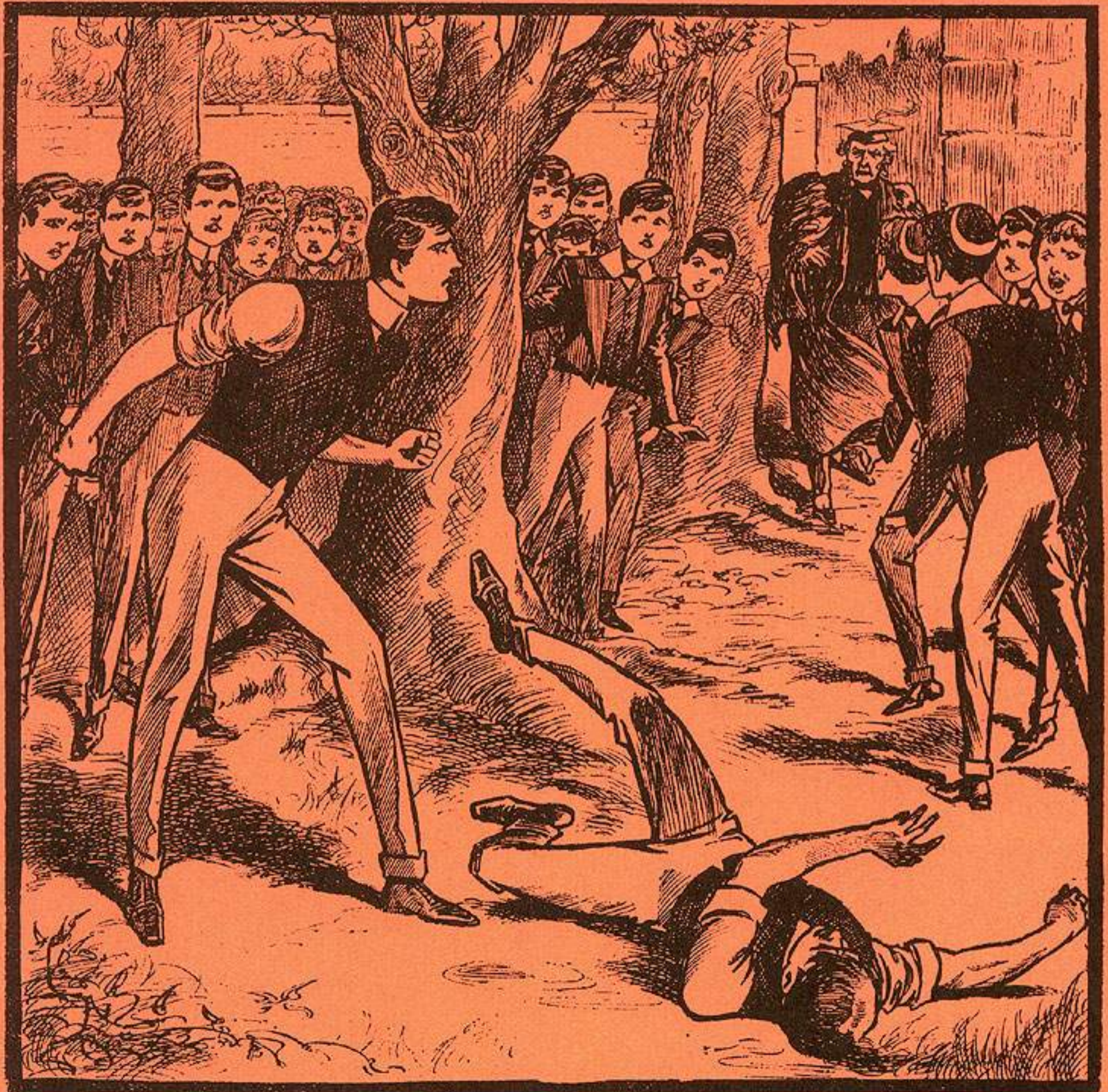


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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Not Grateful.

"WHAT'S the matter with George?" Bob Cherry asked that question in No. 1 Study in the Remove passage at Greyfriars. Bob Cherry was sitting on the corner of the table, swinging his long legs, not at all to the improvement of the lines Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were busily writing at the same table. Neither of the juniors answered Bob's question. They were grinding away at top speed to get their lines done, and get out to the footer-ground. Bob Cherry was kindly keeping them company in their study while they worked through their impositions. Lines flowed under their busy pens at a great rate, though whether they could be read so easily as they were written was another question. Bob Cherry was looking very thoughtful. It was clear that he was thinking something out. As he received no answer to his query, he repeated it. "What's the matter with George?" "Shur-rup!" murmured Nugent. "Quiet!" grunted Wharton. "Yes," said Bob; "but what's the matter with George? That's what I want to know." "Shur-rup!" roared Nugent. "Can't you see we're busy?"

A SPLIT IN THE SIXTH!

A Splendid New, Long, Complete
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FRANK RICHARDS.

"Oh, never mind the lines!" said Bob Cherry. "Mossoo can wait!" "We want to get out to the footer, fathead!" "Never mind the footer!" "Ring off!" "But what's the matter—?" "Shur-rup!" "With George?" concluded Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton dashed down a last line, and threw down his pen. "That's finished!" he exclaimed. "I hope Monsieur Charpentier will be able to read it? Fifty rotten lines of the rotten 'Henriade'—poof! Are you putting in the accents, Franky?" "No!" grunted Nugent. "Same here. We shall have to chance it. If Mossoo's in a good temper he won't notice. I'm ready when you are!" "Shur-rup!" said the unhappy Nugent. "You're as bad as Bob! You're making me put in the wrong genders! Dey up, both of you!" "Yes," said Bob Cherry; "but what—?" "Cheese it!" "What's the matter with—?" Frank reached out one hand—his unoccupied one—and pushed Bob Cherry off the table, without ceasing to write. Bob Cherry gave a roar as he slid down upon the study carpet, and bumped there. He rolled against the nearest leg of the table, and the table reeled, and Nugent gave a yell as a wave of ink from the inkpot swamped over his nearly-finished sheet. "Oh, you ass, look what you've done!" "Fathead!" "Chump!" "My hat!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't take that in to Mossoo now, Franky." Frank Nugent regarded his spoiled impot in dismay. It was smothered with ink, and certainly it was quite impossible



to present it in that state to the French-master at Greyfriars. Bob Cherry picked himself up wrathfully; but he burst into a laugh as he looked at the imposition.

"Oh, you ass!" grunted Nugent. "There's a quarter of an hour wasted, and the whole blessed thing to write over again from the beginning. I'm jolly well not going to do it now! Mossoo will have to wait!"

"Let him wait!" said Bob Cherry serenely. "He will only double the lines. Look here, you fellows, I asked you a question!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Nugent, getting up from the table. "I'm going down to the footer!"

"But it's important," said Bob Cherry. "I've been thinking it over, and I know there's something up with old George."

"What George, you ass!" demanded Wharton. "If you mean King George, he's all right, so far as I know."

Bob Cherry grinned. "I don't mean King George, fathead! I mean our George—George Wingate—Wingate of the Sixth—our respected captain."

"Oh," said Harry, "you'd better let him hear you calling him George, if you want a prize thick ear!"

"But there is something up," said Bob seriously. "Several chaps have noticed it. Old Wingate has been snappy in temper lately, and lots of the chaps have seen him looking worried. Now, old George is a good sort, and I'm not going to have him worried. I want to know what's the matter?"

"Better go and ask him," yawned Nugent.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Can't be did! He mightn't exactly appreciate my protecting interest in him. All the same, I think it's up to us to back him up, you know. Some of those rotters in the Sixth—Loder & Co.—have been giving him trouble, that's my opinion. You remember that little scheme of Loder's—wonder if there's something going on now, and old George

Nugent made Bob Cherry a sign to shut up.

A big, athletic fellow had just appeared in the open doorway of No. 1 Study. It was George Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of the Greyfriars. Bob Cherry had his back to the door, and he did not see the captain of Greyfriars, and he was too busy with his thoughts to notice Nugent's sign.

"Old George is an ass, you know," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "He's one of the best fellows breathing; but he is a good bit of an ass—don't you think so? He hasn't any chance against a deep rotter like Loder."

Wingate paused in the doorway as he heard.

Nugent's expression became positively alarming, but Bob Cherry did not notice it.

"Now, it's up to us to look after George," said Bob Cherry. "He's a good sort, but he can't take care of himself, and I'm not going to have him piled on by Loder & Co. I'm backing up old George, because he's a good sort of ass."

"Shut up, you fathead!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Rats!" said Bob. "May as well speak out while we're alone! You know as well as I do that George is several sorts of an ass!"

"Thank you, Cherry!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry.

He spun round as if he had been electrified.

Wingate's eyes were fixed upon him from the doorway. Bob Cherry's jaw dropped, and he stared blankly at the captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate advanced into the study. Bob Cherry promptly backed round the table. The Greyfriars captain's expression was very grim.

"I am much obliged to you for your excellent opinion of me, Cherry," said Wingate.

"Oh," stammered Bob. "N-n-not at all, Wingate, old man! You're quite welcome!"

"So you are going to back me up?" said Wingate grimly.

"Ye-es!"

"Although I am several sorts of an ass?"

"Ye-es—I—I mean no!"

"How many sorts of an ass, Cherry?" asked the Sixth-Former calmly.

"I—I— You—see—"

"Do you happen to have a cane in this study, Wharton?" asked Wingate.

"No," said Harry promptly.

"A cricket-stump will do."

"Ow!" groaned Bob Cherry, in anticipation. "I—I say, Wingate, old man, you know—"

"I know you are a cheeky young ass!" said Wingate, "and I am going to lick you! Will you hand me a cricket-stump, Wharton?"

"I don't see one just at present," said Harry.

"You had better see one pretty quickly, or I shall look for one. And Cherry won't be the only young ass I shall lick with it!"

"Hand it over to him, and let's get it over!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I—I say, Wingate, you know I didn't exactly mean—I mean I didn't know you were there—"

"I suppose not," said Wingate, taking the cricket-stump. "Hold out your hand!"

Bob Cherry reluctantly obeyed.

"Ow!"

"Now the other hand!"

"Yow!"

Wingate tossed the stump into a corner.

"Now, you will learn, perhaps, to speak a little more respectfully of a prefect," he said sternly, "or, at all events, you will not talk in a loud voice with the door wide open! That's all!"

And Wingate walked away.

Bob Cherry rubbed his hands together, and grunted dismally. Wharton and Nugent were grinning. They could not help it.

"Ow!" groaned Bob. "I can't see anything to grin at myself, you silly, grinning, Cheshire cats! Ow! I believe George has been getting his muscle up lately—ow!—on purpose to lay into his best friend with a cricket-stump. Yow! I've a jolly good mind to leave him alone now, and not back him up at all! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "You'd better leave him alone, I think. Kind attentions from Remove juniors aren't appreciated in the Sixth."

"And possibly he may be able to get on somehow, you know, without your help, Bob," Harry Wharton suggested.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"I don't care!" he said heroically. "Old George can lick me as much as he likes; but I am going to stand by him just the same, and see him through. He's a good sort of an ass, and I'm not going to see him put upon! Yow!"

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent. "Now, if you've finished, let's go down to the footer."

And they went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Rivals of the Sixth.

WINGATE of the Sixth went out into the Close with a frown on his brow. He was not thinking of Bob Cherry. He had already forgotten the incident in No. 1 Study in the Remove, though Bob was likely to remember it for an hour or two. Courtney of the Sixth met the captain of Greyfriars in the Close, with a footer under his arm.

"Wherefore that worried look, Wingate?" Courtney asked, in his cheerful way.

Wingate's brow cleared a little.

"Was I looking worried?" he asked.

Courtney laughed.

"You were—muchly."

"Well, I was thinking about Loder," said Wingate frankly. "I think there's going to be trouble in the Sixth, Courtney. Some of the fellows think a better captain could be found for Greyfriars than I make. Perhaps they're right, too."

"Rot!" said Courtney.

"You remember the time Loder got up a team to play the first eleven, and sent me a false telegram to get me away from the match?"

"I remember. It was young Rake of the Remove who bowled him out, and saved the situation," said Courtney, with a nod.

"Yes. Well, Loder has been on the warpath ever since. He wasn't satisfied with being let off for what he did. He has been looking for trouble ever since."

"Let him find it," suggested Courtney.

Wingate grinned.

"Well, if I wasn't captain of Greyfriars, I should let him

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Coker blew out a whiff of smoke. The next instant he gave a jump and a yell. Pop! Whizz! The cigarette flew through the air, and fell upon the tea-table. Coker staggered back, red with rage. "You silly asses!" he roared. "What a silly trick to play on a fellow!" (See Chapter 5.)

find what he's looking for fast enough," he remarked. "But it would look a little too bad for the captain of the school to punch a prefect's head."

"He won't be happy till he gets it," said Courtney philosophically.

"Well, I'm trying to keep the peace," said Wingate, with a sigh. "It's not easy to keep the peace with a fellow like Loder. And since he's bucked up with his footer, he's good enough to have a place in the first eleven, and I can't very well leave him out. But he's coming into the team to make trouble, not to play footer. I know that very well; and some of the Sixth back him up all the way."

"Right! But— Hallo, here he is!"

Loder of the Sixth came out of the house with Carne. Loder, the bully of the Sixth, and the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars, cast a glance at the captain and Courtney. Wingate nodded to him as genially as he could.

"Coming down to practice?" he asked.

Loder shook his head.

"Not now," he replied.

The skipper of Greyfriars knitted his brows.

"Better come," he said. "We're playing Redclyffe seniors again on Saturday, and if you want to be in the team, you'll have to keep up to the mark. We're playing a scratch eleven to-day, to see how the team goes."

"Sorry I can't come," said Loder.

"Why can't you?" demanded Wingate.

"Got another engagement."

Wingate paused. Loder's tone and manner were extremely unconciliatory, not to say insolent. And it was only too

clear, as the skipper had said, that the cad of the Sixth was looking for trouble.

"Look here," said Wingate, "you'd better play. I'm not quite satisfied with your form, and, if you don't come down to practice this afternoon, I shall have to look out for another outside right."

"And leave me out of the eleven?"

"That follows, of course. I don't believe it's possible to play two outside rights in one team," said Wingate sarcastically.

"The footer committee would have something to say about that, I think," said Carne.

Wingate did not seem to hear Carne's remark. His eyes were fixed upon Loder's face. The prefect shook his head.

"You won't come?" asked Wingate.

"I can't."

"Well, if your other engagement's more important than the footer, I'll scratch your name off the list," said Wingate tartly. "That settles it."

Loder bit his lip.

"You're going to scratch my name?" he said.

"If you don't turn up to practice, certainly."

Loder sneered.

"Why don't you say at once that you're looking for an excuse to get me out of the team?" he exclaimed. "You've never wanted me in it, and you'd have kept me out from the beginning if you'd dared to stand against the committee."

"That settles it," said Wingate.

"I'm scratched, then?"

"You are."

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And Wingate turned away.

"Hold on a minute," said Loder, between his teeth. "I shall appeal to the footer committee about this, Wingate."

"You can do as you like."

"If Loder doesn't play, I don't play either," said Carne, in his silky voice.

"Well, you won't be much loss," said Courtney.

Wingate took a little notebook from his pocket, opened it at a page where eleven names were written, and drew a pencil through two of them deliberately. Loder and Carne watched him curiously.

"Anything more to say?" asked Loder, with a sneer.

"Yes," said Wingate grimly. "While we're on the subject, I may as well tell you what I've had in my mind for some time."

"Oh, go ahead!"

"You've been looking for trouble ever since the footer match some time back," said Wingate. "If you keep on as you've started you'll find it, and it may not be so pleasant as you seem to think. It's time for you to stop and think a bit, and mend your ways, Loder."

"Thanks for your good advice!"

"You think, perhaps, that I've had my eyes shut, because I don't care to interfere with a Sixth-Form fellow, and a prefect, if I can help it," said Wingate, his eyes gleaming.

"I know what goes on in your study. You, a prefect, who ought to be setting a decent example to the juniors. I know very well that smoking goes on in your study, and card-playing for money, and that you send fags down to the village for smokes. That has got to stop."

"Oh, that's got to stop, has it?" said Loder, compressing his lips.

"Yes, it's got to stop. Because you're a prefect, I haven't interfered. I hoped you'd come round to act decently of your own accord; but it seems that you won't, and I feel that I've neglected my duty as head prefect and captain of the school for too long. You've no more right to break the rules of the school than the youngest fag in the Second Form. In fact, there are a good many fags in the Second who are more credit to the school than you are."

"Thanks!"

"I'm giving you a plain warning, and I mean it in a friendly spirit," said the captain of Greyfriars. "After this I'm not going to shut my eyes to anything that goes on in the Sixth-Form passage, any more than to what goes on in the Fifth or the Fourth. If there is any more smoking in your study, Loder, you'll hear from me. And if I find you sending fags on forbidden errands, I shall report you to the Head."

Loder turned pale.

"So you are setting up as a sneak?" he said.

"I sha'n't reply to that. I know what my duty is, and I'm going to do it. I've heard that you are giving a little party in your study this evening. I know what a little party in your study means. Mind, the door is not to be locked!"

"I can't lock my own study door if I like now, then?"

"No, you can't," said Wingate. "There's no reason to lock it, unless you're up to something you're ashamed to have seen. I shall very likely give you a look in, and if you're breaking any of the school rules, look out for trouble!"

"You'll find trouble enough if you come meddling in my study," said Loder savagely. "You may be captain of the school, but you'll go out on your neck if you trouble me!"

"Hear, hear!" said Carne.

Wingate's eyes gleamed, and he clenched his hands. It looked for a moment as if he would rush upon the prefect; and Loder, too, clenched his hands, ready for the attack.

"Cave!" muttered Courtney. "The Head!"

Wingate unclenched his hands.

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, was coming towards the house, and his eyes had fallen upon the scene. He frowned, and quickened his pace.

"Wingate! Loder!"

Wingate flushed crimson.

"Ye-es, sir," he stammered.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the Head sharply, looking from one to the other. "I am very much surprised at you, the captain of the school, and a prefect quarrelling in the open quadrangle before all Greyfriars. I have supposed that you would have had more regard for appearances, if not for your duty."

"I am sorry, sir," said Loder. "I had no intention whatever of attacking Wingate, sir."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"Indeed, Wingate, it seems to me that the aggression was on your side," he said. "You were about to strike Loder, I believe. I do not know what you have been disputing about, nor do I care to know. But I must impress upon you

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that this is not the kind of conduct that is required of the head prefect of Greyfriars. I am very much surprised at you, Wingate, and I must say plainly that I hope there will be no recurrence of this."

And Dr. Locke rustled away, frowning.

Wingate stood dumbfounded.

Loder smiled.

"You cad!" muttered Wingate at last, finding his voice. "You saw the Head coming! That was why you wanted to get up a row!"

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

His shrug was more irritating, perhaps, than his words had been. And again Wingate clenched his hands, and his eyes gleamed.

But Courtney caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, George, old man!" he muttered. "Dash it all, the Head is still in sight! Come on, and get down to the footer!"

Wingate nodded, and, swallowing his wrath, he followed his chums towards the football ground. Carne chuckled softly. The two black sheep of the Sixth resumed their walk towards the school gates.

"But what about that little party to-night?" asked Carne, after a pause. "Do you think that Wingate meant what he said?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Then we shall have to give it up."

"No fear!"

Carne looked very uneasy.

"But if Wingate should come in, Loder——"

The prefect gritted his teeth.

"Let him come! I'm not going to be bullied by Wingate, captain or no captain! And he may not be captain of Greyfriars so long as he thinks."

"But he is captain now, and head prefect," urged Carne, "and he has a right——"

"I sha'n't let him interfere with me!"

"Then we're going ahead just the same?"

"Just the same," said Loder.

"There will be trouble."

"I don't care if there is!"

"It's risky."

"Hang the risk!"

And Carne said no more.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Minor and Major.

DICKY NUGENT, of the Second Form at Greyfriars, granted discontentedly.

"It's simply rotten!" he said. "I'm blessed if I'm going to stand it! Anyway, I wouldn't stand it if I could help it!"

Gatty and Myers, Nugent's minor's chums in the Second, grinned sympathetically.

It was really a very hard case.

Long ago the Remove had established their right not to be fagged by the seniors, and their freedom from those troublesome duties caused all the more to fall upon the Second and the Third.

That afternoon Dicky Nugent and his chums had planned a little excursion, and they had been about to start, when Nugent's minor's services were called upon.

"It'll take up the whole rotten afternoon!" said Dicky angrily. "I've got to go over to Courtfield, and fetch a parcel for Loder. And I know jolly well what's in the parcel, too!"

"What's in it?" asked Gatty curiously.

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Nugent minor snorted.

"Loder's giving a party in his study this evening," he said. "You know what Loder's little parties are like. He always has a supply of cigarettes and cigars to finish up with. I've seen Walker coming away looking as sick as a boiled owl, pretending he's been enjoying himself, the silly ass!"

"Against the rules to smuggle smokes into the school," said Myers, with a sage shake of the head.

"A lot Loder cares for the rules," said Dicky Nugent, with another snort. "Nobody's likely to look into a parcel for a prefect. And if a master should happen to look into it and find the smokes, he's quite capable of disowning the parcel and me, too, and letting me get it in the neck."

"Nice chap to have for a prefect, I don't think!" said Gatty. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, I shall have to go, I suppose!" said Dicky. "I'm Loder's fag, and so I'm bound to fag for him, I suppose. But it's rotten!"

"Beastly!" said Gatty. "And it mucks up our little bike run, too. Couldn't you get somebody else to go? Ask your major."

Dicky looked thoughtful.

"Well, I might ask Frank," he remarked. "I don't see why he couldn't go. What's the good of having a major in the school if he can't do anything for you? Loder said I wasn't to let anybody see the parcel; but that can't be helped. Come on!"

"Where are you going?"

"No. 1 Study."

"But your major's down on the footer ground," said Myers.

"That's all right."

"But—I say—"

"Oh, come on!" said Dicky crossly. "What a chap you are for jawing, Myers!"

And Nugent minor proceeded to No. 1 Study, followed by his two chums. No. 1 Study was empty when the fags entered it. Dicky took a sheet of impot-paper, and dipped a pen in the ink.

"Oh, you're going to leave a note for Frank, is that it?" asked Myers.

"Guessed it, have you?" said Dicky, beginning to scrawl.

"But suppose he won't go?"

"Oh, he'll go, because he knows that Loder will lick me if the parcel isn't fetched!" said Dicky wisely. "It's Franky's business to look after me, as my major, and he's bound to get me out of a licking."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dicky scrawled his note, and pinned it down in a prominent position on the table. Then the fags left the study; and in five minutes they had left the school, too. It was nearly an hour later when the chums of the Remove came in, tired, and a little out of breath, after some hard footer practice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's a note for you, Franky!"

"For me?" said Nugent.

"Look!"

Nugent looked at the note. It ran:

"Dear Frank,—Loder wants a parcel fetched from Mr. Miggs', in Courtfield. You simply say you've called for the parcel for Loder, and it will be all rite. I can't go, because I'm going out with Myers and Gatty, so will you go, like a good chap, because I shall get a licking if Loder don't get the parcel.—Your loving brother,

"Dick."

Nugent granted.

"Well, of all the cheek!" he exclaimed. "To ask me to go over to Courtfield for a rotten parcel for a rotten outsider like Loder! Catch me!"

"Shove it in the fire," said Harry Wharton. "We're going to have tea."

Nugent twisted up the note to throw it into the fire, and paused.

"The young ass!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "Loder will give him an awful licking for not fetching the parcel."

"Serve him right!" said Johnny Bull. "I say, I'm hungry. Marky will be in with the grub in a minute."

"You can't go, Frank," said Bob Cherry.

Nugent hesitated.

"I don't want Dicky licked," he said. "He deceives it, the young scamp. But—"

"Too late to go, too," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, I could cut across on my bike."

