

“HARRY WHARTON’S DOWNFALL!” Amazing school yarn of the Chums of Greyfriars, inside.

The MAGNET²



HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Remove Rag I

THUMP! Harry Wharton jumped, and a couple of blots dropped from his pen.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove was seated at his table in Study No. 1. Pen in hand, with a wrinkle in his brow, he was beat over a Latin exercise. Judging by the expression on his face, he was not in the best of tempers. But a fellow who was "swotting" Latin, on a sunny afternoon in spring, could not perhaps be expected to feel very merry and bright.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars; and Harry Wharton was probably the only fellow in the Remove who was swotting. The other members of the "Co." were at games practice; and every now and then a shout from the football field floated in at the open study window. Most of the Remove men were out of the House; indeed, Wharton had supposed that he had the Remove passage to himself, until that sudden and terrific thump came at the study door.

He looked up angrily and impatiently. "Come in, you silly ass!" he snapped. But the door did not open. There was a sound of subdued chucking in the passage outside, and a patter of retreating feet. Then silence.

Wharton stared at the door; puzzled for a moment. Then his brow darkened.

He guessed that it was a "rag." "Swots" were not popular in the Remove. Evidently some fellow who knew that Wharton was working in the study had considered it funny to thump on the door in passing.

Wharton half-rose; and sat down again. Whoever it was, he was gone.

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now. Skinner, most likely, or Snoop—or one of Skinner's friends. Wharton breathed rather hard as he carefully blotted the drops of ink that had spurted from his pen. It was irritating enough; for that exercise was a special one set him by Mr. Quelch, his Form master; and Quelch loathed slovenliness. He was sure to raise his eyebrows over those blots.

However, it could not be helped; and Wharton dismissed the matter from his mind and concentrated on Latin again.

Thump!

It was another bang at the door—just as he got going. Again there was a breathless snigger and a scampering of feet.

Wharton compressed his lips. Evidently it was a "rag," with more than one fellow in it. He was powerfully tempted to pick-up a fives bat and leave the study in search of the ragger.

That, however, was not the way to get the exercise done before tea. Quelch expected him in his study at five o'clock with the finished paper, which he was to go through with him; pointing out and correcting his little errors and being generally helpful.

It was very kind of Quelch to find time, out of his scanty leisure, to give a fellow "extra tu" or "extra toot," as the juniors variously called it. Certainly, there were very few fellows in the Remove who would have appreciated kindness in the shape of extra tuition. But a fellow who was preparing for a difficult examination, in the hope of bagging a scholarship, had to be glad of it. Wharton would have given almost anything to be out of doors with his friends that sunny spring afternoon; but he remained in his study, doggedly at work. He expected quiet, at least, when all the fellows were out of the

House on a half-holiday. Quiet, however, he did not seem likely to get.

Thump!

It was a terrific bang on the door this time, again followed by a scampering of feet.

Wharton sprang to his feet. It was the third bang on the door, and evidently the "rag" was going on. It was not to be tolerated.

He caught up a fives bat, rushed to the door, and threw it open.

As he did so, a door was heard to close in the distance. Somebody had dodged into a study.

He stared into the Remove passage, with knitted brows.

The passage was empty. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way; and there was no man!

Breathing hard, he closed the door and turned back into the study. His eyes were glinting.

It was rotten enough to be sticking in a study swotting while the other fellows were enjoying the holiday. It was altogether too rotten, to be ragged like this, by fellows who were not up against it as he was! It was not as if he was "sapping" from choice. He had to bag the vacant Founders' Scholarship, or leave Greyfriars—and every man in the Remove knew it. Some of them, perhaps, would have been glad enough to see him go—Skinner and his friends, at least; perhaps the Bounder, who would become captain of the Remove if Wharton went. Well, he was not going, if he could help it; and he was not standing ragging while he was trying to cram Latin into his weary brain. The next ragger who came along to thump on the study door was going to get the fives bat, and he was going to get it hard.

Wharton did not sit down to the exercise again. It was useless to

attempt to concentrate on work, with silly asses banging at his study door every few minutes.

He crossed to the open window and looked out.

Far in the distance he could see the active figures on Little Side—distinct as they were, he could pick out Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and other fellows. The Bouncer was not with them, as he ought to have been; and the angry thought came into Wharton's mind that if Herbert Vernon-Smith thought he could cut games practice when he liked, and still expect to be picked out for the Rookwood match, Smithy might find that he had made a mistake. Smithy certainly was not cutting in the practice for the sake of working in his study; that was not in the Bouncer's line at all.

Glancing down into the quad, Wharton caught sight of the Bouncer—sauntering towards the House with his hands in his pockets. Evidently Smithy saw him at the window, for he glanced up with a derisive grin on his rather hard face—a grin that brought a flash to Wharton's eyes.

Thump! Wharton spun round from the window as the door fairly rocked under a terrific thump outside.

He raced across the study and tore the door open.

But the ragger had retreated promptly. The passage was empty when he started out.

"My hat! I—I—I'll—" exclaimed the exasperated captain of the Remove.

He shut the door; but did not leave it. Just within the door, with the fives bat in his hand, and a grim look on his face, he waited. He was ready for the next ragger when he came.

Five or six minutes passed; and then there was a faint sound of a creeping footstep outside, approaching the study.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

His hand was on the door-handle, ready to drag it open as soon as the knock came. His other hand gripped the fives bat, hard. Whoever it was, this time, was going to pay in full for all that had gone before—after which, perhaps, he would be left to "swot" in peace.

The footsteps approached softly and cautiously. Had the junior in the study been working he would not have noticed them. Now he noticed them—and waited!

Thump! came on the door.

At the same instant, Wharton tore it open and fairly leaped into the passage.

Crash!

He came into violent contact with a fat figure that was about to retreat; and there was a yell of alarm from Billy Bunter.

"Ow! I say, it wasn't me—yaroooh—leggo—oh, my hat—whoop!"

"You fat frump!"

Wharton's left hand grasped Billy Bunter's collar. His right wielded the fives bat, promptly and energetically.

Whack, whack, whack!

Billy Bunter wriggled and roared.

In a study farther along the passage, Skinner and Snoop and Stott heard Bunter's wild roars, and grinned at one another. They had not been caught—but it was just like that fat ass, Bunter, to get himself caught! Bunter, evidently, was suffering for his sins; and Skinner & Co. did not think of going to the rescue. Like that wise animal, Brer Fox, they "lay low and said naught."

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yarook! Help! Chuck it! I say, you fellows, rescue!" roared Bunter.

"You fat owl—take that—"

"Yow-ow-woop! I never did it!" yelled Bunter. "I never banged on your door, you beast! Besides, it was only a joke, old chap! C-c-c-can't you take a j-j-jig-joke? Yaroooooh!"

Whack, whack!
The fives bat fairly rang on Bunter's tight trousers.

The hapless Owl of the Remove wriggled and squirmed and yelled.

Wharton was angry; and like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry! Bunter was getting the benefit of it.

Whack, whack!
"Leggo! Stoppit! Oh, ooh!" yelled Bunter. "I say, it was Skinner's idea—Skinner all the time! Only a j-j-joke, old chap! Beast! Wow, wow, wow! And I never touched your beastly—yooop—door! I—I came along to speak to you—I only came to say—yarooop!"

Whack!
"Yow-ow-ow! I say, old chap, I was only coming to say how sorry I was your uncle's turned you down, and you're hard up, and got to go in for a rotten school—yooop! I—I—I was going to offer to help you with your smuggling—yarook! If this is the way you thank a chap for his sympathy—oh crickey! Will you leggo, you beast!"

For a long time Harry Wharton, captain of the Remove, has satisfied his Form fellows that he is the "right man in the right place." Now public opinion is on the turn, and the Removites are clamouring for a new captain!

Bunter yelled with anguish. There was a footstep on the Remove staircase. Then a voice came sharply: "Chuck that, you bully!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Fight!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, came up the Remove staircase, and lounged across the landing. Billy Bunter's frantic howls had reached his ears long before he arrived on the spot. Bunter's voice was on its top note, and it was heard afar. Whether the Bouncer considered that the fat Owl was getting too much toco, or whether he was looking for trouble with the captain of the Remove, he was prompt to chip in.

Harry Wharton stared round at him. There was an immediate howl from Bunter.

"I say, Smithy! Rescue, old chap! Make him leggo! I say, Smithy, lend a chap a hand! Leggo, you beast!"

Whack!
Once more the fives bat landed on the tight trousers, and there was a terrific yell from Bunter.

"Whooooop!"

"Whack! "Chuck that, I tell you!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"You tell me!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes, I tell you!" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Let Bunter alone, you rotten bully! Stop it, or I'll jolly soon stop you!"

Wharton, probably, had realised by

that time that the fat Owl had had enough, exasperated as he was. But the Bouncer's intervention was not to be tolerated; in his present mood, at least. Up went the fives bat for another swipe, and Bunter roared in anticipation.

But that swipe did not fall.

The Bouncer leaped forward, grasped Wharton's arm, and dragged it away. With a sudden twist, he tore the fives bat from the junior captain's hand, and sent it whizzing along the passage.

"Now let him alone!" said Smithy, with a cool stare into Wharton's furious face.

"You cheeky cad!"

"You rotten bully!" retorted the Bouncer.

Billy Bunter was released. He staggered away to the wall, and leaned there, gasping and spluttering.

The captain of the Remove turned on Vernon-Smith, almost like a tiger. There had been bitter blood between them of late; and the Bouncer had lost no opportunity of making his enmity felt. But this was the last straw.

"Put up your hands, you rotter!" panted Wharton.

Smithy's hands were already up.

"Come on!" he said coolly.

In a moment they were fighting fiercely.

Swotting, and the Latin exercise which had to be shown before tea, were forgotten now. Wharton was only conscious of the hard, mocking face before him, and his desire to punch it. He had much to endure these days: trouble at home, and a change in his fortunes that made the present hard, and the future dark and uncertain. Even his own friends had found his temper a little difficult to bear with. It was at its very worst now.

The Bouncer was cool as ice; cool, determined, implacable. He was a good fighting man—there were few better in the Remove. But he had to give ground before Wharton's whirlwind big spectacles.

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter, blinking at the scrap through his big spectacles.

"Oh crumbs! Go it, Smithy!"

The door of Study No. 11 opened, and Skinner and Snoop and Stott came out. They came along to watch, with grinning faces. Lord Maulverer, who had been resting his noble limbs on the study sofa in No. 12, looked out of his doorway; but Mauly did not grin.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Maulverer. "What on earth's the row? Chuck it, you silly asses!"

Maulverer came running down the passage.

"Don't you chip in, Mauly!" exclaimed Skinner. "Go it, Smithy, old bean."

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Wharton and the Bouncer were fighting furiously, almost savagely. The Bouncer was still giving ground, but only inch by inch; and he was much cooler and more self-possessed than his adversary. He was watching for his chance.

Suddenly he ceased to retreat, and came on with left and right.

Crash!

Wharton was down on his back in the Remove passage, gasping.

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Snoop.

"Good old Bouncer!"

"Man down!" chuckled Skinner.

Lord Maulverer rushed in, as the captain of the Remove, crimson with rage, was scrambling up. He caught Wharton by the arm.

"Wharton, old chap—" he gasped.

"Let go, you fool!"

"But—old bean—" exclaimed his dismayed lordship. "Oh! Gad! Oooh!" Mauleverer was staggering from a rough shove, and brought up against the passage wall with a bump and a gasp.

Wharton rushed at the Boulder again. "Now, you cad—"

"Now, you bully—" retorted Smyth. Hammer and tongs they went. The Remove passage echoed to tramping feet, panting breath, and vigorous punching.

Skinner looked on grinning. The amiable Skinner had hoped that the long-pending trouble between the Boulder and the captain of the Form would come to a head. He had his wish now.

Three or four fellows came up the Remove staircase. They gathered to stare at the fight.

"What's the row, you men?" asked Bolsover major.

"Only Wharton begging for trouble," grinned Skinner. "Smyth stopped him bullying Bunter—"

"Oh, rot!" said Ogilvy.

"I say, you fellows, he was pitching into me with a fives bat!" howled Bunter. "I've got a pain—"

"There goes Smyth!"

Vernon-Smith was down now, sprawling on his back, stretched by terrific right-hander that almost made his senses spin.

He gasped and blinked dizzily up at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton stared down at him, panting. "Is that enough, you cheekey rotter?"

The Boulder scrambled up.

He did not answer Wharton's question, but he came on with savage animosity. He was dazed and dizzy; but the Boulder of Greyfriars was the man to fight as long as he could stand.

"Go it, Smyth!" chirruped Skinner.

"Look here, chuck it, you duffers!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "You'll have a prefect up here at this rate! You'll get into a row for scrapping without the gloves on. Chuck it!"

Neither of the combatants heeded the Scottish junior. They had eyes only for one another.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Thump, thump, thump! It was such a scrap as had seldom happened in the Remove, though the Lower Fourth of Greyfriars rather prided themselves on being a fighting Form. Both the combatants were getting severe punishment, and showing very visible signs of it. But neither of them seemed to care for punishment.

"Ware prefects!" called out Hazelden from the stairs.

"Look out, you men—here comes Wingate!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

Still the fighting juniors did not heed. Wharton was pressing the Boulder hard now, and Smyth, good man as he was with his hands, was almost at the end of his tether. There was a heavy tramp of feet on the stairs, and Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, strode on the scene with a frowning brow.

"Stop that, you young sweeps!" he roared. "Do you know that you can be heard all over the House? Stop!"

But for once the juniors were deaf even to the voice of the captain of the school. Wharton's fist came lashing out, crashing into Vernon-Smith's face, and the Boulder went spinning, to crumple up in a gasping heap at Wingate's feet.

The next moment Wingate's grasp, like a vice, was on Harry Wharton's shoulder.

"You young rascal!"

For a breathless second it seemed that

the angry junior would turn on him, and the onlookers fairly gasped. But Wharton remembered himself in time and dropped his hands.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hard Cheese!

WINGATE gave the captain of the Remove a grim look. His ashlant was in his hand, and he looked very much inclined to use it. Skinner lent the Boulder a helping hand, and Smyth staggered up, panting, dabbing at the crimson stream that flowed from his nose. The Greyfriars captain's glance went from one to the other with grim disgust. "Scrapping" was by no means uncommon in the Lower School, but a desperate fight without the gloves was quite uncommon.

"By Jove!" said Wingate. "I've a jolly good mind to give you six each! But you look as if you've given one another enough! What's this row about, you young sweeps?"

"Oh, nothin'!" said the Boulder. "Nothing?" hooted Wingate. "What was it about, Wharton?"

"Nothing!"

Wingate stared from one to the other again. The late combatants were exchanging inimical looks, but they were agreed on one point—a point that Remove men were always agreed upon; they did not want a Sixth Form prefect butting into their personal disputes. The Greyfriars Remove preferred to be a law unto itself.

"Well," said Wingate grimly, "if you've been scrapping like a pair of prizefighters about nothing, I'll give you something to keep you busy. Both of you will go into your studies and write out two hundred lines, and bring them to me by tea-time. You've just about enough time for it."

"Pleased!" said the Boulder airily.

Wharton did not answer. "And if there's any more scrapping here," added Wingate, "I'll take the pair of you to your headmaster on the spot. Bear that in mind."

"Any old thing, Wingate," said Smyth.

"Now go into your studies. Sharp's the word!"

Under the prefect's eye the two juniors went to their studies, after a last stare of mutual dislike and defiance.

Wingate, frowning, tramped away to the Remove staircase and went down.

Skinner & Co. followed the Boulder to Stoney No. 4. Skinner, not generally an obliging fellow, fetched water from the tap at the end of the passage for Smyth to bathe his damaged face. Snoop fetched him a towel.

The Boulder had been hard hit, and he was quite well aware that only Wingate's arrival on the scene had saved him from being completely knocked out; he could not have stood up to the captain of the Remove many minutes more. Skinner & Co. were as well aware of it as Vernon-Smith, though they affected to take the view that Smyth had been on the point of victory when the fight was stopped. Billy Bunter, blinking into the study through his big spectacles, grinned as he watched Smyth bathing his damages. Smyth had intervened on Bunter's behalf, and captured a severe hammering for his pains. But the fat and fatuous Owl seemed to find something amusing, all the same, in his swelling nose and darkening eye.

"I say, Smyth, you look a bit

damaged!" grinned Bunter. "I say, you're going to have a beetroot nose, old chap. I wish you'd jolly well licked that cheekey beast, Smyth! He was laying into me with a fives bat—for nothing, you know! I wish you could have licked him! I've a jolly good mind to go to his study now and whop him, only—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!"

"Oh, really, Smyth! I say, I'm jolly glad Wingate came up in time. You can make out now that you weren't licked, old fellow—"

"Kick that fat fool out, one of you!" growled the Boulder.

"Oh, really, you know— Keep off, Skinner, you beast— Whoooooop!"

Billy Bunter departed in haste, with a yell, and the study door slammed after him, and Smyth was left with his sympathisers.

Harry Wharton was alone in Study No. 1. Ogilvy, who was friendly with the captain of the Remove, had made a movement to follow him, but Wharton shut his study door, and Ogilvy shrugged his shoulders and went on his way.

Wharton looked in the glass, and frowned at the reflection therein. It was not a pleasing reflection.

Smyth undoubtedly had had the worst of it; but Wharton's handsome face looked far from handsome now, and it was likely to be some days, at least, before he looked his usual self.

He did what he could to repair damages, and sat down rather wearily at the table.

Wingate had given him two hundred lines to keep him busy till tea-time. Really that was a mild punishment, in the circumstances. But if the lines were done there was no time to touch the exercise again, and Quelch was expecting it before tea. Finished or unfinished, Wharton had to take it to his Form master. One or the other had to be left, and Wharton debated which in his mind. Finally he decided on finishing the Latin exercise, and set to work on it.

He was not in a happy mood. He was tired and aching from the strenuous scrap, his nose was dripping "claret," and he had to stop and dab it every few minutes. There was going to be a row with Wingate if the lines were left undone. It was not much use to explain that he had had no time for them, when he had to admit that he had had time for scrapping in the passage. He did not want trouble with old Wingate, whom he liked and respected; but there seemed no help for it. When he thought of the Boulder his brow darkened and his lips set, and he could not help thinking of him more than of the work in hand.

So far as Wharton could see he was not to blame for what had happened. A fellow who was working for an exam could not be expected to submit to ragging which made work impossible. Perhaps he had rather lost his temper with Bunter and pitched into him a little more vigorously than was needful. Obviously the fatuous Owl had been led into the rag by more cunning fellows, who had escaped punishment. Still, that was not why Smyth had butted in. Smyth cared little enough whether Bunter was "bated" or not. He had jumped at the chance of a row.

Wharton's eyes smouldered over his weary Latin exercise. He was sorry that Wingate had come up; sorry that he had not given the meddling Boulder a little more. Smyth had been asking for trouble for days; ever since the day

of the Redclyffe match, when he had played a rotten, selfish game and had been called over the coals by his skipper. Well, if the fellow wanted more trouble after this he should have it, hot and strong; it would be a relief to give him the thrashing he was asking for.

That was not a mood in which good work was to be done. Wharton struggled through the exercise somehow; he had started it well, but he was conscious of the fact that he finished it far from well. With an aching head, a painful nose, and a morose temper, he was hardly equal to the difficulties of the Latin paper.

But it was finished at last, somehow. Wharton rose from the table, with a sigh of relief, and, after another frowning glance at his damaged reflection in the glass, left the study. It was close

Probably he was glad of the interruption.

"My exercise, sir," said Harry. "If you're busy now, sir—" Grateful as he was for the "extra toot" from his Form master, Wharton would have been glad to escape it at the present moment. He was feeling far from fit for Latin with Mr. Quelch.

"Not at all, Wharton," answered Mr. Quelch graciously. "I was expecting you. You will excuse me, Prout—"

Prout, portly and pompous, rolled to the door. He paused, and fixed an expressive look on Wharton's face. Evidently the damages there had caught Prout's eye.

