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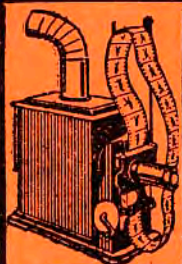
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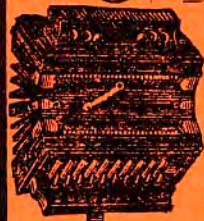
"Unless you play Smithy," said Bulstrode, "we resign." Harry Wharton answered hotly. "I won't play Smithy!" "Then we resign," Bulstrode turned and walked off the field, followed by Morgan and Russell, leaving consternation behind them among the Remove players.



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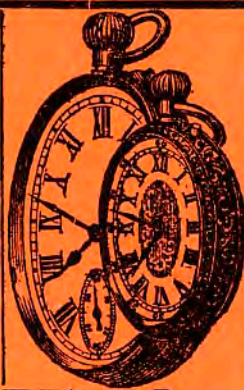
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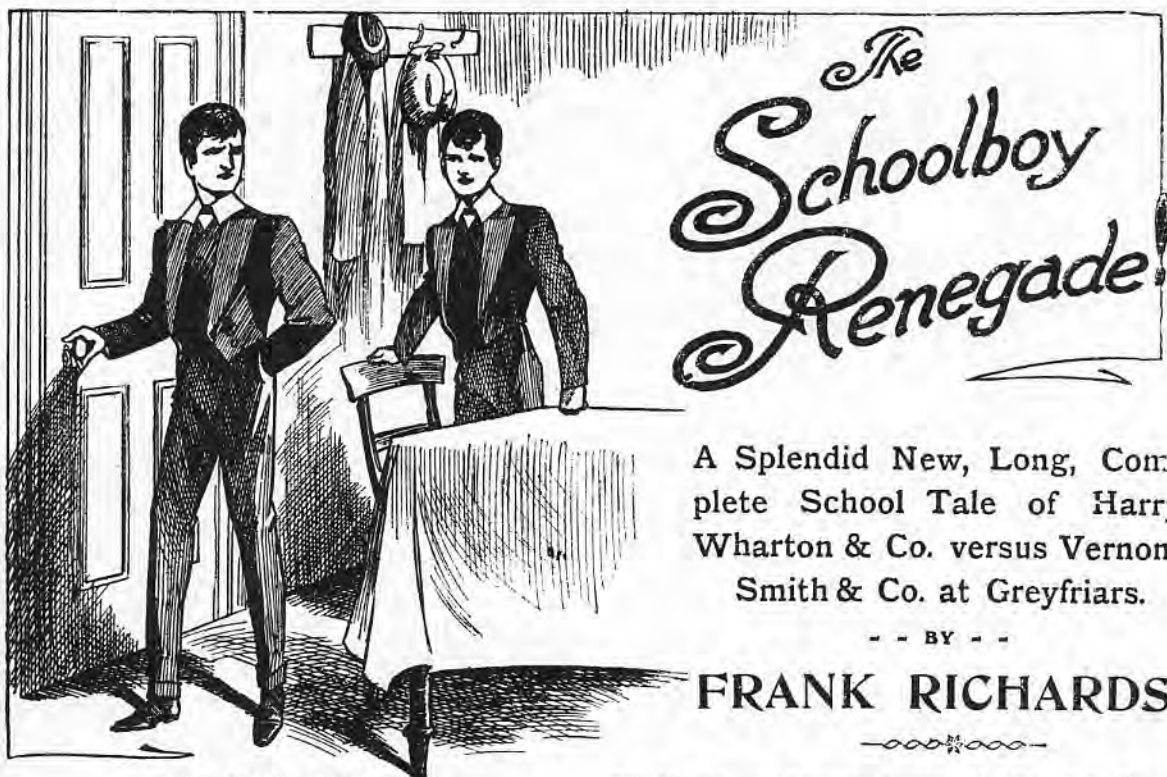
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- - BY - -

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Wharton's Answer.

