

"A STAR OF THE CIRCUS!"

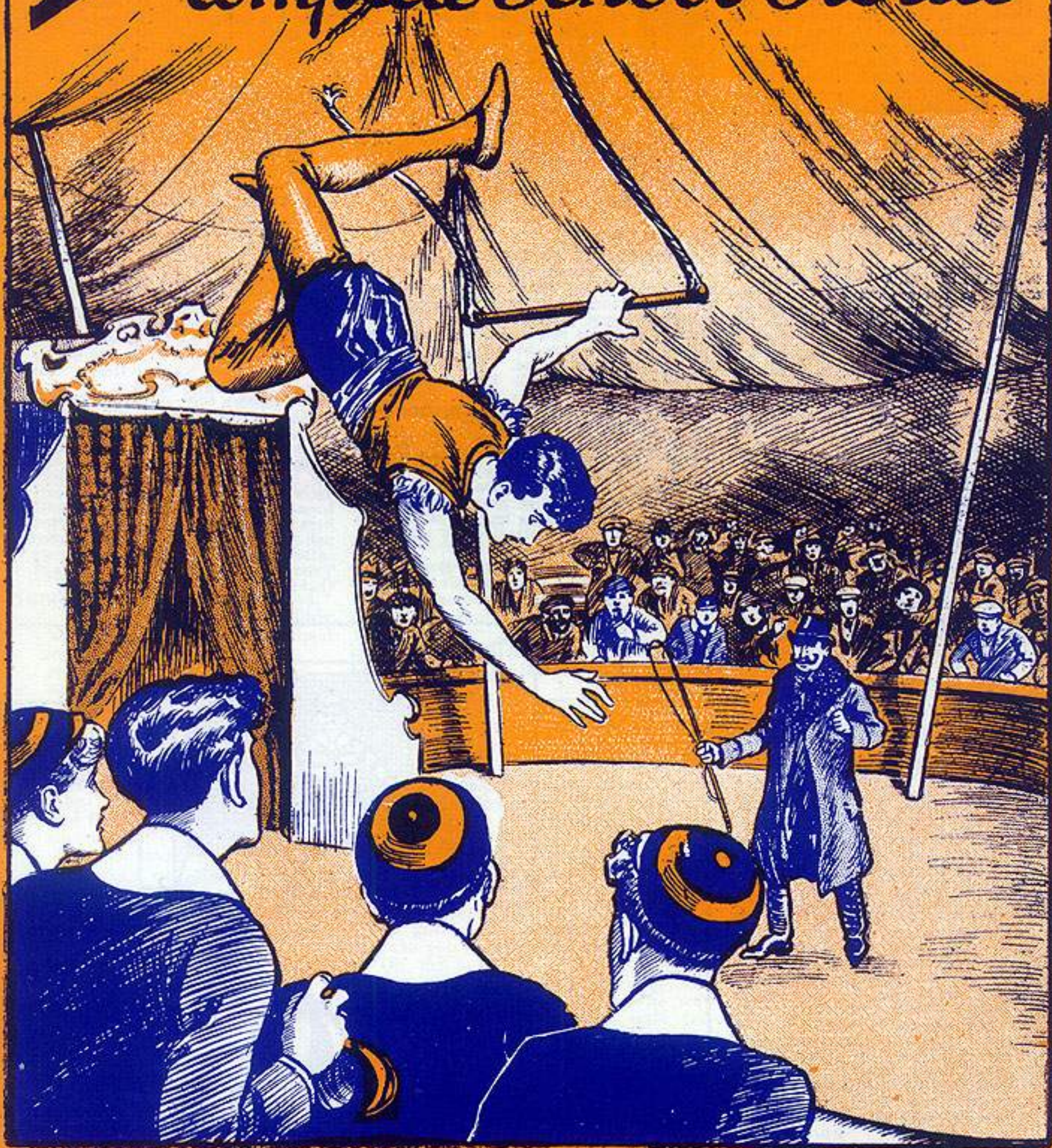
(This week's amazing school and circus story—inside.)

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The Magnet 2¢

EVERY MONDAY.

Library of Complete School Stories



A CIRCUS TRAGEDY!

Of a sudden the rope snapped and Pedrillo, watched by scores of anxious eyes, was seen to hurtle towards the tan!
(See the grand story within)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

BY DAVID GOODWIN.

THOSE three words always set the pulses leaping, for I doubt whether there is a bigger favourite in the story-writing world than David Goodwin. His yarns always strike the happy chord; they are easily followed, and carry with them a fine sentiment thoroughly in keeping with the particular theme he wishes to develop. Now, Magnetites have continually asked me for a David Goodwin story, and, as I have said in the past, it's my job to satisfy you fellows. There's going to be a David Goodwin story—a serial, in fact—for I have already got into touch with this celebrated author, and asked him to give us something from his pen. How's that? Keep your peepers open! Next week's Chat will give you further particulars.

A PLASTERING PUZZLE.

A MAGNET pal who has gone into the plastering business asks me what might be his course in the following circumstances. He has learned the trade from an old friend, but the latter has only a small jobbing work at present. Would it be best to look out for a bigger job so as to learn more? I think my chum will be better advised if he sticks to the man who has seen him through so far. Jobs at wall-patching, etc., are all right, and new chances come along to a worker like my chum's employer has proved himself to be.

A LETTER FROM "BOB."

My best thanks go to this correspondent for his interesting letter. After pointing out that the MAGNET is the finest paper going—with which, naturally, I heartily agree—my correspondent says, "Could you tell me a way to get longer wind?" "Bob" should practise the regular breathing exercises at the open window the moment he springs out of bed. He would also find the Sandow exerciser a sound investment. Plenty of fresh air and exercise—that includes his sport—plain living, and regular hours will accomplish wonders, "Bob," old chum. Get busy!

"CYNIC."

I have received a very fine letter from a reader who styles himself "Cynic." He's not really a cynic—not a bit of it! But he's got his head screwed on right, and his criticism of the MAGNET shows that he must have read our old paper pretty thoroughly to arrive at the conclusions he does. He rather imagined that I would shove his letter of criticism into the wastepaper-basket, or else refer to it in my Chat as a piece of unmitigated cheek. Why, I can't say. Please, you chaps, don't run away with the idea that the only letters I like to read from you are those speaking highly of the MAGNET. Believe me, 'tis very helpful indeed to receive letters from such people as "Cynic," even although I might not agree with all he says. If I don't agree with him, it doesn't mean that we are going to fall out and slang each other. Remember, everyone is entitled to his opinion. I have written to "Cynic," so there is little need for me to air his views here.

"EXTINCT ANIMALS."

A loyal chum from Oxford wants to know where he can obtain a book, entitled "Extinct Animals," which is by Ray Lankester. I should think his newsagent will be pleased to put an order through for him. The book in question is published by Constable, and is priced at five shillings.

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THE GREYFRIARS CADET CORPS.

A reader, who signs himself W. K., wants to know if there is a cadet corps at Greyfriars. If there is, he goes on to say, will I ask Mr. Richards to deal with the cadets when he writes his next story of Greyfriars? First, let me say that there is a cadet corps. Secondly, I will forward the suggestion to Mr. Richards; but, of course, it is impossible for me to guarantee that his next story will be a cadet story. Still, if my correspondent gets his wish gratified at a later date, I am sure he will be content to let it go at that. Many thanks for the suggestion, W. K., and please give my best wishes to your chums.

For Next Monday.

"PEDRILLO OF GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

This will make the second story in the fine school and circus series your favourite author has just embarked upon. With the first of this series now in front of you chaps, you will, I feel sure, be impatient for next Monday to come round. And No. 2, my chums, beats story No. 1. Mind you read it!

"THE CASE OF THE LANGSDALE WANDERERS!"

We are getting near the end of this amazing football and detective serial, but there are heaps of surprises in store before the curtain finally rings down. Magnetites must not miss a line of next week's instalment, as it has a strong bearing on developments in the last chapters of the yarn.

SPECIAL CUP SEMI-FINAL NUMBER!

Harry Wharton's Supplement is rightly labelled a special Cup Semi-Final Number,

and at this particular season of the year it comes as an unusually interesting feature. Mind you read it, boys!

TWENTY! TOPPING TABLE FOOTBALL GAMES!

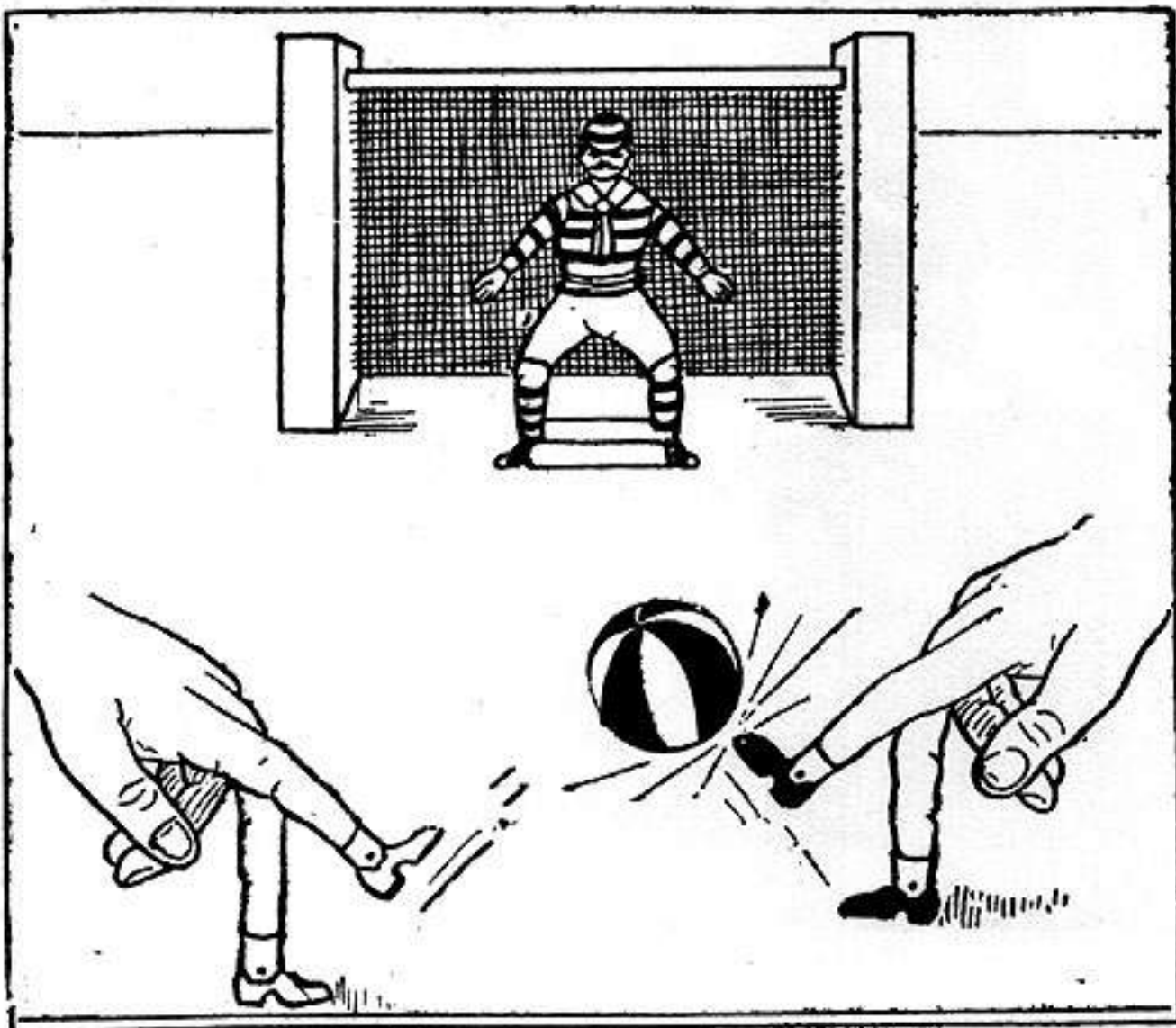
Last week I gave you full instructions on how to win one of these fascinating table games, and for the benefit of readers who missed this announcement I will repeat the offer in detail. All you have to do is to send in a "par"—not more than three hundred words in length—describing any incident which you consider interesting, seen or heard on the football ground. Now, this is delightfully simple; one can hardly call it a competition, as it is within the reach of everyone. For the best twenty efforts sent in each week I am going to award twenty topping table games. The picture below gives you an idea of the game. Note the miniature footer boots attached to the fingers of the hand. Practically the same tricks and movements as played on a proper football field apply to this table game. There's a football, there are two sides, there are the footer boots. What more would you have! Now pile in with those pars; you can send in as many as you like. All efforts must be addressed "Pars," No. 3, The MAGNET LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

Your Editor reserves the right to publish any prizewinning paragraph. Now get busy!

"THE TAMING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

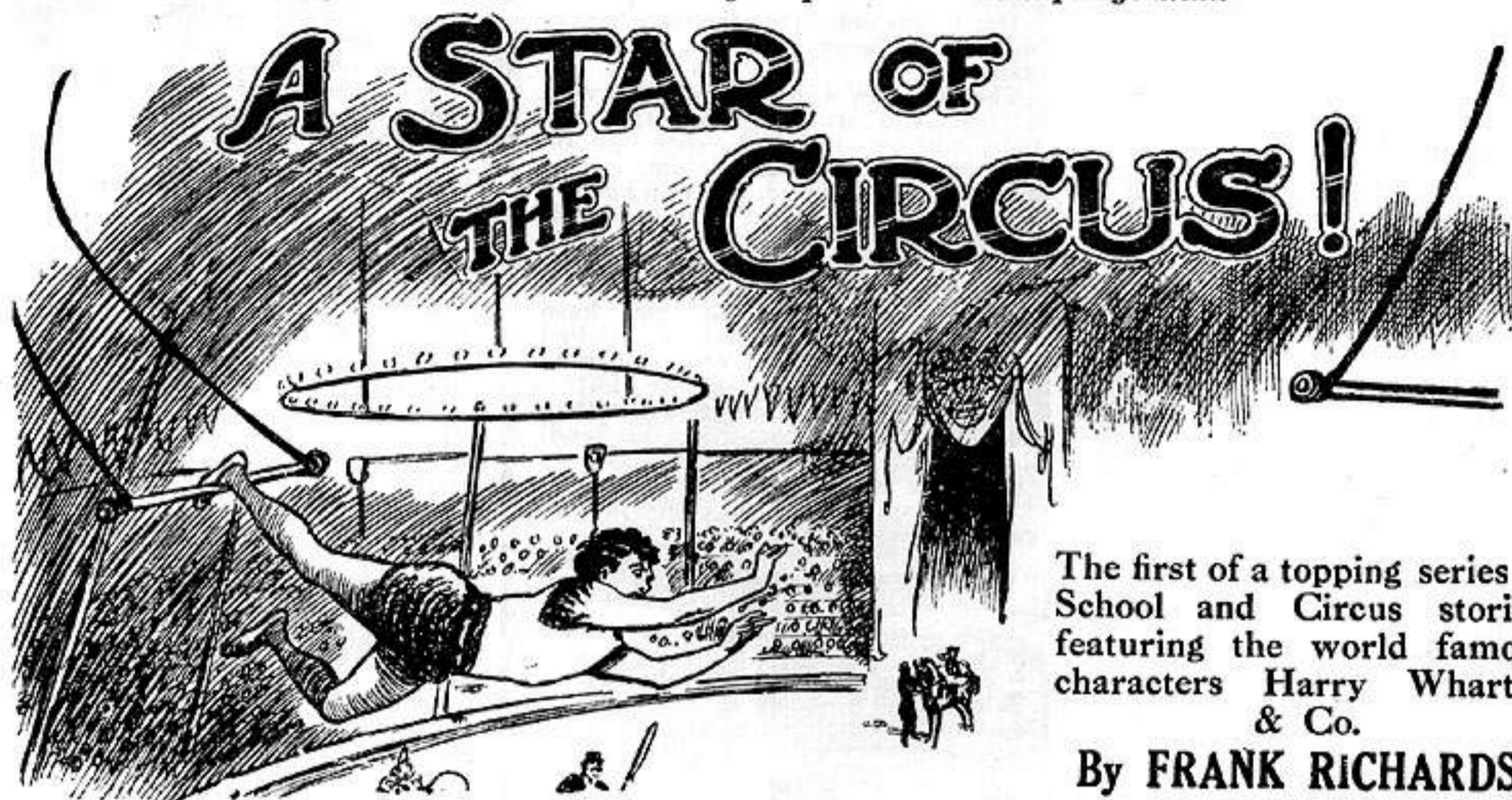
H. N. asks me to publish a special story in the "Schoolboys' Own Library" about the early adventures of Harry Wharton. I recommend "Hustling Ned," or whatever H. N. may stand for, to make a bee-line for the newsagent's, and get a copy of No. 10 of the "Schoolboys' Own Library." If he does, he will find that it contains exactly what he is looking for. Should his newsagent, however, be "sold out" of this particular number, my chum can obtain a copy from our "Back Number Dept.," Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by sending fivepence in stamps, which includes postage. It is always a pleasure to be able to tell anyone where he can discover what he wants. Pretty nearly everybody in this giddy old world is out on the prowl seeking for something. Some people don't really know what they are in quest of, and if they found it they would still be peevish. But here it is different. My trusty Bermondsey pal will, I feel certain, be thoroughly well satisfied with this magnificent yarn, "The Taming of Harry Wharton!" And that's that!

YOUR EDITOR.



Full particulars of how to win one of these novel table football games are given above.

BREAKING BOUNDS! Harry Wharton & Co. are so keen to visit Zorro's travelling circus that they take French leave. Little do they know into what this schoolboy escapade is destined to plunge them.



The first of a topping series of School and Circus stories, featuring the world famous characters Harry Wharton & Co.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Remove on the Warpath!

TO arms!"

"What?"

"Eh?"

Bob Cherry had opened the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove, by the simple expedient of jamming a heavy boot against it.

The door flew open with a sudden crash, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent jumped simultaneously.

Bob grinned cheerily into the study.

"To arms!" he repeated dramatically.

"What the thump—"

"Fathead!"

"The Remove has been insulted," said Bob. "The prestige of the giddy Form is at stake. It can only be wiped out in blood!"

"The prestige?" asked Nugent.

"No, ass—the insult. We're going along to the Shell passage to slay Hobson."

"What on earth for?" demanded Wharton.

"Don't I keep on telling you that he's insulted the Remove? Besides, it's raining, and football is off, and a fellow must do something."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's all very well, but before we kick up a shindy in the Shell passage, let's know what's the row."

"Hobson has kicked a Remove chap."

"What did he kick him for?"

"Two or three minutes."

"Ass!"

"Well, what does it matter what he kicked him for?" demanded Bob. "It's an insult to the Form. Shell fellows can't kick Removites, I suppose. The least we can do is to kick Hobson of the Shell. I think we'd better wreck his study while we're about it. These Shell fellows are too cheeky, anyhow."

"Good!" agreed Nugent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the giddy victim!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Billy Bunter blinked into the study through his big spectacles.

Wharton, who had jumped up, sat down again.

"Was Bunter the chap Hobson kicked?"

"Yes."

"Then I dare say Bunter asked for it."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hobson can kick Bunter as often as he likes," said the captain of the Remove. "Bunter's all the better for being kicked occasionally. Don't we have to kick him ourselves?"

"Yes," agreed Bob. "But this is a special occasion. According to Bunter, Hobson kicked him for absolutely nothing. Besides, it's raining."

"Hobson isn't responsible for the rain, I suppose, fathead?"

"Well, no," admitted Bob. "Not exactly. Still, a fellow does get fed-up, hanging about waiting for the rain to stop. A man must do something to keep the blood circulating. And as Hobson has weighed in with an insult to the Remove—"

"I say, you fellows, that beast Hobson kicked me for nothing at all," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of Study No. 1. "I was just walking along the Shell passage—"

"Like a lion seeking what you might devour?" asked Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No!" roared Bunter. "If you think I was going into Hobson's study after his cake you're jolly well mistaken."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I never knew he had a cake. Besides, how was I to know that he was in his study at all, when only ten minutes before I had seen him talking to Hoskins in the Rag?"

"Go it!" grinned Nugent.

"But there he was," said Bunter indignantly, "and he fairly jumped on me like—like a tiger, you know. Made out that I was after something in his study, though I told him I didn't know he had a cake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. He kicked me—"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"He slung me out of his study—"

"And you were only walking along the passage?"

"Yes—I mean—"

"Good! Let's know what you mean exactly," said the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"He kicked me along the passage."

"Did he kick you hard?"

"Yes, jolly hard."

"Good old Hobson!"

"Why, you beast!" roared Bunter. "Look here, do you call yourself captain of the Remove, and let Shell fellows kick the Remove as much as they like? And Hobson called me a Remove rotter!"

"Right on the wicket!" said Wharton.

"Beast! I told him I'd tell you chaps, and he said he'd kick you all out of his study with pleasure."

"Oh! Did he?"

Wharton rose from his chair again.

"That's an insult to the Remove," said Bob Cherry anxiously. "Now, isn't it?"

"Awful!" said Nugent, laughing.

"Of course, as a matter of fact, it doesn't matter if Hobson, or anybody else, kicks Bunter—"

"Doesn't it?" howled Bunter.

"Not a bit, old fatty. Still, Bunter's a Remove chap, and he who kicks Bunter kicks the Remove, in a manner of speaking," argued Bob Cherry. "It's a casus bellows."

"A—a—a what?"

"Latin, you know—a casus bellows—a cause of war!"

"Do you mean casus belli, fathead?"

"Very likely," agreed Bob. "Something of the sort, anyhow. Hobson has practically kicked the Remove, and as it's raining, and there's nothing else to do, and a fellow must do something, and the Shell are cheeky sweeps, anyhow, and—"

"Plenty of causes of war," said Wharton, laughing. "All serene. Let's mop up Hobson's study. After all, the Shell call themselves Middle School, and make out they're not juniors like us."

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It's time that they were taken down a peg."

"That's right," said Bob with great satisfaction. "Lots of reasons for a shindy with the Shell, if you only think a minute."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ready?" Johnny Bull looked into the study, with Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh's dusky face grinning over his shoulder.

"Ready!" grinned Bob. "I've called these slackers to arms. Not much good calling Bunter to arms—when there's a scrap on he takes to legs."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come on!" said Bob.

"The fact is, I was jolly well going to give Hobson a licking myself," said Bunter. "Only—"

"Come along with us and do it," said Bob. "We'll stand round and see fair play while you lick Hobson, and then mop up the study. This way!"

"I—I say—"

"March!"

The Famous Five marched, and Billy Bunter, with an extremely uneasy expression on his fat face, marched with them. Bunter was greatly exasperated by the high-handed proceedings of Hobson of the Shell; he wanted vengeance, and he wanted it very much. But he was quite ready to leave it in the hands of the Famous Five.

"Here we are," said Bob cheerily as the Removites turned into the Shell passage from the landing. "Come on, Bunter— Why, hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's Bunter?"

"Echo answers where!" chuckled Nugent.

"The wherefulness is terrific!" chortled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter had already disappeared.

"Never mind," chuckled Bob. "I dare say we can manage without Bunter. Here we are!"

And Bob Cherry smote at the door of James Hobson's study, with a terrific smite.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Shindy with the Shell!

JAMES HOBSON, the captain of the Shell, was alone in his study.