"Oh, rats! Sit down and have tea."

Mark Linley came in, with a parcel from the tuckshop under his arm. Harry Wharton was stirring up the fire, and he planted the kettle upon it.

"Where's the frying-pan?" he asked.

"Here you are," said Bob Cherry cheerfully, taking that useful utensil out of the bookcase. "It wants rubbing out."

"Nugent's impot will do; it's no good for Mossoo now."

"Good!"

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"Fill the kettle, Franky, old man."
"Oh, blow the kettle!" said Nugent crossly.
"And lay the cloth."
"Blow the cloth!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, go and get your jigger out, and buzz off!" he said. "I know you're going down to Courtfield, whatever we say. If I had a minor like that, I'd skin him! Buzz off, and we'll save some of the ham and eggs for you."

"I suppose I'd better go," said Nugent thoughtfully. "I wonder what is in the parcel?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"You know Miggs' in Courtfield," he said. "It's a sweetstuff-shop on one side, and a tobacconist's on the other. And I don't suppose Loder is sending there for sugar-candy or bullseyes for his little party to-night."

"The rotter! Smokes, of course," growled Nugent. "He's no right to send a fag out for that kind of thing. I've a jolly good mind not to go, only—Dicky—I suppose I'd better go—the young rascal!"

And Nugent quitted the study.

"If I had a minor like that—" said Bob Cherry impressively. Then he paused; words were not equal to expressing what he would have done if he had had a minor like Frank Nugent's minor.

Harry Wharton & Co. sat down to tea. There was an appetising smell of fried ham and eggs in No. 1 Study, which penetrated into the passage, and brought two or three other juniors strolling into the study in a casual sort of way. Fisher T. Fisher, the American junior, and Dick Rake, the new boy in the Remove, joined the tea-party in No. 1; and the study "brow" proceeded merrily, while Nugent was pedalling away towards Courtfield to fetch Loder's parcel from Mr. Miggs'.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Little Joke on Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the—"

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

"You ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry sat back in his chair and roared.

The rest of the tea-party in No. 1 Study looked at him.

There was no apparent cause for Bob Cherry's merriment. The juniors had nearly finished tea. They were discussing a forthcoming football match with the juniors of St. Jim's, but there was nothing in that to evoke Bob Cherry's sudden roar of laughter.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Got a pain?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Something gone down the wrong way?" asked Rake.

"No, ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then stop going off like a Chinese cracker!" said Harry Wharton. "I was saying that when we meet Tom Merry's eleven—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's in a fit," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you'd better thump him on the back. I guess I'll do it."

"Ha, ha—Ow! Yow! Leave off, you ass!"

Thump, thump!

"Ow! Ow! Stoppit!"

"Feel better now?" asked Fisher T. Fish, with solicitude. "Don't mind giving me trouble! I'll thump you on the back as long as you like."

Bob Cherry jumped up, kicking his chair backwards. Fisher T. Fish had thumped not wisely but too well, and Bob Cherry's merriment had ceased quite suddenly.

"You ass!" roared Bob.

Fisher T. Fish retreated round the table.

"Well, I guess I was only trying to oblige," he said.

"If you want any more—"

"What's the joke?" demanded Harry Wharton. "What were you cackling at?"

Bob Cherry's wrathful brow cleared, and he burst into a laugh again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if he isn't beginning again!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Collar the silly ass, and bump him till he leaves off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Collar him!"

Three or four pairs of hands were laid violently upon the hilarious junior, and Bob Cherry was brought with a slam against the study wall. He roared.

"Ow! Leggo! I'll explain!"

"You'd better," said Johnny Bull wrathfully. "Now, what is it?"

"It's about that parcel Franky's fetching for Loder. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what about it?"

"It's got smokes in it—we know that. Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhaniper. "The bump-fulness is the proper caper."

"Bump him!"

Biff!

"Ow! It—it's all right!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Lemme alone, and I'll explicate. You know we've got some crackers and things left over from the last Fifth of November."

"We know that. What the—"

"Well, when Franky comes back with the parcel—"

The door opened, and Frank Nugent came in, with a parcel under his arm. He tossed it upon the study table, and sank into a chair.

"I've scorched all the way," he growled. "Gimme some tea. I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"Blow the tea," said Bob Cherry. "Gimme the parcel!"

"Hallo, that belongs to Loder," said Frank, in astonishment, as Bob Cherry seized the parcel, and began to untie it.

"I know it does, Franky. I'm going to see what's inside."

"Here's a knife," said Johnny Bull. "Cut the string."

"Ass! How can we make it look just as it was before if we cut the string?"

"Do you want to make it look just as it was before?" demanded Johnny Bull, mystified.

"Of course I do."

"Blessed if I see why."

"There are lots of things you don't see, Johnny. There are more things in the heavens and the earth and Loder's parcels than are dreamt of in your philosophy, as Shakespeare puts it."

"I think you've gone off your rocker!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry did not reply to that remark. He untied the string, and opened the thick brown-paper in which the parcel was wrapped. Frank Nugent was busy with the ham and eggs, which had been kept warm for him in the fender; but all the other fellows had their eyes upon the contents of Loder's parcel as Bob opened it. The contents were as they had expected. There were six cigars tied up in a little bundle, and a box of cigarettes.

Harry Wharton's lip curled.

"That's the kind of stuff Loder sends fags for," he said, "and that chap wants to shift Wingate and become captain of Greyfriars!"

"My dear kid, Loder is going to learn the error of his ways," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "He won't enjoy smoking these cigars and things. Where are those old crackers?"

"What on earth do you want the old crackers for?"

"To get the powder out of them."

"The—the powder!"

"Yes."

"What for?" yelled all the juniors together.

Bob Cherry did not reply in words. He took an awl from Nugent's tool-box, and proceeded to bore a little hole in the end of one of the cigars.

Then the Removites understood.

There was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You catch on now!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton brought out the old fireworks. They were cut open, and a little heap of powder was poured into a saucer. Bob Cherry bored the hole about an inch into the end of the cigar, and then crammed a few grains of the powder into it, and then squeezed the end of the cigar tightly. The hole closed up, and it was hard to see that the cigar had been meddled with at all.

"When that cigar's lighted," said Bob Cherry, with a cheerful grin, "as soon as the light gets to that little bit of powder it turns the cigar into a squib, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's only a little bit, not enough to do any damage,"

said Bob Cherry. "When it flashes off, it may startle Loder, perhaps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it may spoil the flavour of the cigar—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But that will really be rendering Loder a service. Growing youths oughtn't to smoke; it stunts their growth and spoils their wind. Loder isn't able to take proper care of himself, and it's up to us to look after an innocent prefect who's falling into bad ways."

"Hear, hear!"

"Lend me a hand with the other cigars."

The juniors willingly lent a hand. The rest of the cigars were soon doctored. The few grains of powder were not powerful enough to do any damage—excepting to the cigar. But there was no doubt that they would have spoiled the flavour of the very best Havanas.

"Now for the cigarettes," said Bob Cherry. "Can't doctor the lot, but the top layer will be enough."

"Good egg!"

And the top layer of cigarettes in the box were soon doctored.

Then the box was closed again, and the cigars re-tied in a little bundle; and Bob Cherry fastened up the parcel, and tied the string. The parcel looked as it had looked before, and it would have been hard to tell that it had been opened.

Ten minutes later, there was a knock at the door, and Nugent minor looked in. He gave his major a rather sheepish look.

"Did you find my note, Franky?" he asked.

"Yes, I did, you young rotter!"

"Got the parcel?"

"Yes," growled Nugent.

"Well, you needn't look so ratty about it," said Dicky Nugent, with an injured air. "You have told me often enough that it's your bizney to look after me, and take me under your giddy wing, and so forth. Where's the parcel?"

"There it is."

Nugent minor picked up the little packet from the table.

"Thanks!" he said. "Look here, Franky, I'm much obliged to you, you know! We've brought in some herrings, and we're going to cook them over the Form-room fire. You can come if you like."

"Go hon!" said Nugent.

"Well, they'll be good," said Dicky. "I'm going to cook them myself."

"You can eat them yourself, too," said Nugent, laughing.

"Oh, rats! You needn't come!" said Dicky independently. "It's a rotten bother having a major hanging about, anyway! Go and eat coke!"

And Dicky Nugent walked away with the parcel, and slammed the study door after him. The chains of the Remove grinned at one another.

"There will be fireworks this evening in Loder's study," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dicky Nugent made his way to the Sixth-Form passage, and tapped at Loder's door. Loder and Carne were in the study, with Walker and Valence of the Sixth. Loder glanced inquiringly at his fag.

"Got it?" he asked.

"Here it is," said Dicky.

And he laid the parcel upon the table, and quitted the study before the prefect could ask him any questions.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Coker is Not Pleased.

LODER'S study presented a very cheerful aspect that evening, and it looked very inviting when Loder's guests entered.

Two fags had laboured at preparing the feast, and the study.

There were Valence and Walker and Phipps and Carne of the Sixth, and Horace Coker of the Fifth Form.

Coker of the Fifth had never been a guest in the prefect's study before, and he was considerably surprised at receiving the invitation.

But he had accepted it cheerfully enough. A feed was a feed, even if it was stood by a fellow like Loder. Loder was not so obnoxious to Coker of the Fifth as he was to the fags. If he had a heavy hand with the juniors, Coker regarded it with approval.

Coker considered that the lower Forms ought to be kept in their place. It was not so very long since Coker had been in the Shell himself; but Coker had a way of conveniently forgetting that little fact. Coker was a senior now, and, indeed, his late friends in the Shell declared that he was more

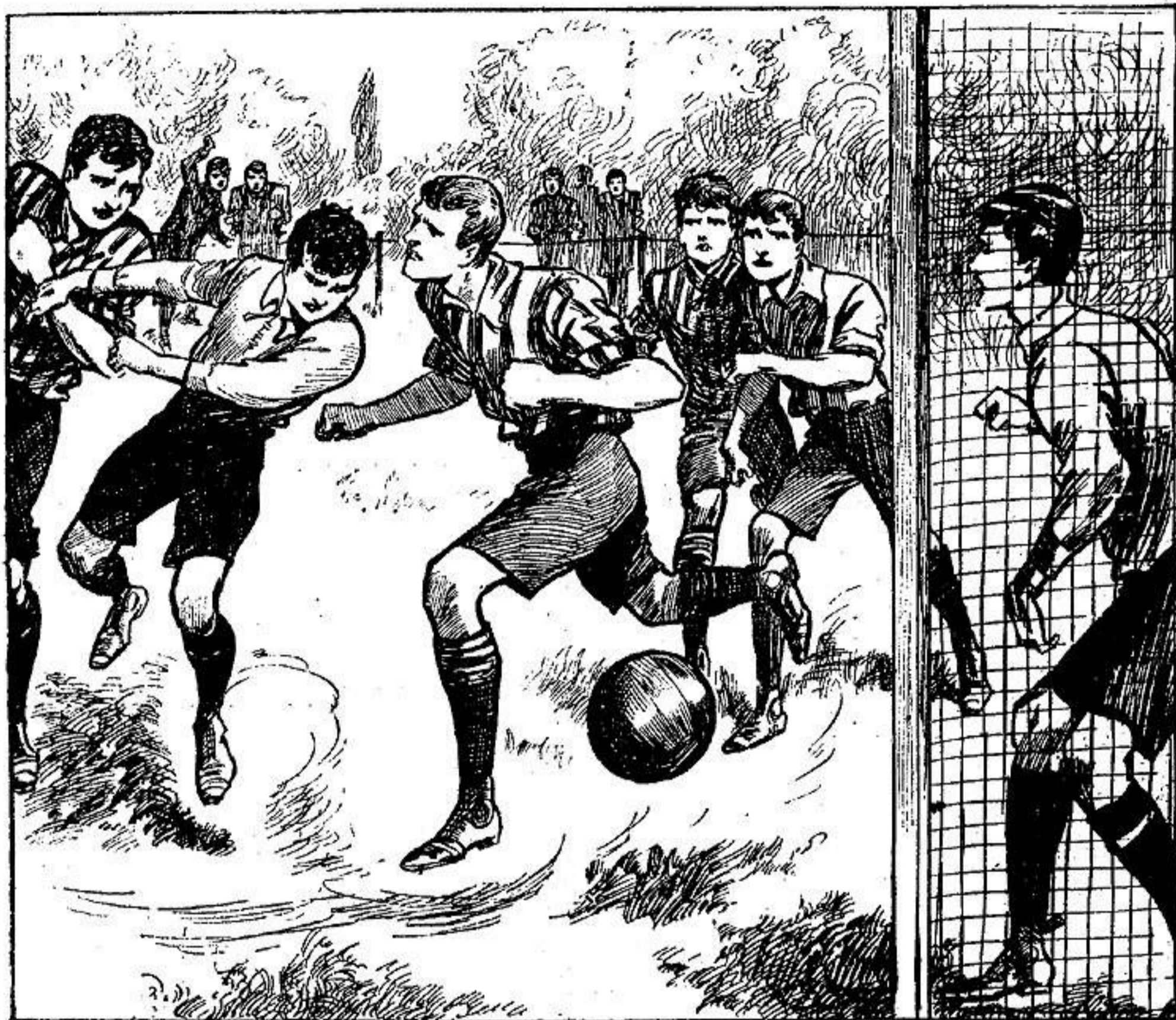
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Right for the goal-mouth the ball whizzed, and the next moment Harry Wharton was shouldered over and fell. He heard a shout as he rolled over. Was it a goal? (See Chapter 11.)

Fifth-former than any other fellow in the Fifth. Coker was surprised and pleased by Loder's invitation, and as it did not occur to his far from keen intelligence that the prefect had something to get out of him, he could only attribute the invitation to the fact that he was excellent company. So Coker of the Fifth turned up in a beautiful clean collar, and a new necktie, and with his best smile on.

Loder greeted him very politely.

The six fellows sat down to tea. There were piles of toast, dishes of eggs and ham, heaps of jam tarts and cake, shrimps, and other delicacies galore. Loder was evidently going it strong.

The feed had been prepared by the labours of Bolsover minor, and Tubb of the Third; but the fags had been turned out of the study when all was finished. Loder had things to say that fags' ears were not to hear.

Coker of the Fifth chatted genially, not noticing specially that he was doing most of the talking.

The Sixth-Formers listened to him with remarkable courtesy.

Coker's views on footer, on the off-side rule, on the subject of fagging the Remove, and on many other matters were received with politeness.

"You ought to be in the Sixth, Coker," said Carne at last. "I wish we had you in our Form."

"You've got my minor," grinned Coker. "I say, I must

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remark that you're doing us down well this time. Loder! By the way, is it true that you're out of the Redclyffe match on Saturday? I've heard so."

Loder nodded.

"Yes, Wingate scratched my name," he said.

"That's hard cheese," said Coker.

"Oh, I don't know!" said Loder. "I don't know that I care to play under Wingate, anyway. I don't approve of his methods."

Coker looked surprised.

"Old Wingate is a jolly good skipper!" he said.

Gerald Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"Might be two opinions about that," he said. "I think there's too much favouritism in the team. Too much of the Sixth, I think, and too little of the Fifth."

"Hear, hear!" said Walker, winking into the teacup.

"Just so!" said Carne.

"That's how it's struck me," said Valence.

"My opinion exactly," remarked Phipps.

Coker nodded thoughtfully.

"I must say I've thought the same myself," he remarked.

"There are only two of the Fifth in the eleven at present—Blundel and Bland. Now, I must say that I think I'm as good a half as you'll find in Greyfriars."

"Better," said Walker.

"CAPTAIN COKER!"

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"I think I play back, too, as well as the next man," said Coker.

"So you do," said Valence. "I've seen you play in the Fifth-Form matches, and I've never seen anybody else play just like it."

"Well, it's good to be appreciated by somebody," said Coker, helping himself to the cake. "I can't get Blundell to understand that I ought to be a regular member of the Form team."

"Blundell's a good half, but no skipper," said Loder, with a shake of the head. "You'd get your cap for the Form team easily enough if you were played in the first eleven."

Coker laughed.

"That's not likely to happen," he said. "I've spoken to Wingate about it, and he said that when we were playing a girls' school he'd put me in, but not before."

"Oh, Wingate!" said Loder. "But George Wingate mayn't always be captain of Greyfriars. Lots of the fellows think it's time there was a change."

"Well, if a change in the captain meant letting fresh blood into the team, I'd say it was a good thing," Coker remarked thoughtfully.

"The fact is, I'd like to have a talk with you about that, Coker," said Loder, in his most genial way. "I've noticed that there is a general feeling that Wingate doesn't really give satisfaction as captain of the school, and that there ought to be a change. For the sake of the eleven chiefly."

"Good!" said Coker. "Suppose we asked him to resign, and had a fresh election?"

The Sixth-Formers exchanged a glance. Coker had of his own accord come to the point they had wished to draw him to.

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Carne.

"Jolly good one!" said Walker.

"Bipping!" said Phipps.

Coker almost purred with pleasure. It was not often that his remarks were greeted with a chorus of approval from fellows in the Sixth Form.

"But who'd you think of suggesting in Wingate's place?" asked Coker.

"What about Loder?" said Carne.

"H'm!"

"If I got in as skipper, I should reconstruct the team," said Loder modestly. "I should make it more representative of Greyfriars, by letting in some of the Fifth. I was thinking of you, Coker, as centre-half."

"Oh, good!" said Coker. "Now you're talking!"

"Your pals, Potter and Greene, could come in, too," said Loder. "You can tell them so from me. Of course, no need to talk about it in public till it's done. That's between ourselves for the present."

"Oh, quite so!" said Coker. "I understand!"

"The chief thing to think of is the good of the eleven, and the honour of the school generally," said Loder. "If I could count on your support, Coker, and your influence in the Fifth for votes, I should be inclined to put it to the test. I shouldn't care to try it if you were against me."

Coker felt very flattered.

"You could jolly well depend on me!" he said. "The footer record lately hasn't been too good, and if I played centre-half it might make a difference."

"It might," said Loder solemnly.

"It jolly well would!" murmured Valence.

Coker looked at Valence suspiciously.

"I mean that we should win matches," Valence hastened to explain.

"Another cup of tea, Coker?" said Loder hospitably.

"No, thanks!"

"Try the cream puffs."

"Finished, thank you!" said Coker. "I say, that's a good idea of a new skipper, and a new team! I know Potter and Green will stand by me. In fact, you'd have a lot of the Fifth on your side."

"If Wingate could be got to resign, and stand a new election!" said Loder.

"Oh, he'd do that if he were asked by a good many fellows!"

Loder rose from the tea-table, and opened the box of cigarettes. Carne struck a match.

"You'll have a fag, Coker," said Loder genially.

Coker hesitated. He was not given to smoking, though it had rather an attraction for him as it was against the rules.

"I—I don't know," he said.

"Cigar or cigarette?" asked Loder.

"Oh, a cig.!" said Coker hastily.

He selected a cigarette in rather a gingerly manner from the box, and placed it between his lips.

"Light!" said Carne.

"Thank you!"

Carne approached the match to the cigarette, and Coker

blew out a whiff of smoke. The next moment he gave a jump and a yell.

Pop! Whiz!

The cigarette flew through the air, and fell upon the tea-table. Coker staggered back, red with rage.

"You silly asses!" he roared. "What a rotten trick to play on a fellow! You silly fatheads! So that's what you asked me here for, was it? You chumps!"

"My hat," exclaimed Loder, "I—I—"

"I didn't know—" gasped Carne.

"You silly fatheads!" roared Coker, rubbing his mouth. "You ought to have more sense, playing rotten japes like rotten fags! Yah! You can go and eat coke! Ow!"

And Coker stamped out of the study, and slammed the door behind him, with a slam that rang the whole length of the Sixth-Form passage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not a Quiet Smoke.

L ODER stood with a look of astonishment upon his face. What was the matter with the unfortunate cigarette he had not the faintest idea. But it was only too evident that there had been something the matter with it.

"Well, you must be an ass, Loder!" said Carne, in disgust.

The prefect glared at him.

"What do you mean?" he growled.

"To play a rotten trick like that on Coker. You'd just got him round to what you wanted, and then you spoiled it all. What did you do it for?"

"You chump!" roared Loder. "Do you think I did it? I don't know what was the matter with the rotten cigarette!"

"There was gunpowder in it, I should say," said Valence.

"Of course there was," said Carne. "And it was a rotten jape. Loder ought to have known better. You'll never get it out of Coker's head now that he was brought here to be japed."

Loder gritted his teeth.

"I suppose it was a jape," he said. "But I know nothing about it. Somebody has been meddling with my cigarettes!"

"Who could have done it?" said Carne.

"Nugent minor, perhaps. He brought them for me from Courtfield," said Loder, between his teeth. "I'll make him smart for it, too, the young sweep!"

"Well, it's all up with Coker!" growled Carne. "You'll have him against you, instead of backing you up."

"Oh, I'll bring him round in time," said Loder. "He wants to play centre-half in the first eleven badly."

"He'll play centre-half badly whether he wants to or not!" grinned Valence.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What about young Hobson of the Shell?" said Walker, with a chuckle. "It seems to me I heard you telling him something about centre-half in the first eleven."

"Why not?" said Loder coolly. "Hobson thinks that a Shell fellow ought to be given a chance in the first eleven, and I've told him that if he can play centre-half, I'll give him the chance. It's all right; he won't be able to play, and I sha'n't give him the chance. But meanwhile—"

"Meanwhile he backs you up against Wingate."

"Exactly."

"All serene, unless he compares notes with Coker!" grinned Phipps.

"He won't do that," said Loder. "He's under a promise of secrecy. I pointed out to him that it would have to be kept dark, in case fellows should think that I was bribing him for his vote—a thing neither of us thought of for a moment, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows have a smoke?" said Loder.

"Not a cigarette, thanks," said Carne, grinning.

"Well, the cigars are all right."

And the worthy youths selected cigars, and lighted them. Carne and Loder and Walker lighted theirs at the same moment.

Fizz! Fizz!

Bang!

"Oh!"

"Yaroo!"

"Yow!"

Three cigars dropped to the floor at the same moment. Loder staggered back to the mantelpiece, and Carne dropped into the chair. Walker reeled against the table, and there was a crash of crockeryware.

Valence and Phipps promptly tossed their cigars into the grate without lighting them.

"Ow!" gasped Carne. "Oh, you ass, Loder! You silly chump!"

"You idiot!" roared Walker. "How dare you play such a rotten trick on me?"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Loder. "Do you think I should play a trick like that on myself, too? Some young villain has been doctoring the cigars!"

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"You'd better shove those giddy smokes on the fire!" said Valence, with a grin. "They're not safe!"

"It must have been Nugent minor!" hissed Loder. "I remember he didn't want to go to Courtfield for the cigarettes, and he's opened the parcel and doctored them on his way back, of course. I'll make him wriggle for it!"

"Grooh!" grunted Walker. "I've got a beastly taste in my mouth. I'm going to wash it out. Grooh!"

And Walker left the study. Valence followed him, laughing. Gerald Loder's face was white with rage.

"One of you go and fetch Nugent minor here," he said. "We'll give him a thundering good licking with a cricket-stump, and teach him not to play tricks on the Sixth!"

"Right-ho!" said Carne.

Carne hurried out of the study. At the end of the Sixth-Form passage several members of the Remove were standing in a group, chatting. Carne recognised Frank Nugent among them, and called to him. It did not occur to the senior that the Removites were not there by chance, and that they were on the watch.

"Nugent!" he rapped out.

"Hallo!" said Frank.

"Where's your minor?"

"I don't know."

"Well, find him, and send him to Loder's study. He's wanted."

Nugent major shook his head.

"Sorry, Carne—"

"Go and do as I tell you, or I'll make you sorrier!" said the bully of the Sixth, with a scowl.

"Can't be did! The Remove don't fag for the Sixth now," said Frank, with dignity. "That question was settled long ago."

"You young sweep—"

"If you asked me nicely, I might go," said Frank.