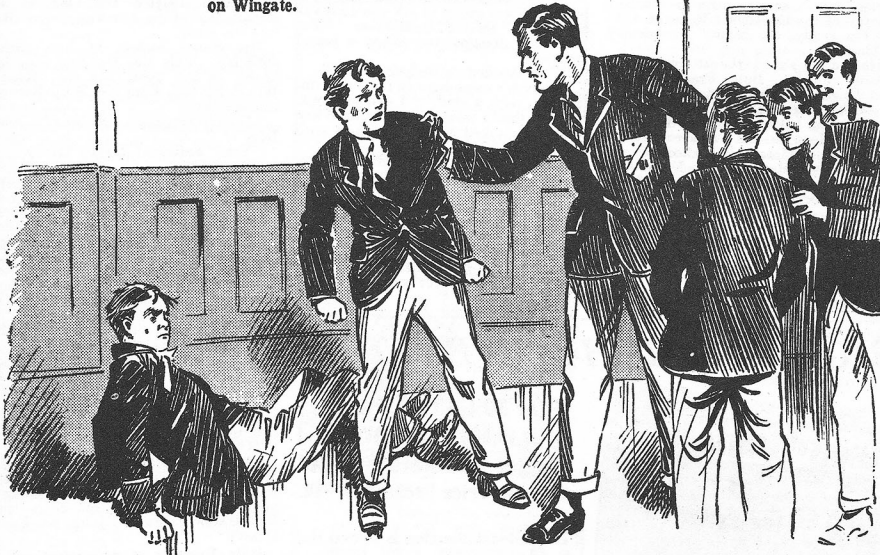
Prout gave a sniff—not a loud sniff, but quite an audible sniff. Prout strongly disapproved of juniors with swollen noses and bruised chins. It was

exercise with Wharton, though it was likely to make him late for tea in the Common-room, which certainly was very kind of Quelch.

But as he examined the paper, the Form master's face hardened. It began well, but it ended badly. There were blots on it, and Mr. Quelch abhorred blots. Worse still, there was a crimson smudge, where a drop of the "claret" had fallen from Wharton's damaged nose.

"Wharton!" Mr. Quelch laid the paper on the table. "This is not the state in which you should bring an exercise to your Form master. I can excuse stupidity, I can excuse obtuseness, I can excuse ignorance—but I cannot excuse slovenliness, which is an altogether unnecessary fault. You have taken no pains with this paper, Wharton."

As Wingate appeared upon the scene Wharton's fist crashed into Vernon-Smith's face, and the Bounder went spinning. "You young rascal!" roared Wingate, gripping Wharton by the collar. For a breathless second it looked as if the infuriated Wharton would turn on Wingate.



on tea-time now, and the fellows would be coming in.

Almost at the same moment Vernon-Smith came out of his study with his finished imposition in his hand. Smithy had done his lines and was taking them down to Wingate.

They crossed the Remove landing together, to the stairs. Vernon-Smith's eyes were on Wharton, with a mocking glimmer in them; but the captain of the Remove, with an effort, restrained the desire to take the Bounder by the neck and jam his head against the banisters. Without looking at Smithy, he hurried down the stairs, and made his way to Masters' Studies.

Mr. Quelch's door was open, and Wharton heard the fruity voice of Prout, the master of the Fifth, as he came up. Prout, apparently, had dropped in for a chat with Quelch—no member of Dr. Locke's staff was safe, in his leisure hours, from Prout and his chattiness.

Wharton tapped at the door, and entered. Mr. Quelch glanced at him,

no business of Prout's, but the master of the Fifth never could mind his own business.

Having expressed his disapproval by that sniff, Prout rolled out. Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on his head boy. What Prout had noticed was not likely to escape the gimlet eyes of the Remove master. And that sniff of Prout's irritated Mr. Quelch. It implied criticism of his Form—a matter on which Quelch, like all Form masters, was sensitive.

"Wharton, have you been fighting?"

Wharton coloured.

"I'm sorry, sir—"

"Answer my question."

"Yes, sir."

"You look disgraceful!"

"I know, sir! I'm very sorry!"

answered Harry as meekly as he could.

The soft answer turneth away wrath. Mr. Quelch was mollified, and he took the exercise from Wharton's hand, and motioned to the junior to draw up a chair and sit down. The Remove master was prepared to go through that

He rose to his feet.

"You have told me, Wharton, of altered circumstances in your home, and that it is necessary for you to obtain a Founders' Scholarship. I have offered to continue at Greyfriars. I have offered you every assistance in my power, although, as you know, my leisure hours are scanty. The least that you could do, I imagine, is your best, and you can hardly say that you have done your best with this paper. Apparently you have given more attention to fighting with some other junior than to this paper."

"I—" Wharton stammered.

"If you are not taking this matter seriously, Wharton, you will be well advised to give up the attempt to win the scholarship, in which you will have competitors who take the task very seriously indeed. I shall not go through this paper with you, Wharton, as I intended. I consider that it would be valueless."

"Very well, sir," said Harry quietly.

"If you had brought me such a paper

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as this, Wharton, as part of your ordinary Form work, I should give you an imposition!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "As it is, you may go!"

Wharton, as a matter of fact, was not sorry to go. Mr. Quelch was left staring at the unlucky exercise—especially at the crimson smudge on it—with knitted brows. And his brows were still knitted when he left the study and went along to Common-room to tea.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wingate is Wrathful!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

The door of Study No. 1 in the Remove was hurled open as if a battering-ram had struck it.

Bob Cherry had come in, after games practice, in exuberant spirits. It was seldom that Bob's spirits were not exuberant, as a matter of fact. Life seemed a jolly sort of business to Robert Cherry of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Tea ready, old bean?" he boomed. "What?"

He stared round the study. It was vacant. Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked in at the doorway.

"Wharton not here?" asked Frank.

"No. Gone out for a trot very likely, after sapping!" said Bob cheerily. "I fancy he would need it. I saw that exercise Quelch gave him, and I can tell you it nearly made my head swim to look at it. I thought he would have tea ready for us. Well, as he hasn't, we'll get tea ready for him. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, what?"

"Hear, hear!"

"It will be a bootfulness on the other

leg," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The fire was low, and Bob gave it a mighty poke, which very nearly obliterated it entirely. Frank Nugent sorted out supplies from the study cupboard. Hurree Singh cleared away the books that Wharton had left on the table. Johnny Bull took the kettle to fill at the passage tap.

All the four were merry and bright after games practice in a keen wind, and they had very sympathetic feelings towards their comrade who had been "stuck" in the study mugging up Latin. They had no doubt that Wharton had gone out for a breath of fresh air, after hours of swotting, and they sagely considered that it would buck him to find tea all ready when he turned up in the study again.

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles butted in at the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Swat that fly!" boomed Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I was going to ask you to tea in my study!" said Billy Bunter. "But I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"Shut the door after you, fatty!"

"I haven't come here to tea," said the fat Owl, with a snuff. "I can jolly well tell you that I wouldn't tea with Wharton, if he asked me! I'm done with him!"

"Lucky man!" said Bob. "Some fellows have all the luck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you beast! Look here! If you take my advice, you'll tea in your own study, Cherry! If you do, I'll come!"

"What an inducement!" chuckled Bob. "And you won't come if we have tea here?"

"No, I jolly well won't!"

"That settles it, then! We tea here!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows, Wharton is in a rotten temper this afternoon," said Bunter. "He pitched into me—"

"Good!" said Johnny Bull. "Roll in, and I'll pitch into you, too!"

"Oh, really, Bull! I say, Smithy's licked him—"

"What?" roared the four juniors together.

"Licked him hollow!" said Bunter, blinking at them. "They had a fearful fight—simply terrific! Wharton stood up to him—I'll say that for him! But he got an awful licking! He was crawling on the floor and begging Smithy to let him off at the finish—"

There was a step in the Remove passage, and a hand dropped on Billy Bunter's shoulder. He spun round with a squeak of alarm.

"Oh crikey! I—I say, Wharton, old chap, I—I was just telling these fellows how you licked Smithy—"

"You fat chump!"

Wharton twisted the Owl of the Remove out of the doorway, and walked into the study.

His chums looked at him rather curiously. This was the first they had heard of the fight, but the state of Wharton's face bore out Billy Bunter's information.

"Been scrapping, old bean?" asked Bob.

"Yes," answered Harry briefly.

"Smithy?"

"Yes."

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

"Get out, you fat freak!"

Billy Bunter blinked into the study. Frank Nugent was tossing sausages into a frying-pan. Billy Bunter liked sausages; he liked, in fact, every sort of edible. But sausages he particularly liked. Bunter was more than willing to forgive and forget the batting of the afternoon for a share in the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

"I say, you fellows, I'll cook those sosses for you, if you like!" said the fat owl. "You can't cook, Nugent. You needn't scowl at a chap, Wharton. I was jolly well going to whop you, if Smithy hadn't, but—"

"Oh, get out!"

"I say, you fellows, I warned you that Wharton was in one of his rotten tempers. Look here, you come along to your own study, Bob, old chap—leave him to stew in his own juice, you know! Beast!"

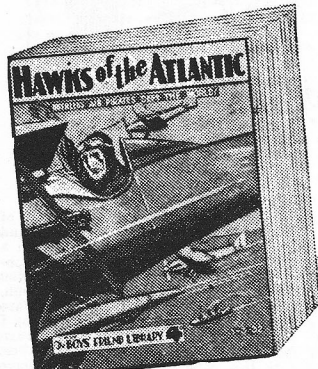
Billy Bunter's remarks were cut off by the sudden closing of the study door, almost on his fat little nose. He jumped back into the passage just in time.

"Beast!" yelled Bunter through the keyhole. "I'm jolly glad that Smithy licked you, and if he hadn't I would have! Yah! Rotter! You come out of that study and I'll jolly well mop up the passage with you!"

And having delivered that bold defiance, the fat Owl promptly vanished before the study door could open again.

There was a savoury scent of frying sausages in the study. Tea was soon ready. Wharton's face was clouded, but four faces in the study remained resolutely cheery and bright. A fellow who had been swotting all the afternoon could not be expected to be in the best of spirits, especially as he seemed to have varied swotting by fighting with one of the hardest nuts to crack in the Remove. In these troubled days for the captain of the Remove, his chums were getting used to treating him with tact. Under the influence of tea, and cheery faces round him, the cloud melted

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from Wharton's brow, as his friends hoped that it would.

"Did the swotting go all right?" asked Bob.

"Well, no! Some silly asses started a rag," said Harry. "I've had rather a jaw from Quelch."

"Hard cheese, old bean! I wish I'd come along and caught 'em ragging," said Bob. "I'll go along after tea and kick Skinner. I suppose it was Skinner."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I suppose so. But the fathead I ought happened to be Bunter, and I batted him. Smythy batted in."

"Cheeky ass!" said Nugent.

"The cheekfulness of the esteemed Smythy is preposterous," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

There was a heavy tread in the Remove passage, a knock on the door, and it opened. Wingate of the Sixth stepped in, his ashplant under his arm and a grim expression on his face. The Famous Five jumped up at once.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerily. "Come to tea, Wingate, old bean? Shove on some more sosses, Franky!"

"You, young ass!" said Wingate, smiling; but the smile was replaced by a frown as he fixed his eyes on Wharton. "Where are your lines, Wharton?"

"I haven't done them, Wingate."

"Vernon-Smith brought his imposition to my study half an hour ago. Why haven't you brought yours?"

"I haven't had time."

There was a touch of sullenness in Wharton's face as he answered.

Wingate raised his eyebrows.

"Wharton's been swotting this afternoon, Wingate," said Frank hastily. "He had some work to do for Quelch."

"He found time for fighting in the passage," said Wingate grimly. "His work for Quelch couldn't have been frightfully important, as I had to come up to stop him scrapping. I told you to bring me the lines before tea, Wharton."

"I know that!"

"Oh, you know that, do you?" said the Greyfriars' captain still more grimly. "Well, I dare say you know also as a Lower School boy is expected to do as he's told by a Sixth Form prefect, and that if he doesn't he gets six!"

Wharton's face set.

"I couldn't leave my work for Quelch, Wingate," he said. "I really had no time for the lines."

"You had time to fight Vernon-Smith in the passage, or you wouldn't have got the lines. If you were so pushed for time you should have cut out the scrap. Bend over that chair!"

Wingate slipped the ashplant down into his hand.

The captain of the Remove hesitated. There was a black and bitter expression on his face. He felt that it was unjust, though certainly injustice was not Wingate's intention.

Wingate's brow knitted.

"Do you hear me, Wharton?" he rapped.

Wharton breathed hard.

"I've told you—"

"Never mind what you've told me! I've told you to bend over that chair—and I'm not waiting."

The Co. looked on in anxious silence. Frank Nugent gave his chum an almost beseeching glance. Right or wrong, the captain of the school had to be obeyed. But there was rebellion in Wharton's dogged look. But he realised the futility of such a contest, and perhaps he realised, too, that Wingate, from his own point of view at least, was in the

right. Slowly Wharton bent over the chair.

Whack! Whack!

"Six" at Greyfriars School was a punishment that might consist of any number of "licks," though seldom more than half a dozen. In this case, it consisted of two; but both of them were well laid on.

"Let me have those lines before bedtime, Wharton," said Wingate quietly; and he tucked the cane under his arm and left the study.

Tea in Study No. 1 finished rather dismally.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Under a Shadow!

"O NE for you, Harry!" It was the following day, in break, and some of the Remove fellows had gone to the rack to look for letters. Frank

**"CHESTNUTS":
DON'T COUNT—**

but up-to-date storyettes win

**TOPPING
POCKET-KNIVES!**

Albert Fogg, of 47, Ronald Street,
Oldham, wins one of these

USEFUL PRIZES

with the following rib-tickler.



Angry Colonel (in crowded carriage): "I say, porter, we're packed like sardines in here. Can't something be done to relieve us?"

Annoyed Porter: "Try numbering off from the right, and let the odd numbers breathe out, while the even numbers breathe in!"

Nugent handed down one addressed to Wharton; and Harry's face addressed a little as he saw that it was addressed in his uncle's hand.

He put the letter quietly into his pocket and went out into the quad. The Co. exchanged uncomfortable glances as he went.

Apparently Wharton wanted to be alone to read that letter from Wharton Lodge. All the Co. were aware that there was some trouble between Harry Wharton, and his uncle and guardian, the old colonel; though only Nugent knew what it was. And, much as they liked their chum, the Co. could not help doubting whether the fault was not on his side. With all Wharton's good qualities, there was an obdurate strain in his nature which made it impossible for even his best friends to take it for

granted that he was in the right in a dispute.

The juniors joined a crowd of Remove fellows punting a footer about, with the exception of Nugent. He looked round for Wharton, and found him on one of the old oak benches under the elms.

The open letter was in Wharton's hand, and the expression on his face was dark as his chum came up. Nugent sat on the bench beside him. He was the only fellow who was in Wharton's confidence in his family troubles; and Nugent, so far as he could, was trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. But he did not find the task easy.

Wharton, without speaking, passed him the letter. It ran:

"Dear Harry,—I have been expecting for some days a letter from you explaining your conduct. No letter has reached me. I am still awaiting your explanation.

"Your Form master, Mr. Quelch, informs me that you have entered for the Founders' Scholarship next term. I approve of this, if it is your own desire. But you must not regard it as being in any way a matter of necessity.

"As I explained to you, my circumstances are temporarily straitened; but there is no question whatever of your having to leave school. Neither is there any difficulty about your allowance, though I have asked you not to exceed it this term.

Your letter, curtly refusing to take any further allowance, surprised and pained me. I came to the school on Saturday specially to see you about this. You deliberately absented yourself, and I had to leave without seeing you.

"This is inexplicable to me. I shall certainly not repeat my visit. But I require you to explain yourself, and I await your letter.

"Your affectionate uncle,
"JAMES WHARTON."

Frank Nugent's face was overcast as he handed the letter back to his chum.

"What would you answer to that, Frank?" asked Harry. "Of course, Colonel Wharton doesn't dream for a moment that I know what I know—does he?" A hard and bitter look came over the junior's face. "You remember that fragment of a letter I showed you—the one that Colonel Wharton dropped in my study when he was here two or three weeks ago, and that that fat idiot Bunter used to light the fire with. There was only a line left of it, referring to his nephew as ungrateful, selfish, and a burden. Wharton winced as he repeated the words, 'I—I've been wondering—'

"What?" asked Frank uneasily.

"Whether that letter really was left there by accident, or—whether it was left for me to see!" said Wharton bitterly.

"Harry!" exclaimed Nugent, shocked.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, what does it look like?" he said. "He must have misread the letter he lost, but he has never asked about it. He must know that he lost it somewhere, and he can hardly have forgotten that that owl Bunter ran into him when he was waiting for me in the study and made him drop his papers. If he knows—"

"He doesn't," said Nugent quietly. "He would naturally suppose that if the letter was left in your study you would find it there, and send it on to him, seeing that it was in his fist."

"Well, yes; but——"

"And he would not suppose for a moment that you would read the letter, Harry. He doesn't think that of you."

Wharton's face crimsoned.

"You know that I never——" he began hotly.

"Don't be an ass, old chap! You had to look at it to see what it was—and you saw what was left of it. But Colonel Wharton couldn't guess anything about that ass Bunter burning the letter. If you'd picked it up undamaged, you'd have glanced only at the beginning, to see whose it was, and would never have read what you did. As you've said nothing about it to your uncle, he takes it for granted that the letter never was left in your study."

Wharton was silent.

"I—I dare say you're right, Frank," he said, at last. "I know I'm feeling bitter, and—liable to make things worse than they are. I don't think it's to be wondered at, either. When a fellow finds out suddenly that the man he's trusted and respected, looks on him as selfish and ungrateful and a burden——" Wharton choked.

"I know," said Frank softly.

"Well, I shan't answer this!" said Harry, after a pause. "I can't tell him what I know—I can't! After all, he was a good friend to me for years—though he's got fed-up with it, and tired of the burden. I don't want to wound him, or let him know what I think of him now—what I can't help thinking of him. But I can't see him—I can't take anything at his hands! I shall leave the school, unless I bag that schol and stay on my own, like old Linley. That's settled!"

"If there's some mistake——" said Frank miserably.

"That's rot! It was in his own hand, and he wrote of me as being a burden—ungrateful, selfish! If I was, I never meant to be. I suppose I've got my faults, like every other chap, and—a fellow may be selfish without knowing it; but I never was ungrateful, I know that. Certainly I never talked about it; it's not a thing a fellow can talk about—it's a thing a man is expected to understand without talking."

"You've got it wrong, somehow," said Frank, with conviction. "Colonel Wharton is the man you always believed him to be—not the man you believe him now. I can't make it out at all, but Harry, old chap, if that rotten letter should have referred to somebody else, not you——"

"He has no other nephew!"

"I know! But——"

Nugent broke off. It was impossible to explain the matter—it was a problem he could not solve. Yet he was assured, in his mind, that the matter was not as his chum believed—that there was some ghastly mistake somewhere.

"If you'd see him, Harry——"

"I can't!"

"If you'd show him that bit of paper, and ask him——"

"A pleasant interview for both of us!" said Wharton bitterly. "I'm to ask what he meant by speaking of me as a burden on him—as if I don't know! No fear! If he doesn't know what I know, the least said the soonest mended. He can't know, I suppose, from the way he writes now. But I'm done with him, and I want him to understand that he's done with me!"

Wharton tore the letter in his hand into small fragments, and scattered them under the elms.

"You'll have to answer that, old chap!" said Frank.

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"I shan't answer it! What am I to say? That he's let me down, and I'd die sooner than take anything from his hands? That's not the sort of answer he wants." Wharton gave a scoffing laugh, and rose from the bench. "Let's go and punt the ball a bit—the bell will be going soon."

"I wish——"

"Oh, let it drop! Come on!"

Nugent could say no more; he followed his chum, and they joined the juniors punting the footer.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Dropped from the Team!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH moved restlessly about his study. Tom Redwing, seated at the table at prep, glanced up at him every now and then. The Bounder was not giving much attention to prep that evening.

It was Friday—the day before the Rookwood match. Smithy was thinking more about Soccer than prep.

When the fellows went down after prep they would find the Rookwood list posted up in the Rag, and Smithy was wondering, with glinting eyes and knitted brows, whether his own name would be in it.

The question was, he told himself savagely, whether Wharton would dare to leave him out. That he wanted to leave him out, the Bounder had no doubt whatever. They had never been friends, though, as a rule, they were on more or less friendly terms. That was over now; all the Remove knew that Smithy was up against the captain of the Form all along the line.

"If he dares——" the Bounder muttered aloud.

Redwing rose from the table at last. His prep was done; Smithy's hardly touched.

"The list will be up soon, I suppose?" said Smithy. "Wharton can't leave it much later than this. What's the odds I shan't see my name in it, Reddy?"

"Rot, old chap! You can't be spared from the eleven in a match like the Rookwood game," said Redwing. "All the same, I wish you hadn't picked that quarrel with Wharton the other day."

"He was bullying Bunter——"

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Redwing sharply. "You jolly well know he was doing nothing of the kind! I've heard about it since. A set of silly asses were ragging him when he was swotting, and he caught one of them and batted him. You'd have done the same—only harder!"

"He was giving him too much, anyhow——"

"A lot you cared!"

