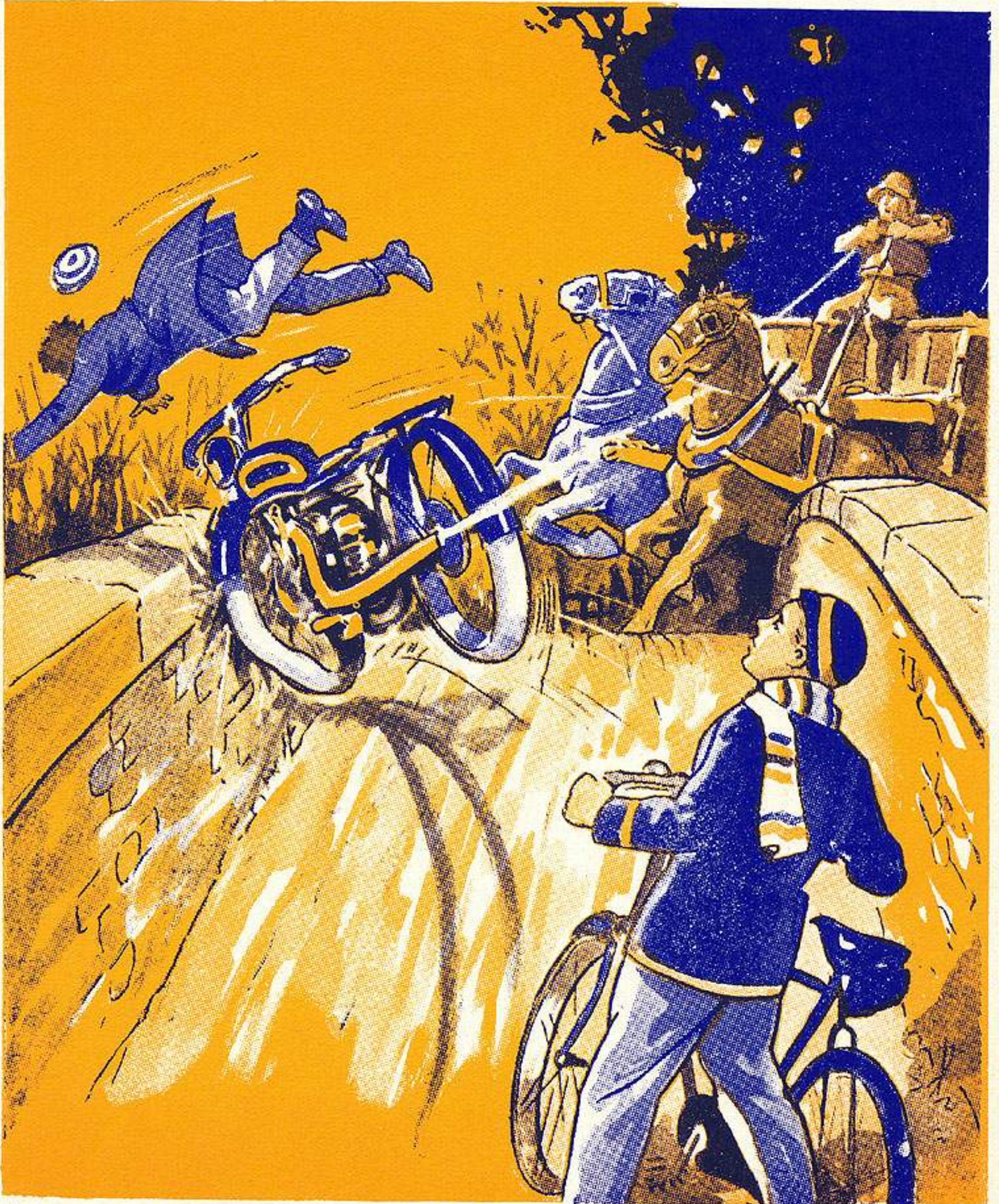
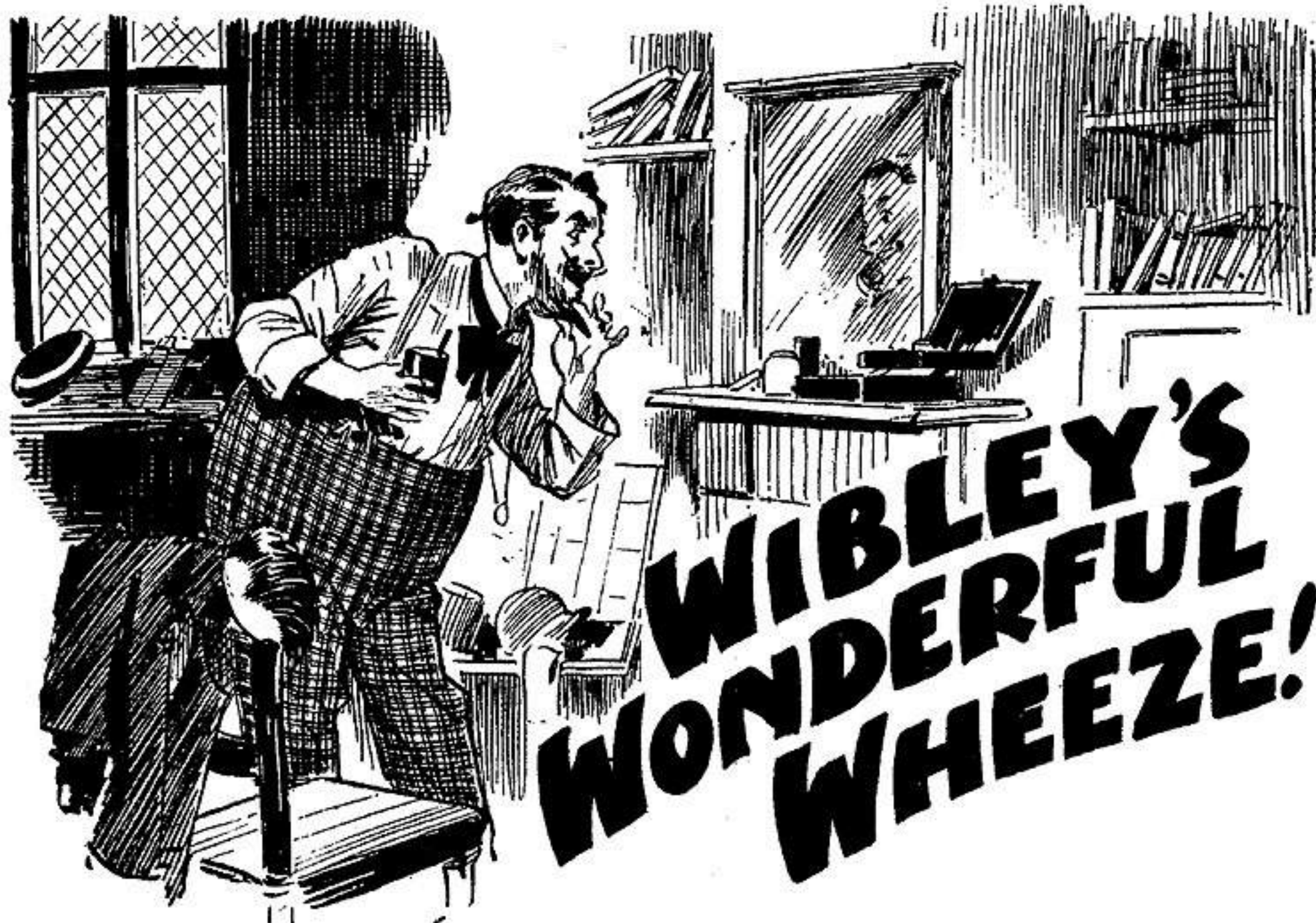


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# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>





**WIBLEY'S  
WONDERFUL  
WHEEZE!**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**

**Wibley on the Warpath!**

**W**ILLIAM WIBLEY of the Greyfriars Remove tramped down the Remove passage to Study No. 1, with knitted brows and a gleaming eye.

From the doorway of Study No. 6, his own study, Micky Desmond and David Morgan watched him, with grinning faces.

Wibley looked serious, almost tragic. But his study-mates seemed to find something comic in his aspect.

Billy Bunter, leaning his extensive weight on the wall of the Remove passage, with his fat hands in his pockets, grinned also as Wibley passed him.

So did Vernon-Smith and Lord Maul-everer and Bolsover major and two or three other fellows who happened to be about.

William Wibley, sober as a judge himself, was the cause of smiles on all sides.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter's fat cachinnation followed him to Study No. 1.

Heedless of that, and of the grinning faces in the passage, Wibley of the Remove arrived in the doorway of Study No. 1.

Without troubling to knock—he was in no mood for politeness—Wibley hurled open the door of that celebrated study.

Five juniors were in Study No. 1—the Famous Five of the Remove. They were talking football—discussing the coming match with Rookwood School, which was a very important matter to the Remove fellows.

But Harry Wharton & Co. ceased to talk football as they looked round and saw Wibley in the doorway.

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They grinned.

The mere sight of William Wibley that day seemed to be enough to make the Remove fellows grin like Cheshire cats.

It is said that an accepted wit has but to say "Pass the salt!" to set the table in a roar. Certainly Wibley had only to show himself in a Remove study to set that study on the grin!

Which was rather remarkable, for Wibley himself was a serious fellow, and took himself very seriously. He was President of the Remove Dramatic Society; he was the prime mover in the Remove amateur theatricals; he played the tragic parts, and played them well. There was not a fellow at Greyfriars, junior or senior, who was a patch on Wibley at theatrical stunts. When he played Hamlet he was the melancholy Dane to the life.

But, like so many people in this troublesome world, Wibley was not satisfied to do the things that he could do; but longed with vain ambition to do the things he couldn't do!

He could play Hamlet; but he couldn't play football! He fancied that he could—but he couldn't!

He could keep his end up respectably in an ordinary Form match or a practice game; but in a real tussle at Soccer Wibley was of no more use than Bob Cherry would have been in the part of Hamlet.

Hence the present trouble—the tragic frown of William Wibley and the grinning faces of the other fellows.

"Trot in, old bean!" said Harry Wharton hospitably. "We've got doughnuts!"

Wibley sniffed.

"They're jolly good doughnuts, too!" said Frank Nugent.

Another sniff!

A fellow who was keen to distinguish himself in a great game of Soccer was not to be put off with doughnuts!

Unconsciously—for he was an actor to the marrow of his bones, and play-acted without even knowing it—Wibley struck an attitude in the doorway, and frowned on the cheery chums of the Remove like a melancholy Dane.

"I've come here to talk football!" he said.

"To talk what?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Football!" hooted Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five in chorus.

Wibley's frown intensified.

"Will you fellows be serious?" he yapped.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, it's not easy to be serious, old chap, when you talk football!" he said.

"But we'll try. Have a doughnut?"

"Bother your doughnuts!"

"My esteemed Wibley," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "the goodness of these esteemed doughnuts is terrific!"

"For goodness' sake talk English, or don't talk at all!" snapped Wibley.

"Draw it mild, old man!" said Bob Cherry quietly. "That's not civil."

"I haven't come here to be civil!" snorted Wibley.

"Seems not; but uncivil fellows sometimes get their nappers banged on a study table!" said Bob.

"And the bangfulness may be terrific and preposterous!" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur warmly.

Evidently William Wibley was wrathful. He was always civil and often polite. Now he was neither. He came farther into the study, staring, or, rather, glaring, at the chums of the Remove. They were still smiling—except Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

That dusky youth was quite satisfied with the English he had learned under the wisest moonshee in Bhanipur, and Wibley's remark had ruffled him a little.

"Rookwood comes over here on Wednesday!" said Wibley. "I've pointed out to you, Wharton, more than once that I've got claims to be played in School games. I can say that I've fairly dinned it into your ears all through the football season!"

"You can say that with truth!" assented Harry Wharton. "As Inky would say, the dinfulness has been terrific!"

"Stick to Hamlet, old bean," said Johnny Bull. "You can play Shakespeare—you can't play Rookwood!"

"Shut up, Bull!" Evidently Wibley had left his good manners at home. "Look here, Wharton, I'm fed-up!"

"Same here!" said Harry. "Shut the door after you!"

"I'm not a fellow like Bunter, or Coker of the Fifth—I can play footer!" said Wibley. "I play a good game! I stick to practice, don't I?"

"Yes; but—"

"I'm not asking to play for School all the time! Give me a chance! But I'm left out of every match!"

"So is Bunter!" Bob pointed out.

"And am I anything like Bunter's form?" roared Wibley.

"Well," said Bob thoughtfully, "you're thinner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a merry jest, isn't it?" sneered Wibley. "You keep a man out of games and you think it's funny! Wharton, I'm asking to be given a chance in the Rookwood match on Wednesday."

"Can't be done, old bean! We've got to put our best foot foremost to beat Rookwood—and they may beat us!" said the captain of the Remove. "I'm not taking chances with men like Jimmy Silver & Co."

"No fear!" said Bob emphatically.

"Why, you cheeky ass," said Frank Nugent. "I'm left out, and I suppose I'm a better man than you at the game!"

"You can suppose what you like," said Wibley. "I think you're a dud! I could play your head off. Wharton's, too, if it came to that!"

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" chuckled Bob. "Have a doughnut, old chap, and forget all about it."

Wibley's knitted brows knitted more darkly, till he really looked as if he would never get them unravelled again. The chums of the Remove eyed him smilingly. They were sorry that old Wib, who was a really good fellow and could play any fellow's head off at theatricals, nourished this ambition to shine in a game that was not within his powers. They were sorry that he took it so seriously and tragically. Still, they could not help smiling.

Other fellows fancied they were frightfully hot stuff at Soccer, and wondered why a football captain, supposed to be in his right senses, did not see what hot stuff they were, and pick them out to play. Lots and lots of fellows were like that! But other fellows made the best of it. Wibley seemed bent on making the worst of it.

His claims to play in the Rookwood game, urged in season and out of season, had become a standing joke in the Remove, producing smiles on all faces. Really, it was rather touching.

Harry Wharton liked Wibley. All the fellows liked him, more or less. In the Form theatricals they gave him his head without limit. In that department Wib was monarch of all he surveyed, his right there was none to dispute. But giving him his head in Soccer was a geegee of quite another colour.

Smiling faces were far from placating William Wibley. Darker and darker grew his wrathful frown.

Harry Wharton & Co. resumed tea, while Wibley scowled and frowned. They had doughnuts for tea—and the doughnuts, as they had told Wibley, were good.

"I want a plain answer," said Wibley, at last.

"Haven't you had one?" asked Harry.

"Am I to play Rookwood or not?"

"Not!"

"That's final?"

"You've got it!"

"Then," said Wibley, in measured tones, "I'll jolly well punch your cheeky head for your dashed impudence!"

"Eh—what?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove, in astonishment.

He stared at Wibley. Fellows had sometimes slanged him for refusing to recognise their claims to play in big matches. But even Bolsover major had never gone to the length of punching his head for that reason. No fellow in the Remove had ever gone to that length. Wibley was making history in the Greyfriars Remove.

**William Wibley's not much of a scholar, not much of a footballer, or a boxer, either. But as an actor and as an impersonator William Wibley has no equal at Greyfriars!**

"Get up!" snapped Wibley.

Wharton sat where he was. He waved his hand to the door.

"Better travel," he said. "Travel's good for the health."

"Will you put your hands up?" roared Wibley.

"Thanks—no!"

"Will you get out of that chair?"

"Not till I've finished tea, old bean," answered the captain of the Remove imperturbably.

Wibley breathed wrath.

Fellows were gathering round the open doorway now, looking into Study No. 1 with great interest. Wibley did not heed them. His eyes gleamed.

Harry Wharton, still smiling, lifted his teacup, to dispose of the contents in the usual way, regardless of Wibley, his wrath, and his frowns. Perhaps Wib read something contemptuous in that action. It gave the finishing touch to his wrath. He made a sudden rush forward, grabbed the captain of the Remove by the collar, and dragged him backwards over his chair.

"Now!" he gasped.

"Ow!" roared Wharton. "Oh, my hat! Ooogh!"

The chair went crashing; Wharton went sprawling. Over him were shed the contents of the teacup—hot from the teapot. The roar from the captain of the Remove as he sprawled with hot tea drenching over him awoke every echo of the passage. And from the fellows crowded outside came another roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Not a Whopping

HARRY WHARTON struggled to his feet. All the tea-party were on their feet now. Both tea and football were forgotten in Study No. 1. The captain of the Remove gasped for breath as he mopped off hot tea. Bob Cherry waved a warning hand to Wibley.

"Cut, you ass!" he called out. "Get out, while the going's good!"

But Wibley did not "cut." His wrath was undiminished; and Wib had lots of pluck. Also, he rather fancied himself as a boxer. That was another of Wib's fancies, which had very slight foundations. Wib was not exactly a conceited fellow. But there was no doubt that he over-rated his abilities in a good many directions. He believed that he could play Soccer as well as any man in the Remove. He believed that he could stand up to the captain of the Form with, or without, gloves. Both beliefs were quite erroneous.

"The cutfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed idiotic Wibley!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Mind your own business!" retorted Wibley.

"Wait a minute!" gasped Wharton, mopping tea. "I'm going to dust the study with that howling ass! Wait a tick!"

"Better travel, old bean!" said Johnny Bull.

"Not till I've licked Wharton!" snapped Wibley.

"Oh, my hat! Have you come to this study to stay for the rest of your natural life?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gloves, you men!" exclaimed Squiff, the Remove goalkeeper, in the doorway. "No bare knuckles in the Remove! Hold on, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton paused as he was advancing on the invader of the study.

"Hand out the gloves, Franky!" he said.

"I don't want gloves!" snorted Wibley. "I've come here to whop you, Wharton, if you don't do the right thing. I don't want gloves."

"You will before you're through, you howling ass!" said Harry. He caught the gloves that Nugent tossed to him, and put them on.

"Well, if you funk knuckles—" jeered Wibley.

"Put on the gloves, fathead!"

"A fight! A fight!" was shouted along the passage, and Remove fellows crowded along. And outside Study No. 1 there was a swarm.

Fellows struggled for front places. Squiff and Vernon-Smith, Tom Brown and Hazeldene, had the doorway. Peter Todd and Bolsover major, Marl Linley and Dick Penfold, were just behind them; then came Russell and Ogilvy, Lord Mauleverer and Fisher T. Fish, Micky Desmond and David Morgan, and behind them again a crowd of more fellows.

Almost all the Remove had arrived on the scene. Agonised squeaks were heard from Billy Bunter as he was squeezed and crushed in the crowd.

Most of the fellows were laughing. A fellow setting out to thrash his football captain for leaving him out of a match was something rather unique. It was enough, as Smithy remarked, to make a cat laugh. And the well-known fact that Wib could not possibly stand up against the captain of the Form for more than a single round made his enterprise still more entertaining. Fellows crammed round the doorway to watch Wharton making mincemeat of the bold invader.

"Now then, ready?" asked Bob Cherry, with a cheery grin. "I'll keep time. Made your will, Wib?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Wibley. "I'll lick you next, Bob Cherry!"

"Mercy!" gasped Bob; and there was a loud chortle.

"Ready!" said Harry Wharton.

"Time!"

Wibley rushed.

It was a fierce rush, and showed how wild and wrathful Wibley was. From Wib's point of view this was a serious matter. But it was evidently not serious from anybody else's. Laughter seemed out of place to Wibley. But to the rest of the Remove it seemed a merry moment.

So fierce was Wib's rush that it drove Harry Wharton back. He gave ground, caught a tap on his nose, and gave more. And then, catching his foot in a ruck of the study carpet, staggered. There really was not a lot of room in a junior study for a boxing match. As he staggered, Wib rushed on, hitting out. The captain of the Remove caught left and right, the first with his chin, the second with his eye, and he went down on his back with a bump.

"Man down!" shouted the Bounder.

"Good old Wib!" yelled Morgan.

"Go it!"

"Faith, and he'll be sorry when Wharton gets up again!" grinned Micky Desmond.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, give a fellow room!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, stop treading on a fellow's feet! I say, stop jamming your elbow into my ribs, Bolsover, you beast! Wow! I say, you fellows— Oh crumbs!"

William Wibley stood staring at Wharton, perhaps a little surprised at his own success, but considerably bucked thereby. Wharton lay gasping for a second. Then he was up like a Jack-in-the-box. He came on with a bound, and then Wib, who had fancied that he could box the captain of the Remove, woke up, as it were.

What happened Wib hardly knew. But he knew that his guard was brushed aside, that a hard glove tapped on his nose, and tapped again and again, and that he sat down on the floor with a bump that shook Study No. 1.

"Time!"

"Oooooogh!" gasped Wibley.

He needed "time." Micky Desmond pushed into the study and gave him a hand up. Morgan fanned him with a newspaper. Wibley's study-mates were as entertained as the rest of the Remove by Wib's warlike enterprise. Still, they wished him luck. For the glory of Study No. 6 they would have been pleased to see him get away with a victory over the captain of the Form. But they did not expect him to do so.

"Time!"

Wibley was groggy. But he had, as the Bounder remarked, more pluck than sense. He came on gamely at the call of time.

It was rather fortunate for him that Harry Wharton had recovered his good humour by this time.

Certainly if the captain of the Remove had put forth his powers, Wib would have been booked for a terrific whopping. But Wharton contented himself with guarding. And Wibley, to his intensifying wrath and chagrin, found himself unable to get through that guard. As a matter of fact, Bob Cherry was the only man in the Greyfriars Remove who could have got the upper hand of Wharton in a stand up tussle, and he would not have found it easy. And Wibley's fistical powers,

compared with Bob's, were as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine. He had, in point of fact, no chance at all in the combat he had so recklessly asked for.

"Time!" chuckled Bob.