His study-mate, Hoskins of the Shell, was in the music-room—Hoskins being a musical youth who was very assiduous with his piano practice. Hoskins often complained bitterly that it was impossible for a fellow to have a piano in the study. Hobson, with friendly hypocrisy, sympathised with his clam, while inwardly thanking his lucky stars that it was impossible. Hoskins had a fiddle in the study as it was; and Hobson had reason to regret that that also was not impossible. Silence was not a thing generally prized by Greyfriars juniors; but sometimes, after Hoskins had been playing the violin, Hobson had reflected what a blessed thing silence was.

Hobson of the Shell was sitting on the study table, with his feet on the back of a chair; and in that elegant attitude he was reading a letter.

The letter did not seem to be affording him much pleasure, to judge by the expression on Hobby's rugged face.

As it was in his father's hand, it ought really to have afforded him much satisfaction, as a dutiful son. But paternal communications were not always grateful or comforting.

Hobson had already perused the paternal epistle once, and he was reading it through a second time when

something like an earthquake happened.

But it was not an earthquake; it was only Bob Cherry opening the study door.

The door flew wide open, collided with a chair, and sent the chair spinning. Bob Cherry marched cheerily in, with his comrades behind him.

Hobson stared round, letter in hand.

"You cheeky fags!" he roared.

"What the thump do you want here?"

"You, old bean," answered Bob.

"What do you mean, ass?"

"It's raining—I mean, you have kicked the Remove—that is, insulted the Remove, and we've come along to mop you up, old scout! Collar him!"

The next moment Hobson of the Shell was struggling in the grasp of hands that seemed innumerable.

He came off the table with a bump.

"You—you cheeky young sweeps!" he gasped. "You—you—"

"Lock the door!" chuckled Bob.

"We don't want a lot of Shell rotters butting in here!"

Nugent slammed the door and turned the key.

"Rescue, Shell!" roared Hobson.

There were footsteps in the passage. Most of the Shell were indoors, owing to the rain that was pelting down in the Greyfriars quadrangle.

"Too late, old bean!" said Bob.

"Now, hold him—don't wriggle like that, Hobby—"

"You cheeky young ruffian—"

"If you wriggle we shall have to tap your head on the table—like that—"

"Whoop!"

There was a thump on the locked door.

"What's the row?" shouted Stewart of the Shell.

"Only Hobson," answered Bob. "I'm tapping his head on the table. When wood meets wood, you know—"

"Open the door!"

"Some other time, old bean! We're mopping up Hobby at present."

Thump! Thump! Thump!

More and more of the Shell gathered round the door. But a locked door was a proposition beyond their powers. They thumped and banged and kicked and shouted threats through the key-hole. But thumping and shouting did not worry the Removites.

Hobson, held by four pairs of hands, was a helpless prisoner. Bob Cherry wagged an accusing forefinger at him.

"Now, prisoner at the bar—" he began.

"Chuck it!"

"You're accused of kicking the Remove, in the person of William George Bunter, a respected member of that Form—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Bunter, personally, doesn't matter a twopenny rap; but as a member of the Remove even Bunter is somebody."

"Hear, hear!" agreed the Co.

"Did you kick Bunter, Hobby?"

"Yes, I jolly well did!" roared Hobson.

"And I'll jolly well kick the lot of you!"

"Gentlemen, the prisoner admits his guilt!" said Bob Cherry. "He has insulted the Remove, and the insult ought, properly speaking, to be wiped out in blood. But we'll let Hobby off lightly, and wipe it out in ink."

Bob picked up the inkpot from the study table.

"Keep that away!" roared Hobson.

The captain of the Shell made a terrific effort, and tore himself loose from the Co., just as Bob streamed the ink at him. Hobson's hand knocked the inkpot aside as its contents streamed.

There was a wild roar from Joliny Bull.

Every bullet has its billet; and the same law applied to the contents of Hobson's inkpot.

It missed Hobson of the Shell; but it was not wasted. It flooded the features of Johnny Bull from his forehead to his chin.

"Groooooooooogh!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

Bob had no time to say more: Hobson was upon him, and they rolled on the carpet together.

Johnny Bull gouged at his inky face.

"Ow! Wow! Groogh! Gug-gug! You silly Owl! Oooch!"

"Lend a hand!" yelled Bob, who was underneath Hobson, and receiving a series of terrific punches.

The Co. rushed to his aid—excepting Johnny Bull. Johnny was busy with the ink and a duster.

Hobson was dragged off, still fighting. Hobson of the Shell was a fighting-man of renown in his Form, and he gave the four juniors plenty of trouble. But the odds were too great, and Hobson was pinned again and reduced to helplessness. He yelled for rescue, and the excited Shell fellows outside the study yelled back. But they could do no more than yell; the locked door was between. The uproar was terrific; but uproar did not worry the Remove raiders. They thrived on uproar.

"Hold him!" gasped Bob, clasping his nose, which was streaming red.

"Hold the cheeky sweep! I'll jolly well—"

"No more ink!" exclaimed Wharton hastily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to play Hoskins' fiddle to him!" exclaimed Bob.

"It would serve him right—almost!"

"Rescue!" yelled Hobson.

"Let us in, you Remove rotter!" yelled back Stewart from the passage.

"Bow-wow!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Hobson was still struggling wildly. Bob Cherry jerked off his necktie, and tied one of his wrists to a leg of the table. Then Hobby's handkerchief served to secure his other wrist to the other leg.

That accomplished, Hobson of the Shell sprawled helplessly on the floor, crimson with wrath and spluttering wildly.

"I say, how are we getting away when we've finished?" asked Nugent. "I should say that half the Shell are waiting for us outside."

"We'll make a rush for it," said Bob Cherry. "Knock 'em over like skittles, you know."

"Hein! I fancy we shall be doing the skittle act."

"What's the good of meefing trouble half-way. We're not finished with Hobby yet—are we, Hobby?"

"I'll slaughter the lot of you!" roared Hobson.

"The slaughterfulness will not be terrific," remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "At present it is a boot on the other leg."

"Hobby, old man—"

"Let me go, you rotters!"

"Are you sorry for kicking the Remove?"

"No!" roared Hobson.

"Do you acknowledge that the Remove are cocks of the walk in the Lower School, and that the Shell are simply nowhere?"

"No!" yelled Hobson.

"Dear man, we shall have to reason with you," said Bob cheerily. "You will perceive these simple truths before we've done."

"You cheeky fag—"

Thump, thump, thump! came on the door of the study. More than half the Shell were there now, and they were raging. But the Famous Five of the Remove heeded not.

Hobson eyed Bob apprehensively as that cheery youth dragged up the hearthrug.

"Look here— Grooogh!"

The hearthrug was spread over Hobson.

Only his crimson and furious face was left in view. Two or three cushions were piled on his head.

"You silly rotters!" hooted Hobson. "Chuck it!"

Bob collected up the chairs belonging to the study, and piled them on the hearthrug. His comrades watched those peculiar proceedings with grinning faces.

Hobson had disappeared now under a stack of his own property. Only his voice showed that he was there. But his voice was loud, emphatic, and continuous.

"Are you sorry now, Hobson?"

"No!" shrieked Hobson. "I'll come along and mop up all the Remove for this! Ragging a Shell study, by gad!"

"Shove some more on!" said Bob.

The study clock and the crockeryware from the study cupboard were added to the pile that covered Hobson of the Shell. Then the bookcase was turned out, and the books piled on him. Every other portable article in the study was added to the stack, amid yells of laughter from the playful Removites.

"Are you sorry yet, Hobson?"

"No!" raved Hobson.

"What an obstinate beggar!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Shove the fender on—I forgot the fender! What about the bookcase? I suppose we mustn't squash him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rescue!" raved Hobson.

"Open this door, you Remove cads!"

"Now, I think that will do for Hobson," said Bob Cherry, surveying his handiwork meditatively. "Do you think it will do, Hobby?"

"Grooogh!"

"Next time you kick the Remove we shall really handle you! This is only a jest."

"Oh crumbs! Rescue!"

"Anything more we can do for you, Hobby?"

"I'll smash you!"

"He seems a bit excited," said Bob. "No good talking to a chap who's lost his temper. Perhaps we'd better go."

"Perhaps we had!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Stand ready to rush as soon as I unlock the door!" said Bob. "It will be a bit of a squeeze, getting through."

"I fancy it will," grinned Nugent. "Shoulder to shoulder!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! They're gone!"

The shouting and thumping at the door suddenly ceased, and there was a scampering of feet. The besiegers were gone!

Knock!

It was an authoritative knock at the door of the study. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob. "That's a master, or a prefect! I—I suppose the row was heard downstairs."

As a matter of fact, the "row" could scarcely have escaped being heard downstairs, unless all Greyfriars had been suddenly smitten with deafness. The heroes of the Remove thought of that a little too late.

Knock!

"Open this door at once!"



Heedless of the thumping at the study door, the Famous Five piled in on Hobson. Bob Cherry dragged up the hearthrug and spread it over Hobson until only his crimson and furious face was left to view. "You silly rotters!" hooted the Shell junior. "Chuck it! I'll come along and mop up all the Remove for this! Ragging a Shell study, by gad!" (See Chapter 2.)

It was the voice of Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell.

Harry Wharton glanced round the wrecked study and at the stack of furniture that hid Hobson of the Shell from sight. Really, Hobson's study was not in a state to meet a Form master's eyes just then. But it was impossible to disregard the command of a Form master, and Wharton unlocked the study door and threw it open; and Mr. Hacker strode in, with thunder in his brow.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

MR. HACKER stared round the room, and fixed his eyes upon the Removites. He seemed a little surprised at seeing only juniors of the Lower Fourth in the study. Hobson was quite invisible, and his voice, which had been like unto the roar of the celebrated Bull of Bashan a minute ago, was now silent. Old Hobby was a sportsman; he was prepared to strew the study with the juniors himself, in little pieces, or almost so, but as soon as a master came on the scene Hobby played up like a little man, so to speak. Under the pile of assorted

goods that concealed him from sight, James Hobson was still and silent as a mouse.

"Wharton!" said Mr. Hacker.

"Yes, sir?" said Harry meekly.

Meekness was not really of very much use, in the circumstances; still, it was worth while to try the soft answer that turneth away wrath.

"What are you Lower Fourth boys doing here?"

"Hem! We—we came to see Hobson, sir."

"Hobson does not seem to be here."

"I—I don't seem to see him, sir."

"There has been a disturbance—a riot—a fearful uproar!" said Mr. Hacker.

"Has there, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I heard it in my study downstairs. Mr. Quelch, your Form master, heard it, and would certainly have come here had he known that boys of his Form were rioting in the Shell studies."

Harry Wharton & Co. were glad that Mr. Quelch had not been aware of that.

Mr. Hacker did not look agreeable, but they had a feeling that Mr. Quelch would have been a little worse.

"I find you Remove boys rioting here!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "It

seems that you had locked yourself in Hobson's study."

"Yes, sir! You—you see—"

"A number of Shell boys were trying to obtain entrance, I believe?"

"Hem! Yes!"

"And why did you not admit them?" demanded Mr. Hacker.

"We—we—we thought it might lead to a scrap if we did, sir," murmured Wharton, "and—and being peaceful chaps—"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob involuntarily.

"I have no doubt that it would have led to fighting if you had admitted the Shell boys," said Mr. Hacker. "But were you not keeping them out of Hobson's study while you wrecked the room?"

"Hem!"

Mr. Hacker waved a portly hand round the apartment.

"The room is in a state of havoc!" he exclaimed.

"Is—is it, sir?"

"Did you do this or did you not?"

"Yes, sir!"

"It is what you juniors call a study rag, I suppose?"

"Hem! Yes, sir."

"Where is Hobson?"

"Hobson, sir?" stammered Wharton. "Yes. Did you come here in Hobson's absence and wreck his room?"

"Nunno, sir! Not at all."

"Then where—"

"Do you know where Hobson is, Bob?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Do you, Franky?" asked Bob, turning to Nugent.

The silence of the loyal Hobson showed that the raggers had nothing to fear from that quarter, so far as Mr. Hacker was concerned. Hobson intended to take dire vengeance later for the ragging, but he did not mean to betray the raggers to a Form master. They were "for it" already, that was certain; but they had enough to answer for without their drastic handling of Hobson being added to the indictment.

"Hobson?" said Nugent thoughtfully. "I saw him not very long ago. Shall I go and look for him, sir?"

"We'll all go and look for him, sir, if you want him," said Johnny Bull eagerly.

"Pleasure, sir," said Bob.

"The pleasuredfulness will be terrific!"

"Sh—shall we go, sir?" asked Harry.

Mr. Hacker smiled grimly.

He had not the slightest doubt that the Remove raggers would be very pleased to walk out of his presence, either to look for Hobson, or for any other purpose. But they were not to escape so easily as all that.

"I understood that Hobson was here, and that you were ill-using him as well as his property," he said.

"Oh, sir!"

"Had it been so, Wharton—had I found you ragging, as you call it a member of my Form, in his own study, I should have taken you to Dr. Locke at once, and demanded a flogging for each of you!"

"W-w-w-would you, sir?"

"Undoubtedly!"

Silence is said proverbially to be golden; but the silence of James Hobson at that moment was more than golden—it was far above rubies.

"As the matter stands, I find that you have wrecked a Shell study," said Mr. Hacker. "I shall take you to your own Form master. Follow me!"

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"The—the study isn't exactly wrecked, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "Only—only a

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little untidy. Think of what we might have done, sir, if we'd been really ragging."

"The ragfulness would have been terrific in that case, sir!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Follow me!"

Snort from Mr. Hacker.

And the hapless raggers followed him. Mr. Hacker's portly form led the way to the stairs. The Famous Five followed, and behind them a number of the Shell emerged from their studies and shook their fists after the chums of the Remove. But the presence of the Form master prevented any other demonstration.

Mr. Hacker and his flock disappeared down the stairs, and then there was a sudden upheaval in Hobson's study. Furniture tumbled right and left, and Hobson's crimson face emerged into view.

"Hoskins!" he shouted.

Stewart of the Shell looked in.

"Hoskins ain't here," he said; "he's still torturing the piano. My hat! What have they done to you?"

"Untie my paws!" grunted Hobson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, Stewart?" demanded the captain of the Shell hotly.

"Oh, nothing, old chap!"

But Stewart was still chuckling as he untied Hobson, and helped him to his feet. Hobson was breathing wrath.

"We'll jolly well rag the whole Remove passage for this!" he said. "Why, I'll rag those cheeky fags bald-headed. I'll—I'll—"

"You look as if you want a wash and brush-up, old bean," grinned Stewart.

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

Hobson stamped out of the study, and Stewart followed him, still grinning. Several Shell fellows came along to stare into the study, and they grinned as they stared. It was fully agreed that the Remove were to be severely punished for this cheeky raid; nevertheless, most of the Shell seemed to find something entertaining in the experience James Hobson had gone through.

After the Shell fellows had cleared off, and while Hobson was still in the Shell dormitory in the process of repairing damages, a fat figure rolled cautiously along the passage and blinked into the havocked study.

Finding the room vacant, Billy Bunter rolled in, with a fat grin on his face. He crossed to the study cupboard, and blinked into it.

A moment later his fat hands were on a cake—the cake which had originally drawn him to the study, and had led to his receiving a well-deserved kicking from Hobson.

It was "all clear" now, and the cake was at Bunter's mercy. In such cases, Bunter was merciless.

With the cake under his arm, the fat junior rolled back towards the door, and then a letter lying on the floor caught his eye.

It was the letter Hobson had been reading at the moment of the entry of the raggers into his study. He had dropped the letter when the scrapping began, and he had been too busy since to give it a thought.

Bunter picked it up.

Curiosity was Bunter's besetting sin, and in matters of this kind he was a thoroughly unscrupulous young rascal. No fellow's letters were safe from him.

But Bunter had a conscience.

Bunter's conscience never prevented him from doing anything that he wanted to do; but it gave his fat intellect a little

exercise in finding good and moral reasons for so doing.

"That's Hobby's," he murmured. "I know his pater's fist. Besides, it begins, 'Dear James.' I'll jolly well bag it! Serve him right for kicking a chap!"

And Hobson's letter disappeared into Bunter's pocket. He was bagging it because Hobson had kicked him, not because he was inquisitive and intended to read it. So much he owed to his conscience! He was going to read it, all the same; but that was a trifling detail.

With the letter in his pocket, and the cake under his arm, Bunter scuttled for the Remove passage.

He was quite satisfied with the occurrences of that rainy afternoon.

In Mr. Quelch's study the Famous Five were up against trouble; but that did not worry Bunter. Bunter had the cake, and that, after all, was the only thing that really mattered.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hard Cheese!

"MR. QUELCH!"

"Mr. Hacker!"

"I have no choice, Mr. Quelch, but to bring these boys of your Form before you."

Harry Wharton & Co. filed rather dismally into their Form master's study.

The rain was pattering on the window-panes, outside all was wet and weeping. But the chums of the Remove would have preferred outside to inside just then.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet, with the glint in his eyes that the Removites knew so well.

"What has happened, Mr. Hacker? Were these boys concerned in the uproar we heard a few minutes ago?"

"These boys, Mr. Quelch, were found by me locked in a Shell study, wrecking the room!" boomed Mr. Hacker.

"Upon my word!"

"That was the cause of the uproar, Mr. Quelch, which rang through the whole school," said the master of the Shell. "As these boys belong to your Form, Mr. Quelch, I leave them in your hands."

"You may safely do so, Mr. Hacker," said the Remove master grimly, taking up a cane.

Mr. Hacker retired.

"You will bend over that chair in turn," said Mr. Quelch. "You first, Wharton!"

Whack, whack!

"Cherry!"

Whack, whack!

"Nugent!"

Whack, whack!

"Bull!"

Whack, whack!

"Hurree Singh!"

Whack, whack!

Mr. Quelch had a hefty arm. It had had, indeed, a good deal of this kind of exercise, in the Greyfriars Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood wriggling. But they felt that there was more to come. They were level-headed youths, and they were not feeling in the least like injured innocents; they were well aware that they had asked for it, and they fully expected to get what they had asked for. Mr. Quelch had started with the cane; and they anticipated lines or gatings to follow; otherwise, it would have been "six" at least. So they wriggled and waited for the rest.

"You will be detained to-morrow afternoon," said Mr. Quelch. "You will go to the Form-room at half-past

two, and I shall set you a detention task. You may go."

"Oh, sir!"
Blank dismay was written in five faces.

Lickings, from Mr. Quelch, were severe enough; but the Famous Five were not soft; they could stand lickings. But the detention for Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday at Greyfriars—seemed to overwhelm them.

"You may go!" repeated Mr. Quelch, taking his chair again.

"But, sir—"

"That is all!"

"But—but—"

Mr. Quelch glanced at the dismayed faces of the culprits, and paused as he was taking up his pen.

"What is it, Wharton? If one of your football fixtures takes place to-morrow afternoon, you may tell me so. Is that it?"

"Nunno, sir—it isn't a match—"

"I have no desire to interfere with games fixtures, as you know," said the Remove master.

"It isn't football, sir—but—but could we be detained on Saturday afternoon instead?" stammered Bob.

"And why?"

"There's a circus—"

"What?"

"A circus, sir, at Friardale—"

"Starts to-morrow, sir," said Nugent.

"The celebrated Spanish Circus, sir!" said Johnny Bull, quoting from the bills that had lately adorned all the dead walls in the neighbourhood.

"Senor Zorro's Famous Spanish Circus, sir!" said Wharton. "It's only staying two days, sir—"

"If we don't go to-morrow, we can't go at all, sir."

Mr. Quelch's brow looked thunderous. He was a just gentleman, and in his way, a very considerate one. Never, if he could avoid it, did he allow such matters as detentions to interfere with the games fixtures of his Form. But to be asked to rescind a sentence of detention, so that the delinquents could go to a circus, was a little too much for the Remove master's patience.

"Are you speaking seriously, Wharton?" he thundered.

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"You have the audacity to ask me to rescind a just punishment, because you desire to go to a circus?" exclaimed the Remove master, as if he could scarcely believe his ears.

"Ye-e-es, sir—if—if—if—you please!"

"I do not please! How dare you make such a request?"

The captain of the Remove did not answer that question. But Mr. Quelch did not really want an answer. He proceeded:

"This is sheer audacity; in fact, I do not hesitate to characterise it as impudence."

"Oh, sir!"

"Leave my study! As I shall be absent to-morrow afternoon, I shall request a Sixth-form prefect to see that you remain in the Form-room and perform your tasks."

"Oh!"

"I shall speak to Loder on the subject. You may go."

"But, sir—"

"Go!" rapped out Mr. Quelch in a voice that made the juniors jump. And they went.

Five dismayed youths tramped away to the Remove passage. They were not in a bright or merry mood.

"What rotten luck!" groaned Bob Cherry. "We shall miss the blessed circus now—and how often do we get a chance to see a circus?"

"Rotten!"



Mr. Hacker looked hard at Harry Wharton & Co. "Where is Hobson?" he asked, little dreaming that Hobson was under the pile of furniture. "I understood that he was here and that you were ill-using him as well as his property!" "Oh, sir!" "Had such been the case, Wharton, I should have taken you to Dr. Locke at once, and demanded a flogging for each of you!" "W-w-w-would you, sir?" (See Chapter 3.)

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

"I believe it's specially good, too!"

groaned Nugent. "There's coloured posters up in Friardale, pictures of a giddy boy acrobat, named something or other— Peter—or Pedro—no, Pedrillo, that's it!"

"Why the thump did you think of ragging Hobby to-day, you ass, Bob?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Well, it's raining—"

"Fathead!"

"It's all that fat idiot Bunter's fault," said Bob. "If he hadn't been kicked, I shouldn't have thought of Hobby as a pastime."

"It's all Hobby's fault for kicking him," said Nugent.

"So it is—let's go and rag Hobson again!" suggested Bob.

"You silly owl!" roared Wharton. "Do you want some more trouble with Quelch—and a few more detentions? Cheese it!"

"Hallo, lullo, hallo! Here's Bunter!"

William George Bunter was in No. 1 Study in the Remove. His face was a little sticky, his hands more so, and the crumbs of a vanished cake surrounded him. Hobson's cake was a thing of the past.

He blinked at the Famous Five,

"I say, you fellows, you're looking very cheery!" he grinned.

"What are you doing here, Fatty?" growled Wharton.

"Well, I came in here to scoff my cake—if I'd taken it to my own study, that beast Toddy would have expected to whack it out."

"Whose cake?"

"Mine—just came by post," said Bunter. "One of the ripping cakes I get from Bunter Court, you know. You're just too late! But what's the trouble—you look as if you were going to your own funerals."

"Quelch's detained us for ragging Hobby."

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Bunter airily.

"Isn't it, fathead? We're detained for Wednesday afternoon, the only chance of seeing Zorro's Circus at Friardale."

"He, he, he!"

The Famous Five glared at Bunter. Obviously, the Owl of the Remove saw something comic in the fact that they were detained, on the one and only occasion when it was possible to see the celebrated Spanish Circus.

"Why, you fat rotter!" roared Bob Cherry. "Is there anything funny in that, you image?"

"He, he, he!" chorled Bunter.

"It's all your fault, too——"

"He, he, he!"

Really, it would have been wiser on Bunter's part to retire from No. 1 Study before he indulged his fat merriment. The detained juniors were in an exasperated mood; and the comic side of the affair, if any, was quite lost on them. They glared at Bunter, and then they closed in on him and collared him.

Bunter's fat cachinnation changed into a yell.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"Travel!" growled Wharton.

Bunter travelled, at express speed. He fairly flew through the doorway of No. 1 Study.

Bump!

"Whoop!"

