be rather too hard on Bunter. The imprisonment of the fat junior during the afternoon would be necessary, for if he were to turn up whilst the fateful match was in progress it would spoil everything. During the morning, however, Bunter would be free to do pretty much as he liked, provided he didn't speak to anybody. Like a refractory baby in a church pew, he would have to be kept quiet somehow.

Harry Wharton guarded the fat junior for the first hour. He kept a grim eye on William George Bunter whilst that youth dressed. Having been thoroughly cleaned, scoured, and renovated overnight, Bunter did not deem it necessary to wash.

When Bunter rolled downstairs, Wharton followed him, putting the final touches to his toilet as he hurried in the Owl's wake.

At the foot of the stairs Bunter spun round angrily.

"What are you following me for, Wharton?" he demanded.

"It's necessary, old fat man!" said Wharton cheerfully.

"Oh, really! I refuse to be shadowed all over the place as if I were a blessed criminal!"

"Well, aren't you?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

Billy Bunter gave an indignant snort and rolled out into the sunny Close. Wharton pursued him with the relentlessness of a Nemesis.

For the next hour the captain of the Remove played the part of Mary's little lamb. And everywhere that Bunter went that lamb was sure to go.

Whenever Bunter approached a fellow and tried to engage him in conversation, Wharton promptly seized him by the collar and marched him away, with the fat junior uttering shrill protests.

Breakfast intervened during the hour, and there was no difficulty in keeping

Bunter quiet during the meal. Bunter's jaws were too busy in another direction.

Harry Wharton, in fact, had quite an easy hour. But Bob Cherry, who relieved him at the end of the period, was not so lucky.

"Now, look here, Bunter," said Bob, "you can go where you like, and do what you like, so long as you don't jaw to anybody. See?"

Bunter glared at his warder.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I don't see why I shouldn't speak to anybody if I want to. It's a free country. You don't expect me to walk past all my pals without saying 'Cheerio!' do you?"

"You can give 'em good-morning if you like," said Bob. "But you're not to stop and jaw to them."

"I'm not going to give away your precious secret, if that's what you're afraid of," said Bunter.

Bob Cherry looked grim.

"You can't be trusted, my tulip," he said. "We're not taking any risks. It's my job to see that you don't blab, and I mean to do the job thoroughly."

"Beast!" growled Bunter.

He rolled away down the Remove passage. Bob Cherry followed him with his springy stride.

Skinner of the Remove was lounging outside the door of his study, and he glanced curiously at the pair.

"Hallo, Skinney, old chap!" said Bunter, rolling to a halt.

"Hallo!" said Skinner. "What's Cherry following you about for?"

"I'll tell you," said Bunter, in a low and confidential tone. "Old Wibley has planned no end of a jape— Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter's confidences came to a sudden full-stop. Bob Cherry's boot was planted behind his plump person, and the fat junior fled down the passage roaring.

That kick had been so powerful and painful that Bunter didn't want an encore. He rushed pell-moll down the passage, and fairly flew round the corner, where he met with an unexpected obstruction, in the person of Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was in a hurry, and Bunter was in a hurry. Coker was in a terrific hurry; Bunter was in a frantic hurry. Both were in such an urgent hurry, in fact, that each failed to see the other—until it was too late.

Crash! Bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

Coker was a sturdy fellow, but he was not proof against that terrific and unexpected impact. He reeled, he clutched at the empty air, and he collapsed in a spinning heap. As falls the giant oak, so fell Horace Coker. He landed on the floor of the passage with a bump and a roar.

As for Bunter, he reeled dizzily against the wall.

"Yaroooooh! Wow!" he roared.

Coker sat up, breathing out threatenings and slaughter.

"You—you clumsy fat idiot!" he roared. "I—I'll jolly well burst you!"

"Rescue me!" said Bunter, his voice rising crescendo as he heard Bob Cherry's quick step approaching.

Coker's astonishment got the better of his wrath. He picked himself up, and stared at Bunter.

"Eh? Rescue you from what?" he asked, in amazement.

"From that beast, Bob Cherry! Here he comes! He's been following me about all the morning. He won't let me speak to anybody. And when I started to talk to Skinner just now, the bullying beast put his boot behind me!"

"Bullying, eh?" said Coker, with a grim look at Bob Cherry, who had now appeared. "I don't allow bullying

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY

No. 3.—William George Bunter (of the Remove).



The most skillful borrower in all Greyfriars, Billy Bunter's untiring efforts in this direction are only equalled by the yearnings of his insatiable appetite and a terrific imagination. A hopeless duffer at sports, Bunter is as much a nonentity on the playing fields as he is in the Form room. Occupies the unenviable position of being Peeping Tom at Greyfriars, no secret being safe when he is about. Has received more kicks and buffetings than any other boy at the school, and yet is incapable of mending his ways. Nicknamed the Owl on account of his peculiar habit of blinking. Shares Study No. 7 with Peter and Alonzo Todd, and Tom Dutton. Despite his shortcomings, and they are legion, Bunter is fairly popular with his tolerant Form fellows. Possesses an extraordinary gift of ventriloquism, which, alack, invariably lands him into trouble when it is put to use.

among the fags. You leave Bunter alone, Cherry, do you hear?"

"Rats!" said Bob.

"If you say 'Rats!' to me, you cheeky young sweep—" began Coker wrathfully.

"More rats!" said Bob cheerfully.

Coker breathed hard. He was not feeling particularly sweet-tempered at that moment. A collision with Bunter was enough to sour the sweetest temper; and Coker's temper was never sweet at the best of times.

The burly Fifth-Former clenched his hands and rushed at Bob. And the next moment a fast and furious fight was in progress. Bob Cherry, being smaller and lighter than his adversary, looked like getting the worst of it. But Billy Bunter didn't wait to see the upshot of the struggle. Here was his chance of freedom, and he took it. With a parting yell of encouragement to Coker, the fat junior scuttled away.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry, with his back to the wall, put up a plucky fight against Coker. He succeeded in landing a couple of terrific drives—one on Coker's chin, and one on Coker's ear. But Bob was down at last, felled by a punch that would have felled an ox. Coker looked down at him triumphantly.

"That's the stuff to give a cheeky young fag!" he said. "Now, just you treat your betters with respect in future. And leave Bunter alone, or I'll give you another walloping!"

And Horace Coker strode majestically away.

Bob Cherry lay in a dazed heap for a moment. He felt much as Humpty-Dumpty must have felt after his bad fall, when all the king's horses and all the king's men were powerless to put him together again. Bob's head was singing, and he wondered if an earthquake had hit him.

Presently he pulled himself together and scrambled to his feet, and looked round for Bunter. That bright youth had vanished. With a gasp of alarm, Bob hurried off in quest of him, hoping to find him before the fat junior had an opportunity of "blabbing."

Bob Cherry rushed down into the Close. To his dismay, he saw his quarry standing under the old elms, in conversation with Loder of the Sixth.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bob.

Loder was the very last fellow at Greyfriars whom Bob wished to learn details of the great jape against Trumper & Co. Loder had a "down" on Harry Wharton & Co., and he would

(Continued on page 17.)

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD



No. 240. HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR. Week Ending Sept. 19th.



My First Football Match!

Some lively and amusing recollections of our Contributors!

SIR JIMMY VIVIAN:

I played my first game of footer in an alleyway near Carker's Rents, in the heart of the London slums. We had a big rag ball, I remember, and it was tied around with string to keep it from bursting. I was down and out at the time—very much so, for I recollect that I had no shoes or stockings, and played in bare feet. It was a gruelling game—more like a pitched battle than anything else! The other fellows were much bigger than me, and I was bowled over without ceremony every time I made a dash for the ball. Every time a goal was scored there was a terrific argument—not a verbal argument, but an argument with bare fists. In Carker's Rents they smite first and talk afterwards! Our game of footer was brought to a sudden full-stop when a bobby in blue poked an inquisitive nose round the corner of the alley. The players melted away like mists before the morning sun!

BOB CHERRY:

My first game of footer was in the nursery, with a soft ball. There were only two players—my girl cousin and myself. The "goal" was the open doorway, which I gallantly defended against my cousin's vigorous shots. She was bigger and older than me, and she had a kick like a mule! After a time she fired in a terrific shot, and I leapt backwards in a frantic effort to save it. Result—I somersaulted down a whole flight of stairs! I must have been made of indiarubber at the time. It was simply marvellous that no bones were broken. But I was bruised from top to toe; and by order of my pater I was suspended from taking part in football for a month!

BILLY BUNTER:

I played my first footer match in the splashy grounds of Bunter Court. I was about six years old at the time, and my form was a revelation. The match was between the Court and the village, and the Bunter Court team consisted of eleven Bunters, who had been collected from all parts of the country for the occasion. There was me in goal, and my pater and mater at back—yes, my mater was a fine footballeress!—and there were three Uncle Bunters at half-back, and

three Cousin Bunters in the forward line, as well as my sister Bessie and my young brother Sammy, who was a mere infant at the time. The villagers swooped down on my goal, and I had my hands full, stopping all sorts of shots. I gave such a masterly eggshhibition of goal-keeping that the mater said, "Bless the boy! He'll play for Tottenham Villa or Aston Hotspurs one of these days!" I kept my goal intacked right up to the finish, and after the match my pater presented me with a gold ticker (now in pawn with Mr. Lazarus at Courtfield)!

ALONZO TODD:

Alas! how poignantly painful are my recollections of the first football match in which I participated. I had never kicked a football before coming to Greyfriars, having suffered in my early boyhood with corns, callouses, and other painful disfigurements of the pedal extremities. My feet got better after treatment by a Courtfield chiropodist, and I was able to play my first game of football. Had I known it was such a brutal and dangerous game I should certainly have encased myself in armour before going on to the field! As it was, I went on without any protection, and was bumped, biffed, bruised, barged into, bespattered, and bewildered! Before the game had been in progress many minutes I crawled painfully off the battlefield, and moaned feebly for the ambulance to come and collect what was left of me. That terrifying experience haunts me yet! I never play football now, except under compulsion. In my opinion, football is a dangerous, degrading, debasing, deplorable—(Delightfully dashing diversion!—Ed.)

WILLIAM GOSLING:

"Which I ain't played football for more years than I cares to remember, an' it's a job for me to remember my last football match, let alone the first! But I've got shaddery recollections of playin' for me native village in years gorn by. There was few fellers wot could wield a mashie so well as William Gosling, or 'ole out in one on the green. Don't talk to me of yer Cyril Trolleys an' yer Vardons an' yer Braids. I was a better footballer than any of they!"

(Gossy's recollections are indeed "shaddery," if he has forgotten the difference between football and golf!—Ed.)



HAPPY is the Editor who has to prepare and publish a special number dealing with Football! He doesn't need to tie a wet towel round his top-knot, or to cool his fevered brow with a block of ice. Football topics flow easily from his pen. He could go on writing about the grand winter game until the cows came home, so to speak.

Now, if I were called upon to publish a Special Polo Number, or a number dealing with deer-stalking, or fox-hunting, or rat-catching, I should be right out of my depth. We don't play polo at Greyfriars—with the exception of water-polo. However, my worthy uncle, Colonel Wharton, spent about twelve years in India doing nothing but playing polo and potting the hill-tribesmen when they got out of hand, so he would be able to give me a lot of tips about that popular game—polo, I mean, not potting hill-tribesmen!

