A Special Story, Telling of the Early Vicissitudes of the "Greyfriars Herald," the famous Junior-edited Newspaper, which is Now an Established Feature of the Life at Greyfriars School

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Order of the Boot!

"WAAL, I should smile!"

Fisher T. Fish of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, uttered that exclamation in indignant tones.

The American junior had stopped outside the door of Harry Wharton's study, No. 1 in the Remove passage.

And although he ejaculated that he "would smile," that was evidently only a form of expression belonging to the great American language; for Fisher T. Fish did not smile, he frowned wrathfully.

There was a square of cardboard pinned on the outside of the study door and it bore, in large letters daubed with a brush, the imposing notice:

"EDITORIAL OFFICE.
No Admittance Except on Business."

Fisher T. Fish regarded that notice with a wrathful eye, and then proceeded to administer a powerful kick to the study door.

Bang!

And a wrathful voice proceeded from within No. 1 Study:

"Clear off!"

"I guess I've got business hyer!" said Fisher T. Fish; and he hurled the study door open and marched in.

Five juniors were seated round the study table.

They were Harry Wharton and Nugent, to whom the study belonged, and Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, all of the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

They were very busy. The study table was covered with papers, and each of the five juniors had a pen in his hand, and a thoughtful wrinkle on his brow. Some of them had ink on their fingers, too, and Bob Cherry had a smear of it on his nose. The Famous Five had evidently been hard at work when the interruption came. But they looked up from their work, and five separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon the American junior. Five distinct and emphatic voices pronounced at the same time the words:

"Get out!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess I'm on in this scene!" he exclaimed, with emphasis. "What does this mean—hey? 'Editorial office'—what?"

"Editorial office of the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" Harry Wharton explained briefly. "Buzz off, Fishy! We're busy—we've got our Christmas Number to produce."

"What?" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Christmas Number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" said Wharton patiently. "Are you getting deaf?"

"Or silly?" asked Bob Cherry politely.

"Look hyer——"

"Gerrout!" growled Frank Nugent. "Don't you know better than to buzz into an editorial office in this way when the staff are at work?"

Fisher T. Fish was crimson with rage. As he had first mooted the scheme of a junior school paper at Greyfriars, and had appointed himself editor when the first number was produced, he had perhaps some reason to be excited.

"Look hyer!" he howled. "You haven't said a word about it to me——"

"You'll see the Christmas Number when it comes out!"

"But I'm editor!" yelled Fish,

"Rats!"

"Wasn't it my idea at the start? Wasn't I chief editor, and you jays only subs——"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"You were—and we were," he agreed. "But all that's in the past tense. You mucked up the number we let you edit, and spoiled the whole thing. We had to get a second edition printed. So we gave you the boot as editor. You're out of the firm. You can go and eat coke. And the sooner the quicker!"

"Hear hear!" said Johnny Bull. "Shut the door after you, Fishy!"

"You jays!" howled Fish. "You slab-sided mugs! You—you mugwumps! I guess I'm editor of this paper, and if there's going to be a Christmas Number, I'm the galoot that's going to produce it. You hear me talk!"

"Buzz off!"

"Who's the editor of this paper, I'd like to know?" shouted Fish.

"Oh, I don't mind telling you that," said Wharton cheerfully. "I'm editor."

"Why, you—you—you——"

"We gave you a chance and you mucked it up with your silly American ideas," Wharton explained. "Phonetic spelling, and all that rot. You couldn't manage a hutch of bunny rabbits, let alone a school paper. You're no good. But I'll tell you what we'll do. If you care to submit contributions for the Christmas Number——"

"What!"

"Every contribution will be carefully considered——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"But the editor's decision is final. Contributions to be written on one side of the paper only!" said Wharton calmly.

Fisher T. Fish waved his bony hand in the air in his excitement.

"Look hyer, I'm editor of this hyer paper!" he roared. "I guess I'm head cook and bottle-washer! Got that?"

"Yes—and if you don't clear out and stop interrupting you'll go out on your neck!" said the editor severely. "Got that!"

"I guess I don't mind letting you chaps have a whack in the paper, but I'm editor, and what I say goes! You savvy?"

"Buzz off!"

"Look hyer, I'll let you jays in on equal terms if you like——"

"No, you won't. You're no good; no Transatlantic geniuses need apply," said Wharton calmly. "Now, buzz off! Johnny Bull has been appointed fighting editor. Get out before he begins on you!"

"I guess I'm not getting out! I guess I'm going to run this paper! I guess you jays have got to sing small! I guess——"

"Shurrup!" roared Bob Cherry. "We don't have guessing competitions in the 'Greyfriars Herald.' Clear off!"

"I guess——"

"Are you going?"

"I guess——"

"Johnny, old man, you're fighting editor," said Wharton. "Pile in!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

The sturdy junior rose to his feet and pushed back his cuffs. Fisher T. Fish brandished two bony fists in his calm face.

"You keep off!" he roared. "If you get my mad up I shall wipe up the floor with you—just a few. You back down!"

"Going out!" asked the fighting editor politely.

"Nope!"

"Right-ho! You'll be put!"

"Look hyer, I shall smash you if you get my mad up! I shall hit you so hard that you won't know what's happened! I guess I shall—I say—— Yah! Oh!"

Bump!

The American junior descended with a heavy concussion upon the linoleum in the passage outside, and roared; and Johnny Bull closed the study door and locked it. Fisher T. Fish scrambled to his feet in a towering rage. It was true that he had "mucked up" the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald" with his American improvements, but he was far from admitting that fact. And to have the management of the paper taken out of his hands in this way was not to be borne. Fisher T. Fish roared through the keyhole:

"I guess I'm coming in, you jays! I guess I'm going to run this paper!"

"Do you want me to come out to you?" shouted the fighting editor.

"Yep!"

"Then I'll come!"

Johnny Bull unlocked the door and came out. He collared Fisher T. Fish, and carried the slim American junior in his strong arms, kicking and struggling, down the Remove passage, and rolled him down the stairs. Then he grinned and returned to the editorial office.

Fisher T. Fish rolled down to the first landing and sat there gasping.

"Oh, I should smile! Oh crumbs! The jays! The rotters! Ow!"

And in No. 1 Study the editorial work went on, untroubled for the present by the indignant claims of the deposed editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Nothing for Bunter!

Billy Bunter came up the stairs and stopped at the door of No. 1 Study, with a letter in his hand. He blinked at the notice on the door through his big spectacles and grunted.

Billy Bunter had a very strong idea that if the juniors wanted a really first-class editor for the school paper, they couldn't do better than select William George Bunter. The unfortunate part was that he couldn't get anybody else to agree with him in taking that point of view.

Bunter knocked at the door, and a loud, exasperated voice proceeded from within:

"If you don't clear off, Fishy, we'll come and frog's march you down the passage!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, it isn't Fishy—it's another silly ass! Clear off!"

"I say, is Inky there?"

"Yes, ass. Clear off!"

"There's a letter for Inky——"

"Clear off!"

"But I've brought it up for him!"

"Take it back!"

"There may be a remittance in it, you know," said Bunter, through the keyhole. "It happens that I'm rather hard up just now——"

"Travel!"

"Through a disappointment about a postal order. If there's a remittance in the letter——"

"Will you go?"

"I'm sure Inky wouldn't mind making me a little loan, would you, Inky?"

"The mindfulness would be terrific, my worthy fat Bunter," replied Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But I've got the letter here, Inky."

"Get out!"

"Slip it underfully through the esteemed door, my worthy Bunter."

"If you don't let me in I think I had better open the letter," said Bunter calmly. "It's not safe to have letters knocking round with money in them."

"Not sate when you're about," grunted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Will you clear off?" shouted the exasperated editors altogether.

"All right. I'll open the letter then."

The study door was unlocked and thrown open, and Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior by the collar and shook him. Bunter's spectacles slid down his fat little nose, and the letter addressed to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dropped on the floor. Bunter roared and wriggled in Bob's powerful grasp.

Johnny Bull collared Fisher T. Fish, and carried him down the Remove passage and rolled him down the stairs (See Chapter 1.)

"Leggo! Ow! I c-c-came up here to oblige Inky! Ow!"

"I have the esteemed letter, my worthy chum," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, picking it up. "You can ejectfully kick out the fat and ludicrous Bunter on his noble neck."

"Oh, I say, I—ow—yah!"

Bunter departed from the study on his neck, and the door was locked again. The fat junior picked himself up, and kicked wrathfully at the door before he departed. But there was evidently no "whack" in the remittance for him—if, indeed, Inky's letter contained a remittance at all.

"If you fellows will excusefully pardon me, I will perusefully open my letter," said Hurree Singh. "I know the fist of my old chum, Dhoolah Das."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Wharton, bending over his work again. "I'll get on with the editorial notes. We shall never get done at this rate."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh opened the letter.

He gave a chirrup of delight as he read it.

"Good news?" asked Nugent.

"The goodfulness is terrific."

"Whacking good remittance, eh?" asked Bob Cherry, with interest.

Inky shook his head. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was generally called Inky at Greyfriars, partly on account of his beautiful complexion, and partly because his full name required, as Bob Cherry had observed, too much exertion for everyday use.

"There is no remitfulness, my esteemed Bob. It is a letter from an old chum I have friendfully known in Bhanipur, and who is now in school in England. His honourable name is Dhoolah Das. Pleasefully read the letter!"

He handed the letter to Bob Cherry, and grinned.

Bob glanced at it.

His eyes grew wide and round. The letter,

to Bob Cherry's eyes, resembled the result of a spider getting into the ink and crawling over the paper. As it was written in the Hindustani language, and in Deva-Nagari characters, Inky's request to Bob to read it was evidently a little joke.

"Do you mean to say you can read that, Inky?" asked Bob.

"The easefulness is terrific, as it is my native language," said Hurree Singh, with a grin. "I speak him with even more accuracy than your noble and august English."

"Not with less, I hope!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In some respects the English instructed at Greyfriars does not seem to me quite so good as that which I learnfully imbibed from my respected tutor in India," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head. "My esteemed companions, will you pardonfully excuse me if I leave you?"

"You haven't finished your article on India," said Wharton severely.

"The finishfulness will be completed to-night," said Inky apologetically. "My beloved and ludicrous chum tells me that he is in Courtfield this afternoon, and if I wish to see him I can cycle over, and we can meet before his train goes. Under the esteemed circumstances, I think I ought to go, as it is a long time since I have beheld the light of his countenance."

"Oh, right-ho," said Harry. "You might ask him to Greyfriars, and we'll give him a feed in the study, if he likes to come."

"Thank you, my esteemed chum."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh left the editorial office. The other four editors bent over their work again. They had a great deal to do to produce the Christmas number of the "Herald," and there were many other claims on their time. Indeed, that afternoon they were neglecting their football for the sake of the Christmas Number, which was a very great proof of devotion.

"I say, Inky——"

Billy Bunter bore down upon the Nabob of Bhanipur in the passage. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently pushed him aside, and walked on quickly.

"Inky, old man——"

"I cannot stoptully linger now, my esteemed Bunter——"

"But I say, old chap!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh slid down the banisters, as the quickest way of getting downstairs, and of escaping from Bunter.

"Look here, you black beast!" roared Bunter, from the top of the stairs.

Inky chuckled. He had changed with startling suddenness from an old chap into a black beast. But he did not mind. He walked out of the School House, and made his way to the bicycle shed. As he wheeled his machine out, Billy Bunter rolled up. Billy Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity, and he was determined that Inky should not escape without parting.

"I say, Inky, old chap," he said persuasively, "I say, you know——"

"You do not wish to speak to a black beast, my esteemed Bunter?"

"Ahem! You see——"

"I am somewhat hurryful," said Hurree Singh, wheeling his bike away.

"You're going out?"

"Yes."

"I'll come with you to cash the postal-order," said Bunter. "Wait a minute till I get Wharton's bike. Ow—ow! You rotten nigger! Yow!"

Billy Bunter sat down violently as Hurree Singh wheeled the bicycle upon him. Inky calmly wheeled it on over his fat legs, and walked away to the gates. Bunter gasped and snorted, and picked himself up, and rushed after the Indian junior. Outside the school gates Inky prepared to mount.

"Hold on a minute," roared Bunter. "I tell you I'm coming with you. I'll stand on your foot-rests if you like, Inky."

"The ratfulness is terrific, my worthy fat Bunter."

The Indian junior glided away. Billy Bunter dashed after him. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled gently, and allowed the fat junior almost to overtake him. Bunter made a grab at him to stop him, and the Nabob pedalled a little more quickly, keeping just

out of reach. Bunter put on a spurt, panting and puffing wildly.

"I say, Inky, old chap, stop for me! I say you black beast! Inky, old fellow! You beastly nigger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give you a licking when I catch you, you black rotter!"

"The catchfulness must come first, my esteemed porpoise."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bent over his handle-bars, and put on speed, and vanished down the road, leaving Billy Bunter panting far behind.

The Owl of the Remove halted in the middle of the road, and shook his fat fists after the disappearing Nabob.

"You black beast! I'll—I'll—I'll——"

"Gerrout of the way, there!" roared the voice of Coker of the Fifth, and a bicycle bell rang loudly.

But Bunter did not get out of the way quickly enough. The front wheel of Coker's bike smote him behind, and he gave a terrific roar and rolled over. The bike curled up, and Horace Coker half-turned a somersault and landed on the grass beside the road.

"Oh, you silly ass!" roared Coker, sitting up dazedly.

"Ow! I'm killed!" groaned Bunter.

"You—you frabjous dummy——"

"Ow! I'm injured——"

"Are you?" snorted Coker, scrambling to his feet. "Then I'll injure you some more."

"Ow! I can't move! Ow! My back's broken! Yow!"

Biff, biff, biff!

Coker's boots were of a large size, and he might have been kicking for goal, by the way he started on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove discovered suddenly that he could move. He moved at a great rate, too, and fled, yelling, down the road. And Coker of the Fifth picked up his bicycle, and the things he said when he found that the wheel was buckled and refused to revolve were such as no respectable member of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars ought to have uttered under any circumstances whatever.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Declined with Thanks!

"'Overwhelmed with debts, the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource but to blow out my brains!'"

Thus Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull suspended their editorial labours, and gazed speechlessly at their chum.

"What's that?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Dotty?" asked Frank Nugent.

"'Overwhelmed with debts,'" said Bob calmly, "'the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource but to blow out my brains.'"

"You utter ass!"

"'To-night in the gloom and silence of the Cloisters, I shall do the deed, and the long silence will be broken, the shame and iniquity I have hidden will be revealed to the world!'"

"Quite mad!" said Johnny Bull.

"'Father, oh, father, before I do this desperate deed, I implore your forgiveness!'"

"If you're not dotty," shouted Harry Wharton, "what are you raving about?"

"How does that sound?" asked Bob.

"Sound! It sounds as if you were potty!"

"Look here, I think that sounds jolly well," said Bob warmly. "Besides, there's a moral in it. It may prove a warning to Snoopy and Skinner, and Loder of the Sixth, if they see it in the Christmas Number."

