

"THE DESERTER!"

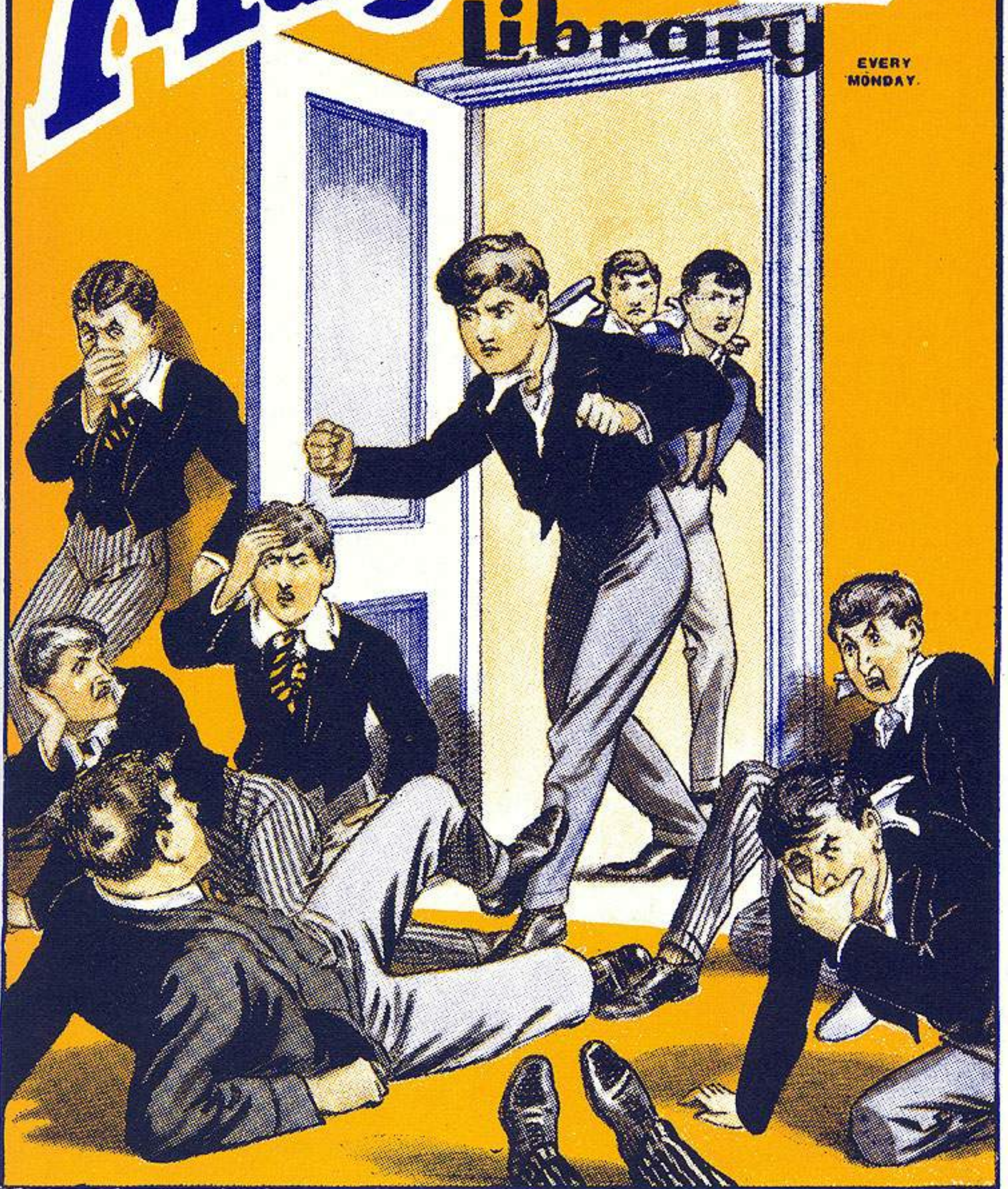
This Week's Powerful
School Story—inside.

No 977. Vol. XXX. Week Ending November 6th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^o

library

EVERY
MONDAY.



BOB CHERRY FIGHTS AGAINST HIS OWN FORM!

For a Remove man to take sides with the Upper Fourth in a scrap against his own Form is "offside" with a vengeance. No wonder Harry Wharton & Co. speak of Bob Cherry as "The Deserter!"



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.

MAGNETITES the world over will be pleased to learn that the first of the promised stories from the pen of young Dicky Nugent will appear in a fortnight's time. The heroes of St. Sam's—Jack Jolly and Merry and Bright figure in it, of course, also an extraordinary new boy. The yarn is a scream from beginning to end, take it from me, chums. Keep your peepers open, then, for No. 979 of the MAGNET—due in two weeks' time.

A SCOUTING STORY!

A Manchester chum wants to know if there is a scout patrol at Greyfriars. There is, there are! as our Greyfriars chums would say. And if there is, continues my correspondent, may I look forward to seeing a special scouting yarn, featuring Harry Wharton & Co.? You may, my chum. I passed on the wheeze to Mr. Richards, and I have his answer before me now. "Tell your Manchester reader," he writes, "that he can expect a scouting yarn in a few weeks' time." How's that?

FRETWORK!

The 1927 catalogue issued by Hobbies, Ltd., Dereham, Norfolk, will be found extremely useful to every reader interested in this fascinating hobby. It is larger than ever, with 246 pages of fret-

work designs, tools, etc., and with every copy two large designs are given free.

It is an excellent feature of this catalogue that all the goods shown are British, and have gained world-wide popularity. Be sure to get your copy early as there is a greater demand than ever. Price 1s. Post free from Hobbies, Ltd., or 9d. at any branch or agent.

THE GLORIOUS FIFTH!

On Friday of this week you fellows will be enjoying yourselves I have not the slightest doubt, for old Guy Fawkes comes to life again, so to speak. Good luck to you; wish I could be there to let off some of those squibs and crackers. Wouldn't there be some bang if every Magnetite met at Wembley, we'll say, and simultaneously loosed off a giant cracker! What-ho! Still, talking of bangs, let me remind you that the two new numbers of the "Schoolboys' Own Library," on sale Friday of this week, will make some noise. No. 39, entitled: "Aliens At Greyfriars!" is a rollicking book-length yarn of your old favourites Harry Wharton & Co., whilst No. 40, entitled: "The Mystery Schoolboy!" is a powerful and dramatic school story by Ernest Protheroe. Don't spend all your pennies on fireworks, you chaps, for these popular volumes will outlive the biggest and noisiest firework ever made.

FREE GIFTS THIS WEEK!

Have you seen the magnificent coloured stand-up figure of Douglas Fairbanks which is being given away this week in the "Nelson Lee Library"? The figure is over seven inches high, and it will stand up on any level surface.

The "Nelson Lee Library" is giving away one of these stunning cut-outs every Wednesday. Last week it was Harold Lloyd; next week it will be Buster Keaton.

THE BEST EVER!

These wonderful, life-like figures are the finest gifts of their kind ever offered by any paper. Get yours to-day!

The "Nelson Lee Library" also contains a fine book-length complete story, "St. Franks' on its Honour!" Just the kind of yarn you like to read.

This splendid Free Gift number is on sale everywhere, price twopence.

THE TREASURE HOUSE!

That is the name of a new and wonderful book which will cause endless delight to all my younger chums; and, as a matter of fact, to everybody else. "The Treasure House" will be issued in fortnightly parts, price 1s. 3d. each, and No. 1 will be published on Thursday, November 4th. This is a truly magnificent book, for it will deal with all the wonder and splendour of the world around us. There will be thousands of ripping illustrations showing the beauties of Nature, the dramatic and appealing scenes out of history, and the marvels of science and art, and, without exaggeration, these charmingly coloured pictures are the finest ever put before readers. The full title of this grand work is "The Children's Treasure House," but the subjects it deals with appeal to all. It is a book not to be missed, and the order for Part 1 should be placed at once. It is edited by Mr. Arthur Mee, who has done so much for years past to shed light on a myriad fascinating things. To know these things is to make life finer and better all round.

L.M.S.

If the reader chum who sent me a postcard and signed himself "L. M. S.," will forward his address I shall be pleased to send him what he asks. Savvy, L. M. S.?

For Next Monday:

"NOBODY'S CHUM!"

By Frank Richards.

Poor old Bob Cherry is going from bad to worse, as the above title well illustrates. You simply must read this strong story, boys. It's a winner!

THE LAST FOOTER SUPPLEMENT!

As this will be the last of the Footer Supplements, for this season, at any rate, those of you who are collecting them should make certain of adding this issue to your set.

"THE BOY WITH THE MILLION-POUND SECRET!"

By David Goodwin.

There will be another gripping instalment of this fine serial, chums. Don't miss it, whatever you do! Chin, chin!

YOUR EDITOR.

SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY!



That's what you'll be saying when you've read this top-hole story of your old favourites, Harry Wharton & Co. It shows Mr. Frank Richards in very humorous vein.

Trot round to your news-agent and ask him for a copy of—

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No. 39.

On Sale Friday, November 5th : : : : : Price 4d.

AGAINST HIS OWN FORM! A chap who scores the winning goal in a footer match usually comes in for a storm of cheering. But all Bob Cherry gets for his goal is a chorus of hissing—for he's played against his own Form and helped in their defeat!

The Deserter!



A Powerful and Dramatic Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, introducing Bob Cherry, once the most popular member of the Remove, but now dubbed a deserter! :: :: By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Man Missing!

"**B**OB coming?" Half a dozen voices asked that question, as Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, arrived on Little Side at Greyfriars.

It was time for the ball to be kicked off, in the match with St. Jim's; and the St. Jim's men were ready and waiting. For once, Harry Wharton was not on time.

His brow was dark as he came back from the House to the football ground. And as he came alone it was really unnecessary to ask the question, which nevertheless half a dozen of the Remove footballers asked at once. For if Bob Cherry, of the Remove, had intended to play in the St. Jim's match, he would have been on hand already.

"Bob coming?" Wharton shook his head.

"No." "And why not?" growled Johnny Bull.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. "You asked him, Harry?" said Nugent.

"Yes. I went specially to ask him, didn't I?" said the captain of the Remove.

"Yes—but—" Nugent hesitated. "I put it civilly, if that's what you mean," said Wharton, with a short laugh.

"Then why has Bob refused to play?" "Back up!" inquired Johnny Bull.

"I suppose so." "It's rotten! We want him in this game," said Johnny. "Can't imagine why Bob's playing the giddy ox like this."

"The rottenfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh dismally.

Vernon-Smith of the Remove broke in. "Look here, Wharton. Remove matches can't be played with like this.

A fellow has to play if he's wanted to play, or else get out of the team."

"I know that." "This is the second time Bob Cherry's let us down," said the Bounder, frowning.

"Perhaps he couldn't help it in the Highcliffe match, as his father came down to see him that day—but I suppose he can help it now. We're playing at home to-day, and he's on the spot—and I suppose his father isn't paying him another visit. Why can't he play, then?"

"He won't," said Wharton curtly. "Because you've been rowing, and he's not on good terms with you any longer, is that it?"

"It looks like it." "Well," said the Bounder emphatically, "it's not good enough."

Wharton compressed his lips. "You needn't tell me that, Smithy. I've told Bob Cherry that if he doesn't play for the Remove to-day he won't play football for the Form again for the rest of the season."

"And he still refuses?" asked Peter Todd.

"Yes." "Blessed if I understand the chap!"

"The esteemed Bob has got his ridiculous back up," said Hurree Singh. "But we cannot keep St. Jim's waiting much longer."

"Redwing's ready," said the Bounder. "I'm ready, if you want me, Wharton," said Tom Redwing, looking at the captain of the Remove inquiringly.

"I'd much rather see Bob in his place in the team—I know he's a better man. But if you want me—"

"It's a case of Hobson's choice," said Harry. "Cherry refuses to play. We shall want you, Reddy."

"Right-ho, then." "We may as well get going," said Johnny Bull. "The St. Jim's men will be wondering what's the matter."

Harry Wharton nodded, and walked over to where Tom Merry, of St. Jim's, was chatting with his friends.

Undoubtedly the St. Jim's men were a little surprised, though they were waiting very patiently and politely for the home team.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, you chaps," said Harry. "But—"

"All serene," said Tom Merry, with a cheery smile.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"We're ready now," said Harry. "A man I wanted isn't able to play, and I've had to put in another man. That's all. We're ready to get going now."

"Right-ho!" And the two skippers tossed, and the kick-off fell to the visitors.

Wharton was not looking so cheery and confident as usual, as he lined up with his men.

He was deeply annoyed and exasperated by the defection of Bob Cherry; who was a mighty man in the half-way line, and was seriously wanted in the match with St. Jim's.

St. Jim's were as good as Greyfriars; there was little to choose between the two teams; and it was, therefore, no light matter for the captain of the Remove to lose one of his best men.

Tom Redwing was a good enough half-back in his way; but neither he nor any other member of the team supposed that he was a patch on Bob Cherry.

And Wharton—quite contrary to his custom—had gone out of his way to conciliate his former friend—had, in fact, eaten humble pie, as many of the fellows would have regarded it, rather than leave Bob out of the game.

And he had eaten humble pie for nothing; Bob had refused to play, for no reason apparently excepting that his back was up, and he was on unfriendly terms with his old chums. That might be a reason for not speaking to them, off the football ground; but it was no reason at all for letting down the team.

Off the football ground he could hug his

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grievances, real or fancied, as much as he liked, and to his heart's content; but when he was wanted to play for school, he should have played. His present line of action was unpardonable.

It was utterly unlike Bob Cherry, too; it was what no fellow would have expected of him. But Bob was "up against it" in these days, and a good deal changed from his old cheery self.

Wharton made an effort to dismiss his annoyance from his mind, and to devote his whole thoughts to football. He needed all his attention for the games for St. Jim's were going strong from the kick-off.

From the kick-off it could be seen that the two teams were very evenly matched; as the first half wore away, it transpired that there was a slight preponderance on the side of the visitors. But the Remove put up a great game—a more defensive game than they were accustomed to; and there was no score till close on half-time. And then the ball came in from Tom Merry's foot, beating Squiff in goal.

The visitors were one up at the interval. And all the players were breathing hard and deep after their exertions.

Fortune smiled on the Remove early in the second half, when Harry Wharton put the ball in.

And then the game went on, ding-dong; with little advantage to either side, both teams putting in all they knew as the minutes ticked away towards the finish.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Against the Grain!

"CHERRY!"

"Oh! Yes, sir."

"Make an effort to keep your mind upon your occupation, Cherry."

"Oh! Certainly, sir!" stammered Bob.

He coloured deeply under the rather severe glance of Mr. Quelch.

Bob Cherry was sitting at the table in the Remove master's study, with his books and papers before him.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Bob was the only member of the Lower School who was at work. And he was at work by his own choice.

It was very kind—very kind indeed—of Mr. Quelch, to give up some of his scanty leisure to help the junior to make up for lost time. Bob realised that, and he was grateful. But, in spite of himself, his thoughts would wander to the football ground, to the match that was going on there in which he ought to have played.

His heart was there; and his thoughts, rather naturally, wandered to where his heart was.

Neither was Bob's conscience quite comfortable.

Wharton had specially asked him to play, after he had declared his intention of standing out of the match; and Bob knew that it had cost the captain of the Remove an effort to put his pride in his pocket to that extent.

He had refused. He had had no choice but to refuse, for he had asked Mr. Quelch to help him that afternoon with his Latin, and Mr. Quelch had consented. The appointment with his Form master could not be broken for any reason whatever. That was impossible. Once having fixed up the "extra toot" with Mr. Quelch, Bob had barred himself off from football for the day—not in the least expecting that Wharton

would ask him again, at the last moment, to play for the Remove. But for that unfortunate conjunction of circumstances, Bob would gladly have met the captain of the Remove half way, and joined his old friends on the football field. But it had been impossible, and Wharton had left him in a bitter mood, obviously completely estranged now and unforgiving.

Bob was not feeling happy.

He hardly knew how it had come about that he was on such rotten terms with the fellows who had always been his friends.

A bad report from his Form master, a stern interview with his father, had determined Bob to work this term—to prove to his father that he was not a slacker, not wasting his time at the school. He had taken to "swotting" with dismal disinclination, but with grim determination. From his very unwillingness to "swot," he had overdone it.

And then the troubles had begun, and had gone on increasing—trouble right and left—and his own temper had often failed him, under the unaccustomed stress of "swotting" for a prize examination. Now—he hardly knew how or why—he was the most unpopular fellow in the Remove—scarcely on speaking terms with any fellow in the Form—chumming with a Fourth Form man for the sake of speaking to somebody—passing his old friends by without a look or a word. It was a rotten state of affairs, and it had culminated in this—standing out of an important fixture in which he was badly wanted, with the prospect of being dropped out of Remove football for the rest of the season.

No wonder poor Bob's thoughts wandered from Latin grammar—kind as it was of Mr. Quelch to give him an hour on a half-holiday—an hour of a busy Form master's very scanty leisure.

After being called to order by Mr. Quelch, Bob made an effort to concentrate his mind on the task in hand.

Mr. Quelch was giving him help in deponent verbs—those extremely disconcerting verbs which are passive in form but active in meaning.

Undoubtedly Bob needed assistance there.

But out of doors, in the keen, wintry air, the Remove fellows were playing St. Jim's, and Bob's hapless thoughts wandered and wandered; and only by incessant efforts did he keep his mind on deponent verbs.

Mr. Quelch glanced at his clock.

"The hour is not yet up, Cherry," he said. "We will continue, if you wish, but I think you are tired."

"Oh! No, sir!" stammered Bob.

"I think you are tired, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch. "If you are not tired you are very inattentive."

"Oh, sir," said Bob, his cheeks crimson. He felt an ungrateful brute, and he could not help it. Nature had not designed Bob Cherry for a "swot"—and he hated deponent verbs.

Mr. Quelch's rather severe face relaxed as he saw the distress in Bob's face.

"You must not overdo it, my boy," he said. "Of late, Cherry, you have worked very satisfactorily. You have made very great progress in class, and I think you have a chance, at least, to gain the Head's Latin prize, for which your father entered your name. At least, I think you will attain an honourable place if you do not gain the prize. That will be a great satisfaction to your father, who was very disappointed with your report last term."

"Yes, sir," muttered Bob.

Bob would have given all the prizes ever offered at Greyfriars School to have been in his old place in the Remove cloyen that afternoon.

For the Head's Latin prize he did not

care a straw; but he cared very much for keeping his promise to his father.

"But you must not overdo it, or you may find yourself stale for the examination," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "You appear to have given up football this afternoon, Cherry, for your studies."

"Yes, sir."

"That is very creditable—very creditable, indeed. But you must keep up games practice. Health comes first of all."

"Yes," said Bob.

"I think I have noticed," went on Mr. Quelch, "that you are a good deal in the Fourth Form passage of late."

Bob started a little. He had not supposed that the Form master had noticed that. But there were very few things in connection with his Form that the Remove master did not notice.

"Well, yes, sir," said Bob. "It—it's not easy to work in the Remove passage, I find. Wilkinson, of the Fourth, lets me work in his study. It's a good deal quieter there."

"I have no doubt of it," assented Mr. Quelch, with a slight smile.

The Remove passage, undoubtedly, was the noisiest part of Greyfriars School; and it was not very long since Bob Cherry had been one of the noisiest fellows in the Remove passage.

"Wilkinson of the Fourth has also entered for the Head's Latin prize, I think," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. We do a lot of work together," said Bob. "I suppose we're rivals, in a way, but we pull together all right."

Mr. Quelch reflected.

"There is no harm in your working in a Fourth Form study, Cherry," he said. "It is very unusual; but, in the circumstances, I approve. Certainly you have been making very great progress. But, as I have told you, you must not overdo it, or you may defeat your own aim. And now that we have finished, I recommend you to take some exercise and fresh air, and leave your books alone for a time."

"Very well, sir."

And Bob carried his books away from Mr. Quelch's study, conscious that he had risen a good deal of late in his Form master's estimation, but still more conscious of what he had missed that afternoon.

He deposited his books in Study No. 13, in the Remove, and then walked out of the House. He wanted some fresh air after deponent verbs, and he wanted to see how the Remove were getting on in the game with St. Jim's. Billy Bunter was loafing by the steps as he came out of the House, and Bob tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How's the match going?" he asked.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Rottenly!" he answered.

"Oh!" said Bob.

"Lot you care!" said Bunter loftily. "You've let the Form down. You don't care if St. Jim's mop the ground up with us."

"You fat dummy!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What's the score?" growled Bob.

"Oh! St. Jim's are winning all along the line," said Bunter. "I hear that you're going to be turned out of Remove football, Cherry, for letting the team down like this. I must say you deserve it. I must say—Yarooop!"

Bunter sat down suddenly on the steps, under a heavy hand, and Bob walked on and left him roaring.

He came on Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth, as he went towards the football ground. Wilkinson of the Fourth was with them—and of



"Get off the ground, Cherry!" roared Bolsover major. "You're not wanted here!" "Rats to you!" cried Bob, his eyes glinting. "Then shift him!" At the mention of the words, many hands grasped Bob Cherry, and he was rushed, struggling, and red with wrath, off the ground. (See Chapter 3.)

late, Bob had been very chummy with Teddy Wilkinson. He did not, as a matter of fact, think very much of Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth. Temple was a very lofty youth, with an extremely good opinion of himself—though upon what he founded that good opinion was a secret only to himself. Bob gave Wilkinson a cheery nod, and stopped for a moment to speak. His own mind being full of the Remove match with St. Jim's, he forgot, for the moment, that the lofty Cecil Reginald affected a superb ignorance of Lower Fourth affairs.

"How's it going?" he asked.

"How's what goin'?" asked Temple.

"The football match, of course."

"Is there a match on, this afternoon?" asked Temple, glancing alternately at Dabney and Fry.

"I think not," said Fry gravely.

"Oh, rather not," said Dabney. "The seniors are at games practice, if that's what you mean, Cherry."

"I mean the Remove match, as you jolly well know," grunted Bob.

"Dear me! Now I come to think of it, I did see some little boys playing with a football," said Temple.

"Hardly what you'd call a football match," said Dabney.

"Oh, hardly!"

"You silly, cheeky chumps!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Dear me! What manners they have in the Lower Fourth!" sighed Temple.

"Shockin'!" said Fry.

"Oh, rather," concurred Dabney.

Bob Cherry resisted the temptation to mop up the quad with the elegant figure of Cecil Reginald Temple. As he was chummy with a Fourth Form

man now, and came a good deal into the Fourth Form passage, it was not judicious to use the captain of the Fourth for mopping up the quad.

Cecil Reginald turned loftily away, never knowing what a narrow escape he had had.

Bob strode on towards the football ground, and Teddy Wilkinson joined him, and walked down to Little Side with him. Wilkinson of the Fourth was grinning.

"Peach, ain't he?" he remarked, alluding to the great Cecil Reginald.