"Well, perhaps I don't care much!" said the Bounder, with a sour grin. "I clipped in to take him down a peg. But I never wanted to row with the fellow, and you know it, Reddy! He started it—over that auction of his bike in the Rag. I gave a jolly good price for the bike, to do him a good turn, and he chose to think that I was patronising him, and called the sale off, and chucked the money back at me." The Bounder's eyes gleamed. "By gad, I've had more than enough of his airs and graces—and so have plenty of other fellows, too, I can tell you!"

"He's up against it, Smithy," said Redwing quietly. "A fellow ought to make allowances. From what the fellows are saying up and down the Form, he seems to have come a pretty serious cropper."

"No reason why he should insult a chap who meant him well!"

"Well, no; but——" Redwing paused. "Anyhow, Wharton's not the man to carry a feud into football. He won't let friendship come before footer. His best pal—Nugent—never gets a look in in the big fixtures. He's still less likely to let enmity come before footer. If he does he's changed a good deal!"

"Oh, he won't be without excuses!" sneered the Bounder. "He can make out that I played a rotten game at Reddy's last week——"

"Well, you did play a rotten game, Smithy—there's no getting out of that!" said Redwing frankly. "If you were dropped out, it's no more than you might expect, really!"

The Bounder gave his chum an evil look.

"So you're backing him up, Reddy?" "Rot! I'm pretty certain your name will be in the list. What's the good of getting your back up in advance over nothing?" exclaimed Redwing impatiently. "The fact is, Smithy, you're up against the chap now and you're looking for trouble."

"You get me exactly," said the Bounder coolly. "I'm up against the chap, and I'm going to give him all the trouble I jolly well can. He's chosen to quarrel with me for nothing, and insult me for trying to do him a good turn—and that tears it! If he didn't want trouble he shouldn't have begged for it."

Redwing made no answer to that. He was not surprised at the Bounder's resentment; Vernon-Smith was not the fellow to be expected to forget or forgive an offence.

"Let's go down and see the jolly old list, anyhow," said the Bounder. "If my name's not in it——"

He left the sentence unfinished, but there was a threat in his tone.

The two juniors left the study. Prep was over in the Remove, and a good many of the Form were gathered in the Rag when the Bounder arrived there with his chum.

There was a squeak from Billy Bunter as Smithy came in.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!"

"Evidently the Bounder had been under discussion."

With a careless air Vernon-Smith lounged into the room. Most of the fellows looked across at him, a few of them grinning. Harry Wharton was not there, but the Co. were among the crowd who were roading the paper pinned up by the captain of the Form. And the Co. looked very serious.

"I say, Smithy, you're scratched!" squeaked Bunter.

"Hallo! Is that the jolly old list?" drawled the Bounder coolly, and he joined the little crowd, taking no notice of Billy Bunter.

Quietly he read down the names.

It was a good team that was posted to play Rookwood on the morrow—quite good, so far as that went. It ran:

S. Q. I. Field; J. Bull, M. Linley; T. Brown, R. Cherry, R. Penfold; Hurree Singh, P. Todd, H. Wharton, R. Ogilvy, P. Hazeldene.

All eyes were on the Bounder as he read.

His name was not there. He had fully expected that, though Redwing had not. Redwing stared blankly and frowned. Hazeldene grinned as he glanced at the Bounder's face—still quite cool, though a little set. Hazel was a fairly good forward when he was not slacking, and he had been on his best behaviour of late, assiduous at practice. Hazel rather fancied himself as a footballer, but even Hazel could hardly

have claimed that he was anything like the Bounder's form in the front line.

There was an evident keenness on the part of the Removites to see how the Bounder would take it. Even Wharton's best friends hardly concealed their opinion that he was not showing his usual judgment, and it was clear that he had not consulted them before posting the list.

The Bounder breathed hard and deep. "Gratters, Hazel, old bean!" he said. "I'll roll up and cheer your goals, old man."

"If any!" grinned Skinner.

"Not a bad team," went on Smithy calmly. "I fancy I could suggest an improvement, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was rather thoughtless of me to punch Wharton's head when he was bullying Bunter the other day," yawned the Bounder. "I see it now."

"Oh, quite! I owned up, and promised to be a good little boy in future," drawled Smithy. "Is that a reason for scratching me now?"

Bob Cherry was silent.

There had been much argument in the Remove over the Bounder's goal in the Redclyffe match. He had played a selfish game, and almost thrown away a certain goal, but by sheer luck the goal had come off. Afterwards, in a moment of frankness, he had owned up that he had "played the goat," and told Wharton fair and square that it should never occur again. More than that a fellow could hardly do—and it was a great deal for an arrogant fellow like the Bounder to have done. Certainly it was the view of the Remove footballers that the Redclyffe incident had been washed out. Apparently, however, it was not the view of the Form captain.

The Bounder turned away and strolled

—and so do the other fellows. Wharton's got his back up—hinc illae lacrymae."

"It's no good making a row, Smithy."

"Who's goin' to make a row?"

"Well, I'm glad you're not, at any rate."

The Bounder laughed.

"There's no need for me to kick. Plenty of others to kick—and it will come more gracefully from them. This sort of high-mightiness won't go down in the Remove; the fellows aren't going to let Wharton throw football matches away because he's got his jolly old back up. My dear chap, I'm not kickin'. My role is that of the patient martyr. I'm ready to play if I'm asked; ready to stand out if I'm told. But—" The Bounder's eyes blazed as his savage anger and resentment broke out for a moment. "There's goin' to be trouble



Billy Bunter blinked into the study and grinned as he watched Vernon-Smith bathing his swelling nose and darkening eye. "You look a bit damaged, Smithy," he smirked. "Wish you'd jolly well lied Wharton!"

"That's rot, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent. "Your silly row with Wharton wouldn't make any difference."

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"It seems to have made rather a difference," he remarked.

"It's not that, and you know it!" said Frank hotly. "You played a rotten game at Redclyffe last week, and you were told—"

"Rotten game—baggin' goals when our skipper couldn't bag any!" said Smithy. "But, dash it all, if Wharton's goin' to turn men out of the team for baggin' goals, what's to become of the game?"

"You fuked that goal at Redclyffe, Smithy," said Bob.

"And our jolly old skipper didn't fluke any! Let's hope he will have better luck to-morrow."

"Look here, Smithy, you owned up that you played the goat that day at Redclyffe," said Bob.

over to the fire. Whatever his feelings were, he did not allow his face to betray them. There was no sign in his looks of the bitter rage in his heart.

Tom Redwing, relieved to see him take it so quietly, followed him. After all, it was useless to kick—though most of the fellows expected Smithy to kick, useless or not.

"Hard cheese, old man!" said Redwing in a low voice. "I—I'm rather surprised. This isn't like Wharton. But—but I suppose he hasn't got over that affair at Redclyffe. After all, a man doesn't expect to play in every match."

The Bounder smiled—an evil smile.

"That affair at Redclyffe is the excuse; the real reason is our scrap the other day," he said.

"Oh, rot, old chap!" said Tom uneasily.

"You know it as well as I do, Reddy

in the Remove, Reddy. And if I don't bring that cheeky rotter down off his perch you can use my head for a football."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
Bob Cherry's voice lacked its usual cheery ring.

Harry Wharton glanced up. As was usual with him now, he was putting in some "swotting" after prep, and he was alone in Study No. 1 when his friends came in.

Probably he guessed why they had come, for his face hardened as he noted their uncomfortable looks, and his eyes glinted a little.

There was no doubt that Wharton, once as cheery and good-natured as any

fellow in the Remove, was not his usual self these days.

The trouble at home had wounded him deeply, and swotting had told on his nerves. And, as so often happens, when one thing went wrong, everything else seemed to follow suit. As Shakespeare has put it—when sorrows come, they come not as single spies, but in battalions.

His Form master, who had kindly offered to help him in his work for the examination, was displeased with him; he had been in trouble with the captain of the school; and the change in his circumstances had made him more prone to take offence than a sensible fellow should have been.

At a time when he needed friendship—or, at least, to be let alone—he had made an enemy of the Bouncer. But he was not disposed to see that he was to blame in that matter. The fact that his friends thought so only had an irritating effect on his temper. He was not in a mood these days to see things quite clearly and justly.

"Busy, old bean?" asked Bob rather awkwardly.

Wharton laid down his pen. "It's about time I chucked it," he answered. "I'm pretty fed-up with it, anyhow. I wasn't meant to be a swot, I suppose."

"Well, what about Smitty?" asked Bob bluntly.

"Well, what about him?" asked Wharton calmly.

"Now, look here, old chap," said Bob. "I'm going to speak plainly. We want Smitty in the game to-morrow."

"May as well put it plain!" said Johnny Bull, with a nod. "Smitty's a bit of an exasperating ass at times; but that's nothing to do with football."

"The esteemed and ridiculous Smitty is an absurdly excellent winger," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I wish you'd think it over again, Harry!" said Nugent.

Wharton waited quietly till all four had spoken in turn. His face was uncompromising.

"So you're not satisfied?" he asked.

"Well, no, old chap!" said Bob. "For goodness sake, don't get your blessed back up—"

"Nobody else dissatisfied?" asked Harry.

"Most of the men, I fancy!" answered Bob. "Dash it all, old bean—the Rookwood match is one of our toughest fixtures. We have to go all out to keep our end up against Jimmy Silver and his mob. We don't want to lose one of the best men in the Remove."

"Well, if most of the men are dissatisfied, there's an easy way out," said Wharton coolly.

"What's that?"

"I'm not captain of the Remove by right divine, like a jolly old Stuart king! It's easy enough to turn me out and elect another skipper."

"Don't be a silly ass," snapped Bob. "That is, if you can help it," he added sharply.

"Look here, Harry—" said Nugent. "Smitty's left out of the game because he's not to be trusted. We can't afford to take chances in the Rookwood match."

"That's just what we're doing, by leaving him out!" said Johnny Bull.

"That's not my opinion. If he played against Rookwood as he played at Redcliffe last week, the game would be a goner. A fellow who thinks that Soccer is a one-man game is no good."

"Smitty's owned up to that he played the goat, and promised—"

"I don't trust him."

"You mean that you've got your back up, and don't want to give him a chance!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Wharton's eyes were steely as he looked at Johnny.

"If that's what you think—"

"That's what all the Remove thinks," said Johnny Bull stolidly. "You're making a mistake, old man. Think it over and you'll see it yourself."

"It may be news to you that I thought it over before putting up the list!" said the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"What I mean is—"

"Never mind what you mean! I know what I mean—and that is, to leave Vernon-Smith out of the games until he learns to play decent football."

A man who checks his skipper on the football field, and keeps the ball to himself to show off, when he knows that he ought to pass, isn't the man that's wanted."

The chums of the Remove were silent. Wharton was right, so far as that went. Yet they knew that, but for the recent trouble between Smitty and the captain of the Remove, the Bouncer would have played in the Rookwood match as a matter of course.

A fellow who had made a wrong could not do more than own up and propose amendment; and that the Bouncer had done. And he was not a man who could be spared from the team, as all the Remove knew, if Wharton did not choose to realise it.

Bob Cherry broke the silence.

"You're right, of course! But—we all know that Smitty will play a good game to-morrow, if he plays at all. What more do you want than that?"

"But I don't know it! I've said that I don't trust him."

"That's rot, old man! If he played the goat to-morrow, as he did at Redcliffe, we'd jolly well scrag him—"

"That wouldn't wash out a defeat," Bob breathed hard.

"He wouldn't, and you jolly well know he wouldn't!" he rapped out. "You don't choose to know it, that's all."

"My esteemed chum—" murmured the nabob.

"Smitty's been a cheeky ass, I know that," went on Bob. "But that's nothing to do with footer, either. And, after all, you started the trouble with Smitty, though you don't choose to see it."

"I don't—though my own pals have taken a lot of trouble to point it out," said Wharton sarcastically.

"The fact is, Wharton," said Johnny Bull, "you're getting jolly touchy."

"Thanks!"

"You practically insulted Smitty, when he only wanted to do you a good turn. You can't expect the fellow to like it."

"Is that all?"

Johnny Bull gave a snort. "Well, I've said what I came to say. You're letting your temper run away with you; but I suppose you can't see it, or you wouldn't do it. No good jawing."

And Johnny Bull marched out of the study.

The other fellows lingered, with uncertain looks. Harry Wharton picked up his pen.

"If you fellows have finished I'll have another go at Livy!" he said.

That was enough for the Co. Without a word, the three juniors followed Johnny Bull. The Famous Five were perilously near a break; and none of them wanted that.

Wharton's face was dark and thoughtful when they had gone; and he did not

recommence work. He was hardly conscious of the fact that the Bouncer's insolence had had the effect of clouding his judgment; certainly he was not the fellow to carry private feuds into football, if he had realised it. Any football skipper would have been justified in dropping a man who acted as Smitty had acted at Redcliffe; and beyond that, he did not think, or perhaps choose to think.

A few minutes later Squiff of the Remove looked in. Sampson Quincy Ilfley Field had a worried look; and Wharton did not need telling why he had come. Apparently it was going to be a procession—all the fellows wanting to know why Smitty was dropped, when they knew perfectly well already!

"I say, old chap." The Australian junior's look was worried, but his manner was very friendly. "I say, we're a bit surprised at Smitty being chucked."

"Nothing surprising in a rotten man being left out, is there?" asked Wharton evenly. "Has he asked you to come here?"

"He hasn't said a word that I know of. But all the fellows think—" The Remove goalkeeper paused.

Wharton dipped his pen in the ink.

"You know I've had to take up swotting," he remarked. "That doesn't leave me a lot of time to listen to what all the fellows think."

Squiff gave him a rather hard look and left the study without speaking again. He had not come there for a row with his skipper.

But it was evidently going to be a procession. Peter Todd and Tom Brown came in together a few minutes later.

Wharton gave them a sarcastic stare.

"Is it about Smitty?" he asked.

"That's it!" said Toddy and Brown simultaneously. "You see—"

"Well, you can cut it out before you begin."

"What?" ejaculated Toddy.

"I've heard enough about it," explained the captain of the Remove, "and I don't want to hear any more."

"That sort of thing won't wash, Wharton," said Tom Brown quietly. "You're not a little tin god, that I know of."

"Shut the door after you."

"We want Smitty to-morrow—" said Peter Todd. "And I can tell you that every man in the team thinks so."

"Then it's easy to settle. Let the team come to me in a bunch and tell me they want a new skipper and I'll resign on the spot."

"Oh, don't be an ass! Nobody wants that!" growled Tom Brown.

"Well, so long as I'm skipper, Vernon-Smith won't have a chance of playing his one-man game. That's that!"

"I think you're a silly ass—"

"Thanks; shut the door, won't you?"

The door banged after Toddy and Tom Brown when they left.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Rookwood Match!

THE changing-room was in a buzz of voices. Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged there, with his hands in his pockets. He was not there to change; he was not in the Remove eleven. Perhaps the Bouncer thought that, even at the eleventh hour, Wharton might realise that it would not do and might call on him to join up. But if he entertained that idea, he had to dismiss it when the captain of the Remove came in. Wharton did not give him a glance, or seem aware of his existence.

(Continued on page 12.)

FOOTBALL FAVOURITES!

No. 21.
BOB KELLY,
of
Huddersfield
Town F.C.,
whose
uncanny
shooting has
been the
despair of
goalkeepers
for years past.



One of the Old Brigade!

"**H**AS anybody here seen Kelly—K-e-double l-y?" Twenty years or so ago—longer than most of you can remember, there was a very popular song with those words as the beginning of the chorus. Just about the same time there was a footballer coming to the forefront—a footballer of the name of Bob Kelly.

In the intervening years the song has been forgotten, but never in those years have footballers been able to forget Bob Kelly, who is still playing at inside-right—or in other positions when wanted—in the Huddersfield Town team. Right through the years, when there has been a match played in which Kelly has been present, there has never been any occasion to ask, "Has anybody here seen Kelly?" Kelly—Christian name Robert—has compelled attention. There has been no difficulty in seeing him. Often when I have been watching a match in which Kelly has played, my difficulty has been to watch anybody else.

Of course you have heard that the career of a professional footballer is not very long lived. And it is a fact that not many leading players stay in the game more than ten years. But it is now, practically twenty years since Kelly first kicked a football in top-class company, and he is still going strong.

Have you seen Kelly? Perhaps not, so I will describe him to you. Off the field, Kelly looks as little like the typical footballer as you can possibly imagine. When the team is on travel, it is by no means unusual to find Bob sitting in a corner of the saloon reading a book. A studious fellow, often giving the impression of thinking deeply.

Even on the field, stripped for the fray, Bob doesn't look like a star footballer. A bit of a slouch in his walk, pale of face, rather slender of body, and not too much muscle, apparently, about the legs. But once the game is going, Kelly plays his part in it. Not in an ostentatious way, but in what might be called the Alex James style. The ball anywhere near the middle of the field seems to be magnetised by him. His control is great; his body swerve has been the despair of defenders right down the years, and he can "flick" a pass to a colleague with uncanny accuracy.

In a word, a very real footballer, not regarding the heavy charge as part and parcel of the game, usually dodging it himself, and not often trying to give the charge to others. That may be one reason why he has stayed in the game so long, because he has always regarded it as a game to be played with the ball at the feet. Not a barging affair.

Strange, but True!

WHEN I asked Bob Kelly how he came to be such a good footballer, he gave me what I consider the most curious reply I have ever received. "I owed my progress," he said, "to the fact that my first partner in the Burnley team was deaf." Strange, that reply, wasn't it? But it's perfectly true, as I will endeavour to prove to you.

When Kelly first played for Burnley at inside-right, his outside-right partner, a fine player named Nesbit, was very deaf. Now understanding between two fellows who play on the same wing is very necessary, and this understanding is often helped, naturally, by the two players telling each other what to do. But as Kelly's partner was deaf this means of communicating ideas was barred. The result was that Kelly and Nesbit were compelled to develop their understanding by other methods. So they used to go on to the field to practise specially the moves of the wing men until their understanding was perfected without the use of words.

I think that role of silent partner was one which suited Kelly. Anyway, he has gone through his football career

with the absolute minimum of talking, and his colleagues at Huddersfield will tell you that even to-day he often goes through a match without saying a word. Just the fellow getting on with the job. That's Kelly.

Many of the players whom I have talked about in these pages started their football at a very early age—when they got into the school team. Now the school at which Bob Kelly attended as a boy did not have a football team, and the opportunities of playing were, for little Bob, few and far between. In fact, weeks at a time, when he was growing up, the only football he played was in the street with a marble, or, if more fortunate, with a small, soft ball. But Bob was keen on football, all the same, and he often went from his home at Ashton-in-Makerfield, which was near to Manchester, to see the Manchester teams play. He loved to watch the best footballers, and he must have watched them intelligently, too.

Father Says "No!"

SEVERAL things seemed to go against young Kelly being a footballer. For one thing his father thought it was a dangerous game, and permission for Bob to play was never granted. The lack of permission to play, however, did not wholly prevent Bob from playing. The job on which he started his business career, however, was a deterrent. He went as errand-boy to a local grocer, and this meant working on a Saturday afternoon. With a pony and trap he used to deliver the goods.

Bob confessed to me that he "engineered" the sack from this grocer's assistant job so that he could get new employment which would leave him free either to play or to watch football on a Saturday afternoon. Later he started work at a colliery, though he did not go down into the pit.

Thus the opportunities came for him to play football occasionally in a park adjoining the local racecourse. But even so, Bob had to smuggle his football attire in and out of his home, because his father still objected to a slender boy like him playing such a rough game. The position Kelly usually occupied in those days was centre-half.

I have not the space to tell in detail the whole story of Kelly's climb up the football ladder. He had a trial with Tyldesley Albion, but was very disappointed because they did not think much of him. Later he stumbled into a member of the Ashton White Star team, when they happened to be short of a player. "Like a game?" he was asked. Bob jumped at the chance. "Where will you play?" was the next question. "Anywhere, except in goal," was the reply. So he played, at right half-back, and then his feet were definitely on the ladder leading to higher things.

Soon he was in the St. Helens team, and in 1913 was duly tried, and signed on as a fully fledged professional with the Burnley team. He didn't turn out with the team very often in his first season, and not in the Cup side once, though Burnley actually won the trophy. He was not qualified to play for them in the Cup, however, because he had appeared for St. Helens in the same competition.

A Splendid Tribute!

BOTH before and after the war, settling down in his best position of inside-right, Kelly played for Burnley, helping them to win the First Division Championship in 1921. In 1920 he was a fully-fledged International player, and between 1920 and 1926 he played for England on twelve occasions.

In 1925, Sunderland paid what was then a record fee for his transfer—£6,750; but after two seasons at Roker Park, where, for some reason or other, he did not show his tip-top form, he again moved, this time to Huddersfield, where he has been ever since.