"Oh!" said Wharton, somewhat relieved. "Is it a story, you fathead?"

"It's my serial," said Bob. "'The Road to Ruin,' you know, or the Debts, Difficulties, and Dangers of Dick Dodger.'"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The hero's at college," explained Bob. "He gets on the downward path by betting on a football match—goes from bad to worse, and finally blows out his silly brains in the college Cloisters. It will be a warning to fellows who go the pace—in fact, I've thought of naming him Loder, only Loder of the Sixth might take it personally."

"Ha, ha! He might."

"Nothing like a story with a good moral,"

said Bob. "I think I've put it rather dramatically, don't you?"

"Ye-es. But isn't it a bit too thick?" asked Wharton doubtfully. "We don't want to have lurid stuff like a blessed newspaper serial, you know."

"My dear chap, it will be ripping. Must have something exciting in the paper. I rather think you'll find all the fellows turning to my new serial first, when they get the paper," said Bob modestly.

"Yes—I don't think."

There was a tap at the door, and Wharton groaned.

"Go away, whoever you are!" he called out. "Can't you see the notice on the door?"

"But I'm here on business," said the voice of Micky Desmond of the Remove. "I've got a contribution for the paper."

Wharton sighed and unlocked the door. Micky Desmond came in with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand, scrawled upon in a sprawling writing.

"I've done you a complete story entirely," he said. "You said that every contributor had better deal with his own part of the world, to get some local colour. Tom Brown is doing a New Zealand story, and Morgan an article on Wales, and Treluce a description of the Cornish coast. Ogilvy is doing a story in Scotch dialect, and Linley a Lancashire story. So I've done you an Irish one."

"In Irish?" asked Nugent.

"Sure, no, you wouldn't understand Erse, and by the same token, I don't understand it myself," confessed Micky. "I've laid the scene on the coast of Galway. Sure, I've got a ripping title—'The Banshee of Ballyonion.'"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I'll read you a bit. 'The dark, deep, night was about to fall, when a horseman might have been seen striding along——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure this isn't a funny story, it's tragic entirely," said Micky Desmond in surprise. "Shut up and listen! 'A yawning chasm opened on the mountain path in front of the galloping horseman. He urged his steed to the leap, and sprang across it, but fell in the middle before he was half-way across——"

There was a yell of laughter from the junior editors. Micky Desmond frowned, apparently quite unconscious of the extremely rich "bull" he had perpetrated.

"Faith, and it's a set of silly gossoons ye are!" he exclaimed crossly. "Sure it's a splendid and thrilling description intirely."

"How could he leap across if he fell in?" roared Nugent.

"And how could he drop in the middle if he wasn't half way across?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and it's a good description. Listen to what comes next. 'On the lonely mountain road there was no one to see the horseman as he disappeared from view——'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"'In dead silence he vanished with a shrill cry——'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"'At the same time, the wild wail of the Banshee was heard——"

"Oh my hat!" gasped Wharton, "this is getting better and better! How was the wild wail of the Banshee heard if there was nobody there to hear it?"

"And in dead silence, too!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I——"

"Here comes another of 'em!" growled Johnny Bull, as Alonzo Todd of the Remove entered the study, with several sheets of impot paper in his hand.

Alonzo bestowed a sweet and gentle smile upon the juniors. Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, was always sweet and gentle—a great contrast in that respect to his cousin, Peter Todd.

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo beaming, "I hear that you are producing a Christmas Double Number of the 'Herald.'"

"Trying to!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Ah, you find it difficult? I shall be so pleased to help you!"

"Will you really, Alonzo?" asked Wharton seriously.

"Most certainly, my dear Wharton!"

"Then take that manuscript back to your study!"

The front wheel of Coker's bike smote Billy Bunter, and he gave a terrific roar and rolled over. Horace Coker half-turned a somersault and landed on the grass beside the road. "Oh! I'm killed!" groaned Bunter (See Chapter 2)

"Eh?"

"And burn it!"

"What!"

"And then stay there!"

"Ahem! I thought you might like a sweet and gentle story for the paper, Wharton—a story inculcating gentleness and goodness," said Todd. "I have therefore written——"

"'The wild wail of the Banshee was heard——'"

"My dear Desmond——"

"Shut up!" said Micky indignantly. "Sure, I'm reading out my story——"

"'Nuff of the Banshee!" said Wharton. "Banshees are barred in school papers. Take it back, and cut out the Banshee, and put in a football match instead, and we'll see what we can do. Now Alonzo!"

"Faith and I think——"

"Order! Pile in, Alonzo!"

"We'll hear half a dozen lines—that will be enough to see that it's no good. I mean, to see whether it's any good."

"Very well, my dear Wharton. I think you will like it. I have endeavoured to inculcate the principles I have learned from my Uncle Benjamin. My story is called 'Dicky's Remorse'——"

"Oh crumbs!"

"It deals with the agonising remorse of a schoolboy, who had gone to a football match instead of writing lines imposed upon him by his kind teachers——"

"Great Scott!"

"Dicky sat at his desk," said Alonzo, reading from the manuscript. "He was frowning. At that moment the beauty of the 'First Book of Arithmetic' failed utterly to ap-

peal to his wilful nature, for sad to relate, Dicky did not love his lessons. He did not love his teachers. He was a bad boy."

"'Nuff!" said Wharton.

"You are satisfied, my dear Wharton?"

"Quite. Put it on the fire."

"What!"

"Or the waste-paper basket, just as you like."

"My dear Wharton, pray allow me to read you some more, especially the part where, when Dicky is watching the football-match, a sudden sense of the horror of his conduct comes over him, and he covers his face with his hands and bursts into tears——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I am sure you will be touched, my dear Wharton!"

"I should be touched, I think, if I put that piffle into the Christmas Number," agreed Wharton. "Take it away and bury it. And in case it should be lonely, you can bury Micky's banshee along with it."

"Sure, and it's a silly gossoon ye are!"

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed a voice at the door, and Trevor of the Remove came in, with papers in his hand. "I've got the first chapter of a serial for you to look at!"

"No serials required. Bob Cherry's doing the serial."

"But this is something rather special. I dare say Cherry won't mind his serial being left out to make room for something really good!"

"Well, you ass!" began Bob wrathfully.

"It's called 'The Red Rover,'" said Trevor. "A pirate story, you know—the kind of thing the readers really want. Listen to this. It begins right on the mark. 'Fire!' cried the Red Rover——"

"Ship on fire?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No, ass, that was an order to the pirates. 'Fire!' cried the Red Rover," repeated Trevor. "'Crash went the broadside. The doomed brig was raked fore and aft. Dead and dying lay in heaps on her decks, and the blood ran by the gallon——'".

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Trevor indignantly. "This is jolly serious, I can tell you. 'Swamped with blood the doomed ship——'"

"Bow-wow! Take it away!"

"But I can tell you——"

"Declined with thanks!"

"You silly asses, you don't know a good thing when you see it——"

"Declined with thanks; clear off!"

"Rats!"

"Pile in, Johnny!"

The fighting editor piled in manfully. Alonzo Todd, looking very much surprised, found himself sitting in the passage all of a sudden. But the other contributors were made of sterner stuff. The other editors had to come to Johnny Bull's assistance, before they were persuaded to leave the study—on their necks!

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Bolsover major, coming along the passage with a roll of manuscript in his hand. "I say, don't close the door. I've got a contribution here for the Christmas Number——".

"Oh, my hat!"

Slam!

The door was closed and locked.

Bolsover major thumped on it.

"I say, I've done you a splendid story—'The Wounded Brigand!'——"

"Take it away!"

"Open the door!" yelled Bolsover major.

"Rats!"

"You silly asses——"

"Go and eat coke!"

And Bolsover major bestowed a tremendous kick on the door, and departed in wrath; and the harassed editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" settled down to work again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Fish is First!

CALLING-OVER was proceeding in Big Hall when Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned. The nabob slipped into his place with the Remove, and answered "Adsum" to his name. The Famous Five left the hall together. Inky's expression showed that he had something to say to his chums.

"I have seen my esteemed chum Dhoolah

Das," he remarked, when they were in the passage. "The pleasurefulness of beholding him again was terrific. And I have the honourable satisfaction to remark that he will come to Greyfriars on Saturday."

"Good," said Wharton.

"On Saturday afternoon we are not playing a match, my esteemed Wharton?"

"No, as Redclyffe have scratched."

"Exactfully! Therefore I have taken the esteemed liberty of asking Dhoolah Das to play with us."

"Footer?" asked Bob.

The nabob nodded.

"Yes. Dhoolah Das is at Southgate School, which is a great distance from here, but he is willing to bring over a team and play us. He is the junior football captain of the esteemed Southgate Football Club."

"Oh!" said Wharton.

"You will like to play them?" asked the nabob anxiously. "As there is no esteemed fixture for Saturday, I thoughtfully considered that you would be glad to have a team come over from Southgate."

Harry Wharton nodded cheerfully.

"Righto! We've never played them before—in fact, I'd never heard of Southgate—but I don't see why they shouldn't give us a game. Your friend Gooly Gas——"

"Dhoolah Das," said the nabob gently.

"I mean Dhoolah Das. He must be a good player if they have made him skipper of their junior team."

"The goodfulness of the esteemed Dhoolah Das is, I believe, terrific. It was only at the last moment, as I was parting from him, that I remembered that we had no fixture for Saturday, and made the esteemed suggestion to him."

"Well, it's a good idea," said Nugent, who was secretary of the Remove Football Club. "When are they coming?"

"They will arrive in an august brake at half-past two on Saturday."

"Good!" said Wharton, "we'll be ready for them. We ought to have put in the afternoon on the Christmas Number of the 'Herald'; but after all, football comes first. Have you ever seen Gooly Gas play?"

"No; he has learned the great and esteemed game of football since being in England, the same as my honourable self," said Hurree Singh. "But I am sure that my noble chums will have a really goodful game."

"We'll chance it," said Wharton. "Nugent had better write confirming the arrangement, as sec. That's settled."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh beamed with satisfaction.

"Now we'll get some of the stuff set up," said Harry Wharton, and he led the way to the box-room where the printing-machine belonging to the schoolboy printers was kept. It was a hand-press, which had been purchased second-hand, and one edition of the "Greyfriars Herald" had already been turned off it—that first number having been spoiled by Fisher T. Fish's latest American improvements, and reprinted afterwards without the assistance of Fisher T. Fish.

The juniors were very keen on doing their printing themselves, and they had had to work hard to get into the way of it. Setting up type, turning off copies, putting them together and pinning them, and distributing the type afterwards, took up a considerable amount of time, with the result that the "Herald," although intended as a weekly paper, seemed far more likely to become a fortnightly, monthly, or even quarterly. The great Christmas Double Number was only the second number of the paper; but as the editors were dispensing with American assistance, it would want printing only once—at least, they hoped so.

There was a light in the box-room when they arrived there.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Some bounder's working our press."

The whirr of the machine could be heard.

Harry Wharton tried the door but it was locked. The light streamed out from under it.

Wharton knocked sharply.

"Here, open this door, and let that machine alone!" he called out.

"I guess not!"

"Fishy!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Correct!"

"What are you doing with our printing-machine!" demanded Nugent wrathfully.

"Whose printing-machine?"

"Ours!" roared the editors all together.

"I guess I bought this machine cheap from old Lazarus, in Courtfield."

"You—you ass! We found the money, didn't we?"

"Yep, and I found the machine—that was an equal division of labour," replied Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I guess I'm going to use this machine. And I guess I'm going to use it now. I guess I'm Chief Editor of the 'Greyfriars Herald'—some!"

"Fathead!"

Whirr-r-r! went the machine.

"Let us in!" shouted Wharton. "We want to set some of the copy up now."

"I guess you can't."

"Why not?"

"I'm using the machine."

"Why, you—you ass, we'll scalp you if you don't let us in!" howled Bob Cherry. "What on earth are you printing?"

"I guess I'm printing the second number of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"What!"

"All other numbers spurious imitations!" said Fisher T. Fish coolly.

"You—you—you——"

"I calculate you can hop off. This hyer paper is in my hands. If you like to send any contributions you can slip 'em under the door. All contributions carefully considered, so far as time allows, you know; being single-handed I'm rather pressed for time. I've had to write the whole of the copy for this number this afternoon, all on my lonesome."

The editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" simply breathed wrath. They had been labouring away most of the afternoon, producing really first-class copy for the "Herald," and now they had a large quantity of it ready to set up in type. And to find that the printing machine and the type were in the hands of the rival editor, and that he refused to let them into their own printing works, was distinctly exasperating.

"Look here!" roared Wharton. "We gave you a run as editor, and you were no good. We told you we should boot you, and we've done it."

"I guess it's not so easy to boot Fisher T. Fish. He sticks!" chuckled the American junior.

And the sound of the busy machine went on.

"Look here, Fishy——"

"Rats! I'm busy."

"I tell you——"

"Too busy to talk now; kindly vamoose the ranch."

"But, I say——"

"Oh, light out!"

Wharton hammered furiously on the door. Bob Cherry lent the aid of his heavy boots, but only a chuckle came from within, and the whirr of the machine. Fisher T. Fish wasted no more time in words. He had plenty to do, to print the second number of the "Herald" all on his "lonesome."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton, desisting from hammering on the door at last. "The cheeky beast! If he gets that number printed, it will make the whole thing ridiculous. The fellows will take it as the real second number—and, of course, it will be crammed with piffle from end to end."

"He's not going to do it," said Johnny Bull wrathfully. "We're producing the second number of the 'Herald'—us!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Wharton kicked at the door again.

"Fishy!" he shouted.

No reply.

"Fishy, you silly ass——"

Still no answer. Fisher T. Fish was attending strictly to business.

"If you don't open the door we'll bust it in!" roared Wharton.

Whirr went the machine! Fisher T. Fish did not speak.

"Rather a big order, busting in the door," said Nugent dubiously.

"We're going to do it. Get a crowbar or a chisel or something!" growled Wharton. "We can pay for the damage afterwards. We're not going to allow that howling idiot to publish the second number of our paper!"

"No fear!" said Bob.

And the exasperated editors rushed away in search of implements to force in the door of the printing works so audaciously held against them by a dismissed member of the staff.

The chums had to come to Johnny Bull's assistance before the contributors were persuaded to leave the study—on their necks! "Oh, my hat!" they gasped. "Ow!" (See Chapter 3)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Holding the Fort!

FISHER T. FISH chuckled.

He was in a mood of great satisfaction. He had heard the sound of retreating footsteps outside, and he had concluded that the rival editors had given the matter up as a bad job, and decided to leave him in peace to produce the second number of the "Herald."

The American schoolboy was considerably inky, and very warm and tired. He had been working hard. From the moment he had learned that Harry Wharton and Co. were at work on the "Herald" without his assistance, he had made up his mind to forestall them. He had locked himself in the box-

room, with a bag of sandwiches, and a sheaf of impot. paper, and there he had written out enough "copy" to fill the number. Perhaps it was not exactly "top-notch" in point of literary quality; but Fisher T. Fish was quite satisfied with it, and, after all, that was the chief thing.