"A silly owl, if you ask me," grunted Bob.

Wilkinson chuckled.

"All that, and more," he agreed. "I've just been talking football to him. He thinks he's going to beat the Remove in the next Form match."

"It would take him about a hundred years," said Bob.

"Well, I'm not so sure," said Wilkinson thoughtfully. "You seem to have chucked playing for the Remove, and you were one of the best men they had."

"Thanks!" said Bob, with a faint grin.

"Oh, I'm not flattering you; you know it's a fact as well as I do," said Wilkinson seriously. "You know that we claim to be the junior eleven of Greyfriars—"

"Gammon!"

"Well, we do, and Temple's great on it," said Wilkinson, "and we jolly well were the junior eleven, you know, till Wharton made up a new football club in the Lower Fourth."

"What about the Shell?" grinned Bob. "I've heard Hobson of the Shell

say that his crowd are the real, genuine junior eleven of Greyfriars."

"Oh, that's just Shell swank, of course. But what I was thinking is, that the Upper Fourth team being the real junior eleven, Remove men ought to be playing in it, just as Temple says; and if you're not going to play for your own Form, you could play for us, see?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"There's room for you in the team," said Wilkinson.

"I hardly think Temple would think so," said Bob, with a snile. "I'm no player of his drawing-room variety of football."

"Oh, we'd make him see reason—scalp him if necessary," said Teddy Wilkinson. "I'd like to see some backbone put into the team—and that's where you'd come in."

Bob shook his head again, and the subject dropped. The two juniors arrived on Little Side, in time to hear a shout:

"Goal!"

"That's St. Jim's," said Wilkinson.

"Jolly good goal," said Bolsover major, who was in the crowd looking on. "That fellow D'Arcy can kick a goal, ass as he looks."

"How's it going?" asked Bob.

Bolsover major looked round at him. He gave Bob a glare of hostility and contempt.

"We're being licked," he said. "That's two up for St. Jim's—they're three to one, and more coming. A lot you care."

"Of course I care," snapped Bob savagely. "What do you mean?"

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"Why ain't you playing for the Remove, then?"

"No business of yours."

"Well, then, sheer off the Remove ground, with your Fourth Form pal," sneered Bolsover major. "You've let the team down, and we're bagging a licking, and you jolly well ought to be ashamed to show your face here. Get back to your swotting—that's what you like."

And Bolsover major swung contemptuously away, leaving Bob with crimson cheeks.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Outcast of the Remove!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were fighting hard, an uphill fight.

Never had Tom Merry and his men, from St. Jim's, seemed in better fettle. And the Remove men were not at their very best.

Since Wharton had taken a goal early in the second half, fortune had persistently frowned on the Remove.

For a long time the home team had defended well; but St. Jim's had got through at last, with a goal from Talbot of the Shell; and that goal had been followed up almost immediately by one from the elegant foot of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

With time drawing close, and the visitors two goals ahead, it was fairly clear to the Greyfriars crowd that the game was over bar shouting.

All that Harry Wharton & Co. could do, was to fight hard to keep the margin down; quite a new experience for the doughty footballers of the Remove.

It was a gruelling game and both sides showed signs of their exertions; but the play still went on hard and fast. Both sides meant business, and perhaps some of the Removites hoped, by a turn of fortune, to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. But the hope, if hope there was, was very remote.

"Three to one!" said Hazeldene, with a sneering grin. "They've got past Field in goal three times. Looks as if they might have got a better man between the posts."

"Rot!" said a voice behind Hazel.

He looked round and saw Bob Cherry. "Oh, you!" said Hazel. "What are you doing here, Cherry? Interested in the match, by any chance?"

Some of the Remove fellows laughed.

"If they've beaten Squiff three times, they'd have beaten you a dozen times, if you'd been in goal, Hazel," growled Bob.

"Thanks," said Hazel, "so glad to hear your opinion! Anyhow, I'd have played if I'd been asked; I wouldn't have let the side down."

"Look here, what do you want here, Cherry?" demanded two or three Remove fellows.

Bob stared at them angrily.

"I suppose I can watch the game, if I like," he exclaimed.

"Rats! You ought to have been playing," said Wibley, of the Remove. "Like your cheek to show up here, I think, after refusing to play."

"I—I couldn't help that, Wib. I—"

"Why couldn't you?" sneered Hazel.

"Well, I couldn't!"

"Swotting, what?" asked Micky Desmond. "Sneaking after the Head's prize, and sucking up to a Form master—playing Good Little Georgie who loved his lessons! Pah!"

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Bob Cherry breathed hard.

He had known that he had become unpopular in the Remove; but he had never realised that his unpopularity had grown to this extent. He had never dreamed of open hostility like this from fellows he had been friendly with, on the Lower Fourth football ground.

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter rolled along. "I say, Cherry's come down here to see the side licked. Boot him off!"

"You fat idiot!" growled Bob. "Shut up, or I'll shut you up!"

"Let Bunter alone!" hooted Morgan. "I suppose you can see that the side is being licked, can't you?"

"Licked to the wide," said Jimmy Vivian.

"And all your fault!"

"Get out of it!"

"Sheer off!"

Bob Cherry set his teeth. It was hostility on all sides, and he was not conscious that he had deserved this.

"Is football a one-man game?" he asked bitterly. "Does one fellow in eleven make all that difference?"

"You know it does," growled Trevor, of the Remove. "St. Jim's are stronger than ever to-day, and with the Remove going all out, we mightn't be able to beat them. And that's the time you choose for deserting the side."

Bob was silent.

A few minutes' observation of the game showed him the truth of what Trevor had said.

There was little to choose between the two sides, if Greyfriars had been at their strongest—but with one of the best men left out, there was no doubt that the Remove were outclassed.

Even had Bob been in his old place, and playing the game of his life, it was very doubtful whether St. Jim's would have been beaten—the result would have been on the knees of the gods, so to speak.

Without him, there was little doubt of the result—it was a victory for the visitors.

Certainly, Tom Merry & Co. were winning on first-class play. But if the Remove had been a little stronger, the St. Jim's men would have been held—where the scales were so evenly balanced, a little more weight would have made a world of difference.

Bob Cherry knew more about Soccer than any fellow standing there could have told him; and he knew very clearly that he had served the Remove a very ill turn by standing out of the match. And yet, how could he have helped it? What, with one circumstance and another, he had scarcely been his own master in the matter.

Round him the Removites were not silent. There were fellows there who had been keen and anxious to play for the Form, and had been left out because they were not considered good enough. It was exasperating enough to them to see a fellow who obviously was good enough stand out of his own accord, leaving the side to be defeated.

Bob stood silent, with crimson cheeks, listening to the gibes of the Remove fellows, while the game went on—to slow but sure defeat for the home side. Once or twice the Remove men got away in good style; but Tom Merry & Co.'s defence was sound; and Fatty Wynn, of St. Jim's, in goal, was not to be beaten. Always the game swept back into the home half; and Squiff in goal was given plenty of hard work. Hazeldene was the only fellow who thought that Hazel would have done better in Squiff's place.

Had Hazel been between the posts, the

St. Jim's score would have reached a fantastic figure. Tom Merry & Co. had come along with their shooting boots on, so to speak; and Squiff was the only man in the Remove who could have kept the margin down.

"There they go again!" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Goal!" shouted half a dozen St. Jim's men who had come over with their team; and the Greyfriars fellows gave a cheer. They knew how to cheer good play, even when it was leading to overwhelming defeat for their own champions.

"Four!" snorted Bolsover major. "Four to one! Still seven minutes to go! What a game! That man Redwing's no good!"

"Redwing's playing up jolly well!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"Oh, you shut up!" said Bolsover major. "Nobody here wants to hear your opinion, I can tell you!"

"You cheeky cad!" shouted Bob, his patience breaking down at last.

"I said shut up!" roared Bolsover major. "And I mean shut up! Clear off the ground with your Fourth Form pal! You're not wanted here!"

Teddy Wilkinson touched Bob's arm. "Come along, old fellow," he murmured. "Breakers ahead."

Bob's eyes glinted, and he shook off his friend's hand.

"I'm staying," he said. "I'm going to see the finish."

"I say, you fellows, he wants to see us licked!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Get out!" roared Bolsover.

"Rats to you!"

"Shift him!"

Five or six angry Removites hustled Bob Cherry back. His temper blazed up as he was shoved, and his right came out, and Bolsover major went headlong.

That did it, so to speak. Half a dozen pairs of hands grasped Bob, and he was rushed back from the field. Bolsover major picked himself up and joined in the rush. Bob Cherry, struggling, and red with wrath, was rushed off the ground, and pitched down in a breathless heap.

"That's for you!" gasped Bolsover major. "Now you'll keep clear if you know what's good for you."

And the juniors crowded back to the field, to watch the last few minutes of the game: while Bob sat and gasped for breath.

Bob staggered to his feet.

He was striding back towards the football field, his face ablaze, when Teddy Wilkinson caught his arm.

"Chuck it, old man!"

"Let go!"

"It's not good enough! Come along with me, old bean," said Wilkinson, of the Fourth, and he drew Bob away.

Bob realised that he was right, and he went. As they left the ground, the final whistle blew. The game was over; and St. Jim's were the winners by four goals to one.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Called to Account!

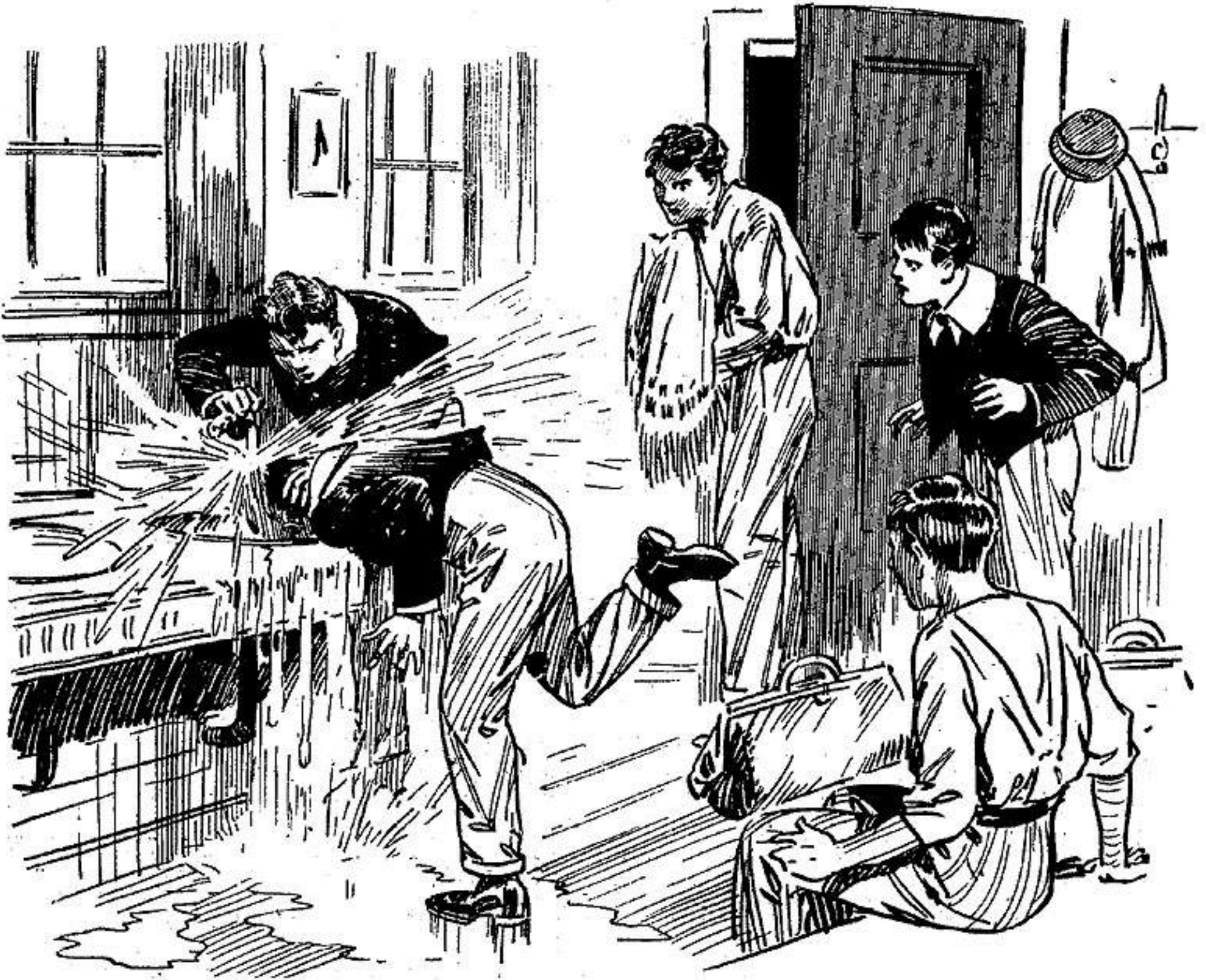
"**N**O!" "Look here—" boomed Bolsover major.

"No!"

Wharton spoke decidedly.

Bolsover major was standing in the doorway of Study No. 1, with three or four Remove fellows behind him. Wharton and Nugent were in the study, getting ready for prep.

"I tell you," roared Bolsover major,



Bob Cherry wrenched Hazeldene across to a tap, shoved his head into a basin, and turned the tap on. "Ow! Help! Rescue!" howled Hazeldene, spluttering and roaring and struggling in vain. (See Chapter 8.)

"that the fellow ought to get a Form ragging!"

"Rats!"

"You're captain of the Form, Wharton, and you're bound to take it up," said Skinner, from behind Bolsover major.

"Hear, hear!" said Hazeldene.

"Rot!" said Frank Nugent. "There's been trouble enough already—let it drop!"

Snort, from Bolsover major.

"Hasn't the fellow let the Form down?" he demanded. "Hasn't he let down the Remove, and chummed with another Form—that alone shows he's a rank outsider. Isn't he always mooching about with an Upper Fourth chap—sticking in an Upper Fourth study—swotting for a rotten prize! Sucking up to the masters, too! Quelchy always gives him the glad glance now—he's a model youth in these days! And he lets the eleven be walked over while he swots."

"Shame!" said Skinner.

"A lot you care about it, Skinner!" said Frank Nugent. "Did you even take the trouble to see the match?"

Skinner did not answer that question.

"Oh, chuck it, Bolsover!" exclaimed Harry Wharton irritably. "Cherry is out of Remove football now—I've told him that. Let it drop."

"That's not enough."

"Rubbish!"

"Did he let the team down, or didn't he?" bawled Bolsover major.

"Yes. But—"

"And did we get lioked, or didn't we?"

"St. Jim's beat us, and by a jolly wide margin," said Harry. "We can't always win matches. It would have made a big difference if Bob Cherry had played—but not all that difference. Soccer isn't a one-man game. I think St. Jim's would have won all the same, though not by so many goals. They were at the top of their form, and had the luck."

"That's so," agreed Nugent.

"And if they were at the top of their form, and had the luck, was that a time for Cherry to let the side down?" demanded Bolsover major.

"No. But let it drop."

"You're not going to take it up, then, as captain of the 'Remove'?" demanded Bolsover.

"No."

"Then I shall jolly well do it!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Do as you like; but give me a rest," he answered.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Bolsover major, and he stamped angrily away from Study No. 1.

Wharton shut the study door after him.

His face was frowning and he was troubled. The feeling in the Remove

against Bob Cherry was very strong; and certainly the captain of the Form could not help sharing it to some extent. A football captain could scarcely be anything but incensed when one of his best men refused to play in a match where he was badly wanted. There was bitter division now in the once united circle of the Famous Five; Bob Cherry's old comrades did not even speak to him now. Still, there was a limit, and the Co. were determined never, if they could help it, to join in any active hostility against the fellow who had been their chum.

"Least said sponest mended," said Frank, with a glance at his chum's troubled face.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes. I don't wonder that the fellows are wrathful. Bob's acted really badly. But if we can't be friends, we're not going to be enemies, if I can help it. The Remove can do as they like, but I'm not going to take a hand in it."

And the two juniors sat down to prep, giving no heed to the buzz of excited voices in the Remove passage.

Bolsover major's voice was booming there.

It was Percy Bolsover's belief that he would have made a much better leader of the Remove than the present captain of the Form, if the Remove fellows could only have seen it. The Removites

did not see it, and were not likely to see it. But at the present moment there was no doubt that the bully of the Remove had a following. The whole Form were exasperated with Bob Cherry; one offence after another had piled up against him, and he had taken no trouble whatever to conciliate his Form-fellows. Quite a crowd of Removites agreed with Bolsover major that a Form ragging was what the "outsider" wanted.

Skinner was quite keen in his support of Bolsover major. Skinner was always keen on anything that was up against the Famous Five. Billy Bunter squeaked his loudest on the same side, chiefly because Bob had sat him down on the House steps that afternoon. But better fellows than Skinner and Bunter were in full agreement with Bolsover major; and he found that he had the support of quite a crowd. As the captain of the Remove declined to concern himself about the matter, Bolsover major stepped into the leadership without opposition, and he quite enjoyed his new prominence.

"Where is the fellow now?" exclaimed Bolsover, addressing a dozen fellows in the Remove passage. "Mugging up Latin in a Fourth Form study!"

"Rotten!" said Hazeldene.

"Awful!" said Ogilvy, with a grin. "You never mug up Latin, do you, Bolsover?"

"Never!"

"Or anything else?" went on Ogilvy, and there was a laugh.

"Look here, you Scotch ass——"

"Not oven footer," added Ogilvy. "You're just as good at Soccer as you are at Latin, and about as good at Latin as at Sanscrit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover major. "Look here, you fellows, that rotter Cherry is going to have a Form ragging."

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll give him a chance to speak up for himself," said Bolsover major. "If he's got anything to say, he can say it. We'll have him in the rag, and give him a fair trial."

"Hear, hear!"

"He won't come," grinned Russell. "He's in the Fourth Form passage, and I fancy he'll stay there."

"We'll have him out."

"That means a raid on the Fourth," said Ogilvy. "There will be a shindy if we begin that."

"Who's afraid of a shindy?" roared Bolsover major.

"Nobody, old bean; but we got a lot of lines last time we raided the Fourth. I haven't done all mine yet."

"Who'll follow me to the Fourth Form passage and have Bob Cherry out?" bawled Bolsover major, looking round for support.

There was no answer.

"Don't all speak at once," said the bully of the Remove sarcastically.

"Dear man, wash it out," said Ogilvy. "If we're going to have a Form raid, we want Wharton and his mob with us. If they're standing out, I'm following their example, for one."

"Little me, for two!" grinned Russell.

"Me for three!" chuckled Peter Todd.

Bolsover major gave an angry snort. By seizing the propitious moment, and loudly voicing what all the fellows were feeling, he had forced himself into a sort of leadership. But when it

came to actual business, he found that he was not exactly the leader the Remove were looking for. Not a fellow was disposed to enter into a shindy with the Upper Fourth, under the leadership of Bolsover major.

"Well, after all, he will come if we tell him we want him," said Bolsover major, moderating his transports, so to speak. "We'll send him a message to come and face us in the Rag."

"He won't come," said Hazeldene. "If he doesn't, we'll jolly well make him face the music in the dorm to-night," said Bolsover major. "But we'll give him a chance. I'll send him a note, ordering him to appear before the Form in the Rag for judgment."

Skinner winked at Snoop, who chuckled. Skinner did not think it likely that Bob Cherry would take much notice of orders from Bolsover major.

Bolsover went into his study, and came back in a few minutes with a paper in his hand, which he proceeded to read aloud to the interested Removites.

"Bob Cherry,—You are ordered to appear before the Form in the Rag at eight-thirty this evening, to be judged for letting down the Form, finking a football match, and being a rank outsider generally.—P. BOLSOVER."

"That's all right, I think," said Bolsover major. "Now, who's going to take this note to Wilkinson's study in the Fourth? You can take it, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Bolsover——"

"Here you are, cut off!"

"I—I say, you fellows, that beast Cherry might kick me, you know, if I take him that message."

"I shall kick you if you don't," said Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, you know——"

Bolsover major lifted a large foot.

"I—I'll take it with pleasure, of course," exclaimed Bunter hastily.

And William George Bunter rolled away with the note, and Bolsover major & Co. went to prep. After prep, Bob Cherry was to be dealt with in the Rag if he obeyed the summons. The general opinion of the juniors was that Bob would not obey the summons, and that he would not be seen in the Rag that evening.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Answer!

TEDDY WILKINSON glanced at Bob Cherry several times as they sat working at the table in Study No. 5, in the Fourth Form passage.

Bob was writing steadily; but his rugged face was darkly clouded, and obviously he was not in a cheery mood.

Wilkinson of the Fourth was rather puzzled.

He liked Bob Cherry, as most fellows did. Until the recent trouble had arisen Bob had been the most popular fellow in his own Form, and fellows in other Forms liked him well enough, so far as they knew him at all. Since Bob had taken to "swotting" for the Head's prize, at his father's command, Wilkinson knew that he had had trouble in his Form, which was not surprising, for "swots" were not liked in the Remove. Neither was it surprising that Bob was glad to work in a Fourth Form study—the Remove passage being a spot which no fellow would have chosen for quiet work.

It was very unusual at Greyfriars, as at most schools, for a fellow to "chum"

outside his own Form; and there was, too, a keen rivalry between the two Fourths—Upper and Lower—at Greyfriars. So it was natural that in all these circumstances, Bob should lose his popularity in the Remove. But the outbreak of hostility that afternoon on Little Side had taken Wilkinson quite by surprise. And though he liked Bob, and had more than one reason for making him welcome in Study No. 5, he could not help thinking that Bob must be partly, at least, to blame for the new state of affairs.

He wondered whether Bob was thinking the same.

Certainly the Remove fellow looked troubled and worried enough.

But, troubled and worried as he was, Bob was putting in hard and steady work. Whatever might happen, Bob kept in the forefront of his thoughts his promise to his father to work hard and make up for lost time. Probably Major Cherry did not dream for one moment of the consequences that promise had brought upon his son. And it could not be denied that Bob had set to work somewhat injudiciously. The change in his ways had been very sudden; and the unaccustomed labour of "swotting" had certainly had an irritating effect upon his cheery, sunny temper. He had thrown all other things aside for the sake of his new "stunt"; which to the other Remove fellows was simply a "stunt," and a rather annoying one, though to Bob himself it was very serious business.

There was a tap at the door and it opened.

Bob glanced up irritably.

It was quite a new thing for Bob Cherry to be irritable. That was one of the effects of the "swotting."

But he remembered quickly that he was not in his own quarters now, and he dropped his eyes to his work again at once. If any of Teddy Wilkinson's friends in the Fourth had dropped into the study for a chat, even while prep was going on, certainly the Removite had no right to object.

But it was not a Fourth Former who looked into the study. It was Billy Bunter's fat face and glimmering spectacles that appeared in the doorway.

Wilkinson looked at him.