WHAT the dickens is that?" Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, came into his study, No. 1 in the Remove passage. There was a frown upon Wharton's brow, a troubled look in his eyes. The study was empty; Frank Nugent, his old chum, was gone from Greyfriars, and Wharton missed him sorely.

An envelope lay upon the table, sealed, and addressed to Harry Wharton.

The junior frowned as he looked at it.

The name "Harry Wharton" was scrawled across the envelope in the sprawling hand of Bolsover major of the Remove. That alone was enough to show Wharton that it was not a friendly communication. He was on the worst of terms with Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove.

He picked up the letter, and was about to toss it into the study fire, unopened, when Bob Cherry looked into the study.

Bob Cherry's usually sunny face was clouded. Bob Cherry, too, missed Nugent from his old place.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Letter from Franky?"

Wharton shook his head.

"No; it's some rot from Bolsover," he said. "I was just going to pitch it into the fire."

"Might as well look at it," said Bob Cherry. "Bolsover and Vernon-Smith have been putting their heads together a great deal to-day, and there's something on."

Wharton nodded, and tore the envelope impatiently open.

Inside was a sheet of impot. paper, written upon and folded up. Harry Wharton unfolded it, and glanced at what was written. The writing consisted mostly of signatures of fellows in the Remove; but the message, as much as there was of it, was very much to the point.

Wharton burst into an angry laugh.

"Look at it, Bob!"

Bob Cherry took the paper and glanced at it, and gave a

low whistle, and puckered his brows thoughtfully. This is what he read:

"To Harry Wharton:

"We, the undersigned members of the Remove football club, consider that now Frank Nugent has left Greyfriars, his place in the Form eleven ought to be given to Vernon-Smith. We request that Vernon-Smith be played in the Form match with the Fifth.

"(Signed) P. BOLSOVER,
SIDNEY SNOOP,
P. HAZELDENE,
A. STOTT,
A. OGILVY."

There were six or seven more signatures, but Bob did not trouble to read them down. He knew that they were the names of the fellows who backed up Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars—Harry Wharton's rival for leadership in the Remove. Bob Cherry threw the paper upon the table and whistled again.

"Nearly a dozen names there," he said.

"Some of them in the eleven, too," said Wharton.

"Yes. The Bounder means business. Curious how that chap contrives to lead fellows by the nose," said Bob Cherry, reflectively. "Nobody really likes him. Nobody trusts him. And yet he's turned half the Form against us."

Wharton picked up the paper and crumpled it in his hand. He was Form captain in the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars. He was the ruling spirit of the Form footer committee. His word was law in the committee. No one had a right to dictate to him whom he should play in the Form matches; and he did not mean to be dictated to. True, a good many fellows in the Remove hinted that he put his own friends into the team to the exclusion of fellows he did not like. Perhaps there was something in it; but the fact was explained by the circumstance that Wharton's chums were the best players in the Form. And, as he had explained more than once, matches were played to be won, not merely as leg-exercise for duffers. If Wharton's selection of the team had resulted in lost matches, the grumbling would have been louder still. It was impossible to please everybody; and perhaps that was the reason why the Remove captain did not try to do it.

"Will you take any notice of that?" asked Bob Cherry dubiously.

"You wouldn't advise me to, Bob?"

Bob Cherry wrinkled his brows in thought.

"Blessed if I know," he said. "You haven't filled Franky's place yet?"

"Not yet!"

"Vernon-Smith is a jolly good player—one of the best, when he chooses. The trouble is that he kicks over the traces, and wants to run the team. I don't know whether you might give him a trial once more, Harry. It would stop a lot of talk."

Wharton bit his lip.

"Vernon-Smith's name isn't here," he said. "But Smithy has got this up. He's dictated it, and the other fellows have simply signed their names. If I let the Bounder decide who's to be put in the team, he's captain of the Remove, and not I!"