But when it comes to football, I feel quite at home. I know the game well. I won't say that I play it well, because that would be swank; but I believe I've got a better idea of the game than Coker of the Fifth, who goes barging and charging all over the field, scoring goals against his own side and playing the giddy ox generally!

How quickly the footer season comes round! The reign of King Cricket seems to get shorter and shorter—in fact, there is more "rain" than "reign" about his season! And that's the charm of football. You don't have to depend upon the weather. Of course, a fine cold day is preferable; but even when the snow is snowing, and it's murky overhead, we can still chase the bounding leather. I have sometimes played in a raging blizzard, and I once played on a water-logged ground, and afterwards sneezed my way up to the sanny, where I remained for a fortnight with 'flu! But that is by the way.

You would hardly think it possible that there were people on this planet who disliked the good old game of football, but there are. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, has been heard to describe football as "a boisterous, barbarous, and brutalising business." But I fancy Mr. Prout only said this in order to show off his wonderful powers of alliteration!

Football was boisterous enough in the olden days, and barbarous and brutalising into the bargain. A footer match and a free fight were one and the same thing. But skill and science are now the order of the day, and rough play is put down very firmly by referees.

Alonzo Todd, the frail duffer of the Remove, shares the views of Mr. Prout.

Lord Mauleverer, too, dislikes football. But, then, Mauly dislikes any form of exertion. Even table football, played with blow-pipes, takes too great a toll of his lordship's energy! Poor old Mauly! Bob Cherry, on looking over my shoulder and seeing that I've nearly finished this Editorial, suggests that we go and rout out the slacker of the Remove and march him down to Little Side. "We'll stick him in goal," says Bob, "and take pot-shots at him! It will be great fun!" Whereupon, I repeat, "Poor old Mauly!"



Counsel from Coker!

By TOM BROWN

The Great Horace tells our Representative how NOT to Play Football!

I CHOSE rather a happy moment for interviewing old Coker. I once interviewed him in his bath, and he threw a soaking sponge in my face. On another occasion I interviewed him when he was lying on his back in the roadway, after a motor-bike crash, and he scrambled to his feet and punched me with great violence on the nose!

This time, however, I had chosen just the right moment. Coker was staking proudly off the football field, after the Fifth had defeated the fags of the Second in the first round of the Coker Cup contest.

The Fifth had won the match by 7-2, and Coker had "bagged" two goals—for the fags!

"Mighty One," said I, making a sweeping salaam, "I humbly crave an interview with you. I've just been watching you wipe up the ground with the Second, and I thought you would be able to give our readers some useful tips on how to play footer."

Coker beamed. "Delighted!" he said. "Now, what do you want to know?"

"First of all," I said, "what, in your opinion, is the greatest essential in football?"

"Brawn!" said Coker promptly. "Brawn beats brain every time! It's no use a fellow taking up footer unless he's as beefy as an ox and as hefty as a Hercules. He should be an expert at barging and charging."

"Whom is he to barge and charge?" "Anybody who happens to get in his way, no matter whether it's an opponent, a fellow-player, a linesman, or the referee."

"But—but the referee might object to being bowled over."

"If he objects, or makes any sort of protest," said Coker calmly, "order him off the field!"

"Oh, my hat!" "And if he refuses to go, take him by the shoulders and frogs-march him off! That's what I always do. I never stand any nonsense!"

"And what other things are necessary in the making of a good footballer?" I inquired.

"A hefty kick," answered Coker. "It doesn't matter in which direction you

boot the ball, so long as you kick it good and hard!"

"But supposing it goes into the wrong goal?"

"You count it as a goal to your own side," said Coker calmly.

"Oh!"

"Another necessary accomplishment," said Coker, "is a good punch."

"Certainly—if you happen to be keeping goal."

"Fathead! I'm not speaking of goal-keeping," growled Coker. "If you are playing at centre-forward, you need a jolly good punch, in order to flatten out the goalkeeper when he comes rushing out to meet you!"

"Great Scott!"

I scribbled away furiously in my notebook.

"One more question," I said, after a pause. "Whom do you consider the finest footballer at Greyfriars?"

"Well," said Coker, "I'll answer that question as modestly as possible. The finest footballer at Greyfriars is a tall, handsome fellow in the Fifth—a good-looking giant who is idolised by the seniors and worshipped by the fags."

"Blundell!" I said.

A muffled roar came from Coker, like the rumble of a volcano in eruption.

"You—you cheeky young cub!" he hooted. "You know jolly well that I was alluding to myself!"

"Well, you're not exactly an Adonis, old man," I said. "In fact, your face is like your footer—too funny for words!"

Coker was not standing that. Out shot his left, straight from the shoulder, and the Special Representative of the "Greyfriars Herald" lay sprawling in the mud!

The great Horace wiped his footer boots on my prostrate form and strode huffily away.

THE NEW HORATIUS!

A Rousing Football Ballad.
By DICK PENFOLD

THAT comic clown called Coker,
By his top-hat he swore
That the Fifth Form Eleven
Should taste defeat no more.
By his top-hat he swore it,
And named a certain day
When the Remove should meet the Fifth
In furious football fray!

But old Wharton's brow was sad,
And old Wharton's speech was low;
And darkly looked he at his men,
And darkly at the foe.
"We're going to get a licking
Before the sun goes down;
For see! We lack the services
Of Bulstrode, Bull, and Brown!"

Then out spake brave Bob Cherry,
Noblest of Wharton's men.
"To every team upon this earth
Defeat comes now and then.
And how can we do better
Than fail against great odds?
So rally, ye Removites!
Ye Nugents, and ye Todds!"

"Line up the team, good Harry,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with some more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
A rag-time team like Coker's
May well be checked by we.
Now, who will stand on either hand
And fight the Fifth with me?"

Then out spake Marcus Linley,
From Lancashire was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand
And fight the Fifth with thee!"
And out spake valiant Inky,
Of Indian blood was he:
"I'll blidfully bide on thy left side
And fight the Fifth with thee!"



"My worthy Bob," quoth Wharton,
"As thou sayest, so let it be!"
And straight into that fierce affray
Removites rushed with glee.
For when they're on the warpath
They won't be stopped or stayed;
It is their aim to play the game,
Fearless and undismayed!

The ref has blown his whistle,
A piercing blast and shrill;
Remove go racing down the field,
The Fifth are standing still.
And Vernon-Smith goes streaking
Just like a lightning-flash,
And from his boot the ball doth shoot,
In yawning net to crash!

And now a shout like thunder
Is heard to rise and roll,
From all that mighty multitude—
One deafening roar of "GOAL!"
And Coker's brow is clouded;
His face begins to fall.
"A fluke!" he snaps "Come on, you chaps!
Now, rally! On the ball!"

The play is fast and furious,
The Fifth attack in force;
And Blundell sends the leather in
With the hoof-kick of a horse!
Thus are the scores made level,
And level they remain,
Till fifteen minutes from the close,
When the Remove attack again!

And hark! the cry is "Cherry!"
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the brave Bob comes sprinting
With the ball within his stride.
Towards him lumbers Coker,
Panting for Cherry's blood!
Then a terrific shoulder-charge
Hurls Horace in the mud!

And the Fifth are in a panic
Before that fierce attack;
And those behind cry "Forward!"
And those in front cry "Back!"
But neither back nor forward
Can check Bob Cherry's run.
The ball goes crashing in the net,
And the match is fought and won!

When the study lamps are lighted,
And the fires are blazing high;
And the chestnuts sputter merrily
On the iron bars near by;
In study and in dormitory
Still is the story told
How brave Bob Cherry won the match
Like a mighty man of old!

OUR ADVERTISEMENT PAGE!

BOYS OF GREYFRIARS! Dress with distinction and discrimination! Don't go about in ill-fitting garments which make you look like scarecrows! Our Etons are perfectly priceless. (This does not mean that they are free!) Prices range from Three guineas to Ten guineas per suit. Come and see our splendid selected selection of tweeds and serges. Give your old moth-eaten suit to the ragman, and **COME AND BE CLAD AT THE COURTFIELD CLOTHING COMPANY**, High Street, Courtfield. (We have recently secured the services of an experienced cutter, who was for fifty years with Messrs. Fittam & Riggem, the well-known Bond Street tailors.)

FOOTBALLS!—All sorts, shapes, and sizes in stock. Don't be content to play football with a ball which is as heavy as a batter pudding, or with a ball which explodes every time you sit on it! Buy a **REAL FOOTBALL**, guaranteed to last throughout the winter. Prices from 7/6 to 30/-. Our footballs are in splendid condition after being blown up. If you find this is not so, come and give US a good blowing-up!—**MESSRS. PASS & SHUTER**, 75, High Street, Courtfield.

CHUNKLEY'S! CHUNKLEY'S!! **CHUNKLEY'S!!! THE SELFRIDGE'S OF COURTFIELD!** We can supply any article under the sun, from a pin to a perambulator. Come and inspect our Sports Department, and see the fine array of footballs, roller-skates, air-guns, boxing-gloves, spinning-tops, and marbles! If your suit is getting shabby, come and be clad at Chunkley's! If you find you are growing a beard, come and be shorn at Chunkley's! Civility and courtesy guaranteed—except to a certain fat boy who demands goods "on tick"! Telephone: No. 1 Courtfield. Telegrams: "Chunk, Courtfield."

If your watch gets "run down," don't forget to "wind up" your shopping expedition with a visit to the Courtfield Jeweller's! Watches, clocks, and time-pieces of every description. Nothing supplied on "tick." Every "hunter" of a reliable watch should "spring" into a taxi and come to us. Our stock will "chain" his attention! There will be no cause for "alarm" if you deal with **MESSRS. NICKELL & BRASS**, Jewellers, Courtfield.

PAINLESS DENTISTRY! Teeth extracted without a twinge at half-a-crown a time. No squealing and squirming; no agony and anguish. Master Robert Cherry writes: "When I called on you a few days ago to have an aching molar extracted, you gave me no pain whatever. I thoroughly enjoyed your laughing-gas—in fact, I've been laughing ever since, and simply can't stop!" Sufferers from toothache are requested to come to me, and I will give them "exquisite" torture!—**MR. CHRISTOPHER WRENCH**, Surgeon Dentist, 13, High Street (opposite the Courtfield slaughter-house).
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 919.

DRAMA! TRAGEDY! COMEDY! "One crowded hour of glorious life"—in fact, several of them—can be secured at the **COURTFIELD CINEMA**. Up-to-date pictures; talented orchestra; cosy and comfortable seats. (Young noblemen of Greyfriars are warned not to go to sleep whilst the pictures are in progress, lest they should find themselves locked in the cinema!) Refreshments supplied at moderate prices. Charges for admission: 2/-, 1/-, and 6d. Fags of Greyfriars half-price. This week's great film:

"IN THE CLUTCH OF THE CANNIBALS!"

A hair-raising Drama of the Golly-Wolly Islands which will be witnessed with "devouring" interest!

ROLL UP IN YOUR THOUSANDS!

THE LIMIT!