"Hallo, barrel! Roll away," he said.

Bob looked up again.

"You, Bunter!"

"I've got a message for you," said the Owl of the Remove, blinking at Bob cautiously. "Mind, no larks! This message isn't from me, you know; it's from Bolsover major."

"What the thump is Bolsover sending me messages for?" grunted Bob Cherry. "He will see me in the dorm presently."

"Well, here it is," said Bunter. "I'll take an answer, if you like."

Bob read the message, and his brow darkened.

"The cheeky fool!" he said.

He tossed the paper across the table to Wilkinson.

"Look at that!"

Wilkinson looked at it.

"Not worth while answering," he said.

"Oh, I'll answer it," said Bob savagely, and he proceeded to scrawl across Bolsover's message: "Go and eat coke."

Wilkinson grinned.

"Take that back to Bolsover, Bunter," snapped Bob Cherry, and he threw the paper to the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, Cherry——"

"Shut up, and hook it!"

Bunter, with an indignant sniff, shut up and hooked it as directed. He slammed the door after him as he went.

"You seem to be rather in hot water

in your Form, Cherry," Teddy Wilkinson remarked.

"Yes, looks like it," grunted Bob.

"It's rather a change, isn't it?"

Bob knitted his brows.

"It's because I'm working for a prize," he said. "They don't like swots in the Lower Fourth. I've had no peace since my name was put down for the Latin exam."

"But Linley, of your study, swots like thunder, and he seems to pull all right with the others."

Bob's brow grew darker.

"If you think it's my fault—" he began.

"Not at all, old chap; but I'm sorry to see it," said Wilkinson. "Mark Linley was playing in the football match this afternoon, I think."

"Yes."

"He's a pal of yours, isn't he?"

"He was," grunted Bob.

"Oh!"

Wilkinson took up his pen again. Bob Cherry's cheeks were rather red.

"Linley's not like me," he said. "He can grind Latin and Greek, and win prizes, and keep up footer just the same; I don't know how he does it. I know I can't. Mugging up Latin knocks me out for everything else."

"Why mug it up, then?" asked Teddy Wilkinson. "It's not really in your line, is it?"

"No."

"You can't care much about the Head's prize," said the Fourth Former. "You've never gone in for prizes. You've been keen on pots and things, but you've never worried about school prizes."

"No fear! I don't care a rap for the prize, or any other blinking prize. Blow the prize!"

"Then why the thump—" said Wilkinson. "I'm going in for it—it's a step towards bagging a scholarship later on, and I need one to see me through. But you don't."

"No; but—" Bob grunted. "It's not a matter of choice. I've slacked at classes, and my father's thinking of taking me away from Greyfriars if I don't show any improvement. He's put me in for the Head's Latin prize as a test. It's up to me."

"Hard cheese!" said Wilkinson.

And the two juniors worked again in silence.

Half-past eight came and went, but it did not even cross Bob's mind to wonder whether Bolsover major and his mob were waiting for him in the Rag. He had forgotten the existence of Bolsover major.

Prep was over, but both the juniors kept on with Latin, putting in a quarter of an hour to the good. Then Bob Cherry rose to his feet, and yawned deeply.

"Fed up?" grinned Wilkinson.

"Up to the chin," answered Bob.

"Same here. I'm going along to see Temple."

"I think I'll stroll down to the Rag."

Wilkinson looked at him.

"Wouldn't it be just as well to give the Rag the go-by for a bit?" he suggested. "After that message—"

"I'd forgotten that." Bob's blue eyes glinted. "By Jove! That's a reason for going into the Rag. I'll let Bolsover major see whether I'm afraid to show up there."

"Easy does it," said Wilkinson. "You don't want any more trouble with your Form, old bean."

"I don't care!"

"It may mean a ragging."

Bob's jaw squared.

"There will be somebody hurt before I get ragged," he said.

And he left the study.

His face was grim, and there was a gleam in his eyes as he went down the stairs.

Two or three Remove fellows looked at him, and exchanged glances. Billy Bunter spotted him on the stairs and rolled away to the Rag at full speed. He burst breathlessly into that apartment, where more than half the Remove had gathered after prep.

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, "he's coming!"

"Cherry?" asked Bolsover major.

"Yes; he'll be here in a tick."

"I knew he'd come," said Bolsover major, with a vaunting look round. "He's late, but I knew he'd come. He had to."

"Here he is!" murmured Skinner.

And all eyes turned on Bob Cherry as he strode into the Rag.

BAN !

"I can't afford to buy a rocket, and a chap doesn't get many squibs for twopence!"

Quite true, my chum, but why not spend your twopence on something that will give you more satisfaction than a handful of doubtful squibs; something that will last a jolly sight longer than the best rocket ever made?

Why not buy a copy of this week's—

"GEM"?

It's made more noise than all the Fireworks in Christendom, and is still going strong!

ON SALE WEDNESDAY.

PRICE 2d.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Form Ragging!

BOB CHERRY did not glance at the Removites.

He walked across to the fire, with his hands in his pockets, apparently oblivious of the fact that there were any Remove fellows in the room at all.

Fry, of the Fourth Form, happened to be there, and he gave Bob a friendly nod. Fry was rather a pal of Teddy Wilkinson's and sometimes made a third to tea in Study No. 5.

"Teddy coming down?" Fry asked, as Bob stood before the fire, staring at the glowing embers moodily.

"Wilkinson? I think he's gone in to Temple's study," said Bob. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the thump do you fellows want?"

That question was addressed to Bolsover major and his companions, as they crowded up round Bob, Bolsover in the lead.

"I say, you fellows, don't let him get away!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"I'll take care of that!" growled Bolsover.

"You silly ass! Who wants to get away?" snapped Bob Cherry. "Don't shove—I shall punch if you do."

"Are you going to lick the lot of us?" jeered Hazeldene.

"I'm going to lick any man that can't keep his distance," said Bob. "and I'll begin with you, if you like, Hazel."

"What's the row, you chaps?" asked Fry of the Fourth.

"You mind your own bizney, you Fourth Form fathead," said Bolsover major. "Now, look here, Cherry—"

"I'm looking," said Bob. "I can see a jolly ugly chivvy—not worth looking at."

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bob. "I'm fed up with you. Give a fellow a rest."

"You got my message—"

"And you got my answer," grunted Bob.

"You've come, all the same," sneered Bolsover.

"Not on your account."

"Well, now you're here, we're going to deal with you," said the bully of the Remove loftily.

"With or without gloves?" asked Bob.

"Take your choice. A little exercise will do me good after swotting Latin; and I've no objection to licking you, if you're keen on it."

"This isn't a scrap—it's a Form trial," said the burly Removite. "You've got to answer for what you've done."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry—" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, cut it out," said Bob contemptuously. "A Form trial wants the captain of the Form, and all the fellows. Are you playing at being captain of the Remove, Bolsover? Cut it out—it doesn't suit you. You're nobody—and your crowd are nobodies!"

"Are we?" exclaimed Hazeldene hotly.

"You are! Not a man among you," said Bob. "Not a footballer, and not a decent chap of any sort. Rank outsiders, the lot of you. If I'm going to answer to the Remove, it will be to the decent fellows in the Form, not to a mob of slackers, smokers, and outsiders. Go and eat coke!"

Fry of the Fourth chuckled. Bob was giving the Removites the plainest of plain English. As a matter of fact, Bolsover major and his comrades were far from representing the best element in the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co. were not there—Squiff, and Tom Brown, and Peter Todd, and Vernon-Smith, Mark Linley and Penfold and Newland, were not to be seen. Bolsover major was a footballer of sorts, and Trevor and Wibley could play; but there was not much to be said for the rest, from a sportsman's point of view. Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott, Fisher T. Fish and Billy Bunter, and the rest, did not exactly shed credit upon the Form they belonged to.

Most of them, in fact, were out for a "rag," and did not care much about the rights or wrongs of the matter.

Bolsover major reddened with rage. He, at least, was in deep earnest; and he was annoyed, too, by the fact that the leading spirits of the Remove declined to have anything to do with his proceedings. Ogilvy and Russell, Morgan and Dutton and Vivian, had come into the Rag, but they were obviously only onlookers, not inclined to take part on either side.

"So that's what you've got to say, is it?" demanded Bolsover.

"That's it!" said Bob.

"You've got to stand up—"

"I'm standing!"

"Before the Form—"

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"Before the fire, if you like," said Bob.

"And answer——"

"I've answered you."

"For what you've done, and left undone!" roared Bolsover major.

"To you?" jeered Bob Cherry. "And who are you, Bolsover? Are you anybody, by any chance?"

Some of the juniors grinned.

Certainly, Bob Cherry did not look much like a culprit at the bar of justice. He seemed to be quite as ready for trouble as Bolsover himself, if not a little more so.

Bolsover major set his teeth. He was very keen on the idea of a Form trial, with himself presiding.

"Swank as much as you like, you rotter," he said. "But you're going through it, all the same. A sneaking swot—sucking up to the masters——"

"That's a lie!" said Bob. "I'm swotting this term, right enough; that's true! It would do you good to put in a little swotting, too; I've heard Quelchey tell you in the Form-room that your con. would disgrace the Third."

"Well, I'm not a swot," said Bolsover major contemptuously. "I don't care what Quelchey says, or what he thinks. You refused to back up the Remove the day the Fourth raided our passage. What have you got to say about that?"

"Nothing—to you," answered Bob.

"You refused to join up the day we raided the Fourth," went on Bolsover. "What price that?"

"Is that all?" asked Bob.

"No, it isn't!"

"I hoped it was! Your voice isn't pleasant to listen to."

Bolsover major breathed hard.

"You've chummed with a Fourth-Form man—a thing no Remove chap ever does," he continued.

"No bizney of yours."

"You work in the Fourth Form passage—swotting with a Fourth Form sap!" said Bolsover major. "You dodge games practice."

"Go it!" said Bob.

"You've turned into a swot, a slacker, a rotter generally, and worst of all, you've let down the Form in a football match. St. Jim's beat us to-day by four goals to one."

"Wharton should have played you, old bean," said Bob. "Then it might have been forty goals instead of four."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover major, greatly incensed by that chuckle from his followers. "This rotten cheek isn't a laughing matter. I've told you what we've got against you, Bob Cherry; now we want to hear what you've got to say for yourself."

"Nothing!"

"You don't care what the Remove thinks about you, what?" asked Skinner.

"Not in the least."

"Oh, draw it mild," broke in Ogilvy.

"That's rather too thick, Cherry."

"Rubbish!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Russell.

"Oh, cheese it!"

"You're going to have a Form ragging," roared Bolsover major. "Wharton won't have a hand in it; but you're not getting off. You've deserted the Remove, and we don't want you. You can go and eat coke—along with your Fourth Form friends; and you can jolly well take a Form ragging along with you, see?"

"Is that the lot?" asked Bob.

"Yes, that's the lot."

"Thank goodness! Now shut up!" And Bob Cherry turned away. Bolsover major, crimson with wrath, looked round at the other fellows.

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"Collar him!" he said.

There was a movement; and Bob Cherry faced the Removites, his eyes flashing.

"Hands off!" he said. "I don't care a rap for you, or for all the Remove. Not a single, solitary rap! I've licked you before, Bolsover, and I'll lick you again as soon as you like!"

"I've told you this isn't a scrap!" said Bolsover. "It's a Form trial; and you're found guilty of being a rotter, a slacker, a funk, and of sucking up to Form masters, and letting the football side down. You're going to have a Form ragging! Collar him!"

Bolsover major led a rush.

Bob Cherry's hands went up like lightning, and Bolsover reeled back and crashed on the floor. But he was up again in a moment and rushing on, and half a dozen fellows backed him up. Bob Cherry struggled fiercely in the grasp of the Removites. Russell and Ogilvy and Vivian had joined in now; Bob's defiance had been a little too much for all the Remove fellows in the Rag. In the grasp of a crowd of juniors Bob Cherry swayed to and fro, fighting hard, till he went down with a crash.

"Look here, you Remove fags——" began Fry of the Fourth.

"Kick that Fourth Form cad out!" shouted Bolsover major.

Edward Fry beat a rather hurried retreat. Bolsover major's leadership was more or less of a jest among the Removites; but on one point, at least, every fellow in the Form was in full agreement with him—they were not going to stand any interference from the Fourth. Five or six fellows helped Fry of the Fourth to the door, and he went hurriedly, and was rather ruffled when he escaped from the Rag.

Russell slammed the door after him.

Bob Cherry was still resisting, but he resisted in vain. Hefty fighting-man as he was, he was hopelessly outnumbered.

Bolsover major dabbed his nose with his handkerchief; it was streaming crimson.

"Shove him on the table!" he shouted. "Bunter, cut off to my study and get a fives-bat!"

"This way, Cherry!" grinned Skinner.

Bob resisted fiercely; but he was swept across to the big table and slammed down on it. A dozen hands held him there, panting and furious. Billy Bunter came back with the fives-bat, and Bolsover grasped it.

"You're going to have a dozen, Cherry!" he announced.

"You rotter!" panted Bob.

Whack, whack!

Bolsover major laid on the fives-bat with a heavy hand.

"Go it!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack, whack!

Bob made a desperate effort, and almost succeeded in breaking loose. But the grasp of the raggers closed hard on him again, and he was held. And the lives-bat rose and fell hard and fast.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Fourth to the Rescue!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE yawned.

Cecil Reginald was reclining in the armchair in his study and listening to Wilkinson.

Wilkinson, who kept goal for the Fourth, was one of the few fellows in Temple's eleven who took football at all seriously. And Wilkinson was very

keen on getting Bob Cherry into the junior eleven. The present circumstances, as he pointed out to the captain of the Fourth, gave Temple a chance of bagging a really good man for the team—and it could not be denied that the team was in sore need of good men.

Cecil Reginald did not seem to see it.

Cecil Reginald was rather satisfied with his team as it stood. The defeats which his team collected during the football season Cecil Reginald seemed to regard as a series of unaccountable flukes.

So all Wilkinson's eloquence elicited nothing but a deep, tired yawn from the captain of the Fourth.

"It's the chance of a lifetime!" urged Wilkinson. "Cherry's off with his own Form—he's out of Remove football—and, of course, he wants to keep up the game. So——"

"My dear man," yawned Temple, "we don't want to pick up the Lower Fourth's leavings."

"Oh, rot!" said Wilkinson. "He's one of the best men in the Remove at footer, and they're fools to drop him!"

"Dear old bean, you stick to swotting for the Head's prize and leave fellows who know something about the game to deal with football matters," suggested Temple.

Wilkinson breathed hard.

He knew more about Soccer than Cecil Reginald was ever likely to know, if Cecil Reginald flourished to the age of Methuselah.

But it was futile to tell Cecil Reginald that. Certainly he would not have believed it.

"Besides," went on Wilkinson, "taking a Remove man into the team is a jolly good idea; it proves that there's something in our claim that we're the junior eleven of Greyfriars. At present we're only a Form team, like the Remove lot."

"Oh, rather!" assented Dabney.

Cecil Reginald Temple sat up and took notice, so to speak, at that. He was very keen on any sort of acknowledgment of his lofty claim—hitherto disregarded with scorn by the Remove men.

"Somethin' in that, perhaps," he assented. "I'll think about it, Teddy. Yaas, I'll certainly turn it over in my mind. I——"

The study door opened, and Fry of the Fourth came in. He looked rather ruffled and breathless.

"Hallo! Been in the wars, old bean?" asked Temple.

"Those Remove ruffians!" said Fry.

"Cheeky fags! Goin' it again, are they?"

"They're raggin' Bob Cherry in the Rag," said Fry. "They had the check to hustle me out because I put in a word."

"Ragging Cherry, are they?" said Wilkinson. "I fancy I'll look in on them, then!" He turned to the door.

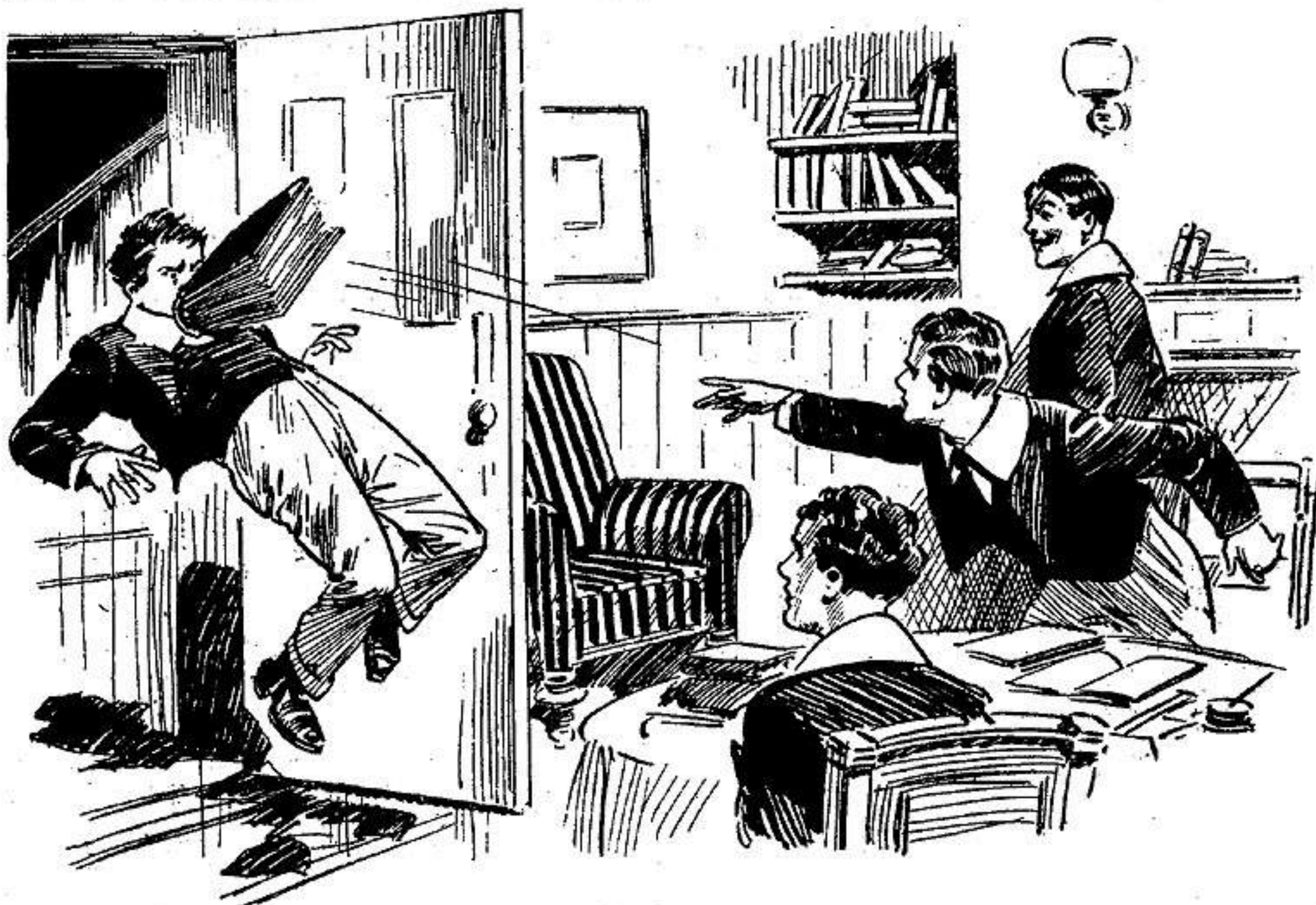
"You'll only get ragged, too!" said Fry. "They seem to have their backs up. Cherry asks for it, too; never saw a fellow who seemed hungrier for trouble than that chap these days!"

"Oh, let them rip, Teddy!" said Cecil Reginald. "What do their fag rows matter to us?"

"Well, I'm pally with Cherry," said Wilkinson. "I'm goin' to lend him a hand. You fellows come, too; it's time the Remove were given another licking!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"That's not a bad idea," assented Fry. "It's Bolsover and his gang; Wharton and his friends are keeping out



Sampson Quiney Illey Field picked up the Latin dictionary, a rather portly volume, and took careful aim. It whizzed through the air, and landed on Skinner's nose, bowling him over like a ninepin. "Yaroooh! Ooooh!" There was a roar as Skinner sprawled in the doorway of the study. (See Chapter 9.)

of it. We could mop them up easily enough."

Cecil Reginald Temple detached his elegant form from the armchair. In the incessant raggings and rows with the Remove, Temple, Dabney & Co. generally had the worst of it. The prospect of getting the best of it without over-exerting himself, appealed to Temple. He was rather keen on the cheap glory of an easy victory.

"I'm on!" he said. "If the cheeky little cads turned you out of the Rag, Fry, they want teachin' a lesson. Can't have Fourth Form men turned out of the Rag by cheeky fags. Call up the fellows."

"Oh, rather!" concurred Dabney.

And in a few minutes Cecil Reginald Temple was heading for the Rag at the head of quite an army of the Fourth. The door of that apartment was closed, but a great deal of noise could be heard from it as the Fourth-Formers approached. Above the din of excited voices could be heard the loud and steady whacking of a fives-bat.

"Now then, all together!" said Temple. "Follow your leader, you men, and rush the rotters!"

"What-ho!"

And Temple hurled open the door of the Rag, and the Fourth Form crowd rushed in.

It was quite a surprise.

Bob Cherry, sprawling face down on the table, was kicking and struggling as the fives bat whacked and whacked, amid the laughter and jeers of the raggars. Bolsover major had rather exceeded the promised dozen; but the bat was still going strong. The sudden

and unexpected rush of the Fourth-formers took the raggars entirely by surprise, and they were scattered like leaves before the hurricane.

"Give 'em socks!" yelled Fry.

"Oh, rather!"

"Down with the Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

"Why, what—who—?" Bolsover major went over with a crash, and the invaders of the Rag trampled over him. Billy Bunter rolled promptly under the table—Skinner and Snoop dodged round it. Five or six of the fellows put up a fight, but the odds swept them away. Right and left the raggars were swept by the Fourth.

"Back up, you men!" panted Bolsover major, struggling breathlessly to his feet.

Bob Cherry, released by the raggars, rolled off the table.

His face was ablaze.

He was hurt—and he was furious. He rushed right at Bolsover major, with his hands up.

Bolsover had no time to attend to the Fourth. His hands were more than full with the fellow whom he had batted.

He was a burly and powerful fellow, but he was driven helplessly back under Bob's lightning attack, staggering under a rain of blows.

"Good man, Cherry!" chuckled Teddy Wilkinson. "Mop them up, you men! Kick them out of the room!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Kick 'em out!" chortled Temple triumphantly. "Clear the scrubby cads out of the Rag! Boot 'em!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Skinner, as he fled to the door, and was helped out by a hefty drive of Dabney's boot. Skinner landed on his hands and knees

in the passage, yelling, and picked himself up and fled. A second later, Sidney James Snoop landed in the same place. Billy Bunter followed, roaring.

