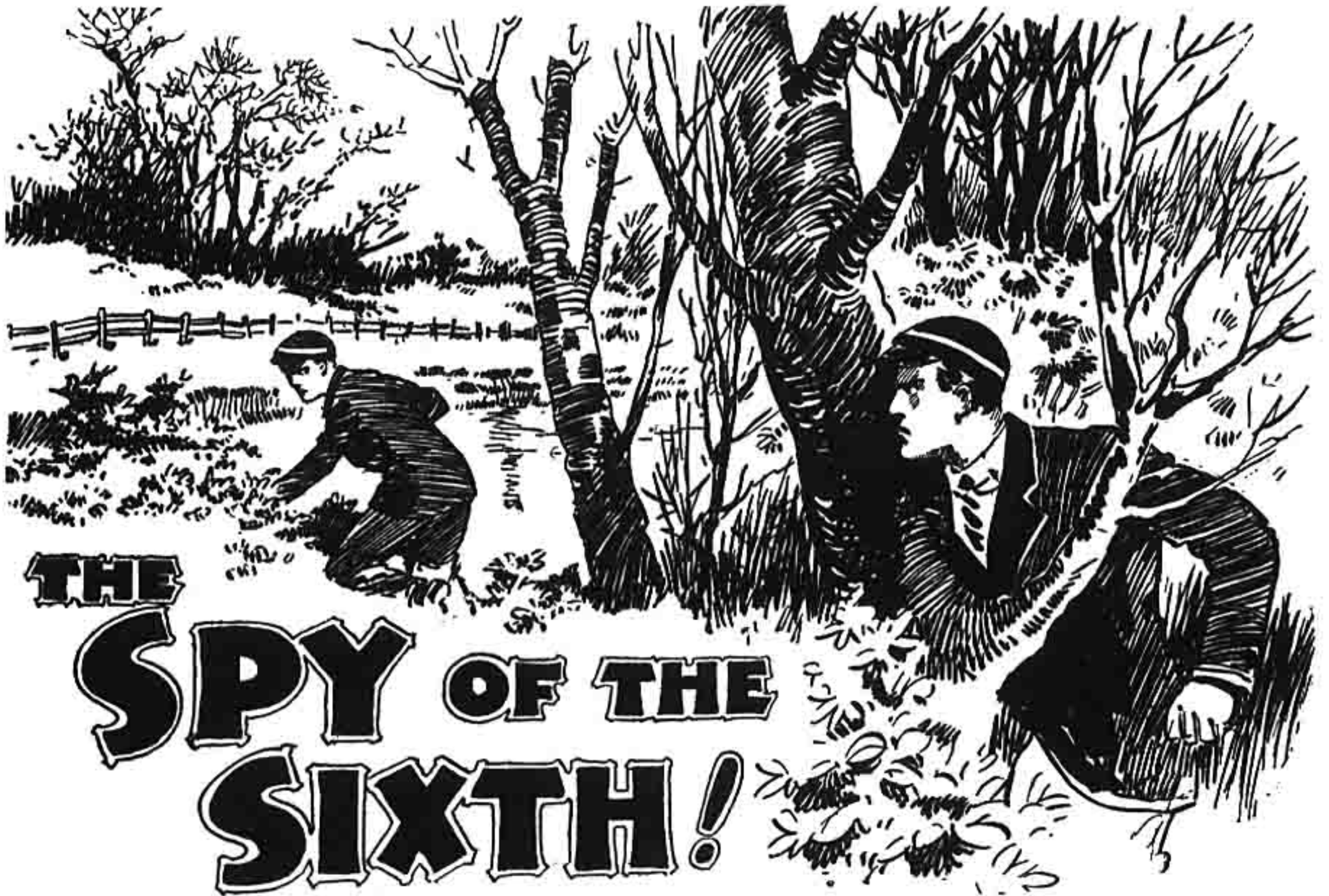


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The MAGNET

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THE SPY OF THE SIXTH!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Begging for it!

BILLY BUNTER giggled. "I say, you fellows!" he squeaked. "Look!"

A dozen fellows in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars School were already looking at Harry Wharton.

It was lights-out for the Remove. Half-past nine had chimed, and the prefect in charge had shepherded the Lower Fourth up to their dormitory.

Loder of the Sixth was the prefect in charge.

He was lounging outside the doorway, chatting with his pal Walker, while he waited for the juniors to turn in.

Harry Wharton had opened the lid of the box at the foot of his bed and rummaged among the contents thereof.

From the box he drew a pair of rubber shoes, and closed the lid again.

The shoes he placed under the edge of his bed.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles and giggled. Other fellows stared—some of them grinning, and some of them frowning.

Wharton seemed unconscious of the general interest taken in his proceedings.

Standing by his bed, he removed his collar and tie with an air of indifferent unconcern.

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

"Jevver see a man ask for it like that?" Smithy inquired of Tom Redwing, and Redwing frowned.

"I say, you fellows, Loder will spot him!" giggled Bunter.

"Don't yell, ass!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, Loder's sure to—"

"Shut up, ass!" grunted Bob, with an uneasy glance at the door.

Loder of the Sixth was not looking in. But he would be coming in in a few

By

Frank Richards.

minutes to turn out the light. Whether he would notice the rubber shoes was an interesting and thrilling question to the Remove fellows.

Wingate or Gwynne might not have noticed. But Loder was well known to have a watchful and suspicious eye on the scapegrace of the Remove.

Not a fellow in the Form doubted why the shoes were placed there. A fellow going out of bounds after lights-out needed to move softly and silently.

Harry Wharton, once head boy and captain of the Remove, was in disgrace this term, and he had acquired a reputation which Skinner described as "juicy."

A fellow who had been caned for smoking in his study, and flogged for "pub-haunting," was a fellow whom masters and prefects alike regarded with deep distrust and suspicion.

That "juicy" reputation was undeserved. It was partly the result of untoward circumstances; partly of the scheming of Wharton's old enemy, Loder of the Sixth; partly, it had to be admitted, of his own obstinate recklessness and passionate temper.

Deserved or undeserved, there it was; and there were few fellows at Greyfriars who did not regard Harry Wharton as a "shady sweep," booked for the inevitable "sack."

His old friends—no longer his friends—exchanged expressive glances. Frank Nugent set his lips; Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his dusky head; Johnny Bull grunted; and Bob Cherry muttered a warning to Bunter not to

draw Loder's attention; Lord Mauleverer stared and shrugged his shoulders.

Smithy came over to the scapegrace. They were not exactly friends, but the Bounder was impelled to whisper a word of warning. Breaking bounds after lights-out was not unknown to Herbert Vernon-Smith, but he was much more prudent and circumspect about it than this.

"You want to go home before we break up for Christmas?" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

Harry Wharton stared for a moment. "Eh? No! What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, a fellow goes home when he's bunked," said Smithy. "If you're not in a fearful hurry to see the old folks at home, old bean, I'd advise you not to let the beaks know you're going out of bounds to-night."

"Out of bounds!" repeated Wharton. "Who's going out of bounds?"

"Aren't you?" grinned Smithy.

"Not at all!"

"I fancy Loder will think you are when he spots those shoes," said Vernon-Smith.

"Any law against putting a pair of shoes ready for a trot before brekker in the morning?" asked Wharton.

"Oh! None! Loder may think you're going to take that trot a good many hours before brekker, though—say, about nine or ten hours!" grinned the Bounder. "Don't be an ass, Wharton! Every man in the dorm knows what you're up to."

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Every man in the dorm can go and eat coke!" he answered.

"Oh, quite! Only givin' you the tip, old bean—no need to bite a fellow's head off! Loder's sure to spot those shoes, and he will know what you've put them ready for, unless he's a fool."

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"More rogue than fool," said Harry. "Well, then, what's the good—"
Vernon-Smith broke off as Loder of the Sixth looked in at the doorway. "Now then, turn in, you young sweeps!" snapped Loder.

Smithy went back to his own bed. He had given the reckless scapegrace a good-natured warning, and he could do no more.

Apparently, however, the scapegrace of the Remove was acting on the Bounder's tip.

He stooped beside his bed and pushed the pair of shoes farther under, so that they were out of view of a cursory glance.

Perhaps he was not aware that Loder, standing in the doorway, was looking at him. The bully of the Sixth was not only looking at Wharton, but he was watching him curiously.

Wharton had his back to Loder while he stooped and shifted the rubber shoes, and seemed quite unaware of his keen scrutiny.

Every other fellow in the dormitory was fully aware of it, however.

Some of them expected Loder to stride in and order Wharton to explain why he had put the shoes in readiness. There was no doubt whatever that he observed them, and observed that Wharton was pushing them out of sight.

But as Wharton rose—the rubber shoes out of sight now under the bed—Loder's glance turned from him. He gave Wharton no particular attention after that. But there was a gleam in his eyes, and a sour grin on his face, when he left the dormitory after turning out the lights.

Loder had not failed to see what all the Remove had seen, and to draw the same conclusions as the Removites.

As a dutiful prefect, Loder, suspecting a junior of planning to break bounds after lights-out, certainly should have taken measures to prevent him from doing so. But Gerald Loder was not a whale on duty.

His idea was to give the young rascal enough rope to hang himself. Harry Wharton was not to be prevented from breaking bounds. His absence was to be discovered and reported after he had gone. Which, in the Sixth Form bully's opinion, would mean the departure from Greyfriars of the junior who knew too much about Loder for Loder's peace of mind.

On the landing at the end of the dormitory passage Loder stopped. His pal Walker glanced at him in surprised inquiry.

"You're coming down?" he asked.

Loder shook his head.

"No; stoppin' here," he answered.

"What on earth for?" asked the astonished Walker.

"I've an idea that one of those young sweeps is getting out of bounds to-night," said Loder. "I've got my duty to do, old bean."

"Look here, Carne's expecting us in his study—"

"I'll join you later."

"If you're after young Wharton again—"

"That's it!"

"Then I'll give you a tip," said Walker. "Let him rip! You've come a mucker half a dozen times, getting after that kid, and he's made a fool of you every time. Ten to one you're barking up the wrong tree again. Chuck it, and come down to Carne's study."

"Rats!"

Walker sniffed and went down the

stairs. Loder turned out the passage light and waited.

Duty, it was certain, would not have caused the slackest prefect at Greyfriars to take so much trouble. It was bitter enmity that held him there, leaning on the banisters in the dark, waiting and watching and listening. It was a weary business, and Loder could not even venture to comfort himself with a smoke. But he had not more than a quarter of an hour to wait.

From the dark, silent passage, came the sound of a door softly opening, and closing again. It was the door of the Remove dormitory. Loder could see nothing—but he could hear distinctly.

His eyes gleamed like a cat's in the dark. He listened intently; but he could catch no sound of footsteps. But he did not expect to hear a junior who was creeping away up the passage in rubber shoes.

Loder was in no hurry to stir. He gave the breaker of bounds plenty of time to reach the box-room at the other end of the passage—plenty of time to clamber down from the window and go. Not till he was absolutely certain that the young rascal was well gone did Loder stir from the spot, and walk back to the Remove dormitory.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Out of bounds!

"NO deception, gentlemen!" said Skinner.

There was a laugh in the Remove dormitory.

Not a fellow there had closed his eyes

Time and again has Loder of the Sixth tried to bring disgrace upon Harry Wharton, the rebel of the Remove. Now this "big gun" of the Sixth descends to common spying in the hope that he will catch the rebel out!

yet. Even Billy Bunter's resonant snore did not wake the echoes as usual.

Many fellows in the Remove were concerned for the reckless scapegrace. All of them were interested.

All through that term Harry Wharton had been drifting on the downward path. But latterly he seemed to be taking it at a rush.

The Bounder had offered three to one, in doughnuts, that the one-time captain of the Form would be sacked before the school broke up for Christmas, and he had found no takers. Wharton's former friends had given up hope of him. Even Lord Mauleverer had turned him down at last. Even Skinner & Co., the black sheep of the Form, were rather shy of him. He was growing to be rather a perilous acquaintance for any fellow. Nobody wanted to be dragged into his ruin when it came. Only the reckless Bounder still kept up a friendly attitude; but Smithy was taking care not to endanger himself thereby.

Wharton's arrogant recklessness was a byword in the Remove now. Yet the fellows were surprised by this latest example of it. He could not possibly want to be "bunked." Certainly a freezing welcome would have been his, at home, if he had been "turfed" out of Greyfriars. His uncle and guardian,

Colonel Wharton, had been shocked and grieved by reports of the way he was going. It was fairly well known that Wharton resented the colonel's view of him, as he resented that of his Form master, Mr. Quelch, and that of his headmaster. He was certain to find Wharton Lodge an extremely chilly abode, if he arrived there in disgrace. And after his last flogging, the Head had solemnly warned him that his next escapade spelled expulsion from the school. This was the next—and he seemed utterly regardless whether it came to the knowledge of the school authorities or not.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"Wharton!" he called out.

There was no answer. It was long since the one-time leader of the Famous Five had been on speaking terms with his old chums.

"You needn't answer!" snapped Bob. "But you've got to listen. I tell you, Loder was watching you like a cat, and he will be watching now. He knows what you're up to, and he will nail you."

Silence from Wharton.

"If you can't be decent, you might have a little sense," said Bob. "If you leave this dorm to-night, you'll be snuffed."

"And serve you right!" growled Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed Wharton," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "although we are no longer on the terms of friendly and idiotic speechfulness, it would be a terrific calamity to see you bootfully bunked from this absurd school. A stitch in time saves ninepence, as the English proverb remarkably observes."

Wharton might have been asleep, or deaf. There was no rejoinder from him.

"What's the good of talking to the chap?" growled Squiff, the new captain of the Remove. "He's begging for the sack, and he won't be happy till he gets it."

"And the sooner the better, at this rate!" grunted Peter Todd.

"Hear, hear!" said two or three voices.

Harry Wharton was not asleep; he had never been wider awake. He lay in the darkness, listening, with a black and bitter face.

That was what the fellows thought of him—even his former friends, who should have known him better. Yet they knew that it was the egregious Bunter who had smoked in Study No. 1 when Wharton had been punished for the offence—punished, in effect, not for smoking, but for not giving away the Owl of the Remove.

They did not know why he had gone to the Three Fishers, on the occasion when he had been spotted "pub-haunting"—but he thought, bitterly, that they might have known that he had not gone "blagging." He had gone there to warn a fellow who had done him a good turn, and who was in danger of being spotted—and he had been spotted himself. But nobody surmised anything of the kind. It seemed to him that all were willing, indeed eager, to believe the worst they could.

It was the same with Quelch, his Form master; the same with the prefects; even with the Head, of late. Nobody expected any good of him—everybody expected bad, as a matter of course.

Yet, except for faults of temper and stubborn pride, he was still the same fellow that they had always known. The whole Form had turned against

him—the whole school eyed him askance—it was hardly a secret that his Form master desired him to go—that the Head was dubious whether he could be allowed to remain at Greyfriars. And he told himself that he had done nothing—almost nothing—to deserve it all. But for the miserable scheming of his old enemy, Loder of the Sixth, things would not have gone so terribly wrong that hapless term—he would still have been standing in his old place.

"Well, I never saw a man ask for it so jolly emphatically," remarked Bols-over major. "If you fancy Loder hasn't got his eye on you, Wharton, you're making a mistake."

"It's a case of 'no deception, gentlemen'!" chuckled Skinner. "Wharton's given Loder the tip that he's going out of bounds, because he thought Loder might be interested."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you're an ass, Wharton," said the Bounder. "I'll bet you Loder will have his eye on this dorm for the next hour."

Wharton smiled sarcastically in the darkness. That, as a matter of fact, was what he thought, and exactly what he wanted.

There was a creak of a bed. It was too dark to see who was getting out; but all the Remove knew.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "He's going!"

"Wharton!" exclaimed Mark Linley, the head boy of the Remove, sitting up in bed and peering through the gloom. "Is that you, Wharton?"

"You know it is!" came the cool answer.

"Have a little sense! You'll run right into Loder's hands."

"That needn't worry you. If I get bunked you'll be safer in my place as head boy."

"I don't know whether, as head boy, I ought not to stop you!" exclaimed Mark angrily.

"Try it on, if you like," came the indifferent answer.

Mark Linley, breathing hard, laid his head on the pillow again. There was a sound of Wharton moving in the darkness. Faintly, but audibly, footsteps went to the door.

The door was heard to open.

"My only hat!" breathed the Bounder. "He's really going! Of all the howling asses—"

The door shut again.

"He's gone!" muttered Bob Cherry. "The gonefulness is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, dismally. "It will be the esteemed and disgusting sack this time."

"Oh, the fool, the fool!" breathed Frank Nugent. "Has he gone off his rocker? It's not a risk this time—it's a certainty."

Not a fellow in the dormitory thought of sleep. Many of them were sitting up in bed, with ears on the alert.

That Loder of the Sixth would be on the watch, seemed certain. His spying methods were well known; equally well known was his implacable hostility to the scapegrace of Greyfriars. The slightest hint was enough for Gerald Loder, and the reckless breaker of bounds had given him more than a hint. The juniors waited, in breathless excitement, for what they knew must follow.

But it was a quarter of an hour before anything happened. Ten o'clock was heard to strike.

"My hat!" murmured Skinner. "Is Loder missing a chance like this, after all?"

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"Not in your Mfetime!" said the Bounder. "He's givin' Wharton time to get clear. He's not goin' to bring Quelch on the scene till he's jolly sure that the chap's gone."

"The rotter!" muttered Bob Cherry. The Bounder chuckled.

"Loder doesn't want to nail him in the House," he said. "He wants him to get out of bounds—that's his game! He's giving him rope."

"The curl!" muttered Nugent. "I say, you fellows, he's coming!" squeaked Bunter.

There were footsteps in the passage at last.

The Remove dormitory door was thrown open.

The light was switched on, revealing Loder of the Sixth in the doorway.

All eyes were fixed on him, and he stared round at the excited faces and wide-open eyes of the Removites—all of whom ought to have been fast asleep at that hour.

Then, in the midst of a breathless silence, his eyes fixed on Harry Wharton's bed.

The bedclothes were turned back; the bed was empty.

On such an occasion the Bounder would have rigged up a dummy in his bed, to resemble a sleeper, and deceive a cursory glance. Wharton had not taken the trouble. The empty bed fairly stared the spy of the Sixth in the face.

Loder's eyes glittered.

There was no doubt now. He knew that the young rascal was gone—he had heard the door open and close. But he had made assurance doubly sure now. He knew that the juniors were all watching him, but he did not take the trouble to hide the malicious satisfaction in his face. For a long, long minute he stood staring at the empty bed.

"So Wharton's gone!" he said at last.

No one answered. Loder switched off the light, stepped back into the passage, and closed the door.

The juniors heard the click of a key. Loder had put the key outside and locked the door, evidently to prevent the breaker of bounds, if by chance he returned, from re-entering the dormitory, while the prefect was gone to call Mr. Quelch.

"That does it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Loder's the man to take care!" chuckled the Bounder. "If Wharton changed his mind and came back, the game's up all the same—he will be nailed outside the dormitory. Not that he will come back—I fancy he's half-way to the Three Fishers by this time."

"Loder's gone for Quelch!" muttered Bob.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton will be sacked in the morning," said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm going to have Study No. 1 when he's gone."

"You fat blighter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry. Look here, I'm jolly well going to have Wharton's study when he's sacked!" said Bunter warmly. "It's the best study in the Remove."

"Shut up, you podgy porker!" snapped Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I know it's your study, but you haven't used it this term—since you rowed with Wharton. Look here, you can share it with me, if you like; but I'm going to have it! You can keep off the grass, Bob Cherry! Like your cheek to say—Yaroooop!" roared Bunter, as a pillow landed on him in the dark, and out short his remarks.

In breathless excitement the

Removites waited. Loder, evidently, had gone to call the Remove master, and the dormitory door was locked against Wharton's return, if by chance he returned. The game was up for the scapegrace of Greyfriars—or so it seemed to all the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Last Straw!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, master of the Remove, sat in his study.

He was correcting a pile of Latin papers for his Form, and he paused over one paper, in the handwriting of Harry Wharton, once his trusted head boy, now, in Mr. Quelch's opinion, the worst boy at Greyfriars.

That paper was far from satisfactory.

Wharton was a good scholar, and he had always had a taste for the classics that was rather rare in the Lower School. He was no "swot" or "sap," but he did not regard the study of the classics as a wearisome bore, as so many of the fellows did. In former days he had always turned out a good Latin paper. Now he had turned out a bad one.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips over that paper. There were worse specimens in the pile before him. But Wharton, obviously, could have done better, had he chosen to do so. At the same time, he had made his paper just good enough to pass muster.

It was up to the average of the Remove—neither more nor less. It was not bad enough to call for punishment; and Mr. Quelch could have found it in his heart to wish that the scapegrace had made it a little worse, so that he could justly have administered punishment. He had no doubt that the mistakes in the paper, though not so bad as Bunter's or Mauleverer's, were intended to irritate him.

Tap!

"Come in!" barked Mr. Quelch, laying down the paper.

