

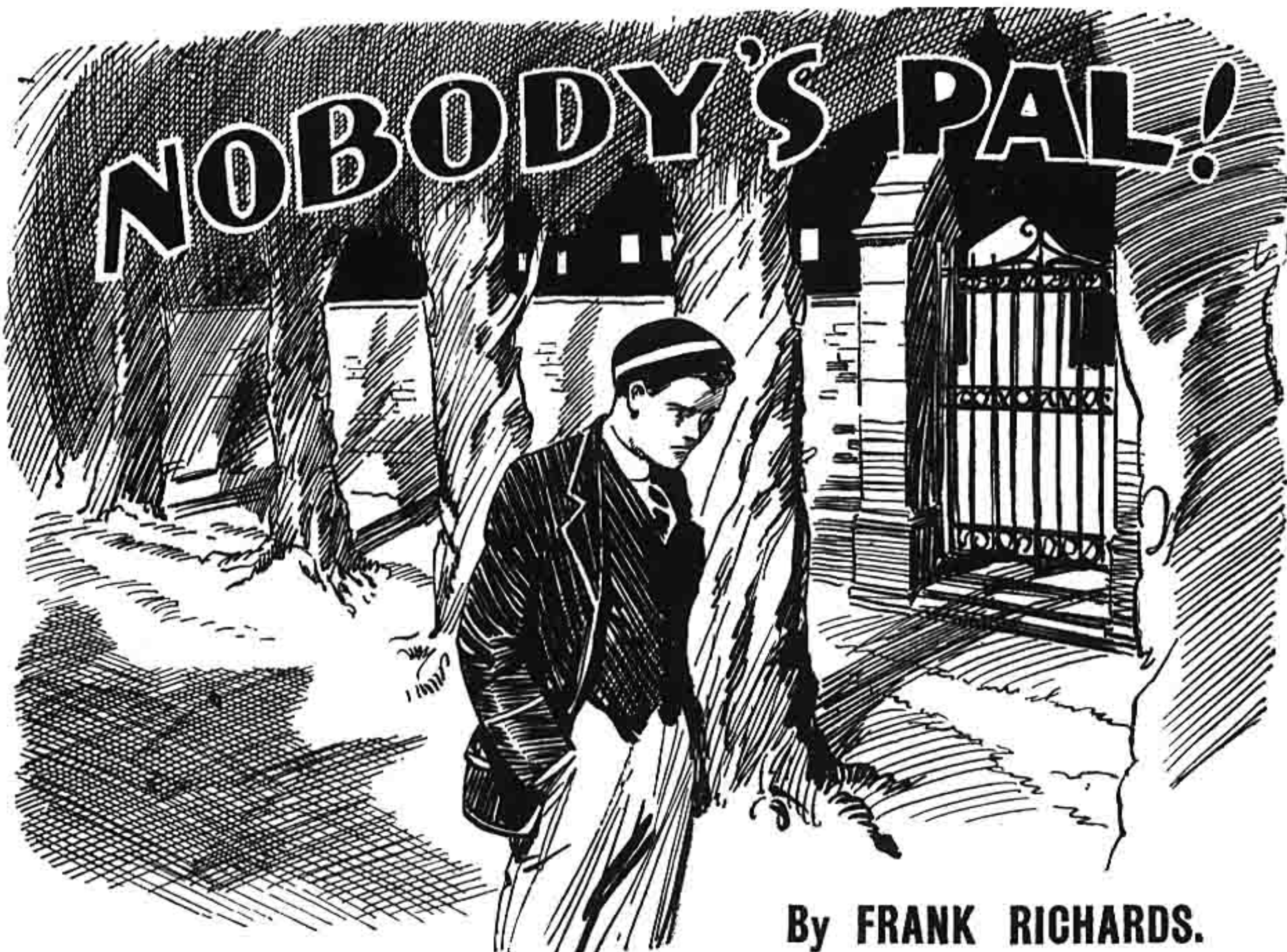
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The **MAGNET**

2^d



**A RECORD
RAGGING!**



By FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Pulling Quelch's Leg!**

HAVE a cigar?"
"Wha-a-at?"
"Have a cigar?" repeated Harry Wharton.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stared blankly. He seemed hardly able to believe his ears.

Smithy was known to smoke cigarettes in his study sometimes. Certainly he never smoked cigars. But if he had been addicted to such hefty smokes, he would not have been likely to indulge that taste in open quad, under the windows of Masters' Studies.

It was morning break at Greyfriars School. It was a fine, sunny morning for the time of year. Plenty of fellows were about—a dozen at least heard Harry Wharton speak to the Bounder. Every one of them turned his head and stared at Wharton.

"Potty?" ejaculated the Bounder. Wharton raised his eyebrows. "What do you mean, Smithy? I offered you a cigar—"

"You howling ass!" breathed Smithy. "Can't you see that Quelch's window is open? Ten to one he's heard you!"

Wharton glanced round carelessly.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had his study window open that fine morning. If he was in his study he could hardly have failed to hear, for the two juniors were not more than a couple of yards from the window.

What Quelch would think—and do—if he heard a member of his Form offering a cigar to another member was scarcely imaginable.

Wharton did not seem to mind.

He slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out a couple of fat, brown cigars with gold bands.

Remove fellows stared at him, petrified.

They knew that Quelch was in his study. They knew that he must have heard. They expected to see his severe face and gimlet eyes looking out of the window every instant. Harry Wharton seemed to have been hunting for trouble all that term. According to his Form master, he had become the worst boy at Greyfriars. But never had the scapegrace of the Remove asked for trouble so wantonly and emphatically as now.

"They're rather good!" said Wharton calmly, apparently unconscious of the amazed stares turned on him from all sides. "I got them in Courtfield yesterday—"

"Shut up, fathead!" hissed Smithy.

"I've a couple. You're welcome to one if you like! Don't you think you'd care for one, Smithy?"

The Bounder made no rejoinder. The expected visage appeared at the open window above. Henry Samuel Quelch looked out into the quad, with an expression on his face that the fabled Gorgon might have envied.

"Wharton!"

Harry Wharton looked round to the window again, the cigars still in his hand. He did not seem alarmed.

"Yes, sir!" he answered.

"I heard what you said to Vernon-Smith, Wharton." Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep.

"Did you, sir?" said Wharton indifferently.

"I did!" rumbled Mr. Quelch, his gimlet eyes gleaming at the rebel of the

Remove. "Even from you, Wharton, the worst boy in my Form, I am surprised at this! I am surprised and shocked!"

"Are you really, sir?"

"I heard you offer a cigar to Vernon-Smith! A few days ago, Wharton, you were caned for smoking in your study."

"Oh, yes, sir! I told you at the time that I had not smoked there!"

"I did not believe you, Wharton, and I do not believe you now! You do not deny that you have just offered a cigar to another boy?"

"Oh, no, sir! I didn't see any harm in—"

"You did not see any harm in offering a Lower Fourth boy a cigar?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir!"

Harry Wharton made that answer with perfect calmness. Mr. Quelch gazed at him, almost dumbfounded. A gathering crowd of fellows stared on in horrified silence.

"He, he, he!" A fat cachinnation from Billy Bunter broke the silence. "I say, you fellows, Wharton's asking for it again! He, he, he!"

"Wharton," gasped Mr. Quelch, finding his voice, "I presume that that answer is intended for impertinence! Even you, the worst boy at Greyfriars, cannot be so depraved."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Not only have you fallen into bad and vicious ways, but apparently you desire to drag other boys into them, Wharton! I demand to know at once where you obtained those cigars!"

"At Chunkley's Stores, in Courtfield, sir."

"Do you mean to say that they sold

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those cigars to you—a junior school-boy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"I cannot believe you, Wharton! I shall communicate with the stores in Courtfield and make an inquiry."

"They will tell you so, sir, if you ask them."

"I am sure that they will tell me nothing of the kind. You have obtained those cigars from some disreputable acquaintance outside the school. Your producing them in public, and offering one to another boy, I can only regard as calculated insolence!"

"Indeed, sir!"

"You will hand me those cigars at once, Wharton! I shall report the matter to your headmaster. Give them to me instantly!"

"Very well, sir!"

Harry Wharton approached nearer to the study window and held up the cigars to Mr. Quelch's outstretched hand. Fifty pairs of eyes were upon him by this time. Fellows of all Forms were staring breathlessly. Why, even the reckless scapegrace was "asking for it" in this way was a mystery to the Greyfriars fellows. The least he could expect was a Head's flogging.

Mr. Quelch grabbed the cigars from his hand. Undoubtedly Mr. Quelch was shocked and disgusted to see such articles in possession of a youthful schoolboy. His face expressed the scorn and disgust he felt.

But as he received the cigars a strange change came over his disgusted, scornful face.

He gave a sudden start.

His gimlet eyes fixed on the cigars in his hand.

The feel of them was what struck him first. They seemed very hard and heavy. The most potent tobacco that ever came out of Havana could not have weighed so much. At a couple of yards' distance they looked exactly like Havana cigars. But as the poet has remarked, "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view!"

On a closer inspection, it was evident that those cigars were not made of rolled tobacco-leaf. They were made of solid chocolate! On the gold band that encircled them Mr. Quelch could read—on a close inspection—"CHUNKLEY'S CHOC!"

Mr. Quelch's expression became extraordinary.

The crowd of fellows under the window stared at him. They did not understand the meaning of that sudden alteration in the Remove master's face.

"I am sorry you think I have done wrong, sir," said Wharton meekly. "We are allowed to eat chocolates in break."

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"I saw no harm in offering one to Vernon-Smith, sir! He has given me chocolates more than once."

Gasp from Mr. Quelch.

"Chocolates!" murmured the Bounder.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I am sure, sir, that if you ask at Chunkley's, they will tell you that they sold me the cigars. I got them in the confectionery department, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was a sudden, involuntary yell from the crowd of Greyfriars fellows. They understood now.

"Wharton! You—you—you—" the Remove master gurgled. "You—you—I—I—I was not aware that—that—that these were—were chocolate cigars—"

"Indeed, sir!" Wharton raised his eyebrows. "I hope you did not think they were real cigars, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a howl.

"Silence!" almost shouted Mr. Quelch. "Wharton, you—you—you may—may

take these—these comestibles. There is certainly no—no harm—"

"Oh! Thank you, sir!"

Wharton took the cigars back. He held one out to Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Have a cigar, Smithy?" he said calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, he was pulling Quelch's leg all the time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slam!

Mr. Quelch's window closed hard.

"Have a cigar, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather!" said Billy Bunter promptly.

Harry Wharton strolled away, with his hands in his pockets. He left fifty fellows chortling. There was a smile on the face of the scapegrace of the Remove. But there was no smile on the face of Henry Samuel Quelch, in the Remove master's study. The look on Mr. Quelch's speaking countenance might have scared any fellow but the reckless rebel of Greyfriars.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Toffee for Bunter.

"O H lor'!" breathed Billy Bunter.

There was a footstep in the silence of the old Cloisters. Billy Bunter pricked up his fat ears in alarm, like a startled rabbit. Classes were over at Greyfriars; and

One by one Wharton's friends have deserted him until only Lord Mauleverer is left to say a good word in his favour. But Wharton, in his usual proud, headstrong fashion soon makes it clear that he is finished with Mauleverer—and regrets it when it is too late!

the November dusk was deepening over the school. In the shadowy old Cloisters it was almost dark. That solitary, shadowy, windy spot was not the spot Billy Bunter would have selected but for a very particular reason.

The particular reason was in his fat hand, and was being transferred to his capacious mouth. It was an enormous chunk of toffee. Ogilvy of the Remove had made that toffee. He had left it in his study cupboard to cool. He was fated to find that cupboard, when he returned to it, in the same state as the celebrated Mother Hubbard's.

Shy retirement was not Billy Bunter's way, as a rule. But so long as the toffee lasted, Bunter preferred to imitate the flower that was born to blush unseen. In the old Cloisters it was cold and it was windy—but it was safe—or, at least, Billy Bunter thought so, till he heard that footstep!

Then he ceased to gobble toffee; and listened with painful intentness. Robert Donald Ogilvy was quite a nice fellow, and very popular in the Remove, but Billy Bunter hated the idea of meeting him just then.

The footsteps came on. Bunter squeezed his fat person out of sight behind a massive stone pillar, and waited, with a sticky and anxious face. Almost he wished that he had left that toffee where it belonged.

The footsteps passed.

Blinking from behind the pillar through his big spectacles, Billy Bunter could see the junior who passed, at a few yards distance; but he could not make him out in the dusk. The fellow, whoever he was, strolled on, with his hands in his pockets. He seemed to be strolling aimlessly; certainly not looking for anyone. But William George Bunter was not taking chances. He remained blotted behind the pillar, making no sound.

The junior turned, and came walking back. This time Bunter saw his face more clearly and recognised it. It was a great relief to see that it was not Ogilvy. It was Harry Wharton—and the expression on his face made Billy Bunter fix his eyes on him, with a curious stare.

Last term, Harry Wharton had been captain of the Remove, and head boy of the Form. This term he was neither. Last term he had been as popular as any fellow at Greyfriars—this term he was as unpopular as a fellow well could be. Headmaster and Form master, prefects of the Sixth, all regarded him with an eye of distrust and suspicion. He was at variance with his old friends, the famous Co.; and with most other fellows in the Remove. Orderly fellows did not like to be seen with him too much. Only reckless fellows like the Bounder, and shady outsiders like Skinner & Co. cared at all for his company. Of all the decent fellows in the Form, only Lord Mauleverer was still on the old friendly terms with him—and even the good-natured, tolerant Mauly was growing a little dubious.

In the public eye, Wharton never showed that he cared two straws, or one, for the change in his fortunes that unlucky term. Cool and calm and indifferent, in outward aspect at least, he gave no sign.

But he was off his guard now; walking by himself in the solitude of the old Cloisters; never dreaming that a curious, inquisitive Paul Pry was blinking at him from the shadows of the old pillars.

The cool indifference was not to be seen in his face now. His brow was darkly clouded, his lip drooped.

That change in his looks was startling. It caused Billy Bunter's little round eyes to widen behind his big round spectacles.

It was as if a mask had been dropped from his face.

His eyes were bent on the old mossy stone flags as he walked slowly along, and he did not look up, or he would have seen the fat Owl of the Remove peering from behind the pillar.

He was plunged into deep and painful thought.

Everything had gone wrong that term, and he could not—or would not—see that he was to blame. There had been many contributory causes—chief of them, the unscrupulous scheming of his old enemy, Loder of the Sixth. But a passionate and reckless temper had helped—a fact which Wharton himself dimly realised at times, though only at rare moments.

Trouble had started with the term, and it had gone on gathering, like a snowball rolling downhill. His old chums had been willing to heal the breach at first—and he had not! Afterwards, he had been willing—and they had not! It was hopeless now—now that he was the scapegrace of the school, looked on by all Greyfriars as a "shady" sweep who was booked for the

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"sack" sooner or later—probably sooner! Yet Harry Wharton, in spite of a stubborn temper and many errors, was still at heart the same fellow that his old friends had always known.

He passed the stone pillar without seeing Bunter there. The fat Owl was about to make a movement. Billy Bunter had a kind heart, in his own fat and fatuous way. The fellow looked down on his luck—and it was in Bunter's podgy mind to offer him some of Ogilvy's toffee.

There were few earthly ills, so far as Bunter was concerned, that could not have been cured by tuck!

But as the fat Owl was about to stir, there was another footstep, approaching from the direction of the quad.

Bunter stayed where he was. Probably it was Ogilvy this time, in search of the toffee which Bunter had so generously thought of sharing with the scapegrace of the Remove. The fat Owl carefully blotted himself from sight.

"Hallo, kid! I've been lookin' for you."

It was a pleasant voice—and Bunter started as he recognised the voice of Cedric Hilton of the Fifth Form. His eyes opened wider behind his spectacles. The Fifth Form at Greyfriars had nothing to do with the Lower School—and it was rather surprising to hear Hilton, the dandy and sportsman of the Fifth, tell Wharton that he had been looking for him.

Wharton stopped only a yard from the stone pillar which hid the fat Owl.

"Looking for me?" he repeated.

"Yes, kid!" The slim, handsome Fifth-Former came to a halt, and smiled at Wharton in the dusk. "I haven't had a chance of speakin' to you—since—"

"Since I was flogged for being caught out of bounds at the Three Fishers?" said Wharton, with a sarcastic tone in his voice.

"Yes! It was pretty decent of you to stand the racket without sayin' a word about me."

Billy Bunter suppressed a squeak of surprise. All Greyfriars had witnessed Harry Wharton's flogging a few days ago for "pub-haunting." Nobody knew that Hilton of the Fifth had anything to do with it—not even Billy Bunter, who rather prided himself on knowing everything, and a little over.

"What rot!" said Wharton curtly. "It wouldn't have done me any good to give you away; and I shouldn't have, anyhow!"

"Well, it was decent," said Hilton. "I should have been nailed, but for you; and as it happened, you got nailed by that cad Loder. Look here, kid—what are you doin' on Wednesday afternoon?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing! I'm on my own these days."

"Not playing football for your Form?"

"I've turned down Remove football!" Wharton laughed. "I was going to play for the Fourth—but Temple's turned me down since I've got a reputation as a pub-haunter."

"Hard cheese," said Hilton. "Well, look here, how'd you like to join up with me for Wednesday? Price won't come—he says it's too risky now that the prefects are sittin' up and takin' notice! Pricey's got the wind-up. But from the way you've been carryin' on all this term, I imagine you've got plenty of nerve."

Harry Wharton looked curiously at the sportsman of the Fifth. Hilton had

done him a good turn; and he had been grateful, all the more because, in these days, few fellows in the school were disposed to do him good turns. He had more than repaid the debt by giving the Fifth Form man a warning in time, at the Three Fishers; saving Hilton from getting caught by the prefects, at the cost of getting caught himself. He had hardly expected a careless, volatile fellow like Hilton to remember the matter long. But evidently the dandy of the Fifth had not forgotten.

"It will be rather jolly," went on Hilton. "A bit out of the common, too! You've never been to Wapshot races?"

Harry Wharton started.

"Good heavens, no!" he ejaculated.

"Well, that's the game! I'm havin' a car and goin'! I'd really like you to come, if you'd care for it! You'll enjoy yourself. Of course, we'd take care not to be spotted! Stick on dinky little moustaches—what?" Hilton laughed. "It's miles from the school—and safe as houses!"

Harry Wharton did not answer immediately.

He was thinking—black thoughts! The whole school set him down as a shady young sweep, booked for the sack! The Bounder had told him mockingly that he might as well have the game as the name! Only a few weeks ago he would have refused Hilton's invitation curtly enough—probably with angry and scornful words. But matters were changed now.

His half-holiday was going to be dismal enough! He had turned down Remove games—and, anyhow, the Remove footballers did not want him since his exploit at the Three Fishers. Temple of the Fourth had turned him down. Nobody seemed to want him—and why not, as the Bounder had said, have the game as well as the name? The whole school looked on him as a shady sweep. He might as well give them some reason!

"Done!" he said abruptly. "I'll come!"

"Good man!" said Hilton, with a smile. "You'll have a good time—and the beaks will never know! The car will be waitin' at the corner on Court-field Common at two on Wednesday—hike along in time. We'd better not be seen together, of course. It's a go!"

Hilton turned and walked back to the quad.

Wharton remained standing very still, looking after him. Behind the stone pillar Bunter was gasping. Hilton, after his late narrow escape, was going to the races—fairly asking for it! No wonder Price of the Fifth had the wind-up! And Wharton was going with Hilton! And if Quelch found him out—All the Remove knew that Quelch would have been glad to see Wharton "bunked" if he spotted this—

Wharton stood breathing hard. A reckless impulse had made him answer in the affirmative. The words had hardly left his lips, when he was sorry that he had uttered them.

He opened his lips to call to Hilton—but closed them again! The Fifth Form sportsman was already gone. After all, why not? he asked himself savagely. Why shouldn't he be what the whole school thought him? At any rate, he was not going to let Hilton fancy that his nerve had failed! He had said that he would go—and he would go!

And yet—Footsteps came up the Cloisters from the quad. If it was Hilton coming back he would tell him—

But it was not Hilton this time. It was Robert Donald Ogilvy of the

Remove who came hurrying along in the dusk.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed, as he sighted Wharton. "You fat villain—Oh, Wharton! You, is it?"

"Yes," said Harry indifferently.

"Seen Bunter?"

"Bunter! No! I don't think he's about here."

"Toddy said he dodged into the Cloisters! The fat brigand has snaffled my toffee! I'm going to find him and burst him!"

Harry Wharton walked away. He was not interested in Bunter or in Ogilvy's toffee. The Scottish junior, on the other hand, was interested in both! As Wharton disappeared in the direction of the quad Robert Donald Ogilvy proceeded to root among the stone pillars in quest of William George Bunter.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter, as Ogilvy came round the pillar that hid his fat person. "I—I say, I'm not here—"

"You fat scoundrel!" roared Ogilvy. "Where's my toffee?"

"I—I haven't seen it, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I never knew you were making toffee, old fellow, and never watched you leave your study, old bean—the—the fact is, I—I don't like toffee! Never could stand toffee, old fellow! It—it doesn't agree with me—"

"Why, there it is in your paw!" roared Ogilvy wrathfully.

"I—I—I mean—" gasped Bunter.

"I—I— Yaroooh! Leggo! Look here, you can have the toffee, you beast! Only a lark, old chap! I say, old fellow— Whoop!"

"You can keep it now," said Ogilvy. "It's a bit too sticky for me! You can have it—down your back!"

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Leggo!" shrieked Bunter. "I say— Help! D-D-Don't you stick that toffee down my bub-bub-back! Yaroooooop!"

Billy Bunter struggled frantically. But he struggled in vain. Ogilvy, chuckling, walked away to the House—leaving William George Bunter spluttering wildly, and twisting and wriggling like an eel, as he made frantic endeavours to extract a chunk of sticky toffee from his back!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants To Be "On!"

BILLY BUNTER, the following day, had an unusually thoughtful expression on his fat face.

Something was working in the obtuse depths of his podgy mind. His unusual thoughtfulness was not caused by unaccustomed attention to his lessons. In morning school Mr. Quelch found him even more inattentive than was his wont. Second lesson was English history, and when a question was put to Bunter his answer showed that his plump intellect was not concentrated on the ancient records of his native land. Having been asked which king signed Magna Charta—which really was an easy one—Bunter, evidently without thinking, answered:

"Jolly Roger!"

That answer caused Mr. Quelch to stare at him in fixed astonishment. It caused all the Remove to look round at Bunter.