He had hoped to get the number printed and published before the rival editors knew anything about it, but the visit of the Co. to the box-room prevented that. They knew now what he was doing, but they could not stop him. He was turning off copies at a great rate, and in a short time they would be finished. He wanted fifty copies of the number, and those fifty he had to fold by hand, pin and cut, so he had plenty to do. Fisher T. Fish was not famous for industry as a rule, but this was a special occasion, and he worked like a Trojan.

"I guess I shall do those jays in the eye!" chuckled Fish, as he laboured away. "I rather guess they'll be sorry they tried to boot me out of the editorship. What I've printed in this number will make 'em sit up—just a few!"

And he worked on without ceasing. Certainly, when the copies were printed, bound, and cut, and distributed in the Remove, it would be very hard for the Famous Five to declare that that wasn't a genuine number of the "Greyfriars Herald." And Fish was certain of a big circulation, for he intended to give the numbers away. The charge of one penny each, which helped to pay the expenses of production, though not all of it, was an object to the Co.—but it was no object to Fish. For all the materials he used belonged to the firm, and he had not paid anything towards them.

Footsteps sounded again on the landing outside. Harry Wharton & Co. had returned, armed with implements for forcing the door. Wharton knocked again.

"Are you going to let us in, Fishy?"

"Nope!"

"Then here goes!"

Crack, crack, crack!

The lock groaned and creaked and strained under the pressure. Fisher T. Fish turned away from the printing-machine in alarm.

"I say, you jays, you'll smash that lock!" he shouted.

"Just what we're going to do!" growled Bob Cherry. "We'll be in there in a minute, Fishy, and we'll make you eat all you've printed!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Fish, in dismay.

Crack-ack-ack!

A strong chisel had been forced between the door and the jamb, and the juniors outside were dragging upon it. It was only a matter of minutes before the lock cracked and gave way.

Fisher T. Fish ran towards the door.

"Let up, you jays!" he shouted. "You'll have to pay for that lock if you break it!"

"Unlock it, then!"

"Shan't! Buzz off! Absquatulate! Vamoose! What do you mean by interrupting an editor in the discharge of his duties?" demanded Fish indignantly.

Carack-ack-ack! The door was straining hard. A screw burst out of the lock.

"Oh, jumping Jehosaphat!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "The jays really mean business. But they ain't coming in hyer, I guess!"

There were a large number of boxes and trunks in the room, most of them empty. Fisher T. Fish began dragging them towards the door to form a barricade. A huge, heavy leather trunk belonging to Lord Mauleverer came first, and he jammed it against the door. Upon it he piled several other trunks, and jammed boxes against them, till the pile was enormous, and completely hid the door.

"Now get in if you can, you mugwumps!" growled Fish.

Crack!

The lock had given way at last. It flew into pieces, and the door yielded. The chums of the Remove all shoved at it at once, but it opened only an inch. The stack of boxes and trunks kept it from opening farther.

"He's got it barricaded!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, the rotter!"

"You clear off!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "You hear me! You're going to absquat-

ulate! No admittance to the printing works except on business! Light out! Git! You hear me talk!"

"We'll hear you howl, when we get in!" growled Johnny Bull. "Now then, all together. Shove!"

"Shoulder to shoulder!" said Wharton.

"Hurrah!"

And the Famous Five shoved all together.

The stack of boxes inside swayed, and Fisher T. Fish sprang to their support. He put his weight against the barricade to keep it jammed on the door.

"You let up!" roared Fish.

"All together, kids! Shove!"

"The shovefulness is terrific!"

There were several other fellows on the scene now, and they were laughing loudly as they watched the Famous Five panting at the door. The barricade inside was strong, and Fish had his weight against it, so the task of the five juniors was not easy.

"Go it," said Bolsover major encouragingly. "Pull devil, pull baker, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lend a hand here, can't you?" panted Bob Cherry.

"Yes, if you want my 'Wounded Brigand,' for the Christmas Number!" grinned Bolsover.

"Blow your 'Wounded Brigand.'"

"Then you can settle your giddy editorial disputes on your own. As a matter of fact, I back up Fishy—if he puts in my 'Wounded Brigand.'"

"Shove away!" gasped Wharton.

The door yielded another inch.

"We're getting through! Shove your hardest!"

The landing and the stairs were crowded with Removites by this time. Temple, Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, came up to look on.

"What on earth are you up to?" asked Temple, in wonder.

The juniors paused in their efforts. The door was still fast, kept so by the stack of boxes and Fisher T. Fish. But a couple of inches had opened, and they could see into the room—the printing machine, and the table piled with papers.

"Trouble in the editorial circle?" asked Fry of the Fourth.

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"It's that ass Fish!" gasped Wharton. "We've sacked him from the editorship for mucking up the first number, and now he's written a lot of tosh, and is printing it as a second number on his own. Of course, we're going to stop him!"

"Like his cheek!" said Temple cordially. "You don't want Fish for Editor. You don't want a Remove kid at all. What you want is an older chap—one of the Fourth, for instance!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"In fact, I'll edit the paper for you myself, if you like," said Temple generously. "You could depend on me to keep a sharp eye on your contributions and blue-pencil all the piffle, you know."

"Fathead!" said the junior editors, with unanimous ingratitude.

"Now, look here——"

"We're not looking for an editor—especially for a silly ass as editor!" said Harry Wharton politely. "Lend us a hand at shoving this door open!"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Temple.

"Pile in again!" said Wharton.

Five sturdy shoulders were set to the door and amid encouraging chuckles from the spectators, the Famous Five exerted themselves upon the door of the box-room.

Inside the printing office, Fisher T. Fish braced himself against the barricade of boxes.

"Buck up, Fishy!" roared Bolsover major.

"Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The combined efforts of the Famous Five told at last.

The barricade was yielding. The American junior shoved on it in vain on the inside. The pile of boxes swayed and staggered, and the topmost trunk slipped over and crashed down to the floor. The door opened farther, and there was crash on crash of falling boxes.

Crash! Bang, bang!

"Oh, jumping Jerusalem! Ow, ow, ow, ow! Great Christopher Columbus! Yarooh!"

Crash, crash!

The door flew open.

The juniors rushed in.

Fisher T. Fish was sprawling on the floor amid overturned boxes and trunks. A trunk lay across his legs, and another was lodged on his chest, and a hat-box was reposing on his waistcoat.

His crimson face looked out of a sea of boxes, big and little.

"Oh, you jays!" he gasped. "Ow! Hellup! Drag 'em off! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The editors left Fisher T. Fish to sort himself out. They devoted their attention to the printed copies of the "Herald" that were piled on the table. Fisher T. Fish dragged himself painfully from amid the boxes. He had been considerably shaken up, and he was not feeling happy.

Harry Wharton pointed to the door.

"Clear off!" he said.

"Nope!"

"Light a fire in the grate," said Harry. "We've got to burn all this rubbish!"

Fisher T. Fish gave a yell of wrath.

"I guess you're not going to burn my copy!"

"Wrong guess!" said Bob Cherry. "We are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish made a desperate rush to save his valuable literary productions. But he was unceremoniously seized and hurled forth from the printing-works. He sprawled on the landing, among the crowd of juniors who were grinning into the box-room. But he was not daunted. He was not a great fighting man as a rule, but the tamest animal will fight in defence of its cubs, and Fisher T. Fish was willing to encounter any odds in defence of his literary productions. He picked himself up and charged into the box-room again, with his fists wildly waving.

"Clear off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I guess I'm chief editor—I guess——"

"Collar him!"

The juniors closed upon the infuriated Fish, and collared him, and whirled him over.

Johnny Bull picked up a can of printers' ink and swamped it over his face. Fisher T. Fish was suddenly transformed into a nigger of the deepest dye. Johnny Bull rubbed the printers' ink liberally into his hair, and down his neck, and then he was slung out of the box-room once more.

There was a surging away of the juniors on the landing to avoid him. Fisher T. Fish was not a nice object to touch in his present state.

"Now clear off!" yelled Bob. "You'll get some more if you come back!"

"Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! I guess—ow—yah—groooooogh!"

And Fisher T. Fish finally disappeared, followed by howls of laughter from the juniors.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Fish's Enterprise Ends in Smoke!

THERE were piles of the newly printed spurious second number on the table.

The exasperated editors handled them unceremoniously.

Wharton glanced over the copy and sniffed with indignation. Fisher T. Fish had written it all himself, in his best style, and he had not spared his rival editors. In his leading article Fish had explained the situation:

"Owing to the crass stupidity of the mugwumps formerly associated in this undertaking, the management is now entirely in American hands. This will ensure brilliant literary work, and the editorial notes, being written by F. T. Fish, will be the last word in journalistic ability. Readers are invited to make comparisons between the splendid contributions in this number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,' and the piffle published in the first number by a set of jays."

"Look at the blessed serial!" grunted Johnny Bull. "'Deadwood Bill, the Boy Burglar, or the Red Road-Raiders of the Rockies.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove 'em into the grate!" said Wharton. "Anybody got a match?"

Nugent had a match, and the literary productions of Fisher Tarleton Fish were soon ablaze.

Number after number was crammed into the grate, and the blaze of the burning edition roared up the chimney.

The fire was fed fast with the numbers turned off the machine with so much labour by Fisher T. Fish.

As the fire-grate in the box-room was seldom or never used, the chimney was not in a state to stand a conflagration of that sort; it had not been swept for dog's ages, as Fisher T. Fish would have expressed it.

As the blaze of the burning papers roared up the chimney it was echoed by a hollow roar above, and lumps of smouldering soot dropped into the grate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in dismay. "That sounds as though the chimney had caught!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover major. "You've set the chimney on fire. You'll have the House on fire next! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly cuckoo—there's nothing whatever to cackle at——"

"Let us in!" shouted Wharton. "I guess not!" said Fisher T. Fish from within. "If you don't open the door, we'll bust it in!" roared Wharton

(See Chapter 4)

But Bolsover evidently thought differently. He roared.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton. "Drag the blessed papers out and stamp 'em out! There'll be a row if the chimney catches!"

The unfortunate editors, who had perhaps been a little too hasty in the work of destruction, hurried to drag the pile of burning copies from the grate. Bob Cherry hacked them out with the poker, and Johnny Bull with the tongs. They fell in the grate and on the floor, and the juniors stamped them out hurriedly. Thick smoke filled the room in a very few seconds, and the juniors laboured at the work of extinguishing the burning papers, with smarting eyes and nostrils, panting for breath.

None of the fellows outside the room offered to help. They were roaring with laughter, evidently considering the whole matter as a comedy designed for their special amusement.

Thick volumes of acrid smoke rolled out of the box-room, and the juniors outside coughed as well as laughed, and sniffed and snorted.

The burning papers were stamped out at last, but the hollow roar in the chimney continued. By this time Harry Wharton and Co. looked like firemen who had been through some particularly rough experiences in a very bad fire. Their faces and hands and cuffs and collars were blackened, their hair was wild and dishevelled, their eyes were smarting, and they were gasping for breath. Bob Cherry dragged the window open to let the smoke escape—a happy thought, though a little late. But the keen wind rushed in, and drove the smoke in a heavy volume out of the door, and enveloped the juniors there in it, and drove them downstairs coughing and snorting and sneezing.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob, rubbing his eyes "You must have been an ass to burn those rotten papers, Wharton——"

"Why, you suggested it, you fathead——"

"The chimney's on fire," said Johnny Bull.

"Perhaps it'll go out soon!" said Wharton hopefully.

"And perhaps we shall have Quelchy and a whole family of prefects up here before that!" Johnny Bull growled.

"Oh, I'll pulverise that howling idiot, Fishy—it's all his fault!"

"The faultfulness of the esteemed Fish is terrific."

"Oh, my eyes!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes Loder! Now for the fireworks!"

Loder the prefect, the bully of the Sixth, strode into the box-room sniffing.

"What does this mean!" the prefect roared.

"Can't you see!" said Wharton tartly. "We've been burning some rubbish, and the chimney's caught!"

"You young rascals——"

"Oh, rats!"

The juniors' tempers had suffered, naturally, and they were not disposed to stand Gerald Loder's bullying, prefect as he was. Loder had a cane in his hand, and he was only waiting for an excuse to use it. Loder of the Sixth had a special "down" on the Famous Five of the Lower Fourth.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yarooh! Oh—oh! Ow!"

Loder distributed the lashes with great impartiality on all sides. But the Removites were not in a mood to stand it. Prefects had a right to cane them, but Loder was thrashing them recklessly, and they did not mean to have it. Bob Cherry caught at the cane, and snatched it away, and tossed it out of the window. Loder, with an exclamation of fury, seized him by the collar and boxed his ears. That was the signal for the rest. With one accord they rushed upon Loder, and rolled him over.

Gerald Loder roared as he rolled in the half-burnt, smoky, charred remains of the second number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

In a few seconds Loder and his clothes were smothered with soot and blacks, and he was in almost as deplorable a condition as the juniors themselves.

"You—you young scoundrels!" roared Loder. "Ow! Leggo! Help! You young villains! I'll have you expelled for this! I'll get you flogged! Ow, ow! Leggo!"

He tore himself away at last, and sprang to his feet, clenching his fists. But the exasperated juniors rushed at him, and Loder dodged out of the box-room and fairly ran.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry excitedly.

But Harry Wharton caught his excited chum by the arm and dragged him back.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast!" he gasped. "We've done enough already to get a fearful licking all round, when Loder reports us."

"Well, the rotter deserved it all——"

"We'd better go and clean ourselves up!" groaned Nugent. "We shall be called before Quelchy for this—and we can't go in this state. Quelchy would think that we'd been disorderly or something if he saw us like this."

"Ha, ha! I think he would!"

"The blessed chimney's gone out," said Bob. "We can't do better than do the same."

And they did.

But they were not destined to escape the eyes of their Form-master. Wingate of the Sixth came hurrying along the Remove passage as they came downstairs. Loder had evidently made his report, and the head prefect was coming for them. Wingate stopped in utter amazement at the sight of the sooty, smoky, juniors.

"Why, what—what——" he stuttered. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

He burst into a roar of laughter.

Five smoke-blackened faces looked at him grimly.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wingate. "You young asses! You frabjous duffers! Loder's reported you for setting a chimney on fire, and assaulting him. You're to come to Mr. Quelch at once."

"I—I say, we can't come in this state!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let's go and get a wash first," urged Wharton.

Wingate shook his head.

"Impossible! Mr. Quelch has sent me to fetch you."

"But—but, I say——"

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"Come on!" said Wingate.

There was no help for it. Crowds of yelling fellows gathered to see them as they marched off at the prefect's heels towards Mr. Quelch's study. Chuckles and loud laughter greeted them on all sides.

With faces crimson under the soot and smoke and blacks, the juniors followed the

captain of Greyfriars into Mr. Quelch's study. Wingate was doing his best to be grave, but he was not succeeding very well.

"Here they are, sir," he said. "Ha, ha, ha! I—I mean I've brought them, sir. They're a little dirty."