"Now go on cackling, old fat bean," said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

But Bunter did not cackle any more. The situation no longer appealed to him as comic.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., of the Greyfriars Remove, were not much given to "grousing" when they were up against it.

As a rule they could take their medicine, whatever it was, with a cheery smile. But on this occasion they allowed themselves the luxury of grousing. Really, it was very hard cheese, and all the Remove agreed that it was.

Only once in a blue moon—or so—there came a circus to so secluded a spot as Friardale, and they naturally wanted to see the circus—they wanted to very much.

There were always films at Courtfield Picture Palace, but they were not very keen on the pictures. Most of the films that came Courtfield way were "made in America," and packed with crooks, revolvers, and wild absurdities, on which a fellow could very quickly become "fed." A circus was quite a different thing—more old-fashioned, perhaps, but none the worse for that; rather, the better. Besides, the Zorro Circus was an extra-special sort of thing; it was a travelling circus that travelled all over Europe—proceeding originally from Spain. That added to the interest of the affair.

But the Zorro Circus was barred to the Famous Five—all on Bunter's account really, and Bunter was not barred. Bunter was going, of course—he had already asked half of the Remove to lend him the necessary shilling for admittance, and several fellows had done so, and Bunter was still asking the others. With so many good-natured fellows about, who thought it rather hard that a fellow who was hard-up should miss the circus, Bunter was likely to see the Zorro show with about a dozen "bobs" rattling in his pocket.

The Famous Five were not short of shillings—but they were barred from the circus by their Form master's stern sentence. Quite early in the evening they had got over the licking. But detention was a thing that could not be got over.

As they knew that Mr. Quelch was to be away from Greyfriars the following afternoon they naturally mooted the idea of "hooking" it.

Breaking detention was a rather serious matter; but, as Hurreo Singh remarked, if the esteemed Quelch did

not know, the matterfulness would not be terrific.

But Mr. Quelch had stated that he intended to ask Loder of the Sixth to keep an official eye open.

If their old enemy, the bully of the Sixth, was on the watch, breaking detention was not likely to be easy. Gerald Loder was not specially dutiful in performing his duties as a prefect; but he could always have been relied upon to make things as uncomfortable as possible for Harry Wharton & Co. Between the Famous Five and the unpopular prefect there had never been any love lost.

"It's N. G.!" Bob Cherry said dolefully. "Loder will sit down outside the Form-room door if necessary and watch us through the keyhole. He'd rather do that than let us bunk!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I suppose Loder won't be going to the circus?" he remarked. "If so——"

"The Sixth make out that they're above circuses," said Nugent. "Loder's more likely to be playing banker in his study with Walker and Carne."

"If he sticks to banker, well and good."

"He will play banker, with one eye on the cards and the other on the Remove Form room!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Don't I know him? It won't wash—and we're done to the wide."

There was much sympathy in the Remove.

Vernon-Smith advised the Famous Five to chance "hooking" it; but the Bounder always was a reckless fellow. Mark Linley advised them to make the best of it—much safer advice, though less welcome. Peter Todd offered to tell them all about the circus when he came back—an offer that very nearly earned Peter a bumping. The Co. did not want to be told all about the circus when the other fellows came back—that was a good deal like insult added to injury.

The chums of the Remove did their prep that evening with rather glum faces, and they did not look so cheery as usual when they came down to the Rag after prep.

Loder of the Sixth was strolling in the passages with Walker, and he sighted them and signed to them.

"Your Form master's been speaking to me about you young sweeps," said Loder.

"Saying nice things about us?" asked Bob innocently.

Walker grinned, and Loder frowned.

"Not too much lip, Cherry! You're detained to-morrow from two-thirty to five, and I'm to see that you don't bolt."

"Oh, Loder!" said Bob, with a shocked expression. "Bolt! Us!"

The Famous Five tried to look like fellows who never would have dreamed of such a thing. They did not succeed very well, however.

Loder wagged a warning forefinger at them. Some prefects might have been annoyed at being asked to keep an eye on detained juniors on a half-holiday. Not so Gerald Loder! It was quite a pleasant task to him, especially when the Famous Five of the Remove were concerned.

"Mind," he said, "I shall have an eye on you—and if you bolt, look out for squalls! I know all about the circus—and I fancy you won't be seeing any circus to-morrow!"

And Loder walked on with his friend, looking almost genial at the thought that his old enemies of the Remove would not be seeing the circus.

Bob Cherry brandished a fist after him.

Loder looked round suddenly, and Bob—caught in the act, as it were—stood with his fist in the air blankly.

"Cherry, what are you doing?"

"I—I— Just—just a sort—sort of exercise, Loder!" stammered Bob.

"Take fifty lines!"

"Oh!"

Loder walked on again, and Bob tramped into the Rag, this time without any more demonstrations at Gerald Loder's back.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, scat!"

"About the circus——" said Bunter.

"Blow the circus!"

"Well, I'm going, you know," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five—"that is if I can raise the price of admittance. I've been disappointed about a postal-order——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I think I mentioned to you fellows that I was expecting a postal-order——"

"I think you did!"

"It hasn't come!" said Bunter sorrowfully.

"I should write to the Postmaster-General about it," said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm. "It's too bad of him to let your postal-order be delayed like this for whole terms!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull! In the circumstances, I suppose you fellows can spring a bob. You don't want me to miss the circus just because you're missing it, you know. Don't be selfish!"

"Catch!" said Harry.

He tossed a shilling to Bunter, and the fat junior caught it with his nose. The Famous Five walked on, and Bunter rubbed his nose and grinned, and added the shilling to eleven others that clinked in his pocket. William George Bunter was doing quite well out of Zorro's Circus!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Trying It On!

THE following morning Harry Wharton & Co. turned up in the Remove Form-room with the rest of the Form with their very best behaviour uppermost.

Each member of the Co. had taken particular care with his prep, and each hoped to be called upon to construe, being prepared to render an exceptionally excellent "con."

They were prepared also to be the very best boys in the Form that morning—the best boys in all Greyfriars—in fact, the very best boys in the wide world.

By this laudable means they nourished a faint hope of touching Mr. Quelch's heart and inducing him to let them off the afternoon's detention.

Possibly Mr. Quelch noticed how good they were. Possibly also he suspected the reason of that unaccustomed and striking goodness.

At all events it did not produce the desired effect on him. He took no notice of the Famous Five; if he glanced at them at all his glance showed that they were not in favour.

They did not even have a chance of getting off the excellent con they had so carefully prepared.

Mr. Quelch did not call upon a single member of the Co. to construe. He may have guessed from their excellent behaviour and their laudable desire to please that they were all ready for him with a perfect con—in which case it was unnecessary to put them through their paces, and better to devote his time to

less careful and painstaking members of his Form.

All the hard labour in the study the previous evening, therefore, was a sheer waste.

True, it had doubtless improved the juniors' knowledge of that great Latin poet, P. Virgilius Maro, but it is extremely doubtful whether the Famous Five would have taken all that trouble merely to improve their classical knowledge.

In fact, they felt that they were being neglected. Fellows, as a rule, were anxious not to be called upon to construe. Now there were five fellows quite anxious to be called upon, and they were passed over without regard. It was not, really, playing the game.

For which reason Wharton rose to his feet when Morgan was called on, apparently mistaking the name. It was possible to suppose that Mr. Quelch said Wharton when he said Morgan. There was really not much similarity of name, but enough for the purpose.

So Wharton took up the tale, hopefully. He was interrupted.

"Wharton!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

"I spoke to Morgan."

"Oh! Did you, sir?"

"I did!"

Wharton sat down, crushed.

Morgan, who had looked quite bucked when Wharton started in, looked the reverse of bucked now. He had hoped that Wharton would be allowed to go on, and himself forgotten.

Morgan went on, and earned fifty lines by the quality of his construe. Not being under detention, he had not put his "beef" into prep as the Famous Five had done.

Discouraging as it was, the chums of the Remove did not despair.

When, a little later, Mr. Quelch wanted the chalk, and found that he had mislaid it, Bob Cherry leaped from his place like an arrow from a bow, captured the chalk, and presented it to his Form-master.

It was another failure.

"Take fifty lines for leaving your place, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

Nobody tried to please Mr. Quelch again that morning by being so very obliging.

Right up to morning break the Famous Five set an example of good behaviour and careful attention to the rest of the Form. They hung on their Form-master's words as if pearls of wisdom were falling from his lips.

But it booted not, as a poet would say.

Mr. Quelch was not in a relenting mood, and he did not relent. Indeed, as the Form filed out for break, Bob Cherry thought he detected a grim, sarcastic smile on Mr. Quelch's face.

"No good!" he said in the corridor. "He's wide to it, I believe. Old Quelch is a downy bird."

"To think of the time we wasted on prep!" sighed Johnny Bull. "Why, I was digging into the Latin dick last evening as if it were a dashed goldmine."

"Same here!" groaned Bob. "I never got so fed-up with Virgil in my giddy natural. All for nothing."

"Hinc allae lacryma!" mumbled Nugent. "Hence these giddy tears."

Harry Wharton looked suddenly thoughtful.

"I wonder——" he said.

"Eh?"

"If there's one thing that pleases Quelch, it's a fellow taking a real, deep interest in study," said the captain of

the Remove. "He likes a chap to sort out some knotty point, and ask him about it. It shows that the chap takes a real interest in the classics."

"There are chaps who do," agreed Bob. "Look at Linley, for instance. I've seen him reading Virgil for nothing."

"I've seen him reading Thucydides," said Johnny Bull. "Chap who reads Thucydides of his own accord must have a fearful thirst for knowledge, or a tile loose in the upper story."

"Well, let's try Quelch on it," said Wharton. "Come on, and we'll catch him as he comes out of the Form-room. You fellows stand round and back me up, and look deeply interested—keen, in fact."

"But what——"

"Nugent put it into my head with that giddy old tag. Come on, or we shall miss him. It will look well, too, hanging about to ask him learned questions, instead of rushing out into the quad like thoughtless kids who only think of getting out of class."

"Oh, my hat!"

Wharton hurried back towards the Form-room door. His chums followed.



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"If you please, sir——" said Wharton meekly.

"There is nothing to be said, Wharton. You are detained for this afternoon."

"May I ask you, sir——"

"No, Wharton, you may not ask me to remit your detention."

"About a Latin word, sir——"

"Eh?"

"If you'd be so kind as to tell me, sir. I'm a bit puzzled——"

Mr. Quelch gave him a curious look.

"You may proceed, Wharton."

"The word lacryma, sir," said Wharton. "Of course, I know that it means a tear——"

"I should certainly expect you to know so much, Wharton, although a great deal of your time, which might profitably be spent in study, appears to be expended upon horseplay and ragging."

"H'm! Yes, sir, I—I quite realise that, sir."

"I am glad you realise it, Wharton."

"Oh, yes, sir, I—I've been thinking a lot, sir, about——about that. But this special word is——is very interesting, sir, and——and a little puzzling. I generally spell it with a 'y,' sir."

"Quite so."

"But looking into Terence the other day, sir, I found that it was spelt l-a-c-r-u-m-a."

"Indeed!"

"Terence, sir—I mean Terentius, of course——"

"Quite so."

"He seems to spell it lacruma, sir. I—I was wondering, sir, if you'd be kind enough to tell us which is the better form, sir. We—we're rather keen on——on Latin orthography, sir."

"We came here to learn things, really, sir," said Bob Cherry gravely. "We try to bear that in mind, sir."

"I am afraid you do not always succeed, Cherry."

"Oh!"

"But I shall be very glad to enlighten you on any point of learning when you desire to consult me," said Mr. Quelch. "You have displeased me very much by your riotous conduct yesterday; but I am always happy to encourage application to study. The Latin word lacrima, meaning a tear, is spelt in several different ways."

"Yes, sir," said five voices, in unison, with deep interest.

"Commonly it is spelt lacryma——"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"L-a-c-h-r-y-m-a is also a correct form, but it does not commend itself to me," said Mr. Quelch. "It is also spelt l-a-c-r-u-m-a, as you have seen for yourself in Terence, Wharton, but this I do not approve."

Five pairs of ears hung on the Form-master's words. Never had Mr. Quelch been blessed with such attentive listeners.

"An old form of the word is 'dacrima,'" went on Mr. Quelch, quite interested in the subject, whatever might be said of his hearers. "But this, of course was antiquated before the Augustan age."

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"Then we must never spell it with a D, sir?" said Nugent with owl-like gravity.

"Certainly not, Nugent."

"I shall remember that, sir, carefully."

"We shall all remember it carefully, sir," said Bob.

"Is it known, sir, why they originally spelt it with a D, sir?" inquired Wharton, with breathless interest.

"Evidently, Wharton, the reason was etymological, from its resemblance to the Greek 'dakro,'" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Of——of course, sir!"

"Of course!" assented Bob.

"The word may be traced etymologically in modern languages," said Mr. Quelch, generously opening his stores of knowledge to these earnest youths who seemed to be thirsting for it. "The Italian word 'lagrima,' a tear, as you perceive, resembles it closely."

"Very!" agreed Wharton.

"The French 'larme' does not show so striking a resemblance, but is obviously derived from the same source."

"Obviously!" agreed the juniors.

"We have an English word of the same derivation——lachrymose, meaning tearful or melancholy."

"I—I see, sir," said Bob Cherry. "A fellow feels lachrymose when he's detained, for instance, sir?"

"Very probably, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch dryly.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Harry Wharton meekly.

"Not at all, Wharton! I am always pleased to answer any sensible question from a thoughtful boy. I thought for a moment that you had addressed me with

the intention of asking me to remit your sentence of detention."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Wharton.

"I am glad that I was mistaken; for that, of course, would be quite impossible."

"Oh!"

Mr. Quelch sailed on his way and disappeared round the corner of the corridor, leaving five juniors looking at one another rather blankly.

"Quite impossible, is it?" mumbled Bob Cherry. "I—I say, I believe the old bird knew we were pulling his leg all the time."

"The knowfulness was terrific," said Hurree Singh, shaking his head.

"Game's up," said Harry. "Let's get out—we've been wasting our time."

"We're learning something about conchology—mean, etymology!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Oh, scat!"

The Famous Five drifted out wearily into the quad. Their thirst for knowledge had been quenched—and so had their hope of getting off detention. Obviously, Mr. Quelch was too downy a bird to be caught with this kind of chaff. It had been worth trying on; but there was nothing doing.

It was likely to be a long time before the Co. applied to Mr. Quelch again for tips on the classical languages. Their thirst for knowledge had been quenched for good!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Queer!

"NEVER mind——"

"Fathead!"

"But, I say, you fellows——"

"Rats!"

"Hobby's in the same boat!" said Bunter encouragingly.

Doubtless Bunter meant to be comforting. But it was no comfort to the Famous Five to learn that their misfortunes were shared by others.

"Hobson detained, is he?" asked Bob. "My hat! We're detained for ragging his study. I suppose he's not detained for having his study ragged, is he?"

"He, he, he! No, he isn't detained at all, but he can't go to the circus, all the same," said Bunter.

"What rot!"

"His pater won't let him," explained Bunter.

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. That statement was so astounding that they were arrested, in spite of themselves.

As Sir James Hobson, the father of Hobson of the Shell, lived at a great distance from Greyfriars, and had not been anywhere near the school of late, it was not to be supposed that he knew anything about Zorro's Circus, or cared anything if he knew; neither was it probable that he troubled his mind about whether Hobby went to the circus or not.

"What on earth are you driving at?" said Bob. "Hobby's pater can't know anything about the circus."

"He jolly well does."

"How can he have told Hobby not to go, you ass, when he hasn't been here, and the circus has only just happened along?"

"He has, all the same," said Bunter. "Jolly mysterious, ain't it?"

"Mysterious if true, fathead," said Wharton. "What the thump have you got into your silly head now?"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "It surprised me, you know, and I know it's making Hobby jolly bad-tempered. He wants to go to the circus like other fel-

lows, of course—Hoskins and Stewart are going, and they're his pals. But he can't go; his pater won't let him."

"What rot!"

"It's true," howled Bunter. "Old Hobson—I mean, Sir James Hobson—couldn't have known that Zorro's Circus was coming to Friardale, I suppose. But he knew that it was travelling in Kent."

"A giddy baronet and M.P. is likely to worry a lot about a travelling circus show, I don't think!"

"He does, all the same, because he wrote to Hobson to tell him that if Zorro's Spanish Circus came anywhere near Greyfriars, he was not to go to it."

"Bosh!"

"He jolly well did!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what does it mean, you know? I think it's jolly queer!"

"Queer enough, if there was anything in it," said Harry.

"The queefulness would be terrific, but the truthfulness is a boot on the other leg," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Did Hobby show you his pater's letter?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"That's it—just that," said Bunter, nodding. "I'm rather pally with Hobson of the Shell, you know——"

"Oh, my hat! And he was kicking you yesterday. Is that how he shows his friendship?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you I've read the letter," howled Bunter. "The old baronet says he's to be very careful not to go to Zorro's Circus if it comes this way."

"Rubbish!"

"I remember Hobby was reading a letter when we dropped in on him yesterday, and looking rather cross," said Johnny Bull. "But, of course, what Bunter says is all piffle."

"Of course."

"I say, you fellows, I tell you——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Hobson!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "All hands repel boarders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

James Hobson, of the Shell, bore down on the Famous Five in the quad-rangle.

The raggers had not heard from him since the rag in the Shell passage the previous day. They had been expecting to hear from him on that subject; and now apparently their expectations were to be realised. Hobson was frowning darkly as he came up; but he came alone, and the Famous Five grinned at the idea of the Shell fellow seeking to tackle them on his lonesome own. They were prepared to roll Hobson in the quad till he was satisfied that he could not handle five Removites at once.

"Look here, you kids——" began Hobson angrily.

"Collar him!"

"No larks!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell, backing away. "I want to ask you something."

"Oh, all right—pax, dear man," said Bob Cherry. "What do you want to ask us? Some tip on the Latin language?"

"Eh?"

"We don't mind helping backward fellows in an Upper Form," said Bob. "If you've got any doubts about the word 'lacrymia,' for instance, we're the very fellows you want to see. We've got it pat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't rot!" said Hobson. "It's about my letter."

"What letter?"

"I was reading it when you came ragging in my study yesterday, and I dropped it in the scrap," said Hobson. "I forgot it afterwards; but now I've been looking for it, and I can't find it."

"Look again, old bean."

"It's not in my study!" snapped Hobson.

The smiling faces of the Famous Five became serious.

"Look here, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry hotly. "We ragged you and ragged your study; but do you think we'd touch a private letter? If you do you're a rotten outsider, so there!"

Hobson flushed.

"Well, I don't think you would," he said. "But the letter's gone, all the same, and it disappeared at that time."

"Well, we know nothing about it!" said Harry Wharton curtly.

"Hold on, though," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What about Bunter? He's just been telling us——"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Hobson. "Bunter, of course! My cake was gone after I got back to my study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We found him finishing a cake, you fellows remember," said Nugent. "He told us it came from Bunter Court."

"The fat bounder! Then he raided Hobby's cake, after all!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"I don't mind about the cake," said Hobson. "But I want my father's letter. If that fat cad's read it——"

Harry Wharton looked round. Billy Bunter had rolled away quite quickly as Hobson came up. He was at a distance now, making for the cloisters.

"I fancy it was Bunter," said Harry. "He was spinning us some yarn a minute ago about your father telling you not to go to Zorro's Circus if it came this way. All rot, of course."

Hobson's flush deepened.

"The fat brute! He's read the letter, then—he couldn't know that unless he'd read it! I'll jolly well scalp him!"

Hobson of the Shell rushed away in the direction of Bunter. The fat junior blinked round over his shoulder and took to his heels. He vanished into the cloisters, with Hobson in hot pursuit. A minute or two later wild yells were heard proceeding from the cloisters.

"Sounds as if Bunter's going through it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Serve him jolly well right!" exclaimed Wharton, with a darkening brow. "The fat rotter must have bagged Hobby's letter and read it. I've a jolly good mind to go and lend Hobby a hand."

"He doesn't seem to need it!" chuckled Nugent.

The wild yells from the cloisters seemed to indicate that Hobson was dealing very efficiently with William George Bunter.

"I say, though, it's jolly queer, isn't it?" said Johnny Bull. "It seems to be true that Hobby's pater has told him not to go to Zorro's Circus. The Head let's us go—so why?"

"Goodness knows," said Bob. "It's queer. Perhaps he's a stiff old johnny, and doesn't approve of fellows going to shows. He looked a bit of a tough old card, I remember, when I saw him last time he came down to see Hobby."

"Well, if the Head let's fellows go to the circus, it isn't for a fellow's pater to butt in," said Harry. "I suppose the old boy knows that the Head knows the right thing to do?"

"It's queer."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Bunter!"

Billy Bunter shot out of the cloisters and came streaking across the quad like an arrow. Gasping for breath and steaming with perspiration, the Owl of the Remove fled for the House, and vanished.

Hobson followed him more slowly from the cloisters. He had a frown on his

face and a letter in his hand. Evidently he had succeeded in recovering his property.

"Got it all right?" called out Bob Cherry.

Hobson nodded.

"Yes, Bunter had it. I've jolly well walloped him, too!"

"He looked in rather a hurry when he passed us," said Bob.

"You fellows are detained this afternoon, I hear, and can't go to the Spanish circus?" asked the Shell fellow.

"Yes—just for ragging a Shell study!" said Bob. "As if a Shell study matters a rap—what?"

"Well, I'm sorry," said Hobson. "I'm going to make you sit up for ragging my study—but I'm sorry you're detained. I did my best for you when Hacker came to the study."

"You did, old bean. You're a white man!"

"I'm in the same boat, as it happens," said Hobson. "I'm not detained, but my pater's written to me not to go to Zorro's Circus if it comes anywhere near Greyfriars. Blessed if I know why; but a fellow has to play up, I suppose."

"What on earth has he got against the circus?"

"Goodness knows! The Head thinks it's all right."

And Hobson tramped away, still frowning, evidently very much annoyed by his pater's peculiar prohibition.

"Well, Hobby's bound to play up, if his pater tells him to give the circus the go-by," said Bob. "Chap mustn't disregard his pater. But we're not bound to play up to Quelchy. Luckily, he's not our pater. If we break detention we chance a licking, and it's fair on both sides—what?"

"Quite! Are we chancing it?" asked Harry, looking round at his chums.

There was a general nodding of heads.

"We are!" said Bob.

"We is!" said Johnny Bull emphatically.

"Loder or no Loder!" said Nugent.

"Hear, hear!"

And so it was settled.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Good Old Hobby!

"I SAY, you fellows, you're for it—he, he, he!"

Thus William George Bunter, as he started for the circus after dinner and the famous Five started for the Remove Form-room.

Bunter grinned cheerily at the chums of the Remove, and quickened his pace a little as Bob Cherry made a motion with his boot.

Quite a little army of Greyfriars fellows were going down to the gates. The Head had given permission for all the fellow—not under detention, of course—to visit Zorro's Spanish Circus; that attractive show was within bounds for all but the Famous Five. The great men of the Sixth were not keen on it—or affected not to be; but there was a general exodus of fellows belonging to less high and mighty Forms. Coker of the Fifth marched off with Potter and Greene to bag the most expensive seats in the circus for himself and friends; and Fitzgerald and Hilton of the Fifth joined Coker, and two or three more Fifth Form fellows. As a rule, these fellows were not keen on Coker's company; but on an occasion like this they rather liked him. They could stand Coker when Coker was standing expensive seats.