It was Loder of the Sixth who entered. Mr. Quelch gave him a glance of surprised inquiry.

"I am afraid that I have a rather serious matter to report, sir!" said Loder, with respectful seriousness.

He was not likely to let look or voice betray his real feelings to the Remove master. Quelch's prejudice against the rebel of his Form was deep and bitter; but he was a just man. Although Wharton did not dream of suspecting it, he was as much grieved as angered by the downfall of the junior he had once liked and respected.

"What is it, Loder?"

"Wharton, sir—"

A glint came into Mr. Quelch's eyes. "Wharton!" he repeated.

It was past ten o'clock. The Remove had been in bed half an hour. Even the worst boy in the Form might have been expected to give his Form master a rest at that hour.

"He is out of bounds, sir," said Loder. "Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch started to his feet.

"Out of bounds—at this hour!" he exclaimed.

"I am sorry to have to tell you so, sir, but there is no doubt about it," answered Loder.

"Surely it is impossible! Even that bad and reckless boy—Loder, are you certain of this?"

"I have ascertained the fact, sir, before calling you," said Loder. "As you know, sir, it was my duty to see lights out for the Remove this evening. I chanced to notice that Wharton had

placed a pair of rubber shoes under his bed—and I could not help thinking that the action was suspicious. I, therefore, kept observation on the Remove dormitory."

A slightly repugnant expression came over Mr. Quelch's face. He trusted Loder—and he fully admitted that it was a prefect's duty to ascertain the facts in such a case. But there was something in this system of watching that went against the grain somehow.

"After a time, sir, I heard the door of the Remove dormitory open and close," continued Loder. "I considered it best to visit the dormitory and ascertain beyond doubt that the boy was gone before calling you. His bed was empty, and the whole Form was awake. I

gave him a solemn warning that his next reckless escapade would be followed by expulsion from the school. Greyfriars is no place for a boy who has gone utterly and irretrievably to the bad."

The Remove master paused. "Loder, please go to the Head's study and beg Dr. Locke, in my name, to step up to the Remove dormitory."

Loder's eyes danced. "Certainly, sir!"

The dutiful prefect retired to call the Head. Mr. Quelch stood for some moments in thought, a dark and bitter expression on his face. This was the end! The cup of the scapegrace's offences was full to overflowing. Even his last disgraceful exploit—the visit to the disreputable den up the river—paled

"I say, you fellows, there's a light outside—that's old Quelch! Loder's told him about Wharton!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, suppose Wharton comes back now? He will barge right into old Quelch."

"Cheese it!"

Mr. Quelch moved a little farther from the door. His lips were tightly compressed.

There was a stop and a rustle in the passage. Dr. Locke came slowly and majestically from the stairs. The kind old Head's face was very grave. Loder followed him up the passage with a carefully serious and concerned face.

"Mr. Quelch! Is it possible—"

"I fear that it is only too certain,



On the very edge of the muddy pool Wharton was struggling desperately in the hands of the panting Higheliffians when he sighted Trumper & Co., the chums of Courtfield School, on a raft. "Rescue!" he yelled. "That's Wharton!" said Dick Trumper, as the three chums began to pole their unwieldy craft forward. "Three to one ain't fair play. This is where we come in!"

could see that they all knew that he had gone.

"Upon my word!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Here is the key of the dormitory, sir! I locked the door after looking in. If Wharton, by chance, returned before you go there, I fear that he would be capable of denying that he had been out of the dormitory at all."

"I have little doubt of it," said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "There was a time when I would have taken his word without question; now I certainly cannot trust him. You have acted very judiciously, Loder."

"Thank you, sir!" said Loder, with a dutiful smirk.

Mr. Quelch took the key. "I will proceed to the Remove dormitory at once, Loder. This is the last disgraceful act of which that boy will be guilty at Greyfriars. Dr. Locke gave

into insignificance beside this. That reckless escapade, at all events, had been in the daytime. Now, it seemed, the young rascal had stolen out after bedtime, creeping away from the school in the dark hours to join some disreputable acquaintances—doubtless at the same blackguardly resort. It was the end!

All through the term Mr. Quelch had been convinced that the scapegrace had better go; but the Head had been slow to come to his opinion. Now the headmaster would see with his own eyes!

Mr. Quelch left the study at last and ascended the stairs. He turned on the light in the dormitory passage, and the glimmer of it under the door warned the excited Removites that the beaks were at hand.

Waiting by the locked door, till the Head should arrive, Mr. Quelch heard an excited squeak from within.

Mr. Quelch said the Remove master. "Loder has ascertained that Wharton has left his dormitory, and the door is locked. He cannot, therefore, have returned while Loder was calling me. Undoubtedly the wretched boy is out of bounds!"

"At this hour!" said the Head, deeply shocked.

"I am afraid, sir," said Loder respectfully, "that this is not the first time. But the boy has been so very wary—I may say cunning—that he has, so far, escaped detection."

The Head sighed. "If the boy is out of bounds at this hour he must be waited for, and taken to the punishment-room as soon as he returns," he said. "He will leave Greyfriars early in the morning. There is no doubt—"

"None, sir."

"Please unlock the door, Mr. Quelch."

The key grated into the lock, and Mr. Quelch turned it. He threw open the dormitory door. Every eye in the Remove was wide open, and the three figures—headmaster and Form master and prefect—were seen against the light in the passage. There was an excited squeak from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows! It's the beak himself!"

Dr. Locke stepped in. He switched on the light. The long, lofty dormitory was flooded with illumination. Dr. Locke's eyes swept along the row of white beds. He looked, and looked again. Every bed seemed to have an occupant. The Head turned to Mr. Quelch, who was in the doorway, with Loder behind him.

"Mr. Quelch, what am I to understand? Loder explicitly stated—and his statement was borne out by you—that Wharton was absent from his dormitory—"

"Certainly, sir!" said Loder.

"Undoubtedly!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Head uttered a sound suspiciously resembling a snort.

"Wharton is here," he said.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Nobody Missing!

"WHARTON!"

"Here!"

Mr. Quelch gasped; Loder fairly gabbled.

Both of them jumped into the dormitory.

The Head frowned.

Harry Wharton, sitting up in bed, gazed at them. He was the only fellow who did. All the other fellows were gazing at Wharton with astounded, almost unbelieving eyes.

Wharton was there. The turning on of the light revealed him in bed like the rest of the Remove. The door had been locked, he could not have got back. Yet he was there. It seemed like magic to the Remove. Not a fellow had doubted that he was far away. Yet he was there sitting up in bed, with an expression of mild surprise on his face.

"Great Scott!" breathed the Bounder, his eyes dancing.

Smithy was the first fellow to catch on. Obviously Wharton could not have got in through a locked door. He had not been out of the dormitory at all.

The whole thing was a stupendous jape on the spy of the Sixth.

He had been out of bed when the prefect looked in—certainly not out of the dormitory—under another bed, in all probability. Now the Bounder knew why the scapegrace had allowed Loder to see the rubber shoes placed in readiness. That had been the bait. Loder had swallowed the bait like a gudgeon. He had been, as the poet expresses it, tenderly led by the nose as asses are. Smithy was quick on the uptake, and he jumped to it almost at once. But the other fellows stared at Wharton, and wondered whether they were dreaming.

Loder wondered whether it was a nightmare. He saw Wharton; he had to admit that he was there. But he could hardly believe his eyes.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard through his nose. That over-dutiful prefect had made a good many mistakes on the track of Harry Wharton. Now he had made one more. That was evident. And the Head had been dragged into it.

Dr. Locke obviously was annoyed, though at the same time relieved to see the suspected junior present. He had been prepared to turn the deepest wrath upon the scapegrace, had he been absent. Now his wrath took another direction.

His calm eyes turned on Mr. Quelch with cold disapproval. The colour flushed into Quelch's face. He had made a fool of himself, and a fool of his chief. The Head's cold look rubbed it in. Quelch's eyes glittered for a moment at Loder—the cause of this disconcerting situation. Loder, his mouth agape with amazement, was staring at Wharton as if it had been the ghost of the Remove rebel that sat in the bed.

"Wharton is here," repeated the Head icily. "I should be glad to know what this means. I have been brought here—"

"I—I certainly supposed," gasped Mr. Quelch, "on Loder's positive assurance, I certainly believed—"

"Loder, will you kindly explain why you have deluded Mr. Quelch, and wasted your headmaster's time?" inquired Dr. Locke.

"I—I—I—" Loder stuttered helplessly. "I—I don't understand. I—I—"

Certainly Wharton was not here when I looked, hardly ten minutes ago."

"He is here now," said the Head icily. "Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

"Have you been out of this dormitory since lights out?"

"No, sir."

"It is false!" panted Loder. "He was not here. I looked, and his bed was empty! I assure you, sir! All the boys present knew that he was gone!"

"Wharton must have been out of bed, at least," said Mr. Quelch, coming to the rescue of the hapless prefect.

"He left the dormitory!" almost shouted Loder. "I distinctly heard the door open and shut!"

"I did not leave the dormitory, sir," said Harry Wharton, calmly addressing the Head.

"Knowing that Loder was spying on—"

"What—what did you say, Wharton?" ejaculated the Head.

"Loder is always spying after me, sir," said Wharton, with the utmost calmness. "He watches me like a cat, and listens at doors, to find out something to report to my Form master. Knowing that he was spying on me again, I got up and opened and shut the door—just to amuse him, sir."

Loder choked.

Distinctly, as he had said, he had heard the door of the Remove dormitory open and shut. But assuredly it had never crossed his mind that the fellow who opened and shut it had remained inside the dormitory all the time. He learned that rather too late for the knowledge to be of any use to him.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

"Wharton," Mr. Quelch almost hooted, "do you mean to say that you were aware that Loder was—was keeping observation?"

"I was aware that he was spying, sir," answered Harry. "I let him see me put a pair of rubber shoes under my bed at lights out, to set him going. I knew that that would be enough for a rotten suspicious mind."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

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

All the Remove were catching on now. There were grinning faces up and down the dormitory.

"You were not in bed when Loder looked in, Wharton!" rapped the Head.

"No, sir. I was under another bed."

"Under another bed!" repeated Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir. I thought I would let Loder make a thorough fool of himself while he was about it."

"Bless my soul!"

Loder gurgled. He quite understood now. A trap had been laid for him, and he had walked into it blindly. His own precaution, in locking the dormitory door, made it impossible for Wharton to be doubted. Obviously the scamp of the Remove had not left the dormitory at all—since he was there now. Loder's leg had been pulled—that was the long and the short of it.

Mr. Quelch stood dumb. He really did not know what to say. It was not the "end" for Wharton. He had not broken bounds: he had done nothing but step out of bed, and let Loder jump to a false conclusion.

"Wharton," said the Head, at last, "you have played a foolish and unthinking prank. I can only conclude that you deliberately intended to give Loder a false impression, and cause him to make an unfounded report to your Form master."

"That is true, sir," said Harry coolly. "I thought, sir, that it might cause Mr. Quelch to speak seriously to Loder, and warn him not to watch Greyfriars fellows like a hired detective."

"Oh scissors!" breathed the Bounder.

The Head coughed.

"I shall leave it to your Form master, Wharton, to deal with you for this thoughtless prank," he said; and he turned to the door. "Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!" chorused the Remove.

The Head swept away.

Mr. Quelch followed, and Loder, after one venomous glare at Harry Wharton, followed the Remove master.

The door closed.

Barely had it closed when there was a yell of merriment in the dormitory. It pealed through the closed door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Oh, what a jape!" yelled the Bounder. "What a lark! Did you fellows notice Loder's face?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Quelch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch's ears burned as he heard that. He walked away rather quickly. Loder followed him down the stairs, his face white with rage. On the lower landing Mr. Quelch stopped. Loder would have been glad to pass, but the Form master stopped him with a gesture. The Head was annoyed with Quelch, and had let him see it very clearly. It was, perhaps, natural that Quelch should desire to pass it on.

"Loder," said the Remove master, in icy tones, "you have made a mistake—a foolish mistake—"

"That young rascal deliberately deceived me!" gasped Loder. "He meant me to believe—"

"No doubt—no doubt! But this is not the first time, Loder. Only a few days ago you reported to me that Wharton had gone to the races at Wapshot, and it transpired that he was playing football here at the time. Now you have reported him out of bounds at night—and it transpires that he had not even left his dormitory."

"I—I thought—"

"You should have ascertained, Loder. You have placed me in a very difficult position. You have made yourself look ridiculous to all the boys in my Form. This will not do, Loder."

"I—I—I—" gurgled Loder.

"That Wharton has taken to bad ways I fear is only too probable. But unfounded suspicions and accusations will not improve matters. Such an incident as this is calculated to make him an object of sympathy in the school and bring the office of prefect into contempt. Loder, you have acted foolishly, thoughtlessly, carelessly, and, I even fear, maliciously. You must be more careful, Loder."

Leaving Loder of the Sixth to digest that as best he could, Mr. Quelch rustled away. The bully of the Sixth stood trembling with rage.

Loder of the Sixth did not enjoy his game of banker in Carne's study that evening.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables I

"GREYFRIARS cad!" Harry Wharton started and glanced round as that polite address fell on his ears. It was the following day, a half-holiday at Greyfriars School. Wharton, as was usual with him now, was on his own. It was not long—though it often seemed to him very long—since he had been an inseparable member of the Famous Five. But the old Co. was broken up now; Wharton had gone his own wilful way and his friends had gone theirs. Other friends had fallen away—even the loyal Mauly had given him up at last. That afternoon the Remove were playing a football match, but Wharton, once their captain, had stubbornly refused to play for the Form since he had been turned out of the captaincy. Not that they wanted him since he had acquired what Skinner called his "juicy" reputation.

Nobody, indeed, seemed to want him. Skinner & Co. had gone off on one of their shady expeditions, but even the black sheep of the Remove did not want him. His company would have been likely to draw the eyes of watchful

prefects on them, which was a risk Skinner & Co. did not care to take. Hanging about the school on his own under derisive eyes was neither grateful nor comforting, and Wharton had started for a long walk across Courtfield Common. It was beginning to seem to him that it would not be a bad thing if he did leave Greyfriars, as his Form master wished. But home was the only alternative, and his uncle was deeply displeased with him, and the nephew deeply resented his uncle's displeasure. He was sauntering on the common, in rather glum meditation, when the voice of Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, fell on his ears.

Three fellows came out of a path in the hawthorns—Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson of the Highcliffe Fourth. A quick glance round assured Ponsonby that the Greyfriars junior was alone. Three to one was sufficiently long odds to inspire Pon & Co. with courage. Hence their polite greeting.

Wharton gave them a glance of con-

"Collar him!" shouted Monson, "Play fair, you rotters!" exclaimed Wharton scornfully. "Come on, one at a time—two at a time, if you like—"

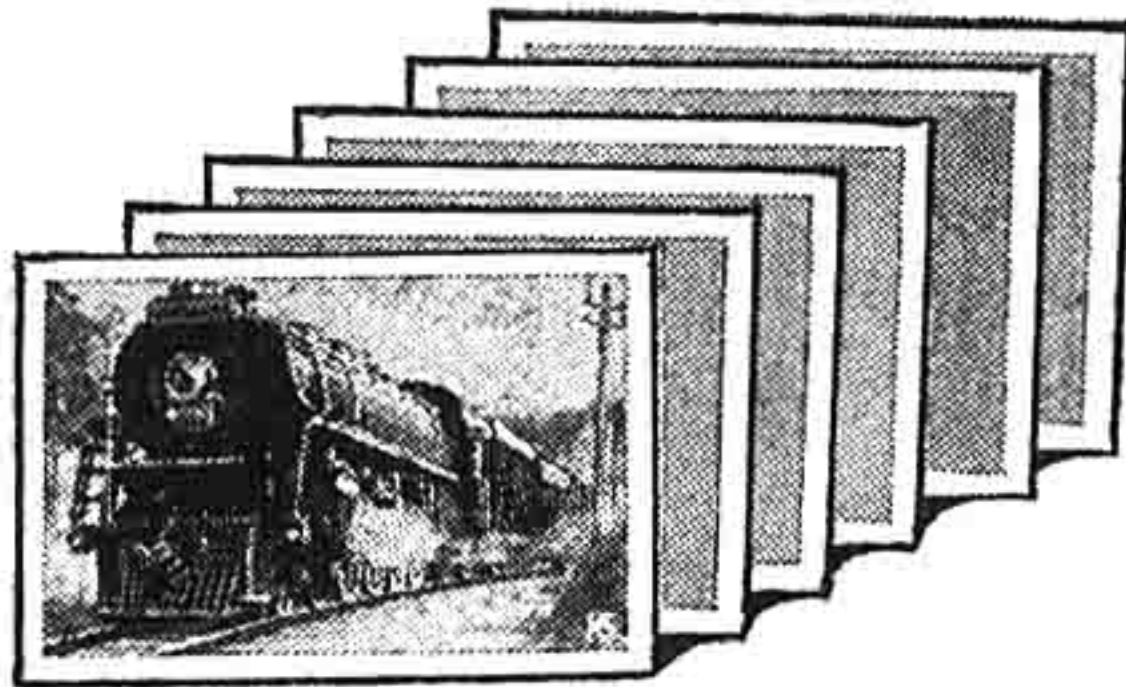
But three at a time suited Pon & Co. better. They came on with a rush. Wharton faced the rush coolly and steadily.

Pon gave a yell as a fist that seemed like a lump of lead jarred on his nose. He sat down suddenly, yolling.

The next moment Wharton was struggling in the grasp of Gadsby and Monson.

A jolt to the jaw sent Gadsby spinning across Ponsonby. But Wharton went over in Monson's grasp, and Monson clung to him, yelling to his comrades to come on.

In a few moments Wharton would have freed himself; but he was not given a few moments. Ponsonby scrambled up and came at him like a cat. Gadsby was only a second later. The Greyfriars junior was crumpled down in the damp grass, with the three Highcliffians sprawling over him.



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tempt and walked on. At a sign from Pon the Highcliffians lined up in his path, and he had to stop.

Obviously, Pon & Co. were looking for trouble—as they generally were on a half-holiday. "Safety first" was Pon's motto; but three to one seemed safe enough. So Pon was full of beans. "All on your own—what?" he grinned.

"Yes," said Harry quietly.

"I hear you've been rowing with nearly everybody else at your school," said Gadsby. "That so?"

"Find out!"

"Cheeky as ever!" grinned Ponsonby. "We'll give you somethin' to cure all that, my pippin! 'Member punchin' my head a few weeks ago?"

"I'm ready to punch it again," answered Wharton disdainfully.

"I'll give you the chance!" chuckled Pon. "There's a pond over there, by the willows—just the place for a duckin'. Bag him!"

Harry Wharton jumped back and put up his hands as the three grinning Highcliffians advanced upon him. He might have escaped the unequal combat by running—he was fit as a fiddle, and Pon & Co. were never fit. But nothing would have induced him to flee from Pon & Co. As a matter of fact, heavy as the odds were, he was not quite averse to a scrap. His mood was bitter and black. Whether the blame lay on himself or on others, everything had gone wrong, and he was at a dismal loose end. There was likely to be some solace, in his present mood, in punching Pon & Co.

"Bag the brute!" gasped Ponsonby.

Pon's nose was streaming red. That hefty punch had "tapped the claret." Harry Wharton struggled fiercely.

Three to one, as the enemy were, they did not have an easy task. They were gasping and panting by the time they overcame the Greyfriars junior's resistance. But he was overcome at last, and in the grasp of the three dusty and dishevelled and infuriated Highcliffians he was dragged across the rough ground towards the belt of willows that hid the pond.

He resisted breathlessly as he went. But he had to go, and the three dragged him through the willows to the edge of the pond.

But the spot was not so solitary as Pon & Co. had supposed.

On the pond floated a rudely-constructed raft, made of logs and branches. On the raft stood three schoolboys, poling along with trimmed branches. Harry Wharton's eyes fell on them, and he shouted. The three were Dick Trumper, Solly Lazarus, and Dicky Brown, of Courtfield Council School—members of the Courtfield Football Club, with whom the Remove played regular matches. They were youths whom Pon & Co. regarded with lofty disdain for having committed the crime of not being rich. Harry Wharton—rather fortunately for himself, in the present circumstances—was no snob, and he was on very friendly terms with the chums of Courtfield School. In fact, he had been rather hoping that he might fall in with some of the Court-

field fellows that afternoon. Now he had fallen in with them—at a fortunate moment.

"Rescue!" he yelled. "Trumper—Brown—Solly! Lend a hand!"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Pon. "Those Courtfield cads!"

"They won't dare to touch us," said Gadsby loftily. "Get on with it."

"Rescue!" shouted Wharton.

On the very edge of the muddy pond he put up a last desperate struggle. It could only have ended one way, but for several minutes the panting Highcliffians had their hands full with him.

Trumper & Co. stared towards the bank. Immediately they began to pole their rather unwieldy craft shoreward.

"That's Wharton!" said Dick Trumper. "Three to one ain't fair play. This is where we come in!"

"What-ho!" agreed Brown.