Carne clenched his hands, and started towards the Removite. The juniors closed up to receive him. There were four of them, and it occurred to Carne that they would be a very difficult handful to tackle. He paused.

"Will you do as I tell you, Nugent?" he exclaimed.

"Not this evening," said Frank calmly.

"Then take that!" roared Carne.

And he delivered a blow at Nugent.

Frank Nugent did not take it. He dodged away, and Carne's heavy hand swept the empty air.

"Collar him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

The four Removites piled on the bully of the Sixth in an instant.

Before he knew what was happening, Carne of the Sixth was lifted off his feet, and laid down upon his back in the passage—not gently.

Then the juniors fled.

Carne sat up in rather a dazed way.

"The—the cheeky young rotters!" he gasped. "I'll—I'll—"

He staggered to his feet. The Removites were gone, and Carne, swallowing his wrath as best he could, made his way to the Second-Form room in search of Nugent minor.

The chums of the Remove had taken refuge in No. 1 Study. They were ready for the bully of the Sixth if he had followed them there; but he did not.

"One to us, and nil to the enemy," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know what they want young Dicky for," said Nugent, with rather a troubled look. "They think Dicky doctored the cigars."

"And they're going to wallop him!" Johnny Bull remarked.

"It's got to be stopped!" said Nugent resolutely. "I'm not going to have Dicky licked by those rotten bullies, especially as it was our jape."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's all right," he said; "we'll rescue him. Let's call up some of the fellows, and we'll get Dicky out of Loder's study in next to no time."

"My hat!" said Johnny Bull. "It's a curious bizney to raid a prefect's study."

"Not this time. Loder won't care to make too much row about the matter, in case it gets out about the smokes. He can't explain to the Head what Dicky's supposed to have done."

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose not."

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton. "Loder's been getting his ears up altogether too much lately, and it's time we showed him that the Remove hasn't forgotten how to go on the warpath. We'll rescue young Dicky, and if Loder cuts up

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rustly we'll wreck his giddy study. He can't take us before the Head; and we're not afraid of Loder by himself."

"Hear, hear!"

And the chums of the Remove hurriedly gathered their forces.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Remove to the Rescue!

THERE was a smell of cooking in the Second-Form room. Round the big fire at the end of the Form-room Dicky Nugent & Co. were gathered. The fags of the Second had no studies, and when they wanted to prepare their own tea, instead of having it in Hall, they usually used the Form-room, which was free to them until the hour for evening preparation. Nugent minor, Gatty, and Myers had brought in supplies for their tea, after their little excursion that afternoon, and all was almost ready now. Sammy Bunter—Bunter minor—had joined them, attracted perhaps by the smell of the herrings impaled upon pens in front of the fire. The herrings were well done; in fact, a little too well done, and Gatty and Myers were passing friendly criticisms upon their chum's abilities as a chef.

"Oh, ring off!" said Dicky. "The herrings are done to a turn. Have you got any plates?"

"Exercise-books," said Gatty.

"Well, don't use mine," said Dicky. "It will make it in a mess. I'll have Bunter's."

"Look here—" began Sammy Bunter.

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Dicky. "You're going to have one of the herrings."

Sammy Bunter blinked at the overdone fish through his spectacles.

"Blessed if I care much about having one," he remarked. "I'm not fond of cinders myself. I'd rather have some of the tarts."

"All the tarts are booked, my son," said Gatty. "If the herrings ain't good enough for you—"

"Why, where are the tarts?" exclaimed Myers wrathfully. "The fat boulder's been scoffing our tarts!"

"I—I had just one to go on with, you know," stammered Bunter minor.

"One! There's four gone!"

"Well, as I was peckish, I had another—"

"And another and another!" yelled Dicky. "You horrid porpoise! You jolly well sha'n't have one of the herrings now!"

Sammy Bunter grinned.

"Bump him!" growled Gatty.

"Oh, I say—" began Sammy.

The three fags were advancing towards the fat Second-Former, when the door of the Form-room opened, and Carne came in.

The fags paused, and looked at him.

"Nugent minor!" rapped out Carne.

"Hallo!" said Dicky resignedly. "What is it now?"

"You're wanted!" growled Carne.

"Oh, I say, that's too thick!" said Dicky indignantly. "I've been fagging for Loder already. If you want a fag, why can't you have young Bunter?"

"You're wanted in Loder's study."

"Tell Loder I'm busy."

"Are you coming?" said Carne pleasantly, reaching out and grasping Dicky's ear.

"Yow! Ow! Yes! Leggo!"

"You'd better get a move on, then."

"Leave some of the grub for me, you fellows," said Dicky dismally.

"Right-ho!" said Gatty. "We'll save the best-done herring for you, old man—the one you've cooked most."

Nugent minor snorted, and followed Carne out of the Form-room.

"Look here, Carne, what does Loder want?" he asked, as they made their way to the Sixth-Form passage.

"You'll find out when you get there," said Carne grimly.

"Wouldn't Sammy Bunter do?"

"No, he wouldn't!"

Dicky Nugent growled, and followed Carne into Loder's study. Loder and Phipps were there waiting for him, and the expression upon their faces alarmed the fag. He made a movement to retreat, but Carne caught him by the shoulder and whirled him into the study. Then he locked the door.

"I—I say, what's the row, Loder?" gasped Dicky.

Loder gave him a scowl.

"You know jolly well what the row is," he said. "I'm going to give you a lesson not to jape the Sixth, you young hound."

"I—I haven't been japing anybody," said the fag, in bewilderment.

"Don't tell lies!" growled Loder.
 "I'm not telling lies," said Dicky, with spirit. "I tell you—"

"You know what was in the parcel I sent you for?"
 "Well, I guessed. I haven't told anybody—anybody but Gatty and Myers, anyway," said Dicky. "I didn't open the parcel."
 "You didn't open it!" thundered Loder.
 "No, I didn't."
 "Then how did you doctor the cigars and cigarettes without opening it?"
 "I—I didn't!" said Dicky. "Oh, that ass Frank!"
 "Frank! What has your major got to do with it?" said Loder harshly.

Dicky Nugent did not reply. He guessed what had happened, but he did not mean to give his major away. He was silent.

"Lay the young cad across the table, you two!" said Loder, picking up a cricket stump. "I'll give him the licking of his life!"

"Look here—" began Dicky.

"Hold your tongue!"

Dicky made a rush for the door. Carne and Phipps seized him, and he was swung off his feet, and tossed upon the table, face downwards. Loder raised the cricket stump.

"Ow!" yelled Dicky, in anticipation.

He had cause to yell the next moment. The cricket stump descended with a resounding thwack, and Nugent's minor roared in good earnest.

"Yaroooh!"

"Give him a dozen, Loder!" said Carne.

"I'll give him two dozen!" said Loder.

"Yow! Yarooog! Help!"

"Shut up, you young idiot!"

"Yow! Rescue!" roared Dicky

Crash!

The door shook under a terrific attack from outside. Loder paused with the cricket stump already raised.

"Who's there?" he roared.

"Remove!" came back the voice of Harry Wharton.

"Have you got Nugent minor in there?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Yes, I'm here!" yelled Dicky. "Rescue! The beasts are licking me! Ow! Yow! Yaroooh!"

Crash!

"Open this door!"

"If you don't clear off I'll come out to you!" roared Loder furiously.

"That's just what we want you to do!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The wantfulness is terrific, my esteemed Loder!"

"Faith, and we're ready for ye!"

The stump descended again, and Dicky Nugent gave a wail of anguish.

Crash! Crash!

The door of the study shook and groaned. With a final crash the lock gave way, and the door flew open. A crowd of juniors swarmed into the room.

Loder stared at them in blank astonishment and rage. He had never dreamed that the heroes of the Remove would venture to burst in a prefect's door.

"You—you young villains!" he gasped. "You—you—"

Frank Nugent rushed to the table, and dragged his minor off it.

"Come on, Dicky!"

"Ow!" groaned Dicky. "Yow! You silly ass, Frank, you've got me in for this!"

"Well, we've rescued you!" said Frank.

"Yow! I'm hurt!"

"Clear out of my study, you fags!" roared Loder. "By Jove, I'll—I'll—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Harry Wharton. "If you want to know, it was we who doctored your smokes, and not Nugent minor at all!"

"Us!" said Bob Cherry sweetly. "Alone we did it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder made a rush at the Removites. He was swinging the stump about in a reckless way, apparently careless of the amount of damage he did. But there were too many of the juniors for him. The stump was wrenched out of his hand, and many hands were laid upon Gerald Loder, and he was bumped upon the carpet.

Phipps and Carne rushed to the rescue, and in a moment more a wild and whirling combat was raging in Loder's study.

Tables and chairs went flying, and the room speedily assumed a decidedly wrecked appearance.

Frank Nugent pushed his minor into the passage.

"You buzz off!" he said tersely.

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"THE GEN" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

The uproar in the study was, as Hurree Janset Ram Singh would have said, terrific. The furniture was being kicked and rolled in every direction, and in the midst of the overturned table and chairs the three seniors struggled with the crowd of juniors.

Seniors from the other studies came along the passage in amazement, to stare in at the open door upon the extraordinary scene.

"Stop that row!" exclaimed Wingate, one of the first to arrive. "Do you hear? What are you up to? Stop that at once!"

"Right-ho!" gasped Bob Cherry, who was seated upon Loder's chest, the prefect being extended upon his back on the floor. "Belay there, shipmates!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the conflict ceased. The victory was with the Famous Five and their comrades. Loder, Carne, and Phipps were on the floor, and the victorious juniors were sitting upon them, pinning them down by sheer weight. Wingate strode into the study, and looked at the strange scene with an angry frown.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

No Licking.

WINGATE stared at the Removites, and the Removites stared at Wingate. Under the weight of the juniors, stretched on the dusty carpet, Loder and Carne and Phipps wriggled and gasped for breath.

"Well?" said Wingate, at last.

"Quite well, thank you!" said Bob Cherry.

And there was a chuckle.

"What does this mean?" said Wingate. "How dare you invade a Sixth Form study in this way? Are you looking out for a flogging all round?"

"No, thanks!"

"The no-thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed Wingate."

"Draggemoff!" gasped the unhappy Loder.

"He's talking Russian, I think," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "Say it over again from the beginning, Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Draggemoff!" roared Loder.

"Get up!" said Wingate.

"Up it is," said Harry Wharton. "Obey orders, you fellows. We'll always do what you tell us, Wingate."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

The juniors rose to their feet, leaving the seniors gasping on the study floor. Loder & Co. picked themselves up painfully and breathlessly.

"Now," said Wingate, "before I give you kids the licking of your lives, you may as well tell me what all this is about."

The juniors exchanged glances. It was no business of theirs to betray the story of the cigars and cigarettes, but at the same time they did not want Wingate to suppose that their entry into Loder's study was an unprovoked raid.

"H'm!" said Harry Wharton. "Better ask Loder."

"Loder can tell you, Wingate," said Dick Rake.

Wingate looked at Loder.

"You can see what they've done, without asking questions, Wingate," said the prefect, in a choking voice.

"I'm going to thrash them within an inch of their lives—"

"Hold on!" said Wingate quietly. "We'll know what it was all about first."

"Are they going to be allowed to wreck a prefect's study?" roared Loder.

"I want to know why they did it."

"I was licking my fag, and they burst the door open and swarmed in, if you want to know," said Loder sullenly. "I suppose a prefect is allowed to lick his fag if he thinks it necessary, without asking permission of the Lower Fourth?"

"Yes; but—"

"The rotter was laying into my minor with a cricket stump," said Frank Nugent indignantly, "and Dicky hadn't done anything; we did it."

"Quite on our own," said Bob Cherry. "I thought of the jape, and we all did it together. Dicky Nugent hadn't anything to do with it."

"Oh, it was a jape, was it?" said Wingate drily.

"Yes; a little scheme we had to show Loder the error of his ways, and bring him up in the way he should go," said Bob Cherry innocently.

"What was it?"

Bob hesitated.

"Well, we're willing to let the matter drop, if Loder is," he said.



"Don't speak too loud," came Tom Merry's voice. "It's a ripping wheeze—a real high roller, and Figgins would give his ears to know it." Fatty Wynn drew a deep breath and ceased to eat. He was glad that he had been so cautious now. (For this incident see the grand long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled "THE MASKED ENTERTAINERS," by Martin Clifford, which is contained in this week's issue of our popular companion paper, "The Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

"Let the matter drop!" roared Loder. "I'm going to skin you, you young villains!"

"Cherry!" rapped out Wingate.

"Yes, George?"

Wingate made an angry gesture.

"If you do not want to be licked for raiding a senior study, you had better explain to me at once why you did it."

"Loder was licking Nugent minor, for something we had done. We japed Loder because he was a cad and wanted a lesson," said Bob Cherry. "I don't mind telling you about it, if Loder doesn't mind—"

"It's no business of yours, Wingate!" exclaimed Loder passionately. "I'm going to punish these fags for wrecking my study."

Wingate looked at him steadily.

"There's more in this than meets the eye," he said.

"You are not going to punish them without an explanation of what they have done."

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"It's in my power as a prefect to punish them, if I choose."

"And it's in my power as head prefect to stop you," said Wingate quietly.

"If you interfere with me, I shall complain to the Head," said Loder, his face white with passion.

Wingate shrugged his shoulders.

"You can suit yourself about that."

"What the dickens is all the mystery about?" exclaimed Courtney, who was looking in, with half a dozen other Sixth-Formers, at the door. "Why can't you explain what the trouble was about, Loder?"

"Because I don't choose to," said the prefect tartly. "I'm not going to be called over the coals and catechised."

"Very well," said Wingate coldly. "If you won't explain, you won't punish these juniors. You kids can clear out."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

Loder made a gesture of rage

"CAPTAIN COKER!"

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As the juniors started towards the door, feeling very glad to have got off so cheaply, Loder sprang towards them, and caught Bob Cherry by the shoulder.

Wingate stepped forward.

"Let Cherry go!" he said.

Loder glared defiance.

"I won't!"

"Take your hand off that kid!"

"I won't!"

Wingate's eyes burned.

"Then I shall make you!" he said.

"Stand back!" howled Loder.

Wingate did not reply. He caught hold of the prefect, wrenched him away from the junior, and sent him staggering across the study. There was a murmur from the group of Sixth-Formers round the doorway. The general feeling in the Sixth was that a prefect should be backed up through thick and thin in his dealings with the juniors; it was a case of "My Form, right or wrong."

But Wingate did not look at it from that point of view. And Wingate's temper was up, too. Loder had been looking for trouble for a long time, and striving to bring about a split in the Sixth. Wingate's patience was strained very nearly to breaking point now. He was, as he had said to Courtney, fed up.

Loder staggered against the mantelpiece, and caught hold of it to save himself. The Greyfriars captain made a gesture to the juniors, and they left the study. They were looking a little scared. They had not intended their raid to make an open quarrel like this between the captain of the school and Loder the prefect. They had felt that they could depend upon Wingate for justice; but they had not expected that Loder would back up against the captain of the school in this way.

There was a dead silence in the study for some moments. Loder broke it.

"You will hear more of this Wingate," he said thickly.

"I don't want to hear more of it," said Wingate scornfully.

"And it would be best for you to let the matter drop. You haven't told me what was the matter here, but I think I can guess pretty clearly the nature of it. I've spoken to you before about sending fags for smokes, and I think I can guess that that's what you've been doing this time, and the fag's major and his friends have interfered. And if that is the case, I back them up, juniors as they are. Is that the truth?"

"I don't intend to answer your questions."

Wingate smiled grimly.

"That means yes, I suppose?"

"I shall not satisfy your curiosity," said Loder. "You've interfered between me and the fags. I shall place the matter before the Head."

"Do so."

"And I shall expect you to settle with me for this insult personally," said Loder savagely.

He knew very well that it would never do to bring the matter before the Head of Greyfriars. The story of the smokes would be certain to come out. And if the doctor had known the facts, Loder would not have remained a prefect long.

"If you mean by that that you want me to fight you, I shall do nothing of the kind," said Wingate calmly. "You know perfectly well that the captain of the school is supposed to be above that kind of thing."

"The captain of the school is not supposed to be a funk," said Loder, with a sneer.

Wingate flushed.

"I leave it to the fellows to say whether I'm a funk or not," he said. "At all events, I shall not fight with you, Loder."

"I'll make you, if you're not a coward!"

"You cannot make me."

George Wingate turned to leave the study.

Loder strode towards him, his hands clenched, and his intention only too clearly evident in his furious face and gleaming eyes.

"Look out, Wingate!" said Courtney.

The captain of Greyfriars swung round.

He caught Loder's upraised hand, at the wrist, and compressed his grip till the prefect gave a howl of pain.

"You had better not try that kind of thing, Loder," said Wingate coolly, compressing his grip harder. "You will get hurt."

"Let go!" muttered the prefect, in a suffocated voice.

Wingate laughed and released him, and strode from the study. Loder remained, clasping his wrist with his left hand, his face working with rage. Courtney went with Wingate as the captain of Greyfriars strode away.

"It's come at last," said Courtney.

"What has come?" asked Wingate abruptly.

"Trouble. You will have to fight Loder now."

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Wingate shook his head.

"I shall not fight him," he said quietly.

"But—"

"My dear chap, can't you see that that is his little game?" said Wingate impatiently. "He wants to drag me into a scuffle, for his own reasons."

"I know it. And now—"

"Well, I sha'n't fall into the trap."

Courtney was silent. Perhaps Wingate did not feel so confident as his words implied. If Loder persisted in forcing a personal quarrel upon him, it would be very difficult for Wingate to avoid it. And he knew that Loder was quite clever enough to make it appear that Wingate had been the aggressor. The big, good-natured captain of Greyfriars was a first-class captain of the school, and a first-class footer skipper; but in some things he was hardly equal to dealing with Gerald Loder.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Kindness Unrewarded.

HARRY WHARTON glanced at the notice-board when the Remove came out of their Form-room on Saturday morning.

The first eleven of Greyfriars were playing Redclyffe Seniors that afternoon, and it was known all over the school that Loder and Carne had been scratched from the list of first eleven players.

Wharton, and a good many other fellows, wondered who would be played in the two vacant places.

The list was not up yet.

"No names up," Harry Wharton remarked. "I suppose that means that Wingate hasn't decided yet about the two places."

"Loder and Carne may play after all," said Nugent.

Wharton shook his head.

"I don't think so. Wingate isn't likely to give way—especially after the scene with Loder the other day. And Loder won't ask him; he'd rather have a row than play in the eleven."

"Wingate's leaving it rather late, then," said Bob Cherry. "Why, the Redclyffe team will be here soon after dinner."

"Yes. It's time the list was up."

A good many fellows thought the same. And many of them strolled round to the notice-board to see if the footer list was posted.

But there was no sign of it. And there was much exercising of minds among the Greyfriars fellows in consequence.

The Redclyffe match was an important one, and the Redclyffians were rumoured to be in very good form. And it behoved the Greyfriars Seniors to put their best foot-foremost in meeting them. Greyfriars First required to be up to their full strength to tackle Redclyffe. And evidently Wingate had not yet decided upon his outside-right and his left-half, in the place of Loder and Carne.

The juniors took more interest in junior football, perhaps, than even in school matches; but they followed the fortunes of Greyfriars First with keen interest. They did not want to see the school's representative eleven beaten. And the Remove were not playing that afternoon themselves, intending to watch the senior match, and cheer the efforts of Wingate & Co. against the enemy.

Harry Wharton and his chums thought a good deal about the matter. They knew very well that Gerald Loder was doing his best to place the captain of the school in an awkward position.

Greyfriars First was not up to its usual strength just now—two or three fellows having left lately who had been bright particular stars in the eleven. Loder, in spite of his faults, was a good player when he chose, and he had been very useful in the eleven since he had taken up footer seriously. His defection now was a serious matter, added to the fact that Carne also was standing out.

There was a wrinkle upon Wingate's brow as he came out after dinner, and the juniors noticed it.

"Old George is thinking it out," said Bob Cherry, to his chums. "I suppose this is what he has been worrying about lately. That cad Loder ought to be scragged!"

"The scragfulness ought to be terrific, my worthy chum," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I see whom Wingate can play!" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "He's got all the good men of the Sixth in the team already, or pretty nearly all that are any good. Only Blundell and Bland in the Fifth are any good for the first eleven. Perhaps Potter could take Carne's place at half. But what's he going to do for an outside-right?"

"Echo answers what?" said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "I could give him a tip, but I don't suppose he'd take it."

"What's that?"

"To play one of us," said the New Zealander.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"I expect he'd give you a tip in return for that—the tip of his boot," he replied. "Though he certainly might do worse. I'd play half with pleasure!"

"And I'd play 'centre-forward,'" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"And I'd keep goal," said Hazeldene, with a grin. "As a matter of fact, a few juniors in the team would buck it up pretty well."

"Gee-whiz!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess that's a good stunt."

"A good which?" howled Bob Cherry.

"Stunt."

"What on earth's that?"

"Don't you know English?" asked Fisher T. Fish. "It means a wheeze, my son—an idea. I guess it's a first-rate stunt. I guess I'll suggest it to Wingate. I've told you fellows that if I had a chance I'd show you how we play footer over there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't mind playing outside-right in the first eleven."

"Go hon!"

"And I'm quite ready to rally round in the hour of need," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Better go and suggest it to Wingate," said Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Yep; I guess I will."

And Fisher T. Fish walked away towards Wingate's study, whither the captain of Greyfriars had retired with his chum, Courtney.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in amazement. "He's really going!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish tapped at the door of the Greyfriars captain's study.

"Come in!" rapped out Wingate, in a less amiable tone than usual—a tone that told that he was worried.

Fisher T. Fish entered the study with great cheerfulness. Fisher T. Fish was fully persuaded that anything that could be done in England could be done better "over there" in the great United States. The fact that he failed in everything he undertook made no difference whatever to the cheerful Yankee junior. His good opinion of himself and his powers remained quite undiminished.

He nodded coolly to Wingate and Courtney. The two seniors had been deep in a discussion, when the entrance of the American junior interrupted them; and they did not look pleased at the intrusion.

"Well, what do you want?" said Wingate sharply.

"I guess it isn't what I want, but what you want," said Fisher T. Fish. "I've come to help you."

"Help me!" said Wingate, puzzled.

"Yep!"

"Are you joking, you young ass?"

"Nope!"

"Then what do you mean?" rapped out Wingate. "If you don't want to go out of this study on your neck, you'd better explain yourself, and sharp!"

"Keep your wool on, colonel," said Fisher T. Fish calmly.

"I guess you're in a hole some, and I reckon I can get you out of it in two shakes of a burro's tail. You're landed for a new outside-right in the eleven."

Wingate made an angry gesture.

"Don't get mad!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I want to give you a tip, that's all—to suggest a really top-notch player, if you haven't filled the place."

Wingate stared at him. The cool impudence of the Yankee schoolboy almost took his breath away. Fisher T. Fish was perilously near at that moment to leaving the study "on his neck." But Wingate restrained himself.

"Let him jaw," said Courtney, laughing. "Who knows, he may be going to talk sense? Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, you know—"

"Well, let's hear your valuable suggestion, you young ass!" said the captain of Greyfriars impatiently.

"You want a really first-chop outside-right, in the place of that guy Loder?" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes."

"It doesn't matter if the chap is a bit younger, so long as he's a really first-chop, top-notch player?"

"No," said Wingate, in wonder.

"Right-ho! I guess I'm ready to oblige you, then," said Fisher T. Fish.

"You?"