Bunter, of course, did not know which monarch had signed Magna Charta—and did not care. He was quite capable of answering Alfred the Great, or Edward the Seventh, or George the Fifth! He was quite likely to give the first king's name that came into his fat mind, and trust to luck.

But even Bunter knew that there had never been a king named Roger in the realm—especially Jolly Roger! So that answer was surprising, even from Bunter.

The Remove stared at him. The Bouncer started a little Smithy, who knew a lot of things better unknown, know that Jolly Roger was the name of a horse that was running in the three-thirty at Wapshot on Wednesday afternoon. Evidently, to the Bouncer, horse-racing was in Bunter's podgy mind. Fortunately Mr. Quelch knew less about the Wapshot race programme than Smithy did, and he had never heard of that "gee," so he did not guess. But he was astonished, and he was cross.

"What—what—what did you say, Bunter?" he ejaculated.

"Wha-a-t?"

"I—I'm sure he signed it only once, sir!" protested Bunter. "It—it's in my book, sir! It says nothing about his signing it a hundred times."

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

"Bunter, you—you—you incredibly stupid boy!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "Certainly King John signed Magna Charta only once!"

"You said a hundred times, sir—"

"You will write it out a hundred times, you obtuse boy!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "You will write out one hundred times 'King John signed Magna Charta at Runnymede'! Now do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

William George Bunter tried to give a little attention, after that. But he

Bunter rolled away towards the distant Cloisters, and Mauly smiled the smile of a fellow who had done a good deed. Wharton, of course, could not possibly want Bunter—nobody ever wanted Bunter. So his lordship had suggested that the fat Owl should look in the Cloisters, because it was highly improbable that Wharton was there!

Billy Bunter looked in the Cloisters. He was still looking when the bell rang for third school. Then he gave it up.

He saw Wharton, however, as he came back to the Remove Form Room. But it was too late to speak to him. Wharton was going in with the Remove. Bunter had to wait till third lesson was over.

When the Remove were dismissed again Bunter made sure of his victim.



Wharton slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out two cigars. "Have one, Smithy," he said, calmly, "they're rather good!" "Wharton!" rumbled Mr. Quelch, from the study window, his gimlet eyes gleaming at the rebel of the Remove. "I am surprised at this—surprised and shocked!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I mean—I didn't mean Jolly Roger, sir!"

"I imagine not!" boomed Mr. Quelch. "For what reason, Bunter, have you made so absurd an answer?"

"I—I didn't—I—I mean, I—I wasn't—that is, I—I—I meant to say— Oh crikey!" stuttered Bunter.

"You have not been giving attention to the lesson, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I heard every word, sir! I—I remember perfectly who signed Chagna Marta—I mean, Magna Charta, sir—it—it—it was Queen Elizabeth, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, you will write out that King John signed Magna Charta one hundred times!"

"D-D-Did he, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"Certainly he did, you obtuse boy!"

"I—I thought he signed it only once, sir!"

was glad when the Remove was dismissed for break. With more important matters on his mind, he found Quelch and lessons a worry.

He came out of the House in break, and blinked round the quad in search of someone. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh were punting a ball about, and Bunter called to them.

"Seen Wharton, you fellows?"

The Co. did not answer that question. They no longer had any concern with the junior who had once been the leader of the famous Co. Bunter, perhaps, had forgotten that—with important matters on his mind!

"I say, you fellows, where's Wharton?" squeaked Bunter. "I say, Mauly, seen Wharton?"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"Look in the Cloisters," he suggested.

"Oh, all right!"

He grabbed Harry Wharton by the sleeve as he went down the passage.

"I say, old chap—" began Bunter.

"Let go, fathead!"

"I want to speak to you. It's important!"

"Try somebody else."

Wharton jerked his arm away and walked into the quad. Billy Bunter blinked after him, his very spectacles glistening with wrath. Considering what he knew about the scapegrace's plans for the morrow, Bunter's idea was that it would pay the Remove rebel to be civil. But Wharton, so far, was unaware of the fat Owl's surreptitious knowledge.

He walked away across the quad and sauntered under the leafless elms. His brow was thoughtful and moody. His arrangement with Hilton of the Fifth for Wednesday afternoon worried him

a good deal. He told himself that there was no harm in sitting in a car and watching the races. Plenty of fellows did that, and no harm done. But he was aware that that argument was merely sophistry. He knew that Hilton was not going to Wapshot merely to see the races run. He was going there to bet with bookmakers; to gamble; to earn the "sack" from Greyfriars if he was spotted.

Again he told himself that whatever Hilton did was no concern of his. He need not join in it, or anything of the kind. But he could not feel satisfied. And though he rather liked Hilton for his good-nature, he could not help feeling contempt for him.

The Fifth Form sportsman meant to be kind; to make it up to the junior for having bagged a flogging for his sake. This was his way of doing it, and he was too unthinking and too selfish to reflect on the harm he might be doing. But an older fellow who led a younger fellow into disreputable pursuits was a "bad hat"—in fact, a rank outsider, and Wharton could not help realising it. All the fellow's careless good-nature could not alter that.

Only one consideration prevented Wharton from seeking Hilton out and telling him that it was "off." The fellow would think it was a case of "cold feet." He would suppose that Wharton was scared by the risk. Nobody was going to think that of him!

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

It was Bunter again. Wharton came out of deep and troubled thought, and glared at the fat Owl.

"You silly chump! Cut off!" he rapped out.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, and buzz!"

Bunter neither shut up nor buzzed. He had something to say, and he was going to say it.

"Don't shout, old fellow," he said.

"Loder's hanging about, and you don't want Loder to hear this."

"Hang Loder!"

"Well, you want to be careful now he's made a prefect again," said Bunter. "You know old Quelch has jawed the Head into making him a prefect again—reward for spotting you at a pub. He, he, he!"

"You silly owl, what are you driving at?" exclaimed Wharton, puzzled as well as irritated. "I suppose a fellow can walk in the quad even if Loder is about, and if the Head has made the cad a prefect again."

"Well, you can't keep this sort of thing too dark, you know," said Bunter, shaking his head seriously. "If Loder gets on your track to-morrow it's all up with you and Hilton. He would jump at the chance."

"You fat villain, what have you been spying into now?" he ejaculated.

Bunter winked a fat wink.

"I know what I know, you know," he remarked astutely. "Precious little goes on in the school that I don't know, I can tell you. I was thinking of coming with you, old fellow, but it's a bit too risky. Besides, I'm rather more particular than you are, you know. Still,

there's no reason why you shouldn't put something on for me, being there, you know."

"Wha-a-t?" Wharton gasped.

"Look at this." From under his jacket Bunter drew a folded paper that was pink in hue. "I dare say you've seen 'Sporting Snips' before, the way you're going on this term. Never mind where I got it. There's a man in this school who always has this paper in his study, and I knew where to look for it." Bunter chuckled. "If he misses it from his study he won't inquire after it—what? Not likely! He, he, he!"

Wharton gazed blankly at the Owl of the Remove. Evidently Billy Bunter was acquainted, somehow, with his plans for the morrow.

The danger of the excursion was doubled, or redoubled, by the fact that it had come to the knowledge of the tattler of the Remove. But Wharton was not thinking of that for the moment. He was struck unpleasantly by the obvious fact that Bunter took it for granted that he was going to Wapshot Races to play the "giddy ox" there. The fatuous Owl prided himself on being rather a "rorty dog," and now he was talking to Wharton, as it were, as a fellow-rorty-dog. Wharton gazed at him speechlessly.

"When you're backing your fancy," went on Bunter cheerfully, "you can put a quid on for me, see? I've picked Jolly Roger."

"Jolly Roger!" repeated Wharton blankly.

"My advice to you is to back him, too," said Bunter, blinking at him with the air of a man who knew something about horses. "He's a good gee. The man in this paper says that you can put your shirt on him. He knows! You can get three to one against him. Starting price, you know."

"You benighted idiot!" gasped Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, read what 'Nippy Snipster' says about him," said Bunter, indicating a tipster's column with a fat forefinger. "I can tell you this is a snip, straight from the horse's mouth. Well, I want you to put a quid on for me, see, while you're at it."

"While— Oh, my hat!"

"I believe I mentioned to you that I was expecting a postal order," continued Bunter. "It will come in the morning, and I'll let you have the quid before you start. It's barely possible that my postal order may not come in time. Not likely, but just possible. In that case you'll lend me the quid, won't you, old chap?"

Wharton breathed hard.

He could hardly blame Bunter for supposing that he was going to the races to be "rorty." Certainly any fellow who had known of the excursion would have supposed so, especially as he was going with the sportsman of the Fifth. Nevertheless, it was distinctly unpleasant.

All the school looked on him as a "shady sweep," like the Bounder, or Angel of the Fourth, and Wharton had said to himself that he might as well have the "game as the name." Now it

was borne in upon his mind very forcibly that, whether he had the name or not, he did not want the game.

"I shall expect you to lend me the quid," pursued Bunter. "One good turn deserves an-

other, you know. Of course, I'm not the fellow to give a man away. I'm not a sneak, I hope. Still, I'm keeping this dark for you. Quelch would jump at it with both feet if he knew I think you can lend me the quid, Wharton, to put on Jolly Roger—what?"

Wharton did not answer.

"Mind, I'm making a point of that," said Bunter. "It will be safe as houses. You get three to one, and you can have your quid back out of the winnings if—if my postal order should happen to be delayed see? Jolly Roger's a dead cert, a sure snip. He's going to romp home, you know, and leave the field standing. Nippy Snipster knows a thing or two. My advice to you is to put your shirt on Jolly Roger, and— Whooooo!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a wild roar as Wharton grabbed the folded racing paper from him and smote him with it.

Bang, bang, bang!

Quite hefty smites can be delivered with a folded newspaper in a sinewy hand. Bunter found that out at once.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

"Oh crikey! You beast, leave off!" yelled Bunter, dodging wildly. "Wharrer you banging me for, you beast? Gimme my paper! Yaroooooh! Oh crumbs! Leave off! Chuck it! Yooooop! Whooop! Yaroooooh!"

Why Wharton had broken out like this Bunter did not know. He supposed that it was some more of the beast's beastly temper. It was quite an unexpected outcome to a pleasant and friendly chat.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Yaroooooh!"

"You fat rascal!" panted Wharton. "I'll keep this paper and put it in the fire. But I'll see first if I can knock a little sense and decency into you."

"Yooo-hooop! Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter fled for his fat life. He vanished among the elms, roaring.

Wharton was left with "Sporting Snips" in his hand. Certainly, he did not intend to let Bunter have that valuable periodical back. He decided to toss it over the school wall, and thus get rid of it. Having come to that decision, he turned to leave the spot, and almost ran into Loder of the Sixth.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"STOP!"

Loder rapped out the order. Wharton stopped.

Loder's eyes were fixed on the pink paper in his hand. Loder of the Sixth knew "Sporting Snips" by sight! That periodical was, in point of fact, the favourite reading of Gerald Loder, though he was, of course, extremely careful to keep that circumstance to himself.

He fairly gloated at the sight of the racing paper in Wharton's hand. This was luck for Loder—uncommon luck!

Wharton flushed crimson. He understood what Loder's stare at the pink paper meant. Loder, who had spotted the scapegrace at the Three Fishers a few days since, had no doubt that the young rascal was well on his way on the downward path. According to the poet, a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind. But Loder of the Sixth had no fellow-feeling for a junior whom he supposed to be a blackguard like himself. Wharton had got off with a flogging for the Three Fishers episode, and a severe warning from the Head that another such escapade would be followed by expulsion from the school. Loder charitably hoped that it might be the "sack" this time.

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"What's that paper, Wharton?" rapped Loder.

"I imagine that you know it by sight!" answered Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "You've probably seen it more than once!"

Loder set his teeth. This young rascal knew altogether too much about Gerald Loder and his ways. It would be a great relief to Loder when the gates of Greyfriars closed behind him.

"Give me that paper!"

Wharton hesitated a moment. But Loder had been reinstated in his rank of prefect by the headmaster, and he was in authority once more. The junior handed over the paper.

"Now follow me to the House!"

"Any old thing!" drawled Wharton. He followed Loder.

Plenty of fellows stared at them as they came out of the elm walk and crossed the quad towards the House.

The pink paper in Loder's hand was very much in evidence. No doubt he desired all Greyfriars to see that the scapegrace had been spotted again in his wicked ways.

"What on earth's that, Loder?" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

"I've just taken this racing paper from Wharton," explained Loder. "I'm taking him to his Form master now."

The Greyfriars captain turned a contemptuous glance on the junior.

"At it again!" he snapped.

"Not at all, Wingate," answered Wharton coolly. "That paper's not mine."

"Not yours? Loder says he took it from you."

"That's right. But it's not mine."

"Better tell your Form master that!" snapped Wingate gruffly.

"I'm going to—thanks!"

Loder marched on, with Wharton at his heels. Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth, shrugged his shoulders scornfully.

"What did I tell you men?" he asked Fry and Dabney. "Precious young blackguard—what? Not the sort of blighter we want in the Junior Eleven!"

"Oh, rather!" agreed Dabney.

"He can play football!" said Fry. "Still, if you want the Remove to lick us as usual to-morrow—"

"There's a limit!" said Temple, with dignity. "I've no use for pub-hauntin' rotters!"

"And no use for goals!" murmured Fry.

Loder marched into the House and tapped at the door of Mr. Quelch's study. He entered, followed by Wharton.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on the scapegrace of his Form. Mr. Quelch had not forgotten how the scapegrace had pulled his leg in the matter of the cigars the previous day; neither had he forgotten many, many other offences. His look was grim.

He gave a start as Loder laid the pink paper on the table before him.

"What—what is this, Loder?" he exclaimed.

"I have just taken this paper from Wharton, sir," said Loder smoothly. "He was reading it in an obscure corner behind the trees."

"That is a lie, sir!" said Harry Wharton coolly.

"What—what did you say, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, while Loder turned almost green.

"I said that that is a lie, sir!" said Harry, with perfect calmness.

"Mr. Quelch—" gasped Loder.

"Leave this bad, unscrupulous boy to me, Loder!" said Mr. Quelch, with a bitter compression of the lips. "I am

not likely to take his word against yours."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Wharton, you dare to deny that Loder took this paper from you?"

"Not in the least, sir. Loder took the paper from me. But he said I was reading it. That is false."

"You can hardly have bought this paper, Wharton, for any purpose but to read it!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"I did not buy that paper, sir."

"Do you mean that it was given to you by some one of your disreputable acquaintances outside the school?" demanded the Remove master.

"I have no disreputable acquaintances outside the school, sir," answered Wharton calmly.

"You will scarcely expect that statement to be believed, Wharton, when only last week you were discovered leaving, surreptitiously, the most disreputable resort in the county! If you did not buy this paper, it must have been given to you by some rascally character."

continued in your disreputable ways! Whether you have yet read it or not is immaterial! You will come with me to Dr. Locke!"

"Perhaps you will let me explain first, sir."

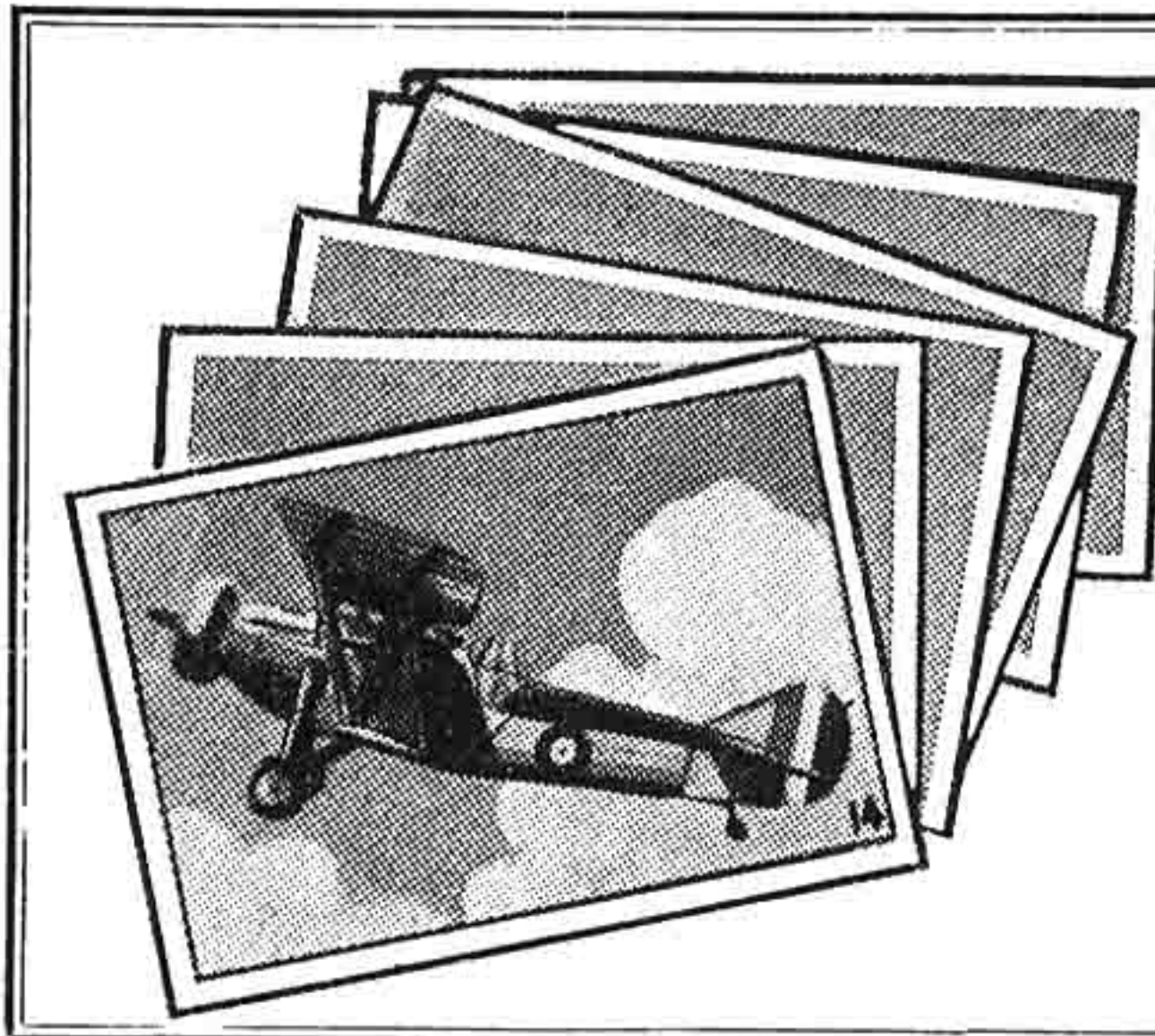
"If you have any explanation to make, I will hear it."

"I took that paper from a silly young ass," said Wharton. "I took it from him and smacked his head with it, and was going to throw it away. Although I am no longer head boy of the Remove, I thought I ought not to let a fellow keep such a paper as that if I could help it."

Loder grinned involuntarily. His idea was that he had never heard a lamer story than this.

Mr. Quelch's lip curled contemptuously.

"If you took this rascally paper from some foolish boy Wharton, to throw it away, certainly I should not blame you," he said. "But if your statement is true, you must give the boy's name, and I will carry the inquiry farther."



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"I know no rascally character, sir, except—"

"Except whom?"

"Loder, sir!" said Harry calmly.

"Loder!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Why, what— Wharton, how dare you! I repeat, how dare you! You insolent boy! How dare you make such a remark!"

"I answered your question, sir."

"This insolence will not benefit you, Wharton! You deny that you were perusing this disgraceful and obnoxious paper?"

"Certainly! I've never read such rot! It doesn't interest me."

"Then what were you doing with it?"

"Holding it in my hand!"

"Take care, Wharton! This is not a matter for jesting! If you were not going to peruse this paper, what were you going to do with it?"

"Throw it over the wall."

"Are you in your senses, boy? Do you mean to tell me that you obtained possession of this disgraceful paper to throw it over the wall?"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips hard. Loder stared at the junior blankly.

"Very well, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch. "Your headmaster warned you that any further disgraceful actions on your part would be followed by expulsion from Greyfriars! Your possession of a racing paper is proof that you have

Wharton stood silent.

"Was any other boy with Wharton, Loder, when you took this paper from him?"

"No, sir. He was alone."

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

"I shall take you to Dr. Locke now, Wharton! It is for your headmaster to judge you! I can hold out no hope whatever that you will be allowed to remain at Greyfriars after this further unmistakable proof of your depravity! You will follow me to your headmaster's study!"

"Very well, sir!" said Harry through compressed lips.

And he followed Mr. Quelch.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Help for Bunter!

"**B**OB, old chap—" "Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry ferociously.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off you fat bluebottle!"

Bob Cherry of the Remove was evidently not in his usual sunny temper. Billy Bunter blinked at him in angry astonishment.

The Co were standing before the House, with grim faces. Bob was frowning, Frank Nugent looked deeply

distressed, Hurree Janset Ram Singh was worried, and Johnny Bull had a rather sarcastic expression on his face. Like fifty other fellows, the Co. had seen Loder of the Sixth marching Wharton in—with the racing paper. They had heard what he said to Wingate, and, like everybody else, they had no doubt that it was the sack this time. The scapegrace of the Remove had asked for it again and again, and now he was getting it. Bob Cherry and his chums were in no mood to be bothered by Billy Bunter.

"The game's up now," muttered Nugent. "The fat's fairly in the fire. How could he be such an ass—"

"Such a rotter, you mean!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The changefulness in the esteemed and ridiculous Wharton is truly terrific," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh dismally.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bob.

"Look here, don't be a beast!" howled Bunter. "I want you to stand by me, old chap! I can't lick the beast myself, and you know it."

"Go and eat coke!"

"He's taken away my paper!" howled Bunter.

"What? Who?"

"That beast Wharton!" howled the indignant Owl. "I was showing it to him, you know, and he bagged it, and banged me on the head with it, and said he was going to chuck it in the fire! I'd jolly well lick him, only—only I can't, you know. You can lick him, Bob. I'll hold your jacket."

The Co. stared blankly at Billy Bunter. The fat Owl was not aware of Wharton's latest trouble. He had been rubbing his bullet-head where the folded newspaper had smitten, for some time, and so he had missed the latest.

"Wharton took a paper from you?" said Bob, with a deep breath. "He took it away to put it in the fire?"