Then came Bolsover major; fighting hard, but driven back step by step under Bob Cherry's fierce attack, his nose streaming crimson, one of his eyes closed, his breath coming and going in spasmodic gasps. In the doorway the bully of the Remove rallied, and stood his ground for a moment; then a terrific drive on the chest almost lifted him from his feet, and he went sprawling headlong in the passage.

He lay there and gasped, completely spent. Bob Cherry gave him no further heed—he turned on the others. His blue eyes were blazing—his temper was at white heat. He quite forgot that he was a Remove man, that the fellows who had rescued him belonged to a rival Form. William Wibley, of the Remove, found himself up against Bob's attack, and he was driven to the door, and knocked out of the Rag, falling across Bolsover major. Then Bob turned on Russell.

Meanwhile, the Fourth, strong in numbers, were kicking man after man out of the Rag. Removite after Removite went sprawling into the passage; and Russell went last, under a left-hander that sent him spinning. Bob Cherry stood in the doorway, crimson, panting.

"Now come back and have some more!" he gasped.

"Oh, my hat! Ow!"

"Groogh!"

"Ooooh!"

"After them!" roared Wilkinson. "Chase 'em up to their passage!"

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"Hurrah!" shouted the victorious Fourth-Formers. "After them! After the cads."

"Hold on!" grinned Fry. "Here comes a prefect."

"Cave!"
The Fourth crowded back into the Rag, as Wingate of the Sixth was seen at the end of the passage. The door was closed. Outside, the breathless and dishevelled Removites picked themselves up and limped away. The coast was clear by the time Wingate of the Sixth arrived on the scene—and the victorious Fourth were left in undisputed possession of the Rag.

Wilkinson clapped Bob Cherry on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he said.

Bob panted.

"Thank you for chipping in, you chaps," he said.

"That's all right," said Cecil Reginald Temple, with a lofty smile. "It's up to us to keep these cheeky fags in order."

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"What price the Remove now?" chortled Scott, of the Fourth.

"Rather less than nothing!" chuckled Fry.

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath. He realised, now that his breach with his Form-fellows was complete—between him and the rest of the Remove there was a great gulf fixed. He had taken the side of the Fourth in the scrap—he had helped, more than helped, in the defeat of his own Form. It had been unavoidable, in the circumstances—the Remove had ragged him, the Fourth had rescued him. But there it was—and Bob Cherry realised that he had burned his boats behind him, with a vengeance.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Outsider!

ANY stranger to Greyfriars, who had observed the Lower School during the following days, would never have supposed that Bob Cherry was a member of the Lower Fourth.

Certainly Bob still was a member of that Form.

But appearances were quite otherwise. He never entered the Remove passage; he never spoke a word to any Removite. Not only his old friends, but every other member of the Remove, was estranged from him.

Only in the Form-room did he come into their company; and he always entered the Remove room alone, and left it alone.

He was generally seen with Wilkinson of the Fourth; but he had other friends in that Form, and was frequently with Scott and Fry.

If he came on a Removite, he ignored that Removite's existence.

Whether he would have chosen matters to take that turn, could hardly be known; for he had no choice in the matter.

He was totally barred in the Remove; and had he addressed a word to a Remove man, he would have learned very quickly that he was sent to Coventry by the Form to which he belonged.

The shindy in the Rag had been the climax, and had given the finishing touch to Bob's unpopularity. He was unanimously voted an outsider in the Remove, and barred by the whole Form.

Certainly, a fair-minded fellow could scarcely have blamed Bob for objecting to a ragging; and for accepting help in

the hour of need, careless of whence it came. But the Remove could not get over the fact that they had been defeated by the Fourth, and that a Remove fighting-man had helped the Fourth to their victory. Even fellows who had not, and would not have taken part in the ragging, condemned the deserter, as Bob was called, for taking sides against his own Form. It was unusual, and unpopular, for any fellow to find friends outside his own Form; and Bob had not only chummed with the Fourth, but he had apparently thrown in his lot with them wholeheartedly. And the natural consequence was that the Remove barred him.

He did not seem to care.

The fact of the matter was, that the unaccustomed stress which he had been under of late, had developed a quite new strain of bitterness in Bob's sunny nature. The fellow who had never been known to bear a grudge, now seemed to hug his grievances, as it were. His own view was that he had been misunderstood, wronged, and ill-used, and that the fault was wholly on the other side; a view that, so far as the Remove was concerned, he had entirely to himself.

Even in games practice, he did not join the Removites now; he played football with the Fourth.

On compulsory days, when it was the duty of the captain of the Remove to round up the slackers who failed to appear on Little Side, Wharton made it a point to ignore Bob's absence. It could not be said that he was slacking, as he attended the Fourth Form practice; and, in the circumstances, it was best for all concerned for him not to show up on the Remove ground. When Wingate of the Sixth, one afternoon, inquired why he was not present, Wharton had to explain.

"Cherry turns out with the Fourth now," he said, colouring a little. "I suppose it makes no difference, Wingate?"

"Not so long as he isn't slacking," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But it's unusual. What does it mean?"

"Well, he's on bad terms with all the Form," said Harry uncomfortably.

"I understand that he used to be one of your closest friends."

"Used to be," assented Harry.

"But he isn't now?"

"No."

"You've been rowing?"

"Well, I—I suppose so. Something of the sort."

"You're a young ass, and Cherry is another!" said the Greyfriars captain. "The best thing you can do is to chuck it, and make friends again."

Wharton made no answer to that.

"Not that it's a bad thing, in a way," went on Wingate. "The Fourth are mostly very slack in games, and a fellow like Cherry will do them good—put some life into them. Isn't he in the Remove eleven now?"

"No."

"Well, he's too promising a player to give up games," said the captain of Greyfriars.

The matter was dropped with that; but the next time Wingate was in charge of the Fourth Form games practice he kept a keen eye on Bob Cherry. Among the rather fumbling footballers who followed the lead of Cecil Reginald Temple, Bob was rather like a whale among the minnows. Cecil Reginald lounged elegantly through Soccer as he lounged elegantly through everything else, and most of his men followed his example; but that was not quite Bob Cherry's way. The keenest devotion to "swotting" was never likely to turn Bob into a loafer.

After the practice Wingate called to Bob when the Fourth Form footballers were going back to the changing-room.

He eyed the junior keenly.

"So you're on scrapping terms with your own Form now, Cherry?" he asked.

"Something like that, Wingate," said Bob.

"Why?"

Bob gave a shrug.

"Swotting, I suppose. I'm working for the Head's Latin prize, and swots aren't popular in the Lower Fourth."

"That's all very well," said Wingate. "But swots aren't popular in the Upper Fourth, either, and you seem on friendly terms with them."

Bob did not answer that.

"And young Linley is what they call a swot, but he doesn't seem to have quarrelled with all his Form on that account," went on Wingate.

Bob coloured, but made no rejoinder.

"I suppose there's something else—what?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"I don't know that there is," said Bob. "I know I've been treated rottenly, and that I'm not speaking to any Remove man any more."

"None of the fault on your side?"

A dark and obstinate look came over Bob's face—a look that was very new to him.

"No!" he answered.

"Sure of that?"

"Quite."

"It takes two sides to make a bargain," said Wingate. "It takes two sides to make a quarrel, too."

"Does it?" said Bob indifferently.

Wingate looked at him sharply. It occurred to him that this rebellious-looking junior was cheeking him.

"Well, I won't chip into your Lower Fourth rows," said the captain of Greyfriars at last.

"Thanks," said Bob.

"But it looks to me as if there's as much blame on one side as on the other," said Wingate sharply, "and I advise you to think it over and think better of it."

No reply.

"Sulking never does any fellow any good," added Wingate.

Bob Cherry crimsoned.

"Sulking!" he repeated.

"Just that."

"I'm not sulking."

"Well, it looks uncommonly like it," said Wingate dryly.

Bob Cherry set his lips, but he made no rejoinder. Wingate, puzzled and a little perturbed, dismissed him, and Bob tramped away after the Fourth-Formers.

As he went to the changing-room he passed a little group of Removites—Skinner, and Snoop, and Micky Desmond, and Billy Bunter. They stared at him, and Skinner whispered to his comrades, and there was a laugh at his remark, whatever it was. Bob paused a moment, and looked grimly at the juniors. He was quite in a mood to mop up the floor with Skinner & Co.

Those cheery youths stared at him without speaking, and Bunter turned up his nose. It was a great satisfaction to Bunter to turn up his fat little nose at anybody.

"Well?" said Bob, coming a step nearer to the group.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"You fat little idiot!"

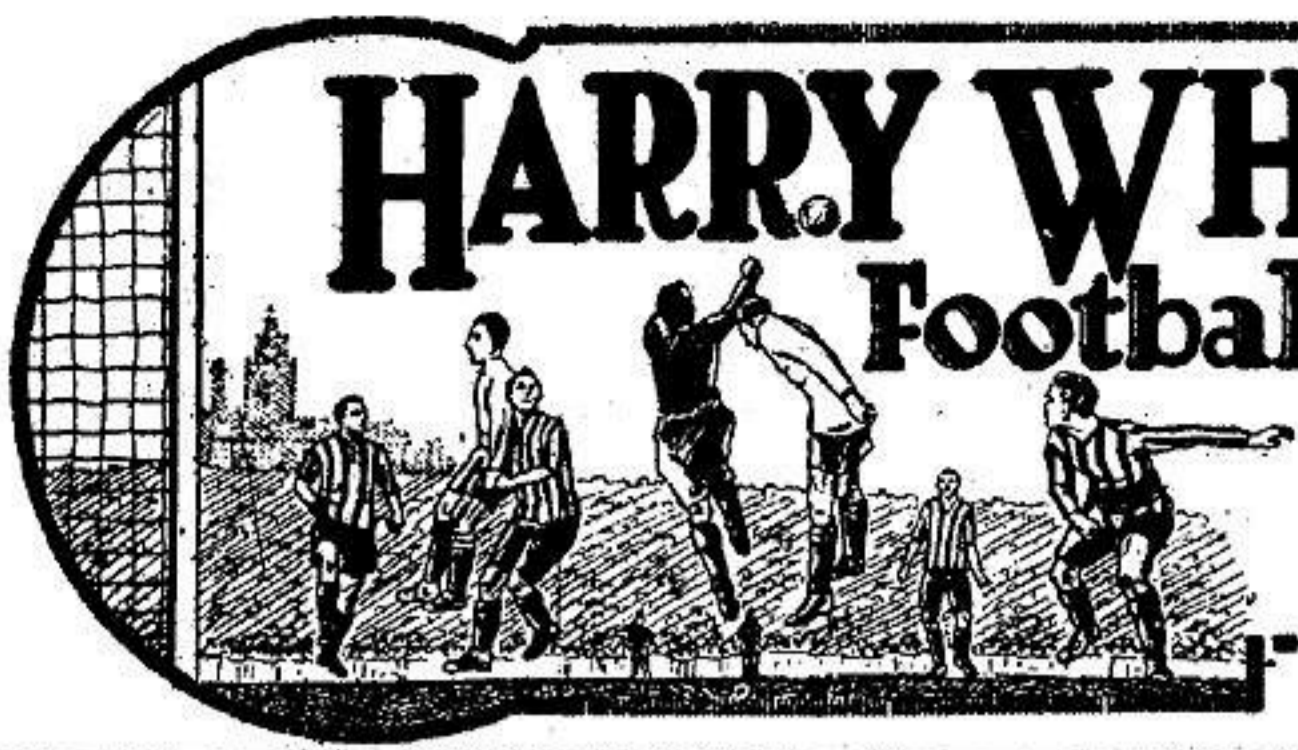
"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come away!" said Skinner. "Nobody's speaking to that outsider!"

Skinner & Co. walked away—rather quickly. They did not like the look on Bob's flushed face.

(Continued on page 17.)

HARRY WHARTON'S Football Supplement



No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of football will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost football authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic. **HARRY WHARTON, Editor.**

No. 10. Vol. 3 (New Series).

Week Ending November 6th, 1926.

Do You Know?



THAT "Dicky" York, the Aston Villa outside-right, was trained as a boy to play Rugby at Aston Grammar School, and on leaving school he took up Association football and was picked as a schoolboy International, and played a brilliant game against Scotland? He was a splendid sprinter and a jumper, too!

That Sims, the Bristol Rovers' captain, has a lucky mascot in the shape of an aluminium horseshoe, one of a set worn by the famous racehorse Prince Palatine? On the day it was given to him, the Rovers won an away match against Millwall.

That First Division football alone now swells the Entertainment Tax receipts to the extent of around £100,000 a year?

That Durham City's wage bill is only £40 a week; but yet the club is having a desperate struggle to make both ends meet?

That Jock Rutherford, the famous outside-right now with the Orient, is the oldest player on the books of any first class club? He made his debut in League football in 1902.

That when Billy Gillespie, the Sheffield United captain, was quite young he used to practise regularly two or three evenings a week, often in the moonlight? Gillespie doesn't think much of what is done by young players in these days.

That there are three present-day footballers who have each scored over 200 goals in League matches only? These are Joe Smith, of Bolton Wanderers, Buchan, of the Arsenal, and Barnes, of Oldham. Of the trio, Smith leads the way.

That Leicester City have regular matches among themselves during the training hours? These games are not mere excuses for kicking the ball about: they are intended to reproduce actual match conditions as far as possible, and the trainer is a great believer in them.

That Bob Archibald, the Stoke City outside-left, used to keep goal for a Boys' Brigade team, and since he found that he was a forward, has appeared for Third Lanark, Albion Rovers, Aberdeen, Glasgow Rangers, Raith Rovers, and Third Lanark again? In his capacity as a footballer he has visited France, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, and South America.

THAT DREADFUL SPOT!



Scoring from Penalties is a Simple Matter when Nothing Depends on the Result.

PENALTY kicks take a high place among the thrills of football. As the player prepares to take his kick from that dreadful spot which is marked twelve yards from goal, the spectators hold their breath. They see the player take his run; they get ready to shout. If the ball goes into the net they do shout, too, but if it should fail there is a prolonged "Oh!" When a player does fail to score from a penalty kick, everybody feels that a bad blunder has been made—a golden opportunity to score a goal lost. That it ought to be easy to score from the twelve yards spot with a free kick at the ball and only the goalkeeper to stop it is obvious, and yet there is no getting away from the fact that there are plenty of

PENALTY KICKS WHICH FAIL

to produce goals—the kicker's blunder. Indeed, I have kept statistics for some time past, and these show that about one penalty kick in every three in first-class football fails to produce a goal.

Perhaps the explanation of this is that the scoring of goals from the penalty spot is not so easy as it looks. What you have got to remember is that a player may fail because of the importance of the occasion. To score from the penalty kick in a mid-week practice, when nothing depends on the result, is easy, and I have known first-class players defeat first-class goalkeepers twelve times in succession from the penalty spot during mid-week practice. But doing it when nothing matters, and doing it when the result of the match may depend on a straight and scoring shot, is a different proposition.

Manchester City would have been in the First Division still, if they had scored with a penalty kick in the last match of last season. So you see the importance of these "dread spot" kicks, and it is the feeling of importance which causes players to fail so often.

Apart from this perhaps a little hint or two may be given as to

THE BEST WAY TO SCORE

from the spot. The first bit of advice is, don't try to break the net. It is unnecessary. A moderate shot well placed is sure to beat the goalkeeper, and it is easier to place the ball when kicking at a moderate pace than it is when trying to smash the net. Again, the most successful penalty kick artists keep the ball low. There are two reasons for this. In kicking high there is always a risk of sending the ball over the bar. Moreover, it is easier for the goalkeeper to throw out his arms and save a high shot, than it is for him to throw out his legs to save a low one.



WILLIS EDWARDS, of Leeds United, as seen by Jimmy Seed, of the Spurs.

AMATEURS *among the* PROS! By THE REF.

Professional football calls for more training than the average amateur can find time for.

A READER of the MAGNET, who evidently notices things, wants to know why it is there are so few amateur players to be found in the first-class sides. As that is a question in which other readers may be interested, I thought it would be best to answer it here. In the first place, my correspondent is certainly right in pointing out that there are precious few amateurs in the big League teams. I have not actually counted them, and the number differs a bit from week to week, but it is almost within the mark to say that the number of amateurs appearing regularly in first-class football could be counted upon the fingers of both hands.

THE LITTLE LIST!

A few outstanding names will occur to the reader at once. There is Howard Baker, that spectacular and very good goalkeeper who has held the fort for Everton; and who formerly played for Chelsea, when he was not appearing with the Corinthians. Then there is Vivian Gibbins, who has been playing in the West Ham forward line this season; George Armitage, who assists Charlton Athletic pretty regularly; and W. I. Bryant, who often plays at centre-half for Millwall. Occasionally, too, Dr. Milne turns out for Aston Villa, and, when the Arsenal were hard hit by injuries last season they called upon another doctor to help them—J. A. Paterson, who was once a professional, but is now an amateur. The foregoing practically exhausts the list of amateurs playing regularly in professional sides, and you will agree it is not a very imposing list, seeing that there are thousands of professionals.

WHY IS IT?

Some people have suggested from time to time that the reason why amateurs do not appear among the "pros" is because the pros won't have them. This is not a correct statement of the position. The pro doesn't mind the amateur playing.

Nor is there any prejudice against amateur players as such among the managers of first-class teams. A well-known manager said to me the other



HOWARD BAKER,
the amateur goalkeeper, who has held the fort for Everton.

day that he would play eleven amateurs if he could find eleven who would prove good enough to enable the side to win their League matches. And that is the general view. The simple fact of the matter is that the right quality of amateurs cannot be found.

By that I do not mean to say that there are not a lot of really first-class amateur footballers, but unfortunately, League football in these days is of such a strenuous nature that it calls for a great deal of training—more training than the man who does not get paid for playing can usually afford to give to any game. It is all very well talking about training a couple of hours or so on one or two nights a week, but the man who has done a day's work is not always in proper trim for doing real training of the sort which would keep him fit to last the whole of the ninety minutes of a gruelling game.

TIME IS TOO PRECIOUS!

There is also another drawback to the playing of amateurs in professional teams. I have pointed out that the amateurs have other jobs to which they must attend during the week. These other jobs often render it quite impossible for the amateur players to get away early on Friday to travel a long distance to play an away match for their particular club. You may say that this would not prevent an amateur playing in a team's home games. It would not, but there are few managers who care to play a man in home games unless he is able to play in away matches. The occasional help of an amateur is not an unmixed blessing. It necessitates changes being made in the side, and no manager likes to make changes from week to week, if he can possibly help it.

So, although it might be good for top-class football if there were more amateurs playing regularly, I am afraid that we shall have to be satisfied with things as they are, and let the pros practically monopolise first-class football.

This Week's Big Games!

Thrilling Tussles for the week-end.

By OLD PRO.

ONE of the surprising things about the football of the present season is that goals have been scored in the First Division with greater frequency than in any other of the big Leagues. Why this should be so is not at all easy to explain, though it may be that as a matter of policy the clubs in the First Division are concentrating more on attack than the clubs in the other Leagues. Anyway, there is likely to be more prolific scoring in the First Division in the games of this week-end, and looking through the list of matches it seems that the home clubs may be in for a specially good time.

There are some extremely interesting contests down for decision in the First Division—games which will conjure up no end of memories in the minds of the players taking part. First and foremost among these I should place the match between Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United, because that is a game which will remind everybody of that

NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN

affair at Wembley in 1923. You remember the circumstances? A new ground had been built for Cup Final games—
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a ground, so it was said, which would prove capable of accommodating in comfort all the people who would possibly want to see a Cup Final. The teams of that year were West Ham United and Bolton Wanderers, but the folk who thought that the ground would be big enough got a big surprise.

Encouraged by a glorious day and curiosity to see what the new ground was like, more folk turned up for that game than have ever turned up for any sporting contest. Exactly how many wanted to see the match will never be known. What we do know is that over 125,000 people paid, and that in addition there were

TENS OF THOUSANDS

who got in without paying when the gates of the ground were rushed. That the match between the Wanderers and West Ham was ever finished was a marvel. The Bolton team won by two goals to nothing.

Ever since then the players and officials of the Bolton and West Ham teams have been the best of friendly enemies.

Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur, who also meet this week-end, have been

RIVALS FOR MANY YEARS PAST, and some of the games in which these two clubs have taken part have been real classics. There is one man who will remember to his dying day a match between the Villa and the 'Spurs. This is Tom Clay, the Tottenham full-back, for whom the contest was a tragedy—the biggest of his football career, so he has told me. The game in which the tragedy happened was a Fourth Round Cup-tie between the 'Spurs and the Villa at Tottenham in 1920. It was felt that the team who won this match would win the Cup. After about ten minutes' play the Villa outside-right sent the ball into the middle. Clay attempted to kick clear, but for some mysterious reason the ball curled off his boot and went past his own goalkeeper. By the goal which Clay scored

AGAINST HIS OWN SIDE

the Villa won, and so disappointed was the Tottenham full-back that he declared at the end of the contest that he would never kick a ball again. Fortunately, for the 'Spurs, he did not stick to this decision.

The Arsenal and Blackburn Rovers match of this week-end will, barring accidents, bring the Rovers up against a former colleague in Hulme, the Arsenal outside-right who was secured from Blackburn last season. Players are always specially anxious to do well against their former colleagues, and it will be interesting to see how Hulme performs.

WEIRD and WONDERFUL!

By
JOHN TOWNROW,



The England and Clapton
Orient Centre-Half.

The directors of the average football club have so many trials and troubles that it seems extraordinary anyone should seek this unpaid job.

IT has often struck me that one of the most surprising things about football is that there are people ready to take on the role of director to a big club. So far as I am able to judge, there is apparently no great difficulty in finding such people. If there is a vacancy on the directorate of this or that club, it will usually be found that there is a certain amount of competition for the post, and it is by no means unusual to find a closely contested election for a vacant seat. Indeed, one would imagine that it is a job really worth having—a post which causes little trouble to those who occupy it, and from which a certain amount of recompense may always be relied upon. The man in the street—or shall we say the man in the crowd?—appears to hold some very vague, and in many directions mistaken, notions of the duties and responsibilities of the directors as they really are.

NO PAY ALLOWED!

Perhaps the fact that there is so often much competition for the posts leads the ordinary person to form strange ideas regarding them. That there is much misconception is undoubtedly a fact. I find, for instance, that quite a lot of people are under the impression that the directors of football clubs get well paid for the work which is associated with the position. Yet it is a fact that, according to the rules of the Football Association, no director can receive anything for the job other than the actual out-of-pocket expenses involved. Directors of other limited liability companies—and nearly all the football clubs are ranged under this head—get paid for their services, but the director of a football club does not. Yet I know fine businesslike fellows who give no end of time, care, and trouble to the affairs of the teams with which they are connected. These fellows not only don't get paid for their work, but must be actual losers when they spend long week-ends travelling up and down the country, watching promising players or accompanying their particular teams.