Teacher: "Why are you late, Tommy?"
Tommy Crawler: "Please sir, they've put a new signpost outside our house—'School! Go Slow.' So I went slow, sir!"

BOOTS! BOOTS! BOOTS! The best that money can buy. Guaranteed to last for ever. The leather is even tougher than the beef you get at Greyfriars! One of our happy and satisfied clients, Master Alonzo Todd, writes:

"Gentlemen,—I purchased a pair of boots from you eighteen months ago, and am still wearing them. The hob-nails have not yet worn down, and the leather is as good as ever. When you consider the fact that I walk at least twenty yards a day—sometimes over the rough flagstones of the Close—you will understand my pleasure and amazement at the durability of your footwear. I expect I shall still be wearing the same pair of boots when I am an old man of ninety. I shall certainly recommend you to all my school-fellows."

Moral: Come and be shod at the **COURTFIELD BOOT & SHOE COMPANY**, High Street, Courtfield.

FINE FEEDS FOR FAMISHED FELLOWS may be obtained at the Elysian Cafe, High Street, Courtfield. Full-course Dinner, 3/6. Skilled orchestra in attendance. Munch your mutton-chops to the strains of merry music! Tackle tough joints to the tunes of Tannhauser! Those who come once to the Elysian Cafe will repeat their visit scores of times. Master W. G. Bunter, the well-known epicure of Greyfriars, writes:

"Feeling famished and fed-up, I vizzited your Caffy the other evening, and went through the menu six times. I've never enjoyed a feed so much in all my natcheral. I soon cured the famished and fed-up feeling, and felt as if I should burst! I consider your chops and stakes are delishus, and your poodings are priceless. The waitresses, too, are very sivil. Unfortunately, I didn't have enuff money to pay my bill; but now that I've sent you this ripping advertissment, I hope you will call it square."

Scores of similar tributes received from happy Greyfriars feasters. When feeling hungry or depressed, come to the Elysian Cafe for light refreshments and light music!

GENTLEMEN OF GREYFRIARS! Don't let your hair grow till it flaps over your shoulders. Come and be shorn by an expert! If you find yourself growing an unwanted moustache, come and have the objectionable hairs plucked out by the roots! If you want a shampoo, or a face massage, or a wash and brush-up, call at the **COURTFIELD TOILET SALOON**. The following is our scale of charges:

Hair Cutting (Prefects) -	8d.
Hair Cutting (Fags) -	4d.
Beard Trimming -	3d.
Shampoo -	6d.
Face Massage -	2s. 6d.
Scalping -	5s. 0d.
Wash and Brush-Up -	2d.

HUNGRY AS A HUNTER? Then come to the Courtfield Bunshop (established in the reign of Queen Anne); Juicy Jam-Tarts, Delicious Doughnuts, Peerless Pastries, and Satisfying Scones! Snacks at the counter a speciality.

Tourists come from far and near To try our noted ginger-beer.

Boys expecting postal-orders which have not turned up are politely requested to keep off the grass!

GOOD PRICES GIVEN for jam-jars, old boots, left-off clothing, false teeth, bicycles, cricket-bats, alarm clocks—any old thing!

ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT, WE WANT! WE PAY!! WE PAY!!! GOOD PRICES!!!!

WRITE OR CALL:
"THE COURTFIELD ACCOMMODATING SOCIETY, Ltd, Pecunious Street, Courtfield."



(Continued from page 13.)

most certainly have prevented the jape being played, purely out of malice.

There was not a second to be lost. Bunter must be got away from Loder at once before the fateful words could be spoken.

Bob Cherry made a megaphone of his hands, and bawled to Bunter.

"Bunter! I say, Bunter! The feed's waiting!"

The Owl of the Remove left off talking to Loder and spun round. The mere mention of a feed had an electrifying effect upon Bunter.

"A feed?" he cried eagerly. "Where?"

"In—in my study!" shouted Bob desperately.

Bunter left Loder's side in a flash, without troubling to excuse himself. He fairly pelted up to Bob Cherry.

"Come back!" roared Loder.

Like the celebrated Dying Gladiator, Bunter heard, but he heeded not!

Loder glared after him, fuming; but Loder was forgotten in the glorious prospect of a feed.

"Come on!" said Bob Cherry. And he fairly whisked Bunter up the steps and into the building.

"Is there really a feed?" panted the fat junior, becoming suddenly suspicious.

"If that was simply bluff, Cherry, just to get me away from Loder—"

"There wasn't a feed," growled Bob. "But as I've practically promised you one, I'll see that you get one!"

"Oh, good!"

"But we'd better not feed in my study in case Loder comes after us. We'll wait till the coast is clear, and then go along to the tuckshop."

Bunter smacked his lips joyously.

"How much had you told Loder?" demanded Bob. "Did you tell him about our jape against Trumper?"

"Not a word—not a whisper! I merely remarked that you fellows were going out of gates this afternoon on some stunt or other. I said I didn't know what you were up to exactly, but I thought you had an interior motive—"

"Ulterior motive, you mean?"

"That's it!"

"And what did Loder say?"

"He hadn't a chance to say anything. You bawled to me just then and I came away."

Bob Cherry drew a breath of relief. Loder knew a little, but not very much. He knew enough to arouse his suspicions, but he had not been apprised of the details of the jape against Dick Trumper & Co. Which was a fortunate thing for the japers.

Bob Cherry and Bunter kept watch on Gerald Loder from a landing window, and presently they saw the prefect stroll away towards the school gates. It was evident that he had no intention of going in pursuit of Bunter.

"Now for the feed!" said Bunter gleefully.

"I'm dashed if you deserve it!" growled Bob. "It's been a perfect nightmare, keeping guard over you. I'm beginning to wish we had followed Smithy's suggestion—"

"Eh? What was Smithy's suggestion?"

Bob Cherry was silent. Vernon-Smith's proposal had been that Bunter should

be imprisoned all day in one of the upper box-rooms. In any case, Bunter was to spend the afternoon there; but it would have been very unwise to have told him so.

Blissfully ignorant of the fate that was in store for him, Billy Bunter accompanied his warder to the tuckshop, where Bob Cherry reluctantly regaled him with jam-tarts and dough-nuts, and foaming ginger-pop.

There was no danger of Bunter "blabbing" whilst the feed was in progress. He was too busy to talk.

Bob Cherry nibbled at a cream-bun, and glanced at his watch. He saw, to his relief, that his hour was up.

Johnny Bull stepped briskly into the tuckshop.

"Oh, here you are!" he said. "My turn to take guard. What are you feeding Bunter for?"

"It was necessary," grunted Bob.

And he took Johnny Bull on one side, and described to him, in an undertone, the troubles and tribulations of the last hour.

Johnny Bull looked grim.

"Bunter seems to have given you no end of trouble," he said. "But he's not going to give me any. I shall take him for a walk!"

"But he's not fond of walking," said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"I can't help Bunter's likes and dislikes. I'm going to walk him into the heart of Friardale Wood, and he can jaw to the birds and bunnies and things, if he wants to. But he won't get a chance to jaw to any human being."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"That's quite a brain-wave on your part, Johnny. Wish I'd thought of it!"

Johnny Bull turned to Bunter.

"Come along, old barrel!" he said tersely. "I'm going to roll you out of gates!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Bunter pleaded and protested, but his pleadings and protestations were wasted on the desert air. He was marched away by Johnny Bull, to spend a harmless hour in Friardale Wood, holding sweet communion with its feral denizens. But he was not going to get a chance of holding communion, sweet or otherwise, with anybody at Greyfriars.

When the hour was up, Billy Bunter came back to the school with his escort, and he was handed over to Frank Nugent, who guarded him zealously throughout the following hour.

Hurree Singh took care of Bunter during the last hour. And thus the morning passed, and dinner-time came, and Harry Wharton & Co. felt well pleased with themselves. But for that unfortunate yet brief conversation with Loder of the Sixth, they had succeeded in keeping Bunter quiet.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Pro's Arrive!

"READY, you fellows?" William Wibley looked into Study No. 1 half an hour after dinner.

The Famous Five were there, together with the rest of the gay conspirators. They were grinning cheerfully.

"Quite ready!" said Wharton.

"We've packed up our bags."

"And we've packed up Bunter!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A number of bags stood in readiness on the study table. They contained football togs—specially hired jerseys, in the colours of Tyneside Rovers.

Wibley had a larger bag than the others. In it were the various articles of "make-up" which would be necessary to transform the schoolboy eleven into an adult one.

It had been arranged that the transformation should take place in the shepherd's hut on Courtfield Common. The hut had already served a very useful purpose, and its usefulness was not exhausted yet.

When they had changed into their footer togs the juniors were to don rain-coats over their shorts and jerseys, and then charter a couple of taxi-cabs to convey them to the Council School ground. Dick Trumper & Co. would imagine, of course, that the taxis had come from Pegg, where the Tyneside Rovers were staying.

It really seemed as if the gigantic jape against Trumper & Co. would prove an unqualified success. Possibly Loder of the Sixth would have to be reckoned with. He might see the juniors going out of gates, and intercept them, and demand to know where they were going, and what the little game was.

But the japers had no uneasy qualms on that score. They were quite capable of dealing with Loder. If he tried to restrain them by force from leaving the school premises, they would not scruple to roll the unpopular prefect in the gateway, and wipe their boots on him.

As for Billy Bunter, that plump Paul Pry had been got out of the way, as per programme. He had been lured to one of the upper box-rooms by the intimation that there was a feed awaiting him there.

This was perfectly true. Bunter's schoolfellows were not heartless enough to keep him without food until they returned that evening after their adventure. Supplies had been smuggled up to the box-room. There was a brown loaf, half a pound of butter, and a glass jar of bloater-paste, which had led a lonely existence on one of the cupboard shelves in Study No. 1 for some weeks past. The jar had never been opened, because the bloater-paste was of a rather suspicious colour.

Bob Cherry opined that it had "gone off." However, Bunter would have ample time in which to test the truth of that theory. He would have time, in fact, to make a thorough and complete analysis of the contents of that jar. And if the paste had indeed "gone off," and was not fit for human consumption, why, there was the brown loaf and the half-pound of butter. That was good, honest fare—not fit for a king, perhaps, but good enough for Bunter. It would sustain him in his captivity, at all events, and keep him from wasting away to a shadow.

Billy Bunter had arrived breathless at the box-room, after toiling up sundry flights of stairs. He had burst eagerly into the little apartment, in order to see what sort of a feed awaited him.

Bob Cherry had been following up behind, and as soon as Bunter was inside the room Bob had slammed the door and locked it, leaving William George Bunter in durance vile with a brown loaf, a half-pound of butter, and a novel, entitled "The Prisoner of Zenda," to beguile the weary hours of imprisonment.

It was unlikely that Bunter would suffer in silence. His tongue had been held in check all the morning, and he would probably give it full play during the afternoon. But his prison was so lofty and isolated that it was extremely improbable that his cries for deliverance would be heard. All the fellows would

be down on the playing-fields, on that sunny September afternoon.

Harry Wharton & Co. quickly forgot William George Bunter and his plight. They had other and more pressing matters to think about.

Armed with their bags, the juniors trooped down to the school gates.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly. "Loder's waiting for us!"