"Yes; but—"

"Besides, whose place is it the cad wants?" said Wharton bitterly. "Frank Nugent's. You know why Frank left Greyfriars—sacked from the school. He laid himself open to it through recklessness, I know; but it was the Bounder who worked the whole business—the Bounder was at the bottom of it all. We've lost our chum through him—and now he's asking for Nugent's place! I wouldn't give it to him if the Fifth were going to lick us, and Vernon-Smith could save the match."

"I feel just the same, old son; but that isn't footer, you know. The other chaps don't think about Franky as we do—and—"

"It can't be done, Bob!"

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Righto! I dare say you're right! I back you up, anyway."

"I know you will, Bob, old man," said Wharton, his voice softening. "After all, so long as we stick together—you and I

and Inky, and Mark Linley, and Johnny Bull—the Bounder can't do us much harm. We've always run the Form—and we'll run it yet! As for this precious rot, that's soon answered."

A fat junior was passing the open door of the study, and Wharton called to him.

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter stopped, and blinked into the study through his big spectacles. He blinked round as if in search of something.

"What is it?" he asked. "Jam-tarts?"

"Eh?"

"Toffee?" asked Bunter.

"You blessed porpoise," said Harry Wharton, "there's nothing for you to eat!"

"Then what the dickens did you call me for?" demanded Billy Bunter indignantly.

"I want you to take this message to Vernon-Smith. You're mighty pally with Smithy lately."

"Vernon-Smith's a jolly decent chap," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "He isn't so mean about a few tarts as some fellows I know—and he will lend a chap a few bob in advance on a postal-order when there's a delay in the post. My friend Smith—"

"Oh, blow your friend Smith!" growled Bob Cherry. "Shut up, Bunter—you make me ill!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Wharton dipped a pen into the ink, and wrote a line across Bolsover's effusion. It was only one line, but very emphatic, and it left no mistake as to the Remove captain's meaning.

"The undersigned can go and eat coke.—H. WHARTON."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, that's to the point," he remarked.

"Take that to Smithy, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "That thing was shoved here by Bolsover, but it really came from Smithy, and he can have it back."

Billy Bunter blinked at the document, and Wharton's line across it, and chuckled. Then he toddled off as fast as his fat little legs would carry him. Billy Bunter was not an obliging fellow as a rule, but he was always willing to bear an unpleasant message to anybody.

"That's settled," said Harry Wharton.

"Settled for a bit," agreed Bob. "But—"

"But what?"

"There may be trouble with the team this afternoon. Some of the chaps want the Bounder to play. If there's trouble—"

"Let it come!" said Harry Wharton.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Very Stormy Meeting.

"GENTLEMEN—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Pile in, Bolsover!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Bravo!"

Bolsover major of the Remove was standing on a chair in the Rag. The big room was crowded with juniors, most of them belonging to the Remove. Some fellows of other Forms had strolled in, out of curiosity to see the proceedings. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were looking on, with their hands in their pockets and superior smiles on their faces. At any other time those superior smiles might have been removed from the Fourth-Form countenances by the simple process of punching; but the Removes had no eyes now for Temple, Dabney & Co. Remove affairs were occupying all their attention, and the Remove were living up to their reputation of being the most unruly Form at Greyfriars.

It was a meeting of the Remove, but the acknowledged leaders of the Form were not present. It was a sign that Harry Wharton's influence in the Remove was waning when a Form-meeting was called, and attended, without his knowledge or concurrence.

Half the Remove, at least, were cheering Bolsover major. Other fellows, friends of Harry Wharton's, interrupted with jeers and catcalls. Others, again, looked on and listened without backing up either side.

"Gentlemen of the Greyfriars Remove!" said Bolsover major, his burly form towering over the juniors from the chair, and his stentorian voice ringing through the Rag. "You have been called—"

"Names!" interjected Tom Brown.

There was a laugh.

"You have been called—"

"Duffers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have been called together," roared Bolsover. "Shot up, Brown, unless you want me to give you a thick ear to take home to New Zealand."

"Come on," said Tom Brown promptly. "I'll have the thick ear—all you can give me."