Perhaps the best tribute which could be paid to a player was paid to Kelly by Alec Jackson, who played alongside him so often. "Playing outside-right, with Kelly as a partner, was as easy as shelling peas," said Jackson.

HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL!

(Continued from page 40.)

Vernon-Smith drove his hands deep into his pockets and walked out of the changing-room. It was rather humiliating there for him; once a mighty man of the eleven, now reduced to a mere hanger-on; of less importance than fellows like Hazeldene. His cheeks burned as he went.

Wharton was riding for a fall; the Bouncer had no doubt about that. He was satisfied with his own reasons for chucking one of the best men in the team, but the other fellows were not satisfied. Wharton's motives were doubtless mixed; but to the other fellows the thing was plain enough—he had had a row with Smyth, and he was chucking him in consequence. If the Rookwooders were beaten that day, no doubt he would be justified. If they were not beaten, there was hardly a man who would not attribute the result to the loss of the Bouncer in the front line. And the discontent of the footballing fraternity would be deep and general.

Partly, perhaps, from conceit, partly from his knowledge of his own quality, Smyth did not believe that Greyfriars would win without him. In that case, Wharton was playing his game for him—the Bouncer had only to watch him ride for a fall.

But there was good as well as evil in Smyth; and he was a sportsman in his own way. Although it would serve his turn, he did not want Greyfriars to suffer defeat. His own schemes and plans took second place. He would have been glad to bury the hatchet and play up for the school, and help to send the Rookwooders home defeated.

It was not to be! If it takes two to make a quarrel, it also takes two to keep the peace! If the Bouncer was prepared to make concessions, the captain of the Remove was not; and there was an end.

Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged in the quad, with a frowning brow. It was rather a new position for him to be excluded and ignored when other fellows were getting ready for one of the hardest matches of the football season. His resentment was deep and bitter. He could have found it in his heart to wish that Jimmy Silver & Co. would inflict a crushing defeat on the home team, if only to prove to the fellows that they could not go without him.

"He, he, he!"

That fat cachinnation came from Billy Bunter. The fat Owl blinked at Smyth through his big spectacles, and grinned, apparently entertained by the Bouncer's black looks.

Smyth gave him a scowl. But his face broke into a grin as he saw that Bunter was in football kit. At any time Bunter's ample figure was a feature of the landscape, so to speak, but in football garb, which Bunter threatened to burst out of at any second, the fat Owl presented a truly weird and wonderful sight.

"Hard cheese, old bean," said Bunter. "They're treating you rottenly, old man! Going to watch the game, and see the other fellows get the goals, what? He, he, he!"

"You fat owl!"

"Oh, really, Smyth! The fact is, Wharton's altogether too cocky," said Bunter. "He's left me out, too."

"You!" ejaculated the Bouncer, "Yes; I've offered to play, you know. In fact—I thought if I changed into football kit Wharton would realise my form."

"It's pretty round," growled Vernon-Smith, "and plenty of it!"

"Oh, really, Smyth! Anyway, I offered my services and Wharton actually laughed," grunted Bunter. "So did all the other beasts. But the fact is, a good man doesn't get a chance in Remove games!" he added, with a shake of the head.

"You benighted idiot!"

"Then I offered to keep goal!" said Bunter, with dignity. "That silly ass Wharton makes out that Squiff keeps goal better than I do."

"Ring off, fathead!"

The Bouncer tramped on, scowling. Billy Bunter rolled after him. Bunter was sympathetic—in his own inimitable way.

"I say, old chap, I'm really sorry to see you chucked like this!" he rattled on cheerfully. "You always fancied yourself rather a big gun, didn't you? Now you're nobody! Just hanging about—left on the beach—he, he, he! Yaroooh!" added Bunter, in tones of anguish, as the Bouncer suddenly grabbed him by the collar and banged his head on the trunk of an elm. "Ow! Leggo! Beast! Wharrer you up to? Yow-ow-ow!"

Vernon-Smith stalked away, leaving the hapless Owl rubbing his head.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly glad you're chucked! Yah! You're no footballer! I'm jolly glad! Yah!"

And as the Bouncer glared round, Billy Bunter rolled hastily away.

Skinner & Co. joined the Bouncer. There were covert grins on their faces. They were ready to back up Smyth, all along the line, in any contest with the captain of the Remove; but at the same time, they were not sorry to see the arrogant Bouncer taken down a peg or two.

"Coming out, Smyth?" asked Skinner. "You're not playing footer this afternoon, I believe."

"You know I'm not!" grunted the Bouncer.

"Well, then, let's get out!" said Skinner amicably. "You don't want to watch the game, I suppose."

"Thinkin' of it."

"Like a jolly old Peri at the gate of Paradise, what?" grinned Skinner. "Dash it all, you'll look rather an ass, Smyth, hanging about the footer ground, when all the fellows know you wanted to play."

"Mind your own business."

"Look here, Smyth—"

"Oh, rats!"

The Bouncer was rather unpleasant company that afternoon. He left Skinner & Co. grinning at one another.

"The dear man's got his back up!" said Snoop.

"Pain in his jolly old conceit!" said Skinner. "Smyth can't stand bein' treated as if he wasn't the only pebble on the beach. There's going to be trouble over this, my beloved 'earers—I can see that in Smyth's eye."

And Skinner smiled cheerily. Trouble for anybody else was grateful and comforting to Skinner.

Vernon-Smith was loafing by the gates when the Rookwooders came. He watched Jimmy Silver & Co., with a moody brow. The Rookwooders looked a good team; the game was going to be a good game, a hard fight from start to finish. Smyth longed to take his part in the fray. And he knew that he was needed, too; the Remove needed to put every ounce of strength in the field against a team like the men from Rookwood School. His brow grew blacker.

Skinner's gibe had produced its effect on him; and he hesitated to go down to

Little Side to see the game. He did not want to figure as a Peri at the gate of Paradise, looking on the good things that he might not share.

But he went at last, and Tom Redwing joined him on his way to the football ground. Redwing was looking grave. It was not always possible for Tom to sympathise with his chum when the Bouncer landed trouble; Smyth was undoubtedly oftener in the wrong than in the right. But on the present occasion Redwing did sympathise, and he was indignant on Smyth's account. There were plenty of excuses for Wharton, and Tom's fair mind could see them all, but he was in the wrong this time. Like nearly every man in the Remove, Redwing thought that his clam ought to have been lining up with the Greyfriars footballers.

The game had started when the two juniors arrived on the ground. A crowd had gathered round the field; even Skinner & Co., on second thoughts, had turned up to see how the game would go; charitably hoping that Wharton was going to bag a licking. Smyth hardly knew whether he shared that wish or not. Certainly, a Greyfriars defeat would have helped on the campaign against the captain of the Remove, on which he was now implacably determined.

The pink-striped shirts of the Rookwooders were thick before the home goal. Jimmy Silver & Co. were already going strong. Squiff, in goal, had plenty of work to do; but he was equal to it, and the attack did not materialise. Johnny Bull cleared the ball away to midfield, Wharton was on it swiftly, passing out to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh on the wing. There was a cheer from the crowd, as the Remove forwards went up the field, passing like clockwork, beating the Rookwooders all through. The Bouncer's face unconsciously brightened. He realised then, if he had not clearly realised before, that he wanted the side to win.

"By gad, that looks like a goal, Reddy! Oh, my hat, that fool, Hazel—"

The ball came out to Hazeldene, on the left wing, and a Rookwood half took it from his toe, and sent it whizzing. Hazel stood for a moment, staring, as if he did not know what had happened. The Rookwood forwards got the ball and rushed it on, and it went spinning in from Raby's foot, and Squiff jumped at it a second too late.

"Goal!"

It was first blood to Rookwood.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Licked to the Wide!

JIMMY SILVER smiled genially as he walked back to the centre of the field after the goal. The Rookwooders expected a hard tussle at Greyfriars, and a goal in the first ten minutes was rather hoped for than anticipated. The visitors were in great spirits as they lined up again.

Those high spirits were hardly shared by the home team. The Remove men were not pulling together as they were accustomed to do. Hazel was scowling, irritated by his failure. He knew, as all the team knew that Jimmy Silver would never have taken the ball from Smyth's toe as he had taken it from Hazel's. The Bouncer knew it better than anyone else, and he laughed scoffingly.

"Looks like a win—I don't think, Reddy!" he remarked. "If that cheery rotter wanted to chuck me, he might

have found a better man than Hazel to fill the place. The fellow's a dud."

"He's not bad," said Redwing, "but he's no good against Rookwood. They're miles over his head."

"The dummy!" growled the Bounder. "If he'd kept the ball and run in—the idiot! Wharton was ready for him to centre. It was a sure goal. And he let that man Silver lift it from his toe—the fatted! Does he think he's playing Soccer or marbles?"

"Silver's a good man," said Redwing mildly.

The Bounder gave an angry grunt. "Think he'd have handled me like that?"

"Well, no."

"The game's a goner!" growled

the first to spot the fact that the captain of the Remove was not playing up to his usual standard. But all the fellows could see it, long before the first half was over. Wharton was putting up a good game. He was never likely to do anything else. But some of the dash and brilliancy were gone. It was true that, as the Bounder said, a man could not serve two masters. Swotting for a scholarship was bound to have some effect on a man's form for football. Certainly the schol was the more important matter of the two, and Wharton had no choice in the matter. But that did not alter the fact.

A dissatisfied and disgruntled team, with a skipper who was far from being at the top of his form, discouraged by

"Bravo, Jampot!"

"Goal!"

But it seemed only a flash in the pan. The Rookwood attack came hot and strong, and with all their efforts the home team could not get going again. Every time they got the ball away it fizzled out; every time the game swayed back into the home half, and the defence was called upon. Once, getting a pass from Ogilvy, Hazel ran the ball down the field. But the Rookwooders were on him like lightning, and Hazel, flurried, miskicked and made them a present of the leather. The Bounder groaned aloud.

"Oh, my hat! Is that Soccer?"

"All over bar shouting," said Skinner cheerily. "You ought to be there, Smithy, to give them a little backbone. They need it."

"Licked to the wide!" said Bolsover major, in disgust.

"It's too jolly thick!" growled Russell. "One more good man in the bunch would have made all the difference. Poor old Hazel's doing his best. But what's the good?"



"Shoot!" Hazeldene was about to shoot when a Rookwood half-back took the ball right off his toe and sent it whizzing away. Hazel stood, for a moment, staring, as if he did not know what had happened.

Vernon-Smith. "It would be touch and go against Silver's men if we put in every ounce we've got. Wharton's not in form himself, either."

"He doesn't seem so good as usual," admitted Redwing. "Still, a man can't always be at the top of his form."

"Swotting!" grunted the Bounder. "Sticking in a study mugging up Latin isn't the way to get into form for footer. A man can't serve two masters, Reddy." "Well, he hadn't much choice about the swotting, from what I hear. It's the schol or the long jump."

"Some row with his uncle," scoffed the Bounder. "Ten to one he's got his silly back up about nothing. It would be like him."

Redwing made no rejoinder to that. It was likely enough that Smithy was right, but it was no business of his.

The game was going on hard and fast. Smithy's keen and jealous eye had been

an early failure, had little chance of holding the Rookwooders. As the half wore on, the home team were more and more packed in their own territory, and defence was the order of the day. The defence was good, and Squiff, in goal, was a tower of strength. But just before the whistle went Mornington of Rookwood landed the pill.

"Goal!"

"Two to nil!" jeered the Bounder, as the whistle rang for half-time. "This is goin' to be glorious!"

"A game's not lost till it's won!" said Redwing cheerily.

"Br-r-r-r!"

The change of ends gave the Greyfriars men the wind behind them, and they started well. There was a roar round the field when Hurree Jamset Ram Singh drove the ball in.

"Goal!"

"Good old Inky!"

"Precious little!" grunted Wibley.

"It's Squiff's game," said Newland. "If we hadn't got old Field in goal they'd be walking all over us."

"Good old Squiff!"

"Well played, Field!"

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was having the time of his life. Seldom or never had such incessant attacks assailed his citadel. Again and again the ball came whizzing, and again and again the Australian junior saved. But, with all their efforts, the Remove men could not get the ball away. And Squiff, mighty man as he was between the sticks, could not perform miracles. There was a howl from the Removites round the field as the leather landed in the net again.

"Three to one!" said the Bounder savagely. "My hat, I'm fed-up with

(Continued on page 16.)

GARDENERS!

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Greyfriars Herald

Edited by HARRY WHARTON, F.G.R.

LATEST EXTRA GOOD EDITION

No. 89. LAUGH AND GROW FAT. March 19th, 1932.

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Big Thrill for Ten Cents.
 Roll up to Study No. 3, folks, if you wanna hear the great radio broadcast of the Boat Race! Admission, 10 cents, (call it 6d. in your credit coinage!) The big thrill of the month for the price of three jam tarts! And if anyone tells you I'm borrowing Prout's radio while he's in London, don't believe him!
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HE DIDN'T NEED PRACTICE

Coker's Sculling Machine

Greyfriars is yelling over Coker's Sculling Machine.
 Coker, as everyone is aware, is the best oarsman at Greyfriars. He's also the best footballer, cricketer, boxer, and sprinter.
 "That's what he told us last week, anyway, and we always believe what Coker says!"
 Some days ago, Coker challenged Blundell to a sculling match from Courtfield Bridge to the boathouse. Blundell declined, at first; but after Coker had followed him about for an entire day, saying "Bah!" "Fah!" and "Huh!" and other cynical things, he changed his mind and accepted.
 Blundell went down to the river once or twice after that, to get in a bit of practice. Coker didn't trouble. As he explained to Potter and Greene, and about fifty others, he could kick Blundell, blindfolded and with one hand tied behind his back, so practice would have been a waste of time.
 A mysterious parcel of large proportions arrived for Coker, a couple of days after the challenge.

He paused to explain matters to the crowd. "If you think I've been coming here to practise for my match with Blundell, you're jolly well mistaken!" he said. "I was just them!—trying out this contraption from curiosity. Naturally, I don't need any practise to meet a chap like Blundell!"
 "Naturally!" smiled Skinner.
 Everybody else echoed:
 "Naturally! Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Idiots!" snorted Coker. "I'll jolly well whop the lot of you!"
 He made a rush, caught his rudder in the banisters, and finished up half-way down the stairs!
 The secret, of course, was out! Coker had been indulging in a little unsuspected practice for his sculling match. Not that he needed it. Perish the thought!
 Coker managed to come unstuck by breakfast time.
 Later on in the day, his idea of beating Blundell at sculling also came unstuck! A large number of fellows turned up to witness this match with the idea, of course, of being thoroughly entertained. They were not disappointed for Coker caught enough "crabs" to stoak a fishmonger's shop, and was eventually beaten by thirty lengths—or three hundred—we forget which!

Curious passers-by during the next few days noticed that Coker spent quite a lot of time behind locked doors in that box-room. Sounds of puffing and blowing could be heard from within and Coker usually came out perspiring freely.
 In answer to inquiries as to what he was doing, Coker invariably replied:
 "Nothing, of course! What the thump do you think?"
 When Skinner suggested that it had some

Hard to understand, isn't it?—particularly as Coker's the best oarsman at Greyfriars. It's evident that Coker doesn't understand it either. When we asked him for an explanation, he threw the sculling-machine at us!

FAG DEBATING SOCIETY

Rousing Opening

The Second Form Debating Society, formed by Nugent minor only last week, held its first debate on Wednesday evening, when the subject under discussion was "That a Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss."
 Nugent minor, proposing the motion, said that he was firmly of opinion that a rolling stone gathered no moss.
 At this point, his opponent, Bolsover minor, said that he objected. If himself was firmly of the opinion that a rolling stone did gather moss.
 Several others voiced their opinion, and Bolsover minor, unable to make himself heard above the din, crossed over to his opponent, and tried to explain why he was of the opposite opinion.
 A number of others followed his example. Fighting broke out within two minutes of the opening of the debate.
 Order was restored by prefects, armed with ashplants, and Coker engaged out with a complete sculling-machine between his legs and his hands glued to the oars.



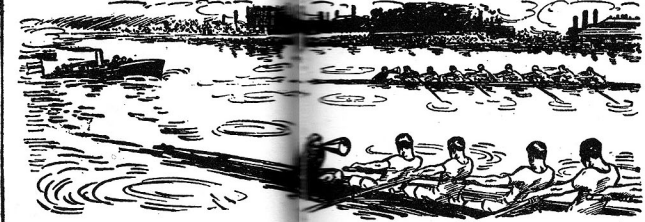
connection with the sculling match, he got kicked—hard!
 The day after that incident, Skinner obtained a duplicate key to the box-room, and was seen entering, carrying a bottle marked "GLUE. DOUBLE STRENGTH." Later, he came out smiling.
 Next morning Coker was in the box-room early.
 Ten minutes after his entry, sounds of frenzied movement were heard. The crowd that gathered outside heard crashings and bangings, accompanied by a wailing and a wailing and a gnashing of teeth.
 The gnashing of teeth was particularly noticeable. It arose from Coker having to turn the key in the lock by his mouth.
 When the door opened, Coker emerged out with a complete sculling-machine between his legs and his hands glued to the oars.

THE BOAT RACE OF 1937

Forecast of a Great Race

WELL ROWED, GREYFRIARS

(EDITORIAL NOTE.—The position they remained for the last three furlongs of the race, and flashed past the judge together without a hair's-breadth in it either way.
 Two of the first to greet the Old Boys as they returned to the shore were Dr. Locke, their old headmaster, now retired, and Mr. Quelch, their successor, who was their Form master when they were all in the Remove. Tired as they were by their herculean exertions, the Old Boys were obviously delighted to meet them again, and gladly accepted Dr. Locke's invitation to a reunion party at a London restaurant.
 Among other prominent Old Boys present were "Batting" Bolsover, prospective heavy-weight champion of the world, who was looking



that all records had been broken with a 17 minutes, 45 seconds.
 The result is especially gratifying to Greyfriars men, who are already aware, of that no less than six Greyfriars Old Boys part in the race. The six in question are: OXFORD: Wharton (bow), Vernons (No. 3), Redwing (stroke). CAMBRIDGE: Russell (No. 4), Bull (No. 5), Cherry (Stroke).
 Without seeking to make invidious distinctions, we think we may confidently claim that Greyfriars contingent provided the strongest of their respective boats. More power to them—if that's possible!
 Fellows who were fortunate enough to see the race saw a grim struggle every inch of the way from Putney to Mortlake. Early indications were that Oxford might hold on to the oars, but they obtained in the first half-mile of the bitter end. From Barnes Bridge, however, Cambridge were creeping up gradually, inch, till the two boats were dead level.

We hear that the recent boat race between Highlife and St. Jim's went off swimmingly. Both boats became waterlogged and sank.
 Nugent minor writes complaining that he has lost his "skull" in the water. He certainly owns a "skelton" key.
 Fellows who were incredulous when the Courtfield Council had built a racing shed found the craft quite safe when they tried it on the Sark yesterday. A lot of scoffers becoming

Rowing News in Brief

Rumour has it that Coker is abandoning sculling and taking up dancing instead. In future, apparently, he intends to stick to the "toopath."
 An Old Boy writes from abroad to say that he has developed a corn on his hand through rowing on the Nile. Is this the corn in Egypt we hear so much about?

BUNTER'S BOAT RACE BEANO

Porpoise's Amazing Generosity

Wharton and one or two others, including Lord Mauleverer, were stuning themselves on the steps of the School House at morning break last Saturday, when Bunter rolled up.
 "I say, you fellows," Bunter said, "I want you all to have a run up to town with me in a car to-day, and see the crews at practice. My treat, you know!"
 "Great pip!"
 "I've asked Quelch about it, and he says it'll be all right as long as we've Bunter for call-over," went on Bunter. "Be a nice little outing for us. I've ordered the Rolls-Royce, and there'll be a couple of tuck hampers here from Chumley's by midday. Coming?"
 Wharton & Co. simply blinked.
 "You—you've ordered a Rolls-Royce?" stutted Cherry. "And—and hampers from Chumley's? Who's going to pay for 'em, then?"
 "I am, of course! Now, don't let me down, you chaps! You're coming, of course, Mauly?"
 Mauly, whose customary languor sometimes leaves him round about Boat Race Day, nodded.
 The last-mentioned watched the race from a long and swallowed a pork-pie he was eating, in the excitement of the finish—an action which caused a well-meaning fellow-passenger to thump him on the back and accidentally knock him overboard into the water! Fortunately, Mr. Bunter was fished out without difficulty. He turned up later at the party looking none the worse for his immersion—unkind critics went as far as to say he looked a good deal better!—and he conclusively that the reputation which survives him at Greyfriars must have been well deserved!
 Here's hoping that the inspiring achievements of our Old Boys in the never-to-be-forgotten Boat Race of 1937 will stimulate the present generation to do equally well in the future!



