

6 GRAND PICTURE-STAMPS *Free* INSIDE

The MAGNET

2^d



"DOWN WITH THE REBEL!"



HUNTING FOR TROUBLE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Rag in the Remove!

“**Q**UIET, please!”
Bang!
“Will you be quiet?”
Bang!

Twice in succession the lid of a desk descended with terrific bangs that rang far beyond the Remove Form Room at Greyfriars.

It was Harry Wharton's desk, and Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, who let the lid fall—apparently by accident.

But the grinning faces in the Remove showed how little the juniors believed that that terrific banging was accidental.

Mark Linley, head boy of the Remove, set his lips.

It was third school at Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, had been called away from the Form-room.

Naturally, he left his class in charge of his head boy.

His head boy seemed likely to have a high old time while Quelch was away. It was easy for any reckless fellow to start a “rag” in the absence of the Form master. Other fellows were sure to follow his lead. Ragging was ever so much more entertaining than grinding at a Latin paper. It did not improve a fellow's knowledge, certainly; but there were quite a lot of fellows in the Greyfriars Remove who were not very keen on the acquisition of knowledge!

Bang!

For the third time Wharton's desk-lid came down with a crash. There was a laugh along the Form.

“Wharton!” said Mark, setting his lips hard.

Wharton glanced round carelessly.

“Hallo!” he drawled.

“If you will not keep order I shall

By FRANK RICHARDS.

have to report you to Mr. Quelch when he comes back!”

“Well, you'll enjoy doing that, won't you?” asked Wharton. “It will give you a leg-up with Quelch to report a fellow he's down on!”

“He, he, he!” came from Billy Bunter.

“You know that I don't want to report you or any fellow, Wharton!” exclaimed Mark, flushing angrily. “But I've got to keep order as head boy, and you know that.”

“Well, go ahead, and do it!” retorted Wharton. “I used to keep order when I was head boy. Now you've greased round Quelch and stepped into my shoes, it's up to you!”

Bang!

Down came the desk-lid again.

Bang, bang, bang! Came desk-lids from various directions. Slackers and ragers in the class were catching on. Vernon-Smith, always ready for trouble, joined in first, then Skinner and Snoop and Stott. Bolsover major began to stamp his heavy feet on the floor. Micky Desmond produced a tin-whistle and blew. Morgan chimed in with a mouth-organ.

It was not uncommon for a rag like this to happen in a French set with Monsieur Charpentier. But it was very uncommon indeed in the Remove-room. It was still rarer for Harry Wharton to be the leader in such a proceeding. But it was no secret that Wharton resented his place as head boy passing to another fellow, and his resentment was visited equally upon his Form master and the new head boy. And this term Harry Wharton, once a good influence in the Form, seemed to have set out

to distinguish himself as the worst boy in the Remove.

Mark Linley breathed hard.

He had to keep order—if he could! It looked as if he couldn't! Once the rag started, there was no stopping it.

Hardly any fellow now was even looking at his Latin paper. Some of them sat on the desks instead of the forms. Ink-balls flew through the air. One landed on Linley's nose, leaving an inky blotch there.

“He, he, he!” chortled Billy Bunter. “I say, you fellows, go it!”

Bunter jumped up. He was more willing than any other fellow in the Form to leave his work undone. Work in any shape had never appealed to William George Bunter.

Bang! went Bunter's Latin dictionary on his desk. Bang, bang, bang! Bunter smote and smote and smote, making as much noise as he could—which was a great deal.

“Bunter!” exclaimed Linley.

“Yah!” retorted Bunter defiantly. “Go and eat coke! Who cares for you?”

“I shall report you!”

“Yah! Sneak!” jeered Bunter, and went on banging.

Mark crimsoned with vexation. A head boy's duties were not always agreeable. Any fellow who told about another fellow was a sneak, and justly despised. But a head boy had his duty to do. Left in charge of a Form-room, he had to report a disturber of the peace.

Wharton, as head boy last term, had never had any trouble on such occasions. But he was also captain of the Form, and prestige counted for much; also, he had not had to deal with a reckless and determined rebel—as he himself now was. It was much easier for Wharton to cause trouble than for Linley to keep it in check.

"Will you fellows be quiet?" appealed Linley.

"Will we?" grinned Bolsover major. "No; I don't think we will, you smug! I rather think we won't!"

"If Quelch comes back and hears this din—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Then he will know what a topping head boy he has!" he remarked. "If you can't handle the job, Linley, you shouldn't have pushed into it!"

"You rotter!" exclaimed Mark. "You know I never did! Quelch appointed me head boy, as he appointed you last term! I never wanted it—"

"Gammon!"

"You'd never have lost the place if you'd behaved yourself decently!" exclaimed Linley. "You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, Wharton! You're making it as hard for me as you can!"

"Quite!" agreed Wharton.

There were four fellows who took no part in the rag—Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. They were no longer Wharton's friends, and their looks showed how they disapproved of his present proceedings. But disapproving looks from his former friends only had the effect of a spur on the wayward fellow.

The uproar grew and grew. Even in Mossoo's French class there had seldom been such a rag, though Mossoo lived and moved and had his being in the midst of ragging. But suddenly Hazeldene caught a footstep in the passage, and shouted "Cave!"

Mr. Quelch was coming back.

The rag ceased as if by magic. Fellows bundled into their places. Only one fellow kept going.

That was Billy Bunter.

Bunter was not quick on the uptake, also, he was enjoying himself. With his dictionary wielded in both fat hands, the Owl of the Remove banged merrily away.

"Chuck it, Bunter, you idiot!" gasped Peter Todd.

The Form-room door was opening. Bunter would have realised the situation in another moment. But he was not granted the other moment. His dictionary came down with a terrific crash just as the door opened, and Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes glittered in.

Bang!

It was the only sound in the suddenly silent room—but it was some sound! It fairly thundered.

The next instant Bunter realised that Quelch had happened. The dictionary dropped from his fat hands, his podgy jaw dropped, and he blinked at Henry Samuel Quelch through his big spectacles in horror and dismay.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

Quelch's face was a study for a moment. He had heard the uproar as he came back to the Form-room. He had a suspicion that Wharton, the boy he had been driven to dislike intensely, was at the bottom of it. But when he looked in, Wharton was seated sedately at his desk, bending over his Latin paper with a calm and studious expression on his face. And it was Bunter—the fat and fatuous Bunter—who was banging a dictionary on a desk!

"Linley!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Mark.

"You are head boy of the Remove! I expect you to keep order here during my brief absence! Apparently, you have failed to do so!"

Mark Linley stood silent, with a crimson face. Really, it was not his

fault. But the Remove master judged by results.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir! No, sir! Please, sir! Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It—it wasn't me, sir! I—I wasn't banging this dio on my desk, sir! It—it just fell down—"

"Linley, hand me my cane!"

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter. "Oh dear! Oh scissors!"

Mark Linley spoke quietly.

"I must tell you, sir, that Bunter is not to blame! I have to report Wharton for ragging in class—Bunter was only following his lead."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Scratched from the Team!

HARRY WHARTON looked up, fixing his eyes on Mark Linley.

There was a cool, scornful smile on his face. It seemed as if he had wanted to drive the new head boy into the disagreeable task of reporting him, and was satisfied now that he had succeeded. His lip curled contemptuously. But most of the fellows in the Remove were glad to hear Linley speak. To let a "silly ass" like Bunter bear the brunt was not cricket. Half the Form had been ragging and Wharton had started the game, and it was not fair play to let the fatuous Owl pay scot-and-lot for all.

Quelch's gimlet eyes glinted. Every man in the Form knew that he was glad

Last term Harry Wharton was all that a model pupil should be—popular with masters and boys alike. This term Wharton is completely changed. He revels in hunting for trouble, finding it, and living up to his new reputation of being the "worst boy in the Form!" Why——?

to turn the vials of wrath from Bunter to Wharton.

"Thank you, Linley!" said the Remove master. "It was your duty to report the ringleader in this disturbance. Wharton, stand out before the Form."

"Certainly, sir!" drawled Wharton.

He lounged out before the Form with an exaggerated carelessness of manner that made Quelch compress his lips.

"It appears," said Mr. Quelch, "that I cannot leave the Form-room for a few minutes without a disturbance breaking out. I had little doubt that you, Wharton, the worst boy in my Form, were the ringleader. I shall not punish a foolish and thoughtless boy for following your bad example. I shall punish you."

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter in great relief.

Bunter did not want to see Wharton "whopped." But the whopping of Wharton in comparison with the whopping of Bunter was a trifle light as air, in the estimation of the fat Removite. So long as William George Bunter wasn't whipped, nothing else mattered very much.

Mr. Quelch pointed with his cane.

"Wharton, you will bend over that desk!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"What? What did you say, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I said 'Thank you, sir!'"

"You will not find that impertinence will benefit you, Wharton," said the Remove master, breathing hard.

"Is it impertinent to thank you for your kindness, sir?" asked Wharton innocently.

"Bend over that desk" said Mr. Quelch in a voice like that of the Great Huge Bear.

Wharton gave Linley another look as he obeyed. It was not merely a mocking look this time, but one full of animosity and bitterness. It brought a painful flush to Mark's face. Only a term ago he and the captain of the Remove had been the best of friends. Wharton had stood by him more than once when he needed it. It was by no wish of his own that he had been appointed head boy when Wharton was turned out. He could hardly understand Wharton this term—the fellow seemed to have changed so utterly.

"Now listen to the band!" whispered Skinner to his pals, and Snoop and Stott sniggered.

But there was no "band" to listen to. Wharton did not make a sound as six strokes descended one after another. Only the swishing of the cane was heard in the silence of the Form-room.

"Some nerve!" the Bounder muttered to Tom Redwing.

Many fellows in the Remove wondered how Wharton could go through it with teeth clenched and without a murmur. For Mr. Quelch was laying on every stroke with bitter force. He had no mercy for the rebel of his Form, whose chief pursuit these days was giving masters and prefects all the trouble he possibly could.

The crack of the cane ceased at last and Wharton rose.

"You may go back to your place, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch harshly. "I trust that that will be a warning to you."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted, and he tightened his grasp on the cane. Wharton's answer was cool and impertinent. But it was scarcely possible to repeat the infliction, and Mr. Quelch let it pass.

Wharton went back to his place.

Latin papers were resumed in the Remove.

Under the gimlet eye of Quelch sitting at his high desk there was not likely to be any more ragging. Fellows worked sedulously, almost as if they loved the Latin tongue—which few of them did! Even Billy Bunter ceased to think how awfully long it was to dinner and gave some attention to his work. Harry Wharton stirred uncomfortably on his form. After six of the best it was not easy to sit still—still less easy for a fellow to put his attention into Latin prose. The gimlet eyes at the high desk turned several times on the captain of the Remove, and Mr. Quelch rapped out at last:

"Wharton, you will sit still!"

The Bounder winked at the fellows nearest him. It was evident that Quelch's rag was out.

Wharton smiled bitterly. This was very like persecution—like the wolf and the lamb over again. He did not reflect that he had worn out the patience of his Form master; that only last term he had himself regarded Mr. Quelch as a just and even a kind man. Mr. Quelch certainly had not changed his nature since last term. It was Wharton who had changed, though he did not realise it, or perhaps choose to realise it.

All that was proud and stubborn, all

that was hard and bitter in him, had come to the surface this unlucky term. It was almost as if he had said, like the fallen archangel of old, "Evil, be thou my good!"

Mr. Quelch was fed-up with that troublesome member of his Form, and it was hardly a secret that he desired him to leave the school—indeed, had the Head taken Mr. Quelch's view, Wharton would have been sent away from Greyfriars before this. So long as he remained he had nothing to expect from the Remove master but unbending severity.

And he did not care—or, at all events, told himself that he did not care! Masters and prefects were down on him—all orderly fellows eyed him askance—even the kind old Head was growing dubious. He had lost his friends—the loyal Co. that had been inseparable once. He spent more time with the reckless Bounder now, and even with Skinner & Co. sometimes. Of the decent fellows in the Remove, only Lord Mauleverer remained his unwavering friend—and even his lordship had to walk warily in keeping on his friendship. Plenty of fellows said that he hadn't quarrelled yet with Mauly because simple old Mauly couldn't be quarrelled with! And if ever he thought of the better time that was past he hardened his heart, like Pharaoh of ancient times, and went on his obdurate way.

Third school came to an end at last and the Remove were dismissed. Mark Linley gathered up the Latin papers and remained behind the rest for a few minutes, putting them together and taking them to the Form master. When he came out of the Form-room the juniors had gone out—with one exception. Harry Wharton was waiting in the passage, near the door, and Mark knew at once that the captain of the Remove was waiting for him.

He moved aside to avoid Wharton—who stepped at once into his way. He had to stop.

"Let me pass, please!" said Mark in a low voice.

Mr. Quelch was still in the Form-room, and Mark was anxious that he should hear no altercation in the corridor.

"You rotter!" said Wharton, his eyes blazing, and he struck with his open hand at Linley's face.

Mark's hand came up like lightning, knocking the smack aside. He stepped back and Wharton followed him up.

"For goodness' sake, Wharton!" breathed Linley. "Don't be a fool! Isn't Quelch down on you enough already? Do you want to bring him here?"

"You do, you cur!" answered Wharton.

"Stand back, you ass—he's coming!" muttered Mark.

Mr. Quelch was leaving the Form-room. Wharton dropped his hands as the Remove master appeared in the doorway. But Mr. Quelch had seen enough.

"Wharton!"

"Oh, yes, sir?" said Harry.

"Is it possible, Wharton, that you were about to make an attack on my head boy, in my hearing and almost in my presence?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Quite, sir!" answered Wharton coolly.

"It's nothing, sir," said Mark hastily.

"Silence, Linley! Wharton, listen to me!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall keep you under my observation. I shall request the prefects to do so. If you become involved in any fighting with Linley—if a single blow is struck—I

shall take you to your headmaster to be dealt with. You will know what to expect in that case."

Mr. Quelch dismissed the rebel of his Form with a gesture. Wharton went out into the quad.

Taken before the Head—yes, he would know what to expect in that case. He knew how Quelch would put it. The "sack" impended over his head like the sword of Damocles. If the head boy of a Form could not report a delinquent without being punched in the passage afterwards, it was time for the severest measures to be taken. That was how Quelch would put it! It did not occur to Wharton's mind, distorted by passionate resentment, that Quelch could hardly put it in any other way!

He walked in the quad for a few minutes, his hands in his pockets, his face set and dark. The fellow who stood in his shoes, who "greased" up to the beak, who was down on him—that was how he put it to himself—was safe from him. Punching Linley's head was too dangerous—a proceeding in the circumstances—it would be giving Quelch the chance he was longing for. But there were other ways.

Wharton went into the House, and into the Rag. On the door of the Rag the Remove games notices were generally posted. On the morrow the football match with St. Jim's was due—Tom Merry & Co. were coming over to Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon to play Wharton's team. The list for the match was already up—and Linley was down to play at back as a matter of course. Head boy had the upper hand in many matters, but the captain of the Form was supreme and unquestioned in games. In games, head boy was of no more account than any other boy.

Wharton took an indelible pencil from his pocket and scored deeply through the name of M. Linley in the football list. Under it he wrote "T. Redwing."

He replaced the pencil in his pocket and walked out of the Rag with a bitter smile on his face. And if it came into his mind that he was doing wrong—that he was carrying a personal dispute into a sphere into which it should never have been carried, he drove the thought from his mind. What power he had he would use, and that was that!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Remove!

"GRATTERS, old bean!" said the Bounder.

Tom Redwing looked surprised.

"How and which?" he asked.

"Don't you want to play St. Jim's to-morrow?" asked Herbert Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

Redwing laughed.

"Yes, rather! But I've no chance. Fellows don't think so much of my footer as you do, old chap. I'm keen enough—but the fact is I shouldn't like to be down to play—Wharton can find better men."

"Modesty, thy name is Redwing!" said the Bounder banteringly. "You put up a good game, Tom, old bean, and every time I've had a chance I've shoved you in—when I've skippered the team while Wharton was under detention. You've always played up well—good enough, anyhow."

Redwing did not answer that. He was a good and steady footballer, and he was keen on the game. But he was not first class, and he knew it. He was grateful to Smithy for his friendly

determination to put him forward on every available occasion—but it had caused him some awkward misgivings. Putting a man into a team out of friendship was no: really Soccer. It was, as a matter of fact, rather a relief to Tom that his chum had not the power now to shove him, willy-nilly, into what amounted to a false position.

The Bounder grinned.

"You can't trust my judgment, old thing, even when I've picked you out to play for Greyfriars," he jeered.

"Well, you see—" murmured Tom.

"You'd trust Wharton's?"

"Of course! If Wharton picked me out to play St. Jim's I should begin to believe myself a better man at Soccer than I'd fancied," said Redwing, laughing. "No chance of that, though."

"You haven't seen the list in the Rag, then?"

"Not since break."

"There's a jolly old change since then. You're down to play back!"

"Honest Injun?" exclaimed Redwing, his face brightening. "Some fellow got himself crocked—I hadn't heard of it." He laughed. "I'm sorry if a man's crocked, but I shall be glad to play. Who's left out?"

"Linley!"

Redwing's face became grave at once.

"Linley! There's nothing the matter with Linley—he can play all right! He's the best back in the Remove—better even than Bull."

"There's lots the matter with Linley, I fancy," chuckled the Bounder. "He's head boy in our jolly old skipper's place, and he got Wharton whopped this morning in the Form-room. What about that?"

"Rubbish!" said Redwing tersely. "Wharton's not the man to carry a quarrel into football. If he is he's changed very much—and not for the better."

"Well, he's cut out Linley," said the Bounder. "Perhaps it's because he doesn't like the way he does his back hair—what?" Vernon-Smith laughed.

But Redwing did not laugh. His face was grave, and growing graver. He could scarcely believe that Harry Wharton, captain of the Greyfriars Remove, had done what he evidently had done. Had Linley been crocked Redwing was a likely man to take his place. But he was not crocked—he was fit as a fiddle, and well known to be looking forward keenly to the game. And in a match like that with Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's the Removites had to go all out—they had to put their best men into the field, and every man had to put his best foot foremost. Leaving out one of the best on account of a private grudge was unthinkable. Yet for what other reason could Wharton have scratched Mark Linley?

Was it possible that he was carrying his private feud into football—at the risk of losing matches? Keen as Tom was to play, he was not conceited—he knew that he was not in the same street at Soccer with the Lancashire junior. Mark would be wanted, and Tom could easily be dispensed with.

"Solemn as a jolly old judge—what?" grinned the Bounder, much amused by the look on Redwing's face. "Anyhow, you're in the team. Gratters!"

Wharton's action was after the Bounder's own heart. That, if Harry had known it, might have warned him how far he had drifted on the downward path since the beginning of the new term. Smithy was prepared to back him up through thick and thin, though the matter might have been different had Wharton picked out some other second-

rate man other than the Bounder's chum to take the place of Mark Linley. It even occurred to Tom that Wharton had selected him to buy the Bounder's support. Smithy had plenty of influence in the Form, and it was quite certain that most of the footballers would be down on the change. Smithy was certain to back up any change that brought his chum into the game.

Vernon-Smith and Redwing were not the only fellows who were discussing the change in the list. Most of the Remove men spotted it soon after class. Bob Cherry blinked at the paper on the door of the Rag as if he could hardly believe his eyes—as indeed he hardly could. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stared at it. Nugent was not in the team, but three of the

"You're fit?" asked Bob. "All right for to-morrow?"

"Quite!"

"Hasn't Wharton spoken to you?"

"No!"

"Well, I don't catch on," said Bob, so gruffly that it was clear that he was beginning to catch on. "This won't do! Redwing's a good chap, but he can't stop St. Jim's on the football field."

"The stopfulness would not be terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rats!" said the Bounder's voice behind them—and they stared round rather grimly at him. "Can't you leave it to your skipper?"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Smithy," said Bob angrily. "This jolly well won't

"Chuck it, dear men!" said Mauly's calm voice. "Toddy, you shouldn't say a thing like that—you really shouldn't, Browney! And you shouldn't, Field! I'm rather ashamed of you!"

"You howling ass!" roared Peter Todd, in wrath. "What do you think Wharton's scratched Linley for, then?"

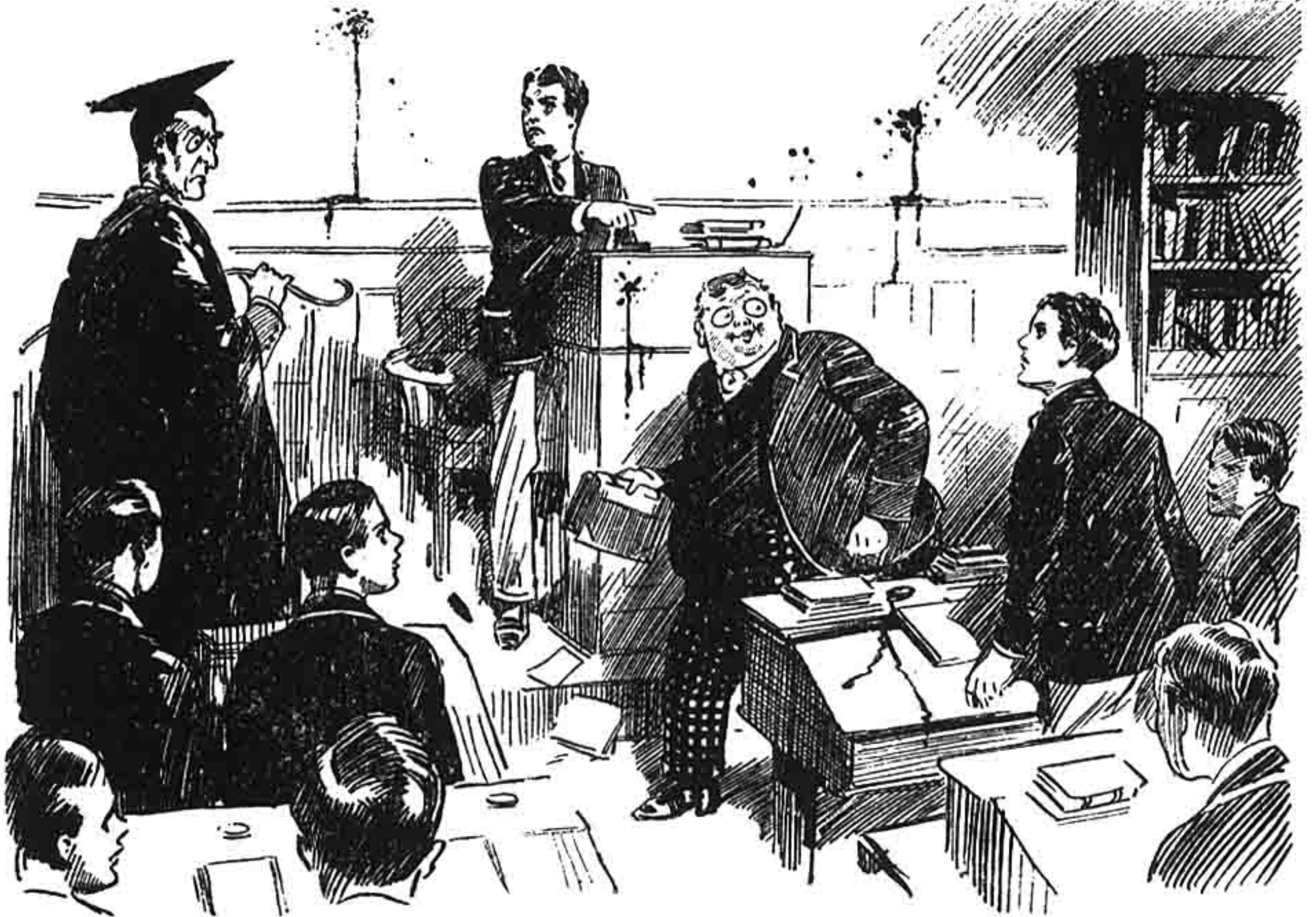
"I suppose he thinks he's got a better man."

