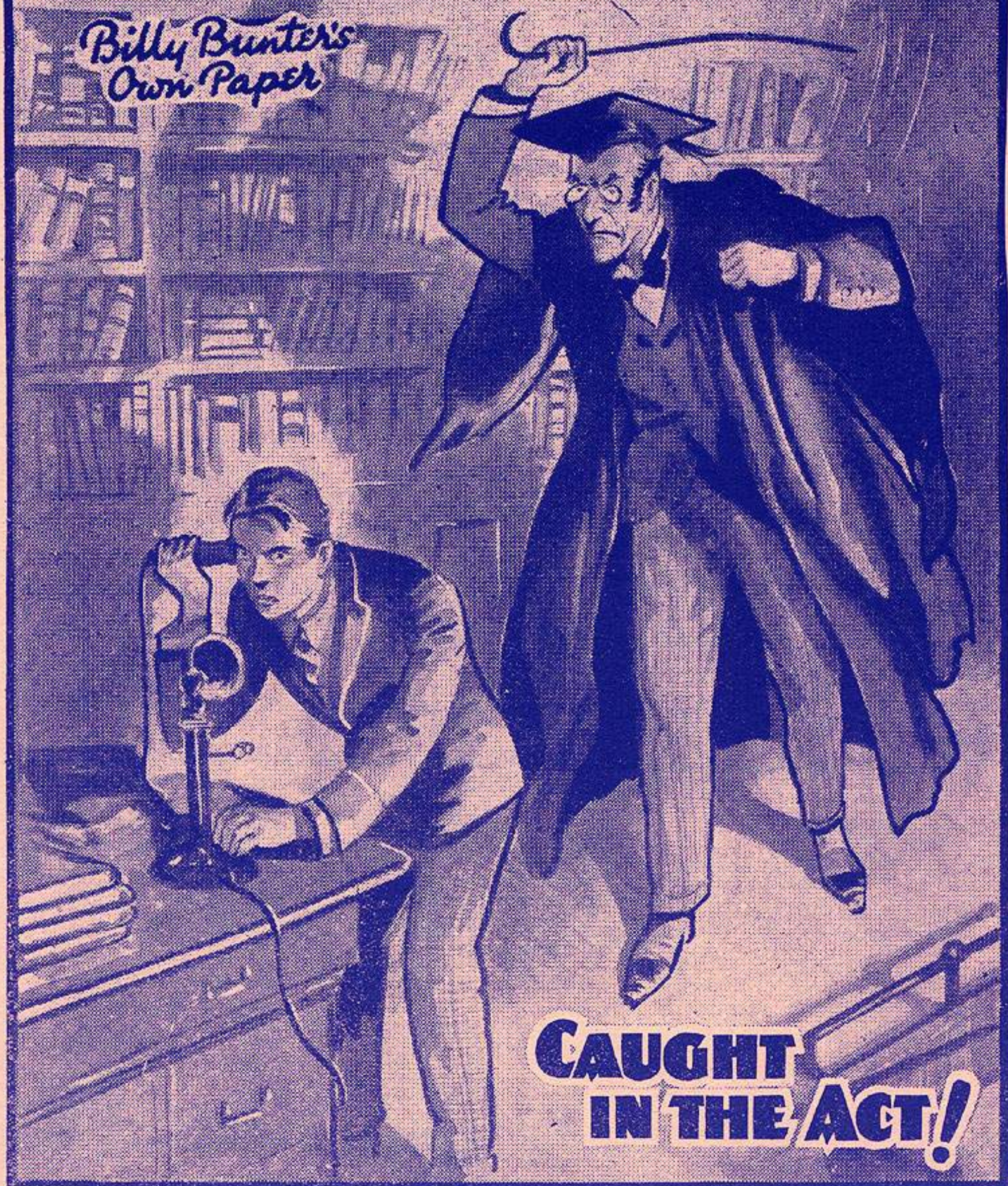


250 FOOTBALLS WAITING TO BE WON! THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME FOR YOU!

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

*Billy Bunter's  
Own Paper*

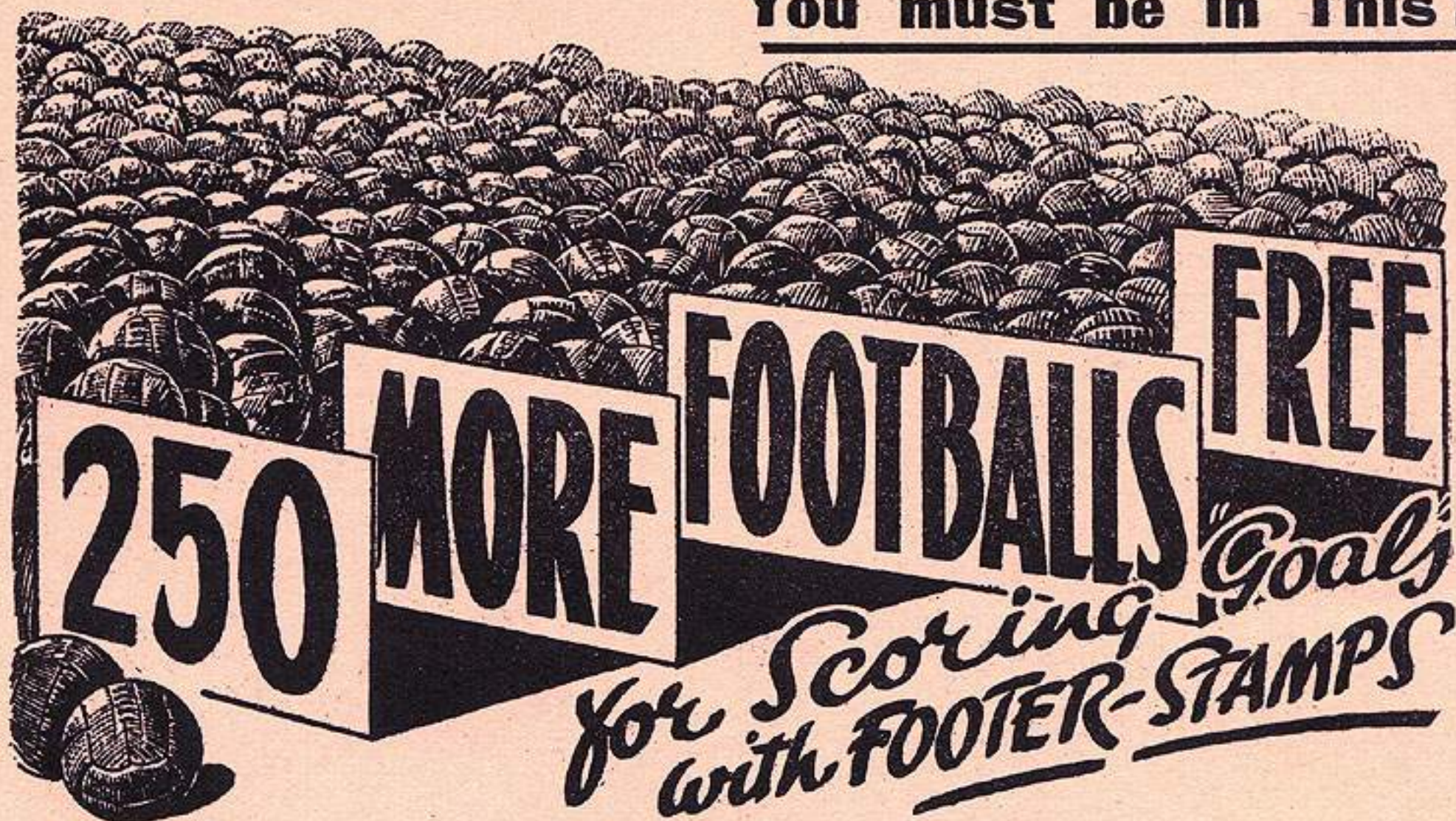


**CAUGHT  
IN THE ACT!**



# OUR TIP-TOP PRIZE OFFER . . . .

## You must be in This!



**250** is the huge number of winners we want for Super Footballs in our November "Footer-Stamps" competition. It's **FREE** to you . . . and up to **YOU** to seize this wonderful chance.

If you are already collecting "Footer-Stamps" and haven't so far won a ball, you should be making another effort now to be a winner. If you are *not* collecting yet, don't lose another minute—snap right into this month's competition!

It's a great idea! "Footer-Stamps" are appearing every week, and the object is simply to make up as many "goals" as you can with them. The stamps illustrate six different actions on the football field.

The six stamps are: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL**, and every complete set of the six actions you collect scores a "goal." (The "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal." You must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6, each time.)

There are ten stamps below, and you will find a complete "goal" among them. Then go all out to get as many more of these stamps as you can. Ask your friends for them, swap with them if you like, or even collect them together. The more you get, the more "goals" you'll score—and here's good news—

**FOOTER-STAMPS** making complete "goals" are also in other famous papers like **GEM** and **MODERN BOY**.

You can bump up your score with stamps from these papers.

The 250 Prize Footballs in the November prize-giving will go to the collectors scoring the most "goals" for the month.

No stamps to be sent in yet—just wait until we give you the word at the end of the month. So if you haven't won a football yet—keep busy with "Footer-Stamps."

**OVERSEAS READERS**—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes in cash are to be awarded for the best scores from readers outside the British Isles. There will be a special closing date for you, of course.

**RULES:** 250 Footballs will be awarded in the November contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—and all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated, or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout. (N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: *Gem, Modern Boy, Boy's Cinema, Sports Budget, Detective Weekly, Thriller, Wild West Weekly, Champion, and Triumph.*)

**TEN MORE**  
**"FOOTER-STAMPS"**  
**FOR YOUR PILE!**





One first-time shot from Gilbert Tracy's foot, and the best goalie's left standing. With such a wonder man in the team, Greyfriars considers the match against Highelife all over bar shouting. But they little know they have a traitor in the side!

# HE LET THE SIDE DOWN!

By FRANK RICHARDS



The junior in the study stood panting, with a white face. Outside the study, a crowd of fellows thumped, and shouted and buzzed. "Will you open this door, Tracy?" called out Harry Wharton. The new boy did not open the door—he knew what awaited him!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Caught!

"CHOCOLATE Box!" Mr. Quelch, the Remove master at Greyfriars, gave a sudden start.

He sat up in his armchair.

He wondered, for a moment, whether he was dreaming, as he heard those unexpected words.

The November evening had closed in. It was dark in the Remove master's study, save for a faint red glow from the fire, burning low in the grate.

Quelch realised that he had nodded off.

Quelch, who was a great walker, had been out for one of his long walks, after class. He had walked Prout, the master of the Fifth, almost off his portly legs. He had got in before dark, and had sat down to rest for a few minutes in the armchair in his study.

He was tired. Between fatigue and the warmth of the fire he had nodded off. That was how it came about that Mr. Quelch was sitting in his study in the dark—darkness having fallen while slumber's chain had bound him!

It was a voice that awakened him—uttering the words: "Chocolate Box!"

He sat up and blinked.

He realised that he was not, as he should have been, alone in his study! He had heard no one enter; whoever had come in, had come in very quietly. But someone was there, speaking!

Why anyone should enter his study, stand there in the dark, and utter the words "chocolate box" was utterly mysterious. For a moment or two Mr. Quelch was blankly amazed.

Then he discerned a clue to the mystery!

Dim, in the dusky gloom, but discernible, was a figure, standing at the telephone, receiver in hand.

Quelch understood. And he frowned portentously.

He realised now what had happened. Some Remove fellow, taking it for granted that he was still out, as the study was unlighted, had dodged in stealthily to use his telephone!

Such proceedings were, of course, strictly forbidden. A fellow might, on special occasions, by asking leave, use

## Super School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., the World-Famous Chums of GREYFRIARS.

that telephone. No fellow was supposed to use it without leave—though, as a matter of fact, fellows sometimes did! One fellow was doing it now!

"Yes, Chocolate Box!" repeated the voice.

The junior at the telephone was not ten feet from Quelch, but evidently in blissful ignorance of the fact that the Form-master was there, with two gimlet eyes fixed on him!

Mr. Quelch recognised the voice. It was that of Gilbert Tracy, the new boy in his Form. It was like the usual cheek of the "worst boy in the Form" to

borrow that telephone without leave asked or granted.

Still, Quelch's portentous frown relaxed. The young rascal was breaking a rule—and a strict rule. Nevertheless, there was no great harm in telephoning to some confectioner about a box of chocolates! If Gilbert Tracy had never done anything worse than that Mr. Quelch would have been much more satisfied with the latest addition to his Form!

Quelch decided to say nothing, and to let Tracy put through his call, and leave the study, unproved and unpunished! Which was really kind of Quelch, considering the trouble that Tracy had given him during the few weeks that he had been at Greyfriars School.

He heard a faint murmur from the instrument, as someone replied from the other end, but caught no words. Then Tracy spoke again.

"Six to one—what?"

Mr. Quelch gave another start.

Those words sounded more like a reference to some sporting transaction than an order to a confectioner!

Another murmur on the phone! Then Tracy's voice again:

"I'm going ten quids, Lodgey—ten quids on Chocolate Box, at Wapshot, next Wednesday! Got it clear?"

The frown returned to Mr. Quelch's brow—intensified.

He understood now.

"Chocolate Box" was not a box of chocolates! It was the name of a horse—a racehorse! Gilbert Tracy was not telephoning to a confectioner's at Court-

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field! He was telephoning to Bill Lodgey, the disreputable racing man at the Three Fishers!

For a long moment Mr. Quelch sat as if petrified, thunder gathering more darkly in his brow.

The nerve of it amazed him. Tracy was a reckless young rascal, the worst boy in the Remove, but that any young rascal should have the nerve to use his Form-master's telephone to call up a bookmaker about a bet was really amazing. That was what the cheery Gilbert was doing.

"If I'm on, all right!" went on Tracy. "Of course I can put up the cash. I'll see you later about that, Lodgey. But I want to know I'm on before the odds go short—they will when it gets out that Chocolate Box is a dark horse. I know what I'm about! O.K.!"

Mr. Quelch rose from his armchair.

His hand reached to the table, where he knew his cane lay!

His grasp closed almost convulsively on that cane!

Cane in hand, he stepped towards the dim figure at the telephone! Gilbert, his back to Mr. Quelch, was going on:

"O.K., then! I'll see you about—yarooooop!"

Swipe!

It was quite a sudden surprise to Gilbert!

Up to that moment he had not the faintest idea that anyone else was in the study—least of all his Form-master. The study was dark. Quelch, so far as he knew, had not come in!

But he became suddenly aware of it as that terrific swipe descended across his shoulders with all Quelch's beef in it.

He roared and bounded.

The receiver dropped from his hand, hanging at the end of its cord. Mr. Lodgey, at the Three Fishers, was probably surprised by his young sporting friend at the school cutting off so suddenly.

But Gilbert was not thinking now of Bill Lodgey, or Chocolate Box, or six to one! He had other things to think of—chiefly his Form-master's cane!

Swipe!

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Tracy.

Swipe!

"Oh crikey!"

"You young rascal!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You iniquitous young rascal! You disgraceful young reprobate! Upon my word! Stay!"

A fourth swipe barely missed, as Gilbert bounded for the door. Gilbert did not think of staying, as bidden! He was thinking of going—as fast as he could!

He reached the door, with a frantic bound! Quelch reached him as he grabbed at the door-handle!

With his left, Quelch turned on the switch at the door, flooding the study with light. With his right he wielded the cane!

Swipe!

It landed as the yelling Gilbert got the door open.

Swipe!

It landed again as Gilbert darted into the passage.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Pattering feet scuttled down the passage. Mr. Quelch put his head out of the doorway, strongly inclined to call the young rascal back and give him a few more! Still, Gilbert had had some of the very best, and his Form-master decided to let it go at that!

He thought that perhaps Gilbert had

had enough! And Gilbert, though not often in agreement with his Form-master at Greyfriars, fully agreed with Mr. Quelch in that, at least!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Great Expectations!

"SEEN old Tracy?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Who?" inquired the Famous Five of the Remove, with one voice.

"Old Tracy!" answered Bunter.

Which naturally surprised Harry Wharton & Co.

Tracy of the Remove was not, of course, old—no older than other fellows in the Form. Bunter was not alluding to his age. "Old," in this case, was a pally, affectionate expression, revealing the kind regard that William George Bunter had for Gilbert Tracy!

If that kind regard was sincere, it was very sudden. Few fellows in the Remove liked Tracy, if any—and a good many disliked him. Among the latter Billy Bunter was certainly numbered.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, whose study in the Remove passage was shared by the new junior, hardly spoke to him if they could help it. The other members of the famous Co.—Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh—never had anything to say to him. Lord Mauleverer, the most tolerant fellow in the Form, carefully avoided contact. Even Vernon-Smith, who most strenuously backed up Tracy's claims to play in the Remove football team, never had anything else to do with him. But Billy Bunter probably loathed him more than any other fellow in the Remove, and had been heard often to describe him variously as a swab, a cad, a worm, and a rotter.

So the change was surprising.

"Tracy aged suddenly?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Why is he 'old Tracy' all of a sudden?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh grinned, a dusky grin.

"Has the esteemed Tracy had a remittance from his absurd uncle at Oakwood Place?" he inquired.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob. "That's it, is it?"

And the Famous Five chuckled.

Tracy of the Remove had a rich uncle who was very kind and indulgent. It was true that that uncle could not stand Gilbert at home, which was why Gilbert was at Greyfriars. But it was known in the Remove that Tracy had only to drop a line to Oakwood Place if he wanted a remittance, and old Sir Giles always played up.

So it seemed easy, after all, to guess why Billy Bunter's deep loathing for the new junior had changed suddenly to pally affection. That startling change was accounted for if Tracy had had one of his many remittances from Oakwood Place!

"I say, you fellows, there's nothing to cackle about!" said the fat Owl of the Remove, blinking at the chuckling juniors through his big spectacles. "There's a letter for Tracy in the rack, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do stop cackling! It's got the Surrey postmark, and I know he's expecting a letter from his uncle. I'm going to tell the old chap."

"Do you mean the rotter?" grinned Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Or the swab?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Or the cad and worm?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" said Bunter. "Tracy ain't such a bad chap! He's rather a beast in some ways, but I never was a fellow to remember a grudge against a chap—"

"Not when he's got a remittance from home!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Sure it's a remittance?" asked Bob Cherry gravely. "Might be only a lot of good advice. You never know! I've known fellows to write home for cash, and get nothing back but a lecture on economy!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter. "Tracy always gets what he asks that soft old chump for. Not that I was thinking about that or anything of the kind, you know," he added hastily. "I'm simply going to tell the old fellow that the letter's here, as I know he's expecting it, and it never came this morning. I don't see why a fellow shouldn't be obliging. I heard him tell Skinner that he had written home for a tenner, and—"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Tenners at a time! If there's a tenner in that letter, you fellows, I rather agree with Bunter that Tracy ain't such a bad chap, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's all go and look for him and tell him there's a letter for him," suggested Bob. "Let's tell him how we like him—all of a sudden! A fellow who gets tenners from home can't be a cad and a swab and a worm! He's an old chap, a jolly good fellow, a dear old bean! Come to think of it, I always liked Tracy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better put him in the team for the Highcliffe match, after all!" went on Bob. "A chap who gets tenners—"

"Yah!" snorted Billy Bunter.

And the fat Owl rolled on to look for "old" Tracy—who had, as it were, grown suddenly old since Bunter had seen that letter in the rack—leaving the Famous Five chortling.

"I say, Smithy, seen old Tracy?" asked the fat Owl, as he came on the Bounder in the quad.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stared at him. "I've seen that swab Tracy, if that's what you mean!" he answered. "And if you weren't as blind as a blinking owl you'd see him, too, as he's standing there by the fountain under your silly nose, you blithering owl!"

"Beast!" said Bunter, no doubt by way of thanks for information received; and he rolled across to the junior who stood by the fountain in the quad.

Gilbert Tracy was talking to Skinner and Snoop, the only fellows in the Remove with whom he was on anything like friendly terms. They were birds of a feather in some ways, though Skinner and Snoop were very careful not to get mixed up in Tracy's "feud" with his Form-master.

"I don't mind telling you," Tracy was saying, as Bunter rolled up. "You can still get six to one on Chocolate Box for the one-thirty at Wapshot next Wednesday. He's going to win, and I'm making a packet on him."

"Sure of that?" asked Skinner, closing one eye at Snoop.

Skinner happened to be aware that Gilbert was in almost a stony state, owing to the delusive uncertainty of a horse that had been sure to win a few days ago.



"Quite!" answered Tracy. "He's a dark horse—kept dark on purpose. I've had it from a man who knows!"

"Ah, those men who know!" sighed Skinner. "What a lot of losers they're responsible for!"

"This is a cert!" snapped Tracy. "Ponsonby, at Highcliffe, is putting his shirt on him."

"Pon will find trouble with his beak if he turns up on Thursday without a shirt on!" said Skinner.

And Snoop giggled.

"I say, Tracy, old chap—" squeaked Bunter.

"Get out, you fat frog!"

"Oh, really, old fellow—"

"Buzz off, bluebottle!"

Billy Bunter breathed hard. This kind of greeting was neither grateful nor comforting to a fellow who had suddenly turned on cordial friendship.

Still, if Tracy's manners were bad, the tenner, no doubt, was good!

"I say, old chap, there's a letter for you in the rack," said Bunter. "It must have come this afternoon. I saw you looking for it in break."

"Oh, thanks!" said Tracy, more graciously.

Evidently he was glad to hear about the letter. He left Skinner and Snoop and walked away quickly towards the House.

Billy Bunter rolled after him.

Tracy was going, as Bunter had no doubt, to extract a ten-pound note from that letter from Oakwood Place, Surrey.

Bunter wanted to be in at the death, as it were. Having been disappointed about a postal order that he was expecting, Bunter was deeply and keenly interested in Tracy's tenner.

Ten pounds was a lot of money—very much more than a Remove junior usually had—and the fat Owl had a hope of picking up some of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

"It's from your uncle, old chap," said Bunter, as Gilbert stopped at the letter-rack. "I know his fist! I say—"

"Don't bother!"

Tracy took down the letter and slit the envelope. There was a very cheerful expression on his face.