WHERE DIRECTORS ARE HAPPY!

I am quite willing to admit, of course, that there are directors who, in a manner of speaking, are mostly on velvet. It must be rather nice, for instance, to be closely connected with a club like Tottenham Hotspur, which has a big balance of assets over liabilities, a ground of its own, a successful team, and so many regular spectators, that there is nearly always something left over when the bills are paid.

ONE LONG WORRY!

There is, however, another side to the story, and, unfortunately, so far as I make out, there are more directors con-

cerned with this other side than with the "easy" life. To realise this you have only to think of the number of well-known football clubs which lead what might be called a hand-to-mouth existence. For these clubs there is never any big surplus of cash at the bank. Rather is it usually a case of the directors guaranteeing a big overdraft. Contrast the experience of Tottenham Hotspur, Chelsea, and other prosperous concerns which could be mentioned with clubs like Barnsley. I heard just recently that at one Second Division



An Impression of J. TOWNROW, of England and Clapton Orient, by Jimmy Seed, of the Spurs.

match played at Barnsley the receipts were much less than one hundred pounds. Fancy trying to meet a wages' bill for twenty or more players for a fortnight on such a sum, not to mention the hundred and one other expenses involved in the running of a big football club!

MILLSTONES ROUND THEIR NECKS!

Think of the problems which face directors of these impecunious football clubs, too! Should they keep the good players they have on their books in the hope that a winning team may bring increased revenue, or should they adopt the alternative course of selling their

players in order to keep the wolf from the door? I know that the directors of my own club, Clapton Orient—a fine set of loyal workers on behalf of the club—have more than once been faced with the same problem in recent years. Just recently at our ground at Lea Bridge a big scheme of improvement was undertaken—a new stand and covering for the "bobites." The payment for these improvements have to be kept up, and, unfortunately, the amount of support is inevitably limited, for there is always an attractive First Division game on our doorstep; as it were, and our ground is not too easily "get-at-able."

AN UNEXPECTED SNAG!

Even when directors do everything possible in the interests of the patrons they run up against a snag, as I am reminded by the story which was told me of Derby County's experience. Mindful of the requirements of their shilling supporters, the Derby directors recently made some improvements in the way of enlarging and terracing the "popular" side of their ground. These improvements were done so effectively that, so I am told, many people who had previously paid more than a shilling to see Derby's matches began to patronise the new cheap part, with the result that, although there was no drop in the attendances, the receipts fell by a couple of hundred pounds or so per match. More could be written to show the difficulties of the problems with which the directors of football clubs are continually faced, but I think I have said enough to prove my original statement that it is surprising so many people are willing to take on the job.

TAKING THEMSELVES SERIOUSLY!

But although it is undoubtedly true that the directors of the average football club have so many trials and troubles that it strikes people as funny that anybody should seek the job, the directors themselves are usually very serious people. I sometimes get the impression that they take the ups and downs of the clubs with which they are associated even more to heart than the players themselves. Thank goodness, many of them have been players at an earlier part of their lives, and appreciate many of our difficulties!

THE MANAGER'S JOB!

Occasionally, though, I think there are directors who might with advantage take their jobs a little less seriously. For instance, although they usually appoint a man to manage the team, it is by no means uncommon for directors to take on many jobs which should really be the worry of the manager. Perhaps I shall be accused of talking about the line of least resistance; but I do think that if I were a director I should, after appointing a manager, really let him manage. If he did it well I should increase his wages, and if he did it badly I should give him the sack. The way directors butt in at times, though, strikes me as funny.

Why London Lags Behind!

Never in the whole history of First Division football has a London side won the championship.

ONE of the surprising things about football is that London doesn't lead, as a rule. Theoretically, London ought to play a really important part in big football; ought at least to take a fair share of the honours. London is the centre of the universe, and as there are more people in London than any other city, it naturally follows that the London clubs get a lot of support. They have had something like an average attendance of 35,000 at every First League match at White Hart Lane for several years past.

The Arsenal draw gates as big, and though West Ham do not quite attain the average attendances of the other two First Division sides, they nevertheless get enough spectators at their matches to enable the directors to show a handsome profit each season. Then at Chelsea, too, good attendances are usually recorded, and at the other London grounds they are better off than at provincial centres, where the game is played by clubs of equal rank. Thus we come to the conclusion that it is not lack of support which makes London lag behind.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT!

Again, London has more first-class clubs than any other city, and it might be expected that one or the other of its many representatives would make a good show almost every season. Yet when we look at the facts we find that this is not so. It may surprise you, but it is nevertheless true, that never in the whole history of First Division football has a London side won the championship. That is surely a reproach against the clubs of the metropolis, a reproach which ought to be removed one of these days, but which does not seem at the

moment likely to be removed this season.

Only one London professional club—Tottenham Hotspur—has ever won the Cup, and, generally speaking, the London clubs had a doleful time last season, both Fulham and Clapton Orient having had a big struggle to keep their places in the Second Division, only escaping relegation by the skin of their teeth, as it were.



J. DIMMOCK, the famous outside-left of the Spurs.

DRAWBACKS!

Perhaps one of the reasons why London lags behind the big northern clubs is that the London weather is not quite so suitable for keeping players in first-class condition as that which obtains farther north. The harder weather of the north may produce a hardier race of footballers and keep them possessed of a bit more "ginger." It is notorious that Scotland produces hardier footballers even than Lancashire, and the climate may certainly have something to do with this.

I sometimes think, too, that London has rather too many attractions for the footballer to keep himself quite so fit as he does in the quieter places in the north. When one is in Rome there is a big tendency to do as Rome does, and London being a place where few people go to bed early, the London footballer gets into the habit of staying up late, and this doesn't help him. Early to bed is a good motto for the footballer.

THE WAGE PROBLEM!

Some professionals persistently refuse to come to London to play for clubs in the metropolis because they do not think the maximum wage rule is quite fair. Everybody knows that it costs more to live in London than it does in the average provincial town, yet the wage of the London footballer is only the same as that of the provincial player.

There are many more minor Leagues up north, too, which produce the best type of footballer. On the other hand, London has from time to time turned out really great players, and there are at present local lads playing for London teams who are as good as any to be found anywhere. A case in point is James Dimmock, of Tottenham Hotspur, who was born within a very short distance of the 'Spurs' ground.

On the whole, however, there is room for improvement in London football. The metropolis lags behind. It should not do so.

GOAL KICKS!

THERE is much talk in these days of what are called "policemen" centre-half-backs—fellows who never leave opposing centre-forwards. The policemen don't make any arrests, but if they do their job well they often compel centre-forwards to take a rest.

Sandy Mutch, the man who kept goal for Huddersfield Town in two Cup Finals, is now the groundsman at St. James' Park, the home of the Newcastle club. It is said that Mutch gained his knowledge of a football pitch by so frequently going down to save low shots. Anyway, he should appreciate the necessity of giving goalkeepers a soft place on which to fall.

Patsy Hendren once played cricket and football on the same day. He was one of a team of county players in a charity match at Twickenham. He fielded for his side in the morning, then dashed off to Brentford to play a League football match, dashed off back again as soon as the football game was over, and was at Twickenham in time to have his innings. One can imagine that he slept well that night.

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Derby County's goalkeeper, Ben Olney, stands six feet one in height and weighs over thirteen stone. Big Ben!

Ted Ray, the famous golfer, has a season-ticket, which he uses regularly to attend the matches of the Watford Football Club. It is understood that Ray envies the footballers because they have such a big ball to "hit," and he finds it difficult not to shout "fore" when the goalkeeper is in the way of a hard drive.

The Leicester City manager recently made it known that he would be present at the ground one morning to interview local players who were anxious to get on. It is hinted that he fainted when he saw a queue of something like 200 youthful enthusiasts who all wanted a trial.

Kingdon, the new half-back of Aston Villa, learnt his football with the Kidderminster Harriers. He should be a "goer" shouldn't he?

In a recent match Chandler, the Leicester City centre-forward, got a kick in the nose which caused that organ to bleed. While everybody was looking at him very seriously he caused a laugh by glancing at his stained handkerchief, and remarking: "There doesn't seem to be any blue blood in my veins!"

THE UNHEEDED WARNING!

THIS is a true story of a recent football match. The play was getting a bit too rough, and one player in particular was flinging his weight about so much that the referee thought it right to give him a lecture. He called the player to him, and talked to him very severely. To the surprise of the referee the onlookers laughed long and loudly while the lecture was being given, but when the player transgressed against the rules again, the referee gave him another talking to. Again there was loud laughter from the spectators.

Naturally, the referee was very cross, and at the end of the game he spoke to the directors of the club about it.

"I think the spectators who attend at your ground," he said, "are the worst lot of sportsmen I have ever come across. When I found it necessary to talk to one of your players the onlookers did nothing but laugh. I didn't see anything to laugh at—it was very serious."

"But there was something to laugh at," the referee was told, "because the player to whom you were delivering such a long and earnest lecture is stone deaf!"



(Continued from page 12.)

Bob made a motion to follow them, but stopped and went into the changing-room. Skinner & Co. were hardly worth his resentment. There were some Removites in the changing-room, and Hazeldene was speaking as Bob came in, without observing his entrance.

"That rotter Cherry was playing football with the Fourth. I—"

"That what?" broke in Bob.

Hazeldene turned round hurriedly.

"What did you call me?" asked Bob between his teeth.

"I didn't speak to you," said Hazel disdainfully. "You're sent to Coventry by the Form, and you know it. Don't talk to me."

"What did you call me?" repeated Bob.

Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders without answering.

The next moment he was wriggling in Bob's powerful grip.

"Let go, you bully!" he roared.

"Bully, as well as rotter—what?" said Bob savagely, and he wrenched Hazel across to a tap, shoved his head into the basin, and turned the tap on.

Hazel spluttered and roared and struggled, but he was not of much use in Bob's grip; and he spluttered and roared and struggled in vain under the splashing tap.

"Ow! Help! Rescue!" he roared.

Johnny Bull came into the changing-room. A crowd of laughing Fourth-Formers stood round, staring at the scene, entertained by Hazel's frantic struggles and splutters.

Johnny Bull pushed through the crowd.

"Let Hazel go!" he rapped out, under the impression, for the moment, that it was a Fourth Form man who was ragging Hazeldene. "Oh! You!" he ejaculated, as he saw that it was Bob Cherry in whose grasp the hapless Hazel was helplessly squirming.

Bob glanced at him and took no further heed. He had been about to release Hazeldene; now he tightened his grip on him and shoved his head under the flowing tap again. Hazel spluttered and gasped and howled.

"Let him go!" repeated Johnny Bull.

"Mind your own business!"

"Will you let him go?"

"No, I won't!"

"If you want a row with a Remove man, pick out a fellow who can stand up to you!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, with angry disdain.

Bob coloured and threw Hazeldene aside. Hazel, drenched and breathless, sat on the floor. Bob's glinting eyes fixed on Johnny Bull.

"You, for instance?" he asked.

"Me, if you like," answered Johnny Bull at once.

"Put up your hands, then!"

"Not here!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth, interposing. "You'll have the prefects down on you in a jiffy if you scrap here, you duffers!"

"When and where you like!" said Bob, his eyes gleaming at Johnny Bull.

"Same to you," said Johnny. "Send one of your precious Fourth Form friends along to fix it up as soon as you choose."

And Johnny Bull left the changing-room.

Bob Cherry, with a darkened brow, changed and went out of the changing-room with Wilkinson.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

To Fight or Not to Fight?

"I won't do!"

Frank Nugent spoke with unaccustomed sharpness.

Johnny Bull gave a shrug of the shoulders.

"Can't be helped," he said. "He asked for it. I suppose you don't want me to cry off and back out?"

"It won't do, I tell you!" exclaimed Frank.

"The circumstances are terrifically unpleasant," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

There was silence for a few moments in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Johnny Bull's brow was grim. Johnny had a heart of gold, but there was a well developed strain of obstinacy in his nature. He was not the fellow to turn back when he had set his hand to the plough.

Frank Nugent glanced from floor to face. Nugent, the kindest-hearted fellow at Greyfriars, had been distressed all along by the split in the Co.—more distressed, perhaps, than any of the others—and he had never quite relinquished the hope that the trouble might blow over and the Famous Five become happily united again. There had been trouble in the Co. before, more than once, but the clouds had always rolled by. But the news that Johnny Bull was booked for a fight with Bob gave the finishing touch to Frank's lingering hope.

"It's rotten," said the captain of the Remove at last, "but I don't see how it can be helped, Frank. Cherry seems to have thrown in his lot with the Upper Fourth now—nobody would think he was a Remove chap at all, to see him. And it looks to me as if he's keen on trouble with his own Form."

"No reason why we should be," said Frank.

"Well, it takes two to make peace, as well as to make a row," said Harry.

"I tell you he asked for it," said Johnny Bull, in a voice that rather

(Continued overleaf.)

THE RIGHT SORT OF PRESENT!



"WILL YOU PLEASE SHOW ME A USEFUL PRESENT FOR A SCHOOLBOY, SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING?"



"IS THIS KIND OF THING AT ALL SUITABLE, OR."



MUCH TOO NOISY!!

"HOW WOULD A NICE LITTLE GRAMOPHONE DO?"



"THAT'S A CLOCKWORK MOTOR"

HOINK HOINK



"PERHAPS A WELL ILLUSTRATED BOOK WOULD SUIT SUCH AS —"



"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" THE VERY THING!! AN IDEAL PRESENT

"I know young Tommy will be pleased with this," said Uncle Bob. And Tommy was! All his pals are hoping that their uncles "come across" with a present like "The Holiday Annual"—for Six Shillings, it can't be beaten!

ON SALE AT ALL NEWSAGENTS!

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resembled the growl of the Great Hugo Bear. "Was I to stand by and see him ragging a Remove man, with a mob of the Fourth looking on and laughing? He was holding Hazel's head under a tap."

"I dare say Hazel asked for it," said Frank. "There isn't a fellow here that hasn't wanted to punch Hazel's head, more than once."

"Very likely," said Wharton. "All the same—"

"It won't do," said Nugent. "If we can't be friends with Bob we needn't be enemies. Hazel can go and eat coke! Why couldn't he steer clear of Bob?"

"He looked as if he wanted to when his head was under the tap," grinned Johnny Bull. "But it's no good talking, Franky. I'm getting a message from Cherry, fixing up time and place, and I'm not going to back out of it. I can't, if I wanted to."

"You oughtn't to have chipped in," said Frank, frowning.

"Oh, oughtn't I?" exclaimed Johnny, warmly.

"No."

"Well, I don't agree," grunted Johnny Bull, "and if you want to back up that cheeky, pig-headed ass—"

"Bob's nothing of the sort!"

"Well, that's what I think he is!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Then you're an ass!"

"Look here, Nugent—"

"Look here, Bull—"

"For goodness sake chuck it, you two!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We don't want any more rowing."

"The rowfulness has been enough and to spare," said Hurrée Singh. "The still tongue saves a stitch in time, my esteemed friends."

"I came in here to ask what chap is going to be my second," said Johnny Bull, with a glare at Nugent. "I can see that Frank isn't going to jump at it."

"Certainly I sha'n't have any hand in making matters worse than they are now," snapped Frank.

"That's all rot! Cherry's gone his own way and thrown over his old pals for the sake of a set of cads in another Form," growled Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up with him!"

"I don't know that he would have thrown us over if we'd been a bit more patient and tactful," said Frank.

"Oh, rats!"

"Bob was no end worried by his father ragging him, and having to take to swotting for a Latin exam," said Nugent. "We might have made more allowances than we did."

"Br-r-r-r-r! Fellow shouldn't be touchy, whether he's swotting or not. Looks to me as if you want to back him up."

"Cheese it, Johnny!" said Wharton. "It's very unfortunate, as Franky says. But, of course, you can't back out of it now. If the message comes from Bob Cherry, you're bound to go through with it."

"I should jolly well think so," growled Johnny Bull. "Why, all those cads in the Fourth would be calling me a funk if I backed out."

"Hang the Fourth!" said Nugent irritably. "What the thump does it matter what they think?"

"Well, it does matter to me if they think me a funk," said Johnny Bull. "As for making matters worse, that's all rot. Bob Cherry backed up the Fourth in a row in the Rag and beat

the Remove. I jolly well wish I'd been there then."

"The Fourth helped him when he was being ragged—"

"And he jolly well deserved the ragging, too, for letting us down over the St. Jim's match. I don't often agree with Bolsover major, but I think he was right there."

"Rubbish!"

"Look here, Nugent—"

"I'll be your second, Johnny, if it comes off," said Harry Wharton. "But perhaps Bob will think better of it and let it drop. If he doesn't send a message, the thing needn't go any farther. No need to hunt for trouble with a fellow who was our pal."

Johnny Bull nodded slowly.

"That's all right," he said. "If Cherry lets it drop I'll let it drop, and be pleased. Otherwise you're my second and you can fix it up."

"That's settled, then."

And Johnny Bull went out of Study No. 1 with his heavy tread.

"The esteemed Johnny's back is up," remarked Hurrée Jamset Ram Singh.

"Let us hope that the excellent and ridiculous Cherry will let the matter fall dropfully."

Billy Bunter's fat face looked into the study.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, out off, Bunter!"

"But I say, when's it coming off?" demanded Bunter.

"Go and chop chips!"

"Look here, you're not keeping this to yourselves," said the Owl of the Remove, wagging a fat forefinger at the juniors. "All the fellows want to see the scrap, of course."

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner, over Bunter's fat shoulder. "We want to see that outsider Cherry licked, you know. I fancy Bull can do it."

"Mind your own business, Skinner," said the captain of the Remove savagely.

"But this is my business," said Skinner cheerfully. "We're all backing up Bull against that rank outsider."

"You mean you're keen on making all the trouble you can, you mischief-maker!" exclaimed Nugent angrily.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Dear man, I didn't ask Cherry to bully a Remove chap, and I didn't ask Bull to chip in. I think Bull acted well, and I'm backing him up. So are all the Form. We want to see the scrap."

"Go and eat coke!"

"But I say, you fellows—" persisted Bunter.

"Get out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

The captain of the Remove unceremoniously slammed the door. Billy Bunter jumped back just in time to save his fat little nose.

"Why, the cheeky beast!" he gasped. Skinner chuckled.

"They want to cut it out," he said. "Blessed are the peacemakers, you know, and all that. But my idea is that it's time Cherry had a licking, after all he's done."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Snoop.

"Look at it!" said Skinner virtuously.

"A fellow lets down his own Form and bullies a man belonging to his own crowd. Absolutely rotten, you know!"

"Absolutely!" assented Snoop.

"You fellows ought to know if a thing's rotten," said Peter Todd, from his study doorway. "Being a pair of rotters—"

"Oh, you shut up, Toddy!" said Skinner. "What that outsider wants is a jolly good licking!"

"If Bull can give him one—what?" grinned Snoop.

Skinner grinned, too.

"Well, if Bull can't give one he can get one," he murmured, "and I sha'n't shed any tears over his damages."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Let's keep an eye open," said Skinner cheerfully. "There's a man coming along from the Fourth to make the arrangements with Bull's second, and we don't want to let those interfering cads spoil sport. This scrap is coming off, my sons!"

"What-ho!" grinned Snoop.

And Skinner & Co. wasted their valuable time looking for the arrival of Cherry's messenger.

When time came for prep Skinner & Co. were feeling rather annoyed. The messenger had not arrived.

Prep was neglected for some time, but still there was no sign of a man coming from the Fourth.

Skinner was deeply irritated.

"Looks as if Cherry is backing down," he remarked to his companions.

"I never thought him a funk," said Snoop.

"Oh, you never know a fellow till you find him out," said Skinner. "If he's funking a scrap after asking for it he won't hear the end of it in a hurry."

Skinner & Co. scamped their prep that evening; they had more interesting matters to think of than prep. After prep Skinner looked into Study No. 14, where Johnny Bull was working with Squiff and Fisher T. Fish.

"Got the message from the Fourth, Bull?" asked Skinner amiably.

"No."

"It's rather late, isn't it?"

"Mind your own business."

Skinner coughed. This was not a very polite reply from a fellow whom Skinner was backing up so heartily. Doubtless Johnny Bull knew quite well Skinner's motives for interesting himself in the quarrel.

"Looks as if Cherry is funking, after all," said Skinner.

"Shut the door after you!" said Squiff.

"But look here—" said Skinner.

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field was using the Latin dictionary—a rather portly volume. He had been using it for prep, now he used it for Skinner. It whizzed suddenly through the air and landed on Skinner's nose, bowling him over like a ninepin.

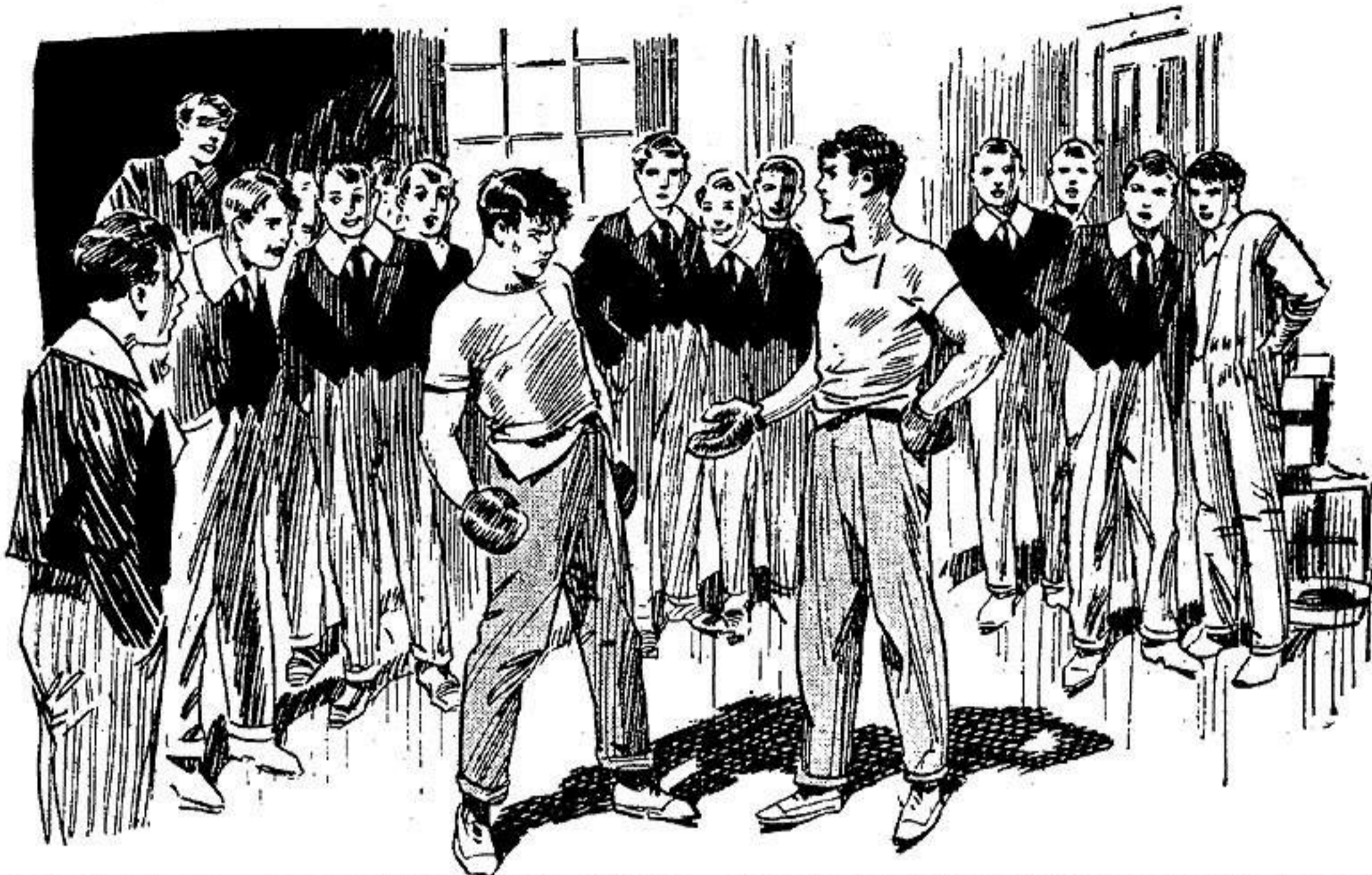
There was a roar as Skinner sprawled in the doorway of Study No. 14.