"Gentlemen—"

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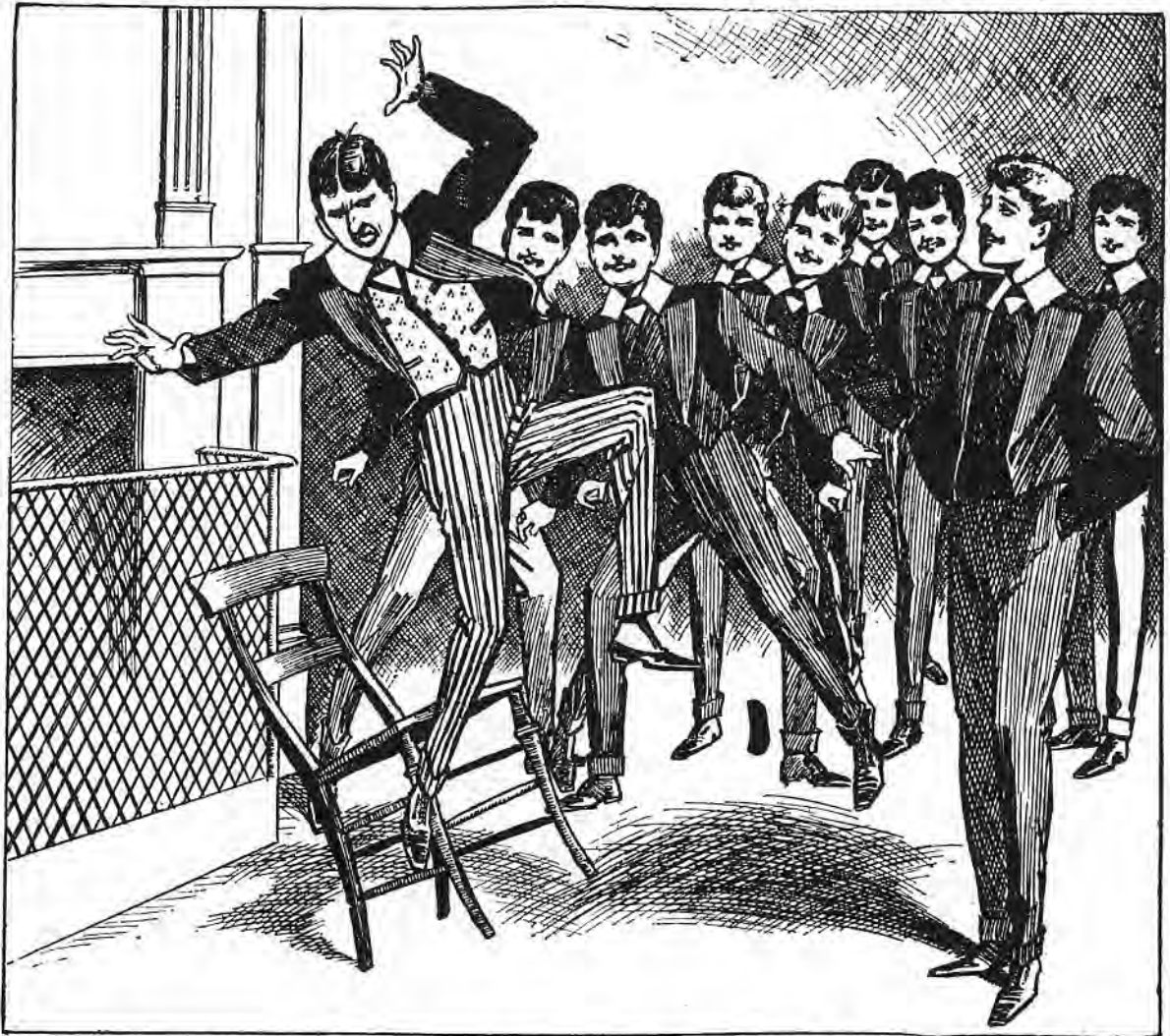
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY
—Every Wednesday—

II — OUR COMPANION PAPERS — II

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
—Every Friday—



"What," shouted the Bouncer from his elevated position, "are Harry Wharton & Co. going to do?" "I'll show you if you like," said Johnny Bull, and putting out his foot he hooked it round the leg of the chair Vernon-Smith was mounted on, and jerked it over. The Bouncer gave a wild yell and went flying. (See chapter 2.)