The second round ended, with no damage done on either side except that Wib was getting sadly out of breath. Wibley was panting, and Wharton was smiling.

"Call it off, old bean, what?" asked Harry.

"Are you playing me at footer?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Then I'm jolly well going to lick you!" panted Wibley.

"The lickfulness will be a boot on the other leg!" chuckled Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time!" chortled Bob Cherry.

The third round evoked laughter and cheers from the spectators. Wharton, with a smiling face, kept his opponent at armslength. Wibley, with the wildest efforts, could not break through his guard. It seemed as if the captain of the Remove was protected by triple steel, so far as Wib was concerned.

Every now and then Wharton gave him a playful tap—quite a gentle tap, on nose or chin, which fanned Wibley's wrath to fury. He made frantic efforts to get to closer quarters. But he couldn't! He was staid off with perfect ease and when Bob Cherry, hardly able to speak for laughter, called time again, Wibley was gurgling for breath and spluttering with rage.

"Some scrap!" grinned the Bounder.

"Chuck it, old man!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "What's the good of playing the giddy ox?"

"I'll smash you!" gasped Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time!"

Wibley fairly bounded at his adversary. Wharton had to give or take; and he gave—rather hard! A drive on the chest sat Wibley down. He struggled up—and another tap sat him down again! Again he struggled to his feet—and again he sat on the carpet! By that time it dawned even on Wibley that he could keep on his feet only so long as the captain of the Remove chose to let him. Also he was winded. So he sat where he was and glared—while the study rang with laughter.

"Is that the lot?" asked Wharton cheerfully.

"Oh, you rotter!" groaned Wibley.

"I'd jolly well whop you if—if I could!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's a jolly big if," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Time to travel, old man. Come back when you're in a better temper and have a doughnut!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Micky Desmond and Morgan helped Wibley out of the study. He disappeared through a yelling crowd. Wib's face was tragic as tragic as when he was playing Hamlet! But everybody else was laughing! The door of Study No. 1 closed on a merry crowd, and the Famous Five sat down to finish their interrupted tea.

"Feeling done, after that terrific combat?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Not frightfully! Poor old Wib! I wish he wouldn't be such an ass!"

"Asses are like poets—born, not made!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Wib's a good chap—and a clever chap, so long as he sticks to what he can do! You can put him into our next game with the Fourth—he's good enough for

Temple and his lot. But against Rookwood—my hat! You can't do that!"

"The fellows would lynch me if I did—and I should jolly well deserve it!" said Harry. "Poor old Wib! Now, about the forward line on Wednesday—"

And "football jaw" was resumed in Study No. 1, over what remained of the doughnuts; and Wibley and his ambitions were quite forgotten.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Just Like Smithy!

**H**ERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stood with a letter in his hand and a thoughtful expression on

his face.

It was the following morning, and some of the Remove had gathered round the letter-rack in "break." Billy Bunter was there, eyeing letter after letter hopefully through his big spectacles, in the hope of discovering one addressed to "W. G. Bunter." But there was none for the fat Owl. For the umpteenth time Billy Bunter was disappointed about a postal order. He turned his spectacles on the Bounder, who appeared to be deeply interested in the letter in his hand.

Smithy was fortunate enough to have a millionaire for a pater, and he often received whacking remittances. That circumstance interested Bunter in Smithy's correspondence. The Owl of the Remove had a keen eye for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

"How much, old chap?" asked Bunter.

As Smithy was deeply interested in his letter, Bunter had no doubt that there was a remittance in it. Why else should a fellow be interested in a letter?

"Eh?"

"Tenner?" asked Bunter.

The Bounder stared at him.

"Fathead!" was his answer.

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say, old chap, my postal order hasn't come!" said Bunter. "It's from one of my titled relations, you know. It's a bit sickening, the way they delay letters in the post, ain't it? I've been expecting that postal order for days!"

"Not for years?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"I say, old chap, if you've got a remittance in that letter, you might lend a chap—"

"I haven't!"

"Oh!" Bunter grunted, losing immediately all his interest in Herbert Vernon-Smith's correspondence. "I say, where's Mauly? I say, Mauly!"

The fat Owl rolled away in search of Lord Mauleverer, a hopeful resource in hard times.

Vernon-Smith put the letter into his pocket and walked out into the quad. He glanced round and called to Wibley, who was loafing in the quad, with the expression of a melancholy Dane on his countenance.

"Seen Wharton, Wib?"

"Blow Wharton!" answered Wibley.

"Seen him, fathead?"

"No—and don't want to!"

Vernon-Smith grinned and walked on. Wibley of the Remove was feeling sore—not only in mind, but a little in body also. He had exerted himself rather strenuously in Study No. 1 the previous day, and had captured some rather hard thumps, though certainly not so many as he had asked for.

Smithy spotted the Famous Five under the elms, and ran across to join them. Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, had stopped to speak to the chums of the Remove: but the dapper little French gentleman walked away as the Bounder came up.

"Lookin' for you, Wharton," said Vernon-Smith.

"Here I am!" said the captain of the Remove cheerily.

"You've settled the team for Wednesday, I know," said Smithy, while the five stared at him. "But if you can get a better man, you'll be prepared to make changes, of course."

"Of course," assented Wharton. "If

don't like! If you mean anything, Smithy, suppose you come to the point?" suggested Wharton.

"I'm coming to it. I dare say you've never heard of my cousin Ginger—"

"Never! Is that his name?"

"No, ass! His name's Vernon-Tracy—he's usually called Ginger, on account of his hair. It's red. He's at a school in Northumberland—his people live in that county—it's called Hexham Hill. There's been an outbreak of flu, and the school's closed down for the term."

"Well?" said Harry, wondering what was coming.

"Ginger's in London now—staying

grinned Bob. "Blessed is he that bloweth his own jolly old trumpet!"

"The blowfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, what about the chap?" asked Harry.

"I've told you he's first-class at Soccer," said Vernon-Smith. "Head and shoulders above six or seven men you've got in the team. I'd like him to enjoy his visit here—and there's nothing he enjoys so much as a good game of footer. Will you do me a favour, and put him in?"

Harry Wharton stared. "Put in a man I've never even seen!" he exclaimed.

"I know something about footer!"



Wharton came on with a bound, and Wibley's guard was brushed aside. The next second a hard glove tapped on his nose and he sat down on the floor with a bump that shook the study. "Time!" "Oooooooooogh!" gasped Wibley, as Desmond rushed to his aid and Morgan fanned him with a newspaper.

you think I've made mistakes in picking out the team, you can get up on your hind legs and say so. I'm always open to hear advice—though I won't undertake to follow it. I've a sort of conceited idea that I know what I'm about as football captain!"

The Co grinned.

"Who's the wonderful man you've discovered in the Remove that Wharton's overlooked?" asked Nugent. "Little me?"

"Not a man in the Remove," answered Smithy.

"Well, we're not playing men from any other Form," said Harry.

"I mean, not a Greyfriars man at all."

"What the chump are you driving at? We're playing Greyfriars men in a Greyfriars match," said Wharton blankly.

"You could play an outside man if you liked."

"Well, I suppose so; but I jolly well

with my father. The pater thinks it's a good opportunity for him to pay me a visit here. He's never seen me at Greyfriars, though I've met him in the hols lots of times. As Wednesday's a half-holiday, he's making it Wednesday."

"We'll give him a welcome," said Harry. "He can watch us playing Rookwood, if he likes, and tell them how to play footer when he goes back to Hexham Hill."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Smithy. "Vernon-Tracy is one of the best junior footballers in the school—as good a forward as we've got here, or better! You've not got a better man in the team than my cousin Ginger!"

"Not even you?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"Not even me," said the Bounder, unmoved. "And I fancy I'm the best of the bunch."

"That sounds a bit like old Wib!"

snapped the Bounder. "And when I tell you that he's at least as good a man as myself, you can take my word for it!"

"Well, yes. But—dash it all, Smithy, draw it mild!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove warmly. "If you've ever mentioned the man before, I've forgotten him. Anyhow, I've never seen him, and don't know him from Adam! He may be all that you say, and a lot more; but if you think I can leave out a Remove man, and put in a total stranger—"

"You can leave out a man for a better man!" said the Bounder. "You've got Hurree Singh as outside-right. Well, he's a better man than Inky!"

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed Smithy."

"You've got Toddy at inside-left—he's better than Toddy—"

"Toddy may think so—perhaps!" grinned Bob.

"You're playing Ogilvy—he's better than Ogilvy—"

"Let's ask Oggy what he thinks!" said Nugent.

"Look here! I'm rather keen on this," said the Bounder, as Wharton did not speak. "Leave out a man and play a better man."

Wharton looked at him.

"You say this gingery chap is as good a man as you are, Smithy?" he asked.

"Quite!"

"Honest Injun?"

"Of course! Do you think I would let the team down by asking you to play a dud?" snapped the Bounder.

"Well, no! I'll take your word for that!" assented Wharton. "If you're really keen on it, and you answer for it that the man's up to your form—"

"I do!"

"Then I might play him at inside-right," said the captain of the Remove reflectively.

Vernon-Smith, who was booked to play inside-right in the Rookwood game, stared. The Co. chuckled.

"You silly ass!" hooted the Bounder.

"I'm not asking you to leave me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co., quite entertained by the expression on the Bounder's face.

"Well, if I leave any man out to make room for your red-headed pal, it will be you, and nobody else," assured Wharton.

The Bounder's hard face darkened. His eyes glinted at the captain of the Remove. He had made an utterly unreasonable request, but he was deeply annoyed and irritated by a refusal.

Certainly the Bounder had no idea of himself standing out of the biggest match in the Remove list to make room

for his relative from Northumberland. Smithy was going to cover himself with glory in the Rookwood game—he would not have missed it for worlds. No doubt he was keen on giving his cousin a good time at Greyfriars—but not to that extent!

"Look here!" he almost snarled. "If you're going to talk silly rot—"

"It seems to me that it's you that's talking rot," answered Wharton. "I'm willing to do all I can. If you like to stand out and make room for this wonderful man from Northumberland—"

"Oh, shut up!"

The Bounder drove his hands into his pockets and stalked angrily away.

Harry Wharton smiled, and the Co. chuckled. Smithy had his back up—which was not an uncommon occurrence with Smithy. But Smithy's angry resentment passed the cheery chums of the Remove by like the idle wind which they regarded not. It was just like Smithy, and nobody was a penny the worse!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Wibley's Way!

"WHOP Wharton!" ejaculated Micky Desmond.

"Yes!"

"Faith, and ain't ye fed-up yet with whopping Wharton?" asked Micky, grinning.

"A fellow can have too much of a good thing, you know!" grinned Morgan.

William Wibley gave his study-mates a dark look.

William Wibley was angry, and, like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry.

His football claims were disregarded, indeed, they were a standing joke in the Remove. That was bad enough. But, as Wib would have said when he was playing the part of Hamlet: "Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind!"

He had set out to give the captain of the Remove the licking he considered he richly deserved. Not only had he failed to administer that licking, but the licking, so to speak, had made fun of him—playing with him, and letting him off. Wibley's exploits as a fighting-man had added considerably to the gaiety of existence in the Greyfriars Remove. Wib, already sore, was sorer! Good fellow as he really was at heart, he was feeling savage and resentful, and his thoughts dwelt on "getting his own back."

"Leave it alone, old bean," Micky Desmond advised him. "You can't touch Wharton, you know. What's the good of being sulky?"

"Who's sulky?" roared Wibley.

Desmond and Morgan chuckled. Their impression was that Wib was sulky, though he was far from realising it himself. His own impression was, that he was feeling the indignation natural to a fellow treated with injustice.

"I've said that I'm going to whop Wharton—" resumed Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle—"

"Thanks—we will! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Micky.

"But I'm going to whop him, all the same. You'll see!" said Wibley darkly. "He's asked for it! Who's Wharton, I'd like to know? Is he the Great Pandrum, by any chance?"

"Sure he's a good chap, and you like him yerself, when your silly back isn't up!" said Micky soothingly.

"I'm going to whop him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, get out!" roared Wibley. "If you can't do anything but cackle, get out of the study, and cackle somewhere else."

And William Wibley grabbed up an Indian club from the corner—and Morgan and Desmond, still cackling, got out of the study. Wib was looking excited—and an Indian club at close quarters was no joke.

Wibley slammed the door after them, and heard them chuckling as they went down the passage. He snorted, and locked the door.

"Just wait and see!" he grunted.

Left alone in the study, Wibley opened the big box that stood under the window.

This was the property-box of the Remove Dramatic Society. All matters in connection with that great society were in Wibley's hands. Harry Wharton had been head of it before Wibley came to Greyfriars—but he had stepped down in Wibley's favour, freely admitting Wib's superiority in that line.

So far as theatrical stunts were concerned, Wibley had no more sincere admirer than the captain of the Remove. The Remove Dramatic Society lived and moved and had its being in William Wibley. He was the beginning, the middle, and the end thereof, and in all matters connected with it his word was law.

Often and often had Wibley entertained the Remove with his impersonations. He had a mobile, flexible face, that could be twisted into almost any expression. He was a past-master in the art of make-up. He could impersonate anybody so far as physical limitations allowed.

He could impersonate Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove—sitting down. Standing up, he was not tall enough. But there was one master at Greyfriars

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whom he was tall enough to impersonate—that was Monsieur Henri Charpentier, the French master. Mossoo was built upon a small scale—plenty of quality, but not much in the way of quantity.

Wibley sorted out "props" from the big box, with a grim expression on his face.

He had said that he was going to "whop" Wharton. He was going to do it. But how he was going to do it was Wibley's own secret—so far!

He proceeded to change his clothes. In check trousers, tight frock-coat, and squeaky shoes, he looked Mossoo to the life—up to the chin. Then, standing before the glass, he proceeded with the make-up.

Wibley was third-rate at footer, second-rate at boxing; but in this particular line, there was no doubt that he was first-rate. He had quite a magic hand with make-up—and his flexible features lent themselves to the work.

Wibley of the Remove gradually disappeared from sight, and a reproduction of Monsieur Charpentier stood in his place before the glass.

Carefully, very carefully, Wibley laboured at his task.

The dark, bushy eyebrows, the sallow complexion, the little, black, pointed beard, the thinning hair brushed carefully over the scantily covered scalp—looked back at him from the glass, and he could almost have believed himself that it was the reflection of Henri Charpentier.

The keenest scrutiny would hardly have detected that it was an artificial scalp that covered Wibley's close-cropped head; while the eyebrows, the dinky little moustache, and the pointed beard, looked as lifelike as if they were all a-growing and a-blowing!

Wibley grinned at his reflection.

If he couldn't play footer, as that ass Wharton made out—if he couldn't box, as the fellows seemed to think—at least there was something he could do, and do well—and it was this!

Unless the genuine Mossoo turned up on the spot, which was unlikely, he defied any fellow in the Remove to detect that he was not Henri Charpentier, now that his work was finished.

Having completed his task to his satisfaction, Wibley put a cane under his arm and unlocked the study door. He stepped into the passage.

It was tea-time in the Remove, and most of the fellows were in their studies.

Only one Remove man was in the passage—Billy Bunter, who was roaming like a lion seeking what he might devour. Bunter had not yet decided in which study he was going to tea—that is to say, from which study he was least likely to be kicked out. The fat junior blinked round, surprised to see the dapper little Frenchman emerge from a Remove study. Monsieur Charpentier seldom or never came up to the Remove passage—he had no business there. So Bunter was naturally surprised to see him coming out of Study No. 6 with a cane under his arm.

Wibley paused on his way to Study No. 1. His disguise was adopted for the benefit of Harry Wharton & Co., and he was confident in its completeness, but it was just as well to test it on Bunter—trying it on the dog, as it were.

"Buntair!" he exclaimed, in the squeaky tones of the French master, which a less skilful actor than Wibley could have imitated easily.

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter, blinking at him curiously through his big spectacles.

"Have you done zose lines zat I give you, Buntair?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

He thought he could guess now why Mossoo was up in the Remove quarters.

There had been a French class that afternoon, and some of the fellows had indulged in ragging—not uncommon in the French class. Mossoo, as was rather usual with him on such occasions, had lost his head, and handed out lines on all sides, as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa.

Half the Remove had sections of the 'Henriade' to write out—though most of them, relying on Mossoo's well-known good-nature, left their lines unwritten, hoping that they would not be asked for. Mossoo's bark was always worse than his bite, and he seldom required a fellow to show up the hundreds of lines which he imposed recklessly in excited moments.

"Vat! Zey are not done, zen?"

"Oh! Yes! No! I—I mean, I've written out the lot, sir!" gasped Bunter, "I—I wrote them out immediately after class, sir, but that ass, Toddy—he's my study-mate, you know, sir—he knocked them off the table, and they—they fell into the fire, and—and—"

MAKE UP A  
GREYFRIARS LIMERICK  
AND WIN A  
USEFUL POCKET WALLET

like Peter Johnson, of 53, Battersca Rise, London, S.W.11, whose winning effort appears herewith:

Arm-in-arm, Horace hove into view,  
With a master whom all the Co. knew.

Cherry said: "Look at that!  
Coker's getting 'high-hat,'  
And he's certainly 'Proud' of it,  
too!"

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"Zen you vill write zem out vunce more, Buntair!"

"Oh, really, sir!" protested Bunter. "Having written them out once, sir, I—I think you might let me off, sir! I—I don't think Mr. Quelch would like a fellow in his Form to write an impot twice, sir."

"Buntair, you are one untruthful garcon! Hold out ze hand."

"What?" gasped Bunter.

"I shall cane you, Buntair."

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter fairly goggled at Mossoo the Second, through his big spectacles. It was absolutely unknown for Monsieur Charpentier to cane a fellow.

"Vous ecoutez—you hear viz you!" snapped the dapper little gentleman.

"If you hold not out ze hand at vunce, Buntair, I makes you bend over and gives you six! Allons!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He held out a fat hand.

Swish!

"Yarooooogh!"

Really it was only a flick, but Bunter could hardly have made more noise if a sledge-hammer had smitten him. That was Bunter's way.

"Ow, ow, wow!" roared Bunter.

"Taisez vous!" snapped Mossoo the Second. "Zat is enoff! Allez!"

William Wibley tucked the cane under his arm again, and walked on to Study No. 1, satisfied that his get-up was perfect. Bunter, evidently, had not

had the faintest suspicion. So Wibley felt quite satisfied.

Billy Bunter, squeezing a fat hand under a fat arm, and glaring after him through his big spectacles, felt anything but satisfied. Fortunately, Bunter did not matter.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Monsieur Wibley!

"WHAT about the lines?"

"Oh, blow the lines! It's light enough to punt a footer about for a bit," said Bob Cherry, "Come on!"

"Well, Mossoo—" said Harry Wharton, doubtfully.

"Bless Mossoo!" said Bob.

"The blessedness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Singh. "Let us get outfully, and punt the esteemed footer."

Harry Wharton hesitated. He was as keen as his friends to get out into the breezy spring air after tea. But three members of the Co. had lines to do for Mossoo. Wharton, as head boy of the Remove, rather had an idea that those lines ought to be done.

"It's all right," yawned Johnny Bull, "Mossoo never asks a fellow for his lines. Or hardly ever! What's the good of worrying a beak with lines he doesn't want?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Time enough, if he asks for them!" said Bob, "I'm jolly well getting out of doors, and chance it. You men coming?"

"Oh, all right," said Harry. "After all, Mossoo's a good little ass—"

"Wharton! Vat zat you say viz you?"

Wharton broke off, in utter dismay, as the study door, which had stood ajar, was pushed open, and a dapper little figure appeared—and a face with a dinky, little, curly moustache, bushy black eyebrows, and a pointed beard.

If it was not Monsieur Henri Charpentier, it was his twin.

Harry Wharton had no doubt that it was Henri Charpentier, and he stared at the sudden and unexpected apparition, his jaw dropping.

"Vat you call me, Wharton?" demanded the squeaky voice.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton.

He had not intended to speak disrespectfully of Mossoo. Calling that gentleman a "good little ass" was really almost affectionate. Wharton liked and respected the French master, though he did not take him so seriously as the "beaks" on the regular staff. A man like Quelch had to be taken seriously; but Mossoo was generally regarded with a more or less humorous eye. Mossoo, naturally, would not have liked to hear himself referred to as an ass—even a good little one! And William Wibley, in his Gallic guise, jumped at the chance! He had Wharton on the hip now, as it were.

"You call me vun ass, isn't it?" he snapped.

"Oh, sir! I—I never meant—"

stammered Wharton.

"I hear you viz my own ears, garcon!"

"I—I'm really sorry, sir—I never meant—"

"Zat is all verree well! But you speak of me as vun ass—zat is to say, vun donkey! N'est ce pas? You are vun bad garcon, Wharton! I zink zat you are ze worst boy in ze Remove."

Wharton reddened.

"Really, Monsieur Charpentier—"

he exclaimed.

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"Zat is enoff, I come to zis study to ask for zose lines zat I give! Zose lines zey are not to write, isn't it?"

"I had no lines to write, sir!" answered Harry.

"But you call me names—insulting names, Wharton! I zink zat I give you cane for zat! You bend over zat chair!"

The little gentleman slipped the cane into his hand, and pointed to a chair. The Famous Five stared at him blankly.

Wharton's colour deepened, and his eyes gleamed. Mossoo was not, of course, a Form master, and it was up to him to report the Remove fellow to his Form master if he had taken offence. It was something quite new for Mossoo to visit a study with a cane, and tell a fellow to bend over—new, and far from pleasing!

"You hear me viz you?" snapped the little man.

"I hear you, sir!" said Harry, coolly. "It is for my Form master to cane me, if I am to be caned."

"Vat! You vill obey me, Wharton! I tell you to bend over zat chair!" snorted the lifelike imitation of Monsieur Charpentier.