"Yeth, rather!" chuckled Solly Lazarus. "Give the rotterth beanth."

The raft bumped on the muddy shore and the three schoolboys leaped off it, and rushed to the rescue.

They were only just in time, for Wharton, in spite of his strenuous resistance, was fairly at his last gasp now.

In a few seconds more the Highcliffians would have rolled him headlong into the muddy pond. Trumper & Co. bumped into them with a rush, and sent them staggering back.

"Chuck that!" rapped out Trumper. "Call that fair play?"

"Get out of the way, you low rotter!" roared Ponsonby. "Don't you dare to lay your low paws on me!"

The next moment Trumper was laying them on—hard! Pon had to retreat, defending himself as best he could from a fierce onslaught. Gadsby and Monson let go the Greyfriars junior. They, too, had to defend. Dicky Brown tackled Gadsby; the smiling Solly took care of Monson. There was no doubt that Trumper & Co. were guilty of the very serious fault of not being rich, but they seemed to be able to use their hands remarkably well. Three wealthy youths fairly crumpled up under their attack.

Harry Wharton, spent and breathless, dragged himself to a sitting posture and looked on. He was too exhausted to join in, but he was not needed. Trumper & Co. were taking the best of care of the Highcliffe knuts.

Pon & Co. sprawled in damp grass and yelled.

"Chuck it!" howled Ponsonby. "You beastly ruffian, leave off hittin' me! I give in! Whooo-hoop! I give in, you beast!"

"They were going to duck Wharton," said Solly Lazarus. "Thauce for the goose is thauce for the gander! In they go!"

"Hear, hear!" chortled Dicky Brown.

"Roll 'em in!" chuckled Trumper.

And in the three Highcliffians were rolled, gasping and spluttering, into reeking mud.

Harry Wharton laughed breathlessly. Three muddy, dripping, draggled figures crawled out of the muddy margin of the pond. Pon & Co. were elegant fellows, but they did not look elegant now. They looked horrid. They panted and spluttered and gurgled, and trailed away across the common, leaving a track of wet mud behind them.

"Tho much for Highcliffe!" chuckled Solly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks, you fellows!" gasped Wharton. "You've saved me from a ducking!"

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He rose to his feet, and laughed as he looked after the draggled Highcliffians trailing dismally away.

"Jolly glad we were on the spot, old bean," said Trumper. "It was a chance for those rotters when your pals weren't with you."

Wharton coloured a little. The Courtfield fellows were unaware that he no longer had any "pals" in his school.

"You're not playing football this afternoon?" he asked.

"We're going up for practice at three," answered Trumper. "We're going all out to beat you when our game comes off, Wharton."

"I'm not in the Remove Eleven now," said Harry. "I—I—I've chucked footer at Greyfriars!"

"What on earth for?" exclaimed Trumper in astonishment. "You're not giving up the game, surely?"

"Well, there's been rather a row," said Harry uncomfortably. "I'm out of it, anyhow. You won't find me on the field when you play Greyfriars."

"Sorry—and glad!" said Trumper, with a cheery grin. "We're not up to Greyfriars weight; we don't get the practice you fellows do, of course. If they're duffers enough to leave out their best man, we may pull it off this time. I say, they must be rather duffers to let you go. If you were in my team, I'd hold you back by your ears if you wanted to quit!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If you want an extra man at any time, Trumper—on a half-holiday at the school, of course—I'd be jolly glad to offer," he said.

"Mean that?" exclaimed Trumper.

"Of course!"

"We only play Saturday afternoons—that's a half-holiday at Greyfriars. It's not always easy to scrounge a full team, either. Look here, old bean, if you're serious—"

"Yes, rather!"

"We've got a game with Woodend on Saturday. We'll give you your usual place, centre-forward, if you'd really care—"

"Good man! Done!"

"By Chove!" said Solly Lazarus. "We're in luck!"

And Harry Wharton rather felt that he was in luck, too, when he walked away with the Courtfield fellows to their ground. It was a new and unexpected resource to the outcast of Greyfriars, and his heart was lighter and his face bright.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

SQUIFF of the Remove looked dubious.

It was Saturday, a cold, clear winter's day, ideal for football, and that afternoon the Remove were booked to play Hobson & Co. of the Shell.

Hobby and his men were a rather older and heavier team than the Lower Fourth, and it was a match in which the Remove had to put their best foot foremost.

On such an occasion there was no doubt that they missed Harry Wharton, the best forward in the Remove.

Squiff, the new captain of the Remove, stood silent, with that dubious expression on his face, listening to Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who were talking to him in turns, and occasionally all at once. Johnny Bull stood without speaking, only occasionally contributing a grunt.

"You see," said Bob, "we want the

chap! We have to go all out to beat Hobby, and even then we mayn't get away with it."

"The all-outfulness is the sine qua non," said Hurree Singh solemnly. "But the getfulness away is preposterously uncertain."

"Give Wharton another chance!" said Frank.

Grunt! from Johnny Bull.

"I'm not saying that he hasn't played the goat," said Bob. "But, dash it all, Smithy plays the goat often enough, and he's in the team."

"Oh, bother that!" said Squiff. "It's not my bizney to butt into a man's affairs—that's up to the beaks and prefects. So long as he keeps fit, and can play a good game—"

"Well, Wharton's fit enough."

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field nodded slowly.

"Yes, it's queer," he said. "It seems plain enough that he's taken to rotten ways—he's been flogged for it, anyhow. But he seems to keep as fit as a fiddle, and he never misses a games practice. I fancied there was going to be trouble there, but he turns up every time, keen as mustard. If he really smokes and rots about generally, it doesn't seem to make any difference to his footer."

"Perhaps he doesn't," suggested Nugent.

Another grunt from Johnny Bull.

"If he doesn't," said Johnny, "he's trying jolly hard to make fellows believe that he does."

"Well, that might be simply the nature of the beast," suggested Bob, with a grin. "Anyhow, footer's better for him than rotting about playing the ox."

"Oh, quito!" said Squiff, rather sarcastically. "But we're not running the Remove games simply to keep silly duffers out of mischief."

"I know that, fathead! But you say yourself that he sticks to practice, and is fit and in form. He's a good man if he'll play."

"Well, he's said that he won't."

"Give him another chance. He's too jolly stiff-necked to climb down. But if you asked him—"

"The askfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Squiff!" urged the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Squiff nodded again. He was puzzled, like most of the fellows, by Harry Wharton these days. All the school looked on Wharton as a "bad hat" now—a smoky sweep, a pub-haunter, a breaker of bounds, a fellow who was heading for the "sack." All this, however, evidently had no effect on his health or his form at footer. It was plain to the most casual glance that he was thoroughly fit; he never displayed any of the pasty looks of Skinner & Co. And though he stood out of games, he was assiduous at practice, and evidently keen on keeping up his form at footer. That, after all, was all that concerned the football skipper. The only doubt, really, was whether Wharton would play if he was asked. Yet if he was definitely determined to keep out of games, it seemed rather odd that he should be so keen on practice.

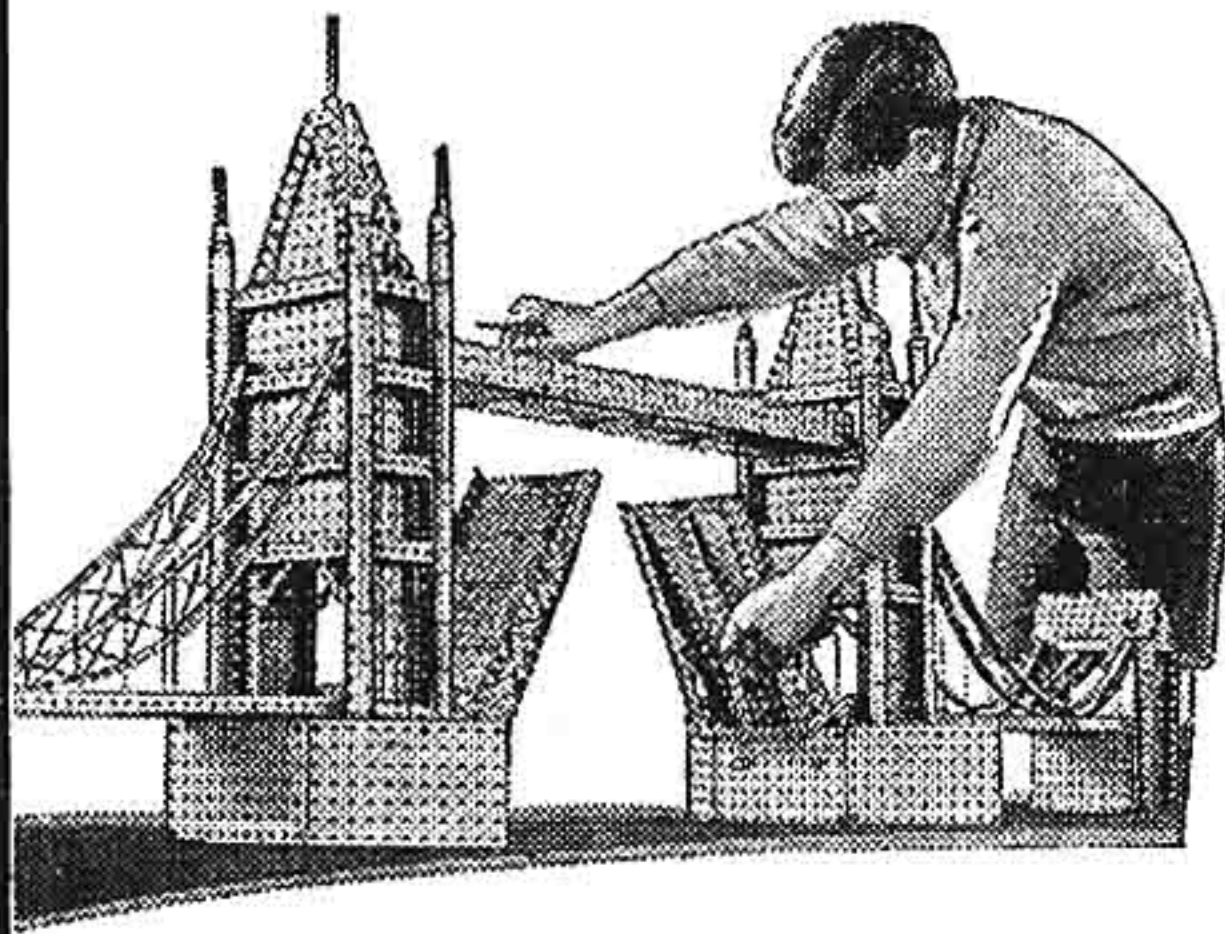
"I'll give him a chance," said the Remove captain at last. He grinned. "I won't mention that you men put in a word for him; that would put his silly back up at the start. If he's tired of playing the ox, and willing to come back into the team, I'm not the man to stop him."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, where's Wharton?" asked Billy Bunter. "I've been looking for

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"Going on your bike, old fellow?" he asked affably.

"Yes."

"Well, why not walk?" asked Bunter. "No need to go far! In fact, if you'll take my advice, you'll have it indoors—much more comfy in a study. I'll get a fire going in Study No. 1, if you like."

Harry Wharton laughed. Considering what his real object was that afternoon, Billy Bunter's misapprehension was rather entertaining. Certainly even Bunter would not have cared to eat the contents of that rucksack, if he had seen them. Billy Bunter could eat almost as many things as an ostrich; but football boots were outside even Bunter's wide limit in foodstuffs!

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said the fat Owl. "It's jolly cold weather for a feed out of doors. Still, if you're going, I'll come."

"You won't!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm about the only fellow in the Remove willing to pal with you, and chance it!" said Bunter warmly. "I think you might be a little decent about it, when a fellow's being kind to you. I say, if you're going on your jigger, I shall have to get my bike out. Look here, it's got three punctures. You're awfully clever at mending punctures, old chap! Never saw a fellow who was such a real dab at it."

Wharton laughed again, and took his machine from the stand.

"If you won't wait for my punctures to be mended, Wharton, I'll borrow a jigger," said Bunter. "Mauly won't mind if I take his. Luckily he's got it repaired since I had it last week. Wait a tick, old chap!"

Wharton did not wait a decimal fraction of a tick. He wheeled his bike out of the shed.

Bunter made a hurried jump for Lord Mauleverer's machine, jerked it from the stand, and rushed it out after Wharton.

"You silly owl!" roared Wharton. "Put that jigger back! It's not a picnic, you frabjous ass!"

"What is it then?" grinned Bunter. "What have you in that bag?"

"Nothing that concerns you, fathead!"

"Well, I can go for a bike ride, if I like, I suppose," said Bunter defiantly. "I say, put Mauly's saddle lower for me, will you?"

"No, ass!"

"Well, I can manage as it is."

Harry Wharton glared at the fat Owl in exasperation. He had no intention of telling all Greyfriars that he had joined up with Dick Trumper's team, and was playing football for Courtfield. But letting Bunter know was as good as shouting it from the house-tops. If Bunter followed on his track he would not discover a picnic, that was certain; but he might discover what the outcast of Greyfriars wanted to keep to himself.

"Look here, Bunter, you howling ass——" he began.

"Ready, old chap!" said Bunter affably. "I say, Wharton—— Oh, you beast——leggo my collar——I'll——Whooooop!"

The exasperated junior grasped Bunter's collar with one hand, and Mauly's bike with the other.

The bike was sent whizzing back into the shed, where it curled up and lay down. Billy Bunter was sent whizzing in the other direction—where he also curled up and lay down!

"Yooooop!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Whooop! I say——Yaroooooh! Leave off kicking me, you beast! Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up and fled for his life. Wharton, behind him, dribbled the fat junior for a considerable distance. Then, leaving Billy Bunter in frantic flight, he returned to his machine, wheeled it out, and rode away for Courtfield.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck for Loder!

"THAT rotter!" muttered Wharton.

Half a mile from the school he glanced back over his shoulder, to make sure that Billy Bunter had not followed. He did not see Bunter on the road—Bunter was not in pursuit. But he saw a Sixth Form man of Greyfriars, and recognised Gerald Loder.

The big senior, on a big machine, could have overtaken the junior easily enough, though Wharton was riding fast. But Loder was keeping a little distance behind. Loder was not out for a spin that afternoon. It was apparent, at a glance, that he was following the scapegrace of Greyfriars—Loder was on the watch again. Billy Bunter had been got rid of easily enough; but the bully of the Sixth was not so easy to deal with.

Wharton knitted his brows, as he rode on again. Plenty of fellows at Greyfriars, if they knew that the scapegrace had gone out of gates, would draw the conclusion that he had gone on what Smithy called the "razzle." Loder of the Sixth had not the slightest doubt of it. He had spotted

the young sweep once at the Three Fishers, and Wharton had been flogged for it. "Next time" meant the sack. Loder hoped that this was "next time."

But Loder knew that he had to be careful. The young rascal had made a fool of him more than once. Loder's ears still burned when he thought of the absurd affair in the Remove dormitory. Since that episode Mr. Quelch had been rather cold and frigid; and bitter as he was against Wharton, he was not anxious to hear further reports from Loder. "Next time," there was not to be the shadow of a doubt. Any other prefect at Greyfriars would have laughed, or shrugged his shoulders, at the idea of putting in an afternoon watching a Lower boy. But Loder was prepared to devote all his leisure hours to that purpose. He would have preferred to disguise his pursuit, had it been possible. But as the young rascal was on a bike, that was not possible. Loder had to take the chance of the wary young scoundrel looking back and spotting his pursuit; and now Wharton had looked back and spotted it!

Wharton rode on with set lips.

There was no harm, nothing against the rules, in his expedition that afternoon. Trumper's team played regular matches with the Remove; one was due the following week, when they would come to Greyfriars to play on Little Side. Mr. Quelch knew them quite well; and certainly he would not have opined that they were "undesirable acquaintances," such as he suspected Wharton of having made outside the school. Indeed, had Mr. Quelch known that the scapegrace was joining up with such a decent set of fellows, it would have been a relief to his doubting mind.

But it was a secret, though a harmless one. That afternoon, Wharton was playing for Trumper's team, as he had arranged, in the match at the village of Woodend. But the following Saturday he was going to play for them at Greyfriars School. That was a surprise he had in store for the Form that had turned him down.

He thought, with sardonic amusement, of the surprise and irritation of Squiff and his men when they found the best centre-forward in the Lower School of Greyfriars in Trumper's team.

It was not like Wharton to look forward with satisfaction to a triumph over his old friends. But a sense of wrong, and passionate resentment of wrong, had changed him, almost beyond his own knowledge. Every man in the Remove believed that he had gone out, to play the shady fool like Skinner & Co. If they thought of him at all, they would think of him in the billiards-room at the Cross Keys, or watching a glovefight in the shed at the Three Fishers, or playing banker in some questionable company. Not a man in the Form would imagine that he was playing football. That would not cross the minds even of his old friends, who might have known him better.

Well, let them think as they liked, and what they liked; they would find out the facts when they saw him kicking goals for Courtfield on the Remove ground. It would be very different from the time when he had played for Cecil Reginald Temple's team against the Remove, and shared in an overwhelming defeat. Trumper and his men were good footballers, hard as nails, keen as mustard. Dick Trumper was a good skipper—as unlike Cecil Reginald Temple as cheese was unlike chalk. In the Courtfield team Wharton had every hope of seeing the Remove

colours go down. They could think of him as "pub-haunting"—till he arrived on the Remove ground with his shooting-boots on! There was a bitter satisfaction in that prospect.

But to spring that dramatic surprise on the fellows who had turned him down, he had to keep his present proceedings a secret. Bunter had been disposed of. Now he had to dispose of Loder.

Luckily he had started early, and had time on his hands. As soon as he reached Courtfield Common, instead of riding on towards the town, he turned to the left into Oak Lane.

That lane led to Popper Court, and also to the back gate of the Three Fishers. Loder's eyes gleamed as he swung round the corner after him. He concluded that Wharton, when he looked back, could not have seen him. Otherwise, the young rascal would not be riding so openly for his destination.

Wharton arrived abreast of the gate of the disreputable inn, and slowed down. He looked back and laughed.

Loder knew that he was seen then. So he was not surprised that the junior did not dismount. Even the reckless scapegrace did not venture to enter the forbidden precincts under the eye of a prefect!

Wharton seemed to hesitate, then he rode on again. He rode slowly, as if in doubt. Twice he looked back, and each time Loder's eyes glittered at him. He was following a path on the common now, which wound among furze bushes, and it was not easy for Loder to keep him in sight.

Loder set his teeth as he rode. He had not the slightest doubt of the young rascal's intentions. He dared not enter the Three Fishers, with Loder in sight; and he was seeking to throw the prefect off the track, in order to circle back and dodge into the place unseen! Loder saw it all! And the spy of the Sixth slackened down at last, and let the junior vanish among the furze.

It was no use keeping on the track; obviously, Wharton would not go out of bounds so long as he was watched. But Loder knew his objective now—or fancied that he did! As soon as he was assured that he was out of sight of his quarry, Loder whirled round his machine, and rode fast back to Oak Lane.

There he dismounted near the back-gate of the Three Fishers. Beeches and willows grew close by the gate, affording ample cover.

Gerald Loder gave a swift, keen glance round. Wharton was not in sight—there was no one in sight.

He ran his bike into the willows, carefully concealing it from view. Then he took up his stand among the trees, a dozen feet from the gate, to watch.

He was in deep cover; no one passing could possibly have spotted him. He waited patiently—till Wharton, satisfied that he had eluded pursuit, should come! He was booked for a long wait!

Twice, thrice, his hopes were roused, by footsteps coming up the lane to the gates. Once a horsey-looking man passed in. Then came a couple of rough-looking fellows. A little later, three well-dressed and elegant school-boys arrived, and Loder recognised Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of Highcliffe School. They lounged in at the gate, never dreaming that keen eyes were watching from the willows. Loder, of course, had nothing to do with Highcliffe fellows; Pon & Co. were

nothing to him. He resumed his watch—for Wharton!

Long, weary minutes passed—but Wharton did not come! A long, long half-hour dragged by. By that time, if Gerald Loder had only known it, Harry Wharton had joined his friends in Courtfield, and was starting with a cheery party of footballers for Woodend. But Loder did not know that, and did not dream of guessing it. He waited and watched.

Another weary half-hour—and Loder grew more and more savagely impatient. He smoked a dozen cigarettes, till he was tired of them. Still the scapegrace of Greyfriars did not appear.

Little did Loder dream that he was on a football ground in a village several miles away, on the ball, and utterly forgetful of Loder and all his works!

The spy of the Sixth gritted his teeth with savage disappointment.

It was clear to Loder—at last! The young rascal had guessed that he was on the watch, and, instead of coming to the back gate, he had ridden round to the towpath, and gone into the Three Fishers by the other entrance. That was perfectly plain to Loder! It was the only possible explanation! He realised that he had not made sufficient allowance for the wary cunning of the young scoundrel!