"Hear, hear!"

"You have been called together——"

"We've had that!"

"Put on a new record, Bolsover, old man," advised Johnny Bull who, as a member of the Famous Four, was very much up against Bolsover major and all his works.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have been called together——"

"That's the third time," said Penfold. "Like a giddy parrot that's learned only one sentence, isn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have been called together to hear——"

"Hear, hear!"

"That's it—to hear, hear, hear, here!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major glared. He seemed about to jump down from the chair and execute summary vengeance upon the interruptors, but his friends shouted to him to go on.

"Gentlemen, you have been called together to hear your giddy Form-captain's reply to my note," yelled Bolsover.

"I'm fed up with Wharton's cheek!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rats! Rats!"

"Rot! Rot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All you fellows who signed the note know how decently we put it—even a poker-backed cocky waster like Wharton had no right to get up his back at a civil message——"

"Righto!" shouted Ogilvy, and Hazeldene, and Trevor, and Stott, and other fellows who had signed their names.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

"Rats!" said Bulstrode.

"Bosh!" said Tom Brown.

"I say we're fed up with Wharton!" bawled Bolsover.

"We didn't have to stand cheek like this from our Form-captain when Bulstrode was captain of the Remove. I say that things have gone down since he got the boot, and Wharton shoved in."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, there's something in that, perhaps," said Bulstrode, rather taken aback. "But I'm backing up Wharton, all the same. He was elected skipper."

"Look here!" roared Bolsover. "Look at that! That's Harry Wharton's answer—a dot in the eye to half the Remove."

He held up the signed paper, and there was a general crowding forward to read what Harry Wharton had written across it.

"The undersigned can go and eat coke!" read out Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at," growled Stott, who was one of the undersigned. "I think it's rotten cheek!"

"Cheek!" roared Bolsover major. "I should say so. Frank Nugent's got the boot—he's been sacked from Greyfriars for pub-haunting——"

"That's not true!" roared Johnny Bull.

"What did the Head sack him for, then?" yelled Snoop.

"It was a rotten mistake——"

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Go home!"

"Nugent's been sacked, anyway," said Bolsover major.

"and there's a place empty in the Form eleven. There are a

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lot of us who think we ought to have a chance, especially in a match with the Fifth; but we are saying nothing about that—we're simply asking Wharton to put in the best player in the Form—Vernon-Smith."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Smithy!"

"Bosh!"

"Rubbish!"

It was evident that opinion in the Remove was divided as to Vernon-Smith and his abilities as a player. And as every junior backed up his opinion with the full force of his lungs, there was a terrific din in the Rag. Several fags of the Third and Second, who had joined the meeting, added to the uproar by stamping on the floor, or hammering on chairs with their fists, by way of adding to the liveliness of the proceedings.

"Let Smithy speak!" roared Hazeldene.

"Righto! Up with you, Smithy!"

Bolsover major stepped down off the chair, and Vernon-Smith mounted in his place. The Bounder looked round over the excited meeting, his cold, clear-cut face quite calm.

"Gentlemen—"

"Go it, Smithy!"

"On the ball!"

"Gentlemen, I don't want to talk about my personal merits—"

"Puzzle—find 'em!" yelled Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I really consider that I'm entitled to a show in the eleven. I won't go into the reasons why Nugent was sacked, but he was sacked, and there's an end. There's a place going in the Form team, and a lot of fellows in the Remove think that I ought to have it. I must say that I think so myself, but that's neither here nor there. A crowd of fellows have told Wharton they think so, and he answers that they can go and eat coke. I put it to you, gentlemen of the Greyfriars Remove, is that the way for Wharton to talk to the Form?"

"No, no, no!"

"Shame!"

"Rotten!"