"Redwing a better man at back than Linley?" yelled Squiff.

"Yaas!"

"You fathead!" bawled Johnny Bull. "What the thump do you know about Soccer or a man's form?"

"Nothin'," answered Lord Mauleverer placidly. "But Wharton knows whole lots. Depend on it, dear men, he knows what he's about."



"Hand me my cane, Linley," said Mr. Quelch, "and I will punish Bunter." "But Bunter is not to blame, sir," said the head boy. "I have to report Wharton for ragging in class. Bunter was only following his lead."

Co. were members of it—but all four were equally surprised and startled.

"What's happened to Linley, then?" asked Bob, looking round. "He was all right in class. What—"

"Nothing's happened to him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, he can't be dropped out of the team if he's fit to play."

Bob Cherry, evidently, did not catch on.

Johnny Bull's brow was as black as thunder. Johnny caught on at once. Frank Nugent looked deeply distressed; Hurree Singh's dusky face had a worried and troubled look.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Linley!" Bob spotted the head boy of the Remove in the Rag. "Linley, old man, what does this mean?"

"Better ask Wharton," answered Mark, very quietly—evidently he had seen that his name was scratched out of the list.

do! I think Wharton must be going off his rocker."

Squiff came up.

"What's this I hear?" he asked. "Linley chucked—"

The Remove goalkeeper broke off, staring at the list on the door.

A crowd was gathering. Mark Linley quietly left the Rag. As the fellow left out he did not want to be concerned in the excited discussion that was going on. With the exception of the Bounder every man in the eleven disapproved of the change, and disapproved strongly, and said so—not once, but many times. And some of the fellows did not hesitate to speak out what all were thinking—that Mark's exclusion from the team had nothing to do with football, but was the result of the row in the Form-room that morning. Only one voice was raised to controvert that view, and it was the voice of Lord Mauleverer, who was no footballer,

"Hoar, hear!" grinned the Bounder. "A jolly old Daniel come to judgment."

"Good old Mauly!" said Bob Cherry.

"You can't understand a fellow doing a mean thing, and we like you all the better for it, old bean. But don't talk about football, old chap. Talk about things you understand."

"If there are any!" grunted Peter Todd.

"I say, you fellows, that's a rotten footer list," said Billy Bunter, blinking at it through his big spectacles. "It's high time we had a new skipper in the Remove, in my opinion. When a skipper keeps on leaving out the best footballer in the Form—"

"Fathead!" growled Johnny Bull. "Marky's not the best footballer in the Form, and this is the first time Wharton's turned him out, too."

"I wasn't speaking of Linley. I don't think much of Linley's football,"

answered Bunter. "I was speaking of myself."

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I've offered to play," said Bunter, "and if Wharton was making a change, it was a chance for him to do the right thing. As for putting in that born idiot Redwing—yah! I wouldn't play him against a team of bunny rabbits! I can jolly well say—Yaroooh! What beast is kicking me? Stoppit!"

"Have another?" asked the Bounder genially.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter retreated without asking for another. The crowd in front of the football notice grew thicker, till nearly all the Remove were gathered, and the discussion grew louder and more excited. Had the Co. been on their old terms with the Captain of the Remove, they would have sought him out at once and argued with him. But they were not even on speaking terms with their former friend now, and they realised only too clearly that opposition from them would only confirm the obstinate fellow in the course he had set for himself. Worst of all, to Wharton's old friends was the clear realisation of his fall, for they could have no doubt about that. He was not the fellow they had once known.

Hitherto, in his incessant rows with the prefects, his mutinous defiance of his Form master, his troubles with the headmaster, he had had at least some show of right on his side. If he had been in fault, he had not been wholly in fault. If he had sinned, he had been more sinned against than sinning. But this time there could be no mistake. He had done wrong, and he had done wrong deliberately, intentionally, obstinately, cynically. Estranged as they were, the old friendship was not dead in the hearts of the Co, and this was a blow to them, and a shock.

"It won't do!" said Bob Cherry, for the tenth time.

"We've got to put it to Wharton," said Squiff. "He will have to think again. We're not going to be beaten to-morrow because he's got a row on with Quelch's blessed head boy!"

"No fear!" said Peter Todd emphatically.

"But just a word's enough to make him go off at the deep end," said Tom Brown. "Still, it won't do, and we'd better tell him so."

The discussion was still going on, hot and strong, when Lord Mauleverer, with a very thoughtful expression on his face, slipped quietly out of the Rag and strolled away to Study No. 1 in the Remove.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Team:

HARRY WHARTON stood at the window of Study No. 1, staring out into the falling November dusk in the quadrangle.

Fellows were coming towards the House from various directions, and he watched them idly. He was thinking, and the expression on his face told that his thoughts were not pleasant ones. A hard, sarcastic smile curved his lips as he sighted his Form master stopping to speak to a Sixth Form man. The latter was Loder of the Sixth, who, till the previous week, had been a Greyfriars prefect, but who was no longer a prefect. Bitter and sarcastic was Wharton's look as he noted the kind and

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genial manner in which Mr. Quelch spoke to the Sixth-Former.

That term, Loder of the Sixth had been in Quelch's good graces, and the fact that the Head had deprived him of his prefectship seemed to have made no difference.

The fact that Loder had "stretched a point," to a rather serious extent, in making an accusation against the junior he loathed did not seem to have lowered Quelch's good opinion of him.

Quelch was only too willing to believe that Loder had acted in error. He did not believe, what Wharton knew, that Loder had lied. His deep prejudice against the rebel of his Form no doubt made Quelch very tolerant towards the rebel's enemy in the Sixth. Certainly, he sympathised with Loder in his fall from his high estate, and was using all his influence with the Head, which was great, to have the fallen prefect reinstated. And Gerald Loder, who had been "greasing" to Quelch all that term, was now greasing more sedulously than ever, in the hope of benefiting by his influence.

Wharton, from his study window, watched them walking to the House together, a sneer on his lips. Loder had lied about him; lied like a thorough rotter, and had been shown up. Yet Quelch evidently thought as much of him as ever! What did he care if the fellow was a liar, so long as he was down on the "worst boy in the Remove"? That reflection was unjust. But Wharton, in these days, was in no mood to take just views.

The two passed out of sight below, and Wharton shrugged his shoulders and forgot them. His thoughts went back to the matter that was on his mind. That was the alteration he had made, in a moment of passionate anger, in the Remove football list. Already, he knew, most of the fellows must have seen it, and he could guess what the comments would be like. That, however, did not trouble him so much as the pricking of his own conscience.

He was football captain in the Remove. He had to admit to himself that he had taken advantage of that position to score over a fellow he disliked. It was a bitter admission.

It brought the colour into his cheeks when he reflected on it calmly.

On the occasions when the Bounder had captained the Form, his determination to play his chum Redwing against the claims of more useful men had caused a good deal of feeling, and Wharton had been "down" on it. But what was that, after all, compared with scratching a player on account of a personal quarrel? The Bounder had been in fault, but his fault was nothing to Wharton's, and the captain of the Remove had to realise it.

The fact was that Wharton had acted hastily, in a bitter and passionate mood, and against his better nature, and on reflection his better nature had the upper hand, and was troubling him sorely. It was only his stubborn pride that prevented him from going down to the Rag and wiping out his fault. He knew that he ought to do it, and, reckless as he had grown, he had not yet reached the stage of deliberately closing his eyes to what he knew that he ought to do. His pride was a stumbling-block in the way. He hated to seem to surrender.

"Hem!"

A gentle cough in the study doorway roused him from his gloomy reflections, and he turned quickly and saw Lord Mauleverer.

A smile lit his clouded face.

"Hallo, Mauly, old man! Roll in!" he said.

Lord Mauleverer's steady friendship meant much to the rebel of the Remove, on bad terms with his old friends, and doubtful terms with most of the other fellows. If there was a fellow in the school whom Wharton really liked in these dark days, it was Mauly. Frank Nugent never came into Study No. 1 now; few fellows did; but Mauly was always a very welcome visitor there. Perhaps Wharton realised dimly that good, loyal old Mauly, with his simple faith and kind good nature, helped to keep him from sliding farther down on the slippery path his feet were treading.

Mauly rolled in and sat on a corner of the study table. He regarded the captain of the Remove with an amiable smile.

"Just staggered in to jaw you, old bean," he said. "You don't mind?"

"Pile in!" said Harry, with a smile.

"I've been lookin' at the footer list."

"That's a sign of grace," said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "I never expected you even to remember that there was a match this week."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't," said Mauly. "But I was sort of reminded of it in the Rag. I'm not goin' to give you advice about Soccer, old bean. It's not my long suit, as probably you've noticed."

"Just a few!" assented Wharton.

"But I've been wonderin'," continued his lordship, "whether you've made a mistake, Wharton."

"A mistake?" repeated Harry, looking at his innocent lordship very curiously.

"Yaas. From what I hear, the general opinion seems to be that old Linley's a more useful back than Redwing."

"Very likely!" assented Harry.

"Of course, you don't think so, or you wouldn't have made the change," went on Lord Mauleverer, "and I'd back your judgment against all the Remove. You know more about Soccer than I shall ever know if I live to be as old as—as Mephistopheles—was it Mephistopheles?"

"Methuselah, fathead!"

"Yaas. I knew it began with an M or somethin'. Make it Methuselah!" said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "But I was goin' to make a suggestion."

"Make it!"

"Well, why not make it clear to the fellows?" suggested Lord Mauleverer. "They're frightfully keen on this game, you know, and, really, they've a right to know! If you've made a mistake—to err is human, you know, and second thoughts are best! We all make mistakes at times—in fact, I hardly ever make anythin' else myself!"

Wharton stood silent.

"Anyhow, I think I'd let the men know just why you've made the change," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "It may save a lot of misunderstanding."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"What are they saying in the Rag?" he asked.

"Talkin' nineteen to the dozen," said Mauleverer vaguely.

Wharton laughed rather grimly.

"You'd rather not tell me that the fellows think I've cut out Linley because of the row in the Form-room this morning," he said.

"You wouldn't do that!" said Mauly.

"Think not?"

"I know you wouldn't and couldn't! But if you make it clear to the men just why you made the change, it would set a lot of surmisin' at rest, see?"

Wharton's cheeks burned.

"You're a simple old bean, Mauly!"

I suppose you didn't come here just to make a fellow feel ashamed of himself?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Mauleverer. "What?"

"But you've done it," said Harry quietly. "Still, I was thinking it over before you barged in, old chap, and getting it clear that it wasn't good enough. I cut Linley out of the footer because I'm down on him."

"Wharton!" "You didn't think me capable of that, Mauly?"

"No! And you're not," said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "A fellow can do a thing in a temper, and chuck it when he gets cool. What?"

Harry Wharton nodded. He could see that his admission had given Lord Mauleverer a shock. Mauly had been puzzled and uneasy, but he had never thought of sharing the views freely expressed in the Rag. It startled him to hear from Wharton's own lips that the fellows were right who had said that the captain of the Remove had done wrong with his eyes open.

"I'm going to set it right, Mauly," said Harry, in a low voice. "I hate knuckling down, but I'm going to do it! Linley can crow if he wants to—"

"He's not the fellow to crow," hinted Mauly gently. "Quite a decent chap. I've always liked him."

There was a tramp of feet in the passage. The excited discussion in the Rag had come to an end at last, and some of the fellows were coming up to the studies. The doorway of Study No. 1 was packed with faces. Every one of them was excited, and most of them angry. Harry Wharton faced them—his face setting.

In speaking to Mauly he had dropped back for a few minutes into his old self—the fellow the Remove had always known. But that passed quickly. It was his new self—the cool, mocking, arrogant rebel of Greyfriars, who faced the crowd in the doorway.

The Co. were not there. They were tactfully keeping off the scene. Peter Todd seemed to be the leader, and Squiff, Tom Brown, Ogilvy, and Penfold were with him—all men whose names were down for the St. Jim's game. Behind them came other fellows, prominent among them Bolsover major—who looked most excited of all.

Bolsover was not in the team—which was rather a grievance—for Bolsover was convinced that he was a better back than either Johnny Bull or Mark Linley. Nobody agreed with Bolsover in that; but plenty of fellows agreed that he was a better back than Tom Redwing. So Bolsover had a new grievance, for which it had to be admitted that there were some grounds.

"Oh, here you are, Wharton!" said Peter Todd.

"Adsum!" said Wharton, as if he were answering to his name at call-over.

"We've been looking at the footer list—"

"Yes. I guessed that one."

"We want to know—"

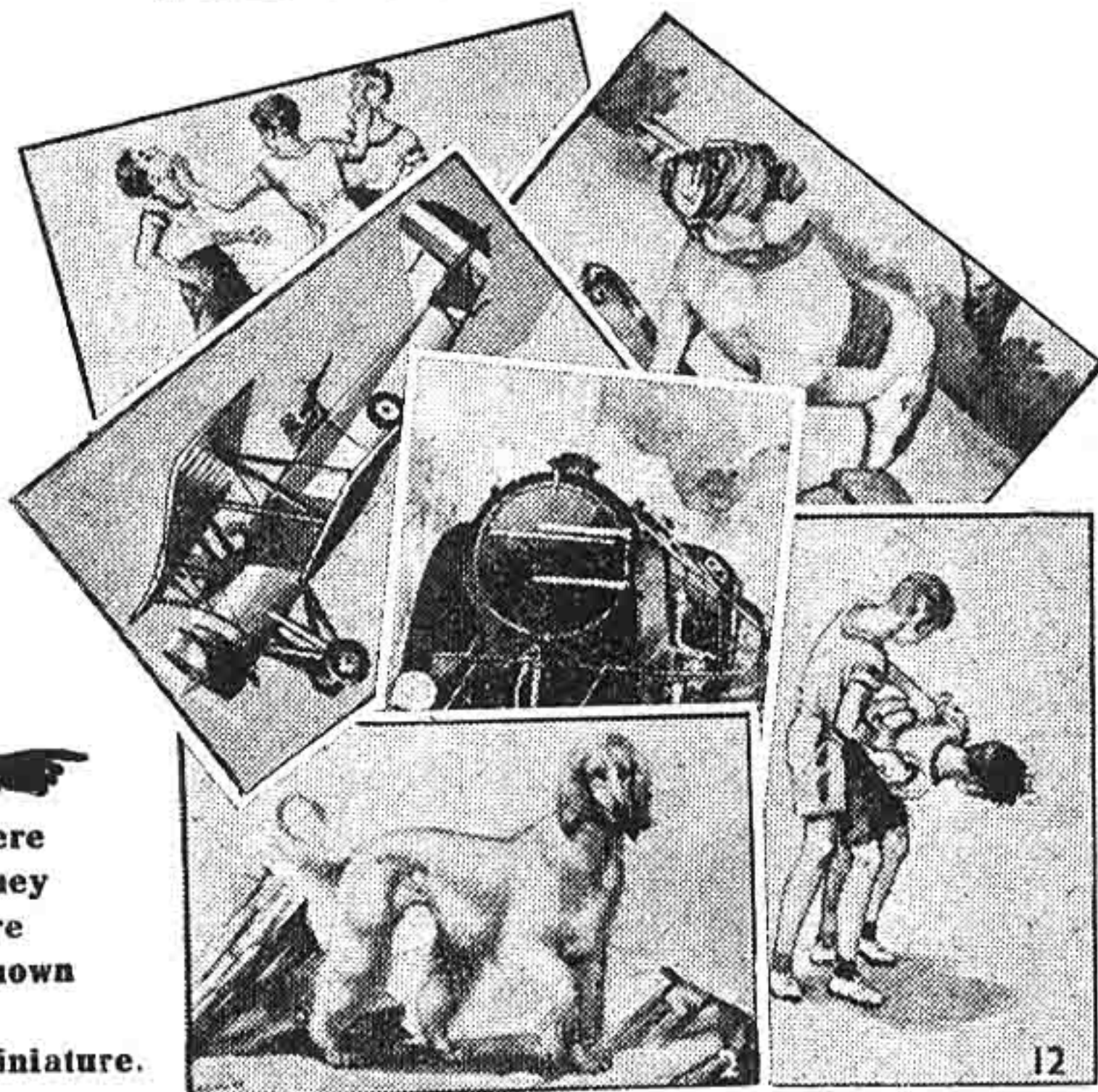
"That's it," said Squiff. "We want to know, old man—"

"And I jolly well want to know!" roared Bolsover major from behind.

"Shut up, Bolsover!" said Tom Brown.

"Shut up yourself! I can tell Wharton that I want to know, and I'm jolly well going to know!" roared Bolsover. "I dare say he was right in chucking Linley—I never thought much of his game. But, putting in that dud Redwing, when there's men who could play his head off—"

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"Shut up, I tell you!" "Shan't! Look here, Wharton—" "I'm looking," said the captain of the Remove calmly.

"My dear men—" began Lord Mauleverer.

"You chuck it, Mauly!" said Peter Todd. "You're dead in this act, old man! Look here, Wharton! We want to know why Linley is chucked out of the game. I suppose you don't expect us to be pleased?"

"Hadn't thought about it."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Look here, Wharton!" said Squiff quietly. "You're skipper, and we all respect your judgment. But we want to beat St. Jim's to-morrow. You've cut out a man we all think is needed in the game. Why?"

"Yes, why?" said Tom Brown. "We haven't come here to rag, Wharton—you needn't begin by getting your back up. Every man here likes old Redwing—he's a good chap! But nobody thinks he's going to stop St. Jim's to-morrow. Can you say out plain that you think him a better man than Linley?"

Lord Mauleverer gave Wharton an almost beseeching look. But it was futile, and he knew it. Wharton's face was hard. Certainly he could not say that he believed that the change he had made in the team was for the better—it would have been untrue, and all the fellows knew it. But he was not likely to admit to this excited crowd what he had admitted to Mauly.

That visit to Study No. 1 had come at an unfortunate moment. Left to himself, Wharton would have done the right thing; he had already almost made up his mind to it, and Mauly's

influence had quite decided him. But there was a complete change in his feelings now. His stubborn pride, which had been his undoing before, was up in arms again.

His answer came short and sharp. "You're not satisfied?"

"No!"

"The remedy's in your own hands! A football skipper isn't captain by right divine, like a jolly old Stuart king! If you're not satisfied, there's plenty of men in the Remove to take my place. Try Linley—he would jump at it."

"Wharton, old bean—" murmured Mauleverer.

Wharton did not look at him. His eyes were fixed on the crowd in the doorway, coolly, scornfully.

"Nobody wants that, Wharton," said Peter Todd, after a pause. "But I can tell you this—every man here believes that you've chucked Linley because you've got a down on him!"

"It's a free country," said Wharton. "Every man can believe what he jolly well likes!"

"If that's all you've got to say—"

"That's the lot!"

Peter Todd breathed hard. He was a good-tempered fellow, and a patient fellow. But good temper and patience failed him now.

"Then I'll put it plain," he said. "You've chucked a man out of the team because you've got a grudge against him, and it's a rotten, sneaking, mean sort of thing to do, and for two pins I'd tell you to find another outside-right!"

Harry Wharton turned to the mantelpiece, and the juniors watched him, in surprise, as he fumbled there. He

turned back with two pins in his hand. In a dead, astonished silence, he held them out to Toddy.

"Well, what do you mean?" asked Peter.

"There's the two pins!"

Toddy's face crimsoned

"Very well," he said, "if that's how you take it, find another outside-right, and be blowed to you! I'm standing out!"

And, with a red and angry face, Peter swung away.

"Done!" said Wharton coolly.

The footballers looked at one another uncertainly. Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, of New South Wales, broke the painful silence.

"This won't do, Wharton," said Squiff quietly.

"I fancy it will have to."

"You're leaving Toddy out?"

"He's left himself out!"

"That's two good men gone, in the hardest match of the season! Put it plain," said Squiff gruffly. "Will you play Toddy and Linley to-morrow?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then," said Squiff, with a deep breath, "you can find another goal-keeper!"

"Done!"

Squiff walked away. The other fellows followed him, in silence. Even Bolsover major was silent.

Lord Mauleverer looked at Wharton. He moved to the door, and then looked back again.

"Wharton, old man," he said gently.

"Go it!"

"You're doin' wrong!"

"I know!"

There was no answer to be made to that. Lord Mauleverer left the study without another word.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Doggo!

"O H, my hat!" murmured the Bounder.

Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove had been very busy. For ten minutes Smithy had been very busy indeed.

He was busy in Gerald Loder's study, in the Sixth Form passage.

Since Loder of the Sixth was no longer a prefect, he had been the recipient of a good many attentions from fellows whom, in his day of power, he had "whopped" not wisely but too well.

Almost every man in the Remove had an old score against Loder; and now that the power of the ashplant had departed from him, plenty of fellows were thinking of paying off those old scores.