"Yes, the cheeky beast! And I want it, you know!" said Bunter, with deep indignation. "Bullying a chap, you know! Making out that he doesn't dabble in such things—when he's been flogged for pub-haunting, you know! Cheeky rotter! I was talking to him in quite a friendly way; only asking him to put something on a horse for me, and he grabbed my newspaper away and banged me on the head with it, and said he was going to put it in the fire. I want it, you know!"

"What newspaper was it?" asked Frank Nugent very quietly.

"Well, it was a—a—a newspaper, you know," said Bunter cautiously. "Not the sort of paper a fellow wants to show about the school, of course. I got it from a senior study; you see, I wanted to see what Nippy Snipster had to say about Jolly Roger—"

"Jolly Roger!" gasped Bob.

"I'd jolly well go to Quelch about it, you know, but it might come out what paper it was," explained Bunter. "I say, Bob, you can lick that rotter—in fact, you did lick him a week or two ago! Lick him again, old chap! I'll hold your hat! Make him gimme my paper."

"Wharton took that pink paper, 'Sporting Snips,' from you to chuck it into the fire?" said Bob slowly.

"Yes. Just rotten cheek, you know!"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And Loder's taken him to Quelch!" breathed Nugent. "It's the sack for him; they won't let him off this time—"

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"Unless he mentions Bunter," said Johnny Bull.

"He won't do that!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, d-d-did you say Loder's taken him to Quelch?" gasped Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey! Did Loder find him with that paper? He, he, he!"

"Is that a laughing matter, you fat frump?" roared Bob.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter, who evidently thought that it was. "He, he, he! Serve him jolly well right! I say, you fellows, isn't it jolly lucky Loder never caught me with it, what?"

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"So it was your paper, Bunter, and Wharton took it away from you to burn. You'd better go and tell Quelch that before Wharton's hiked off to the Head."

"I'll watch it!" grinned Bunter.

"Look here, you fat ass, you'll get six; but it's the sack for Wharton, with so many other things up against him," said Frank.

"Well, serve him right!" said Bunter.

"Bagging a chap's paper and banging him on the napper with it. I was only asking him to put some money on a horse for me—him being a betting fellow, you know—and for some reason he lost his temper and burst out on a chap like a wild Hun! Catch me going to Quelch!"

"You've got to tell Quelch it was your paper!" hissed Bob.

"Catch me! Besides, it wasn't my paper; I only borrowed it from a senior man's study—"

"Will you go to Quelch?"

"No, I jolly well won't!"

"I'll help you!" said Bob.

"I don't want any help, thanks—I'm jolly well not going! I'm rather sorry if Wharton's bunked, beast as he is—awful beast, you know, banging a chap's napper with a chap's own sporting paper!" Bunter rubbed his head. "But you fellows don't care; you're not friends of his. Why, Bull was scrapping with him in the Remove passage a few days ago. You had a fight with him in his study this term, Bob, and—I say— Yaroooooop!"

Bunter did not want any help to an interview with Mr. Quelch. Bob Cherry gave him the help unwanted.

With a sudden grip on the Owl's fat neck, he ran him up the steps and into the House.

Bunter roared as he went. He wriggled and roared and howled. But the grip on his neck was like iron. He went!

Nugent and Hurree Singh looked after them as they disappeared into the House, Bunter's wild roars floating back. Johnny Bull gave a slow nod. Johnny was the least placable member of the old Co. But it was clear that Wharton, whether "pub-haunter" or not, was innocent in this particular matter, and it was up to Bunter to say so. Bunter was not keen to tread the path of rectitude—in fact, he was frightfully reluctant. But with Bob Cherry's help he overcame his reluctance. There really was no arguing, with that grip on the back of his podgy neck.

He rolled, roaring, into Masters' Passage. Mr. Prout looked out of a study doorway, frowning; Mr. Capper and Mr. Twigg looked out, staring. Bob Cherry did not heed. He ran Bunter along to the Remove master's study. No doubt his methods were a little drastic, perhaps a little high-handed. But he was not going to see a fellow bunked because Bunter did not want to take a richly deserved "six."

"Will you leggo, you beast?" howled Bunter.

"Get on, you fat frog!" said Bob. "You can talk when you get into Mr. Quelch's study."

"I say, old chap— Beast!" gasped Bunter. "I wouldn't have told you about it—wow!—if I'd known you'd— Yarooooop! I wanted you to get that paper back from Wharton— Wow, wow! I never thought you'd— Grooogh! Wooooogh!"

They were only a few yards from Mr. Quelch's study door when it opened, and the Remove master came out, with Wharton at his heels. Behind them appeared Loder of the Sixth. All three stared at Bunter and Bob Cherry—Mr. Quelch with thunder gathering in his brow.

"Cherry! Bunter! What—"

"Bunter wants to tell you something, sir!" gasped Bob.

"I don't!" yelled Bunter. "Nothing of the sort, sir! I don't know anything about 'Sporting Snips,' sir—I've never even heard the name—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"It's not my paper, sir! I borrowed it! Besides, I never had it! If Wharton says he got it from me, he's telling whoppers, sir! I'm not that sort of fellow, sir—and Wharton is, as all the Form knows!"

"Bunter, go into my study!"

"Oh lor'!"

"You may go, Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

There was a strange expression on Mr. Quelch's face as he signed to Wharton to follow him back into the study. And on Gerald Loder's face a black and bitter look was growing. It seemed to the bully of the Sixth that he could see his victim slipping from his clutches. For the moment Loder did not foresee anything worse than that. But there was, if he had known it, worse to come.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Awkward for Loder!

"BUNTER!" said Mr. Quelch in a deep voice.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

He stood under the gimlet eye of his Form master, shivering like a fat jelly. Bunter was prepared to affirm or deny anything. Like the witness in the old story, he was ready to swear "in a general way, anything"—but he had a dismal fear that he was not going to be believed. For some reason or other Mr. Quelch always seemed a veritable "Doubting Thomas" when he was dealing with that bright member of his Form.

"Bunter, Wharton has told me—"

"Tain't true, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Wharton's an awful fibber, sir! Ain't you, old chap?"

"Wharton has told me that he took this paper—this disreputable and undesirable periodical—from another boy, with the intention of throwing it away—"

"It—it's a whopper, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He said he was going to put it in the fire! You jolly well know you did, Wharton! I think you ought to tell Mr. Quelch the truth! You jolly well said—"

"Bunter, Wharton has not given the name of the boy from whom he took the paper—"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Good! I mean, it wasn't me, sir!"

"I did not believe Wharton's statement—"

"Of—of course not, sir! Just a whopper—a whacking fib, sir! C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"But it appears that his statement was correct!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "He took



Gripping Bunter by the back of his fat neck, Bob Cherry ran him along Masters' Passage. "Will you leggo, you beast?" howled Bunter. "Get on, you fat frog!" said Cherry. "You can talk when you get into Mr. Quelch's study!"

this disreputable paper from you, Bunter, you have just admitted as much." He paused. "Wharton, I regret that your course of conduct, all through this term, has made it impossible for me to take your word!" he added acidly.

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton sarcastically.

"You have only yourself to blame. Nevertheless, you shall have justice!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Your statement is borne out by Bunter! In view of your recent conduct, I am surprised at your having acted in what appears to be a creditable manner. I believe now that you took this disgraceful periodical from Bunter with the intention of destroying it. Bunter, how dare you have such a paper in your possession?"

"I didn't, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"It is clear now, Bunter, that it was your paper," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"It—it wasn't, sir! I—I only borrowed it," groaned Bunter. "I—I wouldn't have given twopence of my own money for it, sir."

"If someone lent Bunter the paper, sir," suggested Loder, "it is probably Wharton's property. No other boy in the Remove, I am sure—"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. Loder, evidently, was not leaving him a loophole if he could help it. But Mr. Quelch did not receive that suggestion with any enthusiasm. Loder was the junior's bitter enemy; but the Remove master, if Wharton could only have believed it, had no desire but to see strict justice done.

"It can hardly have been Wharton's property, Loder, or he would not have taken it from Bunter to destroy it, as Bunter has admitted." There was a perceptible touch of coldness in Mr.

Quelch's voice. "Bunter! Did you borrow that paper from another boy in the Remove?"

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Who lent it to you, then?"

"It—it wasn't lent to me, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I borrowed it from the chap's study, sir, without—without mentioning it, sir. I—I was going to put it back again, sir."

"You will certainly do nothing of the kind, Bunter, and I demand to know the name of the junior from whose study you obtained this disreputable paper," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"It—it wasn't a junior, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"What! Do you mean that you obtained this racing paper from a senior study?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'!"

"Yes or no!" thundered the Remove master.

"Ow! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"You will give me the name of the senior boy," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall report it to the headmaster."

"Oh crikey!"

"Answer me, Bunter, at once."

"Oh scissors!"

Bunter's round eyes rolled hopelessly behind his spectacles. He blinked at Mr. Quelch, and blinked at Loder in terror. In a similar position, Harry Wharton had refused to give a name. Bunter was equally reluctant, but from very different motives. Evidently he was frightened.

Wharton wondered whether it was from Hilton's study, in the Fifth, that Bunter had borrowed "Sporting Snips." Hilton and Price were rather given to the study of such literature. Whoever was the original owner of that racing paper, it was plain that Quelch meant

to know. He was after that sportsman like a dog after a bone!

"Will you answer me, Bunter?" he thundered.

"Oh, yes, sir! Oh dear! I—I—I—I mean to say— Oh lor'!"

"You need not be frightened, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch more kindly. "You are bound to give me the information I require. This matter must be thoroughly investigated and the evil traced to its source. If, however, you prefer to be questioned by your headmaster—"

Bunter squeaked with sheer terror. "Ow! No! Oh lor'! It—it was a prefect, sir—"

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Quelch was really startled. "Bunter! Are you saying seriously that you obtained this disreputable racing paper from the study of a Sixth Form prefect?"

"Ow! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

Wharton started! So did Loder! Quite a queer expression came over the latter's face. He interposed hastily.

"Mr. Quelch, this boy, Bunter, is so untruthful—it is surely impossible to take any notice of such a statement from him—"

"I shall hear him, Loder! Bunter, give me the name, instantly, of the Sixth Form prefect from whose study, as you allege, you obtained this disgraceful paper?"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter blinked at Loder in sheer terror. Loder's face was pale. Harry Wharton's eyes were dancing. He knew now!

"Mr. Quelch—" gasped Loder.

"Kindly do not interrupt, Loder! Bunter, for the last time, give me the name I require to know! Otherwise, I

shall take you immediately to Dr. Locke."

"Lul-lul-lul-lul—" stammered Bunter.

"What?"

"Lul-lul-lul-Loder, sir!" Bunter got it out.

A dead silence in the study followed. Loder's face was almost green. Harry Wharton smiled. Mr. Quelch stood dazed.

This term he had had a high opinion of Loder. Loder had "greased" to the Remove master with great skill. He had been extremely keen on the track of the rebel of the Remove—which was a recommendation to the master who was fed-up with that troublesome rebel! Bunter's statement fairly staggered Mr. Quelch. Untruthful as Bunter habitually was, it was impossible to doubt it—it was obvious that the name had been forced from him, and that he hardly dared to utter it. Quelch had extracted the name from him, rather like a cork from a bottle—and the name was—Loder! Quelch stood dumb.

From the bottom of his heart, Gerald Loder wished that he had never brought that sporting paper to the Remove master's study. But how could he have guessed that it was the very copy that he supposed to be safe in the table drawer in his study? Naturally, he couldn't have! It had never crossed his mind for a moment. He had believed that it belonged to Wharton! Certainly he had never dreamed that it belonged to himself!

He stood as dumb as Quelch! The silence was awful! It could almost have been cut with a knife! "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch

faintly at last. "Did—did—did you say Loder, Bunter?"

"Oh lor'! I—I was going to put it back, sir!" mumbled Bunter. "I—I meant to put it back before Loder missed it, sir."

"Loder! You are a Sixth Form boy, and not amenable to my authority. You may please yourself about making an explanation. But you are, of course, aware that unless you can do so, it is my duty to place this matter before Dr. Locke."

"If this is indeed the paper that was in my study, sir, the matter is quite easily explained," said Loder. He was surprised himself to find that he could lie so glibly. "Yesterday, sir, I found a racing paper in the prefects' room, which someone must have left there. Apparently this is the paper. I took it away with the intention of inquiring into the matter."

"Did you report the matter, Loder?" "It was my intention, sir, to consult with Wingate, as head prefect, before doing so. I considered that it was a matter best dealt with at a prefects' meeting."

Mr. Quelch looked at Loder, long and hard. Harry Wharton closed one eye at Billy Bunter; and the fat Owl, startled by that sudden wink, gave an involuntary cackle.

"He, he, he!"

Mr. Quelch spun round at him. "Bunter! How dare you? Leave my study! You will take two hundred lines for having had this racing paper in your possession. Wharton, you may go! Both of you go at once."

Both the Removites went at once. Loder would have been glad to follow. But he had to wait.

"Loder," said Mr. Quelch at last, "I accept your statement, of course. I have a high opinion of you, and I trust you, as your headmaster does. But you will realise, Loder, that you have acted very thoughtlessly and injudiciously. You should not have kept a racing paper in your possession."

"I realise that now, sir," said Loder humbly.

"If you think it best to deal with the matter at a prefects' meeting, Loder, that is your affair. Possibly you are right! But, in any case, I should strongly advise you to deal with it without delay, and to ascertain to whom this wretched paper really belonged."

"I shall certainly take your advice, sir! There is a prefects' meeting this evening, and I shall place the matter before my fellow-prefects."

"Very well, Loder! You may take the paper away."

Loder took the paper away. Mr. Quelch was left with an extremely thoughtful expression on his face. He accepted Loder's statement, as he had said. But he had had a shock; and he could not quite get rid of a lingering doubt.

Loder went to his study—with "Sporting Snips" in his pocket. Not till he was in his study, with the door closed, did he allow his face to express his feelings. Then his look would have startled Mr. Quelch, could the Remove master have seen it.

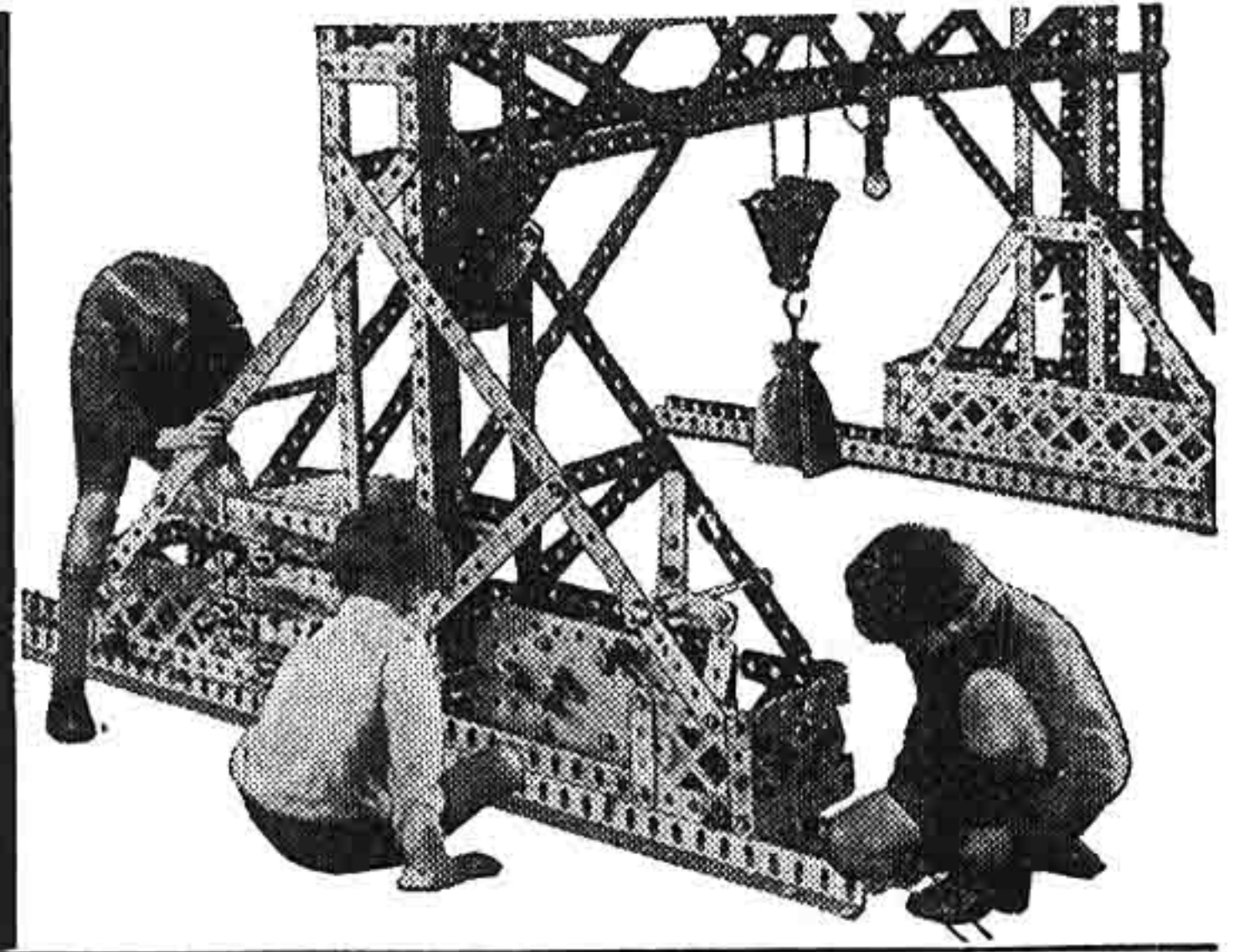
Harry Wharton strolled out into the quad with a smile on his face. He had had a narrow escape, and he knew it. And he knew, too, that he owed it to his former friend—for certainly Billy
(Continued on next page.)

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Bunter would never have arrived at Mr. Quelch's study of his own accord. It was irksome to be under an obligation to a fellow whose friendship he had spurned, and with whom he had exchanged blows.

The Co. were in a group outside the House. They looked at Wharton as he came out. He coloured, hesitated, and walked towards them.

"Thanks!" he said to Bob Cherry, in a low voice.

And he walked on quickly before Bob could make any reply.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Friends in Need!

"**S**TAGGER in, old beans!" Lord Mauleverer sat up on the sofa in his study, where he had been taking a rest after prep. He smiled amiably at the four juniors who appeared in the doorway of Study No. 12.

Maully was alone in the study; Vivian had gone down in the Rag. He rose from the sofa, suppressing a yawn. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh "staggered" in, as his lordship invited them to do. Why Maully had asked them to call on him after prep that evening they did not yet know.

"Well, give it a name, Maully!" said Bob. "Always glad to see you, but there's going to be some boxing in the Rag before dorm. So heave ahead!"

"Yaas, old bean! Shut the door!" Nugent shut the door.

"Take pews!" said his lordship. "Shan't keep you long, but don't stand; makes me tired to see a fellow standin'. I've got somethin' to say to you men—rather important. I thought you might like to scoff a cake while I was talkin'."

"Good egg; we would!" agreed Bob. "But I forgot to get in the cake—"

"You silly ass!"

"I'm always forgettin' somethin', you know—"

"Have you forgotten what you were going to say to us?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "If so, we may as well get down to the boxing."

"No," said Lord Mauleverer hastily; "I've got that ready for you! About old Wharton, you know—"

"I think I'll travel," said Johnny Bull.

"Stay where you are, old bean! I want the lot of you," said Lord Mauleverer. "Mind shuttin' up for a minute or two, Bull? I hate to ask you, but I wanted to talk myself—"

"Well, get it over!" grunted Johnny Bull gruffly.

"I'm tryin' to! I dare say you fellows have heard Bunter's cackle up and down the passage—about Wharton and a Fifth Form blighter—"

"Only Bunter's gas," said Frank un- easily. "I don't believe Wharton would join up with a Fifth Form man for any- thing of the kind!"

Grunt from Johnny Bull. "The gasfulness is probably terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"What's the good of talking rot?" demanded Johnny Bull. "The fellow's been whopped for smoking and flogged for pub-haunting. Bunter heard him fixing it up with Hilton of the Fifth to go to the races to-morrow. He's a spy- ing, prying little beast; but it's so. He hasn't brains enough to make it up. The car's going to wait for the rotters at two on Courtfield Common. They're sneaking out separately. It's all plain enough."

The other three were silent. As a matter of fact, they had little doubt about it. Evidently Lord Mauleverer, the most unsuspecting fellow in the Re- move, had none.

"That's what he's turned down foot- ball for!" added Johnny Bull scorn- fully.

"Rot!" said Nugent. Frank always seemed to have a word to say in defence of his former friend. "He's turned down Remove games; but he had agreed to play for what that idiot Temple calls the Junior Eleven—only Temple turned him down—"

"Any decent man would turn down a pub-haunting sweep."

"Bull, old bean, you talk like a picture-book!" murmured Lord Maul- everer. "But I asked you fellows to come in and hear me talk! You're buttin' in, old man."

"Yes; shut up and give Maully a chance!" said Bob.

Snort, from Johnny. But he shut up at last.

"My idea of it is this," yawned Maully. "Wharton's a good chap—one of the best—but he's made a bad break. He's got his back up, and he's had a lot of cause. I don't deny that he's playin' the giddy ox—he is! But that smokin' affair, you know, was all a mistake, and I don't really believe that he went up to the Three Fishers on the razzle, though I don't know why he went. Man who's misjudged might play the goat out of sheer cussedness—what?"

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"That's how I figure it out; and my idea is that when a fellow's in that frame of mind, bad company is very bad for him. An older fellow leadin' him into mischief is outside the limit."

"Lot of leading he wants!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yaas, glad you agree!" said Lord Mauleverer, apparently deaf to sarcasm. "Well, I'm goin' to chip in. I want you fellows to back me up. It's a frightful trouble—lot of exertion, and all that. I hate the idea! But when duty and friendship call, you know— what?"

"If you're getting at anything, will you get at it before dorm, do you think?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"I'll try! You men won't be playin' football before three to-morrow, I think. It's a quick run to the common on your bikes. We bag Hilton—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Stick him head downwards in a ditch—"

"Great pip!"

"Rag him bald-headed, and all that! After that," explained Lord Maul- everer, gazing calmly at the astonished four, "he won't feel like goin' to the races! Stands to reason that what he will really want will be a bath and a change of clobber—what?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Better thrash him, too," said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "Take a fives bat, or an Indian club, or some- thin'—what? Make a jolly old example of him. Make it clear to him that senior men are expected to keep clear of the junior Forms when they go blaggin'. I don't believe Hilton's really a bad chap! Might make him repent! Anyhow, it will make him think—what?"