He jumped in—on Bunter! Bunter was up-ended, bumped, kicked, and rolled on the ground, while Mauly's Rolls, ever-ything's ready. "Well, now, that's that's over, what do we do?" asked Wharton.
 Mauly grinned.
 "Dear man, there's only one thing we can do now that's everything's ready. That's to carry on with the merry programme!"
 And carry on with it they did!
 Bunter rolled up again just as the Rolls was starting off.
 "Look here, you beasts, you don't mean to say you're thinking of going off without your host, do you? If that's what you call gratitude—"
 "Let him in!" sighed Mauly.
 So Bunter came, after all—and, needless to add, the peculiar circumstances did not stop him from having a wonderful good time!
 "Wonderful what a neck will do for a fellow, isn't it?"

ARE PUBLIC SCHOOL-BOYS UNHAPPY?

Greyfriars Answers "No!"

A well-known newspaper has recently been asserting that Public schoolboys lead most unhappy lives. With a view to inquiring into the truth of this, we sent out a Special Investigator on a tour of observation yesterday. His discoveries are illuminating.
 The first man he found was Johnny Bull. "Are you unhappy, Bull?" he asked.
 Bull covered his face with his hands and uttered a deep groan.
 "Certainly not. I'm awfully happy!" he replied.
 Tom Brown was the next fellow our investigator encountered. He put the same question to Brown, who burst into a torrent of bitter tears.

"Unhappy? Of course I'm not unhappy!" he wailed.
 Our Special Investigator was next attracted by the sound of heartrending moans to Study No. 7. Peter Todd was within, moaning in utter anguish.
 "Are you by any chance unhappy, Toddy?" our Special Investigator asked.
 "Ooooh! I'm as happy as the days are long! Boo-hoo!" was Toddy's reply.
 As our Investigator went down the stairs he noticed several fellows weeping copiously. Others were wringing their hands and tearing their hair in the Hall, while in the quad, many juniors were quivering with sobs as they staggered about their business.
 All were asked whether they were unhappy and the reply in each case was in the negative.
 Obviously, if Greyfriars is anything to go on, Public schoolboys are simply brimming over with happiness!



(Continued from page 13.)

this! I'm not staying here to see them make it a dozen!"

And Herbert Vernon-Smith stamped off the field.

But the other fellows still watched. Harry Wharton & Co. were fighting a losing fight, but they were fighting hard. Every man played up for all he was worth, still hoping to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

But with the Remove men at their best it would have been even chances against the doughty men from Rookwood, and the Remove men were not at their best. In the last ten minutes Rookwood had it practically all their own way, and it was only the final whistle which saved the home team from defeat by a much wider margin. As it was, Jimmy Silver & Co. came off victors by three goals to one.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

BANG!

The door of Study No. 1 flew open. Bolsover major stared into that celebrated apartment

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "You're here!" Harry Wharton glanced at the bully of the Remove quietly. He was alone in the study. He had been alone there ever since the Rookwooders had gone to the station.

He was not in a happy mood. Every man in the eleven was dissatisfied with the outcome of the Rookwood match. Even his best friends blamed Wharton. They had not said so, but he knew it well enough.

He wondered whether he ought to blame himself.

Wharton was no fool. He might let passionate anger and resentment blind his judgment for a time, but that could not last. He was too good a footballer not to know that one more good man in the team would have made all the difference in the game. Had the Bouncer played instead of Hazel—But could he have trusted Smithy to play up? He had had good cause for "chucking" him after his exhibition of selfish play at Redclyffe only a week or so ago. Had that been his real reason for leaving the fellow out, or had he had other—unconscious—reasons? Could he have trusted Smithy to play a decent game? Everybody else in the Remove, obviously, thought so. If he was in the right, he was in the right against a crowd.

The Remove men set great store by their successes in games. They were proud of their football record. The Rookwood fixture was a big thing to the Remove, and it had been lost—thrown away, in the opinion of most of the fellows—by their captain's fault. A good sportsman ought to be a good loser, but nobody wanted to lose a match that might have been won. There

was deep discontent and irritation all through the Form. Even the fellows who did not play Soccer shared the feelings of the rest. Wharton, as he moved restlessly about his study, knew that there was a sort of indignation meeting going on in the Rag downstairs.

His books lay on the study table, unheeded. After that slogging game even the most resolute swot had no heart for Latin. Wharton was tired—much more than he generally was after the hardest game. He knew that he had not done his best on the field, though he had tried his hardest. And he was beginning to think that he had made a mistake—that he had allowed an obstinate temper to make a fool of him.

Then Bolsover major burst in. Bolsover's rugged face was red with wrath, and his glare was angry and contemptuous.

"Oh, here you are!" he jeered.

"Keeping out of sight, what?"

"Here, if you want me," said Harry quietly.

"Satisfied now?" sneered Bolsover. "You've chucked away a football match to get back on a man you dislike! I jolly well think that you jolly well ought to be sent to Coventry!"

"That will do," said Harry. "Travel!"

"I'll travel when I like—"

"You'll travel now!"

Wharton came round the table. His manner was quiet and calm, but his eyes gleamed.

"Get out of my study, Bolsover!"

"I've come here to tell you what I think of you! What all the Remove jolly well thinks of you!"

"Get out!"

"Put me out!" sneered Bolsover.

He was taken at his word immediately. Wharton's grasp was on him, and the burly bully of the Remove went whirling into the passage.

Bump!

He landed—hard.

"I say, you fellows!" It was an excited squeak from Billy Bunter. "I say, Wharton's scrapping again!"

Bolsover major scrambled up, red with rage. He fairly hurled himself at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton met him with right and left. Whether he had been in the right or in the wrong, he was not disposed to take any ragging from the bully of the Remove. Bolsover major was driven along the passage as far as the landing, and there a terrific jolt on the chin laid him on his back again. Wharton left him spluttering, and walked back to his study.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bolsover major, as he picked himself up in a dazed and dizzy state. "Oh crumbs!" "He, he, he! Hurt, old chap?" grinned Billy Bunter. "Go for him again, old fellow! I wouldn't be jolly well licked if I were you!"

Bolsover major gave him a glare, and followed it up with a smack, which sat Bunter down suddenly in the passage. He was not much inclined to "go for" the captain of the Remove again, but it relieved his feelings to smack Bunter's head.

He tramped down the stairs, leaving the fat Owl yelling. His voice was added to the many indignant voices in the Rag.

Bob Cherry and his friends were there, but they had little or nothing to say. They were feeling sore over the result of the game, but they would not join in the general chorus. But other fellows had plenty to say, and they said it.

"Chucked away!" said Skinner.

"Just chucked away!"

"Fat lot you care, Skinner!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Did you even come down to see the game?"

"I jolly well did, and saw it chucked away!" retorted Skinner.

"Why weren't you smoking in your study as usual?" grunted Johnny.

"Skinner don't know anything about football," said Russell, "but he's right, all the same. We should have beaten Rookwood if Wharton hadn't had his back up against Smithy."

"Can't win all the matches, you know," said Bob Cherry.

But he spoke half-heartedly. As a matter of fact, he knew that Dick Russell was stating the exact truth.

"I know that, ass! But are we out to chuck matches away?" snapped Russell.

"With that ass Hazel flumbuging—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" growled Hazel-dene.

"Well, what did you call it?" snorted Peter Todd. "You were making Rookwood a present of the ball whenever you got it. They must have thought you jolly good-natured."

Hazel was angry and uncomfortable. He was only too conscious that he had not shown up well. He had done his best, but his best had not been good enough. All the men knew that he was not up to Rookwood weight. And Hazel knew it now.

"Well, I never stuck myself in the team, did I?" he growled. "If a man's picked out to play by his captain, isn't he to play?"

"Something in that," agreed Ogilvy.

"It wasn't for Hazel to tell Wharton that he wasn't good enough. It was for Wharton to know. As a matter of fact, he jolly well knew."

"He had a good man, and left him out!" roared Bolsover major. "I'm not speaking of myself, though I fancy I play back as well as either Bull or Linley—"

"What a fertile fancy!" said Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, whether I'm a good back or not, Smithy's a first-class winger, and Wharton left him out to play that fool Hazel."

"He left out a bigger fool when he left you out, and chance it," snarled Hazel.

"I say, you fellows, we jolly well want a new skipper!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"That's my opinion, anyhow."

"Go and boil it!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bunter's jolly well right, all the same," declared Bolsover major. "If Wharton's going to leave out good men because he's rowed with them—"

"I say, you fellows, he left me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I offered to keep goal—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'd have taken Smithy's place in the front line, if Wharton would have given me a chance," said Billy Bunter. "I offered—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'd have done better than that ass Hazel, anyhow!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Hazel.

Hazel was feeling sorest of all. He had jumped at the chance of playing in the Rookwood game. And the other fellows—with the frankness natural to the Lower Fourth Form—made no bones about telling him what they thought of the game he had put up. He laid the blame on the captain of the Remove, and with some reason. As he said, he had not put himself into the eleven.

His very now was that Wharton had made a fool of him, on account of his grudge against the Bounder. Being determined to leave Smithy out, he had had to play somebody, and he had played Hazel, with the result that the hapless fellow was slanged right and left by the footballers.

"This sort of thing won't do," said Bolsover major. "And you know it jolly well as much as anybody else, Bob Cherry. You jolly well know that we've bagged a licking because Wharton had a feud on with Smithy."

"Oh, rats!" growled Bob. The Co. left the Rag to get away from the discussion. But it raged as hotly as ever after they were gone. Never had Harry Wharton's popularity been as low as an ebb. And Billy Bunter was by no means the only fellow who considered that what the Remove wanted was a new captain. That opinion was expressed freely on all sides. And Skinner & Co. were already talking gleefully of a new election, for which they had their candidate all ready.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Fall of the Mighty!

"PENNY for 'em, Franky!" Harry Wharton smiled as he spoke.

"Sunday prep" was on in the Remove studies that evening. A section of "Paradise Lost" was the subject. But there were few studies in the Remove in which much attention was given to the epic of the great blind poet. Milton had to take second place to the Rookwood match.

Frank Nugent was silent and thoughtful. Wharton had glanced at him several times with rather a sarcastic expression. Probably he could guess his chum's thoughts without much difficulty.

Nugent coloured a little as Wharton made him the playful offer of a penny for his thoughts.

"Oh, nothing!" he said. "You think I ought to have played Smithy to-day?"

"Not much good talking about that now, old chap."

"But you think so?" "Well, you know I do," said Frank retively. "Every man in the Remove thinks so, if you come to that."

Harry Wharton nodded. "Hazel croaked up rather badly. He had been coming on well, and I thought he would put up a good show. As it turned out you'd have done better, Franky, but if I'd put you in, the silly owls would all be howling that I'd left a better man out to put my own pal in."

Nugent made a grimace. He was not without his own feeling of soreness over that unfortunate match. Loyal enough he assented to Wharton's fixed rule that football came before friendship, and he never groused at being left out of the big fixtures. But he did think that he might have been given a chance, if a dud like Hazel could be played. He was not in the same street with the Bounder, but he flattered himself that he was worth two or three of Hazel.

"Well, poor old Hazel wasn't much good, Harry," he said. "Not as it turned out. He hadn't improved so much as I fancied. But"—Wharton's brow darkened—"I don't admit that I ought to have played Smithy. His game at Redclyffe was

enough for me. There's a limit to what a fellow can stand."

Nugent made no reply to that. If personal antipathy had influenced the captain of the Remove in his decision, it had influenced him unconsciously. Certainly the Bounder was a man to try any skipper's patience severely. Nugent could see that there was a lurking doubt in Wharton's own mind.

"All the same, I don't set up to be the mighty panjandrum that Skinner makes out!" added Wharton, with a smile. "I'm more than willing to stand down if the men aren't satisfied. If I get out of it, Smithy's pretty certain to be elected captain of the Form. And if the fellows like that better, they're welcome."

"Oh, that's rot!" said Frank. Wharton shook his head. "All the men think it was my fault that Rookwood walked over us," he said. "I don't think so—but there it is."

He pushed Milton away, and rose from his chair.

"The fact is, Franky, when a man's sweating all out for an exam, he can't keep up with games. I've got to snatch that schol, or get out of Greyfriars. There's no two ways about that. I've had to cut a lot of practice lately, and I wasn't at my best in the game—"

"Rubbish! You were the best man on the field!" said Nugent sturdily. Harry Wharton laughed.

"The game was a goner," he said. "Everybody thinks it was my fault, and—and I'm not so jolly sure that it wasn't. Anyhow, I'm not setting myself up against the crowd. If they want a better man, I'm ready to stand out and make room for him."

"Rubbish!" repeated Nugent. "Well, I shall see all the men in the Rag," said Harry. "Coming down?"

Nugent hesitated. "I was thinking of a game of chess in the study," he said. But he coloured as he spoke.

"You're not much good as a humbug, old chap," said Wharton, laughing. "You mean you'd rather I didn't face the fellows in the Rag till they've had time to cool down. Is there going to be a jolly old demonstration?"

Nugent did not reply. As a matter of fact, he thought it very probable. He knew how high feeling was running in the Remove.

Wharton read his thoughts easily enough, and his face grew hard. Right or wrong, he was not the fellow to be a dud facing the music.

There was a thump on the door, and a few open, and Bob Cherry's ruddy face looked in. Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were with him.

"You fellows done?" asked Bob cheerily. "Trot along to my study, will you? We're fixing up a four-handed mill—"

"Come along, and bring your mittens," said Johnny Bull.

Nugent's eyes met Wharton's, and he smiled involuntarily. The Co., too, were thinking that it would be advisable for the captain of the Remove to keep clear of the Rag that evening. The boxing match in Study No. 13 was rather obviously a pretext.

"Aren't you fellows coming down?" asked Harry quietly. "Oh, I'm fed-up with the jaw in the Rag," said Bob, "and we've fixed up the boxing—"

"The jawfulness in the Rag is terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed boxfulness is the proper caper!"

"Well, you fellows get on with it," said Harry. "I'm going down."

And he walked out of Study No. 1, and went towards the stairs. The Co. exchanged glances.

"Um! We'd better go down, too, I fancy," said Bob. "Jevvor see such a chap for asking for it? But I suppose we've got to back him up."

"Dash it all, Wharton might give the fellows a rest till they've got over it a bit!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He can't expect them to be pleased with him, I suppose, for chucking away a match. I've come jolly near giving him a piece of my mind myself!"

"Bottle it up, old bean," said Bob. "Plenty of others to do that. This Co. always sticks together."

"The stickfulness is terrific!" "That's all very well!" grunted Johnny. "We've lost a match we jolly well ought to have won, and I jolly well think—"

"Oh, come on!" said Nugent. And Johnny Bull, instead of stating what he "jolly well" thought, grunted again, and followed his friends.

Prep was over in the Remove studies, and most of the fellows had gone down. There was a crowd in the Rag, and a hum of excited talk could be heard from that apartment as the Famous Five came along. The Co. followed Wharton in,

(Continued on next page.)

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and as the captain of the Remove appeared, Billy Bunter's fat squeak was heard.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!" Harry Wharton walked quietly into the Rag. He was entering a hostile atmosphere, and he felt it at once. Skinner & Co. and the Bounder were standing in a group, and they all stared at him as he came in. For them, the captain of the Remove did not care two straws. The Bounder was his rival and foe, and Skinner and his friends were slackers and frowsters of very little account in the Form. But the hostility was general, and he saw it at once. Fellows who had always backed him up through thick and thin, were angry and irritated, and disposed to call him to account.

"There he is!" hooted Bolsover major. "He's got the cheek to show up, after all!"

"Boo!" came from Billy Bunter. "Yah! Boo!"

And there were hisses from several parts of the room at once. Harry Wharton flushed crimson, and then his face paled. The Bounder smiled sarcastically. From the Bounder's point of view everything was going well. He had resolved to give the captain of the Remove a "fall," if he could, and he cynically reflected that his rival had played right into his hands.

"Shut up that row, you silly owls!" growled Bob Cherry angrily. The Co. were loyally backing up their leader, though undoubtedly they had an uncomfortable feeling that they were, on this occasion, backing up a headstrong fellow who had been hopelessly in the wrong.

"Yah!" hooted Billy Bunter. "Who chucked the football match away?"

How the matter concerned Billy Bunter was not very clear, as he never played football if he could help it. Possibly his recent "batting" affected the Owl of the Remove more than the Rookwood defeat, and at all times the fat Owl was anxious to make his voice heard.

"Kick that fat idiot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

There was an outburst of hissing from Skinner & Co. For once, the frowsters of the Remove felt that they had the Form with them, and they made the most of it. Other fellows joined in it. Wharton's face was cool, calm, almost contemptuous, and it had an irritating effect on the Removites in the circumstances. He stood looking over the crowd, his hands in his pockets, apparently unaffected by the demonstration.

Squiff, Toddy, Tom Brown, and the rest of the football fraternity were there, and though they did not join in the demonstration, they were giving the captain of the Remove grim looks. If Wharton was impervious to public opinion in the Remove, they considered that it was time he was made pensive to it. Harry Wharton glanced from face to face quietly and calmly. Of Skinner & Co. he took no notice at all; he gave all his attention to the footballers.

The Bounder watched him curiously. He could see that something was coming, though he could not guess what it was. But he had an idea that Wharton's passionate temper was about to betray him into another false step—which was all to the good, from Smithy's point of view.

"Squiff, old bean!" said Wharton. The Australian junior stared at him. "Well?" he grunted.

"Give it a name."

"What the thump do you mean?"

"I think you know what I mean. You've got something on your chest. Cough it up."

Squiff breathed hard. He had not intended to take part in the movement against the captain of the Remove, but he was not the fellow to refuse a challenge.

"Well, if you want it——" he said. "I'm asking for it," said Wharton coolly.

"Then you'll get it," said Squiff. "I think, and every other man in the team thinks, that you've played the giddy ox—you've got us lied on account of a private grudge. And if you don't know it, any man in the Remove can put you wise."

"That's what you think?"
"That's it."
"Anybody else say the same?"
"Every man here!" said Peter Todd at once.

"Hear, hear!"
"And your own pals think the same, whether they say so or not!" snapped Ogilvy. "Look at them!"

Wharton did not look at the red and uncomfortable faces of the Co. He knew that Ogilvy had only stated the facts.

"And I think the cheeky rotter ought to be jolly well ragged!" roared Bolsover major.

"Hear, hear!" from Skinner & Co. "Shut up, Bolsover!" growled Bob. Wharton did not heed Bolsover major, or seem aware of his existence.

"You fellows are all agreed on that?" he asked quietly. "Well, I don't think you're right. I think I was right in turning down a man who can't be relied on to play the game. And so long as I'm captain of the Remove, that man won't be played in a match."

There was a deep growl.
"You won't stay captain of the Remove long at that rate!" growled Russell.

"Quite!" said Harry calmly.
"Look here——" began Squiff.
"No need to say more, old bean! You fellows are fed-up with me, and—if you don't mind my saying so—I'm rather fed-up with you!" said Wharton coolly. "I resign!"

"Oh!"
"The Remove want a new captain. There's plenty to choose from. If you're hard up for a man, I've no doubt Vernon-Smith will offer. I'm sure he will overcome his natural reluctance to put himself forward."

The Bounder coloured. But he did not speak.

"Look here," said Squiff uncomfortably. "We don't want you to resign—"

"I've resigned!"
"But——" began Peter Todd.
"And that's that!"
And with that, Harry Wharton turned and walked out of the Rag—no longer captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes Pains!

BILLY BUNTER'S fat face wore a thoughtful expression.

It was Monday, and the Remove were in Form with Mr. Quelch.

Bunter, judging by his expression, might have been giving deep thought to the valuable instruction the Remove were receiving from their Form master.

But he wasn't! Much more important matters filled the fat mind of William George Bunter.

English History was the subject of the lesson; and it really was worth any

fellow's while to listen-in. But history, English or otherwise, had no appeal for Bunter. He was not in the least interested in the doings of earlier generations. The only tense in which Billy Bunter took any real interest was the present tense; and the only person, W. G. Bunter.

Quelch, like most schoolmasters, was under the peculiar delusion that fellows came to school to learn things. That was an absolute delusion, at least, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned. Bunter was at school to dodge learning anything he possibly could. Really, it was easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for knowledge to be driven into the thick head of William George Bunter.

Quelch's voice, to Bunter's fat ears, was simply like the drone of an obnoxious and persistent insect. If he gave Quelch attention, it was only to avoid catching the gimlet eye if he could. If he got through a class without catching Quelch's eye, Bunter was satisfied.