It was useless to wait longer. Loder emerged from cover, remounted his machine, and rode away in a savage temper. He had failed again—his luck seemed to be quite out! What Wharton had done was perfectly clear to his mind—but he doubted whether it would be clear to Quelch's or the Head's, if he made a report. He had, in fact, nothing to report but suspicions—and Loder had had rather a severe lesson on that subject. He rode back to Greyfriars savage and disappointed.

That day, after tea, Loder's fag, Tubb of the Third, told the other fags, in tones of thrilling wrath and indignation, that if Loder fancied he could kick a Third Form man as much as he jolly well liked, then Loder was jolly well mistaken, as he would jolly well find out.

It was rather hard on Tubb of the Third; but really, Loder had to take it out of somebody.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Second Form Sportsman!

"WHAT the dickens—" Harry Wharton quite jumped.

It was after class on Monday. It was dusky in the Remove studies when Wharton came up to Study No. 1. He opened the door and came in, expecting to find the study empty, as Frank Nugent was never there this term. In the dimness of the study, a red spot glowed from the direction of the armchair, and there was a scent of cigarette smoke. Wharton, startled, stood and stared.

"Bunter you fat rotter—" he ejaculated. He could not see who sat in the armchair; but a few weeks since he had kicked Bunter out of the study for smoking Smithy's cigarettes there, and he jumped to the conclusion that it was the fat Owl at his antics again.

There was a chuckle in the dusky study.

"All serene, old bean! Only little me."

It was not Bunter's voice. Harry Wharton turned on the light, and stared at a diminutive figure in the armchair, cheerfully engaged in smoking the wild and woolly woodbine. It was Dicky Nugent, of the Second Form—Frank's minor.

Nugent minor had been a fairly frequent visitor to Study No. 1 till of late. He often came there for his brother to help him with exercises; still oftener to borrow half-crowns from his long-suffering major. But this was his first visit since Frank had given up using the study.

He grinned cheerfully at Wharton's angry face. Master Richard Nugent, in the holidays, picked up many naughty ways—among which was smoking cigarettes. Dicky himself did not regard it as "naughty"—he regarded it as rather reckless and wicked, and was immensely proud of it. He had a reputation in the Second Form of being rather a "card."

But this was the first time he had ever ventured to "put on a fag" in Study No. 1 in the Remove. Had his major been there, he would probably have received six from a fives bat as a warning not to be doggish. But he did not seem at all uneasy with regard to Wharton. He grinned, and even winked.

"Made you jump, what?" asked Dicky breezily.

"Yes, you young ass! Throw that thing into the fire!"

"I'll watch it!" said Richard. "Shut the door, old bean. Like a smoke? I've got another one or two. But I dare say you've got lots."

Wharton shut the door. He did not want anyone to see the little duffer smoking there. But his face was grim as he turned to Dicky again.

He realised that they had heard of his shady repute in the Second. Dicky evidently looked on him as a fellow "card."

"If you've come here for your major, he never comes to this study now," said Harry. "You'll find him up the passage."

"That's all right. I don't want Frank," answered Richard Nugent.

"I'll go to Franky when I want some pi-jaw. I don't want any now."

"Well, you'd better get out, anyhow."

"I've come here to talk to you, old bean. I've been waiting."

"You'd better not talk to me," said Wharton impatiently. "I suppose you know I'm not friends with your brother now?"

"Yes, and I know why," grinned Dicky. "Franky's a good sort, but, pi! You'd hardly pull with him, from what I hear of you this term."

Wharton breathed hard.

He was disposed to take the cheerful Dicky by the collar and sling him neck and crop out of the study. As Frank's best pal in the old days, he had borne patiently with Dicky. But he did not feel patient now. Nugent minor's opinion of him was only the opinion that was held by all the school, but it was annoying, all the same.

"Frank's too jolly pi!" went on Dicky. "A man gets fed-up with it, what?"

Wharton recovered his good-humour a little at that remark. The "man" sitting in his armchair, smoking, was rather too absurd for anger.

"Well, if you've got anything to say you can say it," said Harry. "But stop smoking. I won't have it here!"

"Think Loder's about?" asked Dicky rather anxiously. "I know he's always watching you."

"I don't know and don't care. But I won't have it here, so chuck it!"

"Draw it mild!" suggested Nugent minor derisively. "You've been whopped for smoking here yourself. Think everybody doesn't know? Gatty and Myers said you were a rotter, but I said it was rot. A man likes to shake a loose leg at times, what?"

"You utter young idiot!" said Harry, half laughing and half angry. "Stop talking nonsense, and stop smoking! Put that cigarette in the fire, or get out!"

"Well, if you think a beak may butt in, here goes!" said Dicky. "But don't try making out that you're pi, like Franky. That won't wash, you know. If you were I shouldn't have come. The fact is—"

He broke off as the door opened. A fat face and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"Oh, you're here, Wharton, old chap!" said Billy Bunter. "I say—Great pip!"

Bunter broke off in astonishment at the sight of the fag sitting in the armchair with the cigarette in his mouth. Dicky Nugent removed it, and emitted a little stream of smoke. He tossed it into the fire.

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter. "I—"

"Oh, get out, you fat ass!" exclaimed Wharton angrily.

"Oh, really, Wharton! If you haven't had tea—"

"I've had tea in Hall. Buzz off! Nothing doing!"

"I didn't come here to scrounge a tea, Wharton. In fact, I should hardly care to tea with you—a fellow nobody speaks to!" said the fat Owl, with a great deal of dignity. "I consider—"

"Get out!"

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I'll get out fast enough!" he sneered.

"Not the study I care to stay in—smoking and all that. I can jolly well tell you that if Quelch happened to look in here now he would say—Yarooop!"

Wharton, out of patience, took the fat junior by the collar and spun him into the passage. Bunter roared and departed, and the door slammed on him.

"It will be all over the passage now that there's smoking in my study!" snapped Wharton savagely.

"Well, there often is, isn't there?" said Dicky, staring. "According to what I hear, you ain't jolly particular in this study."

"Do you want me to chuck you after Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Keep your wool on, old bean," said Dicky pacifically. "The fellows say that a man can hardly speak to you without getting his head snapped off these days, and I'm blessed if it doesn't look like it. Did you have bad luck on Saturday?"

"On Saturday!" repeated Wharton.

It was on Saturday that he had played football with Trumper & Co. at Wood-end. "You benighted little idiot, what do you think I was doing on Saturday?"

"Painting the town red, what?" grinned Dicky, favouring the wrathful Removito with another wink. "My dear man, you can be candid with me. Dash it all, all Greyfriars knows your games out of gates. You don't make much mystery about it, if it comes to that. Well, to come to the point, will you lend me a quid?"

"Better ask your brother."

"Fat lot of good asking Franky for a quid to put on a horse!" chuckled Richard Nugent. "Don't be a funny ass!"

"To put on a horse?" gasped Wharton.

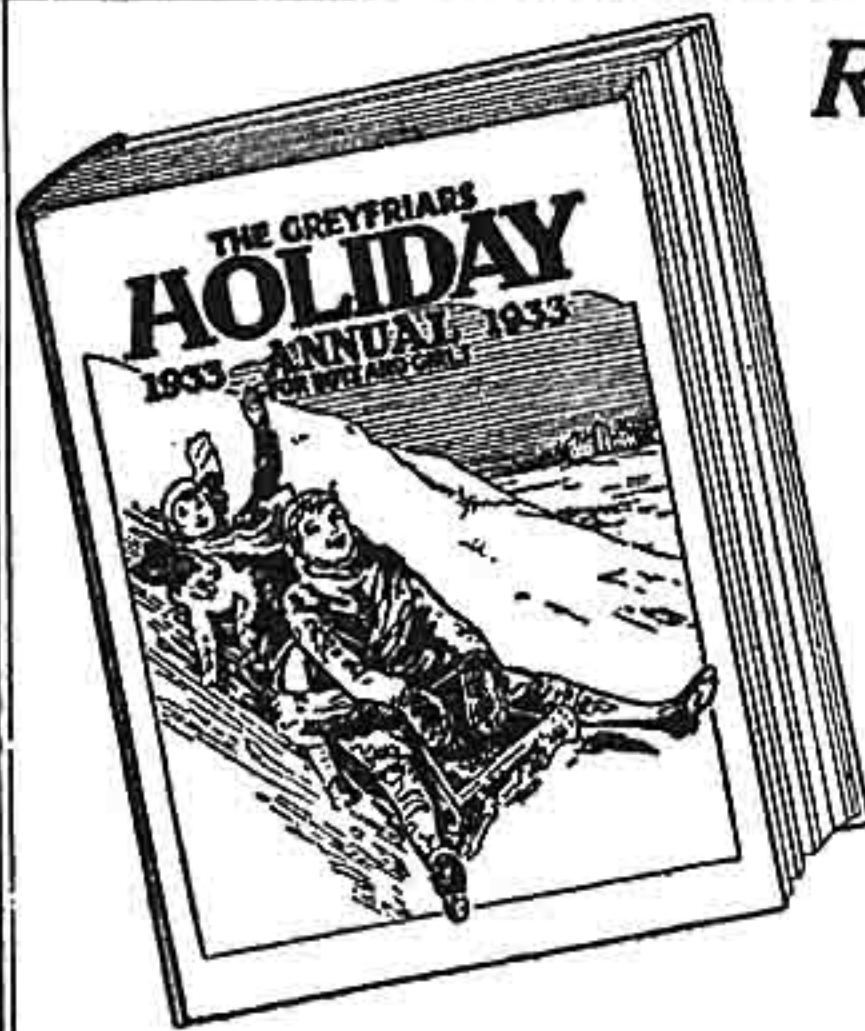
"That's it, old chap." Dicky leaned forward in the chair, and his manner became confidential. "Look here, I'm on to a good thing."

"You're on to a good thing!" repeated Harry almost dazedly.

"The catch of the season!" said Richard impressively. "I heard two Sixth Form men talking about it, and I've got it in this paper. I dare say you know all about the 'Racing Times,' what?" The cheerful Richard produced a paper from under his jacket. "Look here, see what it says about Bonny Bunion and his chances for the two-thirty on Saturday."

Wharton gazed at the fag as if petrified.

There was something disarming in the man-of-the-world air assumed by Dicky Nugent. It really did not suit his chubby face and curly, flaxen hair. But



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Frank Nugent sprang towards the scapegrace of Greyfriars, and his open hand came across Wharton's face with a sounding crack. "Now will you put up your hands?" he shouted. "Oh!" panted Wharton. His face went white, with a red mark across it where Nugent had struck.

Wharton was intensely angry. He remembered that this was not the first time that the young rascal had dabbled in such matters. He recalled an occasion on which Frank had been given endless trouble on account of what Dicky grandly called a "debt of honour." Richard, on that occasion, had found an opportunity of "backing his fancy," and had backed it not wisely but too well, and had been landed in deep waters as a consequence.

That lesson, evidently, had worn off, and Richard was growing sportive again. But what irritated Wharton intensely was the fag's assumption that he, Wharton, was a bird of the same feather; that he was a fellow to whom this sort of dingy rot could be talked confidentially. It was not, perhaps, his special concern if Frank Nugent's young brother played the fool, though certainly he would have stopped it if he could. But Richard Nugent, evidently, had come to Study No. 1 in search of a kindred spirit, and Wharton was that kindred spirit.

Richard was too keen on his paper and the catch of the season to realise his danger. He rattled on cheerfully.

"You can get four to one. The bookies don't know his form. I heard Loder say so to Carne only this afternoon. Loder knows a lot. He gets tips from racing men, you know. Lots of fellows know he does. At least, I'm pretty sure of it. Well, look here, see what this man says about Bonny Bunion—"

"You young sweep!" roared Wharton.

He made a stride at the fag, grabbed him by the collar, and jerked him bodily out of the armchair.

Dicky yelled.

"Let go, you rotter! Oh, my Aunt Selina! Leggo, you bully!"

"If you were big enough to lick, I'd again?" groaned Frank. "What's the trouble now?"

"I'll tell you, old fellow," said Bunter, rolling in. "It's too jolly thick, in my opinion. I say, that looks a decent cake!"

"What about my minor, fathead?" snapped Frank. "Is he in a row with old Twigg, or what?"

"Worse than that!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "I'm not a fellow to cause trouble, as you men know, but if my minor was getting into bad company, smoking and all that, I should expect a fellow to tell me, what? I say, you fellows, if you're not going to scoff all that cake—"

Frank Nugent rose to his feet.

"Cough it up, you fat fool!" he said sharply.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Only gammon, old bean," said Bob Cherry. "You know Bunter! Kick him out, Johnny—you're nearest!"

"Pleased!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Hold on a minute!" said Frank. Nugent major was always prepared to hear that Nugent minor was in some sort of trouble. Master Richard Nugent was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. "Look here, Bunter—"

"The gammonfulness is terrific, my esteemed Franky," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"That's all you know!" jeered Bunter. "If you'd seen him smoking in the study with the worst fellow at Greyfriars—"

There was a general start. Everyone in Study No. 13 knew to whom that flattering description applied.

"You—you—you lying, fat toad!"

(Continued on page 16.)
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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Nugent Loses His Temper!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 13 with a hungry eye.

Tea was going on in that study. Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung, to whom the study belonged, were all there. With them were two guests—Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent. There were six fellows in the study, and they did not seem to want to make it seven. With one voice they bade William George Bunter buzz off.

"I haven't come to tea, you fellows," said Bunter. "I thought I ought to tell Nugent what's going on, that's all."

"Me?" repeated Frank. "What do you mean, fathead?"

"I mean about your minor."

"Oh, my hat! Dicky in hot water



(Continued from page 13.)

panted Frank. "I'll—I'll— It's a lie! As if Wharton would—"

"Trot along to Study No. 1 and see!" answered Bunter, with a fat grin. "They're both there now, and the study's like a bar-room. He, he, he!"

Frank Nugent made a fierce stride towards the fat Owl. But he paused. It was impossible—impossible—and yet— He knew what a reckless young scamp his minor was—and he knew what all Greyfriars know about Harry Wharton. But it was impossible! Wharton, if he was going to the dogs himself, was not the fellow to exert a bad influence over a younger boy. It was unthinkable! And yet one fact was clear—Bunter was not "gammoning." It was plain that he believed what he said, whether he was right or wrong.

"Is my minor in Wharton's study now?" asked Frank, very quietly.

"He, he, he! I've just seen him there."

"What is he doing?"

"Smoking!" grinned Bunter.

"Is Wharton there?"

"Yes, rather—the beast chucked me out! He wanted me to stay, but I told him I was a bit too particular—"

Frank Nugent went to the door. Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, and Johnny Bull jumped up at once and followed him. Frank's face was set hard. He did not, and could not, believe that it was as Bunter had said. But fierce anger was growing in his breast, all the same. At least, he was going to see what was going on in the study of the scapegrace of Greyfriars. His minor had no business there—the shady sweep of the Remove was not a fellow for a foolish and reckless fag to consort with.

"Steady the Buffs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Don't get your rag out for nothing, Franky! It's utter rot!"

"The rotfulness is preposterous."

"I know!" muttered Frank. "But I'm going to see! I don't want my minor in that study!"

"That's right enough," said Johnny Bull.

Mark Linley followed the Co. down the passage. Only little Wun Lung, the Chinese, remained in the study—and Billy Bunter! Bunter promptly dropped into one of the vacated chairs. His fat face was wreathed in smiles. The podgy Peeping Tom of Greyfriars had hoped to wedge into the tea-party on the strength of the news he brought. Matters had turned out better than he could have anticipated. The tea-party was gone—but not the tea! The tea-party had very little interest for Billy Bunter, apart from the tea! Bunter felt that fortune was his friend.

"Fat ole Buntree no scoffee glub belong Bob Chelly!" said Wun Lung, with a stare of disfavour at the fat Owl from his almond eyes.

"You shut up, you cheeky heathen!" retorted Bunter.

And regardless of Wun Lung's remonstrance, he proceeded to scoff the tuck at a great rate. He hoped the tea-party might be long gone. But he was taking

no risks. He travelled fast through the good things on the table.

Frank Nugent hurried down the passage, with his friends at his heels. Vernon-Smith, who was lounging in the doorway of Study No. 4, gave him a curious stare.

"Anything up?" asked the Bounder.

Nugent passed him without an answer, and the other fellows followed without speaking. The Bounder, curious, lounged after them.

Nugent reached Study No. 1. It was his own study, though he never used it this term; he had a right to enter when he liked. He turned the door handle and threw the study door wide open. Harry Wharton, leaning on the study table, almost lamed by the savage hack the fag had given him, stared at the newcomer and the fellows crowding behind him. Dicky Nugent had caught up his precious pink paper from the floor and was turning to the door with it, so he came face to face with his major, the racing paper in his hand.

Frank stared in.

The atmosphere of smoke did not escape him, though there was no smoking going on now. Smoking had been going on, and quite recently, that was certain. Wharton, after one rather startled stare at Frank, gave no sign. But Richard Nugent was excited, and dismayed by the sudden appearance of his brother. He hastily thrust the racing paper under his jacket. But Nugent major had seen it—five or six fellows in the passage had seen it. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders and winked at Skinner and Snoop, who had come along to see what was up. But other fellows looked serious enough.

Nugent panted and stepped into the study.

"Dick!"

"Oh, leave me alone!" muttered the fag. "I'm going—"

"Give me that paper!"

"I won't!"

"Give it me!" Frank's voice became shrill. "I tell you, give it me!"

"And I tell you I won't!"

Frank Nugent was generally kind and patient with Dicky. But there was a limit to kindness and patience. He grasped the fag by the collar and shook him savagely, till the pink paper dropped from under his jacket. Dicky yelled angrily. Unheeding him, Frank picked up the racing paper, stepped across to the fire, and jammed it in. He thrust it down into the low embers with his foot, and it blazed.

"You—you cheeky rotter!" panted Dicky.

Frank turned on him.

"You've been smoking!"

"Find out!"

"I've found out! There's no other study in the Remove you'd dare to smoke in—only this!" said Frank, with bitter scorn that was not directed so much towards Dicky as the owner of the study. "Even Skinner wouldn't let you smoke in his study! Have you any more cigarettes?"

"Find out!" repeated Dicky defiantly.

"Mind your own business, and keep your pi-jaw till I ask for it!"

Frank's grasp was on him again.

"Give me your smokes!"

"I won't!" shrieked Dicky.

"Bob, get me a fives bat, old man!"

The Co. were staring in, silent and grim. Seldom, or never, had they seen the quiet, good-tempered Nugent in a rage like this. But really, it was not surprising. Dicky's last trouble, a term or two ago, had earned Frank a "royal jaw" from his people at home for not having looked after his young brother more carefully at school! Richard

Nugent was not an easy young brother to look after. Frank was looking after him now—with a vengeance!

"Dicky, you young ass, do as your major tells you!" said Bob.

"I won't!" yelled Dicky.

"Then I'll jolly well lick you till you do!" shouted Frank. "Will one of you fellows get me a fives bat?"

A fives bat lay on the bookshelf. Johnny Bull stepped in, and handed it to Frank. Johnny's opinion was that the sportsman of the Second Form wanted that fives bat, and wanted it bad!

"Now, Dick—"

"Leave me alone, you bully!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh, you rotter!" yelled the fag, struggling. "Here you are, you cad!" He tore a couple of cigarettes from his pocket and threw them on the floor.

"Is that the lot?"

"Yes, hang you!"

Nugent released his minor. He picked up the cigarettes and threw them on the blazing paper in the grate.

"Now get out of this study!" he said between his teeth. "This study isn't fit for a decent kid to come into—and I'm going to keep you as decent as I can! Get out, and don't come here again. Let me see you in this study again, and I'll thrash you!"

"You rotter!" gasped Dicky.

"Get out!" roared Frank Nugent.

Dicky, with a glare of defiance, got out. The Removities in the passage opened to let him pass, and Vernon-Smith gave him a kick as he went. Dicky, with a howl, disappeared down the Remove staircase.

Nugent threw down the fives bat. His face was white with anger as he turned to Harry Wharton. Wharton, leaning on the table, was looking on at the scene in silence, his face impassive. Nugent's eyes blazed at him.

"You cur!" he panted.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Fight!

HARRY WHARTON started. That word, from Frank Nugent, struck him like a blow in the face.

He stared at his former chum. Nugent, of course, knew nothing of what had passed before he arrived in the study. He had not believed, or had only half believed what Billy Bunter had told him. But he doubted no longer.

Nugent minor had been smoking in Wharton's study—and Wharton was there! Frank had found him with a racing paper in his hand, in Wharton's study, in Wharton's presence. That was more than enough evidence.

Of all the Co., Nugent had been the least estranged from his former friend. Nugent had always nourished a secret hope that the breach, somehow and sometime, might be healed. But that was over now! The worst boy at Greyfriars was not satisfied with disgracing himself. He had taken up a fag, and was encouraging him in the same ways—that was how it looked. Ostracised by his own Form, he had picked up a fag—and the fag was Nugent's brother! There was no doubt of it in Frank's mind now.

His eyes burned from his white face. Bob Cherry stepped in quickly, and caught Frank by the arm. Nugent shook off his hold with angry impatience.

"Let me alone!" he snapped.