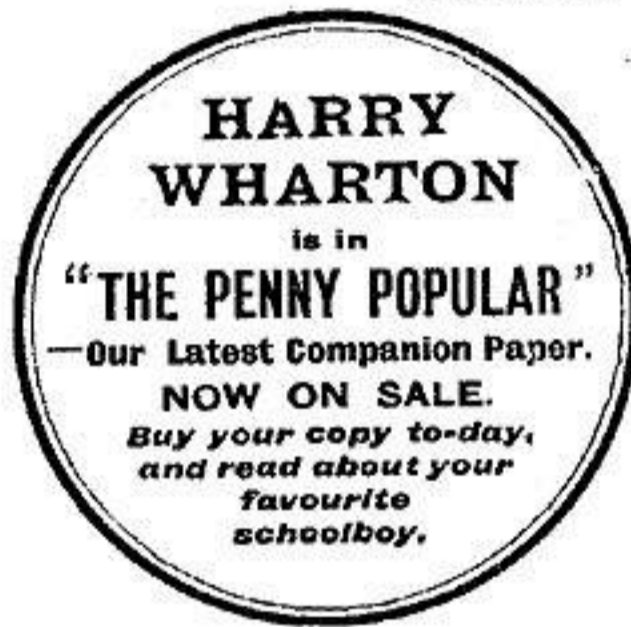
"Yep!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I guess I can show you fellows something in footer,"

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said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "I reckon we know how to play over there, you know. I should be quite pleased to place my services at your disposal, Wingate, and get you out of this hole. I reckon I— Oh! Ow! Wharrer you doing?"

"Kicking you out of my study, fer your cheek!" said Wingate.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

"Ow! Yow! Yaroooh!"

Bump!

Wingate had his football boots on, and he was not using them gently. Fisher T. Fish rolled out into the passage and sat down there with a loud bump. He sat and blinked at the captain of Greyfriars dazedly. Wingate slammed his study door.

"Well, carry me home to die!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "He's off his rocker—fairly off his rocker, I guess."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish blinked round, and found himself the cynosure of a dozen pair of eyes. The juniors had followed him to the Sixth Form passage to see how he fared. They yelled with laughter at the sight of the Yankee junior sitting on the linoleum in the passage.

"Ow!" groaned Fish. "I guess I don't see anything to cackle at! Ow!"

"I do!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo! I guess Wingate's a silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess he's lost a good recruit. I wouldn't play in his rotten eleven now if he asked me! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Fisher T. Fish limped away, followed by the laughter of the juniors; a sadder if not a wiser youth!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Chance for Wharton.

WINGATE turned back into the study after the rough ejection of the American junior. He was grinning; but his face became serious again at once.

"I shall have to make up my mind about it, Courtney," he remarked. "It can't be left much longer. What do you think of Phipps and Valence?"

"Phipps or Valence or Carr," said Courtney, "they're all pretty good, though not so good as Loder. Only—"

"Yes, that's the difficulty. They're all friends of Loder's, and I know that he has been working on them. They may decline to take his place."

"That's what I was thinking."

"And if they refuse—"

"You could put in Potter of the Fifth; but—"

"But what about a winger?"

Courtney shook his head.

"Better see Valence and Phipps," he said. "Valence has always been chummy with me, but he's been very thick with Loder lately, and I can't answer for him. But you may as well see what they say."

There was a knock at the door, and Loder of the Sixth came in, with Carne. Wingate looked at the two seniors grimly.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I notice that the list isn't up for the match yet," said Loder.

"Quite so."

"I suppose that means you haven't filled our places yet?"

"It does."

"Very well. I did not want to stand out," said Loder. "I'm willing to play. Carne is willing to play, and if you want to beat Redelyffe you'd better put us in."

"I shall not put you in," said Wingate coldly. "I want to beat Redelyffe, but I intend to be captain of the team, so long as I'm called captain. You refused to turn up to practice, and I told you plainly I should scratch your name; and the same with Carne. It's too late now."

"Well, I've made you the offer."

"And I've refused it," said Wingate.

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if there's trouble, it's not my fault," he said. "I call on Carne and Courtney to witness that. My friends have asked me to take the first step, and offer to play; and I've done it. I can't do more."

"You've done quite enough."

"Only," said Loder, with a bitter smile—"only, if you're

thinking of putting any of my friends into the eleven in my place, there's a disappointment waiting for you, that's all. They won't help you get an advantage over me."

"Will you kindly get out of my study?" asked Wingate politely.

"You'll find that I've told you the truth."

And Loder and Carne quitted the study.

Courtney and the captain of Greyfriars exchanged glances. "I was afraid it would be like that," said Courtney grimly. "Phipps and Valence are in the game, I'm afraid. But you may as well speak to them."

"I will!"

Wingate looked very moody and thoughtful as he left the study. He found Phipps and Valence in the senior common-room, and spoke to them at once.

"I shall want you this afternoon, you two," he said.

"What for?" asked Valence.

"Footer."

"Any more fellows left the team?" asked Valence abruptly.

"No; only Loder and Carne are out."

"And you're offering us their places?"

"Yes."

Valence shook his head.

"Well, I can't accept, for one," he said. "I think Loder has been harshly treated. He's agreed to offer you his services, though you turned him out of the eleven for a mere trifle—"

"He's offered them, and I've refused them," said Wingate drily.

"Then I must refuse to take his place. I can't have a hand in jumping on a pal when he's down."

"Same here," said Phipps, with a nod.

The Greyfriars captain frowned angrily.

"This is football, not friendship," he said. "I don't care what terms you are on with Loder. I don't think he's been badly treated, but that's neither here nor there. As members of the senior footer club, I call on you to play, as you are wanted."

"I decline!" said Valence.

"I decline!" said Phipps.

Wingate compressed his lips.

"I suppose you know what that means," he said. "If you refuse to play when you're wanted, I sha'n't give you a chance again. You're out of the first eleven for good and all so long as I'm captain of Greyfriars."

"We shall have to chance that," said Valence.

"Perhaps you mayn't be captain of Greyfriars so very long, Wingate, if you keep on as you've started," said Phipps insolently.

"I sha'n't argue that with you, Phipps. I shall never play either of you again," said Wingate, and he turned away.

He crossed over to the window, where Smith major of the Sixth was standing with his hands in his pockets, looking out into the Close. He tapped the Sixth-Former on the shoulder.

Smith major coloured a little as he looked round. Wingate read the refusal in his face before he spoke; but he went on:

"I want you for half, Smith."

"Hasn't Carne offered to play?"

"Yes."

"You won't have him?"

"No."

"Carne's a better half than I am," said Smith major awkwardly.

"That's my business. I want you."

"I'm sorry, Wingate—"

"Do you mean you won't play?" demanded the captain of Greyfriars, with lowering brow.

"I can't take Carne's place, when he's offered to play."

"That's enough."

"I fancy you'll find a good many of the Sixth agree with me, Wingate," said Smith major. "You see, we think—"

"I don't care what you think," said Wingate curtly.

"There are players outside the Sixth Form, Smith."

And he walked away. In the passage near the big doorway Coker & Co. were chatting together, discussing the unfinished footer list. Coker was holding forth on his merits as a half, which he declared equalled his merits as a back; his chums fully agreeing with him. They looked at Wingate as he came out of the senior room with a clouded brow.

"There's trouble going on in the Sixth," murmured Potter. "It's a regular split in the Form. I shouldn't be surprised to see Loder captain of Greyfriars one of these fine days— Hallo, Wingate! Did you speak to me?"

"Yes," said Wingate. "You can play half in the First Eleven this afternoon, Potter."

Potter's eyes danced.

"Good for you, Wingate!" he exclaimed. "You—you mean it?"

"Yes; you can go and get into your things."

"What-ho!" exclaimed the delighted Potter. "Like a shot!"

And he darted away.

"The places ain't filled yet, then?" said Coker.

"Left half is," said Wingate. "Potter's going to fill it."

"But the forward place?"

"Not yet."

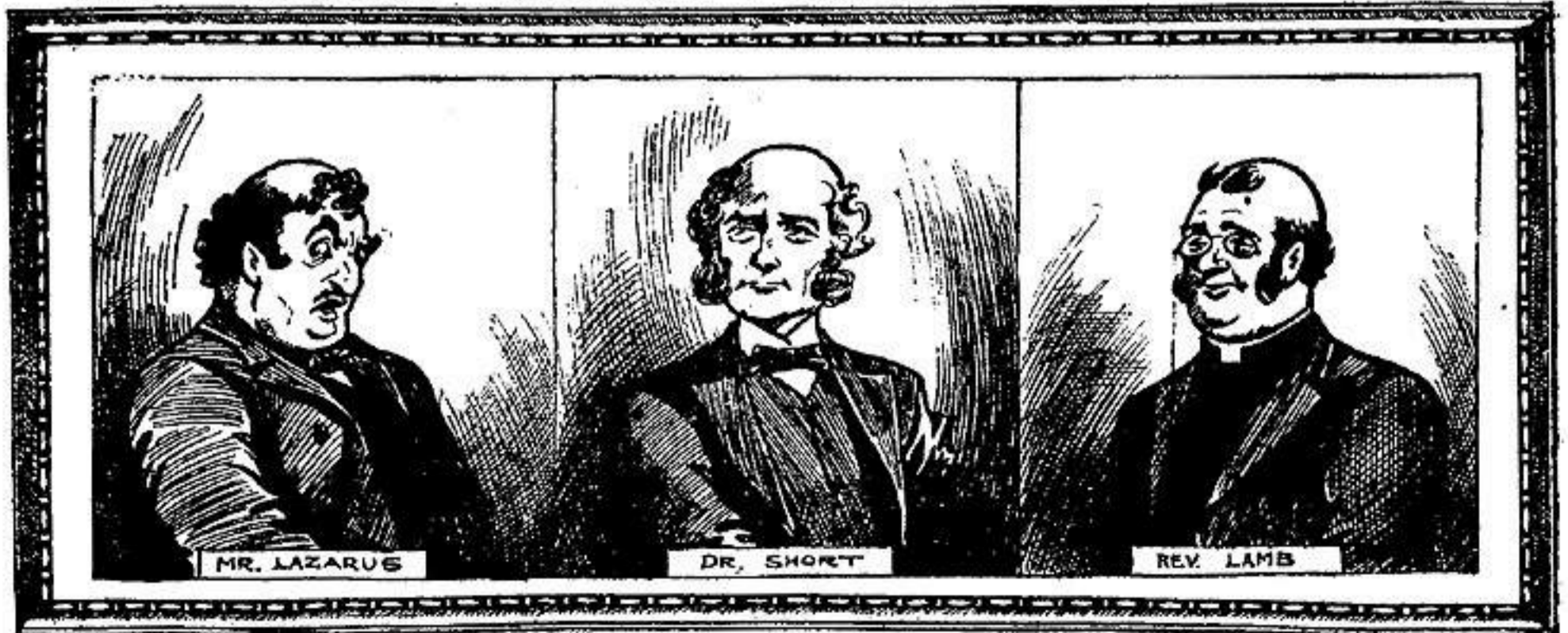
"I must say I think it's jolly sensible of you to look for recruits in the Fifth Form, Wingate," said Coker warmly. "It really shows your sense, you know. I suppose you want me to play outside-right?"

"I don't think that would show my sense," said Wingate drily; "in fact, I think it would show quite the reverse."

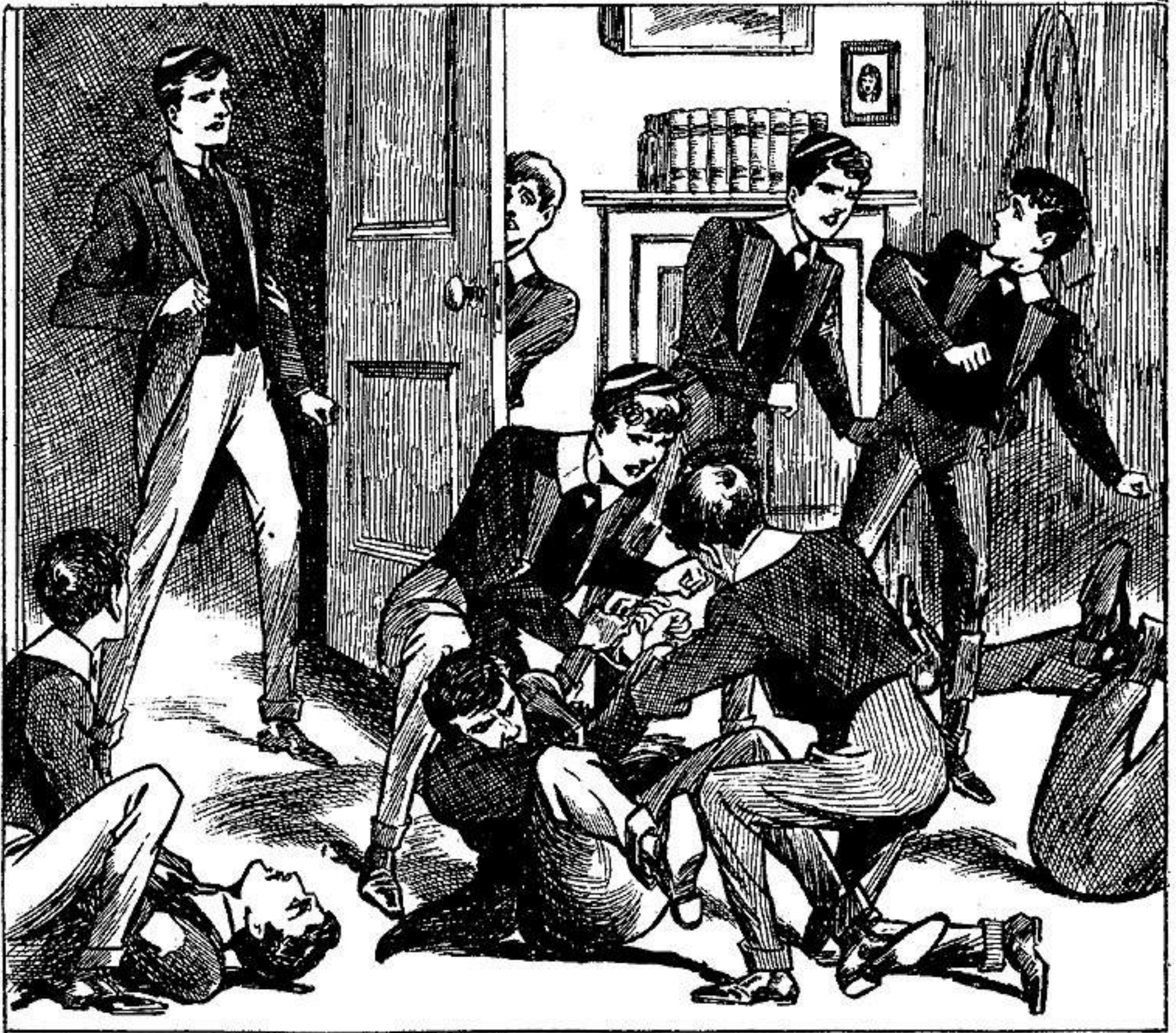
And he turned away.

"But I—I say," exclaimed Coker, "you—you really want another player, you know. I can tell you that I'm very nearly as good on the wing as anywhere else—"

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No. 17.—BLAND: BLUNDELL: FRY.



The uproar in the study was terrific. The furniture was kicked about in every direction, and in the midst of the overturned table and chairs, the three seniors struggled with the crowd of juniors. "Stop that row!" exclaimed Wingate. "Do you hear? What are you up to? Stop that at once!" "Right-ho!" gasped Bob Cherry, who was seated on Loder's chest. "Belay there, shipmates!" (See Chapter 7.)

"I shouldn't wonder; the trouble is that you're not much good anywhere else." And Wingate walked away.

Greene chuckled. Coker turned a glare upon his chum.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Ahem!" said Greene. "I—I wasn't cackling—I was coughing."

"Well, don't cough like an old hen with the croup, then!" said Coker angrily. "I wonder what that ass Wingate is going to do for an outside-right? I know jolly well what's going on in the Sixth. They're turning against him, and he can't get a man there to take the place—that's why he's come to the Fifth. Silly ass not to take a really good player when he's got the chance!"

"Has he got the chance?" asked Greene innocently.

"You fathead!" roared Coker. "Haven't I offered?"

"Oh!" said Greene. "I thought you said a good player!"

Then he fled.

Wingate had left the School House, and he beckoned to Harry Wharton in the Close. The chums of the Remove were punting a footer about; but Wharton left his comrades at once, and hurried over to Wingate.

"You want me?" he asked.

"Yes. How would you like to play outside-right in the first eleven this afternoon?" asked the captain of Greyfriars.

Wharton jumped.

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"I—I—first eleven!" he exclaimed. "You're not joking?"

"No; I want you to play."

"My hat!" said Wharton. "I'll play—rather! But—but—"

"I haven't much time to fill the place," Wingate explained. "I'm not going to pretend that a junior is the right man for a first eleven place, but you are a first-class player for a junior, and I've seen you pass and shoot, and I know what your form is like. You've beaten the Fifth in a Form match; and we have Fifth players in the eleven; and I'm going to give you a chance, anyway, if you'd like it."

"If I'd like it!" gasped Wharton. "What-ho! Only—it seems like a giddy dream, you know!"

Wingate smiled.

"Go and get your things on, then, and come down to the ground," he said.

"Right-ho!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Harry Wharton hurried up the School House steps. "Come back, you ass! Come and punt the footer."

"Sorry," called out Wharton. "I'm busy."

"What's on?"

"Important match."

"What!" said Bob Cherry, coming towards him. "What do you mean, you ass? There's no match on to-day."

"Yes, there is—first eleven fixture," said Wharton, with a grin.

"Well, you're not in the first eleven, are you, you fat-head?"

"Yes."

"Eh!"

"I'm in to-day, at all events," said Wharton, with a chuckle. "Loder's out, and there's a split in the Sixth, and Wingate's short of hands, and he asked me to play."

"Honest Injun?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Honour bright!"

Bob tossed his cap into the air.

"Hurray! Hurrah for us! Hurray for the Remove! Hip-pip!"

Harry Wharton hurried into the house to get into his football clothes. Bob Cherry shouted out the news to his comrades. It spread like wildfire. There was a row in the Sixth Form; and Wingate had asked a junior to play in the first eleven—in one of the biggest matches of the football season. The Remove heard the news with incredulity and delight—the incredulity vanishing, and the delight augmenting, when Harry Wharton was seen on the footer ground with the rest of the eleven.

It was a proud day for the Remove; but the other Forms did not take it so kindly. But Loder & Co. consoled themselves with the reflection that a junior recruit would not be of much use in a match against a team like Redclyffe; and they hoped fervently to see the Greyfriars colours lowered. Harry Wharton himself, perhaps, was a little doubtful; but one thing was certain—he meant to play the game of his life.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Redclyffe Match.

THE Co. came down to the footer ground in great spirits. Nugent and Bob Cherry, Tom Brown and Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh and Mark Linley, and a crowd more of the Remove, stood in a group near the ropes, ready to cheer their champion. There were very few fellows in the Remove who were not glad to see the Form captain taking a place in the Greyfriars First. It was an honour for the Remove which they were not likely to forget.

Temple, Dabney, & Co., of the Upper Fourth were near at hand, and they wore lofty smiles. Temple confided his opinion to Dabney, in a loud voice, that Wingate must be off his dot. And Dabney said, "Oh, rather!" But the Removites did not take any notice, their eyes were upon the footer field. Redclyffe First had arrived, and the match was about to begin. Coker of the Fifth came down to the ground with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a puzzled frown upon his face. Coker could not understand in the least why Harry Wharton had been put into the team, and he—Horace Coker—had been left out. The probability was that he never would understand.

"We've won the toss," said Bob Cherry suddenly. "Redclyffe have got to play against the wind."

"Hurray!" said Johnny Bull.

"There they go!"

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

"Go it, Wharton!"

"On the ball!"

Redclyffe had kicked off, and the match had begun.

Very nearly all Greyfriars had gathered to watch the game. A first eleven match always had a great interest for the whole school; but this match was something out of the common. It was not often that a junior of the Lower Fourth was seen playing with the big guns of the Sixth.

Everybody wondered how Harry Wharton would turn out; and the general opinion was that Wingate was off his "rocker," and that Wharton would be more hindrance than help in the senior team.

That opinion, in fact, was held by all but Wharton's own chums; and the spectators generally expected to see the Removite simply pushed out of the game by the Redclyffe fellows.

But it did not happen.

At first the Redclyffians carried all before them. There was no doubt that the home team was not up to its usual form, or anything like it. They were driven back, and for some time the play was all in the home half. There was a sharp attack on goal, and North of the Sixth, in goal, had plenty to do to defend his citadel. He was caught at last, and the ball came in—the first goal in the game being taken for Redclyffe.

"I guess I told you fellows it would be like that," Fisher T. Fish remarked to the chums of the Remove. "Now, if I'd been playing, that goal—"

"Would have been taken sooner?" suggested Rake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nope! I guess I—"

"It's all over bar shouting!" growled Coker of the Fifth. "Blessed if Loder isn't right; the school wants a new captain, and no mistake!"

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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"It's going to be a bad licking," Loder remarked to Carne. The two cads of the Sixth had come down to see the match. "And if we are beaten, it will be bad for Wingate. He will have all the Form up against him over it."

"Jolly good thing, too!" growled Carne. "Look at that ass Potter, who's been put in, in my place! The Redclyffe forwards simply walk round him!"

"And their confounded junior hasn't done much so far!" said Loder.

"Not likely to, I should think. Looks at me as if Wingate is dotty, or else he's tired of being skipper, and wants the order of the push," said Walker.

"He'll get it, whether he wants it or not!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! They're off!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurray! On the ball! Go it, Remove!"

Greyfriars had kicked off, and the forwards were away with the ball. Courtney had sent it out to the wing, and Wharton was "on" it. The Redclyffians tried to tackle him, but Wharton eluded them, and ran down the field, the ball at his feet. The halves seemed to be nowhere, but the backs closed in on him. For a moment Wharton was tempted to take the kick, before the backs could reach him, and he would have had a fair prospect of success, but he restrained the impulse. He sent the ball in to Wingate, who captured the pass, rushed past the backs, and shot for goal. The ball whizzed fairly into the net before the goalie knew that it was coming.

There was a roar from the Greyfriars crowd.

"Goal!"

"Hurray!"

And the Remove shouted:

"Bravo, Wharton!"

Wingate clapped Wharton on the shoulder as they walked back to the centre of the field. The goal was Wingate's, but he had taken it from Wharton's pass, and at least half the credit was due to the captain of the Remove.

"Jolly good kid!" said Wingate. "Keep that up, and you'll do."

Wharton flushed with pleasure.

The teams lined up again; and from that moment the Redclyffians were observed to keep a special eye on Harry Wharton.

They had not much regarded the junior player hitherto; but now that he was marked, he was "bottled up." But that was, as Bob Cherry remarked, a compliment to the junior. It showed that the senior players from Redclyffe regarded him as a dangerous opponent. They wouldn't have taken the trouble to mark Loder, as Bob observed in a stage whisper at the prefect's elbow.

Wharton had no further chance in the first half, but he kept his end up as well as could be expected; and it could not be said, even by Loder and Carne, that his play "let down" the side in any way.

The first half ended with the score equal.

"It's going to be a giddy victory!" said Bob Cherry confidently. "I wish I could see Wharton kick a goal; that would shut up those wasters yonder."

"The shut-upfulness would be terrific," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"If we lose, they'll make a song out of it," said Johnny Bull. "But they can't say that Wharton isn't doing well—better than Potter, anyway."

"We've got the wind against us now," said Nugent, as the teams came on the field again, "and it's blowing up from the sea."

"Yes, that's rotten luck!"

"Play up, Greyfriars!"

Greyfriars kicked off against the wind for the second half. The change of ends had given Redclyffe the advantage of the wind, and it was a considerable advantage now. The Redclyffians had evidently made up their minds to force matters. The tussle was hard and fast from the kick-off, and soon the visitors were swarming round the home goal.

Bob Cherry & Co. watched the tussle anxiously. They were in momentary expectation of seeing the leather go in, and their expectations were soon realised. The ball whizzed in past North, and lodged in the net.

"Goal!" grunted Bob Cherry. "What they want is a few more of the Remove in the team. That would make it a bit harder for Redclyffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wharton doesn't seem to be going great guns just now," remarked Vernon-Smith of the Remove, with a sneer.