"We are not interfering with Wharton's rights as skipper—though I must endorse Bolsover's remarks, that there wasn't all this trouble in the Remove when Bulstrode was captain of the Form. We won matches, and we didn't have a cocky bounder riding rough-shod over the whole giddy Form. Bulstrode played the game—Wharton doesn't!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The question is, what are the Remove chaps going to do? We've a jolly hard match on to-morrow afternoon—we're playing the Fifth again. It's true we've licked 'em before, but the Fifth are a senior team, and hard for juniors to beat. We want to play the crackest team we can get together. Wharton is putting personal feeling before the good of the club. He won't have me in the team because I was on bad terms with his pal Nugent, and Nugent's been sacked. I submit to the Form that that isn't football—and it isn't cricket, either."

"Hear, hear!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific!" yelled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. His English was wonderful, but his meaning was clear and emphatic.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suggest, therefore, that the matter is put plainly to Wharton; and as for the chaps who are backing him up, if there are any present—"

"Yes, rather!" roared Johnny Bull and Tom Brown and Micky Desmond together; and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh yelled out that the ratfulness was terrific. Bulstrode was silent.

"Well, then, I ask them what they're going to do?" yelled Vernon-Smith.

"I'll show you, if you like," said Johnny Bull cheerfully.

And putting out his foot, he hooked it round the leg of the chair Vernon-Smith was mounted on, and jerked it over. The Bounder gave a wild yell and went flying, and there was a bump as he landed upon the floor, which Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh would have described truly as terrific.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Something Like a Rag.

BUMP!

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith jumped up, his face ablaze with wrath.

He had had a most unpleasant jar, but his temper had suffered more than his bones. As a rule, the Bounder of Greyfriars avoided fistful encounters; he preferred to avenge his injuries, real or fancied, by surer and safer means. But he had forgotten his usual coolness and cunning now. He made a wild rush at Johnny Bull, and clenched with him, and they staggered to and fro in the crowded Rag, struggling desperately.

The juniors formed a circle at once, shouting and cheering. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

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II

OUR COMPANION PAPERS

II

—THE PENNY POPULAR—
—Every Friday—

A fight between the redoubtable Bounder and the sturdy Johnny Bull was something after their own hearts. The Remove at Greyfriars had long prided themselves upon being a fighting Form.

"Go it, Bull!"

"Give him socks, Smithy!"

"Hurrah!"

Vernon-Smith, his eyes ablaze, was punching, hammering, pommelling, with blind fury; but the powerful junior was proof against his attack. Johnny Bull was very sturdy and very strong, and the slimmer Bounder had not his weight or his strength. Johnny Bull grasped Vernon-Smith round the body and swung his feet clear of the floor.

Then he swung round, swinging the Bounder through the air, clear of the floor, his feet flying wildly as he kicked and struggled. There was a roar of laughter.

"This way, gents, to see the Bounder on the bound!" yelled Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major made a rush to the assistance of his leader. He grasped Johnny Bull round the body from behind, and dragged him over. Tom Brown dashed to the rescue at once, and Hurree Singh was only a second after him. Stott and Hazeldene rushed to help the Bounder and Bolsover. That was all that was needed. In a moment more, the rival parties of the Remove were at it hammer and tong.

There was a yelling of voices, a wild trampling of feet. Chairs went flying in all directions, and the table reeled and rolled over. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth strolled to the door with haughty sniffs.

"Better get out of this, dear boys," said Temple loftily.

"Blessed lot of hooligans, those Remove kids, ain't they?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

They sauntered out of the Rag, leaving the Removites mixed up in wild strife. Coker & Co. of the Fifth came down the passage and grinned into the Rag.

"My aunt!" exclaimed Coker. "What's that?"

"Getting ready for the match to-morrow," chuckled Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! Bump! Yell!

The excitement in the Rag was waxing fast and furious. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry came running down the passage. They looked into the room in astonishment. They had not even known that there was a Form meeting, and the sight of the Remove mixed up in a free fight surprised them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Wherefore this thushness?"