"Look here, Frank—"

"Let me alone, I tell you!" Nugent

pushed him roughly back. "Wharton! You cur—you rotter—"

"Go it!" said Harry, with a bitter curl of the lip.

"Put up your hands!" panted Nugent. He tore off his jacket and threw it to the floor. "Put up your hands, you rotter!"

Wharton slipped his hands into his pockets.

"Don't be a fool, Nugent!" he said tersely.

"If you refuse—"

Wharton laughed mockingly.

"I do!"

"Do you want me to go to Quelch and tell him what I've seen in this study?" shouted Nugent.

"If you like!"

"Frank—" exclaimed Bob.

Nugent's eyes flashed at him.

"Do you think I'm going to have my minor sacked along with that black-guard before the end of the term?" he shouted. "Can't he smoke, and haunt pubs, and back horses without dragging a Second Form kid into it?"

Harry Wharton laughed. There was something bitterly amusing in Nugent's misapprehension, considering what really had happened in the study. It was rather Nugent's way to believe that all Dicky's faults were due to bad influence, and did not reside in the young scamp's own nature. He had a way of laying the blame on anyone but Dicky! Now he was laying it on Wharton, and it seemed to him that he had ample reason for doing so.

But Wharton's laugh was the last straw, in Frank's present frame of mind. He sprang towards the scape-grace of Greyfriars, and his open hand

came across Wharton's face with a sounding crack.

"Now will you put up your hands?" he shouted.

"Oh!" panted Wharton.

His face went white, with a red mark across it where Nugent had struck. The fellows crowded round the doorway looked on breathlessly. It had to be a fight now, and all the Remove knew that Nugent had no chance.

He was plucky, and he was a good boxer; but he had no chance whatever in a scrap with Harry Wharton, who was the heftiest fighting-man in the Remove, with the single exception of Bob Cherry.

Wharton came springing forward, his hands up, and his eyes blazing over them. That blow had stirred him to action.

(Continued on next page.)

"TAKING THE AIR!"

WE have been hearing a lot lately about the project of the Plymouth Argyle F.C. to take their players to away matches by air. For the time being this idea has been "sat upon" by the Football League Management Committee, who do not think that the time is yet ripe for whole football teams to run the risk of "taking the air."

Sooner or later, of course, the players of the big football clubs will make their long journeys to away matches by air. Meantime, this talk about the Plymouth project doubtless accounts for the question from a reader asking me if I can give him the figures concerning the relative distances travelled by the big football teams in the course of a season.

Of course, Plymouth, now that they are in the Second Division, top the lot in the distances they have to go to fulfil their League matches, and their travels work out, for League matches alone, at a bit over six thousand miles.

Railway travelling is now so comfortable, however, and the long journeys are so seldom attempted in one day, that I don't think the distance the men have to go really affects the results. Anyway, Plymouth are hoping to win promotion to the First Division at the end of the season, and it is quite possible they may do it!

Of the First Division clubs Portsmouth's journeys mount up to the highest total, for they have to travel over four thousand miles in the course of a season, while Newcastle United just beat the London clubs. The two Sheffield clubs do the smallest amount of travelling in the course of a League season, followed by the Manchester clubs, Huddersfield Town, Derby County, and Leeds United.

BEST POSSIBLE DIET!

WHILE we are talking of travelling, I can answer another question on roughly the same lines.

What about the food to be eaten by footballers before a match starts, that is at lunch-time on match-days? I need not insist that a big meal is inadvisable; indeed, risky.

I had a chat the other day with the manager of the Fulham club, and he told me one or two interesting things about the players' lunch on match-days.

So important does the Fulham manager regard this subject that even when the team is playing at home, all the players have orders to lunch at the ground on match-

LISTEN-IN, CHUMS!

"LINESMAN CALLING!"



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days. They are given boiled chicken and dry toast; not too much of either, and the Fulham manager's experience is that this is the best possible diet; it doesn't upset anybody.

There is also an order to the Fulham players that there must be no smoking between lunch and the start of the match. The players realise that these regulations are made in their own interests, and I pass them along as the advice of one who knows.

"TIME"—AND A PENALTY KICK!

MOST of my readers are aware that the ordinary time of a football match must be extended, if necessary, in order to permit of a penalty kick which has been awarded being taken. But not all my readers know the details of this extra time for a penalty kick.

"We were playing a match the other Saturday," writes a MAGNET reader, "and the referee, having awarded us a penalty kick right at the end, extended the time so that the kick could be taken. The kick was duly taken: the goalkeeper stopped the ball, pushed it back to the original taker of the kick, who then shot it into the net. The referee allowed the goal to count. Should he have done so?"

I am sorry to have to say it, but according to the facts as stated, the referee was wrong.

He was right in allowing the penalty kick to be taken, but when the goalkeeper stopped the shot, then "time" was up automatically, and although only a part of a second elapsed before the original kicker took his second kick at the ball, the goal should have been disallowed.

The same rule applies if the taker of the kick bangs the ball against the woodwork of

the goal, and another player, coming up, puts it into the net. That should not be allowed to count as a goal either after "time" is up. But it would be a good goal if the goalkeeper only partially stopped the first shot and the ball rolled on into the net. It would also be a good goal if the ball struck the inside of the goalpost or crossbar and went thence into the net. The point about the rule is that there must be no second kick on these occasions when the time has been extended to allow of a penalty kick being taken.

WHERE THE GOALKEEPER SCORES!

THE honour of playing for one's country in an international match is one which every footballer worthy of his salt tries after, and is justified in being proud of receiving. The cash reward for a professional player in such a game is six pounds. That will answer a question sent to me by a Manchester reader. The player may, if he so desires, have a medal to commemorate the event instead of the cash, and there are plenty of instances in which players have preferred the medal recognition.

Of course, the players get all their travelling expenses as well, and in addition, each of the ordinary players get a cap and a shirt. I used the words "each of the ordinary players" deliberately, because there is one member of an international side who is honoured just a little bit more than the others. He is the goalkeeper.

This particular member of an international side not only gets all the other things which are given to international players, but he also receives, in addition, a sweater of the distinctive colour which is worn by goalkeepers on these occasions.

So if you want to be able to "swank" over your colleagues in an international team, get the goalkeeper's job.

But, to Nugent's amazement and the surprise of all the other fellows, he stopped, and dropped his hands again.

Breathing hard, he stepped back.

"Will you come on?" shouted Nugent.

"No!" said Harry quietly. "I won't! You've done enough, Nugent! Now get out of my study!"

"Are you a coward as well as a rotter?"

Wharton did not answer that.

He stood with his hands thrust into his pockets again, his face calm. There was a murmur in the passage. Skinner's voice was heard.

"This November weather is chilly!" remarked Skinner. "It causes a lot of cases of cold feet!"

Some of the juniors laughed.

"Shut up, Skinner!" growled Bob Cherry.

Frank Nugent stood uncertain, staring at his enemy. Harry Wharton was quite calm, his temper under perfect control. Why he controlled his temper, why he did not return that angry blow, he hardly knew himself.

Since the break in the Co. he had come to blows with Bob Cherry and with Johnny Bull, and had cared nothing about it. But he would not fight with Nugent! Frank had been his oldest and his best chum—his loyal and steady friend in many a time of trouble. And Frank, fierce and angry as he was, plucky as he was, was no match for him, and, somehow, Wharton could not tolerate the thought of humiliating him by a defeat.

He was surprised himself at his forbearance; but he knew that he was not going to fight Frank Nugent.

There was a long pause.

"Are you going to put your hands up?" asked Nugent at last.

"No!"

"Coward!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"That's enough, Frank," said Bob Cherry quietly. "Get out of this!"

"The enoughfulness is terrific, my esteemed Franky!" murmured Hurreo Singh.

Nugent drew a deep breath.

"If you won't put up your hands, I can't make you!" he said thickly. "You're a coward as well as a rotter and a blackguard! You'll leave my minor alone! I won't have him come to this study!"

"Come on, Frank!" said Bob uneasily.

"I'm going to have this clear!" said Nugent obstinately. "My brother's not going to be led into rotten rascality and sacked from the school to please a rank outsider! I tell you plainly, Wharton, that if Dick comes to this study again, to my knowledge, I shall go to Quelch!"

And, as Wharton made no reply, Nugent picked up his jacket and walked out of Study No. 1. His friends followed him up the passage.

Vernon-Smith looked in at Wharton.

"Potty?" he asked. "I know why you let that duffer off, I fancy; but most of the fellows will think you a funk."

"Let them!" answered Wharton indifferently.

"Well, if you don't care—"

"Not in the least."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" came Skinner's voice in the passage. "Let me urge you, my beloved 'earers, to take example by this good boy Wharton! Forbearance, my young friends, is a great virtue! It may be mistaken

by thoughtless persons for funk, but don't let that discourage you! Let me urge you, my young friends, to cultivate a meek and forgiving spirit, like this good boy Wharton—"

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

Harry Wharton stepped out of the study. Skinner, no doubt, believed that it was a case of "cold feet," and that he could gibe as he liked at a fellow who had allowed his face to be smacked. But Skinner on this occasion was not exercising his usual perspicacity.

"I suppose that's meant to be funny, Skinner!" said Harry quietly. "Does this strike you as funny, too?"

He grasped Skinner and banged his head on the passage wall. There was a fiendish yell from Skinner.

"Yaroooooh!"

Wharton released him and stepped back. There was a cool and contemptuous smile on his face.

"Now, meek as I am, I'm ready to put up my hands, Skinner! In fact, I rather like the idea of mopping up the passage with you! Come on!"

Skinner stood rubbing his head. But he did not come on.

"Go it, Skinney!" chuckled Snoop.

"Forbearance seems to be catching!" chuckled the Bounder. "My beloved 'earers, let me advise you to follow the example of this good boy Skinner—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner, red with rage, made a rush at Wharton. The next moment he was on his back in the Remove passage.

He lay and spluttered.

"That enough?" asked Wharton, as Skinner remained where he was. "Better think twice before you're funny once, Skinner."

He went back into his study and closed the door.

Skinner picked himself up, and limped away, holding a handkerchief to his nose, and wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had not been so funny.

Meanwhile the Co. had returned to Study No. 13. They were not thinking of their unfinished tea; but it would not have been of much use to think of it. Tea had been finished in their absence. Bunter was gone—and the foodstuffs were gone—safely packed away in Bunter. Frank Nugent's face was dark with anger; and his companions' looked clouded and troubled.

"The rotter!" muttered Frank. "The utter cad!"

"Oh, draw it mild, old chap!" said Bob uncomfortably. "The fellow seems to have gone to the bad this term, but—"

"But what?" snapped Nugent angrily. "Are you blaming me?"

"Well, I wish you'd kept cool," said Bob frankly. "You might have asked—"

"What I saw was enough for me!"

"Well, that's all very well, but—it's rot, Frank! I don't believe Wharton would take up a fag—I'm jolly certain that he would never let the silly kid smoke in his study—"

"He did!" snapped Frank.

"Well, how do you know he did?" asked Bob, rather warmly. "The kid may have butted in—"

"Rubbish!" Nugent almost snarled.

"Wharton was there with him—"

"He may only just have gone in, for all you know—"

"Rubbish! If you're finding excuses for that rotter—"

"Well, you might have kept cool," said Johnny Bull, in his slow way.

"Young Dicky's rather a scamp—he's been caned for smoking a good many times—you've batted him for it yourself, if you come to that—"

"You mean that my minor's to blame, and that an older fellow leading him into mischief isn't?" exclaimed Nugent savagely. "Well, if that's your opinion, you can keep it to yourself!"

"Look here—"

"My esteemed Franky—"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Nugent.

Nugent tramped out of the study, and slammed the door after him. It looked as if the rift in the Co. was likely to spread.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER!

Asking for It!

FIELD!"

"Well?" said Squiff gruffly.

"I want to be let off this afternoon!"

Harry Wharton spoke quite civilly. It was Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday. Half-holiday as it was, there was compulsory games practice that day, and all the juniors had to turn up for an hour. Most of them were keen enough to do so; but there were always slackers and frowsters who preferred a study fire to a keen wind on the football ground.

Squiff looked grimly at the scapegrace of Greyfriars. Already, though it was quite early in the afternoon, he had heard from Billy Bunter that he was too ill to play, from Skinner that he had a sprain, and from Snoop that he had a toothache, and from Hazeldene that he had a very important appointment, and from William Wibley that he was too busy about some theatrical stunts to have time for footer. To all and sundry the new captain of the Remove had answered that if they did not turn up they would be reported to the head of the Games. And most of them had decided to turn up, in spite of sprains and pains and important appointments, knowing from experience that it was not much use to "tell the tale" to the Greyfriars captain. And now Wharton was on the same tack.

Scapegrace as he was, Wharton had been so keen on games practice that Squiff was a little surprised. Still, he had wondered how long it would last. A fellow who went in for "pub-haunting" was not likely to stick to games, in the long run. Squiff's face was grim, and grew grimmer.

"You want to be let off?" he repeated.

"I've said so."

"You've been captain of the Form!" grunted Squiff. "You know my duty as well as I do. I can let off a man for a good reason. What's the reason?"

"Quite a good one."

"Not a sprain, or a pain?" asked Squiff sarcastically.

"No!"

"Well, give it a name."

"I'm going out of gates!" explained Wharton.

"You can get back in time for games practice, or leave it till afterwards," answered Squiff.

"As it happens, I can't!" said Harry.

Squiff's eyes sparkled. He was by no means disposed to "throw his weight about" as captain of the Remove. But he was captain, and he had his duty to do, for which he was responsible to the captain of the school. And Wharton's cool and indifferent manner nettled him.

"Well, as it happens, you'll have to," he rapped. "Don't talk rot, Wharton! It's not my bisney what rotten games you play, as a rule. But I can't let you



Taken utterly by surprise, Loder went down with a crash on his back, and three figures held him there. The prefect sprawled and gasped. As he stared up at his assailants, he wondered whether he was dreaming, for three hideous faces were glaring down at him—three faces that were hardly human!

off games practice to go and play billiards at the Three Fishers."

Harry Wharton laughed. Not a man in the Form doubted what kind of a fellow he had become! It was amusing, in a way, though it was amusing with a rather bitter flavour.

"That's that!" added Squiff, turning away.

"You won't let me off?"

"No!"

"I thought I'd ask you," drawled Wharton. "I shall go out all the same, Field."

"That's your look-out, if you want to deal with Wingate when you come back. If you cut games practice, you'll be reported; I've no choice about that, and you know it."

"Suit yourself."

Squiff swung angrily away, but he turned back.

"Look here, Wharton, what's the good of playing the fool?" he said, in a more friendly tone. "Wingate will give you six! That's not all—ten to one you'll be spotted, and get landed! That spying rotter, Loder of the Sixth, watches you like a cat! Quelch has his eye on you—even the Head has! You can't walk out of the school without every man in the place guessing what you're up to. Do you want to be bunked?"

Wharton laughed again.

"No good telling you that I'm not going to play billiards at the Three Fishers—like dear old dutiful Loder?" he asked.

"Well, if you've got a decent reason, why not give it? I'd rather not land you in trouble with Wingate. Where are you going?"

"Courtfield!" said Harry.

"That's pretty vague. Why Courtfield?"

"It's early closing in Courtfield to-day."

"Early closing!" repeated Squiff blankly.

"Just that!"

Squiff stared at him, and his face hardened. How a Greyfriars fellow could be concerned by the fact that the shops closed that afternoon in Courtfield, was a mystery—if it was true! The Remove captain could only conclude that Wharton was laughing at him.

"If that's funny, I don't see it!" snapped Squiff. "You're not let off; and if you cut, look out for six from Wingate."

And Sampson Quincy Ifley Field stalked away. Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders. He had told Squiff the truth—though without expecting him to believe it without further explanation—which he did not intend to give. Many of the members of Dick Trumper's team were in employment in Courtfield, and those members were free on early-closing day. On Wednesday, therefore, Trumper & Co. always had a practice. As Wharton was playing in the team on the following Saturday, he naturally desired to take part in the practice with his fellow-players. But he had no intention of telling anyone at Greyfriars so.

Moreover, he had another little matter on hand that afternoon. Last Saturday he had dodged Loder of the Sixth. He had no doubt that Gerald Loder would be playing detective again; and this time he had made certain preparations for Loder, in conjunction with his Courtfield friends. A Greyfriars junior could not "handle" a prefect. The penalty for that was too severe. But the Courtfield fellows could—and would! There was a surprise in store for Loder of the Sixth, if he shadowed the scapegrace of Greyfriars that afternoon.

Harry Wharton strolled away, with his hands in his pockets, his manner careless and indifferent. In the quad he passed the Co. Bob Cherry, Inky, and Johnny Bull looked another way. Frank Nugent fixed his eyes on Wharton with an expression of contempt and dislike. Frank, placable and forgiving by nature, could neither forgive nor forget Monday's happenings in Study No. 1. Hitherto, Johnny Bull had been the member of the Co. who was most turned against Wharton. Now it was Frank, and he was more bitter and implacable than Johnny had ever thought of being.

Wharton's face remained indifferent, but Nugent's look gave him a pang. Unconsciously, perhaps, he had had a feeling that, even if they were no longer friends, Frank would never really turn actively against him. It was a blow to realise that he now had an enemy in Frank Nugent.

He was not the first fellow Frank had quarrelled with, on account of his young scamp of a minor. That was a subject on which Frank was not always quite reasonable.

He walked on, affecting not to notice the Co., and went down to the gates. He heard Nugent's voice behind him, in tones of sarcastic contempt.

"Pub-haunting again! Of all the rotters—"

"Chuck it, Frank!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"My esteemed and absurd Franky, I—"

Wharton walked on, with his ears burning. He had heard Nugent's words, and knew that he was intended to hear them. The most pacific fellow in the Remove was hunting for trouble!

Probably Nugent expected Wharton to turn back. But he did not turn back. He was coolly determined that Nugent

should find no trouble with him, if he hunted for it ever so hard.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was lounging in the gateway. He gave the scapegrace a nod and a grin.

"Goin' out?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What about games practice?"

"Nothing about it."

"You've forgotten that it's a compulsory day?"

"Not at all!"

The Bounder grinned.

"It means trouble with Wingate, old bean."

"I'm getting used to trouble," answered Wharton indifferently.

"Well, look here!" said Smithy, becoming serious. "I know you don't want advice—especially good advice, so—"

"Right on the wicket!" assented Wharton.

"I'm goin' to bung some at you, all the same. Stick to games practice this afternoon! I've been keeping a peeper on Loder—on your account."

"Thanks!" said Wharton, laughing.

"The good man is after you like a dog after a bone, or a politician after a salary. He's gone out—about a quarter of an hour ago. But—the Bounder grinned again—"he hasn't gone far."

"How's that?"

"To put it plain, I'm jolly certain that he's in cover in the coppice yonder with an eye wide open—watchin' for somebody to go out of gates. You can guess who?"

"Quite!"

"Well, then, stick to games practice, old bean, and let him watch."

"Thanks—I'm going out."

And Wharton went out. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders and walked back into the quad. A mutineer himself to the marrow of his bones, the Bounder had a certain sympathy with a fellow who was up against all authority. He was, in fact, watching Harry Wharton's downward career that term with a sardonic and more or less friendly interest. More than once he had taken the trouble to give him a useful tip. This time, however, tips seemed to be futile. The reckless rebel of the Remove seemed determined to rush on his fate. Having done all he could, Smithy shrugged his shoulders and left him to it.

There was a smile on Wharton's face as he walked away. He turned into the footpath through the coppice, where, according to the keen-eyed Bounder, Loder of the Sixth was on the look-out. It might have been supposed that he desired to draw the spy's attention. No doubt he did!

From the coppice he reached the towpath on the Sark. There he walked carelessly by the river.

He did not once look over his shoulder. But after a time he stumbled and slipped, and as he recovered, he shot a swift glance back for a split second. In that fraction of time he had a glimpse of Loder of the Sixth, backing out of sight behind a tree.

He laughed as he walked on.

There was no doubt of it. Smithy was right. Loder was on the trail. It was what Wharton had expected and planned for. Had Loder only guessed it, that was why he had not gone on his bicycle. He was giving the spy of the Sixth a chance. On foot, a shadower had a much better chance of pursuing unseen. Loder's opinion was that this time he was in luck. That opinion was destined to change later.

Wharton turned from the towpath at last. He followed a narrow footpath through woodland, dense with brambles and bracken. From the thickets a

rather startling object looked out at him. Had he not been prepared for it, it would certainly have startled him. It was an unearthly looking, hideous face. But it was only a Guy Fawkes mask, concealing the features of the wearer. Wharton slowed down.

Two other masked faces peered into view. Wharton did not stop, but he dropped a whispered word as he sauntered by.

"That you, Trumper, old bean?"

"Little me!" chuckled the fisherman's son. "I've got Solly and Wickers here. Are we wanted?"

"Yes. Look out!"

"Right as rain!"

The three weird-looking masks sank out of sight. Harry Wharton walked on, whistling. Loder's opinion was that he was in luck. Wharton's opinion was that the spy of the Sixth would be sorry that he had played the spy that afternoon.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Wet Paint!