Squiff rose from the table and fielded the dictionary. He lifted it high in the air, and his intention of landing it on the sprawling Skinner was so evident that the cad of the Remove squirmed hastily out into the passage, picked himself up, and dodged away. Like the gentleman in Macbeth, Skinner stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. But he went in a more malicious and mischievous mood than before—if possible. The trouble between Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull looked like blowing over if it was let alone. But it was not going to blow over, if the amiable Skinner could help it.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Up to the Scratch!

BOB CHERRY laid down his pen, pushed back his books, and yawned deeply. Prep was finished in Wilkinson's study in the Fourth Form passage. Bob had worked hard at it—he was always a hard worker now. More and more he had been gaining a high place in Mr. Quelch's esteem; more and more it was



Johnny Bull tramped unsteadily forward, but Bob Cherry seemed in no hurry to meet him. "I'm done, if you are, Bull," he said quietly. "Call it a draw." "It's not a draw, confound your cheek. Come on!" Johnny Bull, his dogged temper fully aroused, was not the fellow to allow himself to be spared. (See Chapter 11.)

growing certain that he would attain an honourable place in the Latin exam, even if he did not capture the Head's prize itself. It was unfortunate that success in one direction should be accompanied by disaster in another. Mr. Quelch thought much more of Bob Cherry in these days, but his Form thought correspondingly less of him. Bob was keeping his promise to his father, and there was little doubt now that the major would be pleased with him. That was something. It was a great deal; and Bob extracted from it what consolation he could.

"Finished?" asked Wilkinson.

"Yes."

"Good! Do you want me to go along and see Bull?"

Bob did not answer immediately.

"I suppose you'll have to have a second from the Fourth Form," said Wilkinson. "You don't want to ask a Remove man?"

"No," said Bob.

"Well, I'm your man, if you like," said Wilkinson.

Bob hesitated.

"The—the fact is—" He broke off. Teddy Wilkinson looked at him and smiled.

"The fact is, old man, you were a bit heavy-handed with that chap Hazeldene," he said. "Bull needn't have chipped in, but, taking it all in all, you're thinking of letting the matter drop, and I think it's a jolly sensible way."

Bob looked relieved.

"Well, a fellow doesn't like backing down," he said. "If Bull wants to go on I shall go through with it, of course. But it's left to me to fix it up, and—and if Bull says no more about it I'd rather chuck it. There's nothing to scrap about, really."

Teddy Wilkinson nodded.

"Quite right," he said. "Let it drop, for goodness' sake. Now, what about the football? Temple's rather cottoned to the idea of playing you in the Fourth Form team. As a matter of fact, old Cecil's rather an ass, but he does understand the game a bit and he's got it into his head at last that you would be a jolly valuable recruit. He likes loafing through a game, but he would like to win, all the same, if he could."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"You'd do the team no end of good," said Wilkinson eagerly. "You'd be the best man in the crowd, bar none—in fact, best man without second or third. One jolly good man can help a lot to pull a slack team together. I'm rather keen on Soccer, you know, and I don't like seeing my crowd beaten every time. You're right off with the Remove now, but you don't want to give up games."

"No," said Bob.

"Well, then, let's speak to Temple, and let your name be put down for our lot," said Wilkinson.

"There's a Form match on Saturday," said Bob. "If I were in Temple's team I should have to play against the Remove."

"Then they'd see what silly asses they were to lose you," said the Fourth Former.

"Yes, but—but—" Bob hesitated.

"I—I'm on rotten terms with all my Form now, and I don't think it's my fault. Still, I don't like the idea of playing against them and lowering their colours."

"I understand; but that's all rot. You're not going to give up football matches. Besides, you know, we claim to be the junior eleven of Greyfriars, not merely a Form team, and so a Remove man is entitled to play for us. Vernon-Smith did once, when he was

on bad terms with Wharton. Look here, old man, you'd like to play on Saturday. You're not thinking of chucking footer entirely on account of swotting."

"No fear!"

"Then you'd like to play?"

"Yes; but—"

"Well, you can't play for the Remove, can you? Play for us, then—we'll be jolly glad to have you."

Bob Cherry was silent. The temptation was strong to accept the offer. And it was true that he owed nothing to the Remove—the Form that had sent him to Coventry and barred him from their matches. Yet there was something within him that made it repugnant to think of helping to defeat his own Form.

As Bob sat thinking the matter over, with a rather troubled brow, there was a footstep outside the study.

The door did not open, however.

Both the juniors glanced towards the door, wondering who was there, and why he had stopped outside.

Under the door a sheet of paper appeared, pushed in by the unseen fellow without.

Then there were receding footsteps.

Bob Cherry and Teddy Wilkinson stared at the paper that had been pushed under the door. They could see that something was written on it, but not what it was.

"What on earth game's this?" exclaimed Wilkinson, mystified.

"A message of some sort," said Bob. "Some lark, I suppose. Must be for you, as it's your study."

Wilkinson rose from his chair and picked up the paper. He frowned.

"Oh!" he said. "Not for me!"

"For me?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Only cheek!" Wilkinson crumpled the paper in his hand. "I'll chuck it in the fire, shall I?"

"If it's for me I'll see it," said Bob quietly. And the Fourth-Former passed him the paper.

The message on it was written in capital letters. It ran, in a humorous imitation of a "clue" in a cross-word puzzle:

"WORD OF SIX LETTERS, BEGINNING WITH C AND ENDING WITH Y, MEANING FUNK, SNEAK, OR COWARD."

Bob Cherry's cheeks grew crimson, and he crushed the paper in his hand.

"That's from the Remove!" he said. "That's because I haven't sent any message to Bull. I'll jolly well show them whether I'm a funk, sneak, or coward, the rotters!"

"Hold on!" said Teddy Wilkinson. "That never came from Bull. He's not the chap to sneak along to a study door and stick an insulting message under it without showing his face."

"I don't care! I—"

"Easy does it, old bean!" said Wilkinson. "Drop that rubbish into the fire, and let's go and get a trot in the quad."

Bob paused, quite a long pause; but finally he took Wilkinson's advice, and the message from the Remove was dropped into the study fire. Bob left the study with Wilkinson, and they walked down the Fourth Form passage to the landing at the end, across which lay the Remove passage. By the balustrade of the landing several Remove fellows were lounging—Skinner, Snoop, and Bunter, and two or three more. They were talking and laughing, and as Bob Cherry came in sight Skinner winked at his companions and began loudly:

"Here's Cherry at last! Blessed if I didn't think he'd forgotten that Bull was waiting to hear from him!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Some fellows have bad memories, you know. He, he, he!"

"Easy enough to forget anything you don't want to remember—what?" chuckled Snoop.

"He, he, he!"

"Come on, old fellow!" murmured Wilkinson, as Bob stopped. "What's the good of rowing with those cads?"

But Bob Cherry shook Teddy's hand from his arm and strode across to Skinner & Co.

Harold Skinner felt a slight tremor, but he nodded cheerily to Bob.

"Bull's waiting," he said. "He's fixed it up with Wharton to be his second. He's rather surprised at not hearing from you before this. I suppose you left it till after prep?"

"What business is it of yours, anyhow?" asked Bob.

"None at all," said Skinner airily. "I felt sure you would come up to the scratch. Some of the fellows think you're funking it, but I'm sure you wouldn't do that."

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Cherry forgot all about it, you know. Who's afraid? He, he, he! Yaroooh!" went on Bunter in a terrified roar, as Bob grasped him by the collar. "Ow! Wow! Leggo!"

Bang!

Bunter's bullet head collided with the oak balustrade, and there was a fiendish yell from the Owl of the Remove.

"Yooooop!"

"Let him alone!" growled Stott. Bob Cherry dropped Bunter, roaring, on the landing and turned on Stott. His temper—only too easily provoked in these unhappy days—was in a blaze now.

"Put up your hands!" he snapped.

And Stott, putting up his hands a little too late, sat down beside Bunter, under an angry drive that caught him on the chin.

"Look here——" exclaimed Skinner.

He broke off and jumped back, as Bob turned on him.

"You next, Skinner!" said Bob.

"Put up your hands, you cad!"

Skinner backed away in haste.

"I'm not scrapping with you," he said sullenly. "I'm not up to your weight, and I know it. You can't take it out of me because you're afraid of Bull!"

Crash!

Skinner went spinning almost before he had finished. The next moment Bob Cherry, with his face aflame, was striding up the Remove passage, heading for Study No. 14.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Fight!

FISHER T. FISH was alone in Study No. 14, when the door suddenly crashed open, and Bob Cherry stared in. Johnny Bull and Squiff had finished their prep and gone. Fishy had also finished his prep, and he was deeply engaged in the financial calculations which filled up a great part of his leisure time. Fishy was on the track of three-halfpence, which somehow could not be accounted for in the accounts he kept very carefully.

Somehow or other he had spent three-halfpence more than he had supposed during the term, and he was determined to figure it out. He could not have lent it to anybody—that was impossible. So it was only a question of careful investigation and calculation to ascertain where that three-halfpence had gone; and Fishy guessed that he would figure it out, if it took up all his leisure hours for the rest of the term. Parting with three-halfpence without receiving value for the sum was altogether too painful a thing for Fisher T. Fish to contemplate with equanimity.

But the Transatlantic junior forgot his abstruse calculations as Bob's red and wrathful face stared into Study No. 14. He jumped up in a hurry.

"Hyer, you vamoose the ranch!" he exclaimed. "I guess I don't want any trouble with you. You keep your distance, you guy, or I reckon I'll make potato-scrappings of you!"

Fishy dodged round the study table as he spoke.

"You silly idiot!" growled Bob.

"Where's Bull?"

"Oh, that guy!" said Fisher T. Fish, much relieved to know that he was not personally the object of that wrathful visit. "I guess he's gone down to the Rag."

Bob Cherry strode away. He passed Skinner & Co., who gave him savage looks, and tramped away down the Remove staircase. A couple of minutes later he was in the Rag.

Johnny Bull was here, with a good many of the Remove. His glance fell on Bob's flushed face at once, and his own face grew grimmer. It had been agreed among the Co. that the quarrel was to

go no further if it was dropped on Bob Cherry's side, but Johnny was quite ready for business if called upon. Hazeldene, who was with him, looked round at Bob, with a sneer on his face.

"Here's Cherry—at last!" he said sarcastically.

He stressed the words "at last," for Bob's especial benefit. Bob heard him, but gave no heed. He came directly up to Johnny Bull. Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came across from the fire, but Bob did not look at them. He fixed his eyes on Johnny Bull.

"I'm ready if you are!" he said.

Johnny eyed him in his calm, stolid way.

"I didn't get a message from you," he answered.

"I've brought it myself. Are you ready?"

"Oh, yes, if you want to scrap here!" said Johnny Bull, with rather irritating calmness. "With, or without, gloves?"

"Just as you like."

"The glovefulness is the proper caper, my esteemed friends," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I don't care a rap," growled Bob Cherry. "But I'm not going to wait. If Bull wants the gloves, buck up and get them, somebody."

"I don't know that I do, specially," drawled Johnny.

"Then let's get going, without. Your friends think I'm funking," said Bob savagely. "I'll show them whether I'm funking or not."

"That's all rot," said Harry Wharton.

"Look here——"

"No need for you to chip in, Wharton."

"But——"

"Can't you keep from butting in, in a matter that doesn't concern you at all?" snapped Bob.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"Very well," he said. "But you'll have the gloves on! Get the gloves, Inky."

"Buck up, then!" growled Bob.

"The speedfulness will be terrific," said the nabob of Bhanipur, and he hurried out of the Rag.

Johnny Bull quietly and sedately removed his jacket. Vernon-Smith brought in a basin of water and a sponge from the changing-room. The Remove fellows gathered round in considerable excitement; and Wilkinson came in with a crowd of the Fourth. Teddy Wilkinson constituted himself Bob's second. The matter was settled now, and there was no further chance of peace-making.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned with the gloves. Bob took the pair that were offered to him, and donned them rapidly.

"Who's goin' to keep time?" asked the Bounder.

"Anybody—I don't care!" growled Bob.

"Mauly!" called out Wharton.

And Lord Mauleverer detached himself from an armchair and obligingly took out his handsome ticker to keep time. Vernon-Smith closed the door of the Rag. Most of the Remove, and half the Fourth, were in the room now; and it was easily to be seen that the sympathy of the Remove was wholly with Johnny Bull—all the more because Bob was backed up by the rival Form.

"Two minutes rounds, and one minute rests, what?" said Lord Mauleverer. "You men ready?"

"Yes," grunted Bob.

"Quite!" said Johnny Bull.

"Time!"

And the fight began.

It was watched with eager interest

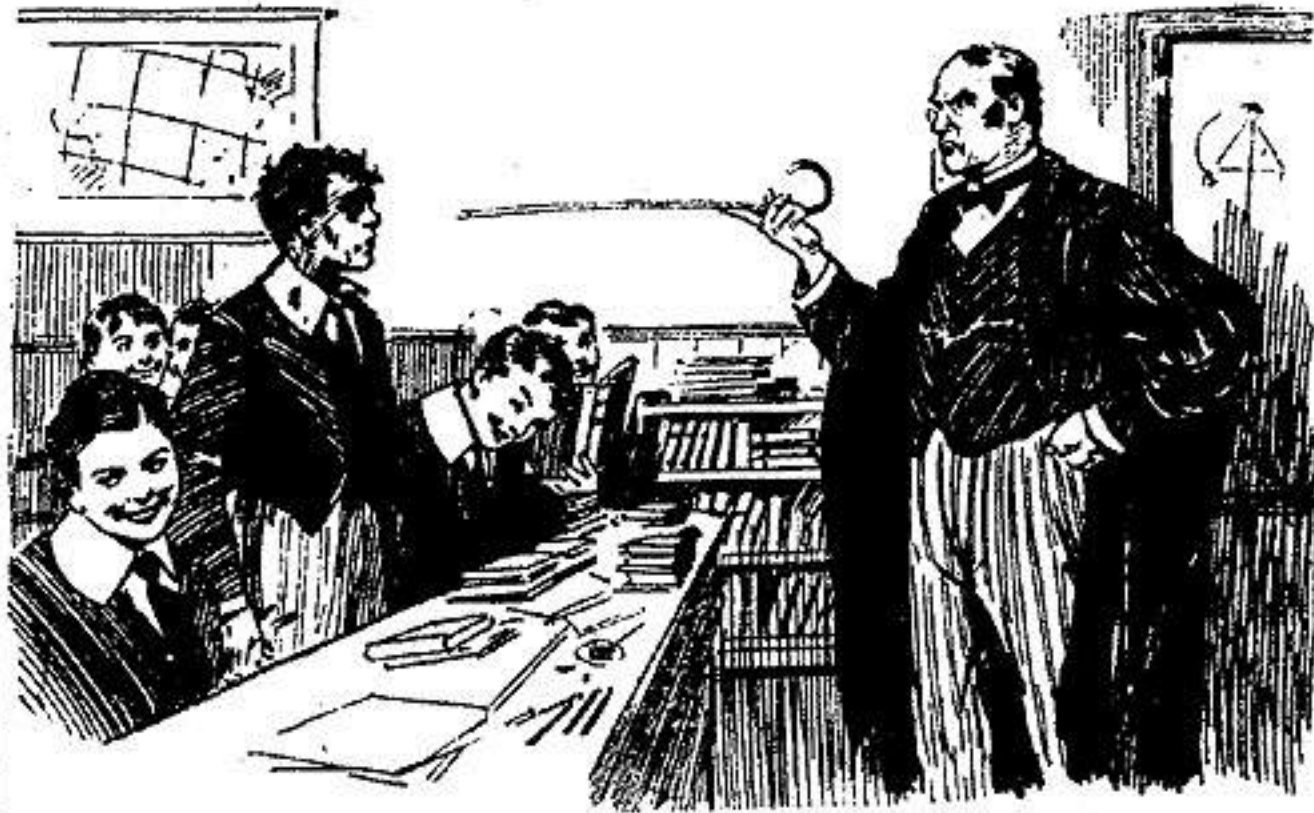
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"What do you mean by coming into the Form-room with a black eye?"



You'll enjoy this remarkable story of the Greyfriars Chums in next week's MAGNET, no end!

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Foolish question, rather, isn't it?

No one walks about collecting black eyes for the sheer joy of the thing.

Certainly Bob Cherry didn't want to run into a scrap on the eve of his examination.

But scraps and black eyes—and swollen noses—are common to the chap who is

"NOBODY'S CHUM!"

by the crowd of juniors; it was worth watching.

Bob Cherry was a doughty fighting-man; and Johnny Bull was sturdy, thick-set, and determined. Both of them had plenty of pluck, and both were good boxers. Whether Johnny could have kept his end up in a scrap with the champion boxer of the Remove, was a question that had never been decided, as they had always been friends, until the recent hapless division in the Co. It was to be decided now. At all events, it was certain that Johnny Bull would put up a good fight, and would not admit defeat while he had an ounce left in him.

Bob began the fight with a swift attack, but he found himself stalled off, and Johnny's heavy fists came home, fast and hard, on his flushed and angry face. There was no doubt that Bob had the worst of the first round, and he was looking rather damaged, when Lord Mauleverer called time.

He dropped on a seat in his corner, and Wilkinson of the Fourth fanned his heated face with a book.

"Not so jolly fast, old man," murmured Teddy. "You're giving yourself away. Keep cool!"

Bob Cherry nodded.

"I'm going to lick him!" he muttered, between his teeth.

Whatever misgiving Bob might have felt at standing up in bitter conflict with his former friend, was banished by the looks and remarks of the Remove fellows crowding round the ring. The keen desire to look on his defeat was written in every face, and revealed by every word. And Bob bitterly and passionately resolved that that desire should not be gratified. The Remove had made him an outsider, an outcast in his Form, for no fault of his own; and they should never see him defeated, at least, by a member of the Form that had turned him down.

Bob profited by Wilkinson's good advice. He was a good deal more cool and collected in the second round; and that round made it clear that Johnny Bull, with all his pluck and dogged determination, was out-classed.

Harry Wharton and his friends looked on with clouded faces.

"Time!"

Johnny Bull sat down in his corner and breathed hard and deep. He was glad of the rest.

"Go it, Bull, for goodness' sake," muttered Bolsover major. "Don't let that outsider get the best of it."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"Put your beef into it, you know," said Skinner.

Those remarks showed how Bolsover major and Skinner considered that the fight was going. Johnny gave them a grim look.

"Either of you care to take my place?" he asked gruffly. "If not, shut up!"

"Time!"

Johnny Bull came up to time promptly enough. In the third round he was severely punished, though his adversary did not escape by any means unscathed.

Round followed round; and it was not till the seventh that Johnny showed signs of weakening. But he came up gamely enough for number eight when Lord Mauleverer gave the call.

His friends were feeling anxious now, though they tried not to show anxiety in their looks.

The ring of Removites kept silent.

They were ready to cheer any advantage of the Form champion; but it was fairly clear by this time that the Remove champion was doomed to defeat. Dark looks were cast on Bob Cherry by all the Remove fellows. He noted them, though he kept his eyes fixed on his opponent, and they hardened his heart. Not a fellow in his own Form, but was longing to see him defeated. They should never see it, he told himself grimly and savagely.

"Time!"

Harry Wharton looked at Johnny rather anxiously, as the call came for the ninth round. Johnny moved at once to toe the line.

"Sure you'll go on, old chap?" whispered Wharton. It was plain to all eyes now that the game was up.

Johnny Bull set his teeth.

"I'm going on till I drop," he answered briefly.

"But—old chap—"

"I know I'm licked! But not while

I've got a punch left." And Johnny Bull tramped unsteadily forward.

But in that round, Bob seemed in no hurry to begin. He did not raise his hands; he stepped back, instead.

"I'm done, if you are, Bull," he said quietly.

"I'm not!"

"Call it a draw!"

"It's not a draw, confound your cheek. Come on!" Johnny Bull, with his dogged temper fully aroused, was not the fellow to allow himself to be spared.

"Just as you like."

And the ninth round went on—and ended, with Johnny Bull on his back on the floor. Lord Mauleverer counted. He counted ten—but he might as well have counted twenty or thirty—Johnny Bull was absolutely spent, and he could not get on his feet.

"Out!"

There was a murmur from the Remove fellows. Lord Mauleverer put away his watch; the fight was over. Wharton helped Johnny Bull to his feet, and placed him in his chair, and sponged his burning face.

Bob peeled off the gloves, and Teddy Wilkinson helped him on with his jacket. Bob's face was well-marked, and he was tired; but he could have gone on for a couple more rounds.

"Good man!" said Wilkinson. "Our win!"

Bob winced a little at the words. They seemed to identify him more completely than ever with Wilkinson and his friends; as if he no longer belonged to the Remove.

"Rotten!" said Bolsover major.

"Shame!" hooted three or four voices, as Bob moved towards the door of the Rag, among the Fourth Form men.

Bob looked round.

It had been a fair fight, and Johnny Bull had been fairly beaten. But the Remove fellows could not forgive the defeat of the Remove man, by a Removite who was in the ranks of the enemy. Hostile looks were cast at Bob, and a movement made towards him.

"Rag the cad!" shouted Bolsover major.

"Stop that!" exclaimed Wharton, frowning. "Nothing of that, you fellows!"

"Rally round, old beans!" grinned Temple of the Fourth. "Keep those fags off! They're not goin' to rag our man!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

And in the midst of a Fourth Form crowd, Bob went out of the Rag. A derisive shout from the Removites followed him.