Nevertheless, Bunter was thinking; though not of his lessons. If Quelch noted that thoughtful expression on his fat face, and fancied that he was giving unusual attention to lessons, Quelch was making a mistake.

The Remove captaincy was vacant. A Form election was to take place on Wednesday afternoon. That was the subject of Billy Bunter's meditations; though other fellows in the Remove would hardly have expected it to interest him very much. They were far from guessing the big idea that had taken root in Bunter's podgy brain.

So far, there were only two candidates for election. Herbert Vernon-Smith was one; Bob Cherry was the other. Harry Wharton had politely but firmly declined to put up for re-election. But it was known that he had urged Bob to put up, and that what influence he still had in the Remove would be used in favour of that candidate. Just to keep Smithy out, was Skinner's comment; but there were plenty of fellows, beside Wharton, who did not think that the reckless Bounder would make a good captain for the Form. The contest was likely to be a close one, and there were few Removites who were not keenly interested in it. But no one, certainly, had expected Bunter to be very keen; or to give any thought to the matter at all. Yet it was the coming Form election that filled Billy Bunter's fat mind, to the exclusion of Quelch and English History.

Quelch ceased at last to drone—not that Quelch himself supposed that his instructive voice bore the slightest distant resemblance to droning!

There was still half an hour to run; and that half-hour the Remove had to fill in with paper work. They were supposed—a rather wide supposition—to have listened to their Form master with keen attention, to have made mental notes, and to be chock-full, as it were, of historical knowledge. Now they were to produce papers on the period dealt with by Henry Samuel Quelch.

Mr. Quelch reposed at his high desk, busy with papers; while the juniors also were busy with papers. His glance rested, with unusual approval, for a moment, on William George Bunter.

Bunter, pen in hand, was hard at work. There was ink on his fat fingers, and a spot of it on his fat little nose; and a wrinkle of deep thought in his podgy brow. It was obvious that Bunter, the laziest and most obtuse member of the Remove, was giving deep attention to what he was writing down—and Quelch rather naturally supposed that it was a history paper. He was

quite unaware of the more important matters that exercised the fat intellect of the Owl of the Remove.

Naturally, it pleased Quelch. He liked to see a fellow take an interest in his work; and Bunter plainly was taking an intense interest.

That was rather a change—a pleasing change! Mr. Quelch even thought that there might be some hope for Bunter, after all. He could not help being dense—but it was something to see him taking pains.

There was silence in the Remove Form room, broken only by the scratching of pens, an occasional grunt, and the shuffling of Bob Cherry's feet.

A whisper was enough to draw a steely glance from Quelch's gimlet eyes;

till a voice which resembled that of the Great Huge Bear was heard behind him.

"BUNTER!"

The fat junior jumped.

"Oh!" he gasped.

He blinked round in great alarm. He spread a fat hand over his paper to obstruct the view. But it was too late.

"Bunter! Give me that paper!"

"Oh lor!"

"At once!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I wasn't—I—I didn't—"

stuttered Bunter.

"Give me that paper!"

"Oh crikley!"

With a trembling hand, the fat Owl handed over the paper. All the Form stared at Mr. Quelch as he stared at Bunter's paper. It was not an historical

that of the fabled basilisk. He had been prepared with words of commendation for Bunter. But it was clear that the words he was going to utter now would not be those of commendation.

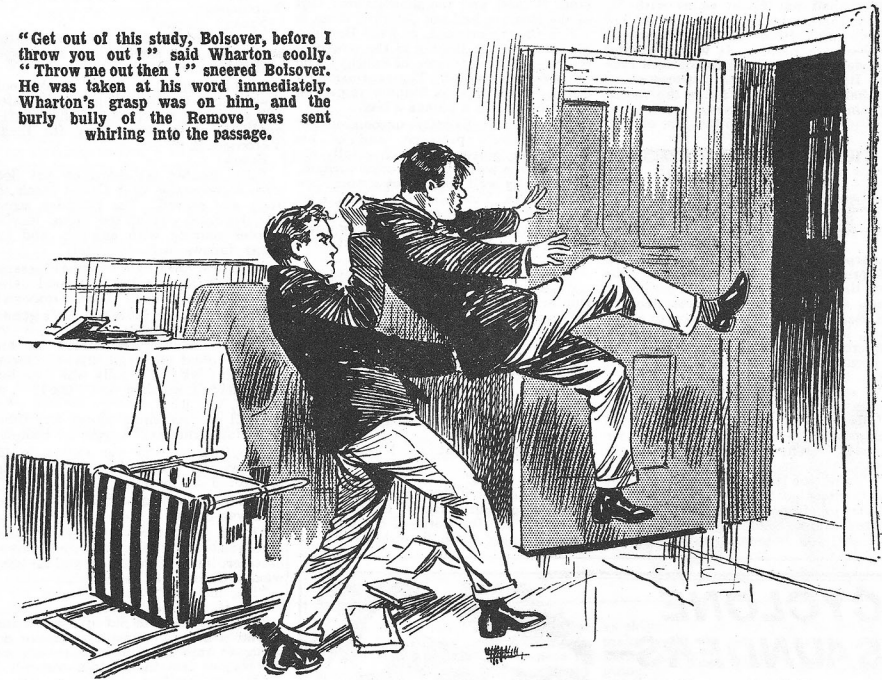
Billy Bunter quaked.

The expression on Quelch's face was enough to make any fellow quake.

Bunter wished just then that he had left his election "notiss" till after class. But the big idea had been working in his powerful intellect, and a fellow had to strike the iron while it was hot. Really, with such important matters on his mind, a fellow would hardly be expected to devote his attention to the reign of King John. Quelch expected it right—which was just like a schoolmaster!

The Remove fellows stared on with

"Get out of this study, Bolsover, before I throw you out!" said Wharton coolly. "Throw me out then!" sneered Bolsover. He was taken at his word immediately. Wharton's grasp was on him, and the burly bully of the Remove was sent whirling into the passage.



and the juniors gave their attention to the work in hand; especially Bunter. More than once, the surprised Form master glanced across at Bunter.

His deep and thoughtful attention to his work was not a mere flash in the pan. He was keeping it up.

Concentrated mental effort was obvious in his wrinkled, fat brow. Quelch's glance at him was quite genial.

Mr. Quelch rose and walked along the Form, glancing at a paper here and there.

Bunter, at the back of the Form, was too concentrated on his mental efforts to observe him.

Quite curious, by this time, to see how the dunce of the Form was progressing, Mr. Quelch stopped behind him and glanced over a fat shoulder.

Then he gave a start.

The genial smile faded from his countenance, as if wiped off with a duster. He glared.

Bunter, deep in his task, heeded not;

paper that Billy Bunter handed over. The subject of his deep meditations had not been what Mr. Quelch had naturally supposed it to be. The gimlet eyes of Henry Samuel Quelch fairly glistened as he glared at the offending paper. It ran—mostly in capitals, and with a considerable amount of decoration in way of blots and smudges:

"NOTISS!

Form elekshun on Wensday.

VOAT FOR BUNTER!

The undersined has the honner of ophering himself as a candydate for elekshun.

VOAT FOR BUNTER!

RALLY ROWND!

BUNTER'S THE MAN!

Role up in yore thousands and voat for BUNTER!"

Mr. Quelch stared at that paper. He glared at it. The expression on Quelch's speaking countenance was reminiscent of

interest. They wondered what on earth Bunter could have written on that paper to get Quelch's rag out to this extent.

For a moment or two Mr. Quelch seemed speechless. He had supposed that Bunter was taking pains—with his lesson. His book indicated that Bunter was about to take pains—of quite a different sort.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch at last. "Bunter, you—you—Step out before the Form, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

Billy Bunter rolled dismally out before the Form. Mr. Quelch followed him, crumpling the offending paper in his hand.

He tossed it into the wastepaper-basket, and picked up the cane from his desk.

Bunter eyed that cane apprehensively. His apprehensions were only too well founded.

"Bunter!"

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"Oh crikey!"
 "Bend over that stool!"
 "Ow!"

With a lugubrious countenance the Owl of the Remove bent over.

Whack!
 "Yaroooh!"
 Whack!
 "Yoooooooop!"
 Whack!

"Cease those ridiculous noises, Bunter, and go to your place! You will remain in the Form-room after class till you have written your paper!"

The fat Owl crawled back to his place. During the remainder of the lesson he wriggled and writhed on his seat, as if the form he sat on was red-hot. If Bunter had not taken pains with his lessons there was no doubt that he had taken pains from his Form master's cane—severe pains! It was a painful episode for Bunter, and for quite a long time Billy Bunter ceased to worry about his chances—if any—of filling the vacant captaincy of the Remove.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rivals of the Remove I

"**H**A, ha, ha!"
 It was a roar of laughter in the Rag.
 Billy Bunter blinked round in surprise.

A crumpled paper, rescued after class from the wastepaper-basket in the Form-room, was now pinned on the door of the Rag—for all the Remove to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

A crowd of fellows had read it, and it seemed to affect them hilariously. Why, Bunter did not know.

"I say, you fellows—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.
 "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" exclaimed Billy Bunter warmly. "Where's the joke, you silly asses?"

"You're the jolly old joke, old fat man!" chuckled Skinner.

"The jokefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, I mean it! I'm

putting up for election on Wednesday—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, stop that row!" exclaimed Bunter angrily. "Look here, Toddy, I suppose you're going to back up a man in your own study."

"Something wrong with your supporter, in that case?" chuckled Toddy.

"I suppose you're not going to vote for Smithy!" exclaimed Bunter. "Who wants a smoko bounder for captain of the Form? Smithy will be sacked one of these days, when the beaks spot him playing the goat. He's a rank outsider."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.
 Vernon-Smith and Bob Cherry, the two candidates for election, were both in the Rag, but they were at a distance from Bunter, and the short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not observed them.

Bob Cherry grinned, and the Bouncer glared across at Bunter as the new candidate stated his opinion of Smithy. The other fellows roared. The expression on Smithy's face was, as Skinner remarked to Snoop, worth a guinea a box.

Bunter, still happily unconscious of the Bouncer's presence, and of his threatening glare, rattled cheerfully on. "Whatton was a pretty rotten captain, but we jolly well don't want a worse one in his place. You fellows see that? Nice thing for the Remove if the captain of the Form gets bunked for sneaking down to the Cross Keys after lights out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Go it, Bunter!" chortled Skinner.
 "Well, that's what I think," declared Bunter. "We don't want the Bouncer. I'd say the same if he was here."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.
 "I jolly well would," said Bunter valourously. "Some of you fellows may funk Smithy because he's got a rotten bad temper. Well, I can tell you that I jolly well don't! A fellow who smokes and plays banker in his study—"

"Go it!"
 "And sneaks out of bounds after dorm—"

"Hear, hear!"
 "And disgraces the Form generally," said Bunter scornfully. "Precious sort of captain for the Form—I don't think! He can't play football, either. All he

can do is to chuck his money about! Blow his money! We don't want a purse-proud outsider like that! Smithy's a rank outsider, and I'd jolly well tell him so if he was here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Look out, Bunter!" called out Frank Nugent.

Smithy, with a positively terrific expression on his face, was striding across towards the fat Owl.

"Eh!" Bunter blinked round. "What—oh, my hat! Yaroooh! Leggo! I say, Smithy, old chap— Yoooop!"

Shako! Shake! Shake!
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yow-ow-ow!" I say, Smithy, I didn't see you—I mean, I never said—I mean to say, I was only jig-jig-jig-joking! Yarooooooh!"

Shake! Shake!
 The hapless Owl's teeth fairly rattled as the Bouncer shook him. He gasped and spluttered wildly.

"Ow! Leggo! Leave off shook-shook-shaking me, you beast!" gurgled Bunter. "If you make my specs fall off—yooop! you'll have to—wow!—pay for them! Yaroooooooh!"

Bump!
 Billy Bunter sat down on the floor with a concussion that almost shook the Rag, and roared. The Bouncer, scowling, tramped out of the room, leaving Bunter roaring with anguish, and the other fellows with laughter.

"Ow, ow, ow! Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, my hat! Beast! Ow! Keep off, you rotter! Ow! Groogh!"

"All serene, old fat man! He's gone!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Oh!" Bunter scrambled up and glared round through his spectacles. "Rotten funk! I'd jolly well lick him if he hadn't sneaked off! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tell us something about the other candidate, Bunter," suggested Skinner.
 Bob Cherry, who was sitting in the window-seat, grinned. Billy Bunter spluttered for breath.

"Yes; what about Cherry?" chortled Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows, Cherry's no good—no good at all. Of course, he's not an outsider, like Smithy! But you all know what a fathead he is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"
 "Like his cheek to put up for election, if you ask me! I suppose you're not going to vote for him because he's got the biggest feet in the Remove—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't want to say anything against the chap," continued Bunter. "He's not a bad sort, in his way. He can't help having hoofs like an elephant—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "He can't help being a silly ass—"

"Go it!"
 "He can't help being a frabjous, foozling fathead—"

"Hear, hear!"

There were a couple of books beside Bob Cherry in the window-seat. He picked one up and took aim. Bunter rattled on merrily:

"I've often wondered why his people sent him to Greyfriars if there was a vacancy in a home for idiots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if you fellows vote for him, all I can say is— Yarooooooop!"

Whiz!

The book landed on Billy Bunter's podgy chest, and cut short the flow of his eloquence.

Bump!

For the second time the Rag shook as Bunter sat down.

CYCLONE SAUNDERS— The Skyways Sleuth

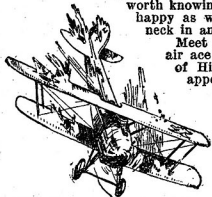
Cyclone Saunders looks a hopeless dude, a monocolled dandy, complete with hair-ol, fancy ties, and enough suits of clothes to stock a tailor's shop; but beneath his lazy exterior Saunders is a real tough guy, a man-getter—the most-fear'd skyways detective in the world!

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"Ow! Wow! Whoooooop!" roared Bunter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Tell us some more, Bunter!" called out Bob Cherry. "I've got another book here!"
 "Ow! Oh crikey! I didn't see you, you beast—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Where will you have it?" asked Bob, taking aim.
 "Beast!"
 Billy Bunter did not want it at all. He dodged out of the Rag, followed by the book and a roar of laughter.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Electioneering!

"WE'RE going to pull it off!" said Skinner.
 "Yes, rather!" agreed Snoop.
 "Certain!" declared Stott.
 "I guess it's a cinch!" said Fisher T. Fish emphatically. "I'll say it surely is a cinch, Smithy!"
 The Bounder smiled a little sourly. It was tea-time, on Tuesday, the day before the Form election. There was generally a rather a spread in the Bounder's study at tea; but on this occasion Study No. 4 was a land flowing with milk and honey.
 Skinner & Co. sat round the table, enjoying themselves. Smithy had plenty of money—which is quite a useful thing at election times. "Feeding the brutes" was one way of capturing votes—a way that Bob Cherry certainly would not have thought of. But the Bounder was not a scrupulous fellow in such matters. Skinner and his friends were supporting the Bounder heartily; not that they liked Smithy more, but they liked Wharton less. But they saw no reason why there should not be a "quid pro quo."
 The Bounder was very keen on winning the election, and he was leaving no stone unturned to that end. Skinner & Co. considered that their votes were worth something. So they tea'd with Smithy, and certainly had no reason to complain of the fare.
 Fisher T. Fish was still more business-like than Skinner & Co. He had a vote in the election, as a member of the Remove; and that vote the cute youth from "Noo Yark" looked on as a saleable article. Fishy did not care a Continental red cent who filled the post of captain of the Form; but Fishy guessed, calculated, and reckoned that he was going to make something out of a chance like this.
 Bolsover major looked in at the doorway. His eyes dwelt lingeringly on the stacks of good things on the table.
 "Just dropped in to tell you you can rely on me, Smithy, old man," he said. "I'm backing you up!"
 "Good man!" said the Bounder.
 "Trot in! Had your tea?"
 "Well, no!"
 "Tea with me, then. Let's talk it over."

Bolsover major trotted in, and pulled a chair to the table. Hazeldene was the next to arrive. The news seemed to be spreading through the Remove that Smithy was keeping open house for his supporters.
 The Bounder gave him a cordial nod.
 "Just the man I want to see," he said.
 "Come in, Hazel, old man!" Redwing, find a chair for Hazel, will you?"
 Tom Redwing smiled and found a chair for Hazel. Redwing was backing his chum's candidature, though perhaps with some inward doubts. Most of



L ODER's hero, as you might suppose, is very cute and absolutely "tonny";
 Within his circle he's the man who knows,
 A bird, in fact, exceptionally downy.
 The "Smart Set" all acknowledge him as chief,
 He's often found in questionable places,
 He likes to bet, and seldom comes to grief
 In spotting winners at the various races.
 Captain James FitzOsborne is his name,
 His pocket-book with five-pound notes is bulging;
 He likes to have a "fiver on the game"
 In which he happens then to be indulging.
 Billiards, banker, poker, or roulette,
 Or anything that sounds a trifle naughty
 Is his delight—to smoke and drink and bet
 The gallant Captain James considers "sporty."
 Of course, he goes to every gay affair,
 His house the smartly dressed young sport besieges,
 To ask him to a party—"You know where"—
 Or get the latest tip about the gee-gees.
 Then he'll drop in at London's smartest bar
 And mix some curious liquid up with soda,

the footballers in the Form were rallying round Bob Cherry; but second-rate men, who did not often get chances in the matches, had an idea that they might fare better under the Bounder's command—an idea which Smithy certainly did his best to foster.
 As for the slackers and frowsters, they were with Smithy to a man. Possibly the Bounder was not very proud of most of his supporters; but, as he cynically told himself, every vote counted in a Form election.
 "Well, you're going to have my vote, Smithy!" said Hazel. "Cherry's a good chap, of course; but I think we've had enough of Wharton's gang."
 "Wharton's catspaw, that's all!" said Skinner. "If Cherry gets in, Wharton will pull the strings from behind, you can bet!"
 "Oh, that's rot!" said Redwing.
 "Shut up, Reddy!" said the Bounder. "Skinner's quite right. I like Cherry myself—everybody likes him—but it's no good making out that he would make a good skipper. He wouldn't. It's not in him!"
 "Hear, hear!" said Skinner & Co.
 "We've had enough of the old gang," said the Bounder. "We want new blood—especially in the eleven. If I get in

GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 22.

This week's contribution by the Greyfriars Rhymester is devoted to the "sporty" hero of Gerald Loder, the bold bad blade of the Fifth.

And order a superior cigar—
 It's just the kind of life for Gerald Loder.

He's quite the pet of all the racing men, And always knows the secrets of the tables;
 He likes to go to Monte now and then And have his little flutter at the tables.
 It's hinted that at games of chance his luck Is so extremely good, it's quite suspicious:
 And when he sees a "pigeon" he can pluck,
 To do so doesn't go against his wishes.

Well, Loder is entitled to his view, And if he thinks the game is worth the candle,
 When he leaves school, he's free to go and do
 Just what he likes, if he keeps clear of scandal.
 We cannot rule his life, but all the same
 We think that every decent fellow-striver
 Will always be content to play the game
 And not to worry much about the fiver.



as skipper, I can tell you I'm going to make some changes! The St. Jude's match comes along soon, and it's not going to turn out like the Rookwood game, if I can help it."
 "If you want a good back—" said Bolsover major.
 "I've thought of that already, old bean," said Smithy. "No good man is goin' to be overlooked, I can tell you."
 Bolsover major gave a satisfied grunt; and Skinner closed one eye at Snoop, who grinned. Smithy's remark had given Bolsover the impression that he was going to play back when the St. Jude's match came along. It gave Skinner the impression that Bolsover's leg was being pulled. It gave Tom Redwing the same impression, and he looked, as he felt, uncomfortable.
 Wibley and Micky Desmond strolled along the Remove passage, and looked in. The Bounder waved a welcoming hand.
 "Trickle in, you men," he said. "I'm goin' to ask you for your votes. I don't want Cherry to bag all the footballers."
 That was enough to decide the two, if they had not made up their minds already. They trickled in cheerfully. Wibley and Micky were, in their own
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estimation, as good a pair of forwards as the Remove had ever turned out; an opinion that certainly was not shared by Bob Cherry. If the Bounder thought so, however, evidently the Bounder was their candidate.

"I say, you fellows!"

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles butted in at the open door. Billy Bunter cast a hungry glance at the table.

"Roll away, barrel!" said Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Oh, let Bunter roll in!" said the Bounder. "He can tell us how many votes he's got so far."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter rolled in.

"The fact is, Smythy," he said, "I've been thinking of standing out of the election. Of course, all my friends would vote for me—"

"That's practically all the Remove!" remarked Skinner.

Sarcasm on Bunter was sheer waste.