"Oh, Maully!" gasped Bob.

"The thinkfulness will probably be terrific if we stick the esteemed Hilton on his absurd napper in a ridiculous ditch!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, is it a go?" asked Mauleverer. "I know it's askin' you men to take a lot of trouble. But when duty calls to brazen walls—I forget the rest—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ripping! We're on!"

"The onfulness is preposterous!"

"Maully, old man, you're a giddy jewel!" said Frank Nugent. "After a lesson like that, Hilton will let the Re- move men alone, I fancy."

"And what about Wharton?" snorted Johnny Bull. "Is he going to thank us for butting in and minding his business for him?"

"Never mind Wharton," said Maully. "Needn't mention it to Wharton! There was a bloke in a poem who did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame! We're goin' to imitate that merchant—see?"

"Well, I'd like to give that Fifth Form rotter one for his nob!" admitted Johnny Bull. "As likely as not it means a row with Wharton, though."

"Let it!" said Maully placidly. "You've had rows with him already because you couldn't keep your silly temper—"

"What?"

"And he couldn't keep his! I feel sure that Hilton won't feel like playin' the jolly old blackguard at the races after we're done with him! And if he don't go, Wharton won't go, and—and there you are! What?"

"It's a go!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather!"

The Co. were quite keen. Johnny Bull was the only dubious member; but he agreed, after a while, to join in. There was something rather attractive in the prospect of "sticking" the dandy of the Fifth head-downward in a ditch! And there was little doubt that it would warn him off!

What Hilton's motive might be for taking up a junior, or whether he had any motive at all, the Removites did not know or care; but they knew that he was doing harm, and that he ought to be stopped. And the chums of the re- move were the fellows to stop him.

Bob Cherry & Co. went down to the boxing in the Rag; and Lord Maul- everer smiled with cheery satisfaction when they were gone.

It was not Maully's way to butt into any other fellow's affairs; far from it. But Maully, alone in the Remove, had remained the scapegrace's friend; and, after deep and anxious cogitation on the subject, he had decided that it was a friend's duty to save a reckless fellow from himself, if he could. Talking to Wharton was no use—and Maully hoped that more drastic measures might prove useful.

That evening, when Wharton came down to the Rag after prep, very many glances turned curiously on him.

Billy Bunter, of course, had tattled. All the Remove knew more or less of the scapegrace's intentions for the morrow.

Nothing was to be read in Wharton's impassive face. Skinner & Co. gave him rather a wide berth that evening. A "shady sweep" was a fellow after Skinner's own heart; but a fellow who was asking for trouble like this was rather a dangerous acquaintance, in Skinner's opinion.

The Bounder gave Wharton a word of good-natured warning. But he did not expect it to produce any effect—and it did not.

"If you take my tip, you'll keep on view to-morrow," said Vernon-Smith.

"I'm not askin' you anythin'—but there's a lot of talk going round, and it may go outside the Remove. Loder would give a term's pocket-money to catch you on the hop."

"Quite!" agreed Wharton.

"Quech won't lose a chance of gettin' you bunked—"

"Not likely."

"Well, old bean, what's the good of sittin' up on your hind legs and beggin' for it?" urged the Bounder. "Look here! I'm going up to Hawkscliff tomorrow with Redwing. Come with us, and give the other thing a miss."

"Sorry—booked!"

"Ten to one you'll get spotted!"

"Think so?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"'Though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him," he quoted.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Thanks!" he answered.

The Bounder gave it up.

The following morning Mr. Quech found the "worst boy in the Form" unusually attentive and circumspect in class. There was no doubt that, in these days, the Remove master, though just, was ruthlessly unsparing in dealing with that troublesome member of his Form. But that morning, at least, he had no cause for severity—no pretext, as Wharton put it to himself. The rebel of the Remove was taking great care not to get a detention for the afternoon. After class that day his plans were unchanged. And he was in happy ignorance of the fact that Lord Mauleverer & Co. had also been making plans for the afternoon.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Hilton Goes His Own Way!

CEDRIC HILTON hastily slipped a pink paper out of sight behind a cushion as a tap came at his study door and it opened. It was Wingate of the Sixth who stepped into the study, and Hilton gave him a friendly and careless nod.

"Oh, you're here!" said Wingate.

"Sum!" answered Hilton gravely.

Wingate threw the door shut, came across the study, and sat on the edge of the table, facing Hilton. His face was serious, and the sportsman of the Fifth

wondered what was up, a little uneasily, though the careless smile did not change on his handsome face.

"There's a Form match this afternoon," said the Greyfriars captain abruptly. "Blundell's willing to play you in the Fifth Form team."

"That's good of him," said Hilton.

"Well, are you going to play?"

Hilton shook his head.

"An engagement, I suppose?" said Wingate grimly.

"Yes. Uncle of mine is comin' down to Lantham—"

"Yes, I guessed it was something out of gates," agreed Wingate. "I'm going to speak to you plainly, Hilton. Last week you went up to the Three Fishers to see the glovefight there."

"What on earth's put that idea into your head, Wingate?" inquired Hilton. "Last Wednesday I went to—"

"There was a prizefight at the Three Fishers—"

"Was there?" yawned Hilton.

"There was!" snapped the Greyfriars captain. "And you know it!"

"I don't know so much about these things as they do in the Sixth!" said Hilton, shaking his head. "But I'll take your word for it, old bean."

"I was after you, and if I'd spotted you there, I'd have reported you to the Head, and seen you kicked out of Greyfriars!"

"You're frightfully kind!"

"You got a tip somehow, and got clear! That young scoundrel, Wharton of the Remove, was caught, as you know."

"Is there a kid named Wharton in the Remove? Yes—I believe I've heard the name! Wasn't he flogged, or somethin', last week?"

"He would have been sacked if he'd been a senior man. You would have been sacked if you'd been spotted. I nearly had you!"

"No good tellin' you that you're awfully mistaken—"

"None at all!"

"Then I'll only thank you for your good intentions and kind wishes," said Hilton lazily.

"You've been going pretty near the limit this term, Hilton. It's my duty, as head prefect, to spot you, and I'm going to do it—if you keep on! I'd rather see you play up like a decent chap! Won't you take a tip from a man who means you well, and chuck it while there's time?" There was an earnest note in Wingate's voice. "You're a good man at games, when you choose. You're not really such a rotter as you make out. If you'd chuck Price, and stick to decent fellows. Why not give it a trial, Hilton?"

"Anythin' wrong with Price?" yawned Hilton. "Seems to me quite a decent fellow—a bit quiet, perhaps—"

"Well, if that's the line you take, I suppose I've wasted my time coming here," said the Greyfriars captain. "I hate to see a man going to the dogs, when he's a good man in the main. Look here, Hilton! Play football this afternoon, and chuck up that rot out of gates."

"I'd be glad," said Hilton regretfully. "But, you see, my uncle's comin' down to Lantham—"

Wingate breathed hard, and slipped from the table. He went across to the door; but there he turned, and spoke again.

"You're going your own way. I've wasted my time. Look out for the sack when I get my finger on you, that's all!"

"Much obliged!"

Wingate left the study, and slammed the door after him. Hilton yawned, and drew the pink paper into view again.

It was not yet time to start, and he was debating very deeply and thoughtfully which elusive geegee was to run away with his money that afternoon.

Once more the paper was slipped out of sight as the study door opened. But this time it was only Price

"Oh, you!" yawned Hilton. "Comin', after all?"

"No fear! And if you've got the sense of a bunny rabbit, you'll chuck it," said Stephen Price. "It's too jolly risky. Wingate—"

"Wingate will be playin' football," said Hilton, "and if he chucked footer, and looked for me, I fancy he would look Lantham way."

"And Loder?"

Hilton raised his eyebrows.

"Loder's all right. What do you mean? We know a lot of things about Loder of the Sixth! Dog don't eat dog!" Hilton laughed.

"Loder doesn't want any trouble with you, I know. But he's after that kid Wharton like grim death. Only yesterday he got him—bagged him with a racing paper, and it turned out to be Loder's own paper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hilton.

"Well, it was funny. But Loder had to spin lies by the bushel to get clear—he's had to make out that he found the paper in the prefects' room—had to pretend to be inquiring into the matter. You can guess what he feels like about it! I can tell you, he's watching that kid Wharton like a tiger—he will watch him this afternoon. If you've got to take the risk, for the love of Mike, chuck that Remove kid, and don't draw Loder on your track!"

"Can't chuck the kid now."

"You utter ass!" exclaimed Price. "What the thump do you want with the kid? What good is he?"

"None! But he did me a good turn, and I've taken him up."

"Better leave him alone, if you feel friendly towards him. Do you think it's going to do a Lower Fourth kid any good to go to the races?"

"Hadn't given it a thought."

"No, you wouldn't!" snapped Price. "Leave the kid alone!"

"Satan rebukin' sin!" said Hilton, with a smile. "Go it, old man! I like to hear you puttin' in pi-jaw! It doesn't

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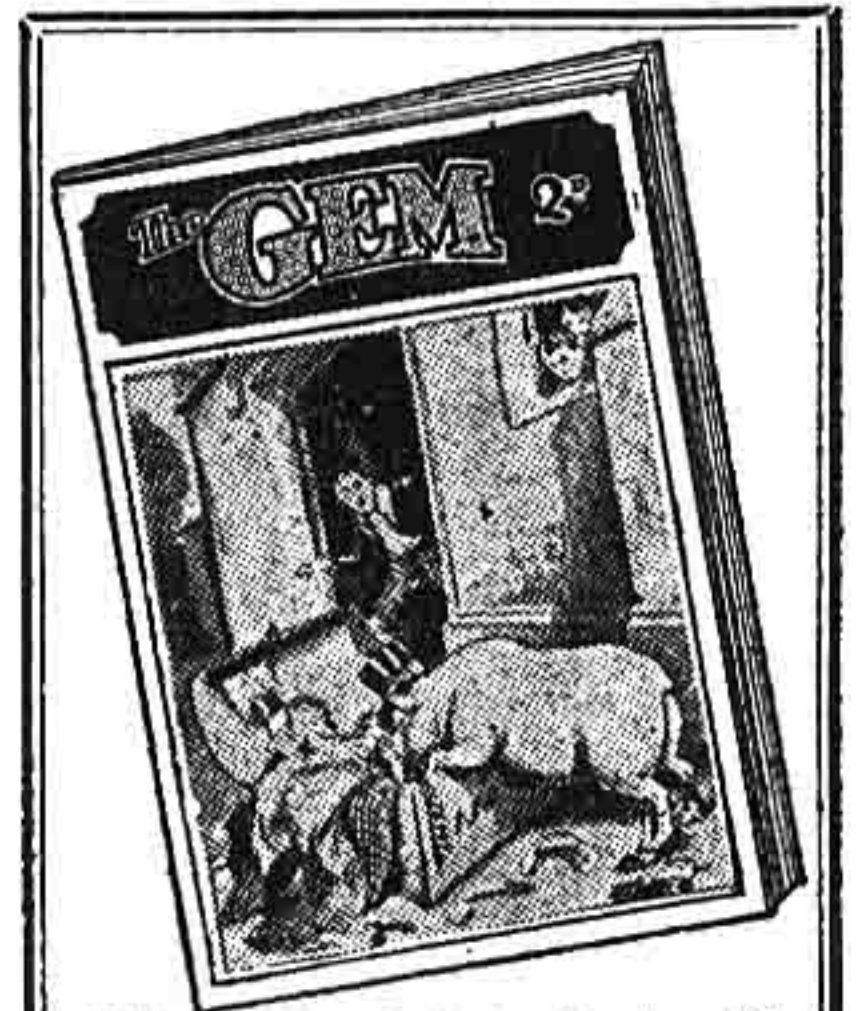
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Fully aware that it would be the first and last time he would play for the Junior Eleven, Wharton waited his opportunity. When, a few minutes later, Temple got in his way, he shouldered him off unceremoniously, and left the captain of the Fourth lying on his back, star-gazing!

suit you, but it's amusin'." He laughed. "From what I hear of the kid, he's pretty goey—a regular bad hat for his age. Birds of a feather, you know! Well, it's time I was off!" Hilton rose, and yawned. "Sure you won't come?" "Quite, thanks! See you again before you're bunked, I hope!" added Price sardonically, as Hilton sauntered out of the study.

A number of senior men standing near the door of the changing-room glanced at Hilton as he walked away from the House—well-dressed, handsome, careless, and at his ease.

Wingate and Gwynne were among them—the two prefects who had very nearly "nailed" the Fifth Form sportsman a week ago, when only Harry Wharton's warning in time had saved him.

They gave him expressive looks now. Neither of them doubted that he had some questionable excursion planned for the day; but watching a man was, of course, not to be thought of. A prefect like Gerald Loder might use such detective methods—not Wingate or his friends. Unless they had something definite to "go upon," they could not act.

But they frowned as they saw him go. Blundell of the Fifth gave a grunt.

"I'd have been glad to play that man," he said, with a nod after Hilton's disappearing, elegant form. "Price has offered; but he's no good. And—"

"I've offered!" said Coker of the Fifth, with dignity. "If you knew a good man when you saw one, Blundell—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frowns were abolished by Horace Coker's offer to play football for his Form. Sixth Form men and Fifth chuckled together.

Hilton, careless of what the footballers thought, walked out at the

gates and took the road towards Courtfield Common. In the quad he had passed Harry Wharton, but without a sign. It was understood that they were not to be seen in company—it would have drawn attention—and even the unthinking sportsman of the Fifth did not want to draw attention. Wharton was to follow after a little interval.

As he walked down the Courtfield road, at an easy and leisurely pace, Cedric Hilton was thinking with happy anticipation of the afternoon's enjoyment—little dreaming what it was to be like. Price's fears, and Wingate's remonstrances, had had no effect whatever on his volatile mind. But what awaited him on the road was likely to have effect.

Greyfriars School dropped out of sight behind him. The green expanse of Courtfield Common was in sight in the distance. The road ran between leafless woodlands at this point. Hilton, as he came swinging gracefully along, noticed a number of schoolboys hanging about among the trees. He recognised them as Remove juniors. But he gave them no special heed—till he came up with them.

Then all of a sudden five fellows rushed out of the trees and collared the Fifth Form man on all sides. Hilton heeded them then!

Taken utterly by surprise by that unexpected attack, he staggered in the grasp of Lord Mauleverer and the Co. "What the dooce—" gasped Hilton. "Bag him!"

And Hilton, promptly and effectively bagged, was dragged headlong into the trees, out of sight of the road.

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Horrid for Hilton!

"GOT him!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "The gotfulness is terrific!"

"Hold the rotter!"

"Sit on his head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hilton of the Fifth hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. He was quite a powerful fellow; but five sturdy juniors were too many for him, and he had been dragged away from the road and landed in the wood without a chance of getting away. Indeed, he was so astounded by the amazing onslaught that he hardly resisted before the Remove party got him where they wanted him.

Surprise speedily gave place to rage. He struggled savagely. But he was well held and his struggles did not avail.

"Chuck it, old bean!" advised Lord Mauleverer. "We've got you!"

"Caught in the act!" grinned Bob.

Hilton panted.

"You young scoundrels! What are you up to? Have you gone mad?" he gasped. "Let me go at once! Do you hear? By gad, I'll thrash you all round!"

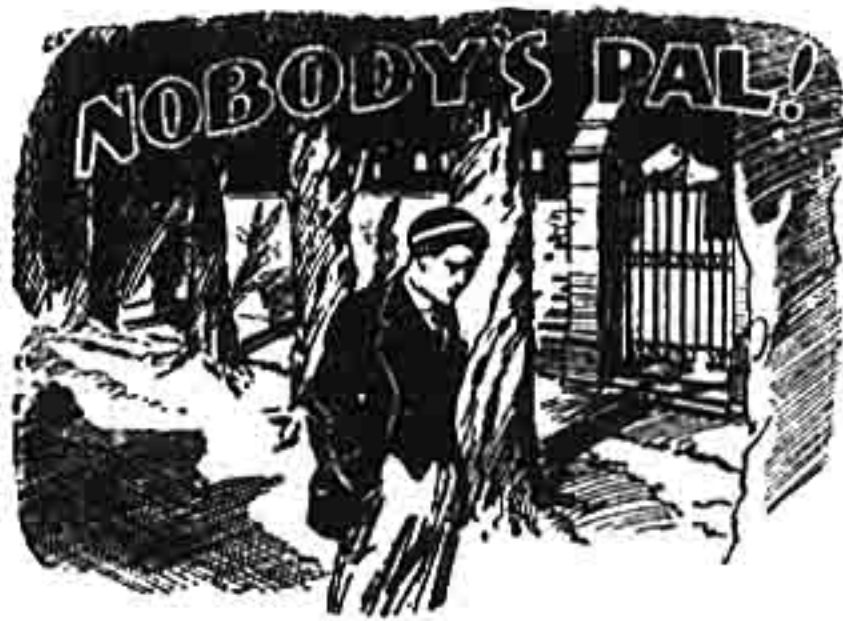
"The thrashfulness will be a boot on the other leg!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What do you mean by this?" shrieked Hilton.

He simply could not make it out. He never had anything to do with the Lower Fourth—he had no enemies in that Form that he knew of. Coker of the Fifth might be ragged by Lower boys—Coker was the man to ask for it. But nobody had ever thought of ragging

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

Hilton before. This amazing outbreak of hostility was a mystery to him.

"Mind my hat!" he panted, as Bob Cherry jerked away his shining topper. "I'm going to," said Bob.

He set the handsome hat on the ground, lifted his foot, and brought it down on the glossy crown. There was a horrible crunch.

Hilton gave a yell of rage. That handsome silk topper was more like a concertina than a hat now. Obviously he could not wear it again.

"You young hooligan—" he roared. "My dear man, that's only a beginning!" said Bob agreeably. "Mind if I take care of your collar and tie?"

"You young villain— Oh gad!" panted Hilton, as Bob dragged away his collar and tie and stamped on them.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. "Sorry, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I hate seein' a man's clobber damaged! But you've got to have it!"

Hilton made a fearful effort. His eyes were blazing with fury. So fierce and savage was his struggling that all the five juniors together had hard work to hold him.

They rolled on the ground in a sprawling, struggling heap, clutching and panting, even Mauly exerting himself.

For a full minute the struggle was a desperate one. But the heavy odds told, and Cedric Hilton was squashed down in muddy earth and trampled bracken, with Johnny Bull sitting on him and the other fellows holding him.

All of them looked rather muddy and untidy. But Hilton looked muddiest and untidiest of all. Breathless, furious, he gasped and panted.

"Try again!" suggested Bob. "Oh! Oooh!" gasped Hilton. "You young ruffians! I'll speak to your Form master about this! I'll have you up before Quelch, by gad!"

"We don't mind," said Bob cheerily. "In fact, I think it might give us a leg-up with Quelch. He doesn't approve of Greyfriars men going to the races."

Hilton started violently. "What?" he panted.

"Catch on?" grinned Bob. "I'll make it plain. You're going blagging this afternoon. You can blag and blag and blag till you get bunked, so far as we're concerned—we're not taking care of the Fifth! That's up to Prout. But you're not taking Remove men along, see?"

"You're going to let the Remove alone, Hilton," said Nugent.

"Yaas. Catch on?" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "We're givin' you a lesson, old bean, to keep you away from fellows in our Form, what?"

Hilton did "catch on" now. His muddy face was crimson with rage.

"If that young fool Wharton has been chattering—" he panted.

"Wharton's said nothin'," answered Lord Mauleverer. "He knows nothin'."

whatever about this! We're under-studyin' the sportsman who did good by stealth, an' blushed to find it fame! See? A fellow heard you talkin' to Wharton, and it got out. You're goin' to drop Wharton's acquaintance. I like the chap, you see, and I'm not goin' to see him bunked along with you. You get me, old thing?"

"Let me alone! Let me go! Hang Wharton! I'll smash you—"

"I fancy not," said Bob. "You're going to get the smashing—you're passive and we're active, see? Get that coat off him!"

Hilton struggled frantically, but his handsome coat was jerked off, and Bob Cherry proceeded to trample it in the mud. Hilton watched him, almost foaming with rage. It was obvious that he would not be able to drive to Wapshot that afternoon without a very considerable change. The chauffeur who was waiting at the corner of Oak Lane was likely to wait long!

But the juniors were not finished yet! Hilton resisted every inch of the way; but the Co. were there to give him a severe lesson, and they gave it. A little deeper in the wood was a muddy pool, fed by the autumn rains.

Leaving the crunched hat and the draggled coat and collar and tie where they lay, the Co. jerked Hilton along towards the pool. He travelled on his back, with the juniors grasping his legs. He travelled fast, and he travelled hard, letting out a succession of yells and howls.

"Don't you dare shove me in there!" he shrieked, as he rolled on the muddy edge of the pool.

"The shovefulness in is the proper caper, my esteemed, disgusting Hilton!" "In with him!" growled Johnny Bull. Splash!

Cedric Hilton rolled into a couple of feet of water and a foot of mud. A roar of laughter followed him.

He disappeared for a moment, then he rose to view, standing up to his hips in water, streaming. His face was paked with mud and ooze; his eyes glittered from the mud like a tiger's. He spluttered and gurgled.

"There's a picture for you!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Grooogh! Ooooch! Wooooch!" spluttered the hapless sportsman of the Fifth. "Oh gad! I'll smash you! Oooooogh!"

He scrambled frantically out of the pool.

A hefty shove on the chest from Bob Cherry's foot sent him spinning back again. He splashed over on his back, and disappeared once more.

There was a wild stirring and bubbling in the pool. Hilton of the Fifth came up again, clothed in mud as in a garment.

He stood gasping and gurgling.

"Think that will do, you men?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha! Had enough, Hilton?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oooooooogh!" was all Hilton could say.

"Yaas, I fancy that will do!" said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "If Hilton's satisfied—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll let Remove men alone after this, old bean!" said Bob. "Mind, we shall keep an eye on you! Any more of your little games, and you get some more of the same! Take a tip in time."

"Oooooogh!" gurgled the wretched Hilton. "Oooooch!"

"Come on, old beans—time we got back for the footer," said Bob. And leaving Hilton of the Fifth in the pool, gurgling, the juniors walked away to

the spot where they had parked their bicycles, mounted, and rode back to the school.

Hilton crawled out of the pool.

For some time he sat and gasped and panted. He picked himself up at last, shuddering at the state he was in. Cedric Hilton was the best-dressed fellow at Greyfriars—the most fastidious and the most elegant. Temple of the Fourth took him as a model, regarding him with admiring envy. Cecil Reginald Temple would hardly have cared to look like him now! The most dilapidated tramp within the county borders would have looked quite tidy and respectable beside Hilton of the Fifth just then.