"Shame!"

"Outsider!"

"Deserter!"

Bob Cherry tramped away, with a burning face and a black brow. Temple, Dabney & Co. marched him off to the Fourth Form passage in triumph. The hoots and yells of the angry Removites were still ringing in Bob's ears. At the door of Temple's study he stopped. He was done with the Remove now—done with them, with a vengeance.

"Temple"—he paused a second—"if you want a man for the football match on Saturday, and you'd care for me to play, I'm your man!"

"Done!" said Cecil Reginald at once. The die was cast now.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Goal!

"CHERRY!"

"Well, that's the limit!"

"The outside edge, and no mistake!"

"The giddy limit!"

On Friday evening Cecil Reginald Temple had strolled into the Rag and posted a notice on the door. He had strolled away again, with a smile on his face, as a dozen Remove fellows gathered round to read the paper. They knew that it was Temple's list for the Form match on the following day.

Nobody expected to see anything surprising in Temple's list. With the exceptions of Wilkinson, Scott, and Fry, the Fourth Form footballers were what the Remove considered "foozlers"; even the great Cecil Reginald himself was regarded as a fozzler by the Lower Fourth. The Remove were accustomed to beating the Upper Fourth in the Form matches; and, though Temple, Dabney & Co. had been pulling up their socks, and playing a better game than of old, they had not yet succeeded in beating the Remove. The Remove men were prepared to grin at the usual list of fozzlers, but there was, as it happened, a surprise for them in the list.

The name of "R. Cherry" leaped to their eyes at once.

The ten names of Fourth-Formers they disregarded. All eyes were fixed on "R. Cherry," who was down to play in the half-back line.

As Bob was barred from Remove football, and on the worst of terms with every fellow in his own Form, it was not really very surprising that he had elected to play for the Fourth. But it took the Removites by surprise. It was, as they all said, the limit.

"A Remove man—backing up the Fourth against his own Form in games!" said Bolsover major, in deep disgust. "It takes the cake!"

"Shame!"

"Rotten!"

"The chap's a rank outsider, and no mistake!" said Skinner.

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"A blinking renegade!" said Snoop.

"Look here, we oughtn't to allow it! Wharton ought to put in an objection!"

"Wharton," bawled Bolsover major, as the captain of the Remove came into the Rag, "look at this!"

Harry Wharton looked.

"What do you think of that?" demanded Bolsover.

"No bizney of mine," said Harry. "Temple can play any man he likes, of course."

"A Remove man against the Remove!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Well, Cherry's out of Remove football now," said Wharton tolerantly.

"It will do those fozzlers good to have one player among them, too. We shall get a rather better game to-morrow."

"So that's how you look at it, is it?" bawled Bolsover major.

"Just that," assented the captain of the Remove.

"I think it's rotten!"

"You can think what you like, of course," assented Wharton.

"Then you're not going to object?" asked Skinner.

"Certainly not!"

"The objectfulness would not be the proper caper, my esteemed Skinner," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "I am glad to see that the excellent and ridiculous Cherry is not giving up Soccer."

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" growled Skinner. "This is a Form match, and a man can't play against his own Form in a Form match!"

"Not exactly a Form match," said Wilkinson of the Fourth, who was looking on, with a grin. "We're the junior eleven of Greyfriars, you know—not exactly a Form team."

"Rats!"

"Gammon!"

"Chuck it!"

"That's how it stands," said Teddy Wilkinson cheerfully. "The actual fact of the matter is that we're the junior eleven, and you fellows are just a scratch team of fags! Cherry's a good man, so naturally we play him. There are one or two other Remove men we'd be willing to play."

"Why, you cheeky idiot!"

"You swanking ass!"

"Chuck him out!" roared Bolsover major.

And Teddy Wilkinson, encircled by the irritated Removites, was promptly ejected from the Rag on his neck.

There was great excitement in the Remove that evening on the subject of Bob Cherry's inclusion in Temple's eleven, and in the Form-room the following morning most of the Removites made it clear by their looks what they thought of the outsider—now more of an outsider than ever.

Bob did not seem to observe the looks.

He was accustomed by this time to entering his own Form-room as a stranger and leaving it as a stranger, exchanging no word or look with any fellow there.

Once or twice, however, a smile came over his face—not the cheery, sunny smile of old by any means. Possibly he found the impotent wrath of the Remove rather entertaining.

"Anyhow, we'll beat that fumbling crew!" Squiff remarked, after dinner. "Temple won't get much benefit out of his now man!"

"The beatfulness will not be so terrific as per usual, my esteemed Squiff," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and ludicrous Bob is a

good man, and the beatfulness may possibly be a boot on the other leg."

"Oh, rot!" said Squiff.

Harry Wharton & Co. came down to Little Side, Temple & Co., as usual, strolling along a little late. There were black looks among the Remove men at the sight of Bob Cherry in the Fourth Form colours.

All the Lower Fourth who were not in the team had gathered to watch the game, even Skinner & Co. turning up for the unique occasion. They noted—not with satisfaction—that Bob Cherry was looking his best. All his "swotting" of late had not told on his form, whatever effect it might have on his sunny temper. Some of the Remove fellows gave him a groan, which Bob did not seem to hear.

Potter of the Fifth had come down to referee the match, and he stared at Bob in surprise.

"You playing for the Fourth?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bob cheerily.

"Isn't this a Form match?"

"Not exactly—it's a match between the junior eleven and a scratch fag team."

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter of the Fifth.

Bob Cherry's words were heard by all the Remove footballers, and they exchanged grim glances. The outsider was going the "whole hog."

Bob lined up with the Fourth, and Teddy Wilkinson, in goal, was grinning serenely.

Cecil Reginald Temple was looking, if possible, a little loftier and more confident than usual. Temple of the Fourth always began a match with an air of lofty confidence, as if defeat was not within the range of practical politics. That lofty confidence generally petored out, however, quite early in the game. But on this occasion Cecil Reginald had some foundation for his confidence—the best junior half-back at Greyfriars had been subtracted from the Remove eleven and added to Temple's, and that change-over made a very great deal of difference. And the presence of a first-class man in their ranks gave new life to the Fourth Form team. Cecil Reginald was captain of the team, but quality was bound to tell, and undoubtedly Bob Cherry had more influence over the men than the great Cecil Reginald had—which was all to the good from a footballing point of view.

The Remove began in a grim and determined humour. As a rule, they did not go all out to beat Temple & Co., but on this occasion they left nothing to chance. From the pheeep of the whistle they played up hard and fast. But from the very beginning it was plain that there was a new spirit in the ranks of the Fourth.

The first half wore away, ding-dong, and there was no score on either side.

At half-time many of the Fourth Form men looked winded, and the Remove men were breathing hard. Temple & Co. were the worse for wear, but their confidence had not abated—it had rather increased. For it was very unusual, in a game with the Remove, for the score to remain blank at half-time. Harry Wharton & Co. had expected at least one goal—if not two. And so far they had taken none.

The whistle went again.

"We've got to beat them!" said Harry Wharton quietly, but with a gleam in his eyes.

"Put your beef into it, you men,"

(Continued on page 28.)

THE SECRET OUT! "Pat Roche" gets the shock of his life when John Carfax, piercing his disguise, tells him he is no more Pat Roche than the man in the moon; that he is in fact Thomas Comber, who escaped from the reformatory ship *Bellerophon*!

The Boy with the Million-Pound Secret!

DAVID GOODWIN'S
SERIAL MASTERPIECE!



HOW THE STORY OPENED.

TOMMY COMBER, sentenced to three years' detention aboard the reformatory ship *Bellerophon* for being concerned in the murder of his uncle, **JOSEPH COMBER**, a clever chemist, inventor of a powerful high explosive named *Comberite*, and owner of *Curlew Island*.

CHUFFER FOSS, Tommy's cousin, a ne'er-do-well, whose false evidence at the trial did much to prejudice the innocent Tommy's chances of acquittal.

DR. SHANE O'HARA, a skilful surgeon, who shelters the fugitive from the *Bellerophon* and fakes his features to resemble those of *Pat Roche*, his servant, so that Tommy's own pal,

DAN BENNETT, doesn't recognise him until Tommy makes known his identity.

MERTON HAYNES, a friend of O'Hara's.

JOHN CARFAX, a mystery man, whose life Tommy saves.

In return for the service O'Hara has rendered him, Tommy—who knows the secret of *Comberite*—is asked to make the explosive for the doctor and his friend, Tommy himself to take a third share in the partnership. Tommy agrees to the proposal and, privately, asks Dan to join him on *Curlew Island* where the stuff is to be made. Dan jumps at the opportunity. Later Dan falls foul of O'Hara and Haynes, and all but loses his life. The adventure, however, goes to prove that O'Hara and his friend are shady customers, and thereafter the two boys keep their eyes peeled for further trouble. Tommy makes a small quantity of *Comberite* and finds that there is a defect in one of the chemicals he has used. Accordingly, Dan is dispatched to London to purchase some more. In his absence Tommy is attacked by three masked figures. Their leader demands the secret of *Comberite*, but Tommy stoutly refuses to give it up. Tommy's fate is hanging in the balance when O'Hara and Haynes turn up. Tommy is rescued in the nick of time. A fresh supply of *Comberite* is made and to test it Tommy buries a small quantity of it beneath a tree. A long time fuse is lighted, and Tom and Dan are eagerly awaiting the result, when, to their horror, *Chuffer Foss* appears in close proximity to the tree. Tom's warning cries are lost in the terrific explosion that follows. On reaching the spot where *Chuffer* had been seen, Tom and Dan discover his body—a huddled heap amidst the debris. Full of concern, the two boys dash off for a stretcher, but on their return they find that *Chuffer* has vanished completely!

(Now read on.)

Dan's Appointment!

"**CHUFFER** wasn't alone then!" cried Dan. "He must have had some mates with him, watching from behind the wall—and they've carried him off!"

"I don't believe it!" exclaimed Tommy. "He got away on his own, as soon as we left him. I thought he wasn't dead—I could have sworn I saw one of his eyes half-open and shut again—once when I turned an' looked at him."

"You thought he was shamming? Then why on earth didn't you say so?"

"I didn't think he was shamming—I thought he was all smashed up, an' we might save him if we could get him to a doctor somehow, even if there wasn't much chance—"

"Chance! Why there wasn't a dog's chance! I say he was killed—no chap could have been as close as this to the explosion an' then got away with it afterwards!" cried Dan.

"You can't tell that. Explosions are mighty queer things. Look how hollow the ground is here. He was right in the dip, and the full force of it passed over his head. So did the stones an' clods of earth that were sent flying; one of 'em hit him, I reckon. He was knocked silly by the shock, and he came to, when we got up to him. But he laid low an' played 'possum; he didn't give himself away, an' when we went

off for the gate he pulled himself together and hooked it. He'll have reached his boat and got clear."

"Great Scissors! I believe you're right!"

"I'll bet five pounds to a penny I'm right. It's the only thing possible."

Dan gave an exclamation of wrath and dismay.

"By gum, then, he knows the whole game, at last! He must have heard all we said. He's wise to the *Pat Roche* stunt this time! He heard me callin' you 'Tommy Comber, an' talking about your Uncle Joseph."

"We don't know that for sure. But it is quite likely," said Tommy uneasily.

"Scoot up to the sea-wall—maybe we can get a sight of his boat. I wonder where it was he landed?"

They ran to the south side of the island, but on the broad, misty *Thames* there were no craft to be seen except some big steamers far out in the deep channel.

"He's more likely to have landed from the creek at the back," said Dan; "after him with the motor-boat, an' we'll catch him yet!"

They doubled back to the jetty, and jumping into the motor-boat they made a complete circuit of the island, running through the creek which cut it off from the mainland. And here, on the farther bank, they found a deserted boat with a couple of oars in her.

"That's it!" said Dan gloomily. "He

crossed in that boat, and after we left him he skulked down to her and crossed back again over the creek, and he's got away on foot. He might be anywhere, now."

There was clearly no use in chasing after *Chuffer*. The mist lay thicker on the land, and they were as likely to find a needle in a haystack. He was probably away by now. Nor was Dan quite sure that his chum was right about *Chuffer* having recovered and heard anything. He doubted whether *Chuffer* would have had the nerve to come to *Curlew Island* all by himself. Dan was still of opinion that some mates of *Chuffer's* had been within call, and had carried him off.

"What mates can he have had?" objected Tommy. "That lot who came after me here two nights ago, are all mopped up. You don't suppose *Chuffer* belongs to O'Hara's crush, do you?"

"I don't know," said Dan. "O'Hara & Co. are a mysterious crowd, and no game they might get up to would surprise me. What are you goin' to do now?"

"I'm going to stand by O'Hara, until I know he's crooked. And I'm going to send him a telegram right away, as I promised I would, to let him know *Comberite* is O.K."

"By gosh!" cried Dan, cheering up wonderfully. "I should say it was O.K.! Put it here, old son—give us a grip of

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your fist! Comberite is a giddy winner! Nothing else matters now we've got Comberite! We can twist all their giddy tails!"

"And Chuffer can go and cook himself—supposing he's alive, as I think he is!" chuckled Tommy. "This is the biggest day of my life, Dan, an' thanks to you I've come out right on top! I'm not worryin' about Chuffer. Put me ashore at Leigh, and I'll slip O'Hara the wire."

"Give it to me, I'll send it," said Dan, "that's safer than you going ashore."

While the boat ran at full speed down Sea Reach, Tommy scribbled the telegram on the back of an envelope. All he wrote was "O.K.," and signed it "Pat."

"But that's to a London address," objected Dan. "He ain't in London; he hangs out at Havengore Island—that place I told you about, and it's only a few miles from us here."

"Never mind, that's where he told me to wire," said Tommy. "I don't care a hang wheré he is."

The motor-boat touched the shore a mile outside the town of Leigh, where Tommy remained in charge of the boat while Dan walked into the town. It was nearly an hour before he was back.

"I sent your blessed wire, though I'd a good mind not to," said Dan. "It's my idea your bird O'Hara is the biggest crook of the lot."

"He may be," said Tommy, "but it isn't proved. I certainly think he's a tough, but I owe him something. It's a queer thing, but I dislike that big hunk of cheese who calls himself Merton Haynes, a lot more than I do Doctor O'Hara. I never could stick Haynes. Still, we've shot the goal, so it don't matter. Where are you making for now, Dan?"

"I've been thinking," said Dan, "you oughtn't to go back to Curlew Island just now. And I've got an appointment, myself."

"Appointment? Where?"

Dan hesitated, and grinned.

"At Havengore," he said, "with Mister John Carfax."

Tommy was too astonished to speak.

"To tell you the truth, old scout," continued Dan, "when I reported to you about my little visit to Carfax, there was something I didn't mention, as I wasn't sure if you'd like it. If you don't we can cut it out."

"Carfax asked me where I came from, and I said Gravesend, as it wasn't any use telling lies. Then he asked me if I'd got a boat. Somehow I fancied he knew already who I was, an' that I owned a motor-boat. You remember, I'd promised to help him if I could. So I said I had, and he sort of smiled at me:

"Well," says he, "I'll tell you something. I shall be at Havengore Island to-morrow, if you know where that is. And if you should have nothing else to do to-morrow evening, Dan Bennett, and you happen to be anywhere around Havengore Island, about the time it's getting dark, you might be very useful to me. If you can't come, I dare say I can do without you. But a friend with a boat would most likely be uncommon handy, so you might keep a look-out, if you're there."

"So I said I couldn't promise, but I'd try and be on the spot if I had the time. After that, we said good-bye and I pushed off. You see," added Dan, "I thought that if we weren't busy over the powder just then, it would be rather

a good egg to pop down to Havengore and see what's doing. What do you say?"

"But, Great Scott!" exclaimed Tommy. "Is Carfax after O'Hara and Haynes after all, then? I didn't know he knew anything about 'em!"

"Can't say! He's after Baldy's lot, and expects to find 'em down Havengore way—and perhaps he knows they're up against O'Hara, too. That's how I figure it, and if I'm right we shall be helping you and O'Hara if we help Carfax. See? Whatever it is, I think I ought to be on the spot. What do you say?"

"Sure!" cried Tommy. "Head her for Havengore, Dan."

"But ought you to be in this stunt?" said Dan doubtfully. "It ain't very safe. I think I ought to land you somewhere and go on my own."

"Guess again!" said Tommy. "Think I'm goin' to be left out of the fun? Let her rip!"

The Passenger!

THE motor-boat started on her journey seaward, but when she was nearly abreast the *Noro Lightship* the boys found they were too early, and ran her into Yantlet Creek, a snug little lonely haven on the Kentish side near Sheerness, and there they waited till sundown. There was plenty to eat in the boat, for Dan always kept her provisioned, and they discussed the mysterious appointment for the evening, without getting much wiser. The only thing to do was to see for themselves, and a little before dusk they left the creek and headed north-east for Havengore.

"Mist's still a bit thick, but that's all to the good," said Tommy, when at last they sighted the desolate little knot of low-lying islands, beyond the *Maplin Sands*, of which Havengore was the central one. "Wonder if we'll find O'Hara at home. I suppose you didn't tell Carfax about getting rammed an' nearly sunk by their motor-launch, did you?"

"Course not," said Dan. "I've never told anybody about that, except you. I don't bear any special grudge against O'Hara for that game. I was askin' for trouble, and I daresay he thought I was one of the Baldy gang. Dare say there's some of 'em left, even now."

"If the launch goes for us this time, we'll have to sing out and let O'Hara know who we are, that's all," said Tommy. "Slow down and go easy. We don't want to be seen if we can help it."

Dan ran the motor-boat dead slow, at about four miles an hour, her engine muffled and just ticking over gently. There was not much chance of her being seen, for it was nearly dark when she got within gunshot of the island shore, and there was a dark background of sky and sea behind her. Then Dan shut off the engine altogether, and they watched and listened.

The place seemed dead and deserted. There was no sound or sign of life. Dan gave the signal once or twice—the whistling note of a grey plover, but there was no answer. After half an hour the boys began to wonder whether they had come on a wild goose chase. And yet they both felt, despite the silence, that there was something dangerous and sinister brooding over the dark island. The same sort of feeling that hangs about a haunted house.

"No go, after all," murmured Dan. "I think we'd better—"

What Dan thought he had better do was never known. For just then the

sudden crack of a pistol-shot rang out, away to the right across the island. It split the silence with its vicious bang, and almost instantly it was followed by a second shot.

Dan sprang to his feet and gave the signal whistle, loud and clear.

"There he is! There's somebody coming over the wall!" exclaimed Tommy, starting up the engine. The boat darted ahead.

The figure of a man appeared, dim and ghostly, flitting over the top of the sea-wall, and Dan whistled again. But there was a long spit of sand running out between the boat and the place where the man was, and they could not reach him direct. He did not hesitate for a moment, but sprang into the water and came swimming out with powerful strokes. Just then there was another shot from the island.

"Quick!" said Tommy. "Get to him!"

The motor-boat rounded the spit of sand and made for the swimmer, but Tommy gripped hold of a stretcher, which made a useful club.

"Make sure who he is first. We don't want any—"

"Hallo!" called the swimmer, in a clear, distinct voice which Dan recognised at once. "That you, Bennett?"

"It's Carfax. In with him!" said Dan, and slowing up, he ran alongside the swimmer.

Tommy reached over and gripped him by the arm, to heave him up. As he did so Carfax gave a little gasp of pain.

"Hallo!" said Tommy, shifting his grip. "Hit?"

"Nothing much," said Carfax, in an easy, composed voice, and with Tommy's help he was quickly hoisted into the boat. "One of them made a luckier shot than he deserved to. It's only my left arm. Thanks, laddie; I am greatly obliged to you. Now you may get away as quick as you like."

"Give her all she's got!" exclaimed Tommy, as Dan opened the throttle and the motor-boat dashed away. "Head her for Sheerness. We shall have that blessed launch after us, an' she can make rings round us!"

"No, she won't!" laughed the passenger, who sat dripping in the stern-sheets beside Dan. "I dished up that launch's magneto before attending to anything else, and they won't get her running for three hours, if that. It was clumsy of me to let them find me, though."

"They've winged him, Dan," said Tommy. "He's got a shot through the arm!"

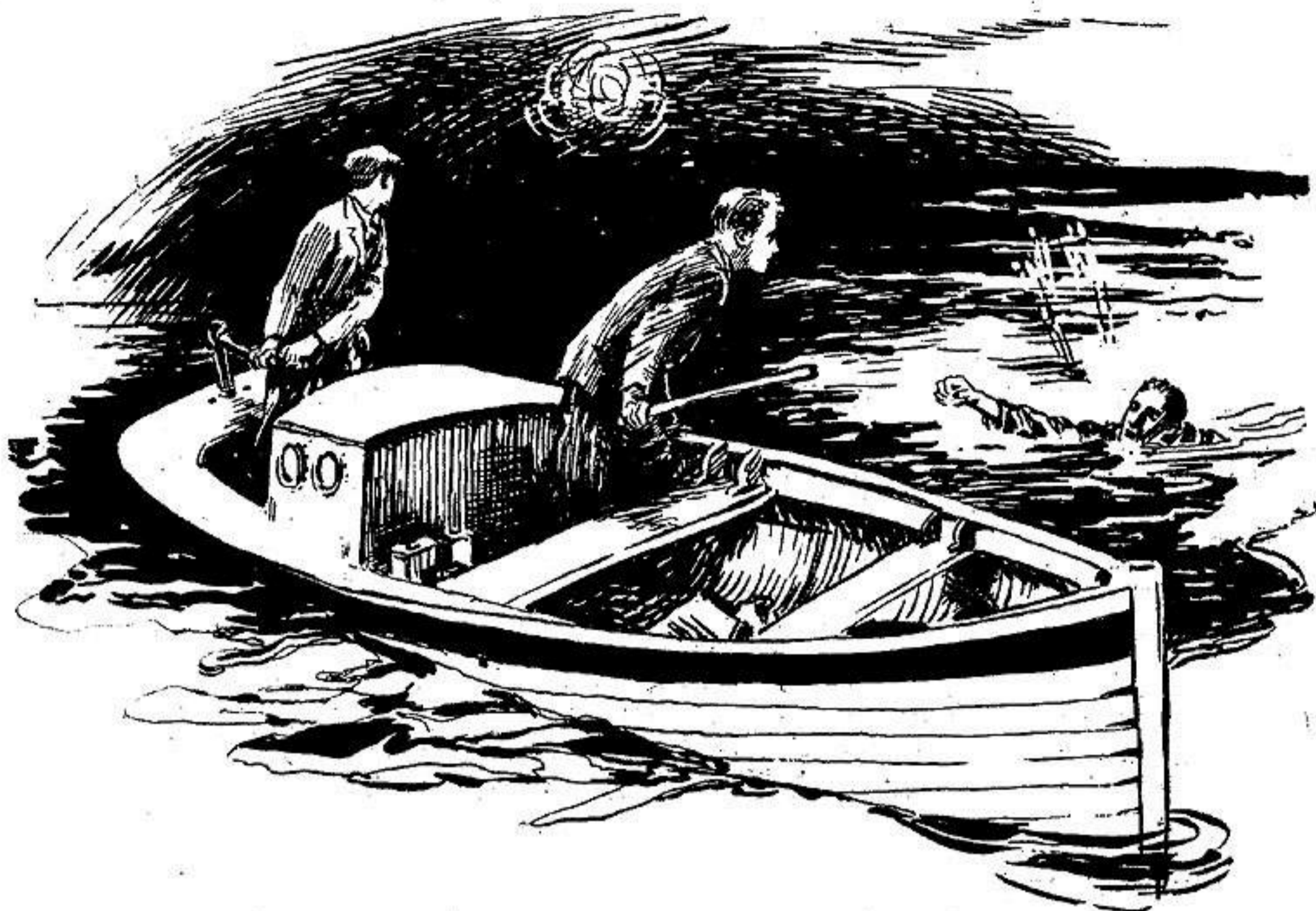
"Here, take the tiller, Tommy!" said Dan. "I'll attend to you, sir, before we do anything else. I'm a chemist, an' trained in first-aid. Let's dress the wound. You may be worse hurt than you think."