Harry Wharton & Co. had to head for the Form-room. They watched a crowd of Removites start; they saw Temple,



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton & Co. halted as the door of the caravan opened and a tall gentleman stepped out. The Greyfriars juniors recognised the man at once. "Great Scott!" murmured Wharton. "Hobby's pater!" "Phew!" The juniors simply could not help staring at the tall gentleman in their blank amazement. (See Chapter 9.)

Dabney & Co. of the Fourth march away in great spirits. As a matter of fact, the Famous Five intended to follow; but, in the circumstances, they could not start early and avoid the crush. Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye was on them at present. They watched the others go, and went to the Form-room.

Hobson of the Shell was lounging rather dismally about the passages, and he gave them a glum look.

For different reasons, Hobson also was staying behind. Hoskins and Stewart had gone with a crowd of the Shell; but Hobby could not go. His father's inexplicable prohibition held him back.

With his friends gone out, and no football on, Hobby was not looking forward to enjoying his afternoon. But he did not think of disobeying his father's injunction. Whatever might be Sir James' reason—or lack of reason—it was bad form for a fellow to disregard his pater's wishes, and Hobby played up, though glumly.

"Rotten, isn't it, you fellows?" said Hobby dismally, forgetting for the moment that he was on fighting terms with the fellows who had ragged his study.

"The rottenfulness is terrific, my

esteemed Hobby," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I wouldn't cut if I were you!" said Hobson. "It's only a blessed Form master keeping you in. If it were Hacker stopped me, I'd jolly well cut!"

Bob Cherry grinned. "We're going to," he said. "When Quelch's gone, we're going—if we have to knock Loder on the head first. Hem!"

Mr. Quelch appeared in the passage, and the juniors went into the Form-room. The Form master followed them in.

Mr. Quelch had kindly prepared a detention task for the juniors. It dealt with deponent verbs.

Probably it was quite a useful task. Not one member of the famous Co. could be said to be great in deponent verbs.

But verbs, deponent or other, did not interest the chums of the Remove that afternoon. They were thinking of the circus and the galloping horses in the tan and Pedrillo the Boy Acrobat, and the other attractions offered to the public by Senor Zorro. Never had the dead languages appealed to them less.

Mr. Quelch handed them their papers and left them to it.

Five minutes later, from a window, they beheld Mr. Quelch, in coat and hat, walking down to the gates.

"Gone!" said Bob. "I—I suppose Quelch isn't going to the circus, you fellows. Wouldn't do to run into him there."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

"I think it's his afternoon for chess with the vicar," said Frank Nugent. "We're clear of him for the afternoon."

"I jolly well wish Loder would go and play chess with the vicar, too," groaned Bob.

"Do you?" said an unpleasant voice in the doorway.

The juniors stepped down from the window. Loder of the Sixth had come into the Form-room.

"Getting busy?" he asked.

"Just going to begin," said Harry.

"Don't slack about! Mind, I'm keeping an eye on this Form-room," said Loder. "I shall give you a look-in later."

"Thanks so much," said Bob. "It's so nice to see you, Loder. It won't really seem like detention, if you look in every now and then in your pretty way."

Loder frowned, and tramped out, slamming the door after him.

The five juniors sat down at their desks.

"A quarter of an hour for the coast to be clear," said Wharton. "Put in as much work as you can—we must have something to show Quelch."

"Oh dear!"

"May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," said Bob. "Loder's bound to report us to Mr. Quelch."

"The boundfulness is terrific."

Wharton shook his head.

"Better have something to show. Besides, I'm going to lock the door, and Loder mayn't know we're gone. And if he gets deep in banker in his study he may forget all about us."

"Not likely! But go it!" agreed Bob.

Wharton crossed to the door and turned the key.

Then the detained juniors began to deal with deponent verbs.

Five pens crawled over five papers, five dismal faces were bent over five dismal tasks.

A quarter of an hour elapsed.

Then there was a footstep in the passage, and the handle of the door turned. Then the juniors heard an exclamation:

"Bolted, by gum, already!"

The Famous Five grinned.

It was Loder; and evidently the bully of the Sixth supposed, from the Form-room door being locked, that the detained juniors had bolted.

Loder rapped on the door to make sure.

"Are you there, you young rotters?"

"Here we are, you old rotter!" answered Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I thought you'd cut!" said Loder. "Unlock this door at once!"

No answer.

"Do you hear me?" roared Loder.

Silence.

"I'm keeping an eye on you, you young rascals!"

And with that Gerald Loder tramped away.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited till his footsteps had died away, and then Harry unlocked the door and peered out into the passage. The bully of the Sixth was out of sight. Hobson of the

Shell was lounging idly by the window, and he nodded and grinned to the juniors.

"Loder's gone back to his study," he said. "Hook it while you've got a chance."

"What-ho!" grinned Bob.

"Hold on!" said Hobson, as Wharton was placing the key in the outside of the Form-room lock. "Give me the key, kid."

"Eh! What for?"

"I'll lock the door on the inside," said Hobson, with a grin. "I've got nothing to do this afternoon; I'll stick in your Form-room, and shuffle my feet when that Sixth Form cad comes along, and make him think you're still there."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Hobby, you're a Trojan!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly sorry we ragged your study yesterday, old bean."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!"

"No offence, you know—we'd just saved you up for a rainy day, that was all," explained Bob.

Hobson grinned.

"All serene. I'm going to make you sit up for that some time; but I don't mind lending you a hand now. I've got to cut the circus, but I'd like any other chap to get there. Give me the key."

"Thanks, old man."

Hobson of the Shell took the key, and went into the Remove-room and closed the door. The key turned on the inside.

"Good old Hobby!" murmured Bob.

"Cave!" breathed Wharton, as there was a sound of footsteps in the distance.

The Famous Five backed into the Shell Form-room, which was near at hand. Keeping the door an inch or so ajar, they watched the passage.

Loder of the Sixth came striding back.

Apparently he had suspected that the juniors might dodge out of the Form-room as soon as his back was turned. He had been away scarcely five minutes.

He stopped at the Remove door, and turned the handle. Then he thumped on the locked door.

"Still there, you cheeky young cads?" he shouted.

There was no answer from the Remove-room, but there was a sound of shuffling feet, and of a book falling to the floor.

Those sounds were enough for Loder; they proved that the room was tenanted. It was not likely to occur to him that a Shell fellow had taken the place of the detained juniors.

From the Shell-room Harry Wharton & Co. watched the prefect curiously.

"I know your game!" called out Loder. "You're going to go out as soon as my back is turned, what?"

No reply.

"Well, you won't find it easy," said Loder. "I'm going to sit here and read, see?"

Loder walked along the passage to the window-recess, where there was a chair. He carried the chair along to the Remove door, and plumped it down loudly.

Then he walked away on tiptoe, and vanished.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, in the Shell-room, with grinning faces.

Had they been still in the Remove-room they would have been taken in by Loder's trick, and would have supposed that he was sitting outside the Remove door, reading.

"Deep—what?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Loder's getting quite downy in his old age! But we're a little downier!"

"Ha, ha! Let's cut!"

"Let's!"

And the Famous Five emerged from the Shell-room, and departed—also on tiptoe.

Ten minutes later, by devious ways, they had emerged from Greyfriars, and were following the road to Friardale at a trot.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Surprising Encounter!

"THERE'S the giddy tent!" "Not started yet," said Harry.

"Good!"

There was a blare of music from the big marquee, in a field near the village of Friardale. The Famous Five had heard that welcoming blare from a distance.

A crowd was still gathered before the tent, going in. Apparently the performance had not yet commenced. But the chums of the Remove did not follow the path across the field to the tent, which was taken by the crowd. They did not want to mingle with the Greyfriars fellows, in the circumstances. As they were out of bounds, with severe punishment awaiting them if detected, the less they were seen the better.

It was possible, too, that some prefect of the Sixth might be in the crowd, in which case they might be ordered back to the school. So instead of joining the swarm crossing the field to the big tent, Harry Wharton & Co. skirted the field and entered on the other side, and came round from behind, passing the camped vehicles belonging to the circus, and the tents and caravans in which Senor Zorro and his assistants travelled.

As a rule, the Famous Five had no objection to the limelight; but they did not want any of it now. So far, their luck had been good; and they hoped to get back to Greyfriars quickly after the performance, and to be sitting sedately in the Form-room when Mr. Quelch came back from the vicarage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob suddenly.

He stopped, in sheer astonishment.

The juniors were passing near a large, rather handsome caravan, which stood at a little distance from the circus tent.

The door of the caravan opened, and a tall gentleman stepped out. A dark-faced, foreign-looking man appeared behind him as he emerged. The latter was Senor Zorro; the juniors knew him from his pictures that had appeared on the circus posters. But they were amazed to recognise the tall gentleman who had stepped out of the van.

"Great Scott!" murmured Wharton.

"Hobby's pater!"

"Phew!"

The juniors simply could not help staring at the tall gentleman, in their blank amazement.

Hobson of the Shell, assuredly, had no idea that his father was anywhere near Greyfriars that day. And his father, who had expressly forbidden him to go to the circus, was there himself—leaving Senor Zorro's caravan, evidently after an interview with the circus proprietor.

It really was amazing

What connection could possibly exist between the rather grim and severe baronet, and the swarthy,

(Continued on page 17.)



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I have managed to secure the services of some of the finest football experts in the country as contributors to our new Supplement. MAGNET readers who follow it regularly can be sure of getting the very latest and most exclusive news, interesting gossip, and information.—H. Wharton, Ed.

Flag-Kicks and Penalties

PARS ABOUT FOOTBALL MEN AND MATTERS.

By The Man in the Street.

THERE used to be a time when no football club was allowed to pay more than £350 in the shape of a transfer fee for any player. However, many clubs came to regard the fixing of such a limit as "the limit," and so the regulation was dropped.

The process known as pulling a game out of the fire is one which is usually given a warm reception.

According to Charlie Roberts, some of the English teams are not doing well because they are relying too much on the Scotch element. Evidently Charlie's view is that they should take more water with it.

Why can West Ham be properly described as the autocrats of football? Because they have two Earls on the staff.

In the Cup competition the "away" team is allowed to charge the expenses of eighteen players and officials. But only third-class fares are allowed, which, according to one man, "is scarcely fair, seeing that we are first-class players."

It is a good move on the part of the Wednesday of Sheffield to engage the services of Brough Fletcher to "lick the reserves into shape." We know he won't be too (B)rough in the doing of it.

Just prior to a recent Cup tie the Newcastle United players each received a plump black-pudding, decorated with the club colours, from a well-wisher. One player who ate his declares that he is not at all sure it came from a well-wisher.

Mudbaths are highly recommended for the retention of good looks. If that is true, some of our footballers ought to take all the prizes at the beauty shows.

In a junior League game at Blackpool recently it was found that one side had thirteen players. This was only discovered when the teams lined up, and the two fellows who had to go off were most upset about it. These referees will spoil sport.

Beecham, the young Fulham goalkeeper, has been presented with an alarm-clock by his admirers from Hertford. They evidently want to be quite certain he is not asleep when the shots are sent in.

The Manchester Corporation now run special tramcars for women only after the Manchester City football matches. There is, however, an official denial to the rumour that this was done because the men coming from the games had no chance to board any of the tramcars.

Several weeks ago the manager of South Shields worked it out that the club would have less travelling to do in the First Division than they have in the Second League. Should this be called real optimism or counting one's chickens?

Getting very near to Sunderland's pet title, South Shields are now known as "The team of all the local talents." There are ten men in the side who were born in the district, and are now proving a real "Shields."

One of our young readers has a grievance. He says he went to a local picture-palace the other evening to see a film called "Hearts and Spurs," only to discover that it wasn't a football match at all.

EYES on the SKIPPER!

DOES THE CAPTAIN COUNT?

THE skipper of a football team does count. That is a fact which I am going to make an effort to drive home. It probably won't be very easy, because there are such a lot of people who seem to be of the opinion that the captain of a football team is a mere figurehead, anyway. If you asked these people what the captain of a football team does, they would probably reply something like this: "Oh, the captain? Yes, he is the fellow who comes first out of the dressing-room at the start of a match, and who tosses for choice of ends." In the doing of those simple things, according to many people, is found the beginning and the end of the football captain's job.

The amazing part of it is that even in first-class football the general opinion is somewhat on those lines. I could name a dozen football clubs whose captains are merely the fellows who have been longest in service, or who happen to be the most popular members of the side. Popularity and experience are worth something, I admit, but it is sheer folly to suggest that the test of the captain should be a question of personal popularity or age-long service with his club.

If you doubt my statement that there are first-class clubs who don't think the captain counts, let me tell you a story of the early days of the present season. There was one particular First Division team whose directors appointed the captain a few days prior to every match, and for about half a dozen matches running a different player was given the job of skipper. It is no wonder that the team which had this idea of captaincy made a very bad start to the season. They had no controlling body on the field, no authority to whom to refer on matters of tactics. They had a man who was a captain in name, but they had no real leader, and I put it to you that there is scope for leadership in football.

In the first place, the captaincy of any football team—whether it be a young lads' club or a senior organisation—should fall on the thinker of the team—the player who shows himself the most capable of summing-up the weak and the strong points of his opponents, and who has the sort of personality for getting the very best out of the team of which he is skipper. When teams of equal merit meet on the football field it is the little things which tell—little matters of tactics, and so on—which make the difference between victory and defeat. And general tactical questions are for the captain to decide, provided he is more than a mere figurehead leader.

Another fallacy in regard to the captaincy of a football team is that, of necessity, the centre-half should be given the job. This is absurd. If your centre-half is the best man to skipper the side, then give him the captaincy by all means, but to give the captaincy to a player merely because he happens to be the centre-half is sheer folly. I admit that the centre-half, being the pivot of the whole side, is in the best position to dictate policy. He is in touch with both attack and defence. But I would rather have a forward captain or a goalkeeper captain who was a good skipper than a mere dummy of a captain who played at centre-half.

The player who is going to fulfil the real captain's job must have courage, too—the courage of his convictions. If things are going wrong the real captain will not hesitate to find a remedy. I have seen big football matches which seemed well lost pulled out of the fire by a judicious shuffling of the players. On the cricket field the captain changes his bowler if he is being hit all over the field. I don't see why the captain of a football team shouldn't change his centre-forward if the centre-forward is doing nothing which is really worth while.

The real captain will not only decide on general tactics on the field, but he will also make or mar the team's reputation as sportsmen. I have never yet seen a dirty football team which had a clean playing captain.

Sink or Swim Time!

BUYING "SAFETY"!

THIS is what might be called the "sink or swim time" so far as the big football clubs are concerned. There is a regulation on the books that no transfers will be sanctioned after March 16th if, in the opinion of the rulers of the League, those transfers are sought by any club with a view to gaining an unfair advantage. Cutting out the fancy wording, this regulation means this—that the clubs which are in the running for the championship or in danger of relegation must sink or swim by the players they have secured before the sixteenth of this month.

The reason for such a regulation will be pretty obvious. It is to prevent the clubs with money buying "safety" or purchasing championship success during the last six weeks of the season. Nor is it likely that anyone will be found to disagree with such a ruling. If this or that club has shown such poor form during the earlier months of the season as to be now in danger of going down into a lower division, it is neither right nor proper that such club should be able to save itself by spending a small fortune on buying new players with which to win their concluding matches.

Mind you, there was not always such a rule in force. Years ago it was the common practice for clubs in danger of relegation to spend a lot of money on new players in the last few weeks of the season with a view to saving themselves from the fate which threatened. Once in the long ago Middlesbrough did it when they secured, among others, such a famous forward as Steve Bloomer. Middlesbrough were doing badly, but nobody ever thought that they would succeed in persuading Steve Bloomer to leave Derby County or get Derby County to part with their pet player. There was at least one man who thought that the transfer of Bloomer might be a temporary one to get Middlesbrough out of their difficulty. This was Mr. J. J. Bentley, then president of the Football Association. When the Bloomer transfer papers were given to him to sign he sprawled across them, in red ink, "Not temporary."

It was really the Chelsea club, though, which caused the regulation relating to transfers after March 16th being put on the books. In the season of 1909-10 Chelsea were in the First Division, but their record was such that it became clear that, without a tremendous effort and some victories in the last few days of the season, the club would descend into the Second Division.

The situation was desperate, so a desperate remedy was found. The manager was given a cheque-book, and off he went to sign practically half a team of stars. Among them was Bob Whittingham; and as showing to what lengths the Chelsea management were prepared to go in those days, it may be mentioned that Whittingham was signed on in Bradford at four o'clock one morning, and played for Chelsea in the afternoon of the same day. It is some sort of consolation to know that, in spite of their money-spending effort, Chelsea did not save themselves from relegation, but they might have done so. And this sort of thing, these last-minute transfers being so obviously against the spirit of the competition, the authorities chipped in, and made a new rule which prevents those clubs near the top or near the bottom signing on new men during the last few days of the season.

I have said that I consider this "sink or swim" regulation which operates after March 16th a good one. To my way of thinking, however, there is one thing wrong with the rule, and that is the date on which it begins to operate. I have a feeling that a rule which is a good one on March 16th might be a good one on December 31st, shall we say?

It doesn't need any particularly deep thinking to realise that the transfer business abounds with difficulties. Also I think it annoys most of us when we see the rich clubs saving themselves; at any period of the season, by spending a fortune on the purchase of ready-made stars. How can

these things be prevented, then? It is obvious that a residential qualification of the sort which works in cricket could not be applied to football, nor is it desirable that it should do so. I think, too, that always some sort of transfer system will have to be permitted, as a player does not necessarily get into the right club at the start of his career. My solution of most of the transfer troubles, however, would be on these lines—to prevent any important transfers during the course of any one football season. In other words, I should like to see a regulation worded thus: One player, one club, one season. Such a regulation would not prevent any club signing on a youngster during the playing season, but it would prevent all clubs from team-building during the course of the campaign by merely signing hefty cheques.

After all, the March 16th sink or swim rule merely says, in effect, that during the last six weeks no club shall "buy" a championship or shall save itself from relegation by taking an unfair advantage of the other competitors. Then why not have the same idea in operation right through the season?

Some of you may suggest that it would be a bit harsh. But there is in regard to the Cup competition a regulation on those lines, and nobody suggests that this is harsh. If a lad plays for the Timbuctoo Wanderers in a very early qualifying round of the English Cup competition, he is not eligible to play for any other club in that competition in the course of the same season. So far as the Cup is concerned—and the Cup is surely as important as the League—the idea of one player, one club, one season operates. I want to see the same rule operate in the League.

Such a rule would be a good thing for the players of football. It would compel the managers to do their team-building during the summer instead of, as now, making shift with the minimum number of players, in the certain knowledge that, if things go wrong, they can pull out their cheque-book and buy a new team if need be.

In one other respect there is a Cup regulation which might also be applied to all League football. This is to the effect that no player can appear for a Cup team until he has been signed on for fourteen days. It is quite a common thing in League football for a player to be signed on only an hour or two before he plays for his club. There is one striking instance of a Clapton Orient player going to the Manchester United ground to play for the Orient, but, being transferred just before the match started, he played for Manchester United against the Orient. This sort of thing only makes people cross with the whole football system.



Jimmy Seed of the 'Spurs gives us an impression of Sam Wadsworth, the famous English International full-back of Huddersfield Town.

TRAINING FOR FOOTBALL

HINTS ON DIETING.

THE week before last I referred to a number of training "Don'ts," but I didn't exhaust the list. There are others which have a big influence upon your physical condition. These concern eating and drinking. I remember one of the members of a team of athletes, in whose success I was very much concerned, who came grumbling to me, and said: "It's jolly hard lines if I can't have what I like to eat and drink!"

Now, every person knows what he likes better than another can tell him, but it doesn't follow that the things we like best are the best for us at all times, or that we should take them in unlimited quantity. If one is training, choosing foods that are easily digested is the correct thing.

Again, to eat a hearty meal—a "good square tuck in"—very shortly before taking part in a run or any other form of vigorous exercise is a sad mistake. Nothing is more likely to upset the stomach, and to upset the stomach is the most certain means of spoiling one's physical efficiency. A good meal requires extra blood to be taken from the brain and the muscles in order to help digest the food. Now, when you call upon your muscles to do an extra lot of hard work in order that they should do it properly, they must have an extra supply of blood; they can't work hard without it. So if the blood is taken to the muscles at a time when more of it should be in the stomach, digestion is going to suffer. Much of the value of the food is lost, and shortness of wind, indigestion, heartburn, and possibly stomach-ache will be the result.

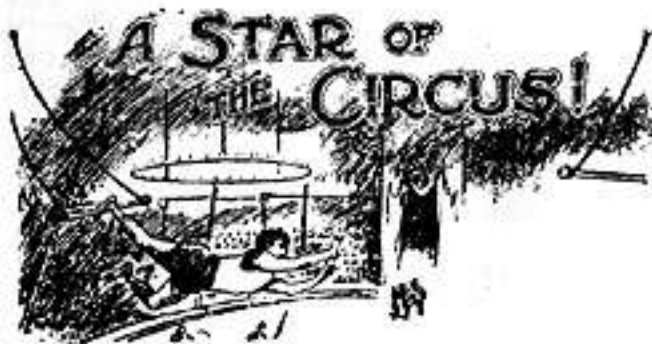
To drink a lot is also a mistake. It is bad for the wind. Ginger-beer and any kind of "gassy" mineral drinks should be left alone, so should the sloppy, semi-liquid kinds of foods be avoided before a game. They "blow out" the stomach, and make running about disagreeable. Everyone, I know, is not just the same. Some can get on quite well a couple of hours after a good meal, others aren't at their physical best until three or four hours have elapsed. But no one can do his best who goes on the field, say, half an hour after having hurriedly bolted a quantity of food that in the ordinary way he would have taken twice as long to eat. Heavy flour puddings and pastry of any kind shortly before a game are about the worst foods anyone can have. They feel like lead in the stomach. If it happens that you really can't find time to get a decent meal, eaten slowly, within a couple of hours of a game, then don't have it at all. Be content with something light, nourishing, and sustaining—say, Bovril-and-milk or a well-beaten egg in milk, with a little sugar in it, taken with a few biscuits, not sweet ones.

These are only seemingly trivial "Don'ts," but they are important ones, and if you are really anxious to give of your best you can't afford to ignore them. The state of the stomach is just as important as the condition of the muscles, and it is not much use getting your wind and your arms and legs fit if you are going to neglect or ill-treat the all-important stomach. More than one match has been lost because a player couldn't say "No" when tempted to over-indulge his liking for a certain kind of food.

Eight of the present first team players of West Bromwich Albion joined the club as amateurs, and graduated in the reserve team.

Jack Hobbs, the Surrey and England cricketer, has a son who may some day earn a reputation in the football field. He is the centre-forward for his school team.

The Liverpool directors are most solicitous in their consideration for the boy supporters of the club, and the "men of to-morrow" much appreciate the special boys' paddock at Anfield.



(Continued from page 12.)

greasy-complexioned Spanish showman, was a deep mystery.

Certainly, it did not concern the chums of the Remove; and they were not given to interesting themselves in matters that did not concern them. But they could not help being astonished.

Indeed, they were so astonished that they doubted whether the tall gentleman really was Hobson's pater, after all, or whether it was a case of an odd resemblance.

But a second glance was enough. They had seen Sir James Hobson a good many times, when he had visited Greyfriars to see his son; and he was by no means a commonplace man easily forgotten. He was tall, severe-featured, with a proud and aristocratic bearing—somewhat like his son in feature, but otherwise bearing little resemblance to the cheery, easy-going Hobby. Sir James looked anything but cheery or easy-going.