He had had bad luck of late in his sporting speculations. That, of course, was going to be set right by his new venture.

A tenner on Chocolate Box, at six to one, meant sixty pounds—when Chocolate Box romped home ahead of the field. Tracy was already "on," in spite of Mr. Quelch's interruption of his telephone call a couple of days ago; but Bill Lodgey had to see the colour of his money before the bet was officially booked. Unless he put up the cash, he would be not "on," but "off."

But it was all serene now, and Tracy opened the letter with cheery confidence.

His Uncle Giles had turned him over to Quelch's tender mercies; he had refused to let him leave the school and return home; he had sent him back when he had taken the desperate step of running away; but he had never, so far, let him down in the matter of cash. This was all right.

Billy Bunter watched his cheerful face hopefully. Bunter certainly was not thinking of dead certs and dark horses at six to one. He was thinking of jam tarts and cream puffs at the tuckshop. The amount of tuck represented by ten quids was positively dazzling to Bunter.

Tracy drew out the letter and unfolded it. A change came over his face as he saw that there was no enclosure.

A simultaneous change came over Billy Bunter's

This did not look like a tenner.

Tracy read the letter—or, rather, skimmed it—hurriedly. The look on his face quite startled Bunter.

Disappointment and rage were depicted in Tracy's face. His eyes glinted, and he gritted his teeth!

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh!"

He crumpled the letter savagely in his hand.

"I—I say, old chap—" squeaked Bunter.

Gilbert Tracy did not heed him. He stood breathing hard, almost panting, with fury in his looks, the letter crumpled convulsively in his grasp.

Bunter grabbed his sleeve.

"I say, old fellow—"

Smack!

Tracy, thus forced to remember the fat Owl's existence, turned on him with a snarl, and smacked at the fattest head at Greyfriars.

"Wow!" roared Bunter as he caught that sudden and hefty smack, and he tottered, and sat down with a bump.

"Ow! Wow!"

Tracy, unheeding him further, strode away, the crumpled letter in his hand.

Billy Bunter sat and spluttered and blinked after him with a ferocious blink through his big spectacles.

"Ow! Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Cad! Swab! Worm! Wow!"

Evidently Gilbert was no longer "old Tracy," not an old chap at all!

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Nothing Doing!

"WELL make him!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Better leave it alone!" said Tom Redwing.

"You're an ass, Reddy!" grunted the Bounder. "I don't like that new man, Tracy, any more than you do, or any more than Wharton does. But Soccer's Soccer—and a man like that can't be left out of the eleven."

"That's for Wharton to decide—"

"We'll decide it for him. I tell you—"

Tap!

The door of Study No. 4 in the Remove opened and the Bounder broke off, as the fellow under discussion looked in.

Smithy did not give Gilbert Tracy a welcoming look. He was prepared to row with the captain of the Remove to any extent to get that wonderful footballer in the Remove team that was going over to Highcliffe on Wednesday.

But, as he had said, he did not like him—in fact, he barred him.

The Bounder was not perhaps a very particular fellow, but the cool unscrupulousness Gilbert had displayed, on a good many occasions since he had come to Greyfriars School, was too thick, even for Smithy! As a footballer, he admired and respected him, but outside Soccer he preferred to keep him at a distance.

"Want anything?" he asked pointedly, as Tracy looked in.

"I want to speak to you, Smithy!" said Gilbert, with more than his usual civility.

"About football?"

"No, something else."

"Nothing else to speak to me about!" said Smithy coolly.

"I'm backing you up all along the line, as far as

Soccer goes. If I were captain, instead of vice-captain, I'd play you at Highcliffe on Wednesday, and in every other big fixture this season. But I'd rather not speak to you about anything else."

Tom Redwing smiled faintly. Gilbert scowled. The new junior did not, however, go. He stepped into the study.

"I'm going to speak," he said. "I suppose you can give a fellow a few minutes of your valuable time, Vernon-Smith! It's about something that will interest you, if not your pal."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders and leaned back in his armchair.

"You can run on if you like," he said.

Redwing looked from one to the other and left the study without speaking.

He could guess the topic that was coming, and he had no desire to hear anything about the Wapshot races, and sure snips and dead certs.

Smithy was, however, a little interested. There was a blackguardly kink in Smithy, though it was not developed to the same extent as in Tracy. Soccer had more attractions for him, but he was ready to talk "gee-gees."

He was, too, rather cynically amused by the new fellow. Smithy "backed his fancy" sometimes, chiefly because he fancied himself as a "bad hat."

But Gilbert, who had been foolishly and recklessly indulged at home, and had hardly knew the meaning of discipline before he came to Greyfriars, was a genuine "bad hat," and all the Remove knew his shady ways. He had plenty of money—much more than was good for him—and Smithy, who had his own dealings with the sporting circle at the Three Fishers, knew where a great deal of it went. A fellow who fancied that he could spot winners amused the Bounder.

Tracy sat on the corner of the table and lighted a cigarette.

"I'm on to a good thing," he said abruptly.

"Wish you luck!" said Smithy satirically. "As good as Peep o' Day, that you dropped a fiver on last week?"

"Oh, don't talk rot! This is a good thing—a dark horse! Will you lend me a tenner for a few days?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith sat up and stared at him. Except Lord Mauleverer, Smithy was the only fellow in the Greyfriars Remove who ever possessed such a thing as a tenner. Probably he had one, possibly two, in his pocket-book at the moment. But he was hardly the fellow to lend one, especially to a fellow he did not like. He stared.

"Horn of plenty run dry?" he asked with a grin.

"Yes—that old blighter Quelch has butted in!" said Gilbert bitterly. "He caught me the other day, talking to Lodgey on his phone—"

"Oh, gad!"

"Look at that!" Gilbert took a crumpled letter from his pocket and threw it to the Bounder. "Read it, and you'll see!"

"I don't want to read your letters."

"Read it, I tell you."

Smithy gave another shrug and

(Continued on next page.)

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looked at the letter. It was written from Oakwood Place, Surrey, and ran:

"Dear Gilbert,—I have received your request to send you £10, and must tell you plainly that I cannot accede to it. I have heard from Mr. Quelch that you have become concerned in racing transactions at your school, similar to those which caused me so much distress and alarm when you were at home, and he has earnestly requested me to send you nothing beyond your allowance, and at the same time, to reduce your allowance to 2s. 6d. per. week.

"As Mr. Quelch has so kindly taken charge of you, and incurred responsibility on your account, I am, of course, bound to observe his wishes, and place faith in his judgment.

"I urge you, my dear boy, most earnestly, to give up such bad and vicious ways, and to endeavour to gain your Form-master's good opinion.

"Your affectionate uncle,  
"GILES OAKWOOD."

"Hard cheese!" grinned the Bounder. "Rather a facer, what? You were an ass to let Quelch get on to your little games, Tracy."

"Hang Quelch!" said Gilbert between his teeth.

"Hang him as high as Haman, if he'll let you!" said Vernon-Smith. "Nunky seems to have got his back up, what?"

"It will blow over," growled Gilbert. "The old ass seems like wax in Quelch's hands. But it will blow over. Only, for the moment, you see how I'm fixed! I've told Lodgey I'm on Chocolate Box for a tenner, and that old chump has let me down—for the very first time! Lodgey won't take the bet on the nod—I want a tenner."

The Bounder laughed.

"You've come to the wrong study for it!" he remarked.

"Oh, don't be a goat!" said Tracy. "That old goat will be shelling out as usual in a week or two—you run no risk. Anyhow, I've got things I can sell to raise as much, or more. But I want to cut across and see Lodgey this afternoon. Will you lend me the tenner?"

"No, I won't," answered the Bounder coolly, "and I think it's like your dashed cheek to ask me, too!"

Gilbert gave him a black look. Possibly, from the Bounder's emphatic support of his football claims, he had mistaken Smithy's feelings towards him, and perhaps he had counted on Smithy's sympathy as a bird of the same feather. But the Bounder's reply left no room for misunderstanding.

"Do you think I shouldn't square?" he sneered.

"I'm not at all sure about it," answered Vernon-Smith. "That letter sounds to me as if your uncle has made up his mind. He's landed you on Quelch, and he can't let Quelch down. The old boy means business."

"I got six to one on Chocolate Box, anyhow."

"Hem!"

"Do you think Lodgey won't pay? You've had plenty of dealings with him, as I know jolly well."

"Lodgey will pay if you win—if!" grinned Smithy. "It pays him to deal square! But if you ever collect sixty pounds off Bill Lodgey, I'd like to be there to see you do it."

Gilbert slipped off the table.

"Keep your putrid money!" he said, with a sneer. "I was a fool to ask you—I can manage without you!" He turned to the door. But he turned back. "Look here, Smithy, you can see that I'm in a hole! Let me have

the tenner, and I'll leave my wrist-watch with you—it's worth a good deal more!"

"I'm not a pawnbroker!" answered Vernon-Smith.

Gilbert's bitter temper broke out, as he realised that there was nothing doing, and that he had asked favours with no result.

"Aren't you?" he jeered. "I've heard that your father is, and a moneylender, too! Doesn't it run in the family?"

The son and heir of Samuel Vernon-Smith, millionaire financier, sat for a moment looking at Tracy. Then he leaped up.

He did not answer in words. He came at Tracy with gleaming eyes and clenched fists. Up to that moment he had been coolly indifferent, now his indifference dropped from him like a cloak.

Before Tracy knew what was happening, the Bounder's knuckles were landing on his nose, and he staggered into the doorway.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You cheeky rotter—ow!"

He came back at Vernon-Smith, hitting out. The Bounder met him with left and right. His left jolted on Gilbert's chin, and Gilbert staggered—his right crashed full on Gilbert's nose, and the new junior went headlong out of the study into the passage.

He crashed there on his back. The Bounder gave him a look as he sprawled and slammed the study door. Had it opened again, he was ready to give Gilbert some more of the same—as much more as was wanted! But Gilbert, apparently, had had all he wanted; the study door did not reopen!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### No I

**H**ARRY WHARTON sat in his study, after class on Monday, with a football list on the table in front of him and a rather grim expression on his face.

In a row on the box-seat under the window sat the Co.—all of them with rather serious faces. By the fireplace lounged Gilbert Tracy.

From the Remove passage outside came the murmur of voices and the sound of footsteps.

Trouble was brewing in the Remove. Harry Wharton was quite aware of it. His friends were aware of it, and it worried them all the more because, in the matter in dispute, they could not give their leader wholehearted support. Tracy was aware of it, and to judge by the lurking grin on his face, rather amused by it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Here they come!"

It was quite a party of Removites that arrived in the doorway. They were led by Herbert Vernon-Smith. Following him came Squiff, the Remove goalkeeper, Tom Brown, Peter Todd, Mark Linley, Ogilvy, Russell, Penfold, Hazeldene, and several other fellows.

They were all footballers, either in the Remove eleven, or reserves for the same; almost all of them friends of the captain of the Form.

This, however, was evidently not wholly a friendly visit.

"Oh, you're here!" said Smithy, as he stepped in.

"Adsum!" said Harry, as if he were answering to his name at calling-over.

Some of the juniors grinned.

"I dare say you know why we've come," said Vernon-Smith.

"As you've been jawing it up and

down the Remove, and I'm not deaf, I've managed to guess!" answered Wharton.

"This isn't a joke, Wharton!" said Peter Todd. "We want to know whether that new man, Tracy, is going to play at Highcliffe or not?"

"Not!" said the captain of the Remove tersely.

"Look here!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"Look here, Wharton!" hooted Tom Brown.

"Leave it to Smithy!" said Hazel.

"Smithy's spokesman. Go it, Smithy!"

"We want this plain, Wharton!" said the Bounder. "You're skipper—but you can take it from me that you won't stay skipper long if you stick to keeping the best footballer at Greyfriars out of the team!"

"Hear, hear!"

Gilbert looked curiously at the Bounder. This was the fellow who had punched him headlong out of his study! Tracy's feelings towards Smithy were bitter enough, and he certainly would not have backed up a fellow he disliked in Soccer or anything else. But Smithy was a sportsman in a sense far from understood by Gilbert Tracy.

"You bar the fellow!" went on Vernon-Smith. "That's all very well. I bar him, too, if you come to that! Most fellows here bar him. That's got nothing to do with football! Is he, or is he not, the best footballer in the Lower School here?"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Quite!" he agreed. "Best of the bunch, so far as Soccer goes! You're a good man, Smithy, but you're not a patch on him!"

The Co. in the window-seat grinned. Wharton's full and frank acknowledgment of Tracy's super quality as a footballer did not seem wholly pleasing to Smithy the way he put it.

"Then it's not jealousy of his football form that makes you bar him from the eleven?" sneered the Bounder.

"You know it's not," answered Harry coolly. "That sort of rot may be good enough for Skinner and Snoop, but it cuts no ice with you, Smithy!"

"Put him in, then!" snapped the Bounder. "I bar him—like you do! I chucked him out of my study the other day for checking my pater! I'd be glad to see him get away with his game of worrying old Quelch till he lets him go home! But all that makes no difference. He ought to play for the Form, and you know it!"

"I don't!"

"Every man here is keen to see him scoring goals at Highcliffe on Wednesday," said Smithy. "Your own pals are against you in this! Ask them, and they'll tell you so!"

"No need to ask them—I know."

"You're in a minority of one, Wharton!" said Peter Todd.

"What some political johnny calls splendid isolation—what?" said the captain of the Form, unmoved.

"Are you sticking out against the whole Form?" asked Hazel.

"Yes!"

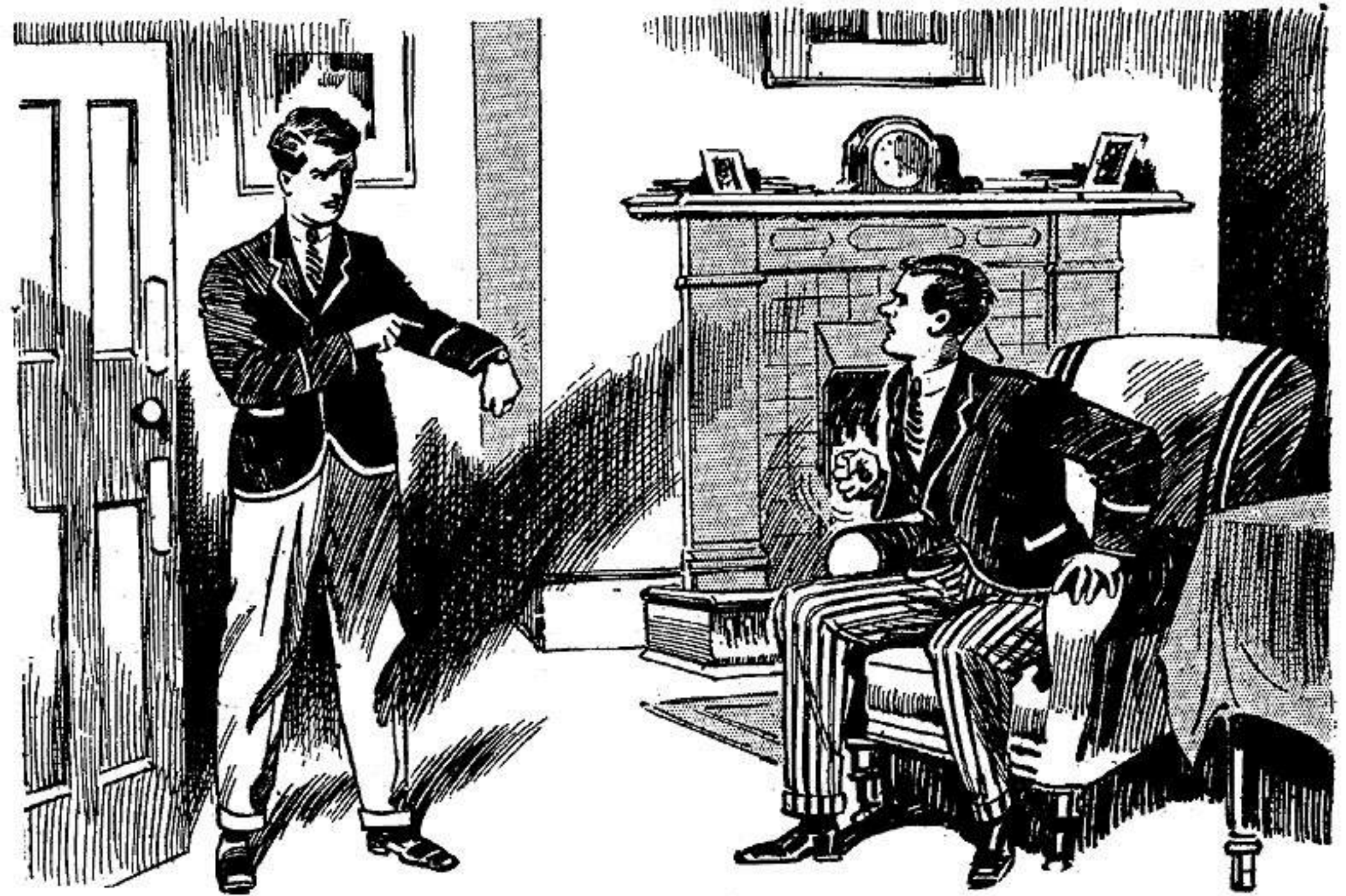
There was a murmur from the deputation, echoed by a deeper murmur from a crowd of fellows behind them in the passage.

Herbert Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

"We want Tracy in the team, Wharton," he said quietly. "Not a man here likes him any more than you do; but we want the best junior footballer at Greyfriars to play for the Remove."

"If you all say the same, you can have him!" answered Wharton coolly. "You've only got to say the word, and I resign the captaincy on the spot. So





"Lend me a tenner," said Tracy. "I'll leave my wrist-watch with you—it's worth a good deal more." "I'm not a pawnbroker!" answered Vernon-Smith. "Aren't you?" jeered Tracy. "I've heard that your father is, and a money-lender, too! Doesn't it run in the family?"

long as I'm captain, that tricky, treacherous cad doesn't play for the Remove. But I'm not captain of the Remove by divine right—you can turn me out any time you like, if you agree about it! I shan't grouse!"

Vernon-Smith glanced round.

"Take him at his word, you fellows," he said. "I'm for turning him out, and getting a new skipper!"

"Go it, if you like!" said Harry Wharton. "You won't have far to look for a new skipper—I'm sure Smithy's ready to offer!"

Vernon-Smith gave him a scowl.

"What do you fellows say?" he demanded.

"Oh, rot!" said Squiff. "Look here, Wharton, we haven't come here to ask you to step down—we've come to ask you to put personal feelings aside and play Tracy in the team."

"Personal feelings don't count in Soccer," answered Harry. "I'd jump at playing a footballer of Tracy's quality if I could trust him. I can't—and don't! He's a tricky double-dealer and a foul player! I'd rather chuck Soccer than play in the same team with him!"

"Thanks!" sneered Tracy from the fireplace.

Harry Wharton glanced round at him.

"You're welcome to hear my opinion of you as you choose to be present," he said. "It may do you good to hear it!"

"Well, you know what we're here for!" grunted the Bounder. "What's your answer?"

"No!" said Harry.

"You really mean that?"

"Certainly!"

"Look here, Wharton!" said several voices.

"I've said no, and I mean no!" said the captain of the Remove. "You can chuck me any time you like. If I'm making a mistake, the sooner I'm chucked, the better! So long as I'm skipper, Tracy doesn't play for the Remove!"

The Bounder glanced round again. He, at least, was prepared to take Wharton at his word. But he could see that the other fellows were not disposed to back him up in extreme measures.

With a knitted brow, he tramped out of the study. The rest of the deputation exchanging irritated looks followed him. Smithy had told Redwing that they would "make" Wharton yield the point; but the "making" seemed a difficult proposition.

"If we get licked at Highcliffe this week—" said Johnny Bull slowly.

Wharton glanced at the Co.

"If we get licked, the fellows will turn me out," he said. "They will all fancy that we should have won hands down with Tracy to score goals for us!"

"So you would!" remarked Tracy.

Wharton did not answer him. He fixed his attention on the football list again. The fixture at Highcliffe was one of the hardest games that the Remove had to play, and every name in that list was carefully considered. But the name of G. Tracy was not there—and was not going to be there.

Tracy, shrugging his shoulders, loafed out of the study. He was out of the Highcliffe match—out of Remove football altogether—but it was a satisfaction to him, at least, to see the whole crowd set against their captain. Gilbert was far from liked in the Remove, but it was certain that just then he was not nearly so unpopular as the captain of the Form.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Presence Of Mind!

**B**ILLY BUNTER gave a sudden jump. Then he gurgled spasmodically.

That sudden, startled jump, when his capacious mouth was full of cake, had a rather disastrous result.

A portion of the cake went down the wrong way!

Bunter choked and gurgled and gasped and spluttered. And Harry Wharton, coming into his study, had a view of the fattest junior at Greyfriars School—choking, gurgling, gasping, and spluttering.

"Urrghh!" gurgled Bunter. "Ooogh! Wurrghh!"

The captain of the Remove stared at him.

"What are you doing here, you fat ass?" he inquired.

"Gurrghh!" was the lucid reply.

"What the dickens—"

"Whoooooogh!"

Bunter gurgled wildly and spluttered for breath. It was the last morsel of a large cake of which he had been disposing when Wharton came in.

It was fearfully annoying to Bunter. He had not expected Wharton.

It was not yet dark, and many of the fellows were out of the House. Harry Wharton had been among them—as Bunter had noted. That was why Bunter was in Study No. 1.

The fact that there was a cake in the study cupboard was known to Billy Bunter. His fat little nose had a wonderful scent for such things. He had calculated that he had ample time to scoff that cake before the proprietor thereof came in to tea.

His calculation was almost correct, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,604.



but not quite. He had scoffed the cake. He was dealing with the final remnant when Wharton came in. Wharton had, in fact, come in for that cake, which was to be conveyed to Study No. 13, where the Co. were to tea with Bob Cherry. He was too late for the cake, but not too late for Bunter!

"You fat brigand!" roared the captain of the Remove, as he discerned what had happened.

There was a sea of crumbs on Bunter's fat waistcoat. Relics of cake were plastered round his large mouth. It was only too clear why the fat Owl was choking and spluttering.