In the Remove passage, had even been discussed the idea of "shipping" Loder's study in the Sixth; shipping a study being an unmistakable way of letting a fellow know what the school thought of him.

But shipping a Sixth Form study was rather a serious enterprise; for though Loder was no longer a prefect, other prefects were certain to take an extremely serious view of such an insult to their Form.

So the scheme of shipping Loder's study, though discussed in the Lower Fourth, did not get farther than discussion. But if shipping the study on a wholesale scale was not practical politics, there was no reason, so far as the Bounder could see, why a little rag should not be perpetrated. That was why he was there now.

Having watched Loder, from the corner of the passage, walk along to

Carne's study, Smithy had no doubt that he was safe for a time. He slipped into Loder's room; and after he had been there ten busy minutes, he had reason to be pleased with his progress. Loder's books and papers were piled in the fender, with ashes and cinders piled on them, to which a bottle of red ink had been added. His study table was upside down, and on each leg a chair had been perched—rather a surprising sight to greet Loder's eyes when he came in. A bottle of gum, up-ended in Loder's armchair, was streaming out its contents into the leather seat. Smithy was not finished yet—but he stopped suddenly at the sound of voices and footsteps approaching the door.

He heard Loder's voice, and Carne's and Walker's. And it flashed into his mind that Loder had not gone to Carne's study, as he had supposed, to play banker till bed-time. Loder had gone to call his friends, probably to play banker in his own study. Smithy had made rather a miscalculation. All three of them were coming along to Loder's door; and the Bounder was fairly cornered.

It would not have been grateful or comforting to have been caught there by Loder alone. But to be caught by Loder and two prefects was quite dismaying. Escape was cut off—Smithy could not dodge out of the study, into a lighted passage, unseen. And dodging out of the window would have been useless, as the House was locked up. For a second Vernon-Smith stood, his heart beating rather fast. Then he made a dive for the alcove in which Loder's bed stood—Sixth Form rooms at Greyfriars being study and bed-room combined. A hand was on the door-handle, turning it, when the Bounder whipped out of sight under the bed.

The next moment the door opened, and Loder and Walker and Carne came in together. The Bounder hardly breathed.

"Hallo! My hat!" exclaimed Walker staring.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Carne.

"What the bump—"

There was a roar of wrath from Loder. He stared at the wreck of his study with blazing eyes.

"What young villain's done this?" he roared.

Walker winked at Carne.

"Looks as if you're not popular among the fags, old bean," he remarked. "They seem to be giving you a lot of attention lately."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"You fellows will have to take this up, as prefects," he said. "I suppose this sort of thing isn't going to be allowed in the Sixth."

"No fear!" said Carne. "If you've got any idea who did it—"

"I know who did it!" said Loder, between his teeth. "It was Wharton of the Remove, of course. Nobody else."

"Likely enough," assented Walker.

"That young sweep's the cheekiest young scoundrel at Greyfriars. If you know it was Wharton—"

"Of course I know it was Wharton!" snarled Loder. "Call him down, and let me see him thrashed for it."

"Well, how do you know?" asked Carne.

"I do know!"

"That will hardly do, old bean," said Walker blandly. "Give us a tip who has been raggin' here, and we'll whop him fast enough, and hard enough. But we can't go on guessin'!"

"Hardly," agreed Carne. "I don't like that cheeky young rascal any more than you do, Loder, but there's a limit,



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you know. You'd be a prefect now, old chap, if you didn't jump to conclusions so quick. If you've got any proof—"

"I know it was Wharton!"

"Yes, and you knew it was Wharton ragging Quelch last week, and swore it to the Head, and it turned out that it wasn't!" said Walker. "Between ourselves, you were so jolly certain about it that you told the beak a whopper; and it came out that you were mistaken, after all. Lucky for you the beak let it go as a mistake!"

"We're not getting the same from the Head that you got, Loder," said Carne. "If we whop the kid for nothing, and it comes out to the Head, we may be in Queer Street, like you! I'm not tired of being a prefect."

"Same here!" agreed Walker. "And he's just the tricky young oad to bring it all out to the beak, and get a man into a row!"

Loder's eyes gleamed at his two pals. Both of them were grinning. They seemed to find something amusing in the state of Loder's study.

"So you're letting a thing like this drop?" hissed Loder.

"Not at all, old bean! We'll take it up, and if we find out who's the guilty party, we'll take the skin off his back. But—"

"But the fact is, I don't believe it was Wharton!" said Carne, shaking his head. "Anyhow, we can't give him a prefect's whopping without something to go on. Of course, we'll inquire into the matter."

"Fat lot of good that will be!" snarled Loder. "Do you think the young rotter let himself be seen coming here, or that he will own up? I know it was Wharton, and if I were a prefect now, I'd go to his study and give him six."

"And get into another row for it?" said Walker. "We're not looking for trouble with the beak ourselves! Why, even old Quelch would stand by the kid if he were whopped for nothing, though he's down on him like a ton of bricks!"

"What about our little game?" yawned Carne. "Better come back to my study. We can't play here."

Herbert Vernon-Smith, hardly breathing under the bed, was extremely glad to hear it.

"Well, I'm not standing this," said Loder. "I know it was Wharton, and I'm going to make the young scoundrel squirm for it!"

Walker chuckled.

"Go in and win, old bean," he said. "Remember you're not a prefect now; and if you wake up trouble in the Remove passage, those young sweeps will be on you like a nest of hornets! By gad! I fancy they'd like nothing better than to see you come up to their passage hunting for trouble, now you're not a giddy prefect!"

Under the bed, the Bouncer grinned. He hoped from the bottom of his heart that Loder would visit the Remove passage hunting for trouble. The Bouncer was ready to answer for it that he would find all the trouble he wanted, and a little over. There was no doubt that the Remove would have risen as one man, to give their old enemy the time of his life.

But Loder was as well aware of that as the Bouncer. He had no doubt—not the slightest doubt—not a shadow of a doubt—that it was Wharton who had ragged his study. But he had no intention whatever of seeking the captain of the Remove in his own quarters.

"If you feel sure it's Wharton, go along to Quelch," suggested Carne. "He's glad enough to hear anything

against that young scoundrel these days."

"What's the good?" snarled Loder. "I've got no proof—the young rotter's too wary for that! But I'll make him squirm for it. If I'm not a prefect now, I've still got my ashplant; and I'm taking it to the Remove dormitory to-night, see? I'll thrash that young scoundrel within an inch of his life, after lights-out."

"Safe as houses," said Walker laughing. "But you'd better not tell us about it—as prefects, we can't allow anything of the sort, you know."

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" snarled Loder.

"Look here, what about the game?" asked Carne impatiently. "Let's get back to my study."

"Let that young rotter wait!" hissed Loder. "I'll get him in the dorm! If I don't make him squirm—"

"Oh, come on!"

"If I don't make him cringe—"

"Well, I'm going."

Carne went, and Walker followed. Loder, with a snarl, went after them. Carne and Walker were thinking chiefly of banker; but Loder was thinking more of his plans of vengeance on his enemy in the Remove. He was scowling savagely as he tramped along the passage to Carne's study.

With great relief, the Bouncer heard a door close down the passage. He crawled out from under the bed.

Not for a moment had it occurred to Loder that the ragger was still on the spot. That was fortunate for Smithy; though it was not likely to be fortunate for Harry Wharton, if Loder carried out his intention after lights-out that night. Smithy looked cautiously from the study doorway, saw that the coast was clear, and cut.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Change of Quarters!

HARRY WHARTON stood in his study doorway after prep, his hands in his pockets, leaning against the doorpost.

Prep had finished in the Remove studies, and most of the fellows were going down. Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and the nabob, came along together, and passed the fellow in the doorway of Study No. 1 apparently without seeing him—or being seen by him. Peter Todd walked by, and gave him an audible sniff as he passed. Squiff, as he came down the passage, looked at Wharton with a quiet look that brought the colour into the cheeks of the captain of the Remove, but he went on without a word.

Lord Mauleverer, ambling by, paused a moment, and then walked on. Even Mauly did not seem to want to speak to him. There was a fat chuckle from Billy Bunter as he rolled along from Study No. 7. Not only his old friends, but most of the best fellows in the Remove, seemed to be turning against Wharton now; and Bunter, observing it, seemed amused. But the look on Wharton's face, and a motion of his foot, cut Bunter's fat chuckle suddenly short, and

he rolled on rather hastily to the stairs.

Mark Linley came down the passage a few minutes later. Wharton's cool and steady stare met him as he came along, and Mark coloured. He could

not help thinking that he would not have passed that study in peace, but for the grim warning Mr. Quelch had uttered that morning. He passed on, affecting not to notice the steady hostile stare from the doorway of Study No. 1.

No one stopped to speak to Wharton, till Skinner and Snoop and Stott came along from Study No. 11. In these days, with Wharton in disgrace with masters and prefects, and at loggerheads with most of his Form, Skinner felt more friendly towards him than of old. There was much more good than evil in Harry Wharton, very much more; but of late he had shown the darker side of his character to such an extent that Skinner felt that he could almost like him! So Skinner stopped for a word or two; and Wharton answered him cheerfully enough. A fellow who threw away good friends, had to be content with bad ones, and Wharton was much more cordial to Skinner & Co. now than he had ever been before. The three stayed and chatted a few minutes, and then went down; and Wharton remained where he was, disinclined to go down into the hostile atmosphere of the Rag.

Redwing came out of Study No. 4.

Wharton gave him a cheery nod. He liked Tom Redwing—it was hardly possible not to like a good-tempered and inoffensive fellow like Tom. Redwing was, as Skinner put it, one of the few fellows Wharton hadn't rowed with yet; though no doubt it was coming!

"Seen Smithy?" asked Redwing, stopping.

"Smithy! Wasn't he at prep?"

"He cleared off in prep—and he hasn't come up yet. Some rag on Loder of the Sixth, I believe."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"More power to his giddy elbow!" he said.

"I've been going to speak to you, Wharton," said Tom, after a pause. "About the football to-morrow."

"You'll have to pull up your socks to-morrow, old bean," said Harry. "We're going to beat St. Jim's."

"Well, I hope so; but it doesn't look much like it to me, with three of the best men out of the team," said Redwing. "Look here, Wharton! I'd be jolly glad to play, and you know it. But—"

"That's all right—you're playing!" said the captain of the Remove briefly.

Tom shook his head.

"Better not, I think," he said quietly. "I'd rather you left me out, Wharton."

Wharton bit his lip.

"You don't often get such a chance. Redwing," he said.

"I know! But—in the circumstances—I'd much rather you left me out! I suppose it's no use asking you to think again about Linley—"

"No use at all!" said Wharton curtly.

"He's the man you want," said Redwing. "Not a man in the team thinks I ought to have the place, except Smithy—and he doesn't really believe it. It's not pleasant to butt into the eleven on terms like that."

"Stand out if you like," said Wharton indifferently. "I was giving you a chance—but if you're not keen on it, please yourself."

(Continued on next page.)

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"I'll stand out, then," said Tom, and he walked on towards the stairs.

Wharton stood looking after him grimly. Redwing was not a very valuable member of the eleven, and he could easily replace him; but it was rather a blow to be turned down like this. But he shrugged his shoulders and dismissed the matter from his mind.

"Oh, here you are, old bean!" The Bouncer came along from the Remove staircase, with a grin on his face. "I looked for you in the Rag—"

"I'm not frightfully popular there, at the present moment," said Wharton sarcastically.

"No wonder—when you're playing ducks and drakes with the eleven." The Bouncer grinned as Wharton's brow darkened. "You needn't glare at me, old bean—I'm not goin' to offer you advice—I dare say you've had enough offered—"

"Too much!" said Wharton dryly.

"I've got something else to tell you. Step into the study."

Wharton turned back into Study No. 1, and the Bouncer followed him in. Vernon-Smith shut the door and chuckled.

"I cut prep, to rag Loder's study," he said. "I was jolly nearly caught there—three of the blighters! Luckily, I got cover! And Loder—ha, ha—Loder's sure it was you!"

"How do you mean?"

"He jumped to it that you'd ragged his room. He wanted Carne and Walker to whop you on suspicion; but they weren't taking any. And—ha, ha—he's coming up to the Remove dorm after lights-out to whop you himself."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I heard him tell Carne and Walker so! Some game, what!" chuckled the Bouncer. "Not being a prefect now, he can't really whop you—so he's going in for a dormitory raid like a fag to catch you on the hop! Sure thing for Loder—he's seen lights-out for us often enough; he knows which is your bed, and he will only have to step across to it and lay it on with the cane—and clear off before anybody gets a light and spots him. See the idea? A Sixth Form man raiding a junior dormitory would get into a fearful row with the beaks—but Loder won't stay long enough to be recognised. That's the jolly old programme—but it won't work out like that."

"Not quite—now I know!" agreed Wharton. "Thanks for giving me the tip, Smithy."

"My idea is for half a dozen fellows to be ready for Loder and give him the time of his life when he butts in," said Smithy. "Instead of whopping you in the dark, and getting away unseen, Loder's going to get the whopping, and if he kicks up a shindy, he can take his chance of bein' spotted by the beaks."

"Not a bad wheeze," said Wharton, laughing. "But—"

He paused. There was a thoughtful look on his brow, and a dancing light in his eyes—a look the Bouncer knew.

"But you've got a better one?" asked Smithy.

"Well, yes, I believe so! Look here, Smithy, keep this dark—not a word to any of the fellows. Give Loder his head."

The Bouncer looked at him a little uneasily.

"What's the game, then?" he asked.

"Leave it to me."

"I don't like the look in your eye, Wharton," said Vernon-Smith.

"Look here, Smithy, leave it to me. Loder's coming up after me, and it's my bizney and nobody else's. I'm asking you to say nothing about it."

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"Oh, all right!" said the Bouncer. "Leave it at that."

And it was left at that.

Harry Wharton joined the crowd of Removites when they went up to the dormitory at half-past nine. Wingate of the Sixth was seeing lights out for the Remove. He put on the light in the dormitory, and the juniors marched in; and the next minute there was a startled exclamation from Mark Linley.

"Who's done this?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Look at my bed!" exclaimed Linley, his face pale with anger.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"What's the row there?" called Wingate from the doorway.

He strode in and stood staring at Linley's bed. It was in an extraordinary state. Someone, it was clear, had paid a visit to the dormitory before bed-time and given the head boy's bed his very special attention. The bed was swamped with water from end to end, sheets and blankets fairly swimming in it, pillows and bolster, and even mattress, soaked and drenched. Evidently some reckless Removite had been ragging the head boy's bed.

Wingate's brow grew grim.

"Who's done this?" he demanded.

"Some awful rotter!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'd jolly well alter his features for him if I were Linley!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "Serve you jolly well right, Linley, for reporting fellows! He, he, he!"

"Was it you, Bunter?" demanded the prefect.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh! No! No fear! I—I—I haven't been near the dorm, Wingate. It's against the rules to come up to the dorm, you know. Besides, I—I like Linley. We're pals. Ain't we, old chap? I ain't down on Linley for greasing up to old Quelch; I—I—I like him for it, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you young ass!" growled Wingate. He looked sternly over the crowd of staring Removites. "Look here, this won't do! This isn't a joke; this is a rotten hooligan trick! That bed can't be slept in! Who did it?"

There was no answer.

"Might have been a man from another dorm, Wingate." Lord Mauleverer suggested at last. "Nobody here would play a dirty trick like that."

Some fellows noticed that Harry Wharton coloured at this innocent remark from his lordship. They exchanged glances.

"Rot!" snapped Wingate. "It was some fellow here—somebody with a grudge against Linley, I suppose. I want to know who it was! Whoever it was will have to let Linley have his bed for the night, as well as taking an impot. Now then, who was it?"

The Bouncer gave a start, and his eyes flashed round quickly at Wharton. But he said nothing. Obviously Linley's bed could not be slept in that night. The Bouncer could guess who had ragged it now.

"I'll give the young rascal one minute to own up," said Wingate. "Then I shall call up Mr. Quelch. If you want to see your Form master here—"

"No need for that, Wingate,"

drawled Harry Wharton. "I'm the man."

"You!"

Wingate stared at him blankly. Every eye in the Remove turned on him.

Harry Wharton nodded coolly.

"You!" repeated Wingate. "Well, I suppose I needn't be surprised, after the way you've carried on all this term. And what have you played this rotten, mean, silly trick on your Form-fellow for, I'd like to know?"

"I'd rather have punched his head," explained Wharton. "But Quelch has specially ordered me not to."

Some of the Removites laughed. Mark Linley glanced at Wharton quietly and coldly. There was contempt in his look.

"Well," said Wingate, "as you've owned up to it, Wharton, you'll take a hundred lines, and you'll let Linley have your bed."

"What am I to do, then?"

"Anything you like!" said Wingate curtly. "You should have thought about that before you drenched Linley's bed, you young scoundrel!"

"Oh, all right!" said Wharton carelessly. "I dare say somebody will let me have a blanket. I can see Bunter just going to offer—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You're jolly well not going to have my blankets—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Turn in!" snapped Wingate.

The Removites turned in. Mark Linley turned into Harry Wharton's bed, and the reckless ragger was left to do the best he could. He did not seem to mind. Only the Bouncer knew why he did not mind; the Bouncer was grinning. It was impossible for any fellow to sleep in the bed drenched and dripping with water, or to use any of the drenched bedclothes. Harry Wharton looked like passing an extremely uncomfortable night, especially as it was cold November weather. Wingate grimly expressed the wish that it would be a lesson to him. He put out the light and left the dormitory.

Wharton had borrowed a couple of blankets, one from Smithy and one from Mauleverer. With those and a rug he made himself a bed of sorts on the floor. There were few fellows in the Remove who did not consider that it served him right. The Bouncer called to him after lights-out.

"Quite comfy there, Wharton?"

"Quite, thanks!" called back Wharton.

"You must be an ass, old bean!" said Skinner. "You might have guessed that you'd have to give up your bed."

"Yes, I might," agreed Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bouncer.

"Well, you may think it funny, Smithy," said Skinner. "But I'm blessed if I see anything funny in giving up one's bed on a cold night!"

"Lots of things you don't see, old top!" chuckled the Bouncer.

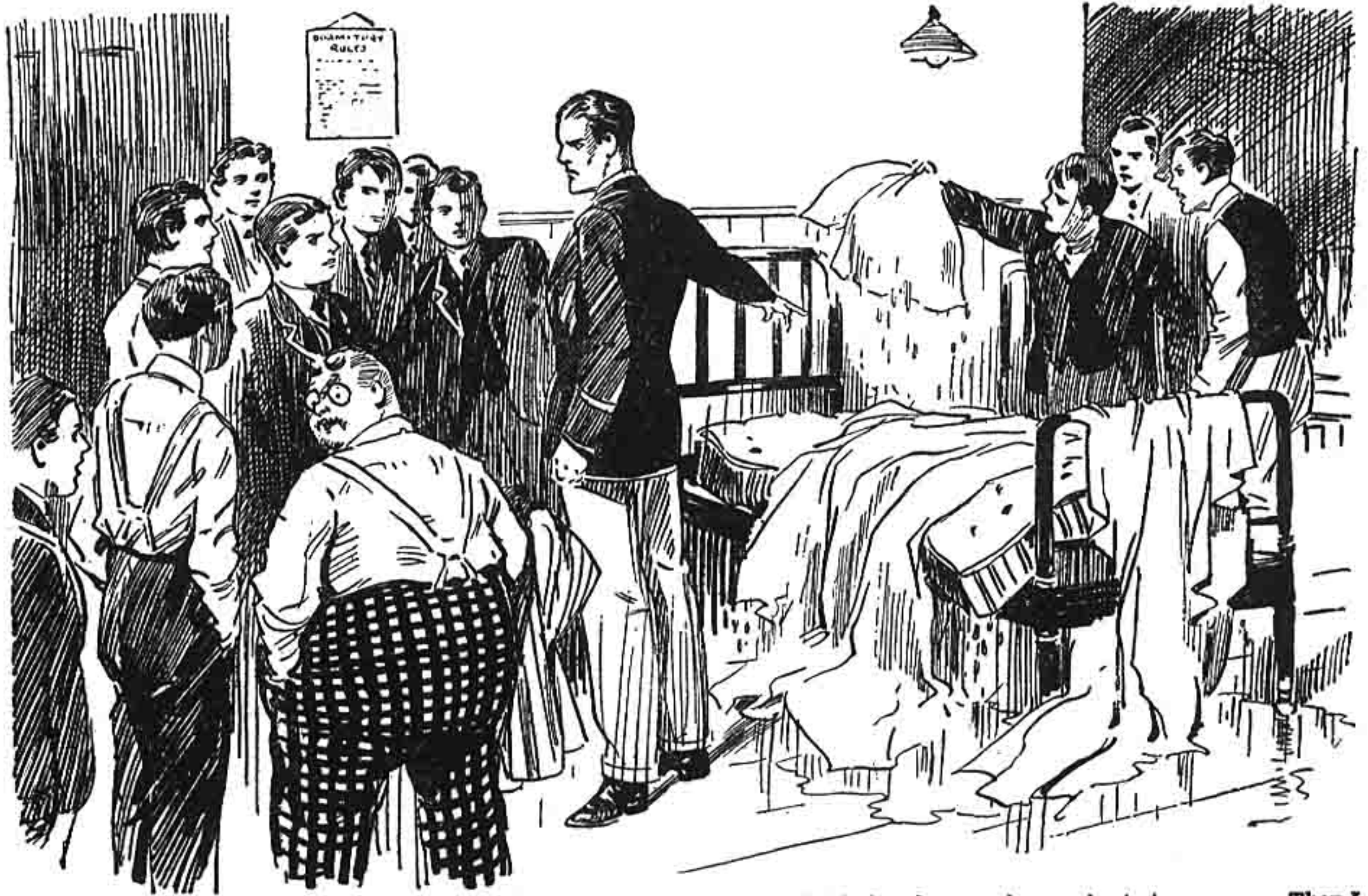
And the Remove settled down to slumber—which was not destined to last uninterrupted till rising-bell.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Raid on the Remove!

GERALD LODER of the Sixth Form picked up the ashplant from the table in his study and swished it in the air.