Mr. Quelch jumped up as the five grimy juniors marched in.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "What—what does this mean?"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"This is—is disgraceful!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Loder has reported you to me. You have set a chimney on fire."

"It was an accident, sir; and it's gone out," said Wharton meekly.

"You have assaulted a prefect."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"What! Do you deny Loder's statement that you seized him and rolled him on the floor among some burnt papers and rubbish?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly. "Loder came here in a most revolting state!"

"Ye-e-es, sir. We—we didn't assault him exactly, sir. We know better than to assault a prefect," said Nugent.

"Then what did you do?"

"We just collared him, and rolled him on the floor, sir."

"Nugent!"

"But we didn't mean to assault him, sir. That would have been wrong," said Nugent with a shake of the head.

"I shall cane you, and you will take two hundred lines each," said Mr. Quelch. "Also, you are forbidden to gather in the box-room again for any reason whatever."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Wharton in dismay. "It's our printing-office, sir."

"You heard what I said, Wharton."

"Yes, sir; but——"

"Enough! Hold out your hand!"

Mr. Quelch was not to be argued with. The Famous Five were caned in turn, and dismissed from the Remove-master's study—then went out squeezing their hands and blinking painfully through the grime on their faces.

"Well, this is a go!" groaned Bob Cherry. "The printing office of the 'Greyfriars Herald' will have to be closed till further orders."

"Ow, ow! I didn't know Quelchy was such a giddy athlete!" mumbled Johnny Bull. "All for rolling a beast like Loder in the soot! Ow!"

"All Fishy's fault!" growled Wharton. "Let's look for Fish and slaughter him!"

"Good egg!"

And they hunted for Fish. But Fisher T. Fish was locked up in a bath room, scrubbing printer's ink from his face and hair, and it was a couple of hours before he showed himself again.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Removed to New Premises!

MISFORTUNE had fallen upon the Greyfriars editors.

Mr. Quelch's edict had the effect of evicting a prosperous printing firm from their works, and the "Greyfriars Herald" editorial staff had nowhere to lay its weary head, so to speak.

The Remove-master was quite right from his point of view. He had closed the box-room to the enterprise of the Famous Five. But it was evidently necessary to have a printing-works and an editorial office, if the paper was to be produced at all; and the staff turned the matter over very seriously in their minds.

Fisher T. Fish chortled when he heard the news.

He had been booted out of the editorial staff, and the editorial staff had been booted out of the editorial office; and the American schoolboy regarded that as a sort of poetical justice.

But Harry Wharton and Co. were worried.

None of the Remove studies could be considered large enough for a printing installation, even on the modest scale of the "Greyfriars Herald" Outfit.

"We shall have to do the printing in the Rag," said Bob Cherry.

"We can never get the Rag to ourselves," said Wharton, with a shake of the head. "All the fellows use the Rag, you know."

"We could boot them out."

Wharton laughed.

"We couldn't boot out a whole Form," he said. "There are only five of us, and if the

The door opened farther and there was a crash of falling boxes. Crash! Bang, bang! "Oh, jumping Jerusalem!" howled Fish. "Ow, ow, ow, ow!" Then the door flew open. (See Chapter 5)

other contributors back us up, that's less than half the Form. And the Fourth, and the Shell, and the Fifth use the Rag."

"Well, where else are we going to do the printing?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Then we shall have to try the Rag."

And that had to be decided upon. The Rag was a large room, and there was plenty of accommodation for a printing plant ten times as large as that of the "Greyfriars Herald." The difficulty was that all the fellows had a right to use the Rag. The Sixth generally had their meetings in the senior common-room, or the prefects' room; and the Fifth did not use the Rag much, but all the junior meetings were held there. Temple, Dabney and Co. of the Fourth met there regularly every

Thursday evening for a debate, being the leading lights of the Fourth Form Debating Society. Hobson and Co. of the Shell met there in football committee once a week. Even the fags of the Third held meetings in the Rag, sometimes having a "spread" there. The editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" were not likely, therefore, to have the Rag to themselves, if they established their editorial office and printing-works there.

But there was nothing else to be done.

The most enthusiastic member of the staff did not relish the idea of having the printing machine in his study, and the Rag was the only alternative.

So on the day following the misadventure in the box-room the juniors, after morning school, brought down their machine, and their cases of type, and cans of ink, and other appurtenances.

They were all bestowed in the Rag, ready to be set up for use as soon as the juniors were finished with lessons for the day.

Fisher T. Fish was looking very crusty that day.

He had been solemnly warned that he would be bumped without mercy if he was found near the printing-machine again. He had simply yelled with rage, and exploded into all kinds of weird American remarks, when he learned the fate of his doomed second number of the "Herald." He announced his fixed intentions of being "on" in the editing of the great Christmas Double Number, and the rival editors announced their equally fixed determination of slaughtering him if he bothered them any more.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled when he learned that the printing press had been established in the Rag. Alone and unaided he could not have interrupted the work of the editorial staff; but he thought he saw his way clear to make them repent themselves for having pushed him off the staff, as he expressed it.

After lessons that day the editors snatched a hurried tea in No. 1 study, and then proceeded to the Rag for business.

They were soon in their shirt-sleeves, setting up type, oiling the machine, finishing the literary work at the table — as busy as beavers.

While they were labouring away, very busy and considerably inky, Fisher T. Fish came in. Bolsover major and Skinner and Stott, Snoop and Trevor, and several other fellows came in with him. They were all eager contributors whose contributions had been declined, with or without thanks, by the editor. As a natural result, they were not feeling specially amiable towards the editorial staff.

"I guess we're ready," Fisher T. Fish remarked.

Wharton looked up from the type-case where he was working.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he asked.

"We're all going to help, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish airily. "I've taken these chaps on to my staff."

"Well, you cheeky ass!"

"As chief editor I've a right to engage as many sub-editors as I like," Fish explained. "These chaps are all sub-editors. See? Got that?"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Fish is going to put in my 'Wounded Brigand,'" said Bolsover major. "I recognise Fishy's rights as chief editor."

"Sure, and he's going to publish my 'Banshee of Ballyonion,'" said Mick Desmond. "Fishy is a first rate editor, intirely!"

"He's putting in my 'Ode to a Dying Swan," said Peter Todd. "Under the circumstances, I admit Fishy's rights as chief editor, and consider all you chaps as outsiders!"

"Hear, hear!" chorused Bolsover and company.

Harry Wharton snorted.

"You can go and bury your 'Dying Swan,' along with Bolsover's 'Wounded Brigand,' Todd," he said. "And you can shove in the 'Banshee of Ballyonion,' and Alonzo's story of remorse and crime. And then you can go and eat coke."

"We're waiting," said Bolsover major.

"Waiting for what—a thick ear?"

"That printing-machine."

"We're ready to dis. the type," said Fisher T. Fish. "Don't trouble to set any more up; it's all got to be dissed again."

"Look here, you clear out of the editorial

office!" exclaimed Wharton wrathfully. "If you don't travel, you'll be shoved out."

Bolsover major pushed back his cuffs.

"I'd like to see anybody shove me out!" he said truculently.

"Back up, all members of the staff!" said Wharton, as Fish and Co. advanced, with the evident intention of taking possession of the printing plant by force.

There were a good many contributors at work at the large table in the Rag. Tom Brown of New Zealand, and Ogilvy, and Morgan and Penfold, and Mark Linley, lined up with the Famous Five.

"Now are you going to hand over our printing press?"

"We'll give you one minute to clear off before we hand you over the thick ears!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Charge!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

Like a prudent general, he remained in the rear as he issued that fiery command.

But Bolsover major, who had heaps of pluck, led the charge, and in a moment there was a terrific combat raging in the Rag.

"Pile on 'em!" roared Fish. "Give 'em socks! Give 'em a lambasting! Pile in, my giddy antelopes, and pulverise the jays!"

But as it happened, the odds were slightly on Wharton's side, and the Famous Five were better fighting men than the other fellows. The charge of Bolsover and Co. was stopped, and they were hurled back, and Harry Wharton and Co. followed them up hotly. Skinner backed into Fisher T. Fish hurriedly, and they rolled over together, and they were seized and hurled out into the passage. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped Bolsover major, and the burly Removite was swung off his feet, and hurled headlong out after Fish and Skinner. Then the smaller fry broke and ran, pursued by the victorious staff half-way down the passage.

"Hurray for us!" shouted Bob Cherry, as the staff returned to the Rag, flushed and breathless and victorious.

"Pile in!" said Harry Wharton.

And the somewhat dusty staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" piled in, and the famous Christmas Number grew under their busy hands.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Lively Debate!

TEMPLE of the Fourth came into the Rag about half an hour later.

Fish and Co. had evidently been chased away for good; at all events, they had not returned to try conclusions again. Harry Wharton and Co. had hoped that they were to be left in peace to finish their editorial work. They looked rather suspiciously at Temple, the captain of the Fourth, as he came in. Temple was followed by Fry, Scott, Dabney, and five or six more members of the Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What do you kids want?"

"It's Thursday evening," Temple explained.

"Yes; I can see that on the calendar. Thanks for the information all the same. Do you know any more things like that?" asked Bob politely.

Temple frowned majestically. As captain of the Upper Fourth, he cultivated a superior manner towards mere Lower Fourth-Formers, and affected to regard the Remove as mere fags—a superior attitude which sometimes led to trouble.

"I suppose you know that our debating society meets on Thursday evenings?" he said loftily

"Weekly, you know," said Fry.

"Oh, crumbs! Better make it fortnightly," said Harry Wharton. "We can't be worried with your blessed debates while we're at work."

"Rather not."

"The rather-notfulness is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous Temple."

The captain of the Fourth sniffed.

As chairman of the debating society, naturally he regarded a debate as a much more important matter than any number, Christmas or otherwise, of a Remove Form paper.

"I was just wondering whether we could stand you here while we're holding our debate," he said. "If you're very quiet, we'll try to stand it; but don't talk. If you interrupt us in any way you'll have to go."

Johnny Bull picked up a can of printers' ink and swamped it over the American junior's face. Fisher T. Fish was suddenly transformed into a nigger of the deepest dye (See Chapter 5)

Whereupon the staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" looked at Temple as though they would eat him.

"We shall want that table," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chimed in Dabney.

"You can't have it, you know," said Mark Linley politely. "You see, we're writing out our articles on it."

"Can't be helped. A debating society must have a table."

"Couldn't you go and debate somewhere else?" asked Wharton. "In the bike shed, or the wood-shed, for instance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I decline to answer impertinent remarks from a fag!" said Temple loftily. "I must repeat that we want that table."

"Then I must repeat that you can go and eat coke."

"And plenty of it," said Nugent.

Temple looked at his followers, and then at the Removites. He was greatly inclined to commit assault and battery upon the spot, and eject the schoolboy editors and the printing-press and all their works violently into the passage. But he reflected in time that that was a device that might work in reverse order; and, besides, the Fourth-Formers had come there for a debate, not for scrapping. So Temple choked down his wrath and remained polite and urbane.

"We'll split the difference," he said. "It's a big table. You kids can have one end, and we'll meet round the other end."

"Well, that's fair enough," said Wharton, willing to accept the olive-branch, so to speak, and keep the peace. "But I hope you don't want to talk. You see we can't write while you're talking."

"And I don't see how I can set up type with those chaps chattering," said Johnny Bull, who was working as a compositor.

"Do you think we can debate without speaking?" roared Temple.

"Well, couldn't you have a Quaker meet-

ing for once, and leave the debate till next week?" asked Frank Nugent.

"You—you ass——"

"Leave those fags alone," said Fry. "Let's get to work. Take your seat, Mr. Chairman."

Temple took his seat.

The Removites went on with their work, and Temple, after a wrathful glare at them, opened the proceedings of the Fourth Form Debating Society.

The subject proposed for debate was "On the Influence of the Public School System upon the National Life, and whether the British Empire could possibly survive without the Public School."

Fry undertook to prove that it couldn't; and Dabney, on the other hand, was of opinion that it could, though necessarily in a crippled state.

Needless to say, Fry adduced that famous saying which the Duke of Wellington uttered—or did not utter—concerning the cheerful assumption that the Battle of Waterloo was won upon the playing fields of Eton.

"What did the Iron Duke say?" exclaimed Fry. "The Battle of Waterloo——"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Fry, I've heard that before!"

Temple rapped the table.

"Don't you fags interrupt!" he exclaimed severely.

"Sorry!" said Bob politely. "Can you tell me a ryhme for frabjous chump, Temple? I'm writing a poem about the Fourth."

Temple glared, but did not offer to provide a rhyme.

"The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," said Fry firmly. "Of course, in saying that, the Duke meant all the public schools, and not only Eton—which, after all, isn't quite up to Greyfriars."

"Hear, hear!"

"He meant that affairs were well managed by public school men—that the braininess and initiative of our officers, the marvellous resource and adaptability of our generals, the splendid and wideawake administration of our War Office are due to the public school men who fill all the posts."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Shut up!" roared Temple.

Fry went on eloquently. Dabney replied with equal eloquence. He acknowledged that his friend Fry had put the case well. But he begged to submit that, even, without the public schools, the British Empire would have a slight, perhaps a very slight, chance of surviving. It was barely possible that some other class of men could be found to administer the War Office, for instance, almost as energetically as it was administered now. It was possible that——

"I want some more e's," said Johnny Bull. "Have you chaps been making pie of this blessed type again? I must have some more e's."

"Silence!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here——"

"Rats! I want some more e's," said Johnny Bull.

Wharton lent him a hand at sorting out the type. More e's were found, and Johnny Bull went on setting up. Dabney, after a ferocious glare at the Removites, resumed his speech. Bob Cherry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Any of you chaps know a rhyme for burbling?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm doing a poetic description of a junior debating society," Bob explained.

"Are you going to shut up?" roared Temple, rapping furiously on the table. "Now go on, Dab, old man!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Russell of the Remove at last, lifting his head from his work. "I've finished this at last. I think the readers will like this story of rugger footer, Wharton. It will be specially interesting as we play Soccer here."

"Order!"

"I'll read out the first bit," said Russell. "You fellows listen to this for a thrilling description. 'Jack dashed up the field, the ball in his hands. Forward after forward tried to stop him, but——'"

"Shut up!" roared the debating society with one voice.

"'But Jack dashed on. There was only the full-back to beat——'"

"Ring off! Speak louder, Dab."

"'Jack was tackled, and they rolled on the ground——'"

Temple of the Fourth jumped up, rushed along the table, and caught the splendid story of Rugger from Russell's hand, and flung it across the room. Russell jumped up with a yell of wrath.

"You silly ass——"

"Now shut up——"

"Why, I'll—I'll——"

"Turn those Fourth-Form bounders out of the editorial office!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "I've been making all sorts of mistakes, with their chatter going on. I've just written down Waterloo instead of walnuts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky fags——"

"You silly magpies——"

"You'll get booted out——"

"You'll get booted out——"

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

Debating society and editorial staff were equally excited. There was no pause from words to action, and the Fourth Form Debating Society went whirling towards the door, under a fierce rush from the editorial and literary staff of the "Greyfriars Herald."