Wharton's face set hard.

"Hold on, sir!" said Johnny Bull, quietly, "Wharton never meant to be disrespectful—"

"You vill hold ze tongue, Bull!"

"And it's not the game to take notice of what a fellow says in his own study, either!" said Johnny Bull coolly. "If we'd known you were at the door, we—ow! Wow! Yaroooooh!"

Whack! Johnny Bull broke off, with a yell, as the cane suddenly whacked across his shoulders.

He jumped back, astonished, and red with wrath.

"What the thump——" he roared.

"Zat you hold ze tongue, Bull! Taiscz vous!"

"Look here, sir——" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Whack!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob, as he got the whack.

The chums of the Remove backed away, staring at the little Frenchman almost in stupefaction. Never, since he had been French master at Greyfriars School, had Monsieur Charpentier carried on in this style. Seldom or never had he been known to use the cane at all. Now he seemed readier with a swish than with a word.

"Esteemed and absurd monsieur——" began Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. But the Nabob of Bhanipur did not complete that expostulation. He dodged round the study table just in time to escape a swish.

"Maintenant, Wharton, you vill bend over zat chair. Je vous ordonne, I tell you! Mais oui! Vat? Bend over zat chair at vunce!"

Monsieur Wibley flourished the cane.

Wharton set his lips. He was angry now, and less inclined than ever to obey the order.

"I'll go with you to my Form master, sir, if you like," he said coolly, "but I will not bend over that chair!"

"Harry, old chap——" murmured Nugent.

"I won't, and that's flat!" snapped Wharton.

"Allons! Nous verrons! You are van verree bad garçon, and I vill cane you!" exclaimed the little gentleman, and he made a stride at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton jumped back.

Mossoo the Second followed him up and caught him by the collar with his left hand. He whirled him round, and

the cane came down across his shoulders with a terrific swipe.

"Oh! Whooooo!" roared Wharton.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Oh, my hat! Yaroooooh! Oh crikey!"

Wharton tore himself loose from the grasp on his collar with unexpected ease. He jumped away from the wielder of the cane. Monsieur Wibley followed him up, whacking hard. The captain of the Remove dodged round the study table, with the dapper little figure whisking after him, whacking, and he caught half a dozen hefty swipes before he dodged out of the study into the Remove passage.

"Stop! Zat you stop at vunce! I have not finish to cane you!"

But Harry Wharton did not stop.

He was wondering dizzily whether Monsieur Charpentier had gone out of his senses. It really looked as if he had!

He scudded for the Remove staircase.

The Bouncer, coming up the stairs, stared at him.

"What on earth's up?" he asked.

"Mossoo—he's gone potty!" gasped Wharton. "He's barged into my study, laying about with a cane!"

"Mossoo?" repeated Vernon-Smith.

"It's you that's potty, I should think! I've just passed Mossoo. He's downstairs, talking to Quelch."

Wharton jumped.

"What!" he yelled.

"Off your rocker, or what?" asked the mystified Bouncer.

Wharton stared at him, and then rushed past him to the landing below, and looked over the lower banisters.

Below, two figures could be seen standing by the staircase in conversation—the tall, angular figure of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, and the little, dapper figure of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master.

Harry Wharton stared at the latter like a fellow in a dream.

There was Mossoo, yet Mossoo was in Study No. 1, and had just chased him out with a cane! Wharton really wondered for a moment or two whether his brain was going. Then a light dawned on him. As Mossoo was downstairs, he obviously couldn't be upstairs. The Frenchman in the study was a spoofer, and there was only one man at Greyfriars who could spoof to that extent in the impersonating line.

"Wibley!" gasped Wharton.

And he raced up the stairs again, no longer desirous of avoiding the dapper gentleman in Study No. 1, but extremely anxious to get to close quarters with him!

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## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Paying the Piper!

"ZAT you come back viz you!" shouted the second edition of Monsieur Charpentier, brandishing the cane in the doorway of Study No. 1. "Buntair! Where is zat Wharton?"

"Oh Crikey! He's hooked it, sir!" gasped Billy Bunter. "He—he—he's gone downstairs, sir!"

Bunter expected Mossoo to whisk away to the stairs after the captain of the Remove. But William Wibley had no intention of doing that. Downstairs there was danger of running into the genuine Mossoo.

He turned back into Study No. 1.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh and Frank Nugent, eyed him warily, ready to dodge. It seemed to them that the little French gentleman must be fairly off his rocker.

Never had Mossoo been known to

break out like this. It was really alarming—almost unnerving!

"Mon Dieu! Vous etes—you are all bad garçons, and I give you all ze cane!" exclaimed the dapper gentleman; and he made a stride at the Co., who melted away in haste round the study table.

"Here, you keep off!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"My esteemed and idiotic Mossoo—— Yaroooooh!" roared the Nabob of Bhanipur, as he caught a terrific swipe across his shoulders.

"Stop it!" yelled Nugent, as he caught the next. "Oh, my hat! Whooop!"

The four juniors dodged wildly round the study, with Monsieur Wibley after them, swishing away with the cane.

There was not much room for four fellows to dodge, and the cane did great execution.

Whack, whack, whack!

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

William Wibley was enjoying himself—the only fellow in the study who was! This was getting his own back—and a little over!

Wharton had been "whopped" and chased out of the study. Now the Co. were getting it—hot! Had they known he was Wibley, they would have made short work of him. But they supposed that he was Monsieur Charpentier, and the most reckless fellow at Greyfriars never dreamed of laying hands on a master. So Wibley had it all his own way, and he made the most of it.

Swipe! Whack! Yell!

The Co. bolted for the doorway. There was a jam in the doorway as they all tried to get through together. Close behind them Monsieur Wibley whacked and whacked with the cane, and frantic yells woke to the echoes of the passage.

Fellows crowded out of their studies to see what was on.

"I say, you fellows," yelled Billy Bunter, "Mossoo's gone mad! Mad as a hatter! Look at him!"

The jam in the doorway broke, and the Co. scrambled out of the study, with the cane still whacking behind.

Vernon-Smith, coming across the Remove landing, stared at Mossoo like a fellow in a dream, his eyes almost bulging from his head. There was a patter of footsteps on the Remove staircase. Harry Wharton was coming up, apparently in a hurry.

Wharton's face was crimson with wrath.

Having seen Monsieur Charpentier downstairs, and guessed who was carrying on in his guise upstairs, the captain of the Remove was anxious to establish contact. He came across the Remove landing at a run.

"Mossoo," emerging from the study in pursuit of the Co., saw him coming, and turned towards him, brandishing the cane.

"Wharton! Zat you—— Oh, my hat! Yaroooooh!" roared Wibley, as the captain of the Remove leaped at him and grabbed him.

There was a roar in the Remove passage. The sight of Harry Wharton grappling with, as they supposed, the French master took away the Remove fellows' breath almost.

"Harry——" yelled Nugent, in consternation.

"Wharton, you ass——" roared Squiff.

"Hold on——"

"For goodness' sake, Wharton——"

Wharton did not heed. He tackled "Mossoo" Rugger style, and brought him down with a crash. Monsieur Wibley landed on his back in the Remove passage with a concussion that





Wharton tackled the pseudo French master and brought him down with a crash. "You spoofing rotter!" he roared. "You—you—you——" "Harry!" gasped Nugent, dragging back his chum. "Are you mad? You'll be sacked for this—handling a master!" "Fathead! It's Wibley!" roared Wharton. All eyes turned on the supposed French master and the little black beard that had become detached from his face.

nearly shook the floor, and a yell that was worthy of a Red Indian on the war-path.

"You spoofing rotter!" roared Wharton. "You—you—you——"

"Ooooooo!" gasped Wibley.

"By Jove! I'll——"

Frank Nugent jumped at his chum and dragged him back by main force.

"Harry! Are you mad?" he gasped. "You'll be sacked for this—handling a master, you potty ass!"

"Fathead! Mossoo's downstairs!" gasped Wharton. "I've just seen him! We've been done!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"That villain Wibley——"

"W-w-wibley!" stuttered Frank.

"He's pulled our legs!" roared Wharton. "Whopped me—whopped us all! Why, I'll spifficate him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder. He understood now how he came to behold a second edition of Monsieur Henri Charpentier in the Remove passage.

Wibley sprawled and gasped.

All eyes were on him. And even then the fellows would have doubted whether Wharton had got it right but for the fact that the little black beard had become detached as Wibley went down and was now hanging down Wibley's neck.

That settled it! The genuine Mossoo's beard couldn't possibly have become semi-detached: it grew on Mossoo.

Wharton jumped at the sprawling spoofer, and grabbed the beard, and then the moustache, and then the eyebrows. They all came off.

There was a buzz of amazement in the passage. Even then, Wibley's make-up

rendered him still unrecognisable. Still, it was clear that he wasn't Mossoo!

He sat up, gasping.

"Grooogh! Ow! Grooogh! Oh, my hat! Oooooogh!" spluttered Wibley breathlessly.

"Tare and 'ounds!" yelled Micky Desmond. "It's sure Wib—and he said that he would whop Wharton—and he's done it entirely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wibley!" roared Bob Cherry. "You spoofing worm——"

Harry Wharton caught up the cane.

"Collar him!" he gasped. "He's whopped us all round—and now he's going to get some of the same!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The samefulness will be terrific!"

"Here, hands off!" yelled Wibley, as the Co. grasped him. "Ow! Keep that cane away—— Wow! Oh, my hat! Yaroooooh!"

William Wibley struggled frantically in the grasp of the avengers.

But his struggles were unavailing. He had called the tune—now he had to pay the piper! After the feast came the reckoning!

The Remove fellows crowded round, looking on and yelling with laughter! Wibley's tight frock-coat split up the back—the buttons burst from his waistcoat—the artificial scalp came off his head—his make-up smudged over his perspiring and crimson countenance—as he struggled and grappled in the hands of the Philistines!

It was a wildly dishevelled Wibley who was turned over at last to receive the swipes of his own cane—and Wharton laid them on with a heavy hand—to an accompaniment of fearful yells from Wib.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-owow! Wow! Help! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—ho, he, he——"

"Ow! Leggo! Oh crikey! Chuck it!" shrieked Wibley. "Oh crumbs! Wow!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Sure, you've whopped Wharton, old bean," chuckled Micky Desmond, "and what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley wriggled and yelled frantically. Whopping Wharton had been quite satisfactory! Being whopped by Wharton was a geegee of quite another colour! There was a great deal of difference between the active and the passive!

"Cave!" yelled Hazeldene, from the stairs. "Hero comes Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch was stepping up to ascertain the cause of the unusual din in the Remove quarters. But the din ceased before Mr. Quelch could ascertain its cause. The juniors scuttled into the studies—and William Wibley, breathless, torn and dusty and dishevelled, crawled into Study No. 6 and collapsed in the armchair there.

Mr. Quelch glanced into the Remove passage, found all quiet on the Remove front, so to speak, and departed, shaking his head.

William Wibley gasped and groaned, and groaned and gasped. After Mr. Quelch had gone, fellow after fellow looked into Study No. 6 to stare at William Wibley, and chuckle. He looked a deplorable object in the tattered remains of his French master's outfit—and he gasped and gasped and gasped, as if he would never leave off gasping. And he was not in the least

comforted by the sounds of laughter up and down the passage. He could hardly have been comforted, just then, by the offer of a place in the Remove team for the Rookwood match! For a long, long time Wibley of the Remove understudied the young man of Hythe, who was shaved with a scythe, and did nothing but wriggle and writhe!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Run Down!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Rats!"

"I say—wait for me!" yelled Bunter.

On Saturday afternoon there was bright sunshine and quite a breath of cheery spring in the air. Harry Wharton & Co. were taking a boat out that afternoon, for a pull up the Sark. They were pushing off from the school raft, when Billy Bunter came speeding down to the bank, yelling to them as he sped. The sight of William George Bunter, and the prospect of being joined by him as a passenger, did not make the Famous Five delay in pushing off. Rather it made them accelerate.

Bob Cherry shoved hard with an oar, and the boat rocked away, while Bunter was still yards distant.

Why Bunter was so keen to join them in the boat the chums of the Remove did not know. Certainly he was not keen on pulling an oar—and he was too lazy to steer if he could help it. Had they been going on a picnic up the river, they could have understood it. But there was no picnic in view; there was nothing eatable in the boat. So it was a puzzle—unless Bunter had a sudden yearning for their society. That, no doubt, would have been flattering. Still, they had no yearning for Bunter's. So they pushed off.

The fat junior came panting down to the raft. He had a bag in his hand, packed full. His other fat hand he waved excitedly at the fellows in the boat.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Good-bye, Bunter!" chuckled Bob. With ten feet of water between the boat and Bunter, the Famous Five felt safe—Bunter was no jumper.

"I say—"

"Fare thee well, and if for ever, all the better, fare thee well!" said Frank Nugent, misquoting Byron.

"Beast! I mean, stop for me, old chap! I say, you fellows, I—I want to come!" gasped Bunter. "I'll row if you like—"

"We don't want to travel downwards, thanks," said Harry Wharton.

"I'll steer—"

"But we don't want to hit either bank."

"Beast! If this is the way you thank a chap for standing you a picnic—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I've got the stuff here!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I knew you fellows were going up the river, and I know you'd get hungry after a row, so—"

"Well, my only hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry in amazement. "Do mine aged ears deceive me, or is Bunter offering to whack out a spread?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here!"

The chums of the Remove looked—in astonishment!

Bunter opened the bag! Good things—quite attractive things—were revealed! There was a large cake! There were doughnuts! There were jam tarts! There was a bunch of bananas. There were bottles of ginger-pop! There were other good things.

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If Billy Bunter had laid in that supply of tuck as a treat for his friends in the Remove, it looked as if his celebrated postal order must have come at last—and as if it had been a postal order of unusual magnitude!

"Look!" gasped Bunter.

"My only summer bonnet!" said Johnny Bull. "Where did you get all that tuck, Bunter? Whose is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm standing a picnic!" explained Bunter. "Glad I caught you in time! Pull in—take me on board, you fellows! We'll picnic on Popper's Island, what? But don't waste time."

The fellows in the boat looked dubious. Certainly it seemed rather ungrateful to refuse a generous offer like this. If Billy Bunter, in possession of such a supply of tuck, had hurried after them with the generous intention of whacking it out with them, it was very decent of Bunter. And, as a matter of fact, those excellent things looked rather tempting. A pull up the river on a breezy spring day was likely to make fellows hungry.

"What about it?" asked Bob, glancing round at his comrades. "This is rather decent of Bunter."

"The decentfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Let us take the esteemed and ridiculous Bunter on boardfully."

"I say, you fellows, pull in." Billy Bunter cast an anxious blink over his shoulder. "That beast may be along any minute."

"Eh! What beast?" asked Harry.

"That beast Smithy! Do buck up!" urged Bunter.

The Famous Five stared at him. The reason of Billy Bunter's hot haste dawned on their minds.

"Have you been pinching Smithy's tuck, you fat villain?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "I heard that Smithy was going up the river with Redwing this afternoon, on a jolly old picnic. That's the picnic."

"Tain't!" howled Bunter. "I never found this bag in Smithy's study. I never dodged into his study while he was gone to look for Redwing. I haven't been in his study at all."

"Push off!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Smithy!" chuckled Bob.

Round the corner of the boathouse came a running junior. It was Herbert Vernon-Smith—and his face was red, and his eyes glinting.

Evidently the Bounder had missed the bag of tuck from his study. Evidently, as soon as he had missed it, he had thought of Bunter! Fellows always did think of Bunter, if they missed tuck! It was one of those injustices that often and often fell to Billy Bunter's lot.

"Stop!" yelled the Bounder, as he came in sight and spotted the Owl of the Remove on the raft.

Billy Bunter blinked round in alarm. "Oh lor'! I say, you fellows, pull in!" shrieked Bunter. "I say, rescue! I say, you beasts, hurry up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boat did not pull in. Harry Wharton & Co. knew the origin now of Billy Bunter's unusual supply of tuck, and they had no intention of helping the grub-raider of the Remove to escape with his plunder. They rested on their oars and watched, with grinning faces.

"I say, you fellows—"

The Bounder came on like lightning. Billy Bunter turned round and blinked at him in terrified alarm. The fat Owl

was not going to be taken in the boat, and there was no other escape for him. In a foot-race with Smithy he had about as much chance as a tortoise against a hare.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

The bag of tuck dropped from his fat hand. He was fairly caught between the devil and the deep sea, as it were. The river was on one side; the Bounder on the other.

Billy Bunter's fat knees knocked together.

"I—I—I say, Smithy—" he gasped.

Vernon-Smith did not speak. His eyes gleamed as he charged across the raft at Bunter.

He was barely in time to save his raided tuck, but he was thinking less of the tuck than of giving the fat Owl the punching he deserved.

Smithy was not a good-tempered fellow, and that hot chase down to the river had not improved his temper. He came straight at Bunter with gleaming eyes and clenched fists, and the fat Owl fairly quaked.

"Hold on, Smithy!" shouted Wharton from the boat. "Draw it mild, old man! Don't barge him into the water!"

"My esteemed Smithy—" exclaimed Hurree Singh.

The Bounder did not heed.

It was clearly his intention to punch Bunter on the very edge of the raft, and there was no doubt that the fat Owl would go headlong into the water when he captured the punch. Bunter certainly deserved punishment, but not to that extent, in the opinion of the Famous Five. But the Bounder, as usual, was utterly regardless of any opinion but his own.

Bunter quaked as the Bounder charged at him. In sheer terror he dodged desperately, hitting out blindly with both hands. He barely eluded the Bounder's rush, and Vernon-Smith hardly saved himself from pitching into the water. He was on the very edge of the raft when Bunter's fat fists smote him and he staggered over the edge.

Splash!

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Bob Cherry, as the Bounder splashed in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked in terror at the widening circles on the water where the Bounder had gone in.

Smithy was in no danger; he could swim like a fish. But he had disappeared under the surface, and Bunter realised what would happen when he scrambled out. For an instant he gazed at the glistening water, then, forgetful even of the bag of tuck, Billy Bunter turned and raced away. He was vanishing over the horizon as the Bounder came up spluttering and gasping.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Smithy Asks for It!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. edged the boat in. They were laughing; the Bounder's disaster rather entertained them. He had fully intended to barge Bunter into the water—and he had gone in himself, instead of Bunter.

Smithy's face was furious as it emerged from the Sark; but the fellows in the boat saw the comic side of the incident, which was quite lost on Smithy. However, they were willing to help, and they edged in to give the Bounder a hand.

Vernon-Smith spluttered wildly. That sudden, involuntary dive had taken him deep. But he did not need help. He clutched at the raft and scrambled out,

(Continued on page 12.)

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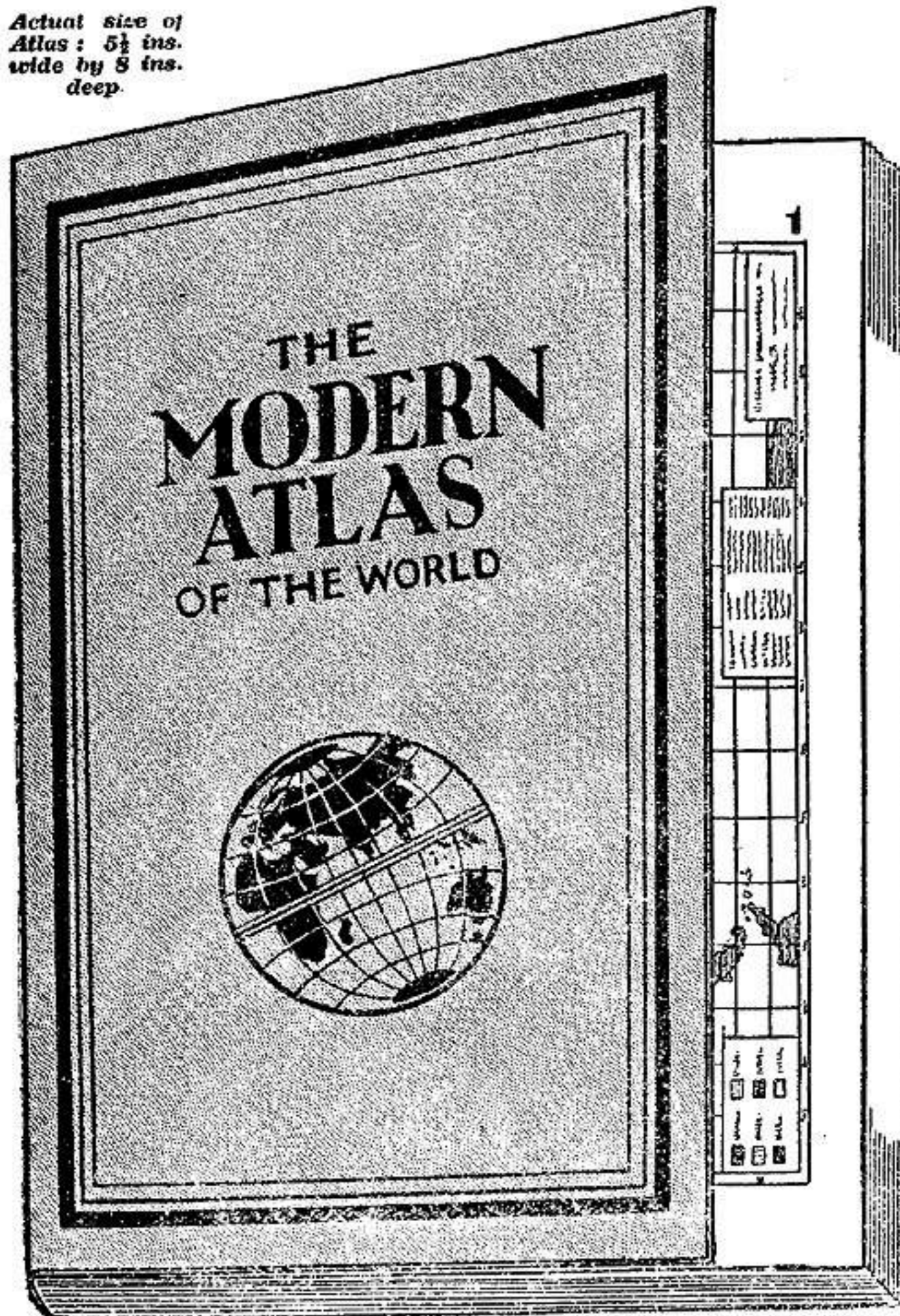
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THE EDITOR.