The afternoon's excursion was off, that was certain. Racing would be over at Wapshot long before the Fifth Form sportsman could get into a state for the trip. But Hilton was hardly thinking of that, or of the man waiting with the car. He was only thinking of the awful, horrible, unspeakable state he was in. As for Wharton, if he thought of him, it was only with the desire to kick him for having brought this upon him!

For a good hour Hilton of the Fifth was busily engaged in cleaning himself and his clothes before he ventured out of the wood. After the best he could do he still looked a fearful object. And he had a mile of public road to traverse before he could get out of sight! With feelings that were too deep for words, the wretched sportsman started for the school at last, and had the pleasure—or otherwise—of being stared at by everyone he passed on the road. That mile back to Greyfriars was the longest mile Hilton of the Fifth had ever covered.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Change in the Programme!

HARRY WHARTON sauntered down to the gates—apparently oblivious of the fact that a crowd of Remove men had curious eyes on him.

Billy Bunter giggled, and the Bounder shrugged his shoulders. Squiff and Toddy, Tom Brown and Ogilvy, and other fellows frowned. All the Remove knew what the scapegrace had "on" that afternoon, owing to the fat Owl's tattling; but the scapegrace evidently did not care what they thought about the matter.

Some of the fellows, who still wished him well, were thinking of the risk he was running. There had been so much talk in the Remove that it was more likely than not that some of it had been heard outside the Form—and it was well known that Loder of the Sixth was all eyes and ears, so far as Harry Wharton was concerned. No fellow was likely to "sneak"; but walls have ears in such cases. Wharton certainly could not have been ignorant of his danger, but his manner was cool and casual as he sauntered to the gates as if he had not a care on his mind.

Temple, Dabney, and Fry of the Fourth were in the gateway. They were engaged in argument. Wharton smiled as he passed them. Fry, he knew, was very keen to get him into the Junior Eleven, which was playing the Remove that afternoon. Fry was one of the few fellows in Temple's ineffable team who really played Soccer, and was keen on the game. In this matter he had the support of other fellows who were not wholly satisfied with Cecil Reginald's lofty and autocratic manners and customs. And Fry, backed by Dabney,

had succeeded in getting Temple screwed up to the point of speaking to Wharton and graciously offering him, after all, a place in the game.

"But the fellow's a pub-hauntin' sweep!" Temple was saying. "We don't want that sort of rotter."

"We want goals!" snapped Fry.

"I can shoot goals!" said Temple with dignity.

"Why don't you, then?" demanded Fry.

Temple did not deign to answer that.

"Look here, here the man comes," said Fry. "Bag him before he goes out. He'll be glad to play—he's on scrappin' terms with his own Form! Playing a Remove man proves that we're the genuine Junior Eleven—those young sweeps can't make out we're only a Form team when we play Remove men."

That was touching the right chord! At that point Cecil Reginald Temple surrendered. And he called to Wharton as he passed:

"Here! I say, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton turned a deaf ear and walked on.

"Here, Wharton!" shouted Temple angrily.

Wharton, like Felix, kept on walking! Temple's change of mind had come too late! The scapegrace would rather—a thousand times rather—have played football than have joined Hilton of the Fifth on his disreputable excursion to Wapshot. But he could not turn the man down without a word. He walked on, leaving Fry and Dabney staring and Temple crimson with mortification.

On the Courtfield road Wharton walked rather quickly. He had given

Hilton plenty of time to get ahead, and had no doubt that the Fifth Form man was nearly at the rendezvous by that time.

Half-way to Courtfield Common he stood aside for a bunch of cyclists to pass him, riding towards the school.

He gave Lord Mauleverer a nod in return for a cheery wave of the hand, taking no note of the other four fellows. He wondered a little to see them out on their bikes just before a football match, but assuredly it never crossed his mind how they had been occupied.

They grinned at one another as they rode on.

Wharton walked on towards the common. Hilton, as he supposed, was well ahead of him, and he did not dream that, had he turned off the road into the wood, he would have come on
(Continued on next page.)

READING through the letters which I am so happy to receive, it is clear that many readers of the MAGNET find their biggest football difficulty to be concerned with accurate heading of the ball. Indeed, I believe many boys would be glad if a suggestion which was put forward some time ago was adopted: to make the heading of the ball a football offence.

It was suggested that if heading of the ball ceased to be allowed, then footballers would make greater efforts to keep the object on the floor. Now keeping the ball on the floor is a very desirable end, and every good football team strives to carry out this ideal. All the same I would not like to see heading of the ball barred from the game. Some of the most delightful goals I have ever seen scored were the result of most skilful headers, and there are footballers who can "hit" the ball with their head as accurately and almost as hard as they can with their boot!

THE ART OF HEADING I

IN any case, ability to head the ball still remains one of the assets of the real footballer, so there is nothing for my puzzled young readers to do, but master the art of heading. The first thing to be borne in mind, when heading, is to keep your eyes on the ball. Not easy, this!

You can't head a football accurately if you shut your eyes when the ball comes near.

Learn to keep your eyes open; insist on doing this, and then get the ball on the forehead or the side of the head. Don't head it with the top of the head, that is dangerous in the first place, and in the second place accuracy is impossible if the top of the head is used.

One of the best headers in big football is James Dunne, the centre-forward of Sheffield United, and in the hope that he might be able to pass on some helpful hints, I asked him how he does it: how he became so proficient in the art of heading.

Dunne had some very interesting things to say about this heading business. He told me that he started to become proficient in the art of heading a ball when he was a lad in Dublin, and that he learnt how to do it by practising with a small rubber ball.

Throw the ball against a wall, was the advice Dunne gave me to pass on, and then head it as it comes down, trying to keep up the process without letting the small rubber ball touch the ground.

After mastering the small ball and the habit of keeping the eyes open, the next

SOCCER QUERIES ANSWERED HERE.



If you're in doubt over any Soccer problem write to "Linesman," c/o MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Our special sporting contributor will be only too pleased to give you his expert opinion.

step is to use an ordinary football. Dunne assured me that when, as a youth, he was playing with New Brighton, he and a couple of other players used to go out on the pitch and practise heading the ball backwards and forwards to each other. The same idea is in use at the Arsenal ground. Indeed, the players there have a little weekly competition. They go out in pairs, and the winners of the weekly competition are the players who head the ball to each other the greatest number of times without it touching the ground.

CLIMBING THE FOOTBALL LADDER!

QUESTIONS are often asked me by young readers concerning the way to get on in football in a general sense. These boys are progressing up the football ladder, advancing through one team to another which is playing in a higher class of football. It may be of assistance to such boys if I set down some golden rules which were given to a young player by his father.

The young player was Harry McMenemy, the inside-left of Newcastle United who, as you may remember, was the youngest player in last season's Cup Final. When his medal was handed to him he was only twenty years of age. McMenemy's father was one of the greatest footballers Scotland ever produced. It was natural, therefore, that the boy should want to climb the football ladder—follow in father's footsteps.

When young Harry got his chance to go to Newcastle his father gave him some very good advice, some golden rules. I pass them on to you here.

Put your whole heart into the game and never lose your head in the hottest of contests. Better to hold the ball and run the risk of losing it than merely pass it to an opponent for the sake of getting rid of it. Avoid the obvious, and endeavour to take your opponent unawares. If your side is losing,

don't get flustered. The natural game pays best. Keep going all the time, right to the final whistle. A match is not lost until the final whistle sounds.

I think those rules are quite good ones for young players who are anxious to get on in the game.

SUBSTITUTES FOR INJURED PLAYERS!

A THOUGHTFUL question is put to me by a reader concerning the rules of the game. It refers to the allowance of substitutes for injured players. Don't you think it would be fairer, queries a reader, that when a player is so badly injured that he has to go off the field, a substitute were allowed to take his place?

I am inclined to answer that question in the affirmative. There is a sense of unfairness about a game when one side has to struggle along with ten players, or even less, against eleven.

However, the authorities have laid it down that substitutes for injured players must not be allowed in competitive football. They think there is a risk of a substitute rule being abused. What I would certainly like to see, as an experiment, is substitutes allowed for injured goal keepers. On one Saturday recently, three goalkeepers of first-class teams had to go off while their matches were in progress. A player quite unaccustomed to keeping goal—which is a different task from that of any other player on the field, had to go between the posts.

I think the rule-makers might allow substitutes for injured goal-keepers without the slightest risk. A goalkeeper doesn't get tired, and no goalkeeper would have an excuse for going off merely because he had been overworked.

"LINESMAN."

the Fifth Form sportsman trying to get himself clean on the edge of the woodland pool. Hilton was out of sight, and the junior passed on without dreaming that he was there.

He reached the common, where the car stood waiting at the corner of Oak Lane. The chauffeur stood beside the car, smoking a cigarette, but there was no sign of Cedric Hilton.

Wharton had no doubt that this was the car, but it was surprising not to see Hilton there. He approached the chauffeur, who touched his cap, looking at him rather curiously.

"You're waiting here for a Greyfriars man?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"He hasn't come yet?"

"Haven't seen him, sir."

"Oh, all right; I'll wait!"

Sitting in the car would have been rather too conspicuous. Wharton strolled a little distance up the lane, which led towards Popper Court and the river. He did not go out of sight of the car, and a few minutes later he looked round and saw a Greyfriars man. It was not Hilton, however. It was Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

Wharton started at the sight of him. He saw Loder glance curiously at the waiting car, and then look about him. He saw Loder's eyes rest on him for a moment or two. Then the prefect walked on with a casual air, as if not interested.

The scapegrace of Greyfriars did not need telling, however, that Loder was very much interested indeed. There had been rather too much talk in the Remove—and Loder had heard something! It was plain that he had followed Wharton from the school.

Wharton's lip curled. Spying and watching and shadowing—that was Loder's way. But his face became grave. Loder had disappeared over the common—but the junior did not believe that he was gone. He must have had a pretty accurate idea that Wharton was there to go in the ear, and was waiting for someone else to arrive. If he was watching, he would see Hilton when he came. Certainly he could not follow the car on foot, and Wapshot was a good many miles away. But it was clear that there was danger in the air. Loder either knew or suspected, that was a certainty.

It made no difference to the reckless junior's resolve. He was out to take chances, and he was going to take them. And as the minutes passed he wondered whether, after all, Loder was taking the trouble to hug cover and watch. There was no sign to be seen of him, at all events.

Minutes passed—but Hilton did not appear.

It was half-past two now—the time of the first race at Wapshot. Hilton had intended to be present at that race. What was delaying him was a mystery—Wharton had seen him leave the school, and if he had loitered, the junior should have passed him on the road. It seemed as if Cedric Hilton had vanished into space after walking out of Greyfriars.

Wharton began to get restless.

He was far from keen on the excursion—he would have been glad to get out of it, but that his pride forbade him to appear "funky." But the fellow could not expect him to hang about like this! There was still time to get back to Greyfriars for the football. Surely half an hour was long enough to wait for anybody?

He walked back to the car at last.

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The Courtfield chauffeur was leaning on the car and yawning. He spoke as the junior came up.

"Look here, sir, if the young gentleman's changed his mind—" he said. "Two o'clock was the time."

"I suppose he must have," said Harry, puzzled. He looked along the high-road, but there was no sign of Hilton. "I can't make it out!"

He made up his mind.

"Look here, I'm not waiting any longer," he said. "If he's coming, I shall meet him on the road. If he turns up, give him a message—tell him I was fed-up with hanging about."

The chauffeur grinned.

"Yes, sir."

Wharton started back to the school. He was, as he had said, fed-up—and at the same time, relieved. He had kept his word to Hilton—it was the Fifth Form man who had failed to keep the appointment. If Hilton was coming, he would meet him somewhere on the road, and could turn back with him. At the bottom of his heart, he hoped that he would not meet Hilton.

There was a rumble of wheels on the road behind him, and old Joyce, the woodcutter, looked down at him.

"Lift, sir?"

"Yes, rather, and thanks!" said Harry.

He climbed actively into the woodcutter's cart. If Hilton was on the road, he could get down again—but he was conscious of a deep and heartfelt wish that Hilton was not on the road. What the fellow was up to, where he was, and what he was doing, was a mystery; but Wharton cared little, so long as he missed him. If he missed him, the lift in Joyce's cart meant getting back to Greyfriars in ample time for the football. A few civil words to the ineffable Cecil Reginald would soothe his ruffled dignity, and football would be the order of the day.

And he did miss Hilton! That hapless sportsman was still in the wood, wearily scraping off mud from his person and his clothes when the woodcutter's cart rumbled by, and rolled on towards the school. It was a quarter of an hour later that the muddy and weary sportsman emerged from the wood and took his dismal way to Greyfriars.

Before that time, Harry Wharton, with a cheery word of thanks to old Joyce, dropped off the cart at the school gates, and walked in. Price of the Fifth, who was lounging in the quad, sighted him, stared at him, and came quickly towards him.

"Haven't you gone, after all?" he asked, puzzled.

"No!" snapped Wharton, curtly enough.

"Hilton's gone alone?"

"I don't know where he's gone—he never turned up, and I got fed-up and came back."

Price stared. Leaving him to stare, Wharton walked on towards the House. Price walked down to the gates, and stood staring out into the road, perplexed and mystified. It was perplexing and mystifying enough to Wharton as well as Price; but Wharton, at least, gave it no thought. Whatever it was that had happened, he was glad of it—glad to be shut of the whole thing. And he went to look for Temple of the Fourth—with nice, pleasant, civil words ready for the great Cecil Reginald; careless whether Cedric Hilton had gone to Wapshot or gone to Jericho, so long as he got a game of football that bright frosty afternoon.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

On the Ball!

"YOUR own fault!"

"Look here, Fry—"

"Why couldn't you keep a good man when you had him?"

"Insultin' rotter, walkin' off when a fellow called to him—"

"Oh, rats!" growled Fry.

Temple of the Fourth sniffed.

Cecil Reginald Temple did not "see" making all this fuss about the new recruit to the "Junior" Eleven. It was true that Wharton could shoot goals—and that, to most footballers, was a consummation devoutly to be wished. But goals, after all, weren't everything—in Cecil Reginald's opinion, at least.

Besides, Temple fancied that he could shoot goals himself—so far as goals went! Temple always fancied that, before a game! During the game he generally discovered that it was only a fancy. After the game he had to realise sadly that somehow the goals hadn't materialised!

Fry was cross. Fry fully supported the claim that Temple's eleven was the real, genuine Junior Eleven of Greyfriars; all imitations spurious, so to speak. They were the goods; the Remove crowd only a fag Form team! This being the case, it was a rotten state of affairs for the Remove to walk all over them at Soccer—as the Remove always did! With the best man taken out of the Remove and put into Temple's team, matters might have looked up a little—and Fry attached more importance to goals than Temple did. So he was cross, and he was annoyed, and he let his great chief have the benefit of it.

It was nearly time to go down to the changing-room. The three were in their study in the Fourth at the moment. Harry Wharton, coming up the passage, heard them through the open doorway, and smiled.

"We shall beat those fags, I fancy!" said Temple loftily.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"We might have, with that man Wharton kicking goals for us," growled Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney again.

Dabney always agreed with the last speaker. It saved the trouble of thinking.

"Well, the man won't play!" snapped Temple. "Walked off like an insultin' fag when I called him! That's that!"

"If you hadn't turned him down—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Hem!" There was a gentle cough in the doorway. The three Fourth-Formers looked round and saw Harry Wharton.

Temple gave him a rather inimical glance. It was true that his claims to be junior captain of Greyfriars were strengthened by the adhesion of a fellow who had been captain of the Remove. It was true that a really first-class man in the team might make a lot of difference in the game. And Temple, though he thought more of clothes than of football, would have liked to mop up the Remove for once. But he did not see making a lot of fuss of a Remove fag—neither did he want to be completely put in the shade by a mere follower. But Edward Fry gave the newcomer a hearty greeting.

"Hallo, Wharton! Look here, we want you this afternoon, if you care to play. Temple was going to tell you so when you went out, only you didn't catch on. Is it a go?"



In the midst of a laughing crowd of big seniors, Wharton was hustled and kicked along the passage to the head of the stairs. "Now out, you young sweep!" cried Coker magisterially.

"Ready if wanted!" said Wharton amicably.

Fry gave Temple an expressive look. The great Cecil Reginald made up his mind to it.

"Well, it's a go, then," he said. "You're in the team, Wharton! I said I'd give you a trial, and I jolly well will!"

"Thanks!" said Wharton gravely. "I'll try to do you credit, Temple."

Fry suppressed a chuckle. Temple rather thawed. The fellow was civil, anyhow, and seemed to understand that Cecil Reginald had to be treated with respect.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "I dare say you'll be useful. Let's go an' get changed, you men."

They went down to the changing-room. Most of the junior footballers were there already. Squiff, the new captain of the Remove, gave Wharton a rather grim look as he came in with Temple & Co. Some of the Remove men shrugged their shoulders, and exchanged glances. Bob Cherry and his friends smiled. They knew why Wharton was there—though Wharton himself, as a matter of fact, did not. And though they were not exactly pleased to see him hung up against his own Form, they were at least glad that he was going to play football.

Wharton took no notice of the Removites. He was on friendly terms with very few of the Remove these days. He had been turned out of the captaincy of the Form, with hardly a dissentient voice. He had said no word on the subject, but his actions showed that it rankled. Squiff had tried hard to keep him in the Remove game, though

no longer as captain; but on that the scapegrace had been adamant. And since Wharton had acquired his new reputation as a "shady sweep" and a "pub-haunter," the Remove skipper was by no means anxious for him to return to the fold. The less he had to do with him, at present, the better Squiff liked it.

Harry Wharton went down to the ground with Temple & Co. There was a grim determination in his breast to play the game of his life, and let the Remove see what they had lost. It would be a triumph for him, if, with his aid, Temple pulled off a win. A triumph over his own Form, and over his old friends, was not the sort of triumph that would have appealed to him once. But it appealed to him now, and very strongly. Right or wrong, he was going on his own wayward course; and it was something to prove that he could not be disregarded.

He looked over the men, when the teams lined up, with a keen eye. Headstrong stubbornness had not deprived him of his judgment. There was a chance, at least, for the Fourth. Fry was a good forward; Scott was a first-class half; Wilkinson was a fairly good goalkeeper and Wharton, at centre-forward, was himself the best man on the field. The rest were footballers of Temple's own stamp, and of little use.

But the Remove were not at full strength. They had lost Wharton, the best forward in the Form, and the Bounder was not playing; he had gone out for the afternoon with Redwing. Nugent had taken the Bounder's place, and though he was a keen and reliable player, he was nowhere near Smithy's form. Mark Linley was also out of the

game, his place being filled by Hazeldene. Squiff had not expected any more trouble than usual in beating the Fourth, after hearing that the ineffable Temple had dropped Wharton. Now that he saw the best junior forward at Greyfriars in the enemy's ranks, Squiff wished that he had put a stronger team into the field.

The whistle went, and the game started. And from the kick-off it was made clear that there was a new spirit in the ranks of the Fourth. Squiff was in his accustomed place, in goal, and in a game with the Fourth, which the Remove looked on merely as practice, he did not expect to have a lot to do. This time he had plenty to do. There was a quite unusual break-away on the part of the enemy, and two of their forwards—Wharton and Fry—came up the field with the ball. Edward Fry centred neatly to Wharton, who ran in and kicked, leaving Hazeldene on his back, and winding round Johnny Bull; and Squiff, mighty man as he was between the sticks, was beaten by that swift shot. It grazed his finger-tips and went into the net.

"Goal!" gasped the Fourth. Harry Wharton smiled.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Some Game!

"GOAL!" Fourth Form men round the field shouted. It was first blood to Temple & Co. in the first ten minutes of the game. Squiff frowned as he tossed out the ball.

It was a Remove goal, though it was taken for the Fourth. If the scapegrace of Greyfriars really had gone to the dogs, as most of the Form believed, it had evidently made no difference to his game.

"Good man, Wharton!" chuckled Fry. "What price that, Temple?"

Temple did not look enthusiastic. A goal was a goal! Even Cecil Reginald admitted that much. But he did not quite like a Lower Fourth man coming into the team like a whale among the minnows. However, even Temple could not quite rag a man for capturing a goal.

"Not so bad!" he said.

The teams lined up again. Hobson of the Shell, who was referee, blew the whistle. More fellows were gathering on Little Side now. The news was spreading that Harry Wharton, formerly captain of the Remove, was playing against his Form, and scoring goals. The scapegrace of Greyfriars had been so much in the limelight that term that anything he did was sure of getting attention. Nearly all the Fourth and the Remove gathered to watch, and a good many Shell fellows, and fags of the Third and Second. Lord Maul-everer exerted himself to the extent of coming down to the field, and even Billy Bunter rolled along. Wharton was getting a good audience.

The game went on with unusual vim. The Remove attacked hotly, eager to wipe out that reverse. But they found the Fourth unusually tough. Early success is inspiring, and something of Wharton's keen and determined spirit was caught by the rest. There were three good men in the team, and they backed up Wharton's play for all they were worth. Even the slackers and dawdlers put their best foot foremost. Even Cecil Reginald Temple played up with something like energy, anxious to demonstrate to his own men, and to the world generally, that he was not really outshone by this new man in the side.

The game went on hard and fast, without a score for either side, and the Fourth were still one up, when the whistle went for half-time.

Harry Wharton, it was true was not playing his usual game. A capable team, where every man knew his place, and could do his own job, was the team to which he was accustomed. That state of affairs did not obtain in Temple's eleven. Three of the forwards and two of the halves were duds, and spent a good deal of their time on their backs, looking at the sky. It fell to Wharton to do other men's work as well as his own, and he did it well.

In his days as captain of the Remove, he had often had to tell the Bouncer that Soccer was not a one-man game. Now he found himself playing the Bouncer's game, only more so. To let Temple, for instance, have the ball, in order to make a present of it to the other side, did not seem useful. But Cecil Reginald, who was loftily unaware that he was in the habit of making the other side presents, could not approve. On one occasion he had called out, quite distinctly. "Here — to me!" — and Wharton had seemed deaf. No football skipper could be expected to like that sort of thing.

Naturally, in the interval, Cecil Reginald had something to say, and he said it. Perhaps Temple really could not be expected to recognise the fact that he was an ass, and that the further he kept off the ball the better it was for the game.

"This will hardly do, Wharton!" said Cecil Reginald, with severity. "Bargin' and rushin' are all very well for a

fag team—I dare say they like it in the Remove. But we play footer!"