No longer a prefect, Loder of the Sixth had no official right to wield that ashplant—which in the days of his power he had wielded not wisely but too well. But that night he was going to wield it once more—unofficially, but very energetically. His eyes glittered as he swished it in the air. It was half-



"I want to know who swamped this bed with water," said Wingate. "I'll give the rascal one minute to own up. Then I shall call Mr. Quelch." "No need to do that, Wingate," drawled Harry Wharton. "I'm the man!"

past ten, and by that time all the junior dormitories were—or should have been—deep in slumber. It was an easy matter to slip up to a dormitory and step in in the dark; easy to carry out his scheme of vengeance on the rebel of the Remove. He knew, of course, where Wharton's bed was in the Remove dormitory; in his days as a prefect it had often been his duty to see lights out for the Lower Fourth. There was no need of a light—and a light would have spelled danger. Loder did not want to be seen and recognised.

A dormitory raid after lights-out was rather a serious matter, even when carried out by exuberant juniors; for a Sixth Form senior to be mixed up in such a thing was unheard-of. Had Loder been spotted butting into a junior dormitory after dark to thrash a Lower boy there, Loder would have found himself in serious trouble. At the very least he would have had his Sixth Form privileges taken away. And Loder, who was in hopes of being reinstated as a prefect, knew that he could not be too careful. Had his present enterprise come to light there would have been an end of his hopes in that direction.

But it was safe enough—safe as houses! A couple of minutes in the dormitory would be enough; in a couple of minutes a lot of execution could be done with a cane and a sinewy arm. Having thrashed the cheeky young scoundrel who had ragged his study—as he supposed—Loder could clear off long before there was a light on the subject, leaving the juniors to guess and surmise who the raider had been. Wharton most likely would guess, but Loder did not care what he guessed so long as he could prove nothing.

Slipping the cane under his coat, Loder left his study and strolled away down the Sixth Form passage. Carne and Walker knew of his intention, and as dutiful prefects it was their duty to see that he did not carry it out, but he

knew that he could rely upon them to keep clear. And he was still blissfully unconscious of the fact that two fellows in the Remove knew of his intention also—and still less did he dream of the measures that had been taken by his intended victim.

By a back staircase Loder reached the dormitory passage. The light had long since been turned out there, and all was dark. But he knew, of course, every inch of the way, and he groped silently along and reached the door of the Remove dormitory.

That door opened silently under his hand.

Softly he stepped into the room, leaving the door ajar behind him ready for his escape after the thrashing had been administered.

There was a pale glimmer of starlight at the high windows of the long, lofty room. It was sufficient to guide Loder; he could make out the dim shapes of the long row of white beds.

On tiptoe he stepped towards Harry Wharton's bed.

Cane in hand, he stood beside that bed, looking down with gloating eyes at the dim form of a sleeper therein.

Nothing could have been easier! He gripped the cane hard.

He had made hardly a sound so far—certainly no sound that would have awakened any sleeper. He was quite unaware that one fellow in the dormitory was not sleeping at all.

In the dimness he could not see, and never dreamed that a junior, who was in blankets on a rug on the floor, had sat up, and was peering through the gloom.

Harry Wharton had not yet closed his eyes.

He was aware that the door had opened, and he knew that it was still open, as he could feel the draught.

Quietly—even more quietly than Loder—Wharton rose, and grasped the cushion that was serving him as a

pillow. It was a large and heavy cushion. He could not see Loder, but he knew that Loder was there, and he knew where he was—and he knew what was going to happen. His tread was as soft as a cat's as he crept to the door, and stood waiting there in the dark with the cushion grasped in both hands. Loder, as he stood beside Mark Linley in Wharton's bed, did not dream that his line of retreat was not so open as he fancied. A surprise was awaiting the raider when he beat a retreat.

With the cane in his right hand, Loder bent over the bed and jerked back the bedclothes with his left.

Mark Linley started suddenly out of slumber with a shiver.

He started up with wide-open, startled eyes, and as he did so Loder's left grasped him by the back of the neck and twisted him over, and the cane came down in Loder's right with a sounding swish.

Whack!

Pyjamas were not much defence against that hefty swipe! There was a yell from Linley that woke every echo of the dormitory.

"Whooooooo!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!
"Oh! Ow! Leggo! Help! What the thump—Yarooooooooh!"
Whack! Whack! Whack!

Loder was laying it on! He was putting his beef into it! In the firm belief that it was Harry Wharton whom he was thrashing, Loder fairly let himself go! The cane rang on his hapless victim.

Standing by the door in the darkness, Wharton grinned. From up and down the dormitory came startled exclamations. The Remove fellows were awakening right and left—even Billy Bunter's deep snore ceased, and the fat Owl opened his eyes. The frantic yelling

would have awakened the Seven Sleepers or Rip van Winkle.

"Oh! Ow! Let go!" yelled Mark. "You rotter—Ow! Wow! Help! Rescue, you fellows! Yaroooooh!"

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Bob Cherry's voice. "What the thump—"
"What the dooce—" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer.

"I say, you fellows—"

"What's that row?"

"The rowfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder.

He had awakened at the first yell. Smithy had no love for head boys, or anybody in authority. Evidently the Remove rebel's deep-laid scheme had been a success, and the Bounder roared with laughter.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Mark Linley struggled desperately. His first bewildered impression was that it was Wharton who had assailed him. But the powerful grasp on him, that pinned him down helplessly, showed that it was no junior. It was a senior—a big and powerful fellow—who was holding him down with one hand and thrashing him mercilessly with the cane in the other.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!
Whack!

The cane fairly rang! Loder was enjoying this—enjoying every whack! He was really having the time of his life!

He laid it on with savage energy.

Mark struggled and kicked in vain! But now fellows were turning out of bed on all sides.

"It's a raid!" roared Johnny Bull. "Get your pillows, you men! Somebody get a light!"

"Who's got a match?"

"Get a candle, somebody!"

Loder gave a last terrific whack and bolted for the door. He had put in a good two minutes! But he had to be gone before a match was struck and a candle lighted. Already fellows were groping for match-boxes; he had no more time to lose. He rushed for the door.

In another second he would have been clear. But in that second Loder of the Sixth had the surprise of his life.

Crash!

A dim shadow moved by the doorway. A heavy cushion, grasped in two strong hands, swept through the air and crashed on Loder's features.

"Ooooooh!" gurgled Loder.

He went over backwards as if he had been shot! He landed on his back on the floor of the dormitory with a terrific concussion.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The cushion rose and fell, banging on the breathless, sprawling Loder with mighty smites.

Who it was, what it was, Loder did not know! He was utterly bewildered. All he knew was that he had been knocked over, that he was sprawling on his back, and that something hard and heavy was banging on him like a steam-hammer. He sprawled and spluttered.

A match scratched—a candle-end spluttered. Light flickered and glimmered in the dark dormitory. Loder scrambled desperately up. Another swipe from the cushion caught him, and he staggered—but he made a frantic leap out of the dormitory doorway. Another swipe landed on the back of his head as he leaped, and he pitched forward on his hands and knees with a howl. There was a crash in the passage outside. Dazed and dizzy, hardly know-

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ing whether he was on his head or his heels, Loder of the Sixth picked himself up and vanished into space.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The High Hand!

"SORRY!" said Hazel.

Wharton's eyes glinted.

It was in break the following morning. Hazeldene of the Remove was loafing under the leafless elms, his hands in his pockets and a thoughtful expression on his face when Wharton joined him. As Hazel prided himself on his gifts as a goalkeeper, and made no secret of the fact that he believed himself better than Squiff between the posts, he might have been expected to be glad to hear that he had been picked out to keep goal against St. Jim's. But with a fellow like Hazel you never could tell. Instead of expressing the expected gratification, he grunted and said he was sorry!

A faint grin dawned on his face as he read Wharton's look. Hazel rather liked to be independent—at awkward moments for other fellows.

"I'm fixed up for the afternoon," he condescended to explain. "Field's name was down to keep goal; naturally I never imagined I might be wanted. Sorry!"

"Field is standing out—"

"I know that now! I didn't know yesterday, when I fixed up for to-day. Sorry, as I've said." Hazel turned away as if that ended it.

Harry Wharton stood biting his lip. If a man stood out of the team, he could stand out and be hanged to him—that was his present view. He would fill that man's place—any man's place! Naturally he had supposed that Hazel would jump at the chance—it was seldom that he had a chance of playing in a game like the St. Jim's match. Wharton's impulse was to turn his back on Hazeldene, but he did not follow that impulse. He had to find somebody to keep goal, and Hazel was the next best man after Squiff.

Instead of turning his back, he stepped after Hazel, and forced himself to speak civilly.

"Look here, Hazel, you're our reserve goalie, and you're bound to play up. I don't know what you've got on for this afternoon, but you can cut it out to play in a match."

"I can't!" answered Hazel curtly.

Wharton breathed hard.

"You're bound to play if called on, Hazel! You know that! If you fail us when you're wanted you won't get another chance."

"Well, I'm not wanted, if you come to that!" sneered Hazel. "All the fellows are pretty wild at Field being dropped, and they'll give me the marble eye if I wedge in in his place. I'm not wanted—except to help you get away with riding the high horse! That's not good enough."

With that, Hazel walked away, leaving Wharton standing very still. Slowly the captain of the Remove walked back to the House.

He had counted on Hazel as a matter of course, and Hazel had let him down! He had counted on Redwing being glad to play in the St. Jim's match, and Redwing was standing out. The "high hand" was bringing its own difficulties in its train! It was not yet too late for the captain of the Remove to take counsel with his own better sense; but he was not thinking of doing so. The softened mood in which Lord Mauleverer had found him in his study

the day before was quite gone. Like Pharaoh of old, he hardened his heart; nothing now would have induced him to retract or retreat.

Many Remove men eyed him as he went back to the House, and among them all there was hardly a friendly glance. The Remove footballers were keen on the St. Jim's game—one of their biggest fixtures.

The prospects for that match were beginning to look doubtful. With a goalie like Squiff, and a forward like Toddy, and a back like Mark Linley, left out, the eleven wanted some pulling together. Plenty of fellows were keen enough to play, but they were not of the quality required for the game. Frank Nugent was the best available forward among the reserves; but all the fellows knew that Wharton would not think of his former chum, and they were right; he did not. Indeed, in his present arrogant mood, no one would have been surprised if he had found pretexts for dropping the other members of the Co. out of the team.

Wharton went to the Rag, where the football list was posted, and some of the juniors followed him there. Among them was the Bounder, who was looking cross and irritated. The previous evening, Smithy had been on the friendliest possible terms with the captain of the Form, and he had joined in the rag on the head boy with great enjoyment.

That was a rag after Smithy's own heart; but it had not improved Wharton's position in the estimation of the Form. He had said nothing, and Smithy had kept his own counsel; but all the Remove guessed that somehow he had known that Loder was coming to the dormitory after lights-out, and that he had coolly planned for Linley to get the whopping. Skinner & Co. found it enormously amusing, but few other fellows shared their view. The Bounder's cordiality had vanished in the morning, when he found that his chum Redwing was not, after all, to play in the St. Jim's game.

Wharton stood looking at the list. He had three places to fill; the pencil had been drawn through three names now.

"What about Redwing?" asked Vernon-Smith abruptly.

"Nothing," answered Harry.

"You're ridin' for a fall, Wharton," said the Bounder disagreeably. "You can't keep on like this."

"I'll try," answered Wharton composedly. "Don't be an ass, Smithy! I haven't chucked Redwing—he chucked himself."

"Put it to him that he's wanted, and he will play up."

"I'm not asking him twice."

The Bounder breathed hard.

But he turned and walked away without another word. Wharton took a pencil from his pocket and eyed the list in a meditative manner. A good many fellows eyed him as he did so.

"Looks like a win this afternoon—I don't think," remarked Bolsover major derisively. "What rotten dud are you going to stick in, Wharton, now that Redwing's out?"

"You!" answered Harry.

"Eh?" ejaculated Bolsover, taken aback.

Wharton scribbled in the name "P. Bolsover" in the place of Tom Redwing's. The burly Removeite stared at it.

"Oh!" he said blankly.

Wharton smiled faintly. The expression on Bolsover major's face was rather amusing.

"Well, that's all right, old chap," said Bolsover major at last. "I'll jolly well (Continued at foot of next page.)"

"LINESMAN CALLING!"



Our special contributor, who is an expert on Soccer, will be pleased to hear from MAGNET chums who have problems to solve. Write to him at the Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

IN many of the minor competitions, difficulty arises in the case of drawn games, and the secretary of one of these competitions writes to ask me if I have any ideas as to how to decide the result of a football match if the score is even at the finish. This is not a new problem, and there are ways and means of getting rid of the necessity for a replay.

In Scotland, for instance, they ran a competition at one time in which the victory, in the event of a tie in respect of goals, was given to the side which had gained the greatest number of corners in the course of a game. I think this is a very fair way of deciding, too,

because it can be accepted as a fact that the side which has forced the greatest number of corners in any match is the one which has had the largest amount of the play: which has brought most pressure to bear on the opposing goal.

I heard the other day of a novel method which they have in Holland of deciding the winner of these drawn games. The idea which is carried out in that country is for each team to have three penalty kicks after the game is over, and the side scoring the greater number of goals with these three kicks is declared the winner.

When I was given this information as to the way in which drawn games in Holland are settled, I was also told an amusing story of a recent match in that country. The score was all square at the end of the game. Thereupon, the penalty kick idea—three such kicks to each side—was put into operation. Alas, when both sides had taken their three penalty kicks, neither side had been able to score a goal. Strange, wasn't it, that out of six kicks from the twelve yards spot not one goal was scored?

play the game of my life, I promise you that."

"Do!" said Harry.

"I've said all along that it's time we had new blood," said Bolsover. "Give a man a chance, you know. Rely on me, old bean."

Bolsover major, at least, was satisfied. In Peter Todd's place, at outside-right, Wharton wrote in Russell's name. Squiff's place gave him more food for thought. Obstinate as he was, obdurate as he was, Wharton had not lost any of his knowledge of the game, and he was well aware that in a match like that with Tom Merry & Co., Squiff was the man who was wanted in goal.

He could not have failed to be aware, also, that Sampson Quincy Ifley Field would have joined up again if asked, if only for the sake of the side. But he had no intention whatever of asking him. Hazel was second-best, and Hazel had turned it down. It was only after considerable cogitation that Wharton wrote in the name of W. Stott. Stott could keep goal—after a fashion. The

THE "SPOT" KICK!

IMET a professional footballer the other day who said that the footballer who failed to score a goal from the penalty spot ought to be fined.

This is all very well in theory, and it is quite certain that the majority of footballers could, during practice, score nine times out of ten with a shot from the penalty spot. But doing a thing during practice, and doing it in the course of a real match are two very different things.

I have known the captain of a leading football side go round and ask several different members of his side to undertake the responsibility of trying to score with a penalty kick. And I have known captains compelled to accept the responsibility themselves because they could not find any other member of the side willing to take it on. The trouble is, of course, that in taking a penalty kick when the result of the match depends upon it means that the player begins to worry about failure. And that is the quick way to reach failure.

The best way of taking a penalty kick, according to Gordon Hodgson, the famous forward of Liverpool, who has been very successful with these efforts from the spot, is to keep the ball low. In explaining this to me, Hodgson said:

"The goalkeeper who is there to stop a penalty kick can throw out his arms much more easily than he can throw out his legs. Therefore, keep the ball low. If you do that, and direct it just a little way either to the left or to the right of the goalkeeper he will find it very hard to stop the ball, even though there is not a tremendous amount of force behind the kick."

I commend that bit of advice to my young readers.

"high hand" had now placed the captain of the Remove in the position of having to be satisfied with men who could play after a fashion.

It was still a good team, though by no means the best that the Remove could have put into the field. It would be strong in attack, but decidedly weak in defence. Well, attack was the best form of defence, after all, and Wharton could only hope that William Stott would not be given a lot of stopping to do in goal.

In third school that morning many Remove men gave Wharton expressive looks. He did not seem to observe them. Right or wrong, he went on his own way, and made no sign.

Mr. Quelch found his Form a little inattentive in third school. Most of the fellows were thinking of Soccer, and of the dubious prospects of the match with Tom Merry & Co. There was deep discontent in the footballing fraternity; it was safe to say that not a single man in the team was satisfied with the skipper and his ways—except perhaps Bolsover major, who was convinced that

WAS HE OFF-SIDE?

THE off-side rule in football, like some other things, is always with us, and two out of three letters I receive from readers of the MAGNET deal with off-side problems. Here is a typical one. The outside-right raced in and headed the ball into the net. The goal was disallowed. When the outside-right applied his head there was only the goalkeeper in front of him, but when the ball was swung over there was a full-back, as well as the goalkeeper, in front of him. Should the outside-right have been given off-side?

The answer is that the outside-right, according to the story as I have repeated it, was not off-side.

The position which determines off-side is not that in which a player receives the ball, but how he stood in relation to the other players when the ball was last played.

I confess that this rule is very difficult to follow, and many good goals are disallowed because the referee does not take into account the positions of the players when the ball is last kicked. It is not easy for him to do so, because it is a habit with referees—a necessary habit one might almost say—to keep an eye on the player who has the ball in his possession.

EXPERIMENTS PAY!

THERE are many young readers, I find, who experience difficulty in deciding what is likely to be their best position on the football field. Here is a typical question: "I am rather small, have a good right foot, and a medium left foot, while I also have a good turn of speed. Where do you think I ought to play?"

I should think the best position for such a player would be outside-right. In that position he could use his skill, and at the same time use his pace, while strength of kick with the right foot would enable him to get the ball right across goal. While giving this advice, however, I am all for the young footballer making experiments concerning the position in which he will give most service to his side.

Many a star footballer to-day has only become a star because he has switched from one position to another.

A last short answer to a correspondent. There is nothing in the rules which says that a footballer can only be charged by an opponent when he is playing the ball. Therefore the referee was wrong in giving a penalty kick in the circumstances you name provided the charge was a fair one.

he was going to show all Greyfriars what a topping full-back he was.

The news that Stott was down to keep goal was a sort of finishing touch. Stott himself was as surprised as pleased. He was a member of Skinner's select circle, and regarded in the Remove as more or less of a "rotter." Still, he played games which Skinner and Snoop never did if they could help it. He was elated, but doubtful; and if he had fancied that he was a goalkeeper in the same street with Squiff, or even with Hazel, there were plenty of fellows ready to disabuse his mind of such a fancy.

After third school, Hazel joined Harry Wharton in the quad. There was a gracious, not to say patronising, expression on Hazel's face, and the captain of the Remove smiled grimly. He knew what was coming.

"Look here, Wharton, I hear you've got Stott down to keep goal—" began Hazel.

"That's right."

(Continued on page 16.)

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HUNTING FOR TROUBLE

(Continued from page 13.)

"Well, look here, I can't let the side down to that extent—I'll play," said Hazel. "I'll wash out what I had on this afternoon."

"You needn't," said Wharton coolly.

"I've said I'll play."

"Too late. The place is filled," answered the captain of the Remove icily, and he walked on, leaving Hazel crimson with rage and mortification.

It was the "high hand" with a vengeance. It remained to be seen what the outcome would be.

THE NINTE CHAPTER.

Riding for a Fall

"**Y**OU keep goal! You couldn't keep white mice!"

It was Johnny Bull's voice, in tones of derisive scorn, that greeted Harry Wharton's ears as he came along to the changing-room.

Johnny was evidently speaking to the new goalkeeper.

"Oh, draw it mild, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's hope we shall keep St. Jim's busy at their own end."

"The esteemed hopefulness springs infernal in the human chest," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"May as well chuck up the sponge and have done with it," snorted Johnny. "You've seen those St. Jim's men play Soccer. Is Stott going to stop the leather when a fellow like Tom Merry, or Figgins, or D'Arcy, sends it in? Might as well put Billy Bunter in goal."

"Look here, you go and eat coke, see?" growled William Stott. "I'm going to play 'em, and do my best, anyhow. Field stood out of his own accord, and Hazel refused—I heard him. I'm ready to play, at any rate."

"It's all rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "We're going to chuck away this fixture, because a silly fool's got his silly back up."

Harry Wharton had arrived in the doorway of the changing-room by that time. He stood there, with a sarcastic smile on his face, unobserved by the group of fellows engaged in discussion.

"Wharton's skipper," said Bob Cherry mildly.

"I know that—and if this is the way he's going to handle the job, we want a new skipper. That's my opinion, for what it's worth," snorted Johnny Bull. "He resigned once, and we were dashed duffers not to let him stick to it. He's letting the side down now."

"My esteemed Johnny—"

"You know it as well as I do!" roared Johnny Bull. "And if you fellows took my advice, you'd put it to him plain, here and now—play a winning team or get out!"

"Can't swap horses crossing a stream, old man," said Bob. "It's pretty rotten, all round; but—"

"The rottenfulness is terrific. But the—"

"Oh, rats! I'm blessed if I feel in—"

clined to play the goat this afternoon," growled Johnny Bull. "St. Jim's will walk over us, and serve us jolly well right. We want Linley, and Toddy, and Squiff, and you fellows know it, and Wharton knows it. I've a jolly good mind to stand out."

"No great loss if you did," said a drawling voice in the doorway, as Harry Wharton came in.

Johnny Bull spun round.

"Oh, you're here!" he snorted. "No great loss if I did, what? Have you got another dud up your sleeve that you'd like to barge into the team? Thinking of playing Bunter next?"

"Cheese it, old chap!" murmured Bob anxiously.

"The cheesefulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Johnny!"

Snort from Johnny Bull.

"Oh, let him run on!" drawled Wharton. "He's rather amusing!"

Johnny Bull's rugged face crimsoned. Johnny Bull had many good qualities, but tact and patience were not numbered among them. No member of the old Co. was keen to play under Wharton's captaincy; but they were all keen to keep the Greyfriars colours from being lowered on the Soccer field; and for that reason they wanted, if they could, to avoid any altercation with the captain of the Remove. Ever since Mark Linley's name had been taken out, Johnny Bull had found it difficult to suppress his feelings. Now they refused to be suppressed any longer.

"You cheeky rotter!" he roared. "You're mucking up the team, and you know it. You're giving the game away to St. Jim's—making them a present of it! You know it!"

"Why trouble to tell me, then?" asked Wharton calmly.

Johnny Bull seemed about to choke.

"If you're not keen on the game, other fellows are!" added Wharton. "Time to get out, if you want to, Bull!"

"I'd get out fast enough," gasped Johnny. "But Bolsover and Stott won't stop St. Jim's, and you know it."