THERE IS A COUPON—VALUE 5 POINTS—ON PAGE 27. CUT IT OUT AND KEEP IT BY YOU!

## WIBLEY'S WONDERFUL WHEEZE!

(Continued from page 10.)

drenched and dripping and panting with rage.

"Wet, old bean?" asked Bob.

"The wetfulness seems to be terrific."

Vernon-Smith gouged water from his eyes and glared round for Bunter. The fleeing, fat figure had disappeared beyond the boathouse. He glared at the grinning fellows in the boat.

"Where's Bunter?" he roared.

"Gone!" chuckled Nugent.

"The gonefulness is preposterous."

"You rotters! Which way did he go?" panted the Bounder. "I'll smash him! I—I—I'll— Which way did he go?"

"Never mind Bunter, old nut," said the captain of the Remove soothingly. "You'd better cut in and change; you'll catch a cold at this rate—"

"Mind your own business!" yapped the Bounder.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, all right! Give way, you men; time we were off."

The oars dipped.

"Which way did Bunter go, you rotters?" yelled the Bounder.

In the present state of Smithy's temper the Famous Five did not consider it judicious to point out the way Bunter had gone. No doubt the fat pilferer deserved a whopping, but not such a whopping as he was likely to get if the Bounder had got hold of him just then.

Instead of answering, therefore, the chums of the Remove pulled away in the boat up the Sark, leaving Smithy to find Bunter if he could.

Herbert Vernon-Smith shook a savage fist after them and then tramped away in search of Bunter.

It would have been wise to take Wharton's advice and cut in and change his clothes. After a hot chase a sudden dip in icy cold water was rather dangerous, and there was a keen, cold wind blowing. But the Bounder was too furious to think of that. Whether Bunter had gone up or down the bank, or headed for the school, the Bounder did not know, but he was determined to find him before he attended to anything else.

"Seen Bunter?" he shouted, as he sighted Wibley near the boathouse.

Wibley glanced at him and grinned.

"Fallen in?" he asked.

"Fathead! Have you seen Bunter?"

"Yes; he passed me going up to the school. What—"

The Bounder had passed Wibley the next moment at about sixty miles per hour. He left Wibley staring.

Leaving a wet trail behind him, and with squelching shoes, the Bounder ran back to the school. Tom Redwing called to him in the quad.

"Smithy! What—"

"Seen Bunter?"

"Yes; he's gone into the House. But what—"

Vernon-Smith hurtled into the House. Redwing, staring, followed him in. But the infuriated Bounder left his chum far behind. Bunter had evidently hunted cover—and the Bounder could guess where.

The door of Study No. 7 was locked on the inside when Herbert Vernon-Smith reached it.

He wrenched at the door-handle and then hammered on the door.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Owl!" came a fat squeak from within.

"Bunter, you fat rotter—"

"Owl! I'm not here!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I'm somewhere else, Smithy! Oh dear!"

"Let me in, you fat blighter!" yelled Smithy.

"No jolly fear!" gasped Bunter.

"I'll smash you—"

"Beast!"

"Smithy, old man—" Tom Redwing arrived, breathless. "What the thump—"

"Look at me!" panted the Bounder. "That fat scoundrel's got me a ducking! I'm drenched! Aatchoooooh!" He broke off with a sneeze.

"My dear chap, for goodness' sake, cut up to the dorm and change!" said Redwing anxiously. "You're catching a cold—"

"Aatchoooooh-ooooop!" The Bounder sneezed again. "By gad, I'll smash that fat rotter! I—I—I'll—"

"You're catching a cold—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Go away, you beast!" gasped Bunter from the safe side of the door. "Go away, you rotter! I'll jolly well come out and lick you if you bang on my study door!"

"Smithy," exclaimed Redwing, "don't be an ass! Do you want to be laid up on Rookwood day?"

That reminder helped the angry Bounder to check his rage. Another prolonged sneeze also helped. Vernon-Smith bestowed a last kick on the door of Study No. 7, scowled at Redwing, and tramped away.

He came down from the dormitory a quarter of an hour later changed into dry clothes. But the harm had been done; his nose was red and his eyes were watery and he was coughing and sneezing. Redwing gave him an anxious look. He could see that his chum was booked for a bad cold, though Smithy was not disposed to admit it himself.

"Well, are we going up the river?" growled Smithy.

"No—we're jolly well not!" snapped Redwing. "You're coming into the study, and I'm making up a jolly good fire—"

"Rot!"

"You've got a cold—"

"I haven't—atchoooooh—oooh! Just a trifling—atchoooooh—oooh—ooop! I'm as fit as a choo-hooooooop—ooop!"

The Bounder struggled with a fit of violent sneezing.

Redwing dragged him into Study No. 4 in the Remove. Even the angry and obstinate Bounder had to admit that he was not in a state for going up the river! Had he acted promptly and sensibly after getting that ducking, he might have avoided the cold—but he was fairly in the grip of it now. Redwing urged him to go to the House-dame, but the Bounder sulkily refused, with the fear of "sanny" before his eyes. But it booted not! He remained in his study till calling-over, and then he had to go down to Hall.

And when Mr. Quelch, who took the roll, called his name, the Bounder did not answer "adsum," as usual. His answer was unexpected and surprising.

"Aatchoooooh!"

Mr. Quelch looked across at him.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Aatchoooooh-oooo-oooooop!" sneezed the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"You have a cold, Vernon-Smith—a bad cold! Go to Mrs. Kebble at once."

Sneezing and scowling, the Bounder tramped out of Hall. Mr. Quelch, frowning, went on with the roll. When the school was dismissed after call-over, the Remove fellows did not see Smithy again! They learned that he had been promptly transferred to the sanatorium

—which news was welcome at least to William George Bunter. So long as Smithy was in sanny, Bunter was safe from reprisals, and the fat Owl charitably hoped that Smithy's cold would last a long, long time!

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Held to his Word!

"KICK Bunter!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton granted.

Kicking Bunter might be solacing, but it was not really helpful. On that Monday in March Harry Wharton was worried.

On Wednesday the Rookwooders were coming over. And the Remove inside-right was laid up in "sanny" with a cold—a bad cold; a cold that clung to him lovingly, and evidently did not intend to leave him; a cold that looked like lasting almost as long as even Billy Bunter could have desired.

The captain of the Remove was not wasting much sympathy on Smithy personally. A fellow who chose to indulge a reckless and violent temper could take what was coming to him. But Smithy was wanted in the Rookwood game. He was one of the very best men in the team; and in a game with Rookwood the Remove needed their very best men.

So far from wasting sympathy on Smithy, Wharton was feeling inclined to kick him for getting crooked just before a big match.

Smithy it was certain now, would not be able to play. He would be growling and scowling in sanny on Wednesday afternoon, while the Remove men were playing Rookwood. It was a question of filling his place. And there really was no man to fill the Bounder's place adequately.

It was a knotty problem for the captain of the Remove. He was thinking it over, after class on Monday. Frank Nugent, from moment to moment, gave him rather curious looks. Nugent was not in the eleven; but if a man was wanted to take Smithy's place, Frank was as good as any man available. Naturally he was keen to play in the match. He admitted that he was nowhere near the Bounder's form; still, somebody had to take Smithy's place in the front line.

"If that chap Valentino hadn't left," muttered Wharton disconsolately, "I could have put him in at half, and shifted Browney into the front line."

"But he has left!" said Frank.

"That silly ass Smithy! He needn't have caught that cold—"

"But he has!" remarked Frank.

"Who the dickens is going in?" growled Wharton. "Russell, Newland, Desmond, or you, Franky? We can't afford a weak spot, playing men like Jimmy Silver & Co."

Nugent made a grimace. He had a great respect for his skipper's judgment; but, personally, he would not have described himself as a weak spot.

"That ass Smithy! That idiot Bunter!" growled Wharton.

"Kick Bunter!" suggested Johnny Bull again.

"The pair of them ought to be kicked! Bother them both! The fact is, we want Smithy to play, and he can't play, and— Oh blow!"

Wibley of the Remove strolled across to the Famous Five, as they walked in the quad discussing this knotty problem. There was a faintly hopeful expression on Wibley's face.

Wib had been feeling down on his luck lately. His football claims were



Vernon-Smith was on the very edge of the raft when Bunter's rats smote him, and he staggered backwards into the river. Splash! Bunter blinked in terror, while the Famous Five looked on, highly amused.

derided. His boxing had excited only merriment. Even his impersonation of Mossop—a thing that Wibley could do, and do well—had ended in disaster.

Now, however, William Wibley was feeling rather hopeful again. A man had to be dropped out of the eleven; there was a vacant place. There was no first-class man available to fill that place. Wib, indeed, regarded himself as a first-class man, but he had to admit that he had that belief all to himself. But even if Wharton chose to regard him as a second-rate man—well, he had to play a second-rate man now. Surely this was a chance for Wibley.

He rather wondered that Wharton had not thought of him already. But Wharton, obviously, hadn't. So Wibley decided to remind the captain of the Form of his existence.

"Chance for me, old bean, what?" asked Wibley.

Wharton glanced at him.

"Eh, what? Don't bother now, old man; I'm thinking."

"About the Rookwood game?"

"Yes; cut off."

"You want a man!" said Wibley.

"I know that, ass, now that howling dummy Smithy's got himself crooked!"

"Well, what about me?"

"You! Don't be an ass!"

Wibley breathed hard.

"I can play football, I suppose?" he said. "You want a man! Smithy's out of it. What about giving me his place?"

The captain of the Remove gave a snort.

At any other time, when less worried with pressing problems, he would have smiled and given a tolerant answer, though undoubtedly a negative one. But he was worried and troubled now, and had no tolerance to waste on a fellow who couldn't see what every other fellow in the Form could see.

"For goodness' sake don't be a silly

ass!" he exclaimed. "Yes, you can play football rather better than Bunter, I suppose. A little better than Coker of the Fifth! Are you ass enough to think that we can carry a passenger in a game with Jimmy Silver's crowd?"

Wibley's eyes gleamed.

"Admitting that you're the beginning and the end of football wisdom," he said sarcastically. "Still, you've got to play somebody. You've got what you think the pick of the Form in the team already. I don't agree—"

"You needn't!"

"My esteemed Wibley—" murmured Hurrey Singh.

"Oh, let a chap speak!" snapped Wibley. "There's a vacant place in the team. You've got to pick a man to fill it, Wharton. If you're thinking of putting in Nugent because he's your pal—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'm a better man at Soccer than Nugent, I suppose?" hooted Wibley.

"I dare say you suppose so!" growled the captain of the Remove. "But you're the only fellow in the Form who does. Nugent is worth ten of you!"

"Then you're playing Nugent?"

"I haven't decided yet. There's three or four fellows to think of."

"Am I one of them?"

"No," roared Wharton, "you're not! Now cut off, and don't bother a man who's got something to think out!"

Wibley clenched his hands, his ire rising. He looked as if he were strongly tempted to try his luck at boxing again in spite of the disastrous result of the affair in the study. Bob Cherry gave him a playful push on the chest, and he staggered back.

"Don't play the goat, old man," said Bob amicably. "Stick to your theatricals and dressing up, and so on. We'll all stand round and cheer next time you play Hamlet or Macbeth! But don't be a goat!"

And the Famous Five walked on, leaving Wibley glaring after them with a hostile and indignant glare.

Evidently there was no chance for William Wibley. There was a vacant place in the team, but Wib had no chance of filling it. He tramped away with a knitted brow. His indignation was deep, but there was no help for it—the football captain's word was law.

Mr. Quelch, looking from his study window, beckoned to Harry Wharton. The other fellows walked on, and Wharton stopped under the window.

"Vernon-Smith desires to speak to you in the sanatorium, Wharton," said the Remove master. "You may, if you choose, see him for a few minutes."

"Yes, sir," said Harry; and he lost no time in repairing to sanny, where he was admitted to see the Bounder.

What Vernon-Smith wanted to see him for, he could not guess. Smithy certainly was not a fellow to seek sympathy or condolences.

Wharton wondered whether the Bounder was not, after all, so hard hit as had been supposed, and whether it was barely possible that he might be able to line up with the Remove on Wednesday.

But that idea was quite banished from his mind when he saw the Bounder. Smithy was in the throes of an absolutely rotten cold, which undoubtedly would have spread all through the Remove had he not been isolated. He blinked dismally at Wharton with watery eyes, and spoke in a cracked and husky voice. Obviously there were a good many days in "sanny" still ahead of the hapless Bounder.

"Don't get too near—you don't want it!" croaked Smithy, with a sardonic grin. "What about Wednesday, Wharton? You can't play me."

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Rather not!" agreed Wharton. "Sorry to see you like this, old man—"

"Leave that out! You want an inside-right."

"I'll find one somewhere." "You've forgotten what you said the other day!" sneered Smithy. "My cousin Ginger's comin' here on Wednesday. That's fixed. I shan't be able to see him—I don't want to hand him this."

"If he comes all the same, we'll look after him for you—"

"Play him!"

"Eh?"

"That's what you said—you'd play him if I stood out! Well, I'm standing out—lying out, at least."

Wharton, standing by the bedside, stared down at the Bounder. He had forgotten all about Smithy's cousin from Northumberland—he had plenty to think of, without bothering about Smithy's relations. Evidently the Bounder had not forgotten what had been said on the subject.

The captain of the Remove coloured with vexation.

It was like Smithy—to hold a man down to a careless word like this! Wharton had said that he would play the red-haired man if Smithy stood out for him—being perfectly well aware that no consideration whatever would make Smithy stand out to make room for another fellow. And, if it came to that, Smithy was not standing out now—he was knocked out by accident.

"You want a good man," croaked Smithy. "Look here, I give you my word he's as good a man as you could want. There's some old papers in my study, with reports of Hexham Hill games—you'll find my cousin mentioned in them—he's a first-class man, and a wonderful goal-getter—Redwing will give you the papers, and you can see for yourself! Let Dick Vernon-Tracy take my place on Wednesday—you won't be sorry for it."

Wharton stood silent.

The Bounder was pinning him down—and he did not like being pinned down. Still, he considered the matter. If Smithy's opinion of his cousin's powers was well-founded, the advent of Ginger on Wednesday would, in fact, get the Remove team out of the difficulty in which they had been placed by Smithy getting crooked. And Smithy, after all, could judge a man's form at Soccer—he was no fool.

"You think he's up to your form, Smithy?"

"I know he is."

"I've got no other man in the same street with you," said Wharton slowly.

"If you're right—"

"Look at the papers I've told you of—reports of Hexham Hill matches. You'll find that he's the big noise at Soccer at his school."

"He's sure to turn up?"

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"Yes—and he'll be jolly glad to play. If you agree. I'll let him know—lots of time before Wednesday to let him know. He will be coming on his motor-bike—and I'll tell him to pack on his Soccer things—"

Wharton thought it over.

He did not want to play an outsider in the Remove team; but Smithy's cousin might be admitted to have some claim to replace Smithy, at Smithy's request. After all, it was one solution to the problem that had been worrying the captain of the Remove. If the fellow really was Smithy's equal at the game, it was indeed rather a catch to get hold of him on Rookwood day.

"Is it a go?" asked the Bounder.

"I'll look at the papers you spoke of—and let you know," answered Harry Wharton at last.

"Before the last post goes then!" grunted the Bounder. "Cut off!"

Wharton went back to the House in a thoughtful mood.

He went at once to Study No. 4 in the Remove, where he found Redwing Tom Redwing, who had visited the Bounder in sanny that day, had evidently been told; for he had the copies of the Northumberland local papers ready for inspection, open at the reports of the Hexham Hill School games.

Wharton ran his eye over them, and had to admit that he was satisfied. R. Vernon-Tracy was referred to a good many times: it was clear that he was a good man and a goal-getter—in fact, the very man that was wanted to fill the vacant place in the Remove Eleven on Rookwood day.

Wharton felt a sense of relief.

He was glad to be able to gratify the Bounder, in his present deplorable and disappointed state. At the same time, granting the Bounder's request got the Remove team out of the difficulty Smithy had landed it in. He laid down the papers and caught Redwing's eye. Redwing smiled.

"I'm seeing Smithy again after tea," he said. "What shall I tell him?"

"Tell him it's a go!" answered Harry.

And a "go" it was.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### The Limit!

"**R**. VERNON-TRACY!" "Who the thump's that?" "Smithy's cousin."

"What rot!"

"Not a Greyfriars man—"

"There are good men outside Greyfriars, my beloved 'earers!" said Bob Cherry. "Admittedly we are the salt of the earth; nevertheless, there are good men outside this jolly old school."

"Silly ass!" grunted Russell.

"Utter rot!" said Bolsover major.

"Wharton's an ass!"

"A howling ass, if you ask me!" said Hazeldene.

"Nobody asked you, sir, she said!" hummed Bob Cherry.

It was Tuesday and the football list was posted up in the Rag.

Ten names were already fairly certain, but there had only been rumours, so far, about the eleventh man.

There were few fellows in the Remove who were not keen to play Rookwood. It was a big match for the Remove—and it was the last big match of the season. Even Billy Bunter would have been glad to figure in that game—even

Lord Mauleverer would have exerted himself to the extent of lining up on such an occasion had his lordship's services been in request. Even slackers like Skinner and Snoop would have jumped at the chance.

But certain men were foregone conclusions in such a match. Only Squiff was to be relied on to keep goal against the men from Rookwood. On lesser occasions Hazel might play in goal; but against Rookwood the Australian junior was the only man.

Johnny Bull and Mark Linley had to be the full-backs—that went without saying. Bob Cherry, Tom Brown, and Penfold had to be the halves, if they were in form—and they were! Harry Wharton had to be centre-forward. Toddy and Ogilvy had to be on the left wing; Hurree Singh and Smithy on the right—only Smithy wasn't available. He was the only one of the tried and trusty brigade who was crooked. So the only real question was, who would take Smithy's place? And every fellow, almost, who was not already in the team, nourished a hope that he might be selected.

Fellows like Russell, and Micky Desmond, and Frank Nugent, and Morgan, and Monty Newland, had claims. Had the vacant place been a full-back's, David Morgan would have had it on the spot. But it was a winger that was wanted—and the choice was expected to lie among three fellows—Nugent, Russell, and Newland—with possibly William Wibley as a fourth choice.

So the name of R. Vernon-Tracy in the team did not please all parties.

Even Nugent, loyal chum as he was, felt just a little sore. He was not a fellow to press his claims like Wibley; and certainly he did not expect the skipper to place friendship before football in a Soccer game.

Still, this man Vernon-Tracy was a stranger—nobody at Greyfriars had ever even seen him except his cousin Smithy. And it was stretching a point to play him in a Greyfriars team. Frank could not help feeling, a little, that Wharton need not have stretched that point—with pretty good material closer at hand.

Nugent felt that a little—Russell and Newland felt it a lot! Bolsover major, who had no more chance of playing for Greyfriars than for England, snorted with indignation. Hazel sneered and shrugged his shoulders. But the most indignant fellow who read that list in the Rag was William Wibley.

Wibley's face was pink with wrath.

If he had been set aside for any other Remove man, or even a Greyfriars recruit from another Form, it would have been bad enough. But to be set aside for a fellow he had never even heard of, and who had never been seen in the school at all, was too much!

"I say, you fellows, this is rather thick!" declared Billy Bunter, as he blinked at the list through his big spectacles. "No need to go outside the school to find a man to play!"

"None at all!" growled Bolsover major. "Plenty of good men here!"

"Well, I don't know about plenty!" said Bunter blinking at him. "But there's at least one good man that Wharton always passes over."

"He never gives me a chance," assented Bolsover. "At a time like this—I think he might. But he won't, of course."

"Eh! I didn't mean you!" said Bunter. "I was thinking of myself—"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I suppose Smithy's wangled this somehow," growled Russell. "I heard that he wanted to wedge his precious cousin into the team, and Wharton wasn't taking any! Now he's got away with it."  
 "It's cheek!" gasped Wibley.  
 "Rot, old man!" said Tom Redwing. "Smithy's Cousin Ginger—he calls him Ginger—is a big noise at footer in his own school. Wharton's right!"  
 "I tell you it's cheek!" roared Wibley. "Greyfriars men pushed aside to make room for a nobody from nowhere!"  
 "Just like Wharton's cheek!" agreed Bolsover. "Look here, he would have to climb down and chuck it if the fellows made him! The team ought to raise objections!"