The important point whether the British Empire could or could not survive without the public schools, was never settled—at all events, by Temple, Dabney, and Co.

The Fourth-Formers put up a gallant fight, but they were rushed out of the Rag, and chased down the passage. The proceedings of the debating society had come to a sudden termination.

"Now, perhaps, we can get some work done, now those talkative burblers have cleared out," growled Johnny Bull. "Some silly ass has upset the forme. The blessed type's in pie on the floor. Help me sort it out."

"All hands!" said Wharton.

And all hands started "dissing" the type, which had been upset in the struggle with the Fourth-Form Debating Society.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Coker's Little Game!

"Busy—eh?"

Coker of the Fifth asked that question.

It was half an hour since the departure of the Fourth Form Debating Society, and Harry Wharton and Co. were making great progress with the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

They were not pleased to see Coker of the Fifth walk in, with Potter and Greene and Fitzgerald with him.

Instinctively they knew that it meant trouble.

Coker of the Fifth had kindly offered to take on the editing of the school paper when it was first started. The offer had been declined without thanks. Then he had offered splendid literary contributions—which had also been left on his hands. Then Coker had become wrathy, and there had been trouble between the Fifth Formers and the editorial staff. And Horace Coker looked now as if he meant mischief, as he stood with his hands in his pockets, regarding the schoolboy editors and printers with a broad grin.

"Yes, we're busy," said Wharton shortly. "And we don't want to be interrupted, as a matter of fact," Frank Nugent remarked pointedly.

Coker chuckled.

"Got leave to use the Rag for this rubbish?" he asked.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, live and let live!" said Coker genially. "We don't mind you kids being here, so long as you don't interrupt us."

"Not at all," said Potter airily.

"Sure and not a bit intirely!" affirmed Fitzgerald.

"Look here, what are you going to do here?" demanded Wharton suspiciously.

"Only a little boxing match—half a dozen couples," said Coker calmly. "No need for you kids to get in our way, you know. If you do you'll get hurt, very likely; but, of course, that's your own look-out."

"Why can't you box in the gym.?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Coker appeared to reflect.

"Why can't we box in the gym., Potter?" he asked.

Potter shook his head.

"Why can't we box in the gym., Greeney?" he asked.

Greene in turn shook his head with owl-like solemnity.

"Why can't we box in the gym., Fitzgerald?" he asked.

"Sure, and it's because we're going to box here!" said Fitzgerald.

"Look here, you can clear out!" exclaimed Wharton. "You rotters, you've come here for a rag, and we're not going to have it. We're busy!"

"The busyfulness is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous friends.".

"Are we going to clear out?" asked Coker, appealing to his friends, in the same humorous strain.

"Are we going to clear out, Potter?"

"Are we going to clear out, Greene?"

"Are we going to clear out, Fitzgerald?"

"No," said Fitzgerald; "we're not!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Other Fifth Formers were dropping in by ones and twos now. They were fully entitled to use the Rag if they wanted to, though, as a rule, they were satisfied with the senior common-room, where they were untroubled by the presence of mere juniors. But just now they had special reasons for being in the Rag. Coker had evidently organised the raid.

There had been comic libels on the Fifth in the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald." The Fifth had smarted under them. Apparently they had made up their minds that they would have a word or two to say in the production of the second number.

Coker did not intend to interfere directly with the schoolboy printers. But the crowd of Fifth Formers had brought boxing-gloves with them, and they intended to have a general boxing match. And the results of that, at close quarters with the work of the editorial staff, could easily be anticipated.

The chums of the Remove exchanged uneasy glances.

They had dealt with the recalcitrant members of the Remove, and they had ejected the Fourth Form Debating Society, but it was not quite so easy to eject a dozen seniors. Coker and Co. were in too great force to be tackled with any hope of success.

"Line up!" said Coker. "Now, my party's going to charge your party, Potter. If we drive you right round the table, that counts one for us!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Potter.

"Don't you come fooling round this table!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Keep off, you Fifth Form rotters!"

"Clear out!"

"Go back to Colney Hatch!"

The Fifth Formers did not heed the angry and indignant exclamations of the juniors. They lined up in two ranks of six, and Coker's party charged Potter's division. Potter's division gave way at once, and came whirling round the table. Coker's party scrambled over the table to get at them, with direful results to literary efforts and formes of set-up type.

"Go it!" roared Coker. "Don't get in the way, you kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" roared Wharton. "Get out, or we'll put you out!"

"Oh, don't be rough with little boys!" implored Coker with comic pathos, and his followers roared with laughter.

"Line up!" shouted Wharton. "Kick them out!"

"Play up, Remove!" bellowed Bob Cherry.

The juniors played up gallantly. It was the only thing to be done, as the seniors only too evidently intended to wreck the whole show. The Removites had little chance in the unequal combat, but they did not mean to be ragged out of their printing-office without a struggle.

Harry Wharton tackled Coker, and succeeded in knocking him flying with a left-hander right on the chin. Coker roared as he went down.

"Oh! Yah! Collar the cheeky little beasts! Kick them out!"

"Sock it to 'em, Remove!" roared Bob Cherry.

Potter and Greene seized him as he roared, and he was carried, kicking and

struggling, to the door, and hurled bodily into the passage. Bump!

And after Bob Cherry, one by one the unfortunate literary and editorial members of the staff were hurled forth, and there was a quick succession of bumps and loud yells in the passage outside the Rag.

And when the ejection was finished, Coker & Co. crowded in the doorway, yelling with laughter, and chortling with triumph.

The Removites scrambled up, and limped away. They had no chance, and they did not want to try conclusions with the Fifth a second time just then.

A roar of laughter from Coker and Co. followed them.

Work on the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald" had been stopped for that evening, there was no doubt about that; and there was equally no doubt that a new printing-office would have to be found for the junior newspaper. The Rag was a little too lively for editorial and literary work.

Crowds of yelling fellows gathered to see the juniors as they were marched off at Wingate's heels. "I-I-I say, we can't come in this state," said Bob Cherry (See Chapter 6)

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Very Funny!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple, Dabney, and Co. stood before the notice-board in the Hall and yelled with laughter.

There was a new notice on the board, in the handwriting of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

It was that notice, apparently, that drew Homeric laughter from Temple, Dabney, and Co. of the Fourth Form.

The Famous Five came along the passage, while the Fourth Formers were indulging in their merriment, and they looked at them in astonishment. There was nothing in the Remove notice to excite risibility, so far as the Removites could see. It was the list of the Remove eleven booked to play Southgate School on Saturday, when Inky's old chum, Dhoolah Das, was to arrive with his team. Notices of the senior matches were always posted up on the board, and Harry Wharton did not see any reason why junior matches should not be posted in the same way. He did not see anything whatever to laugh at.

But Temple, Dabney, and Co. evidently did. They had spotted the notice when they came out after lessons that Friday, and they had fastened on it at once. A whisper from Temple to the others had set them roaring, and they roared still louder as they saw Harry Wharton and Co., staring at them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, this beats the band!" ejaculated Temple.

"Oh, rather!" Dabney chuckled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the little joke? I don't see anything funny in a footer list myself. Your name's not there, Temple. It would be funny, if it were, of course."

"So you're playing Southgate?" said Temple, with tears in his eyes.

"Yes, to-morrow," said Wharton.

"At footer?"

"Yes, of course. You don't think we should be playing them at cricket, I suppose, at this time of the year?"

"Or at marbles or hop-scotch?" growled Johnny Bull.

Temple, Dabney, and Co. yelled again, and the chums of the Remove were utterly mystified. Where the joke came in was a mystery to them. But there evidently was a joke—the mirth of the Fourth Formers was genuine enough. There were tears in Temple's eyes, and Fry appeared on the point of having a fit.

Dabney, in a shaking voice, read down the list of the eleven, amid breathless chuckles from the other Fourth Formers.

"Bulstrode; Bull, Morgan; Brown, Todd, Cherry; Hurree Singh, Nugent, Wharton, Penfold, Vernon-Smith."

"Eleven of 'em?" grinned Fry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you expect us to be playing ten or twelve, you silly asses?" asked Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So that's the giddy list?" said Temple.

"Yes, and I don't see where the cackle comes in. We're leaving Linley out as he's working on an exam. paper on Saturday. But that's a good team—good enough to whip the Fourth Form out of its boots."

"Ever seen Southgate play?" chuckled Temple.

"No; never even heard of them till Wednesday," said Wharton. "Inky's got a chum there, a chap named Bass or Gas or something."

"Dhoolah Das, my esteemed friend," murmured the nabob.

"Well, I've seen 'em," said Temple blandly. "I've got a cousin at Southgate—he's in the junior footer team."

"What sort of game do they play—good?"

"Oh, quite good!"

"Well, if they're a good team, and they lick us, we'll try to stand it," said Wharton. "But I don't see where the cackle comes in all the same."

"You will to-morrow," said Temple, and the Fourth Formers burst into another roar, and walked away, leaving the Removites very much mystified.

"I'm blessed if I can get on to this," said Bob Cherry. "What is there to cackle at in our playing Southgate at footer?"

"Nothing that I can see."

"Seems to me that the silly asses are off their silly rockers!" growled Johnny Bull.

Wharton rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't quite understand it," he said. "If Temple's got a cousin at Southgate, I suppose he knows something about the place, and about their footer team. But I don't see anything funny in their team coming over here to play us. You had an answer from them, Frank?"

"Yes, that's all right," said Nugent. "They'll be here before half-past two to-morrow."

"Good! I suppose as a junior team they'll be playing fellows from the Fourth and the Shell, and Temple thinks they'll be too strong for us. We'll see."

"We can beat the Fourth and the Shell here," said Bob Cherry. "We always walk over Temple and Co. on the footer-ground, and we've beaten the Shell. And we can do as much for Southgate."

"Of course."

But the chums of the Remove were puzzled. Even if the Southgaters were a particularly strong team, and likely to administer a severe licking to the Greyfriars Remove, that did not fully account for Temple and Co.'s great merriment on the subject.

But Temple evidently did not intend to explain, and the Removites were left in the dark as to where the joke came in.

But although Temple did not explain to the Remove, apparently he confided the secret whatever it was, to other fellows. When Wharton came across Coker of the Fifth that

Friday evening, Coker hailed him with a broad grin :

"I hear you're playing Southgate to-morrow ?" he said.

"Yes ; what about it ?"

"Never seen them play—eh ?"

"Never," said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha !" roared Coker.

And he walked away laughing.

Wharton began to feel vaguely uneasy. And, later on, Hobson of the Shell tackled him on the subject. He tapped Wharton on the shoulder in the passage.

"Playing Southgate to-morrow, what ?" he asked.

"Yes !" Wharton snapped. He was getting tired of the subject.

"Rather a queer match—eh ?" said Hobson.

Wharton stared at him.

" Queer !—why queer ?"

"Ha, ha, ha !" roared Hobson. "You'll see to-morrow, if you don't know now. Who arranged the giddy match ?"

"Inky arranged it with another Indian chap who's at Southgate."

"Without asking any questions, I suppose ?" grinned the Shell fellow.

"Questions ! What questions should he have asked ?"

"Oh, you'll see to-morrow !"

"Look here, Hobson——"

But Hobson walked off, chuckling gleefully.

"I don't quite like this," Wharton confided to his chums. "There seems to be something funny about our playing Southgate, but I'm blessed if I can see it. Temple has been telling his little joke all over the school, and all the fellows are cackling about it, but they won't say what the joke is."

"Quite beyond me," said Nugent.

"I suppose they won't fail us at the last moment, or anything of that kind ?" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Impossible, my esteemed Bob," said Inky promptly. "The relyfulness upon my worthy chum Dhoolah Das is terrific."

"There must be a joke somewhere," said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. "I've just been asked about it by Potter of the Fifth. I thought he'd die of laughing when I told him Southgate were coming over here to play us."

"But there's nothing funny in that, is there ?"

"Not that I can see."

"Well, they'll be here to-morrow, and we shall see," remarked Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "I don't see the joke at all myself."

But the other fellows to whom Temple of the Fourth had imparted his mysterious information, seemed to think that it was very funny.

Quite a number of fellows in other Forms, who generally affected not to know that there was such a thing at Greyfriars as a Remove Footer team, announced their intention of putting off other engagements in order to see the Southgate match.

But the secret, whatever it was, was well kept ; and the Remove fellows could not get the slightest hint as to the nature of the mysterious joke.

"Oh, let 'em cackle !" said Bob Cherry that evening. "We've got to see about the Christmas Number of the 'Herald.' Where are we going to stick the printing-press ? We can't leave it in the Rag."

"Might have it in your study ?" Nugent suggested thoughtfully.

"No room," said Bob blandly. "I was thinking that you might have it in No. 1."

"Ahem ! Johnny Bull might like it in No. 14."

"Couldn't find room," said Johnny Bull promptly. "But, as Wharton is chief editor, he would naturally like it in his study."

"Well, we can't have it in the box room, now Quelchy's on the warpath," he said, "and we can't get any work done in the Rag. It will have to go into some study."

"Toss up for it !" suggested Tom Brown.

"I suppose that's the only way !"

And that was done, and it fell to Johnny Bull. So the printing press and all its appurtenances were carried into Study No. 14, which Johnny Bull shared with Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. Fish was there when it was brought in. And the schoolboy editors impressed upon him, with direful warnings, that he would be slaughtered, scalped, and boiled

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I-I-I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir, ha, ha, ha! But—but this is too funny!" "Cherry!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "For the last time, explain the meaning of this wicked letter!" (See Chapter 13)

in oil, if he ventured to lay a finger on the property of the Remove Printing and Publishing Company.

"I guess I'm the head of that comany!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Better bump him to start with," suggested Bob Cherry, "simply as a warning!"

"Yes, that's a good idea!"

"Hyer, I saw—I guess—ow, ow!"

Bump!

And the schoolboy editors left the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish sitting on the floor, gasping for breath, and breathing vengeance.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Loder Makes a Terrible Discovery!

"CHERRY!"

Loder of the Sixth rapped out the name.

It was close upon bedtime, but Bob Cherry, who had been working hard at his literary work for the great Christmas Number, was going out into the Close, to take a sprint in the open air to freshen himself up before going to bed. Loder of the Sixth caught sight of him at the door, and called to him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob, stopping and keeping a wary eye on the bully of the Sixth. He knew that Loder had not forgotten the incident in the box-room, as well as several other rubs he had had with the Famous Five.

"Where are you going?" demanded Loder. "You know very well juniors are not allowed out of the house after nine o'clock."

"I'm going for a sprint round the Close; Wingate's given me leave!"

"Rubbish!" said Loder. "Wingate's gone out!"

"He gave me leave before he went out, please Loder," said Bob with meek politeness.

"Rubbish! I suppose you are going out for some mischief. Get in!"

"Rats!" said Bob, less politely.

And he ran out.

Loder made a rush after him, and caught him by the shoulder. There was a struggle at the bottom of the School House steps, and then Bob tore himself away, and vanished into the darkness.