"You're telling me a lot of things I know, aren't you? And aren't you rather over-estimating your value?" asked the captain of the Remove, in his coolest tones. "The team could do quite well without you—and you won't have any choice about getting out, if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head."

"That does it!" gasped Johnny Bull. He tramped to the door.

"Johnny!" called out Bob. "Don't be an ass! Are you going to help make it a walk-over for St. Jim's?"

"I'm not playing!" roared Johnny Bull. "You can take my name out as soon as you like, Wharton, and be blowed to you!"

"All serene!"

"Hold on, Bull!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Look here, Wharton, this won't do! Are you going to put up a team of shreds and patches against St. Jim's?"

"Bull's resigned," said Wharton coolly. "Any other fellow that wants to follow suit had better make up his mind before St. Jim's get here." He glanced at Bob Cherry and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a mocking look.

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath, but he turned away without speaking. His impulse was strong to follow Johnny Bull from the changing-room; but he would not further weaken an already weakened team.

Johnny Bull tramped away in great wrath, and disappeared.

"Shall I call Bunter, Wharton?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"Bunter! What do you mean?" snapped Wharton.

"You'll want a man in Bull's place."

Some of the fellows in the changing-room laughed. Harry Wharton frowned.

"Don't be a silly ass, if you can help it," he said curtly, and he beckoned to Wibley of the Remove, who was looking in at the doorway.

"Want me, old man?" asked William Wibley hopefully. It was Wib's great ambition to play for Greyfriars—an ambition never likely to be realised, except in the present peculiar circumstances.

"Yes; we shall want another man now Bull's standing out," said Harry. "Get into your things, Wib!"

"Like a shot!" said Wibley cheerily.

The Remove men in the changing-room exchanged eloquent looks. Wibley was great in amateur theatricals; but at football he was far from great. But it was now a case of any port in a storm, with the wilful and arrogant captain of the Remove. There was plenty of football talent in the Form; but he had not left himself free to call on it. He could only call on stopgaps now. Evidently the team was going to be, as the Bounder called it, a thing of shreds and patches.

The fellows were changing in sulky, discontented silence, when Sampson Quincy Iffley Field came in. Squiff had been thinking the matter over, and he had made up his mind to toe the line. So far as Wharton was concerned, he was more inclined to punch his head than to play football with him. But he was thinking of the side, and the score that St. Jim's were likely to pile up if it was left to Stott to keep them out. It was not pleasant to put it to the cool, contemptuous fellow who looked at him with eyes like cold steel; but the Australian junior had made up his mind, and he got on with it.

"Look here, Wharton. I'll play to-day if you say the word," said Squiff. "I was rather hasty in chucking it—you got my back up, as I dare say you know! But that's not footer! Say the word—"

"Sorry," said Wharton politely. "It's rather late for that, Field! I can't chuck a man because you've changed your mind."

Squiff breathed hard.

"You know that Stott can't keep goal against St. Jim's," he said. "I'm asking you to give your own side a chance of winning the game."

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" said the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"I'm not blowing my own trumpet!" said Squiff quietly. "You've told me often enough yourself that I'm wanted in goal in any hard game. I'm offering to swallow your confounded cheek, and play all the same."

"Nothing doing!"

"You mean that?"

"Quite!"

"Well, that's that!" said Squiff. "I thought I ought to offer! I'll clear off now, or I might knock your features through the back of your head, you cheeky tick."

"Try it on if you like," answered the captain of the Remove indifferently.

Squiff was evidently strongly tempted, but he restrained himself, and walked quietly out of the changing-room.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders as he went. The footballers changed in savage silence.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The St. Jim's Match!

TOM MERRY & CO. of St. Jim's took no notice of the fact that there was suppressed trouble in the Greyfriars team. The trouble was suppressed, but fairly obvious even to a careless eye. It was no business of the St. Jim's men, and they were very careful to observe nothing. But if ever Tom Merry had seen a football eleven that was at sixes and sevens, it was the eleven that Harry Wharton led into the field.

Some St. Jim's fellows had come over with the team to see the match, and these fellows could not help hearing the talk in the crowd round the field, which enlightened them considerably as to the state of affairs; and gave them the impression that the game was not going to be the strenuous affair they had expected it to be.

Among the lookers-on were Johnny Bull, Mark Linley, Peter Todd, and Squiff; four fellows who ought to have been playing. They stood in a little group, and the most casual observer must have noticed that they were in a state of angry resentment and irritation.

Frank Nugent was with them, his face clouded. Nugent, more than any other fellow, felt deeply the sight of his former friend going from bad to worse. He could do nothing—say nothing—he could only look on, with a heavy heart. And he knew that there was more trouble to come. The team of "shreds and patches" was not likely to beat St. Jim's. It seemed as if Wharton, in his hot-headed arrogance, had completely forgotten that a football skipper's job was to win matches. He seemed to be content with defeating fellows with whom he ought to have pulled in harmony; and with leaving the defeat of St. Jim's to chance.

By luck the game might be pulled off; but it needed a lot of luck. If it turned out a victory, in spite of probability, no doubt Wharton would "get away with it." Resentful criticism might be silenced by a victory. But if it was a defeat, especially a defeat by an unusually wide margin, there was going to be a storm—Nugent knew that. Indeed, though he was more distressed than angry, he was angry himself. He was keen to play for the school; and, though willing to stand down in favour of better men, it was rather hard to stand down in favour of worse. He was a letter footballer than some members of that team.

His eyes dwelt curiously on Wharton, looking handsome and fit in the field. Did the fellow realise that he was doing wrong—did he care? Was he following the dictates of stubborn pride without realising whither he was being led? Nugent wondered. Certainly, if Wharton was dissatisfied with himself, his looks gave no clue to it.

Tom Merry won the toss, and gave Greyfriars the wind to kick off against. Blundell of the Fifth was there to referee, and Blundell was seen to cast a rather curious glance over the Remove eleven. The ball rolled, and the game started; and it was hard and fast from the beginning. Tom Merry had brought over a good team, and had the home team been at its best, the game would have been on the knees of the

gods. But the home team was very far from being at its best.

Harry Wharton, at all events, was at his best; and his best was very good indeed. If pride and anger had blinded him in picking out his men, they did not blind him to the probable result. The Remove front line was good, the second line was a tower of strength; but the backs were no good, and the goalkeeper was a dud. Keeping up the attack, keeping the game so far as possible in the visitors' half, was the programme; and Wharton's lead, well followed by forwards and halves, looked like carrying out that programme.

Frank Nugent's face brightened as he watched Greyfriars coming up the field, watched them getting the ball, time and again, over the half-way line, and at length the forward line, with the short passing that was their favourite game, getting right up to goal in a brilliant advance, and then—

"Goal!" gasped Nugent.

His eyes danced.

Fatty Wynn, of St. Jim's, in goal, missed the leather by half an inch as Wharton's foot drove it in. It was in the net. First blood to Greyfriars in the first ten minutes.

"Goal!"

"Bravo!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Well, that's luck!" said Johnny Bull. "That's jolly good luck! It won't last, but it's good luck!"

"Let's hope it will last!" said Mark Linley.

"Why not?" grinned Squiff. "May as well hope so—till they get near Stott, and it begins to rain goals for St. Jim's."

"Anyhow, it won't be nil," said Peter Todd.

Angry as they were with the captain of the Remove, the group of excluded footballers looked brighter. More than anything else, they wanted to see their side win.

But they could not help feeling that it was only a flash in the pan. And so it proved.

The teams lined up again after the goal, but Greyfriars were not able to repeat their former tactics. There was a long and obstinate struggle, and the game swayed up and down the field, but when Wharton got through and

kicked for goal Fatty Wynn grinned and sent the ball far and wide, a St. Jim's back drove it spinning down the field, and then the St. Jim's forwards had their chance and made the most of it.

Greyfriars fell back to defend, and with Johnny Bull and Mark Linley at back, the defence would have been sound enough. But Wibley was quite lost, and Bolsover major seemed to be able to do nothing but barge about like a bull. Almost to their own surprise, the St. Jim's men found themselves going through Greyfriars like a knife through cheese; but Bob Cherry, falling back, was in the way when Tom Merry kicked for goal, and Tom barely drove the ball in before Bob pushed him off it. It was a hasty kick—all the St. Jim's captain had time for, with about a chance in a hundred of materialising. Stott's foot slipped as he barged at it, and he sat down in goal, the ball going over his head to land in the net. The St. Jim's men fairly gasped when they saw that they had scored.

"Goal!" gurgled Blake.

"Bai Jovo! Goal, you know!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Figgins.

"Some goalie!"

"Goal! Goal!" roared the St. Jim's men who had come over with the team. "No need to shout," remarked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "They'll want a lot of wind if they're going to yell for every goal they get. Stott! I say, Stott! Shall I bring you a deckchair?"

Stott scrambled up with a crimson face.

"Oh, sit down to it!" roared Johnny Bull. "You're as good sitting down as standing up! May as well take it easy."

"Shut up, old chap!" murmured Nugent. "The poor beggar's doing his best."

"Might as well do his worst!" snorted Johnny. "There's no difference, that I can see."

Some of the St. Jim's men were smiling as they lined up again. Harry Wharton's face was set and hard. If he had not realised it before, he knew now that he had taken too many chances. But it was rather too late to think of that, and he could only resolve to play hard, to play the game of his life and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat—if it was to be snatched.

(Continued on next page.)

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And during the remainder of the first half there was no doubt that the captain of the Remove played a great game. Vernon-Smith and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh backed him up brilliantly. And the second line—Tom Brown and Bob Cherry and Dick Penfold—was so good that it seemed able to do the work of the backs, as well as its own. Attack was the order of the day, and somehow St. Jim's were kept away from the weak spot and were given no chance to take advantage of Stott's remarkable abilities as a goalkeeper or the equally remarkable performances of Wibley and Bolsover major. By a series of miracles, as it seemed to the onlookers, the Remove kept their end up, and when Blundell blew the whistle for half-time the score was one all, and victory was still on the knees of the gods!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Procession I

THE whistle went.

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

"On the ball!"

With the change of ends Harry Wharton & Co. had the wind behind them. From the kick-off they were attacking hotly, though some of them were showing signs of bellows to mend, after a gruelling first half. The captain of the Remove was as fresh as paint, and at the top of his form. Never had he been seen to put up a better game on Little Side at Greyfriars. Again and again the Remove looked like scoring, but Fatty Wynn, in goal, put "paid" to every attempt. The fat Fourth-Former from St. Jim's was like an impregnable rock in the chicken-run. Twice Harry Wharton almost got home, twice the Bounder, and once Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. For a good twenty minutes David Llewellyn Wynn, of St. Jim's, had to work, and work hard; but he saved every time, and then came the chance of Tom Merry & Co.

And then came Bolsover major's chance at the same time, of distinguishing himself—in Bolsover's own way! He charged Tom Merry down like a bull, fairly flooring him in the penalty area—a fact which dawned on Bolsover's rather obtuse brain when the whistle screamed and the St. Jim's men yelled "Penalty!"

The kick materialised in a goal for St. Jim's. After which Bolsover major looked sulky, and played more recklessly and roughly than ever; and Bolsover's play was always on the verge of hooliganism. Several times the referee called him to order, and Wharton spoke to him sharply, answered by an angry snort. It was the special pride of the Remove that they played a hard game, and a strenuous game, but without undue roughness; football was a game of skill and endurance, not a barging competition. Bolsover major's idea of a game was barging, and he was neither particular nor careful how and where he barged. Shock tactics like Bolsover's were not much use against really good play, and the more excited he got the more his shock tactics degenerated into fouling.

"Bai Jove, you know," D'Arcy murmured to Blake, "that fellow is weally a wuffian, you know! I am suah that kick he gave me was not an accident. Weally, I did not expect this sort of thing at Gweyfwiahs."

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But barging and fouling did not help. Blake put the ball in, and a few minutes later Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put it in. By this time the hapless Wibley was so used up that he could only stagger to and fro if anybody pushed him, and was in a state of doubt as to whether he was on his head or his heels. Stott, in goal, was doing his best, but, as Johnny Bull had remarked, he might as well have done his worst. The easiest of shots left him guessing; he never knew where the ball was till he saw it in the net. The more hopelessly he failed, the more confused he grew, until at last, as Skinner brightly remarked, he was of no more use than he was ornament.

"Four to one—and twenty minutes more to go!" said Johnny Bull to his companions. "Watch the procession."

"I'm afraid it's all up," said Mark Linley.

"Can't win every match, you know," murmured Nugent.

Johnny Bull gave him a savage snort.

"Don't be an ass, Frank! We're going to be beaten by a margin that will make the whole school cackle. Licked to the wide—and disgraced, too! What decent side would play a man like Bolsover? I saw him kick one of the St. Jim's men, as deliberately as if he were kicking a ball. If Blundell had seen him he'd have booted him off the field. What are they going to say about us at St. Jim's?"

"There they go again!"

"Oh, I'm fed-up with this!" growled Johnny Bull. "What's the good of standing here counting their goals? I'm sick of it, I can tell you!"

"Oh, my hat! Look!"

"Bolsover, you cad!"

"Oh, you rotter!"

"Foul! Foul!"

Bolsover major seemed to have completely lost his head. He barged into Figgins of St. Jim's like an escaped elephant, and was unceremoniously shouldered off, and he kicked back—not at the ball, but at Figgins. There was a yell of anguish from Figgins as he hopped on one leg, his knee, which had caught the kick, almost paralysed. It was a foul of the most palpable description, an outbreak of savage temper from a bully, and it did not escape Blundell of the Fifth. The whistle went, and the referee bore down on Bolsover major.

"You young cad! Get off the field!" hooted Blundell.

"Get off, you cur!" muttered Harry Wharton, his face crimson with rage and shame. "Get off, before I boot you off!"

Bolsover major cast a glare of angry defiance round him, shoved his hands deep into the pockets of his footer shorts, and tramped off the field. Howls from the crowd followed him as he disappeared.

"Man short!" snarled Johnny Bull.

"Not that it matters!"

"And that man's playing in Linley's place!" said Squiff, with a deep breath.

"By gum, Wharton will have to answer for this!"

"What a game!" muttered Mark.

"St. Jim's will have something to talk about when they go home," said Micky Desmond, with a whistle. "Foul play on Greyfriars ground—"

"Oh, it's sickening!"

"Man short, an dall the better for us," said Johnny Bull. "Better without that barging hooligan."

"Wharton must have been mad to play him," muttered Nugent.

"What does he care?" said Johnny bitterly. "All he cares about is riding the high horse, and scoring over fellows he'd rowed with."

That was hardly just to Wharton, who certainly realised, by that time, the mistakes into which his angry and stubborn temper had led him. He knew now that the side was booked for defeat—overwhelming defeat; and not only defeat, but disgrace. Figgins of St. Jim's had to go off the field—he was crooked by that savage and vicious kick; and St. Jim's, as well as Greyfriars, were a man short. Greyfriars had lost a rotten player; St. Jim's had lost a first-class one, so the advantage was with the side that had fouled, which was a discomfiting reflection for everybody concerned. But that advantage counted little, for the home team were hopelessly outclassed, and even the captain of the Remove could no longer hope against hope, that by some miracle he might yet pull it off.

Almost miraculously, in the first half, the visitors' score had been kept down to one—one. But that could not last. There were too many weak places in the home team; and superior quality on the part of St. Jim's showed more and more every minute that the game lasted. It was in vain that Harry Wharton excelled himself, and that the good men in the team backed him up for all they were worth. It was inevitable that Tom Merry & Co. should get the upper hand; and they got it and kept it.

Again the ball went in, and again! Six to one was the total now—a total unheard of on the Greyfriars ground.

"All over bar shouting!" said Skinner.

Obviously it was all over, except that a painful interest still attached to the question, what the margin would be. With ten minutes more to go, and a beaten and dispirited team walked over by a victorious one, the margin might really have been anything. Johnny Bull was inclined to think that St. Jim's would pile up about a dozen before they finished. It was clear that only the final whistle could save Greyfriars from an utterly ludicrous defeat.

But in the last ten minutes, Harry Wharton played up as he had never played before, and the Bounder and Hurree Singh backed him up wonderfully, and Bob Cherry seemed to be twice his usual self. To the general surprise, the game swept up to the St. Jim's goal again, and but for the good quality of Fatty Wynn, the margin would have been reduced. But the Welsh junior in goal was equal to the strain, and there was no score. The tussle petered out at last, and St. Jim's swept up the field; but now there was only a minute to go—which was a relief to Greyfriars. That minute proved to be sufficient for Tom Merry to slam the leather in once more.

"Seven to one!" said Johnny Bull, in a voice that the Great Huge Bear might have envied. "Seven to one! Jevver see anything like it?"

"That fool Wharton—" muttered Squiff.

"That rotter Wharton—" said Peter Todd. "By gum, we'll make him sorry for this! Seven to one—and a man sent off the field for foul play! I'm going to talk to him!"

"Rag him as he comes off!" said Squiff.

"Yes, rather!"

"Hold on—don't play the goat!" exclaimed Nugent. "For goodness' sake—not before the St. Jim's men!"

Snort, from Johnny Bull.



"Looks like a win this afternoon—I don't think," said Bolsover major, as Wharton walked up to the footer list, pencil in hand. "What rotten dud are you going to stick in now?" "You!" answered the junior skipper. "Eh?" ejaculated Bolsover, taken aback.

"Oh, yes—let's keep up jolly old appearances! St. Jim's will have enough to laugh at when they get home, without seeing us rag our football captain! Leave it till they're gone!"

"When they're gone!" said Toddy, with a deep breath.

Quite a number of Remove men were looking forward to the departure of the visiting team. They had something to say to the captain of the Remove when the visitors were gone; and there was no doubt that it was going to be something emphatic!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Paying the Piper!

"**C**HUCK it!"

"Get out of the way, Cherry!"

"Chuck it, I tell you!" repeated Bob.

"Shift him!"

"Kick him out!"

Bob Cherry stood outside the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove. His back was to that door, and his attitude was determined.

A crowd of fellows thronged in the passage.

There was a tramp of feet, and a buzz of voices. Almost every man in the Remove was there. And almost every man in the Remove was there to make it clear to Harry Wharton, in the most unmistakable manner, that he was no longer captain of the Form.

The St. Jim's men were gone. The November dusk was deep on Greyfriars. Harry Wharton was in his study—alone!

He heard the tramp and the buzz in the passage, without heeding them at first. He was pacing the room restlessly.

What a fool he had been! That was the clearest thought in his mind. And another thought, that he tried to drive away, was, what a rotter he had been! It was said of old that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall! Wharton felt, as keenly as any fellow in the Remove, the disgrace of that defeat. Any team might be beaten—any sportsman ought to know how to take a beating! But that did not apply now. The defeat had been by a ridiculous margin—the Remove, who prided themselves on their footer, had been made to look fools on the football ground. And they knew, and Wharton knew, that they owed it to his arrogant, unbending pride and stubbornness.

The Bounder had told him that he was riding for a fall; and he knew it now. And the fall was to be a heavy one. Why had he carried on, with inflexible obstinacy, putting all reflection behind him, hunting for trouble, welcoming it when it came—heading for defeat and disgrace? He hardly knew. Everything had gone wrong that unlucky term, and he had not been to blame—at first, at least. One thing had led to another.

Miserable scheming and lying by Loder, his old enemy in the Sixth; misunderstanding and injustice from his Form master; wrong, and passionate resentment of wrong—that had been the beginning. Then the breaking off of old friendships—the feeling that fellows were against him—that everything was against him—and only sullen, stubborn pride left! His old comrades had let him down when he needed them—or so he believed—and yet did he, at the bottom of his heart, quite believe that? Linley had ousted him from his position

as head boy, but did he quite believe that either? He hardly knew.

Had he not, in sheer arrogance of temper, chosen the wrong course, and stubbornly kept to it? No; it was not so bad as that! Anyhow, it was not much use sorting out the blame now. What he had done he had done, and that was that! He had called the tune, and at least he would pay the piper, and face the music with his head held high. His troubled reflections, as he paced the study, led him to that!

He hardly heeded the excitement in the passage; but at length he gave heed, as he heard Bob Cherry's voice outside the study, and the angry shouts of a dozen other fellows. He wondered whether it was going to be a rag.

The fellows were fed-up with him—the looks of every Remove man he had seen since the St. Jim's game had told him that.

The men who had played in the match were even more fed than the others. Stott, jeered and mocked on all sides, was savagely resentful against the fellow who had shoved him into a position where he could only make a fool of himself. Wibley, who had simply been in the way all through the game, was sore and disappointed, and put the blame on his skipper. Bolsover major, hooted for his foul play, hardly dared to show his face in the Remove, and sulked in his study. Russell had played a good game, but he was painfully conscious of the fact that Toddy would have played a better one—well, it was Wharton who had shoved him into Toddy's place.

The good men in the team, who had fought desperately a losing battle, were sore and savage—and the good men who had been left out were more so.