"Gurrgh! Urrgh! You beast, making a fellow jump!" gasped Bunter. "Wurrgh! I'm chok-chok-choking! Gurrgh!"

"You've scoffed that cake!"

"Urrgh! What cake?" gurgled Bunter. "If you think I've come here to—gurrgh!—to scoff your cake, you're jolly well—wurrgh!—mistaken—I mean mistaken! Who's scoffed your cake, you beast? Yurrgh!"

"You fat, fozzling, pilfering porker!" said the captain of the Remove, in measured tones. "Have you scoffed the lot? You pernicious porpoise, it was a three-pound cake, and you—"

"Gurrgh! I haven't!" gasped Bunter. "Can't a fellow step into a fellow's study without being supposed to—ooooogh!—to scoff a fellow's tuck? I haven't touched your mouldy cake!"

Harry Wharton turned to the cupboard and took a cricket stump therefrom.

That cake—a very handsome and attractive cake, had arrived from home, specially made by his Aunt Amy at Wharton Lodge. It had been intended to grace the tea-table in Study No. 13—quite the piece-de-resistance on the festive board. Now, evidently, it was gone. Fortunately Bunter was not gone, and Bunter was not going till he had paid the just penalty.

"I—I say, you keep off, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, I—I never touched your cake! I never knew there was a cake in the cupboard at all. Think I was listening when you told Nugent?"

Wharton gripped the cricket stump with a businesslike grip. Billy Bunter edged round the study-table, watching him with deep alarm through his big spectacles.

After the feast came the reckoning. Bunter had enjoyed the feast, but he realised very clearly that he was not going to enjoy the reckoning.

"I—I say, it—it wasn't your cake, old chap!" stammered Bunter, with a longing blink at the door. "I've not touched your cake. There wasn't a cake in the cupboard when I looked, and—and I left it there, all right—honest Injun! Keep off, you beast!"

"I'll give you such a whopping that you'll be tired of grub-raiding in the studies for the rest of the term," said Harry Wharton, in concentrated tones.

"I say, I—I haven't—I never—I haven't touched the cake!" yelled Bunter.

"You fat villain, you're smothered with the crumbs of it!"

"That—that was another cake!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is, I—I had a cake from Bunter Court—"

"Come round that table!"

"Shan't! I—I mean, look here, old chap, don't be a shirty beast! I tell you it was my cake. I—I brought it here to eat, because—because Bolsover major was going to grab it!"

"Gammon!"

"Look in the cupboard!" hooted Bunter. "You'll find your cake there all right, you suspicious beast!"

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Harry Wharton paused. He had no doubt that the fat Owl intended to scuttle out of the study while he looked in the cupboard. On the other hand, it was barely possible that the statement was true. And as Billy Bunter, in his flight, was likely to be about as rapid as a tired tortoise, it really did not matter if he got a start. The cricket stump would soon be behind him.

"Well, I'll look!" said Harry.

He crossed to the study cupboard.

Bunter shot to the door.

As Wharton opened the cupboard, Bunter jumped into the passage.

But there he stopped.

Flight was his first thought. But the fat Owl realised that flight would not save him if Wharton rushed in pursuit—as undoubtedly he would be doing in a few seconds.

Bunter was not usually quick on the uptake, or rapid in making decisions. His fat brain generally worked slowly when it worked at all. But if anything could spur on his fat intellect to quick motion it was the prospect of a whopping from a cricket stump.

Instead of scudding up or down the passage, Bunter grabbed the key from inside the lock.

He jammed it into the outside.

He slammed the door.

Inside the study was a rapid patter of feet as Wharton, having discovered that the cake was gone, crossed to the door.

Click!

Just in time Bunter turned the key.

The next moment the door-handle was grasped within and dragged; but the captain of the Remove was a second too late.

There was a roar of wrath from within Study No. 1.

"My hat! Have you locked the door, you freak? Unlock it at once, you blithering bloater!"

"Ha, he, he!" gasped Bunter.

"Do you hear, you footling frog?" roared Wharton.

"Beast!"

"I'll whop you!"

"Yah!"

Bunter jerked the key out of the lock. He was not going to leave it there for some other fellows to turn, and let the captain of the Remove loose on the trail of vengeance. It was wiser to give him time to cool down.

Whether he was likely or not to cool down while locked in his study was perhaps doubtful. Anyhow, Bunter was out of reach of the cricket stump.

"Bunter!" roared Wharton. "You podgy piffler, let me out!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter slipped the key into his pocket, and rolled away to the stairs.

Harry Wharton was left hammering on the inside of his study door, and in a few minutes six or seven Remove fellows were gathering round that door, chuckling—apparently quite amused by the peculiar situation.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### A Reckless Trick!

**P**LOP!

Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, tottered.

His mortar-board flew from his head. He gasped with surprise and wrath. It was probably the first time in the history of Greyfriars School that a master's mortar-board had been knocked off his head by a whizzing chunk of turf!

The November dusk was thickening in the Greyfriars quad. The bell had run for lock-up, and most of the fellows had gone in, only a few belated figures

here and there, cutting through the misty gloom towards the House.

Mr. Quelch was walking on the Beaks' Grind—the path under Masters' windows. He was about to walk along to the door to go in when that turf whizzed from the shadows, and his mortar-board went.

It landed several yards away.

Mr. Quelch jumped after it, grabbed it, and glared round for the hurler of the turf. He spotted a running figure—a mere shadow in the November mist—and rushed after it.

Some junior—he could see that much—though recognition was impossible in the misty dusk and with the young rascal's back turned as he ran.

The junior who had had the amazing temerity to knock Quelch's mortar-board off was booked for a bad time if captured and identified. Quelch's long legs fairly flashed as he whisked in pursuit.

The fugitive shadow ran for the old elms, and fast on his track flew the Remove master, with hand outstretched to grip.

As he reached the trees the running junior stumbled and fell, and Quelch fancied that he had him.

But the figure was up again in a twinkling and running for cover. His cap had fallen off as he fell, but he did not stop for it. He tore into the black shadow of the old elms and vanished.

Mr. Quelch came to a breathless halt.

There was little hope of running down the young rascal, dodging among the shadowy trees. But Quelch had seen that he escaped hatless. He glared round for the headgear he had dropped.

A minute more and he clutched it up.

There was a grim satisfaction in the face of Henry Samuel Quelch as he clutched up that Greyfriars cap.

Every hat and cap at Greyfriars had the owner's name in it. By losing his cap the young rascal had given himself away as completely as if he had fallen personally into the Remove master's hands. It was only necessary to look into his cap to identify him.

It was too dark in the quad to read the name. Mr. Quelch, breathing deep wrath, walked back to the House and entered. In the lighted doorway he looked into the cap.

Then he gave an almost convulsive start.

He would not have been in the least surprised to see the name of "G. Tracy" in that cap. He would not have been surprised to see "H. Vernon-Smith" or "H. Skinner," or "S. J. Snoop." Neither would "P. Bolsover" or "W. Wibley" have astonished him.

But the name he read was none of these. The name was "H. Wharton."

It was the name of his head boy—his trusted head boy—the very last fellow in the Remove whom Mr. Quelch would have suspected of such a reckless and disrespectful trick.

For a long moment he stared at that name in astonishment. But astonishment soon gave place to intensified wrath.

Wharton—it was Wharton who had done this! Never for a moment would he have suspected Wharton. True on a recent occasion Wharton had been caned in the Form-room hastily, and—as it had turned out—hardly justly! But Quelch had never supposed that his head boy would nurse a grudge for that rather unfortunate incident. Further back, Quelch remembered, Wharton had been given a heavy imposition over a row with Tracy, and he had since wondered rather uncomfortably whether Wharton had really been to blame in that episode, as he had believed at the time.



But never for a moment had he dreamed that the boy harboured revengeful thoughts! It was not like him—at least, Quelch had felt sure hitherto that it was not like him. Now he had to revise that opinion.

Grimmer and grimmer grew his brow. A good many fellows glanced at him as he stood there with a cap in his hand and thunder in his brow.

He glanced round and called to Wingate of the Sixth, who was at hand.

"Wingate, will you please find Wharton of my Form and send him to my study?"

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch rustled away to his study. He had no doubt that the junior who had hurled the turf was in the House by that time; he had had time to cut in while Quelch was rooting after the dropped cap. All the fellows were in now and the doors were shut.

The Remove master switched on the light in his study. He selected a cane and laid it on the table in readiness. Then he waited for Wharton to arrive; and as the minutes passed, and he still had to wait, his wrath improved, like wine, with keeping!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Vials Of Wrath!

"B OTHER you, let me out!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "You cackling fatheads——"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites.

Quite a crowd had gathered outside Study No. 1. From inside came thumps on the door, alternating with excited shouts. Most of the fellows were laughing, but the fellow locked in the study did not seem amused.

"Where's the key?" called out Bob Cherry.

"That fat scoundrel Bunter's got it!"

"Where's Bunter?"

"How should I know, fathead?"

"Puzzle—find Bunter!" chuckled Skinner.

"Anybody seen Bunter?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth did the fat chump lock you in for?" asked Frank Nugent.

"He's scoffed the cake, and I had a cricket stump for him——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you get that dashed door

open?" roared the captain of the Remove, in tones of intense exasperation. "I've been locked in here for more than a quarter of an hour, you sniggering chumps!"

"Bunter doesn't seem to be on view," chortled Vernon-Smith.

"Find him, idiot!"

"Where's Bunter?" roared Bob.

"The wherefulness is terrific."

"Is he in your study, Toddy?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No; I've looked!" grinned Peter.

"He seems to have disappeared. He will turn up at calling-over, Wharton."

"Think I'm going to stick here till calling-over?" roared Wharton.

"I'll burst that fat frog all over the Remove when I get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't you get another key?" yelled Wharton.

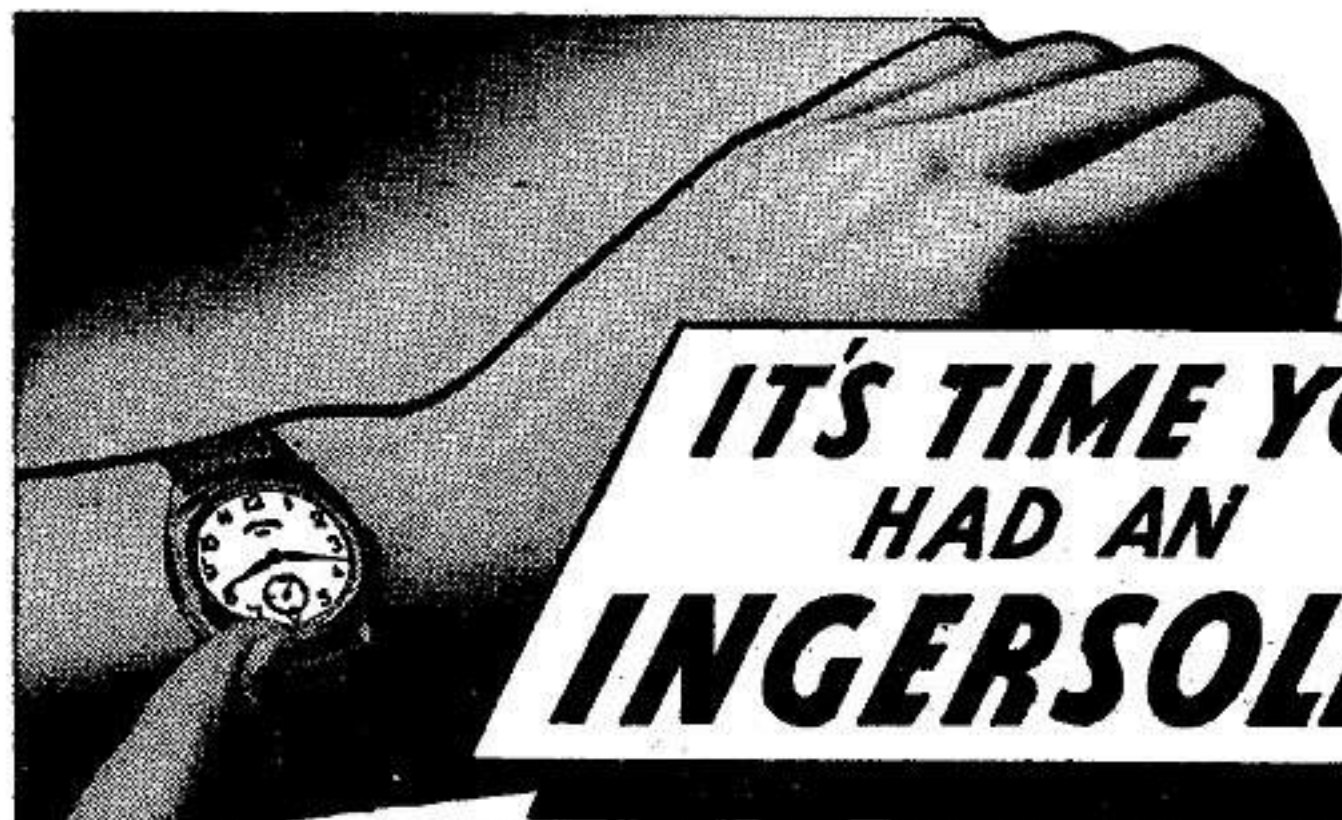
"Ask that worm Fishy; he's got a bunch of old keys."

"Oh, good egg!" said Bob Cherry.

"Keep smiling, old man; I'll go and look for Fishy and borrow his bunch of keys."

"Buck up then, fathead!"

(Continued on next page.)



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Wharton's temper seemed to be suffering from his imprisonment.

Bob Cherry, grinning, tramped up the passage to Study No. 14, at the other end, to borrow Fisher T. Fish's bunch of keys. The rest of the juniors remained outside Study No. 1, laughing. Everybody but Harry Wharton seemed to find Billy Bunter's antics entertaining.

"What the dickens is this row?" asked Wingate of the Sixth, coming across the Remove landing and staring at the chuckling mob in the passage.

"Chap locked in his study, Wingate," answered Vernon-Smith. "Only a lark."

"Hasn't that silly ass got a key yet?" came an angry howl from Study No. 1.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" roared Wharton.

"Is that Wharton?" called out the Greyfriars captain. "Your Form-master wants you in his study, Wharton, at once."

"Does he? I can't get out through the keyhole, Wingate! A silly chump has locked me in and hiked off with the key!"

"Well, look here, Quelch wants you, and he didn't look in a good temper," said Wingate. "Some of you kids had better get a key from somewhere."

"Here comes Bob!" said Nugent. "Buck up, Bob; Wharton's wanted by the beak."

Bob Cherry came hurrying down the passage with a large bunch of old keys jingling in his hand. There had been a little delay in Study No. 14. Fisher T. Fish required the moderate sum of threepence for the loan of that bunch of keys! Bob had rather wasted time in explaining to Fishy that he was a mean worm and a cringing toad and a mouldy Shylock.

However, he was back at last, and he tried key after key from the jingling bunch on the door of Study No. 1, Wingate waiting impatiently the while. A prefect's time was too valuable to be wasted by larks in the junior studies! However, there was no help for it, and the Greyfriars captain had to wait till

Bob at last found a key that would fit, and the study door was unlocked.

Harry Wharton came out at last, with a flushed and wrathful face. He stared round at the grinning crowd.

"Where's Bunter?" he demanded.

"Bunter non est!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind Bunter now," said Wingate. "Your beak's waiting for you, Wharton. Come along, and don't waste any more time."

Harry Wharton would have preferred to look for Bunter—he was extremely keen and anxious to find the fat Owl of the Remove. But Bunter had to wait, in the circumstances, and he followed Wingate down the stairs.

Why Quelch wanted him he had not the faintest idea—though he supposed that it was something to do with his duties as head boy. Certainly, he did not expect to find his Form-master in a state of deep and hostile wrath.

Wingate tapped at the door of the Remove master's study.

"Wharton is here, sir!"

"Thank you, Wingate!"

The captain of the Remove went in, and Wingate—after a rather curious glance at Mr. Quelch's grim, frowning face, departed. He felt rather sorry for the junior he had left with a beak looking like that!

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on Wharton's surprised face, as the door closed.

"You have kept me waiting, Wharton!" he snapped.

"I'm sorry, sir; but—"

"No doubt you were not anxious to see your Form-master, after what has occurred!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "No doubt you guessed that I might be acquainted with the facts."

"The—the facts!" said Harry blankly. "I don't know what you mean, sir! Have I done anything?"

Mr. Quelch's lip curled.

"Then you were not aware that I knew," he said contemptuously. "It did not occur to you that I found your cap—"

"My c-c-cap?" stuttered Wharton.

He could see that something was up! But certainly he could never have guessed that it had any reference to an article of personal attire.

"Is it possible," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "that you were not aware that you dropped your cap in the quadrangle, Wharton?"

"I—I don't remember doing so, sir!" gasped Harry.

"Possibly—possibly! Nevertheless, it is a fact that you did, and that I picked it up!" said Mr. Quelch, in the same grim tone.

Wharton could only stare at him.

To Mr. Quelch it appeared possible that, in the breathless haste of that flight, after knocking off his mortar-board, the junior might not have noticed the loss of his cap. To Wharton it seemed utterly bewildering that a Form-master should take note of so trifling an occurrence as a fellow dropping his cap!

"There is the cap," said Mr. Quelch, pointing to it lying on his study table. "That is your cap, Wharton?"

Harry looked at it. Greyfriars caps, of course, were alike; but he saw his name in it, which settled the matter.

"Yes, sir, that is mine," he said.

"I picked it up, Wharton, where you dropped it."

"I don't quite understand, sir. I don't recollect having dropped my cap out of the House at all. But even if I did, I don't see—"

"That will do, Wharton! You dropped your cap when you ran—"

"When I—I ran—"

"After flinging a turf at your Form-master's head!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Eh?"

"But for that, I should certainly never have identified you!" said the Remove master. "I could not recognise you in the dusk, and but for your stumble, when you ran under the elms, I should never have known that it was you! I will not tell you, Wharton, how shocked, how pained—"

"But—but—but I—I never—"

stammered Harry. "It is possible," went on Mr. Quelch, in a very quiet tone, "that I have on one or two occasions this term dealt with you with undue harshness, owing to the unscrupulous double-dealing of another boy. But that you should have harboured revengeful feelings comes as a very painful shock to me."

Wharton flushed crimson.

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" he exclaimed hotly. "I was caned for nothing; but I could see afterwards that you knew it was a mistake, and I never gave it another thought. As for playing such a rotten silly trick as you've described, I should never have dreamed of it. I—"

Mr. Quelch looked at him grimly.

"Say no more, Wharton!" he interrupted. "You only shock and pain me the more by these prevarications!"

"Prevarications!" Wharton's face fairly flamed. "You've no right to say anything of the kind!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You are making a mistake—and not the first, either!" exclaimed Harry, passionately. "You caned me on a mistake last week—now you're making another."

"Is that the way to speak to your Form-master, Wharton?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"It's the truth, anyhow, and you ought to know that it's the truth!" exclaimed Harry, his eyes flashing.

"Silence! It was my intention," said Mr. Quelch, "to cane you, Wharton, and give you detention for four half-holidays, for what you have done. But it is certainly true that you were caned under a misapprehension the week before last, and for that reason I shall not cane you now. I shall give you the detentions—both half-holidays this week, and both next. Now you may go—and I can only hope that, on reflection, you will be sorry that you have lost my good opinion."

"I've done nothing—"

"Leave my study!"

Harry Wharton left the study—and very nearly banged the door after him. However, he stopped short of that. He shut the door and tramped away down the passage, his brows knitted and his eyes gleaming. Seldom, or never, had he felt so savagely resentful. Like the prophet of old, he was angry, and he considered that he did well to be angry.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### A Row in The Remove!

"I SAY, you fellows—"  
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's Bunter!"  
 "You fat ass!"  
 "Ware Wharton!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I—I say, you fellows, is—is—is he waxy?" asked Billy Bunter anxiously.  
 "I say, I—I was downstairs, you know,

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and I saw him come down with Wingate, so I knew he'd got out! Is—is—is he shirty?"

"Just a few!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The fewfulness is terrific!"

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them when Wharton comes up!" chuckled Skinner.

"His Highness is in a royal bait."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked anxiously round at the grinning faces in the Remove passage. If he had hoped that Wharton had cooled down while he was locked in the study, it seemed that the hope was unfounded. Really, it was rather a lot to hope for.

"I say, you fellows, it was only a lark, you know," squeaked the fat junior. "I never had the cake! You see, he fancied I'd had his cake—you fellows know that I wouldn't snoop a fellow's cake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I—I say, think he's shirty?" appealed Bunter. "If—if he is, I—I'd better keep out of the way. I—I don't want to knock the fellow down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites, quite taken by storm by the idea of the fat Owl knocking down the captain of the Remove.

"Blessed if I see anything funny to cackle at! I say—"

"Ain't he too funny to live?" gurgled Peter Todd. "Let's all stand round and see him knock Wharton down!"

"Oh, let's!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gilbert Tracy came up the Remove staircase. There was a lurking grin on the face of the new fellow. He glanced at the hilarious crowd in the passage.

"Anything up with Wharton?" he asked. "I've just passed him downstairs, and he looked as if he was going to bite somebody."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I say, Tracy, is—is he coming up?"

"Yes, he's coming up now."

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter shot up the passage to his study—No. 7—and shot in, followed by a yell of laughter.

He vanished, but the next instant his fat face reappeared, blinking round the door.

"I say, you fellows, don't mention to Wharton that I'm here, will you? If—if he asks about me, tell him I've gone to Quelch, will you?"

"He's likely to believe that, when he's just gone to Quelch himself!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Oh! Has he? Tell him I'm gone to the Head, then!" gasped Bunter.

"Or—or tell him I've been taken suddenly ill, and—gone into sanny! Tell him I'm awfully ill—pneumonia or something—"

"Shall we tell him you're dead and gone to your own funeral?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out—here he comes!"

"Cut under the table, Bunter!"

"Get up the chimney, old fat man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of Study No. 7 slammed. Bunter disappeared again. And a crowd of laughing fellows turned to look at Harry Wharton as he came tramping into the Remove passage.

But the look on his face caused some of the laughing faces to become serious.