GERALD LODER grinned as he turned from the towpath into the wood.

Some little distance ahead of him he could hear the suspected junior whistling, though the thick brambles hid him from sight. Obviously, to Loder, the young scoundrel did not know that he was followed this time.

On a bike it had been impossible to conceal pursuit. On foot it was easy, especially as Wharton was taking such a path. Loder knew where that path led—it would bring the young rascal out by a fence of the Three Fishers' grounds. His destination could not be in doubt.

Loder had only to follow him a hundred yards farther, and see him climbing the fence into forbidden territory. When he had seen that with his own eyes, and beyond the shadow of a doubt, Loder could make his report at Greyfriars, without any danger of the thing turning out a "fizzle," like his unfortunate report in the dormitory affair. Loder knew that he had to make sure, and he was going to make sure.

But Loder was not destined to cover that hundred yards. He could still hear the junior's careless whistle, in advance, when suddenly there was a rustle in the bracken, and three figures leaped out.

They leaped right at Loder.

Taken utterly by surprise, the prefect went down with a crash on his back, and the three clambered over him.

Loder sprawled and gasped.

As he stared up at his assailants he wondered whether he was dreaming. Three hideous faces glared down at him—three faces that were hardly human. Loder's brain almost swam.

"Got him!" came a chuckle from under one of the cardboard masks.

"Yeth, rather!"

"Pin him down!"

Loder began to struggle.

After the first few moments of horrid amazement, he could see that the hideous faces were only Guy Fawkes masks.

But who his assailants were he had not the faintest, remotest idea. He concluded that they must be Greyfriars juniors—they were about the size of Remove fellows. Wharton had planned this! Yet that was rather perplexing, too. So far as Loder was aware, he had no friends in the Remove to stand by him in a matter like this!

"Let me go!" panted Loder. "You young scoundrels! By gad, I'll take the skin off your backs! Let me go!"

He struggled fiercely.

One of the three he could have

handled easily—perhaps two would not have been too much for him. But three were too much. Dick Trumper was a powerful fellow, and he had Loder's wrists in a grasp that was not to be shaken off. Willy Wickers had hold of Loder's legs. Solly Lazarus sat on his waistcoat.

Loder heaved and rocked and struggled and squirmed; but he had no chance, and he was held down, panting.

"I'll have you flogged for this!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Trumper.

The idea of the Courtfield fellows being flogged by the headmaster of Greyfriars was rather entertaining.

Loder panted. He could see now that the three youths were not dressed like Greyfriars fellows. It dawned on his mind that they did not belong to the school at all. They did not choose to let him know who they were; but they were not Greyfriars fellows.

Who they were, and why they had assailed him, was a deep mystery. He even doubted now whether Wharton had anything to do with it. Wharton's acquaintances outside the school—according to Loder's belief—were not a set of mischievous village boys, but much more disreputable characters. Wharton could hardly know anything of these lads, whoever they were!

Wharton's whistle had died away in the distance. Whether he knew anything of the affair or not, he was taking no part in it.

"Who—who—who are you?" panted Loder, as he crumpled up at last, realising that resistance was useless.

"Guess!" chuckled Trumper.

"Let me go!" gasped Loder. "Look here, I'm after a young rascal belonging to my school, who's going out of bounds—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm a prefect—a Greyfriars prefect—"

"Roll him over!" said Trumper.

Loder was rolled over, his hands dragged behind him and tied together. Then he was rolled on his back again, helpless.

He eyed the masked enemy furiously. Who they were was a mystery; what they had assailed him for was another mystery; and what they were going to do with him was a third mystery. But that mystery was soon elucidated. Only too soon Loder discovered what they were going to do with him.

One of the masked youths produced a bag. From the bag he took a can of paint and a brush. He jerked the lid off the can and dipped in the brush, drawing it out streaming with black paint.

Loder shuddered with horror.

"Don't you dare—" he gasped.

"Better shut your mouth! You might get some paint in it!" said Trumper.

"Don't you dare—groogh—ooogh—yurrghgh!" spluttered Loder, as the paintbrush was dabbed into his mouth.

"I warned you, old bean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder kept his mouth shut after that. The paint did not taste nice. In silence, convulsed with fury, the wretched prefect submitted to being painted. Dick Trumper laid the paint on with a liberal brush.

Loder's furious face disappeared under a thick coating. He was transformed into a negro in a few minutes. Trumper dabbed paint on his ears and round his neck. Then he emptied what was left in the can on Loder's head and stirred it into his hair with the brush.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a jolly old picture!"

"Ho can have the brush," remarked Trumper. "I'm done with it now."

And he pushed the sticky brush down Loder's back;

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three released Loder, and Dick Trumper pinned a card on his chest. It bore the familiar inscription:

"WET PAINT!"

Then they jumped away from him. Loder's hands were tied, but he was trying to kick. Trumper & Co., yelling with laughter, backed into the bushes.

"Good-bye, old bean!" said Trumper.

"You—you—you young villains!" panted Loder. "You can't leave me like this. Untie my hands."

"You'll promise not to hit out if we do?" asked Trumper.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Loder would have promised anything for a chance of vengeance. "On my word!"

"Shall we take his word, you fellows?" chuckled Trumper.

"I don't think!" chortled Wickers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the three young rascals disappeared through the bracken, leaving Gerald Loder to his own devices.

Black as the ace of spades, streaming and sticky with paint, Loder gasped with rage. He wrenched at the cord on his wrists, but without avail.

He turned at last, and tramped out of the wood back to the towpath. He was quite unwilling to show up in public in his present state; but there was no choice in the matter. And he was not thinking of shadowing Harry Wharton any farther. He was not in a state for detective work!

He tramped out on the towpath and tramped savagely back towards the school. In the winter the towpath was lonely, and Loder sighted only one person—an old gentleman taking a walk—who, at the sight of Loder's black face and furious eyes, gave a violent start, spun round, and took to his heels. Who and what Loder was he did not know; but evidently he thought him alarming.

Loder gritted his teeth and tramped on.

He tramped through the coppice and reached the road that ran past the school gates. As he tramped furiously in at the gates Gosling stared out of his lodge like a man in a dream. William Gosling's ancient eyes almost bulged from his head. He shouted to Loder.

"'Ere! You 'ook it! You can't come in 'ere! You 'ook it! Wot I says is this 'ere, you 'ook it, or I'll ring up the police!"

"You old fool!" roared Loder. "Untie my hands! I'm Loder!"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Gosling.

"I'm Loder, you old idiot!" yelled the hapless spy of the Sixth. "Will you let me loose, you silly old fool?"

Gosling stared at him. He recognised Loder's voice now, though certainly he did not recognise Loder. Nobody could have recognised Loder. He might have been taken for a Hottentot, or a Christy minstrel, but never for a Greyfriars prefect.

"You doddering old fool!" hooted Loder. "Don't you know me, you blithering old cuckoo?"

"No, I don't!" said Gosling grimly.

Possibly Gosling did not like being called an old fool and a blithering cuckoo. These painful truths seldom have a pleasing effect. Anyhow, he did not choose to know Loder! He stopped back into his lodge and slammed the door, leaving the painted prefect to his own devices.

There was no aid from Gosling, and Loder tramped in, with his hands still tied behind him. There was a startled yoll.

"I say, you fellows, look out!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo—"

"What the thump—"

"Who the dickens—"

"Who's that nigger?"

Billy Bunter, after one startled blink at the alarming stranger through his big spectacles, bolted for the House. Other fellows stared and shouted. Loder's face was crimson under the black paint. But, like the flower in the poem, he blushed unseen! His blushes were wholly hidden by paint. But the glare in his eyes was almost terrifying.

"You silly fools! Will you let me loose?" he shrieked.

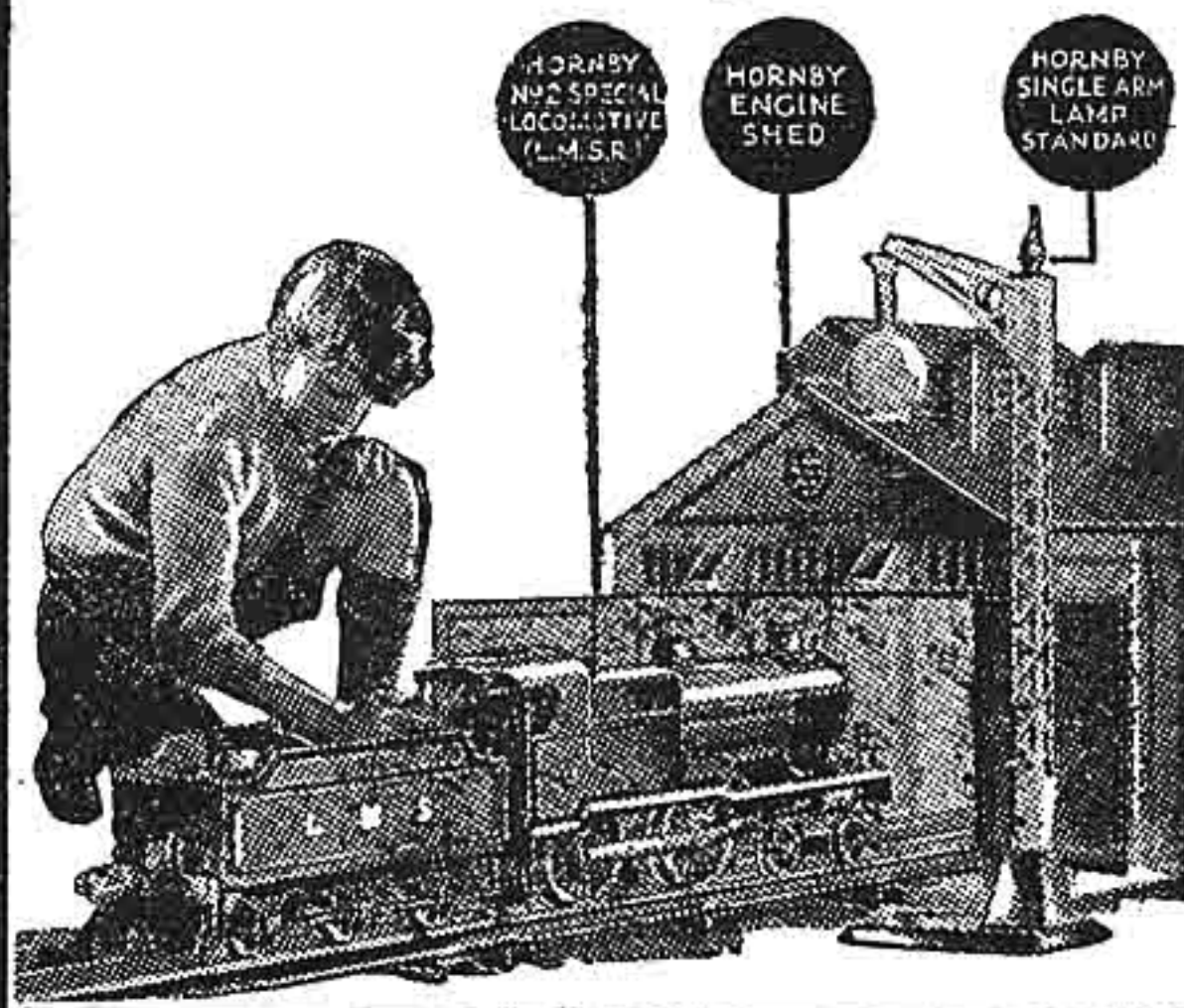
Wingate came striding up. He was about to grasp the black man by the shoulder, but on second thoughts—proverbially the best—he didn't! There was too much paint about Loder, sticky and streaming.

Wingate gazed at him in amazement and wrath. He realised that the newcomer was not some black from Central Africa, or a wild man from Borneo. But nobody had ever been seen in the old quad of Greyfriars before, painted black, with a notice "WET PAINT" pinned on his chest.

It was amazing, almost unnerving. It looked as if it was a case of an escaped lunatic.

(Continued on next page.)

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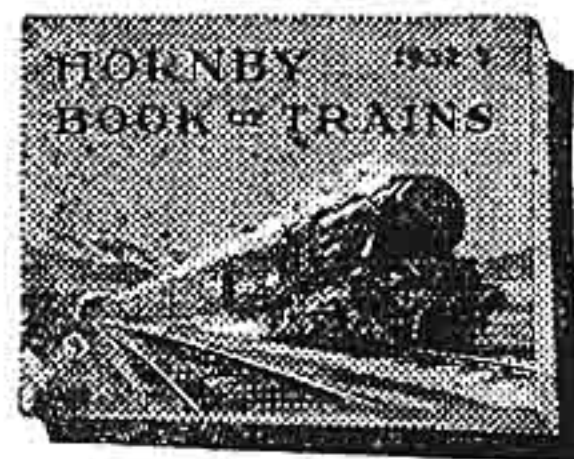


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"Who are you?" roared Wingate. "What do you want here? Who—?" "You silly fool!"

Loder was not in a frame of mind to choose his words nicely.

"Eh?"

"You gabbling ass! I'm Loder!"

"L-L-Loder!" babbled Wingate.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from all quarters.

Games practice was not yet on; which was rather lucky from the point of view of the juniors. They would have hated to miss this.

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

"Behold he is black, but comely!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The blackfulness is terrific!"

"Wet paint!" howled Johnny Bull. "It looks rather wet! I say, is he batty? What is he doing this for?"

"Loder!" babbled Wingate helplessly.

"What the thump—"

"Untie my hands!" shrieked Loder.

"I've been attacked—assaulted—painted—my hands are tied—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate was still surprised; but he was chuckling as he took out a pocket-knife to release Loder's hands.

He dealt with him very carefully—there was paint streaming all over Loder, and the Greyfriars captain did not want any of it.

Loder was freed at last. He did not stop to thank Wingate. He rushed for the House, leaving the quad rocking with merriment.

"Who—who—who—what—" Mr. Quelch, drawn to the doorway by the uproar in the quad, met Loder face to face as he charged in. He jumped back barely in time to escape a collision. "Who—who—who—"

"Who is this?" boomed Prout, master of the Fifth. "Who—whoever you are, how dare you come here? Go away at once! Some escaped maniac—"

"I'm Loder!" yelled the hapless prefect.

"Loder! Impossible!" gasped Prout.

"If you are Loder, what do you mean by this? You are covered with paint! Such a senseless prank—"

"L-Loder!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Are you in your senses, Loder? For what imaginable reason have you painted your face in that ridiculous manner—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the quad.

Loder did not stay to explain to the astonished and scandalised masters. He tore away for a bath-room. What Loder wanted just then was steaming hot water and soap—lots of hot water and lots of soap! And while the Greyfriars fellows howled with merriment, Loder rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, till his face, from black, changed to the hue of a freshly-boiled beetroot.

Harry Wharton, at practice with Trumper & Co., at Courtfield, was not likely to be troubled any more that day by the spy of the Sixth.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

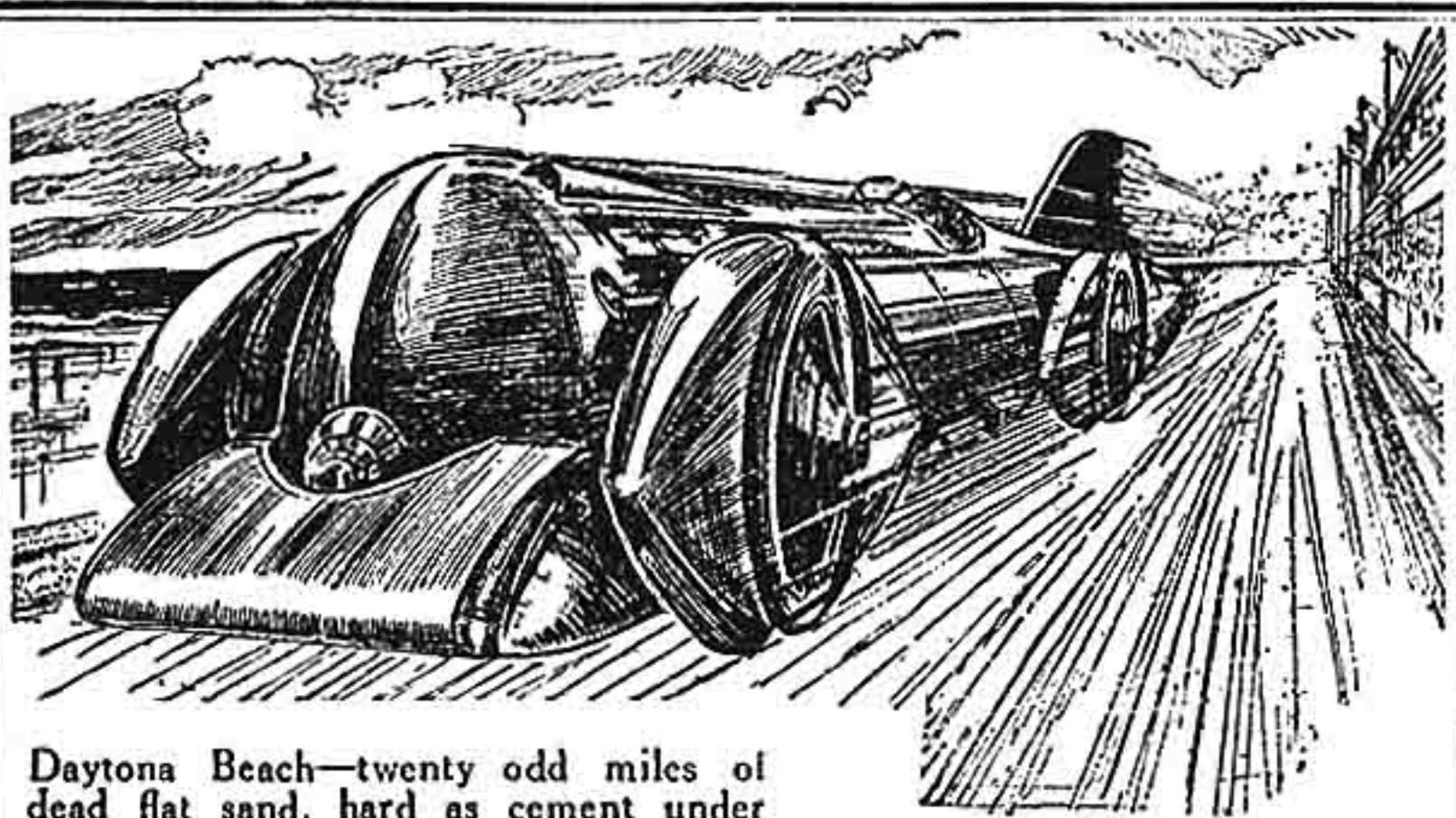
Gated!

"LAST time of asking!" said Squiff gruffly.

It was Saturday.

Quite early after dinner Harry Wharton left the House and walked down towards the bikeshed. Squiff intercepted him.

Wharton smiled faintly as he stopped. Squiff did not smile; his face was dark and grim.



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"I suppose you know we're playing Courtfield this afternoon, unless you've forgotten all about Remove matches," said the new captain of the Remove.

"Yes, I know that," said Wharton, his smile broadening. He was not likely to have forgotten, as he was playing in that match, though as yet Squiff was far from guessing so.

"Well, there's a place in the team for you if you want it," growled Squiff. "It's the last time of asking!"

"Sorry, but—"

"Another engagement?" asked the Australian junior, with a curl of the lip.

"Exactly!"

"Well, I'm giving you a last chance," said Field slowly. "If you stand out to-day, you stand out for good."

"Oh, quite!" drawled Wharton. "Leave it at that."

Squiff, however, seemed rather reluctant to leave it at that.

"Look here, Wharton"—he tried to repress his anger—"you're wanted in the game. Trumper's lot are a good team, and I hear that they've got a new forward; I don't know his name, but I've heard that he's a wonderful man—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"I can't see where the cackle comes in!" snapped Squiff savagely. "Two or three of the fellows have heard about it from Courtfield men in the last few days. According to what they say, there's a new centre-forward in the team, who's miles ahead of any man they've ever played. I hear that he played for them at Woodend last week, and bagged three goals on his own—and Woodend are a fairly good team. I don't know who he is, but it seems that he's a first-class man; and if they've got a surprise-packet to spring on us, we want to be right up to the mark. Will you play?"

"I can't play for the Remove."

"You mean that you won't?" exclaimed Squiff, his voice rising.

"Just as you like!"

"Well, that tears it!" said the Remove captain. "I'm done with you! You won't be asked to play again! Any decent chap—" He broke off as Frank Nugent came up.

"You're asking Wharton to play this afternoon, Field?" Nugent broke in.

"Yes," growled Squiff.

"I'm in the team. If Wharton plays, I stand out!" said Frank.

"Oh, my hat! Are you going to play the giddy ox, too?" exclaimed the exasperated skipper of the Remove. "Look here, if Wharton plays, we shan't want you—and you can go and eat coke! See? Now shut up! Wharton—"

"Sorry—another engagement!" smiled Wharton.

"Last time of asking—"

"You've said that before."