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The same man's load on the Moon

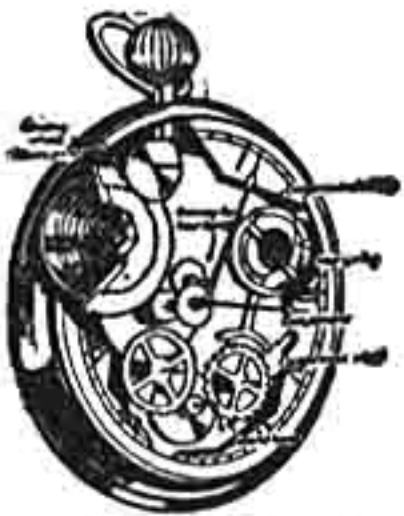
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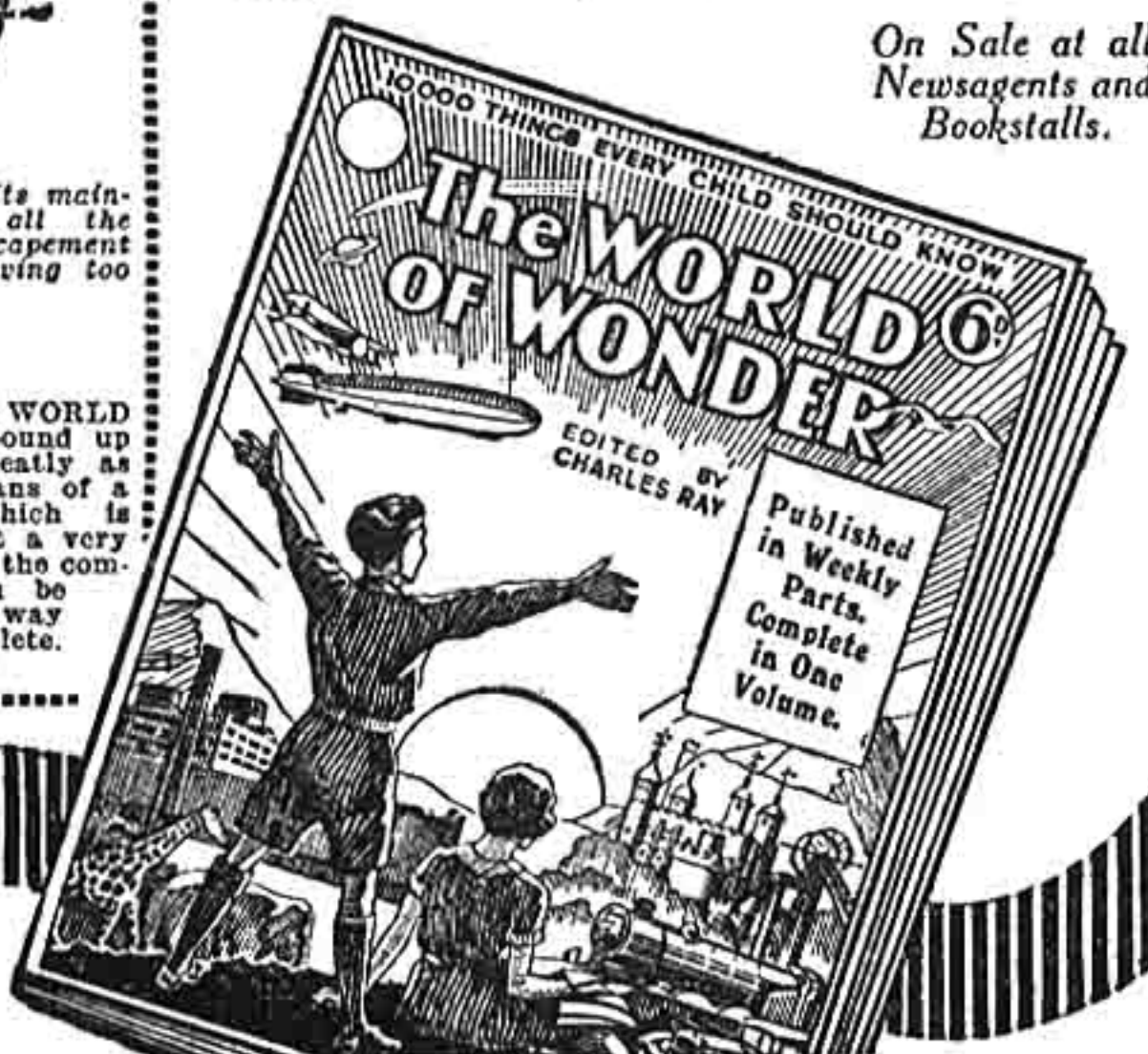
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Seven goals to one—and a man ordered off for foul play—no wonder the fellows were fed-up. Wharton knew that trouble was brewing, and he did not care. Now, as he heard the roar in the Remove passage, he knew that the trouble was coming to a head. It was going to be a rag.

"Get out of the way, Cherry!" It was Peter Todd who was shouting. "By gum, if you don't shift, we'll jolly soon shift you!"

Wharton's lip curled as he heard. His face flushed. If any fellow was setting up to protect him, he would soon show that he was not in need of protection.

"Chuck it!" he heard Bob's voice again. "Keep your little tempers, my infants! What's the good of ragging?"

Frank Nugent stepped to Bob's side, and after him Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. They put their backs to the door of Study No. 1, on either side of the stalwart Bob.

But Johnny Bull did not join his comrades there. Johnny was in the opposing ranks.

"Bob, you dummy——" he roared. "Back up, Johnny, old bean!" urged Bob. "Stick to the old firm!"

"I'll stick your silly head against that door, if you don't shift!" roared Johnny Bull. "That's all the sticking I'll do, you fathead!"

"My esteemed and absurd Johnny, I——" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, Inky, and clear!"

"Have him out!" roared Tom Brown. "Have that rotter out! We're going to show him what the Remove thinks of him."

"I say, you fellows, you'll have Quelch up here, at this rate——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Kick Bunter, somebody!"

"Yaroo!"

"Hiding in his study!" sneered Hazel. "Look here, have him out and give him the frog's-march up the passage."

"Yes, rather!"

"Are you fellows going to shift, or do you want us to shift you?" demanded Squiff. "Last time of asking."

The door of Study No. 1 opened behind the three defenders. There was a roar as Wharton appeared. The cool, disdainful expression on his face did not placate the angry Remove.

"There he is——"

"Have him out!"

Wharton looked out into the crowded passage. His self-accusing reflections of a few minutes ago were gone now. His look was cool, contemptuous.

"I'm here if anybody wants me," he said. "Will you fellows oblige me by getting away from my door?"

That question was addressed to Bob, Nugent, and Hurree Singh.

"We're not having any ragging!" grunted Bob.

"Why not mind your own business?"

"You cheeky idiot——"

"That's enough! Get away from my door!" snapped Wharton.

Breathing hard, Bob Cherry stepped away, and his friends followed him. Harry Wharton stood alone in the doorway of Study No. 1, looking out at the angry and excited crowd.

Johnny Bull moved forward; but Nugent caught his arm and dragged him back by main force.

"Chuck it!" he snapped.

"Look here——"

"Don't be a goat!"

Bob slipped an arm through Johnny's. Nugent took the other, and the angry and indignant Johnny was forcibly walked up the passage. A light laugh

from the captain of the Remove followed.

"Why not give him his head—such as it is?" he asked.

Johnny Bull halted; but his friends dragged him on. The rag was coming; but Wharton's old friends were not taking part in it. Three of them, at least, were determined on that, and they took care of the fourth.

Johnny was marched into his own study at the other end of the passage, and as his friends were prepared to sit on his head, if necessary, to keep him there, Johnny Bull grunted and acquiesced.

It was Peter Todd who took the lead. Peter was in a state of towering wrath, quite a contrast to his usual good nature and good temper. The cool disdain in Wharton's face was the finishing touch. If the fellow did not care what the Remove thought of him, they were jolly well going to make him care!

Wharton eyed him coolly.

"If you've anything to say, get it off your chest!" he drawled.

"You—you rotter! You cheeky rotter!" gasped Peter. "You're sacked from the captaincy, to begin with."

"Kicked out of it!" roared Squiff.

"Turfed out of it!" said Hazel.

"We're done with you, Wharton—"

"I guessed that one!" said the captain of the Remove, with icy coolness. "I had a sort of idea that you fellows had come along to ask me to resign. Thanks for putting it so politely."

"You're not asked to resign!" shouted Hazel. "You're turfed out!"

"And that's not all!" said Peter. "You're going to get what you've asked for—what you've sat up and begged for! Collar him!"

It was only two or three weeks since there had been a rag in that study, but a very different sort of rag. On the former occasion the Remove footballers had ragged their captain because they wanted him, and his pride stood in the way of asking Mr. Quelch's leave from detention! There was a difference now—a change, with a vengeance! They were ragging him now because they did not want him, and wanted to make it quite clear that they were fed-up with him, and done with him. That change showed the distance that Harry Wharton had travelled on the path he had marked out for himself.

There was a rush. A crowd of fellows surged into the doorway, Peter Todd and Squiff and Hazel in the lead. Wharton sprang back. He knew what was coming, and he knew that he had to have it. But if he was going down, he was going down fighting.

With his hands up, his eyes glinting over them, he faced the rush of the ragers as they swarmed into the study.

Peter Todd dropped at his feet, feeling as if a mule had kicked him on the chin. Hazel sprawled across him, yelling. Squiff, as he grasped the captain of the Remove, was almost lifted off his feet by an upper-cut. But in a moment more the Removites surged over Harry Wharton like a billow.

He was in the midst of a struggling, shouting, jostling crowd, hitting out fiercely. But many hands grasped him, and he was swept off his feet. Still resisting savagely, he was rushed out of the study. Peter Todd scrambled up, clasping his chin in anguish.

"Frog's-march!" he gasped.

"Give him jip!"

"Give him beans!"

Up the Remove passage at a rush went the captain of the Form, helpless in the grasp of numberless hands, struggling, dishevelled, furious. Round

him trampled and shouted the angry and excited juniors. Up the passage they went to the very end; and Johnny Bull, in Study No. 14, grinned as he heard the trampling and shouting outside.

Then down the passage came the surging mob, with Wharton in their midst going through the frog's-march—crimson and furious and breathless. If the Remove wanted their discarded captain to know what they thought of him, there was no doubt that they were making it clear to the most obstinate mind.

Down the passage they came with a rush, amid wild trampling and shouting and yelling. Nobody heeded Billy Bunter's fat squeak on the landing.

"I say, you fellows, here comes Quelch!"

In the din and excitement the arrival of the Remove master on the scene was unheeded. The shouting mob reached the landing from the passage, as Mr. Quelch reached it on the other side from the stairs. Henry Samuel Quelch stared at the wild scene in amazement and wrath.

"Boys!" he thundered.

"Oh, my hat! Quelch!" exclaimed Squiff.

"What does this riot mean?" thundered the Remove master.

Bump! Wharton suddenly let go, sprawled on the floor, almost at the feet of his Form master.

Mr. Quelch gazed down at him.

"Wharton!" he ejaculated.

Wharton panted breathlessly.

Something like a grim smile came over Mr. Quelch's face. His own opinion of the rebel of the Remove was fixed. It looked as if that opinion was now shared by the Form. If any fellow in the Remove was still Wharton's friend, that fellow was not to be seen. Dusty, dishevelled, breathless, the rebel of the Remove sprawled there, under his Form master's contemptuous gaze.

"Wharton! Go into your study!" said Mr. Quelch. "Boys! Let there be no more of this—if there is any further rioting in this passage, the whole Form will be given detention for two half-holidays!"

Wharton picked himself up breathlessly. He tottered rather than walked into his study, and the door closed on him. The crowd dispersed, and Mr. Quelch, having restored order, rustled down the Remove staircase and disappeared.

"No lines!" grinned the Bounder. "Quelch jolly well knew that he had asked for it!"

"And I fancy he was rather pleased to see him getting it!" grinned Skinner.

The rag was over; Wharton was left alone in his study. No lines, no lickings, after a record riot—Quelch was glad to see him down and out, he reflected bitterly. The man who wanted him sacked from the school was glad to see the whole Form down on him. And the rebel of the Remove shrugged his shoulders scornfully, and hardened his heart.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The New Captain!

SAMPSON QUINCY IFFLEY FIELD, who was called Squiff in the Remove, hesitated at the door of Study No. 1, coughed, and finally put his head in at the doorway.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Harry Wharton, in the study, was changing his shoes for a pair of thick boots, which

looked as if he was going out for a ramble that afternoon. Squiff, standing in the doorway, coughed, and Wharton looked up from lacing his boots, and smiled faintly.

"Going out?" asked Squiff.

Wharton nodded.

"What about footer?"

"That's in your hands now!"

"But you're not chucking the game, I suppose?"

"Am I still wanted?" asked Wharton sarcastically.

"Of course!"

"Sorry, then! I'm going out!"

The new captain of the Remove stood silent, looking at him. The election in the Remove had taken place, and it had been a walk-over for Field. It was perhaps odd; but, unpopular as Wharton had become, and determined as all the Removites were to "chuck" him, his opinion still seemed to weigh with the Form. It was known that Wharton regarded the junior from New South Wales as the best fellow to captain the Form in his place, and Squiff knew that he owed his election to that more than to anything else.

Smithy and Peter Todd had been rival candidates, but neither of them had had a look-in. More than a two-thirds majority plumped for Squiff. Wharton had not voted or attended the election at all; but he was, as Skinner put it, the nigger in the woodpile!

Discarded, discredited, unpopular, with hardly a friend left in the Form, he still pulled the strings, little as he appeared to care about the matter. He was right in his judgment, and the fellows knew it. Squiff was the best man for the job, especially as no member of the old Co. was willing to stand. Nobody had voted for Toddy, and only four fellows for Smithy, and of those, three were Bunter, Skinner, and Snoop. And it was hardly a secret that the Bounder had "squared" those three. The fourth voter for Smithy was Redwing, who stood by his pal, perhaps encouraged to do so by the obvious fact that his vote would not get Smithy in.

Whether Wharton was pleased or otherwise with the result of the election was not apparent; he gave no sign. He seemed to be withdrawing himself entirely from Form affairs. Now, as he sat lacing his boots, with Squiff looking at him from the doorway, he did not look unfriendly. If he felt any resentment for the part Squiff had taken in the rag following the St. Jim's match, his face did not betray it.

There was a silence, and Wharton, having finished lacing his boots, rose. Then Field spoke again.

"Look here, Wharton, you're not chucking games just because you've been chucked out of the captaincy! That's not sense. You have to own up that you made a muck of it as skipper. A fellow who lets his temper run away with him—"

"That's ancient history now. You're captain of the Remove, Field; I'm not butting into your bizney. Leave me out! I left you out, you know."

"That makes no difference! You played the goat; but that's no reason why a sensible fellow should do the same!"

"Thanks!" said Wharton, laughing.

"You're the best forward in the Remove—"

"Thanks again! You're the best goalkeeper!" said Wharton blandly. "One compliment deserves another, I suppose!"

"It's only a Form match this afternoon," went on Squiff, unheeding. "We shall beat Temple's lot easily enough."

But I'm new to the job, and want to get the thing in hand. I want you in the team! I want you in your old place—centre-forward. That place belongs to you."

"If it does, I'm willing to leave it for the first comer."

"Well, I'm not willing!" said Squiff sharply. "If you're ratty because I lent a hand ragging you last Wednesday, you're an ass! You asked for that, and you know you did!"

"Very likely. But it's quite usual for a fellow to dislike getting what he asks for."

"Look here, will you play for the Remove?"

"No, I won't!"

"You're going to play at sulking instead of at Soccer?" asked the new captain of the Remove, with a touch of scorn.

"Put it like that if you like."

"Look here——"

"Sorry! I'm going out!"

And Wharton went, leaving the new Form captain staring after him, with knitted brows, from the doorway of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton walked out carelessly into the quad. The Bounder called to him as he sauntered towards the gates.

"Not playing to-day, Wharton?"

"No!" answered Harry, over his shoulder.

"Not backing up our new captain—the work of your own hands, you know!" said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

"I'll lend a hand ragging him if the game's lost!" answered Wharton sarcastically.

And he walked on to the gates, leaving the Bounder grinning.

Loder of the Sixth was lounging in the gateway. He turned his eyes on Harry Wharton, with a glint in them. Since the night he had paid his surreptitious visit to the Remove dormitory Loder had heard talk among the juniors, and he was aware that he had "whopped" the wrong man in the dark; and he was also aware—at least, he guessed very accurately—who it was that had cushioned him as he fled. Wharton met his inimical glance with a mocking smile, and never had the fallen prefect so sorely regretted the loss of his power. He would have given a term's pocket-money to be able to order that cheeky young rascal to "bend over."

Handing out an official "six" was now a thing of the past for Loder. But if he could not punish, he could bully; and as Wharton swung carelessly past him, Loder let out his foot, expressing his feelings in a sudden kick.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He staggered for a moment, and Loder grinned at him. Kicking the cheeky young sweep was a solace.

Loder did not seem to expect what happened next. But it happened—swiftly. Wharton spun round at him, and came at him with a rush, with his hands up.

Before the bully of the Sixth quite knew what was happening, a fist caught him under the chin, and the next second another landed in his eye. The Sixth Form man staggered back, with a gasp, brought up against the gate, and leaned there, spluttering.

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"Keep your hoofs to yourself, you rotten bully!" he snapped.

"By gum!" gasped Loder.

He made a spring at the junior. Wharton gave ground, but he faced his bulky adversary, with his hands up and his eyes flashing. Big as Loder was, towering over the Lower Fourth junior,

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he did not have it all his own way by any means. Wharton was hard as nails, resolute and reckless, and, though he had no chance in a scrap with a Sixth Form man, he was ready to scrap till he dropped. He gave ground, but he gave ground fighting every inch, and Loder got at least as much damage as he gave.

"My eye!" Old Gosling came out of his lodge and stared at the scene. "Wot I says is this 'ere—my eye!"

There was a fat squeak from the quad.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's scrapping with Loder!"

"Always scrapping with somebody these days!" chuckled the Bounder, as he ran up, with a dozen fellows at his heels.

"Cave!" shouted Bob Cherry, from a distance.

"Look out! Beaks!" yelled Skinner.

Mr. Quelch was coming down from the House. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face as he saw a fight going on in the school gateway was portentous. He hastened his steps, and came up almost at a run. His brow was like thunder as he recognised the combatants.

"Wharton! Loder!" he thundered.

Loder backed off and Wharton dropped his hands. Loder, as a matter of fact, was not sorry to be interrupted. With a determined onslaught, he would have knocked the junior into a cocked hat, but he did not like the idea of the hard hitting he would have experienced in the process. There was a yellow streak in Loder, and he never could face hard hitting.

"Wharton, how dare you! Loder, I am surprised to see a Sixth Form boy engaged in a disgraceful scuffle at the school gates!"

"I am sorry, sir!" gasped Loder. "You may be sure, sir, that I did not desire anything of the kind. The young rascal came at me like a wildcat——"

"I quite understand." Mr. Quelch was well aware that a good many juniors were paying off old scores now that Gerald Loder was no longer a prefect, and he had no doubt that that was the case now. He never had any doubt these days that Wharton was in the wrong in any dispute. "Wharton, this is another example of your lawless and uncontrollable temper! You will learn that if you do not control your temper, Wharton, Greyfriars is no place for you! Go back to the House at once!"

Wharton panted.

"It was Loder——" he began.

"I decline to listen to a word from you, Wharton! I am well aware that you take every advantage of the fact that Loder is no longer a prefect! But if you have no respect for the Sixth Form, you must learn! You will remain within gates this afternoon! Go in at once!"

"It's a half-holiday——"

"Go in at once, or I will take you to your headmaster!"

Wharton, suppressing the bitter words on his lips, went in again at the gates. Mr. Quelch cast a stern glance after him and then walked away down the lane.

Loder mopped his nose with his handkerchief and walked away in the other direction. His nose was painful, but he grinned as he went. Right or wrong, he could always rely on Quelch to back him up against the rebel of the Remove; the old goat had his knife deep into Wharton! Mr. Quelch was far from suspecting that Loder—to himself—described him as an old goat. Certainly, had he known, he would not have entertained such a high opinion of Loder of the Sixth.

Squiff joined Wharton ten minutes later as he tramped savagely in the quad—gated for the half-holiday.

"Gated, I hear?" said the new captain of the Remove.

"Yes!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, change your mind and play football, old bean," said Squiff amicably.

"Go and eat coke!"

That answer was enough for Squiff; he turned his back and walked away without speaking again. Wharton frowned after him and walked down to the gates. He was gated for nothing. It was a half-holiday, and he was going out. And he went.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand!

MR. QUELCH came into his study with quite a cheerful expression on his face.

He had had a long walk that keen November afternoon; Quelch was a great walker. He had tea'd in Common-room, and had got the better of Prout, the master of the Fifth, in an argument. His Form were off his hands; it was a half-holiday for Quelch as well as for the Remove. It was yet half an hour to call-over, and Mr. Quelch was going to spend that half-hour in the most enjoyable way imaginable; though his Form would have been puzzled to guess where the enjoyment came in.

On Mr. Quelch's table lay a huge volume; one of those editions of the Greek poets done in full calf. Weighty literature in every way. It was the Head's own pet Sophocles, and he had left it in Quelch's hands, with a certain passage marked, which Quelch was to elucidate—afterwards comparing his elucidation with the Head's elucidation. Between them, it seemed possible, if not probable, that what Sophocles actually had meant to say might transpire.

Obscure passages in ancient poets were to the Head and Quelch what a jigsaw puzzle was to a fellow in the Remove. It was no wonder that Quelch looked cheery and good-tempered with half an hour of such enjoyment as that in front of him! He had even forgotten the troublesome junior who had been very much in his mind of late. In his present mood he could have been lenient even with the rebel of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch switched on the light in his study; the early November dusk was thickening. He stepped to his table.

Then his expression changed. As the poet has put it, a change came o'er the spirit of his dream. He stood looking at Sophocles with a fixed, rigid stare, as if it had been the ghost of Sophocles on his table instead of a ponderous volume of that great Greek's works.

Someone had been in the study in his absence. That was clear. A felon hand had been at work on Sophocles!

It was not a jape—a rag—a practical joke! It was an outrage; an act of hooliganism hitherto unheard-of and unknown at Greyfriars School. The calf covers of the big volume had been slashed and slashed again with a knife. Leaves had been torn out and scattered on the table round the book. That volume, which Dr. Locke had prized for thirty years, which he had entrusted without doubt to the care of his friend and colleague Quelch, was irretrievably disfigured and ruined.

Mr. Quelch gazed at it.



Bolsover's foot flashed out and the next moment Figgins was hopping on one leg, clasping his knee. "Foul!" The whistle went and the referee bore down on Bolsover. "You young cad!" hooted Blundell. "Get off the field—at once!"

For a full minute he stood spell-bound, his feelings too deep for words or for motion.

"Good heavens!" he breathed at last.

With a trembling hand he examined the volume. A dozen of the thick pages had been torn. Ink had been spilled into others. Passages which Sophocles had left obscure enough were now doubly obscure under a coating of black ink! Worst of all, the calf covers were almost cut to pieces. Deep gashes showed where a keen blade had slashed and hacked. It was a cruel, brutal act of vandalism of which Mr. Quelch would never have dreamed any Greyfriars man capable. And the volume belonged to the Head, who had entrusted it to him!

Mr. Quelch's first feeling was one of sheer horror and dismay. That gave place to a surge of fury.

Who had done this?

He hardly needed telling who had done it. Who, but the rebel of the Form—the young rascal who delighted in giving trouble, who had set himself against all authority since the beginning of the term, who hardly cared to make a secret of the fact that he was "out" to give Quelch all the trouble he could? Who, but the junior whom he had "gated" that afternoon for a ruffianly attack on a Sixth Form senior?