"So he is, by Jove!" said Wharton, catching sight of Loder's lanky form in the school gateway. "He doesn't look exactly amiable, either."

Certainly Gerald Loder did not look amiable. Quite the reverse, in fact. The frown on his far from handsome visage would have done credit to Jove of old.

He eyed the juniors grimly as they came trooping down to the gates with their bags. Then the prefect planted himself right in their way—a lion in the path, so to speak.

"Where are you kids going?" demanded Loder.

"Out!" said Bob Cherry, with a delightful vagueness: "Topping afternoon, isn't it, Loder? Not a cloud in the giddy sky! The jolly sun, he shines like fun, and all is fair and bright."

Loder scowled. He was not interested in the weather conditions just then. He was interested in one topic only—the movements of the eleven juniors who stood before him.

"I have reason to believe," said Loder grimly, "that you young rascals are up to something shady this afternoon."

"Go hon!"

"You're going blagging, I believe!"

"Blagging?" echoed Wharton. "My hat! I've never heard football called by that name before."

Loder's scowl deepened.

"You needn't try to kid me that you're going to do anything so innocent as playing football," he said. "You've got bags, I see; but that's merely bluff. Bunter was telling me this morning that you had some ulterior motive in going out this afternoon. And I want to know exactly what the game is!"

"The game," said Vernon-Smith, "is football."

"I don't believe you!" snapped Loder.

Vernon-Smith flushed.

"If you accuse me of lying—" he began angrily.

"Dry up, Smithy!" said Wibley. "Time's too precious to bandy words with Loder. Come on!"

Loder still barred the exit.

"You're not going out until you've given me a truthful explanation of your movements," he said.

"We've given it," said Wharton. "If you don't choose to accept it, Loder, that's your own affair. Quick march!"

At the word of command the juniors marched forward like a well-ordered squad of infantry.

Had Loder been wise he would have jumped clear. But he stood his ground, angrily protesting, and the consequences were disastrous. The vanguard of the juniors marched straight into Loder, and the prefect was knocked sprawling. The rearguard marched triumphantly over him, wiping their boots on his prostrate form in the process.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Loder. "How dare you? I shall report you for this! Come back at once, you cheeky young cubs!"

A yell of derisive laughter was the only response. The juniors marched on out of the gates. Instead of taking the road to Courtfield, and thus giving

Loder a clue as to their destination, they took the road to Pegg. They anticipated that Loder would follow them, but the prefect was not in a fit state to pursue them at the moment. He was half-dazed by the human whirlwind which had surged over him. Moreover, he would need a wash and brush-up before venturing out of gates. He was covered from head to foot in dust, as with a garment.

"We shall be reported for this," said Nugent, as the juniors tramped on.

"We shall be called over the coalfulness, and we shall get it in the neckful portion of our anatomies!" said Hurree Singh.

"Or a little lower down," suggested Bob Cherry. "But what does it matter? And, after all, we didn't handle Loder. He was ass enough to get in our way, so it's his own funeral."

"Absolutely!" agreed Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton glanced back over his shoulder. Loder was not in pursuit—not yet, at any rate. When he did start in pursuit, he would take the road to Pegg, for he had seen the juniors go in that direction. The unpopular prefect would have a wild-goose chase, for the juniors only went a little way along the Pegg road. Then they struck off across the fields towards Courtfield Common.

In due course they arrived at the old shepherd's hut, where the real business of the afternoon began in earnest.

Wibley of the Remove had a very difficult and delicate task to perform, and very little time in which to perform it. The match had been fixed for two o'clock, and the footballers would be late, as it was. A few minutes' delay would not matter much; but they didn't want to be excessively late, or Trumper & Co. might become suspicious.

Wibley set to work at once to make up the faces of his schoolfellows. He produced the flesh-masks from his bag, and adjusted them with great care. In some cases, also, he affixed wigs and moustachios. But for the most part the juniors remained clean-shaven.

There was a roar of laughter when Hurree Singh's disguise was completed, for the dusky nabob was transformed into a "white," and quite a handsome "white" at that. Inky's arms and hands and legs were also treated with a special preparation, which transmuted them from dark brown to white.

Hurree Singh was cautioned not to speak whilst the match was in progress. His voice would undoubtedly have given him away.

"Don't start telling me to passfully pass, or to shootfully shoot," said Bob Cherry, "or the worthy fat will be in the esteemed and ludicrous firefulness!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh grinned.

"I shall keep as mum as a mouseful rodent," he promised. "I shall remember your English proverb that speech is silver, and silence is worth two in the bush."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley disguised the juniors in turn, and he left his own disguise till last. He had to be very particular about himself, because Dick Trumper was familiar with the features of Turvey, the Tyne-side Rovers' skipper—though he had no idea what the other members of the team looked like. Trumper owned a photo of Turvey, but he had never seen photographs of the others.

Wibley was through with his disguise at last, and he posed before his schoolfellows for their inspection. The verdict was hearty and unanimous.

"Perfect!"

"Top-hole!"

"Not even a giddy 'tec would twig that disguise, Wib!" declared Bob Cherry.

There was a sudden toot-toot from without, and Harry Wharton opened the door of the hut. The two taxi-cabs had arrived, as arranged, and the Greyfriars juniors—now transformed into the Tyne-side Rovers' football eleven—clambered gaily into the vehicles. The drivers had been solemnly pledged to secrecy, and they were to be paid double fare for keeping the juniors' secret.

As the taxicabs glided away across the common, Harry Wharton gave final instructions to his comrades.

"We've got to strut on to the ground as if it was beneath our dignity to play a team of school kids," said Harry. "We'll start off in a leisurely sort of way, and let Trumper's men take a goal. Then we'll pretend to get rattled, and we'll play up like fury, and make the pace a corker. But we'll be careful not to bag any goals. We'll balloon the ball over the bar, and shoot wide, and all that sort of thing. Meanwhile, Trumper's men will be piling on more goals—you'll have to keep fumbling the ball, Bulstrode—and in the end we shall be roundly and soundly whacked. Trumper will be simply purring with pride to think that he's beaten a real League eleven!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we'll leave a note with him before we drive away, pointing out that he's been dished, diddled, and done! The look on Trumper's face when he reads that note ought to be worth a guinea a box. But we sha'n't be there to see it, worse luck. We shall have to go, while the going's good."

Harry Wharton leaned out of the taxi window, and repeated his instructions to the fellows in the rearmost taxi. Scarcely had he done so, when the Council School ground came in sight, and the taxi-cabs slowed up.

The thudding of a football was audible. Dick Trumper & Co. were putting in some practice, pending the arrival of their formidable opponents.

Around the ropes was a crowd of Council School fellows, and a sprinkling of local people into the bargain.

As soon as the disguised Greyfriars juniors stepped out of the taxis, there was a rush of feet towards them.

"The Rovers!"

"They've turned up at last!"

"Hooray!"

Scores of admiring glances were bestowed upon the visiting team as the taxis disgorged them.

"There's Mr. Turvey!" said Trumper gleefully. And he came sprinting up to the disguised Wibley, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

It was a tense and fateful moment. Wibley needed all his nerve, all his superb powers of play-acting, to meet the situation. Trumper was looking him squarely in the face, and Trumper's eye seemed keener than usual.

But the Council School leader suspected nothing. He shook the hand of "Mr. Turvey" as vigorously as if it had been a pump-handle.

"Sorry we're late, you kids," said Mr. Turvey, in a deep, pleasant voice. "We were unavoidably delayed, you know."

"That's all right, Mr. Turvey!" said Trumper. He ran his eye over the rest of the footballers. "Dapper little crowd, aren't you? I knew that Tyne-side Rovers were on the short side, but some of your fellows are no bigger than us!"

"Size isn't everything, in football," said Mr. Turvey. "Giants are generally awkward and cumbersome on a football field. Little fellows, on the other hand,

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By OWEN CONQUEST.



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are simply full of clever tricks and touches—as you will shortly see!

Trumper laughed. Mr. Turvey spoke in rather a supercilious sort of way, as if the downfall of the home side was a stone dead certainty. Trumper refused to regard it as anything of the sort. He meant to show this cocksure Mr. Turvey that schoolboys could play football just as well as paid professionals—if not better.

"I see you've changed," said Trumper, noting the red-and-white stripes that were visible beneath Mr. Turvey's rain-coat.

"Yes, we changed before we came. We thought it would save time. Are you kids ready for this farce to begin?"

"Eh? What farce?" demanded Trumper.

"This farce—or comedy, whichever you choose to call it—of a pack of school-kids playing a team of professionals. All these people"—Mr. Turvey waved his hand to indicate the crowd round the ropes—"ought to be made to pay amusement tax!"

"Ay, by goom!" said one of the visiting players.

Trumper frowned.

"If the match turns out to be a farce, the laugh won't be against us!" he said, with conviction.

"Sure you wouldn't like to cry off, while there's still time?" said Mr. Turvey.

Dick Trumper greeted this suggestion with a scornful snort.

"You don't catch me crying off!" he said. "Are your fellows quite ready, Mr. Turvey?"

"Quite!"

There was a storm of cheering as the teams lined up. It was quite a novel spectacle to see a first-class League team—as the spectators thought—lining up against the Courtfield County Council School eleven.

Dick Trumper won the toss. There was no advantage to be gained thereby, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Nevertheless, the spectators regarded the winning of the toss as a good omen,

and there was a fresh volley of cheering.

"Hurrah!"

"Play up, Courtfield!"

"On the ball!"

The referee's whistle shrilled out, and the next moment the battle between schoolboys and pro's was in full progress.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Triumph of Trumper!

DICK TRUMPER & CO. entered into the fray with whole-hearted zest. Right from the kick-off they played up very grimly and gamely.

The Council School team had been putting in plenty of practice, and Trumper had brought them to the pitch of perfection.

"We're going to win," Trumper had told his men before the match started, "or perish in the attempt!"

Now that Trumper's ambition of playing against a real League eleven had been gratified, another and a loftier ambition had followed hard on its heel. Trumper's latest and greatest ambition was to find himself on the winning side when the match was over—to thrash and trounce the famous Tyneside Rovers.

Certainly, if enthusiasm counted for anything, Trumper had a good chance of succeeding; for he was fairly bubbling with enthusiasm—brimming over with it, in fact. Never did monarch enter into battle, or knight ride to the tourney, with such enthusiasm and energy as Dick Trumper now displayed. And if enthusiasm conquered the world, as was popularly supposed, surely it would conquer Tyneside Rovers, who only represented the merest fraction of the world.

Fired by the fighting spirit of their leader, Trumper's men "piled in" for all they were worth.

The Council School team exploited the long-passing game, swinging the ball from wing to wing and following up with the keenness of terriers.

The visiting eleven, on the other hand, adopted a very different style of play. They were lazy and lackadaisical. They wore superior smiles and they merely jog-trotted after the ball, instead of dashing for it.

Play had barely been in progress a couple of minutes when the Rovers' goal was placed in peril.

Dick Trumper, playing at centre-forward, swung the ball out to Solly Lazarus, on the wing, and Solly went away like the wind, showing a clean pair of heels to the half-back who was opposed to him.

The crowd cheered him frantically.

"Go it, Solly!"