"Rats!" said several voices—belonging to members of the team.  
 Men who were in the happy position of having been picked out to play did not seem to have any serious fault to find with the football captain!  
 "Isn't his jolly old Magnificence monarch of all he surveys?" grinned Skinner. "Doesn't he keep Remove games in his waistcoat pocket?"  
 "Oh, cheese it, Skinner!" growled Bob.  
 "It's cheek!" shouted Wibley. "And I'm jolly well going to tell Wharton so!"  
 "Do him good!" said Russell.  
 "Going to whop Wharton again, old bean?" asked Micky Desmond. "Sure if you're going to whop him again, I'll bring along a cushion from the study for you to fall on!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley did not "whop" Wharton again. Whopping Wharton had turned out to be more painful for the whopper than for the whoppee! But he went along to Study No. 1 to tell the captain of the Remove what he thought of him.  
 He stood in the doorway of Study No. 1, telling him for about ten minutes.  
 What he thought of him was frightfully uncomplimentary, and he told him at considerable length—without, however, ruffling Wharton's equanimity to any great extent. Indeed, the captain of the Remove preserved a smiling face all through the tirade. He was still smiling when Wibley, out of breath, slammed the door and stalked away.  
 Notwithstanding William Wibley's indignation and the annoyance of two or three other fellows, it was settled  
 (Continued on next page.)

**A NECESSARY RULE!**

I'VE had a most interesting letter in my post-bag this week my reply to which will, I think, prove of great interest to all "Magnetites." It refers to a rule concerning the transfer of players, which thousands of people who regularly watch big football matches do not appear to know. The sixteenth of March is an important day in the calendar of the football season, because it marks the beginning of what might be called the "close time" for the transfer of players. No player signed on by a big League club after the sixteenth of March can play in a League match for that club in that season without the special consent of the Football League Management Committee.

There are some interesting points connected with this March sixteen rule. A lot of people think that a club cannot sign on a new player after that date. Such a view is wrong. The Management Committee does not step in to prevent transfers during the closing weeks of the season. What it does is to decide whether a player thus signed on shall be allowed to play for his new club.

In effect, the actual working of this rule is very simple.

**The Management Committee does not, in principle, allow a player signed on after the closing date to play in any match the result of which might possibly affect the big problems of the season such as championships, promotion and relegation.**

Let me give a supposititious case to show how the rule would be worked.

Here is a club in a "safe" position about the centre of the League table signing on a player after the sixteenth of March. They would be allowed to play such a man in their team if they were meeting another club similarly placed—that is another club without League hopes or fears. But the new player would not be allowed to play for the club in the middle of the table if they were meeting opponents who were in the running for a championship, or who were in danger of relegation.

This rule is regarded very seriously by the powers who control big football. I remember, for example, that three seasons or so ago Stockport County actually signed, on March sixteen, Joe Smith, the player who had twice captained Bolton Wanderers in Cup Finals. Stockport County were in the running for promotion from the Northern Third, and they played Smith in a League match without the consent of the Football League. His registration as a Stockport player had not been received or accepted by them. And because they played

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Smith without permission Stockport County had two points deducted from their total.

**A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE!**

THE object of this March sixteen rule will probably be obvious to most of my readers.

*It was put on the books to prevent clubs which were out for promotion, or in danger of relegation, signing on players during the last few weeks of the season, and thus stealing a march on their competitors.*

The Chelsea club were responsible for the rule going on the books. Some little time before the War the "Pensioners" were in danger of dropping into the Second Division. When they had only two or three games left to play, the officials got very busy and signed on several new players, at big transfer fees, to assist them in the remaining matches. Such a course of action was considered to be against the best interests of the clubs in general, and hence the new rule which prevents the various clubs being materially strengthened during the last six weeks of the season. Incidentally, there are a lot of people who think that the rule barring transfers should be brought forward to a much earlier date in the season, but we can leave that argumentative topic for the time being.

Talking of transfers reminds me of an experience which has befallen a player this season, and which I think is unique in the history of football. It is that of a player playing for two different teams in what is virtually the same match. In the month of December Charlton Athletic played Port Vale in a League game at Charlton, but before the end of the game play had to be abandoned owing to fog. Before the match was replayed, Oakes had been transferred from Port Vale to Charlton, and he had the experience of playing for that club against Port Vale.

**A DUAL TASK!**

WE are always being told that there is nothing new under the sun. The case of Oakes is, I think, new. And I think another new thing has happened during this season which concerns the West Ham United club. When the late Mr. Syd. King was not well enough to continue in the position of manager Mr. Charlie Paynter was appointed as his successor, and he is now manager of the team.

Here is the strange thing about Mr. Paynter, however: that he combines the job of manager and trainer. He was the trainer before he was the manager, and he has kept up the training part of his duties even since his new appointment.

Believe me, this double job makes the West Ham man very busy. I have seen him early in the morning in the office, immaculately dressed, dealing with the hundred and one things which crop up concerning the management side of a football club. And a couple of hours later I have seen Mr. Paynter in the players' dressing-room, his shirt-sleeves rolled back, massaging the injured limb of this or that player. I wonder if the manager-trainer idea will catch on and be adopted by other football clubs? Certainly this West Ham official has made a success of the dual task.

Following on my talk about penalty kicks last week, here comes an interesting question. Suppose a player takes a penalty kick, and because of some infringement the kick is ordered to be re-taken, must the same player take the second kick?

*The answer to the question is in the negative. There is no rule in football which says that the same player must take the second kick, and if the captain of a side wanted to change the kicker when the kick was ordered to be re-taken he would be quite within his rights in doing so.*

LINESMAN."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,308.

that Richard Vernon-Tracy, otherwise "Ginger," as Smithy called him, was going to play for the Remove on Wednesday! And that was that!

Fellows who did not like it, could only lump it—Wibley among the rest. But Wibley had his own way of lumping it! After tea William Wibley was seen to walk into the Rag with a big blue pencil in his hand.

Fellows watched him curiously as he walked up to the football notice.

Squiff shouted to him:

"Wib, you ass! Leave that alone!"

Unheeding, Wibley proceeded to draw a thick line through the name of R. Vernon-Tracy. Fellows watched him aghast. Meddling with a football notice posted up by the skipper was an absolutely unheard-of thing. But Wibley was too indignant to think of that, or to care about it. With a heavy hand he scored out the name of Herbert Vernon-Smith's cousin.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "Wharton will scalp you!"

"The scalpfulness will be terrific!" gasped Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

But the indignant Wib was not finished yet. Under the scored-out name of Smithy's cousin from Hexham Hill he wrote in another—his own! The juniors stared at him blankly.

"W Wibley."

There it was—Wibley's name in the list for the Rookwood game—where at least William Wibley believed that it ought to be, if fellows had their rights!

Having written it, Wibley put the pencil in his pocket, and stared round defiantly at the astonished Removites.

"That's that!" he said. "That's a chance for Wharton to do the right thing. Anyhow, he will see what I think!"

"Wait till he comes in!" chuckled Micky Desmond. "You'll sure wish intirely that ve'd left yere pencil in the study!"

But Wibley, if he was rather an ass, at least had plenty of pluck. He waited coolly for Wharton to come in.

The captain of the Remove strolled into the Rag, a little later, with Nugent and Bob Cherry. The general grin on all the faces present apprised him that something was "on." He glanced round inquiringly.

"There's an improvement in your footer list, old bean!" grinned Skinner.

"What the thump do you mean?"

"Look and see!" chuckled Snoop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What silly ass has been playing tricks?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is that a joke of yours, Wib, you duffer?"

Wharton looked at the list and frowned.

"Who did that?" he demanded.

"I did!" retorted Wibley.

"You cheeky ass!"

"Same to you!"

"Well, rub it out!" snapped Wharton.

"Shan't!"

Wharton's eyes glinted a little. He was really very patient with Wibley—who, in football matters, was a fellow to try any man's patience. He came towards the rebel, who, standing with his back to the wall beside the notice, eyed him with indignant defiance.

"Will you rub your name off that paper, Wibley?" he asked.

"No, I won't!"

"Then I will—with your cheeky nose!" said the captain of the Remove. And he grasped William Wibley in a grasp of iron.

There was a struggle for a minute or two; then Wibley crumpled up. He

had no chance in the grasp of the captain of the Remove. He had, in fact, bitten off much more than he could masticate in defying the captain of the Form. He struggled wildly, but unavailingly. With a grip on the back of his neck the captain of the Remove pushed him closer and closer to the paper, till Wibley's unfortunate nose was in contact with it.

Then he rubbed—with Wibley's nose! There was a yell of laughter in the Rag!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrgggh!" spluttered Wibley. "Let go—wow!—oh, my nose—Urrrrgggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've asked for it, old bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "What the thump did you expect?"

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Wibley.

He struggled frantically. But his nose was rubbed and rubbed and rubbed on the offending name on the paper, till the name of "W. Wibley" was fairly rubbed off. By that time Wibley was feeling as if his nose had been rubbed off, too!

"That will do, I think," said Wharton cheerfully. "Sorry, old bean; but you mustn't meddle with football notices! You know that as well as I do."

"Yurrrgggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley, gasping for breath, stood rubbing his painful nose, while the captain of the Remove wrote in the name of "R. Vernon-Tracy" again.

By the time he had written it Wibley had recovered sufficient breath to jump at him.

But Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped him promptly by either arm. Smiling, they walked him to the door, and sat him down outside the Rag. Still smiling, they closed the door on him. Really, they were saving him from himself, though Wibley, to judge by his looks, was not at all grateful. With feelings too deep for words, Wibley stalked away, followed by a howl of laughter from the Rag.

But Wibley's time was coming! He did not know it yet—nobody knew it—but it was coming, and it was close at hand!

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### He Cometh Not!

"FINE!" said Bob Cherry.

"The finfulness is terrific!" agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

It was, indeed, a glorious morning—cold, but bright and clear. It gave promise of an ideal day for football.

That Wednesday morning there were many cheery faces in the Greyfriars Remove. Most of the fellows were thinking of the Rookwood match.

Other games were due that afternoon. The First Eleven had a game on, away, at Highcliff. The Shell and the Fourth had a Form match on. But these, to the Remove men, were trifles light as air.

They took a kindly interest in First Eleven matches, of course, and were proud of the record of Wingate and his merry men. But their own fixtures came first in their estimation—and of these, that with Rookwood School was one of the most important.

Hardly a man in the Remove was likely to be missing from Little Side when Jimmy Silver & Co. came over.

Some fellows did not share the general cheeriness. Herbert Vernon-Smith was still in sanny. He had

hoped to get out, if not to play in the match, at least to watch his cousin, Dick Vernon-Tracy, play in it. But there was no chance of that. The Bounder was still on his beam-ends, and likely to remain so for several more days to come; indeed, he was lucky that his recklessness had produced no more serious consequences.

While the Bounder growled and groused in sanny, William Wibley frowned and knitted his brows in the Form-room or the quad. Wibley certainly was not sharing in the cheeriness of the Remove. His indignation was unabated; he was feeling sorer and sorer.

Convinced that he was a good man, wanted in the eleven, he had been set aside by a football captain in whose judgment he had no faith. That was bad enough. But he had been set aside, not for a Greyfriars man, but for an outsider—a stranger who was taken on trust. That was the unkindest cut of all. Wib resented it deeply.

Wib felt sore about it, and his nose felt sorest of all. A fellow who had the cheek to make alterations in an official football notice might really have expected something drastic. Most of the fellows thought that Wib had got off rather lightly. Nevertheless, his nose was sore, and so was his spirit. He was sore all over, and all through.

After morning school Wibley stalked in the quad with frowning brow, apparently enacting, unconsciously, the part of a melancholy Dane. Fellows grinned when they saw him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life!" roared Bob Cherry, clapping him on the shoulder with a mighty clap.

"Ow! Keep off, you maniac!" growled Wibley.

"Shirty about something?" asked Bob innocently.

"Idiot!"

Bob Cherry chuckled. Wibley was in a frightfully bad temper; but Bob had good temper enough for two.

"You'll turn up on Little Side this afternoon—what?" he asked amicably. "It's going to be a game worth watching."

"Rats!"

"Not giving us the go-by?" asked Bob.

"I'm going over to Lantham this afternoon," grunted Wibley. "I've got to get some new stage props. A lot of them were mucked up the other day when you fellows were playing the goat."

"Well, old bean, you begged for that."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Cut out Lantham, and come and watch the game," said Bob.

"Go and eat coke!"

Wibley stalked off, with his nose in the air. Bob chuckled again, and left him to it. Wibley was very "shirty" at present, but no doubt he would recover his good temper by-and-by.

After dinner that day Harry Wharton & Co. strolled in the quad, and noticed Wibley wheeling his machine out. They had plenty of time on their hands, as kick-off was not till three, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were not expected yet.

Vernon-Smith's cousin was expected pretty soon, however, though the exact time of his arrival was not known, as he was coming on his motor-bike. Smithy had told them that Ginger was very keen to play in the match—had jumped at the offer—and could be relied upon to turn up in plenty of time for the game. The Famous Five were rather curious to see him.

They called out a cheery word to Wibley as he started on his bike. That incensed youth did not answer or look at them.





Wharton received the ball from his wing, then, as the Rookwood back rushed to tackle him, he passed the leather to his inside-right. There was a gasp of amazement as Smithy's substitute fell over it, clumsily. This was unexpected, but nobody was taken more by surprise than Smithy's substitute!

They smiled to one another as he pedalled away and disappeared.

"Poor old Wib; he's got his jolly old back up!" sighed Bob Cherry.

"The backupfulness is terrific!"

"Well, the fellow's rather an ass," said Harry. "He's nowhere near Rookwood Form, and really he ought to understand it. Playing Rookwood is rather different from playing 'Hamlet.'"

"I dare say he'll have a happy afternoon, rooting over the costumier's shop at Lantham," said Bob, with a grin. "After all, that's really his special line. He'll forget all about Soccer when he's handling wigs and beards and cloaks and stage daggers and things."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I wonder when Vernon-Tracy will blow in?" he remarked. "Smithy said he would not be later than two. It's nearly two now."

"You're taking a lot on trust in playing Vernon-Tracy—a man you've never seen," observed Frank Nugent.

Wharton glanced at his chum, and made no reply to that. He had satisfied himself that Richard Vernon-Tracy would be a useful recruit, well worthy to take the Bounder's place. Otherwise, he certainly would not have consented to play him, in spite of Smithy holding him down to his careless words. But he realised that Frank did not see eye to eye with him. But for the fellow from Hexham Hill butting in, Nugent would have had the vacant place, and he was feeling slightly—though ever so slightly—disgruntled about it.

The captain of the Remove was rather anxious for Vernon-Tracy to turn up, but the new recruit seemed in no hurry to put in an appearance at Greyfriars.

According to the Bounder he should have materialised at two o'clock, but at

half-past two there was no sign of him. Wharton began to feel a little worried about it.

Having agreed to play the man, and having counted on him as a certainty, it was disturbing for him to be still absent as the time for the match drew near.

The Famous Five walked down to the gates, to keep an eye open for a motor-cyclist on the road.

Several motor-cyclists hummed by, but none stopped at Greyfriars.

And the minutes were passing.

Jimmy Silver & Co. from Rookwood might arrive at any minute now. Harry Wharton had taken it for granted that his new recruit would turn up before the visiting team. But Vernon-Tracy had not turned up.

There was a slightly sarcastic expression on Frank Nugent's face. He was sorry, of course, if matters went wrong. Still his idea was that the Remove Eleven did not want Smithy's cousin in it, and he considered that Wharton had acted in this matter with less than his usual judgment. Also, if Vernon-Tracy failed to turn up, there was a place for Nugent in the team.

"Dash it all, the man might come!" growled Johnny Bull.

"There's Rookwood," said Bob, as a crowded charabanc came in sight on the Courtfield Road.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Bother the man! Why isn't he here?" he grunted. "Might have had a spill on his jigger, perhaps. Why the dickens couldn't he come down by train? If he doesn't turn up—"

"Looks as if he won't," smiled Nugent.

Wharton grunted again. Personally he would rather have played his chum than any relative of Herbert Vernon-Smith's. But that was not the point.

He wanted to beat Rookwood, and Smithy's cousin was the only man available to take Smithy's place adequately. But it looked now as if he wasn't available after all. It was deeply annoying and exasperating.

Rookwood arrived; but Vernon-Tracy had not arrived. Far in the distance a hurtling taxicab was visible from the gates of Greyfriars; but of a motor-cyclist on the road there was no sign.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Pluck!

WILLIAM WIBLEY stared, and murmured:

"Silly ass!"

Half-way to Lantham Wibley of the Remove had stopped for a rest.

He had come over Redclyffe Hill, and was in the dip between it and Lantham Hill. Ahead of him on his way lay a steep rise, up which he had to wheel his machine; so, as he was in no hurry, he took a rest. At the bottom of the hollow between the two long hills ran the Redclyffe Canal, crossed by an ancient bridge with a low, stone parapet. Wibley leaned his bike against the parapet, and sat on the latter with a gloomy frown on his face.

Wib had not, as Bob Cherry surmised, forgotten all about Soccer in his interest in theatrical matters that afternoon.

It was true that Wibley took a deep interest in matters theatrical, and that he was likely to enjoy a couple of hours at the costumier's in Lantham, where he was one of the very best customers, rooting over costumes and stage props. But Wibley was feeling sore and indignant and exasperated. And as he sat

on the parapet of the canal bridge he was thinking of the Rookwood match, and his exclusion therefrom with unabated indignation.

If that ass Wharton had only given him a chance, Wibley reflected, it would have been all right. He would have played a winning game, proved beyond cavil that he really was the fine footballer he believed himself to be, and which no other fellow in the Remove believed him to be. But without a chance to show what he could do, obviously he couldn't show what he could do, and that was that! It was rotten!

With these disagreeable thoughts in his mind Wibley watched, idly and without interest, a motor-cyclist appear over the brow of Lantham Hill.

But as the rider came down the hill towards the canal bridge, he gave him a little more attention.

Lantham Hill was steep, and it led down direct to the canal bridge, which was narrow, having been built years and years before motor traffic was thought of, or dreamed of. On the Red-clyffe side was a sharp turn, round which a car, or a slow-moving country cart, might emerge at any moment. But the motor-cyclist came pelting down the hill like an arrow, sailing merrily along as if he had the widest of open roads before him. Hence Wibley's comment, "Silly ass!"

Staring at the rider who came whizzing down the steep hill, Wibley noted that he was not a man, but a boy, hardly older than himself, with a sandy-coloured complexion, and strongly marked features which seemed a little familiar in outline, though the fellow was certainly a stranger to the Greyfriars junior. Little could be seen of his hair, but what could be seen of it was a bright red—not a quiet red, or an ordinary red, but a bright and almost aggressive red.

"Oh!" ejaculated Wibley, staring.

Lantham lay on the road from London. Wibley guessed who that motor-cyclist was. Smithy's cousin, he knew, was coming down on his motor-bike—he was a red-haired fellow, whom Smithy called "Ginger"—and even at a distance the resemblance of his strongly

marked, rather hard face, to the Bounder's, was distinguishable.

The reckless rider was Richard Vernon-Tracy. Wib had no doubt about that. He was on his way to Greyfriars, and covering the ground at a reckless speed, which might, perhaps, have been expected of a relation of Smithy's.

Wibley gazed at him sourly.

This was the fellow who was going to play for Greyfriars in the Rookwood match, in the place which, Wibley considered, ought to have been assigned to Wibley. Wibley disliked him on the spot.

Chug-chug-chug! Zip-zip-zip!

Wibley grunted. The fellow was utterly reckless. The Bounder, if he had ridden a motor-bike, would have ridden it like that—and evidently his cousin had the same reckless strain in him.

He came down the steep hill towards the narrow bridge like a rocket. The road was none too good, and a slip or a skid would have spelt serious disaster. Wibley rather wished that he was not on the bridge. He did not want to be pinned between a skidding motor-bike and the stone parapet if disaster happened. He slipped from the parapet, took hold of his bike, and wheeled it off the bridge, getting clear just as the red-haired rider came swooping down.

"Silly ass!" repeated Wibley.

He stared after the rider as he roared on to the bridge.

Then he jumped.

From the turn in the road, across the canal, came the heads of a couple of huge farm-horses, evidently drawing a wagon behind them. Horses and wagon filled the corner where the road sharply turned.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Wibley.

Hardly six yards separated the roaring motor-bike from the heads of the horses when the rider saw his danger.

Wibley stood spellbound.

A frightful crash, and a fearful accident, seemed inevitable—and the Greyfriars junior stared on in expectant horror, rooted to the ground.

What followed passed in a flash. The reckless rider crashed on his brakes, the

motor-bike skidded wildly, and seemed to hurl itself at the low parapet.

There it crashed!

Wibley had a glimpse of a flying figure disappearing into space, and there was a splash in the water below. The wrecked jigger lay buzzing and grunting, the rider was in the canal below, and a startled carter was striving to drag in his startled horses.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wibley.

He ran down to the bank below the bridge. The canal was not deep, and he expected to see the fellow scrambling out, and was ready to lend a helping hand. There was no one else near the spot, and the wagoner was busy with his frightened horses.

Wibley reached the edge of the canal, and stared.

The fellow was not scrambling out. A hand was tossed up feebly, as he floated on the sluggish water, a face appeared for a second, and sank again. Wibley realised that he had had a knock, and was hurt and helpless, and was drowning before his very eyes. As soon as he grasped that, Wibley plunged in.

Wibley could swim; "ducker" was compulsory at Greyfriars. But he was not a good swimmer. And even a good swimmer is liable to find difficulties, with his clothes and boots on. The water was not very deep, but it was over Wibley's depth. It did not occur to him, for the moment, that he was risking his life by plunging in. But undoubtedly he was.

He reached Vernon-Tracy, and grasped him, and dragged his drowning head up. A white face and a red head came up—the cap had fallen off, revealing a shock of drenched red hair.

"Hold on!" gasped Wibley.

Ginger did not speak. He could not. He was conscious, but that was all. A thin streak of crimson ran down from under his red hair, mingling with the water that drenched him. But he clung feebly to the Greyfriars junior.

Wibley swam—for his life. The current was sluggish, but it carried him under the bridge. He went under the water, and struggled up again, and as he passed from under the shadowy arch struggled frantically to get to the bank, dragging his burden with him.