At that moment, perhaps, Mr. Quelch wished that he had not gated Wharton. Had the young rascal gone out, as he had intended, he could not have committed this act of dastardly revenge. But it should be his last offence; his very last at Greyfriars. Hitherto the Head seemed to have taken a lenient view of the young scoundrel. More than once he had quietly but firmly pointed out to Quelch that even a troublesome and mutinous junior was entitled to justice. More than once a hasty condemnation of Mr. Quelch's had been reversed on investigation by the Head. But this, Mr. Quelch told

himself bitterly, would convince even Dr. Locke that Greyfriars was no place for such a lawless young ruffian. When Dr. Locke knew that Wharton had done this—

Mr. Quelch picked up the gashed and disfigured volume, with the intention of taking it direct to the Head. But he paused. In his own mind there was no doubt that this was Wharton's handiwork. Whose else could it be? But the young rascal would deny it; and the Head, shocked and grieved as he would be, would never administer punishment on bare suspicion. He might even attribute a hasty and unproved accusation to Quelch's prejudice against the scapegrace of Greyfriars.

Quelch set his lips hard at the thought. He was sure, but he had to make the Head sure, too. Proof—proof of what he did not doubt for a moment—was what he wanted. He would find proof. And then suddenly he saw the proof staring him in the face.

On the table lay a pocket-knife; a schoolboy's pocket-knife, with two blades, a corkscrew, a can-opener, a screwdriver, and other contrivances. One of those pocket-knives dear to the schoolboy heart. Obviously that was the knife with which the damage had been done.

Mr. Quelch picked up the knife. One of the blades—the largest—was open. It would be easy to ascertain who was the owner of that knife, though he already had no doubt.

Any doubt he might have had vanished as he examined the horn handle of the knife. The owner's initials were let into the horn in silver. And the initials were "H. W."

"Harry Wharton!"

Mr. Quelch breathed the name.

It was easy to understand how the knife had been left there. The young rascal had used it to gash the covers of the book. He had laid it down while he tore out pages and spilt ink into

the volume. He had left the study without picking it up again. Possibly he had taken the alarm and left in a hurry. He must have been in a state of trepidation while he was there, listening for footsteps in Masters' Passage. As likely as not he had heard footsteps and dropped from the window. And at that thought Quelch glanced round towards the window and saw that it was open. He had left it shut.

Suddenly scared by someone coming along the passage the rascal had dropped from the window and fled, forgetting the knife he had left lying on the table. It was clear enough to Mr. Quelch.

There was something of a grim satisfaction in the Remove master's face now. Proof—absolute proof—was in his hands. That very night the worst boy at Greyfriars would be turned out of the school.

He picked up the Greek volume and the pocket-knife and left the study. At the end of the passage he came on Loder of the Sixth, who gave him a rather curious look, his eyes lingering on the hefty volume under Mr. Quelch's arm.

"Loder, have you seen Wharton?" asked the Remove master.

"Not since you sent him in at the gates, sir," answered Loder.

"You have not seen him near my study?"

"No, sir; I have been out this afternoon."

Mr. Quelch passed on and disappeared in the direction of the Head's study. Loder lounged away with a smile on his face.

It was lock-up now, and all the Greyfriars fellows were in the House. Loder lounged by the door of the Rag and glanced into that apartment. Squiff and some of the footballers were standing in a group, talking about the afternoon's match with smiling faces.

They had beaten Temple & Co. of the Fourth without difficulty. Harry Wharton was in the room, standing by the long table, on which he was looking as if in search of something. Loder, from the doorway, watched him with a gleam in his eyes.

"Any of you men seen a pocket-knife about?" he heard Wharton ask.

Two or three fellows glanced round.

"No; lost one?" asked the Bounder.

"Well, I can't have lost it—I thought I left it in my study. Must have left it somewhere else. I suppose. You got it, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, you're always borrowing a fellow's things, you fat villain, and never handing them back."

"Yah!"

"Well, I suppose it will turn up," grunted Wharton.

Loder, lounging by the doorway outside, smiled. The missing pocket-knife was destined to turn up, as evidence of how Harry Wharton had been occupied that afternoon while he was "gated." This time Loder had laid his scheme with such cunning that it seemed impossible for the Remove rebel to escape.

He rubbed his nose, which was red and swollen from the scrap at the gates early that afternoon. Loder's idea was that Wharton would soon be sorry for having given a Sixth Form man such a nose.

Quelch was with the Head now. The chopper would not be long in coming down! And this time the Head was in it—the chief Beak would be as wild as Quelch! Loder was expecting to hear Wharton called for every moment—little as Mr. Quelch dreamed that Loder of the Sixth knew anything at all about the matter!

"Did you beat the Fourth, Field?" Loder heard Wharton's careless voice again.

"Yes—without your help!" answered the new captain of the Remove dryly. "You didn't trouble to give us a look-in, either."

"I wasn't frightfully interested," drawled Wharton.

"Better watching a match than sulking in your study," rejoined Squiff tartly.

"Oh, quite, but I haven't been sulking in my study!" said Wharton, laughing. "I've had quite a pleasant afternoon."

"Nice to be gated—what?" grinned Skinner. "What have you been doing with yourself—I haven't seen you about."

"I've been reflecting what a nice man Quelch is, and how kind it was of him to remember me on a half-holiday."

Some of the juniors laughed. Mark Linley came down the passage, passed Loder at the door, and looked in.

"Is Wharton here?" he called.

"Sum!" answered Wharton, with a cool stare at Mr. Quelch's head boy.

"You're wanted, Wharton," said Mark quietly. "Quelch—"

"Dear old Quelch!" said Wharton mockingly. "Has he really spotted my latest sin? And I thought I'd beaten the old bean this time."

Mark started. His face was deeply grave.

"Then—you did it?" he exclaimed.

"Did you find it out?" sneered Wharton. "Of course, you'd report to Quelch if you spotted a man—you dutiful head boy, what?"

"I never knew anything till Quelch called me—and told me to send you to the Head's study. I couldn't believe it, either; but—"

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"Why not?"

"What on earth have you been up to, Wharton?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer.

"Is it another row comin'?"

"Looks like it," answered Wharton carelessly. "There seems to be no escaping jolly old Quelch's gimlet eye. Well, if Quelch wants me in the beak's study I'd better hike! Bad manners to keep two beaks waiting! Blessed if I know why he wanted to drag the Head into it, though. I should think the beak would get fed-up with my little delinquencies."

"I can't understand you," said Mark. "If you did it, you're going to be flogged, if not sacked, and there can't be the slightest doubt about that. And you'll deserve it, too. I'd never have believed that a Greyfriars man would do such a rotten, mean, cowardly, and sneaking thing!"

Harry Wharton, who was moving to the door, stopped dead in his tracks, staring at the head boy of the Remove in blank astonishment. So far, he had supposed that he was sent for because he had been gated, and had not stayed in gates, supposing that Quelch had somehow found it out. But Mark's words, obviously, could not refer to a fellow going out of bounds.

"Are you mad, Linley?" he asked. "What have I done—or, rather, what does Quelch make out that I've done?"

"A minute ago you admitted it," said Mark. "Anyhow, you're to go to the Head at once."

"Tell me what's happened, you rotter!" said Wharton between his teeth. "I can see now it's not what I was thinking of. What is it?"

"A valuable book belonging to the Head was cut and slashed in Quelch's study," said Mark. "That's all I know."

"Rotten hooligan trick!" said Skinner. "But how do they know Wharton did it?"

"I don't know anything, except that he's sent for," said Mark. "I've seen the book, though—and the fellow who handled it like that ought to be kicked out of the school."

"Wharton never* did a thing like that!" said Mauleverer, shaking his head.

"Who did it, then?" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton. All the fellows in the Rag were looking at him, and they were astonished to see him burst into a roar of laughter. "Oh, my hat! This is rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you think it's a laughin' matter, you ass?" said the Bounder. "Quelch will get you bunked for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

It was evident that his merriment was genuine, surprising as it was. The Remove men stared at him in amazement. The fact that Wharton was sent for showed that he was suspected, and few fellows doubted that he had "done it" in retaliation for being gated that half-holiday. But something evidently struck him as comic in the matter.

"Well, I'd better hike off to the Head," he remarked. "This is going to be quite entertaining! Poor old Quelch! As you're his head boy, Linley, and in his confidence, why not give him a tip that he will have to think of something better than this? Ha, ha, ha!"

And Wharton, still laughing, strolled out of the Rag, and walked away carelessly to the Head's study. He left an amazed crowd behind him. Loder of the Sixth, as he stared after him in the passage, was as amazed as any fellow in the Rag. Alarm, indignation, passionate temper, he might have expected to see—but that outburst of ring-

ing merriment astounded him. The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley, as the poet has stated, and Loder of the Sixth wondered savagely whether this, his latest, was to "gang agloy."

— —

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Wins!

HARRY WHARTON'S face wore a smile as he tapped at the Head's door and entered.

The smile lurked on his face as he stood before his headmaster.

Mr. Quelch, standing by the Head's writing-table, fixed his eyes on the rebel of his Form with a bitter look. He did not fail to note that lurking smile, and it incensed him deeply. This time there was no doubt—no doubt whatever—but the scapegrace of Greyfriars was keeping up his cool impertinence to the finish, or so it seemed to his Form master.

On the table before the Head lay the mangled volume of Sophocles, and the pocket-knife with which the outrage had been done. Wharton's eyes fell on the knife, which he recognised as his own, and he started a little. He had wondered what had become of it; but certainly he had not expected to see it turn up in his headmaster's study.

"Wharton," said the Head gravely, "a very serious accusation has been made. It seems to admit of no doubt; but I shall hear what defence you may be able to make. Look at that pocket-knife. Do you admit that it is yours?"

"It is mine, sir," said Harry.

"He does not deny that, at all events," said Mr. Quelch acidly.

"Why should I deny it, sir?" said Wharton. "It's my pocket-knife—I left it in my study this morning, and when I missed it a little while ago I supposed that some fellow had borrowed it. Certainly it is mine."

"You say that you left it in your study, Wharton?"

"I believe so, sir—but I might have left it in the Rag."

"It was found in your Form master's study."

"I don't see how it got there, sir," answered Harry.

"Did you leave it there?"

"No, sir!"

"Did you visit Mr. Quelch's study in his absence this afternoon and cut and disfigure this volume?"

"No, sir!" answered Harry cheerfully. The smile that had been lurking on his face became a little more pronounced.

"Wharton, this outrage was committed, and your pocket-knife was used. No doubt exists on that point. This afternoon, I understand, you were engaged in some scuffle with a senior boy, for which Mr. Quelch ordered you to remain within gates. Was this an act of revenge?"

Wharton's lip curled.

"No, sir! Even if I were the worst boy in the Remove, as my Form master thinks, I should not do a rotten thing like that."

"The proof is absolutely conclusive," said Mr. Quelch between closed lips.

"Certain'ly it appears so," said the Head. "As you were gated, Wharton, you were certainly in the school this afternoon, and unless you can account for every moment of your time—"

"Witnesses will be required," said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice. "Your word will not be taken, Wharton."

"Indeed, sir!" A sarcastic smile hovered on Wharton's lips. "As it

happens, I was not with any Greyfriars fellows this afternoon."

"Nothing more remains to be said, Dr. Locke!"

"Excuse me, sir, I have something more to say," said Wharton coolly.

"You may speak," said the Head.

"Mr. Quelch gated me this afternoon, sir. I did not stay within gates. I went out immediately after Mr. Quelch had gone."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly. "Are you confessing, Wharton, that you deliberately disobeyed your Form master's orders?"

"Yes, sir!"

"I do not believe a single word of that statement, Dr. Locke," said the Remove master through tightened lips. "It is a palpable trick to confess to a small fault in order to escape the consequences of a serious one."

"I will hear Wharton, Mr. Quelch. You say there were no other Greyfriars boys with you, Wharton?"

"None, sir."

"Have you any proof to offer that you were out of gates, as you state?"

"Plenty, sir," answered Wharton coolly. "I walked over to Highcliffe to see my friends there—Courtenay and De Courcy. They were playing a pick-up game, and they lent me some things, and I played football with them. I stayed for tea in Courtenay's study, and got back here just before Gosling closed the gates. I have been miles from Greyfriars the whole afternoon."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

Mr. Quelch's eyes looked more like gimlets than ever. He understood now why that cool smile had lurked on the face of the accused junior. He knew that the gleam of mockery in Wharton's eyes meant that he could prove every word he said. It was only necessary to ask a question at Highcliffe School.

"If you care to ask the Highcliffe fellows, sir, they will bear out what I say," said Wharton cheerfully. "And

I met Solly Lazarus and Dick Trumper of Courtfield School on my way, and stopped to speak to them. Mr. Joyce, the woodcutter, gave me a lift back to Greyfriars in his cart, and he will tell you so if you ask him. I think I can account for every minute of the afternoon, sir, or very nearly every minute."

Dr. Locke coughed.

Mr. Quelch's face was slowly reddening. He knew, and the Head did not fail to observe, that the rebel of the Remove was mocking his Form master. But it was hard to find fault with his words.

"Inquiry will be made, Wharton," said Dr. Locke hastily. "For the present you may leave my study."

"Thank you, sir!"

Wharton left the study with a smile on his face. A chuckle was heard from the passage after the door had closed on him. It caused Mr. Quelch to clench his hands till the nails dug into the palms, and it made the Head give another little cough.

"Mr. Quelch, inquiry may be made of the—the persons named by Wharton. If you think it necessary—"

"I—I—I will consider, sir," said Mr. Quelch in a choking voice.

"If Wharton has spoken the truth—as I can hardly doubt—some other boy—some wicked and revengeful boy—has committed this act of vandalism, and borrowed Wharton's knife for the purpose. That boy must be discovered, Mr. Quelch."

"Undoubtedly!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He left the study, leaving the Head gazing mournfully at his Sophocles. He overtook Wharton at the end of the passage. He was not thinking of making inquiries at Highcliffe. He knew that Wharton had spoken the truth. His prejudice against the scapegrace had hurried him into another mistake; but any regret he might have felt for the mistake was banished by the cool mockery of the Remove rebel.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will take five hundred lines for going out of gates this afternoon, after I had sent you in."

Wharton smiled.

"Thank you, sir!" he said demurely.

Mr. Quelch, choking, swept on. Harry Wharton strolled away to the Rag. He passed Loder of the Sixth on his way, and as he caught Loder's bitter stare, a vague suspicion at the back of his mind crystallised into certainty.

"You'll have to try again, Loder," he said, with cool contempt. "Missed fire this time, old thing. Try again!"

He passed on, leaving Gerald Loder staring and speechless. A buzz of voices greeted him as he sauntered into the Rag.

"Bunked this time?" called out the Bounder.

"Bunked!" drawled Wharton. "They don't bunk a man for taking a walk out of bounds when he's gated. It's frightfully serious, of course, but they don't sack a man for it. They give you a hundred lines, as a rule. I've got five hundred because Quelch is so fond of me."

"You've been out of gates?" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"The whole jolly afternoon."

"Then you didn't—"

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then who—"

"Who indeed?" said Wharton, laughing. "I don't suppose Quelch will ever find out. He won't think of inquiring in the Sixth. But, whoever it was, it wasn't the worst boy at Greyfriars. And dear old Quelch won't see the last of me yet!"

And he walked out of the Rag, whistling.

THE END.

(Next Saturday's yarn in this grand series is entitled: "THE SCAPEGRACE OF THE SCHOOL!" It's absolutely great, chums, and so are the six picture stamps which will be given FREE with this issue.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

SIX more stunning picture stamps for your album this week, chums! Your collection must be looking well worth while by now! I am very sorry for any "toughs" who try to tackle MAGNET readers now that you have all been reading our "Self-Defence" series. The Back Leg Trip is a remarkably effective way of dealing with a would-be attacker who starts any nasty business with a vicious kick! The defender should jump in and lift the attacker's left leg. Then, by bearing against his right knee, he is bound to send him toppling backwards.

You'll find two more pictures of the Locomotive series in this week's issue. Picture No. 10 shows the famous Lord Nelson, which draws the Southern Railway's Continental Expresses between London and Dover, a distance of 77½ miles. This pride of the S.R. weighs 140 tons 4 cwts., and has four guiding wheels and six driving wheels, but no trailing wheels (4-6-0, using the technical term). Picture No. 11 in this same series depicts one of the L.M.S.R.'s powerful tank locos, which are commonly known as the "Maids of all Work." These tank engines are used for various purposes, such as shunting in goods yards, working suburban traffic, and assisting trains up steep gradients—and they can pull very heavy loads.

The "ship" stamp shows the P. and O. luxury liner Strathnaver. She was launched in 1931, is 22,547 gross tonnage, and has accommodation for 498 first-class passengers and 668 tourist class. This is the largest steamer plying between England and Australia, and is electrically driven, fitted with swimming baths, and every imaginable luxury.

This week's aeroplane stamp shows a Hawker Audax. Audax is the famous Hawker "Hart" 2-seater day-bomber converted for Army co-operation work, such as spotting for the artillery, message carrying, photographing, etc. This plane is fitted with a Rolls-Royce "Kestrel" engine of 500 h.p., and can travel at a speed of 169 m.p.h.

What price the Desert Bandit in our Rough-Rider series? Not a very pleasant-looking chap to come up against, what? These bandits are reckoned to be the finest riders in the world. Bandits have to be expert riders, otherwise their careers would soon be brought to an abrupt termination!

An interesting letter, and one I really must answer this week, comes from "Regular Reader," of London. He thinks

HE HAS CAUGHT ME OUT!

But your Editor takes a bit of catching! When was Greyfriars founded? He says that he has read that it was founded in 1716, and yet he has read a

story about Greyfriars in 1657! Curiously enough, both statements are correct!

Greyfriars, as it now stands, was founded in 1716. It was originally used as a school for poor boys in 1551, but fifty years later a new college for gentlemen's sons was built. Then, in 1716, Greyfriars was entirely reorganised, and founded as the college which it still is. Satisfied, "Regular Reader"?

I am afraid I have still got to hold over a number of replies this week, but I'll get through them all in good time.

Meanwhile, here is next week's splendid programme.

"THE SCAPEGRACE OF THE SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

is the title of next week's long complete yarn of Greyfriars. You all know what to expect when Mr. Richards gets going, don't you? So the title is sufficient to tell you that you are in for a rattling fine yarn that will hold your interest to the very end.

There'll be another splendid instalment of "The Red Falcon" and a full-of-fun issue of the ever-popular "Greyfriars Herald." "Linesman" will be solving more Soccer problems, and, as they say, "to complete the box of tricks," there will be six more free picture stamps to stick in your album! You'll feel like kicking yourself if you miss this bumper free gift issue. Cheerio!

YOUR EDITOR.

OUR THRILLING STORY OF THE "GOOD OLD DAYS."

THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS.



A Close Shave!

THERE was a chorus of approval. Drink was being handed round, and the man with the red-hot iron, flinging the tool down, since he was not to be allowed to use it, went in search of a rope, which he brought back with him. He began to fashion a noose at the end of it.

Some candles were dug out of store and lit, adding their flickering light to the glow of the fire.

There were four other men besides Pryce and York in the cave, and, of course, Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett. York jumped up on a stool, almost brushing the roof with his hair, as he began to address the meeting.

"Lads," he said, "this place will be no use to us after to-night. Martin Cosgrave has quered our pitch. His men know he's come here, and they'll be buzzing round us like bees in the morning. Well, then, I say—why shouldn't Cosgrave pay for it? He's a sneaking spy! He sent my pal Craven to the gallows, and half a dozen more men besides. That's where he wanted to send US. But we've caught him, instead. Very well, let's hang him, and bury his body in the cave!"

Glasses were raised and clinked, and liquor drank. The fiery spirit seemed to madden the men.

"The Colonel's right!" they shouted. "Let's hang the dirty spy!"

"All in favour of hanging hold up their hands!" bawled York, with a flourish of his hat.

Five hands were raised.

"Carried!" shouted York. "There's only one against us—Jack Pryce, and he don't count!"

"You're wrong," said Jerry McLean. "There are three!"

He held up his hand, and Hal held up his, too. Pryce's right hand was already raised high above his head.

"Bah!" said Colonel York. "Pryce is a new brother. His pals have not even been initiated to the brotherhood. None of them count. Get on with the hanging, boys! String Cosgrave up to the ceiling."

Martin Cosgrave was seized and dragged to the centre of the cave; then he was forced to stand upon a stool and held there. The man who had fashioned the hangman's rope set the big loop over Cosgrave's head, and then tested it to make sure that it would slide easily.

More drink was handed round, and

READ THIS FIRST.

Convicted of robbing the Earl of Huntford, Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean are conveyed to the convict hulks at Woolwich. As the result of a prearranged plan, the convicts fire the ship, and Hal and Jerry escape. After a series of exciting adventures on the Great Highway, they seek sanctuary in the "Retreat," Epping. Here they find Martin Cosgrave, chief of the Bow Street Runners and their mortal enemy, a prisoner in the hands of a notorious gang of highwaymen, one of whom is holding a red-hot iron.

"Let's hang the dirty spy!" cries a man known as Colonel York.

York held a brimming mug up for Cosgrave to sniff.

"Now you're going to hang, you dog," he cried, "take a last look at that!"

Hal noticed that Cosgrave looked the highwayman full in the eyes, not so much as a single eyelash quivered.

"That will not save you, York," said the Bow Street Runner. "Your race is almost run."

York struck him, and Pryce hurled the highwayman back. Then one of the others called upon the man with the rope to kick the stool from under Cosgrave.

The order was instantly obeyed. The stool crashed over, and two men strained on the rope, jerking the Runner up to the ring-bolt in the ceiling.

Then things happened!

York drew his sword and lunged at Pryce. But the convict side-stepped him, got within his guard, and sent York crashing to the floor with a smashing punch. At the same time Jerry and Hal hurled themselves upon the men who were dragging on the rope and forced them to loosen their hold.

Martin Cosgrave tumbled, gasping, to the ground; and Hal, pouncing on him, loosened the strangling noose.

The two men turned on Jerry, who met them with a cocked pistol in each hand.

"No, my bully coves," he said, with a grim smile, "you shall not knife me! I'm your pal, but dash me if I'll stand by and watch cold-blooded murder!"