"Right through on your own, old boy!"

One of the Rovers' backs ambled across to intercept the fleet-footed Solly. The Courtfielder simply lobbed the ball over the back's head, then he darted round him, and fired in a terrific shot.

The Rovers' goalie made a seemingly desperate leap at the incoming leather, but he was seconds too late. The ball crashed over his shoulder into the net.

"Goal!"

It was a shout of wonder, of amazement, of sheer incredulity. The on-lookers, like the explorers in the famous sonnet, "look'd at each other with a wild surmise."

Trumper & Co. had actually drawn first blood against their formidable opponents!

And there was no fluke about that goal. It was a good, honest goal, cleverly worked for, cleverly taken.

Dick Trumper raced across to Solly Lazarus and thumped him on the back.

"Oh, good man—good man!" he cried, in ecstasy. "One up, by Jove! Wonder what Mr. Turvey thinks of that?"

Judging by the expression on Mr. Turvey's face, he was thinking very grim thoughts about that goal. He scowled at the goalie as the latter ruefully fished the ball out of the net.

"Buck up, Binks! Fancy being beaten by a soft thing like that!"

"Soft!" snorted Binks—alias Bulstrode of the Greyfriars Remove. "Why, the blessed thing came in with the force of a cannon-ball!"

Mr. Turvey gave a grunt of displeasure.

"This won't do at all, ba goom!" he said. "Fancy being a goal down to these infants!"

"That's nowt to worry about," said one of Mr. Turvey's colleagues. "Coom, lads, and we'll soon put a different complexion on things!"

"Ay, ba goom!"

The ball was kicked off again from the centre. The Rovers dropped their lethargic and lackadaisical style of play. That goal had rattled them and shaken them out of their sloth. They played up with tremendous vim, and they were none too gentle in their tactics. There were no fouls; but there was plenty of vigorous shoulder-charging, and Trumper's men went sprawling on the turf. Indeed, it seemed as if the visiting players took a grim delight in charging their opponents over like skittles.

The game had veered right round now in favour of the Rovers. Trumper & Co. were hemmed in their own half and compelled to concentrate on defence.

But the Rovers' forwards, although they did many brilliant things, which evoked the applause of the crowd, were simply hopeless when it came to shooting. Time and again, with only the goalie to beat, they fired the ball over the cross-bar, or sent it hopelessly wide. They had chances enough to score half a dozen goals, but they failed to score a single one.

Even when a Courtfield back had the misfortune to handle the ball in the penalty-area and the Rovers were awarded a penalty-kick they failed to turn it to account. The ball was tapped tamely into the goalie's arms.

Mr. Turvey seemed to get very annoyed with his men. During a pause in the game—the ball had been kicked wildly into the crowd by one of the Tynesiders' forwards,—Mr. Turvey harangued his comrades.

"What's the matter with you all?" he demanded irritably. "Have you left your shooting-boots at Pegg?"

Dick Trumper & Co. chuckled. They considered it rather comical for Mr. Turvey to take his colleagues to task, for he himself had been the worst offender. He had made about a dozen shots, and all of them had been ridiculously wide of the target.

"They're getting rattled!" murmured Trumper. "And that doesn't do in footer. We've only to keep cool and we shall win hands down."

It really seemed as if Trumper was right.

The more irritated Mr. Turvey became and the more he slanged, his men the more wild and erratic became their shooting. "Everywhere but the goal" seemed to be the motto of the visiting forwards. The ball flew in all directions but the right one. And the Courtfield goalie never had a moment's anxiety.

Presently Trumper's men took up the attack once more. And they gave their opponents an object lesson in sharp-shooting.

The ball came out to Trumper from a ruck of players, and Trumper took it in his stride and fairly smashed it into the net. The Rovers' custodian failed to see the shot, much less save it.

"Goal!"
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The crowd around the ropes fairly let themselves go. They let their caps go, too, whirling high above their heads.

Trumper & Co. were now two up against the professionals, and the excitement was at fever-pitch.

But it rose higher yet; for within a couple of minutes of the scoring of that goal a further goal fell to the Courtfielders. They forced a corner, and Solly Lazarus scored direct from the corner-kick—a rare happening in football.

"Three up!" tootled Trumper, fairly dancing with delight. "Am I dreaming?"

"It's no dream, old chap!" said Graham happily. "We're three up, right enough and we've plenty of shots in our lockers yet. Look at Mr. Turvey's face! It's a picture!"

All sorts of emotions were chasing each other across Mr. Turvey's countenance. Dismay, astonishment, fury, stupefaction—all these were in evidence.

"Three down!" groaned Mr. Turvey. "Three down—against a team of school-kids!"

"Three up!" chortled Dick Trumper. "Three up—against a team of giddy pro's!"

"Hurrah!"
The whistle sounded for half-time, and the crowd swarmed on to the playing-pitch and made a tremendous fuss of Trumper and his men.

As for Mr. Turvey, the skipper of the visiting side, he wandered away disconsolately to a deserted part of the field. Like Eugene Aram in the poem, he stood remote from all—a melancholy man.

But perhaps Mr. Turvey was not quite so melancholy as his manner implied. Perhaps he had strolled away on his own in order to release the merriment that was bottled up within him. But Dick Trumper & Co. were not to know that.

After a brief interval the teams lined up again.

The Rovers started the second half as if they meant to run the schoolboys off their legs. They played a storming game. Territorially, they had nine-tenths of the play, but their former weakness in front of goal again asserted itself. They could do nothing right. Mr. Turvey did manage to hit the cross-bar on one occasion, and he looked quite

startled when he did it, as if he had not intended to do anything of the sort.

Then Trumper's men, hungry for more goals, took up the attack again, and their shots were dead on the target.

Solly Lazarus completed his "hat-trick" with a grand goal; and then Dick Trumper put on another couple.

The spectators stood spellbound. They were too flabbergasted even to cheer.

It had been anticipated that Trumper & Co. would give the professionals a hard game; but not even the wildest optimist had expected to see as many as six goals scored against the famous Tyneside Rovers!

"Why, it's a rout!" gasped Graham. "If we can lick the Rovers by six to nix, what will Lantham Argyle do to them on Wednesday?"

"It will be a cricket score!" chuckled Trumper. "The Rovers will be simply wiped off the face of the earth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The game was nearing its finish now. And Mr. Turvey wore a very worried look. He had ample reason to look worried, reflected the onlookers; for Trumper's eleven had simply "cake-walked" to victory against Mr. Turvey's team.

But Mr. Turvey was not worrying on that score. He was looking worried because he had just noticed a man stroll on to the ground and mingle with the spectators—a man who was Mr. Turvey's own double—a man who would indubitably have been taken for Mr. Turvey himself!

The sight of the newcomer seemed to alarm Mr. Turvey. He beckoned to the referee.

"How many minutes to go?" he asked.

"Only a couple," answered the official. And Mr. Turvey drew a breath of relief.

The final whistle rang out shortly afterwards. It was the signal for such a scene as had never before been witnessed on the Council School ground.

The victors of that amazing match were in danger of being torn limb from limb by their delighted schoolfellows. Fellows in Council School caps simply surged round Trumper and his men, and wrung their hands, and thumped their backs, and finally hoisted them, and bore them shoulder-high to the dressing-room. And the air rang with cheering.

This was Trumper's hour of triumph. He was lionised by the crowd. Those who were not cheering were playing: "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" on their mouth-organs. And Dick Trumper, swaying on the shoulders of the processors, bore his blushing honours thick upon him.

As for the visiting side—the famous professionals who had been swamped by the schoolboys—they fairly bolted towards the two taxicabs which awaited them at the exit. Doubtless they were glad to hurry away to hide their diminished heads.

Mr. Turvey lingered for a brief moment, to hand a sealed envelope to the referee.

"Would you mind taking this to Trumper, in the dressing-room?" he panted.

And then he darted off in the wake of his comrades, and scrambled into one of the taxis.

The vehicles moved off, followed by laughter and ironical cheers.

But the laughter which followed the defeated team was nothing compared with the shrieks of merriment which arose from the occupants of the two taxi's!

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The jape against Dick Trumper & Co. had worked like a charm, and the merry party of japers fairly hugged themselves with glee as they were whirled away. They could not speak. They were too convulsed for words! And their only regret was that they would not have the pleasure of seeing Dick Trumper's face when he opened that note!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Friars on Top!

"**W**HACKED to the wide!" exclaimed Dick Trumper. "Beaten all ends up!" grinned Graham.

"Thith ith where we thmile!" said Solly Lazarus.

And the Courtfield footballers "smiled" so loudly that they might have been heard a mile off.

Dick Trumper & Co. were in the seventh heaven of delight, as they changed in the dressing-room.

Trumper's dual ambition, of meeting and defeating the famous Tyneside Rovers, had been gloriously realised. The League professionals from the north had been made to look like a team of fifth-rate footballers—a collection of raw novices. They had been trounced in convincing fashion by six goals to nothing. It was an epoch in the history of football, and it was indeed a red-letter day for Dick Trumper. His cup of triumph was filled to overflowing.

The Courtfielders were still gloating over their wonderful win, when the referee looked into the dressing-room. He handed a sealed envelope to Trumper.

"Mr. Turvey asked me to give you this," he said.

"Oh!" said Trumper, in surprise. He ripped open the envelope, and drew out the half-sheet of notepaper which it contained. There was a message written on that half-sheet of paper—a message which caused Dick Trumper to gape, and gasp, and goggle.

Trumper stared at the written words in a stupid sort of way for a moment. It took some little time for their full significance to strike home.

This was the message:

"Dear Trumper,—This is to inform you that you have been dished, diddled, and done!

"You will remember pelting a number of our fellows with bad eggs the other day. Well, this is our way of returning the compliment. You haven't licked Tyneside Rovers at all, my dear old bean! The team you have just licked was a disguised Greyfriars Eleven, specially captained for the occasion by

"Yours merrily,

"WILLIAM WIBLEY

(alias Mr. Turvey)."

"Gug-gug-great pip!" gasped Dick Trumper.

He continued to stare at that message in much the same way as Belshazzar of old must have stared at the writing on the wall.

It took Trumper quite a little time to realise the awful truth—that he and his comrades had indeed been "dished, diddled, and done" by the merry japers of Greyfriars.

When the truth did dawn upon Trumper, he uttered quite a roar.

"Spoofed!"

Trumper's chums stared at him. Their smiles of triumph had vanished now, and expressions of uneasiness and alarm came over their faces.



"Quick march!" At the word of command, Harry Wharton & Co. marched forward like a well-ordered squad of infantry. Had Loder been wise, he would have jumped clear. But he stood his ground, angrily protesting, and the consequences were disastrous. The vanguard of juniors marched into the Sixth Former, and knocked him sprawling. "Yow-ow-ow!" roared Loder. (See Chapter 9.)

"Spoofed!" repeated Trumper dazedly. "Dished and done by those Greyfriars bounders!"

"What!"

"We—we've not played Tyneside Rovers at all!" stuttered Trumper. "That fellow we took to be Mr. Turvey was Wibley—Wibley, of Greyfriars!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Courtfielders exchanged glances of blank dismay. Like their leader, they were stunned and stupefied, at first, by the news. It seemed too utterly incredible.