His face now was more severe than ever; his brow was wrinkled in a dark frown, and his eyes were glinting.

On the swarthy face of the circus proprietor there was a lurking, half-sneering grin. But as the baronet, after passing down the steps of the van, turned to speak to him, the Spaniard's face became grave and serious and his manner respectful.

In their astonishment at seeing Sir James Hobson there, Harry Wharton & Co. had stopped; but now they hurried on. Strange as the incident was, they had no desire to seem to be spying on the baronet and his affairs.

Sir James did not glance in their direction; he was speaking to the circus proprietor in a low voice, and evidently intent on what he was saying.

A minute more, and the bulk of the big marquee hid the juniors from his sight if he had looked round.

"Well, that beats it, doesn't it?" murmured Johnny Bull. "What on earth is Hobby's pater doing here?"

"Beats me," said Bob. "He won't let Hobby go to the circus, and yet he seems on visiting terms with the circus johnny himself. No bizney of ours, though."

"No need to mention it to anybody, either," said Wharton, in his thoughtful way. "The fact is it's jolly queer; but we don't want to start any talk about Hobby's people. Hobby is a good sort."

"Yes, rather."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he goes."

The juniors glanced round. In the distance, Sir James Hobson was striding away across the field, taking a route that kept him away from the sight of the people gathered before the circus tent.

He disappeared beyond a hedge in a few moments, in the direction of the village.

"He's not going to see the show!" said Bob, with a faint grin.

"Nor going to Greyfriars to see Hobby, either," said Harry. "Looks as if he's going straight back to the station."

"It's jolly queer!"

The queerfulness is terrific."
"Well, come on," said Harry. "Most of the people are inside now, and we've got a chance of slipping in without being noticed much."

The chums of the Remove went on round the big tent, and arrived at the entrance. The big marquee was fairly well-filled now, and only a few villagers were still going in. Harry Wharton & Co. went in along with them, and found seats as the performance started.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Accident at the Circus!

"PEDRILLO!"
"That's the name—the giddy acrobat!"
"Looks quite a kid," said Bob.

"It's a Spanish name, but he doesn't look much like a foreigner," said Harry, glancing with interest at the handsome, lithe figure that had entered the arena.

The performance was half-through; and so far, though entertaining enough to the audience, there had been nothing specially striking about Senor Zorro's Spanish Circus.

But the boy acrobat was a special turn; pictures of him in various perilous positions had covered the walls of Friardale and the neighbourhood for days past.

All eyes were fixed on him as he swarmed up a rope to the trapeze that swung from the roof of the big marquee.

Judging by appearances, he was not more than fifteen or sixteen years old, and though his name certainly was Spanish, neither his features nor his complexion seemed to indicate an Iberian origin. His face was sunburnt; but quite unlike the swarthy face of Senor Zorro in complexion.

"That wants some nerve!" remarked Bob Cherry, as the acrobat threw himself on the bar of the trapeze, and swung high in the air.

"Yes, rather!"

But Pedrillo was only beginning.

He proceeded to go through a performance that held the packed tent breathless.

The trapeze swung at a dizzy height, with the acrobat holding on by a single foot.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him spellbound.

"Dash it all, I wish he'd come down!" muttered Bob. "Blessed if I like this sort of show. That chap would be killed if he dropped."

"Oh, he won't drop," said Johnny Bull. "He does this every day, you know."

"I know; but he might do it once too often," said Bob uneasily.

"There he goes."

"Phew!"

Pedrillo flew through the air, and caught lightly at the second trapeze, turning a somersault as he flew, far above the head of Senor Zorro, standing in the sawdust below.

Bob Cherry looked at his programme.

The next item was an American rough-rider, and Bob was rather anxious to get on with the next item. Not that he was specially interested in the rough rider; but Pedrillo's performance was a dangerous one, and there was little pleasure in watching a mere lad risk life and limb.

But the boy acrobat was evidently quite at home on the trapeze, and his nerve was of iron.

Loud applause rang through the tent, and there was a satisfied smirk on the swarthy face of Senor Zorro.

Pedrillo's turn was the "piece-de-resistance" of the show, and the best thing that the senor had to offer to his patrons. And there was no doubt that it thrilled the audience.

"There he goes again!"

"Ripping!"

The acrobat flew, turning as he flew, and caught at the bar of the swinging trapeze.

The next moment there was a gasp from the audience, a cry of horror.

Wharton sprang to his feet, his face white.

"Good heavens!"

"He's falling!"

"The rope's broken——"

"Oh!"

A spangled figure shot through the air. There was a thud in the tan. From all sides came scared cries and exclamations.

Senor Zorro stood rooted to the tan, staring blankly at the still figure that lay there. The Boy Acrobat, a moment before so lithe and active, lay motionless in the sawdust.

Harry Wharton leaped over the barrier, the first to recover from the spell of horror.

In a moment he was on his knees beside the still figure.

He raised the unconscious head. The eyes of the boy acrobat were closed; he was insensible.

"A doctor!" shouted Wharton.

Senor Zorro hurried up.

"Carambo!" Wharton heard him mutter savagely. The circus proprietor seemed more enraged than horrified by the accident.

A few seconds more, and the arena was invaded by an excited crowd.

Wharton's chums had joined him, and they gathered round the unconscious boy, keeping back the excited swarm.

"Fetch a doctor, somebody!" shouted Harry.

Bob Cherry plunged through the crowd and raced out of the tent. The crowded marquee was plunged into the wildest confusion. Senor Zorro was swearing in Spanish, while Wharton supported the unconscious head of Pedrillo upon his knee.

Bob dashed out of the tent and down to the road. A car was coming along from the village, and Bob jumped into the road in front of it and waved his hand.

"Stop!" he shouted. The chauffeur jammed on the brakes just in time. A surprised face under a silk hat looked out of the car.

"What—why—Cherry!"

"Dr. Locke!"

It was the Head of Greyfriars.

"What does this mean, Cherry?" exclaimed Dr. Locke sharply. "What do—"

Bob ran to him.

"There's an accident in the circus, sir—an acrobat fallen. He's badly hurt. Will you let your car take him to the doctor's, sir?"

"Bless my soul!"

"He may be dying, sir——"

"The doctor is here," said the Head. "My dear Pillbury, how fortunate that you were coming to dine with me!"

"Oh, what luck!" gasped Bob, as the school doctor stepped quickly from the car. "This way, sir!"

Bob ran back to the tent, the little stout gentleman hurrying after him.

"Make way!" shouted Bob. "Here's the doctor!"

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"Oh, good!" gasped Wharton.

Dr. Pillbury waved back the surging crowd, and knelt beside the insensible acrobat. Wharton was only too glad to leave him in the medical gentleman's hands.

"It was a stroke of luck," said Bob breathlessly. "I stopped a car to take him to the doctor's, and the jolly old Head was in it with Dr. Pillbury. I've never been glad to see the doctor before, but I could jolly well have hugged him this time. I—I wonder if he can do anything for that poor kid?"

"Wharton!" called out Dr. Pillbury.

"Yes, sir!" The captain of the Remove hurried forward.

"Dr. Locke's car is waiting—this unfortunate lad must be carried to it at once. You and your friends—"

"At once, sir!"

The Famous Five lifted the insensible figure gently from the ground. As they carried Pedrillo away, and Dr. Pillbury was following, the circus proprietor caught the doctor by the arm.

Dr. Pillbury shook off his hands impatiently.

"Don't delay me, please!" he snapped.

"But the nino—the boy!" exclaimed Senor Zorro, mixing Spanish and English in his agitation. "Pedrillo, mi muchacho—goes he to die?"

"I think not, but I fear concussion. He must be taken to hospital at once," said Dr. Pillbury. "There is no time to lose! Is the boy in your employment?"

"Si, senor, si!"

"If you wish to accompany him—"

"Carambol No, senor. I have my business here. But if he goes to die—"

The senor turned away, muttering to himself in Spanish.

Dr. Pillbury hurried after the juniors. Evidently Senor Zorro was not concerning himself very much about Pedrillo for the boy's own sake. It was the loss of the acrobat's services that was worrying him.

The lad, still unconscious, was lifted into the car. Dr. Locke gave him a pitying look.

"Is his state serious, my dear Pillbury?" he asked.

"Very. So much so that I am going to ask you to let him be placed in the sanatorium at Greyfriars, sir, to save the long journey to the hospital at Lantham."

"Certainly, certainly!" said the kind-hearted old Head at once, and the car was immediately set in motion.

"Good old Head!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Dr. Locke's car disappeared down the road towards Greyfriars. "Isn't he a sport?"

"I hope that kid will pull round," said Harry. "What a rotten end to a show!"

"Rotten! They've stopped the show," said Bob, with a glance towards the big marquee, from which the people were pouring in a crowd. "Anyhow, I shouldn't care for any more after what's happened."

"No fear!"

"Let's get back to Greyfriars," said Harry.

And the Famous Five, in a serious and thoughtful mood, started to walk back to the school.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

All Clear!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Oh dear! Bunter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had entered the precincts of the school by way of the cloisters, not caring to
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enter at the gates under the sharp eyes of Gosling.

Their intention was to slip unnoticed into the School House—if they could—and gain the Form-room. As the circus performance had ended unexpectedly early, they had plenty of time to resume their places in the Remove-room, and get on with their detention tasks, and thus avert the wrath of their Form master. But as they came along into the quad, Billy Bunter met them. William George Bunter could always be relied upon to turn up in any place where his presence was not desired.

Bunter grinned at them.

"Out of bounds—what?" he said.

"Go and eat coke!"

Bunter chuckled.

"I saw you at the circus," he remarked. "Lots of fellows saw you. Suppose somebody tells Quelchy?"

"Suppose you roll away and don't bother!" suggested Bob.

"I say, you fellows, I've seen old Pillbury," said Bunter. "Do you know they've stuck that circus chap in our sanny?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Bit thick, isn't it?" said Bunter.

"What's the Head thinking of, letting them shove all sorts of vagrants and vagabonds into the school hospital? Don't you think it's rather thick?"

"If you mean your silly head, I do!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Has Quelchy come in yet?" asked Harry Wharton. "As you know everything, Bunter, I suppose you know that much?"

"Not yet," said Bunter. "He won't be back till five. I happened to hear him say so to Loder. It's not quite five yet. But, I say, I asked Pillbury about that circus chap, and he said he will be laid up here some time. He told me all about it."

"He would," said Bob sarcastically.

"At least, he told the Head, and I was present," said Bunter loftily.

"With your ear to a keyhole?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "Nothing of the kind. I happened to hear them, I mean. Pillbury says the chap isn't in any danger—"

"Oh, good!"

"But he's had a terrific shock, and won't be able to perform any more stunts in the circus for a long time. No bones broken, according to what Pillbury told me—I mean, told the Head. But we've got him landed on us, it seems to me. Fancy the Head letting them put him in the school hospital. I don't approve of it myself."

"Did you tell the Head so?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, I'm jolly glad the kid isn't in danger," said Bob. "I was afraid it was going to be jolly serious. It's good news, so I won't kick you, Bunter. Roll away."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, and the chums of the Remove proceeded towards the House.

Bunter's news, for once, had been very welcome. The Famous Five were very glad and relieved to learn that Pedrillo was in no danger. They had been thinking more of the circus lad than of the scrape they were themselves in on their way back to Greyfriars.

"Jolly lucky for the kid that he's fallen into good hands," Bob Cherry remarked. "Lucky it was the Head's car I stopped. That circus man, Zorro, didn't seem to be worrying himself much about the kid. I couldn't understand what he was saying in his own lingo, but it sounded awfully like swearing."

"The Head's a brick," said Harry.

"He is—he are!"

"The brickfulness is terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But it occurfully flashes into my mind, my esteemed chums, that the Head has seen us out of bounds."

"Quelchy won't have told him that we're detained," said Harry. "The Head wouldn't be bothered with a trifle like that. If he happens to mention to Quelchy who carried the circus kid into the car, though, it will be awkward."

"Oh, my hat, rather!" said Nugent. "Let's hope he won't."

"This is what comes of being good Samaritans," said Bob Cherry ruefully. "We weren't bound to appear on the scene at all."

"I'm glad we lent a hand, all the same."

"Oh, rather! Let's hope the Head won't tell Quelchy what nice boys he's got in his Form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Cave!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "Quelchy!"

"Oh crumbs!"

The juniors backed out of sight immediately, as they spotted the angular figure of Mr. Quelch in the distance. Five was striking from the clock tower.

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch did not glance towards the juniors, and they were very quickly in cover.

He walked on towards the House and disappeared.

"Done to the wide!" groaned Bob. "Quelchy's back before we've got into the Form-room."

"Rotten!"

Wharton shook his head.

"He won't go straight to the Form-room," he said. "Our detention is till half-past five. We've got lots of time, if we can dodge Loder and get into the Form-room. Come on!"

The juniors hurried on round to the back of the school buildings. There, by a back door, they entered, rather surprising Trotter, the page, as they passed him in the passage. In a few minutes more they were cautiously scouting at the end of the Form-room corridor.

That corridor was quite deserted, but the chair that Loder had placed at the door of the Remove-room was still there. Nothing was to be seen of Loder of the Sixth, however.

"That looks as if Hobby is still in the Form-room," said Bob. "Good old Hobby! Trot on."

The juniors ran along the passage, and Wharton tapped at the Remove-room door.

There was immediately a shuffling of feet in the room.

Bob chuckled.

"Hobby thinks it's Loder, and he's playing up," he remarked.

Wharton called cautiously through the keyhole.

"You there, Hobby?"

"Oh! Is that you, Wharton?" came the reply of Hobson of the Shell.

"Yes. Let us in, old bean."

"Right-ho!"

The door was unlocked and opened. The Famous Five lost no time in getting into the Form-room.

"Circus over already?" asked Hobson, yawning.

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

"Yes. There was an accident, and it shut down. Have you been here all the time?" asked Wharton.

"Yes. I had a 'Gem' in my pocket, and I've been reading. Loder's been outside most of the time; he got a chair, and sat down to it," said Hobson. "I wondered how you'd get in again."

"He got a chair and pretended to sit down to it," grinned Bob. "The chair's there, but Loder isn't."

"Oh, my hat! He took me in," said Hobson. "I thought he was squatting there reading. Well, I'll cut."

Hobson cut, and Wharton locked the door after him.

"Now for the giddy verbs," he said.

"Blow the verbs!" grunted Bob.

"But I suppose we'd better."

And the juniors sat down to their unfinished tasks.

Deponent verbs—those unpleasant verbs which are passive in form, but active in meaning, and troublesome in both—occupied the attention of the Famous Five, when a quarter of an hour later there was a thump at the door.

"Not a word!" whispered Wharton. "Just shuffle your hoofs, same as Hobby did."

The juniors chuckled, and shuffled their boots under the desks.

Thump!

"You young rascals!" came Loder's voice.

The juniors did not answer. But Bob Cherry dropped a Latin dictionary to the floor, with a sounding crash, as a demonstration that the Form-room was tenanted.

"I'm still here," growled Loder, and the juniors heard him seat himself on the chair outside the door.

"Dear man!" murmured Bob. "He's going to make out to Quelch that he's been squatting there all the time. Dutiful sort of chap, you know, taking his duties awfully seriously. I dare say he will have Livy on his knee, to let Quelch see what a studious chap he is."

And the juniors chuckled and resumed their work, which was not suspended again till they heard Mr. Quelch's voice in the corridor.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Little Thick!

MR. QUELCH came along the Form-room corridor, and raised his eyebrows a little at the sight of Gerald Loder sitting on the chair outside the door.

He couldn't help being surprised.

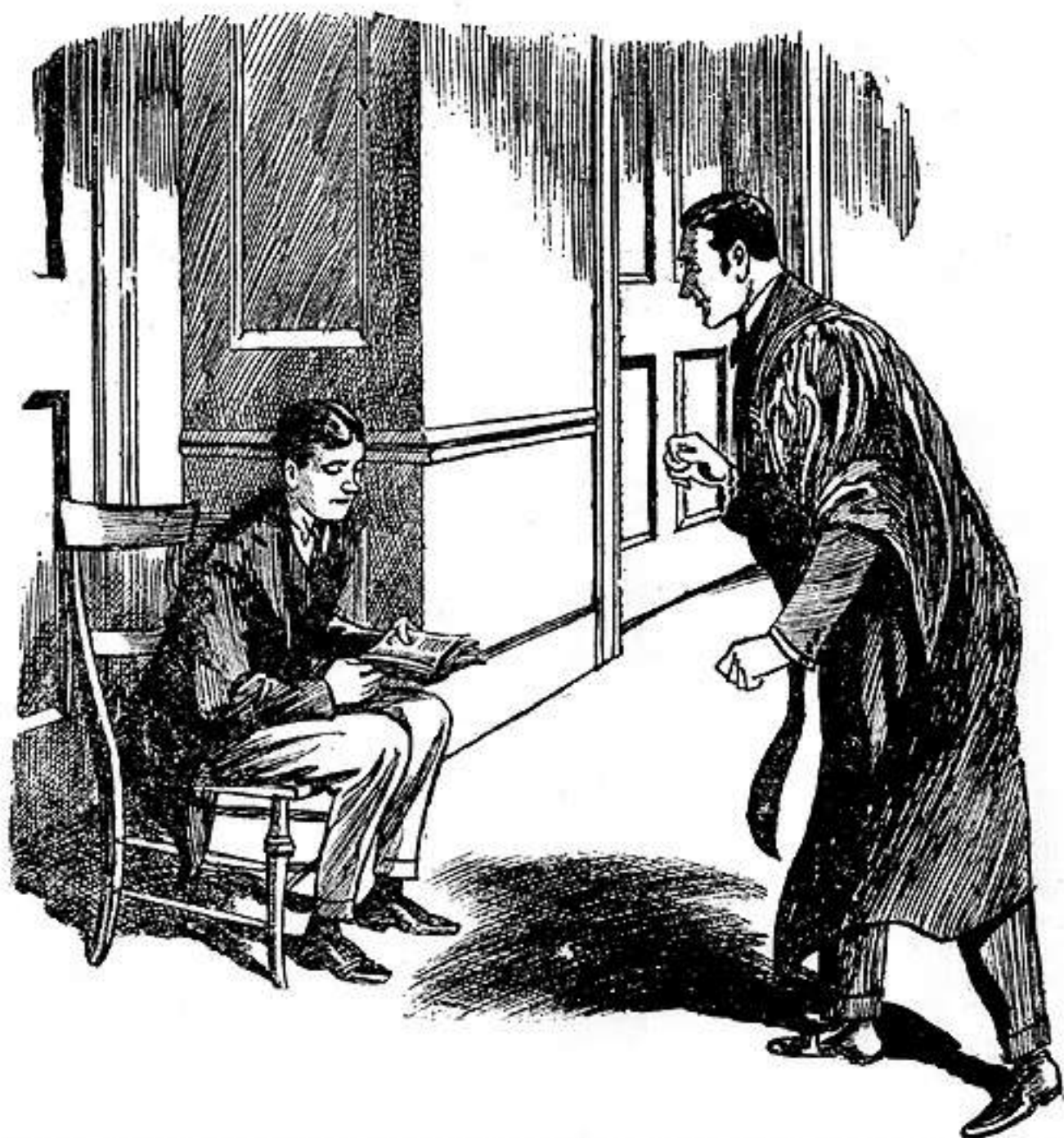
Certainly, he had requested Loder of the Sixth to keep an eye on the detained juniors; but he had been far from expecting Loder to perform that duty in such a thorough-going manner.

Loder did not seem to hear his approach.

He had a volume of Aeschylus open on his knees, and he was apparently deeply absorbed in the great, if somewhat obscure, beauties of the "Epta epi Thebas."

Loder of the Sixth liked Aeschylus about as much as Bob Cherry liked deponent verbs. Loder was not given to studying anything with much attention, except a certain pink sporting paper which was his favourite reading. But he was not averse from letting a Greyfriars Form master observe, as it were by accident, what a very studious fellow he was.

So he remained absorbed in Aeschylus, to such an extent that he did not notice Mr. Quelch's approach till the Remove master was quite near.



Mr. Quelch came along the Form-room corridor, and raised his eyebrows a little at the sight of Gerald Loder sitting on a chair with a volume of Aeschylus open on his knee. He had detailed the Sixth-Former to keep an eye on the Remove, who had been detained, but he had hardly expected Loder to perform that duty in such a thorough-going manner. (See Chapter 12.)

Then he glanced up, with a start, and jumped to his feet.

"Oh! Excuse me, sir. I did not see you!" he exclaimed, shutting his volume.

"I see that you have been improving the shining hour, Loder," said Mr. Quelch quite genially.

"Well, sir, I did not want to waste my time," said Loder modestly. "An extra dig at Greek never does a fellow any harm, does it, sir?"

"Far from it, my dear Loder—far from it! But surely you would have found it more comfortable in your study," said Mr. Quelch, with a smile.

"As you asked me to keep an eye on the detained juniors, sir, I thought I would sit here," said Loder. "The fact is I could not help suspecting that they had some intention of leaving, in spite of your orders, sir. They have locked the door of the Form-room."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"There was no reason why they should do so, sir, unless they were planning to clear," said Loder. "I hope I was not unduly suspicious, sir; but I certainly suspected that these juniors intended to leave, and lock the door after them, so that when I came to give them a look-in I should suppose that they were still locked in the room as before."

"I am afraid it is quite probable, Loder," said Mr. Quelch, frowning still more portentously.

In the Form-room the juniors grinned at one another. As a matter of fact, Loder had "tumbled" to their intention, which Hobson's generous assistance had enabled them to carry out more effectively.

"I thought that a trick of that kind was intended, sir," said Loder. "So I brought a chair here and sat down to study, sir. As I had intended, anyhow, to put in a couple of hours this afternoon at Greek, it was no trouble to me."

"Quite so, Loder. I am very pleased to see a Greyfriars prefect taking his duties so seriously," said Mr. Quelch, in his most gracious manner. "The boys, of course, are still in the Form-room?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I have been here all the time."

"Phew!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Loder doesn't mind piling it on a little, does he?"

"Frightful fibber!" murmured Johnny Bull. "That's to get into Quelch's good graces."

"The fibfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton's lip curled. Loder, whose manners and customs did not always permit him to shine as a dutiful prefect and a studious searcher after classical knowledge, was not losing this opportunity. And a strict regard for the truth had never worried Gerald Loder.

He had not, of course, the faintest suspicion that the Famous Five had been out of bounds. Several times during the afternoon he had called through the locked door, and the shuffling of Hobson's boots had told him that the room was tenanted all the time.

Loder had spent most of the time playing banker with Carne and Walker in his study; but that, of course, he was not likely to confide to Mr. Quelch.

Being fully assured that the Famous Five had remained in the Form-room

throughout the whole period of their detention, Loder was taking unto himself the credit of having kept them there. And Mr. Quelch, who had sometimes had his doubts about Loder, was very pleased and impressed to learn that the prefect had spent the afternoon sitting in the Form-room passage, deeply absorbed in Greek.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "I really did not wish to put you to a great deal of inconvenience, Loder, in asking you to keep these juniors under your eye this afternoon."

"No inconvenience at all, sir," said Loder. "The fact is I was so deep in study that the time seems to have passed very quickly."

In the Form-room the Famous Five exchanged grinning glances. Undoubtedly Loder was making the most of his chance and piling it on.

Mr. Quelch tapped at the door of the Remove-room.

"Boys, open this door at once!"

"Certainly, sir!" answered Wharton.

The captain of the Remove ran to the door, unlocked it, and opened it for Mr. Quelch. The Remove master strode in.