Tracy gave him a curious glance, and went into Study No. 1 and shut the door. The Bounder, glancing at Wharton, shrugged his shoulders. Lord Mauleverer raised his eyebrows. Other

fellows stared. What had happened was annoying enough to any fellow; but it certainly did not call for the black and bitter anger that was only too visible in Wharton's face. So far, none knew that anything had happened, except Billy Bunter's fatuous trick at the study door.

"My dear chap!" exclaimed Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "What—"

"Bunter's only a blithering owl, old chap!" said Frank Nugent. "No need to go off at the deep end—"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Wharton. "Do you think I'm bothering about that fat fool!"

"Oh! Then what—"

"Not a row with Quelch?" asked Johnny Bull. "He didn't want you for a row, did he?"

"Yes!"

"Oh!"

"Dear me!" said Skinner. "What has our model head boy been doing now? Has the eagle eye of our beak detected a fault in that faultless character?"

There was a snigger from Snoop. Some of the other fellows grinned. But Wharton gave no heed to Skinner.

"The old ass—" he said.

"Are you speakin' of Quelch, dear man?" asked Lord Mauleverer, very quietly.

"You know I am!" snapped Wharton.

"Yaas! Might I suggest rather more respectful language? Bad form to speak of a beak like that!" said Mauly, shaking his head.

"The old ass—" repeated Wharton savagely.

Lord Mauleverer ambled away up the passage. He was not going to listen to a fellow speaking of his Form-master in such terms. Wharton's own chums were looking very uncomfortable.

"Draw it mild!" said Johnny Bull.

"Suppose you tell us what the row is, without flying off the handle."

"Oh, I'll tell you!" said Wharton.

"I've got detention for four half-holidays, and very nearly had a licking, too! That washes out the Highcliffe match for me to-morrow—unless Quelch comes to his senses before then."

"And why?" asked Bob.

"No reason at all."

"Got it for nothing?" asked Vernon-Smith, grinning.

"Yes."

"It's a tough life at school!" said Skinner sadly. "We're always getting something for nothing! I've been there myself." And there was a chuckle.

"But I suppose Quelch gave a reason!" said Bob Cherry, with a touch of sarcasm. "He didn't say he was doing it for fun, did he?"

"He said that somebody had buzzed a turf at his silly head, in the quad, and he was fool enough to think that it was I, because he was ass enough to whop me, more than a week ago, through Tracy's rotten trickery."

"Did he use those very words?" asked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be a fool, Smithy!" snapped Wharton. "I dare say this will suit you," he added savagely. "If I stand out to-morrow, you captain the side, and you can pick your own men, and play the rottenest cad that ever breather, if you like!"

"No great loss, if you stand out, then!" said the Bounder tartly. "We shall beat Highcliffe better without you, if I captain the side and play Tracy."

"Shut up, Smithy, old man!" muttered Tom Redwing.

"Every fellow here knows that that's the truth!" retorted the Bounder.

"Shut up, all the same, old chap!"

"I say, you fellows." The door of Study No. 7 opened and a fat face peered cautiously out. "I say, did that beast Wharton come up? Don't tell him I'm here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! Oh crikey! Is—is—is that Wharton! Oh lor'!" Billy Bunter popped his head back, like that of a tortoise into its shell, and the door of Study No. 7 slammed, amid a yell of merriment.

Harry Wharton gave no heed to the fat Owl. He was not thinking of Billy Bunter and his fatuous antics.

"But look here, old chap!" urged Bob Cherry. "Quelch must have had something to go upon. What made him think—"

"He seems to have picked up my cap in the quad. I never dropped it there. I know that. I remember putting it on the peg in the lobby when I came in. I suppose some fellow took it by mistake, and he must have dropped it in the quad, if Quelch found it. Quelch fancies that it was dropped by the fellow who got him with the turf. So he thinks I was the fellow! That's all."

"And you weren't?" asked Vernon-Smith blandly.

Wharton gave him a look.

"No, I was not, Vernon-Smith!" he answered. "I leave that kind of hooligan trick to fellows of your kidney. It's the sort of thing you would do, or Tracy or Skinner would do—but not the sort of thing I would do, and Quelch ought to know that."

"Hoity-toity!" grinned the Bounder.

"But when did it happen?" asked Nugent.

"I don't know—Quelch never said; but before lock-up, I suppose," growled Harry Wharton. "Quelch thinks it was I, because some fellow had borrowed my cap and dropped it about—"

"Sort of evidence," said the Bounder. "If the fellow dropped your cap, he most likely had your head on his shoulders, old bean."

Harry Wharton clenched his hands. "I've got to stand Quelch's rot," he said, between his teeth. "But I'm not standing yours, Vernon-Smith! You'd better shut up!"

"I'll please myself about that!" answered the Bounder coolly. "If a fellow borrowed your cap, it was the fellow who got Quelch—that's plain enough. Quelch may be an ass, as you say he is; but he's not ass enough to fancy that the chap he saw dropped his cap, if the chap didn't! And as it's jolly unlikely that any fellow borrowed your cap, it looks to me as if Quelch has got the right man."

Harry Wharton made a stride at the Bounder, and the Co. pushed in between.

"Chuck that!" said Bob.

"Will you let me get at that jeering cad?" exclaimed Wharton, his eyes flashing.

"No!" answered Johnny Bull stolidly. "Scrapping won't mend matters. We shall have to clear this up, somehow, if you're to play at Highcliffe to-morrow. Punching Smithy's cheeky head won't do it."

"I tell you—" roared Wharton.

"Oh, come on!" said Bob.

Vernon-Smith laughed, and went into his study.

Harry Wharton made a movement after him, but his friends gathered round him, and barged him along the passage to Study No. 13.

Billy Bunter, blinking out of Study

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No. 7, spotted his face as he passed, and fairly palpitated with terror.

He watched the progress of the Famous Five up the Remove passage, with his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles.

Wharton had a temper—but never had the fat Owl seen him looking so fearfully savage. And as the fat Owl supposed that it was on his account, it was no wonder that he was alarmed.

"Look here—" roared Wharton, as the Famous Five reached the doorway of Study No. 13.

"Oh, come on!"

"I'm going to smash that cheeky cad!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. Unaware that Wharton was alluding to the Bounder, the fat Owl shook like a fat jelly.

"You're not," said Bob. "Come on!"

"I tell you—"

"Barge him in!" said Johnny Bull.

There was a tussle in the doorway of Study No. 13. The Bounder's jeers had roused Wharton's deepest anger, and he was very keen to get within hitting distance of Smithy's nose. But Bunter, blinking a terrified blink up the passage, did not doubt for a moment that he, his own fat self, was the object of this deep wrath—not knowing that anything was the matter except his fatuous trick at the door of Study No. 1.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

And—once more displaying uncommon presence of mind—Billy Bunter bolted from his study, careered down the passage to the landing, and shot down the staircase. A yell from the fellows in the passage followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hook it, Bunter—he's after you!" yelled Skinner.

"Just behind you, Bunter!" roared Hazel.

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter vanished down the stairs—what time Harry Wharton, who had quite forgotten his fat existence, went into Study No. 13—barged in by his loyal and devoted chums!

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Butts In!

**M**R. QUELCH glared. A Royal Bengal tiger had nothing on Quelch at that moment.

He was already intensely annoyed, irritated, and angry; but even had he been his usual serene self he would have glared when a fellow burst open his study door without even a knock and hurtled into his study.

"Bunter," Quelch almost roared, "what—"

"Oh crikey! Keep him off!" spluttered Bunter.

"Who—what—"

"I never did it—I mean, it was only a lark! I won't be whopped with a cricket stump!" roared Bunter. "Oh lor! Oh crikey! I say— Oh dear!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"You make him stoppit, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He's after me— Oh crikey! I ain't going to be whopped with that cricket stump! I never did it—and it was only a lark! I never had the cake, either! Chasing a fellow down the stairs— Oh lor!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

He realised that pursuit was on the track of this member of his Form—or that, at least, Bunter supposed that it

was. The fat Owl, in the fixed belief that Wharton was just behind him, cricket stump in hand, had scuttled into his Form-master's study for refuge.

No pursuer, certainly, was likely to follow him there. But the fat Owl blinked at the doorway with terrified eyes, evidently in full expectation of seeing the pursuer appear.

"Upon my word!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Bunter—"

"You tell him to stoppit, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He's just coming, sir—he's got a cricket stump—"

"Of whom are you speaking, Bunter?"

"Wharton, sir! He's just coming! He's in an awful bait!" groaned Bunter.

"I've never seen him so savage before! It was only a lark! Fellows have been locked in their studies before now without getting so fearfully wild about it! Oh dear!"

"You utterly stupid boy, did you lock Wharton in his study?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"He—he thought I'd had the cake, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never had it, of course; it was another cake—quite another cake! So I—I just turned the key on him to give him time to cool down, sir. But—but he ain't cooled down; he's as wild as—as a Red Indian, sir! He's after me!"

Mr. Quelch glanced from the doorway. Except for Mr. Prout, rolling majestically, the passage was vacant.

"Is—is—is he there, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"You foolish boy, certainly not!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Skinner said he was after me—just behind me—" stuttered Bunter. "He looked fearfully wild! D-d-d-do you mind if I stay here a few minutes, sir? I—I don't want to meet Wharton before he's cooled down. Perhaps you'd tell him to—to chuck it, sir? He would have to chuck it if you told him, sir. Oh lor!"

"I shall certainly not allow Wharton to deal with you, Bunter, for your foolish trick—"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"But I shall deal with you myself," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "It appears that you have been pilfering in a Remove study, Bunter."

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter in alarm.

He had escaped the supposed wrath of the captain of the Remove, but it occurred to his fat mind now that he had escaped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Quelch was an efficient defender against an exasperated Removeite, but there was no defender against Quelch.

"You purloined a cake from Wharton's study!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind!" groaned Bunter. "It was—was all a mistake, sir! I—I happened to be in Wharton's study. I—I never thought he would come in before the other fellows; I—I thought he wouldn't come in before lock-up, of course. But—but he did, and—and I was there; and—and he fancied I'd had the cake, and—"

"What do you mean, Bunter? You are talking nonsense!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Wharton was in the quad-rangle when the bell rang for lock-up. What do you mean, you stupid boy?"

"Eh? He wasn't, sir; he was in his study."

"How dare you make such a statement, Bunter!"

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him. "He was, sir; I locked him in—"

Mr. Quelch gave a start and fixed his eyes like penetrating gimlets on Billy Bunter's fat face.

"Bunter, are you telling me that you locked Wharton in his study before the bell rang for lock-up?"

"It was only a lark, sir—"

"Did you, or did you not?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Impossible! Bunter, take care what you are saying! This matter is serious."

"Is—is—is it, sir? It was only a lark. I locked Bob Cherry in his study once, and he only laughed; but Wharton—"

"At what time exactly, Bunter, did you lock Wharton in his study—if you did so at all?"

"I never noticed the time, sir—"

"Are you sure that it was before lock-up?"

"Oh, yes, sir! The other fellows hadn't come in; Wharton came in first. I—I suppose he came for the cake, now I think of it; and—and as it wasn't there, and—and I was in the study, he—he thought—"

"How long before lock-up was it?"

"I don't know, sir—"

"Think!" roared Mr. Quelch in a voice that made Bunter jump.

"Oh crikey! About—about five minutes, sir, or ten—perhaps a bit more. I never noticed. I remember most of the fellows came in after I got downstairs—"

"You came downstairs, leaving Wharton locked in his study?"

"Yes, sir. I—I thought he might cool down—"

"How long did Wharton remain locked in his study?"

"I—I don't know! I—I never saw him again till he came down with Wingate. I—I think Wingate went to fetch him for something. And then I went up to the Remove; and soon afterwards Wharton came up in a fearful temper—"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard.

That turf in the dusky quad had knocked off his mortar-board just as the bell for lock-up was ceasing to ring. If Wharton had been locked in his study before the bell rang, and remained there for even a few minutes, it was physically impossible that he could have been the turf-hurler.

Yet that fleeing figure had stumbled over, and dropped Wharton's cap in stumbling. There was no doubt on that point.

A fellow in a hurry might have grabbed another fellow's cap from a peg, or— Quite a dreadful thought came into Mr. Quelch's mind. A bad and unscrupulous fellow might have taken the cap intentionally, and dropped it intentionally, feigning a stumble to give colour to the act. The name of Gilbert Tracy shot into Quelch's troubled mind.

His lips shut harder.

Once before he had given his head boy an unjust punishment owing to that wretched young schemer's trickery. Had he done so again?

It was a very disquieting thought, yet there could be no doubt about it if Wharton had been locked in his study before the bell rang and remained there afterwards.

His keen eyes searched Bunter's fat, terrified face.

"You are sure, Bunter, that you locked Wharton in his study before the bell rang for lock-up?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Was anyone else aware of this?"

"I—I suppose the fellows knew, sir, as Wharton was kicking up a row in the study to be let out—"

"Remain here, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.





"You fellows know that I'd jump at playing a footballer of Tracy's quality, if I could trust him," said Harry Wharton. "But I can't! I'd rather chuck Soccer than play in the same team with him!" "Thanks!" sneered Tracy, who was lounging by the fireplace.

"Yes, sir! I—I'd like to, till Wharton cools down a bit."

Mr. Quelch left the study. With a knitted brow he made his way to the Remove studies. There was a sound of laughter in the Remove passage when he arrived there; but it died away at once as Mr. Quelch was seen.

"Todd!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir?" said Peter.

"I understand that a foolish boy locked Wharton in his study. Was this before or after the bell rang for lock-up?"

"Before, sir," answered Peter.

"You are sure of that, Todd?"

"Quite, sir!" answered the wondering Peter. "He was banging on the inside of the door when I came up, and that was before the bell rang."

Mr. Quelch felt quite a pang. Wharton had been banging on the inside of a locked study door when that whizzing turf had knocked off his mortar-board in the dusky quad!

"Where was Wharton when Wingate came for him?" he asked.

"In his study, sir."

"Did Wingate find him locked in his study?"

"Yes, sir; he waited while Cherry got a key."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. "Where is Wharton now?"

"In Cherry's study, sir."

Mr. Quelch rustled on up the Remove passage, leaving a crowd of fellows staring.

set. He was deeply and intensely exasperated by an unjust punishment: all the more deeply, because detention meant cutting the Highcliffe match on the morrow.

He was angry with Quelch—but Quelch was out of the reach of reprisals. He was angry with the Bounder—and the Bounder was within the reach of reprisals—if the Co. did not stand in the way!

But they did!

"Look here, don't be an excited ass, Wharton!" said Johnny Bull. "Smithy's a cheeky swab, but you won't set this matter right by punching him."

"Do you think I'm going to have that cad calling me a liar?" exclaimed Wharton savagely. "I've said that I never buzzed anything at Quelch's silly head—"

"If Quelch thinks you did, any fellow has a right to think you did!" answered Johnny Bull.

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"If that means that you don't take my word for it, Bull—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Johnny. "You know I do! Quelch must have made a mistake, if you say you never did it! But—"

"As likely as not it was Smithy himself!" said Harry bitterly. "It's just one of his rotten cheeky tricks."

"We might figure it out if we knew just when it happened!" said Bob. "Might have happened while you were locked in your study, for all we know. Didn't Quelch say—"

"He never said anything except that he was going to make a fool of himself—"

"Oh, chuck it! Look here, we can ask Quelch—"

"I'm not going to ask him anything! The old ass fancies I buzzed a turf at his silly head because he whopped me more than a week ago for nothing—"

"Well, some fellows would—"

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton. "Do you think I go about nursing silly grudges like a cad like Tracy? I've got something better to do! I'd forgotten all about that whopping—I knew that Quelch understood afterwards that he'd made a mistake, and I'd never have dreamed of owing him a grudge for it. Think I've got nothing better to do than hang about brooding over a silly grievance? I tell you I'd forgotten all about it—"

Tap!

Harry Wharton jumped up. "By gum, if that's Smithy—"

He broke off as the study door opened, revealing a tall and angular figure in cap and gown.

"Oh!" he gasped, unclenching his hands in a hurry.

The juniors in Study No. 13 all rose to their feet. They all wondered why Mr. Quelch had come there.

Wharton gave his Form-master a grim and uncompromising look.

But Mr. Quelch's expression was very mild.

"I heard what you said, Wharton, as I reached this study," he said. "You were speaking very loudly."

"I don't mind you hearing what I said, sir!" answered Harry.

"I quite believe, Wharton, that you had forgotten about that unfortunate incident of a week or two ago, and I regret that I ever doubted that you had done so!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Harry. That was rather unexpected, in view of what had passed in Quelch's study.

"And I regret," added Mr. Quelch quietly, "that I did not accept your word, without question, when I saw you in my study, Wharton."

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Tea For Bunter!

"KEEP smiling, old bean!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!"

"Hem!"

There was rather an electric atmosphere in Bob Cherry's study.

Harry Wharton's face was pale and





(Continued from page 13.)

"Oh!"

"I have since learned," pursued Mr. Quelch, "that it was not, and could not have been you, who flung a turf at me in the quadrangle at lock-up."

"Oh!"

"Your detention is, of course, rescinded!" said the Remove master. "The whole matter ends here."

"Oh!"

"I have only one question to ask you, Wharton—do you know who was wearing your cap after you came in?"

"No, sir! I left it on the peg in the lobby, and I suppose some fellow was going out in a hurry and took it by mistake—"

"I fear," said Mr. Quelch, "that there was no mistake in the matter. I fear that I have been misled by a very unscrupulous boy. That is what I shall ascertain, if possible. I regret that I was misled, Wharton."

"Oh! Thank you, sir!" stammered Harry.

"No doubt can possibly remain on the subject," said Mr. Quelch. "I have learned from that foolish boy, Bunter, that he had locked you in your study before the incident occurred in the quadrangle—"

"Oh!"

"If I had known this at the time, Wharton, I should have known, of course, that you could have had nothing to do with what happened outside the House. But I knew nothing of it till Bunter came to my study—"

"I gave you my word, sir!"

Mr. Quelch breathed rather hard.

"I regret that I did not accept it without question, Wharton! I came here to tell you so. That is all!"

Mr. Quelch rustled away, leaving the juniors in Study No. 13 staring at one another. They heard his voice in the passage a moment later.

"Where is Tracy?"

"In his study, sir!" answered Hazel.

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"He's after Tracy now! I wonder if—"

"I don't!" said Harry. "Ten to one it was Tracy—but he won't nail that warty rotter down! You'll see."

The juniors looked out of the doorway.

Mr. Quelch stopped at the door of Study No. 1 and threw it open.

"Tracy!" came his deep voice.

"Yes, sir!" answered Gilbert's voice from the study.

"Were you in the quadrangle when the bell rang for lock-up, Tracy?"

The Remove fellows in the passage exchanged glances. They understood the purport of that question. No doubt Tracy did also. His answer came at once.

"No, sir! I came in a few minutes before the bell rang."

"You are sure of that, Tracy?" asked Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Oh, quite, sir."

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"Did you come up to the studies when you came in, Tracy?"

Bob Cherry winked at his friends.

"He's got him!" he murmured. "Lots of fellows know he never came up till long after—"

Harry Wharton shook his head. He had no doubt that Quelch was on the right track this time; but he did not believe that the wary schemer of the Remove was to be "got" so easily!

"No, sir!" came Gilbert's bland answer. "I remember I stayed to look at the notices on the board before I came up."

"Where were you at the precise moment that the bell rang, Tracy?"

"I think I was looking at the notice-board just then, sir."

"Was anyone else on the spot at the time?"

"Oh, yes, sir, two or three fellows, I think."

"Their names?"

"I didn't notice who they were, sir."

"I thought not!" said Mr. Quelch, between his closed lips. "I do not believe a single word that you have uttered, Tracy!"

"Oh, sir!" murmured Gilbert.

Mr. Quelch gave him a long, hard look. But there was nothing to be done—in the total absence of evidence or proof, he could not deal with the young rascal. It was not the first time that he had been morally certain of Gilbert's delinquency, and yet unable to deal with him.

After that grim look, Mr. Quelch walked on to the stairs and went down.

In Study No. 13 the Famous Five sat down to tea in a much more cheerful mood. Tea was going on when the door opened, and a fat face and a big pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here he is—kill him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, where's that beast Wharton? If he isn't here, I'll come in to tea, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I dodged into Quelch's study to get away from the rotter—and I dare say he's hunting me all over the House! Skinner said he was just behind me when I went down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say—oh crikey!" Billy Bunter spotted the captain of the Remove in the study, and gave a yelp of terror. "I say, keep off, you beast—"

Harry Wharton, laughing, grasped the fat Owl by the collar, and hooked him into the study.

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "Ow! I wish I'd stayed in Quelch's study now—leggo! I say, old chap, it was only a lark—leggo, you beast—I say, old fellow—will you leggo my neck, you rotter?"

"You fat chump—"

"I never had the cake!" roared Bunter. "I hadn't just finished it when you came in! It was another cake—quite another cake—and—and—I—I only locked you in for a jig-jog-joke—I—I thought you—you'd be amused—I—I did, really—"

"You blithering bloater, if you hadn't locked me in, I should be up for detention to-morrow—"

"Eh?"

"Instead of playing football at High-cliffe—"

"Oh!"

"Sit down, you fat chump—"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I see! I—I'll stay to tea, old fellow, as you're so pressing! I say, is there a cake?"

"Yes."

"Good! Where is it?"

"Parked inside you, you fat burglar!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat down to tea in Study No. 13. It was quite an unexpected and happy ending to Bunter's wild adventures!

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Glorious Prospect!

"SORRY!" said Skinner politely.

Harold Skinner did not look sorry, and he did not feel sorry! Still, he had no objection to saying that he was sorry! Words cost nothing!

Gilbert Tracy scowled.

It was Wednesday morning, and in break, Tracy, like other fellows, walked over to the school shop. Skinner and Snoop, with friendly smiles, joined him as he went. But when Tracy suddenly paused and ran his hands through his pockets, as if suddenly remembering, Skinner and Snoop exchanged a rather significant glance.

And when that action, on Tracy's part, was followed by a request for a loan of the moderate sum of five shillings, Skinner said that he was sorry!

Snoop did not even take the trouble to say that he was sorry! He edged away, and strolled off.

"I'm stony, Skinner!" muttered Tracy.