"Oh, rats!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Two up for Redclyffe," said Coker. "Well, it serves 'em right. If Wingate doesn't know a good player when he sees one—"

"Play up, Greyfriars! Don't go to sleep!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

Greyfriars kicked off again. The visitors pressed them hard as before, but this time not so successfully. Courtney succeeded in sending the ball out to Wharton, and Harry ran it

down the touch-line till he succeeded in sending it across to the other wing. There was a fine exhibition of short, quick passing as the Greyfriars forwards brought the ball across the enemy's half, and rushed for goal. The defence seemed to have no chance; but as Wingate received the ball from the right wing, and was about to kick, the backs charged him. The Greyfriars captain had just time to send the ball out to Wharton before he was charged over.

Wharton trapped the ball, and gave a quick glance round. There was no other forward in a position to take a pass, and he had only a couple of seconds to spare. There was nothing for it but to take the risk of shooting, and he did it after one second of pause.

Right for the goal-mouth the ball whizzed, and the next moment Wharton was shouldered over, and fell.

He heard a shout as he rolled over. Was it a goal?

He staggered up.

The shot had been good and true; but the wind had deflected the ball, and it had struck the goal-post, and fallen back into the field of play.

The next instant a Redclyffe back sent the leather whizzing to midfield, and the chance was gone. Play surged away to the half-way line.

"Oh, what rotten luck!" groaned Bob Cherry. "It was as near as anything—blow the wind! It was the narrowest shave!"

"Beastly luck!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Loder laughed.

"Exactly what might have been expected from a kid shoved into the first eleven!" he said to Carne.

"It was an easy shot, and the young ass muffed it!"

Bob Cherry heard the remark, and he glared at Loder.

"You know you're talking rot!" he exclaimed. "It was a difficult shot, and Wharton very nearly brought it off. It was the wind spoiled it."

"Hold your tongue, you cheeky cub!" said Loder, scowling.

All eyes were turned keenly on the game now. The Redclyffians were pressing the attack once more, and the Greyfriars side were struggling hard in defence.

For a time there was no further score; but it could not be denied that the Greyfriars men were playing a losing game.

They did not seem to have a chance of equalising, and it began to be clear that if they kept the score as it was, it was as much as they could expect.

Bob Cherry glanced up at the clock-tower.

"Ten minutes to go," he remarked gloomily.

"Lots of things happen in ten minutes," said Frank Nugent. "It's a delightfully uncertain game, you know."

"This one is certain enough," said Bolsover major. "The Greyfriars First is licked, and they might as well chuck up the sponge now."

"I guess so. Now, if I were in the team—"

"There they go!" roared Bob Cherry. "Play up, Greyfriars!"

The Greyfriars forwards had succeeded in getting through at last. The field changed kaleidoscopically. The players were swarming round the visitors' goal now, and the attack was sharp and determined. The leather went in from Courtney's foot; but the Redclyffe goalie was "all there." It came out again, and Harry Wharton made a leap forward. His head met the leather, and the ball went whizzing in.

"Goal!" gasped Bob Cherry.

But it was not to be.

It was very near; but the Redclyffe skipper was up to his work. His fist crashed on the leather sphere, and it whizzed out, and then a Redclyffe back sent it flying to the touch-line. The Redclyffe goal was saved, and the home team did not have a chance again. There remained but three minutes to play, and in those three minutes the visitors brought the attack up to the home goal, and piled in shots. And it was evident to all the crowd that only the whistle of the referee, announcing the close of play, saved Greyfriars from a bigger score against them.

Phio!

Bob Cherry grunted.

"That's the finish; two to one against! Oh, rats!"

"Licked!" said Vernon-Smith, with his unpleasant smile.

"Our respected Form-captain hasn't done the giddy miracles expected of him."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Bob Cherry angrily. "He's

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done jolly well, anyway. And if the rest of the team had been up to his form, we should have won."

"Yes, rather," said Nugent.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the rather-fulness was terrific.

But the faces of the Greyfriars eleven were gloomy as they came off the field. They had been beaten; and beaten not so much by the quality of the enemy, as by their own shortcomings. But for the split in the Sixth, there was no reason why the home team should not have kept its end up against the visitors. Wingate's brow was dark, and his lips were compressed. He owed that defeat to Loder, and Loder's trickery—he knew that; but the other fellows did not share his opinion. They attributed the defeat to the composition of the team, naturally, and the composition of the team was the work of the skipper, and so it was generally agreed to lay the blame upon Wingate's shoulders.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Too.

HARRY WHARTON was surrounded by his chums as he came off the field. Wharton was not looking very happy. The chance of playing in the first eleven had been a great chance for him, and he had intended to play the game of his life; but he had not had very good luck. He had done well—quite as well as circumstances would permit—and if the rest of the team had been in better form, he would have done better—he knew that.

More than once he could have taken a shot if the passing had been up to the mark, and more than once the Greyfriars game had failed through the halves proving wanting. The junior who had been put into the team had made as good a show as any other player, and certainly better than several. But he had not succeeded in taking a goal off his own foot, and the general "rotteness" of the team had neutralised his best play. And with the exception of the pass which had given Greyfriars its only goal, the crowd could not see that Wharton had been very useful. And as Greyfriars had been defeated, Harry knew how Wingate's enemies would make capital out of the fact that he had played a junior. Before long it would be the general belief that Greyfriars had been beaten owing to Wingate's obstinacy and recklessness in putting a junior into the first eleven.

"No need to look down in the mouth, old man," said Bob Cherry, clapping his chum on the shoulder. "You did about the best of the lot, I think, anyway, excepting Wingate and Courtney."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I wish I could have done better, for Wingate's sake," he said. "He feels that licking very much. It was Loder's fault."

"No doubt about that," said Nugent. "And the rotter was looking as pleased as Punch when the team were licked."

"It suits his game," said Wharton bitterly. "He will be able to make capital out of this. They will make out that we were licked through a junior being played. And, as a matter of fact, most of the team were against it, I think. They're all feeling very sore about the licking, and I fancy they'll take it out of Wingate."

"That's the beauty of being footer captain," said Bob Cherry sagely. "If the team wins, it's due to the kicking of one chap, or the shooting of another, or the passing of somebody else; but if it loses, then it's all the skipper's fault from start to finish."

"And I fancy it means trouble for Wingate," said Harry.

Wharton's opinion was shared by a good many fellows. Certainly it would mean trouble for Wingate if Loder could bring it about.

"Well, it's rotten," said Bob Cherry. "If I were Wingate, I'd take Loder into a quiet corner and give him a walloping. But—"

"But you're not Wingate," said Nugent, laughing. "And the best thing we can do under the circumstances is to—"

"What?"

"Have tea," said Nugent. "I'm hungry."

"So am I, when I come to think of it," said Bob. "And

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we ought to celebrate having had a Remove chap in the first eleven, though it hasn't turned out so well as we expected. Now then, shell out!"

"I don't feel much like celebrating, old chap," said Wharton.

"You will when you get going," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Besides, it's no good being downhearted. You've done your best, and no fellow could do more. Wingate's satisfied with you, and I'm satisfied with you, and that's enough. Shell out, you chaps, and I'll drop into the tuck-shop while Wharton's changing his togs."

"Right you are!"

And contributions from all the Co. having been dropped into Bob Cherry's cap, Bob started for the school tuck-shop, in the shady corner behind the elms.

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, was in the tuck-shop. He blinked lugubriously at Bob Cherry through his big spectacles as the junior came in.

"I suppose you haven't got five bob about you, Cherry?" he remarked.

"Your mistake; I have," said Bob, rapping on the counter with a half-crown to draw Mrs. Mimble's attention from her little back parlour.

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"Good!" he exclaimed.

"I don't see anything specially good in it for you," said Bob Cherry calmly, rapping on the counter again. "I've got five bob, and I'm going to keep it."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, as Mrs. Mimble came out of the parlour. "You're neglecting a good customer, Mrs. Mimble. If you take a tip from me, you won't leave Bunter in the shop without an eye on him."

"Oh, really—"

"Hams and eggs, and rashers of bacon," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "H'm! And I'd better have a dozen tarts—twopenny ones."

Billy Bunter's mouth watered.

"I say, Cherry—"

"Don't say anything, old son, while I'm shopping," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "I think it will run to a pot of jam, too—strawberry jam, Mrs. Mimble."

"Yes, Master Cherry."

"I say, Cherry, I—I wonder if you could cash a postal-order for me, as you seem to be so flush with cash," said Bunter.

"Got it about you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ahem! I'm expecting it this evening."

"Then you can expect it to be cashed this evening, too," said Bob Cherry. "Go and eat coke. I think I'd better have some dough-nuts, too, Mrs. Mimble."

"I—I say, Cherry," said the Owl of the Remove, his mouth watering—"I—I say, I said all along that, if Wingate knew his business, he'd have put you in the first eleven instead of Wharton."

Bob Cherry stared at him.

"Oh, you said that, did you?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, certainly! You see—"

"Then you were a silly ass!" said Bob.

"Eh?"

"And a frabjous duffer!"

"Ahem!"

"Not that I believe you said anything of the sort," added Bob Cherry. "You may as well put in some cream puffs, Mrs. Mimble—half a dozen."

"I—I say—I meant to say that I thought it quite right of Wingate to put Wharton in," the Owl of the Remove amended. "Of course, you wouldn't have been any good, come to think of it."

Bob Cherry glared.

"Wouldn't have been any good!" he roared.

"Certainly not! So—"

"You silly ass!"

"Oh," stammered Billy Bunter, seeing that he was on the wrong tack again, "I—I didn't mean to say that exactly, either. Of course, you would have been a lot of good. I wonder that Wingate didn't put you in as well as Wharton. I—I say, Cherry, I suppose you're wanting somebody to do the cooking for you, ain't you, old man?"

"No," said Bob Cherry gruffly.

"Look here, you know how I can cook—especially bacon and eggs," said Bunter persuasively. "You'd better ask me."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Besides, I want to help you celebrate," urged Bunter. "It's a splendid thing to have a Remove chap in the first eleven, kicking goals for Greyfriars."

"Kicking goals?" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes. I can tell you I watched Wharton all the time, and I felt jolly proud of him," said Bunter.

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"THE GEN" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR."
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"You—you giddy Ananias!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You can't have seen the match at all, or you'd know that Greyfriars had only one goal, and Wingate took it."

"Yes, that—that's exactly what I mean," said Bunter, rather taken aback. "I—I meant to say that—that—that—"

"That you want to come to the feed," said Bob Cherry. "Well, I'm only ordering enough for twelve, and, as there are seven of us, there wouldn't be enough left for you if you did come."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"So you can buzz off and chop chips!"

And Bob Cherry gathered up his purchases and left the tuck-shop.

"Beast!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry chuckled, and made his way to No. 1 Study. The chums of the Remove were there, and Mark Linley and Tom Brown had joined the Famous Five. Bob Cherry dumped his purchases down on the table. The door reopened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

"Hallo, what do you want?" asked Frank Nugent.

"I've come," said Bunter.

"Yes, I can see you've come," said Nugent. "Now, it's time for you to go."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Buzz off!"

"I—I promised Cherry I'd come and do the cooking," explained Bunter. "And—and I'm a fellow of my word, you know. Where's the frying-pan?"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Well, if that doesn't take the cake!" he exclaimed. "You deserve a feed for your cheek, you fat boulder! Pile in and cook!"

And Billy Bunter piled in and cooked. And after that he piled in and devoured the lion's share of what he had cooked—a little way Billy Bunter had.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wingate Sticks.

GEORGE WINGATE was in his study, his brow clouded and moody.

He was dissatisfied with the result of that afternoon's match, dissatisfied with himself, and with things generally.

The split in the Sixth had brought about the defeat of the first eleven, there was no doubt about that.

The split in the Form was not due to Wingate; but he wondered whether he could have done anything to avoid it, if he had been more careful.

It was not his fault that Loder, and the other black sheep of the Sixth, wanted a change of captain, and were willing to play the game low down to get rid of him.

Wingate had always stood for a high standard of conduct and the best traditions of the school, and he had always been a thorn in the side of the fast set in the Sixth. It was not surprising that they wanted to be rid of him. But Wingate wondered that Loder had succeeded in getting so many of the seniors on his side. It was due to his cunning; and in a contest of that sort George Wingate was woefully lacking. He had no tricks to pit against Loder's; he would not flatter, and he would not cajole, and he was at a disadvantage. If the fellows wanted another captain, let them have another captain, that was how he looked at it. It was not the way to combat Gerald Loder's plotting.

The football record for the season was a matter of very great importance to Wingate, and Loder did not care twopence for it. Greyfriars First might be defeated a dozen times for all Loder cared, so long as he gained his ends.

Wingate knew that. He knew that if Loder succeeded in driving him out of the captaincy, and replacing him, it would be a bad thing for the Sixth, a bad thing for the football club, and a bad thing for Greyfriars generally.

And so Wingate restrained his impulse to throw up the post, and decided to hold out, at all events, unless there was a chance of a decent fellow like Courtney or North getting in as skipper in his place.

Wingate had made mistakes, doubtless; but upon the whole his rule had been for the good, and Loder's rule would be for the bad, there was not the slightest doubt about that.

And now Wingate was wondering what was to come of it.

The team were dissatisfied with him; the Sixth were, as a whole. All of them resented the fact that he had played a junior. If the match had been won, it would have passed off as a lucky inspiration of the skipper's; but the match had been lost—badly lost—and the team attributed it to his measures. Why couldn't he have played Loder and Carne? They had refused to practise when ordered; but, after all, that was not enough to risk a football licking for, so most of

the seniors considered. And Loder had confided to the fellows that he had declined to practise on that special occasion because he had had an important engagement, which Wingate refused to hear about. Loder was willing to say anything—Wingate was not willing to say even what was to his advantage—and so it was natural that Loder's view should be taken by a good many fellows.

Wingate started and looked up as a knock came at his door. There was a sound of a good many footsteps in the passage, and the captain of Greyfriars smiled grimly. He had been expecting some move on the part of Loder & Co. He did not know exactly what, but he knew that something was coming. And now it had come.

"Come in!" said Wingate quietly.

Loder opened the door of the study and came in. Carne and Valence and Walker and Phipps followed him. After them came three or four more of the Sixth, and then some members of the Fifth Form—Blundell and Bland, and Coker and Greene and Fitzgerald, and several more.

Wingate's study was a good-sized room, but the crowd of seniors nearly filled it as they came in.

Wingate rose to his feet and regarded his visitors with a sarcastic smile.

"Quite a little party!" he remarked. "If you've come to tea, I'm afraid you'll find the grub rather short."

"We haven't come to tea," said Loder.

"Then it's a conversazione?" asked Wingate.

Loder scowled.

"Not—not that, either. We've talked the matter over, and we've come to speak to you plainly and frankly."

"Well, that will be a change for you, anyway, Loder."

Coker chuckled; but he became grave as Loder scowled round at him. Some of the delegation looked uneasy and uncomfortable.

"The Sixth are not satisfied," said Loder.

"Really?"

"We've been licked to-day—licked by a team we could have beaten!" said Blundell, the captain of the Fifth.

Wingate knitted his brows.

"Well, whose fault is that?" he demanded.

"Well, I think it's yours!" said the Fifth-Former. "I'm open to correction; but I must say I think it's your fault, Wingate!"

"Hear, hear!" said the delegates, all together.

"You played a kid out of the Remove in the first eleven," went on Blundell. "Such a thing is simply unheard of."

"Quite unheard of," said Coker. "I was willing to play—"

"And you left out good men from the Sixth," said Carne. "Loder and I were quite willing to take our places in the team, though you made things so unpleasant for us."

"We offered," said Loder.

"And I offered—" began Coker of the Fifth, again.

Wingate made an impatient gesture.

"If you fellows have come here to call me over the coals, you can save your breath to cool your porridge," he said. "I'm not taking any."

"You've got to!" said Loder roughly. "The Sixth are not satisfied, and you're not yet a giddy Czar, that I know of."

"And the Fifth are jolly well not satisfied," said Coker. "We're only a deputation, and there's a crowd of fellows who think the same as we do. It's time Greyfriars had a new skipper."

Wingate smiled sarcastically.

"I thought it was coming to that," he said, his lip curling in a way that made most of the delegates feel angry and uncomfortable. "You've decided among yourselves that I had better resign?"

"Yes!" said the seniors, with one voice.

"And I dare say you've selected my successor already?"

"Ahem—"

"You may as well get it out!" said Wingate scornfully. "I suppose Loder is the fellow you have fixed upon?"

"Well, I don't see that there's any use in beating about the bush," said Valence. "It is quite right—we think Loder will make a better skipper. He can't do much worse than you've done lately, anyway."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's how the matter stands," said Carne bluntly. "The fellows think you ought to resign, Wingate."

"I don't think a majority of the fellows think so," said the Greyfriars captain.

"That can be settled by a show of hands in the seniors' room, if you like," said Blundell. "Anyway, you're free to stand for re-election, and if the fellows want you, you will be re-elected."

"That's fair play," said Bland.

Wingate laughed scornfully.

"I don't think I should get much fair play from Loder," he said. "I can guess the kind of tricks he would use to win an election—much the same as his trickery now in trying to make a vacancy."

Loder turned crimson.

"I am acting in the interests of the Form, and of the

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Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

school," he said loftily. "I leave it to the fellows to judge of what I've done."

"Hear, hear!" said Walker. "It's all right, Loder, we're backing you up. I dare say it's a bit unpleasant for you, Wingate, to be told that it's time to go; but there you are. The Sixth are fed up with you. Your putting a junior in the first eleven, and leaving out Sixth-Formers who are willing to play, was the last straw."

"Absolutely the last!" said Phipps.

"I put in the best man I could find," said Wingate; "and Wharton of the Remove played up as well as any fellow in the team. He gave me the pass I scored from."

"Oh, we expected you to defend your act, though everybody else can see it was a bungle," said Loder.

"The question is—are you going to resign?" asked Carne.

Wingate shook his head.

"No," he said, "I'm not going to resign!"

There was a loud murmur from the deputation.

"You refuse?" demanded Loder.

"Yes, I refuse!"

"Will you take a show of hands on the subject, from all the members of the Fifth and Sixth?" demanded Phipps.

"No! You appear to forget that the captain of Greyfriars is captain of the whole school, not only of the Fifth and the Sixth," said Wingate. "I have the juniors to consider as well as the seniors. I'll take a show of hands of the whole school, if you like."

There was a pause. Well enough Loder & Co. knew that Wingate was the idol of the Lower Forms, and that in such a test the majority would be overwhelming in his favour.

"You don't like that idea?" asked Wingate, his lip curling.

"No," said Loder. "After you've played a junior in the first eleven, it stand to reason the juniors will back you up."

"In that case, they'd back me up in a new election, if I stood for re-election," said Wingate. "It would be a walk-over for me, and trouble for nothing."

Loder bit his lip. In a new election he had an arsenal of trickery at his finger-tips; there were ways and means of influencing the voting, of preventing some of the youngsters from voting at all, of bribing or threatening others. In a new election Loder felt that he had a good chance. But in a show of hands from the whole school, taken on the spot without time for scheming, he knew that he had no chance.

"Very well, if you're sure of re-election, why not resign?" said Loder, at last.

"Because I don't choose to. I won't give you a chance of getting in as captain, and disgracing the Form and the school," said Wingate coolly. "I won't give you a chance of getting in by trickery and rotten scheming—which is what you want."

"You've no right—" began Loder.

Wingate interrupted him.

"Oh, ring off! I know you, Loder."

The prefect gritted his teeth. The delegation seemed to be at an impasse. They had fully expected Wingate to resign when he found that the two top Forms were against him. They were angry and disappointed. If Wingate had assumed a conciliatory manner, several of the fellows present would have come round to his side. But that was the last thing the captain of Greyfriars thought of. He had done his best, and it was not for him to be conciliatory. He had a right to demand that from the other side.

"Very well," said Loder, at last. "You refuse to resign?"

"Yes."

"Then pressure will be brought to bear on you."

Wingate shrugged his shoulders.

"Go ahead with the pressure," he said.

"Then there's nothing more to be said," Loder muttered, between his teeth. "Come on, you fellows!"

And the delegation crowded out of the study with knitted brows.

"Shut the door after you!" said Wingate ironically.

Coker slammed the door.

But as soon as the door was closed, and he was alone and unobserved, Wingate's cool and contemptuous manner deserted him. His face clouded over, and he threw himself into a chair, with a dejected look. It was bitter enough to him to feel that his Form-fellows were dissatisfied with him, that they wanted to get rid of him. The door reopened, and Courtney came in.

"You've had a lot of visitors!" he remarked.

Wingate nodded.

"What did they want?" Courtney said, rather anxiously.

The Greyfriars captain laughed harshly.

"Nothing much—only my resignation."

"The cads!" said Courtney hotly. "You haven't resigned!"

"No."

"That's right—stick it out!" said Courtney, encouragingly.

"I—I feel pretty rotten about it!" said Wingate de-

spondently. "I'd pass on the captaincy to you willingly enough, Courtney, or to North or Thompson. But I know what it would mean if Loder got in, and I'm standing out against that."

"They'll come round!" said Courtney.

Wingate did not reply. He did not think the fellows would come round, and he wondered what would be the next move in Gerald Loder's game. Loder had suffered a check, but not a defeat; and Wingate knew very well that the plotting prefect would not allow the matter to rest where it was.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.
Loder Gains His Point.

LODER was not without some expectation that Wingate, in spite of his reply to the deputation from the Sixth and the Fifth, would resign; but his hope was disappointed. The next day passed, and the next, and Wingate made no reference to the matter. Neither had he spoken to Loder or Carne on the subject of the two seniors resuming their places in the First Eleven. As there was another important match fixed for Wednesday afternoon, when the First Eleven were to meet Courtfield Wanderers, there was a great deal of speculation on the subject. That Wingate would play a junior in the first team was again incredible; but otherwise it was not easy to see how the places would be filled. Several members of the eleven had announced their intention of resigning if a junior was played a second time, and if Wingate persisted he was likely to have a team composed half of juniors to face the Wanderers with. Loder felt that he had the captain of Greyfriars in the hollow of his hand; but his power was limited. He could balk Wingate at every point, and make it impossible for him to captain the team with success. But if Wingate did not choose to resign, it was not easy to "shift" him. Loder and his friends gave the matter a great deal of thought, and discussed it very frequently in Loder's study.

The split in the top Form was the talk of the school; and most of the juniors, especially in the Remove, were

unreservedly on Wingate's side. As Harry Wharton said, the captain was being treated rottenly, and the fellows who were backing up Loder would be sorry enough after they had succeeded in making the change they were aiming at, when they had had some experience of Gerald Loder as a captain. The black sheep of Greyfriars would rejoice; but, after all, they were in a minority, and the rest would be wanting their old captain back again soon enough.

"Only Wingate doesn't mean to go," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle, as the Removites discussed it after morning school on Monday, "and if he doesn't choose to go, I don't see how Loder is going to work the oracle."

"Might appeal to the Head to shift him out of the captaincy," said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, who was one of Loder's party.

The juniors turned wrathfully upon the Bounder. "Oh, shut your head!" said Johnny Bull. "The doctor isn't likely to do anything of the kind."

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry. "It's a rotten scheme against Wingate, and it's up to him to stick it out till the fellows come to their senses. If Loder gets in, the school will go to the dogs, I know that."

"Well, I don't know it," yawned the Bounder; "and I should be jolly glad to see Loder captain, for one."

"So that you could smoke cigarettes in your study without fear of being licked," said Bob scornfully.

"And break bounds without being reported," growled Johnny Bull. "Shut up, Smithy; you make me ill!"

"Well, I consider—"

"Oh, never mind what you consider! Shut up!" said Bob Cherry. "Dash it all, I think the cad would be better for a bumping! We're not going to have fellows in the Remove getting their ears up against old Wingate."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent.

"Hands off!" roared the Bounder; but it was too late. The indignant juniors had collared him, and he was promptly bumped on the ground.