"Good! You're the handiest youngster I ever struck," said Carfax pleasantly. "All the comforts of a home! Fire away, then."

While Tommy steered Dan got the passenger's coat off carefully. He wore a dark flannel shirt, the left sleeve of which was soaked with blood. Dan took out his knife and ripped the shirt from cuff to shoulder. The wound was just below the elbow, a small clean puncture right through.

"You're lucky," said Dan, washing it carefully and binding it with a strip of canvas and a pad. "Another two inches and your arm wouldn't have been much good to you for the next two months. Does it hurt much, sir?"

"Not in the least," said Carfax coolly. "I hardly knew I was hit until your young friend grabbed hold of me."



As the motor-boat made for the swimmer, Tommy gripped hold of a stretcher. "Make sure who he is, first, Dan!" he cried. "We don't want any—" "Hallo!" called the swimmer, in a clear, distinct voice, which Dan recognised at once as being that of John Carfax. "That you, Bennett?" (See page 24.)

"Did you hit any of them?" exclaimed Tommy.

Carfax smiled.

"I didn't shoot," he said. "I never do shoot, except in the last resort. And it hasn't quite come to the last resort yet, though I expect it soon will. But all the same, I'm quite thankful to you, Dan Bennett, for keeping the appointment so punctually. You are just the sort of lad I could do with in my job. I was going to swim across to Foulness when you picked me up, but with this hole in my arm I dare say I'd never have got there at all."

"But was it one of Baldy's lot who shot you?" asked Dan eagerly.

Mr. Carfax shook his head.

"Great Scott! It wasn't O'Hara, was it?" blurted out Dan.

"Why, yes; or rather, his friend Haynes," replied Carfax calmly. "O'Hara and Haynes, as they call themselves, are the gentlemen I am after—together with just one other person, whom I hope to lay my hands on very soon indeed. I thought you guessed that all along, Dan. By the way, you haven't introduced me to your friend yet, who pulled me out of the water."

Dan, feeling utterly bewildered, looked at Tom.

"This is my chum, Pat Roche, sir," he said.

"Pleased to meet him," replied Carfax dryly. "But what name did you say?"

"Pat Roche."

Carfax wrung the water out of his cap and put it back on his head.

"Really?" he said. "Well, that shows how mistaken one can be."

There was an awkward pause. Then Dan leaned slowly forward and looked into Carfax's face.

"What do you mean?" he asked, in the gentle voice that Dan always kept for the most dangerous and unhealthy moments.

Carfax did not turn a hair. He remained just as calm as Dan.

"I mean," he said, "that I supposed myself to be sitting next to Thomas Comber, convicted at the Maidstone Assizes, who escaped from the reformatory ship Bellerophon."

For a few moments neither of the boys spoke. Then Tommy broke the silence with rather a grim laugh.

"We're up against it, Dan," he said.

Dan looked from one of them to the other.

"What shall we do, Tommy?" he said quietly. "Does he go over the side again?"

"I don't think so," said Carfax. "We are going to Sheerness. I'm afraid I've told you one or two lies. We sometimes have to tell lies in my job."

Dan throttled down the engine till the boat was hardly moving. Then he turned to Carfax and his jaw stuck out like the ram of a battleship.

"Look here, Mister Carfax," he said. "We're two to one. We're not going to Sheerness or anywhere else till we've got the truth out of you. Unless I know that my pal Tommy Comber is safe, you're in a worse mess than you were when you ran away from O'Hara's pistol!"

The Ace of Trumps!

CARFAX looked at Dan, with a twinkle in his eye.

"You're a hefty pair of lads, you two," he said. "I can see I've fallen into the hands of desperadoes,

You've got me at your mercy, eh? If I disappeared out here in this fog; nothing more would be heard of me. And being drowned is no worse than being shot, is it?"

"It would be quite easy to put you over the side," replied Dan. "Shall we do it, Tommy?"

"If you like," said Tommy. "Only it seems rather a waste after taking all this trouble to pull him out. Look here, sir, what is it you want with me? I tell you straight I'm not going back to the Bellerophon. Is that the goal you're shooting for?"

"No," said Carfax; "I'm playing a bigger game than that. I'd much rather keep you out of the Bellerophon, Tommy Comber, than put you there. But you're in danger of it, and you're in a much bigger danger still, which you don't know about. Your best chance is to trust to me. Will you do that?"

Tommy took one look at him and decided.

"Yes," he said, "I will. So long as I know the game. It's got me beat. It's a mystery to me!"

"It's no mystery to me," said Carfax. "And I'm going to tell you everything. It's the simplest and the best way, after all."

"Go ahead!" said Tommy.

The two boys sat silent, while the motor-boat forged ahead, and Carfax began to speak again quite quietly.

"It's a big game," he said. "And it means a lot to England. I'm an official in the Secret Service, as you know already. I'm after a gang of men who are trying to wreck this country. I've got one of them already. He is the man you call Baldy."

"Baldy!" exclaimed Tommy. "The chap who tried to poison you?"

"Yes. He is a Bolshie spy, and he is in the pay of your friend O'Hara."

"Why, then O'Hara lied to me!" said Tommy grimly. "He told me Baldy was his enemy, and one of the gang who murdered my uncle."

"Certainly O'Hara lied to you if he said that Baldy is his enemy. Dr. O'Hara, as he calls himself, is a Russian. He is one of the cleverest men in Europe. His real name is Soltoff; he was a Court-physician in the time of the Tsar, and when the smash came he went over to the Revolutionaries, and was very useful to them. He is an ambitious man. I believe he would be Tsar himself if he could! He is half-English.

"He has a comrade, Merton Haynes, a Russian, whose true name is Dimitri, and who is a bigger blackguard than O'Hara himself. They have a third partner, their real boss, Karkoff, who provides the money for their work. Baldy is their spy and man-of-all-work.

"These four men—O'Hara, Haynes, Karkoff, and Baldy—are the real gang. The first three are very important men at home in Russia. They came to England some time ago. Nobody knew what they were after—but we knew it was mischief. I got on their trail two months back—soon after the murder of your uncle on Curlew Island. I have been watching them ever since. I've been getting the evidence against them bit by bit. It has been difficult, for they are very clever. But not quite clever enough. My case is nearly complete. Only I mustn't move till I can make a clean sweep of the lot of them. You see, my lad, in the Secret Service we must never fail. It doesn't matter if we get killed; no questions are asked. But we've got to make absolutely sure.

"What that gang were after was your uncle's powder—Comberite. They'd got wind of it somehow through a spy. I believe that Baldy got hold of your cousin, Chuffer Foss, of Gravesend, and got more out of him than even Foss guessed at. Chuffer is a fool; he is also a rascal."

"And he hates me," said Tommy,

"because I licked him. And because he thought I was my uncle's favourite."

"Very likely. That's why he told those lies about you at your trial—to clear himself and get you put away. He was most likely put up to it by Merton Haynes; he would never have thought of it for himself. If I had been on this job earlier, Tommy, I think I could have saved you, and shown you were innocent. They put me on the trail just too late for that."

Tommy looked at him dumbly.

"Who killed my uncle, sir?" he said. "Who raided the island that first night, when he was found dead?"

"It was O'Hara and Merton Haynes," said Carfax quietly. "They were after the secret of the powder. Which of them killed your uncle I cannot tell. But those two men were the raiders. They did it very cleverly; they left no clues, and the police were baffled. You were left to bear the blame. Some of the stolen money was found on you. My theory is this, Tommy, for it's the only one that fits the case. You got a knock on the head, and never knew what happened to you, for you never saw the men. They shoved some of the stolen notes into your clothes, and set you adrift in your boat. That was enough to dish you. You were innocent, but your story wasn't good enough for a judge and jury."

"Great Jupiter!" said Dan explosively. "Didn't I always say Haynes and O'Hara were crooks and scoundrels?"

For a moment Tommy was stupefied.

"Can you prove this, sir?" he said at last.

"I know it to be as true as that you are sitting there beside me," said Carfax. "But to prove they actually did that is another thing. I couldn't prove it if you put me in a witness-box in court. The Secret Service can't always prove things of that sort. What I can prove—thanks to you and Bennett—is that O'Hara has worked from the first to get hold of Comberite Powder, and that he is a Bolshie agent I know only too well. That's enough for me.

"If that gang had the secret of Comberite—the most powerful explosive on earth—they could, and would, wreck England with it. And Russia could wreck the world, and bring it under her thumb, and make it as miserable and poor and hopeless as Russia is now—with a gang of scoundrels on top, holding all the power and allowing no liberty to anyone—a slave country. They've murdered two million people as it is to get their own way."

Carfax laid a hand on Tommy's shoulder.

"But when England has Comberite, Tommy, that danger will be past. And another danger, too, will be gone. England is an honourable country. She has never made war unless she was attacked! And, with a power like that in her hands, she can make war impossible. She can forbid war all over the world. And that's great. You weren't old enough to be in the Great War, Tommy; but take it from me, war's a rotten thing. Fighting's good fun, but war nowadays is beastly.

"And you, Tommy Comber, happen to hold the secret of that power; so we're not going to lose you. You're the ace of trumps!"

Tommy gasped. He could hardly take it in.

"But look here, sir," he exclaimed,

"I'm thinking of my Uncle Joe—poor old nuns. You say O'Hara's lot killed him. But who was that gang who tried to do me in the night before last on the island?"

Carfax turned to him quickly.

"What gang are you speaking of?" he exclaimed. "Not Helsing's? Was there a tall man with a little crossed scar on his chin—a very square chin—the sort of scar German students often have? Tell me what happened."

"I never heard of Helsing; but there was a chap rather like that when his mask was off," replied Tommy; and he told how he had been held up and bound at the bungalow.

Carfax listened and gave a long whistle.

"You were lucky, Tommy!" he said, and frowned. "I never thought that lot were so close upon the scent. They were a rival gang, trying to do O'Hara down. They cut in, did they? They weren't thought so dangerous as O'Hara's crew. A mate of mine was getting after them, and we'd soon have rounded them up; but he must have let them get away from him. I warned him they might be after Comberite, but the Service expected nothing as soon as that. I can't look after everything myself. So O'Hara chipped in and wiped them up, did he? It was a case of dog eating dog!"

"But who were they?" cried Tommy.

"Germans," said Carfax. "Those men were a push of the old Royalist crowd, who are out for revenge, and are always looking for a chance to restore the Kaiser. Most of the German nation wants peace now, but a few of these firebrands are always on the move. The leader of the fellows who tackled you is Von Helsing, the son of a Prussian prince. If they had got hold of Comberite they would have had a great power in their hands. O'Hara's Russian crew knew they were after it and would never have let them get away with it."

"Jimini!" said Tommy. "And that swab O'Hara told me they were the gang who killed my uncle, an' that Baldy, who I caught spying after me in London, was one of them."

"Of course, O'Hara would tell you that, so that you mightn't suspect him. It was a lie! Von Helsing's crowd never got to know about Comberite till the time of your trial, when you told the court about your uncle's experiments. The court didn't believe you. But the German gang did, and they followed it up. They kept a watch on Curlew Island, and when O'Hara fitted up the sheds, and you arrived and started making those thundering explosions, of course, they went for the goods as soon as the coast was clear."

"What do you reckon's become of them, sir?" asked Dan with interest.

"Von Helsing and his lot? I wasn't there at the time. But it's even betting they will never be seen again," said Carfax dryly.

"No doubt the busy Mr. Merton Haynes sunk them in deep water, with a pig of lead ballast apiece to keep them down. And, as far as I'm concerned, a good riddance! The Secret Service would be glad if all war-mongers were at the bottom of the sea. We can't put 'em there, but we're quite pleased when anybody else will do it for us. Saves us lots of trouble. But Von Helsing was a dud—these Prussians are

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never very bright. He saw that you knew how to make Comberite, but, I doubt if he knew you were Tommy Comber himself, disguised as you were."

"Did you know it, sir?" asked Tommy.

John Carfax smiled.

"Why, yes; I knew it from the first. I'd had O'Hara watched, and when I discovered he'd been secretly sheltering a mysterious boy it didn't take me long to piece up the puzzle. It was no news to me that Dr. Soltoff, alias O'Hara, is the cleverest man living at faking disguises, though he never did a better job than yours is, Tommy."

Carfax sat back and lit his pipe, having filled it with tobacco from a water-tight box, and using a match out of a little, corked bottle. He blew a contented puff of smoke into the air.

"Is it all clear to you now, laddies?" he said cheerfully. "The fact that Tommy was a runaway convict was no business of mine, and I didn't care a button for it. In a big game like this Tommy was more useful to me as a free boy than he would have been if shut up on the Bellerophon. I've been running my three cunning foxes to earth, and when Baldy got the wind up and tried to poison me, why, that was very much what I expected. It gave him away altogether."

"Then why in thunder didn't you tell the police, sir?" ejaculated Dan.

"The police!" said Carfax sarcastically. "My dear Dan, we don't drag the police into a business like this. Our great object is to keep them out of it!"

"Well, what's goin' to happen to O'Hara and Haynes now?" said Tommy eagerly. "Can you scoop them up, sir?"

"I want Karkoff, too!" said Carfax. "My case is nearly ready; there's just one more proof I've got to get. I must be in London to-night, and you've got to land me at Sheerness. Even now, to strike too soon is to lose everything. The fellows might slip through my fingers. But I don't think they will. Now, Tommy, are you satisfied?"

"I'm satisfied if you are, sir. I think it's splendid!" said Tommy, laughing, as he gripped the hand that Carfax held out to him. "I don't know if what I'm doing'll get you into trouble, sir. I've heard it's a year's hard labour a chap can get for helpin' an escaped prisoner."

"You may be an escaped prisoner, Tommy," said Carfax slowly, "but if you choose I believe you can do more for England than anyone living."

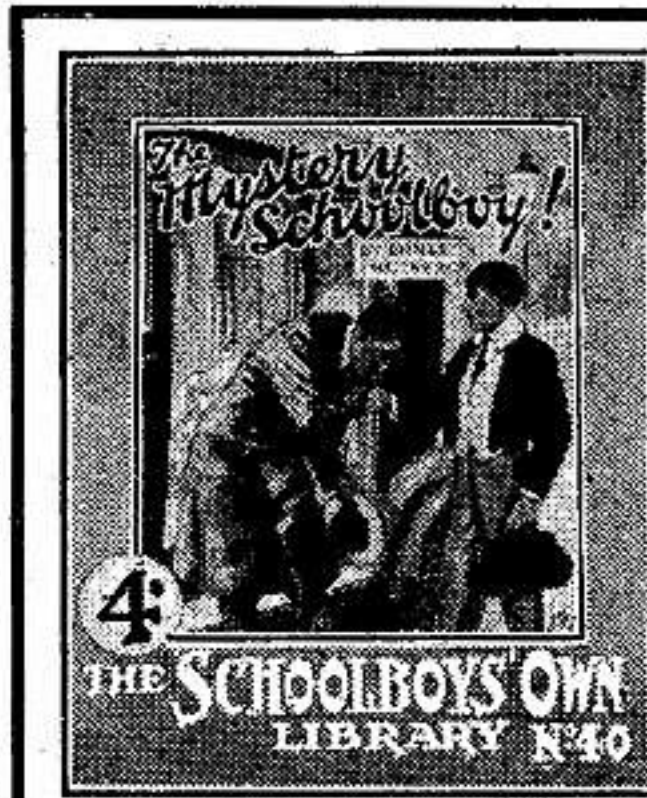
There was a short pause.

"It seems to me England's a bit in Tommy's debt already, sir," said Dan, rather grimly.

"Oh, that don't matter," retorted Tommy cheerfully. "What is it you want me to do, sir?"

"I want you to keep out of harm's way till nine o'clock to-morrow, and meet me at Sheerness Pier. We'll then go off together, and I'll show you what to do. I'm going to take Dan Bennett with me now, if he'll come. We shall go to London. I don't want you with me yet, Tommy; we'd best not be seen in each other's company till the right moment. You'd best keep away from Curlew Island, unless there's anything there that could possibly give the secret of the powder away, in which case you must destroy it. But don't run any risks. I should let it alone. But I want Dan."

"That's all right," said Dan. The boat was speeding away for Sheerness, and just passing the Nore Light. "I'll come with you, sir, and Tommy can



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keep the motor-boat. You know how to run her, Tommy, and there's plenty of grub, and everything you need."

They passed up the mouth of the Medway in the darkness, and Carfax and Dan landed on the pier.

"Remember, nine o'clock, Tommy!" said Carfax, as he stepped ashore. "Don't be late, for we can't wait for you. I reckon the fur's going to fly to-morrow!"

The Police at Last!

AS soon as he was alone Tommy emptied another can of petrol into the tank of the engine, got the boat going, and steered out of the Medway again.

"I'll stick to the ship," said Tommy to himself, and he turned into the Thames Mouth and ran into a snug little creek on the Kentish shore. He made a tent over the well with a tarpaulin, and after stowing away a hearty meal of tinned tongue, and biscuits, and apricots, he rolled himself up in an oil-skin and went to sleep. He was always just as happy on a boat as anywhere else, and there is nowhere one sleeps so soundly as afloat on salt water. He had had a wonderful day, but he was too tired to think it over. To-morrow might be more exciting still, if Carfax was any judge. And Tommy reckoned him the best judge of hot stuff that he had ever met in his life.

When Tommy woke it was some time after daybreak, and though he had no watch, he was a good judge of time by the sun, and made it to be about seven, but he wished he had thought of borrowing Carfax's watch.

His own watch was in the bungalow at Curlew Island. It would not have run down yet; he had wound it up yesterday, just after Dan arrived. He wished he had it. And yonder was Curlew Island, not two miles away across the water.

Tommy thought it over while he made a hurried breakfast. Was it worth while going across? He decided that it was.

He ran the boat out of the creek and steered across towards his own territory. For Curlew Island was his.

He would run no risks at all. If there was anybody about, or any signs of trouble, he could sheer off and give it a miss.

But there was no craft in sight whatever—nothing but one small boat with

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

is remembered by young and old as a day of "bangs."

This year's "Fifth" will carry another big bang with it, for a ripping book-length story of school life by Ernest Protheroe, will be on sale at all bookstalls on fireworks day.

a lug-sail, tacking up and down along the Shellhaven mud-flats above the island. She was a cockle-boat, on her way down to the Chapman Sands; she was harmless and quite slow.

"Sha'n't go up the creek to the jetty," said Tommy. "It's an awkward place to get out of again, if I wanted to do a bunk. I'll land on the open side, an' take a look-see from the top of the wall."

He headed for the coast of the island that fronted on the main river, and straight in front was a bank of black, sea-weedy rocks with deep water right up to them, called the Scar Elbow. Tommy shut off his engine and landed here, making the boat fast with her little grapnel anchor. Then very cautiously he climbed the embankment, and crouching low, peered through the long grass on top and scanned the flat expanse of the island.

It was absolutely deserted. Not a sign of life could he see except the gulls and redshanks. Yonder was the bungalow, lonely in the misty morning light.

All clear, Tommy lay and watched for quite twenty minutes before he set out across the marsh. But first he took a precaution. He took off the moveable switch from the motor-boat's engine and slipped it in his pocket. He could replace it in a second or two when wanted, but nobody could start the boat without it.

Then he set out at a brisk pace for the bungalow, jumping the marsh ditches on the way. There was barely a quarter of a mile to go. When he was within a couple of hundred yards of the house he paused and glanced back.

Tommy's eye, that was as quick as a Red Indian's, caught a glimpse of something that till now had been invisible. Instantly the danger signal seemed to ring out in his mind like a bell. He gave a gasp of dismay.

Right away back on the sea-wall, a good way from where he had crossed it, a thing like a small, dark blue dome was rising out of a patch of very long, thick grass. There was a man under it, watching him.

"Gosh!" gasped Tommy. "The cops at last!"

(Does it mean that Tommy's run of freedom has come to an end? Mind you read the continuation of this thrilling serial, chums. You'll find it in next week's MAGNET.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 977.

"THE DESERTER!"*(Continued from page 22.)*

said Temple cheerily. "We've got the Remove on toast this time, what?"

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney. The crowd of Removites watched the second half with breathless interest. The Remove attacks were hard and fast, but it could not be doubted that there was an unusual amount of beef in the Fourth. One player at least—the left half-back—was a tower of strength to his side. Some of the onlookers remarked that Bob Cherry was doing a lot of work for the forwards and a great deal for the backs, and sarcastically suggested that he would soon be dropping back into goal to give Wilkinson a hand. But

Wilkinson of the Fourth did not need a hand. Again and again he saved when the Remove attacks were pushed home; and if a back failed to clear there was always one half-back on the spot.

Fellows began to look up at the clock-tower. The end of the game was drawing nigh, and still the Remove had not broken their duck.

"Five minutes to go!" said Bolsover major. "Is it going to be a draw? My hat! Have you fellows left your shooting boots at home?"

"Play up, Remove!" It was not going to be a draw, as Bolsover major feared. For suddenly the game swept into the Remove half, and there was a tussle. Temple was on his back, gazing at a whirling sky, Dabney was sitting down in a dazed state; but a

sure foot found the ball and sent it whizzing. And Squiff, in the Remove goal, was a second too late to save that long, whizzing shot. The ball was in the Remove net, and the crowd gasped.

"Goal!"
"Bob Cherry—goal!"
Pheecep! went the whistle. For the first time that season the Upper Fourth had beaten the Lower Fourth in a football match—one goal to nil—and the winning goal had been kicked by the Deserter of the Remove.

THE END.

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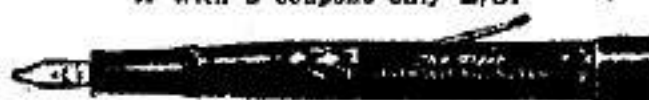
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