"Hard cheese!" sighed Skinner. "Might happen to any fellow—especially a fellow who spots winners! I think that's Stott calling me—"

"Hold on a minute!" said Tracy bitterly.

Skinner politely held on. He did not mind Tracy repeating his request if he liked, and as often as he liked. Indeed, he could have set it to music and sung it, for all Skinner cared! Skinner was not going to lend him any money, if he talked till the bell rang for third school.

Harold Skinner, in point of fact, did not like Tracy much more than other fellows did. He had become more or less friendly with him, not only because their tastes were similar in the way of smokes and gee-gees, but chiefly because the nephew of old Sir Giles Oakwood always had plenty of money—and Skinner's supply of that useful article was limited.

Now it seemed that cash was scarce. Vernon-Smith had said nothing of what Tracy had told him in Study No. 4, but everybody knew that Gilbert had written home for a "tenner," and had not received the same. And most of the fellows knew that during the past few days Tracy had been "raising the wind" by any and every means.

One day he had ridden down to Courtfield on his bicycle, and come back on foot! A handsome wrist-watch he had once worn was no longer to be seen. Skinner was contemptuously amused by any fellow being fool enough to raise money in such ways to back a "winner." Tracy was keen, cunning, artful, unscrupulous; yet in this matter he was acting like the veriest gull. He was absolutely certain that Chocolate Box was going to win the one-thirty at Wapshot. He fancied he knew about these things—and the fact that he generally lost money on his elusive gee-gees made no difference to that.

Now, it seemed, Tracy was not merely "short of a tenner," but short of shillings and sixpences—from which it appeared to the excellent Skinner that it was hardly worth while wasting his time on so unpopular a fellow at all!

Either he was not so well off as he had made out, or else the supply had been cut short, but if he fancied that



He was going to spend Skinner's cash, he was very considerably out in his reckoning.

"I've said I'm stony!" muttered Gilbert. "But it's only for a time—a short time! I shall have lots this evening."

"Expecting a postal order, like jolly old Bunter?" asked Skinner blandly.

"I shall have sixty pounds this evening."

Skinner jumped.

"Sixty quids!" he ejaculated.

"Just that!"

"Oh, my hat! I'll help you spend it, old bean," grinned Skinner. "But I say, you're not asking me to believe that that uncle of yours is sending you a packet like that, after keeping you as hard-up as Bunter for a week! Why not tell a chap an easier one?"

"My uncle's turned me down, owing to Quelch!" said Gilbert between his teeth. "I'll make Quelch sorry for it, too, before I'm through—"

"By knocking his tile off again?" chuckled Skinner. "Better go easy, old tulip—he's got a deadly eye on you!"

"I'm getting the sixty from Bill Lodgey. I've got a tenner on Chocolate Box at six to one."

"Fan me!" murmured Skinner.

He contrived not to laugh. What sort of a "gee" Chocolate Box might be, Skinner did not know. But that it was going to win he knew was very doubtful.

Skinner could not quite "see" Bill Lodgey, at the Three Fishers, taking much risk of having to pay out such a sum as sixty pounds!

Lodgey, in his own disreputable way, was straight; he paid if he lost! Otherwise he would have done little business with the sporting set at Greyfriars and Highcliffe. But that he would book a bet at six to one, to the tune of ten pounds, on a horse that had the remotest chance of landing him in the soup, Skinner did not believe for a moment.

Chocolate Box might be a "dark horse." The "man who knew" might have put Tracy on to a "good thing." But Skinner was going to believe all that when he saw the sixty pounds—not before!

"It's O.K.," went on Tracy. "I got it from a man Pon knows—Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, you know! Pon's backing him as hard as he can! Chocolate Box has been kept dark to diddle the bookies! You'll see."

"So easy to diddle bookies!" murmured Skinner. "Such innocent, trusting chaps—child-like simplicity, and all that!"

"Oh, don't be an ass! They think Chocolate Box is an outsider—but there are some in the secret—and I've got on to it, see?"

"Best of luck!" said Skinner. "I'll lend you a bag to carry your winnings home in, if you like! You won't want a very big bag."

"You'll talk a different tune, when you see the result!" snapped Tracy. "I know something about these things! It was because I got in with racing men that old Giles made up his mind to land me here. I know the game all right. I shall get the news early, too!"

"Special wire from the racecourse?" grinned Skinner. "Think Quelch would let you have it, here?"

"I'm calling up Lodgey on the telephone at two o'clock, at his pub at Wapshot!" grunted Tracy. "He's going to tell me."

"You awful ass!" said Skinner. "For goodness' sake, get outside the school if you're going to do anything of the kind. If you were caught at it here—"

"I'm going to! I'm going to ring up from Highcliffe—I've arranged that with Pon—he wants to know as much as I do. Pon can always get a phone if he wants one—it's easier at Highcliffe than here! If you want to hear the news, you can come over to Highcliffe with me."

"O.K.," said Skinner, laughing. "A lot of fellows will be going over to see the match; might as well come. I wouldn't bank on that sixty quid, though, if I were you."

"It's as safe as if I had it in my trousers pocket already! Think I'd have cleared myself out to the last sixpence, if it hadn't been a dead cert?" growled Gilbert. "It will see me through for the rest of the term—old Giles can keep his tips, blow him! I shan't want anything from him, with my own money in my pocket. I shall have plenty left, after getting my bike and watch back, and—what are you laughing at, you fool?"

"Did I smile?" gasped Skinner. "Sorry! You're more entertaining than you know, old bean."

"Oh, shut up! Lend me five bob till this evening—"

"Coming!" called out Skinner, in answer to an imaginary call; and he walked away, leaving Gilbert scowling.

Skinner, evidently, valued five shillings in hand more than sixty pounds in the bush!

But Gilbert, at all events, had no doubts! It was unpleasant to be "stony" at the moment, but he had a happy and confident anticipation of lots of money coming! Skinner irritated him, with his doubts, but did not shake his confidence.

His cheery confidence, in fact, was at the moment going up like a rocket—though probably it was destined to come down later like the stick!

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### A Chance For Gilbert!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Please take out No. 8 map, and place it on the easel!"

"Yes, sir!"

The Remove had gone in for third school. The lesson was geography; and No. 8 was a large rolled map of Europe, required for the lesson. Quelch was going to give his Form some more or less valuable information on the subject of the latest frontiers in Central Europe.

Harry Wharton left his place, and went to the cupboard at the end of the Form-room. Little duties like this fell to the head boy of the Form.

That cupboard, which was let into the wall, was large and deep. Rolled maps of extensive size, and other articles, sometimes required in the lessons, were kept there.

The key was in the lock; and Wharton unlocked the tall door, drew it open, and stepped into the cupboard, which extended from the floor to a height of eight feet or more, and was four or five feet wide from front to back.

A number of rolled maps were parked there, and the head boy had to look them over to select the one required.

The Remove fellows, settling down in their places for the lesson, paid no heed to Wharton's proceedings—with one exception.

Gilbert Tracy watched him curiously. Having stepped into the large Form-room cupboard, Wharton disappeared for the moment from sight.

Gilbert's eyes glimmered. A strange

and rather startling thought had come into his mind. Probably was suggested by Billy Bunter's antics of the previous day—locking Wharton in his study.

Had anyone at that moment pushed the cupboard door shut after Wharton, he would have been locked in, along with the collection of maps; the door closed with a spring-lock, and could not, of course, be opened from the inside without the key.

That was the thought that occurred to Gilbert's mind; and it was a malicious trick that he would willingly have played had it been possible—which, of course, it was not, at the moment. But that thought remained in Gilbert's mind—and developed there.

The head boy stepped out with No. 8 map, which he unrolled over the blackboard on the easel. Then he returned to his place in the class—quite unconscious of Gilbert and his thoughts.

The lesson proceeded. But Tracy was not giving much attention to Mr. Quelch's geographical instruction. What had been a vague idea in his mind, was forming into a carefully thought-out scheme.

Gilbert was going over to Highcliffe that afternoon, partly to see Ponsonby of the Fourth, chiefly to put through his telephone call to Mr. Lodgey at his "pub" at Wapshot. He had given up hope of going over as a member of the football team. But it was in his mind now that, with luck, he might go over to Highcliffe after all as a footballer!

The captain of the Remove was inflexible on that point; he was standing by his decision, in spite of the general opposition. The Remove footballers wanted Tracy in the team; but they had to choose between Tracy and their skipper; and Smithy was the only fellow who was prepared to take the drastic step of turning Wharton out.

But if by any chance Wharton did not turn up—if he could not be found when the Remove men started for Highcliffe—

Gilbert grinned at that idea.

In that case, Herbert Vernon-Smith would captain the eleven, and he would pick his own men. The first man he would pick was Gilbert Tracy! Smithy was the leader of the opposition; and if he had a chance to have his own way, he would jump at it, that was certain.

The fact that he disliked Tracy, and a few days ago punched him out of his study, made no difference to that. Smithy wanted that wonderful goal-getter in the team, and he would want him all the more if he was captaining the side, with personal glory to be gained by a sweeping victory over Courtenay's team at Highcliffe.

If Wharton was not available, Vernon-Smith would play Tracy, and every man in the side would approve. That was a foregone conclusion. And to the schemer's cunning mind there now seemed to be a chance that Wharton might not be available—if he played his cards carefully, and had a spot of luck!

Gilbert was still thinking it over when the lesson ended and the Remove were dismissed. It was the last lesson of the day, as the afternoon was a half-holiday.

Harry Wharton lingered a few moments behind the Form to roll up the map and replace it in the Form-room cupboard. When he followed the rest of the Form, he passed Gilbert loitering in the passage, without giving him a glance, and joined his friends in the quad.

Gilbert still loitered, and he was still there when Mr. Quelch left the room.



Leaving it, the Remove master locked the door after him, taking away the key, as was his usual custom.

If Gilbert had hoped that he might, for some reason, as was sometimes the case, leave the Form-room unlocked, he was disappointed.

Mr. Quelch went to his study, taking the key with him; and Gilbert strolled out into the quad, with a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow.

If he was to carry out the scheme that had formed in his mind, he had to get possession of that key. Quelch, he knew, would put it on a hook in his study; he knew where to look for it. But if Quelch was in his study after dinner, there was nothing doing. It was quite probable, however, that Quelch would go out for a walk, or that he would be in the library at work among the black-letter manuscripts there! Gilbert hoped for the best.

After dinner that day, Gilbert's eye was on his Form-master from a distance. He scowled blackly when he saw Mr. Quelch go to his study. If Quelch remained there, the game was up.

But ten minutes later the Remove master, with a bunch of papers in his hand, left his study; and Gilbert, loitering at a distance, saw the library door close on him.

Quelch was safe!

Hardly a minute later, Tracy slipped into his Form-master's study. He slipped out again a moment later with the Form-room key in his pocket.

His heart was beating rather fast, but his face was cool and casual, as he went to look for the captain of the Remove.

There was not a lot of time to spare now, for the footballers were making an early start for Highcliffe. Harry Wharton, at the moment, was in the quad, engaged in an argument with the Bounder—Tracy could guess on what subject, as he observed them.

"What's the good of jawing, Smithy?" Wharton was saying impatiently, as Tracy lounged up. "The thing's settled! For goodness' sake let's hear the end of it!"

"You won't hear the end of it in a hurry if we get licked at Highcliffe this afternoon!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "You know as well as I do that a goal-getter like Tracy ought to be in the team!"

"I don't!" answered Wharton coolly.

"Courtenay and his men are in great form—"

"I know that!"

"And you stick to leaving out a man that can walk all over them!" snapped the Bounder.

"I stick to leaving out a man who would be more likely than not to disgrace us by playing foul."

"Oh, rats!"

"Oh, let it drop!" said Harry.

"I jolly well wish that Quelch had carried on, instead of letting you off detention!" granted Smithy.

"That would have suited Tracy—I've no doubt he did the whole thing with that in view!" said the captain of the Remove scornfully.

"Oh, rot!"

The Bounder turned angrily away. He had made a last attempt to make the captain of the Remove climb down, and he had failed. He stalked away with a knitted brow, leaving Harry Wharton frowning. Wharton, turning away came face to face with Gilbert.

He would have passed him without a word, but Tracy spoke quickly. This was his opportunity; as good a one as he could have wanted.

"Hold on, Wharton—"

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"Oh, leave me alone!" snapped Harry.

"Gladly!" drawled Tracy. "But I've got a message from Quelch." He held out the Form-room key. "He's sent you this. He wants that map we were using in class—you're to take it to his study."

"Oh, all right!"

Harry Wharton took the Form-room key, slipped it into his pocket, and walked away to the House.

There was nothing to excite his suspicion in that supposed message from Quelch. Quelch might have wanted the map; and if he did, he would naturally send his head boy for it. That Tracy could possibly have any reason of his own for wishing to inveigle him into the Form-room, deserted on a half-holiday, was not likely to occur to Wharton.

He went at once to the Form-room without even noticing that Gilbert Tracy walked after him. With the key, he let himself in, leaving the door open as he crossed to the cupboard where the maps were kept.

A moment later, Gilbert Tracy stepped into the Form-room after him, and shut the door.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Trapped!

**H**ARRY WHARTON glanced round as he opened the door of the Form-room cupboard, at Tracy's footstep.

He stared at Gilbert.

"What the dickens do you want here?" he asked. "You know you're not allowed in the Form-room after class."

"I left a book in my desk—"

"Well, get it, then. I shall have to lock up again when I leave, and take the key back to Quelch."

"All right!"

Giving Tracy no further heed, Harry Wharton set the cupboard door wide open and stepped in, to pick out that rolled map. His back was to Tracy, who, hardly breathing, tiptoed after him.

Cautious as he was, Wharton heard a sound, and, with his hand on the long, rolled map standing at the back of the cupboard, glanced over his shoulder.

He saw Tracy—but only for a split second! Tracy made a swift bound forward, grasped the cupboard door, and slammed it.

Slam! Click!

The spring lock snapped shut, locking the captain of the Remove inside the cupboard! He was shut in sudden darkness, only a gleam of light penetrating above and below the door.

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton.

He let go the map and turned round, enraged and exasperated by what seemed to him a childish trick.

Gilbert, outside the door, stood panting.

He had succeeded. The captain of the Remove, without the remotest suspicion of his real object, had fallen blindly into the trap! Even yet Wharton did not imagine what Gilbert's real object was.

He thumped on the inside of the door. "You cheeky fool, let me out of this!" he shouted.

His voice came muffled through the thick oak door.

Gilbert chuckled breathlessly. He came close to the keyhole to speak to the junior within.

"Got you—what?" he chuckled.

"What do you mean, you cheeky idiot?" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Haven't you sense enough

not to play silly tricks like a kid in the Second? Open this door. I can't open it from inside."

"You wouldn't be there if you could!" grinned Gilbert.

"Will you unlock that door?"

"No!"

"You silly owl, do you think you can leave me locked in here?" roared Wharton.

"You've got it."

"Why, you—you—you fool, Quelch is expecting me with this map—"

"Hardly!" chuckled Gilbert. "Quelch isn't expecting you a lot, old bean! Quelch is in the library—"

"You said he was in his study, and he—"

"Oh, quite! I pinched the Form-room key from his study, so you can guess whether he's there or not."

Wharton trembled with rage.

"Do you mean that Quelch never sent you with a message for me to get that map?" he exclaimed.

"Guessed it in one."

"You—you—you dummy!" panted Wharton. "Have you pulled my leg, to get me here to play this silly trick?"

"Exactly!"

"I'll smash you when I get out!" roared Wharton.

"You're not out yet, old bean! You're not getting out in a hurry, either."

"We start for Highcliffe in twenty minutes!" roared Wharton.

"I don't think you'll be starting."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Not unless you can squeeze through the keyhole. Can you?"

"You—you—you rotter! If you don't open this door I'll shout till half the House comes along here—"

"Shout away, old bean! Nobody comes to the Form-rooms on a half-holiday! I don't think you'll be heard. What do you think?"

Harry Wharton panted. A moment's reflection told him that the loudest shout from within the locked cupboard would not be heard outside the Form-room. He could shout, and thump as long as he liked; but unless someone came to the Remove Form-room he would not be heard. And no one would come!

"I think you're pretty safe there—what?" drawled Gilbert. "I got the idea in third school this morning, when you went in for that map. You can thank jolly old Bunter for putting the idea into my head! You remember—"

"You cur!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Do you mean to say that you've done this to keep me away from Highcliffe?"

"Is it dawning on you?" chuckled Gilbert. "What a brain!"

"You dare to keep me away from a football match—" Wharton choked, as the full extent of the scheme dawned on his mind.

"That depends!" said Gilbert coolly. "I'm keen to play at Highcliffe! I'm going to play at Highcliffe! Smithy will play me, if you won't!"

"You plotting rascal—"

"Make up your mind to play me, and I'll let you out! I'll take your word—honest Injun!" grinned Gilbert. "You've got nothing to grouse about. I can play your head off, and you know it! You get a good man—"

"You cur!"

"Is it a go?"

"Do you think you can wedge into the team by a trick like this? I'll smash you the minute I get out of the cupboard!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Then you won't get out till after the Highcliffe match!" said Gilbert coolly. "I wish you joy of your afternoon!"



"You dare not—" breathed Wharton.

"You'll see!"

"Oh, you rotter! You worm! I—I—I—"

Words failed the captain of the Remove.

"Smithy will be glad of a good man in the team—what?" drawled Gilbert. "You needn't worry about Highcliffe. We shall beat them all right!"

"I'll smash you—" choked Wharton.

"I daresay the fellows will stand by me, after we've beaten Highcliffe by five or six goals!" chuckled Tracy. "Every man in the team is against you. Last time of asking—will you play me if I let you out?"

"No!" roared Wharton.

"That does it, then!"

The imprisoned junior heard a sound of retreating footsteps. Tracy was going!

Wharton beat on the locked door with his knuckles!

"Tracy! You rotten rascal! Do you hear?" he shouted. "You rotter! You worm! You cad! Tracy!"

Only the sound of a shutting door answered. Gilbert was gone.

Harry Wharton beat on the thick oak door, and shouted. He could hardly believe that Tracy, reckless young rascal as he was, really intended to carry on with this amazing scheme.

But there was no doubt in the matter. Tracy was gone—and the captain of the Remove was left a prisoner.

When Bunter had played his fatuous trick, the day before, it had been easy to draw a crowd round Study No. 1 by banging on the door; but there was no chance of that now. He was not dealing, this time, with a fatuous ass, but with a cool and cunning rascal. Tracy had laid this trap with cool unscrupulousness; he had succeeded, and he had left the captain of the Remove absolutely helpless—to remain a prisoner until the young rascal let him out! It seemed incredible—but there it was!

Meanwhile, Gilbert Tracy locked the Form-room door on the outside and put the key in his pocket. He walked back to Masters' Passage, loitered till the coast was clear, and then slipped into Mr. Quelch's study and replaced the Form-room key on its hook. Quelch, if he came back to the study later, would see it there; he would not miss

it, and he certainly would never dream of the use to which it had been put.

After which, the cheery Gilbert strolled out into the quadrangle, with two happy thoughts in his mind, one that he was going to play football at Highcliffe that afternoon, the other that the one-thirty at Wapshot was now on, and that "dark horse" Chocolate Box, was romping home and winning sixty pounds for him!

It was no wonder that Gilbert smiled cheerily as he walked in the wintry sunshine in the quad!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Skipper Missing!

"ANYBODY seen Wharton?" "Where the dickens is Wharton?"

"What the thump—" The motor-bus that was to carry the Greyfriars footballers over to Highcliffe was waiting. Everybody was ready—excepting the captain of the team. Where Harry Wharton was, and why he had not turned up, nobody seemed to know.

It seemed hardly possible that he had gone out, when the team were getting ready to start. It was still more unlikely that if he had gone out he would not come in again in time to go with the others. But he was not to be seen, and as the minutes passed the footballers were puzzled and perplexed, and growing exasperated.

They had to get to Highcliffe by the appointed time. They were expected there. Moreover, dusk was early in November days. Two or three fellows had seen him in the quad, after he had left Smithy, going towards the House. But he was not to be found in the House.

No one, of course, thought of looking in a locked Form-room—still less in a locked cupboard in that Form-room.

Frank Nugent ran up to the studies; Bob Cherry looked in the Rag; other fellows looked in other places. Johnny Bull even went to Quelch's study to see whether the head boy might possibly be with his Form-master; but neither Quelch nor Wharton was there.

Billy Bunter suggested that he might be in the tuckshop; it seemed probable to Bunter that a fellow might forget so unimportant a trifle as a football match

if he happened to be busy demolishing tarts or cream puffs!

Nobody else thought it probable; still, Peter Todd rooted in the school shop without having any luck. And the footballers, already ten minutes behind time, grew more and more exasperated and perplexed.

"Seen Wharton?"

"Anybody seen Wharton?"

"Here, Tracy, you were speaking to Wharton! See where he went?" called out Vernon-Smith.

"I thought he went into the House," said Tracy. "Looked in the studies?"

"Yes. He's not there. Besides, why should he be there?" grunted the Bounder. "He knows when we had to start."

"Gone out, perhaps."

"How could he be idiot enough to go out?"

Tracy laughed.

"Well, he doesn't seem to be here," he said. "Got room for a man in the bus? I'm coming over to see the game, and I haven't a bike."

"I dare say you can cram in. But where is that silly ass Wharton? Why doesn't he come?"

Four members of the Co. were hunting up and down and round about in a very puzzled frame of mind. They asked every fellow they met, but no fellow knew anything of the Form captain's whereabouts.

Amazing as it was, they were driven to the conclusion that he must have gone out of gates, and that something had occurred to delay his return. That he was in those very moments breathing fury behind a locked door was not likely to occur to anyone.

"Hasn't he turned up?" asked Bob, coming back breathlessly to join the crowd by the waiting bus.

"No!" snarled the Bounder. "And we're jolly well not going to wait any longer for the silly fool! It will be too dark to finish if we hang it out much longer."

"We can't go without him," said Bob.

The Bounder gave an angry snort.

"Are we going to wash out the match, you fathead? If Wharton doesn't choose to turn up, we've got to go without him!"

"But—" said Bob.

He broke off. The Bounder was right. If Wharton was not on the spot (Continued on next page.)