"Now you shut up on that subject," said Bob Cherry, wagging a finger at the infuriated Bounder, as he sat breathless and gasping. "Your views on the subject ain't popular, and you'd better keep them to yourself."

The Bounder staggered to his feet. His temper, which



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was always bad, was evil itself now. He made a furious rush at Bob Cherry.

"Well, if you will have it!" said Bob Cherry resignedly, and he let out his left, and Vernon-Smith measured his length upon the ground again.

"Yarooli!"

The juniors walked away, leaving the Bounder there. Vernon-Smith scrambled up, his hand closing upon a heavy stone. He was too infuriated to think of what he was going to do—he raised the stone to hurl it.

A hand grasped his wrist from behind, and the stone was forced from his grasp. It fell with a thud to the earth, and the Bounder swung round snarling, to find himself in the grasp of Wingate of the Sixth. Wingate's face was pale with anger.

"You cowardly cad!" he exclaimed. "You were going to throw that stone! Do you know what injury you might have done?"

"I don't care! I—I—"

"You don't care!" said Wingate grimly. "I'll teach you to care, then, you young ruffian. Hold out your hand!"

Wingate had a light walking-cane in his hand. He swished it in the air, and waited for Vernon-Smith to hold out his hand; but the cad of the Remove did not obey. Loder had just come in sight, and the Bounder was looking towards him.

"Did you hear me?" said Wingate grimly.

"Yes, I did."

"Then hold out your hand!"

"I'm not going to be caned."

"What!"

"Bob Cherry started the row—"

"I don't care what he did. You might have injured him seriously with that stone, and only a coward and a cad would have thought of such a thing. Are you going to hold out your hand, or shall I lick you?"

"I appeal to you, Loder!" exclaimed the Bounder suddenly.

Loder paused.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"You needn't inquire what the trouble is," said Wingate sharply. "I'm attending to this matter, Loder."

"Loder's a prefect, too," said Vernon-Smith. "I appeal to you, Loder. You saw—"

"Hold out your hand, Smith!"

"I won't!" said Vernon-Smith. "Loder saw what happened, and—"

He got no further. Wingate seized him by the collar, and laid the cane across his shoulders. Vernon-Smith roared.

"Hold on!" said Loder. "Let's hear the rights of the matter first—"

"Mind your own business!"

"Look here, Wingate—"

"Oh, hold your tongue!"

"Are you going to let that junior alone?" demanded Loder.

"I'm going to thrash him!"

"You're jolly well not!" said Loder. Loder's eyes were gleaming. He did not care twopence whether Vernon-Smith was licked or not; but he saw his opportunity at last. "Let him alone, or I'll stop you!"

Swish! Swish!

Loder ran in and grasped Wingate's arm, and arrested the fall of the cane. The Bounder wriggled out of Wingate's grasp. The captain of Greyfriars stared blankly at Loder, too surprised by the prefect's action to act for a moment.

"Do you know what you're doing, Loder?" he almost shouted, when he found his voice. "Do you dare to interfere with me?"

"Yes, I do, when you're bullying a junior," said Loder.

"Wh-a-a-a-t!"

"You heard what I said," said Loder coolly. "You may be head prefect, but even head prefect hasn't a right to bully a fag. Let him alone!"

"Stand aside!" said Wingate hoarsely.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Loder, planting himself between the captain of Greyfriars and Vernon-Smith.

"Will you get out?"

"No!"

"Then I shall shift you."

"You had better not try."

Wingate dropped the cane, and grasped Loder with both hands. Loder returned grip for grip, and they struggled. Loder was not a match for the captain of the school; but he was a powerful fellow, and not easily disposed of. The sight of the Greyfriars captain struggling with a prefect in the open quad, drew a crowd from all sides. In a moment, almost, there was a swarm of fellows round them.

Crash!

Loder went heavily to the ground.

He lay there gasping, and blinking up at Wingate.

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"CAPTAIN COKER!"

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ONE
PENNY.

The captain of Greyfriars stood panting. He had lost his temper at last—the temper he had long held in.

"Now, you cad, if you want any more, get up and have it!" he shouted. "You've been trying to force me into a fight for a long time, and now you've got your way. Get up!"

"Go it, Loder!" sang out Carne. "Tackle him while he's not funking it for once!"

Smack!

The back of Wingate's hand caught Carne across the mouth, and the Sixth-Former went reeling back. He fell against several Removites who had hurried up, and they promptly shoved him off, and he rolled on the ground.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Old George is on the warpath this time, and no giddy error."

Wingate's blood was up; there was no doubt about that! Loder, as he staggered up, and caught sight of the captain's pale, concentrated look, felt an inward misgiving.

It was true that he had striven to force Wingate into an encounter with him, fully intending that the Head should know about it; but now that it had come, he felt a sinking of the heart. Wingate was a rough customer to tackle, and Loder was likely to pay dear for his success.

"Well, are you ready?" exclaimed Wingate.

"I'm ready," said Loder thickly.

"Hold on!" said Courtney hurriedly. "You can't fight out here, in full view of the Head's window. Have a little sense. Come round behind the chapel."

"I'm not coming round anywhere," snarled Loder. "If I'm going to fight, I'm going to fight here and now."

"The Head, if he's in his study—"

"Mind your own business!"

But Wingate paused.

"Come behind the elms!" he said.

"Look here, I—"

"Get behind the elms, Loder, you cad!" shouted Bob Cherry. "You want the Head to see you—that's your little game."

"The cadfulness is terrific!"

"Play the game, Loder!"

The crowd followed Wingate, and Loder was hurried along with it, whether he liked it or not. They swarmed past the elms. The trees were leafless, but the old trunks screened the crowd and the combatants from the house windows. Wingate paused, and faced the prefect.

"Now!" he said.

Loder clenched his hands.

"I'm ready for you!"

"Then come on!"

And as Loder showed no haste to come on, Wingate himself attacked, and in a moment the two seniors were going it hot and strong.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish.

THE crowd thickened round the scene of the combat. The news that Wingate—old Wingate, the head of the Sixth and the captain of the school—was fighting out a quarrel like any inky-fingered cad in the Third Form spread like wildfire.

Fellows came from far and near to see the fun.

Loder's friends hardly troubled to conceal their satisfaction. Wingate was caught at last! They had scarcely hoped that he would break out like this, in public, in a way that could hardly escape attention from all Greyfriars.

Loder, certainly, would be roughly handled; but it was worth that, from the point of view of Carne, Walker & Company.

Indeed, it was worth it from Loder's own point of view; though he did not enjoy the process while it lasted.

Loder was not a fighting-man when he could help it; but he was capable of putting up a good fight when he chose, and he chose now.

He wanted to make the combat last, if he could, until the Head was brought upon the scene, and that was certain to happen if he prolonged the fight.

And so he stood up to the slogging blows of Wingate with a pluck and determination which were quite unexpected from Gerald Loder.

"Go it, Loder!"

"Mop him up, Wingate!"

"Pile in!"

"Go it, ye cripples!"

"Your man down, Carne!" yelled Nugent, as Loder sprawled on the ground under a terrific right-hander from the captain of Greyfriars. "Pick him up, man!"

"Bravo, Wingate!"

"Hurrah!"

Wingate glanced round frowningly. It was not exactly

gratifying to him to be cheered on by fags, while the seniors stood round with dark, grim, disapproving faces.

"Shut up, you kids!" he said roughly.

"Yes, dry up," muttered Harry Wharton. "We don't want to get the masters here to see what's going on, you duffers!"

Carne had picked Loder up. The prefect was gasping for breath, and there was a red stream flowing from his nose. He turned a look of hate and fury upon the captain of Greyfriars. Wingate met it grimly.

"Have you had enough?" he asked.

Loder ground his teeth.

"Enough? No, I haven't! Come on, hang you!"

And this time it was Loder who rushed to the attack.

Wingate met him more than half-way. Wingate's blood was up. Loder had driven him into this, and Loder should pay for it, and he was paying for it.

Loder was fighting hard, and Wingate's face showed signs of wear and tear; but his punishment was as nothing to the prefect's.

Loder's left eye was closed; his nose seemed to be double its usual size, and he was gasping for breath.

But he fought on doggedly.

"By Jove, he's got some pluck, after all!" Bob Cherry said grudgingly. "I never expected Loder to turn out game like this."

"He's trying to hang it out till the masters come on the scene," muttered Harry Wharton, with curling lip.

"The rotter! That's his game, of course!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Sure, and he won't hang it out much longer!" said Micky Desmond. "Faith, he can hardly stand up to old Wingate now!"

"There he goes!"

"Pick him up, Carne!"

"Stand him on his pins!"

Loder was on his back again. He gasped painfully as Carne and Phipps helped him to his feet.

"You can't go on!" said Wingate abruptly. "I'm satisfied if you are."

Loder's eyes blazed.

"You've got to go on!" he said savagely. "Hang you—hang you! I'm not done yet!"

"Well, come on and finish!"

And they closed in strife again. There was a sudden shout from Bolsover minor of the Third:

"Cave!"

The cry was taken up by the crowd.

"Look out!"

Wingate would have separated from his adversary. But Loder, too, had heard the cry of warning, and he grasped the captain of Greyfriars with all his strength.

"Let go!" muttered Wingate. "Oh, you coward!"

For Loder's fist had crashed into his face, after his hands were down. Wingate's eyes blazed with rage, and he struck out, and Loder, hurled away by the force of the blow, rolled on the ground at his feet.

There was a sharp exclamation; a figure in rustling gown came quickly through the trees, just in time to see Loder roll at the feet of the captain of Greyfriars.

"Wingate!"

It was the Head!

Wingate dropped his hands.

He stood unsteadily, gasping for breath, exhausted by the conflict, and crimson with shame and humiliation. The Head looked at him in amazement and horror. Wingate was not a pretty sight at that moment. His face was daubed with blood, and bruised and cut. One of his eyes was closed, and he blinked painfully and uncertainly with the other.

"Wingate," repeated the Head, almost dazedly—"Wingate, is it possible? You, Wingate, fighting like a hooligan?"

There was a dead silence.

"And who is the other?" said the Head, turning his glance upon the senior groaning on the ground.

"Loder, sir," said Carne.

"Loder—a prefect! This is—is utterly disgraceful!" said Dr. Locke. "I am ashamed of you! I am utterly disgusted!"

Wingate stood overwhelmed with shame.

He had no excuse to offer.

"What is the cause of this?" said Dr. Locke.

Silence!

"Have you nothing to say, Wingate?"

"No, sir," said Wingate, "except that I'm sorry."

"What have you to say, Loder?"

Loder staggered up, and stood leaning upon Carne.

"I—I—I did not strike the first blow, sir," he said, "that's all. I interfered with Wingate because he was bullying a junior, and he went for me. I think I'm entitled to explain that much."

"It's a lie!" said Wingate.

"Kindly moderate your language, Wingate, please," said the Head. "In what is Loder's statement incorrect?"

"I was punishing a junior, and he interfered," said Wingate. "But I don't want to make any excuses for myself, sir. I lost my temper, and I own up."

"You lost your temper," said the Head drily. "Perhaps that accounts for the whole matter, Wingate."

Wingate bit his lip.

"At all events, wherever the blame may lie, you must both realise that this conduct is impossible in prefects," said the Head. "Loder, you are no longer a prefect."

"Very well, sir," said Loder submissively.

"The same applies to you, Wingate. I expect you to resign your position as captain. A boy who cannot command his own temper is not fit to command others."

Wingate bowed his head.

"Very well, sir, I resign."

"I am shocked and pained by this scene more than I can say," said the Head, with real distress in his kind old face.

"If you were juniors, I should cane you severely. You are no longer prefects; and I shall carefully consider your future conduct before I think of reinstating you. That is all."

And the Head rustled away.

There was a dead silence behind him.

The fellows looked at one another without a word. The Head's sentence had fallen heavily upon their ears. Even the fellows who had backed up Loder through thick and thin were taken somewhat aback at this complete success of their plans. Wingate was no longer captain of Greyfriars; he was no longer even a prefect. The fellow who had loomed largest in the public eye of the school had become a simple member of the Sixth again—like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof.

Wingate looked round upon the startled faces, and his lip curled bitterly.

"Well, you've got your way now, you fellows," he said, with his glance upon Loder & Co. "You've got me out of the captaincy."

"Shame!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Rotten!"

"I'm no longer captain," went on Wingate, without heeding the juniors. "I've resigned. And there will be an election for captain, I suppose. I shall not stand for re-election. That will be impossible under the circumstances."

"I should say so," said Carne.

"I've only got this to say," said Wingate, ignoring Carne. "I've stuck to the captaincy, not because I specially wanted the job, but because I thought I was doing pretty well for the school. I think it means a rotten state of things for Greyfriars if a fellow like Loder gets in."

"Thank you!" said Loder, with a sneer that made his battered face look positively hideous for the moment.

"Hear, hear!" roared the Famous Five.

"I'm not going to stand for re-election," resumed Wingate. "Any fellows who would have backed me up can oblige me by picking out a decent candidate, and getting him in as captain. That's all."

And Wingate walked away.

Loder, walking very unsteadily, went into the house with his friends. The plotting prefect groaned as he bathed his injuries; but in the midst of his personal discomfort he felt a keen sense of satisfaction. He had succeeded. He had turned out the captain of the school, and there was no danger of Wingate being re-elected. It would be Loder's own fault now, he felt, if he did not work the election his own way, and succeed in his ambition. And that reflection consoled him as he dabbed at his burning face, aching all over from the punishment he had received.

The Famous Five gathered in No. 1 Study with gloomy brows. Bob Cherry summed up the feeling of all present when he declared that it was rotten. And Huerce Jamset Ram Singh agreed dismally that the rottenfulness was terrific.

"But it's not a time to be downhearted," said Bob Cherry. "Old Wingate's shifted out; but we'll have him back again as skipper some time. But just now we've got to keep our eye on the giddy election, my sons, and keep Loder out."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's the business of this Co. now," said Bob Cherry impressively. "Loder's going to put up for election as captain; and Loder's got to get the kybosh!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the Famous Five of the Remove meant business, though whether they would succeed in baffling the scheming Sixth-Former was another question.

THE END.

(Next Monday "CAPTAIN GOKER," by Frank Richards. Order your copy in advance. Price One Penny.)

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"THE GEN" LIBRARY,
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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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OUR THRILLING SERIAL STORY. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!



Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREW



Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, and ventriloquist.



Nathan Gore, jewel collector and multi-millionaire, Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN."

Whilst crossing the Atlantic on his way to England—where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," is to be put up for auction—Nathan Gore, the American millionaire and jewel-collector, receives a message from his agent in London to say that the diamond has been bought by his hated rival, Ferrers Lord, who is the owner and inventor of the wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep.

Nathan Gore swears he will obtain possession of the diamond, and on the night of his arrival in London he goes to his rival's house, and, taking the stone, leaves in its place the message: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst! I defy you! The stone is mine!—Nathan Gore." The millionaire accepts the challenge, and a few hours after the robbery the chase is started. For five months, accompanied by his two friends, Ching-Lung, a Chinese prince, and Rupert Thurston, he pursues Nathan Gore, travelling once round the world, but never being able to overtake him. At last he hears that Gore has bought an island in the South Seas, and is fortifying it. Ferrers Lord follows the mad millionaire to the place in his submarine, and, on arrival, divides his forces into two parts, leaving Rupert Thurston with Prout and most of the crew on board the Lord of the Deep, and taking with him Ching-Lung and one or two men on the launch, which the Lord of the Deep carries stored away. This vessel is wrecked, and the crew are stranded on Goreland—Nathan Gore's island—and are eventually sighted by a cruiser belonging to the American millionaire. They are rescued by Rupert Thurston, in the Lord of the Deep, just in time to save them from being captured by Nathan Gore. Ferrers Lord learns, through tapping the cable, that the mad millionaire has complained to the Government of America, and that the United States are sending out two cruisers, while England is sending out a vessel to investigate matters. Ching-Lung hears, soon afterwards, that a princess of his own country has taken his province, Kwai Hal, for her own use, and he determines, as soon as the war with Gore is over, to return to China.

While the submarine is cruising about gently the crew league themselves against Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga, who take up a position behind a book-case in the billiard-room in readiness to fire arrows, with rags round the points, at anyone entering. Maddock and O'Rooney, who enter the billiard-room singly, are disposed of in turn by the two practical jokers, who bind them and conceal them in a large ottoman. After an interval Joe the carpenter cautiously enters, and seeing no one, suspects that Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga are hidden in the ottoman. He therefore approaches that piece of furniture with great caution, while Ching-Lung chuckles in his place of concealment. "Fire!" he whispers to Gan-Waga.

(Now go on with the story.)

Ching-Lung and Gan Smile!

The bows twanged together, and the arrows smote Joe at the same instant Joe punched the carpet with his eyebrows, and yelled "Ouch! Ow!"

As Gan fell upon the foe, Ching-Lung locked the door. The carpenter and the Eskimo were rolling about the room, for Joe was always a hard nut to crack. Ching-Lung flung a noose over Joe's legs, and roped him up to the table. Then he put a cushion over the carpenter's back hair, and took a seat thereon.

"Chain up the wild and savage beast, Gan," he said, "and let's chuck him into his den. I guess when they plot against us another time they won't make so much row about it. Walls have ears, and doors have keyholes. Chain him up. Give me hold of his wrists. Got him tight as wax. Roll him over, and gimme the gag!"

"Ow! Help! Hal-lo!" roared Joe. "Rescue! Help—"

The gag stifled the rest. Joe was dropped into the bulky ottoman, and the victors took a seat on the lid and solemnly shook hands.

"What—haw—lovely weathaw, ma deah fellah!" said Ching-Lung. "Isn't it beastly—desperately atwocious—haw? How's your paw livaw?"

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"CAPTAIN COKER!"

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"My livers is all good 'nough, Chingy!" tittered Gan.

"Have a cigawette, deah boy—haw?"

"I takes de boxes if yo' likes!" chuckled Gan.

"What beastly, despewate wuffians we have—haw—undah-neath!" lisped Ching-Lung. "Oh, howwid wogues!"

"Dey's had 'nogh rogueses fo' nothings!" grinned the Eskimo. "Did me tickles haire? Oh, tells me, Chingy, did we tickle haire? It is so joyousness to tickles haire. Dey alls wicked piritses. Ho, ho, ho!"

Ching-Lung winked, and balanced the cigawette on his nose. A faint, grunting sound, like that of a strong man trying to eat very hot potatoes, came from the recesses of the trunk.

"Let us go forth," said the prince. "Out with your trusty bow. Put an arrow on the string, and pierce any mutinous dog who dares to show his face to the midriff. Oh, the bow, the bow, the stout yew bow! A grand weapon, Ganus!"

"I gets my dinners wid hims lots of times, Chingy. Shoots hundred seales!"

"Get on, and don't talk!" said Ching-Lung.

They turned up the lights as they went along. All was silent. The loss of their leaders had settled the mutineers and the mutiny. Ching-Lung took the key with him, and went for the store-room trolley. He left Gan in the swim-

ming-bath, but Gan soon returned. It was hard work roping up the ottoman, and harder work getting it on to the trolley. Gan wheeled it out, Ching-Lung before it, and trundled it to the swimming-bath.

A rope with a hook on the end hung from the roof. The hook was put over one of the ropes of the ottoman.

"Pull her back," said Ching-Lung. "Yo-heave-ho-ho!"

"Yo-hoo-hivey-ho-hoo!" roared Gan.

"Run her on now!" cried the prince.

"Yoo-oo-hive-hoo-ho!"

Splash! The trolley ran over the edge of the bath, and dropped into the water. The ottoman, with its living freight, whizzed away clear across the bath, swung back at a terrible rate, and then back again. Little by little the swing grew shorter, until the ottoman remained swaying to and fro over the very centre of the bath, six feet above the surface of the cold and chilly water.

"Sometimes, Gan," said Ching-Lung, eyeing the prison in mid-air, "we have been known to smile."

"Not ifs its tickles haire, Chingy," said Gan. "We nevers smileses thens."

"Of course not. On such occasions it would be most improaire. But I think—nay, I am certain—that sometimes we have been known to smile. Let us smile."

"Yes, wo will smileses, Chingy. Ho, hoo, hoo, ho-o-oo!"

"That is a grin, Gan," said the prince. "I object to grins. Smile, and be a gentleman; grin, and be an organ-grinder. Let us laugh a loud 'Ha, ha!' just like that. Kindly laugh 'Ha, ha!'"

"Ha-aa, ha-a-ah!" roared Gan, opening his mouth until it resembled a red cavern.

Ching-Lung drew up a couple of chairs, took a book out of his pocket, lighted a cigar, and began to read. Gan did not know the difference between the English alphabet and a box of tin-soldiers, but he loved to imitate Ching-Lung. Ching-Lung handed him a second book, and Gan perused it upside-down with an air of gravity and deep learning.

"The writer of this volume," said Ching-Lung, after a pause, "offers much mental food to the brain of a thinker."

"Hunk?" inquired Gan. "Nots know him, Chingy."

"I will explain myself to you with lucidity, my dear friend," said Ching-Lung. "The problems he sets forth are of deep intellectual subtlety, and he words them in a fashion that renders them abstruse and more complicated than is necessary. For instance, he asks—or, rather, he does not ask. He states the difficulty, and asks the question afterwards. Listen, my dear searcher after knowledge. If you do not understand, do not hesitate to inquire."

Ching-Lung put an eyeglass in his eye, and pretended to read from the book:

"A contiguity to aqueous, oleaginous, or spirituous fluids is of necessity, so far as scientific experience goes, a basis for the almost universal belief that more or less of the atomic particles of these substances will remain in adherence to the contiguous object."

Gan's eyes grew round.

"Not know him, Chingy. Say him agains. What's hims means?"

"It only means," grinned Ching-Lung, "that if you drop into wet stuff, you'll get wet, like those bounders up there. S-sh!"

He pointed up. The prisoners had been fighting hard—and were fighting hard—to slip their bonds. Their struggles set the ottoman dancing about in a very lively fashion. As the reader is aware, the back of the ottoman (which was on the left hand side in the present position of that article of furniture) was merely draped with silk. Suddenly two feet shot out through the silk, and began to kick violently.

"Play up, Derby County! Play up, Villa! Play up all the lot of you!" said Ching-Lung. "Well shot, sir!"

"Do not tickle haire," said Gan-Waga. "I would's nots lets yo' tickle haire fo' candles."

The feet disappeared, and after a time a head looked out. It was Barry's, and Barry had got rid of his gag. Ching-Lung slipped the elastic over his thumb and finger, and discharged a piece of orange-peel.

Slap!

"Ow! Murther!" roared Barry, pulling in his head. "Help! Oi'll be the dith of yez, yez wicked varmint!"

Barry knew their awful position. Maddock—he was underneath—groaned hollowly. The Irishman with his teeth began to pull at the knot on his wrists. It gave way, and his hands were at liberty.

The light was bad, but Barry saw the uninviting water below. He darted out his head, and shook his fist in the gloom at his tormentors.

"Sure as Oi live," he howled, "Oi'll tear the—the—"

Slap! Ching-Lung seemed unable to miss, and Barry shrieked and tore his whiskers madly as another missile cannoned away off the bridge of his nose.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR."
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Three Men in an Ottoman.

Barry began to jabber and rave in Irish. He was terribly angry. After letting off a little steam, he set Joe at liberty. The moment the gag was removed, Joe used atrocious language until he was fairly out of breath. By squeezing themselves into the smallest possible compass, and flinging the litter and paper overboard, they managed to bring Maddock into view. One of them had been sitting on Benjamin's face, and that was a thing Benjamin resented. He started saying things that almost made the lights go out. Softly chirped the voice of Gan-Waga from below:

"Pull up yo' sockses,
T'ree mens in a boxes,
If deys tumbles outs,
Dey fall in some slopses.
Ho, hoo, hoo!"

Six clenched fists punched the air vainly but savagely, longing to punch heads instead of atmosphere.