More by luck than design, he grasped hold of a drooping willow branch a short distance below the bridge, and hung on.

"Help!" he panted. "Help!"

With one hand grasping the flimsy, swaying branch, the other holding on to the red-haired fellow, Wibley clung for life—for two lives!

He could do no more—he was at the limit of his exertions. Getting ashore by himself would not have been easy—with his dragging burden upon him, it was impossible. Vernon-Tracy could not help himself—he was hardly more than half-conscious, and his hold on the Greyfriars junior was feeble and relaxing. Wibley hung on desperately, shouting hoarsely for help.

There was no one at hand, except the wagoner with the horses—and the horses were giving trouble. From over the bridge the carter's voice reached him.

"Cooia oop! Coom oop, wull ye?" the man was adjuring the horses, as he strove to quieten them after their fright.

Wibley felt a chill at his heart.

"Help!" he shouted again. "Help!"

He doubted whether the man on the bridge heard. He could hear the man's voice, mingling with trampling of hoofs, jingling of harness, and grinding of heavy wheels. But suddenly there came a shout from the bridge that brought joy to his heart.

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"Hoold on! Hoold on! I be coom-ing!"

The musical Kentish accent had never sounded so sweetly in Wib's ears as it did at that moment.

He was holding on desperately, his strength going, when he heard the heavy tramp of the carter on the bank. The man had seen his danger, and was coming as fast as he could.

He came none too soon for Wibley! Had there been a fast current the junior would have been lost. Fortunately, the waters of the canal were sluggish. But the weight of his helpless burden dragged on poor Wibley—and he had not the strength of a fellow like Bob Cherry or Johnny Bull. He was fairly at the end of his tether, when the big, powerful carter plunged waist-deep into the water, seized him in sinewy hands, and dragged him and his burden to the bank.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Change of Identity!

"**R**OTTEN luck!" groaned Dick Vernon-Tracy.

"Rotten!" agreed Wibley. Both of them were drenched and dripping. The carter, meditatively chewing a straw, regarded them stolidly, as they wrung water from their clothes. Wibley, except for his drenching, was little the worse. But the fellow from Hexham Hill School was in a parlous plight. He had a cut on his head, and his ankle was twisted, and he had a collection of bruises that he did not take the trouble to count.

The motor-bike was little better than a wreck. That, however, did not matter so much, as Vernon-Tracy was quite incapable of mounting it and riding it. The carter had offered to give him and his jigger a lift into Redclyffe, where both could get the repairs they needed, an offer that Vernon-Tracy accepted.

Vernon-Tracy was in need of attention, and Redclyffe was the nearest place. But he was thinking of Greyfriars and the football match there. It was impossible for him to get to Greyfriars now—useless for him to get there, so far as football was concerned. But he had to let them know.

"How far are we from Greyfriars? Do you know?" he asked Wibley. "I dare say you know the place."

Wibley grinned.

"Just a few—as I'm a Greyfriars man," he answered.

"Oh, good! You belong to Greyfriars?" exclaimed Vernon-Tracy eagerly. "Will you let them know, then?"

"Let them know?" repeated Wibley. "I suppose you're Smithy's cousin?"

"Yes—Dick Vernon-Tracy. I was going to play in Smithy's place in a match to-day—"

"I know!" said Wibley. He knew only too well!

He had felt, at first sight, rather a dislike for the fellow who was going to play in the place he—Wibley—ought to have had! That had vanished, however. Although he had not realised it at the moment, he realised now that he had saved Vernon-Tracy's life. A fellow couldn't dislike a fellow whose life he had saved. Wibley was, in fact, feeling a friendly concern for him now.

The fellow had got off cheaply from such a crash; but he was hurt, and the sooner he had a doctor's attention the better. It was up to Wibley to carry the news to Greyfriars, and leave Vernon-Tracy at liberty to take care of himself.

"I was going to Lantham," said

Wibley. "But I'll cut back to Greyfriars. Leave it to me! Get into the wagon, and be off. You'd better not lose any time. Leave it to me."

"You're awfully good!" said Vernon-Tracy. "Give me a hand up—my dashed leg is frightfully wobbly."

Wibley helped him into the wagon. The carter wrapped him in a thick coat against the cold, and made him comfortable on a bed of straw. Then Wibley and the carter between them landed the wrecked jigger in the wagon. Vernon-Tracy called anxiously to the Greyfriars junior.

"You'll lose no time?"

"Not a tick!" answered Wibley cheerfully. "They don't kick off till three—lots of time. There's a short cut I can take, too. Ta-ta!"

Vernon-Tracy settled down in the straw, and the carter backed the horses, turned in the road, and rumbled away to Redclyffe.

Wibley finished wringing his clothes as dry as he could. As he had said, there was plenty of time to let them know at Greyfriars that Vernon-Tracy was not coming after all. By the short cut across the fields and through the woods, it was only two or three miles for a cyclist.

Wibley was sorry for the Hexham Hill fellow's mishap, and for his disappointment. But he did not feel sorry for Harry Wharton's disappointment, which was to follow. Serve him jolly well right, was William Wibley's opinion.

It crossed his mind, for a moment, that when he carried in the news that the new recruit was not coming Wharton might offer him the place in the eleven.

But he shook his head! He knew that that was not so! Nugent would have the vacant place—or if not Nugent, then Russell or Monty Newland! Anybody but Wibley, he reflected bitterly.

His reflections went further than that! A strange, queer expression was coming over William Wibley's face, and there was a curious glimmer in his eyes. His thoughts were taking a curious turn.

Nobody at Greyfriars had ever seen Dick Vernon-Tracy—except his cousin Smithy, who was in "sanny," and so would not see him when he came.

All they knew of Vernon-Tracy was that he was a red-haired fellow!

The startling idea that was now working in Wibley's brain was one that probably would not have occurred to any brain but Wib's.

But it jumped into his mind—and the moment it occurred to him he fairly fastened on it.

Wibley was a past-master in the peculiar art of make-up and impersonation; as his trick on Study No. 1, in the character of Monsieur Charpentier, had proved.

Certainly, he could not have palmed himself off on the Greyfriars fellows as a fellow they knew by sight.

But as a fellow they did not know by sight—

That was the big idea!

A mop of red hair and a sandy complexion were easily assumed, by a born actor like William Wibley! A few other changes, which he knew well how to make, would render him a total stranger to Greyfriars eyes!

He breathed quickly.

Why not?

It was his place—he was convinced of that—that had been given to this chap Vernon-Tracy—who could not now fill it! Why shouldn't he take back what really belonged to him?

It would be all right afterwards; for he only needed to play in the Rookwood game to show that he was entitled to a

place in the eleven! On that point, William Wibley had no doubt—no shadow of doubt! Wharton would be jolly glad when he found out what a recruit he had unconsciously secured—all the fellows would be jolly glad! Of that Wibley was sure!

He mounted his bike. But he did not ride for Greyfriars. He rode for Lantham!

He had not made up his mind yet! He was still thinking it out! But his heading for Lantham looked as if his mind was as good as made up!

In justice to Wibley, it must be admitted, that such a stunt would never have entered his mind had he supposed for a moment that he was not equal to the Rookwood game, and that the Greyfriars prospects would suffer! But on that point, Wibley was convinced that he was right and that the other fellows were wrong! He had a natural desire to show them how right he was, and how wrong they were.

When he arrived at Lantham he went direct to the costumier's, where he was a well-known and welcome customer. By that time Wibley's mind was made up—irrevocably!

Justice was denied him—in football matters! He was going to take it! That was that!

At the Lantham shop, therefore, he did not root over costumes and stage disguises, as he intended. He had other business on hand. Mr. Purfitt, the costumier, was no doubt surprised when Wibley told him what he wanted; but he was ready to oblige. It was a "lark," Wibley explained; and that was good enough! With Mr. Purfitt's skilful assistance, Wibley of the Remove proceeded to change himself into a fellow whom no one would have dreamed of recognising as Wibley of the Remove!

A shock of red hair adorned his head. His complexion became a sandy one. Gingery eyebrows concealed his own. Two or three pieces of sticking-plaster added to the effectiveness of the disguise. His clothes were changed for a Norfolk suit. He did not look, perhaps, much like Dick Vernon-Tracy, except for the red hair. But that did not matter, as Vernon-Tracy was personally unknown at Greyfriars. He looked like a red-headed fellow—utterly unlike William Wibley. That was all he needed.

He surveyed the result in a glass, with much satisfaction, Mr. Purfitt watching him curiously.

A taxi was called! There was no time now for a bike ride home—moreover, it would not have done for Richard Vernon-Tracy to arrive on Wibley's bike!

Wibley stepped into the taxi.

The driver gave him only a cursory glance, evidently having no suspicion whatever that the red-headed boy was in a state of deep disguise.

"Greyfriars School—as fast as you can go!" said Wibley.

The taxi shot out of Lantham.

It ate up the miles on the road.

Wibley grinned at the sight of the grey old tower of Greyfriars School rising above the trees. He looked at his watch. Ten minutes to three! He had cut it rather fine—but he was in plenty of time!

Wibley chuckled. He was going to play in the Rookwood match after all! Fortune had favoured him—and the fellows were jolly well going to see what they would see! That, at least, was certain; and—fortunately for Wibley's satisfaction—it did not even occur to him that the result might not be so satisfactory as he anticipated—that

Harry Wharton, after all, might have been right in judging him unequal to the task of playing Rookwood! It was just as well—for Wibley's satisfaction—that the veil of the future hid from his eyes what was going to be the result of that remarkable impersonation.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Rookwood Match!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Here he is!"

"Better late than never!"

It wanted a couple of minutes to three, and the footballers were all on the ground, ready to play—Harry Wharton in a dubious and worried frame of mind.

Jimmy Silver, the Rookwood junior skipper, was an obliging fellow, and he would not have minded waiting a little; but Wharton wondered whether it was any use asking him to wait.

Vernon-Tracy had not come; and the fellows hardly expected to see him now. Something had happened to delay him—perhaps a spill on his motor-bike. Frank Nugent had changed—to be ready if wanted. It was settled that Frank was to play if Smithy's cousin did not turn up. Vernon-Smith, in "sanny," knew nothing of what was going on; but the footballers were telling one another rather emphatically what they thought of Vernon-Smith's cousin. The silly ass had been due an hour ago; and he had not come! The sooner Wharton decided to wash him out, the better. But the captain of the Remove decided to wait till three—and it wanted two minutes to that hour, when a red-headed fellow was discerned hurrying down to the ground.

As he was red-headed, and as he was—or, at least, looked—a complete stranger to the Greyfriars fellows, they had no doubt of his identity! Vernon-Tracy had turned up after all!

"That's the chap!" said Harry, in great relief.

"Blow!" murmured Nugent. He had had the trouble of changing for nothing.

"Well, I'm glad he's come," said Harry. "Here—this way—are you Vernon-Tracy?"

The new arrival came breathlessly up. "Am I late?" he asked.

"Well, just on time," said Harry, looking at the sandy face rather curiously. "But we expected you an hour ago! Had an accident?" His glance lingered on the strips of sticking-plaster.

"Tumble on the jigger—but I'm all right—right as rain! I've left the motor-bike at Redclyffe—I got here in a taxi." William Wibley had a regard for the truth; but the impression his words conveyed were certainly not in accordance with the facts. "I'm ready—Smithy's lending me some things, I think—by the way, where's Smithy?"

"Still in sanny!" answered Wharton, unaware that the new arrival knew that as well as he did. "You can go in and see him after the game—no time now."

The red-haired fellow grinned! He was not exactly keen to go in and see Smithy before the game! Smithy certainly would have been very much astonished, had he presented himself as Richard Vernon-Tracy. His disguise was good enough for Harry Wharton & Co., who did not know Vernon-Tracy; but it would not, of course, have imposed on the Bounder for a moment. However, the Bounder was safely off the scene; and Wibley was not likely to give him a look-in.

"Sure you feel up to a game after

a tumble from a motor-bike? asked Nugent.

Ginger grinned again.

"Oh, quite! The tumble never hurt me," he answered, which was undoubtedly true, though it had hurt Richard Vernon-Tracy considerably. "Look here, if you'll show me where to change—"

"This way!" said Bob Cherry.

He led the new arrival away to change into Smithy's things.

Harry Wharton looked after him very curiously.

"I've never seen that chap before," he remarked. "But there seems something about him that I seem to know, all the same."

"Well, Smithy's cousin would be like Smithy," remarked Squiff.

"But he's not like Smithy—not the least little bit," said Harry. "You'd never guess they were relations."

"Let's hope he's up to Smithy's form, whether he's like him or not," said Nugent rather dryly. "I can't say he looks it."

"Well, he doesn't look so hoity as Smithy, that's a cert," agreed the captain of the Remove. "But he's a good man. I know that! He's played a good game for his own school. Sorry, Franky, old man, but—"

Nugent suppressed a grunt.

"Oh, it's all right!" he said. "I may as well go and get these things off again. I hope you won't be disappointed in Vernon-Tracy, that's all."

And Nugent, with a rather sore feeling, in spite of his kind and cheerful temper, left the field.

Bob Cherry came back with the new man. In the bright sunshine Ginger's red head showed up to great advantage, and made some of the fellows grin. He was in tooter outfit belonging to Herbert Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder had mentioned that his cousin from Northumberland was just about his size. But that seemed rather an error now that the "cousin" was seen in Smithy's outfit. He was thinner than the Bounder, his chest was narrower, and his limbs were most decidedly not so well developed. In football rig, in fact, he had rather a weedy look, which reminded some of the fellows of Wibley in the same guise.

Harry Wharton could not help feeling smitten by dubiety as he looked at him. Vernon-Tracy's football record, as Wharton had read it up in the reports of matches he had played in, was first-class. And the Bounder had emphatically declared that his cousin was his equal at the game. After that it seemed impossible to doubt. Yet, on his looks, the captain of the Remove would have set the fellow down as being far from a first-class footballer.

Still, he looked keen enough, and was evidently eager to play. Wharton repressed his doubts, and hoped for the best.

Jimmy Silver won the toss, and gave Greyfriars the wind to kick off against. Greeno of the Fifth, who was refereeing the game, blew the whistle. The ball rolled from Harry Wharton's foot.

Fellows crowded round the field to watch. The Rookwood match was always worth watching. Frank Nugent, having changed again, joined the swarm of spectators, and stood with Lord Mauleverer and Russell and Newland, looking on. For the sake of the side Nugent hoped that the new recruit was up to the Bounder's description of him, but he doubted it, and doubted it still more as the game got going.

The men from Rookwood were in great fettle, too. They had come over to win, if they could. But the Remove

team were in great fettle, too. All the best men in the Remove were there, with the single exception of the Bounder, sneezing in sanny. And, unless something had gone wrong, the Bounder's vacant place was well filled.

But it wasn't!

The game was hard and fast from the start. Rookwood came sweeping down on goal, with the wind behind them. Squiff, in goal, dealt with them faithfully, and a mighty kick from Johnny Bull cleared to mid-field. Then the forwards had their chance, and jumped at it.

Ogilvy, on the left wing, got the ball, and then the whole line got away, with an exhibition of the rapid short passing of which the Remove men were justly proud. Ogilvy gave the ball to Toddy, who centred to Wharton, and Wharton, as a Rookwood back marked him, passed it to his inside-right. Smithy, at inside-right, would have had the ball in the twinkling of an eye. Smithy's substitute fell over it, clumsily.

This was unexpected on the part of the crowd and on the part of Ginger himself. Nobody, in fact, was taken more by surprise than Wibley.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

"Great gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh whipped in and got the ball. The red-headed footballer sat and blinked.

The line ran on, the nabob sending back to Wharton as he was barged over by a Rookwood back. The new recruit had no chance of taking a pass. He was yards behind, and still sitting on the cold, unsympathetic earth. Harry Wharton ran the ball on and shot for goal. Rawson of Rookwood fisted it out, but it met Toddy's head and shot in again, and there was a roar.

"Goal!"

"First blood to us!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "But what the thump's that man doing sitting on the ground?"

"Get up, Ginger!" yelled a dozen voices.

Wibley staggered up.

He was rather dizzy.

"Goal!" roared the Greyfriars crowd.

"Goal!"

It was a goal. But Ginger had not helped; he had hindered. The game, as a matter of fact, was too fast for Wibley. He was nowhere near the form that was needed. Happily for him, he did not realise it. He was going to have better luck next time. Anyhow, it was a goal.

Harry Wharton gave him rather an expressive look as the sides lined up after the goal. The captain of the Remove was feeling that he could have kicked Smithy, kicked Smithy's cousin, and kicked himself. He wondered what sort of Soccer they played at Hexham Hill if this chap had helped to win matches there. Marbles, evidently, was his game.

It was borne in on Harry Wharton's mind that in this, the toughest game of the season, the Greyfriars team had a passenger to carry. Smithy's much-vaunted cousin was the passenger. But it was too late to think about that now, and the captain of the Remove could only hope that Greyfriars would pull it off, in spite of the assistance of Ginger.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Woe! for Wibley!

"GINGER!"

"Go it, Ginger!"

"Give Ginger a chance!"

"Ha, ha, na!"

"I say, you fellows, they call that football! He, he, he!"



“Scrag him!” “Rag him!” “Give him socks!” “Urrrrrrgggggghhh!” came feebly from Wibley, as the unhappy spoofer gurgled and gasped in the hands of the avengers. An inkpot was inverted over his mouth, and then Bob Cherry swamped him with soot. “That’ll teach him not to throw away a footer match again!” roared Wharton.

“Wake up, Ginger!”

“Pick that man up and stand him on his legs!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

The remarks that were made round Little Side were like those of Truthful James’ patient in the poem—frequent and painful and free.

As the first half of that match wore on Ginger attracted more and more attention, and drew more and more remarks, not one of them of a complimentary nature.

Fellows stared at first in surprise, then they grew wrathful. What was the fellow barging into a football match for if he couldn’t play football? That was what the Removites wanted to know.

The fellow could play football—after a fashion. His game would have been good enough for a Form match with the Fourth or the Third; but in a hard-and-fast game like that with Rookwood, the man with the red head was nowhere; worse than nowhere, for he was in the way.

That fact dawned on Harry Wharton very early in the game; on the other footballers soon afterwards. Then it dawned on the spectators, and perhaps it faintly trickled even into the mind of William Wibley himself.

It had not worried Wib that he was playing under false colours when he was going to play a winning game for his side and show what really was the quality that the Remove had carelessly overlooked. But it did begin to worry him when he found himself nothing more than a breathless passenger, and it undoubtedly worried him when the crowd began to tell him what they thought of him and his style of play.

And they were soon telling him very plainly.

He was—or was supposed to be—a stranger within the gates, a guest to whom politeness was due. That was all very well if he hadn’t butted into the football match. Having butted in, he had to take what was coming to him in the way of derision and sarcastic comment. Certainly he had asked for it, and more.

The short passing game which the Remove favoured was knocked to pieces by a “dud” in the front line, who was never there to take a pass, and generally miskicked if he got the ball. The Remove, at their best, played a remarkably good game of Soccer, leagues ahead of anything that Wibley could do. Even poor Wib himself began to catch on to this, now that it was too late for the knowledge to be of any use to him.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were not long in marking that recruit. They wondered what he was doing in the team at all.

“Pick him up!” roared Bolsover major, as the disguised Wibley sat and gasped, staring dizzily at the game that swept by him. “Stand him on his feet!”

“Stand him on his head!” yelled Russell.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Frank Nugent gave an angry snort. This was the fellow for whom he had been left out! Nugent could have played a better game, hopping on one leg!

“That idiot Smithy—” he said.

“That’s the man Smithy was bragging of!” said Monty Newland. “My hat! Smithy must have been off his rocker!”

“Wharton must have been off his!”

growled Russell. “Leaving out men who can play to put that stuffed dummy in! Yah!”

“Well, he thought—” said Frank, ready to defend his chum, irritated as he was personally.

“Thought!” snorted Russell. “He can’t think! Can that man play Soccer?”

“No fear!” snorted Bolsover major. “He had a jolly good record at his own school in games!” said Frank.

“Some school—if that’s how they play football!” jeered Russell. “What’s he up to now? Looks as if he’s playing hunt-the-slipper.”

“Punctured, I fancy!” said Hazel-dene, with deep sarcasm. “Deflated! Somebody ought to pump him up with a bike pump!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I’ll kick Smithy when he comes out of sanny!” growled Nugent. “He’s taken Wharton in, the silly ass!”

“Go it, Ginger! Stand up!” roared Bolsover major. “Do they play Soccer on their hands and knees where you come from?”

“He’s sitting out this one!” remarked Monty Newland.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

The red-haired footballer caught a great deal of this, and more, and it was not music to his ears.

And he had other troubles. The pace was ever so much too much for him; he was hopelessly winded. He had done nothing for the side; and the Remove were, in effect, playing a man short. Before the first half drew to a close, Wibley was almost tottering. Never had a footballer been so glad to

hear the whistle which announced a respite.

Rookwood had scored only once, like their opponents; by sheer hard and good play. Harry Wharton & Co. had kept their end up. The score was 1-1 at half-time.

Squiff, in goal, was a tower of strength; never had the junior from New South Wales been of more value to his side. Every other man was doing his best; and all, fortunately, were at the top of their form. So far, they had held their own.

Grim looks were cast at the red-headed recruit in the interval. Harry Wharton was blaming himself bitterly. Yet, really, he was not much to blame. The absolutely rotten form of the new man was a surprise and a mystery. It was the utterly unexpected that had happened.

Even the best of men may be off colour at times. But that did not account for it. It was clear that the fellow was a poor player—he was plucky and did his best, but his best was no good.