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to go with the team, the team had to go without Wharton, or else wash out the fixture—which, of course, was not to be thought of.

"Something must have delayed him," said Frank Nugent. "I can't understand it. He never said anything about going out."

"Must have gone," said Johnny Bull. "Well, something's delayed him."

"He shouldn't have let it, and he shouldn't have gone out!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "We're a quarter of an hour late now. We'll give him five minutes more, and then we start."

"Nothing else to be done," agreed Squiff. "We shall have to put on speed, too, and make up for lost time on the way."

"Five minutes is the limit!" said Vernon-Smith. "Where's that man Tracy?"

"Sitting in the bus," answered Bob. "What—"

"He will be wanted if Wharton doesn't turn up."

"Oh!"

Vernon-Smith was as puzzled and annoyed and exasperated as the other fellows by Wharton's strange and unaccountable absence. But those feelings passed as he realised that the team would be going without their skipper—in which case, he would be in that skipper's place.

Smithy was quite keen to captain the side, and, as captain, he certainly would have preferred Tracy to Wharton in the team. If Wharton stood out there would be a place to fill, and the Bounder did not need to think twice about the man who was to fill it. He was glad of the chance of playing Tracy, whose claims he had urged in season and out of season.

The footballers had waited a quarter of an hour, and, as Wharton had not appeared, it did not seem likely that he would now appear. His friends made a last hurried search for him, but it was quite clear by that time that he was not to be found in the school.

Vernon-Smith called to Tracy, who had taken a seat in the vehicle as a follower of the team. He was not aware that Gilbert was expecting that call, and was, in fact, waiting for it!

"Tracy!"

"Hallo!" called back Gilbert.

"Better get your things. You may be wanted."

Tracy stared at him.

"How's that?" he asked innocently. "Wharton's not likely to change his mind about that, is he?"

"Hang Wharton!" snapped the Bounder irritably. "He's standing out for some fatheaded reason of his own, blow him, and leaving us in the lurch!"

"That's rot, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "Something must have kept him."

"Oh, rats! Anyhow, he's not here! I shall play you, Tracy, if I captain the

side, and it looks as if I shall have to. Get your things."

"Oh, all right, if you want me!" said Gilbert.

The last hurried search for the missing skipper proved unavailing. There was no more time to be lost, and the footballers, and as many other fellows as the vehicle would hold, packed in and rolled away for Highcliffe.

As they rolled away there was a good deal of excited discussion on the subject of Wharton's absence. His friends on the bus kept a look-out as it rolled up the Courtfield road, in the hope of sighting him; they could only suppose that he was somewhere out of gates, and that something or other had delayed him in getting back. But they saw nothing of him, and the one fellow who could have enlightened them was not likely to do so.

They were puzzled and rather worried, but the Bounder, at least, was in a satisfied mood.

This was, from Smithy's point of view, rather a stroke of luck. He had no doubt of captaining the side quite as well as the missing skipper, and, with Tracy in the ranks, he was going to win a tremendous victory, and prove, even to Wharton's own satisfaction, that that wonderful goal-getter was entitled to a place in the team.

He rather enjoyed the prospect of seeing Wharton's face later when the captain of the Remove learned that Tracy had played, after all. He could like it or lump it; Smithy did not care a straw.

But he would be, in fact, left with not a leg to stand on if the tale of goals was uncommonly high, as Smithy had not the slightest doubt that it would be. He was determined against all opposition not to play that wonderful man; so what would he have to say when the Remove returned victorious after a smashing game?

The rest of the team to some extent shared the Bounder's feelings. They did not want to lose their skipper, but they did want Tracy in their ranks.

Only when the footballers got down at Highcliffe did a shadow of a doubt cross the Bounder's mind, and he spoke quietly to Tracy. Harry Wharton might, or might not, be an obstinate ass, bent on playing Lord-High-Panjam-drum; he might, or might not, be influenced by his personal dislike of Tracy; but he was, after all, no fool in football matters, and he had fancied, at least, that he had good reason for barring Tracy from the team. Smithy realised that.

"Look here, Tracy," he said in a low voice, "no rotten tricks in this game!"

Tracy glanced at him.

"I don't quite get you," he drawled.

"I think you do," answered Smithy quietly. "You fouled a man in that match, and were turfed off the field. I don't think that was a reason for barring you from Remove Soccer for good. I'm proving that by putting you in to-day. But don't let me down."

"Rely on me!" said Gilbert. "That was an accident, as I've said often enough."

"Don't have any accidents here!" said Smithy.

And he left it at that

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Tracy Takes The Knock!

CECIL PONSONBY of the Highcliffe Fourth gave Tracy a friendly nod.

Gilbert slipped a coat on over his football outfit and joined the dandy of Highcliffe.

He had time for that telephone call, and he was extremely eager to get the good news from Wapshot. Possibly there was, at the back of his mind, some half-conscious element of doubt which made him so eager, for he hardly dared to think of the outcome if that "dark horse," Chocolate Box, failed to get home. If he had not, literally, put his "shirt" on Chocolate Box, he had put everything else; and if it turned out that he had backed a loser, the disaster would be overwhelming.

"This way, old bean," said Pon. "I didn't know you were playing football here to-day," he added.

"Wharton's standing down, and Vernon-Smith asked me to take his place," answered Tracy carelessly. "You've got a phone?"

"Mobby's," answered Ponsonby.

"Your beak? He's not about, I suppose?"

Ponsonby chuckled.

"No! Even dear old Mobby wouldn't stand for calling up a bookie on his phone," he said. "Mobby's gone out—and he's given me leave to use the phone in his study, to speak to the old folks at home."

Tracy chuckled, too.

"I see! That's all right!"

In Mr. Mobbs' study, Ponsonby closed the door carefully, and Gilbert rang up a Wapshot number.

Pon joined him at the telephone.

He was as eager as Tracy to hear the good news. Pon was "on" Chocolate Box, as well as Gilbert, though not to such an extent. Pon hoped to finger six pounds of Mr. Lodgey's money, when the "dark horse" romped home. Gilbert was still dreaming of sixty!

Tracy got through, and a beery voice told him that Mr. Lodgey would come to the telephone.

He waited eagerly. Mr. Mobbs, who had given his good Ponsonby leave to use that telephone to ring up his home that afternoon, would probably have had a shock, could he have seen the two eager, greedy faces over the instrument.

Bill Lodgey's husky voice came through.

"Hallo! That Master Tracy?"

"Speaking!" answered Gilbert.

"How's it gone?" He asked that question without a doubt of the answer, yet in spite of his confidence, his heart was beating rather fast.

"You've 'ad bad luck, sir!" came the beery, husky voice of Mr. William Lodgey, over the wires.

Tracy gave so violent a start that he almost dropped the receiver. The colour wavered in his face, and drained out of it, leaving him so pale, that Ponsonby stared at him.

"What—" began Pon.

"Shut up!" hissed Tracy. Then he panted into the transmitter. "What do you mean—bad luck, Lodgey? What do you mean? Chocolate Box—"

"He never came in, sir!"

Tracy choked.

"He—he never came in?" he stammered.

"No, sir—not even in the first three! Tagged in at the tail of the field, that 'orse did! You was took in over that gee, sir! Better luck next time!"

Tracy held the receiver in a trembling hand. He stood staring at the telephone with starting eyes. At his side, Ponsonby scowled. Pon, like Gilbert, fancied that he knew something about "gees." Now he had learned exactly how much he knew.

"Lost!" muttered Pon. "By gad, I banked on him! By gad! I had a quid on him—I'd have had a fiver if I could have raised it! Glad I didn't, now! But what rotten luck!"

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## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

## A Surprise For Smithy!

Tracy almost threw the receiver back at the telephone. He stood with a white face, breathing hard.

He was quite knocked over by this blow.

Ponsonby, looking at him, sneered slightly. Pon had lost his quid and he was disappointed and annoyed, but he had nerve enough to take things as they came.

Tracy looked as if he was going to crumple up.

He moved unsteadily away from the telephone, and leaned a hand on Mr. Mobb's study table.

He had totally forgotten the football match for the time.

The footballers were going down to the field, probably wondering where he was, and why he had slipped away from them. He did not give them a thought. All his thoughts were taken up by this crushing blow.

It was not only the loss of the large sum he had hoped to win. That was bad enough, after his high hopes. But worse than that was the loss of the sum he had placed in Lodgey's hands—ten pounds, which he had scraped and squeezed from every quarter.

A week ago it would not have mattered much—when he had been able to draw on old Sir Giles. But for Quelch—he ground his teeth at the thought—it would not have mattered much now. But now—He had sold everything on which he could raise money, to back that precious dark horse, in the hope, or rather the certainty, that it would see him through. And it had let him down, as he might have expected that it would, from his previous experiences in the same line. Let him down with a crash!

He would not even be able to try his luck again—to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat; the delusive hope of every gambler. He was left penniless—stony! He had told Skinner that that sixty pounds was as good as in his trousers pocket, and he had believed so. The disappointment was overwhelming—crushing—it seemed to the wretched fellow annihilating!

"Oh!" he breathed aloud. "Oh!"

"Better get out of this," drawled Ponsonby, hardly disguising his contempt for a "sportsman" who could not take a knock without crumpling up under it. "We're through here."

Tracy gave him a black and bitter look. Pon could take it coolly—Pon was not hard hit. Tracy was utterly overwhelmed by this disastrous disappointment.

"You fool!" he muttered thickly.

"You fool!"

"Wha-at?"

"I got this tip from you—you told me it was a dead cert—you fancied—Oh, you fool! You've let me in for this!"

Tracy clenched his hand. In his disappointment, his rage and his bitterness and dismay, he looked for the moment as if he would strike the dandy of Highcliffe.

Cecil Ponsonby gave him a look of cool contempt, and walked out of the study, leaving Tracy to his own devices.

It was long minutes before Gilbert followed him. He tried to pull himself together, but with little success. The blow seemed almost to have stunned him. When at length he left the study, he looked limp and crushed, and the expression on his face drew curious glances from Highcliffe fellows that he passed. If over a fellow looked as if he had "taken the knock," Gilbert Tracy did—and the knock had fairly knocked him out!

"TRACY!"

"Where's Tracy?"

"Is that fool playing the goat like the other fool?" muttered Vernon-Smith.

The footballers were on the field. Courtenay and De Courcy and the rest of the Highcliffe team were there, ready—the Greyfriars fellows were ready—with the exception of their latest recruit, who was to play centre-forward in Harry Wharton's place. Tracy had not arrived.

Some of the fellows had noticed him join a Highcliffe junior, and go with him, but naturally, they had supposed that he would follow on to the field. But he had not followed on.

It would have amazed them to learn that he had actually forgotten the football match, when both teams were in the field, and the whistle ready to blow. But he had.

He had intended to follow the team down to the ground, after getting the good news from Wapshot—a matter of a few minutes. The "good" news from Wapshot had turned out bad—the worst possible! It had driven other matters from Gilbert's harassed mind.

Meanwhile, the footballers wondered what on earth had become of him, and waited impatiently for him to appear. The Bounder, intensely irritated, stared round in vain for him.

At Greyfriars, Harry Wharton had failed to turn up to go with the team. Now his substitute was failing to turn up to play; it looked as if history was repeating itself at Highcliffe! What Tracy fancied he was up to, was a mystery. He was known to be keen on playing in the match—he was as keen as every man in the team. Yet here they were, already late, and with the ball ready to kick off, and he was not on the spot. He had walked off with a Highcliffe fellow, and had not been seen since!

Smithy set his lips hard. This was the fellow whom the captain of the Remove refused to trust in the team, and whose claims Smithy had pushed, through thick and thin. Had Wharton been right, after all? Yet it was surely unimaginable that Tracy could let the team down.

"You fellows go and look for Tracy!" the Bounder called out.

There were a dozen Remove fellows on the ground who had come over to see the game, and they were in a buzz of surprise at Tracy's failure to appear. They cut off at once, at the Bounder's word, to look for the missing forward.

The Highcliffe men were waiting—politely! But they were clearly surprised. The Bounder was growing angrier and angrier. He had jumped at the chance of putting Tracy in; he had looked forward with amusement to Wharton's annoyance when he heard of it, but he was not so sure now that he was glad to have included that wonderful goal-getter.

It was Skinner who came on Tracy—coming out of the House, with a dropping jaw, a quivering lip, and the whole appearance of a fellow who had had the stuffing knocked out of him.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Skinner. "Where the dickens have you been, Tracy? Don't you know the fellows are waiting for you?"

"Are they?" muttered Tracy indifferently. "Well let them wait and be hanged!"

Skinner simply blinked at him. He could see, in utter amazement,

that Tracy had forgotten the match and that he was booked to play in it, till he was reminded.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked. "Are you ill, or what?"

"Oh, don't bother!"

Skinner gave a start, as he remembered what Gilbert had told him in break that morning. He guessed what was the matter with him then.

"By gum!" he said. "You've been putting through that phone call to Wapshot—is that it?"

Tracy scowled at him by way of answer.

"You ass!" said Skinner. "You dummy! You've backed a loser, and you've let it knock you over like this! Is that it?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Well, the fellows are waiting," said Skinner. "Smithy's getting his rag out—"

"Hang Smithy!"

"You'll be booked for trouble if you let him down!" said Skinner. "For goodness' sake, man, pull yourself together and get going!"

Tracy gave him an angry stare, but he realised that the advice was good. He was in no mood for football—he would gladly have cut the match and walked off by himself, to brood over that crushing disappointment to his high hopes. But though that disaster filled his thoughts, he realised that there were other matters to think of.

He had wedged into the football team by leaving the captain of that team under lock and key at Greyfriars. To let them down after that was scarcely to be thought of. Anyhow, it was no use mooching about brooding over what was done and could not be helped; it would be better to throw himself into the football and try to dismiss it from his mind—if he could!

He tramped down to the football field, Skinner following him, with a sneering grin on his face.

"Hallo; hallo; hallo! Here he is!" called out Bob Cherry, as Gilbert put in his appearance at last.

Vernon-Smith's eyes glittered at Tracy.

"What have you kept us waiting like this for, Tracy?" he snapped.

"Find out!" snapped back Tracy.

"What—"

"I'm here now—that's enough!" said Tracy sullenly. "Don't start ragging me, Vernon-Smith—I'm not standing it!"

The Bounder's face reddened with rage.

"You cheeky cad—" he began furiously.

"Oh, shut up!"

Bob Cherry hastily stepped in. The Bounder looked like hitting out at that valuable recruit he had been so anxious to capture for the Remove eleven.

"Smithy, don't be a fool!" breathed Bob. "Are you going to start a shindy here—on the Highcliffe ground? Are you potty?"

"My esteemed Smithy—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder choked back his rage. He gave Tracy one look and turned away from him without speaking again.

The footballers got going at last. But Herbert Vernon-Smith was no longer in the cheery mood in which he had come over to Highcliffe. He was in a savage temper, and it was being borne in upon his mind, too, that wonderful goal-getter as Tracy undoubtedly was, the captain of the Remove had not been such a fool as he had supposed for leaving him out of the team.



Nevertheless, there was one consolation—much as he would have liked to knock the fellow spinning for his cheek, the fellow was going to pile up goals—even if he had to take back-chat from Tracy, Tracy at least was going to display super-quality as a footballer, and make Smithy's captaincy a glorious success!

But was he? Smithy had counted on that as an absolute certainty, and never a doubt had crossed his mind. The fellow, when he liked, at least, could play a wonderful game; and he had every incentive now for playing the game of his life. He was keen on Soccer, his keenest wish was to plant himself in the Remove eleven, and if he put up a great game at Highcliffe, it would be very difficult for Wharton to keep him out afterwards. Smithy was banking without a doubt on those goals!

But they did not materialise!

It was true that Tracy was a wonderful man when he put his heart and his thoughts into the game. But on the present occasion he could put neither into it.

He had hardly realised, when he joined the footballers, how utterly he had been knocked out by the crushing news from Wapshot. But he was feeling, in point of fact, rather like a fellow still staggering from a punch.

In spite of himself, his thoughts wandered, and even had he tried his hardest to pull himself together, no fellow could have played a good game in a mood of the heaviest and blackest depression.

His keenness, as a footballer, was, for the time being, quite gone. He was sullen, depressed, irritated, tired, and utterly "rotten." And that condition was reflected in his play.

Indeed, in that black mood, he cared little whether he played a good game or not! He was fed-up with everything—including Soccer!

That remarkable turn of speed, that swift and unerring judgment, those lightning-like shots that left the goalie staring, were conspicuous by their absence. So far from scoring, he failed to take advantage of good chances that were given him; even his passing was so clumsy that he robbed other forwards of chances. Only once, in the first half, did he even attempt a goal, and then he sent the leather a yard outside.

Smithy's feelings, during that performance were more easily to be imagined than described.

What was the matter with Tracy he did not know—unless he was giving way to a sullen temper, or had put himself out of condition with too many cigarettes in the study! Whatever the cause, his new recruit was no use to him—not only was he not a match on Wharton, but there were five or six fellows watching the match who could and would have done better than this! Russell, Newland, Kipps, Wibley, Hazel—Smithy would have jumped at any one of them in the place of this scowling, clumsy, fumbling dud.

The Bounder's temper grew blacker and more bitter all through that first half. He had made a mistake—Wharton had been right, after all—the fellow was not reliable, and was not to be trusted. It was no consolation to have that fact forced into his mind.

He had ragged and worried and bothered the captain of the Remove to put his man in—he had even been ready, if the other fellows had backed him up, to turn him out of the captaincy for not playing him. He had

jumped at the happy chance of playing him himself! And it was for this!

That wonderful goal-getter, whatever the reason, was nothing more or less than a passenger in the team.

Smithy's rage and disappointment did not improve his own play by any means. When the whistle went at the end of the first half, Greyfriars had not piled up a startling tale of goals! Greyfriars had not scored at all. The score stood at 1—nil, and the one had been taken by Courtenay for Highcliffe.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Too Late!

**T**HUMP! Bang!

Mr. Quelch gave quite a jump.

Thump!

He stared.

Mr. Quelch had come to the Remove Form Room. After a couple of happy hours with black letter manuscripts in the library, Quelch had torn himself reluctantly from that fascinating occupation at the call of duty. He had about thirty Latin proses to correct for his Form—not a happy task for any Form-master, but one which had to be done.

Those proses were in his desk in the Form-room. So there was Quelch to collect those proses—but he quite forgot the classical efforts of his Form as he heard a loud thumping from the interior of the wall-cupboard at the end of the Form-room.

Thump, thump!

Quelch was, of course, quite unaware that there could possibly be any occupant of that cupboard—till he heard him. He was quite astonished.

That cupboard had had a tenant for about two hours. Those two hours had seemed rather like two weeks, or two months, to Harry Wharton.

He had found it hard to believe, at first, that Gilbert would dare to leave him there while the footballers went over to Highcliffe without him. But it was not long before he could have no further doubt about that.

The minutes crawled by! The footballers were at Highcliffe—Tracy, he knew, playing in his place. It was stuffy in the cupboard, and uncomfortably close quarters. But after a few minutes of shouting and thumping, Wharton had given up the hope of making himself heard, and settled down, in a state of silent rage, to wait—till he heard someone moving in the Form-room! Then he began thumping on the door again—the thumps that startled Mr. Quelch!

He did not know that it was Quelch. It could not be Tracy, for the footballers could not be back yet. Whoever it was Wharton wanted to get out, and he thumped and banged to draw attention.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

He realised, with great astonishment, that someone was in that cupboard—evidently locked in. He crossed over to it and turned back the key. He drew open the door.

He stared at a crimson face.

"Wharton!" he ejaculated.

"Oh! You, sir!" gasped Harry.

He stepped out of the cupboard.

Mr. Quelch surveyed him grimly. Wharton had been anxious to be released, but certainly he would have preferred to be released by anyone but his Form-master. Obviously, Quelch would want to know all about this extraordinary occurrence.

"What does this mean, Wharton?" asked the Remove master. "I find you locked in this cupboard in this Form-room, which you should not have entered without permission. Explain this at once!"

"A f-fellow locked me in, sir!" stammered Harry.

"No doubt! How did you obtain admittance here? This Form-room was left locked, the key on the hook in my study. Did you—"

"I was told that you wanted a map from here, sir, and the—the fellow gave me the Form-room key. He said you had sent it."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I understand. I cannot blame you for being deceived in such a way, Wharton. Then the boy to whom you allude must have taken the key from my study and replaced it afterwards, after locking you in here."

"I suppose so, sir."

"His name?"

Wharton did not answer that.

"His name?" repeated Mr. Quelch sternly.

Wharton's colour deepened, but still he did not speak. He was feeling the keenest desire to get at Gilbert, to hammer him right and left, and reduce him to something like a jelly; but giving his name to a master was another matter.

Mr. Quelch's brow grew sterner.

"This is a serious matter, Wharton," he said. "No one is allowed to enter this Form-room out of class without leave. In this case, the key has been surreptitiously abstracted from my study and used without my knowledge. It is impossible for me to overlook such a matter. I require you to give me the name of the boy who locked you in."

"I—I hope you will excuse me, sir," stammered Harry, "but—but—"

"I cannot excuse you from giving me the name, Wharton. I require you to tell me this instant!"

Wharton's lips set obstinately.

"I quite understand," added Mr. Quelch, "your scruples on the point, Wharton; but I have no choice but to give you a direct order to tell me at once the name of the Remove boy who locked you in here."

"I can't, sir!"

"What?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Every fellow in the Remove would call me a sneak, sir, if I gave you his name, sir," answered Harry.

"In so serious a matter as this, Wharton, you must disregard that consideration. Nor would any Remove boy expect you for one moment to disobey a direct command from your Form-master. The name—at once!"

Wharton did not speak.

"Do you imagine for one moment that I can pass over such a matter as this, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "A key is abstracted from my study—a boy of my Form locked in a cupboard! Such an occurrence must be dealt with most severely. Answer me!"

The captain of the Remove stood silent. Mr. Quelch's brow was knitted, and his eyes glinting.

He respected a schoolboy's scruples in such a matter, but he expected the boy to put them aside at a direct order. His face grew grimmer as his head boy did not speak.

"For the last time, Wharton, I command you to give me the name," he said, in a voice like that of the Great Huge Bear.