"Oh, quite!" assented Wharton.

"I believe you were a skipper, of sorts, in the Remove. Don't fancy you're skipper of this team."

"Not at all!" agreed Wharton.

"Baggin' the ball and keepin' it, isn't Soccer!" further elucidated Cecil Reginald. "A selfish game never pays."

"Hardly."

"Soccer," said Temple, "isn't a one-man game! See?"

"I see!"

It was exactly what Wharton had said to the Bouncer, many a time and oft. Smithy had a way of regarding the leather as his own private property, not to be parted with. But the circumstances were different. Soccer, most decidedly, was not a one-man game—unless there were only one man in the side who could play it. Then it was.

"Well, if you see, all right," said Temple suspiciously. "But not so much of your bargin' about, and hoppin' all over the field. And if I tell you anythin', I expect you to sit up and take notice, see?"

"Quite."

Wharton's answers were carefully polite. As a skipper himself, in his time, he could understand Cecil Reginald's feelings. Also he did not want to quarrel with Cecil Reginald. But he did want the game to be won, and it was clear that if he played up to his captain, the game was a goner. It was rather a difficult position.

Temple had made it clear that he expected better things in the second-half. He was blissfully unaware of the fact that what he called Wharton's "bargin' about" had kept the Fourth one ahead on the game. He had a very suspicious and distrustful eye on his new recruit. A coke-hammer could not have knocked it into Temple's head that his new recruit could have made rings round him with his eyes shut. Temple was already doubting his wisdom in yielding to Fry's urgency and playing this cheeky, obstreperous fag!

Fry got away with the ball, and centred to Wharton, right up before the Remove goal. Temple, though he had bellows to mend in the second-half, was up on Wharton's other side. There was a chance for the centre-forward to run in and shoot, if Temple could have seen it. But Temple could not see anything but the eclipse of his own importance.

"Pass!" he shouted. "You hear me, Wharton—pass that ball?"

Wharton obeyed his skipper.

Temple's intention was to send the ball in from the wing, beating Squiff hollow in his citadel. He was quite surprised when Johnny Bull took it away from his foot, and sent it whizzing to the half-way line. Wharton was not surprised. But Temple was quite astonished, and he stood and stared. He was still standing and staring when the Remove forwards raced the ball down the field, and banged it into the Fourth-Form goal, well clear of the goalie.

Wharton set his lips.

If that was to be the game, he knew that he might as well sit down in touch and take a rest. From that moment on Wharton turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to his skipper. If Cecil Reginald did not like it, Cecil Reginald could lump it.

The score was equal now, owing to the present that Temple had generously made to the Remove. But when the ball was kicked off again, Wharton's "bargin'" tactics were renewed and intensified. He even took the ball from Cecil Reginald's own majestic foot—just

in time to save it from Hurree Singh, it was true; but Temple did not even know that it was in danger. He put in a run up the field that drew cheers from all the onlookers, getting through like a knife through cheese, and slamming the ball into the net a second before he was charged over.

"Goal!"

"Bravo!"

"Good man!" gasped Bob Cherry. "My hat! Temple's got a good man now, if he knew how to use him!"

That, unfortunately, was exactly what Temple did not know!

Temple was pink with wrath.

Goals were goals—even Temple did not deny that goals were goals! But this was the limit!

Temple had been going to score a goal in a proper, scientific way—real Soccer! Wharton had taken the ball from him, and scored by a howling fluke! That was Temple's view of the matter! Did a howling fluke justify such conduct? It did not!

"Wharton!" Temple stuttered with wrath. "You cheeky sweep! Do you call that football?"

"I call it a goal!" said Harry.

"I've told you what I think of your bargin' and rushin'. If you fancy you're skipper of this side, forget it! Any more of your cheek, and I'll send you off the field, by gad! I mean that!"

"Oh, shut up, you silly ass!" Wharton's patience, as well as Temple's, seemed near breaking point.

"Eh?" gasped Temple. "What?"

"You're talking like a fool! Shut up!"

"Why, by gad—I—I—" Temple stuttered.

"Line up, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Fry. "Keep your temper, Temple."

"Do you think I'm goin' to stand that?" bawled Temple. "The fellow's been kicked out of his own team for his dashed cheek, and—"

"Look here, get on with the game!" growled Scott of the Fourth.

"Any more dashed cheek from you, Wharton—"

"Oh, ring off!" snapped Wharton. "Hold your silly tongue, and save your breath for the game—or, rather, keep out of the way; that's the best thing you can do!"

Even Wharton would hardly have said that that was the way for a footballer to talk to his skipper. Temple spluttered with rage.

"Look here, cheese it, Wharton," said Fry. "For goodness' sake, let's get going. This is a football match, Temple, not a jawbone solo."

"Look here—"

"Oh, get on with it!"

Cecil Reginald somehow swallowed his wrath. The ball was kicked off again. Perhaps even Cecil Reginald realised that it would not do to lose a man from the side. But his mind was made up that this was not only the first, but the last time that Harry Wharton would play for the Junior Eleven.

Wharton could not fail to be fully aware of that; and any consideration he had hitherto shown Temple was now thrown to the winds. When, a few minutes later, Temple got in his way, he shouldered him unceremoniously off shouldered him off unceremoniously back, star-gazing.

There were still twenty minutes to go, and most of the Fourth were winded. Scott, at centre-half, was the only man who seemed to have any beef left, and Fry was the next best. The rest were

nowhere; and the Remove men came down like wolves on the fold!

Harry Wharton played hard, putting up the game of his life; but his hope of pulling off a win was gone now. Soccer, after all, was not a one-man game, and could not be! The ball went in, and the score was level—two all! It did not remain level.

Five minutes later, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh slammed it in again—a few more minutes, and Frank Nugent put it in—and yet again, it went in from the foot of Ogilvy. Five—two was the result when the final whistle blew!

The Remove men grinned as they went off the field. The defeated team did not grin. Most of them were nearly crawling. Temple himself had hardly breath enough left to tell Wharton what he thought of him. However, he contrived to do so.

"You cheeky rotter!" said Temple savagely. "You've lost the match for us, with you bargin' and kickin' and rushin'. Chucked it away, by gad! I was a fool to play you! You're chucked out of this team, see? Kicked out! Got that?"

Harry Wharton did not reply in words. His temper was at white heat. That defeat he had hoped to inflict on his old team had not come off. His new career as a footballer in the Junior Eleven was knocked on the head. Nothing had gone right—everything had gone wrong! Temple's words were the last straw!

Instead of answering in words, Wharton reached out at Temple, and grasped his nose between a finger and thumb.

He tweaked it—hard!

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Temple. "Whoooooh! Oooooogh!"

"Now sit down, you fathead!" snapped Wharton.

With a swing of his arm, he sent the captain of the Fourth spinning. Temple sat down with a crash.

Harry Wharton walked off the field. He was done with football for the Fourth now! There was no doubt about that—no possible probable shadow of doubt—no possible doubt whatever!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Fracas in the Fifth!

"He, he, he!"

Thus William George Bunter.

Bunter cackled! Plenty of other fellows grinned.

Harry Wharton's cheeks burned as he came across the Remove landing and went to Study No. 1. Squiff was standing in the passage with a group of the Remove footballers, and they all smiled.

Many of the Remove men had been irritated to see Harry Wharton in the ranks of the Junior Eleven. But the outcome of the match had banished irritation and caused hilarity.

Obviously, it had been Wharton's aim, if he could to give the Fourth a win over the Remove—but in spite of all his herculean efforts, the game had gone as usual; the Fourth beaten by a wide margin.

The final scene had made the Remove men chortle as they came off the field. A member of a team tweaking his captain's nose was rather an uncommon sight. And the rebel of Greyfriars was now out of Temple's team, as he was out of Squiff's; and it looked as if he had to be out of football altogether.

As Skinner remarked, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall! The upshot of the affair made the Remove smile; and Wharton had the pleasure, or otherwise, of seeing them smiling as he went to his study.

The door slammed.

Through the door he heard a chuckle from the passage. He threw himself into a chair with a moody brow.

He was tired; he had gone "all out" in that rotten game, trying to pull it out of the fire. Temple had been an exasperating ass; but he was not quite satisfied with his own action in pulling Temple's nose. Really it was one of those things that weren't done.

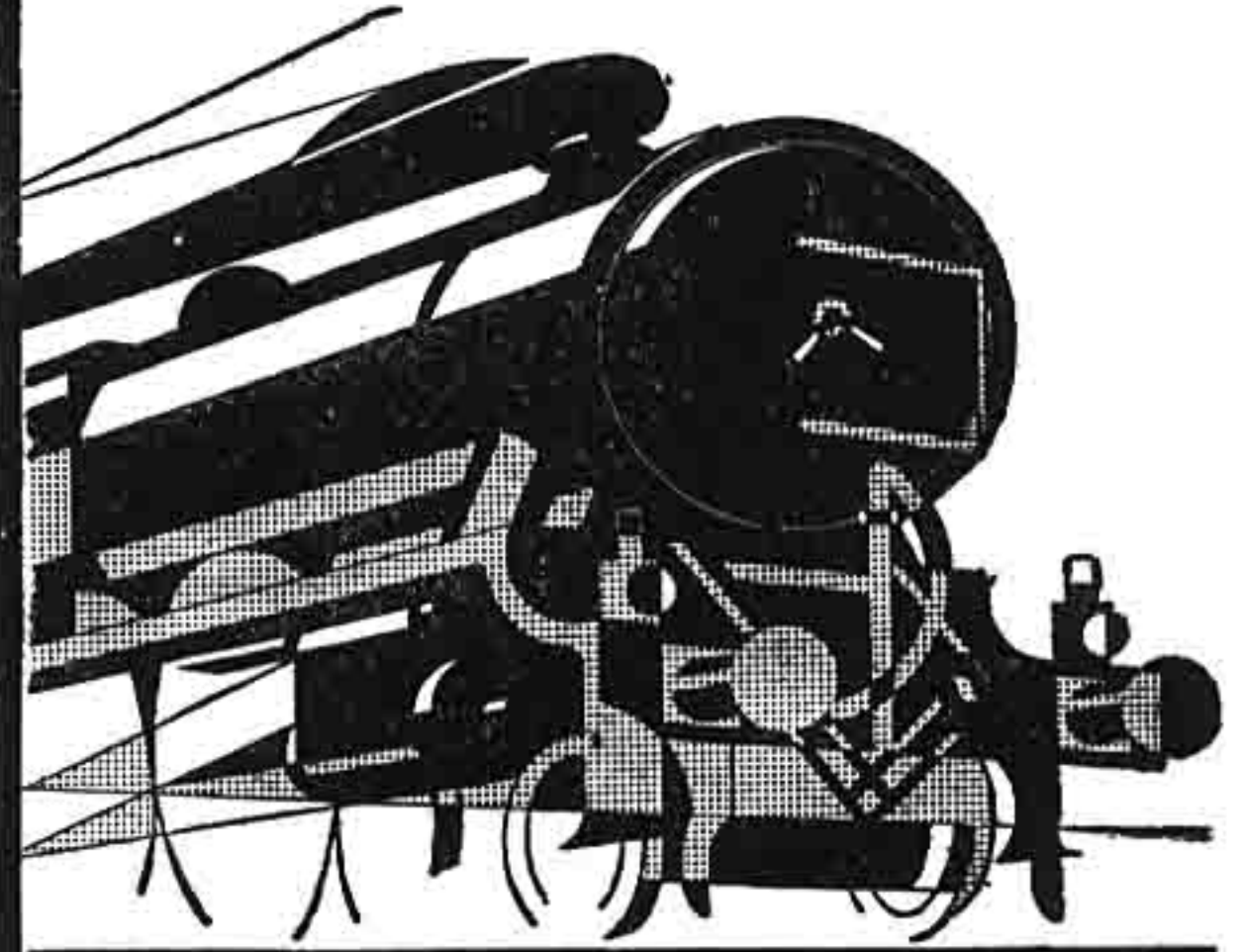
Anyhow, that door was closed to him now; the Fourth did not want to have anything more to do with him. Even Fry was not likely to say a word for him again. And the Remove were cackling over it! He had set himself against the Form; and his disappointment and chagrin entertained them. He was moody, irritable, despondent; and he would have been glad to see a friendly face look in at the door.

But he had hardly a friend in his Form. The Bounder was friendly, in his way—but Wharton certainly did not want to see his sardonic grin. Lord Mauleverer would have been welcome—but Mauly did not look in. Wharton could not go to Mauly's study; as likely as not, his lordship had some of the Co. to tea, and he did not want to butt into them.

In the feeling of dispirited loneliness that came over him,

(Continued on next page.)

BOYS, START A RAILWAY OF YOUR OWN!

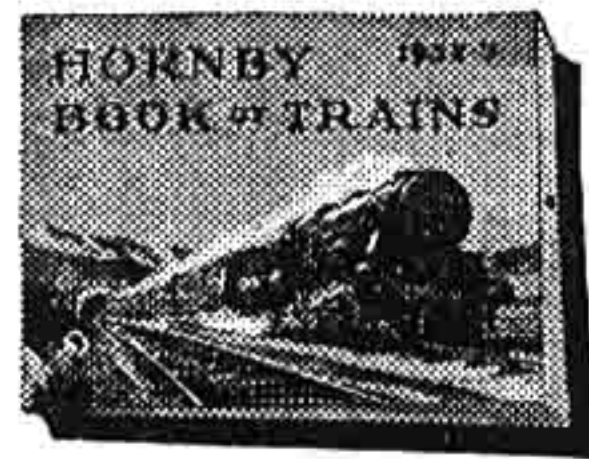


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he might have read a warning that pride and anger had hurried him into the wrong path. Instead of that, he was thinking that, if he had no friends in his own Form, he had friends—or one friend, at least—in another Form! He remembered Hilton.

He had been glad to miss Hilton that afternoon; glad to get out of a disreputable excursion, and play football instead. But the footer had turned out a wash-out, and he was angry and disappointed. Not to save his life would he have admitted that he wanted a friendly look or word from any man in the Remove. But whether he admitted it or not, he knew that all the fellows were aware that no man liked to be left on his lonely own.

The humorous Skinner had already nicknamed Study No. 1 "Robinson Crusoe's Island." He was well on the way to becoming an outcast. He had tea'd in Hall; and all the fellows knew that he tea'd in Hall because he did not want a solitary tea in his study. Hilton of the Fifth was a "bad hat" and a dangerous acquaintance; but Wharton reflected sardonically that he was now regarded, himself, as a bad hat and a dangerous acquaintance.

Even Skinner & Co. were getting shy of him. He was beginning to think now that he had been rather a fool not to wait longer for Hilton, after all, and go with him out of bounds. And he left his study at last, and went along to the Fifth, to see whether Cedric Hilton was at home.

Now that he had leisure to think about it, and was beginning, too, to place a higher value on Hilton's friendship, he was rather curious to know why the Fifth Form sportsman had not kept the appointment.

The November dusk had fallen, and there was a light in Hilton's study. Somebody was at home, at all events.

Wharton tapped on the door and opened it.

Hilton and Price were in the study at tea. The latter glanced round as the door opened, and grinned sarcastically. "Oh! Your fag friend, Cedric!" he said.

Hilton scowled.

Wharton stepped into the study. He could see at a glance that there was something wrong with his friend in the Fifth. Hilton had bathed and changed after getting back to the school, and he was in a newly swept and garnished state. But the signs of his severe handling were thick upon him. He had put up a fight in the hands of Bob Cherry & Co., and they had not used him gently.

His handsome Greek nose was red and swollen, and had a list to port; it looked neither handsome nor Greek now. There was a shade under one of his eyes. There were a couple of bruises on his face, one on his cheek and one on his chin. Hilton was very particular indeed about his personal appearance, and the sight of those disfigurements, in the glass, fairly made him writhe. For days and days, he was going to have a battered look. And so far from reporting those cheeky juniors for the lawless rag, he dared not say a word—lest they also should have something to say.

He received no sympathy from Price. Stephen Price had roared when he heard what had happened, and told Hilton that it served him right for picking up pals among the fags. Knowing the temper Hilton was in, it amused Price to see

Wharton come to the study, evidently knowing nothing.

"You!" grunted Hilton, staring at the junior across the table. "What the dooce do you want?"

Wharton coloured. This was a startling change from Hilton's manner at their last meeting.

"You did not turn up this afternoon," said Harry quietly. His own temper was far from amiable at the moment. But he had not come there to quarrel with his "friend in the Fifth" if he could help it.

"And you don't know why?" snarled Hilton.

"I haven't the foggiest. I waited half an hour—"

"Well, you can ask your friends in the Remove," said Hilton bitterly, "and you can tell them at the same time that they needn't worry about my speakin' to you again, you scrubby little scoundrel. I'm droppin' you like a hot potato. Now get out of my study before I kick you out!"

Wharton stood very still.

He was taken utterly by surprise. Hilton's careless good-nature, his polished politeness, had dropped from him like a cloak. He was angry, irritated, and humiliated, and he attributed it to Wharton. He had been kind to a fag, and a gang of fags had mobbed him as a result. Hilton fully agreed with Price, now, that he had been an ass to take up the young sweep at all. It had landed him in a precious mess. He was done with him, and he made it clear. Indeed, he was strongly inclined to get up from his chair and kick the junior out of the study, without giving him the chance of walking out.

Wharton seemed in no hurry to go. His face had paled a little, and he was breathing hard.

Hilton was angry, with the pettish anger of a superficial nature. Wharton's anger was much deeper. He was taken up and thrown over as if he had been some cadging hanger-on like Billy Bunter. But that was not all. He was quick to catch on to the Fifth-Former's mention of his "friends in the Remove." Someone had been butting in.

"I've told you to go!" said Hilton, with another glare.

"You've got to tell me something first," said Harry quietly. "As for dropping me, you empty-headed, disreputable ass, you can do that as soon as you like, and I shall be well rid of you!"

"What?" gasped Hilton.

"But I want to know what you mean."

"Get out!"

"Not till you've explained."

"Your fag pals ragged Hilton this afternoon," said Price. "They laid for him on the road and mobbed him. You seem to have tattled all over the Lower School that Hilton was taking you up—"

"I've said nothing. But it got out in the Remove. Bunter heard Hilton speaking to me—" Wharton broke off. "But that doesn't matter. Who ragged you, Hilton?"

"Cherry and his mob," snarled Hilton. "Now get out! I've told you twice."

"Was it on my account?"

"They said so."

Wharton's face grew paler with the intensity of his anger. His eyes glinted.

"I understand now why you didn't turn up," he said. "Cherry was one of the Remove men who ragged you. Who were the others?"

"Find out!" snapped Hilton.

"I'm asking you."

"Are you goin'?" roared Hilton, jumping to his feet.

"Not till you've told me what I want to know."

"Well, if you will have it—"

Hilton came round the table, and Price jumped up.

Harry Wharton did not recede an inch as the two Fifth Form men came at him. His hands flew up, and his eyes blazed over them. They grasped him together, and he hit out with all his strength.

Price went over like a ninepin, and crashed to the floor with a yell. Hilton staggered back, with the "claret" spurt-ing from his already damaged nose—now less Greek than ever.

"Oh gad!" he gasped.

"Collar him!" panted Price, scrambling to his feet.

Two pairs of hands grasped the Remove junior, and he went spinning through the doorway. There was a crash in the Fifth Form passage.

Wharton sprawled there, dazed and breathless.

"Now cut, before I kick you out of the passage!" panted Hilton.

The junior scrambled up.

"Hallo, what's that row?" Coker of the Fifth looked out of his study. "My hat! Is that Remove tick kicking up a shindy here? Here, get out!"

Wharton, too enraged to think of prudence, fairly hurled himself at Cedric Hilton. He was grasped again by both Hilton and Price, and Horace Coker came barging up to lend a hand. Potter and Greene followed the great Horace, and two or three more of the Fifth came out of their studies. In the midst of a laughing crowd of big seniors Wharton was hustled and kicked along the passage to the landing at the end, where he rolled in a dazed and dizzy state.

"Now cut!" said Coker magisterially. "Kicking up a shindy in the Fifth, by gum! Jevver hear of such a neck! Cut, you young sweep!"

And there was a chortle from the crowd of Fifth Form men as the hapless junior limped away.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Called to Account!

LORD MAULEVERER jumped up. His lordship was startled. So were his guests at the tea-table—Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Billy Bunter.

The door of Study No. 12 had suddenly burst open, and Billy Bunter's fat, red, and excited face stared in. And from the passage Harry Wharton's voice floated in after Bunter.

"Where's Cherry? Where's that rotter?"

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked the excited Owl, "Wharton's hunting for you, Bob—hunting you up and down the passage. I say, he's on the jolly old warpath! I say, you fellows—"

"Well, I don't want a lot of hunting," said Bob coolly. "I'm here."

"I suppose this means that he's found out," muttered Nugent.

"Looks like it," said Bob.

"Oh gad!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Think the good man's goin' to kick up a shindy because we weighed in with Hilton this afternoon?"

"Didn't you expect him to?" grinned Bob.

"Oh dear!" groaned his lordship. Apparently he hadn't expected him to, though really he might have.



As the enraged Wharton struck full at Mauleverer's face, Bob Cherry stepped in and struck the blow aside with a crack on Wharton's wrist that sounded like the crack of a whip. "I'm your man, if you're scrapping!" growled Bob savagely.

A moment later, and Wharton was looking in at the doorway. Behind him the passage was in a buzz. Fellows gathered from far and near at the sounds of war.

Lord Mauleverer and his tea-party were all on their feet now. Mauly was in a state of dismay; but the tea-party were quite cool. The Co. had not expected Harry Wharton to like their intervention in his affairs, and they had rather wondered how he would take it when it came out—as it had to do as soon as he saw Hilton. Now they saw how he was taking it.

"Cherry, you meddling rotter!" Wharton's voice was husky with rage. "You meddling fool, couldn't you mind your own business?"

"I minded yours, for a change, old tulip," answered Bob coolly. "That cad in the Fifth wanted a ragging, and he got it. He's going to get another of the same if he doesn't keep clear of the Remove. And that's that!"

"You'll answer for it!" panted Wharton.

"Ready and willing—if you choose to make a fool of yourself!" retorted Bob coolly. "Keep back, Mauly, old fat-head!"

Lord Mauleverer did not keep back. He interposed his elegant figure between the two juniors. Wharton would have been hitting out the next moment, but he checked himself as Mauly pushed between.

"Stand aside, Mauleverer!" he said hoarsely.