York got up, but was met with the point of his own sword, which Pryce turned against him. Pricking through the colonel's coat, Pryce drove the man back to the wall. Then, reaching for York's flapped pocket, Pryce secured his pistol. He faced round on the scowling gang.

"Boys," he said, "I couldn't let you do it. It's one thing to kill a man in a fair stand-up fight when it's a question of his life or yours, but this would have been murder. We're finished here. Take out your horses and ride away. We can meet where we know of in London town. Take the Runner to the road and let him go, but not before we make our move."

"I protest!" shouted York, livid with rage. "I am captain here!"

"A fine captain!" jeered John Pryce. "You're nothing but a cowardly, murdering dog!"

"Let me tell you what York did for me and my pal," said McLean, lowering

his pistols, but keeping a close watch on the men.

He told them of his meeting with York, and what followed, and of the highwayman's treachery at the Huntford Arms.

The men began to murmur.

"That's the sort of double-crosser York is!" said Jerry derisively. "He's a coward and a bully and a traitor! He'd hang any man who had his hands tied behind his back! Lads, you'll lose nothing by letting the Bow Street Runner go."

Louder murmurs rang through the cave. Then the men turned their backs on York and began to bustle about, gathering their things together. Within an hour their horses were ready, and everything of value had been either taken or destroyed.

The candles were left to gutter out, and the men moved in a body through the forest, finding their way in the dim light as surely as if it were day.

As soon as they reached the road they scattered, some riding northward, others riding south.

York lingered, scowling at Pryce.

"Which way are you heading, Jack?" asked Jerry, out of earshot of the pinioned Bow Street Runner.

"London," said Pryce.

"Then," said Jerry, "we'll all three go together."

It was then that York, who had secured another pistol, which he had secreted in the cave, raised his right arm and took aim at Pryce's spine.

"Look out!" cried Cosgrave warningly.

Pryce ducked and wheeled his horse; then, as the bullet whistled overhead, he drew a weapon from his own pocket and fired a shot after York as the highwayman was in the act of galloping away.

It brought York tumbling and cursing from the saddle. The riderless horse clattered away.

York scrambled up but little hurt, and shook his fist at Pryce.

"You dog!" he cried. "I'll have your life for this!"

Pryce cast one glance at him, and then walked his horse along the road.

"Time we were moving," he said. "That cur can shift for himself!"

Hal Lovett dismounted, loosed Martin Cosgrave from his bonds, and told him to be going.

The Runner looked steadily at Hal.

"You stole my horse, and I owe you a hanging," he said; "but you and your pal saved my life to-night, and I owe you a debt for that. We shall meet again, Red Falcon!"

"Are you going to walk?" asked Hal.

"No," replied the Runner, with a shake of his head. "I've got my horse hidden in the forest. I'm riding. But I shall hold a truce for eight-and-forty hours. Then I shall claim the right to hunt you and your pals down."

Hal looked back. York was stumbling up the road in the direction his horse had taken.

The Bow Street Runner, chafing his bruised neck and wrists, turned in among the forest trees. Hal swung himself into the saddle and rode after Pryce and Jerry, who were already a quarter of a mile away on their journey to London.

As he urged Bow Street Beauty into a canter he heard Cosgrave calling in the wood and the answering neigh of a tethered horse.

Face To Face!

JERRY McLEAN and Hal Lovett, both wanted for highway robbery and for breaking into Huntford Hall, the seat of the Earl of Huntford, with intent to rob, and wanted furthermore as convicts escaped from the hulk Ethalion, had vanished amid the whirl of London life.

Samuel Lovett, Hal's father, was suddenly afraid.

"The lad's hiding in London somewhere, Samuel," said Martin Cosgrave, the Bow Street Runner, as he bent two dark piercing eyes upon the Wych Street tradesman; "but I suppose you don't know where?"

Lovett bit his underlip and rubbed a dirty hand across his unshaven chin.

"Of course I don't!" he snapped. "I'd have looked in at Bow Street and told you where to find him if I did."

"H'm!" mused the Runner, taking out of his pocket his gold-crowned staff and banging the end of it reflectively upon the counter top behind which Lovett loomed. "I thought, being his father, the boy might have come to you. And as his father you might have wanted to protect him."

"He's a thief! Didn't I see him with that rascal McLean steal the Earl of Huntford's diamond star outside Drury Lane Theatre? They sentenced him to five years' hard labour on the hulks. They ought to have hanged him!"

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"H'm!" said Martin Cosgrave again. "And you're his father! Perhaps you're right. Well, I want to get the lad, Samuel, and Jerry McLean, too. The law being as it is, they will in all probability both hang. Yet I owe them my life—they saved me from a hanging out Epping way. Still, duty is duty. I've got to find 'em. And since you say you can't help me, Samuel, I'll be moving on."

With a curt nod of the head the stalwart Bow Street Runner strode to the shop door, pulled it open to a clang of the door bell, and wandered slowly out and along the street.

Samuel Lovett, drawing a sigh of relief as he saw the man disappear round the corner, went back to his den, and, taking a heavy pinch of snuff, sat himself down to brood.

As he sat in a darkened cobwebbed corner his eyes strayed to two posters or reward bills which he had pinned upon the wood-panelled walls.

£100 Reward Will Be Given To Any Person Giving Information Which Will Lead To The Apprehension of Jerry McLean, Highwayman. Sentenced to Serve on the Hulks for Seven Years, Also Wanted For Mutiny On The Convict Hulk, Ethalion—"

And again:

£100 Reward Will Be Given To Any Person Giving Information Which Will Secure The Apprehension of Hal Lovett, Thief And Highwayman—"

Samuel fingered his snuff and glared at the bills.

"Two hundred pounds reward," he muttered—"two hundred pounds reward."

Then he flicked the brown dust off his shabby clothes, and thought of another two hundred and fifty guineas which my lord the Earl of Huntford had promised him if he could only set the police on to Hal Lovett and the highwayman Jerry McLean.

Only yesterday the earl had called, wearing shabby clothes with an old cloak wound about him, and had made the offer.

The earl had not used a nicety of language, either.

"Hang it all, Lovett," he had sneered as he cut at his boot with a cane, "you're a receiver, and know every thieves' haunt in London. You ought to be able to trace them. See that you do it, or else I may see to it that you take a ride to Tyburn and dance on nothing."

Two hundred and fifty guineas promised by the earl plus the other rewards as against a possible hanging!

Samuel Lovett clutched at his throat and read the reward bills through for the fiftieth time. Martin Cosgrave had brought them two days ago. Since then he had been making inquiries, but nothing had come of them.

The devil take the brat! What evil chance had thrown Hal Lovett in touch with Jerry McLean? And to think of them escaping from the hulk Ethalion! John Pryce was to be thanked for that if rumour could be relied upon.

"May the foul fiend seize the lot of 'em!" snarled Samuel Lovett, speaking the words aloud in a sudden burst of overpowering rage.

Then the door bell rang sharply, and, turning, he saw two cloaked figures swinging in from the street. The sun had gone—it was already dark outside. The figures could only be seen in black silhouette as they tramped the bare-boarded floor. Heavy riding-cloaks were draped about them. Their three-cornered hats were pulled down to shade their faces. Samuel heard the ring of spurs and noted the firm, masterful tread of each stranger.

He would have run behind his counter but the taller of the two visitors cut off his retreat that way, whilst the other barred his escape from the shop.

"What can I do for you gentlemen?" asked the receiver, cringing and screwing his hands together. "I have a large and well-assorted stock of every description."

"Curse your stock!" said the taller man. "Sit down there, where we can see you! Hal, boy, strike a light!"

Hal! Samuel Lovett screamed.

"It's Hal Lovett, my son!" he cried. "Well, you're just in time, you gallows brat! See those reward bills? You're worth money to me, you worthless ruffian! Won't Martin Cosgrave, the Runner, be glad to hear of this?"

Jerry McLean stretched out his right arm, gripped Lovett by the cravat in a hold that almost choked him, and then hurled the man, big and powerful though he was, into his chair.

"But he's not going to hear of it until we've had our say and got away to a place of safety," said Jerry, as he towered over the shivering man.

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Taking a tinder-box out of his pocket, Hal struck light to the tow and soon had candles burning. Then Jerry strode the length of the shop and bolted and locked the door. Back he came to find Lovett sitting bolt upright and blinking two frightened eyes at the barrel of the pistol with which Hal covered him.

"That's the ticket, lad," said Jerry. "Keep him mum until I've seen all safe, and if he moves blow his brains out!"

The receiver's face was like chalk, and his hands shook as he grasped the arms of his chair. Jerry shut the between-door and locked it, then he strode down into the stone-paved scullery behind the shop and locked and bolted the door there. Having done this, he came swinging back with his cloak thrown back over his shoulders and his fine clothes revealed.

Taking up one of the candles which Hal had lit, he held it close to the posters which he read through, then laughed and tore them down, spraying the torn sheets in Samuel Lovett's face.

"So! You hoped to reap that reward, eh?" he jeered. "The boy and I heard that you'd been spying round for us, Lovett. Well, now we're here."

"What do you want?" asked Samuel Lovett. "I've always treated my son fairly, Mr. McLean. It's not my fault he's turned out a rascal."

Hal was about to speak, but McLean silenced him with a significant look.

"In the first place," he said, drawing a wooden chair up close to that in which Lovett sat and seating himself on the edge of it, "the boy is not your son. We've come here to find out who is his father. Now, out with it!"

"He is my son," whined Lovett, "and

a good father I've bin to him, too. He's nearly broke his poor mother's heart and—"

"Stop your whining," said Jerry, seizing hold of Lovett's dirty cravat and twisting it tightly round his neck. "What's the meaning of that Red Falcon tattooed on the boy's chest? Look at him, Lovett, as handsome as a prince. Could those refined and handsome features come from such a coarse stock as yours, eh? Answer me!"

Lovett could not answer. His face had changed to purple. The tightened cravat was strangling him. Jerry had turned it into a tourniquet. He shook the man with it until he saw that Lovett was in danger of suffocating, and then flung him down.

"Who's his father, you rogue?" demanded Jerry.

"I am, I swear!" said Samuel Lovett. "I don't know who sent you here—"

"I'll tell you," said Jerry sternly. "It was Isaac Quilt. 'Go and find Samuel Lovett and make him tell you who Hal Lovett really is,' he said to me yesterday. We're waiting for an answer, Lovett."

Samuel Lovett scrambled to his feet and rocked on them, white-faced and shivering, his eyes wide with fear.

"Very well, I'll tell," he choked. "It's true. I'm not the boy's father. But Quilt knows whose brat he is. Go and ask Quilt."

"Quilt knows!" Hal spoke for the first time since he had entered the shop he had known and loathed ever since he could remember. "What does the Red Falcon mean, and why is it the same as the falcons of the Huntford Arms?"

"I don't know. I swear I don't

know," choked the wretched man, as he tore at McLean's wrists and tried to pull them from his throat. "Oh! Ah! Mercy! Mercy!"

Once more Jerry flung him down and, towering over him, drew a pistol from his pocket and jammed the cold rim against Lovett's forehead.

"The truth now," he said, "or I fire! I'll give you to the count of thirty. Why did you plot with the Earl of Huntford to have this lad put away? Why did you steal from the earl the diamond star and plant it on Hal? And what does that Red Falcon mean?"

"I don't know," Samuel Lovett howled. "I don't know. Shoot me if you like, but I don't know. I entered into no plot with the earl. I didn't steal the diamond star. Hal stole it. It's true he's not my son. Quilt knows, go and find Isaac Quilt and ask him."

Jerry shrugged his shoulders, turned to Hal with a grim smile, placed the pistol back in his pocket, and then pulled the boy along to the door of the shop.

"Evidently he does not intend to squeal, or he doesn't know, boy," said Jerry. "But we've established one thing—you're not this rat's son. Let's go and find Quilt. But if he knows the secret, why didn't he tell us when we saw him yesterday?"

Jerry shot the bolts back, turned the key, opened the shop door to the ring of the warning bell, and the two adventurers left the shop.

(Look out for more thrills in next week's instalment of this "old-time" story, chums. And don't forget next Saturday's MAGNET will contain six more super picture-stamps to stick in your album.)

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WHY WORK?
Join the Fifth and have a rest for a change!
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MANNERS MAKETH MAN!
If any of you bees want to learn manners and etiquette as practised in the best society, I'll teach you at five bob an hour, or half-a-crown if you're too mean and stingy to pay more! Yeh!—W. G. Bunter, No. 7, Remove Passage.

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

November 12th, 1932.

No. 7 (New Series).

COURTFIELD CINEMA
Great All-British Masterpiece
"BLITZEN"
Featuring Luigi Spagnoli and Olga Bannansky
Directed by Alfonso Gialdini
Photography by Oscar Schwartz
Story by Teily Volga
Continuity by Kip Torgelder
And Remember—It's All British

Bunter's Luck in Local Sweep

Bunter rolled into the Rag the other evening, blinking at a soiled piece of printed paper he held in his hand.

"I say, you fellows, any one here got to-day's number of the 'Courtfield Gazette'?" he asked.

"Comin' over, fatty!" said Vernon-Smith, throwing a newspaper across the room.

"If you're lookin' for a job, may as well have yourself the trouble. Nobody's lookin' for a prize porker this week!"

"Best!" snorted the Portpoise.

"Matter of fact, I'm looking for the result of the Courtfield Tradesmen's Charity Ballot. I found a ticket in the quid—that is to say, with my usual generosity, I bought one—and I'm just wondering if I've had any luck. M-n-m-y hat!"

"What's happened, fatty?"

"Why, I've won one of the giddy prizes!" hooted Bunter, excitedly. "Here it is: 'Prize No. 14—Ticket No. 1386.'—Lemmo one—Number Fourteen—One Hundred Shippings, Handressed, High Street—m-n-m-y hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chaps in the Common-room fairly yelled. The change in Bunter's face when the realisation fully dawned on him that he had won one hundred shippings, was enough to make a cat laugh.

"Never mind, old fatty," grinned Wharton, consolingly. "You'll be able to sell your prize to someone here for fifteen bob or so. Whatabout trying the Head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wish you wouldn't rot, Wharton," said Bunter peevishly. "Still, when you come to think of it, it should be worth at least that! Perhaps Loder would buy it. He looks awfully scruffy at times."

(Continued at foot of next col.)

FOOTBALL A LA FILMS

HILARIOUS GAME AT COURTFIELD

Inspired by a recent football film which has been showing at the Courtfield Cinema, the Remove played Highcliffe at the American game on Saturday last in aid of the Courtfield Cottage Hospital.

The game, which attracted a large crowd to the Courtfield F.C. Ground, was the most remarkable ever played in the district. No copy of the American rules being available, the players simply went by what they had seen on the screen, with hilariously entertaining results.

Both teams turned up in plus-fours and school caps, and the game was preceded by a wardrobe in which the rivals brandished fats and hurled insults at each other. Play was started by the firing of a gun. The players



immediately flung themselves into the fray and a blood-thirsty fight ensued.

It was only after play had been in progress for half an hour that someone discovered that the ball had not been brought on to the field. This omission was quickly remedied, and from that point onwards the crowd had the satisfaction of catching several glimpses of it at irregular intervals during the game.

As readers of this contemptible little rag are aware, I am a strong believer in dealing firmly with fags. Well, there's one fag in particular I believe in being especially firm with, and that fag is Dick Rake of the Remove.

All fags are cheeky. But Rake is far and away the cheekiest fag I've ever had the misfortune to meet. He's entirely lacking in respect for authority. The fact that I am an illustrious and branny Fifth-Former and a mighty man of valour seems to convey nothing to him. You'll hardly believe it when I tell you that the other day he threw an over-ripe orange at me, you know! When I told Whingate, he simply refused to credit that a fellow of my importance had been so humiliated. When I told Porter and Greene, they both flinched on the sturdy settee!

The worst of this fag Rake is, he never takes anything seriously. Many a time I've tried to lecture him on it, but it's hopeless; as soon as he sees me, he starts larding—why, I can't make out! Of course, I'm not denying that he's a clean, honest kind of youngster and a useful kid at games. Under the expert tuition of a fine, all-round sportsman like myself, I've no doubt he'd become quite an athlete.

By the way, he'd have to improve his eyesight first. Yesterday, when he met me in the quad, he called out: "What's that on your face, Coker?" I could feel nothing, and told him so. "Then he had a closer look and said: 'Oh, I can see now, it's your nose! I thought it was a turnip!'"

The kid must be awfully short-sighted to make such a mistake, mustn't he? I've a good mind to tell his Form master about it.

Well, I don't see why I should waste any more time talking about a cheeky fag, so I'll stop it. Next time, perhaps, that young ass Wharton will ask me to write about someone really interesting—myself, for instance!

(Rake gets a shot back at Coker next week, you fellows. Don't miss it!)

As Others See Them

What I Think of Dick Rake

By HORACE COKER.

A stand-up fight with two desperate round bandits on a deserted road at one in the morning! This is the startling experience that befell Coker of the Fifth, in the early part of this week!

Living to the illness of his Aunt Judy, who has since, we are pleased to say, made great improvement, Coker had been allowed special leave to go to see his Head arranging, under the exceptional circumstances, for Nibble, the gardener, to wait up for him in the School House and see him safely in. Coker had made the trip on his motor-bike, and was returning do so on this occasion.

Before they had covered half a dozen yards, Coker had jumped to his feet and was running after them. One wild jump carried him right on to the back of the pillon-rider. The bike skidded right across the road, then crashed, and all three were flung off on to the road.

Coker was first on his feet, and with that advantage, managed to deal effectively with the bandit by knocking him down. No. 1 bandit by knocking him down. No. 2 was a more formidable proposition. He had scolded himself before Coker could attend to him, and got in first with a punch to the jaw. But Coker was on his feet, and he dealt with him, and severely felled it, flinging himself at the fellow with one of his celebrated bullet-like rushes, as though he might have been in the gym at Greyfriars.

After driving his opponent across the road, Coker disposed of him with a straight hit between the eyes. After that, considering that discretion was the better part of valour, he

COKER FIGHTS ROAD BANDITS

STRANGE SEQUEL STARTLES SIXTH

on that famous vehicle when at a lonely spot about five miles the other side of Courtfield, two dark figures suddenly stood in the middle of the road, blocking his way.

Coker was forced to slow down. Immediately he did so, one of the figures made a dash for him, and Coker felt himself flung off the bike. His attacker promptly jumped into the saddle, and the second man mounted the pillon seat.

Coker, sitting up in the road, saw them move off. But as our readers are aware, it is not Coker's practice to talk things lying down, and he didn't do so on this occasion.

Before they had covered half a dozen yards, Coker had jumped to his feet and was running after them. One wild jump carried him right on to the back of the pillon-rider. The bike skidded right across the road, then crashed, and all three were flung off on to the road.

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Listen-In To Study No. 1

Unique Broadcast Next Wednesday

Here's some news for you, chaps! Got busy at once tightening up your receiving-sets, and don't forget to tell all your pals that Study No. 1 is coming over the ether next Wednesday, at 5 p.m. There! It's out!

Tom Brown's the fellow at the back of it all. Brownie has the unique distinction at Greyfriars of possessing a licence for experimental transmission, and he has promised us faithfully that, barring accidents, he'll broadcast a programme from No. 1. How's that? We know you'd like it!

Of course, we're making special arrangements to make it a real bumper broadcast that will live in your memories for many a long day. The Famous Five and five other leading Removites will take part, and they'll do their very best to give you an idea of what life in No. 1 is really like.

There will be an opening chorus, "Tea for Ten and Ten for Tea," accompanied by a special comb-and-paper band. After that, you'll hear the merry tinkling of crockery and the cheery chatter of the crowd at the table. Then Bunter will enter and sing a specially written solo, "My Postal Order." After that, Coker will charge in to rescue the cake we intend pinching from him, and you'll hear the sound of his bull-like voice fairly roaring out of your loud-speakers—not to mention the subsequent banging and crashing as we throw him out!

Other items end with a short speech from each of the ten performers.

Altogether, it's going to be a great afternoon, and all you fellows who have longed to get in touch with us in the past are going to have the time of your lives! Don't forget, then! Five o'clock next Wednesday afternoon, on 45 or 450 or 4,500 metres—we just forget what Brownie said for the moment!

Don't miss it, whatever you do!

Hoskins Wants Help

Dear Editor, — I wonder whether the publicity obtainable through the medium of your valuable paper can bring me assistance. My problem is that I have lost something, but I can't remember what it is. It's really awfully annoying. Can any of your readers suggest what I should do?

Yours truly,
CLAUDE HOSKINS.

P.S.—It's all right, after all! I've remembered, it was my fountain-pen, and I've found it in another pocket.

P.P.S.—Re-reading what I have written, I wonder why I am writing you at all. Do you know?

No, we don't, old chap! After reading your letter the staff are at present keeping about all over the office, making faces at each other. Next time you think of writing, please us instead, will you?—(Ed.)

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Bob Cherry is the champion "thrower-in" of the Remove football eleven.

The ghost of one of the original Grey Friars is said to haunt the Old Priory whenever there is a full moon.

William Whaley has started a series of non-stay variety shows in the Rag after prep, and they have proved a roaring success!

Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—On my recently requesting an almsdozen, I found from Coker, that peculiarly characterised individual, to my inordinately astonishment, exhorted me to "Go and eat coke!" I appeal to you, sir, for guidance in the elucidation of that cryptic utterance. In what way can conjunctively be established between a carbonaceous mineral? Is it possible that I was witness of a psychological manifestation of photomedia connected with a subterranean inhibitory mental condition?

Yours anxiously, ALONZO TODD.

(We advise you to take Coker at his word, old bean!—Ed.)

Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

What's the difference between Loder of the Sixth and Tubb of the Third?
One falls at fags, the other falls at traps.

PITY POOR PROUT

When Prout took the Fourth during Capper's absence last week, he looted them for an hour on how he hunted grizzlies in the Rockies.

Needless to say, the only thing the Fourth could do was to grin and bear it!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Bunter is a duffer at almost everything, but he has the gift of ventriloquism, and can imitate any fellow's or master's voice with remarkable fidelity.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

In a match against Claremont, Harry Wharton scored fifteen goals—a record for a junior match at Greyfriars! Claremont gained a very weak team and were beaten 18-1.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Fisher T. Fish is a surprisingly clever "tap" dancer, and gives impromptu performances in the Rag.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Bob Cherry is the champion "thrower-in" of the Remove football eleven.

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