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field drew a deep breath. It seemed for a moment as if he would spring at the rebel of the Remove, hitting out. But he restrained himself, turned his back, and walked away.

Wharton, seemingly ignorant of Nugent's existence, walked on to the bikeshed. But a moment later his name was called.

"Wharton!" It was Wingate's voice.

Harry looked round.

"Yes, Wingate—"

"You're to go to your Form master's study."

Wharton set his lips.

"What for?" he demanded.

"Better ask Quelch" answered Wingate dryly. "Anyhow, go!"

Wharton stood where he was, breathing hard. In class every day that week he had been careful—a model pupil. Mr. Quelch had no reason—and no

pretext—for finding a single fault. For a whole week the scapegrace seemed to have changed his ways. He had been very, very careful not to run the slightest risk of detention. Now he was wanted in Quelch's study—just as he was starting out to join the Courtfielders!

But if he thought of disobeying the command, it was useless. Wingate was keeping an eye on him; probably he read the rebel's thoughts.

"Go in, Wharton!" he rapped.

"Look here, Wingate—"

"Do you want me to take you in by the collar?" asked the Greyfriars captain unpleasantly. "You'll get six if you give me the trouble!"

Harry Wharton, breathing hard, went back to the House. His brow was dark, his heart hot with anger. He had done nothing; it could not be pretended that he had given any offence. Yet he was called in on a half-holiday—and he did not need telling that it meant trouble.

Mr. Quelch, in his study, had a thoughtful expression on his face. His keen eyes searched Wharton's clouded countenance as he entered. He did not look angry; but his expression was cold, hard, and firm.

"You sent for me, sir. I was just going out—" Wharton tried hard to make his manner respectful. For once, he did not want trouble with his Form master.

"I saw you leave the House, Wharton, and requested Wingate to call you," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I cannot allow you to go out of gates to-day."

"May I ask what I have done, sir?"

"So far as my actual knowledge extends, nothing," said the Remove master. "But I cannot trust you, Wharton! I do not mean to say that I am giving you a detention on bare suspicion. You are free for the afternoon within the limits of the school precincts. But you must not go out of gates—unless, indeed, you can give me a full and frank explanation of your occupation out of gates, and convince me that it is of a harmless nature. In that case, I shall leave you to do as you choose on a half-holiday."

Wharton stood silent.

"Of late," said Mr. Quelch in the same quiet tone, "you have spent your half-holidays, and other spare time, perpetually out of gates. You have gone alone, and remained out for lengthy periods. Last Wednesday, I learn, you failed to attend games practice, although it was a compulsory occasion, and were caned by the head of the games."

"Yes, but—"

"Very well! That matter is out of my province; the games are in the hands of the captain of the school and the games master. But it is clear that you had some motive for acting as you did. Can you explain it?"

No answer.

"How were you occupied last Wednesday afternoon?"

Wharton did not speak.

"How do you intend to occupy your time out of gates to-day?"

"No other fellow in the school is questioned like this, sir. A fellow is supposed to be free on a half-holiday so long as he doesn't miss the roll-calls."

"That is quite correct, Wharton. But you have placed yourself under suspicion. You have been punished by the Head for frequenting a disreputable resort. You cannot be trusted. Unless you make a full explanation and satisfy me, I shall not allow you to go out of gates."

Wharton's lip curled bitterly.

"If I told you that I went out of gates to meet some decent fellows, and

play football with them, would you believe me, sir?"

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

"Certainly I should not believe such a very extraordinary statement, Wharton, without the most convincing proof!" he snapped.

"Then I've nothing to say, sir."

"In that case, you will remain within gates! Understand me," said Mr. Quelch, his voice deepening, "if you leave the precincts of Greyfriars this afternoon I shall take it as your final act of disobedience to authority, and I shall make a formal demand to your headmaster to expel you."

Harry Wharton looked at him. The Remove master's face was set like iron. There was no doubt that he meant every word he said. Wharton was silent for a few moments; then he spoke in a low voice.

"I intended, sir, to ride down to Courtfield—and return to the school in about an hour."

"You will not go out of gates at all, Wharton, unless you are prepared to pay the penalty I have indicated! That is my last word! You may go."

Mr. Quelch turned to the heap of papers on his writing-table and ceased to be aware of the scapegrace's existence. And Harry Wharton, with a set face and glinting eyes, left the study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Catch!

PROUT, the master of the Fifth, rolled out of the House, portly and podgy, in his purple overcoat.

It was a fine clear afternoon, cold, with a touch of frost, and Prout was going for a walk. Prout, rolling out majestically, was unaware that two pairs of eyes were fixed on him from different quarters. Horace Coker, of Prout's own Form, watched him from a window in the Fifth; Harry Wharton of the Remove eyed him from the Rag. Neither Coker of the Fifth nor Wharton of the Remove was as a rule interested in the portly proceedings of Prout. Now both were interested—though not so much in Prout personally as in the fact that there was a telephone in Prout's study, which a fellow could use when Prout was not on the scene.

Prout once safely out of the House, Wharton departed for the Fifth Form master's study. Coker continued to watch Prout from his window till the ponderous gentleman was at a good distance across the quad. So it came about that, of the two fellows who desired to borrow Prout's phone, the junior was the first in the field.

Wharton slipped quietly into Mr. Prout's study and shut the door. Without delay he lifted the receiver of Prout's telephone, and gave a Courtfield number. It was the number of Mr. Lazarus, the second-hand merchant of Courtfield, who was the venerable parent of Solly Lazarus of the Courtfield Football Club. It was Mr. Lazarus' voice that came through.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Lazarus!" said the junior politely. "Can I speak to Solly? Harry Wharton speaking from Greyfriars."

"Yeth, certainly," answered the old gentleman at Courtfield.

A few moments later Wharton heard Solly's voice.

"That you, old thon?" asked a second and younger edition of Mr. Solomon Lazarus' fat and lisping voice.

"Yes, old chap; Wharton speaking. I'm prevented from coming down to join up at Courtfield."

"Oh, my Uncle Tham!" ejaculated Solly. "Don't thay you can't play thith afternoon, old thon! We're banking on you!"

"No, that's all right," said Harry. "I'm keen as mustard, old chap. But I can't get out, and I want you to tell Trumper that I shall be ready here, right on the nail."

"Good man!" said Solly, in great relief. "All therene!"

"I've left my clobber with you," went on Wharton. "You can bring it along for me—what?"

"That'th all right."

"I can't play the Remove in Greyfriars colours, you know," said Harry, laughing. "I want my new outfit."

"Yeth, rather! Right as rain—I'll thee to it! Sure you're fit?"

"Fit as a fiddle."

"Fine! I'll tell Trumper, and bring your clobber. Thee you at the thschool, then," said Solly. "Tho-long, old thon!"

Wharton smiled as he put up Mr. Prout's receiver. "Gating" that afternoon had placed him in an awkward predicament. His new football outfit, in the Courtfield colours of blue and black, had been left with his friends at Courtfield. He did not want to chance its being seen at the school before the day of the match. Also Dick Trumper & Co. were expecting him to join them, and come on to Greyfriars in their company. But Mr. Prout's telephone had solved the difficulty.

He turned from the telephone. As he did so his glance fell on a letter that lay, stamped and addressed, on Prout's table, and his ear caught the sound of a footstep in the passage.

He caught his breath.

It was fairly clear that that letter had been left there forgetfully; Prout having intended to take it out to post as he went. And the footstep in the passage sounded as if Prout had remembered it and returned.

Wharton set his lips. Prout, if he caught him in his study, was certain to kick up a row. A report to Quelch, and trouble with that acid gentleman might mean detention, and no football match, after all. Even as that dismaying thought passed through Wharton's mind the study door opened, and he laughed with relief at the sight of Horace Coker. It was not Prout, it was Coker of the Fifth, and Coker did not matter.

(Continued on next page.)



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Coker, however, was not aware of that. Coker of the Fifth had an unfounded belief that he mattered a lot.

He stared across the study at the Remove in surprise and wrath.

"What the thump are you doing here, Wharton?" he demanded.

"Find out!" was Wharton's polite answer.

"Playing tricks on my Form master—what?" said Coker suspiciously. "You kicked up a shindy in the Fifth Form-room the other day. Now you're japing Prout in his own study—what?"

"Why not mind your own bizney?" suggested Wharton.

Coker, however, took the view that this was his "bizney." He shut the door, and put his back to it. For the moment Coker forgot what he had come to the study for. Anyhow, he had plenty of time. Prout had gone out. It was up to Coker to deal with this cheeky fag whom he had discovered in his Form master's study.

Wharton came towards the door. "Look here, Coker, don't play the goat!" he exclaimed impatiently. "I don't want a row with you here—in a master's study."

"What have you been up to?" demanded Coker magisterially.

"Prout may come back, you ass!"

"I've asked you what you've been up to," said Coker calmly. "I advise you to explain yourself before I lay hands on you. I've a short way with fags, you cheeky young sweep!"

"Let me pass, you silly ass!" roared Wharton.

He was in dread every moment of hearing Prout's footsteps returning for the forgotten letter.

Instead of letting him pass Coker detached himself from the door and made a stride at him. The junior dodged round Prout's table.

"You howling ass, will you keep off?" he yelled.

"I'll jolly well—Yaroooh!" roared Coker, as the junior grabbed up a volume of Thucydides from the table, and hurled it.

Coker had not expected that. Really he might have, but he hadn't. Thucydides caught him under the chin, and fairly bowled him over. He staggered back, and sat down on Prout's hearth-rug with a heavy bump.

Coker would have been up again in a moment, grabbing the cheeky junior and demonstrating what a short way he had with fags. But Wharton did not give him a moment. He jumped forward, grasped Prout's big armchair, and, with a swing of his arms, overturned it on Coker.

It was a large and roomy chair with a padded leather seat, and it bonneted Coker as it up-ended on him. Coker sprawled, roaring, with the armchair on top.

Wharton darted to the door, tore it open, and scudded. Coker was busy with the armchair, and he had time to cut. He vanished from the study, and did the passage as if he were on the cinder path. As he disappeared from the passage at one end, Mr. Prout entered it from the other. Prout was coming back for the letter he had forgotten to take to the post, and which he had remembered at the sight of the letter-box near the gates.

Prout, rolling majestically up the passage to his study, was startled by strange, wild sounds from that apartment. In great surprise he hurried his majestic steps.

"Ooooh! Whoop! You cheeky sweep! Ooooh!" came in spluttering, gasping accents as Prout reached the open doorway.

Prout stared in.

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Horace Coker, disentangled from the embrace of the armchair, had just gained his feet. He was red and ruffled and wrathful. He glared round for Wharton, and saw Prout.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

Prout gazed at him. He gazed at the armchair lying on its back, at the volume of Thucydides lying in the fender, and at Coker, red and ruffled and breathless. And thunder grew in his brow.

"Coker!" gasped Prout. "You—you young rascal! You impudent, impertinent young ruffian! You—you have dared to enter my study in my absence; to upset my room; what you would call, I presume, a rag—a rag on your Form master! Upon my word!"

"I—I—I—" babbled Coker.

"Silence, sir!" roared Prout. "I regret—I deeply regret—that the traditions of my Form, sir, prevent me from using a cane! I regret it deeply! You will take five hundred lines of Virgil, Coker."

"I—I—I—" Coker gabbled.

"You will go immediately to the Form-room and write out five hundred lines!" boomed Prout. "Not a word—go! Another word, Coker, and I shall forget the traditions of a senior Form and cane you! Go!"

Coker went.

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if you want to win a prize, chums!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Harry Wharton Against Greyfriars!

HARRY WHARTON lounged into the changing-room. It was drawing near time for the football match, and most of the Remove footballers had gathered there.

Plenty of fellows stared at Wharton as he came in. What he wanted there was rather a mystery to the footballers. Certainly plenty of fellows strolled in to chat, who had friends in the footballing fraternity. But Wharton had no friend in the eleven—no friend in the Form at all, if it came to that. He could hardly have dropped in to chat with anyone about the game. But there he was.

Squiff gave him a grim look. If Wharton had changed his mind and intended to say that he would play, after all, the Remove captain had a sharp negative ready. He was more than fed-up with the mutineer of the Form. But that did not seem to be Wharton's object. He did not approach Field, or take any heed of his existence. Neither did he come near the Co., or appear to notice Frank Nugent's inimical glance. Only the Bounder gave him a nod and a grin at the same time.

"Not going out, old bean?" asked Smithy.

"No; gated."

"What for?"

"Nothing."

"Good boys like us are always getting something for nothing," said the Bounder, with a sad shake of the head.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"But it's really for nothing this time—just to keep me out of mischief. I'm not to be trusted out of gates, according to Quelch."

"Suspicious old bird!" sighed the Bounder.

He resumed lacing his football boots. Wharton strolled to a window and looked out. The Courtfield men were expected every minute now. Frank Nugent glanced at his former friend several times, and at last spoke to Squiff. The Remove captain nodded, and called to Wharton.

"Here, Wharton, if you don't want anything you may as well clear!"

Wharton looked round from the window.

"But I do want something," he answered mildly.

"You're done with football!" snapped Squiff. "And I can tell you that every man here is fed with the sight of you."

"The feeling is reciprocated."

"Well, get out, then."

"Thanks; I'll stay. I haven't come here merely because I'm so popular, to rejoice your little hearts," explained Wharton. "But I understand that the Courtfield men will come in here to change."

"What has that to do with you?"

"Lots! I want to see them."

"I don't see why."

"Heaps of things you don't see!" answered Wharton. "You don't see that you're a silly, cheeky ass, even when a fellow points it out to you."

Squiff gave him a look. He was a good-natured fellow, but he was powerfully tempted to collar the scapegrace of the Form, and bang his head on the wall, and call on the team to boot him out. But, after all, any Remove man had a right in the room if he chose to come there, and Squiff did not want a row going on when the visitors came along. He turned his back on Wharton.

"Oh, shut up, Frank!" said Bob Cherry, in answer to some muttered remark from Nugent. "You seem keener on a row than he ever was. For goodness' sake, let's have peace and quiet."

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"My esteemed Franky," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "let not the frown of absurd wrath chase away the beneficent smile of idiotic good-temperfulness. Speechfulness is silvery, but silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the esteemed well."

Frank grunted, and was silent. Wharton appeared to hear nothing. He roamed idly about the long apartment, with his hands in his pockets, humming a tune, apparently unconscious of curious, expressive, and inimical looks. The Bounder, having finished changing, joined him. He was very curious.

"What have you got on?" he asked.

"My clobber!"

"Oh, don't be a goat! I can read somethin' in your eye—but I'm blessed if I can make out what it is! What the dickens are you here for—if it's not specially to put the fellows' backs up?"

"What does a fellow usually come here for?"

"To change for a game, I suppose!"

"Well, you've got it!"

"There's no junior game on this afternoon, except our match with Courtfield," said the Bounder, puzzled. "Squiff won't play you for love or



Wharton jumped forward, grasped Prout's big armchair, and with a swing of his arms overturned it on Coker. The Fifth-Former sprawled, roaring, with the armchair on top of him. "Ooooooch!" he spluttered. "Whooop! You cheeky sweep!"

money, after the way you've checked him."

"All the same, I'm playing Soccer this afternoon," said Wharton laughing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here they come!" exclaimed Bob Cherry; and attention was turned from Wharton when Dick Trumper and his merry men appeared.

Squiff went to meet the visitors. The Bouncer looked at Wharton, puzzled by the amused glimmer in his eyes. Keen as he was, Smithy did not guess. He, like other fellows, had heard some of the talk about a new centre-forward in the Courtfield team, who was a wonderful goal-getter. But he had not heard the man's name; and certainly did not guess what it was. The Courtfield men came into the changing-room, and some of them nodded to Wharton and grinned. Solly Lazarus tossed a bag over to him.

"There you are, old thon!" said Solly.

"Thanks, old bean."

Some of the Remove men were still changing. Trumper & Co. proceeded to do likewise. To the astonishment of the Removites, so did Wharton. Several friends had come along with the visitors, so it was not apparent, till they changed, that only ten players had come. As Wharton threw off his jacket and kicked off his shoes, amazed stares were concentrated on him. When he pulled the blue-and-black outfit out of the bag Solly had tossed to him, amazement was at its height. The Bouncer gave a gasp. He caught on at last.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Smithy.

Squiff stared hard at Wharton, and came over to him.

"What does this mean?" he asked quietly.

"Guess!"

Squiff looked round at Trumper. The Courtfield captain laughed.

"A little surprise for you fellows!" said Trumper. "No objection, what? I understand Wharton doesn't play for you now—"

Squiff breathed hard.

"That's so," he said. "But—"

"No buts about it, Field," cut in Wharton coolly. "I've joined the Courtfield Football Club, and I'm playing for my team."

"Your team?" repeated Squiff.

"Exactly!"

Squiff breathed hard for a moment. His feelings towards Wharton were not pleasant. But he wanted no disagreement with the visiting team.

"It's all right, Trumper," he said. "No objection in the world! It's a bit of a surprise, that's all. But you're more than welcome to the man if you want him—we certainly do not!"

"No fear!" said Frank Nugent.

"But—you're playing a man who's never played with your men before?" said Bob Cherry. "Is that it?"

"Not quite," said Trumper. "Wharton's put in a good bit of practice with us, the last week or two, and he played for us at Woodend last Saturday—"

"Oh, my hat!" roared the Bouncer. "The jolly old new centre-forward that we've heard about. His name was never mentioned."

"Well, if it's all right—" said Dick Trumper.

"Right as rain!" said Squiff; and with that the subject dropped and the footballers got on with changing.

But there were many curious looks among the Remove men. Wharton's solitary absences from the school were

explained now, in a rather unexpected manner. Some of the fellows could not help wondering whether he was, after all, the "bad hat" that he was generally supposed to be.

There was a lurking smile on Wharton's face as he donned the blue-and-black of the Courtfield Rangers. He walked to the ground with Trumper's team, and a sea of eyes were on him.

The two teams lined up, and the game commenced.

Within two or three minutes the Courtfieldians were swarming down on the Greyfriars goal. A splendid piece of manoeuvring on the part of the visiting forwards followed. Solly Lazarus received the ball and passed it on to Wharton. Worming his way through the Greyfriars defence, the rebel of the Remove ended up by sending in a first-time shot which gave the home "goalie" no chance.

"Goal!"

"Well played Wharton!" shouted three or four voices—those of the fellows who had come over with Trumper's team.

Wharton had started well for his side. Squiff gave his men a word as they walked back to the centre of the field after the goal.

"Pull up your socks, you men! We've got to win this match—we've got to let that deserter see that we can beat him! Get down to it!"

The Remove men got down to it. They played a hard game—as hard as they knew! And they were good men at Soccer. But the Courtfielders were good men, too, and they were on their mettle; and they had a recruit in their ranks who had once been a tower of

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,294.

THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS

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 Fa'con. Hal and Jerry promptly meet Quilt—who is later arrested by the Runners—from whom they learn that the Earl of Huntford is on his way to London with a quantity of gold. Riding hard for Blackheath, they hold up the coach. "Your money or your life!" says Jerry, covering the earl with a pistol.

"And I could not kill him. My luck's dead out!"

"Can you give me a single convincing reason why I should not blow your brains out, my lord?" asked Jerry, whose finger was pulling nervously at the trigger.

The Earl of Huntford noticed the trembling forefinger, but he did not attempt to move his head out of the line of fire. The sneer broadened on his stretching lips.

"Fire if you want to, and be hanged!" he replied.

Game! The earl was game right enough. So, Jerry had heard, were all the Burbidge stock.

"On second thoughts," rejoined the highwayman, "we'll take your money now and reserve the bullet for the next occasion. Now, the money-bags, my lord!"

The Earl of Huntford picked up the bags and held them out at armslength one after the other.

Jerry reached for one of the bags, and stowed it away in his side pocket. Hal Lovett took the other.

At that very moment the postilion, who had been lying half-stunned in the road, scrambled to his feet and began to shout.

Along the road from Blackheath some men came riding. And simultaneously more horsemen appeared, riding hard from the opposite direction.

The watery moon shone upon their heavy riding-coats, their short, brown-topped riding-boots, their three-cornered hats, and the hangers which clanked against the horses' steaming sides as they galloped along. Some of the men wore their heavy coats flung open, and behind the dark blue cloth could be seen bright red waistcoats.

They were Bow Street Runners!

"Master!" bellowed the postilion, as he began to run. "The Runners! The police! They'll catch the highwaymen!"

At the sound of the pounding hoofs and the man's wild outcry, Jerry backed Galloper away from the barouche, and then looked up and down the road. Each way it was the same, a crowd of heavily coated horsemen riding down on them.

Trapped!

"Hal boy," hissed Jerry McLean, "The Runners are upon us! Quick! Let's take to the wood!"

Hal stowed his bag of gold away in his pocket, and steered Bow Street Beauty round. He saw the horses belonging to the carriage rear and plunge



Caught Redhanded!

THE Earl of Huntford ground his teeth savagely. "So that villain Quilt has betrayed me, has he?" he snarled.