"Sorry, old bean! You see—"

"Stand aside! I don't want any row with you; but I'm going to make that meddling rotter answer for butting into my affairs! Stand aside, I tell you!"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"You see, old thing, I'm the man that's got to answer for it," he said gently. "It was my idea—a poor thing, but mine own, as the jolly old poet puts it. What? These men backed me up because I asked them to—"

"Mauly!" gasped Wharton. "You!"

"Yaas, little me! I asked these men to back me up, because it would have been a fearful fag handlin' Hilton on my own! Besides, I couldn't have handled him without help! See? They played up like little men. But it was my idea entirely!"

"You—you—"

Wharton panted.

"If you feel that you're bound to punch a fellow for doin' you a good turn, old tulip, I'm your man," said his lordship. "Go it!"

Unable to control his rage, Wharton struck full at Lord Mauleverer's calm face.

But Bob Cherry was watching. He struck the blow aside before it could reach Mauleverer, with a crack on Wharton's wrist that sounded like the crack of a whip.

"Here's your man if you're scrapping!" growled Bob savagely, and he shoved Mauleverer aside.

"Oh gad!"

Mauleverer grasped Bob by the arm, and pulled him away—with a strength that few would have dreamed dwelt in his slim, graceful frame. Mauly's face was set now, his lips tight.

"My bizney, Bob," he said quietly. "Leave it to me."

His hands were up. The next moment Wharton was fighting with the only friend he had left in the Remove.

"Cave!" shouted a voice in the passage. "Prefects!"

"Wharton's wanted!" It was Wingate's voice. "Is he here? Oh gad!" The Greyfriars captain stared into Study No. 12 as the buzzing crowd made way for him. Then he strode in, grasped Harry Wharton by the shoulder, and swung him away from Mauleverer. "You young rascal—"

"Let go, you fool!" roared Wharton. Wingate's jaw set grimly.

"You young sweep! You're wanted by your Form master! Fighting again! Is there a fellow in your Form you haven't scrapped with? Come!"

"My fault, Wingate," said Mauleverer. "I've been annoyin' the good man—"

"Come with me, Wharton!"

With the Sixth-Former's strong grasp on his shoulder, Wharton was led out of the study. He went down the passage, panting, with Wingate.

Johnny Bull shrugged his shoulders. "I dare say we were rather asses, to butt in," he said.

Lord Mauleverer nodded slowly.

"Yaas! My fault! I asked you to butt in! My doin' entirely! It was rather a mistake—which won't happen again, as far as I'm concerned." He glanced at the crowded doorway. "Gentlemen and chaps, the show's over. If you don't mind, there's a draught from that door—"

Bob closed the door. The tea-party sat down to finish tea. Lord Mauleverer's face was calm and placid, as usual. But the Co. knew what was in his mind. The scapegrace of Greyfriars had lost his last friend in the school.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"W HARTON, sir!" Wingate of the Sixth pushed the junior into Mr. Quelch's study, drew the door shut, and walked away. Mr. Quelch rose to his feet, fixing his eyes on the rebel of his Form, raising his eyebrows expressively as he did so. Wharton's face was flushed, and he was breathing hard. A junior was not supposed to enter his Form master's study in a state of half-suppressed excitement and wrath. But the Remove master had given up being surprised at anything from this particular junior.

Loder of the Sixth was in the study. His sardonic glance turned on the panting junior, and he, too, raised his eyebrows. There was a gloating look in Loder's eyes. Unless Loder was mistaken, the career of that obnoxious junior had come to the finish at last.

"Wharton! I have sent for you—" began Mr. Quelch.

"What is it now?" asked Wharton, with a bitter accent on the last word.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. "You had better refrain from insolence, Wharton. If the report I have received proves to be well founded, you will be expelled from Greyfriars to-day."

Wharton stared at him. Then his glance went to Loder, and he read the gloating triumph of the bully of the Sixth in his eyes. Loder, it was clear, believed that he was at the end of his tether.

But he could only wonder. Had that excursion with Hilton of the Fifth taken place, he would have supposed that all had been discovered, in which case he knew that it must be the "sack." But the excursion had not taken place.

There was nothing, so far as he knew, to justify Mr. Quelch's portentous words.

"A report from Loder, sir?" he asked, with a curl of the lip.

"That is the case."

"Loder has told you lies before, sir! He is telling lies again!" said Harry.

"I have warned you not to be insolent, Wharton. Were you, or were you not, present at the Wapshot races this afternoon?"

"No!"

"I am sorry that I cannot take your word, Wharton," said the Remove master. "Your denial counts for nothing."

"What was the use of asking me, then?" said Wharton coolly.

"Take care! If you do not choose to confess—"

"I've nothing to confess, that I know of."

"We shall see!" answered Mr. Quelch grimly. "Loder, you may speak."

A faintly sarcastic smile dawned on Wharton's face. He knew what was coming now. He remembered how Loder had shadowed him from the school after dinner, and seen him with the waiting car on Courtfield Common. He had wondered then whether the prying prefect had heard any of the talk and tattle in the Remove concerning that day's excursion; and had hardly doubted it. It was clear that Loder believed that the excursion to the races had taken place. That was what he had reported to Wharton's Form master!

"I think the matter is clear, sir," said Loder smoothly. "For several days past it has hardly been a secret in this boy's Form that he intended to visit the races this afternoon. From what I heard, it has been a subject of constant discussion among the juniors—"

"Prefects are not supposed to listen to fellows talking, sir!" Wharton pointed

out icily. "I am sure that Dr. Locke would not approve of a prefect listening at a keyhole."

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you, you insolent boy! Proceed, Loder."

"It was quite by chance, of course, that some of this talk reached my ears," said Loder, with a venomous look at the scapegrace. "In view of Wharton's recent conduct, for which he has been flogged, I decided to keep him under observation. He left the school soon after dinner, and later I found him waiting with a car on Courtfield Common."

"You do not deny this, Wharton?"

"Loder saw me on Courtfield Common this afternoon, sir! I saw him there, for that matter! Courtfield is not out of bounds on a half-holiday."

"Did you enter that car and drive to Wapshot?" demanded the Remove master sternly.

"No!"

"Proceed, Loder!"

"I took notice of the car, sir," pursued Loder. "I recognised it, and the chauffeur, as belonging to Courtfield Garage. I waited for some time—"

"In cover!" said Wharton, with a curl of the lip.

"Do not interrupt, Wharton!" rapped Mr. Quelch. Possibly the Remove master was not wholly pleased by Loder's detective methods.

"I waited some time, but Wharton plainly guessed that I was keeping him under observation, for he waited, too. I realised that he did not intend to start till the coast was clear, and so I went on to Courtfield. There I made an inquiry at the garage."

Wharton started a little. He had rather wondered what Loder's game was, after he had lost sight of him. It came very clearly into Wharton's mind that, had that drive to the races taken place, his game would have been up. He had never guessed that the spy of the Sixth was quite such a detective.

His start did not escape Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye, and the Form master's lips tightened as he observed it.

"At the garage," continued Loder, "I found the proprietor unwilling to answer questions about his customer. But I felt it my duty to ascertain the state of affairs beyond doubt; and a little later I questioned a man employed in the garage yard. From this man I learned the facts. The car had been hired by a Greyfriars boy, whose name he did not know, and it was booked to drive to Wapshot and stay there for the races. As I had taken the number of the car, there could be no doubt about it."

Wharton listened quietly, with a faint smile on his lips, that puzzled both Loder and the Remove master. Proof could scarcely be clearer!

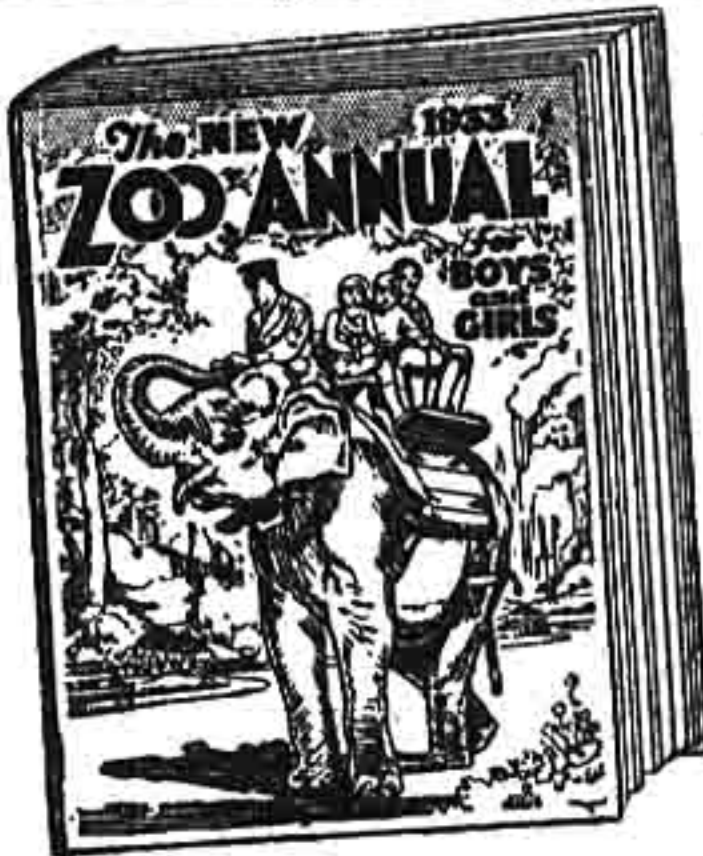
"I remained in Courtfield for some time," went on Loder. He did not think of adding that he had walked over to the Three Fishers for a game of billiards. "Later, when I came back, the car was gone. I had no doubt that Wharton had gone in it as soon as he was sure that I was off the scene."

Wharton watched Loder as he spoke. Either Loder did not know that Hilton of the Fifth was mixed up in the affair, or he did not care to mention the fact. The scapegrace of the Remove was his game!

"The matter can scarcely be clearer," said Mr. Quelch. "If you persist in denial, Wharton—"

"Certainly, sir!"

"In that case, I shall personally call at the garage and insist upon a statement from the chauffeur who drove the car!" said the Remove master.



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Wharton breathed rather hard. Loder believed that he had him on the hip, and undoubtedly Loder would have been right, if that excursion had taken place. Only too clearly Wharton realised now what he owed to Lord Mauleverer's friendly intervention.

A flush came into his cheeks.

But for Mauleverer, he would have gone with the Fifth Form sportsman on that shady escapade. Proof of it would have been absolutely clear. And he would have been taken to his headmaster, to hear the sentence of expulsion from Greyfriars. That very day, within the very hour the gates of the school would have closed behind him. The Remove master would have been rid of the rebel of his Form. Loder would have scored, finally and utterly, over the junior he loathed. Mauly had saved him—and how had he repaid Mauly? A feeling of bitter shame brought the colour to his face.

Mr. Quelch, as was natural, misinterpreted that flush. He saw in it the sign of conscious guilt, discovered and proved now beyond subterfuge. His face hardened into grim sternness.

"Wharton! If you still deny—"

"I do!"

"Very well! I shall make an immediate inquiry at the garage, and then place the matter before Dr. Locke."

"As you choose, sir!" said Wharton with icy coolness. "I have no objection to telling my headmaster exactly how I have spent the afternoon."

Mr. Quelch looked at him. The case was clear—absolutely clear! Yet the lurking smile on the junior's lips gave him a feeling of uneasy doubt. There was a pause.

"Whatever you have to tell your headmaster, Wharton, you may tell me, here and now!" said Mr. Quelch at last.

"Very well, sir! I played football this afternoon!"

"What? Where?"

"On Little Side at Greyfriars."

"Wharton!"

Loder stared blankly.

"I played for Temple's team," went on Wharton calmly. "All the Fourth Form, and all the Remove, and a good many other fellows, will tell you that I was playing football here, at Greyfriars, this afternoon, if you care to ask them, sir."

A dead silence followed Wharton's words. Loder gasped—he fairly gaped! Mr. Quelch seemed thunderstruck.

"Wharton! Is this sheer impertinence?" he exclaimed at last. "You venture to tell me that you were within school bounds, playing football—"

"Yes, sir!"

"Such a statement is very easily put to the test. If you are telling the truth, Wharton—"

"I do sometimes, sir!" said Wharton with cool mockery. "In this case, you have only to ask about a hundred fellows whether they saw me playing in the Form match this afternoon."

There was another silence.

"Loder!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Kindly request Field to step here."

Loder left the study, almost choking. Mr. Quelch sat down, with a sort of overwhelmed look. Never had a case been clearer—never had evidence more indubitable been produced against a culprit. Yet if Wharton's statement was true, the whole thing was a tissue of mistakes—a comedy of errors! Was the junior's statement merely a last example of flippant recklessness? It would soon be proved one way or the other!

Wharton waited calmly. In a few minutes Squiff arrived at the study. He came alone. Loder, evidently, had learned the facts from him, and did not

care to return and see Mr. Quelch again! Sampson Quincy Iffley Field came in, with a rather peculiar expression on his face.

"Field—Mr. Quelch's voice was a little uncertain. 'As you are now captain of my Form, no doubt you played in the football match to-day?'"

Squiff smiled slightly.

"Yes, sir!" he answered.

"Was Wharton present?"

"Wharton? Yes, sir!"

"I mean, did Wharton take part in the game? Did he play it through from beginning to end?" asked Mr. Quelch categorically. He was not leaving any possible loophole.

"Yes, sir, from the kick-off till the final whistle," said Squiff. "He played for Temple's team, and scored two goals—"

Mr. Quelch dismissed Field with a gesture. He was not, evidently, interested in the goals Wharton had shot! Squiff left the study.

For a long, long minute, Mr. Quelch sat and gazed at Harry Wharton. The rebel of the Remove waited demurely. Mr. Quelch spoke at last.

"It appears, Wharton, that an error has been made." He spoke haltingly.

"As you played in a football match at Greyfriars to-day, it is obvious—" He paused. "You have only yourself, and your own reckless conduct, to thank for the suspicion that has fallen upon you. You—hem—you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton.

He left the study, with a mocking smile on his face, for which Mr. Quelch would gladly have called him back and caned him.

He laughed as he went down the passage. There was no doubt that Mr. Quelch would have something to say to Loder of the Sixth later—something very expressive and emphatic. The spy of the school was not prospering. Wharton laughed as he thought of it. But only too well he knew how narrow his escape had been, and from what Mauly had saved him. His laugh died away as he thought of that.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER!

The Last Blow!

"**L**OCK up!" called out the Bouncer.

Harry Wharton did not seem to hear.

Smithy and Tom Redwing, back from Hawkscliff just in time for call-over, were coming up from the gates when the Bouncer sighted the pacing figure under the elms, half-seen in the thickening November dusk.

Harry Wharton was walking to and fro under the leafless branches, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his eyes fixed moodily on the dead leaves that his feet kicked up as he paced.

In deep and troubled thought, he did not see or hear the Bouncer. He tramped on in the dusk.

Vernon-Smith stared at him curiously. "You'll be late, Wharton!" called out Redwing. "Call-over in a few minutes now!"

Wharton heard that, glanced round, and nodded. But he did not join the two juniors, and they walked on to the House and disappeared.

The scapegrace of Greyfriars paused, irresolute, under the trees. He was the only fellow still out of the House. For a long time he had been there, plunged into gloomy and unhappy meditation.

Anger had passed now: he was feeling shame and remorse. He had told himself, again and again, that Mauly had butted into his personal concerns—that, like the prophet of old, he did well to be angry. But he could not feel

that he justified himself—and now he no longer wished to do so. But for Mauly, he would have gone on that rotten, shady, disreputable expedition; but for Mauly, he would have been sacked; but for Mauly, the school gates would already have closed behind him, and he would have left Greyfriars for ever, leaving behind him the memory of a fellow who had had the best of chances, had thrown them all away, and had gone to the bad and been kicked out!

Mauly had saved him from that, and he had repaid him with angry words and angry blows! Old Mauly—the only man who had stood by him through thick and thin, who had believed in him when all were down on him and against him, his last and most loyal friend! It was no wonder that the junior's brow was black, his heart heavy, as he paced in the dusk of the elms!

A bell in the distance ceased to ring.

He started for the House.

His mind was made up now; he had had a struggle with his pride and beaten it. If he had been headstrong, passionate, wayward, all through that unlucky term, at least he would make amends to old Mauly—he did not care how much he humbled himself. It was a new mood for the scapegrace of the Remove.

He ran into Big Hall just as the great oak doors were closing. Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed at him as he took his place in the Remove, barely in time to avoid being shut out. Wharton did not observe him. He answered the familiar "Sum" mechanically when his name was called.

His eyes were on Mauleverer, and he felt a pang at the sight of a mark on Mauly's quiet, placid face. Mauly did not look at him, and did not seem to have noticed his late, hurried entrance or to know that he was there.

Calling-over seemed endless to Wharton. But it was over at last, and the fellows were dismissed. As the Remove streamed out he hurried towards Lord Mauleverer.

Mauleverer walked on, unseeing, and Wharton tapped him on the arm. Mauly looked round, and drew his arm quickly away.

His face was calm, placid, good-tempered as always, but there was a quiet firmness in his look that was new.

"Mauly," muttered Wharton, "I—I'm sorry! I can't speak here. Shall I come up to the study?"

"I'd rather you didn't, thanks!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"I—I want to tell you—"

"You've nothin' to tell me—nothin' I want to hear, at any rate!" Lord Mauleverer paused a second. "Sorry I butted into your bizney! It's a mistake I don't often make. Rely on it that it will never happen again! Can't do more than apologise for a mistake!"

He walked on.

"Mauly!" muttered Wharton huskily. Lord Mauleverer walked on, without turning his head.

Wharton stood looking after him for a moment or two. Curious eyes were upon him, but he did not heed them—did not see them. He turned away at last. It was over, and he knew it; he had worn out the patience of his last friend, and now he was left alone! The scapegrace of Greyfriars was now the friendless outcast of the school!

THE END.

(Next Saturday's yarn in this topping series is entitled: "THE SPY OF THE SIXTH!" You'll vote it great, chums. Look out, also, for the six picture-stamps which will be given away with this issue.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,293.

THRILLS ON THE BROAD HIGHWAY!

THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS.



The Spy!

AS York lay in the darkness he heard the new arrivals being conducted to their room along the passage; a double-bedded room, he gathered, since he heard only one door open and shut.

In the morning York was up and dressed as soon as the yard below was opened. He rang for and had his breakfast brought to his room. Having finished this, he tiptoed along the empty passage and listened at the door until he heard Jerry and Hal Lovett talking.

Finding that he could only gather a word here and there, he went back to his room and tried the balcony. With his hat drawn over his face he sidled along until he was close to the room occupied by the two adventurers.

A window was open, and the voices could be heard quite distinctly.

"We must give up all hope of ever seeing Isaac Quilt again, lad," the spy heard Jerry McLean say. "The Runners have taken him, and any attempt at seeing him in gaol could only result in our being arrested, too. And so there's only one thing for us to do—quit the country."

"We haven't enough money," York heard the boy answer.

"We'll get more than we want to-night," said Jerry.

"We're going to stop the earl, then?"

"Ay, Hal, lad, we're going to stop the earl!"

At that moment a carriage clattered into the inn yard, making such a rattle that Jerry and Hal Lovett opened the door of their room and passed out on to the balcony. They were just in time to see a man's heels vanishing through a door a little distance away.

Jerry's brows came together in a frown.

"Boy," he muttered, "we've been spied upon!"

Hal Lovett, who had also seen the vanishing heels, nodded.

Jerry sped along the balcony at a run, and peeped between the curtains into the room occupied by the spy. He was just in time to see the door leading into the passage of the inn swing to. Back into his room again and through it he ran, with Hal following him. But though the two adventurers went into every public room and bar below, and even peeped into the bar-parlour itself, they found nobody there they knew.

They asked questions. A military-looking gent occupied the bed-room they alluded to, name of Morrison they learned. Upstairs they went again, and, finding the outer bed-room door locked, Jerry and Hal went out on to the balcony again and entered the room belonging to the spy from that side. A search of the drawers and wardrobe revealed a riding-cloak and whip, and Jerry found also a brace of pistols. A trunk in the room was locked.

Jerry and Hal partook of breakfast in silence, and then ordered the ostler to saddle their horses.

Before leaving the Mermaid, however, they had another look round, and it was as he stood at the front door that Jerry saw Colonel York striding, with his customary swaggering gait, towards him.

The colonel was grinning broadly, and he faced Jerry without a quiver of an eyelash.

"So," said Jerry, through half-shut teeth, "it was you!"

"Me it was, my bully cove," answered York, as Jerry stepped down to him. "And very glad I was to find two old pals occupying the neighbouring room, for I was afraid they might be the cops."

"What," asked Jerry in a voice as hard as steel, "is your little game?"

READ THIS FIRST.

Convicted of robbing the Earl of Huntford, Hal Lovett and his chum, Jerry McLean, are conveyed to the convict hulks at Woolwich, whence they escape. They seek sanctuary in the "Retreat," Epping, where they rescue the chief of the Bow Street Runners from the ruthless hands of a gang of highwaymen. Later, Samuel Lovett is forced to admit that he is not Hal's father and that Isaac Quilt, a housebreaker, knows the secret of the Red Falcon. Quilt, however, is arrested by the Runners before he can speak. Evading capture themselves, Hal and Jerry find accommodation in an inn, where, unknown to them, an old enemy in Colonel York is occupying a neighbouring room.

"Nothing," rejoined York, with a leer. "This is a safe place in which to hide, and I have a grazed wound in the shoulder which hurts me considerably. I'm going to stop here until it heals up."

Jerry fixed him with a cold stare, but York did not flinch.

"And you?" he asked almost casually.

"My pal and I," replied Jerry, "are going a-riding."

With that he left York, and together with Hal hurried into the inn yard, where, the reckoning having been paid, he again handsomely tipped the ostler, and, mounting Galloper, led the way out into the street, followed by Hal on Bow Street Beauty.

"I don't trust that infernal scoundrel, boy," said Jerry. "He'd sell us as soon as look at us. But, thank goodness, we didn't say enough for him to understand."

"You talked about robbing the earl," said Hal, "but luckily we mentioned no name, or time, or place."

Jerry nodded his head and pressed his hat down firmly as they faced a gusty wind.

"He'll make neither head nor tail of that," he said.

In so saying, however, Jerry underestimated Colonel York's intelligence.

The colonel, who had gone for a stroll with a purpose in view, had put two and two together as he hastened along the Borough High Street. One fact stood out boldly; Jerry and Hal Lovett were going to rob an earl. And, bearing in mind the story he had heard of the adventurers' nocturnal visit to Huntford Hall, that earl could only be the Earl of Huntford.