Loder snapped his teeth. He had interfered with the junior from sheer motives of bullying, and for no better reason. He knew very well that Bob would not have told him an untruth. He did not feel inclined, however, to chase the elusive junior in the darkness of the Close, and he turned back to the House—and, as he did so, he caught sight of a sheet of paper that lay on the steps, evidently dropped either by himself or by Bob Cherry in the momentary struggle.

He picked it up and glanced at it.

Then, he gave a sudden start, and whistled.

"My hat! What on earth——"

He read the paper over again.

It was in Bob Cherry's sprawling handwriting, which Loder knew well enough, having often imposed lines upon Bob; And it ran:

"Dear Father.—Overwhelmed with debt, the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource left but to blow out my brains. Evil companions have led me into gambling and reckless folly, and now the end has come. I cannot face exposure and disgrace. My last coin has gone to purchase a revolver, with which I shall end a career of vice and folly. This night, in the darkness, I shall perish in the gloomy shadows of the Cloisters, and you will be rid of an ungrateful and unworthy son. Father, forget me, and——"

There the writing ended.

Probably it had been continued on another sheet, but that other sheet was still reposing in Bob Cherry's pocket.

Loder stared at the sprawling writing, fraught with such deadly meaning, with wide-open and startled eyes.

Was it possible?

He had always had his suspicions of the Famous Five. Their conduct had always appeared to be open and honest, frank and honourable—but to Loder, who was a past-master in the art of hypocrisy, that only seemed an additional reason for regarding them with suspicion.

More than once he had tried to find out things to their disadvantage—but he had always failed, simply because they had nothing to conceal.

But this letter?

It could not be a jape, because Bob Cherry could not possibly have had any fore-knowledge of the fact that Loder had been near the door when Bob was going out.

And the junior could not have written that terrible letter, and put it into his pocket for nothing.

It was not written in the form of a letter to be posted either, but simply scrawled on a sheet of impot. paper, doubtlessly the first paper that had come to hand, in a junior study.

Incredible as it seemed, Loder could not doubt it.

The wretched junior was all that he had ever suspected at his most suspicious moments, and worse—the Famous Five were "evil companions" who had led him into vice and crime and debt—what an exposure for Harry Wharton and Co., when the last despairing letter of Bob Cherry was made public!

Loder grinned at the idea.

But he quickly ceased to grin—after all, he was human—and a junior's life was trembling in the balance. The wretched victim of his own folly had gone to the Cloisters to blow his brains out—with the revolver purchased with his last coin.

Loder felt that he must act quickly.

To save Bob Cherry's life was his first duty—and then to expose his evil companions who had led the hapless junior to that rash step. Loder himself was a decidedly evil companion for anybody, but he did not stop to think of that just then. He was going to see justice done. It was quite a new sensation for Gerald Loder to feel that he was doing good.

He ran into the house, and dashed breathlessly into Mr. Quelch's study, without stopping to knock at the door.

The Remove-master started up, regarding him in astonishment.

"Loder! What is the matter?"

"There's not a moment to lose, sir—look at that letter!"

Mr. Quelch took the letter and glanced at it.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed. "Is it a joke?"

"A joke! The wretched kid's life is in danger, sir! He has just gone out of the house!" exclaimed Loder. "I tried to stop him, but he dodged away and ran, and dropped this letter."

"Impossible!"

"It is exactly as I say, sir, and if time is lost, it may be too late——"

"I cannot believe that Cherry is so foolish a boy. I am sure also that he is one of the most honourable and upright boys in the school!"

"Don't you know his handwriting, sir?"

"Yes, certainly—but it must be some foolish joke! Perhaps he dropped it on purpose for you to find, Loder."

"Impossible, sir! He did not know that I should stop him as he left the house."

"Well, no; I suppose not!"

"And I may say, sir, that I have for a long time suspected Wharton and his friends of not being above suspicion——"

"You have sometimes brought accusations against them, Loder, which have been disproved," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

"If you will not take steps in this matter, sir, I must go to the Head!" said Loder, with equal tartness. "That boy's life is in danger!"

"I shall certainly see to the matter, and if it turns out to be a joke, Cherry shall be punished for writing this nonsense. You say he has gone out!"

"Yes; he ran out, though I told him to stop——"

"Then we must look for him in the Cloisters. Get a lantern, Loder, and take a couple of prefects with you, and find him as quickly as you can. There is a bare chance that this letter was written seriously, of course."

"I am certain of it, sir!"

"Then lose no time!"

"Very well, sir!"

Loder left the study—somewhat disappointed that the Form-master did not join with him in a breathless chase after Bob Cherry. But he called Walker and Carne, and they hurried into the Close, armed with bike lanterns.

Mr. Quelch remained in his study, looking and feeling very annoyed and uneasy. He read the letter through again, and frowned over it.

"It must be some foolish joke!" he muttered. "It is impossible—impossible! Yet—if it should be true—the foolish boy——"

He stepped anxiously to the window, and looked out into the shadows of the Close.

The light of the bike lanterns gleamed through the darkness under the leafless old trees, as the prefects searched for the supposed intended suicide.

Mr. Quelch waited anxiously.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Saving Bob Cherry's Life!

Bob Cherry was sprinting cheerfully round the Close, in the keen fresh air of the winter night, when he caught sight of the bike lanterns gleaming in the darkness.

He paused, and whistled softly.

The light in the distance showed him Loder and Carne and Walker, the bullies of the Sixth; and it was only too evident that they were searching for somebody, and that that somebody was himself.

"My hat!" murmured Bob. "Loder must be awfully ratty, to take all that trouble. Well, he's not going to catch me. I'll dodge into the Cloisters!"

Passing the ball from hand to hand, the Southgaters bore down upon the goal. Bulstrode looked out for the attack with all his eyes. "Hands!" roared the Greyfriars fellows frantically. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 15)

The old Cloisters of Greyfriars was a secluded spot, very lonely and dark of a night; and Bob felt that the seniors were not likely to look for him there. Of the real reason why Loder was hunting for him he had no idea. He simply supposed that the bullies of the Sixth were going to rag him—and if they caught him in the Close far from his chums, it was probable that the ragging would be a severe one. So Bob plunged into the darkness of the Cloisters to keep clear of them.

"Cherry! Where are you, Cherry?"

It was Loder who was calling.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Don't you wish you knew, you rotter?" he murmured.

The light gleamed closer at hand. Bob Cherry took cover behind a stone column, and watched the searchers. To his dismay he discovered that they were coming directly towards the Cloisters just as if they knew he was there.

The three seniors came under the old stone arch flashing their bike lanterns to and fro in the deep gloom.

"He must be here somewhere," said Loder.

"How the dickens does he know that?" murmured Bob.

He backed away silently among the old stone arches.

A stone clinked under his boot, and Loder uttered a shout.

"There he is!"

The three seniors rushed in the direction of the sound.

Bob promptly ran.

The light gleamed on him as he ran, and Loder shouted to him:

"Cherry—Cherry! Stop! Stop at once!"

"Rats!" murmured Bob.

And he fled through the Cloisters.

After him the three Sixth-Formers came pelting in hot haste. They shouted to him to stop, but naturally enough Bob did not heed. He dodged and twisted among the old stone arches, and doubled back and gained the Close, with the seniors hot on the trail. He sped across the Close at top speed.

Loder put on a desperate spurt, and overtook him halfway to the School House. His hand fell upon Bob's shoulder in a firm grasp, and closed there, and dragged him back.

"Got him!" he panted.

"Leggo!" roared Bob.

"I've got you——"

Bob struggled violently. Loder dropped his lantern and grasped him with both hands. Carne and Walker came panting up.

"He's safe enough!" gasped Loder. "We were in time. Keep quiet, Cherry, you young fool—you'll be glad some day that we found you in time."

Bob left off wriggling in his amazement at this remark, and stared at Loder.

"In time for what?" he demanded.

"You know very well."

"It's not bedtime yet," said Bob. "I was coming in in time for bed, anyway."

"You know very well what I mean!" said Loder darkly. "Come along!"

"Where?" demanded Bob.

"To Mr. Quelch."

"Oh, I don't mind going to Mr. Quelch!" said Bob. "I thought it was a ragging!"

"Better take the pistol away from him first," said Carne.

Bob gave a yell of surprise.

"The pistol! What pistol?"

"The revolver," said Loder.

"Revolver!" said Bob dazedly. "Are you off your silly rocker? What on earth makes you think I've got a revolver? Have you been reading some of Fishy's papers about Deadwood Dick and Bloodstained Bill, and got it on the brain?"

"Search him for it," said Walker. "It will be safer out of his hands!"

"Look here——" gasped Bob.

But in spite of his struggles, Loder ran his hands through his pockets. But no revolver, or any other deadly weapon, was discovered.

"He must have chucked it away in the Cloisters," said Loder. "He could easily have done that while we were chasing him."

"I never had any giddy revolver, you silly asses!" roared Bob Cherry. "What on earth do you think I had a silly revolver for?"

"To blow your brains out," said Loder severely.

Bob's jaw dropped. He began to have serious doubts about Loder's sanity.

"B-b-blow my b-b-brains out!" he stammered. "Are you potty? I—I say, Loder, have you been drinking?"

"Bring him along!" said Loder.

"But, I say, what do you mean?" gasped Bob. "Has any silly ass been telling you that I had a revolver?"

"You know very well that you had a revolver," said Loder sternly. "You went to the Cloisters to die!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Owing to the difficulties you have got into through the bad example of Wharton and the others," said Loder. "You will probably be sent home to your father. Wharton and the rest will be expelled, and Greyfriars will be well rid of them. I have always suspected them of being a gang of young scoundrels, and now it is proved!"

Bob simply stuttered with amazement.

"Mad!" he ejaculated. "Quite mad! He can't be merely drunk to talk like that—he's stark, staring, raving dotty, and potty!"

"You'll be glad some day that we found you in time!" said Loder. "I've saved your life. But you'll be punished all the same, you wicked young rascal!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Mind he doesn't get away, you chaps!"

"Yes, rather!" said Walker. "We've got him!"

The three seniors, each with a firm grip upon Bob Cherry, were marching towards the School House. They were taking the most elaborate care that he did not get away to carry out his rash deed. As they marched him into the House Harry Wharton caught sight of them, and ran up.

"What's the matter, Bob?" he asked.

"I don't know, excepting that Loder and Carne and Walker have gone mad," said Bob. "They're taking me to Mr. Quelch for some mad reason—not being a lunatic myself, I don't understand what the little game is."

"You'd better come too, Wharton," said Loder. "You're implicated in this."

"In—in what?"

"In Cherry's intended suicide, owing to the debts and difficulties you have got him into by your rascally conduct," said Loder sternly.

Wharton almost fell down.

"Follow me!" said Loder.

And he marched off with Bob Cherry to Mr. Quelch's study, and Harry Wharton, gasping with amazement, followed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Not Guilty!

MR. QUELCH was standing by his study table in a magisterial attitude, with a magisterial frown upon his face, when Bob Cherry was marched in.

"Here he is, sir," said Loder. "We caught him in time. He tried to dodge away from us in the Cloisters, but we ran him down!"

"You actually found him in the Cloisters?" asked the Remove-master.

"Yes, sir."

"And he tried to avoid you?"

"He ran as hard as he could, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's frown deepened. It began to look as if the tragic letter was quite serious, after all, and in that case Gerald Loder had certainly performed a very important service—he had saved Bob Cherry's life!

"Cherry, this is a very serious matter!" said Mr. Quelch, resting his hand on the letter on the table. "I want you to tell me the whole truth, my boy!"

"I shouldn't tell you anything else, sir, I hope," said Bob, in wonder.

"I hope not, Cherry. What were you doing in the Cloisters?"

"I dodged there, sir, because I saw Loder after me!"

"Why did you try to escape?"

"To get away from Loder, sir!"

"But why should you wish to get away from a prefect who was seeking you according to instructions given by a master?"

Bob stared.

"I didn't know you wanted to see me, sir. I thought it was a rag, and I didn't want Loder to nail me in the Close!"

"Do you mean to say that you suspected a prefect of desiring to rag you, Cherry?" said the Remove-master sternly.

Bob was a little uncomfortable. He did not want to sneak about Loder and Loder's little ways; but since Loder had marched him into Mr. Quelch's presence to explain, he had to explain.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Surely, Loder, it is not possible that you ever so far forget your dignity as a prefect, as to rag the juniors?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly not, sir! Cherry is not speaking truthfully."

"Why, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob, in hot wrath.

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Silence, Cherry——"

"He's no right to call me a liar, sir," said Bob.

"I hope you are speaking truthfully, Cherry. Did you find a revolver or any other weapon on him, Loder?"

"No, sir; he must have thrown it away when he found we were after him!"

"Is that the case, Cherry?"

"I don't understand, sir!" gasped Bob. "Why should I be supposed to have a revolver? I've never had such a thing in my life. I don't catch on!"

"Do you know anything about Cherry's having purchased a revolver, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, fixing his eyes on the captain of the Remove.

"No, sir!" said Harry promptly.

"I think Loder must be a little potty, sir," ventured Bob Cherry.

"Silence, Cherry! Look at this letter, and if it is not seriously written, kindly explain to me what it means."

And the Remove-master handed the scrawled sheet to Bob Cherry.

Bob looked at it.

"Did you write that, Cherry?" Mr. Quelch asked severely.

"Yes, sir. You know my writing."

"You admit that you wrote it?"

"Certainly, sir. I shouldn't be likely to deny it when it's true. There's nothing wrong in writing that, that I know of. I don't know how it came here. I thought I had it in my pocket," said Bob, puzzled.

"You dropped it in the Close, and Loder picked it up."

"Oh!"

"Loder brought it to me, and I gave orders for you to be found and brought into my presence," said Mr. Quelch.

Bob looked astounded.

"Well, I'm here, sir." he said. "What is the matter?"

"You must explain that. If that letter was not written seriously, I presume that it is a foolish joke?"

"It's not a joke, sir!"

"You wrote it seriously."

"Certainly, sir. It's quite serious—in fact, it's tragic."

"Cherry! Am I to understand, then, that your apparently innocent and honourable career in this school is a sham and an imposture, and that you have been secretly leading a life of gambling and other kinds of recklessness?" the Remove-master exclaimed in a voice of thunder.

Bob Cherry staggered.

"I, sir?" he gasped.

"Yes, you. And that, overwhelmed with debt, and threatened with exposure, you had come to the rash and wicked determination to take your own life?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Do not make those ridiculous ejaculations here, Cherry. Do you admit that this is the case, or do you not?"

"Not!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Then what does this letter mean?"

"Oh, my hat!" roared Bob, a light suddenly breaking on his mind. "Oh, my only Aunt Jemima! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. And Harry Wharton, as he, too, realised Loder's ludicrous mistake, joined in the yell of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at them angrily.

"Cease this untimely and unseemly merriment!" he exclaimed harshly. "Unless you can explain this satisfactorily, you will both be severely punished. Once for all, Cherry, explain to me the meaning of this wicked letter."