With a lightning-like dart of his right hand he tried to seize the pistol Jerry levelled at him, but the highwayman was too quick for him.

"Quilt told us about the money—yes," said Jerry McLean. "But he hasn't crossed you, my lord. Quilt was seized yesterday by the Bow Street Runners, and lodged safely in gaol. Now, hand out your money-bags, and be quick about it!"

The earl's face turned almost green. Hal heard him stifle a cry. The next moment he was as calm as ever, brushing his chin with a lace handkerchief, as if to wipe away the touch of Jerry's pistol.

"Quilt apprehended!" he muttered in a far away voice. "Then at least one rascal will meet with his just reward."

He seemed to Hal to be considering the situation.

"Your money, earl," said the boy, chiming in impatiently, "and afterwards I want you to tell me the truth about the Red Falcon I bear tattooed on my breast. Samuel Lovett said Quilt knew the truth about it. You must know, too. You're going to tell us why you had dealings with Samuel Lovett, and why you sent me to the hulks on a false charge."

The earl smiled, and eyed Hal as if he were amused by the boy.

"The Red Falcon," he said, in a low, drawling tone, "to be sure. The Wych Street brat. The boy convict from the hulks. I sent you there, boy. And soon I'll make sure of you. I'll see you hanged!"

"That's quite enough talk!" said Jerry harshly. "You're playing for time, my lord! Those money-bags—quick! Then we'll come to the other business!"

The earl had tossed his pistols back upon the cushions of the carriage. Now, turning away from the window, he moved some of the cushions aside, and, groping under them, brought into view two heavy leather bags. As he moved

them they gave out a soft, metallic chink. They were bags full of gold. Here was the money the earl had promised to Quilt, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Jerry smiled under his black mask. The money would mean a small fortune for him and Hal. It would be some compensation for that very ugly business of the diamond star.

The earl held the bags up for them to see. As he did so, the sharp ring of steel shoes on the flint surface of the rutted road made Jerry and Hal look quickly round.

A watery moon peeped out of the heavy clouds, and by its light the two adventurers could see the coachman leading the four horses at a walk along beside the wood.

Of course! The coachman and his horses; that explained the noise they had heard. Jerry turned his head again, and so did Hal.

But in the brief space of two fleeting seconds the earl had flung down the money-bags and seized the pistol which he knew was loaded.

Jerry's eyes widened in horror as he saw the ring of it thrust within a foot of Hal's ear.

"Look out, boy!" cried Jerry warningly. But even as he spoke the earl snapped the pistol.

The pistol flashed, but did no more. The powder with which the weapon was charged did not explode, nor did the ball leave the wad against which it had been rammed to plough through Hal's brain.

"May the devil take the foul piece!" hissed the earl, as he drew back his hand and hurled the weapon at the boy's head.

The pistol stuck against Hal's three-cornered hat, bearing it away, and with the hat went the boy's mask, leaving his face fully revealed.

As he looked from the boy to the convulsed face of the man, Jerry McLean was struck by the close resemblance they bore one to the other. The Earl of Huntford's face was very like Hal Lovett's, though marred by lines stamped on it by vice and dissipation.

The earl licked his lips and smiled evilly again.

"The Red Falcon!" he muttered.

as the cavalcade rode by. The postilion was running towards the stranded carriage. Hal heard one of the Runners calling out as he came:

"Get along to the carriage! Aymes, Marlowe, Stevens, Henshaw, Baker, you come with me. The others can look after the earl. We've got to catch the highwaymen. No shooting, mind! We've got to take 'em alive!" It was the voice of Martin Cosgrave.

Jerry rode his horse through the gap in the palings which he had broken down earlier in the day, and waited among the trees for Hal to join him.

"Deuce take it, boy," he said, "this is York's work. He's betrayed us, curse him! But we'll get even with him if ever we get out of this mess. I saw a path running through the wood. We've got to take a chance! Follow me!"

The moon gained in lustre. Ahead of him Jerry saw the wood opening out. It was a promising sign, though for ought he knew he was riding into a trap.

Hal held Bow Street Beauty in check knowing full well that the horse could, in speed and strength, outrun and outlast any horse belonging to the Runners.

He was curious to see what was going to happen along the road, and turned in the saddle.

He saw Martin Cosgrave and the Bow Street Runners close in on the stranded carriage from both sides. The horses flurried about it. Some of the men dismounted, and ran to meet the earl, who stepped down into the road.

"I have been robbed," said the earl. "There go the highwaymen. They are Jerry McLean and Hal Lovett, the convicts who escaped from the hulk Ethalion. I'll pay five hundred guineas for their capture, either dead or alive!"

The words shrilled to a thin piping, strangled by the Earl of Huntford's rage.

Hal still hung back, though he heard Jerry calling frantically to him. The scene fascinated him.

He saw Martin Cosgrave bend over his horse's neck.

"We'll take 'em, my lord," answered the Bow Street Runner, "but we'll take 'em—alive. No shooting. I'm leaving some of my men to look after you, sir. The rest of you follow me!"

He pulled his horse about, and settled down to ride. After him came a batch of Runners, no doubt the men whose names he had called.

As Hal heard them crashing through the branches, he urged Bow Street Beauty on his way.

"We've got a hard race before us, my beauty," he said, as he patted the horse's glossy neck. "You'll have to gallop!"

Then, with head down, he went pounding after Jerry McLean, who showed up on Galloper in black silhouette at the head of the path through the wood.

The well-timbered copse bordered some open fields, and across these Jerry McLean led the way on Galloper, hoping that they might presently find a way out and, with their start, show the Bow Street Runners a clean pair of heels.

But as the moon escaped from the curtain of cloud, Jerry saw that a high hedge shut the field in on their side.

"Make for the footpath, Hal!" he shouted. "Maybe we shall find a way through there."

(It looks a thousand to one chance against Hal and Jerry evading capture this time, doesn't it, chums? Be sure you read the continuation of this thrilling narrative in next week's MAGNET, in which you will find six more 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.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

A slight, but important modification has now been introduced into our great Super-Stamp Collecting Scheme, "Every Boy's World in Pictures," now running in "Modern Boy," "Magnet" and "Ranger," whereby the full set of 144 different Stamps is now ensured to every boy who takes any two of the above papers for the duration of the scheme, without the necessity of any "swapping" whatever!

This means that every boy who takes any two of these papers will complete his Album, without having to "swap" any of his stamps. By the conclusion of the scheme he will have received every one of the six sets of twenty-four stamps each, as well as a certain number of duplicates.

ONE of the neatest little "self-defence" tricks you can "pull off" if attacked by a bully is the "stomach throw." It always surprises an attacker when his victim falls back quicker than he expected—but it surprises him a great deal more when the "victim" thrusts his foot into the attacker's stomach and throws him over his head!

After you've done that, get hold of his forearm in the manner shown in the second of this week's picture stamps, and press his elbow against your shin bone. Unless your attacker wants a broken arm, he won't attempt to resist any further.

We've got some wonderful locos in this country, and, as you'll see by the third picture stamp—the "Trans-Canada, Ltd."—the great Dominion of Canada also has a worthy giant of the iron way. How would you like to spend eighty-seven hours in a train? That's the average time taken by these mighty locos to draw a train across the Canadian continent from Montreal to Vancouver—a distance of 2,885 miles—which necessitates 12 changes of engines en route.

As you can guess, these are the last word in luxury trains, with sleeping-cars, dining-saloons, observation-cars, and smoke-rooms. In fact, they are practically hotels on wheels!

The Bristol 120 G.P. Aircraft, pictured in our fourth stamp, comes from a firm of aircraft constructors whose machines, built to their own designs and fitted with engines of their own make, are amongst the most efficient and effective fighters ever produced. The Bristol people enjoy a well-earned reputation for every class of plane—fighters, school planes, and general service planes. The 120 G.P. is one of their latest.

Ever seen a Channel Train Ferry? They were used a great deal during the War for the transport of munitions to the Continent and, thanks to the fact that the box cars forming the trains can be used on both British and Continental railways, they are still going strong nowadays. A whole freight train can be run on to these ferry ships, taken across the Channel, and run off on to the Continental railways—a tremendous saving of time in the transport of goods.

The French poodle, which forms the subject of our last picture stamp this week, is essentially a show dog, although at one time it was used for retrieving. It

has a great capacity for learning tricks, and is a splendid canine actor. It is active and intelligent, has a keen sense of smell, and will take readily to the water.

MANY readers are telling me that they have difficulty in getting their copy of the MAGNET—there is such a demand for it. You will greatly help your newsagent, and yourself, if you place a regular order for your copy to be delivered or reserved for you.

Here are a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to various queries sent in by readers.

What is a "Copperhead"? ("Magnetite," of Worcester): This is a name given to the moccasin snake, a poisonous North American reptile found in swampy localities. It grows to a length of about three feet, and is brownish in colour, with dark brown and black markings.

Where is Micronesia? (Jim Talbot, of Newhaven): The word means "small islands," and is given to the scattered islands of the Pacific which include the Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall and Gilbert.

Are Octopi Found off the British Coast? (S. G., of Whitley Bay): Yes, but they are mostly of a small variety. The principal variety found in our waters has only one row of suckers down the arms, but most octopi have two rows.

Which Author Wrote the Most Books? ("Bookworm," of Leicester): Alexandre Dumas is generally credited with being the most prolific author who ever lived, but no one knows exactly how many books he actually wrote himself, for it has been said that he published the works of other authors under his own name! But we do know that Frank Richards has written nearly 1,300 book-length stories for the MAGNET, not to mention its companion papers!

TALKING about Frank Richards, don't miss his latest school yarn, You'll find it in next Saturday's MAGNET, and it's entitled:

"SAVED BY A SCAPEGRACE!"

"Frank Richards has got all the other authors of schoolboy fiction groggy," remarked a reader the other day—and I think you'll all agree with him! In any case, when you start on next week's tip-top story of Greyfriars, you won't want to put down your copy of the MAGNET until you've read every line of it! So order your copy in good time and don't run the risk of being told by your newsagent that he is "sold out."

There'll be another full-of-thrills instalment of our splendid highwayman serial "The Red Falcon." Then, by way of a change, and to satisfy a great number of readers who have written in asking for a Dicky Nugent story, a rousing yarn of Dr. Birchmell and the heroes of St. Sam's, entitled: "HELD TO RANSUM!"

The shorter features, including my weekly chat, will appear as usual next week—and the six free gift pictures will make valuable additions to your album.

Snap 'em up, chums—and don't forget to write to me, telling me what you think of the various MAGNET features.

YOUR EDITOR.

EXPERT BONSETTER WANTED!

Advertiser has been holding his nose so high that his neck's out of joint.—Apply at once, C. R. Temple, Upper Fourth.

No 10 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

December 3rd, 1932.



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

TO ANGLERS NEEDING BAIT

If you'll just trot along to study No. 11, which Skinner shares with Snoop and Stott, you'll find three of the biggest worms you ever set eyes on.

FAG ELECTION RIOT

Wild Scenes at Polling H.Q.

That Second Form Election which was told you about has duly happened. The occasion wasn't vested with the dignity the fags hoped for, but it was undoubtedly a howling success—with the accent on the "howling."

With the idea of giving "tone" to the affair, Nugent minor approached Wingle with a request that he should preside over the polling.

Wingle, for reasons which Dieky Nugent found unfathomable, slapped his sides and laughed till the tears ran down his face—but made no other reply.

Wondering what on earth there was to laugh at in a matter so important as a Second Form election, Nugent minor went along to ask Blundell of the Fifth. Blundell fixed a thumb and forefinger on the fag's ear and led him gently to the door of the study.

Considerably surprised, Dieky trotted along to Hobson of the Shell. Hobson yawned and booted him out of his study.

Temple of the Upper Fourth, when approached, simply announced a Greek lexicon at his visitor. Finally, Dieky interviewed Bob Cherry, of the Remore, and got the first favourable reply. Cherry good-naturedly consenting to preside over the turbulent gathering of fags that would undoubtedly turn up to record their votes.

It was a surprise to Cherry, when he reached the Second Form Room, to find it almost empty at first, the only kids present being the two candidates, Nugent minor and Paget. After a little shrewd questioning on Cherry's part, it transpired



Although the enthusiasm was terrific, and the din almost deafening, not a single hand went up for either candidate!

The explanation was that each side was preventing the other side from voting by holding their respective hands down! Cherry decided to get out of the dilemma by issuing voting papers. But this step proved ineffective, for there turned out to be three times as many slips in the ballot-box as he issued!

Determined to arrive at a result somehow, Cherry suggested that the two candidates fight it out there and then. The suggestion was greeted with tumultuous applause, and Nugent minor and Paget promptly set to. Unfortunately, they knocked each other out simultaneously, so the problem wasn't solved that way!

Despairing at ending the deadlock by any other method, Cherry eventually tossed up for it. Paget won. We understand, however, that despite this decision, Nugent minor will continue to be leader in the Second. The name of the official captain will probably be forgotten in a couple of days.

BY THE WAY—

Nothing ever seems to move at Greyfriars, No, but you must admit that occasionally the Cloisters.

HOBSON'S CHOICE FORM MASTER.

Hobson tells us that Mr. Haecker is a very quiet, retiring gentleman.—We've noticed ourselves that he rarely comes out of his shell.

IT TAKES THE CAKE!

Most people have only five senses, but Bunter claims that his instinct for nosing out other people's cakes is a new sense altogether.—Yes, and if it comes to that, it's altogether a nuisance.

LAUGH THIS OFF, SQUIFF!

Squiff writes to ask if we have ever heard of Alf Abett, the famous teacher of grammar.—Why, of course! He's first cousin to Eddie Fiss, the celebrated builder!

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Fisher T. Fish

By JOHNNY BULL

Not being a student of the Transatlantic tongue, I don't pretend to understand half of what Fisher said about me in last week's issue. It's a thumping certainty that it wasn't very complimentary, any way; but it's even more certain that they won't be anything complimentary if you follow me to say about Fisher!

You fellows know that I'm in the habit of calling a spade a spade. So when I assert that Fisher T. Fish is a mean apology for a human being, you'll understand that I'm not being funny—I'm merely telling the truth! I can stand and admit a lot of things. I can stand Hoskins' piano-hitting, Dutton's deafness, and Bolsor's bounce. But I can't stand Fisher!

I'll admit that there have been occasions when there seemed to be hope for him; but time hasn't improved him, and he seems beyond redemption now! Fisher has been trying, ever since he came to Greyfriars, to turn Study No. 14 into a cross between a psychotherapist's shop and a confidence trickster's office. I've spent the same period putting the keyboard on every move in that direction! Fisher doesn't understand why, of course; it's impossible for a chap of his sort to understand anyone pretering honesty to dishonesty. But he does understand that I've got a big fish, and that keeps the beggar in check!

REMOVE GO NAP BUSTING TEMPLE'S BOASTS

Possibly the Remove were chuffed up on the end wall, and sounder in defence, but the Fourth were undoubtedly better in front of goal, Temple remarked in a loud voice last Wednesday after the Remove had loked his team by three clear goals.

Vernon-Smith promptly look up the challenge. "If that's what you think, old bean, we're quite willing to test it. What about the forwards of both teams taking a free kick each against a neutral goalkeeper?"

Temple laughed. "Let'd be a shame to show you up! Any way, there's no light left now and there probably won't be a chance for another week." "Why not in the gym this evening then?" Vernon-Smith suggested. "Not quite like being on turf, of course, but we shall loth be in the same boat." "Oh, all serene, then!" yawned Temple. "You find a neutral goal, and we'll oblige you this evening, eh you men?" "Oh, rather!" bleated the Fourth Form footballers—so-called! Half the school turned up in the gym that evening after prep to watch the contest. A goal was chalked up on the end wall, and North of the Sixth very kindly consented to act as goal.

SCHOOL WHERE BOYS BOSS HEAD

Why Not Greyfriars?

We're awfully advanced in our ideas. We believe it's all wrong for a boy to be compelled to do anything. It results in mental depressions, whatever they are. All reformers know that the boy who is camed at school is bound to turn into a burglar later on. But why tell you fellows these things, when you've read all about them in the newspapers?

"Just stand there for a jiffy like a good chap," Tripe said. "I want to express my individuality by tripping you up."

"Why, my dear boy, it's a pleasure!" laughed Professor Piffle. "Go ahead!" Tripe then tripped him, and the Head smote the floor with a terrific bump. But he was still smiling when he picked himself up. "Well done—well done, indeed!" he said enthusiastically. "It is indeed a joyful experience to see a free, modern boy giving unfettered expression to his natural inclinations! Now go and throw a dictionary at your Form master. It will do you good!" "Good wheeze, Piffle!" said Tripe. "You buzz off and I'll go and do it!"



INTELLECTUALS OF THE FIFTH

There's not the slightest doubt about the Fifth being the most brainy Form at Greyfriars. Ask any Fifth-Former and he'll assure you that it positively is so! The Fifth games-study at about half-past eight any evening simply hums to the chorons of brilliant wit, shrewd, if caustic, criticism, and profound philosophy. No Remove could ever hope to reach the Parnassian heights on which the Fifth dwell; it gives him a headache even to listen to it! When we went in to see Blundell on the other evening, the chorons was in full blast. All around one could hear pearls of wisdom dropping

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Any way, we're strongly in favour of Professor Piffle's new Self-Governing School at Courtfield. We went over to see young old Tripe, professor of bunkology at Nottingham University, you know. He seemed awfully happy. Spotting a benign old gentleman trotting across the Hall when he took us in, he yelled: "Hi, Piffle! This is a pal of mine! That's our Head, old chap! Come here a minute, Piffle!" "Certainly, Tripe, my boy!" answered the Head. "What can I do for you?"

'Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—Peter Todd, who bears consanguineous relationship to me, and to whose verbal pronouncements, consequently, I frequently devote my powers of ascultation, has occasionally voiced his commendatory approval of the gastronomic bonifiance of the champion and characterful and kindred edibles. Personally, as a non-granivorous biped, I've versed in astronomical science, I experience considerable reluctance to collect such specimens of those natural comestibles as I may encounter in the course of my perambulatory exercises, more especially since my solitary attempt at the masification of an orbicular fungoid upon which I chanced resulted in severe somatic disquietude.

Yours faithfully, ALONZO TODD.

P.S.—Cousin Peter says what I mean is that I once ate a tondstool instead of a mushroom.

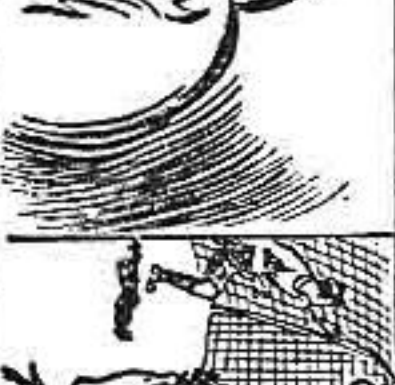
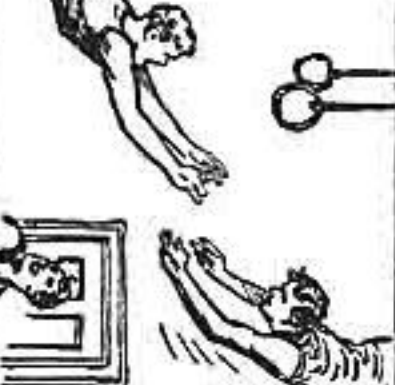
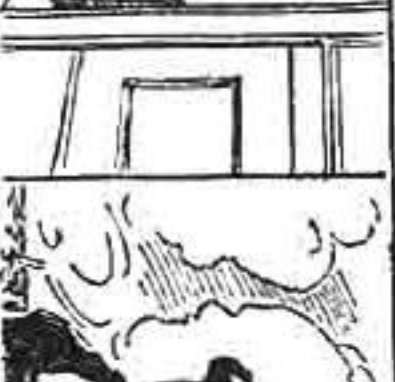
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

A grate modern thinker remarked the other day: "Now that calculating machines are used everywhere, it's useless to teach skollers in schools to multiply, divide, or subtract."

To such a wise utterance, there's nothing I can add!

THEY SIMPLY ATE FURLONGS

Frank Nugent, in describing his trip to Egypt last summer, told a Rag audience, that there was nothing to tell him and his olurna how far they had travelled when they were out in the desert. "Nature in the raw is seldom 'miled,'" he said.



W. J. Bunter estimates contentedly that he has listened at 327 keyholes this term! He'll be suffering from nose-mald's knees soon.

George Wingle scalded the shoulder at Pegg Bay to rescue Gatty of the Second, who had got into difficulties while bird's-nesting.

Bunter is extremely short-sighted, and reads this as the reason why he frequently "mistakes" other fellows' letters for his own!

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry in the champion gymnasts of the Remore, and can put a number of sensors in the shade.

It was Peter Todd who first called Bunter the Owl of the Remore. Bunter's solemn blinking reminded him of the old owl which nests under the chapel roof.

Once Harry Wharton was asked to play for the Greyfriars First XI against the Highcliffs. He played at inside-left, and made the opening for Wingle to net the winning goal.