Obviously, Smithy must have been immensely deceived in him. Yet Smithy was a good judge in such matters. And there was Vernon-Tracy's record at Hexham Hills—he was the great goal-getter of the school junior side. If that was so evidently he had left his shooting-boots in Northumberland! The whole thing was unaccountable.

"Feeling fit, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry, with unaccustomed sarcasm, as the new man fairly gasped with relief at getting a rest.

"Groooogh!" was the answer.

"The fitfulness does not appear to be preposterously terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Pity Smithy isn't here to see him!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I'm going up to sanny after this game to kick Smithy!"

"Of all the doddering duds——" said Peter Todd.

"Chuck it, old man!" murmured Wharton. "It can't be helped now, and one ought to be civil."

Snort—from Toddy.

"What's he doing here?" snapped Toddy. "If that fool Smithy thinks he can play, I suppose the fellow himself knows that he can't! Like his cheek to be here!"

Wibley's face was crimson under his make-up. His face was almost as red as his hair.

But he was still hoping for better things in the second half.

If he could only bring off one of those brilliant shots he had planned in advance—if he could only slam the leather in, in the way he had fully intended doing—if he could only see the pill whizzing from his foot, past an astonished and hopelessly beaten goalkeeper—as he had seen it in his mind's eye before the match——

But he couldn't!

Wibley had seen great things—in his mind's eye! Unfortunately he was not going to see them with any other eye!

Instead of doing better in the second half, he did worse, for he was now hopelessly winded! Greyfriars men shoved him roughly out of the way when he got in the light. He spent a great deal of time sitting down—and not a little lying down, gazing at the sky. He captured a number of accidental kicks—some of which were, perhaps, not wholly accidental!

The Rookwood men regarded him with amusement. But the Greyfriars men were not amused. They were

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indignant at a fellow shoving himself into a game for which he was hopelessly inadequate. He had kept a good man out of the team. He was, as Johnny Bull remarked, no better than Wibley would have been—the captain of the Remove might as well have given poor old Wib a chance!

Little did any man on the field dream that Wib had given himself a chance—and that this was what he was making of it!

But if the footballers had known what Ginger was feeling like, they might have compassionated him!

For, at long last, it was borne in upon Wib's mind that he had over-rated his abilities and that he was where he had no right to be!

It was an awful discovery for Wibley!

He had to realise it when he tottered about helplessly, with nothing to do except to keep out of the way of the players as much as he could.

His little deception would have been justified, had he played the great game he had fully intended and expected to play. Instead of which he was losing the game for his side! That was a bitter thought to Wibley, who really was a patriotic Greyfriars man.

He had pictured himself disclosing his real identity, after the game, amid thundering cheers. Now he was only thinking of keeping it dark—of getting away somehow after the match, without letting the fellows know how he had spoofed them. What they would say—and do—if they found him out, was an awful thought!

With that worry on his mind, the hapless spoofer was not likely to put up a good game at the finish, even had he been capable of it—which he was not!

The last minutes of that game were sheer torture to William Wibley! Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were playing the game of their lives. By sheer good Soccer, they held their own, right up to the finish. Hardly a man in the side hoped to win, but at least they hoped to make it a draw and leave the score where it was—one to one.

But even that was denied them. In the last few minutes Rookwood came down like wolves on the fold. Squiff, in goal, was magnificent; but the attack was not to be beaten. Mornington of Rookwood slammed the ball in.

The whistle went, with Rookwood winners by two goals to one!

The players came off the field—one of them—a red-haired fellow—nearly tottering.

And another red-haired fellow, with a sandy face, a bandage round his head under his cap, and a limping gait owing to a damaged leg, came on the ground at the same time—and Wibley, catching sight of him, gave a convulsive jump!

Richard Vernon-Tracy was the last man in the world that Wibley wanted to see at that moment.

"Smithy about?" asked the newcomer, addressing Frank Nugent.

Nugent glanced at him.

"No; Smithy's in sanny. Who——"

"I'm his cousin——"

"Eh?"

"Vernon-Tracy! Sorry I couldn't get here for the match—I suppose that chap told you——"

"Wha-a-at?"

Frank Nugent nearly fell down.

He stared at the red-headed newcomer. Then blankly he stared at the red-headed man who had played for Greyfriars. But he had only a back view of that individual.

William Wibley was winded—he was

breathless—he was feeling as if he couldn't put one foot before another! But he found new wind from somewhere—for he was streaking for the House, at a speed he had not displayed on the football field, with the whole crowd of footballers staring after him in amazement.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER!

### Something Like a Surprise!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo——"  
"What the thump——"  
"Is that man mad?"

Stupefied, Harry Wharton & Co. stared after the fleeing figure, running like a deer for the House.

Wibley was hunting cover. It was high time he did!

Frank Nugent, stuttering with astonishment, seized the equally astonished newcomer by the arm and dragged him towards Wharton. Wharton blinked at him.

"Who—what——"

"He says he's Vernon-Tracy!" gurgled Nugent.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Smithy's cousin——"

"Eh?"

"What on earth's the rumpus?" asked Dick Vernon-Tracy, staring round at staring faces. "I don't know anybody here. But I suppose you know that Smithy's cousin was coming? I'm Smithy's cousin."

"Ginger!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes. Sorry I had to let you down. I can tell you I was awfully keen to play, but that spill on the jigger crooked me. I shall be limping for weeks. But what——"

"Mean to say you're Vernon-Tracy?" howled Bob Cherry.

"Eh? Yes. Didn't that chap tell you——"

"What chap?"

"The Greyfriars man who was at the canal bridge when I had my tumble. He told me his name—Whiffey. No; Wibley, that was it—Wibley——"

"Wibley!" repeated Wharton like a fellow in a dream.

"Yes. He said he would let you know in plenty of time before the game. I had to get patched up by the doctor at Redclyffe, but I came on afterwards, I've just got here——"

Wharton gasped.

"What do you mean? Smithy's cousin came; he's played in the match. There he is." He pointed towards the distant House, into which at that moment a fugitive figure was vanishing.

Dick Vernon-Tracy jumped.

"He—he—he came——" he stuttered. "Mad—or what? I'm Vernon-Tracy; there ain't two of me that I know of."

"That ginger chap came here and said he was Vernon-Tracy; we supposed he was—— What the thump——"

"You've been spoofed, then," said Smithy's cousin. "If Smithy was here he would know me, if you fellows don't. Take me along to Smithy, and he will tell you that I'm Vernon-Tracy."

"Great pip!"

"But that chap Wibley—didn't he tell you I was crooked and couldn't come on for the match——"

Bob Cherry gave a roar.

"Wibley! Is this some more of Wibley's spoofing? Is it——"

"Impossible!" gasped Wharton.

"You've played a man calling himself Vernon-Tracy?" said the newcomer. "Well, that takes the cake! I'm Vernon-Tracy."

Nobody doubted that statement, astonishing as it was. Obviously this fellow was Vernon-Tracy.

But who was the other Vernon-Tracy? There couldn't be two of them!

The truth forced itself into Harry Wharton's mind.

The Removites had been expecting a red-headed fellow—and Wibley could make himself up as a red-headed fellow or anything else. His sudden and amazing flight from the field at the sight of the newcomer was explained.

For some moments the captain of the Remove stood staring at Richard Vernon-Tracy in blank amazement; then, without another word, he dashed away towards the House, and a crowd of fellows followed him; and Jimmy Silver & Co. stared after them, wondering whether Greyfriars men were subject to these sudden outbreaks of insanity.

Wharton covered the ground like lightning. Coker of the Fifth was in the way as he ran into the House. Coker of the Fifth was left sprawling and spluttering as the captain of the Remove raced up the stairs. He did the Remove staircase at amazing speed. There was a running, panting figure ahead of him now.

Wibley had a good start, and he had made good speed. He was hunting cover as fast as he knew how. But, fast as he was, his infuriated pursuer was faster, and Wharton very nearly overtook him in the Remove passage. Wibley glanced back at the pattering footsteps, put on a desperate spurt, and bolted for his study. Wharton put on an equally desperate spurt and raced him down.

Wibley dodged in as Wharton grabbed.

Wharton's clutch closed on a mop of red hair.

Had that hair been growing on Wibley's head he would indubitably have been captured. Fortunately for Wibley, it wasn't.

The mop of red hair came off in Wharton's hand. He staggered back. The next instant the study door banged behind Wibley, and the key turned in the lock.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He was left in the passage, staring blankly at the shock of red hair in his hand.

There was a wild trampling of feet on the stairs and in the passage.

"Got him?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Was it Wibley?" panted Peter Todd.

"Who was it—"

"What—"

"What on earth's that?"

Wharton held up the red wig which had so effectually disguised the identity of William Wibley of the Remove.

"Look!" he gasped.

"But what—"

"It came off when I grabbed him! He's locked himself in Wibley's study! It's Wibley!"

Bang!

Bob Cherry thundered at the door with a bang that made it groan.

"Wibley!" he roared.

"Open this door, you sweep!" shrieked Squiff.

"Let us in, you spoofing tick!" raved Toddy.

"Wibley, you rotter—"

"Wibley, you toad—"

"We'll smash you—"

"We'll lynch you—"

"Have him out!"

"Open this door, you villain!"

Wibley did not open the door. William Wibley might be—and, no doubt, was—an ass in some respects. But he was not ass enough to open that door!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

"Oh crikely!" groaned Wibley. Wibley was in the lowest of spirits.

He had expected to be rejoicing after the Rookwood match! He had expected to have proved what a footballer he was, and how lucky the Remove were to have such a man in their ranks.

But it had not worked out like that. That without Wibley the Remove would have won that game, was very probable, and to all the Removites seemed certain. And they wanted to scalp Wibley. They wanted to scrag him. They wanted to lynch him. Really, William Wibley's life was hardly safe in the Remove.

Even Wibley realised that he had been—to put it mildly—in error. Even Wibley could not imagine any longer that he had been of any use to the side.

**CHESHIRE READER WINS A TOPPING POCKET KNIFE**  
for sending in the following amusing joke.



All: How did you get that black eye?  
Bill: "Oh, a fellow down the road fainted."  
All: "Fainted?"  
Bill: "Yes, he fainted with his left and hit me with his right!"

Send in a joke and win one of these useful prizes like: R. Clough, Brook Street, Hazel Grove, nr. Stockport, Cheshire.

He repented him deeply. But repentance, as usual, came too late. The damage was done, and Wibley was found out and "for it." Only a locked door stood between him and drastic vengeance. Fortunately the door was of oak, thick and strong.

Remove men raged in the passage, breathing blood-curdling threats through the keyhole, almost thirsting for his blood. They banged on the door. They kicked at it. They howled to Wibley to come out!

Wibley did not come out.

The Rookwood men had gone—victorious. Wibley's astounding trickery, as all the Remove agreed, had made Jimmy Silver & Co. a present of that victory. They longed to get their hands on Wibley.

Vernon-Tracy, grinning, had gone to sanny to see his Cousin Smithy. "Ginger" seemed entertained by the

incident. But the infuriated Removites breathed only vengeance.

Bang, bang, bang! Thump, thump, thump!

Wibley groaned as he listened. He had stripped off the remainder of his disguise, and was William Wibley again. From the bottom of his heart he wished that he had never pretended to be anybody else. That wonderful wheeze, which had seemed such a winner when he thought it out, had proved an awful frost; a fearful disappointment; a delusion and a snare! Nobody but Wibley would ever have thought of such a stunt. And Wibley sincerely wished that he hadn't.

Crash! Creak! Creak-e-e-ek!

Wibley fairly shivered as the door groaned and creaked. The enraged Removites were not to be denied. Regardless of damage, regardless of consequences, somebody was forcing a chisel into the lock. It was a good lock, but it was not built to stand that. The door flew open.

"Collar him!"

"Bag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Scrag him terrifically!"

"Oh lor!" gasped Wibley; and he could say no more, for he disappeared under a rush of wildly excited Removites.

What followed seemed like an awful dream to William Wibley; like a nightmare of the most terrific description.

He was bumped. He was thumped. He was ragged and rolled and tumbled and tumbled! Hardly a button remained on him. Hardly a breath lingered in him. He gurgled and gasped in the hands of the avengers, and he gasped and he gurgled.

"Scrag him!"

"Rag him!"

"Give him socks!"

"Urrrrrrgggghh!" came feebly from the unhappy spoofer.

"Give him the ink!"

"Yurrrrrggh!"

A breathless, gurgling, gasping, dishevelled, and bewildered Wibley sprawled on the floor. Over him the inkpot was inverted; and his mouth, wide open to gasp, received a great deal of the ink. The rest spread over his crimson countenance.

"Urrrrrrggggh!"

Bob Cherry shovelled soot down from the study chimney. It swamped over Wibley. Toddy found a bottle of gum and streamed its contents over him. There were jam and pickles in the study cupboard. They were rooted out and bestowed on Wibley. Wibley had wondered what would happen to him. He was finding out now. It was happening, and it was horrid!

A ghastly heap—a horrid mixture of gum and ink, jam and pickles, soot and Wibley—moaned on the floor. Then it occurred to the ragers that even the silly ass who had chucked away the Rookwood match had had enough for the present. The silly ass' own opinion was that he had had too much. Certainly he did not want any more. But he learned that there was more to come.

"That will do for now," said Harry Wharton. "We mustn't quite slaughter the silly idiot! But he's going to have the same to-morrow—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And every day for the rest of the term!"

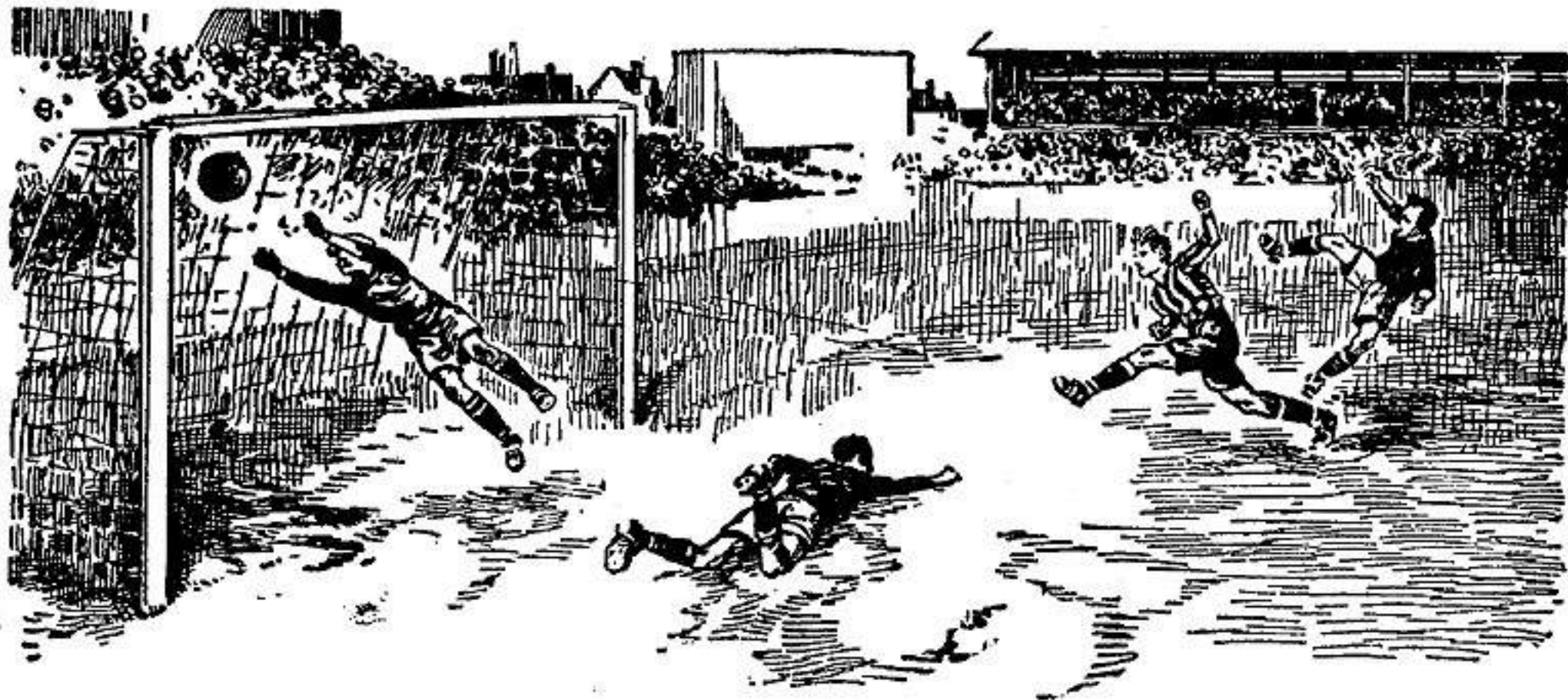
"Yes, rather!"

"You hear that, Wibley, you potty chump?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Groooogh!" gurgled Wibley.

(Continued on page 28.)

# NOBBY, the 'Shooting Star!



## HOW THE STORY STARTED.

Having run away from Don Carlos' circus, Nobby, a sixteen-year-old waif, meets Ferrers Locke, the detective, who introduces him to Lord Douglas Weatherstone, chairman of the Parriton Rovers F.C. From ground-boy, Nobby soon becomes professional, only to fall foul of Lord Douglas' rascally nephew, Daniel Willoughby Thundersley, who, in league with the Don, determines to bring about his downfall. Later, to avoid exposure by his bookmaker, to whom he owes a large sum of money, Thundersley decides to "touch" his uncle for a hundred pounds.

(Now read on.)

## A Blow for Two!

**A**T the moment of Thundersley's painful interview with his bookmaker, Lord Douglas Weatherstone was going through the monthly accounts with his bespectacled and efficient secretary, according to custom.

But whereas custom seldom saw any interruption from his lordship as the secretary droned through his statements of the household's expenditure, and of the outgoings of his lordship's private purse, he departed from custom now with an occasional fitful outburst of protest. And always the protest came whenever Daniel Willoughby Thundersley's name was mentioned.

"How much have I put into Mr. Thundersley's account this month, Smithson?" queried his lordship, at the end of the secretary's recital.

Smithson, good at arithmetic, was quick to answer:

"Exactly seven hundred pounds, my lord!"

"Good gad! Ooooh!" His lordship forgot his gout for the moment as he started out of his chair, and was quickly reminded of it. "Seven hundred pounds, d'you say?"

"Yes, my lord!"

"Why, I had no idea, Smithson—"

"Your lordship perhaps forgets that Mr. Daniel contributes a great deal to

the hospitals this month. Unless my memory is at fault, my lord, Mr. Daniel paid both the Laxton and Counties Hospitals the sum of a hundred and fifty guineas each."

"Ah, yes! He did, indeed," murmured his lordship, relenting somewhat. "That's a lot of money, Smithson."

"It is indeed, my lord!"

"Yes. A lot of money," pursued his lordship. "I must do something about that," he added to himself. Then aloud: "Very well, Smithson, that will be all."

The secretary retired, taking his ledgers and accounts with him. Then, with a furrowed brow, Lord Douglas Weatherstone settled himself in the big leather chair at his desk, and gave himself up to reflection. Since the scene at the Blampton Wednesday match he had taken himself to task for spoiling Daniel Thundersley. The secretary's statement of accounts for the month bore out this opinion.

"It's my own fault," his lordship muttered. "Daniel's a good fellow, but I'm allowing him too much over his regular allowance. Seven hundred pounds in a month—phew!"

The thought of that sum brought a further twinge of gout to his lordship's troublesome foot, at which he swore softly. Then, recovering, he lifted the telephone and asked to be put through to the treasurer of the Laxton Hospital.

"Is that you, Thomason? Ah! Lord Weatherstone speaking. Look here, I want you to do something for me concerning my nephew."

The treasurer replied that he would be delighted to oblige so old and generous a patron of the hospital as his lordship.

"It's like this, Thomason, I know my nephew contributes quarterly to the hospital fund. Mind you, I'm not against such generosity, but, in the circumstances, I think a hundred and fifty guineas a trifle—well, what shall I say, too much for a young man who has yet to make his way in life. Now, don't interrupt, Thomason"—this a trifle testily, as his lordship's gout returned. "I

think your people ought to be satisfied with a tenner subscription from young Thundersley a quarter, what?"

Came a surprised ejaculation over the phone, a cough, and—

"My lord, it is not our usual custom to reveal the amount of our patrons' subscription to the hospital funds, but in the case of Mr. Thundersley, I feel at liberty to inform you that he invariably donates a five-pound note. If he thinks of raising it to a tenner, my lord, we shall naturally be very gratified. Touching this reference to one hundred and fifty guineas, my lord—"

But Lord Douglas Weatherstone hardly heard the remainder of that conversation. He sat grasping the telephone instrument, with a look of deep pain on his fine old face. Without further questioning, his lordship knew that he had been deceived. Had the hospital ever once received the hundred and fifty guineas Daniel Thundersley claimed to have subscribed—the hundred and fifty guineas which an indulgent uncle had repeatedly given him for the past three years on quarter days? Lord Weatherstone knew that the answer was in the negative.

Like a man who has received a mortal blow, the old nobleman clamped down the receiver of the telephone, and stared out over the room with unseeing eyes. Twice in one week now, his nephew, upon whom he had lavished affection and luxury, had hurt him deeply.

He knew that he would receive the same answer from the treasurer of the Counties Hospital when, a few moments later, he got into telephonic communication with him. And he was right. Ever since Daniel Willoughby Thundersley had been a subscriber to their funds, so the treasurer informed him he had contributed a regular five pounds—nothing more.

Lord Douglas Weatherstone looked old and grey when he received that information. His nephew had deceived him shamefully. But what troubled his lordship more was the fixed feeling that



Thundersley was a waster—that the son of his dead and gone brother whose painted portrait stared down at him from his favourite position by the mantelpiece was a liar, a schemer, a deceitful rogue.