Yet there was the proof, in black-and-white. A Greyfriars Eleven had impersonated Tyneside Rovers, and had deliberately allowed Trumper & Co. to inflict a crushing defeat upon them!

The look of dismay on Trumper's face, and the expressions on the faces of Trumper's followers, were indeed worth a guinea a box. Indeed, it might be said that they were worth a five-pound note.

"Fools—blind fools that we were!" snorted Trumper. "Fancy our not twigging their disguises! When they turned up at the ground, I was surprised that they weren't bigger and broader. But I didn't guess—I didn't suspect—"

"Oh, what a giddy sell!" groaned Graham.

"We shall never hear the end of thith!" murmured Solly Lazarus.

Dick Trumper crumpled Wibley's note savagely in his hand, and hurled it out of the window.

There was a very different atmosphere in the dressing-room now, compared with the triumphant atmosphere of a few minutes before.

The Courtfielders could have kicked themselves for not having "tumbled" to the gigantic jape which had been played upon them by their rivals of Greyfriars. They were furious to think how easily they had fallen into the trap.

"We've been spoofed all along the line," growled Trumper. "That fellow we rescued from hooligans last night, in the High Street, couldn't have been Turvey at all! It was Wibley! And the hooligans weren't genuine, roughs. My hat! They were Wharton and his pals, disguised for the part! Oh, what frantic fools we've been! We shall never be able to hold up our heads again, after this. We shall be the laughing-stock of Courtfield. And think how those Greyfriars bounders will crow over us!"

"Don't!" implored Graham. "I—I can't stand this! I feel I want to go and kick somebody!"

Graham's desire to go out and have somebody's blood was perhaps natural, in the circumstances. All the Courtfield fellows had the same desire. They wanted to let off steam—to do something that would console them a little for their crushing disappointment.

With this warlike desire burning in the breasts of Dick Trumper & Co. it was distinctly unfortunate for Gerald Loder, of the Greyfriars Sixth, that he

should have arrived on the ground at that moment.

For nearly two hours past, Loder had been engaged in a determined but futile pursuit of Harry Wharton & Co. He had been resolved to find out where they were going, and what they were up to. Loder had tramped all the way to Pegg, for he had seen the juniors go in that direction. He had made inquiries of the old fishermen, without avail. He had tramped the foreshore; he had combed the cliffs and caves; but all to no purpose. And then it had occurred to Loder that the juniors had thrown him off the scent—that they had struck off across the fields, probably to Courtfield.

Loder was not very fond of walking, as a recreation. But he had his fill of walking that afternoon. He had walked until he was dusty and footsore and perspiring. Like the celebrated Felix Loder "kept on walking, kept on walking still." And his peregrinations had at last brought him to the Council School football ground, at Courtfield.

From the entrance to the ground, Loder could see a number of schoolboy figures, silhouetted against the windows of the dressing-room. He wondered if Harry Wharton & Co. were there. Perhaps, after all, their explanation of their movements had been a truthful one, and they had been here, playing a football match with the County Council fellows.

Loder decided to go and investigate. It was an evil moment for him when he made this decision.

Dick Trumper & Co. were feeling distinctly "wrathy" at that moment. They wanted somebody's blood—preferably the blood of a Greyfriars fellow. And the sight of Gerald Loder, striding towards the dressing-room, afforded them grim satisfaction.

"Greyfriars cad!" said Trumper. "What shall we do with him?"

The number of terrible tortures suggested by the warlike Courtfielders would have done credit to the inquisitors of old. Graham proposed that Loder should be tied to a tree and made a target for peashooters, water-pistols, large and hefty lumps of turf, and any other missiles that were available. Solly Lazarus suggested that Loder should be frog-marched to the town pump and forcibly held under the tap until the Courtfielders' wrath had cooled and Loder had been cooled into the bargain. Another bright youth proposed that

Loder should be put in a sack and decorated with paint and feathers and pursued back to Greyfriars by a booing crowd.

Fortunately for Loder, none of these dreadful things happened to him. But what did happen to him was sufficiently dreadful, to Loder's way of thinking.

The Greyfriars prefect, his face dark and angry, came striding up the steps of the dressing-room.

Dick Trumper & Co. did not know what Loder wanted, and they did not care. They were in no mood to make polite inquiries. As soon as Loder reached the top of the steps, and banged his fist on the door, he was readily answered. The door was thrown open at once, and a number of furious-faced fellows fairly hurled themselves upon the lanky prefect.

Loder, taken completely aback by that unexpected assault, roared and protested.

"Leggo, you young rascals! How dare you lay your grubby paws on me! How dare you! I—yooooop!"

Loder broke off with a terrific yell as he was hurled from top to bottom of the dressing-room steps.

At the foot of the steps lay a pool of very muddy water—the accumulation of recent rains. Loder landed fairly in the centre of the pool, and lay floundering and spluttering in a veritable mud-bath.

"Ow! Gug! Odoock! You—you villains!" gurgled Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick Trumper & Co. roared at the spectacle of Loder floundering in his bath of mud. It was a spectacle that compensated and consoled them, in some measure, for their recent misfortunes.

Loder scrambled to his feet, breathing threatenings and slaughter. He ought to have known better than to ascend the dressing-room steps again. But he was in such a state of fury that he did not stop to reason. He fairly bounded up the steps, his face livid with rage.

The Courtfield footballers were ready for him. Willing hands seized the Greyfriars prefect and spun him round and despatched him down the steps again and into the muddy pool.

"Gerooooogh!" spluttered Loder, as he splashed in his mud-bath.

"Want any more?" inquired Trumper sweetly. "We're quite willing to oblige, you know!"

Loder did not want any more. He had had enough, and more than enough. He tottered to his feet, and shook his

fist in a frenzy at the grinning faces at the top of the steps. Then he turned on his heel and squelched savagely away.

It had not been Dick Trumper's lucky afternoon. Neither had it been Gerald Loder's!

Furious and muddy, and feeling at war with the world, the cad of the Sixth crawled in at the gates of Greyfriars an hour later.

After he had treated himself to a much-needed bath, Loder stamped savagely away to Mr. Quelch's study. He was determined to make trouble for somebody—the "somebody" being Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove.

In a heated torrent of words, Loder described to Mr. Quelch how he had been assaulted by the Remove juniors in the school gateway.

"I had reason to believe, sir," said Loder, "that the young rascals were going out on some shady expedition. They were going blagging!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Pray, confine yourself to King's English, Loder!" he said. "What, exactly, do you mean by 'blagging'?"

"Going on the razzle, sir," said Loder. He was too angry to pick and choose his expressions.

"I am still as far from enlightenment as ever, Loder," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "The one expression is as meaningless to me as the other."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"They were going to some disreputable place, sir, probably for the purpose of smoking and gambling," he said. "I gathered as much from Bunter this morning. Bunter told me there was something shady going on—"

"Enough!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "I am surprised at you, Loder, for attaching any importance to the statements of a boy like Bunter, who is a notorious prevaricator. If Bunter indeed made such an assertion, it is quite obvious he made it out of malice. I know Wharton and his friends too well to believe that they would be guilty of such pernicious practices. You say they assaulted you in the school gateway. If you brought such an unfounded accusation against them, Loder, is it any wonder that they assaulted you? You doubtless provoked the assault. I am aware that there has long been a bitter feud between you and my leading pupils."

Loder stood silent, scowling.

"Of course, I shall hold an inquiry into this matter," Mr. Quelch went on. "I shall ask Wharton how he and his friends spent the afternoon, and I have no doubt he will give me a satisfactory explanation. Their assault upon you—even though it was probably provoked—cannot be overlooked. I shall punish the boys concerned—"

Loder brightened up a little.

"By awarding them an imposition of fifty lines each!" concluded Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Loder. He had been fervently hoping that it would be "a licking all round" for Harry Wharton & Co.

"You may go, Loder," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

And Loder went—with feelings too deep for words.

Harry Wharton & Co. were summoned shortly afterwards to the Remove master's study, and Mr. Quelch readily accepted their assurance that they had spent the afternoon playing football. They were given fifty lines apiece for their assault upon Loder; but that, as Bob Cherry gleefully remarked, was nothing to go into mourning about.

(Continued on page 28.)

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"GOOD heavens!" The ejaculation came from Bristow's parched lips in a long drawn-out whisper of amazement. "It—it all fits together like a jigsaw puzzle. And you're right, too, Locke."

He paused uncertainly for a moment as if striving to make up his mind about something.

Then finally he swung round to the detective again.

"Look here, Locke!" he said. "I'm done. You've got me, and I know what I'm in for. I'm not complaining. I've played my game and lost. But, at least, I'm glad, dirty-souled rotter though I am, that my conscience is clear of the murder of my uncle."

"And now I'm going to own up to something."

"Before leaving Johannesburg I kept a watch on that fellow Griggs. I know him, you see—knew him long before this affair back in England at Stonemoor."

Bristow's eyes glinted, and his hands, beneath their pinions, clenched and unclenched convulsively as he spoke. Locke nodded without speaking.

"I got to know—never mind how—about Daft Dave and the dictaphone. I also got to know that he had a couple of spare records containing part of the actual words spoken just before the crime was committed."

"As you already know, the record that Daft Dave kept putting on to terrify me into agreeing to his infamous terms—he believed I was heir to Sir Merton's property and reckoned he'd found a fat pigeon to pluck—the record he used repeated the words, 'You've killed me. But I know you, you scoundrel. Gerald—'"

"That's right," nodded Locke. "Except for the last word, which was 'Jarrad.' I heard it distinctly when I was watching, with Jack Drake, in the next room of the house where you and Daft Dave were engaged in—er—conversing. That last word was 'Jarrad.' But if you had taken the trouble to listen more carefully at the time you would have noticed a distinct pause after the word 'scoundrel' and a rising inflexion on the name 'Jarrad.' In

short, what Sir Merton was saying was: 'You've killed me. But I know you, you scoundrel!' And then he raised his voice in a feeble attempt to shout, and called out 'Jarrad!' doubtless with the idea of rousing his secretary, who slept in the room overhead."

"Great Scott!" gasped Bristow. "I never thought of that."

"Daft Dave knew you never would," nodded Locke. "That's why he put it across you and nearly got away with it."

"Well, to go on," said Bristow, after a tense pause. "As I say, I watched Griggs—his real name's Hedger—and after I'd sneaked that paper off Jack Drake I followed Griggs that same night to the Devil's Elbow; and, from a safe distance, I saw him take the contents of that obony box hidden there by Daft Dave."

"Later I contrived—it doesn't matter how—to get hold of what Griggs had found. It turned out to be a couple of new, unbroken dictaphone records."

"I took these with me to Bulawayo,

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GRIGGS, valet to Sir Merton, also implicated in the affair, although to what extent it is yet to be discovered.

STEPHEN JARRAD, Sir Merton's secretary, wrongly accused of the crime, takes to flight.

DAFT DAVE, a local half-wit, who knew the true facts of the case, but died before he could make a full confession.

The treasure of the Golden Pyramid, left to Sir Merton Carr by an eccentric Boer farmer, supplies the real motive of the baronet's tragic end—a treasure that both Bristow and Griggs are now seeking. Bristow, however, is caught by Ferrers Locke, who then begins to elucidate the mystery.