"Exactly," he assented. "In fact, I've been promised a lot of support. But I'm going to stand out and give you a chance, Smythy. I say, that looks a jolly good job!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sit down and try it, old bean!" said the Bounder.

Bunter did not need asking twice.

Possibly Bunter had discovered by that time that if he stood at the election the only person to record a vote in his favour would be W. G. Bunter. Anyhow, a spread in hand was worth more than a captaincy in the bush. Billy Bunter devoted his fat attention to the spread.

More fellows came along, till there was quite a crowd in Study No. 4. The Bounder did the honours with smiling good-humour. Never had Smythy made himself so agreeable.

When the party dispersed, in great good-humour with themselves and their candidate, Vernon-Smith took pencil and paper, and jotted down a list of names with considerable satisfaction.

He glanced at Redwing, with a grin.

"I fancy it will be all right to-morrow, Reddy," he said. "Bob Cherry's a good half-back, but I think I can play his head off at electioneering. What do you think?"

"I think you're looking for trouble, as usual, Smythy," answered Tom. "If you get it—"

"Oh, I shall be all right!"

"Well, if you do, you'll have some trouble on your hands. Bolsover major thinks you're going to play him in the St. Jude's match if you skipper the team."

"I haven't said so."

"Hazel thinks he is going to keep goal—"

"Does he?" yawned the Bounder.

"You jolly well know you've made him think so!" said Redwing sharply.

"I've said that he's a good goalie. So he is. He can't do anything else, but he can keep goal—when he sticks to it and doesn't slack. That's not sayin' I'm goin' to play him."

"Skinner and his friends think they're going to dodge games practice for the rest of the term, without being reported to Wingate."

"Let 'em think so," said the Bounder carelessly.

"Wibley and Desmond think you've got your eye on them for the next fixture."

"Well, so I have got my eye on them," grinned the Bounder. "It's a skipper's duty to keep his eye on his men, isn't it?"

"Oh, don't be an ass! As for that THE MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 1,257,

outsider Fishy, you've practically bought his vote," grunted Redwing.

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"That's awfully suspicious of you, Reddy! How do you make that out?" he asked. "Surely you're not accusin' me of bribery and corruption?"

"He's sold you a pocket-knife for five shillings that he got from some fag for about a bob."

"Well, he said it was worth the money," said the Bounder innocently. "I'm not goin' to doubt a man's word, Reddy. Aren't you gettin' rather distrustful in your old age?"

Redwing gave a grunt.

"Well, if this is what you call electioneering, I've no doubt that you can beat Bob Cherry hands down at the game," he said. "But I'd rather lose an election by Bob's methods than win one by yours."

"That's because you're a silly ass, old bean," said the Bounder, unmoved. "You'll be accusin' me of bribin' Bunter next."

"Well, what do you call it? You've told him to drop into the study to tea whenever he likes. What do you call that?"

"I call that a giddy jest," grinned the Bounder. "If he drops into the study to tea after the election, he will drop out quicker than he drops in, with my boot to help him."

"Well, I call it rotten!" grunted Redwing.

"My dear chap, is an election ever anythin' but rotten?" yawned the Bounder.

"Oh, rats!"

Redwing left the study, leaving the Bounder laughing. Whatever his chum thought of his electioneering methods, Smythy at least was satisfied with them. Leg-pulling all round was, in the Bounder's opinion, as good a method as any other, and, like many elected persons in a wider sphere, he was prepared to kick over the ladder he had climbed once he was safely landed at the top.

Left to himself, the Bounder conned over his list with deep attention. He was sure—or almost sure—of the result. The thought of success made his eyes gleam. Wharton, his rival and enemy, was down and out, thanks chiefly to himself. The Bounder had always been ambitious. Many a time he had dallied with the thought of ousting the captain of the Remove and taking his place. Now his chance had come, and Smythy was not likely to care much about the methods he used to make sure of success. Redwing could say what he liked, his words, perhaps, finding an echo in the Bounder's conscience; but, right or wrong, by fair means or unfair, the Bounder was going to have his way.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Captain's Election!

"TWELVE and four—that's sixteen; and those six—no, seven—follows over there—that's twenty-four—"

Billy Bunter was not good at arithmetic.

The Rag was crowded on Wednesday afternoon.

The Remove were a numerous Form. All but three or four had turned up for the Form election. It was a half-holiday, and the fine spring weather had tempted a few out of gates, but the greater number had crowded into the Rag.

Two Sixth Form-prefects were to preside, but they had not come along

yet. At half-past three the count was to be taken to decide who was to be captain of the Remove—a matter of the greatest importance to the Remove, but which did not seem to stir the rest of Greyfriars very deeply.

Indeed, Temple & Co. of the Fourth had strolled into the Rag to regard the excited Removees with an air of lofty amusement, and Cecil Reginald Temple was heard to ask Dabney what the fags were excited about.

The Bounder had come in with a little crowd of his supporters, and Bob Cherry arrived with his friends. Other fellows in the room joined one or the other party, and several fellows, besides William George Bunter, were counting heads. The two parties seemed about equally divided, and it looked as if the count would be a close thing.

"Wharton isn't here," remarked Johnny Bull, glancing round. "I suppose Wharton's not sweating now, Franky?"

"Lots of time yet," said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Well, the door's to be closed when Wingate and Gwynne come in. Cut off and fetch Wharton, Frank. Tell him he can swot after Bob's been elected."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent. And he cut out of the Rag.

"The fellows ain't all here," grunted Johnny Bull. "I think they might all turn up on an occasion like this. Slackers!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you voting for yourself, Bunter, old fat man?"

"I'm not standing!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I fancy I should have got in all right—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"The fancifulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"But the fact is, I'm not keen on it," explained Bunter. "It would take up a lot of a fellow's time, you know. On second thoughts, I'm giving it a miss."

"The missfulness is as good as an esteemed mile!" remarked Hurree Singh gravely. "So you are going to vote for the excellent and absurd Cherry?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet. Cherry refused to cash a postal order for me this morning," said Bunter, with an accusing blink at the candidate through his big spectacles.

"I'll refuse again now, if you like," said Bob.

"If that's the way you ask a fellow for his vote, Bob Cherry—"

"You fat chump, I'm not asking for your vote! Take it away and bury it!" answered the candidate.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Take your face away, anyhow. It worries me!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, snorting. Bob Cherry's friends exchanged glances, and some of them grinned. Bob was a good half-back, and a good fellow; but there was no doubt that his electioneering methods left a lot to be desired.

"You're rather an ass, old man," said Peter Todd. "Bunter's got a vote, you know."

"That fat frowster oughtn't to vote at all," answered Bob. "Anyhow, I don't want his blessed vote."

"Fatead!"

"Same to you, old bean, and many of them!"

Peter Todd followed Bunter. Teddy wanted to get his man in, and every vote counted. From the way the Removees were grouped round the two candidates it looked as if a single vote might decide the election, in which case



"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter. "I suppose you're not going to vote for Cherry because he's got the biggest feet? He ought to be in a home for idiots!" Bob Cherry, seated on the window seat, picked up a book and took careful aim. Whiz! The flying missile cut short the Owl's flow of eloquence.

Billy Bunter, for once, was of some importance. Toddy gave the fat junior a friendly tap on the shoulder, and received a suspicious blink through the big spectacles in return.

"You're voting with me, old fat bean?" asked Toddy, with his sweetest smile.

"That depends," answered Bunter. "I can't say I think your candidate is much good, Toddy. Still, the other man isn't much good, either. I say, old chap, how many votes have you got?"

"Oh, quite as many as we want," said Toddy. "But the more the merrier, you know. Better come in on the right side, Bunty."

"I'm going to," agreed the fat Owl. "Good!" said Peter heartily. "That's right, old man."

"But I haven't decided which is the right side yet!" added Bunter.

"You fat freak—"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, look here, old chap—"

said Toddy hastily.

"Go and eat coke, and be blown to you!" retorted Bunter independently, and he rolled away.

Peter Todd made a motion with his foot. But he restrained his natural inclination—in the circumstances. Bunter rolled away unlicked.

Herbert Vernon-Smith gave him an agreeable nod and smile.

"Oh, here you are, old chap!" he said. Bunter grinned. Seldom, or never, did the Bounder of Greyfriars address him as 'old chap.' Billy Bunter had a shrewd suspicion that he was an old chap till the election was over; after which, he was likely to cease to be an old chap on the spot.

"With Bunter that's thirteen, at

least," said Skinner, "and I fancy we shall have two or three more."

"Oh, it's quite a cert!" said Snoot. "Quite!" agreed the Bounder, though, as a matter of fact, he was not feeling quite certain.

After so much careful electioneering, Smithy had hoped to get a good majority. But Bob, without any electioneering at all, seemed to have rallied half the Form. And Smithy had to admit—to himself—that Bob's party was a rather more creditable crowd than his own. That, however, mattered little to the Bounder, so long as he secured the number of votes he needed.

"Wharton's not here," grinned Bolsover major. "He's so jolly deep in swotting that he's forgotten all about the election."

"More power to his elbow," said Wibley. "But I fancy Nugent's gone for him—he's just cleared off."

"Anybody who's not here at half-past three doesn't come in," said the Bounder quickly. "The door's closed at three-thirty."

"What-ho!" said Skinner. "And I'll jolly well lock it, too. Nobody's going to butt in at the last moment and turn the election."

The Bounder glanced round over the crowd, and then at the clock. All his supporters were present; but Wharton and Nugent had not come in. A few minutes later, however, they come in together and joined the crowd round Bob Cherry. Wharton, as usual, had been swotting, but he had by no means forgotten the election. The Bounder gave the former captain of the Remove a scowl.

"I say, Smithy, old chap—"

The Bounder gave Billy Bunter a

glare—changing it immediately, however, to a friendly grin.

"Yes, old fellow," Smithy's voice was as soft as the coo of a dove; and no one would have guessed from it how much he wanted to kick Bunter.

"I haven't made up my mind how I'm going to vote, old chap," said Bunter, blinking at him seriously. "But that isn't what I was going to speak about. I dare say you heard me mention that I was expecting a postal order."

"Eh!"

"A postal order, old chap," said Bunter cheerfully; "it will be for five bob. It's from one of my titled relations, you know. And—would you believe it, Smithy, Cherry's refused to lend me the five bob? Fancy a chap expecting a chap to vote for a chap when a chap refuses to oblige a chap in a small matter like that, Smithy!" And Billy Bunter shook his head sorrowfully.

The Bounder suppressed his feelings. Two half-crowns slid surreptitiously into a fat palm.

"Thanks, old fellow," said Bunter, effusively. "Of course, this has nothing to do with the election. I'll let you have that postal order as soon as it comes."

"Don't shout, ass!" muttered the Bounder. "I mean, all right! Don't forget to put up your paw for me when Wingate takes the count."

"Rely on me, old bean," said Bunter affectionately. "I've always thought you ought to be captain of the Form, Smithy! You're not mean, like the other beast! I'm seeing you through, old chap."

The Bounder turned away. It was not

judicious, at the moment, to kick Bunter as he deserved; and Smithy mentally promised him a kicking after the election.

But, as a matter of fact, Smithy would have done well to keep an eye on William George Bunter.

Bunter's vote was his now—bought and paid for, in fact! There was no doubt about that. But with two half-crowns in his possession, Billy Bunter was not the fellow to bother his head about such trifling matters as Form elections.

The fat Owl slipped quietly out of the Rag unobserved; and lost no time in covering the distance to the tuckshop—where he proceeded to bestow his custom on Mrs. Mible to the precise amount of five shillings! He was going to vote for Smithy—that was settled. But first things came first.

Three or four more Remove men came into the Rag. Fellows who had gone out of gates had come in in time for the election. Even Lord Mauleverer had taken the trouble to exert himself for the great occasion, and he drifted into the Rag and joined Bob Cherry's crowd. All, or nearly all, the Remove were now gathered, and as the half-hour chimed, Wingate and Gwynne, of the Sixth Form, walked in, and Skinner promptly closed the door and locked it behind them.

There was a buzz of excitement in the Rag. Fellows on both sides were trying to count heads; but heads were difficult to count accurately in an ever-shifting crowd.

Wingate glanced round with the tolerant smile natural to a great man of the Sixth Form who was kindly taking a hand in junior politics.

"All here?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the Bounder immediately.

"I'm not sure, Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "I think—"

"It's half-past three!" said the Bounder curtly. "It's agreed that the door's closed at half-past three, and we get on at once. We can't keep Wingate hanging about all the afternoon for dawdlers."

"You certainly can't!" agreed Wingate. "If that was the arrangement, Cherry—"

"That's it, Wingate," said Bob. "Still, if a fellow's a few minutes late—before the counting's over—"

"We're wasting time!" said Vernon-Smith. "If your men are not here, Cherry, it's your look-out. Get on with it."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Bob cheerily. "Get on with it by all means." "I don't mind waiting a few minutes—ten minutes, if you like," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"Oh, it's all right," said Bob, as the Bounder scowled. "Let's get on with it, Wingate."

"Right—ho, then."

And they got on with it.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER!

The Missing Man!

HANDS up for Bob Cherry!"

Plenty of hands went up. Harry Wharton glanced round rather anxiously. Captain of the Remove no longer, he was very keen to see his chum elected. That was certainly not wholly on account of his desire to back up his chum, and apart from his dislike of the Bounder, he was very far from regarding Smithy as a suitable captain for the Remove. His own hand was the first to go up.

and more than a dozen others followed it.

Wingate proceeded to count, and they agreed the total at fourteen.

"Near thing, even if we don't pull it off," murmured Nugent. "If Bob voted for himself that would make fifteen—half the Form."

"Chap can't vote for himself!" said Peter Todd.

"Bet you Smithy does!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"If he does we'll jolly soon stop him!" he said.

"The stopfulness will be terrific."

"Silence!" called out Wingate. "Now, then, hands up for Herbert Vernon-Smith!"

Up went a crowd of hands.

The two prefects proceeded to count. It looked as if the Form was about evenly divided; and it was evidently going to be a close thing.

"Fifteen!" said Wingate.

"Fifteen!" agreed Gwynne.

"Then—"

"Hold on!" interposed Harry Wharton, his eyes glinting at the Bounder, whose hand was in the air with those of his supporters. "Vernon-Smith's voting for himself! That's not in the game."

Think of a Greyfriars limerick
and WIN A USEFUL POCKET
WALLET!

"I guess Fisher T. Fish is
some guy,
For he's neat, he's slick, and
he's spry.

Oh, brothers and sisters,
He's the grasshopper's
whiskers:
Yet the loss of a cent makes
him cry!"

One of these handsome prizes
goes to: Olive Tyers, of 12, Manor
Road, Smethwick, Staffs, who
submitted the above winning
effort.

The Bounder gave him a bitter look.

"Rot!" roared Bolsover major. "Man's allowed to vote for himself if he likes. Smithy's elected."

"Every Remove man can vote," said Skinner.

"Smithy's a Remove man, I suppose! Smithy can vote."

"Hear, hear!"

"Rats!"

"Smithy's elected—"

"Take your paw down, you sweep!" There was a roar in the Rag. Fifteen votes against fourteen meant that the Bounder was elected captain of the Form. It had not even occurred to Bob Cherry to vote for himself, but the Bounder was not quite so particular.

Wingate looked dubious.

"You claim the right to vote for yourself, Vernon-Smith?" he asked.

"Certainly!" said the Bounder at once.

"Did Cherry vote for himself?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"No fear!" answered Bob.

"Well, look here," said Wingate, after considering the matter a moment or two. "Vernon-Smith will be allowed to vote for himself if he likes—"

"Hear, hear!" chirruped Skinner.

"But in that case there will be a recount for the other side, so that Cherry can have the same chance. That's only fair."

"Oh!" said Skinner.

The Bounder set his lips. Wingate

was there to see fair play, which was not exactly what the Bounder wanted. But he could scarcely raise an objection; Wingate certainly would not have listened to one.

"Fifteen votes for Vernon-Smith!" said Wingate. "Now, then, hands up again for Bob Cherry."

"Up, goes your paw, Bob," said Frank Nugent.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"I'm not going to vote for myself! It's a rotten idea."

"You silly ass!" hissed Johnny Bull.

"Are you going to let that cad walk off with it by foul play?"

"I'm jolly well not—"

"You jolly well are!" said Harry Wharton. "Put up your paw, you ass! I'll jolly well punch your head if you don't!"

Bob reluctantly raised his hand with the rest. The recount came to fifteen, with Bob included, and the numbers tied. The Bounder's face was like a thundercloud. Thirty fellows had voted, and there was only one more to make up the full number of the Remove. One Removee was missing; though which one it was, was not observed at the moment. That missing one, as a matter of fact, was in those thrilling moments guzzling jam-tarts in the tuckshop, not having yet quite guzzled away Smithy's two half-crowns.

"Well, it's a tie," said Wingate, rather puzzled. "You men had better think it over; and hold the election again on Saturday."

The door was unlocked, and the two great men left the Rag.

"Well, a draw's better than a defeat," remarked Harry Wharton; "and some of those silly asses may change their minds by Saturday and vote for the right man!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

The Famous Five walked out. The result of the election was not satisfactory; still, as Wharton said, a draw was better than a defeat. And there was a chance that some of the Bounder's backers might change their minds in time for the election on Saturday.

The Bounder was left scowling.

A fat figure, with a happy, sticky face, rolled into the Rag.

"I say, you fellows!"

The Bounder stared at him. "Wanter!" ejaculated Skinner. "Why, he wasn't here— Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, haven't you started yet?" asked Bunter. "I believe it's half-past three, isn't it? I say, Smithy, what are you scowling at a fellow for? I'm going to vote for you, old chap. I say— Yaroooooo!"

Whooooo! Help!

What happened next was quite a surprise to Bunter. Why Herbert Vernon-Smith was collaring him and banging his head on the table as if he wanted to wreck that article of furniture, Bunter did not know. But he knew that Smithy was doing it. Only too well he knew that.

"Ow, ow, ow! Leggo! Help! Yarooooo! Whooop!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Yaroooooo!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter landed on the floor and roared. And the Bounder tramped out of the Rag and left him to roar.

THE END.

(Vernon-Smith's chance of bagging the captaincy looks rosy—what? But it all depends on Bunter. Be sure and read: "BOUNDER AND CAPTAIN!"—the next yarn in this grand new series by Frank Richards.)

WINGS OF WAR!

By HEDLEY SCOTT.



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

BRUCE THORBURN, A YOUNG FLYING OFFICER OF 256 SQUADRON, HAS THE MISFORTUNE TO BE SHOT DOWN OVER GERMAN TERRITORY IN HIS FIRST ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ENEMY. HE SETS FIRE TO HIS WRECKED MACHINE, AND THEN UNEXPECTEDLY FINDS HIMSELF BEFRIENDED AND SHELTERED BY ADOLPH MENILLE—A PEASANT—WHO IS, IN REALITY, FERRERS LOCKE, A BRITISH SECRET SERVICE AGENT. LOCKE HIDES THORBURN IN THE LOFT OF THE FARMHOUSE, WHICH IS DIRECTLY ABOVE THE ROOM IN WHICH TWO GERMAN FLYING OFFICERS—WHO HAVE ARRIVED UNEXPECTEDLY—ARE SLEEPING. IN THE DARKNESS, THORBURN INVOLUNTARILY LETS OUT A CRY AS A RAT SCAMPERS ACROSS HIS FACE, WHICH AWAKENS THE TWO GERMANS. "SOMEONE IS UP THERE!" CRIES ONE OF THE OFFICERS. "LIGHT THE LAMP, CARL—QUICK!"

A Great Chance!

IN that moment of danger Bruce Thorburn's wits worked swiftly. To remain where he was meant certain discovery. But it was not of himself that the youngster was thinking, it was of Ferrers Locke. Death at the hands of a firing-party would be the fate of any peasant found guilty of sheltering one of the enemy.

Even as the blaze of light from the lamp Carl hurriedly lit flickered through the cracks and crevices in the old, raftered ceiling, Thorburn moved silently towards the small square of window in the roof. There was just a possible chance that he could squeeze through, drop to the ground, and trust to luck, the darkness, and a sturdy pair of legs, to take him a few miles away from the farmstead belonging to Adolph Menille.

From below he heard the scraping of booted feet and the guttural voices of the two German captains.

"Pig of a peasant!" roared Carl, flinging open the door of the bed-room. "Here! And at once!"

"Coming, mon capitaine," answered the quavering voice of Adolph Menille.

"What is it that my gentlemen require?"

He staggered under the brutal blow the burlier of the two Germans aimed at him with the back of his hand, but in a moment he had recovered, and was all humility and willingness to be of service.

"Son of a pig!" rapped Carl. "Bring us the ladder! Someone—some spy is above us!"

The hands of Adolph Menille were raised in horror at the suggestion.