"Why did you lock the door, Wharton?" he demanded.

Wharton coughed.

"Hem! We didn't want Loder to interrupt us, sir."

"What?"

"Loder came in once, sir," said Nugent. "After that we locked the door. We—we thought—"

"I am afraid that some trick was intended," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I greatly fear that had not Loder stationed himself where he did you would not have remained under detention."

"Oh, sir!"

"In that case, your punishment would have been most severe, and you may thank Loder for having escaped a flogging," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

"I cannot help suspecting that your locking the door was preliminary to breaking detention, your plan being to lead Loder to suppose that you were still locked in the Form-room!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Was—was Loder there all the time, sir?" stammered Bob.

"Did you not know he was?"

"No, sir," said Bob very truthfully. "I certainly didn't think that Loder was sitting outside the door all the time."

Loder sneered.

"I'm pretty certain you'd have bolted if you hadn't thought so—I mean known so," he answered.

"Oh, Loder!" murmured Bob.

"Well, well, as the juniors did not leave the Form-room the matter closes, of course," said Mr. Quelch. "I am very much obliged to you, Loder, and sorry I have given you so much trouble."

"Not at all, sir," said Loder.

And he took his departure, very well satisfied with himself, and at the way he had pulled the wool over the usually keen eyes of Henry Quelch.

"You will hand me your papers," said the Remove master, seating himself at his desk.

The juniors brought their papers—still unfinished, in spite of the industry of the last half-hour.

Mr. Quelch looked over them.

"You do not appear to have made very great progress with your tasks," he said. "More should have been done in the time."

"We've been working jolly hard, sir," said Bob, alluding to the last half-hour.

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but without specifying what he was alluding to.

"Indeed! You have had time to finish these papers," said Mr. Quelch. "But for Loder's having assured me that you could not possibly have left the Form-room, I should suppose that you had, after all, gone out."

"Oh, sir!"

"However, as you have certainly been detained the whole afternoon, we will say nothing of your tasks remaining unfinished," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Famous Five went very willingly.

"We're well out of that!" remarked Bob Cherry, as they reached the Remove passage. "I suppose we're not called upon to tell Quelch that jolly old Loder has been pulling his leg?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"You fellows been through it?" asked Vernon-Smith, meeting the Famous Five in the Remove passage.

"Through it?" said Bob. "Why?"

"I saw you at the circus, and you were under detention," said the Bounder, with a stare.

"Tell it not in Gath—whisper it not in the streets of Askalon!" chuckled Bob.

"It's a deep, dead secret."

"But how—"

"Loder's stood our friend!" chortled Bob.

"Loder?" yelled the Bounder.

"Dear old Loder! To get a little credit with Quelch, he's made out that he sat outside the Form-room door all the afternoon—"

"My hat!"

"Mugging up Greek—"

"Loder! Mugging up Greek! More likely mugging up the Racing Times."

"Ha, ha! He wouldn't tell Quelch that, of course. But if Loder was sitting outside the door all the time, we can't have broken detention—that's a cert! Quelch is satisfied—and so are we!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quelch was a little surprised that we hadn't had time to finish our tasks!" grinned Johnny Bull. "But as Loder proved that we'd been in the Form-room all the time, that was all right."

"Oh, gad! Fifty fellows, at least, saw you at the circus!"

"They must have dreamed it, old man—for there's Loder's word for it that we never left the Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd never have pulled it off without Hobby," said Nugent. "Loder would have smelled a rat fast enough, if he hadn't heard anything alive in the Form-room all the time."

"Sure thing!" agreed Bob. "Good old Hobby! Next time he kicks Bunter he can kick him sky-high, and I won't butt in, for one."

"Same here! After this, he can kick Bunter as often as he likes."

And the Famous Five, chuckling, went into No. 1 Study to tea.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Loder!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate!"

"Nugent!"

"Yes."

"You're wanted."

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were sitting down to prep, when the captain of Greyfriars looked into No. 1 Study.

The chums of No. 1 were feeling very merry and bright.

They had escaped—so they supposed, at least—the extremely serious consequences of having broken detention. They had been, in spite of everything, to the circus—and though the accident to the acrobat had spoiled the entertainment for them, they had had the satisfaction of making themselves very useful to the injured Pedrillo.

Dr. Pillbury, who had dined with the Head, had made it known that Pedrillo's injuries were less serious than had been feared, and that the circus lad was in no danger, and was progressing as favourably as could be expected—a great relief to the juniors. So it seemed to the chums of the Remove that everything was in a satisfactory state, and they were pleased with themselves and with things generally.

But the cheery smiles faded from their faces as they received that summons from the Head-prefect of Greyfriars. They rose to their feet with very serious looks.

"Anything up, Wingate?" asked Harry.

"Yes. Wait till I've called the others."

Wingate went along the Remove passage, and Wharton and Nugent waited for him at the door of No. 1.

He came back accompanied by Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The juniors exchanged grimaces.

Wingate had come to the Remove passage to gather up the Famous Five; and them only. Which made it fairly clear that the episode of the afternoon was not, as they had supposed, over and done with.

"Follow me!" said Wingate.

"Is it the Head?" asked Bob.

"No; your Form-master."

"Oh, dear!"

The juniors followed Wingate down the staircase. He led them to Mr. Quelch's study.

"Here are the juniors, sir."

"Thank you, Wingate."

The Greyfriars captain retired, leaving the Famous Five in the presence of their Form-master.

They stood in a guilty row, looking as meek as they could. There was no further doubt in their minds that Mr. Quelch knew of their escapade; and they waited anxiously for him to speak. Never had his eyes seemed so much like gimlets as they seemed now.

"Dr. Locke has acquainted me with the fact that a lad injured in an accident, at a circus in Friardale, has been brought to the sanatorium here," said Mr. Quelch.

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Wharton.

"He has acquainted me with the fact that, when the accident happened, several Greyfriars boys made themselves very useful—one of them stopped his car, and was therefore the cause of the injured lad receiving prompt medical attention."

"Oh!"

"As the boys in question belong to my Form, the Head naturally supposed that I should be very gratified to hear about it," said Mr. Quelch.

"H'm!"

"But what was my surprise!" continued Mr. Quelch. "What was my astonishment, when Dr. Locke acquainted me with the names of the boys in question."

"Ah!"

"In a word," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "you five juniors, who were under detention, and whom I believed to be in the Remove Form-room, had

the audacity to leave the school, in spite of my strict orders, and to go to the circus."

Silence!

It was impossible for Harry Wharton & Co. to deny the soft impeachment. They had been to the circus, and their Form-master knew that they had, and there was an end.

The next words they expected to hear from Mr. Quelch were the old familiar words "Bend over!" But to their surprise, the Remove master did not utter those dreaded words.

"I am placed in a difficult position," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, sir!"

"You have been guilty of a very serious infraction of discipline. Yet it appears that the prompt assistance you rendered to an injured boy was of inestimable service to him—and may even have saved his life. In these circumstances, it is impossible for me to regret that you were on the scene when the accident happened."

The five juniors looked a little brighter.

Mr. Quelch was taking a view of the matter that did credit to his sagacity, in their opinion.

"I shall not, therefore, punish you," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall take the view that you have atoned for your disobedience, by the service you rendered to the victim of an accident."

The Famous Five looked quite cheery.

"Nevertheless!" added Mr. Quelch, in a thunderous voice. "If such an act should be repeated—"

"Oh, sir! We—we—we're sorry—"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!"

"You may go!" said Mr. Quelch. "As you go, Wharton, kindly call on Loder of the Sixth, and request him to step to my study."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

The Famous Five retreated into the passage. Harry Wharton hurried along to the Sixth-form passage, tapped at Loder's door, and gave Mr. Quelch's message.

Loder of the Sixth immediately started for Mr. Quelch's room. His face was very cheery; apparently, he expected to hear something pleasant from the Remove master.

The Famous Five waited in the corridor.

Loder walked into the study, nothing doubting. He shut the door, and faced Mr. Quelch—starting a little as he observed the exceedingly grim expression on the Form-master's face.

"You sent for me, I think, sir?" said Loder.

"I did, Loder! This afternoon, before visiting the vicarage, I requested you to keep an eye upon certain juniors of my Form who were detained."

"I trust that I carried out your wishes satisfactorily, sir."

"Indeed! You assured me that those juniors had not left the Form-room, Loder."

"Quite so, sir."

"You assured me that you had sat outside the Form-room door, studying Greek, during the whole time of their detention."

"Precisely, sir!"

Loder eyed him uneasily.

"Accepting your assurance, as I was bound to accept the word of a Sixth-form prefect, I did not punish the juniors for having left their tasks unfinished, firmly believing that they had been in the Remove room all the time of their detention."

"So they were, sir—"

Loder stammered. "They were not, Loder! I have



"You have acted very badly, Loder—deceitfully and unscrupulously—you have actually told me untruths!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall consider whether to acquaint Dr. Locke with your untrustworthiness. For the present I regard you with contempt—with scorn! You may go, Loder!" The Remove Form-master pointed to the door. (See Chapter 13.)

learned since that they visited the circus at Friardale this afternoon."

"Eh!"

"The Head saw them there—"

"Oh!"

"And mentioned the matter to me."

"Great Scott!"

"Loder! I am surprised—I am shocked—that a prefect of the Sixth should descend to petty untruthfulness—"

"But—but they were in the Form-room," stammered Loder. "At least, I know that somebody was, I heard them—I—"

"Nonsense! Possibly some other boy may have taken their place," said Mr. Quelch. "If you heard anybody in the room, undoubtedly they must have made some such arrangement. These five boys were at the circus."

"Oh!" gasped Loder. He understood at last.

"You deceived me, Loder!"

"I—I—I—"

"So far from having kept the Form-room under observation all the afternoon, as you pretended, you apparently gave the detained juniors no attention at all. Certainly they left the Form-room, and returned there, without your knowledge."

"Oh!"

"You have acted very badly, Loder—deceitfully and unscrupulously—you have actually told me untruths. I shall consider whether to acquaint Dr. Locke with your untrustworthiness, Loder—I shall consider that matter carefully.

For the present, I will only say, that I regard a prevaricator with contempt—with scorn, Loder! You may go, Loder."

Mr. Quelch pointed to the door. There was nothing for the hapless Loder to say—and he went.

Five juniors, in the corridor, grinned as they saw his face. As they had anticipated, Loder was not looking so merry and bright after his interview with Mr. Quelch. His face was white with rage and chagrin, and he shook his fist at Mr. Quelch's door after closing it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Had a pleasant talk with our Form-master, Loder?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder spun round, furiously.

"Has he thanked you again for keeping watch and ward over our Form-room—and pulling his jolly old leg?" chortled Bob.

Loder did not reply in words. He made a furious rush at the Famous Five.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors fled for the Remove staircase, roaring with laughter. And Loder stamped away savagely to his study, with that pleasant sound ringing in his ears.

THE END.

(Now look out for "Pedrillo, of Greyfriars!"—the sequel to the topping story you have just read—in next week's MAGNET.)

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SAVING THE PRICE! Speedlow manages to wriggle out of a very nasty corner by throwing the blame on to other people. And these other people, being human, resent it. More than that, they square accounts, as it were, by taking it out of Speedlow's hide!



The CASE of THE LANGSDALE WANDERERS



Introduction on
page 23.

Speedlow's Trump Card!

TO return to Messrs. Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley," said Ferrers Locke to Jack Drake. "I know it's a wasted effort, but I must trot round to their respective digs just to satisfy myself that they have made themselves scarce."

"Then you think they've beaten it, gov'nor?" asked Drake, and there was a note of disappointment in his voice. "I wish the nurse had phoned you as I asked her—"

"I expect our birds had flown even then," said Locke. "If they are men working for Marlow, you can bet your bottom dollar, my lad, that they've got brains. And finding you on their trail would be sufficient to send them scuttling for dear life, apart from the fact that one of their number had knocked you out."

"Then we are at a deadlock," said Drake miserably. "We can't do much for young Curly unless we rope in the other three merchants."

"You are forgetting Speedlow," said the detective. "Now that you have enlightened me as to who broke open the safe and helped themselves to the contents, you have set a fresh theory running through my head. And unless I am mistaken Master Speedlow will withdraw the charge, or try and fix it on someone else."

"Tell me, then, gov'nor—" began Drake.

"When I come back," answered Ferrers Locke. "You are going to promise me that you'll sit tight in that chair until I come back. I sha'n't be long. Just a trot round to the digs of Spindle & Co., and perhaps another to the railway-station. But if you move out of that chair, I'll get real cross with you."

"Oh, I'll stay here," said Drake resignedly.

And, with a smile that broke up the sternness that had crept into his last words, Ferrers Locke walked out of the room.

Meantime, Lionel Speedlow was seated in his comfortable chair at the Rookery gloating triumphantly over his cousin's nasty experience.

"Expect the young rotter is having his bread-and-water now," he muttered. "Serve him right! He's bound to get three years' hard, at least."

Contemplation of that sentence comforted Lionel Speedlow, but in the midst

of his thoughts jarred the whirring note of the telephone. With a muttered imprecation Speedlow seized the instrument.

"Hallo!" he called ungraciously. "What name—Marlow! Oh, yes! Why, man, what's the matter with you? You sound as if you are at your last gasp! Eh? What? Good gad!"

The latter part of Speedlow's remarks were almost shrieked into the transmitter. Marlow was telling him of Spindle & Co.'s suspicions, of their arrival in town, of their attack upon him. But Speedlow only acted the part of the sympathetic listener until he had extracted all the information he wanted. Then he laughed.

"What the thunder are you cackling about?" roared Marlow over the wires. "Do you know, man, that they half-killed me? You had better withdraw that charge! You had better say that the whole thing was a mistake, that you forgot you had banked the money, or something."

"You blamed fool!" hissed Speedlow into the phone. "I shall withdraw the charge, all right. I'm not such a fool as you think, Marlow. You thought you were clever in helping me to suggest a way to shove that accursed cousin of mine into prison, but I saw how to turn things to good account if the main part of the scheme went wrong!"

"What do you mean?" bellowed Marlow from his end.

"Simply this," came the answer, and the tone was mocking. "I'm going to discover that Spindle & Co. were impostors, that they were no more professional footballers than you are—you follow? That they were, and are, in fact, professional burglars. And that they have robbed the club safe of a thousand quid, and shoved the blame on to my cousin. Do you follow that, Mr. Clever Marlow?"

"Oh, you cunning hound!" came Marlow's voice, and then silence, for he had rung off, bitterly regretting his rashness in suggesting the plan to "shove" Curly Taylor into prison. Speedlow had been one too clever for him.

There was a gloating smile on Speedlow's face as he replaced the receiver on the hooks.

"A thumping good job, by gad, that I had fixed my alternative!" he muttered. "That meddlin' fool Drake and his chief have dropped on to part of the

plot. But they can't touch me, that's one comfort. I shall now play the tender-hearted cousin, full of remorse an' all that for having doubted Richard's integrity. That I was so upset at being the indirect cause of my cousin's imprisonment that I began to hunt round for fresh evidence. 'Twas then I received an anonymous phone message, etc., and chanced across the forged Bowsley. Ha, ha! Mr. Locke may be clever, but he'll have to be devilish clever to bring anything home to me!"

The more Speedlow turned over his course of action, the more he improved it. Thus it was the rascally owner of the Rookery, of a million good pounds, drove like the wind to the local police-station with a definite object in view.

He inquired for Inspector Towley, and the station sergeant wondered at the agitation of his caller.

"Inspector Towley won't be here for five minutes yet, sir," said the sergeant. Speedlow stamped his foot impatiently.

"Oh, what a ghastly mistake!" he muttered, loud enough for the sergeant to hear his words. "My poor cousin! The villains! I'll have them arrested—every one of them!"

"Eh?" blurted out the sergeant, scratching his head.

Speedlow turned to him appealingly. "A ghastly mistake has been made, sergeant," he said. "My cousin, Richard Taylor, has been committed to the cells as a felon. He is innocent—he is innocent! Do you hear, man?"

"Well, you said it plainly and loudly enough!" rumbled the sergeant. "I—Hallo! Here is the inspector!" he added, as Inspector Towley strode in at the door of the station, accompanied by no less a person than Ferrers Locke.

Speedlow's eyes glinted for a moment as they rested on the spare, upright figure of the great private detective, but they quailed before the steady scrutiny Ferrers Locke returned.

Inspector Towley pushed his way forward.

"Mr. Speedlow," he began, but that gentleman was determined to get his say in first.

"I insist upon my cousin being released at once from those horrible cells! The disgrace of it! The stigma—" he began wildly, what time Ferrers Locke's keen grey eyes twinkled wickedly.

"Eh?" rapped Inspector Towley, who

was rather slow of intellect. "What on earth are you talking about, Mr. Speedlow?"

"But my cousin is innocent!" shrieked Speedlow, acting for all he was worth. "I have made—you have made a terrible mistake!"

The inspector turned to Ferrers Locke. "What's the game?" he demanded. "I met you on the way down from the station, Mr. Locke, and you were prepared to bet me that I should be releasing Mr. Richard Taylor before the night was out."

"And I'm still prepared to bet you," smiled Ferrers Locke. "I gather that Mr. Speedlow has found out something—eh, Mr. Speedlow?"

There was a hidden challenge in the words that only Speedlow interpreted. But he knew he was on safe ground.

"Indeed I have!" he said warmly. "But first, inspector, I wish to withdraw the charge in the usual official way. Next, I want to see my dear cousin released—"

Inspector Towley looked up sharp at the "dear cousin," but said nothing.

"And then I'll place sufficient evidence in your hands, inspector," added Speedlow cunningly, "for you to arrest three of the cleverest criminals in the metropolis!"

The inspector bit hard at the last words. Inside ten minutes Curly Taylor, a very surprised young man, found himself standing in the sergeant's room, a free man—without a stain on his character!

"What does this mean?" he demanded, and his glance rested harshly on Speedlow.

"It means, cousin, that I have made the biggest mistake in my life!" said Speedlow, in well-simulated concern and self-reproach. "It means that I have harboured three professional cracksmen in the Wanderers' eleven. That they have robbed me; that they all but succeeded in throwing the guilt of their dastardly work on to your innocent shoulders! Cousin," went on Speedlow—and his acting drew Ferrers Locke's admiration—"I must humbly apologise for being the cause of your misfortune. But Spindle & Co. shall suffer! I'll bring them to book if it costs me—"

Speedlow's eloquence and emotion failed him then, but he concluded his half-uttered vow with a convincing flourish of the fist there was no denying.

"I'll forgive you right enough," said Curly Taylor, whose trusting nature saw nothing more in Speedlow's emotion than genuine remorse. "But explain, Lionel. What on earth have Spindle & Co. got to do with this business?"

"I will tell you," said Speedlow. "About midday I received an anonymous phone message informing me that Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley were not footballers; that they were, indeed, professional cracksmen—"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Curly. "Grant!—from Inspector Towley."

Cynical smile from Ferrers Locke.

"I at once made all speed to investigate their letters of application for places in the Wanderers. Their credentials were forgeries, cousin. You know what a fool of a business man I am. But the forgeries took me in at a time when I wanted players for the Wanderers badly. Imagine my horror, then, when I discovered this. With all speed I dashed round to the houses of these rotters, and I found there that they had not been seen since two o'clock."

"Oh!" muttered Towley, taking out his notebook.

"I decided to hang around and do a bit of detective bisney," went on Speedlow. "But not one of the three came near his home—and they all live in the same street—all the afternoon. About an hour ago I suddenly thought that the scoundrels might have left town, so I went along to the station, and discovered that they had caught the two-thirty train to London."

"That's apparently what Mr. Locke did, too," broke in Inspector Towley, who was completely at sea, but who wanted to appear au fait with all the circumstances.

"And so you discovered that Spindle & Co. were crooks, Mr. Locke?" said Speedlow.

The private detective eyed Speedlow shrewdly before he replied.

"I did," he said quietly. "And a bit more besides!"

"Blessed if I can follow this!" said Curly, whose release from that dingy cell and all it meant had left his mind in a whirl. "But I'm thumping thankful to you all for ferreting this business out!"

"We'll see it through to the bitter end, cousin!" said Speedlow hypocritically.

"To the end!" said Locke grimly. "And if, with your permission, Mr. Speedlow, we adjourn to your house, I fancy I shall be able to give Inspector Towley a few clues to work on in following up this case."

"Thank you, Mr. Locke," said the inspector gruffly.

"By all means," agreed Speedlow. "My car is at your disposal."

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous criminal investigator, is called in to sift the peculiar evidence surrounding the death of MARCHANT TAYLOR, founder and managing-director of the Langsdale Wanderers.

Locke learns that, after a deal of legal argument, the entire fortune of Marchant Taylor has been left to LIONEL SPEEDLOW, his eldest nephew, while CURLY TAYLOR, Speedlow's eighteen-year-old cousin, is allowed ten pounds a week, on the understanding that he continues to play for the Langsdale Wanderers.

There is no love lost between the two cousins, and in his new role of managing-director Speedlow from the start earns the displeasure of the football lovers in Langsdale. Thereafter, in a spirit of spiteful revenge, he goes all out to ruin the famous Langsdale club.

Later comes news to the effect that there is a second will in existence, leaving Marchant Taylor's fortune to Curly, and this will, it is alleged, is to be found in the volume, entitled "Nicholas Nickleby." Speedlow and his cousin search for this volume, but it is not to be found.

Fearful of the consequences—should Curly eventually discover it—Speedlow decides to get his cousin out of the way, and to achieve his rascally purpose he enlists three cracksmen in the Wanderers team.

Then comes news that the team's club-rooms have been robbed, and the evidence is so black against Curly that the youngster is arrested.

Following the instructions of Ferrers Locke, Drake hits the trail, but Bowsley, Jagers, and Spindle, who are responsible for the theft, suspect the youngster, and Drake is knocked senseless to the ground, where he is found eventually and taken to the Cottage Hospital.

Later, Drake leaves the hospital, to learn that Locke meantime has visited the Rookery, where he has gleaned some valuable information.

(Now read on.)

Clues I

THE four moved out of the station, only to discover that a crowd had collected. The news of Curly's release had spread like fire, as news of that kind will.

"Hurrah!"
"Good old Curly!"

A burst of cheering went up as Taylor and his companions came into sight. And it was with the utmost difficulty, that the party reached the waiting car, so eager was the throng to pat Curly on the back, to congratulate him. Speedlow, at the wheel of his car, had literally to drive his way through the crowd, which was growing in numbers as the seconds ticked past, before he could change into top gear. But once clear of the main street, the car zipped along the road en route for the Rookery.

Once in that palatial residence, Speedlow invited his companions to partake of a little refreshment to celebrate the great occasion, as he termed Curly's release. But the offer was politely refused on all sides. Following a request from Ferrers Locke, the party made tracks for Curly Taylor's room.

Once in that apartment, Ferrers Locke looked hard at Speedlow, and then moved towards the fireplace.

"According to your evidence, inspector," he said, "certain bags of money, alleged to be the proceeds of the robbery, were discovered by you in this room—"

"That's so," replied the police-official. "There's a niche in that chimney, and the bags were found there."

"Exactly," smiled Ferrers Locke. "Now, what distance up from the edge of the iron screen—which commences above the bars of the grate—would you say that niche is?"

"Well, I should reckon it's about thirty inches," replied the inspector. "You see, I could only just reach those bags concealed there, and my reach is about thirty inches in length, that is to the tips of my fingers."