"Look at 'em! They're practising for a prize-fight," said Ching-Lung.

"Av Oi had hawld of yez both this blissid minit," hissed Barry O'Rooney, "Oi'd take yez by the whiskors and bash yez into smithernes!"

"Cowards, cads, c-c-curs!" snarled Joe.

"Swabs, sea-cooks, dirty lubbers!" bellowed Maddock.

"Hush-a-by baby, on a tree-top, if the rope breaks, the cradle will flop!" chanted the prince.

Anger was useless. The prisoners groaned, and Barry tried persuasion as the only sensible thing to do.

"Oh, Mистер Ching, darlint!" he whined. "Sure, now, be the throe, koind gentleman yez always were, and lit us down. Faith, we was only playin' pirits, and niver intinded to hurrt wan lock of yer honour's hair. Ut was an iligant joke—an iligant joke; but plaze let us down!"

"Who's stopping you?" asked Ching-Lung. "Jump down."

"Oh, troth, be aisy now, sor, and pull us ashore. There's none of us so well in hilt as we moight be, and the cowld wather wud be the dith of us. Here's pore ould Ben twisted up loike a watch-spring wid rheumatics, me wid the neuralgia cuttin' the face off me, and Joe dyin' of lumbago in both ears. Wud yez sind three innercent fellow-craytures to an early grave? Ochone, ochone! Be marcifal, and lug us ashore, and we'll be your slaves for iver!"

"I'll bust him when I do get ashore, drat him!" growled Joe.

"And I'll strangle him wi' his own pigtail!" muttered Maddock.

The ottoman swung round. A cork popped, and the sight of Gan and Ching-Lung smoking cigars and drinking champagne did not make the captives feel any happier. There were two small bottles of the wine on the table.

"Say, you up there," said Ching-Lung, "we drink your very good health!"

They gnashed their teeth, and Maddock took off his boots. He let go one at the champagne bottles, and hit one of them with a size thirteen boot. It was the full bottle, and when it struck the floor it exploded with a terrific bang, fairly blowing Gan-Waga headlong out of the chair. The second boot was not so accurately thrown. It hit the table, bounded off, and dropped on the Eskimo's skull. The second bottle, overturned by the explosion, sent its contents gurgling into Gan's neck as he sat there holding his head.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!" he shrieked, fancying that the ship had blown up. "Ow, ow, ow!"

Ching-Lung's nether garments were saturated with wine. Joe and Barry, highly excited at Maddock's success, were tearing their bootlaces out by the very roots. Their footgear had rubber soles, so there was no danger of braining anyone. Whizz! came Barry's No. 14. Ching-Lung snatched up the table, and caught the missile on it cleverly. Thump! thudded Joe's boot between Gan's shoulders, and Gan howled again.

"Sthand back! Lit me crush the pigtailed spalpeen!" yelled Barry.

Swoosh!

"Help! Ow! Murder! The bottom's coming out!" screamed Joe.

"Save us! The bottom—the— Mercy!" roared Maddock. "Ow! It's—it's mur-mur— Ow!"

It was not the bottom, but the side of the outraged article of furniture that was giving way. Three pairs of legs broke through the loosened wood, and waved violently in the air. Joe hung on to Barry's whiskers, and Maddock to Joe's necktie.

Louder and louder grew the sound of splintering wood, and fiercer grew the howls. A shower of coins, pocket-knives, and matchboxes flopped into the bath. They were falling, falling, falling!

They descended in a bunch; and reached the water. There was a mighty, reverberating splash.

"Hallo, they've walked the plank!" said Ching-Lung. "Gan, let us retire. They are blackguards! When they come up their language will be coarse, rude, and offensive. It will shock our ears. We must not allow our ears to be polluted. Come, dearest!"

And Gan and Ching-Lung departed.

Ferrers Lord Plays the Pirate Under the Very Guns of Five Ships-of-War.

The steamer which had brought the stores had also brought newspapers from Cape Town. These were filled with cabled reports of acts of piracy committed by the mysterious Britisher, Ferrers Lord, on the high seas. As usual, the articles were worked up to the very highest pitch of sensationalism, and were full of absurdities and lies. Instead of one miserable submarine, it was reported that the millionaire had torpedoed three large steamers, and sunk them with their crews.

Ching-Lung and Rupert enjoyed themselves immensely as they read the statements.

"According to this rot, old chap," said Rupert, "Captain Kidd couldn't hold a candle to us."

"Hang it, he couldn't have held a lucifer match. It says that the Emily Hort, fifteen thousand tons, bought by Gore from the Long Island Navigation Company, was ordered to heave to by a shot at her bows. Jupiter and jujubes! Listen to this! 'In the middle of the second dog-watch the Emily Hort, owing to a heavy fog, was travelling about five knots. The sea at the time was perfectly calm. Suddenly those on deck were startled by the report of a heavy gun to starboard. Dreading a collision, the second officer promptly signalled full speed astern. Almost immediately a black, low-lying craft, crowded with masked men, rushed out of the mist like some ghostly ship, and ran clean under her bows. The strange vessel vanished in an instant. Before the crew of the steamer could recover from their astonishment a terrible explosion occurred aft.' And so on. Great pip! Did you ever hear such ghastly lunacy in all your natural?"

"Oh, burn it!" said Rupert. "It wearies me! If people can swallow that stuff, they'd swallow harpoons!"

"It appears to me they will swallow it, and do swallow it, boys," said the deep voice of Ferrers Lord.

He had entered the room unnoticed, and was leaning over the back of Thurston's easy-chair.

"Why, old chap, it's an insult to common-sense!"

"No, no, Ching; you blunder there. Don't you see that if a lie is anyway feasible, it will gain ground? Nearly every lie is built on some foundation of truth. If it is not refuted, and cannot be refuted, people take it for truth. We shall not trouble to refute it—not yet, at least. It is altogether too ridiculous to trouble about. But even this wild yarn has borne fruit. Come to the wheelhouse with me, and view the crop of fruit so far."

They hurried after him into the wheelhouse. Ferrers Lord switched off the lights. A picture flashed out upon the screen of the camera-obscura—the distant, rocky shore of Loneland and the tumbling sea, bearing on its bosom five men-of-war.

"Five of them, by hokey!" said Thomas Prout, scratching his beard.

"And who and what are they, Prout?"

The old sea-dog did not hesitate.

"Three chewin'-gums, a beef, and a macaroni, sir!" he answered promptly. Which is to say, three Yankees, one Britisher, and one Italian."

"Quite a provision shop, Tom," said Thurston.

"Yes, sir; by hokey! It's a way I've got of talkin' on 'em. Roosians we called 'vodkas'; Frenchers, 'frogponds'; Dutchies, 'schnapps'; and Turks 'teetotals,' 'cos them beggars don't reckon to drink, except on the sly."

Ferrers Lord laughed as he folded the table over.

"This is the squadron in search of us," he said. "There are more of them about somewhere. By the way, here's another curiosity. Get the flag, Prout! Look at it—the noble flag of Gore and Loneland!"

Prout spread out the bunting. Nathan Gore had improved on the Stars and Stripes by stamping a couple of flowers on the flag, with his initials below them.

"Beautiful!" grinned Ching-Lung. "It'll make a lovely dishcloth for Yard of Tape's greasy pots. Fancy the old rogue sporting a flag of his own! I wonder if he's got a national anthem as well?"

"If he hasn't, Barry is the very chap to compose one for him," said Thurston.

The needle of one of the telegraphic instruments began to sway, and there was a noisy, ticking sound.

"Due south, Prout," said Ferrers Lord. "They are sending marconigrams, ethergrams, or whatever you care to call them, to the ships that are out of sight. You can intercept their correspondence if you think it will amuse you."

"Oh, I could not be so mean!" chuckled Ching-Lung.

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ticking off the message. "Great Scotch broth! What's this they're saying? 'Have picked up mines and torpid—torpid—'"

"Torpedoes, lunatic!"

"Thanks! I thought it might be torpid livers! That's from Gore."

"Of course!" said Ferrers Lord. "He would be in a pretty mess if one of these vessels had an argument with one of his miners."

"Gently, mine boys!" said Ching-Lung. "More news is floating on the breeze!"

"Read it."

"Have you heard more of the sub-sub-sub—?"

"Submarine," suggested Rupert.

"No. Submersible they call it. That's a message from Gore. I'm on that like a bird, before Gore can chip in."

Ching-Lung sent back the answer:

"Submersible very wet when last heard of. Hope your whiskers curl as usual. We have nothing to eat on the island except food. Love and kisses to your fattest stoker. How is your mother-in-law off for soup? You are a lot of baldheaded baboons, but don't worry about it! Hope you'll get this hairless telegram all right. My name is Gore. 'd I am balmy! I am having calves' head for lunch, 'h turnip gravy. Sweetheart, farewell! The hot weather has frozen the drainpipes, and we have to thaw the gas in the refrigerator before we can light it. Love and kisses to all from Little Nathan, the balmy boy!"

The prince repeated the message as he sent it off.

"Haw, haw, haw, haw!" roared Prout. "By hokey! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Give him some oats—he's braying for 'em!" said Ching-Lung. "If Gore's answer gets mixed up with that lot, they'll think they've banged into the padded room of an asylum! Wireless telegraphy is a great thing—a marvellous thing, but it's weak in places. Shall I ask if they can lend us a mangle and a few flatirons?"

"Idiot!" laughed Thurston.

"Hush, my dear brother! I think I ought to ask about the mangle and flatirons!"

"Ax for some beer, sir!" said Prout. "This new lot we've got in is thicker nor tar wi' its shakin' up! By hokey! You wants a knife and fork to cut it, it's so thick!"

"Like your head, Thomas! Here she goes again! No; a false alarm. I'm off for a swim."

Making every allowance for newspaper exaggeration, Ferrers Lord and Rupert saw that the battleships had not arrived by chance or through a coincidence. Three Governments had decided to find out what was happening round Loneland. Britain and Italy had only sent one vessel each, according to the millionaire's information; but German vessels were on the way, for Germany is famous for putting its fingers in other peoples' pies whenever it can. The thought of having roused such a storm delighted Ching-Lung and Rupert. There was something fascinating in the idea of playing hide-and-seek with these great fighting machines.

"But what if they nail us, old chap?" was Rupert's final question.

Ferrers Lord shrugged his shoulders.

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"What their orders are," he said, "has been kept a profound secret, and we cannot tell without experimenting to what length they will go. We must find out by making an experiment."

"How?"

"Wait!" said Ferrers Lord. "Will you take some of this mullet, Ching?"

It was soon evident that something exciting was going to take place. As they sat at dinner dull noises were heard on the deck above. The Lord of the Deep had run round the island, and was lying off its north-western point. The evening was calm and slightly hazy. One by one Prout made out the lights of the advancing ships. Joe superintended the mounting of two seven-pounders and a pom-pom which had been hoisted from below by the crane.

Ferrers Lord, in evening-dress, with one magnificent diamond flashing on his finger, leaned over the rail and looked North.

"Is it bonfire night, or what, O King?" inquired Ching-Lung. "Why these cannons and sich?" Are you going to give your foes a salute of seventy guns?"

"I am going to be a pirate, my boy."

"You can't be Blackbeard without growing whiskers, you know. What's the game?"

"It's there. Look straight forward. What do you see?"

Ching-Lung raised his glass.

"One green light."

"Our quarry," said the millionaire. "That is the vessel we are about to attack."

The prince did not understand, and, with a quiet laugh, Ferrers Lord moved away.

"Plaze, sor," said the hoarse, bass voice of Barry O'Rooney, "what's wrong wid these at all, at all? Troth, luk at the swate, tinder smoile on this wan! Hasn't he lost his best front tooth?"

"It's a blank, you booby!"

"Bedad, ut luks ut!" said Barry. "Oi never seed nothin' blanker. All bark and no boite, Oi reckon, and the others is the same. Oi shud loike to find the dintist that lugged all the groinders out of thim."

And Barry shuffled away with his load.

The Southern Cross shone vividly in the sky.

The submarine burned no lights. On the water the mist hung in patches, and every ripple that struck the vessel was silver with phosphorescence. Though the ironclads were two good miles away, the note of one of their bells was heard with distinctness. The green light to the north was brighter. Birds winged overhead in flocks, and sometimes the hoarse bark of a seal swept across the quiet water.

"Very slowly, Prout!" called Ferrers Lord.

The propeller revolved with a soft swish as the bell tinkled. Each man was in his proper place. Ching-Lung heard Thurston laughing. The laughter was enough to inform them all that the millionaire was about to perpetrate some colossal hoax. None of the guns were shotted, and the rifle-cartridges that had been served out were all blanks.

"Sure," said Barry, "yonder must be an Oirish boat, by the colour of her loights!"

There was a general titter.

"Great funnels and flying-fishes!" said the carpenter. "You're a real able-seaman, you are! Did yer larn navigation on a duck-pond or in a pail?"

"He sarved his apprenticeship on a bloomin' canal-boat, wi' a moke to pull it!" remarked Maddock. "That 'ere wessel is Irish, from Cork, and carries a cargo of Irish-stew, done up in brown-paper packets. She's manned by ninety-nine Irish gents with knee-breeches and tail-coats. Each on 'em carries a shillalay in his fist and a large bunch of shamrock in his buttonhole, and they keep axin' somebody to tread on the tail of their coats. Ain't that a fact, Joe?"

"A copper-buttoned, steel-lined, wear-the-same-colour-all-through fact!" said Joe. "That wessel is Shamrock V., wot's goin' to win the America Cup—and jolly good luck to her!"

"Hear, hear!" put in Ching-Lung, who had sauntered forward. "That cup has got to come back, anyhow. What's the fun?"

"Mr. O'Rooney is givin' us a lesson in seamanship, sir," said Joe drily. "He's got a bit of green in his eye."

"Troth, there'll be some black round yourn shortly!" growled Barry. "Oi can take chaff—"

"All donkeys can!" said Maddock rather smartly.

"And Oi can give beans," said Barry, with equal readiness, "which is good food for donkeys and horses, too! Oi've got some ready."

"Not so dusty!" chuckled the prince.

"Silence, there!"

They ran into a patch of mist. All at once, as they emerged, the vessel seemed to rise up right ahead. She was a single-funnel steamer, rakish, trim, and painted white.

Ching-Lung knew her at a glance, and others recognised her, too.

"Thunder!" said Maddock. "It's our grocery-store!"

"Port!" said Ferrers Lord.

They glided past. The millionaire put the enormous megaphone to his lips, and his voice rang through the great funnel like a thunder-clap:

"Make for the ironclads when we fire," he shouted, "and we will use you as a cover! Have your hawser ready!"

"Ay, ay!"

What was the millionaire's scheme? The steamer was the very vessel that had brought out their stores, and Ferrers Lord's own property. The submarine went swiftly on, until the steamer's tail-lights were lost in the mist. Then she came about, making a perfect and faultless curve.

"Did you see her flag, sir?" asked Joe.

"No. What was it?"

"Summat like the Stars and Stripes arter a railway accident!" said Joe.

"Oh, she was flying the Loneland colours? There she is! Now, Gan, here's your chance to be a coarse rabbit, corsair, filibuster, pirate, and buccancer all at a go! Get hold of that, and yank it! Yank it, I tell you, you fat villain!"

"Boom!" roared the seven-pounder, and the flash lighted the deck.

"Boom!" went the gun for the second time, the report smothering the laughter of the men. The submarine had slowed down. The shot was answered by the steamer, which altered its course. Several searchlights flashed through the night.

"Bam, bam, bam, bam-m-m-m-m!" buzzed the pom-pom gun. The steamer was flying. Ferrers Lord tied on a mask of black velvet, and watched the five ships of war.

"An act of piracy under their very noses!" said Rupert. "What's that row?"

"Fireballs."

A dozen rockets hissed into the air. One by one they burst into masses of vivid fire. The brilliant light flooded down, almost turning night into day. It revealed the steamer, and the low-lying, black, men-crowded pursuer.

There was an explosion on board the steamer. Spars came rattling down.

"Clever!" said Ferrers Lord. "And it looked so natural! The experiment works! What's in front of that flash? Is it metal?"

The nearest ironclad had fired. "Z-z-z-o-o!" The sound was unmistakably the fierce, shrill scream of a shell rushing overhead.

"Who's playing the fiddle?" shouted Barry.

There was a heavy splash astern as the shell dropped into the water, and a yell of laughter as the Irishman solemnly added:

"Be jabers! He's bust his middle sthring!"

He must have tickled haire too hard!" chirped Gan.

"How cruel to tickle haire so hards!"

It was a clever deception. Rocket after rocket leapt from the ironclads that were forging ahead. The steamer was apparently in difficulties. She swung round helplessly, burning flares. Splendidly steered, the submarine came up with her, in full view of the battleships. The men-of-war dared not fire, for the two vessels were side by side, and they would assuredly have sunk both.

"Boarders—boarders!" cried Ferrers Lord, his voice shaking with laughter. "Make all the noise and fuss you can! Maddock, you know what to do!"

"Charge!" roared Ching-Lung.

(Another instalment of this amusing and exciting serial story next Monday.)

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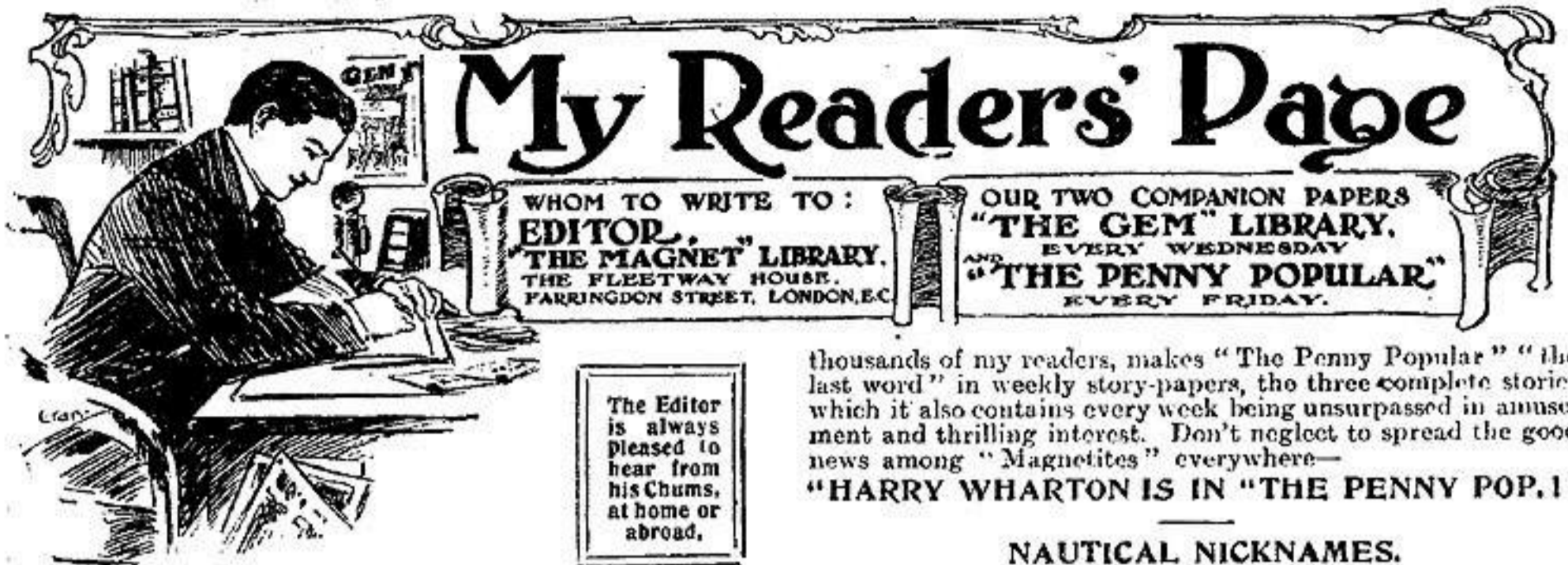
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"HARRY WHARTON IS IN "THE PENNY POP."!"

NAUTICAL NICKNAMES.

Practically everybody knows that the sailors' name for the chaplain is "sky pilot," but we publish below a list of nicknames which are not so widely known.

The coxswain is "Tommy Pipes," the carpenter "Chippy," the electrician "Spark," and the stokers rejoice in the euphonious name of "clinker knockers."

The name given to sick berth attendants, which suggests a slight element of ingratitude, is that of "poultry-wallopers," and the doctors have been invested with a still unkind one of "butchers."

The naval cooper is "Jimmy Bungs," and the sergeant of marines is known as "Stripey," while the paymaster's appellation is delightfully suggestive of affluence—to wit, "Moneybags."

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

J. Miller (Australia).—Thanks for your postcard. The answer to your query is "Yes."

H. P.—The address of William Collins, Son, & Co., Ltd., is 4, Bridewell Place, London, E.C.

S. Bowdedge (W. Norwood).—No doubt you saw what Miss "Pat. H." said in her letter with regard to her League, which was published in last week's "Gem Library."

W. S. Bell (Grimsby).—Messrs. Uppott, Gill, of Drury Lane, London, W.C., publish a book entitled "The Management of Rabbits," which you can obtain from them for 1s. 2d., post free.

J. G. (Edinburgh).—I should advise you to get the book mentioned in the answer to W. S. Bell, above.

If Miss B. C. (of Bradford) will send her full address I shall be pleased to insert her request.

S. Bourne (Sheffield).—I think you might be able to obtain a book such as you require from the British Sports Publishing Co., of 2, Hind Court, Fleet Street, E.C., for about 1s.

"Candid" (Bury).—Thanks for criticism and suggestion, which I will bear in mind.

"An Irish Reader."—I am sorry, but we do not keep back numbers of very early date in stock. With regard to your query as to how you can increase your height, the following exercise is a good one. Directly on rising every morning stand in front of an open window with hands on hips. Then slowly draw into the lungs, and raise yourself gradually on tip-toe. Then slowly empty your lungs, and sink to the ground. Done every morning about a dozen times this exercise will help to build up your body in every way.

E. K., F. G.—Thanks for letter. I am sorry I have no back numbers to spare to send you for distribution, but am obliged to you for suggesting the idea.

Miss L. Wilson (Liverpool).—Thanks for letter. I fail to understand what objection can be taken to the "Gem" Correspondence Exchange, since there is not the slightest need for its presence to be even noticed by those to whom its advantages fail to appeal. Owing to the great measure of appreciation which this feature has met with I have no intention of discontinuing it at present.

J. P. (Tottenham).—I was surprised to hear that you were unable to obtain the two substances you mentioned at a chemist's. Some oil-and-colour shops stock them, so why not try there?

THE EDITOR.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"CAPTAIN COKER!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next long, complete Tale of Greyfriars School, entitled as above, is a particularly amusing and interesting one. The recent split in the Sixth Form having caused the resignation of Wingate from the high position he has held so long, leaves the way open for the election of a new captain.

By a curious combination of circumstances, this high honour falls to none other than Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form! Coker proceeds to make hay while the sun shines, and gives play to his original ideas in a manner that causes all Greyfriars to gasp! However, after Coker's football team has sustained a crushing defeat, it soon becomes evident to the school at large that

"CAPTAIN COKER"

is hardly "the right man in the right place," and some drastic changes take place.

Don't forget to order

"CAPTAIN COKER"

in advance!

A MOUTHFUL!

"Donald," of Southwark, sends me an amusing example of the lengths to which "alliteration"—that is, the use of words all beginning with the same letter of the alphabet—can be carried. "Donald" candidly adds that his contribution is not original; but, in spite of that, I think it merits a small space in our page. Here it is, just as "Donald" sends it to me:

"OH, LOR!"

Sarah Ann: "Will you tell me what that whopping big 'D' means in that window, please?"

Cockney: "Decidedly! That displayed 'D' denotes that the despairing domestics of that detached domicile desire that the distinguished dustman, during his daily diversions, should deem it his delightful duty to deliberately dislodge all the dirty dusty deposited in their dilapidated dustholes!"