In that cave in Epping Forest he had heard John Pryce and others talking. He knew that the earl was responsible for Hal Lovett's conviction and sentence in the hulks. Jerry McLean was an additional victim of the earl's.

And where was the earl? At Huntford Hall. And if Jerry and Hal intended to rob him on the road, whither would he be travelling unless to London; and which way would he come other than via Blackheath? Colonel York rubbed his hands together gleefully at the thought. Farther along the High Street was situated the Wherryman ale-house. Colonel York knew a potboy there whom he had first met in a thieves' den in St. Giles. This potboy, who rejoiced in the name of Charlie Greenfinch, he sought

out. A wink and a beckon drew him aside.

"Charlie," said York, "want to earn half-a-guinea?"

"Try me," answered Greenfinch, grinning from ear to ear, every inch a gallow's rascal by the look of him.

York hastily scribbled a note, and placed it in an envelope which he sealed down. This letter he addressed to "Mr. Martin Cosgrave, at the Police Office, Bow Street."

The potboy blanched as he read the address.

"Shiver me, but I ain't going to take this there, not for a hundred guineas," he said in a hoarse tone of protest. "I don't wanta get nabbed!"

"Take it," said York, giving him the coin he had promised. "It won't take you long to cross the river by ferry and hand it in. You needn't even wait. There's no answer. Besides, it's safe."

The potboy reluctantly pocketed the money and sought his cap. York went back to the Mermaid to meet Jerry and Hal Lovett, as we have learned, and as he went and after they had gone he kept on repeating to himself the message he had written.

"Mr. Cosgrave,—The escaped convicts and wanted highwaymen, Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett, contemplate robbing the Earl of Huntford to-night, most likely in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, while on his way to London Town. If you send a posse to hold and guard the road you ought to get them easily.

"WELL-WISHER AND FRIEND."

This message was faithfully delivered at the Bow Street Police Station by Greenfinch, the potboy, who hurried away the moment a sleepy-looking officer had taken it.

Martin Cosgrave read the message through twice and then grinned broadly at the Runner who had brought it in to him.

"Have you sent a plain-clothes man to follow the messenger?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the Bow Street officer.

"Then we ought easily to find out who penned this," remarked Cosgrave, as he held the letter up to view. "We'll have those horses saddled and ready at four o'clock, and take up our posts on the Blackheath road in safe hiding before dark."

Martin Cosgrave then thrust the letter into his pocket. He had made arrangements for his posse to go a-riding before ever Greenfinch, the potboy, delivered it.

Holding up the Earl!

THE storm of the night had abated, but throughout the day squalls of rain and gusts of wind made conditions out of doors decidedly unpleasant.

However, taking a chance of being seen and recognised by the locals, Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett rode to the Swan With Two Necks Inn, and put up there until the day began to wane.

The friendly landlord gave them the use of his own private sitting-room, and showed keen interest and pleasure in all their adventures, being mighty glad to see them again. And an equally friendly ostler, remembering how he had helped them when the inn had been raided by Cosgrave and his Runners, hid the stolen horse, Bow Street Beauty, from the view of prying eyes and kept a keen watch for spies. A handsome tip was a certainty, and, besides, he had

happy remembrances of the lavish generosity of Mr. Jerry McLean.

The tables and seats outside the inn were deserted all day long. Rustics, who ventured that far, crowded in the ale bars. None of them even knew that the Swan With Two Necks was patronised by visitors.

When at dusk two horsemen, heavily cloaked against the weather, rode swiftly out of the yard and turned towards Blackheath, they never even gained a sight of them.

The heath looked bare and dismal in the fading light. Riding along the London road, the two horsemen kept on until they gained the shelter of a copse, where they waited among the bushes and sheltering trees for the coming of the Earl of Huntford's coach.

"Jerry," said Hal, "I wish we had not encountered York. He hates us, and I feel sure he was planning some mischief."

"H'm! He'd betray us if he could, Hal," agreed Jerry. "But he would have to give himself away if he tried any tricks. That would mean a ride to Tyburn. Martin Cosgrave won't forget in a hurry how York tried to hang him. Why, lad, I'd wager that by this time York has left the Mermaid in a panic because he met us there. He'll be wanting to save his own skin."

It was quite dark now. The rain ceased, and a high wind rose that bent the boughs under which the adventurers were lurking.

After a while they heard the steady, rapid beat of pounding hoofs upon the road, the jingling of harness, and the rumble of rattling wheels. A carriage was coming along the London road.

Jerry urged his horse to the edge of the copse, where he had broken down the wooden rails, and Hal followed. In the distance two bright lights danced, and the two adventurers were able to make out the black shape of the barouche that carried them. Four horses were drawing it, driven by a coachman, while a postilion sat astride the near leader.

"Hal, lad," laughed Jerry, "here comes our earl. So we are going to meet again. On with your mask, lad—though, deuce take it, the disguise is of little use when he is sure to recognise us! But we'll grab that money he is bringing to town for Quilt, and we'll force him to divulge the secret of the Red Falcon as sure as I'm a high toby-man!"

Jerry set his mask in place and made sure of the fastening. Hal did the same. Then they drew their pistols from their holsters and saw to the priming.

Hal felt himself possessed by a wave of nervous excitement that sent his heart racing and almost stopped his breathing. Jerry sat, ice-cold, on Galloper, steadying the horse, which began to paw the earth excitedly.

The noises on the road grew louder. Peering through the leafy screen, the two adventurers could see the candle-lamps dancing in the dark.

"Gee-up! Steady there, you warmint!" They heard the postilion cry out impatiently and the crack of his whip as he lashed the leader.

A window of the carriage rattled down, and a cold, bitter voice cut the night air.

"Make the cattle gallop, Ned. The very devil's in the lazy brutes! Kill 'em if needs be! We shall never get to London town to-night!"

"It's time, boy!" called out Jerry, when the barouche was almost upon them. "Here goes!"

He urged his horse into the middle of the road, and Hal followed.

Suddenly the postilion found the way barred by the two masked highwaymen.

The Earl of Huntford saw them, too.

"Never mind those blackguards, Ned!" he shouted. "Ride 'em down!"

The coachman and the postilion plied their whips vigorously in response to the call, urging the horses into a charging gallop.

The earl disappeared inside the coach. But a second or so later he showed himself again, grasping in his right hand a long-barrelled gun. Pointing the weapon at Hal, he fired at point blank range as the carriage rattled on.

Hal ducked and laughed as he heard the bullet whistle by. But he had to pull Bow Street Beauty aside to avoid the thundering coach.

The postilion crouched like a jockey over the leader's neck, his right arm rising and falling as he used his whip unmercifully.

Within another second or two the Earl of Huntford would have passed in safety, and the highwaymen would have been placed at a disadvantage. But Jerry McLean, alive to the danger, turned his horse about, and, galloping in close to the leaders, toppled the postilion out of the saddle with a downward blow of the butt of his pistol. Then, making Galloper swerve to avoid trampling upon the fallen man, he swung in beside the near-side leader and gripped the reins. The barouche slowed down.

At the same time Hal rode up on the other side. He was only just in time, for he saw the coachman, who had dropped the reins, reach for and shoulder a wicked-looking, bell-mouthed blunderbuss.

Before he could take aim, however, Hal sent a ball whistling close to the fellow's head with a random shot, and, howling for mercy, the coachman dropped his weapon on to the footboard and held up both his hands.

"Don't spare him! Shoot him down, Hal!" cried Jerry, as he turned Galloper about and rode up to the window, and covered the earl with a pistol. "Put down that weapon, my lord, or I'll shoot daylight through you!"

The coach had stopped, and the leaders were swinging round, spurning the sodden road in a rearing fright.

Hal presented his second pistol at the coachman's head.

"Get down and free those horses," he ordered, "or I'll stir up your muddled brains with an ounce of lead."

The coachman had tried his hardest to get away. Now he slid obediently to the ground and unbuttoned the traces.

Menacing him, Hal made him lead the four prancing bays back along the road, after which he joined Jerry at the door of the barouche.

The earl's face was ashen, and his eyes glittered. His expression was evil and yet defiant. Very handsome he looked as he dropped the discharged pistol and its fellow upon the window-ledge.

"Ah! So I have again to deal with our gallows birds from the hulks," he sneered. "But for the devil's own luck you'd have had a bullet each by now!"

"Instead of which, my lord," said Jerry, reaching out and tipping up the earl's chin with the cold barrel of his loaded pistol, "I'll put a bullet through you unless you hand over that money you're taking to London town."

(The money will mean a small fortune for Jerry and Hal—if they get it, and some compensation for the wrong done them by the villainous Earl of Huntford! Look out for further exciting chapters next week, and six more free picture-stamps to add to your collection.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: *The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

A JOLLY interesting series of picture stamps this week, aren't they, chums? The "Come Along With Me" grip is indeed a good way to march a would-be attacker to the nearest "bobby"! The picture shows you how to get his arm in such a manner that he cannot possibly get loose without breaking his arm. The secret is contained in the leverage which you place against the captive's elbow-joint.

The first of our locomotive stamps shows you the Southern Railway's Lord Nelson, one of the most powerful locos on this line. It is a four-cylinder, 4-6-0 loco.—which means that it has four guiding wheels, six driving wheels, and no trailing wheels. Hauling a train from London to Brighton in one hour is just one of its many fine performances.

The Snowdon Mountain Railway is the only rack-and-pinion railway in Britain, although this type of railway is used a great deal in mountainous districts in other parts of the world. Fixed under the locomotive are toothed wheels which engage in a racked rail placed between the ordinary lines. This railway was opened in 1897, but the descent of the first passenger train led to tragedy, and the engine left the line at a sharp curve, and plunged over the Cymglas precipice, killing one man. A "safety guard" was laid down, and the railway was re-opened about a fortnight later. It ascends from Llanberis to the summit, a distance of 4½ miles.

H.M.S. Hood, which was commenced in

1916 and completed in 1920, is a post-Jutland battle cruiser of 41,200 tons. She cost six millions to build, and can steam at 32 knots. She has a 12-inch belt of armour, and carries eight 15-inch guns, with a secondary armament of sixteen 16-inch guns.

The aircraft carrier, Courageous, is another British Naval monster. She was launched in 1916, and is 735 feet in length, with a beam of 81 feet. She has a displacement of 18,600 tons, and can steam at 31 knots. She carries six flights of aeroplanes in her hangars!

One of the best "doggy pals" you could possibly have is the Smooth-haired Fox Terrier, which forms the subject of the last of this week's picture-stamps. It is the best-known of all English breeds.

AND now for a few RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

A Cricketing Query. (F. J. Hiseman, of Eltham, S.E.)—During last season the following juniors kept wicket mostly for their respective schools: Tom Brown for Greyfriars Remove XI; Harry Noble for St. Jim's Junior XI; and Arthur Newcome for Rookwood Junior XI.

What has Happened to "Kipps"? ("Hopeful Conjuror," of Belfast).—Kipps, the Conjuror, is still at Greyfriars, and going strong! I shall endeavour to get Mr. Frank Richards to introduce him again in a later story.

What is a "Fives" Bat? (G. Booker,

of Seaton Park, South Australia).—As its name implies, it is a bat used for playing the game of "Fives." The game consists in playing a ball against a wall above a certain line. The second player must return it on the first bound. At some schools (notably Eton) the game is played with padded gloves, but other schools (like Greyfriars) play it with small bats.

SOME readers still seem to be in doubt as to whether or no they have got to take all three companion papers in order to complete their full set of picture stamps.

No, this is not necessary. If you take The MAGNET each week, and one other paper—either the "Modern Boy" or the "Ranger"—you will be able to "swap" your duplicate stamps with your chums, and thus complete your collection by the end of the scheme.

I'm running short of space again, chums, but I mustn't forget to draw your attention to the "Greyfriars Holiday Annual," and the "Popular Book of Boys' Stories," which are now on sale. The former costs six shillings, and the latter 2s. 6d., and at these prices they represent the best value in boys' books it is possible to obtain.

Next Saturday's MAGNET will contain another fine programme. The titbit, of course, will be the grand long yarn of the Chums of Greyfriars. It is entitled:

"THE SPY OF THE SIXTH!"

and Frank Richards has packed it with some of his best work!

There'll be more thrills for you in our serial: "The Red Falcon!"—and chuckles galore in the "Greyfriars Herald."

Jokes, Greyfriars limericks, another chat with your Editor, and six more free stamps, will complete an issue that you mustn't miss on any account!

YOUR EDITOR.



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FOURTH FORM DEBATING SOCIETY
 Headquarters: The Rag.
 Next Debate: Wednesday, evg. 7.30
SUBJECT: "That all Remove fags playing leap-frog in the Rag should be compelled to wear rubber shoes, noiseless crash-helmets, cotton-wool knee-caps and mouth-gags."

Headquarters: The Rag.
 Next Meet: Wednesday evg. 7.30.
 Form Championship Match. Regulation kit: hob-nailed boots, wooden knee-caps, tin hats and squeakers.

THE NEW
Greynians Herald
 EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.
 November 26th, 1932.
 EXTRA GOOD EDITION

REMOVE LEAP-FROG SOCIETY.
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 Next Meet: Wednesday evg. 7.30.
 Form Championship Match. Regulation kit: hob-nailed boots, wooden knee-caps, tin hats and squeakers.

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Johnny Bull

By FISHER T. FISH

Say, folks, Johnny Bull surely is the worst bunkie I ever got hooked up with. When I think of Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish sharing the same apartment, I'll tell the world I got a pain in the neck! Yeah!

If any of you boys wanna see baloney, bunk and hallyhoo at their brightest and best, horn in to Study No. 14 one time and get a load of Bull. That guy certainly has got one hundred per cent of all of 'em!

For reasons quite beyond yours truly, Bull reckons to keep my business dealings out of Study No. 14. Why that hombre should select the activities of a Noo York go-golter for his particular grouch, I just don't know. Ain't it the toughest break imaginable?

The things that saps' called me in my time would make the average Britisher's hair curl, I guess. He's got a kinder humnch that I'm a panhandler doing a whole lot of skulduggery. What's wrong with him is, he just doesn't understand Business! But do you think anything Bull says makes any difference to F. T. F. of 111 of N. Y. ? No, siree! Hard words break no bones—that's me!

I wouldn't grouch if he stuck to words; but the worst of it is Johnny Bull uses hard knucklees as well as hard words! And I ain't so hot when it comes to slugging! He allows he's the Big Shot in Study No. 14, and what he says goes; and it ain't a bit of use pointing out that I got all the brains.

But I got the goods on him all the same, and he surely has got all that's coming to him. One time I guess I'm gonna get my mad up and call his bluff, and unless you're blind in both eyes you'll see F. T. F. make potato scrapings of him!

Poor old Bull! I guess it ain't his fault, really. After all, he's just a big, brainless Britisher with notions about "honour" and "truthfulness" dating back to before the time when Amurruca came along and civilized the world! Like this sleepy old shebang where we all hang out he'll just go peddling along in the same way for all time and then some!

But it's tough on a guy from Noo York having to be his bunkie, ain't it? I sure is!

(Fishy gets a severe jolt from Johnny Bull next week. Boys! Look out for it, Ed.)

'Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor—Any affection of indigestion regarding the incontestably lanky condition of the digits belonging to the second and third form novitiates at this scholastic establishment would be inexcusable. Inhibitory, a sad deterioration from the tenets of cleanliness has eventuated in these youthful scholars. May I suggest that the inauguration of a series of reformatory discourses on the concentration between saponaceous treatment and salutiferous physical condition and on the necessity for the elimination of all extraneous liquid plimentation? Your collaboration in this estimable project, dear Editor would meet with my most appreciative commendation—Yours hope-fully, ALONZO TODD

(We have a hazy idea that 'Lonzy' wants to clean off all ink stains from the fingers of the fags. If that's what he wants, we can only warn him that to do so would be to provoke instant revolt! But perhaps we've misunderstood. When we get time we'll read the letter backwards and see if there's any more sense in it that way!—Ed.)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BUNTER?

Porpoise's Puzzling Peculiarities

There's a mystery surrounding Bunter the last few days. Soon after returning from the Courtyard Bushop, where the attractive new young lady assistant served him with twenty-five successive rock cakes, he became strange in his manner. We found him, for instance, sitting on a bench under a tree with his eyes crossed and his mouth wide open.

"Bunter, old chap!" we gasped. "You look as if you're going to have a fit—let's rush you to the doctor at once!"

Bunter, to our relief, recovered immediately and glared.

"Limerick Contest, be bothered!" roared Bunter; and, for unfathomable reasons, he rolled off in a fearful rage. On the following day a loud noise like a wheezy old pair of bellows in action drew a crowd to Study No. 7. Bunter was discovered wearing a dreamy look on his face and breathing deep breaths of air.

"My hat! So Bunter's taking up breathing exercises!" said Tom Brown.

Bunter seemed to gasp. "You—you utter idiot!" he stammered. "It's come to something when a chap can't sigh at the sadness of his romantic thoughts without being told he's doing exercises!"

"Great pip!" "Touched!" said Brown, significantly.

It certainly seemed that Bunter was "touched" when he began to lose his appetite, as he did soon after. Then he displayed another symptom. He borrowed a guitar from Hoskins and started strumming and singing.

"Ah! Got it!" we exclaimed triumphantly. "You're practising with a view to joining Wibley's Christmas Concoct Party!"

"Blow Wibley's conceit party!" was Bunter's surprising retort. "I wouldn't be found dead in it!"

"The day after that Bunter rolled up to a group of us in a very confidential manner.

"I say, you fellows, I've decided to confide in you," he said. "The fact is I'm very keen on Bertha of the Bushop."

"Bunter, my dear old bear, you're shocked," said Bob Cherry. "Take my advice and leave the gee-gees alone. I dare say someone has told you that Bertha of the Bushop is going to win to-day, but—"

"Blow the blessed lot of you!" howled Bunter. "What's the good of trying to confide in fatheads like you who misunderstand everything I dash well say or do? I'm not jolly well going to try now! Yeah!"

"There's no getting away from it—there's a mystery surrounding Bunter the last few days!"



WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Tom Redwing, a sailor born, has resolved to become the captain of a liner such as the Empress of Britain.

In a particularly close-fought game with St. Jim's, "Guffin" and kept his detached instep till the finish!

The swimming champion of the Remove is Bob Cherry, and he insists on his daily dip all the year round.

The Remove, Bur-ot-War ham (Bull, Cherry, Bunsford, and Bolsover) beat teams from both Fourth and Shell!

Mr. Mobbs, master of the Highgate Fourth, is a petty snob, and "fondles" unashamedly to the well-connected Fomonty.

Donald Ogilvy occasionally performs on the bagpipes of his native country, but his efforts are very far from being popular!



MASKED MEN AT MYSTERY MEETING

Who Were They?

A fearfully mysterious meeting of the "Down with Loder Society" was held in the Crypt last Wednesday evening. As Greynians readers of this paper are already aware, the "Down with Loder Society" is a fearfully mysterious organisation at any time. None of the members are known by name, and masks are invariably worn so that nobody's identity shall leak out.

Member No. 1—the honorary secretary—issued the summons for the meeting, and a copy of his letter happened to drift into the editorial office. In accordance with our well-known practice on such occasions we sent a reporter along to investigate. He wore a mask, of course, and found out that the meeting had been called to draw lots for the honour of flinging a rotten egg at Loder's head. But the names of the members, which were of much more interest to him, were quite impossible to ascertain.

"Who are you?" he asked of one diminutive member.

"No no teller!" was the baffling answer. "You findee out, P'haps—P'laps not!"

Who could it have been? There was absolutely nothing to go on!

Our reporter approached another member.

"I wonder if you'd mind telling me your name?" he asked.

"The tellfulness will not be terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous friend," answered the masked stranger—an answer that conveyed no clue whatever, unfortunately, to the identity of the fellow!

Another member attracted our reporter's attention. Beyond the fact that he was

BANG TIN CANS AND WIN EXAMS

Surprising Help to Swots

Of course you all noticed that paragraph in the papers about the Cambridge students. They found the effects when they thought they'd stop Linley swotting by banging tin cans outside his study. After they'd been doing it for an hour, Linley opened the door and shook each of them warmly by the hand.

"Thanks very much!" he said. "I've been a bit off my Latin just lately, but that noise helped me considerably in constructing a difficult passage from Livy. Come round again whenever I'm swotting, won't you?"

And Linley returned to his study, whistling, leaving Bolsover & Co. gaping!

Other examples have come to our notice since. We hear that the Head has engaged a man to fire blank cartridges out of a revolver while he is examining Sixth Form papers. Also that Wingate, who hopes to win an important University scholarship soon, is swotting to the accompaniment of a "talkie" record of an earthquake.

A meeting of the Governors is to be held shortly to consider the advisability of keeping a permanent gang of navvies armed with pneumatic drills about the school premises for the express purpose of having a fearful hullabaloo going on while lessons are in progress. Alternatively it is proposed to mount a heavy field gun in the quad and keep it blazing away all through the day!

All this news, by the way, is strictly exclusive and is supplied to the "Greynians Herald" by the Harold Skinner News Agency. Their reputation for reliability is too well known to need description.



MAULY CAUSES SENSATION

Lord Mauleverer, who claims to have spent more half-holidays snoozing on his couch than all the rest of the Remove put together, astonished everybody last Wednesday afternoon by walking downstairs, out of the House, and across the quad towards the playing-fields.

The Form match which was in progress as the unusual visitor appeared, and players and spectators alike crowded round Mauly, playing him with questions.

"What's the matter, old bean?"

"Gone off your rooker, Mauly?"

"Is the Louisa on fire?"

Mauly answered not, but just kept on walking till he walked right into one of the walls of the pavilion, when he collapsed with a yell!

When the crowd helped Mauly to his feet again it was noticed that he was rubbing his eyes. After that he blinked round dazedly.

"Where am I?" he asked drowsily. "How on earth did I get here, dear men, when the last thing I remember is falling asleep in my study?"

And with a sigh of relief the crowd realised that Mauly had not gone off his rooker after all—he had simply been walking in his sleep!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

DICKYNUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

My tagmaster Loder told Carne yesterday that the words "Cross Keys" sounded like mawkish in his ears. So they do in mine—but only because the "Cross Keys" is such a "vile inn."

APOLOGY!

Advertiser, who found a pair of Bob Cherry's shoes under the dorm window, wishes to apologise for taking them to the Courtyard Circus under the impression that they belonged to the performing elephant.

With profound regards.

(Signed) DICKYNUGENT.

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