"Thank you," said Locke, with a smile. "Now, just take a look at Mr. Richard Taylor's arm. Do you think he could possibly manage to place those bags there?"

Speedlow started as he saw the detective's meaning, and Ferrers Locke smiled slightly as he noted that guilty movement.

The inspector measured his arm against Curly's, and then shook his head.

"He couldn't do it," he muttered rather shamefacedly, for he saw the weakness of the conclusion he had jumped to earlier in the day. "Couldn't possibly do it."

"But I rather fancy Mr. Speedlow could," suggested Ferrers Locke, unable to resist the impulse to give Speedlow an uncomfortable minute.

"Yes, I reckon he could," replied the inspector innocently, measuring his arm against that of Speedlow's.

"And I can prove that a hand was used to place those bags up the chimney, not an instrument of any kind," said Locke; "for there are finger-marks upon the bags, inspector. Not real finger-prints, complete with whorls," he added, "as the person responsible wore gloves. Still, even the pattern of the cotton gloves might help you in your search."

"You seem to have noticed a lot, Mr. Locke," said the inspector half admiringly.

"I was at the station early this afternoon," replied Ferrers Locke, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 945.

"inspecting the haul you made here. No, no; don't get officious, Towley," he added, as the inspector's eyebrows came up in a pompous line. "For I have a pass bearing the Home Secretary's signature, authorising my interference, so to speak, in anything I might think proper."

And the private detective handed the police-officer the official pass duly stamped and signed by Mr. Jefferson Beeks, the Home Secretary.

"I beg your pardon!" apologised Inspector Towley. "I am all attention."

"We will proceed, then," said Locke. "According to your notes, this door was locked when you arrived here after Mr. Taylor had been committed to the cells?"

"It was."

"Very extraordinary!" said Locke. "For it must be remembered that Mr. Taylor's key-ring, containing the key of this door and also the key of the club safe, was found on the premises where the robbery took place."

Speedlow's face flushed a deep crimson. Again he saw where his cunning had not been good enough to baffle this clear-headed detective. But eyes were not on Speedlow just then. Curly and Inspector Towley were gazing admiringly at Ferrers Locke.

"I see your point," said the police-officer. "If the keys were found on the club premises, together with the key that opened the safe, it signifies that the burglar decamped with his loot, and forgot to take the keys with him. And yet, if some of the loot was found secreted in this room, how could this door be locked by Mr. Taylor, when the key, on the key-ring with the others, was a quarter of a mile away?"

"How could it indeed," said Locke. "Unless Mr. Taylor had a duplicate key of this room—"

"But I've never had a duplicate key, and I repeat I have never had in my possession the key of the club safe either," said Curly. "What's more, I've never locked this door in my life. That key-ring must have been filched from my dressing-table."

"We will accept that statement, Mr. Taylor," said Locke kindly, "because the charge against you has been withdrawn. We must accept it. Well, then, inspector, it simply goes to prove that the person"—Locke purposely used the

singular—"who tried to fix this frame-up was too clever for himself. Not content with placing some of the loot in a place that Mr. Taylor couldn't possibly reach by reason of his short arm, he next proceeds to lock the door with the key that is supposed to be found a quarter of a mile away on the floor of the room where the robbery took place. What does that suggest to you?"

"Obviously that a duplicate key must have been used," said the inspector slowly.

"Good!" said Ferrers Locke. "Now, when you get back to the station just place under the microscope the keys your subordinate found. You will find on the one that fits this door a few traces of wax still adhering to it."

Speedlow started guiltily. He little liked the trend of this conversation. But there was a comforting thought. The key had been duplicated, but the man who had made it from a wax impression was an expert locksmith in Marlow's employ. Speedlow thanked his lucky stars that he had taken it to him and not given it to a locksmith to do.

"If that's the case," said Inspector Towley, "it ought to be a simple job to discover who made it. And after that to learn who gave him the job. But, still, these fellows, Spindle & Co., are the men we want."

"They are," agreed Ferrers Locke. "And another man, too."

He looked hard at Speedlow, but that consummate actor played his part well. So far he was safe. There was no real evidence to convict him, although he knew that little was now concealed from Ferrers Locke.

"It seems to point to someone who would have access to this house," said Speedlow thoughtfully. "I wonder if Turville had a hand in it—"

"Turville!" scoffed Curly Taylor. "Why, he's as honest as the day!"

But Turville's name, for all that, was entered into the inspector's notebook.

"And now, just one more thing," remarked Ferrers Locke, lighting his pipe, and blowing a full cloud of smoke ceilingwards. "The bags of silver found here."

"What about them?" asked Towley.

"Simply that they were part of the proceeds of the match in which the Wanderers played against the Peterham eleven," replied the private detective.

Again Speedlow felt uncomfortable.

This detective seemed to be knocking his whole scheme to pieces.

"But I understood Mr. Speedlow to say that the money stolen from the club safe was the gate-money from the match played yesterday," said the inspector, puzzled.

"That is so," agreed Speedlow, with a forced smile.

"But the bags at the police-station, which were taken from this chimney niche, each bear the date of the Peterham match at their base!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke. "And I have taken the trouble to ascertain that it was the custom of the accountants at the club to mark each bag each week in this way. Rather strange, isn't it, that bags bearing the Peterham match date should be found here, if we are to reconcile ourselves to the fact that Spindle & Co. solely were responsible for this frame-up, when that particular match was played long before those gentlemen showed up in Langsdale?"

It was Ferrers Locke's trump card, and it shook Speedlow's confidence like a cyclone bends a palm-tree. All the same for that he was smiling.

"Very complicated," grunted Towley, "but I must admit, Mr. Locke, that you have shed considerable light on this matter. My duty now is to look round for an enemy of young Mr. Taylor, and then to seek a motive."

"Exactly," smiled Ferrers Locke. "I will leave it in your capable hands, Towley. If you can achieve those two things there's certain promotion for you, I'll be bound!"

The inspector glowed with pride. Little did he know that that promotion, in the shape of Lionel Speedlow, was at his elbow, so to speak.

He began to question Curly, in an endeavour to discover possible enemies. But he received little encouragement, for Curly, beyond thinking of his cousin Lionel, could remember no one who would honestly fill that category. And common decency—at that moment especially—forbode him naming his cousin. So Towley, looking very wise and pleased with himself, took his departure. And Ferrers Locke and Curly Taylor followed him a few seconds later, both of them declining Speedlow's invitation to spend the evening at the Rookery.

Paying the Penalty!

ONCE clear of the fine old house, Ferrers Locke chuckled.

"I bet I gave him a shaking up!" he remarked.

"Gave who a shaking up?" queried Curly.

"Why, your cousin, Lionel Speedlow," returned the detective. "Do you mean to tell me that you haven't guessed who framed this up, despite this tale of Spindle & Co.?"

"I'm blowed if I have!"

The great detective broke into soft laughter.

"Well, you'll never make as good a crook as your cousin," he said, "for Lionel Speedlow—I'll give him credit there—has worked as pretty a frame-up as I've ever seen."

"Then you think—"

"Oh, tut!" exclaimed Locke shortly. "Speedlow would go to prison to-morrow if I could produce anything better than circumstantial evidence. But for the time being he's beaten me. Once I get my hands on Spindle & Co. the whole truth will come out!"

"But you referred to those blighters as if they weren't anything to do with the

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robbery!" exclaimed Curly, absolutely bewildered.

"Don't you see, they were merely tools in the hands of Speedlow?" said Locke. "But they rumbled how the wind would blow and have made themselves pretty scarce."

"Well, I'm blowed!" ejaculated Curly Taylor. "I'm beginning to see things. If cousin Lionel is as big a blackguard as you make him out to be, he ought to go to gaol for keeps!"

"Doubtless he will!" came Locke's dry response. "But, come on, Curly! Young Drake will bite my head off for being away so long. I didn't know, though, for certain that I should be bringing you back with me. That'll please him, anyway."

And it did.

When Curly Taylor came into the sitting-room at the heels of Ferrers Locke Drake let out a whoop of joy, whilst Curly, as he noticed Drake's bound head, was all concern for his young friend at once.

"Hurrah!" roared Drake. "The gov'nor's done it!"

"But your head—" began Curly.

"His head," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile, "has saved your head, Curly. For if Jack hadn't bumped into Messrs. Spindle & Co. this morning you would have spent a night in the cells at Langsdale Police Station—not a very comfortable experience I do assure you."

Thereupon the private detective explained how Drake had met with his accident, for the benefit of Curly Taylor, after which he outlined what had transpired at the police-station, and subsequently at the Rookery, this time for Jack Drake's benefit.

"A good day's work," said Drake when his chief had concluded. "I'm pleased I got this biff on the head, after all. All I want to see now is that fossil-faced, one-eyed waller Speedlow sentenced for life—"

"As I remarked to Curly a few moments ago," said Ferrers Locke, "doubtless that will come about."

And if a man could be thus sentenced merely for thinking crime, Lionel Speedlow would indeed have been incarcerated for life.

Long after Ferrers Locke and Curly Taylor had departed the scoundrel sat staring into the fire, scheming revenge upon the man who had beaten him.

"The interferin', meddlin' hound!" hissed Speedlow between clenched teeth. "Why, the man's uncanny. He's playing with me!"

The wretch shivered slightly, and glanced about him like a hunted animal. But the worst blow from Ferrers Locke was yet to come.

"I must do something," muttered Speedlow. "I must get Marlow to keep his mouth shut about that key. I'll phone him."

In two strides Speedlow was at the telephone. A few seconds later and he was in communication with Marlow. That worthy, relenting somewhat from his previous attitude, now advised Speedlow to come up to town without delay.

And, much against his wish, Speedlow intimated that he would make the journey by car at once.

The two-seater fairly flew out of the gates a few minutes later. Speedlow was in such a reckless mood that he cared little for his neck. And inside one hour and a half the two-seater, daubed in mud, for the roads were wet, swung into a side turning at the back of Cambridge Circus, and drew to a halt outside a prosperous-looking restaurant.



Speedlow turned to the station sergeant appealingly. "A ghastly mistake has been made," he said. "My cousin is innocent—he is innocent! Do you hear?" "Well, you said it plainly and loudly enough!" rumbled the sergeant, scratching his head. (See page 22.)

A signal passed between Speedlow and the door-keeper, and the former passed into the passage that ran alongside the restaurant, and thence by flights of stairs made his way to the "ronday."

Tap, tap-tap, tap!

The different lengths between the taps, a pre-arranged signal between Marlow and his rascally associates, had the desired effect, for a small grille, cunningly devised and hidden to the casual observer in the panel of the door, opened. Through it Speedlow saw the outline of a face, and that face lit up in a greasy smile as the newcomer's features were in turn scrutinised.

A few seconds' silence, followed by a scraping of bolts, and the big door swung inwards.

Speedlow walked in.

The room was appointed like an ordinary office. At a big desk in the centre of the apartment sat a well-dressed man—Werthemir Marlow. His heavy features were swollen and cut about—evidence of the violence he had met with at the hands of Spindle & Co. Speedlow could hardly repress a smile as he noticed these signs of war.

"Jove, they did handle you, Marlow," he said.

"Yes, they did that," snarled Marlow, and Speedlow wondered at the hostility in the man's voice. "But when I phoned you up three hours ago you thought it dashed funny, didn't you, my pippin?"

The big man leered across at Speedlow, resembling a gorilla about to maul his victim.

"I—I—" began Speedlow.

"You reckoned you had been too clever for me and the boys, too," snarled Marlow. "But don't you think, my fine fellow, that the boys have forgiven you for trying to swing it on them. And don't think that I've forgiven you for being too clever for me."

"But—"

"There are no buts," continued Marlow. "When Marlow's men get too clever for Marlow he puts it across them,

you see." The man placed two jewelled fingers to his lips and blew upon them.

Speedlow started back, warned by some instinct that trouble was brewing for him. But scarcely had he taken a step backwards when, from behind a screen at the side of the room, issued three men.

And they were Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley.

"At him, boys!" said Marlow with a greasy smile. "You can do what you like with him. I'm finished with Mr. Clever Speedlow!"

The "boys" needed no injunctions on that score. They had been making preparations to fly into safety when Marlow had got into communication with them, informing them that Speedlow, the man who was responsible for all the trouble, was expected at the "ronday" that night.

As Spindle & Co. could not, from a point of view of safety, venture into Langsdale for some time to come, they had jumped at the chance of levelling the score against Speedlow at such a convenient place as the "ronday."

They advanced on the terrified Speedlow like three hungry wolves. Theirs was a peculiar code down at the "ronday." If a man went back on his pals he was made to suffer for it.

And Speedlow suffered.

For about three minutes he stood up to the combined attack of Spindle & Co., and then a brawny fist sent him staggering to the floor like a sack of coals. After that he knew no more.

It was half an hour later when Speedlow came to. He found himself sprawling in an unsavoury heap of refuse in a gutter two streets away from the "ronday." His head ached terribly, his eyes pained him at every movement, for they were puffed to an extraordinary extent; his nose was daubed with crimson, and his lips were bruised and bleeding. Never in all his life had Speedlow looked or felt such a sorry spectacle.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 945.

Painfully he crawled to his feet and looked about him. There was his car, thoughtfully parked a few yards away from him, for the habitues of the "ronday" had no use for that car.

Speedlow was so exhausted that he hadn't the strength just then to shake his fist at a grinning urchin who had eyed him in some amusement. All he wanted to do was to put as much distance as possible between him and the "ronday," for Speedlow had learned his lesson.

The car started up with a roar and a splutter, the accelerator was jammed hard down, and with an imprecation falling from his battered lips, Lionel Speedlow paid his adieu to the "ronday" and its habitues.

Kicked Out!

THERE was a further shock in store for Lionel Speedlow when he arrived back at the Rookery, in the shape of a very formal letter from the Football Association demanding his presence at their offices the following morning at eleven-thirty sharp.

Speedlow eyed the letter with a sniff. "Deuced cheek!" he breathed. "Sharp, indeed! Now who the thump do they think they are talking to? And what do they want, anyway?"

Little did he know that within twenty-four hours the Langsdale Wanderers would cease to be; that the name of Lionel Speedlow would be struck from the registers of the powerful F.A. for all time; that, indeed, he was to be suspended for life!

Not that Speedlow would have troubled himself unduly had he known these things in advance, for he hated football and everyone connected with it.

He tossed the letter into the fire and watched it burn, a scornful, amused smile twisting the corners of his mouth. Very much like the demon of destruction did he appear at that moment, for the firelight flickered across his features and the heavy shadows in the room were not kindly disposed towards him.

And while the destroyer of Langsdale Wanderers stood thus, the saviours of the grand old winter game, so far as it affected Langsdale, had gathered together. Old Silas Chisholm was in the chair. Without a dissentient voice he had been elected chairman of the new concern.

This formation of a new eleven had started at the gates of the Rookery on the fateful night when Speedlow had bought out his fellow-shareholders. From that night onward not one of these business men of Langsdale had spared himself in order to forward the project. They tackled their uphill task with all the enthusiasm of schoolboys, and all their savings were sunk in it. Fortune favours the brave. A formal application to the F.A. had brought them the sanction they needed to form a new club. More than that, Silas and his backers had been advised to apply to the F.A. for readmission to League I in a different guise, and under a new management. If this came about it meant, naturally enough, that the Langsdale Wanderers would be wiped off the slate as a recognised professional football team. It had one effect, this application on the part of Silas Chisholm, namely, the F.A. convened a special meeting of the Council to discuss the alarming downfall and mismanagement of the once popular Wanderers.

A special committee of investigation journeyed down to Langsdale to find out the rights and the wrongs of the affair, and the story they took back with them gave the F.A. no option but to call Lionel Speedlow to book.

"Gentlemen," said old Silas from the chair, "we are already climbing. Our application to form a new club has received the sanction of the Football Association. More than that, it hinted in their communication of even date that we may take the place of the old Wanderers if the League clubs raise no objection to our readmittance. That at least will save us the wearisome and lengthy task of fighting from obscurity all the way through the various minor Leagues—"

"If that materialises," chipped in Woodley, "it means that the Wanderers will be suspended for all time—that the old club will be disbanded."

"And a good thing, too!" spoke up another of the directors. "That scape-grace Speedlow ought to be sent to gaol for what he's done in our native town!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was no mistaking the backing of the remainder of the company.

"It means, too, gentlemen, that out of the ruin of the Wanderers will rise a new team known to the world as the Langsdale Victors."

"Hurrah!"

It was good to hear these old men cheer; it was good to see the colour come and go in their rugged, honest faces; it was good to see the fixed determination written in every countenance.

"To-morrow," concluded Silas Chisholm, "we shall know more. Once we do know our position definitely we shall have Langsdale with us to a man. Even the old players, like Woodward and Abbott and Strang, will be pleased to come and serve under our banner."

"And young Curly Taylor, too!" chipped in Woodley. "He'll join us like a shot!"

"Of course!"

The meeting broke up. That night the local Press were preparing a sensational story for the public's breakfast, as it were, for it had already leaked out from the headquarters of the F.A., as these things will, that Lionel Speedlow was to be suspended for life from

taking any further part in football, either as manager or player, and that the Wanderers were to be disbanded!

With the morning came the bomb-shell. Langsdale over breakfast was agog with excitement. Newspapers sold like hot cakes, the posters the newsboys carried round with them told the tale in a few words that whetted the appetite for more:

"LANGSDALE WANDERERS DISBANDED!"

DRASTIC ACTION BY THE F.A.!

SPEEDLOW SUSPENDED FOR LIFE!"

No wonder Lionel Speedlow was the cynosure of all eyes when he boarded the train for London at ten o'clock that morning. And strangely enough, Speedlow liked his position in the limelight. People could gaze up at the man who had destroyed a once famous League club, could see the type of man he was; could hurl abuse at him, threaten him.

He merely smiled that mocking smile of his, well content in the sheer perversity of his nature to have made so many enemies in so short a time.

They nearly lynched him ere that train drew out, and but for the arrival of Curly Taylor, who had been pressed into service by a thoughtful police-inspector, they undoubtedly would have done. With the coming of Curly, however, the angry crowd became good-tempered and eager to demonstrate their affection for the younger cousin, where but a few seconds previously they had been athirst for Speedlow's blood. That inspector was a student of human nature, for he saved Langsdale from committing an outrage which would have been a blot upon the fair name of the town.

The train drew out, Speedlow gazing savagely from the window as he saw the crowd swarming towards his young cousin, saw him swung aloft on the shoulders of at least half a dozen of them, saw them waving their hands, their hats, anything; heard them singing those well-worn strains:

"For he's a jolly good fellow!"

Speedlow's interview with the F.A. suffered from that recollection of his cousin's popularity. He was the great god, the big noise—the injured person. But only for a few moments. Those venerable old fellows on the F.A. Council soon reduced Speedlow to a state of humiliation. They resembled a number of fathers gathered in judgment upon an erring son, only where, as fathers, they would doubtless have been prepared to forgive. Speedlow was doomed to walk with the rank disapproval and condemnation of the F.A. beside him for the rest of his days.

He told them he hated them—a favourite phrase of his—that he hated football and all connected with it, that he was pleased to wash his hands of the whole affair. Finally, he crawled from the room of judgment sentenced to keep away from football in any shape or form for life, almost foaming at the mouth with rage and mortification. At the door he straightened himself to shake a fist at Samuel Verney, the President of the F.A., but a faithful commissioner caught the valiant Speedlow by the slack of his pants and helped him out of the building with more force than was really necessary.

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And to crown it all, a Press photographer outside the building snapped Speedlow as he made contact with the pavement.

Speedlow did not take the train back to Langsdale that night. He proceeded to the West End in search of solace. He found it, a member of the light-fingered fraternity cunningly relieving him of every penny he had about him. It was being borne in upon Speedlow's perverse mentality that he was not the only power for evil in this topsy-turvy world of ours.

The Mystery Book!

AND now Curly, my lad, just ask Turville to step this way."

It was a week later—a week of glorious rejoicing in Langsdale for the new club. The Langsdale Victors had come into their own. The passing of the Wanderers was mourned, for there was a heap of sentiment bound up in its formation; but interest in the new club, which was, incidentally, the old club almost to a man, with the one exception of its managing-director, now occupied first place in the realm of sporting topics.

Ferrers Locke was standing before the fire in the sitting-room of his hotel. Jack Drake was lounging in the arm-chair gazing at his master with eyes of admiration. A few yards away from them stood Curly Taylor, bright of eye, yet curious.

As Locke spoke Curly stepped to the door of the sitting-room. He beckoned inside Turville, once the man-of-all-work at the Rookery.

Turville entered the apartment wondering.

"I just want to ask you a few questions," began Ferrers Locke easily. "You were, I believe, Turville, in the habit of dusting the library at the Rookery. Did you ever in the execution of this task come across a volume entitled 'Nicholas Nickleby'?"

Turville's answer came without a pause.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you by any chance take it from the shelf, Turville?"

"Yes, sir," answered Turville, now beginning to wonder what this cross-examination was leading to. "The master—old Mr. Taylor, sir—seemed to have a great regard for that book, Mr. Locke. He was always messing about with it, sir."

The detective's eye gleamed and he stiffened perceptibly.

"Messing, Turville?" he said gently. "What exactly do you mean by that term?"

"Well, sir," replied the servant, "he used to read it upside down, if you know what I mean. Whenever I came across him in the house with that book he always—ahem!—made a pretence to be reading it."

"And you knew he wasn't reading it, eh?"

"Well, a man can't read a book upside down," returned Turville. "Leastways I've never heard tell of it, sir."

"Did that ever make you curious, Turville?" asked Ferrers Locke sharply. "Did you ever develop a fancy to read the book yourself?"

"No, sir. The only thing I read is my newspaper—and my bank-book," said Turville, with a ghost of a smile.