(Now read on.)

where I managed to lay hands on an old dictaphone, a worn-out dud of a thing, but good enough for my purpose. And if you care to have a look at the whole doings you'll find 'em in that sack over there in the corner. I reckon they've a pretty tale to tell, and one that'll make you sit up and take notice."

Bristow ceased speaking, and Locke, after one long, searching glance at the man, turned and made his way across the cave as directed, Jack Drake meantime keeping guard over their prisoner.

In a few moments Ferrers Locke had discovered the sack and removed its contents—a dilapidated-looking dictaphone of an obsolete pattern and a couple of records, carefully wrapped in cotton-wool.

It did not take the detective long to set the instrument going, and next moment a tense silence fell upon all three of us. After a preliminary scratching the voice of the dead man—Sir Merton Carr—broke the stillness of the cavern. It came strong and clear, aided by an ingenious hornlike contraption which Bristow had evidently constructed himself, and which acted somewhat on the lines of a loud-speaker.

"What is it you want? Haven't I told you I will not be disturbed—"

The voice broke off, and there came another, muffled and partially indistinct, so much so that Jack's brows became puckered. He felt sure there was something vaguely familiar about that voice, yet he could not quite place it.

"You know perfectly well what I want, Sir Merton, and I'm going to get it!"

Again Sir Merton's voice raised in anger:

"You scoundrel! Leave this room instantly! Get out of my house! After all I've done for you—"

"I'm not leaving here until you hand over the—"

The voice trailed off, the needle scratching harshly against the record, and finally coming to a dead stop.

Locke, amid a tense, electric silence, removed the record and slipped the one remaining tube on to the roller, starting the needle again. For some moments it traced its way with a hissing scratch

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over the record, and then, with startling, dramatic clearness, the voice of Sir Merton Carr came forth, raised in an angry, half-frightened shout.

"What! You murderous ruffian! Keep your distance, I say, or—"

The voice broke off and was followed by a series of crashes, weirdly suggestive of the upsetting of furniture during the course of a short, sharp struggle. Then followed one final, shattering crash and a scream of pain.

"You've killed me, you scoundrel!" It was Sir Merton's voice, choked now with pain. "But I know you. Jarrad!" Locke lifted the needle and turned towards the others. His face was set in solemn lines, but there was a glint in his eyes suggesting that he had made an all-important discovery.

"Of course," said Bristow before the detective could speak, "all that was recorded on one single tube at the time. These are only copies made from the original mould by Daft Dave, who evidently found it more convenient for his purpose to separate it all into two records."

"For the very simple yet significant reason," murmured Locke, nodding, "that there is a distinct absence of the other man's voice in the second half of that tragic conversation, thus enabling Daft Dave to keep up his pretence of your guilt, and also, when the time came, of Jarrad's. It's all been most fiendishly ingenious."

He put the records and the instruments carefully away again, and then turned briskly towards Bristow.

"And now we'll move along, I think," he said quietly. "The last lap of our trail lies yonder at Great Zimbabwe, where I expect we shall find our friend Griggs already on the spot. You will accompany us, Bristow, and I should hardly think it necessary, in view of what has happened, to warn you that any funny business will be abruptly terminated in no uncertain manner."

Bristow gave a scornful laugh. "No need to worry about that," he exclaimed. "I reckon I know when I'm beaten. And anyway, I'm sick of the whole business. But you really mean to take me with you to Zimbabwe?" he added, with a sudden look of anxiety which rather puzzled Jack.

Locke nodded. "Absolutely," he replied. "There's nowhere else to leave you till we return to Bulawayo."

"Good enough!" Bristow's lips parted in a smile that was almost a snarl. "Then I'm ready right now!"

Locke looked at him curiously for a moment, but did not speak again, and a few moments later the party had left the cave, to be joined outside by Pycroft and the native guide.

Locke halted for a moment and looked at Mafuzu thoughtfully. Finally he turned to Pycroft with a gesture of impatience.

"Let that fellow go," he said abruptly. "We've drawn his fangs, and he can't do any more harm now that his master's been muzzled."

Mafuzu received the order of release with a whoop of delighted surprise, and after lavishing blessings, in his own extravagant language, upon Locke and Jack, and even sparing a huge grin for Bristow, who merely scowled in return, the native guide turned and took to his heels across the lonely veldt.

The End of the Trail!

THE sun was setting in a blaze of blood-red glory when the little party, headed by Ferrers Locke, at last reached the vast, straggling dead city of stone which went by the name of Great Zimbabwe.

The journey had not been a long one, but they had been compelled to cover it entirely on foot, as Bristow's aeroplane was too small to accommodate

them all, and had, perforce, to be left behind.

Locke took the precaution of approaching their destination by a circuitous route, as he was anxious not to give any inkling of his presence to Griggs, if that elusive and mysterious fellow had indeed actually forestalled them.

They came to a halt and gazed at the scene before them, momentarily entranced.

A ruined city of stone it undoubtedly was, curiously forlorn and isolated in that desolate splendour of the vast, undulating veldt, with its massive boulders of nightmare design standing sentinel over the place of the dead. And set almost in the centre of the ruins was the great conical tower, a gigantic, hoary monument rearing its great heights over all, and casting long, diaphanous shadows all about it.

"Come on!" said Locke at last. They resumed their march, Locke leading, and Jack and Pycroft following with Bristow, his arms still pinioned, between them.

The monocled crook had given no trouble whatever. Indeed, he seemed almost cheerfully resigned to his fate, and even cracked cynical jokes with his captors as the journey was made.

Locke, after a momentary hesitation, decided to make straight for the conical tower. He was resolved, before searching for the old Boer's asbestos reef, to make sure about the man Griggs, and, if he was indeed there, to take him prisoner.

And, presuming that the ex-valet had got in ahead of them, Locke wisely guessed that, as night was now rapidly approaching, the conical tower would be the most likely place wherein Griggs would seek shelter and rest.

They passed through a maze of what had once been long narrow streets, the ruins of the weird, tumbledown buildings surrounding them on every hand, (Continued on next page.)

STARTING NEXT WEEK!



A Super-Mystery Story Featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.
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until at last they reached their objective, and passed through a narrow opening into the dark confines of the tower, from the top of which a pin-point of light, with a solitary unwinking star, heralding the night, could just be seen.

Suddenly there came a wild yell of warning from Pycroft, and ere either Locke or Jack Drake could move, a figure dashed past them, and began scaling the narrow, stone steps which ran up one side of the tower wall towards the summit.

"It's Bristow!" yelled Jack. "He's escaped!"

"Took me off my guard," came Pycroft's voice in angry surprise. "Must have worked his bonds loose, and— Oh, heavens, look at that!"

He broke off with a gasp of horror, pointing upwards.

Locke, who had already begun to scale the steps in hot pursuit of the elusive crook, now paused and caught up his breath.

Bristow had almost reached the summit so swiftly had he climbed, and now another figure appeared walking round the wide, crumbling edge of the hollowed turret.

"Griggs, by thunder!" gasped Pycroft.

But ere he or either of his companions could speak again, the stillness was broken by a cry from the lips of Gerald Arthur Bristow, who had now reached the top, and stood, in a curiously crouching position, within a yard or so of the man Griggs.

"Got you at last, you backsliding traitor!"

The words came clearly down to the horrified, spellbound watchers below. They sprang from Bristow's lips in a snarl of concentrated fury, and were answered by a half-stifled cry of blank amazement from Griggs.

Locke redoubled his efforts now, and soon had come level with the summit. He clambered up till he stood erect on the edge of the turret, with Jack Drake following up the steps behind him, and Pycroft watching, spellbound, from below.

"Steady, Jack!" hissed Locke warningly. "Keep back!"

Bristow and the other man were now almost completely round the other side of the ruined circular summit, Griggs retreating in wild, panic-stricken alarm before the steady and amazingly sure-footed advance of his enemy.

Bristow seemed suddenly to have gone mad. His eyes, shot with yellow streaks, blazed in a frenzy of jealous hate, his lips sagging, and his hands outstretched before him like the claws of a bird of prey.

The summit of the tower consisted of an unusually wide platform of gigantic stones, allowing enough room for three men to walk abreast. Thus, though the peril of a false step was great indeed, it was yet not altogether surprising that neither Griggs nor his infuriated pursuer had fallen headlong to the ground below.

A great moon sailed in the star-spangled heavens now, casting a weird, almost unreal light upon the scene. Jack Drake, his head and shoulders just above the edge of the pit-like interior of the tower, watched with bated breath as Locke, with a warning shout, started forward in pursuit, almost recklessly ignoring his own risks of a fall.

But long ere Locke could get near them the two gaolbirds had closed in a fierce embrace, Bristow suddenly pouncing upon his adversary with a yell of triumph.



Even as Ferrers Locke rushed forward and drew level with the struggling pair there came a wild scream from Griggs, and the two combatants, reeling over the outer edge of the tower, pitched headlong to the blackness below.

And then began one of the most terrible, awe-inspiring duels that Ferrers Locke had ever seen.

Back and forth the combatants swayed, each struggling frantically for mastery. Griggs, his face livid with fear, fought and clawed for freedom, while Bristow, apparently blind to everything save the fact that he had at last got his treacherous erstwhile confederate to himself, steadily forced his man back, with a stranglehold tightening every second on the other's throat.

The end was inevitable, and nothing that Locke could have done would have made the slightest difference. Indeed, even as the detective, in one last, desperate attempt, rushed forward and drew practically level with the struggling pair, there came a wild scream from Griggs, and Locke himself fell back and covered his face with his hands as the two crooks reeled to the outer edge of the tower, swayed drunkenly for a moment, and then pitched headlong into the blackness below.

The silence that followed that last, awful shriek was like the breathless stillness of a tomb.

Half an hour later they found Gerald

Arthur Bristow sprawled out on the ground at the base of the conical tower. He was quite dead.

A few yards away was another huddled heap, which moved ever so slightly as Ferrers Locke and his companions, white and tense, approached it.

Griggs, otherwise Hedger, opened his eyes as Locke bent swiftly down to examine him. A faint smile played round the lips of the dying man.

"No—good! I'm all in!" he gasped. "Don't—trouble about me! Just—want—to say—it was I—who—who killed—Sir Mer—"

His voice trailed off and his eyelids closed wearily. Ferrers Locke, after gazing at that bruised and bleeding face for a long moment, rose slowly to his feet and drew off his hat.

Then he looked towards his companions and nodded. No words were spoken, because no words were needed.

The next day, following implicitly the instructions left in so weird a form by Piet de Jongh, Locke and his companions found the hidden, secret reef of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 919.

asbestos, and subsequent examinations, conducted by expert mineralogists from Bulawayo, more than confirmed the truth of the old Boer's queer claims.

Sir Merton Carr and his scapegrace nephew, Gerald Bristow, being dead, there was only one remaining member of the family, to whom the vast fortune accruing from the working of the asbestos reef went in its entirety. This was Gordon Carr, son of the mining magnate, and captain of the Remove Form at Stormpoint College.