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I—I—I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir—ha, ha, ha!—but—but—— Oh dear! This is too funny!"

And Bob went off into a fresh yell.

"Cherry! For the last time——"

"Yes, sir! Excuse me," said Bob, wiping away his tears. "Is it possible, sir, that Loder fancied I wrote that letter for myself, to be found—ha, ha, ha!—on my body in the Cloisters? Oh, crumbs!"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch. "You admit writing the letter. You had it in your pocket, and you dropped it by accident. Then you proceeded to the Cloisters, and tried to avoid the prefects sent to look for you. You must explain this."

"Ha, ha, ha! It's easy enough to explain, sir. That letter's quite serious—only it isn't written about myself."

"Then whom——"

"Dick Dodger, sir."

"Dick Dodger!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I have never heard the name. Who is he?"

"The hero of my serial in the 'Greyfriars Herald,' sir."

"What?"

"'The Road to Ruin; or, The Debts and Difficulties of Dick Dodger,'" explained Bob Cherry, choking back his merriment. "I've got the rest of this instalment in my pocket, sir, if you would like to read it. It's a good story, sir—full of warning to reckless chaps like Loder—ahem!—I mean full of warning to reckless chaps who go on the razzle-dazzle——"

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath of relief.

"Then that foolish letter is simply part of a silly and ridiculous story you are writing for the school paper?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir—only it's a really good story——"

"It is so, sir," said Harry Wharton. "All the staff have seen that copy. It's part of Bob's serial."

Loder's face was a study.

"It—it isn't true, sir!" he panted. "I don't believe a word of it! I have suspected those young rotters for a long time——"

"Then you have suspected them unjustly!" said the Form-master tartly. "You have also wasted my time over a perfectly ridiculous matter, Loder. I was convinced from the beginning that it was mere nonsense."

"You—you believe them, sir?" stuttered Loder.

"Of course I do! You are absurd, Loder. Pray be more careful in the future. You may go!"

Loder left the study with a brow like thunder. If Bob Cherry's life had been in danger just then, the bully of the Sixth certainly wouldn't have taken the trouble to save it.

Mr. Quelch frowned at the two juniors, but there was a queer twitch at the corners of his mouth which showed that he found it difficult to keep from smiling.

"I should recommend you to print something a little less lurid and sensational in your paper," he said. "This kind of nonsense should not be read by boys of intelligence. You may go!"

"Yes, sir!" said the juniors demurely.

And they departed. In the passage they grinned cheerfully at one another.

Harry Wharton kicked a goal, in spite of the Southgate full-back, who tackled him and brought him to the ground just after the ball flew from his foot. "Ow, gerroff, you ass!" gasped Wharton. (See Chapter 15)

"Loder's come a cropper this time!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Fancy thinking that I had been following in his footsteps, and gambling and getting into debt——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quelchy's a good sort, but he doesn't know a good story when he sees one," said Bob, with a shake of his head. "I say, let's go and tell the fellows. This giddy joke is too good to keep."

And in ten minutes all the juniors in Greyfriars knew how Loder of the Sixth had saved Bob Cherry's life, and were roaring over it.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Football and Football!

"WEATHER'S all right!" said Bob Cherry, as he looked out of the School House on the following morning.

It was a bright, keen winter morning—just the day for a football match. Harry Wharton and Co. were looking forward to the afternoon with keenness. As the regular fixture for that afternoon had been scratched, they had not expected to get a match until the meeting of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with his old chum Dhoolah Das at Courtfield. And a match with the junior eleven from Southgate was much better than a scratch match among the juniors to fill up the afternoon.

"Blessed if I see what the other fellows are cackling over the Southgate match for?" Peter Todd remarked that morning. "What is there funny about it, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Can't guess," he replied. "Temple of the Fourth started it. He's got a cousin at Southgate School, and seems to know something or other about them, but I don't see where the joke comes in."

"All the fellows say they're coming to see the match," remarked Billy Bunter. "The fact is, Wharton, Southgate are a strong team, and you've no right to leave out one of the best players in the Remove."

"Mark Linley is working for an exam., and can't play."

Billy Bunter snorted.

"Who's talking about Mark Linley. If you care to play me at centre-forward, I should be quite willing——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'll keep goal, if you like. I've kept goal before——"

"The match would be funny enough to be cackled at then," remarked Bob Cherry. "If we were playing Bunter, I could understand the fellows taking it as a joke."

"Oh, really Cherry——"

"Hallo!" said Coker of the Fifth, coming along with a broad grin on his face. "Still going to play Southgate this afternoon?"

"Yes, of course, you ass!"

"Don't you think they'll be too many for you?"

"We're going to try to be too many for them, but we're willing to take what comes," said Wharton. "What's the joke?"

"Oh, you'll see—you'll see! But, you mark my words, you'll find that the Southgate team is too many for you!" said Coker. And he exploded into a series of cachinations as he walked away.

Wharton puzzled over the matter during morning lessons—somewhat to the detriment of morning lessons, as a matter of fact—but he could find no solution to the mystery of the merriment with which the Southgate football match was regarded. The mystery would be explained, doubtless, when Dhoolah Das and the Southgate team arrived at Greyfriars; and all the Remove were anxious to see them arrive.

After morning lessons, the Remove eleven punted the ball about the junior ground for a while before dinner. Temple of the Fourth stopped to look at them.

"Are you going to play Southgate with that ball?" he asked.

"No; we shall use our match ball," said Wharton, puzzled. "Why?"

"Oh, I wondered," said Temple chuckling. "I don't know whether the Southgate fellows will be satisfied with your match ball, that's all."

"Why shouldn't they be? The ball's all right."

"Oh, you'll see—you'll see!"

And Temple walked off evidently in a state of great internal enjoyment, to judge by the chuckles that escaped him.

His words mystified the Removites more than ever. Why the Southgate fellows should not be satisfied with the really first-class match ball provided by the Remove was a very deep mystery. Yet Temple evidently meant something by what he said.

"The mysteryfulness is simply terrific," Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked. "I fancy that the esteemed school must be going off its august rocker!"

After dinner the Remove team prepared for the match, and waited for the arrival of the Southgate fellows with considerable impatience.

Other fellows were waiting for them, too, just as impatiently.

There was a shout from Temple at the school gates when a brake came in sight, crowded with fellows.

The brake rolled in.

A Hindu junior jumped down and embraced Hurree Jamset Ram Singh warmly, and Inky presented him to the Co. as Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das, his esteemed chum.

"Here they are!" grinned Coker. "Now for the match! It will be worth seeing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A description of it will make a ripping comic column in the Christmas Number of the giddy 'Herald'!" remarked Temple.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry Wharton crossly. "This way, you fellows!"

Dhoolah Das and the Southgate fellows looked surprised at the laughter, which they did not understand any more than Wharton did.

The footballers adjourned to the junior ground.

"Hallo!" exclaimed one of the Southgate players, as he looked out at the field. "Are those your goals?"

"Of course!" said Harry.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Great Julius Ceasar!"

"Dooly-Booly, you silly ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Laughter and exclamations of surprise came from the Southgate football team. There were sixteen fellows in the Southgate party, the additional ones being taken for the spectators who had accompanied the team, by the Greyfriars fellows.

Harry Wharton & Co. had reached the climax of astonishment now.

That Temple and Hobson, and Coker, and a crowd more fellows should have been hilarious over the match was surprising, but the amazement and the laughter of the Southgate juniors were simply incomprehensible.

"What on earth's the joke?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Where does the esteemed joke come in, my worthy friends?" inquired Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das smote his dusky forehead.

"The fault is mine!" he exclaimed. "I did not think of it. Neither did you, oh, my noble chum."

"The incomprehensibleness is terrific."

"Think of what?" roared Johnny Bull.

Dhoolah Das pointed to the goals.

"That!" he said.

"What's the matter with the goal-posts?"

"It is very unfortunate."

"What is?"

"But in the hurry of seeing my worthy chum Hurree Jamset Ram Singh I did not think of it," said Dhoolah Das distressfully.

"Of what?" shrieked Wharton exasperated.

"The game that you play."

"We play footer!" yelled Bob Cherry. "I suppose you didn't come over here to play cricket, did you?"

"Or kiss-in-the-ring?" howled Nugent.

"Yes, but there is football and football," murmured Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das sorrowfully. "We did not know the game you played. It is equally clear you did not know the game we played."

"But what—what——"

"Those are Association goals," explained Dhoolah Das.

"Of course, they are," said Wharton. "I suppose you didn't expect to find Rugby goals here did you?"

Dhooloh Das nodded.

"My dear friend, as a matter of fact we did," he admitted.

"Wha-a-at!"

"We play Rugby at Southgate," murmured Dhoolah Das.

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"Great Julius Cæser!"

"And it appears that you play Soccer," said Dhoolah Das. "I did not think about it. My esteemed friend Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not think about it. The regret is great, but we shall not be able to play."

"Oh!"

And dismay fell upon the Removites. They understood at last. Temple of the Fourth had known it all along, owing to the fact that he had a relative at Southgate. That was the cause of the hilarious mirth with which Temple and the other fellows in the secret had looked forward to the match.

Southgate played the Rugby game, and

Greyfriars played Soccer! Dhoolah Das had brought over a fifteen to play the Remove eleven!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "Pile in! Play up! One of you can play Rugger, and the other Soccer! It will be worth watching! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

A Novel Game!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. The Remove footballers turned upon the dismayed Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You ass, Inky!"

"You fathead!"

"You duffer!"

"You sooty lunatic!"

"My noble and esteemed chums, the sorrowfulness for the lamentable misapprehension is terrific!" murmured the distressed nabob. "I did not think——"

"And I did not think——" murmured Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das.

"If I had thought of it——" said Inky.

"Oh, you can't think!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Play up!" roared Coker. "You can have a ball each."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The situation was curious. Wharton could have raised a fifteen in the Remove, but they would have played a very poor game of Rugger. And it was doubtful if a Rugby ball could have been found within the walls of Greyfriars. On the other hand, the Southgaters could have left four men out and played Soccer; but they were not used to the game or to the ball, and they would certainly have made an equally poor show. And neither side naturally wanted to enter into such an unequal contest, certain to be followed by a defeat.

But for the Southgate team to come a great distance and not to play, and for the Remove to reserve the afternoon and have nothing to show for it—that would have been extremely disagreeable and disappointing.

Harry Wharton thought it over.

"Look here, we're not going to waste the afternoon, and you fellows don't want your journey for nothing," he said.

"Quite so," said Dhoolah Das.

"Then we'll play all the same," said Harry.

"Ah! You are willing to play Rugger?"

"Ahem! No. I thought perhaps you fellows might like to play Soccer."

"H'm! You see——"

"Well, you see——"

"Dash it all, we've got to play something!" said Bob Cherry. "Suppose each side plays its own game."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton uneasily.

Dhoolah Das grinned.

"We should be willing to do that," he said.

"You'll agree not to handle the ball, then?" asked Wharton.

"My dear friend—we must handle the ball in Rugger."

"But it's not allowed to handle the ball in Soccer."

"Then your side shall not handle the ball, and our side shall handle it," said Dhoolah Das. "That will be just."

"But you'll have all the advantage, then."

"Hold on! They won't be allowed to pass the ball forward," said Bob Cherry. "That will give us a chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you'll have fifteen men to our eleven!" said Nugent.

"Leave out four," suggested Johnny Bull.

But Dhoolah Das shook his head.

"Must play fifteen in a rugger side!" he said firmly. "Let each side stick to its own rules."

"Might play thirteen men, same as they do in the Northern Union Rugby game," Bob Cherry suggested.

"But we play the Rugby Union game, my dear fellow."

"And we shall have the disadvantage of playing with a Soccer ball," one of the Southgate fellows remarked.

"Well, go it then!" said Wharton at last. "We must play something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How are you going to score, though?" inquired Vernon-Smith, starting a new diffi-

culty. "They score by points in the Rugby game."

"And we score by goals," said Nugent.

"Each side can score in its own way, then," said Wharton desperately. "For goodness' sake, let's get going, and get away from those laughing hyenas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was evidently nothing else to be done.

The Southgate team went into the dressing-room to change, and Harry Wharton & Co. punted about the Soccer ball while they waited for them.

The news of this extraordinary match that was impending brought fellows from far and wide to the junior ground. The most important matches played by the first eleven had seldom brought so crowded an army of spectators to the field.

There was a startled exclamation from Fish as the Famous Five threw open the door. "What have you been doing?" demanded Wharton sternly (See Chapter 17)

Even members of the high and lofty Sixth came to Little Side to see that amazing match. As Coker said, it would be worth seeing. Certainly no match like it had ever been played on the Greyfriars playing-fields before, or was likely to be played there again.

With fifteen men against eleven, the odds were certainly on the side of the Southgate team; but to compensate for that was the fact that they were playing with a Soccer ball and on a Soccer ground.

Blundell of the Fifth had agreed to referee the match for the juniors. But Blundell of the Fifth almost fell down when he found what kind of a match he was to referee. However, he grinned good humouredly, and agreed to go ahead. But with two different sets of rules to apply to the players, the task of the referee was not likely to be an easy or simple one.

The Southgate fifteen came out of the pavilion, and were greeted with cheers by the Greyfriars crowd.

Wharton tossed with Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das for choice of ends, and then the teams took their places.

"Now look out for the fun!" murmured Coker of the Fifth.

And the crowd grinned and loooked out for it.

The fun was not long in coming.

The Southgaters and Dhoolah Das collared the ball, and led a rush for goal. And there was an indignant yell from several of the Remove players:

"Hands!"

But hands were allowed in the Rugby game, and the Southgaters rushed on unheeding. Passing the ball, they bore down on goal, and Bulstrode, in goal, looked out for the attack with all his eyes.

As Soccer rules do not allow the backs to collar a man and bring him down, the rush of the enemy was difficult to stop.

Dhoolah Das brought the ball right up to

the goal line, and touched down yards away from the goal-post.

Bulstrode in goal did not think in time of issuing forth to tackle him further along the line and the try was easily scored. And the Southgate team yelled:

"Try! Try!"

And the Greyfriars crowd roared:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's three points for the enemy," growled Johnny Bull, as the ball was carried out.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"But we count by goals," he said. "Never mind their giddy points."

"But if they make more points than we make goals——"

"Blow their points! We shall only count goals for a win."

"Then both side may win!" howled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha! All the better—please both parties!" grinned Bob.

"Stand back!" shouted the Southgaters, as Dhoolah Das prepared to take the kick after the try. "Where's the referee?"

"We're not going to look on while you kick blessed goals!" howled Nugent.

"Order! Where's the referee!"

Blundell of the Fifth blew a blast on the whistle.

"Back, there!" he ordered. "Rugby rules—they've got to have a kick from a try. But you've got to put it over the cross-bar, you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the ball did not go over the cross-bar, so the goal was not scored. Southgate were three points up for the try; but as the Remove side had agreed not to count points they did not care.

Ten minutes later Harry Wharton kicked a goal, in spite of the Southgate full-back, who tackled him and brought him to the ground just after the ball flew from his foot.