No answer.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, between his closed lips. "I shall not cane you for this disobedience, Wharton, though you must know that you deserve





"What does this mean, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, as he drew open the door of the wall-cupboard. "I find you locked in this cupboard—which you should not have entered without permission. Please explain!" "A fellow locked me in, sir," stammered Wharton.

it. You will take five hundred lines. Now, leave this Form-room!"

Harry Wharton, breathing hard, left the Form-room.

Quelch's grimmest look followed him as he went.

He went out into the quad. Five hundred lines to save the skin of the young rascal who had played that treacherous trick on him. His feelings towards Gilbert Tracy were deep.

"Oh crikey! Is that you, Wharton?" Billy Bunter rolled up to him in the quad, blinking at him through his spectacles. "I say, where have you been all this time? I thought you'd gone out—"

"Did the others think I'd gone out?" asked Harry. He wondered and wondered what the footballers would think of his inexplicable absence.

"Eh? Of course they did!" answered the fat Owl. "Haven't you been out?"

"Tracy went with the team?" asked Harry.

"Yes; Smithy put him in."

Wharton glanced up at the clock-tower. It was half-past three! It was useless to follow the team to Highcliffe. The game must be nearly over by this time—the second half, at all events, in progress. It was worse than useless to think of making a scene at Highcliffe. Tracy would have to wait till the team came back. Wharton had not remained locked in so long as the schemer of the Remove had intended and expected; but it came to the same thing—his release had come too late!

There was nothing for the captain of the Remove to do but to wait till Tracy came back, after playing in his place. And if he came back with a big score to his credit, possibly he would be right in counting on the footballers to stand by him, in spite of the methods he had used.

Wharton's teeth set hard at that thought. If the whole Remove stood by

Tracy as one man, it would make no difference. He would make the young rascal pay the penalty for the miserable trick he had played.

"I say, what did you clear off for?" asked Bunter, blinking curiously at his angry, clouded face.

"I didn't, you ass! I've been locked in. That cur Tracy locked me in to keep me away from Highcliffe!" grunted Wharton savagely.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. His round eyes grew rounder behind his spectacles. "I say, what did you let him do it for?"

"Eh?"

"I shouldn't have," said Bunter, shaking his head.

"Idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Chump!"

"Well, you can call a fellow names," said Bunter. "You clear off and make out that a fellow locked you in somewhere—"

"What?" roared Wharton.

"You needn't yell at a chap. It sounds jolly steep to me!" said Bunter. "I say, did Tracy really lock you in?"

"Haven't I said so?" howled the captain of the Remove.

Bunter grinned.

"Yes; but it's a bit steep, old chap. Sounds to me like gammon."

"You blithering idiot!"

"Well, it's steep!" said Bunter. "I say, honest Injun, old chap! Are you pulling my leg?"

The captain of the Remove gave him a glare.

"No," he answered, "I'm not pulling your leg—I'm pulling your ear!"

"Yarocoooh!"

"Like that!"

"Yoo-hoop! Leggo! Yow-ow-ow! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton tramped away with a black brow, leaving the fat Owl of the Remove rubbing a fat ear.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Four—Nil!

"YOU fool!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith almost hissed the words.

At half-time, with Highcliffe one up, and the outlook dubious and dismal, the Bounder's temper was very nearly boiling.

The match was as good as lost, or as bad; and it was owing to Tracy, and to his own mistake in playing him.

Specially and keenly did the Bounder want to win that match, in which he was captaining the side; specially and keenly did he want to prove that he was right and that Wharton was wrong. And he had never doubted—till it was too late for doubt to be of any use.

The other fellows were puzzled and disappointed. Johnny Bull grunted expressively as he sucked a lemon. That new man, to whom they had pinned their faith, was not merely a failure—he was a rotten failure, and in a game which was so tough that only the very best men were of any use.

"You fumbling, fozzling dud!" went on Smithy. "What's the matter with you? What's come over you? Smoked yourself sick, or what?"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Tracy. His failure was irritating to him, though with other and heavier troubles on his mind he did not give it a great deal of thought or care.

Smithy clenched his hands.

"You can play if you choose," he muttered. "What's come over you? You seem to be half asleep. What have you got on your mind, you fool?"

"Find out!"

It was not good business for a football skipper to rag a man in the middle of a game. Harry Wharton would have reserved such remarks, if required, till



later. But Smithy was too enraged and exasperated to think of that.

He would gladly have punched that new recruit of his there on the field, under the eyes of the Highcliffians. The fellow had utterly let him down, without sense or reason for doing so, that Smithy could see.

"Wharton said you weren't to be trusted!" said the Bounder bitterly. "And I've been calling him a fool—ragging him to put you in! What's up with you? You can play when you choose. By gad! Are you letting me down because I wouldn't let you stick me for a tenner, and pushed you out of my study for cheeking my father?"

"Oh, don't be a fool! I'm a bit off colour!" muttered Gilbert. "Shut up, and let me alone!"

"And why are you off colour?" snarled the Bounder. "You were all right when we left Greyfriars—keen to push in. What's happened since? What—?" The Bounder broke off, as it flashed into his mind and he knew. He almost choked.

"You worm!" he breathed. "You measly worm! I saw you walk off with Ponsooby! Have you got news from him about that rotten race you were on to-day—the one-thirty at Wapshot? Have you heard?"

But it was unnecessary to ask. Smithy knew that he had put his finger on the mystery now. Something had occurred since the arrival at Highcliffe to put Gilbert utterly off his form. That was it!

"You—you—you—" In his rage, the Bounder made a step towards his centre-forward, his eyes blazing.

"Stop that, Smithy, you hooligan!" snapped Peter Todd.

"Smithy, you ass—" Squiff pushed the Bounder back.

Smithy shoved the Australian junior aside, but Bob Cherry added a push that made the Bounder stagger.

"Chuck it, you dummy!" said Bob curtly. "The man's no good! But you picked him; you knew better than Wharton, or fancied you did. You've got to blame yourself!"

"Do you know why he's let us down

like this?" snarled the Bounder. "Do you know what's the matter with him? He's backed a loser, and got the news since we got here!"

"Oh, rot!" "I tell you that's it! That's why he's chucking away this match!" the Bounder panted. "That's why! The cur—the rat!"

"Is that so, Tracy?" asked Bob, very quietly.

"Find out!" answered Gilbert sullenly.

"That's it!" said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "Wharton said that the cur couldn't be trusted, and he was right. It would have happened just the same if Wharton had captained the side and had been fool enough to play him—as we were fools enough to want him to do! He's got the news that his precious gee has lost, and it's crumpled him up—the cur—the rat—the—the—" Smithy choked again. "But it's Wharton's fault!" he added. "If he hadn't let us down, that rat wouldn't be in the team at all!"

"And you'd have been ragging Wharton for the rest of the term for not putting him in!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Vernon-Smith made no answer to that. It was true enough, and he knew it. The call to play interrupted further discussion.

The second half of that game never showed a spot of hope for the visiting team. Had Tracy pulled himself together and displayed something of his old style, fortune might have smiled. But the Bounder's angry, scornful words had not had an inspiring or invigorating effect on his centre-forward! "Ragging" a player during a game really was not good policy. Tracy was in no condition to put up a good game—and savage words of scorn only roused his sullen, sulky, resentful temper and made matters worse.

He hardly seemed to make an effort at all. That wonderful goal-getter was, in point of fact, nothing better than a chink in the armour.

The next goal came to the Caterpillar for Highcliffe. With the score at two-

nil, and twenty minutes to go, the most hopeful member of the Remove team did not envisage the possibility of pulling the game out of the fire.

Tracy's hopeless failure and Smithy's savage temper had a disintegrating effect on the team; no fellow seemed at his best. The ball went in again for Highcliffe. And almost on the stroke of time Frank Courtenay put it in again. And it was only the final whistle that prevented the Highcliffians from piling up a bigger score, as all the visitors knew.

However, the whistle went when the score was four-nil; and fellows round the field grinned as they watched the Bounder's face when he came off with his men. Smithy was not a good loser at the best of times—and in this case every circumstance conspired to exasperate him.

It was not a cheerful team that rolled homeward after that match. Tracy sat with a sullen scowling face, not a fellow speaking to him—Smithy glancing at him from time to time with a look that indicated only too plainly that he did not find it easy to keep his hands off that valuable recruit! Seldom or never had so disgruntled a team rolled home to Greyfriars after a Soccer match.

## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER. •

### Gilbert's Last Card!

"WHARTON!" "You're here, then!" "Where the dickens have you been?"

"You let us down, you fool!" snarled Vernon-Smith.

"Look here, Wharton—"

Gilbert Tracy gave a start and drew a quick breath.

Harry Wharton was waiting for the footballers when they came in, and the sight of him started the hapless schemer whose schemes had gone so hopelessly and disastrously awry.

The captain of the Remove, so far as Tracy knew, was still locked in the map cupboard in the Form-room, and had to be let out before calling-over. Evidently, however, he was no longer there; he had escaped somehow, for here he was. And his eyes, with a gleam in them singled out Tracy.

"So you're here, Wharton!" said Bob Cherry, rather gruffly.

"Yes, I'm here," said Harry quietly.

"You've got back!" sneered the Bounder. "I hope you enjoyed your walk this afternoon—as much as we enjoyed Soccer."

"I'd like to know what you mean by it, Wharton," said Peter Todd. "It's the first time I've ever heard of a football skipper clearing off just before a football match without a word—"

"Better ask Tracy," said Harry Wharton dryly.

"Tracy! What does he know about it?" snapped Peter. "Did he make you clear off and give Smithy a chance to stick him in the team?"

"Yes—exactly that!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"My esteemed Wharton—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You played Tracy, of course?" asked Harry.

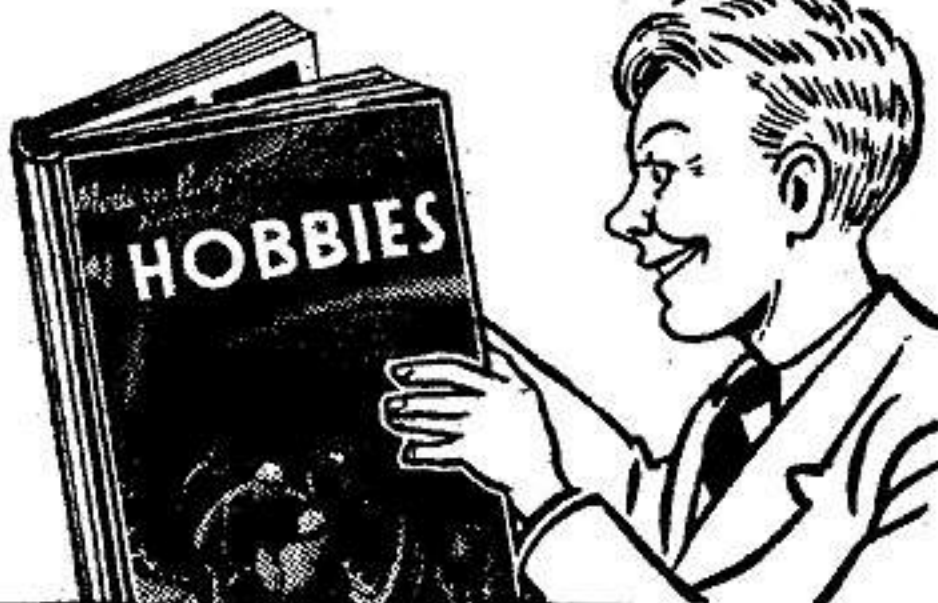
"You know I did!" grunted Vernon-Smith. "You knew jolly well I should when you cleared off and left us in the lurch. It's your fault that he let us down at Highcliffe—yours from beginning to end!"

"Oh! He let you down after all?"

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said the captain of the Remove sarcastically. "Every man here has been ragging me for leaving him out. You jumped at the chance of shoving him in. Aren't you satisfied now you've had your own way?"

Vernon-Smith gave the captain of the Remove a black look. He had had his way—but he was very far from satisfied with the result.

"How did it go?" asked Harry.

"Four-nil," said Bob dismally. "Licked to the wide!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Nobody will rag you to stick Tracy at again!" said Squiff. "He let us down all along the line. Smithy thinks he was upset over some rotten racing piffle or other."

"I don't think! I know!" snarled the Bounder. "He was up to the neck on some rotten outsider, and he went to pieces when he heard that he had backed a loser. Do you deny that, Tracy, you worm?"

"Wharton told us he wasn't to be trusted!" grunted Johnny Bull. "It turns out that he was right. But—"

"But he wouldn't have been in the team if Wharton hadn't walked off and let us down!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, I know I was keen to play him—and I know I was a fool for my pains—but that doesn't alter facts. And I want to know—"

"I'll tell you, if you'll shut up for a minute," said the captain of the Remove. "Tracy could tell you if he liked, as he played the rotten trick that kept me away!"

"Tracy did?" exclaimed Nugent.

"What the thump do you mean?" snapped Vernon-Smith. "How could Tracy have kept you away, you fool?"

"I'll tell you," said Harry, his eyes gleaming at the sullen face of the schemer of the Remove. "He tricked me into going to the Form-room with a spoof message from Quelch, and banged the door of the map cupboard on me. I was locked in for a couple of hours before I got out—too late to come over to Highcliffe."

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder.

"Oh crumbs!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"He knew that Smithy would be keen to play him," said Wharton bitterly. "He had only to get shut of me! And that was how he did it!"

All eyes turned on Gilbert Tracy.

Tracy was breathing hard.

Even the disaster of Chocolate Box had been dismissed to the back of his mind during the run home to Greyfriars—with the prospect before him of what awaited him there, when his trickery was discovered.

Had his scheme gone according to plan, had he covered himself with glory on the football field, and taken a chief part in a smashing victory, he might have counted on the footballers to stand by him. Nothing succeeds like success—and three or four goals would have covered a multitude of sins.

But the actual outcome of his scheming had been the most crushing defeat the Remove team had ever experienced on the Highcliffe ground.

That, as it were, put the lid on!

The wretched schemer fairly quaked at the prospect of the Remove fellows discovering what he had done—that he had tricked their captain out of the match in order to take his place, and lose the game for them! The looks on the faces round him sent a cold chill down his back.

But he had—or thought he had—a chance still of wriggling out. Somehow or other, Wharton had got out of that locked cupboard in the Form-room! Tracy had not expected that—but it had

happened; fortunately, as it seemed, for him. What was to prove that he ever had been locked in there?

"So that's how it was!" said Johnny Bull, in a deep, growling voice. "That's how it was, Tracy, was it?"

"You mean to say that Tracy locked you in—the Bounder seemed hardly able to believe it. "He kept you away—"

"Just that!"

"Oh gad! And then chucked the match away for us—"

"Tracy, you cur—"

"Beasy, you rotter—"

"Will you let a fellow speak?"

Gilbert's voice was cool, though his heart was beating unpleasantly. "Is Wharton making out that it's my fault he cleared off for the afternoon?"

The captain of the Remove stared at him.

"You know what you did, you rat!" he snapped. "You banged the door of the map-cupboard on me, and turned the key—"

"Dreaming?" asked Tracy.

Wharton could only stare at him. It had not even occurred to him that the young rascal would deny his own action. But that, plainly, was what Gilbert was going to do.

"Did you, or didn't you?" snarled Vernon-Smith.

"Not at all!" said Gilbert coolly.

"If Wharton was ever locked in the Form-room, he seems to have got out all right!"

Vernon-Smith stared from one to the other.

"I don't know why he cleared off this afternoon," went on Gilbert deliberately. "I dare say he had his reasons—if he cared to give them! But he can't put it down to me."

Harry Wharton stood silent, looking at him. He saw at once what was in the young rascal's mind. Tracy concluded that he had escaped somehow, perhaps by forcing the lock of the map-cupboard. It had not occurred to him that Wharton owed his release to the circumstance that Mr. Quelch had chanced to come to the Form-room for Latin papers.

"You mean to say that you had nothing to do with it?" asked Peter Todd blankly.

"Nothing at all!" said Gilbert airily. "A fellow ought to be able to think out a better yarn than that! Doesn't it strike you as steep?"

"Well, it sounds steep enough!" said the Bounder. "But—"

"Don't talk rot, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent. "Wharton's word is good enough for us—"

"Is it?" sneered Vernon-Smith. "I know that Wharton cleared off and left us in the lurch. Now he tells me that he was fool enough to let a fellow bung him into a map-cupboard and turn the key on him! If he was ever locked in that cupboard, he seems to have got out all right, as Tracy says."

"If?" said Harry Wharton, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Yes—if!" retorted the Bounder.

"There's no 'if' about it," said Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "Wharton says so, and that's enough! But—"

"But—" said Peter Todd dubiously.

"I say, you fellows, it's too jolly steep, ain't it?" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I told Wharton it was too jolly steep, and the beast pulled my ear—"

"Steep ain't the word!" said Skinner. "Mountainous, I call it!"

Tracy breathed more freely. He had, at least, cast doubt upon the matter.

Harry Wharton watching him, smiled grimly. He had only to speak!

"I don't think any decent fellow here will doubt my word!" he said quietly. "But any other sort of fellow, such as you, Smithy—"

"You cheeky fool—"

"Any other fellow," went on Harry, in the same quiet tone, "can ask Quelch!"

"Quelch!" repeated Vernon-Smith. "And what has Quelch got to do with it?"

"Only that it was Quelch who came to the Form-room, unlocked the cupboard, and let me out!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh!"

Gilbert's jaw dropped.

"Quelch will tell you, if you ask him," added Wharton sarcastically, "and he may tell you, too, that he's given me five hundred lines, for refusing to give the name of the fellow who locked me in."

"Oh!" repeated Smithy.

"That settles it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What have you got to say now, Tracy, you swab?"

Gilbert had nothing to say. He backed quickly, turned, and cut into the House. There was a roar.

"Stop him!"

"Collar him!"

"Scrag him!"

The whole crowd of Removites rushed after Tracy.

It was rather fortunate for him that the angular form of Mr. Quelch was standing in the doorway of the House. Gilbert cut past him, and disappeared—and the stern glare of the Remove master brought the pursuing mob to a halt.

"What—" began Mr. Quelch, frowning.

The crowd melted away under his gimlet eyes. Tracy had to wait—but it was probable that that for which he waited would improve with keeping!

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

### Going Through It!

"TRACY!"

No answer.

Mr. Quelch was calling the roll, in Hall.

"Adsum" came to name after name; but at the name of Tracy there was no answering "adsum."

The Remove master glanced at his Form, and repeated the name. But there was no answer to it, and he marked Tracy absent from the roll, and went on.

That Gilbert was in the House, he knew, for he had seen him cut in, with a crowd of Remove fellows, almost at his heels. But Gilbert had not chosen to turn up for calling-over; and Mr. Quelch made a mental note to impress upon him that he could not cut roll at his own sweet will.

Certainly it did not occur to him why the rebel of the Remove had cut calling-over on this occasion. It was not, for once, "cheek" on the part of the new junior. Gilbert, at that moment, was in his study, in the Remove passage, with the key turned in the door! He had not come down to calling-over for the simple reason that he dared not.

The Remove fellows had no doubt of getting Gilbert at calling-over. So far he had dodged what was coming to him; but he had to turn up for roll. In Hall, under the eyes of authority, of course, he could not be dealt with; but after roll, he was going to have a numerous escort when he left Hall, and no chance of dodging again. Gilbert,



quite aware of what was in prospect, stayed away from roll.

"I say, you fellows, Tracy ain't here!" whispered Billy Bunter.

"We'll get him after roll!" muttered the Bounder.

Seldom had the Removites been so impatient for roll to be over. Almost every fellow in the Form was anxious to see Tracy. Keenest of all were the footballers who had played at Highcliffe.

Quelch, at length, called the last name, and the school were dismissed, and almost as one man the Remove marched off to the studies. Gilbert was keeping doggo; but he was not likely to remain doggo for long, with all the Form looking for him.

Tracy, in Study No. 1, caught his breath, at the sound of tramping footsteps and buzzing voices in the Remove passage.

Thump!

"Here he is!"

"Let us in, you swab!"

"He's locked the door!"

"Tracy, you outsider—"

"Tracy, you rotter—"

"Let us in, you worm!" roared the Bounder. "You're going to have the ragging of your life! Do you hear, you outsider?"

Thump, thump!

"Open this door, Tracy!" called out Harry Wharton.

There was no answer from the junior in the study. He stood, panting, with a white face.

Outside the study a crowd of fellows thumped and shouted and buzzed. Only the lock stood between the wretched schemer and the angry crowd. But it was not likely to stand long. He was at the end of his tether.

"Will you open this door, Tracy?"

"I say, you fellows, Fishy's got a key—"

"There's a key sticking inside, fat-head! Tracy, you swab—"

"Tracy, you cad—"

"Open this door, you rotter!"

Tracy was not likely to open the door. He knew what awaited him—such a ragging as had seldom or never happened in the history of the Greyfriars Remove. Only a few days ago the Remove footballers had come to that study to urge the captain of the Form to put him in the eleven; more than half inclined to turn him out of the captaincy for refusing! Those very fellows were in the crowd outside the study now, keenest of all to get hold of him and give him the time of his life!

Such was the ultimate outcome of unscrupulous scheming. Perhaps it dawned even on Gilbert in those moments that honesty was the best policy and that it paid better, in the long run, to play a straight game. But if that reflection occurred to him, it came too late to be of service.

Thump, thump!

"Stop that row! You'll have the prefects up here!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Get a chisel or something."

"Good egg!"

"Buck up!"

Gilbert quaked. He had one hope—that the shindy in the Remove passage would bring a master or a prefect up. Quelch—the Form-master whom he had tricked and flouted and defied—would have been very welcome to him at that moment.

But at the Bounder's warning the thumping and banging on the door ceased. The buzz of angry voices was subdued. A minute or two later came the sound of a loud crack at the door—

as the lock was forced. The door flew open and the doorway was crammed with excited faces.

"Collar him!"

"Bag him!"

"Scrag him!"

There was a rush across the study as Gilbert backed away. The next moment he was struggling wildly in the grasp of many hands.

"Now, you rat, you're going through it!" said the Bounder grimly. "You're going to have a lesson that you won't forget so long as you stick here. You won't meddle with Remove fixtures after this."