At first the news that he had suddenly become virtually a millionaire was received by Gordon Carr with complete indifference. His grief over the tragic loss of his father overshadowed everything else, and made him for some time the centre of the deepest pity and sympathy among schoolfellows and masters alike at the great Hampshire college. But as Time pursued its healing way Gordon Carr's perspective brightened considerably.

Meanwhile Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake returned to London in company with their old official colleague and friend, Inspector Pycroft.

And to-day there reposes on Locke's desk a tiny golden pyramid, which he invariably uses as a paper-weight, and which forms a constant reminder of the wild adventures he and his colleagues experienced on the never-to-be-forgotten case of "The Veldt Trail."

THE END.

(Now look out for the opening chapters of "The Phantom Bat"—a powerful serial story of mystery and adventure starting in next week's MAGNET!)

If you want
a thrill, boys,
then read—



An Amazing New
Pirate Story
Commencing in
Our Top-Notch
Companion Paper

"THE BOYS' FRIEND"
Out Next Monday
Order it Now!

FIRE FIGHTING as a Daily Job!

A thrilling, well-paid occupation, and how to enter it.

(Several *Magnetites* have recently asked for information on this subject, and the following article has been written for their special benefit.—Ed.)

A THRILL comes to the youthful alarm-giver when, one or two minutes after he has obeyed the above instructions, a gleaming red-and-brass motor-escape hoves in sight, and he is invited to "Hop aboard and say where, sir!"

At the rapid increase in the speed again to something well above the legal limit, and the rapt interest of the passers-by, and the silent determination of the helmeted men beside him to rescue every living thing in danger, a glow will seize him if his ambition is the handling of such a superb monster himself, and making fire-extinguishing his daily job.

Actually, becoming a fire-brigade officer is no idle dream, for the pay is very good, even from the start, and there is no danger of "trade slumps," sudden dismissals, and other dismal things, once on the permanent staff. It is not a very easy ambition to realise, of course, because, naturally, only picked men are fitted for the arduous, risky work involved, and most authorities, after subjecting a candidate to a searching examination, prefer only to take him on at first for a "probationary year."

There are, however, continual vacancies to be filled, for both the little villages and the big county councils are continually adding to their fine fighting forces, while should he leave the fireman is always certain of a remunerative position elsewhere.

Those in London should write to the Chief Officer, Brigade Headquarters, 94, Southwark Bridge Road, S.E., for an application form, and those in the provinces to the Chief Clerk of their County Council.

Anyone is eligible who is over nineteen years of age, and 5 ft. 7 ins. in height; chest 37 ins., expanded 38½ ins., and is physically sound; can write legibly, is bright and willing, and is fairly good at weight-lifting, spelling, and arithmetic. Examinations in these things will have to be faced. Weight-lifting, for instance, will entail lifting about 250 lbs. of hose-pipe, and, if successful, the candidate will become a "probationer," earning right away without any apprenticeship the munificent salary of £3 8s. 6d. per week.

The probationer's ability to take advantage of the instruction and drill provided, and his general record for smartness, will then be considered, and at the end of the year he will either be dismissed or will commence to earn £3 10s. a week, plus 8s. 6d. board wages. Qualifying tests and seniority can then raise his salary to £4 13s., plus board wages, while if he distinguishes himself by his knowledge or by winning the fireman's V.C.—the silver medal—he may be appointed sub-officer at £4 15s. to £5 10s. Other ranks are: Station officer, £300 to £350 a year; dis-

trict officers, £360 to £400; superintendents, £475 to £575; senior superintendent, £575 to £625. Pensions are awarded after fifteen years' service, while if one retires without pension after five years, one gets a gratuity of one month's pay for every year of service.

It is a good plan for those thinking of joining to go and see the free fire-drill display given every Wednesday at 3 p.m., by the London Fire Brigade, at 94, Southwark Bridge Road. Visitors receive a cordial welcome, are shown round the workshops, and entertained by the brigade band. Write first to the "Chief Officer" for free tickets.

"Drills and other technical instruction will occupy a large part of the probationer's time," an L.C.C. County Hall official pointed out recently. "He will have to learn how to scale walls and windows with the special hooked brigade ladders, and how to handle hose, chemical extinguishers, and hand-pumps, and generally learn all there is to be known about life-saving, carrying unconscious people down ladders, wearing smoke helmets, handling motor-escapes and pumps, and, perhaps most exciting of all, taking his place in the watch-room, waiting for a disc, indicative of a fire-call, to fall. Each of the discs bears a consecutive number, showing the point or origin of the call. Thus if two discs, 02 and 03, drop together, the silent watcher knows it is most likely two alarms for the same fire, but if 02 and 09 drop, he has reason to suspect two fires.

"The probationer will also learn a lot about the river floats for waterside fires, and about the tank of water carried by the motor-escapes which enables them to start spraying a fire while the nearest water-hydrant has still to be found. Other jobs will be testing call-boxes for proper working, and inspecting theatres, music halls, lodging-houses, and other places, to see that the fire regulations are being observed.

"Firemen no longer 'live in.' They now work in regular shifts—9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 a.m., changing over weekly from the day shift to the night shift."

There is always keen competition to become a driver, but as there is usually a number of men undergoing training, the probationer with some previous experience stands a good chance of winning the 5s. per week bonus. Driving three tons at 35 miles per hour through City streets is by no means easy, but brigade driving will become even more strenuous when the present 50 h.p. motor-pumps are replaced by the 250 h.p. machines now being "tried out." A motor-escape driver is given about twenty seconds to get his machine "under way," and a motor-pump driver forty seconds, the station officer usually accompanying the latter.



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed "The Editor," THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

SAVING!

I HAVE received a jolly interesting letter from a reader in Southport who undoubtedly possesses a shrewd head on a pair of young shoulders. He tells me that he has developed an enthusiasm for saving money. My correspondent, who is fourteen years of age, receives a shilling a week pocket-money, jointly from his mother and father. This is what he does with it. He buys each week a copy of the MAGNET, "Gem," and "Boys' Friend." That little lot costs him sixpence. To use his own words, "it's the best six-pennyworth that anyone could buy!" The remaining sixpence goes into a money-box, which is emptied every three months, the contents then being handed over to the care of the Post Office Savings Bank. My correspondent has been following this programme for three years, and has now a tidy little sum stowed away for a rainy day. Apparently, he found it difficult at first; but after a month of wistful gazing into shop-windows, followed by more wistful glances at the money-box when he returned home, he conquered the temptation to "burst open the box and blue the contents." Splendid fellow! Saving is a grand thing, and there always comes a time when it brings its reward.

AN AMATEUR ANNUAL!

R. MacMurray, of 19, Royal Street, Gourrock, Scotland, writes to tell me that he is contemplating "running" an amateur annual. He goes on to say that, however excellent an annual might be, it would hardly be a success without readers. My friend is evidently something of a wag, which says well for the humorous side of this coming annual. Will those of my chums who are interested in this project communicate with R. MacMurray at the above address.

THE

"GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

Talking of annuals brings me to emphasise the point that readers who are keen to possess the new Annual should take the precaution of ordering a copy now. I'm not bluffing; the "Holiday Annual" now on sale is going like hot cakes. Orders are pouring in from all over the world. Think of it, boys, 360 pages of School, Sport, and Adventure yarns by all the famous authors of the day; profusely illustrated; Hobby Hints, Plays, Poems, Tricks, Articles, etc.—all for the modest price of six shillings! This little lot will drive away the blues when the dark evenings come to stay for a bit. Do

yourself a good turn now. Your newsagents will be pleased to let you see a copy, and when you've seen it you'll want it—take it from me!

A SUGGESTION!

A cheery reader from Bainbridge sends along a suggestion that has arrived too late to be of use this year, but which, I feel sure, Mr. Richards will be able to make use of next summer. My loyal chum would like to see the Famous Five spending a summer vacation at "Hurree Singh's 'place' in Bhanipur." India is a long way off, likewise next summer, but I think we shall see Inky lording it in his own country, for all that, with Harry Wharton & Co. as his guests of honour! Many thanks for the suggestion, chum.

A MAP OF GREYFRIARS!

Quite a number of Magnetites are devoting their leisure time to drawing a map of Greyfriars from imagination. In most cases, the reader has announced his intention of letting me see the finished article. It will be rather interesting to see how these maps compare one with the other.

JAMAICA!

Even in far-away Jamaica the MAGNET has its followers. Amongst them can be no more enthusiastic reader than R. N. Fraser, who "likes the MAGNET better and better every week." This loyal chum winds up a very interesting letter by wishing the old paper every success, and says, "I am sure it will get it—it really is a 'Magnet.'" Right on the wicket, my chum!

POWERFUL MYSTERY SERIAL!

Readers can look forward to a real treat in the way of detective yarns next Monday, for in that issue of the MAGNET will appear the opening chapters of

"THE PHANTOM BAT!"

The title alone is suggestive of a good thing in store. And it is a good thing. Ferrers Locke and the youthful Jack Drake have devoted their time to some knotty problems of late, but the mystery surrounding this phantom bat will keep them busy from the word "Go." Perhaps I ought to say at this stage that the yarn does not deal with Jack Hobbs' cricket-bat, attractive as that hardworking piece of willow is! Anyway, there's nothing ghostly about it when centuries

are required. Mind you read the first instalment of this topping story, boys.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION!

An Ealing reader wants to know if he can have a story of Greyfriars featuring Harry Wharton & Co. as Scouts. In common with my usual custom, I have forwarded the notion to Mr. Frank Richards. Many thanks for the suggestion, chum.

NO ADDRESS!

A thoroughly typical and topical letter reaches me from Carnarvon, in Western Australia. The writer is Reginald Russell, and he says he would like to hear from Magnetites all over the atlas. The address, however, which he gives is so vague that I am unable to deal with his questions through the post. He wants old copies of his favourite paper, otherwise the MAGNET. My chum is a wanderer, for ever seeking the spice of adventure. One of these days he intends to set out on a lengthy travel. He first intends to make his way to Java, then New Guinea, and the Pacific shores, afterwards cycling through China to Calais! And after Calais, Suffolk, and the dear old familiar streets of Stowmarket. A hefty journey, Magnetites will all agree, and yet friend Russell is determined to accomplish it. I hope he will find the old copies of the MAGNET as he plods along; they'll serve to make the journey a lighter affair, at any rate. Bon voyage!

THE "GEM!"

My chums will be spending twopence to good advantage if they buy a copy of our topping companion paper this week. Besides a splendid long complete yarn of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, there is a special supplement, a thrilling adventure serial, and a joke competition, to say nothing of a brilliant little poem featuring the character of a leading light at the school in verse. Get a copy of the "Gem" to-day, chums.

Next Monday's Programme!

"FISH'S 'HAIR-RAISING STUNT!'"

By Frank Richards.

A magnificent, extra-long story of Harry Wharton & Co., with Fisher T. Fish, the cute American junior, well in the limelight. A scream from beginning to end!

"THE PHANTOM BAT!"

The opening chapters of a super-mystery story, featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

"PETS!"

A special "Herald" Supplement by Harry Wharton & Co., who have "adopted" pets as their subject.

PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Another topping portrait of a Greyfriars Celebrity, making No. 4 in the series.

Cheerio, chums, till next week!

Your Editor.

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