"Ow!" gasped Wharton, as he rolled over in the grip of the full-back. "Yow-wow! Gerroff my neck, you ass!"

"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry.

And the crowd roared and cheered:

"Goal! Goal! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Both Winners

Loud yells of laughter from all the spectators greeted the game at every point. Both sides were playing up hard, but as they were playing according to very contrary sets of rules, the result was somewhat confusing.

Soccer rules did not allow Harry Wharton and Co. to bring down a forward or a three-quarter running with the ball—and when the ball was held breast-high it was difficult to get at it with the foot.

On the other hand, Rugger rules did not allow the Southgaters to pass the ball forward, which placed them under an equal disadvantage against the Soccer players.

Tries galore were scored by the visitors, but at the same time goals piled up for the home team.

At half time Southgate had a score of twenty points, and Greyfriars Remove could boast of five goals.

"Never mind, we're beating them," said Bob Cherry, as he fanned his heated brow. "They've only got one goal among their lot."

"We've got twenty points," said Dhoolah Das.

"We count by goals."

"We count by points."

"Blow your points!"

"Then blow your goals, also, my worthy friend!" grinned Dhoolah Das.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The play was fast and furious in the second half. The spectators howled with laughter. Tries came very easily to the Southgaters, who had only to grab the ball and dash up the field, avoiding charges, as they could not be collared. But converting the tries was another matter.

On the other hand, the Remove forwards scored goal after goal when their chances came, at a rate they never had equalled when playing a Soccer team.

On several occasions Blundell was laughing too much to blow his whistle. When a Southgate man with the ball was charged over, the Southgaters claimed a scrummage, and in the

scrum, of course, they had all the advantage. But the Removites held their own very well.

By the time Blundell blew his whistle for the last time the score on both sides was quite startling.

The Remove were six goals to the good, and Southgate had the handsome score of forty points.

"Well, it's over now!" gasped Bob Cherry, stopping in his run, as Blundell whistled for time. "But who's won?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We have forty points, my worthy friend," murmured Dhoolha Das softly.

"But we have six goals," said Wharton warmly.

"A goal counts as five points; you have, therefore only thirty points."

"According to your blessed Rugger laws, yes. But, according to Soccer rules, you have only two goals. Tries don't count at all."

"Not a bit in the world!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"We've won this match by four goals—six goals to two."

"Pardon me, we've won by forty points to thirty."

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

"Where's the referee?" grinned Wharton. "Referee must decide. Blundell, old man, who's won this blessed match?"

Blundell grinned.

"Southgate have scored by points," he said. "That's Rugger rule. And as they've scored more points than you have, they win."

"Oh!"

"Good man!" chortled the Southgaters "Of course we win!"

"Hold on!" said Blundell, coolly. "But the Remove score by goals, according to Soccer rules, and as they've scored six goals to two they win!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Then we've both won!" yelled Johnny Bull.

Blundell nodded.

"Exactly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's the first match I've ever played in where both sides won!" gasped Wharton. "I suppose it will be the last, too!"

"We are satisfied," purred Dhoolah Das politely. "All we wanted was to make it clear. We are the winning side!"

"And so are we!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the players streamed off the field, each side perfectly satisfied with itself and its success.

Greyfriars simply howled over the result of the match. Two winning sides in a single game was certainly an astonishing and unusual result.

Both sides having won, both sides were satisfied; and Harry Wharton and Co. entertained the Southgaters to an ample spread after the match, before they departed, and the two teams parted on the best of terms.

"We will play you again," said Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das, as he shook hands with Harry Wharton, "if, of course, you change your game to Rugby!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We'll play you again with pleasure," he said, "if, of course, you change your game to Soccer!"

And Dhoolah Das grinned and shook his head.

The Greyfriars fellows gave the Southgate team a cheer as they rolled away in their brake in the winter dusk.

"And now," said Bob Cherry, when they returned into the School House, "I think the time has come to slaughter Inky for landing us in such a mess."

"Yes, rather."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked distressed.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums," he said. "I confess it did not occur to me in the haste of the moment, that my honourable friends at Southgate played the Rugger game."

"Fathead!"

"I fear that the fatheadedness of my honourable self is justly regarded as terrific," admitted the nabob; "but the mistakefulness shall never occur againfully."

"We'll take jolly good care of that!" said Wharton. "If you recommend any team

"What does this mean?" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Explain your presence here at once!" "We're getting ready the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' sir," stammered Harry Wharton (See Chapter 17)

to play us in future, we'll take care to make inquiries—or you'll be landing us with a hockey team next."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If we'd lost the match, Inky, we'd have slaughtered you," said Bob Cherry. "But as we've won it, as well as the Southgate chaps——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll only bump you!"

"My esteemed Bob——"

"Bump him!"

And the Nabob of Bhanipur was duly bumped, but not very hard, for, as Bob Cherry said, they had won the match, and there was really nothing to complain about.

"And now for the Christmas Number," said Harry Wharton. "By the way, I haven't seen anything of Fishy all the afternoon."

The schoolboy editors hurried to No. 14 study.

They heard the whirr of the printing-press as they came up the Remove passage.

Fisher T. Fish was busy.

He turned an ink-smudged face towards them as they crowded into the study.

"What are you up to?" demanded Johnny Bull wrathfully.

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"Printing the second number of the 'Herald,' I guess," he replied.

"What!"

"Where are the formes?" shouted Bob Cherry. "Where's all the type I set up?"

"I guess I had to dis. that—to set up my copy," said Fish calmly.

"You—you—you've pied my type!" howled Bob.

"Dissed it!" corrected Fish.

"You—you burglar! You pirate! I shall have to do it all over again!" gasped Bob. "Collar the silly ass—boot him out!"

"I guess I'm not going to be booted out of my own study!" roared Fish.

"Then you guess wrong—out you go!"

"I guess I shall slaughter you if I get my mad up! I guess—— Yaroooh!"

Fisher T. Fish went skidding along the linoleum in the passage; and then the schoolboy printers set to work distributing once more the type Fisher T. Fish had set up to print his valuable copy.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

A Big Printing Order!

ALL was ready at last!

The great Christmas Double Number of the "Greyfriars Herald" was written, set up in type, and the proofs had been taken off and corrected.

All that remained was to print the copies and fasten them together, and the great Christmas Number would be an actuality at last.

That last and important piece of work was to be done on Wednesday afternoon, and then the Greyfriars editors felt that they would have deserved well of their country.

Fisher T. Fish had been very quiet the last few days. He had not by any means given up his claim to be regarded as editor-in-chief of the "Greyfriars Herald." But the other editors and sub-editors derided his claim, and as the American junior had no means of enforcing it, there was nothing for him to do but to give in. But Fisher T. Fish's eyes gleamed when he heard Bob Cherry's remark in the common-room on Tuesday evening, just before bedtime, that everything was finished, and that it only remained to turn the copies off on the following afternoon.

Fisher T. Fish was looking very thoughtful when he went to bed with the Remove.

"It's all right, Fishy," said Bob Cherry consolingly, "we're going to present you with a free copy of the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' you know."

"It isn't published yet, I guess," remarked Fish.

"It will be to-morrow."

"Oh rats!"

And Fisher T. Fish went to bed. But Bob Cherry's eye was upon him, and he noted the fact that Fisher T. Fish did not take all his things off. Bob Cherry's suspicions were aroused. He resolved to sleep with one eye open that night. If the type were "dissed" again, after so much labour had been expended on setting it up and correcting the proofs, it would be too heavy a blow for the schoolboy printers.

Bob fully intended to keep one eye open—but he was sleepy, and dozed off. But he awoke later, and sat up in bed. He was certain that he had heard the dormitory door close softly.

He jumped out of bed and struck a match. Fisher T. Fish's bed was empty.

Bob Cherry breathed wrath as he roused his chums and made known his suspicions.

Wharton was out of bed in a twinkling. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull followed his example, and then Hurree Jamset Ram Singh turned out. All the schoolboy editors were excited at the idea of having the result of their labours "mucked up."

"The rotter!" growled Johnny Bull. "We shall have it all to do all over again——"

"Come on!"

Half dressed, the juniors stole silently from the Remove dormitory.

It was nearly midnight, and all Greyfriars was asleep. Fisher T. Fish had left his excursion till a very late hour, to be sure not to be spotted by a master or a prefect. The Famous Five hurried down silently to the Remove passage. From under the door of Johnny Bull's study a light gleamed.

"He's there!" muttered Nugent.

"Quick—come on!"

Bob Cherry reached No. 14 study first, and threw open the door.

There was a startled exclamation from Fisher T. Fish.

"Waal, I swow!

The juniors crowded into the study, and Harry Wharton closed the door behind them. Fisher T. Fish backed away round the table.

"Now, what have you been doing?" demanded Wharton sternly.

The American junior grunted.

"Nothing, I guess, so far."

"Lucky for you—you'd have been scalped if you had. What were you going to do then?"

"I guess I was going to dis. the type, and set up the real genuine second number of the 'Herald'—edited by me!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"You cheeky ass!"

"I calculate I'm editor of this hyer paper——"

"You've fetched us out of bed in the middle of the night;" said Wharton severely. "We're not coming down for nothing. Bob, put a rug along the door, in case the light's seen. Pull the blind down, Nugent. As Fisher came down here to work, we'll give him some work to do. Fishy, old man, you can't edit a paper, but you can print one."

"I won't!"

"Right-ho! You'll be bumped until you do! Collar him!"

Fisher T. Fish was promptly collared.

"Leggo!" he howled. "I'll yell—I'll wake the house——"

"Shove something into his mouth—that duster will do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish choked over an extremely inky and dusty duster. Then he was solemnly bumped on the study carpet—three times, hard!

Queer, inarticulate sounds came through the duster that was crammed into his mouth.

"Now are you going to obey orders?" asked Wharton cheerfully. "Nod your head if you mean yes!"

"Grooogh!" And the infuriated Fish nodded his head.

"Pile in, then!"

There was no help for it. Fisher T. Fish's gag was removed, and he piled in. The study door was locked, and there was no escape for him.

The Famous Five watched him grimly. Johnny Bull had sorted out a cricket stump, to be used in case of necessity. Fisher T. Fish cast one despairing glance at the five faces, but all were grimly in earnest. He had to spend his night in printing the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald," or to be licked until he did, and as he had to do it anyway, he wisely decided to do it without being licked first.

Johnny Bull lighted the fire: it was cold in the study. The juniors took it in turns to watch the labouring Fish. The others dozed before the fire. The Remove studies were too far from the sleeping quarters for the noise of the machine to be heard. The juniors watched Fish too carefully to give him a chance of making any alterations in the pages set up for the Christmas Number.

Midnight tolled out, and then one, and then two—and the American junior was still labouring at the printing-press.

The printing was finished at last.

Harry Wharton woke up his companions.

"Make him bind the copies," suggested Johnny Bull.

Fisher T. Fish gave an angry yell.

"I guess I'm going back to bed! I guess I'm tired! I guess I shall be dog-tired in the morning! I guess——"

"Shut up!"

"Look hyer, you jays——"

"You brought it on yourself," grinned Nugent. "You were so blessed keen to print a number of the 'Herald.' You've got nothing to complain of."

"I guess——"

"Cave!" murmured Bob Cherry.

There was a step in the passage.

The juniors gazed at one another in dismay.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton. "Spotted!"

There was a sound of the footsteps slackening down in the passage—outside the study. Something had evidently been heard after all. The handle of the door was tried, then there was a knock.

"Who is here?"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

Wharton reluctantly opened the door.

Mr. Quelch stepped into the study, with the blankest amazement depicted on his face. His Form was not the most orderly Form at Greyfriars certainly. But he had never expected to find six members of the Remove in the study at two in the morning—one of them in his shirt-sleeves, and daubed with ink, and the table covered with newly-printed copies of the school newspaper.

"What does this mean?" gasped the Remove master.

"I guess it means trouble!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "All your fault, you silly jays!"

"Wharton, explain——"

"If you please, sir——" stammered Wharton.

"If you expect to please me by being out of bed at this hour, Wharton, you have very strange ideas on the subject," said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "Explain your presence here at once."

"Ahem! If—if you please, sir, we're getting ready the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' sir!" stuttered Wharton. "Fishy is very keen on it—ahem!—and we—we've been watching him work, sir!"

"Goodness gracious! You have been sacrificing your night's rest for that absurdity!" the Form-master exclaimed, in amazement.

"Ahem! It isn't absurdity, sir—it's—it's our Christmas number!"

"You will go back to bed at once," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "and you will all be detained to-morrow afternoon in the Form-room, and will write out two hundred lines each!"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"Not a word! Go back to your dormitory at once."

And the schoolboy editors went, and Mr. Quelch saw them to the Remove dormitory.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled when the Form-master was gone.

"I guess you jays get it where your hair is short this time!" he remarked. "I guess you have run up against a snag—just a few! I guess—yah, yarooh! Who threw that boot?"

"I'll throw another if you don't shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You silly jay! I guess—ow—ow!"

And Fisher T. Fish shut up on receipt of the second boot.

. . . . . .

The next afternoon the schoolboy editors had the pleasure of writing out piles of lines in the Form-room.

But, as Bob Cherry philosophically remarked, it wasn't much more trouble than printing off the Christmas Number—and that had been done for them.

The Christmas Number was a great success.

And when it came out under what circumstances it had been printed, the unfortunate Fisher T. Fish found the laugh very much up against him.

"I guess I'm done with you!" he declared, putting his head into No. 1 study, where a crowd of juniors were perusing copies of the Christmas Number with great satisfaction to themselves—each fellow reading and re-reading, and discovering new beauties in his own contributions. "I guess I'm done with you, and your blessed paper! I won't edit that rotten paper for you again, not if you ask me on your bended knees, I guess."

And he never did.

The Greyfriars Alphabet!

A Humorous Poem of some well-known Greyfriars Characters.

is ALONZO, a dreamy young duffer,

is for BUNTER, the world's greatest "stuffer."

is for COKER, a comical fellow,

is for DUTTON, at whom we all bellow.

is for ELLIOTT, a junior well-dressed,

is for FISH, who is sometimes a pest.

is for GATTY— gay jests are his aim,

is for HOSKINS, of musical fame.

is for "INKY," who's dusky of visage,

's JOHNNY BULL, who's a marvel for his age!

is for KIPPS— a conjurer clever,

is for LODER— no good whatsoever!

is MAULEVERER languid and lazy.

is for NUGENT, as fresh as a daisy!

is for OGILVY, Scotland's proud son.

is for PENFOLD —great deeds he has done.

is for "QUELCHY," a capable master.

is for RUSSELL, whose "left" spells disaster!

—the sly SKINNER — plans japes by the dozen.

is for "TODDY," Alonzo's cute cousin.

is the UPPER FOURTH'S elegant leader.

VERNON-SMITH —gaily greets every reader.

is WHARTON, a "sport" born and bred:

sometimes 'XTRA — Bob Cherry's "YZ" (wise head).