"But, mon capitaine, there is but no one in this poor farmhouse excepting your august selves and poor Adolph! A rat, maybe, you heard—"

"Donner! Is the old fool going to talk all night?" snarled Carl's companion. "Bring hither the ladder, burn you!"

As he spoke he drew his revolver, and, taking random aim, fired three shots into the rafters above.

"That's a warning, my friend," he laughed harshly to Carl. "Rats! Ach! I have yet to hear a rat with a human voice!"

Thorburn thanked his lucky stars that he had moved from the pile of blankets, for it was in that direction the bullets,

recklessly discharged, had been dispatched.

By the time the peasant had laboriously brought the required ladder into the bed-room and the impatient Germans were ordering him to rear it against the loft hatch, Thorburn had squeezed himself through the narrow window.

"Up you go, Carl!"

Pushing Adolph unceremoniously on one side, Carl mounted the ladder, with a cocked revolver. One rung behind him came his companion, bearing the lamp. In an agony of dread Ferrers Locke waited below.

"Ach! There is no one here, Friedrich," came Carl's muffled voice. "Turn the lamp this way—zo!"

Friedrich von Kauffman did so. But all that came within the radius of the light were cobwebbed cross-beams, a few blankets, and the small, open window.

"There is nothing!"

Carl's voice reassured Ferrers Locke. In some uncanny fashion Thorburn had made himself scarce. That he had disappeared via the small window did not occur to him at that moment, for he

told himself that no full-grown body could squeeze through so narrow an aperture.

"We must have been mistaken, mein friend," said Carl, with a light laugh. "It was, as this miserable dog suggested—the rats!"

His companion slowly descended the ladder. There was a scowl of bewilderment on his square features, and suspicion.

"Himmel! Rats—"

It was obvious that he was not satisfied. With a muttered ejaculation he strode to the bed-room window, jerked aside the curtaining, and flung open the casement. Then a whoop of triumph left his lips.

"Himmel! Ha, ha! Rats!" he croaked. "Lend a hand, Carl!"

The sight of a pair of legs dangling before the open casement brought Carl rushing to his companion's aid.

Ferrers Locke's face grew grim and hard. He needed no telling that the legs belonged to Thorburn, or that the youngster, having squeezed out through the loft window, had worked his way round the eaves of the roof, seeking a favourable point from which to drop to the earth below.

It was sheer bad luck that had caused him to choose the route that would take him right before the noses of the hunters.

"Ach!" grunted Friedrich. "In you come, mein friend!"

He seized the dangling legs in a grip of iron and tugged lustily. There was nothing else for it but for Thorburn to release his hold on the roof. In a shower of arms and legs he and Friedrich von Kauffman descended to the floor, what time Carl covered him with his automatic.

Thorburn disentangled himself at last and sat up, rubbing his head where the German's heavy field boot had thudded into it.

All the two Germans saw was a shabby, stupid-looking peasant, who seemed of a sudden to be subject to violent coughing.

Carl wheeled on Adolph Menille.

"Zo!" he laughed harshly. "There was no one there? Very pretty! And who is this snivelling, unwashed pig?"

"The peasant farmer wrung his hands piteously.

"He is but my poor nephew Francois Epenardo—"

"His papers?" snapped Carl. "Produce them!"

Again the peasant wrung his hands.

"Alas, mon brave capitaine, he is but lately come to visit me from Lille. His papers are with his mother. I beg of you, mon capitaine, to show him mercy. He is dumb, and sorely afflicted. Zo shell-shock—ze bad cough—"

"Dumb! Ach!" grunted Friedrich. "The pig was not so dumb a moment or so ago! But we will see! This is kolossal!"

He took the lamp from the little table, jerked Thorburn to his feet, and stretched the youngster's bared arm directly over the glass funnel of the lamp.

Thorburn's lips set hard. The heat from the lamp was unpleasantly painful. But he tried with all his power to live up to the imposture of being dumb. Three minutes of the searing yellow flame he bore without a single relaxation of those tightly set lips. Then it was more than he could stand.

An involuntary cry escaped him, and

at the same time his free arm crooked and swung round in a jab that carried all his weight behind it.

"Zo! Dumb! Ha—"

Friedrich's gloating was short-lived, for a bunch of British knuckles took him clean upon the point of the chin. He dropped as if he were poleaxed, and the lamp dropped with him.

"You murderous dog!" shouted Carl, and, raising the revolver, would have shot the ragged figure before him then and there, except that he had overlooked the farmer peasant.

In a movement that suggested he was about to restore the lamp to the table, Ferrers Locke bent down and deftly snicked the automatic out of the amazed German's hand.

"Donner und blitzen!" screamed Carl. "Oh, but you will be shot for this, you snivelling pig! Hand me that pistol at once! You hear?"

"I hear!" was Ferrers Locke's cool retort. "But I am not obeying. Quick, young 'un! Secure that lump of sausage you have just pasted. There's cord in the drawer!"

Thorburn jumped to obey. His heart was pounding against his ribs, for everything had happened with such suddenness and unexpectedness that temporarily he was thrown off his balance.

Locke's coolness had a sobering effect upon him. While Carl crouched against the wall with arms raised high above his head, cursing the treachery of the peasants and the horrible fate that would be meted out to them generally, and Adolph Menille particularly, Thorburn trussed up his late tormentor with a skill that drew a smile of commendation to Locke's face.

"What next?"

"Now do the same with this pleasant young man. In his own class he is known as the Hauptman von Wiseldurg; but you would never believe a German gentleman could possess such a flow of beautiful invective," said Locke.

He seated himself at the table while Thorburn carried out his task, but his eyes never strayed from the furious face of the German.

"You will gag him as well, young 'un," he added. "We cannot be too careful. Yes, the same with our friend Friedrich, when he comes round. That's better. Now I think we had better stop them in the loft for the time being."

"They are not likely to squeeze through the window," remarked Thorburn, eyeing the ample forms of his prisoners. "It's a wonder I got through. Seem to have left half my shoulder-blades behind me."

"Lend a hand!" said Locke briefly.

Stooping, he gathered up the sullen form of the Hauptman Carl von Wiseldurg, swung it across his broad shoulders with the assistance of Thorburn, and mounted the ladder. The sound of a slight bump a few moments later told Thorburn, waiting below, that Von Wiseldurg had been "dumped." The semi-conscious Friedrich joined him a couple of minutes later.

"And that's that," commented Locke, replacing the hatch, and shifting the ladder to its customary position by the wall. "Jove! But it was a near thing!"

"It certainly was," agreed Thorburn. "And I'm afraid I'm to blame. It won't be safe for you to remain here as Adolph Menille after this."

Ferrers Locke pulled a wry face.

"It certainly will not. In fact, I think we had better be moving before the dawn. I can't keep these two 'gentlemen' here indefinitely. Someone from the aerodrome will be certain to inquire for them."

"Phew!" A light sprang to Thorburn's eyes as he emitted that muffled yet excited whistle. "It's a chance! I thought of it while I was lying up there listening to their plans. And now there's two of us—Mr. Locke! It's a chance—a great chance, I tell you!"

Locke's eyebrows were raised in a half-amused smile.

"Would you mind telling me just what that all means, Thorburn?" he asked. "What chance? What plans—and so on."

Thorburn's voice fell to a low, tense whisper.

"These two birds are German flying men, detailed for special work," he announced. "Half an hour before dawn they are due to present themselves at the Haraschel aerodrome. A captured British two-seater, a De Havilland Rolls-Four will be run up ready for them. The German anti-aircraft batteries have been given orders to make only a pretence of trying to pot it; roving Fokkers have also been instructed to turn a blind eye when they see it—"

"Go on!" said Locke tensely. "I am beginning to follow your line of thought."

"The big idea," continued Thorburn, "is for Friedrich to be dropped near our headquarters railroad, lay a mine at the junction—the wiring and everything will take him quite the best part of three to four hours—then when he's fired it to beat it for a near-by meadow, where friend Carl will be patiently awaiting him."

"You have heard all this?"

Thorburn nodded.

"I heard every word of your plans. They went over it detail for detail two or three times. It sounds a simple job on the face of it, but there were risks, of course, and our two friends naturally wanted to eliminate them where possible."

Locke's eyes lit up with almost as much boyish excitement as his companion's.

"It's a great idea!" he declared.

"Great!" chuckled Thorburn. "Why, it's what our friends would term kolossal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"While I was lying up there," went on the youngster, "the thought occurred to me that I might, somehow, take the place of either Carl or Friedrich. But there's now no reason why we shouldn't both become Fritzes for the time being."

"Every good reason why we should," said Locke. "It will be hard to identify us in leather flying-suits, goggles, and helmets. The talking you can leave to me. Methinks I can manage a passable imitation of Carl's voice."

While he spoke, the detective rummaged in the bulky valise that belonged to the Hauptman Carl von Wiseldurg, and brought to light a slightly soiled leather flying-suit, helmet, and triplex goggles.

"Luck is with us," he chuckled. "Thorburn, I've been playing a dangerous game here, now for months, as the humble peasant Adolph Menille. I have burgled the commandant's offices on more occasions than I care to remember. I have filched his war secrets,

his codes, with the desperate luck of the gambler. When you dropped from the skies I was wondering how long the luck would last. Now the answer is supplied. Just before dawn, then, the Hauptman von Wiseldurg and Von Kauffman will do their duty for the Fatherland."

His hand went out and seized Thorburn's in a powerful grip. And at that moment there came a thunderous tattoo on the door of the farmhouse.

A Big Bluff!

INSTINCTIVELY Locke's grip tightened, then he relaxed. In a flash he became Adolph Menille, humble and subservient.

"Hide under the bed—better still in the bed! Quick!"

Thorburn hastily slipped between the blankets and drew them up round his head.

Locke gave him a final glance, and then shuffled downstairs. After a pretence of fumbling with the bolts, which took him a few minutes, he swung open the door.

In it was framed the massive figure of a German sergeant.

"Give the Hauptman von Wiseldurg my compliments," he boomed, "and my request for an audience with him."

Locke's eyes narrowed, "But, mon capitaine," he protested, with his usual flatter, "that is more than poor Adolph dare do."

"Zo," barked the sergeant harshly, "then I will request an audience myself."

Up came Adolph's hands in horror.

"This madness, mon brave capitaine!" he protested again. "The last words of the respected Hauptman von Wiseldurg were that he would shoot me if I dared to show my pig face the wrong side of his door before dawn."

The sergeant burst into a deep, throaty laugh.

"Just like him," he chuckled. "And who could blame him? Ach! Your face would look a thousand times more handsome—with a bullet in it! Ach! Laugh, you pig fool! Laugh!"

Adolph broke into feigned laughter as requested.

"But he would not shoot his sergeant mechanic, Dyncac. Ho, ho! I will wake him myself."

His heavy feet started to cross the farmhouse floor, but Adolph's bent figure interposed.

"Mon brave capitaine," he ventured, "you are unwise. If the Hauptman von Wiseldurg fires when you open his door, how will he know that it is indeed his good friend Dyncac—until Dyncac is dead? You see—"

While he was talking he was drawing a bottle of red wine from an adjacent cupboard. The sergeant's eyes lingered on it affectionately.

"Would not mon brave capitaine prefer the safer method of writing a note for his Excellency? Then all our lives would be spared?"

"You little rat!" laughed the sergeant. "But you're right! Too well do I remember the Hauptman's temper. He threw a grenade at his last sergeant mechanic in a pleasant fit of temper, and the stupid dolt held it in his hands while it exploded. Ho! He is a rare one is the Hauptman. This wine reminds me of home. 'Tis good! The only thing good in your miserable godforsaken country. Give me paper and materials."

They were speedily forthcoming. Then the sergeant laboriously wrote a

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

IN response to requests from many readers, I am giving you a few more

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE!

A Sponge is Really a Skeleton! Thousands of the lowest form of living creatures have only one skeleton between them. They comprise a jelly-like mass, which separates from the sponge when it is taken from the water, leaving only the skeleton—which is what we call a sponge!

The Horse is NOT the most Useful Animal! The ox, which is widely used as a draught animal in many parts of the world, also provides: Food—in the shape of milk and beef; clothing and boots—in the form of leather; glue, horn, and many other things which are widely used by mankind!

Snakes DO NOT Fascinate Their Prey! It is their quickness which allows them to strike before their victims can escape.

Octopuses are Captured by Paralysing Them! If an octopus is gripped firmly just behind the arms it is instantly paralysed, and then becomes an easy captive.

A Dead Man who Presides at Board Meetings! Although Jeremy Bentham has been dead for a hundred years, his skeleton, dressed as he was in life, is always placed in the president's chair at meetings of University College Hospital in London. Bentham left his whole fortune to the hospital on condition that this should always be carried out. A mask which is a replica of his living face takes the place of his skull.

The man who hatched out chickens: A soldier in Napoleon's army complained that he was too weak to do anything but sit. Napoleon made him sit on a nest of hen's eggs until he had hatched three broods of chickens.

DONALD WALKER, of Teddington, sends along the following query:

WHAT ARE BOLAS?

These are weapons peculiar to the Indians of certain parts of South America. They consist of two massive iron balls fastened together by stout leather thongs. They are whirled round the head, and then thrown with great force at the animal to be captured. The weight of the iron balls causes the leather thongs to become twisted around anything they strike, and wild animals are immediately brought to

note, sealed it, promised Menille a lingering death if he failed to deliver in the very moment the captain awoke, finished the bottle of wine, and clanked noisily and somewhat unsteadily out of the farmhouse.

Ferrers Locke breathed with relief when he was gone. Then he slit the envelope and perused what the sergeant had written.

"Still the luck holds good," he told himself.

Then, with a light laugh, he tore the letter into fragments, burned them in the dying embers of the kitchen fire, and rejoined Thorburn.

the ground when they are hit by the bolas. The Indians always carry two of these weapons, and, after incapacitating a wild animal with the first pair, they aim the second pair at its head.

Hedley Scott's grand new serial of air adventure has caused a large number of my readers to take a great interest in aeronautical matters. S. H. D., of Sunderland, has written to me to ask for particulars of

AIR FLEETS OF THE WORLD.

Which country has the largest air fleet, and which has the smallest? he asks. At the time of going to press, France tops the list with a total of 1,400 planes. After her come the following countries: Russia (1,250); Italy (1,200); U.S.A. (936); Great Britain (800); and Japan (550). The smallest known air fleet is that of Greece, which consists of only six planes. Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, and Hungary are forbidden by various treaties to possess an air force, while no figures are available for China, which, up to the time of the recent trouble over there, was also said to possess no official air force.

THERE is some "good stuff" in store for you next week, chums! I have just been reading

"BOUNDER AND CAPTAIN!"

By Frank Richards,

and I can tell you that it is one of the finest yarns he has yet written for us. It is a rattling good school story of the type which has earned such wonderful tributes for this popular author, and I advise you not to miss a line of it!

And if it's thrills you want—well, you'll get them in the next long instalment of our magnificent flying yarn, "Wings of War!" Like all MAGNET authors, Hedley Scott knows what he is writing about, for he served as an airman on the Western Front himself during the Great War, and quite a lot of his personal experiences have been incorporated in this story. Drop me a line and let me know what you think of it, will you?

There'll be the "Greyfriars Herald," as usual, of course, together with our other smaller features, and I'll be in my office waiting to have another little chat with you!

So, cheerio, for the time being, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

"You can come out of that," he said playfully. "The cat's away; the cat being a Sergeant Dynac, mechanic, who has made the special journey here from the aerodrome."

"What did he want?" breathed Thorburn.

"He wanted to tell his captain that he regretted having to leave his service on the eve of such an adventure, but that the High Command had granted him leave as from midnight to-night."

"Oh, good!" gasped Thorburn. "That means he won't be at the aerodrome when—"

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"Exactly!" nodded Locke. "Furthermore, he intimates that a new sergoant, by name Ernest Wulff, lately transferred from the Russian front, will make it his very especial business to see that the De Havilland plane will be run up and in readiness outside Hangar No. 4 half an hour before dawn."

Thorburn nearly danced a jig in his excitement.

"Great Scott! It's a gift!"
"It certainly seems that Fate is kind," said Locke. "But now, if you will take my advice, you will turn in for a couple of hours."

"Oh, I'm not tired!"

"Maybe not," said Locke. "But you will be. And I'm not risking my neck flying behind a chump who can't keep his eyes open. Turn in, and leave me to keep watch."

Thorburn's protestations were cut short.

Playfully Locke lifted him and literally put him to bed. Then he blew out the light and settled himself in the chair.

Thorburn was soon deep in slumber. The events of the day had tired him much more than he was prepared to admit, but Ferrers Locke's eyes never flickered. Like all men who live with danger as their constant companion he possessed the faculty of being able to keep going without sleep.

Although he allowed his limbs to relax, his eyes and ears, ever attuned to danger, remained fully alert. From afar came the occasional booming of a battery in action; overhead droned the peculiar rhythmic beat of a twin-engine bomber, and from its note Locke knew that a British machine was heading probably for Douai with a cargo of bombs on board. He wished the intrepid crew "luck" in his thoughts.

The hours crept by.

The movements of the prisoners in the loft above had ceased. Trussed up as they were, any movement was a matter of pain and inconvenience to them, and could serve no purpose. Doubtless, too, they had succumbed to the urge to sleep.

Gently Locke awoke his companion. "Tumble out, my son! It's time we were off!"

Thorburn sleepily shed the blankets.

stretched his limbs, yawned, and finally shook himself.

"Good gad! Didn't know I was so tired. I could sleep for a century, I do believe."

He dipped his head into a basin of water which Locke poured out for him, towelled vigorously, and announced himself ready for anything.

Quietly Locke bade him get into his flying-suit—a one-piece garment, fortunately never intended to fit like a tailor's model. Certainly Thorburn looked much bulkier in the Hauptman von Kauffman's kit than he looked in his own.

"You'll do!" said Locke, slapping the youngster on the back. "Now just watch the window while I get busy. It would never do for me to walk out like Adolph Menille."

The detective busied himself with some odd rags and grease; Thorburn saw that out of the tail of his eye, and marvelled at the man's genius. Gradually the make-up of the peasant farmer disappeared, and in its place, to Thorburn's astonishment, there appeared quite a passable likeness to the Hauptman von Wiseldurg.

"That's in case of accidents, my son," whispered Locke. "You as my under officer need not show much of your face, nor talk at all. Coat well turned up, helmet fastened, and goggles half-lowered. That's fine! Now we're ready."

"Listen—" It was Thorburn's voice in an excited whisper, as he peered out of the window. "Someone coming!"

"Someone?" breathed Locke quickly. "Sounds like a squad. By thunder it is!"

"They are coming here!" whispered Thorburn. "Two mounted men and a squad of infantry blighters."

Locke thought quickly. Instinctively he knew for what reason the squad had come, and thanked his stars that he had seen fit to erase for ever the guise of Adolph Menille, the peasant.

"They've come for me!" he muttered.

"Phew!"
Thorburn excitedly grabbed him by the arm.

"What are we going to do—make a fight for it? I'm a pretty good shot with a revolver."

He gripped the German captain's revolver tensely.

Locke shook his head and smiled.

"I admire your pluck, son," he said slowly, "but it won't take us far. The only thing that can get us out of this corner is bluff—big bluff. Don't say a word! Come!"

He swaggered in true German military fashion to the door. Thorburn did his best to copy that important strut. But his heart nearly missed a beat when the pair of them had descended the stairs and halted in the hall beyond.

Crash!
The door of the farmhouse suddenly flew open under a mighty shoulder charge. In stalked a lieutenant and a squad of armed men. An under officer brought up the rear.

At sight of the two figures clad in flying-uniform the lieutenant in charge brought up short.

"Who are you?" he demanded. Locke, with perfect coolness, began to don his fur-lined gauntlets.

"I would have you know, lieutenant, that you are addressing the Hauptman von Wiseldurg. My companion is the Hauptman von Kauffman."

"A thousand pardons!" apologised the ober-lieutenant, and he came to a stiff, ramrod salute which his under officer copied faithfully.

Both Locke and Thorburn snapped back a salute.

"Our business is urgent and our time is brief," said the former easily. "otherwise we would be prepared to listen to what brings you here. As it is, you will pardon our haste."

He stalked to the door, and Thorburn followed suit.

The ober-lieutenant, however, came briskly to the salute again. His squad, with immovable expressions, stood strictly to attention right in the path of the two Britishers, and no order was given to them to make way for the captains.

"Your pardon," said the ober-lieutenant courteously. "But we are here to search for, and arrest one, Adolph Menille, by order of the kommandant."

(It looks as if Ferrers Locke and Thorburn have stepped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Be sure you read the next instalment of this thrilling story, chums—you'll enjoy every line of it.)

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