Thus Daniel Thundersley hardly chose a propitious moment to announce his arrival. The moment he set foot in the library Thundersley knew that something was wrong. Instead of the customary smile of welcome and the genial handshake, he saw a frowning countenance set in a face of severity.

"Sit down, my boy!" said his lordship sternly. "I have to speak seriously to you."

There was a pause, and Thundersley felt somewhat like a felon in the dock awaiting the judge's sentence.

"Rather than you should, perhaps, attempt to lie yourself out of the position," began his lordship coldly, "I will tell you quite frankly that I have discovered your shameless fraud upon me in the matter of the hospitals' subscriptions—"

Thundersley felt his blood run cold. He sat staring out before him with eyes dilated in horror, mouth agape. No words came to his aid—not that words would have helped him in that extremity—for his tongue was dumb.

"It has been a blow to me, Daniel," continued his lordship. "A great blow, but I accept part responsibility. It was foolish of me never to inquire what you really did with your money. Now I know better. In the future, young man"—Thundersley winced at that—"you will manage to keep within your allowance. You need not come to me for extra money, as that will place me in the unhappy position of having to refuse you."

Thundersley felt the world crashing about his ears. He sat there dumb-struck—overwhelmed at the calamity which had befallen him.

"Your fixed allowance," went on his lordship inexorably, "is ample—more than ample, in fact—for any young man. Do I make myself perfectly clear?"

Thundersley remained silent. His lying, deceit, his extravagance had brought him to this. At that moment Thundersley would cheerfully have died, so great was his humiliation.

"Your behaviour at the last match was inexplicable to me at the time," continued his lordship. "But now I am beginning to see many things of which I have remained in blissful ignorance for a long, long time. I think, young man, that you and I had better not meet too frequently—that is, until you have reinstated yourself in my opinion. I think that is all!"

With that, his lordship, conscious of having performed an unpleasant duty, coughed loudly, lit up a cigar, started to read—or pretended to read—a copy of the "Tatler," which he held upside down—and waited for his crestfallen nephew to depart.

Like a man with chains round his ankles Thundersley dragged himself to his feet and stumbled blindly out of the room. What was he to do now? Too late, he realised that the way of the transgressor is hard. Live on his allowance—why seven-eighths of it was already swallowed up by moneylenders, blackmailers, and people of like kidney into whose evil hands he had blindly trusted himself.

And on the morrow fresh disgrace awaited him. Samuel Entwistle would present his cheque for a hundred pounds—and that cheque would be dishonoured!

Hardly knowing where he was going, Thundersley found himself in the long, curving drive. His hands, thrust deep into his pockets, came in contact with a

few shillings—all the money he had got in the world.

Money was the spice of life to Thundersley's spoiled nature. Without it he was as good as dead. Dead! He toyed with the thought morbidly. People in similar extremities had found a way out. The river—He shuddered. Thundersley told himself that he hadn't even a coward's courage to do that. But the notion set his brain working in other directions. He knew that his uncle kept a fair amount of money in the house for immediate expenditure.

The safe—  
Thundersley's eyes lit up cunningly. He knew the combination of the safe. Had he not stood behind his uncle many times when the old fellow had been opening it? The safe—the safe—the safe—

The word sledgehammered his brain until it became an obsession.

The safe—the safe—the safe—  
He wrestled with the temptation after

the manner of a weak man; told himself that, blackguard as he was, he would never stoop to open robbery. Told himself that in one breath, and countered it the next with the reflection that he had robbed his lordship in another way—namely, through the hospitals subscription—and so reached that state of mind where one offence assumed no greater proportion than the other.

The safe—the safe! It's your chance, you fool! No one will know! Even your uncle would never suspect you of that.

Again and again he wrestled with the problem, the while the dusk deepened over the grounds. Then, all a-flutter with nervous horror of the decision he had reached, Thundersley crept into a thick bush of rhododendrons and waited.

His heart beat against his ribs like a hammer on an anvil. In a quarter of an hour he knew the gong for dinner

(Continued on next page.)

## COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**W**ELL, chums, a week has passed since I made the announcement concerning our stupendous **FREE GIFT OFFER**

of a 32-page Atlas in full colours in return for collecting eight coupons. I can picture you all bubbling over with excitement to obtain this magnificent free gift. And well you might! Maybe some of you were unable to obtain a copy of last week's MAGNET. Should this have been the case you can still participate in this free gift scheme by purchasing copies of the "Gem" or "Modern Boy," both of which contain a coupon value 5 points. What you've got to remember is this: by the conclusion of the scheme—which is four weeks hence—you must have collected eight coupons (totalling 40 points in all) to qualify for this wonderful gift. If, for instance, you are starting your collection with the coupon which appears below, you have another month in which to collect the remaining seven coupons—say four from the next four issues of the MAGNET and the remaining three from either the "Gem" or "Modern Boy." To be on the safe side, chums, give your newsagent a regular order for the papers you require now!

By the way, there's a "peach" of a yarn in this week's "Gem," entitled: "Tom Merry & Co. in Liverpool!" Tom Merry, the leader of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, "adopts" Digby's uncle. In consequence of a letter received from this uncle a party of juniors journey north to Liverpool. Of their many and varied adventures and the weird and wonderful

'Erbert Rags, whose pluck saves the juniors from a terrible "beating up" by a gang of toughs, you'll learn when you read this spanking yarn by Martin Clifford. Get a copy of the "Gem" to-day, boys—you'll be more than satisfied with it.

As space is rather short I have only room for two

### RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

Is it Harder to Cycle or to Walk? (J. B., of Leatherhead).—Much harder to walk—about three and a half times as hard! The average walker takes 2,263 steps to the mile. On average cycling gear he requires only the same amount of energy corresponding to 627 steps to travel the same distance!

Signals of Distress (T. J., of Harwich).—If a steamer is seen flying a black ball above a square flag, it means: "Fire or leak: I want immediate assistance." If the black ball is below the square flag, it means that she has run aground, and also requires immediate assistance.

### NEXT SATURDAY'S PROGRAMME!

There's another first-rate issue in store for you next week, chums. Frank Richards who, by the way, also writes for the "Ranger," "weighs in" with one of the most exciting—and most humorous—yarns he has yet contributed to our paper. It's entitled:

### "POPPER'S UNPOPULAR PRIZE!"

and will keep you interested from beginning to end. As Fisher T. Fish would say: "I guess and calculate it sure takes the cat's whiskers!"

Hodley Scott, too, is at his very best in our powerful Soccer and 'tec story. Of course, there'll be chuckles galore in the "Greyfriars Herald," and our shorter features will round off a programme it'll be hard to beat. Before closing down, let me remind you that there will be another Free "Atlas" Coupon worth 5 points in next Saturday's MAGNET.

YOUR EDITOR.

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Magnet 11/3/33

would echo round and about the great house, for it was to dinner that Thundersley had invited himself when he had made up his mind to "touch" his uncle. Thundersley waited, the perspiration streaming off him from sheer nervous tension.

The gong suddenly sent out its clamour with such volume as to set his pulse racing madly. He waited a few moments, then stole away from cover and darted to the rear of the great house. He could have found the study blindfolded—a diamond-paned window on the first floor which gave on to a balcony. Strong creeper grew into the wall directly beneath the study window, and up this age-old creeper Thundersley started to clamber with monkey-like haste.

He was breathing hard when he scrambled over the balcony rail, but he quickly darted into cover, waited a few seconds to ascertain that all was well, and then began to operate on the sash with his pocket-knife.

He was a clumsy workman, and broke the blade of his penknife before he managed to slip the catch of the window, but the job was done at last. Next moment Thundersley had disappeared within the room.

He was afraid to switch on the electric light, but reassured himself that light was unnecessary; he knew where the safe was. He could do all that he wanted to do without even the aid of a match flare.

A moment later his thievish fingers were clawing through the darkness for the safe.

To do Thundersley justice, his conscience smote him as he knelt before the safe. It was in his mind to retreat, to abandon the whole project. But a mental picture of his liabilities, of exposure from more than one quarter, served to crush any noble instincts that remained to him.

Deftly his fingers set to work on the combination lock. Only a week earlier he had stood at his lordship's side when the safe had been opened, and had checked his memory for details of the combination—quite innocently enough then. A surge of excitement swept hold of him as he felt the door suddenly give to his pressure on the handle. Then—unexpected, strident, compelling—came a loud voice and the piercing clangour of a bell.

"Put up your hands—quick! Put them up, or I'll shoot!"

The voice seemed to come from the doorway which was at Thundersley's back. He froze with horror, and for a split second remained on his knees before the safe, incapable of action. Then overwhelming relief flashed through his whole being. He remembered, late in the day, that his uncle had attached an anti-burglar device to the safe, which sounded the alarm throughout the house the moment an unlawful attack was made on the safe, and, moreover, set in motion an instrument which "spoke" the words mentioned above.

Thundersley cursed, recovered his nerve, and plunged his hands into the safe. All the while the alarm bell shrieked its warning in the house. And while Thundersley groped within the steel walls of the safe pounding footsteps echoed alarmingly near.

To linger was madness, yet Thundersley lingered long enough to grab a bundle of what felt like notes, and stuffed them in his pocket. Next he was across the room, through the window, and scrambling down the creeper with the speed of desperation, to gain the lawns and the friendly shelter of the rhododendron-bushes. Not a second too soon. From his hiding-place he saw the lighted figures of the servants at the window as they peered down into the darkness, heard their cries.

Pausing only long enough to see that his immediate vicinity was not under surveillance, Thundersley darted from cover, cut off on a diagonal route, and reached the stone wall which encircled the grounds. He was up and over the wall like a professional cat-burglar. In his blind haste he did not notice that someone was striding along the pavement almost beneath him—until he had dropped upon that unfortunate person like a ton of bricks.

Yet, quick as the whole incident was, he gave a gasp of horror as he recognised the face of the luckless passer-by, and the familiar mop of hair which came to view as a felt hat toppled off and rolled into the gutter, for both belonged to Nobby!

(Now look out for next Saturday's MAGNET and further exciting chapters of this powerful story, chums!)

## WIBLEY'S WONDERFUL WHEEZE!

(Continued from page 25.)

"Look out for another dose tomorrow—"

"Yurrrrgh!"  
"And every day afterwards!"  
"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

And the juniors streamed out of the study, leaving Wibley strewn on the floor, gasping and gurgling and gugging, with the prospect before him of an endless repetition of similar experiences. It was a happy prospect for Wibley!

But—  
Fortunately for Wibley there was a "but."

For Dick Vernon-Tracy, before he left the school that evening, told in detail what had happened on the Lantham road that afternoon. The Remove fellows learned that that ass, that fat-head, that cheeky tick, Wibley, had actually risked his life and very nearly lost it to save Smithy's cousin after his fall into the Redclyffe Canal. Which naturally made a difference, especially as they had had time to cool down a little.

Pluck will tell. It did not diminish Wibley's offence; but, after all, he had had a severe lesson on that subject, and it was unlikely—very unlikely—that he would ever try to play tricks on the Remove footballers again. And pluck was pluck!

Harry Wharton proposed, and the other fellows agreed, that Wibley should be let off the rest of his punishment. So that was that. It was a great relief to Wib; and, though he still rather fancied himself as a footballer, it was certain that the Remove would never see again anything like Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!

THE END.

(You'll find another ripping story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, chums, entitled: "POPPER'S UNPOPULAR PRIZE!" Mind you read it, chums, for this is a yarn that is far too good to me missed! Look out also for another Free "Atlas" Coupon value five points.)

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# THE NEW Greysfriars Herald

EXTRA  
GOOD  
EDITION

No. 23 (New Series).  
EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.  
March 11th, 1933.

**WHO'LL HELP BUNTER?**  
Expert mountaineers urgently needed to form rescue party. We've just been told that Bunter is lying helpless at the end of a tremendous gorge and we feel awfully anxious about him.

## Abusive Articles Taboo

### Label Laws Prevent Publication

We want you chaps to understand definitely once and for all that it's absolutely useless for you to send us articles containing abusive remarks about other fellows.

Please get it into your wooden nodules that there's a law of libel in this country, and that we should get into very serious trouble if we attempted to blacken the character of anybody at Greyfriars.

Don't trouble to tell us that it's an awful shame. We know that already. We should love to tell you that Skinner is a smoky rotter without a grain of decency in him. But we dare not.

Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to mention that Snop is a white-livered cur without a speck of manliness. But it's utterly impossible for us to do so.

It would be delightful to be able to say that Coker is a prize idiot with the brain of a bunny-rabbit, and a face that reminds us of a pound of pickled pork. But the law forbids it.

Privately we are of the opinion that for about imbecility Tomple of the Upper Fourth takes a lot of whacking. But publicly such an opinion cannot possibly be expressed.

It seems a pity that convention, assisted by the law, should throttle the truth. But as the publishers of a great and widely-read newspaper we cannot afford to flout convention or show disrespect to the law.

Rough on us, isn't it? The strain is simply awful sometimes. One of these days we feel sure we shall break out and tell you just what we think of somebody. After which it's ten to one we shall be led away with eyes on our wrists to think it over on a day of bread and water.

It's not all honey running the "Greyfriars Herald," believe us!

## Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

The only thing left to Sammy Bunter when his Uncle Alfred died recently was an ornamental weighing-machine.

What else could you expect, anyway, Sammy? As the old proverb remarks: "Where there's a will there's a way."

**Indigestion Cure Wanted**

By Temple of the Fourth. He said he'd eat his hat if his tummy couldn't lick the Romoave at tooter last Wednesday—and we doubt whether his digestion will stand the strain!

## MASKED RAIDERS GAG ORATOR

### Scenes in Fifth Form Debate

Extraordinary scenes marked the last meeting of the Fifth Form Debating Society. The debate, which was on the resolution "That the Modern Schoolboy is Degenerate" had attracted a record attendance and the speeches both for and against were full of enthusiasm.

Half-way through the evening, Coker rose. It was noticed that he had a gleam in his eye and a huge sheaf of papers in his hand and that he cleared his throat and coughed.

"You bet we will, boss!" answered the "Boys" in chorus.

The quartette then marched out, under the circumstances, the Fifth Form could hardly do anything in the matter. To their very great regret they had to carry on without hearing an oration from Coker. Fortunately his gag didn't prevent him from uttering a few remarks, however, and the Fifth listened with great respect to occasional "Goo-goo's!" and "Ging-gug-gug's!" from behind the chair with stout cord, and gagged him.

If anyone unites him before the end of the debate, said the leader of the four, in a forceful voice, "we'll come back and shoot up the show properly, won't we, boys?"

But Coker isn't. For some reason he seems to imagine that the whole thing was framed up by Blundell for the purpose of putting the kybosh on his speech. Obviously the visitors were desperate gangsters straight from Chicago. Anyone with a grain of common sense should be able to see that!

Nothing has been heard of them since, by the way, and for unknown reasons the Fifth always laugh when we mention them. Whiboy and Brown and Bultrode and Smiddy of the Remoave seem to find something amusing in it, too!

We wonder what it is?



handkerchiefs that covered his mouth.

Coker was in a state of blind fury by the time he was eventually released, though why he should have been so beats us. Blundell said that Coker's remarks were the most sensible and the best-phrased he had ever heard him make in a debate, and surely Coker ought to be satisfied with that.

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## LONZY'S LITTLE LETTERS

Dear Editor,—The preparation of a consummately-worried indictment of a fellow-scholar is not, I confidently affirm, my habitual activity; but I should demonstrate a lamentable deviation from social duty amounting to pusillanimity if I refrained from giving expression to an involuntary observation concerning William George Bunter.

Permit me, therefore, to remark that the morality of this juvenile is, I fear, as amorphous as his somatic characteristics, and that, submitting my association with him to dispassionate mental analysis and revision, I cannot effect avoidance of the conclusion that the utility of the application of supererogatory humanitarianism to Bunter is open to considerable doubt.

Yours ingenuously,  
ALONZO TODD.

This is positively the worst thing we've ever heard said about Bunter. Wish we knew what it all meant!—Ed.

## Prout's Corn Stops Athletes

### No Subject for "Chaff"

Mr. Prout of the Fifth is one of the best—a rare old sportsman with a heart of gold. But if he offers to judge your long-jumping practice, take our tip and run a mile!

We know you see. We've had some. Last Tuesday, to be precise.

Mr. Prout rolled up with a measuring-tape just as we were starting practice at the little sand-pit on the other side of the playing-fields where the long-jump is usually performed.

"Pray allow me to do the measuring, my boys. You may rely on strictly accurate measurements and perhaps a few tips in season from an old stage," he said, with his usual smiling smile.

We gave him his head, of course.

W. Tolsover the drawback whom Tolsover major did his stuff. Mr. Prout's movements are rather slow, and Bolsey's a weighty sort of chap. The combination of those two circumstances proved fatal.

Wharton had just jumped, and the master had just measured his jump. As



Words can convey no idea of the tragedy of that moment, but if you imagine a demented bull in its death-throes, you'll get a faint notion of what Mr. Prout looked like!

Some of us thought it funny and laughed on the other side of the face when Mr. Prout marched us all back to the House and reported us for impertinence. Mr. Quelch doesn't like complaints from the master of the Fifth, and he demonstrated that fact in no uncertain manner.

As Peter Todd remarked, Mr. Prout's "corn" is no subject for "chaff"!

## WHO WRECKED GOSLING'S FLOWER-BED?

### Answer Surprises Remove

The sensation of the week has been the mystery of the Trampled Flower-bed. As a crime it threatened to baffle the best brains in the Remoave till Dev-Insp. Penfold took charge of the case and applied his well-known methods of deduction to it.

The facts were simple. On Wednesday, after footer, the flower-bed outside Gosling's house, which has been attracting a lot of admiration on account of the gross show of bulbs contained in it, was found to have been trampled on, flowers had been trodden underfoot, the soil kicked in all directions, and the whole thing ruined. Gosling's howls of wrath brought up a crowd from the footer field. The crowd started at the wrecked flower-bed and immediately sighted a most important clue. The flower-bed was simply covered with footprints of elephantine size!

The problem was how those footprints had arrived there. Some body suggested that an elephant or a rhino had escaped from a circus, and the theory found a lot of acceptors till Penfold came along.

The famous criminologist gave one glance at the flower-bed they started. "Those footprints!" he said hoarsely. "What are they—an elephant's or a rhinoceros's?" somebody asked.

Dev-Insp. Penfold shook his head. "Neither," he said decidedly. "I know that's what they look like, but appearances are sometimes deceiving. As a matter of fact the footprints are those of Job Cherry!"

"My hat!"

The fellows looked startled. "The crowd made a move to find Job Cherry. But Dev-Insp. Penfold held up his hand.

"Hold on!" he said quietly. "It's obvious that the footprints are Bob's; there's nobody else with a foot that size at Greyfriars. But how do we know he was wearing the boots?"

"You mean someone else might have been wearing 'em to put us off the scent?" asked Kipp.

Dev-Insp. Penfold nodded. "Just that! If you'll take another look at those marks, you'll notice the tread is very deep. Judging by the look of 'em the culprit must have weighed a ton at least."

"Well, Bob Cherry doesn't weigh a ton," remarked Bultrode.

"Exactly! But there's another chap who does."

"BUNTER!" yelled the crowd.

It was obviously the culprit! Bunter was obviously the culprit! On being tackled about it, Bunter said he hadn't been within a mile of Gosling's flower-bed, and that he had only borrowed Bob's boots because his own weren't handy, and that he didn't borrow them anyway; and that Cherry was a beast.

The crowd were rather displeased by this simple, honest, straightforward statement. They raged at Bunter on principle, however, and had a whip-round for Gosling.

Dev-Insp. Penfold is taking no further action in the matter!

## AS OTHERS SEE THEM What I Think of Harry Wharton

By H. Vernon-Smith

Fellows who've been looking forward to this article in the expectation of seeing me indulge in an orgy of mud-slinging in Wharton's direction are in for a big disappointment. At the same time, pals of Wharton who hope to see me land him to the sticks are not going to have their wishes gratified, either.

It's a pretty obvious fact from Wharton's article last week that he can see my faults. Well, you can take it from me, clearly! Chief among them is Pride. When Wharton starts "putting on the Ritz" an iceberg's a warm and cheery body in comparison!

Then there's his temper. I haven't the best temper in the world myself, but if you've ever seen the lightning dart from Wharton's peepers and the thunder gather on his noble brow, you'll admit that I'm only a novice at the game!

Still, every man has his little peculiarities, and now I've given you Wharton's, let me add that he's still my idea of the Hundred Per Cent Sportsman. We've rowed plenty, I know; but we've been in tight corners together, too, not only at Greyfriars, but in several distant parts of the world. What I've learned from those experiences is that there's one fellow I'd always prefer in an emergency to anyone else—and that fellow's Harry Wharton! But I can't help wishing he'd break out—just once!

## GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

One of Horace Coker's pet ideas is to be a great detective. Remove by eating as much as seven other fellows all hearty maginizing glass towards it!

Devil Reinsaid Temple, among other artistic pursuits, dabbles in oils, and favors that his paintings match stand a chance at the Academy. He is always in that opinion, however!

## A "Current" Topic

Courtyard residents are a little against the new pylons and overhead cables being strung across the Common. We agree that they're not very beautiful, but when the local residents talk of the local residents' talk of the local residents' charm, we can't help thinking they're beginning to "pylon" the agony.

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Alonzo Todd gives full rein to his awe-inspiring command of the words in his essays, and he occasionally finds that some practical joker has administered it with ink!

Harry Wharton is an expert on an aquatic game, having secured his skill behind a speed-boat in Pegg Bay.

W. G. Bunter defended his title of champion footman of the Remoave. The seven was tragic—for Bunter!