"Bring him out!"

"Frog's-march!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Boot him out!"

Struggling and yelling, Gilbert was whirled out of the study.

He struggled and kicked and yelled. But he came whirling out into the passage with half a dozen fellows grasping him.

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Now, you worm—"

"Now, you rotter—"

The next ten minutes were like an awful nightmare to the hapless schemer of the Remove. Success at Highcliffe might have seen him through; at least, it would have left him with only the captain of the Form to deal with. But, as it had turned out, his trickery had spelled defeat, and the fellows who had been keenest to see him in the eleven were keenest now to make it abundantly clear what they thought of his trickery.

Up and down the Remove passage he went in the frog's-march. Then the Bounder held his head under the tap while Peter Todd turned it on. And then Vernon-Smith cut into his study, and reappeared with a bottle of ink in one hand and a bottle of gum in the other. Both were up-ended over Gilbert, and the contents streamed over him as he gasped and gurgled and spluttered.

"Give him some more—"

"I say, you fellows, I've got some treacle—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him the treacle!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Enough's as good as a feast, you fellows!"

"Shut up, Wharton!"

"Look here—"

"Shut up! Get that treacle!" roared the Bounder.

"Here you are—"

"Go it, Smithy!"

"Urrrrgh!" came a horrible gurgle from Gilbert, as treacle streamed over him. "Gurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him the lot!"

"What about some soot?"

"Good egg!"

"Chuck it!" Harry Wharton pushed the Bounder back. "That's enough—if not a little over—"

"Rot!" snapped the Bounder.

"I'm sure Tracy thinks so!" grinned Bob Cherry. "What do you think, Tracy?"

"Gurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boot him out!" shouted the Bounder. "Now then—all together! Boot him!"

How many boots landed on him before he escaped from the Remove passage, Tracy never knew. They seemed innumerable. But he escaped at last, and for the next hour, he was busy in a bath-room, with soap and

(Continued on page 28.)

## St. Frank's Kindly Head Becomes a Brute! Why? Nelson Lee Means to Find Out!



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# The GREYFRIARS GUIDE



## ALL ROUND GREYFRIARS. Highcliffe School.

(1)

At Highcliffe School the tone is high,  
The fees are most expensive,  
And even wealthy paters sigh  
And feel a trifle pensive;  
Yet in another way, perhaps,  
The tone is lowered sadly,  
For quite a lot of Highcliffe chaps  
Behave extremely badly.

(2)

A high percentage of their lot  
Are snobs and cads and rotters;  
They're worse than Skinner, Snoop, or  
Stott,  
In fact, they're downright plotters!  
Unscrupulous and dingy swabs  
Like Ponsonby are many,  
If they're a sample of the nobs,  
Their price is ten a penny!

(3)

But there are better men than these,  
And just as well related;  
The Caterpillar's one, for he's  
Quite highly situated.  
He's honest, polished, clever, cool,  
And Highcliffe's great salvation,  
For chaps of his type at a school  
Redeem its reputation.

### GREYFRIARS — AN AUNT'S-EYE VIEW



Though Greyfriars may be old and great,  
Though Greyfriars name may scintillate,  
Aunt Judy doesn't care;  
For her, its claim to deathless fame  
Is just that Coker's there.

What matters that the school enjoys  
The charge of many other boys?  
They've only one excuse,  
Their presence here, to her is clear,  
Is just for Coker's use.

The juniors come to school, indeed,  
To minister to Coker's need;  
They're simply here if he  
Should need a fag to pack his bag,  
Or get his study tea.

The seniors also serve his ends,  
They're here in case he needs some  
friends,  
Which must not be withheld;  
Should they object, then she'll expect  
Them all to be expelled.

The masters must not try to teach,  
For that's a job beyond their reach;  
They may at times assist,  
But if they try to bore him, why,  
Of course, they'll be dismissed.

And all the time she can approve  
Of Greyfriars, she will not remove  
Her Horace from the place,  
For well she knows if Horace goes  
It's doomed to dire disgrace.

Alas, Aunt Judy, hear the worst!  
Your dream must now be rudely burst,  
Your thoughts are all in vain;  
We often bump and rag the chump,  
And—here we go again!  
(Bang! Biff! Thud! Wallop! Crash!  
Exit Coker!)



### A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By

THE GREYFRIARS  
RHYMESTER

### GREYFRIARS GRINS

Mr. Prout says it is good for everyone to have some ambition which they are never likely to attain. His own, of course, is teaching Coker to spell.

More news of Coker. Because Aunt Judy was afraid he was off colour, she secretly put a strong tonic in a rabbit pie she sent him. It made Bunter quite ill.

Cecil Reginald Temple is going to take up a profession when he leaves coll, but isn't quite certain for which profession he's best fitted. We suggest that a horn dummy should do well at Madame Tussaud's.

### PUZZLE PAR

When Bunter found a tart he gave it to his sister's mother's husband's daughter's elder brother. To whom did he give it?

Answer at foot of column 2.

### THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

**GEORGE WINGATE,**  
Captain of the School and Head Prefect.

W is WINGATE—true as steel,  
Who always gives us a square deal,  
Though he may give us lines or "six"  
For practising our little tricks,  
We know that we can always trust  
George Wingate to be strictly just.



At every sport, of course, he's great,  
I simply cannot overrate  
His brilliance on the footer field.  
At cricket he is sure to wield  
A mighty willow with immense  
Encouraging self-confidence.  
An athlete, too, he simply loves  
A fast encounter with the gloves.  
He captains us with heart and soul—  
The finest on the college roll!

### ANSWER to PUZZLE

Himself. Natchoorally!

Watch this page for—

## A SPLENDID NEW FEATURE

—Commencing in a fortnight's time!



# HE LET THE SIDE DOWN!

(Continued from page 26.)

hot water! He needed quite a lot of both!

## THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER. Sent To Coventry!

"HE, he, he!" That unmusical exclamation greeted Tracy's ears when he came up to the Remove studies again. He was not seen till prep, and he came into the Remove passage warily.

There was a crowd of fellows in the passage. They had not yet gone into the studies. But, to his relief, and a good deal to his surprise, no special notice was taken of him.

Some of the fellows glanced at him. Two or three of them grinned. Billy Bunter cackled. But there was no hostile movement; ragging, evidently, was over and done with. Not even a word was addressed to him. It was a relief to Gilbert, who realised very clearly that the Remove were more than fed up with him. It was not only Wharton and his friends, with whom he had never been on good terms; the whole Form were down on him, with a very heavy down. He fully expected a hostile demonstration. But there was not even a word—and many of the fellows did not look at him at all.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "He, he, he!" "Shut up, Bunter!" rapped Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"  
"Shut up!" said Peter Todd.  
"I ain't going to speak to him, Toddy!"

Gilbert stared at the fat Owl.  
"Who wants you to speak to him, you fat freak?" he snapped. "What do you mean, you bloated bloater?"

"Why, your cheeky beast—"  
"Shut up, Bunter!" roared half a dozen voices.

"Oh, really, you fellows! I ain't speaking to him—I'm only calling him a cheeky beast!"

"Kick him!" said the Bounder  
"Yaroooh!"

Gilbert stared at the Removites. He was quite puzzled. Why two or three fellows should kick Bunter for calling him names, was quite a mystery to him. He had expected plenty of "slanging" from a good many fellows, as well as Billy Bunter.

He went to his study. Wharton and Nugent, who were standing by the door, moved aside.

They did not speak to him, or look at him. They simply got out of his way.

Gilbert gave them a scowl, and put his hand to the study door to push it open. Then, with his hand half-raised, he stopped dead!

There was a sheet of impot paper pinned on the study door. On that sheet was written a sentence; and Gilbert, as he stared at it, realised what was "on" in the Remove.

The sentence was brief, but it was to the point!

It ran:  
"NOTICE!  
"G. Tracy is sent to Coventry by the Remove for the rest of the term!"

"By Order."

For a long, long moment Tracy stood looking at that sentence.

He understood now how matters stood. There was going to be no more ragging. The Removites were leaving him alone—severely alone! But they were fed-up with him—fed-up with his scheming, his cunning, his unscrupulousness, his treachery and his trickery; and they were done with him. He stared at the paper, breathing hard and deep.

Then he looked round. His eyes glinted at indifferent or hostile faces.

"So that's the latest, is it?" he sneered.

Nobody answered.  
"You've got this up, Wharton, I suppose?"

The captain of the Remove did not speak.

"Or you, Vernon-Smith, you cad?" The Bounder seemed deaf.

"Well, I'll show you what I think of it!" said Gilbert. He jerked the paper from the study door.

Then he tore it across, and across again. He flung the fragments along the passage, and they fluttered to the floor.

But if Gilbert expected that act of defiance to draw any remark from the Remove, he was disappointed. Not a fellow spoke. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders; Billy Bunter grinned. No one else took any heed of his action at all.

Gilbert tramped into his study with a black brow. A few minutes later,

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent followed him in to prep. They sorted out their books, apparently unconscious of the scowling face and glinting eyes that watched them.

"How long do you think you can keep this up, you fools?" asked Gilbert at last.

Neither Wharton nor Nugent answered. Having sorted out their books, they sat down to prep as if unaware of his presence in the study.

"Do you hear me?" howled Gilbert. If they heard they did not heed. They might have been stone deaf, for all the sign they gave of hearing.

"You rotters!" breathed Gilbert.

"Do you fancy I care a rap?"

No answer.  
"Keep it up as long as you like! If it amuses you, it won't hurt me!" snarled Tracy.

Gilbert gave it up. He slumped into a chair, and prep began in Study No. 1. During prep, Wharton and Nugent exchanged remarks; but if Gilbert spoke, sudden deafness and dumbness supervened. When prep was over, the two juniors left the study, still without a word.

"Oh, keep it up!" sneered Gilbert, as they went. "Keep it up as long as you like, you dummies! Rats to you!"

He stood scowling in the doorway of the study as the Remove fellows passed, going down after prep. Nobody looked at him—nobody spoke in passing. The sentence of "Coventry" was in full force!

Gilbert laughed contemptuously when they were gone, and he turned back into the study to light a cigarette.

He had said that he did not care a rap—and, so far, he did not care much. But it was very probable that there would be a change when he had been a little longer in the cold and chilly shades of "Coventry."

THE END.

The next yarn in  
this Super Series—  
**"SAVED BY HIS  
ENEMY!"**  
Is Better Than Ever.

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# HILTON SIMPLY SCORNS SNOBS!

Says Sir Jimmy Vivian

"Snob? Not I! Matter of fact, I simply scorn snobs!"

That was what Hilton of the Fifth said, as I trotted out of Courtfield Station with him, one day last week. To be strictly accurate, he did not say exactly that. What he really said was something like this:

"Snawb? Not Ay! Mattaw fact, Ay simply scorn snawbs!"

But that's just how Hilton happens to speak and is neither here nor there. What interested me was Hilton's denial that he was snobbish. I had always imagined that he was the last word in snobbishness!

"The mere idea of any chappie puttin' himself above any other chappie makes me wild," said Hilton. (I won't try to reproduce his accent again.) "One chappie is as good as any other chappie—no better an' no worse. They're my sentiments!"

"Mine, too, Hilton, old chap!" I said.

"Comin' my way, kid?" asked Hilton, as we walked into Courtfield High Street. "I'm takin' a really stunnin' girl to the Palm Lounge to tea. Pamela Poshe-Leigh, you know—O.C.F."

"O.C.F.?" I repeated blankly. "Old County Family," explained Hilton, with a somewhat pitying smile. "The best family in the county at that. Oh, gad!"

Much to my surprise, Hilton did the disappearing trick at that moment. I realised suddenly that he had slipped into a shop doorway.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth came strolling by, the next moment. They gave me a nod and passed on.

Hilton came out of the doorway.

"Wanted to miss those two," he said cheerfully. "Frightful bounders; no class at all, you know."

"But—didn't you say you weren't snobbish?" I stammered.

"Oh, I'm not—not a scrap," beamed Hilton. "But, of course, a man must draw the line somewhere."



# The GREYFRIARS HERALD

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EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON,

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# HARRY WHARTON CALLING ALL CHUMS!

Hallo, Everybody! I am calling this week from the Greyfriars Junior Common-room—more usually known as the Rag. Always on the look-out for something fresh for the "Herald," I have decided this week to devote my space to a first-hand description of this celebrated meeting-place just as it appears on a November evening.

It's a long, lofty room that stretches before me—furnished plainly, but quite comfortably, with plenty of ordinary chairs, arm-chairs, and easy-chairs, a big table in the centre, and a number of small tables down the sides. Most of the small tables are occupied by chess or draughts players.

Curious crowd to look at, by the way, these players. Their foreheads are deeply furrowed; and they bite their lips and screw up their faces just as though they are undergoing excruciating pain! The only sounds that escape them while they are playing are grunts; but, to make up for that, they indulge in plenty of wordy warfare as soon as the game is over!

Around the big table in the centre sit the members of the Upper Fourth Debating Society, debating the proposition "That brevity is the soul of wit." They all look as solemn as boiled ovals—in striking contrast to the Remove listeners-in, who seem to be getting a vast amount of amusement out of the speeches. The Upper Fourth men, who occasionally break out into a peculiar bloating chorus of "Hah—hah!" (I fancy it's their way of saying "Hear, hear!") occasionally turn round to direct freezing glares at the Remove chaps; but the only result seems to be to warm them up to it!

Around the big, blazing fire cluster a number of juniors, arguing warmly (in two senses!) as to the precise reasons why we only drew against Redclyffe on Little Side, a fortnight ago. The opinion of each non-player seems to be that the game would have been won by a cricket score if only he had been playing. On the other hand, the idea of every man who did play in the game is that the game would have been lost, but for his own particular efforts!

Just to complete the buzz of voices, Wibley is in the far corner instructing several budding actors in the parts they are taking in his forthcoming production: "Beauty and the Bandit!"

You may wonder how on earth actors, debaters, arguers, and mere idle talkers can all do their stuff in one room, without interfering with each other. Well, I can't explain it myself; but I do assure you that it's done right enough in that cheery gathering-place of high-spirited youth—the Rag at Greyfriars!

Meet you all again next week, chums!  
HARRY WHARTON.



## WHY BREAK BONES BREAKING BOUNDS?

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## H. Vernon-Smith's Weekly Sports Shorts

A prophet is not without honour save in his own country.

When I went round the school last week, forecasting that our team would atone for the Redclyffe disappointment by winning handsomely at St. Jude's, I was greeted everywhere with polite scepticism.

Critics pointed out to me that our failure to beat the third-rate Redclyffe XI was proof positive that we were on the down-grade. I was told also that St. Jude's, notwithstanding their bad lapse at St. Jim's last week, were a smart team that had been beaten only once in four matches.

As I say, a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. I am glad to be able to add that our visit to the St. Jude's "country" was not without "profit"!

In brief, we won a brisk, businesslike match by three clear goals.

St. Jude's, who seem to have fallen away rather severely after their brilliant early-season start, proved fairly easy victims. Had we been in a "killing" mood, we might well have doubled the score.

As you will see for yourselves, Greyfriars still head the championship table with 9 points out of a possible 10.

The pace, however, is pretty hot, with St. Jim's only one point behind us; and we obviously cannot afford to yield a single point without placing ourselves in prompt danger of losing the lead.

Lack of space prevents me giving you detailed news of other sports at this hectic period of the footer season. I must, however, record that my own particular pal, Tom Redwing, won a Lower School 5-mile cross-country run organised by Wingate to find out how the marathon men among the junior Forms were shaping. Redwing, who won in a canter, so to speak, beat some of the best runners in the Lower School, including Brown, Russell, and Cherry.

Just room for this tit-bit: there are strong rumours going round that the proprietors of the ice-skating rink at Courtfield have offered the Head the use of the rink for the school if he will agree to the formation of an ice hockey team.

Remove men who tried out ice-hockey last Christmas are in a fever of excitement at the prospect. I advise them not to place too much reliance in the rumour. But we're all hoping for the best!

### CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
1. Greyfriars	5	4	1	0	13	3	9
2. St. Jim's	5	4	0	1	10	3	8
3. Rylcombe	5	2	2	1	9	7	6
4. Bagshot	4	2	1	1	6	3	5
5. Highcliffe	5	2	1	2	8	11	5
6. St. Jude's	5	2	1	2	7	12	5
7. Rookwood	4	2	0	2	10	7	4
8. Claremont	4	0	3	1	5	8	3
9. Redclyffe	5	0	1	4	3	9	1
10. Abbotsford	4	0	0	4	2	10	0

"Well, I'll be 'oppin' it nah, an' leave yer with this 'ere covey. 'Arternoon!"

And I departed. I heard a dull sound behind me, as I went; but I didn't look round, as I can't tell you whether it was Hilton or his girl friend who fainted.

I haven't seen Hilton since. Perhaps he's looking too small to be seen!

## MR. SAMUEL BUNTER REPLIES TO HIS OFF-SPRING—BILLY!

Dear William,—I am sorry to learn from your letter that you are suffering from an acute shortage of cash. Unhappily, I am afflicted with a similar trouble. Things have not gone at all well for me on the Stock Exchange, with the result that I have sustained severe cash losses.

You ask me to send you a tip, and I send you one with pleasure. Here it is: Content yourself with the meals provided by the school, instead of spending all the money you can lay hands on in the tuck shop, and I am sure your health will show a marked improvement—particularly in regard to the "india-gestion" of which you make special mention.

I am sincerely sorry to hear that your frame is gaunt and that your cheeks are hollow; and the circumstance of your weight falling away to a mere fourteen stone is certainly distressing. Nevertheless, William, I must ask you to draw in your belt and do your best to survive in this feather-weight condition. For all you have a long way to go before you become a "skallington"!

I am afraid I cannot altogether share your indignation about your schoolfellows locking their cupboards so that you cannot borrow their eatables without their permission. After all, they have the first claim to their own food; and if they really are as skinny as you say they are, it seems to me that they may be more urgently in need of it than you are yourself.

As soon as I can do so, I will send you on a postal order. How soon that is likely to be, I cannot say; but, at least, I hope it will not have grown whiskers by the time you receive it.

With all good wishes to yourself and to young Sammy.

Your affectionate father,  
SAMUEL BUNTER.

## Throw an Orange at Quelch!

Or drop a banana-skin in front of Prouty. Please, somebody, do something or other to make the beasts sit up. Things have been so peaceful this term, they'll think we've lost our backbone if somet' violent doesn't happen soon!

Miss Poshe-Leigh started slightly. Then she threw me a dazzling smile. She apparently liked meeting titled people.

"Aw, how d'do, Sir James?" she drawled.

"Ow do, yerself, young lidy?" I chirped back.

To say that my cheery answer gave the pair of them a shock would be putting it mildly. They jumped spasmodically and regarded me with a look of frozen horror.

"W-w-what did you say?" stammered Miss Poshe-Leigh.

"Ow do yerself, young lidy?" I



repeated brightly. "Lumme, you don't 'arf look a toff! Wot to!"

Miss Poshe-Leigh reeled back quite dizzily.

"D-did I understand that your name is SIR James Vivian?" she gasped.

"Yus! Wot to! Not 'arf it ain't!"

was falling off. "But even though the topper seems doomed, begad, I'm jolly sure the merry rank an' file are a dashed sight smarter than they were," he said. "Yaas!"

With this comment, his lordship lapsed into a state of coma, and I pushed off to see what I could see on my own.

I must say, the general standards do seem, as Mauly indicated, to have improved considerably. Junior clobber was remarkably free from jam, soup, and ink stains, and such marks as I noticed were smaller than the blobs one used to see. Of course, this may be because chaps are taking less soup and jam and using less ink.

Judging by the most elegant examples seen in the quad, jackets will be buttoned in the middle this year. There were, however, several exceptions to this rule. Rake of the Remove, for instance, achieved a distinctive effect by buttoning up his jacket to his waistcoat buttons.

Bunter had adopted a unique style by having no buttons at all on either his jacket or waistcoat.

Coker of the Fifth, who appeared to be wearing his jacket inside out, had enhanced his unusual appearance by

"M'yes, I suppose he must," I grudgingly admitted.

"Ah! Here comes the girl friend!" exclaimed Hilton, as an expensively dressed young lady sailed into view.

"I'll just give you an intro., kid, then you can buzz!"

"Oh! I see!" I grinned. Daylight had suddenly broken through the darkness. In a flash, I realised why Hilton had condescended to be seen with me.

It was because of my title! Hilton wanted to collect all the kudos he could get out of introducing his girl friend to a chap with a handle to his name!

I doffed my school cap to the young lady; at the same time, I put on my thinking-cap.

As most of my readers know, I spent my early years, by a strange mischance, in a very poor district among people whose accent was not exactly up to the B.B.C. standard; and, although I suppose I speak standard English as well as most people now, I can still "go native" and lapse back into the old dialect when I like.

That circumstance gave me an idea. Hilton, grinning cheerfully, performed his introduction.

"Hallo, Pam! This is a young friend of mine. Meet Sir James Vivian! Vivian, old bean—Miss Poshe-Leigh!"

repeated brightly. "Lumme, you don't 'arf look a toff! Wot to!"

Miss Poshe-Leigh reeled back quite dizzily.

"D-did I understand that your name is SIR James Vivian?" she gasped.

"Yus! Wot to! Not 'arf it ain't!"

## Tom Brown Reveals THIS TERM'S FASHION SECRETS!

The present being the time of the year when the smart man-about-school thinks of his winter wardrobe, I have been scouting round to pick up a few tips on winter fashions for the benefit of dresy "Greyfriars Herald" readers.

First, I called on Lord Mauleverer to obtain his view on the forthcoming season's prospects. His lordship, who was wearing a snappy pink dressing-gown as he sat before the fire with his feet on the mantelpiece, expressed the opinion that everything pointed to a highly successful season for fellows who took a pride in their appearance.

"I've noticed that there are far fewer frayed trousers an' sticky waistcoats about than usual this year, begad," he said. "What's more, by Jove, many more chappies are wearin' smart silk hankies in their coat-pockets. Of course, toppers are fallin' off a little—"

"They're falling off a lot in the quad," I grinned. "In fact, I've seen quite a number used as footballs this term!"

Mauly smiled gently and explained that he meant the use of them