Sarah Ann: "Lor'!"

AN UNUSUAL QUERY ANSWERED.

One of my readers, Henry J., of Lee, S.E., is kind enough to supply me with an item of information which I have pleasure in passing on for the benefit of at least one of my chums, who asked a question on the subject recently.

My obliging correspondent informs me that second-hand handcuffs can be obtained from Messrs. Goff, of New Street, Covent Garden, London, W.

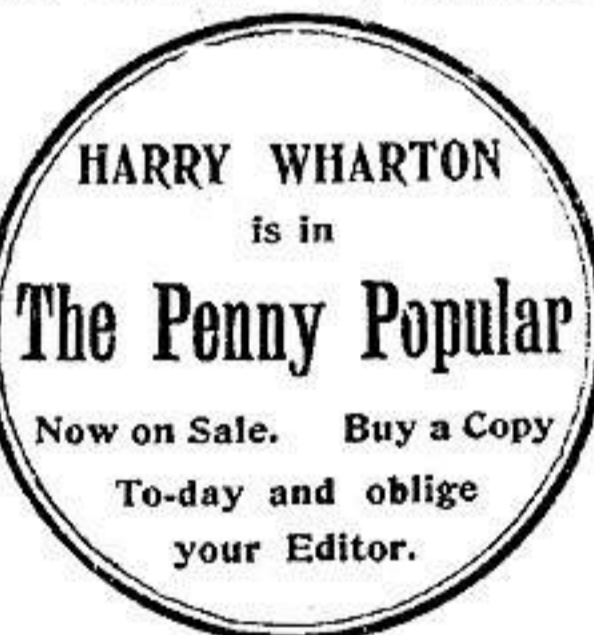
Many thanks for your note, Henry J.

HARRY WHARTON IN "THE PENNY POPULAR."

Don't forget, my chums, that the issue of our grand companion paper, "The Penny Popular," which is now on sale, contains a splendid story of the early schooldays of Harry Wharton—the famous junior, who is now the recognised leader of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. This grand new feature, which has been introduced by the special request of

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:



"CAPTAIN COKER!"

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SPLENDID COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

A HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURE.



1. "Oh, dear me!" gurgled the poet. "What ever shall I do? Oh, what a horrible creature!" And in his fright his hair stood up on end.



2. And Giles, who was doing a little bit of gardening, mistook it for a bush that wanted trimming. "O'll just take a bit of that!" thought he.



3. So he snipped away right heartily. And it's a question who was most surprised—the poet, the bull, or Giles.

A GOOD RE-TURN.

She: "My old dress won't do for the ball."

He: "Well, turn it."

She: "But I have once."

He: "Well, turn it again. One good turn deserves another."



MONEYED MANNERS.



"Look at that fat man eating with his knife."

"Gracious! he must be very wealthy!"

"And stirring his coffee with his fork."

"Great Jupiter! He must be a newly-made millionaire."

JONES' GAMP IS RUINED, BUT HE SAVES HIMSELF A WETTING!



"Condash! The wind is bent on—

"Ruining my new three-and-ninepenny gamp.

"I should just like to have the clerk of the weather within reach.

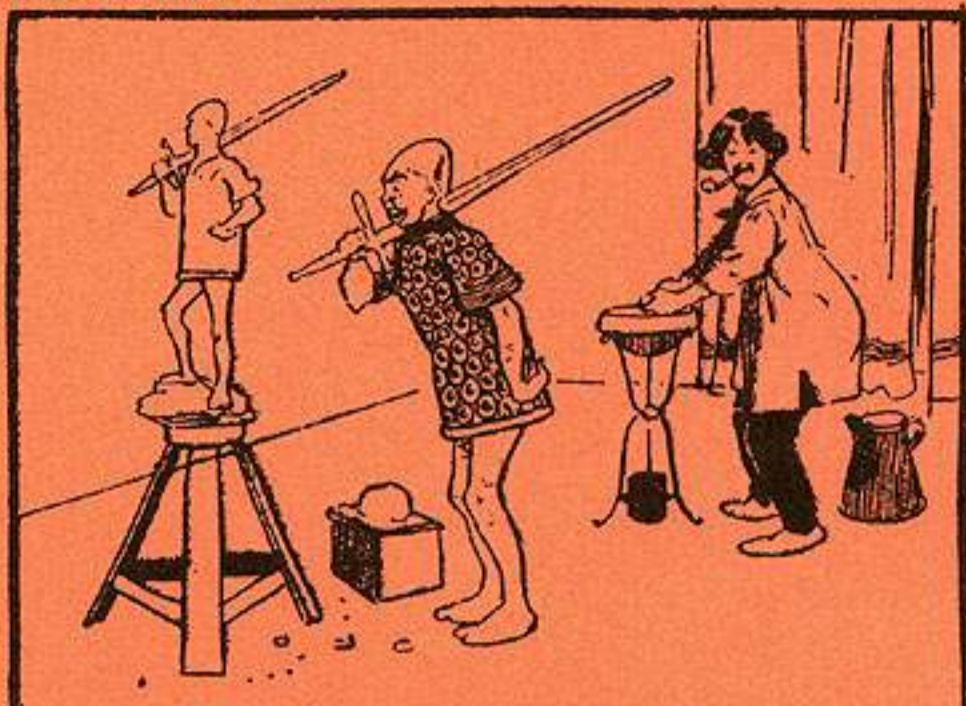
"Yes, that's finished. I shall get wet through.

"Ha, ha! No, I sha'n't. This is quite the latest thing in capes, isn't it?"

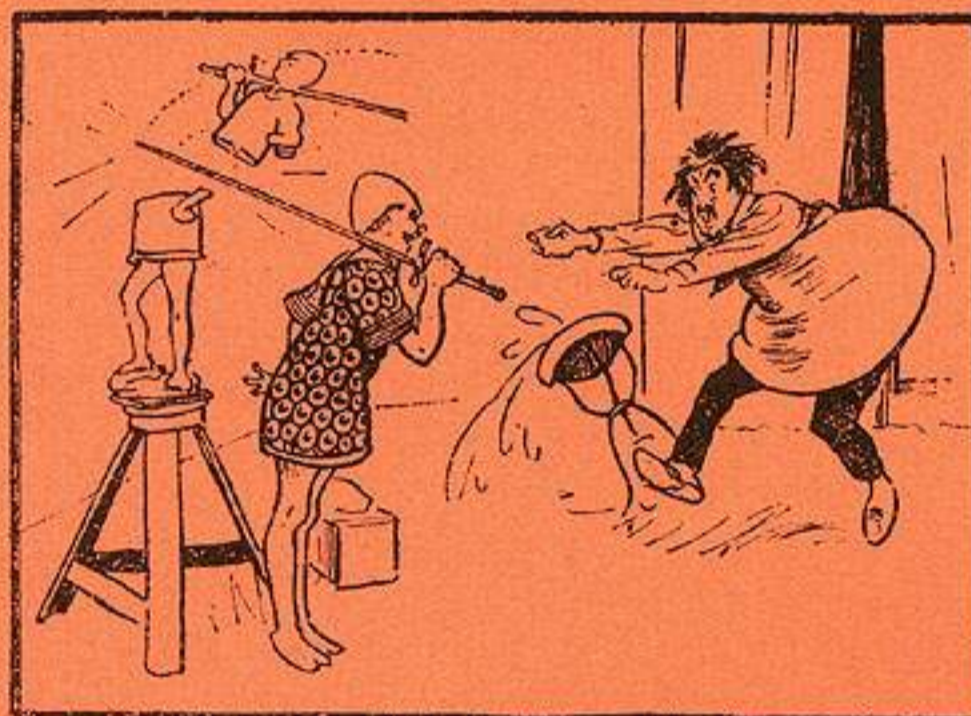
BAD LUCK ON THE SCULPTOR.



1. "This is my masterpiece!" chortled the sculptor. "This, undoubtedly, will bring me fame and fortune. Hooray!"



2. Then the model got down for a rest, and had a look at the statue. "Bit of all right, this, guv'nor!" said the model.

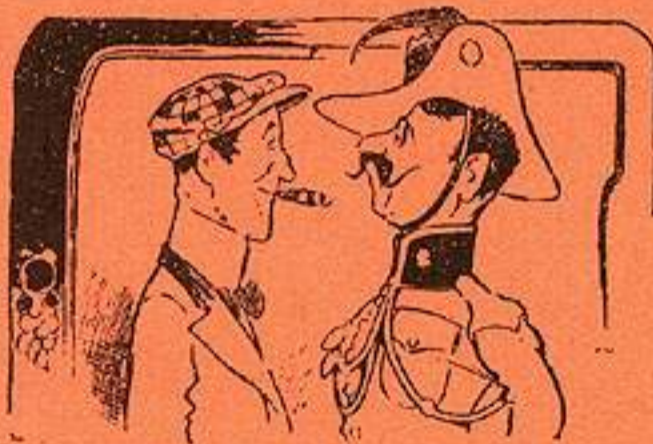


3. "I tell you what, though," said he, turning round. "Yow! help! You villain, you've spoilt it!" cried the artist. So he had, too, and no mistake.

AN APT DESCRIPTION.



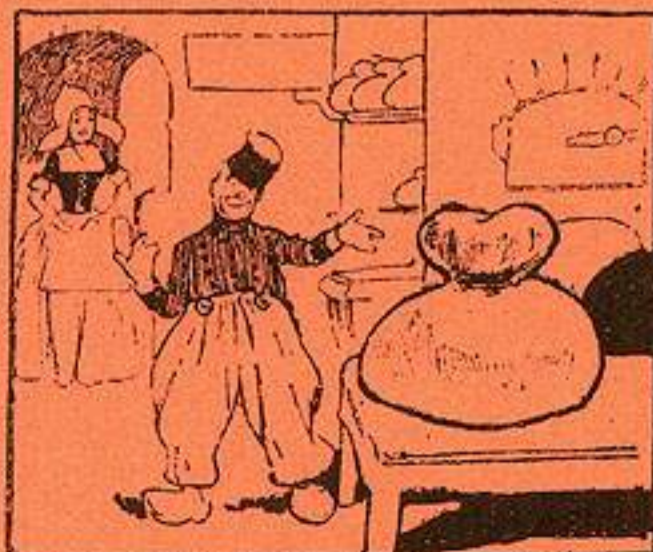
Friend: "Puzzling girl, that model of yours, eh?"
Artist: "Yes, she's certainly a poser."



NO DOUBT.

Brown: "I met a chap who said he'd like the pleasure of being able to kick you."
Jones: "That's an insult! Who is he?"
Brown: "Well, he's a poor fellow that lost both his legs in South Africa!"

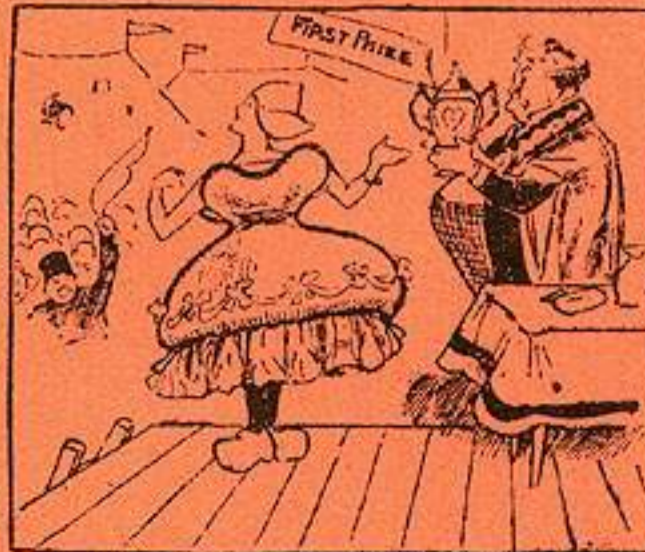
HOW LOAF-LY.



1. "Ach, Wilhelmina!" quoth Hans, "Dot vos some splendid loaves! I gets me der first prize at der Bakers' Exhibition for sure!"

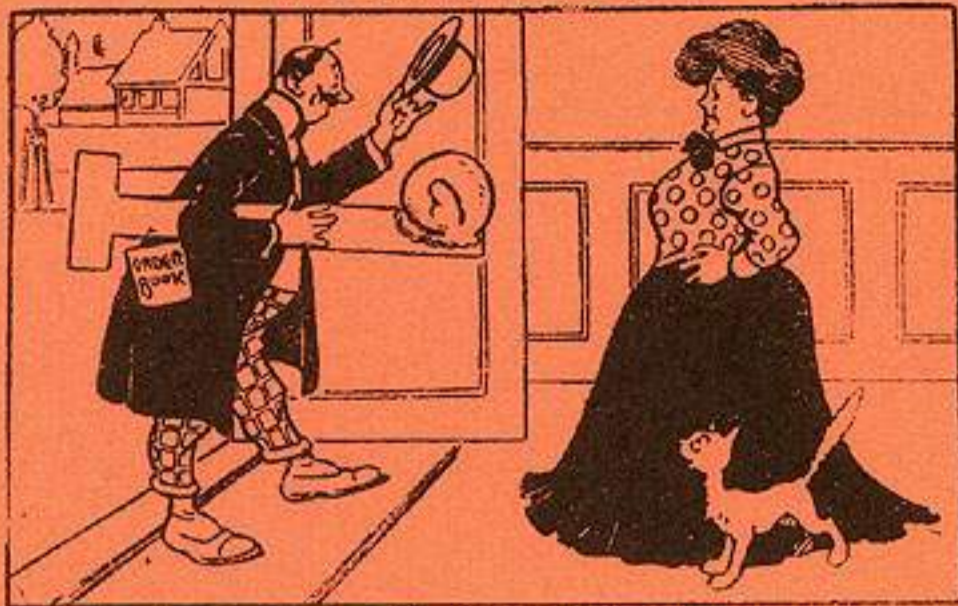


2. But, unluckily, the rats got at the loaf in the night. "Mein gootnesses, dot vos done it!" gasped Hans. "Don't you be so sure!" cried little Wilhelmina.

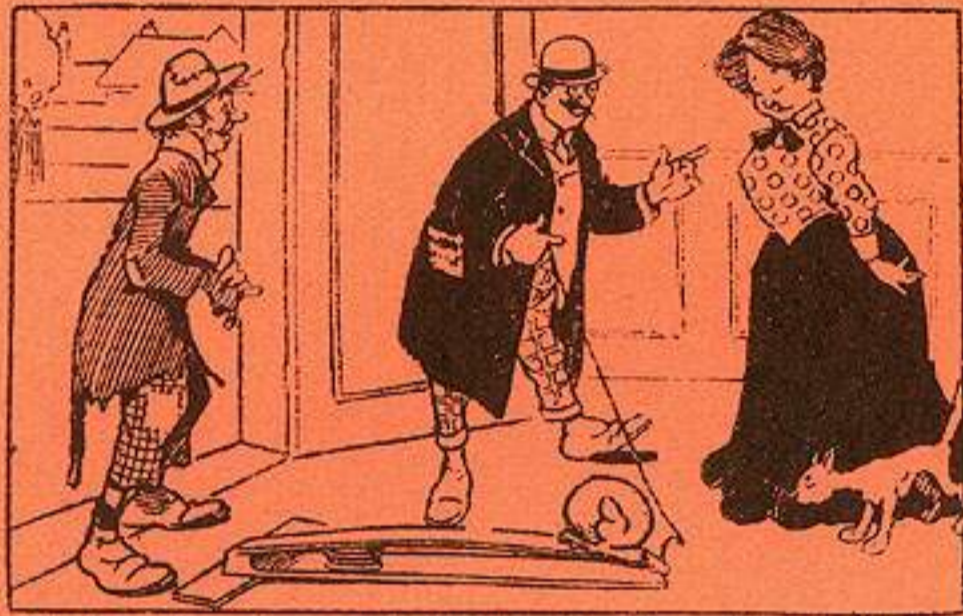


3. What do you think? The clever little woman turned the loaf into a costume for the fancy dress ball, and took first prize as "New Bread!"

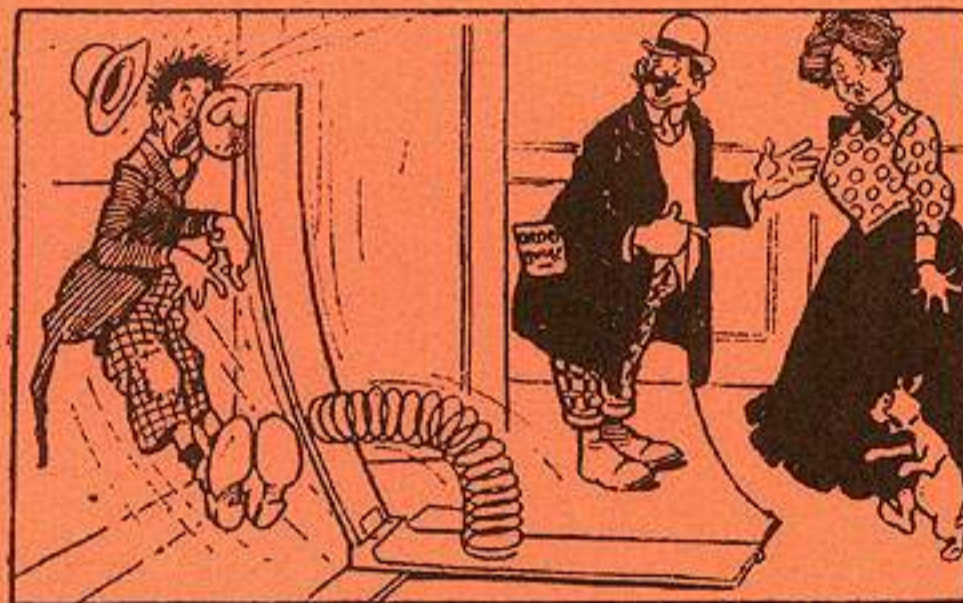
A SPRING NOVELTY.



1. Good day, madam," said the traveller. "Allow me to call your attention to a new line of goods. The patent tram-remover. Yes, you place the apparatus on the floor—"



2. Just then Ragged Robin, the tired traveller, tumbled up. "Ahumum!" he gurgled. "Wot's the matter? Wot's this, eh? Wot's he going to do, eh?" "Observe, madam," said the agent, "I pull the string, and—"



3. Plonk! And poor old Ragged Robin was severely pushed into the next parish, travelling through space at some ninety-odd miles an hour!

A STAGE ASIDE.

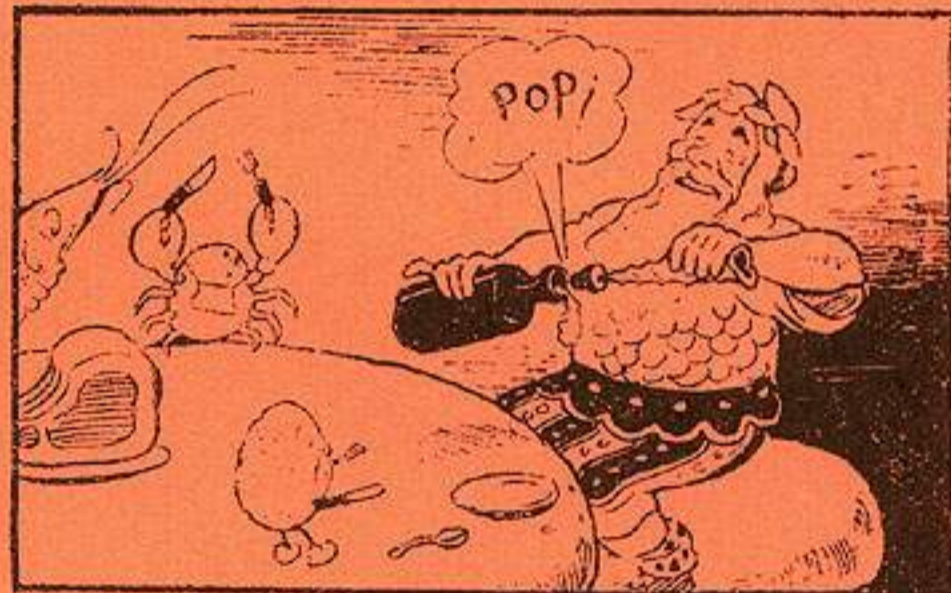


Ho: "I have a leading part in the next production"
She: "What do you lead—a horse?"

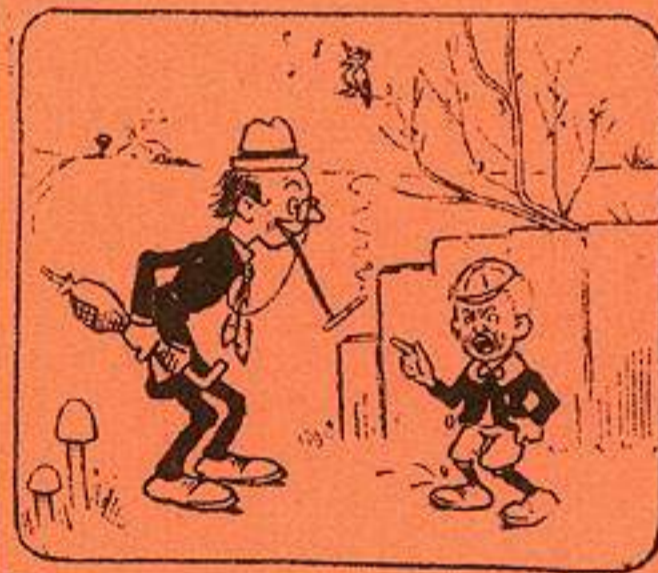
RATHER UN-"SCREW"-PULOUS BEHAVIOUR.



1. Papa Neptune was giving a merry little tea-party to his shell-fish friends. "Dear, dear! I haven't got a corkscrew to draw this cork!" said he.



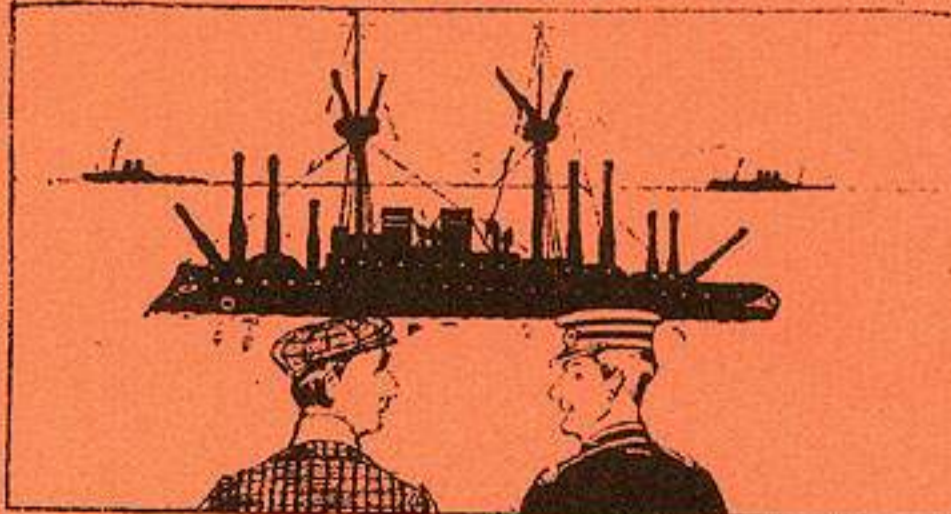
2. "Never mind," he chuckled. "I'll use one of the guests!" Pop! The corkscrew-shaped shell-fish says he won't come again to one of Father Neptune's tea-light's. Nunno!



LOST HIS AIM IN LIFE.

Spring Poet: "What's the matter, little man?"
Boy: "Boony! That little bird makes me weep!"
Spring Poet: "Ah, the poetic nature!"
Boy: "No, sir; I forgot me cata-pult!"

THE NEW AIR SCARE.



Captain Skyscraper: "Yes, that is the last word in battle-ships!"
Landlubber: "But what on earth are all the guz doing pointing up to the sky?"
Captain Skyscraper: "To fire at hostile airships, of course!"