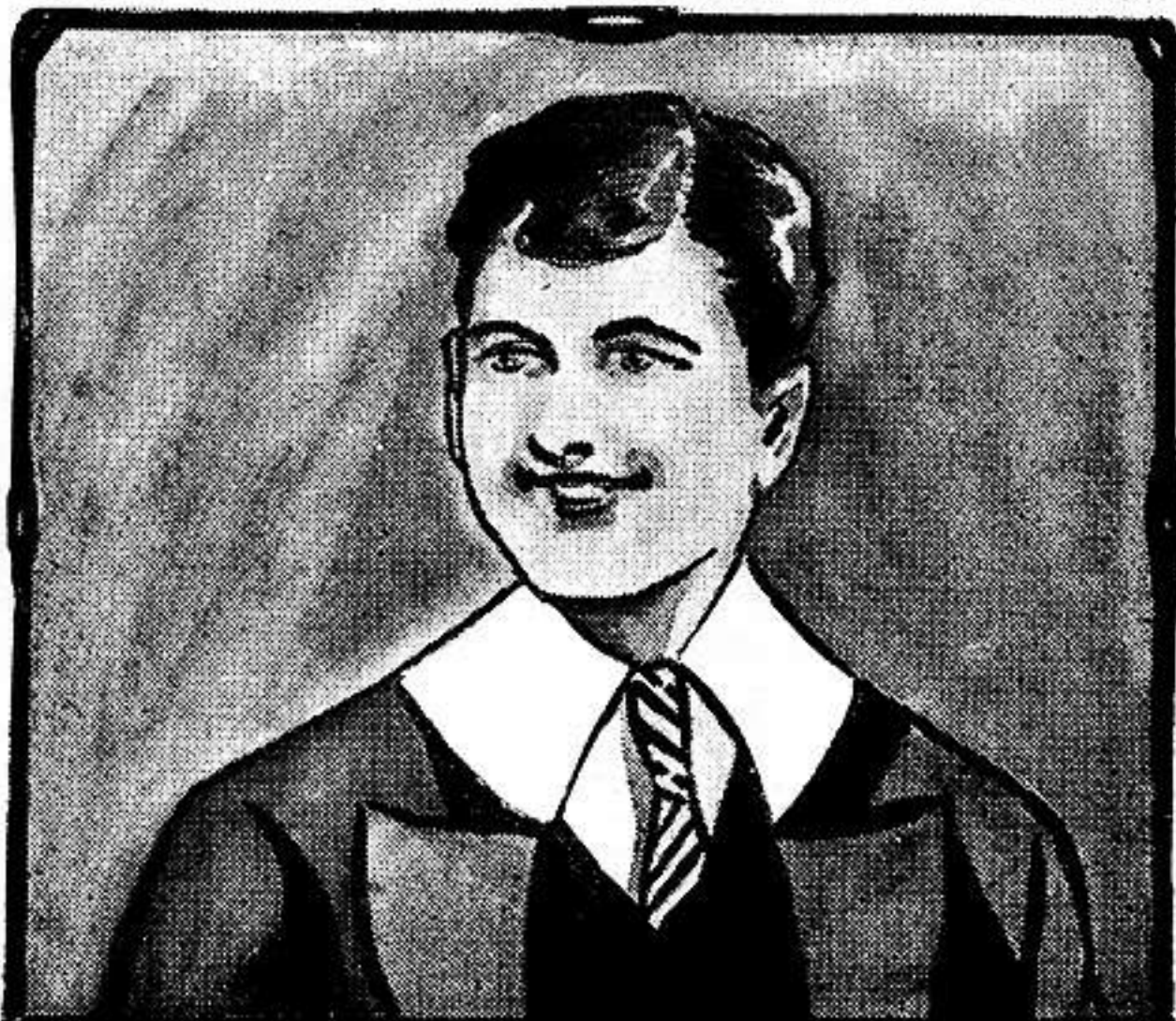
"And so you never took that book to your room?"

"Never in my life, sir. But Sarah, she was always keen to read the classics, as she called them."

"Sarah," said Ferrers Locke sharply. "Who is she?"

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"She's a daily help, sir," came the reply. "Sarah Munnings was engaged by old Mr. Taylor to do the cooking. She slept out."

"And Sarah was keen on the classics, eh?"

"So she said. But Sarah said lots of things—very voluble young woman, sir."

"Thank you, Turville," said Ferrers Locke. "I shall be wanting a servant to help me with one or two things. If you are looking for a temporary job as—"

"Thank you, sir," said Turville, his eyes lighting up. "I am."

"Then you may consider yourself engaged on the spot," said the detective kindly. "But first take a holiday for a week. It will do you good."

"You're very kind," said Turville respectfully. "I—"

But Ferrers Locke was waving him aside. Evidently there was something more important to attend to than old man Turville's thanks.

"The address of this lady—Sarah Munnings?" the detective asked swiftly, as if this important point had slipped his memory up till now. "You know it, Turville?"

"Yes, sir. Sarah lives at 93, Gerard's Rents, Park Crescent."

"Thank you, Turville," said Locke. "That will do. You will report here for duty in exactly a week's time. You

will find a month's wages in an envelope addressed to you care of the hall porter below."

Turville hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. All this talk about the book— Now he came to think of it, Speedlow also had been extremely anxious to discover its whereabouts. Turville couldn't make head nor tail of it. One thing he did understand, and that was he now served one of the most generous masters he had ever struck. He retired, with the feeling that he was walking on air.

When he had gone Drake and Curly shot Ferrers Locke looks of inquiry.

"Why have you engaged him, gov'nor?" asked Drake. "Surely I can do anything—"

"Cut it out, my lad," smiled Locke. "I merely want to keep him in the family. When we've got that book and Curly comes into his own he'll be wanting a good servant. I'll be delighted to make a present of Turville to him."

But there was more than this sentiment passing in the detective's mind. Drake saw that clearly enough. His master was theorising—on what lines, though, Drake had to admit himself entirely baffled.

"Listen, my lad," said Locke sharply. "Trot round to Sarah Munnings' address with Curly as quickly as you can. I

THE CASE OF THE LANGSDALE WANDERERS!

(Continued from previous page.)

must stay here, for I am expecting a telephone call from an inquiry agent at Birmingham at any moment within the next hour. Ask Sarah Munnings if she will give you the book she borrowed from the library at the Rookery. It's a "chance shot," added the detective, as he saw the questions trembling on the lips of his young audience. "But I rather fancy it will score. I wonder I never thought of the good lady before."

"Then you think she has the book, 'Nicholas Nickleby,' guv'nor?" queried Drake breathlessly.

"I am inclined to that theory, my lad," came the reply, "for we have explored every other source and drawn blank. Someone must have that book. And we must find it, you understand. If anything has happened to old Taylor

He bit his lip, realising that he had said too much, although to Drake that last broken phrase meant nothing. They were to realise the significance of it later.

"Off you go, my lads!" said the detective after a pause. "I want to be alone when this call comes through from Birmingham."

Drake eyed his chief in bewilderment. It was so unusual for Locke to work a case assisted by an outside inquiry agent. The detective read his assistant's thoughts.

"Surprises you, eh, my lad?" he said, with a smile. "But if the confounded fellow had only been about half a mile an hour quicker at his job we should have no need to be hunting for that book

with the missing will. Still, the story will keep. Get busy and hunt up Sarah Munnings."

But there was no need to urge Drake and Curly to do that. They had slipped into their coats already. Swinging out of the room, the two youngsters made all haste to seek the "daily help" at the Rookery, and within ten minutes the pair of them had reached 93, Gerard's Rents, Park Crescent.

Curly knocked at the door.

Sarah Munnings herself answered the summons.

She bowed them into her sitting-room, wiping the seats of the chairs with her apron just as if they were covered in a layer of dust, when, as a matter of fact, they were spotlessly clean. Curly did not beat about the bush.

"I've called, Sarah," he said, "to ask you about a book—"

Sarah's face crimsoned, and her jaw dropped a trifle. Drake noted these signs, and knew instinctively that they had come to the right quarter for information.

"Book?" began Sarah timidly.

"'Nicholas Nickleby,'" said Curly reassuringly. "Turville told me that you were keen on it—"

"I didn't mean to take a liberty, sir," said the good lady, almost tearfully now. "I was very keen on the classics, and my pal, she says, 'Read 'Nicholas Nickleby'; it'll do yer heart good.' So I made up my mind to ask old Mr. Taylor for the loan of the book, but when it came to it I hadn't the pluck—"

She paused and wiped away a stray tear.

"Go on," said Curly gently.

"So I borrowed the book and brought it home," continued Sarah, very alarmed now. "Mind you, sir, I

didn't hurt it. I wrapped it in a brown paper cover so I shouldn't soil it, and made up my mind to read it and put it back without the old man—I mean Mr. Taylor—knowing anything about it. I never meant no harm, sir."

"I'm sure you didn't," said Curly, only wishing that the voluble lady would come to the point, at the same time determining to humour her.

"Then came the master's tragic end," went on Sarah, "and in the general bustle and bustle that there book got forgot. I had it in my cupboard here for months—"

"You had it!" said Curly, with a sharp intake of breath. "You don't mean to say that it's lost now?"

"Lor' bless you, no, sir!" was the answer. "But Mister Speedlow, he asks me about a book, casual like, called 'Nickleby,' and I got afraid to return it to the library. He seemed so unnaturally savage 'cos he couldn't find it. But I'm a honest woman, Master Curly. I made up my mind to take that book back, and I took it back."

"What?" ejaculated Drake breathlessly. "You've taken it back?"

Sarah nodded, and subsided into fresh tears.

"Yes. I put it back on the top shelf in the library yesterday," she said at length.

"Good heavens!"

Curly looked horror-struck, at Jack Drake. To think that that coveted book was even now within reach of Speedlow's destructive hands!

"Come on, Curly!" exclaimed Drake, jumping to his feet. "The Rookery, toot-sweet!"

(With Curly Taylor and Jack Drake find this precious volume, or will someone else have been there before them? Mind you read next week's 'Thrilling instalment,' chums.)

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DOUGHTY DUNCAN!

by "Referee"

The Football Romance of Leicester City's Stalwart Scottish Skipper.



John Duncan.

THEY have Scotsmen at Leicester as at everywhere else, but two of them stand out very conspicuously among the rest. The two are: (1) John Duncan, the Scottish international skipper of the club, and (2) Mr. Peter Hodges, the manager.

In their own sphere, are really great, and because they are really great their stars have run in close affinity to each other. There are few managers of the calibre of Mr. Peter Hodges. Similarly, there are few footballers of the dash, vigour, or braininess of John Duncan.

Together these two have made First Division football possible at Leicester; together these two have lifted the club to heights undreamt of five seasons ago. Their acquaintance began in 1917 in Scotland when Duncan was a junior in the ranks of Dumbach Star, and Peter was the manager of Raith Rovers.

But there is a story attached to that, and, seeing that that story forms a part of the history of John Duncan himself, we will commence, as all stories should properly commence, at the very beginning.

Flight-ho, then! John—or "Tony," as his intimates know him—first perceived the light of day in Lochgelly about twenty-eight years ago, and if you know anything of football you will at once perceive that he was born in the right atmosphere. Lochgelly has given some of the brainiest craftsmen of the football world, and in such a place John simply couldn't do anything else but take an interest in football.

He took more than an interest in it; indeed, he became a devoted slave to it at a very early age. His football experiences during his boyhood were much the same as those experiences of other notable celebrities whose histories we have examined here, so I do not think there is any need for me to enlarge upon them.

Since it to say, then, that John's first club of any note was this Dumbach Star I have mentioned, and that John played for that he was in his early teens. In 1917 the Star attracted quite a lot of attention by their performances in the Scottish Cup; and when I tell you that you will at once know from your experience as a football fan that they were also attracting scouts from the bigger organizations. They were, among them, a friend of Mr. Peter Hodges.

Now, Peter Hodges at that time had recently rejoined Raith Rovers as manager. I say rejoined because he had been an official of the club before, having drifted to Stoke, and during the War drifted back to Kirkcaldy, which is Raith Rovers' home. This friend of Peter's was impressed by the performance of young John, and suggested to Peter that he would make a useful forward for Raith. Well, presumably Peter went to have a look at John, discovered himself satisfied, and there and then began the acquaintance of these two.

In 1918, as you know, the proclamation of the Armistice put an end to the Great War, and club managers been seriously to think of the competitive campaign that would once again be launched. Among those who were Mr. Peter Hodges, and Peter, who never having forgotten our John, took immediate steps to sign him at once. Thus was the 1917 acquaintance fructified, and thus did John become a Rover of Raith. I should say a rover of Raith; for that is what he was—a very outside-right, and forming a very fine partnership with Alexander Archibald, his predecessor, who had gone to Glasgow.

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THE day is match-day, and here is a tip. If ever you get an invitation to lunch with a football team under those conditions, always sit next to the directors, as distinct from sitting next to any of the players. There are two reasons—both good ones—for doing this. In the first place, the directors, having merely to sit still and encourage their lads in the course of the match, can have pretty well what they fancy. And when you sit next to the directors you may possibly be mistaken for one of them, and have the good things as well.

On the other hand, if you sit next to the players, it is possible you may be considered just one of them, and be treated merely to a bit of toast. Even if you get the good things when sitting next to the players there is a distinct risk that they will vanish before they reach your mouth. I remember once having a most annoying lesson on this line. I sat with a party of footballers at lunch on a Cup Final day. Oysters were brought to me, but when I turned to speak to the friend on my left the oysters vanished down the throat of the player on my right. This happened with several courses.

Let me hasten to add that Burnley were not the team concerned that day, because the Burnley players wouldn't do that sort of thing, of course. They are too well brought up. I may as well add, in case any of my readers have misgivings, that the Cup Final player who pinched my oysters and other good things from my plate was admitted afterwards to have played the game of his life. The content with the toast and the cup of coffee. However, that's nought here nor there, as they say in Lancashire. What is happening is that we are having lunch at Turf Moor, which, in case you don't know, is at Burnley.

On the day I was there dark clouds were overhanging this home of the Burnley club. It seemed possible that at the end of the season they might be doomed for a spell in the Second Division. If you imagine that gloom pervaded the players, however, you are very much mistaken. Indeed, it is a long time since I was so happily entertained as I was by the Burnley players. Believe me, these lads are an accomplished lot. First of all there was a song from "Sandy" Ferguson, and if ever the days comes when "Sandy" can't earn his living by football I shall give him a recommendation to some music hall manager.

Then there was Jerry Dawson to follow with a concertina effort—a very good effort, too. Those who don't know Jerry have missed one of the good things of life. He is just as much a part of the appointments at Turf Moor as the goalposts. The oldest inhabitant can't remember the day when Jerry Dawson didn't keep goal for Burnley, and when he isn't keeping goal or playing his

HAVING LUNCH with BURNLEY

(Our Travelling Correspondent.)

concocting he is making big breaks at billiards. Whenever there is a billiards competition at Turf Moor, they give the prize to Jerry first and then play off the various matches afterwards. Last, but by no means least in this Burnley entertainment line, there is John Henry Hill. His news, and as he is well over six feet in height, he may be said to possess a natural aerial. The only thing I didn't succeed in discovering is why they call Jerry "Sandy" when there is John Henry Hill in the team.

I tried to interview Jerry Dawson very seriously, but Hill kept chipping in. For instance, when I asked Dawson the sort of shots which he found most difficult to save, Hill gave me the reply: "Those which he can't reach." I then asked Dawson what was the happiest day in his football career, to which Hill again replied: "When he got seven man-assignments as his first week's wages at Burnley." You see, Hill added, "Jerry knew he wasn't worth so much."

Hill is the captain of the side, of course, but there is nothing of the strong silent man stuff about his leadership. He talks on the field as well as off the field, but though some people might say that a talking captain advertises his intentions, Hill is the essence of subtlety. I have heard him shout to a colleague in possession of the ball: "Swing it over!" and then, in a stage whisper, say: "Pass it to me!" The idea of the first shout was to get the opposition rushing to that part of the field, but it is the whisper which was carried out.

After the match on this day when I dined with Burnley at home, Watrofield, the out-side-left, whom Burnley have made into a first-class full-back, would insist on my going round to see his homing pigeons. Tom Roberts drove us there in his motor, and the things the centre-forward knows about cars would fill a lot of books. Most of the Burnley players are in some sort of business in the town, and Hill has just settled down as proprietor of a gent's outfitter's establishment.

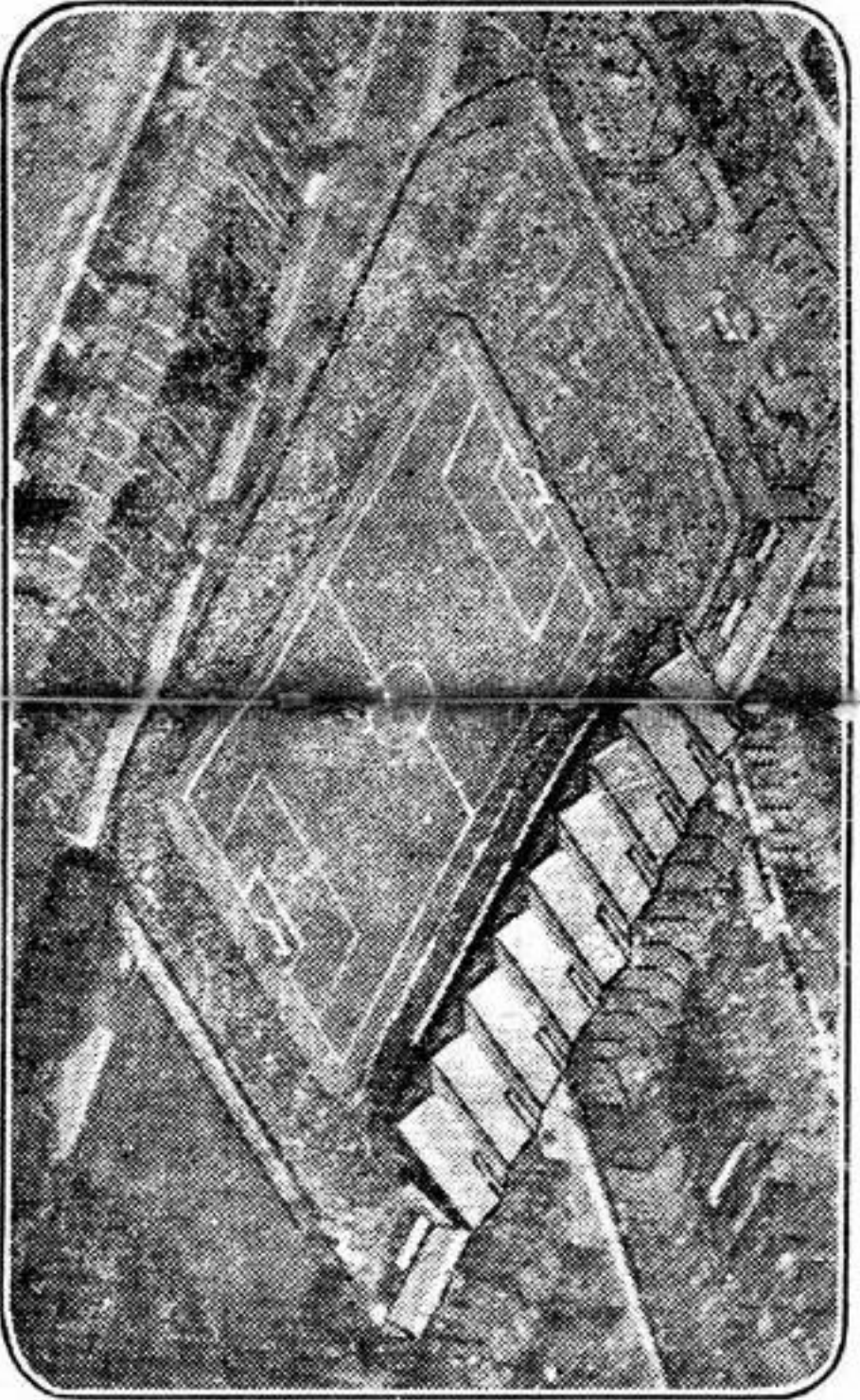
I had rather a long search after the lunch for "Andy" McCullagh, the Irish international full-back, but eventually found him in a corner of the lounge with his nose in a crossword puzzle. The other fellows sometimes try to beat him at this pastime, but their efforts usually end in a visit to McCullagh when they come across a problem which beats them.

There is also an expert of another sort on the staff—Louis Page, the out-side-left, who spends most of his leisure time in the summer playing baseball. He has a faint hope, I believe, that one of these days the professional footballer will be paid on much the same lines as the baseball exports of America. I don't think he need lose any sleep, however, thinking about what he will do with the money when he gets a few thousand dollars for one match.



JERRY DAWSON.

WHAT THE ARSENAL FOOTBALL GROUND LOOKS LIKE FROM ABOVE!



Who would have thought years ago that the famous Arsenal team who were then playing on Plumstead Common would be able to boast of so spacious a ground as they now have at Highbury? It has taken a considerable sum of money to build, but it is well spent when one considers that this spacious ground is capable of accommodating 70,000 spectators.

JOY DAYS FOR THE PEOPLE FOR THE

by David Halliday.



Days when Everything "Comes Off."

THE other day I was very much interested in a paragraph in one of the newspapers referring to the varied experiences of a certain footballer during the present season. In one match in which he played he had a sorry day, so completely unable to do anything right that he was barracked by the so-called supporters of his club. A few days later the same player again played for the same side on the same ground, scored three goals, was cheered to the echo, and generally proclaimed the hero of the hour. He had a joy day, which must have gone quite a long way to rubbing from his mind the bitter memories of the occasion when he was barracked.

A Hindrance to the Side.

This sort of thing is no new experience in the story of the lives of footballers. To a greater or lesser degree, it is one through which most of us pass. There are days when everything comes off—when we scarcely put a foot wrong, as the saying goes—and on other days it is almost equally true to say that we scarcely do anything worth while. Instead of being a help to the side we are a hindrance. It is this seemingly strange thing which I am now asked to explain. How is it that we have these so-called "go mad" days, as it were, and do things "terrible" above ourselves? On the contrary, why on other days do they fall to do themselves anything like justice. Believe me, these are questions which I should very much like to be able to solve, because it is perfectly obvious that it is the man who is consistently maintains a high standard who is of the utmost value to his side. But certainly, so far as I am concerned, the fluctuations seem to be just a part of my make-up. Days of sorrow may come in the midst of a successful streak, and days of joy arrive when least expected.

The Mystery of "Form."

As to the why and the wherefore of this sort of thing, however, I confess I am more than a bit puzzled. The best way out, of course, is to say that there has always been the mystery of form. What I want to get down is why there should be these ups and downs. Sometimes I have gone on to the field feeling as fit as a fiddle, and full of confidence that I should have a good time. But instead I have gone through one of those worrying experiences, when I completely failed to do the things I attempted to do. On other days I have gone on to the field not feeling particularly "like it," and yet on such days I have scored perhaps three or perhaps four goals.

A Question of Temperament.

The nearest I can get to a solution of the problem is to suggest, in the first place, that those fluctuations of form, these joy days and sorrow days, are largely a matter of temperament. So far as my experience goes, I am convinced that it is the way things go in the early stages of the game which make a lot of difference. Suppose, by way of example, that in the first quarter of an hour or so I miss a couple of sitters. It is very difficult—and sometimes impossible—not to go through the rest of the contest with a worried feeling at the back of one's mind. I know I ought to pull myself together, forget completely those "sitters" which I have missed, but it is much easier to talk about doing this than to carry it out. In this game in which I have started

Worried by Failure.

The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that it is in this matter of concentration that we find the explanation of the amazing good starts which are made by certain players. We have already this season had several cases of young fellows, promoted to the premier eleven, making what the newspapers called a wonderful debut. I guarantee that if the average lad going on the field to make a start in a higher class of football, happens to do right at the very commencement he will have a good day. If he does wrong—if a pass goes astray, if he misses his kick or footies a shot—then we can all be sorry for him, because the odds are that he will be so worried with the thought that he may fall again that he will probably come near to being a "frost."

Starting Away from Home.

I feel so strongly that I am right about this phase of the joy-day business that I should like to appeal to the supporters of every club to treat their young players especially with more than ordinary consideration. Don't be too severe on your youngster. Remember he is on trial, and that he knows it. If he falls, don't get severe in your criticism. Rather give him an encouraging cheer, even if he does nothing particularly worthy of applause. The average manager usually arranges, if he possibly can, to give his youngsters their first run away from home. Why? Because the manager, generally himself an old player, realises that the trial will be a little less exacting if the youngster's first game is played before spectators who are not sufficiently interested in his display to mark him out for special attention.

Just a Lottery.

Naturally, there are less subtle reasons than the foregoing for the joy days of the footballer. Some of my best scoring feats have not been accomplished because I was in particularly good form, but because I happened to have opponents who were indulging in a "day off." Alternatively, the joy day for the goal-scorer especially may come because on any particular afternoon his pals may give him a succession of perfect openings. Then there are lucky days and unlucky ones. One sometimes gets two or three goals in a match without doing anything wonderful in the shooting line, while on another day far better shots reap no reward; they are stopped by the goalkeeper, or by the crossbar, or by the bodies of opponents who are in the line of fire by accident. Summed up, then, I should say that we have our joy days and sorrow days because the game is one big lottery.

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