Coker roared.

"It's only the Remove scrapping, Wharton. Pile in—the more the merrier! Ha, ha, ha! You'll have the prefects down on you soon! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rescue!" roared Tom Brown, as he sprawled on the floor with Stott and Snoop sprawling over him. They were two to one, and Snoop was taking the opportunity of administering punches to the fallen junior. Bob Cherry gave a roar of wrath.

"Don't hit a chap when he's down, you cad!"

"Rescue!"

Biff! Bob Cherry smote Snoop, and smote him hard, and the sneak of the Remove rolled over yelling. He rolled round the overturned table, and stayed there. He did not want any more from Bob Cherry. As the poet remarks, the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were mixed up in the Form row the next moment, and their aid was wanted, too. Bolsover major was a host in himself; there were few fellows in the Remove who could tackle him, and he was smiting the loyal juniors right and left. Some of the Remove had backed out of the struggle altogether. Bulstrode was standing looking on, and so was little Banthorpe, who was too timid a lad to take part in the wild proceedings. Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, was sitting on the window-sill looking on. He was one of Wharton's supporters, and he was debating in his mind whether he should take the trouble to take his hands out of his pockets and join in the scrapping. He would probably have been still debating that question if the rag had lasted an hour.

It was not likely to last so long, however; it was too fast to last, even if it had not been interrupted. And it was certain to be interrupted. The din the juniors were making was audible far down the passage and up the stairs, as far, in fact, as the studies occupied by the high and mighty Sixth.

Coker, at the door, gave a yell of warning as he saw the prefects coming. Coker of the Fifth was very much down on the Remove. He considered them cheeky, and lacking in proper respect to himself, Horace Coker. But he was a good-natured fellow, and at the sight of four Sixth-Formers dashing down the passage with canes in their hands, he yelled:

"Cave! Look out! Scoot! The prefects!"

But the Removites were too excited to heed, even if they heard. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and Courtney, Valence, and Loder, dashed into the Rag, brandishing their canes.

They did not speak. Their voices would not have been heard

if they had. Besides, there was no need of words. Their canes did all the explaining that was necessary. And those canes rose and fell with marvellous celerity.

Swish, swish, swish, slash!

"Oh! Ow! Yow! Groo! Yaroo!"

The wild struggle ceased, and the Removites made a frantic dash to escape. They tore towards the door, and Coker & Co. were sent flying by the on-rushing crowd of juniors rushing to escape. Coker rolled over on the floor, and Potter and Greene rolled beside him, and over them rolled a dozen of the Remove, who stumbled on the sprawling Fifth-Formers. More active fellows dashed down the passage and escaped, and only just in time. Wingate and the prefects pursued them out of the Rag, still lashing with their canes.

Swish, swish, swish!"

"Yaroop! Yow!" roared Coker, as he caught Wingate's cane across his shoulders. "Wharrer you up to? Yow. Chuck it! Stop it! Yowp!"

"Oh, is that you, Coker?" gasped Wingate. "I didn't see you—I was caning the juniors—"

"You've caned me!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha—I mean sorry!"

"You—you—you—"

Scamper, scamper, went the retreating footsteps of the juniors. The Remove was gone, and the prefects, breathing deep after their labours, returned to the Sixth Form studies, feeling that the Remove would be quiet for a little while. And Horace Coker of the Fifth remained in the passage trying to rub his back where Wingate's cane had lashed, and growling. Potter and Greene tried to look sympathetic, as was their duty as loyal followers of the Great Coker. But Coker detected smiles upon their faces, and he snorted:

"What is there to cackle at, you silly asses?" he demanded.

"N-n-nothing," said Potter.

"Nothing," said Greene. "I'm—ha, ha—sorry! Are you hurt?"

"No; I like it!" yelled Coker. "Fathead!"

And Coker stamped away in wrath.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble!

THERE were some damaged-looking features in the Remove Form-room that afternoon.

Swollen noses, thick ears, and even blackened eyes were not uncommon in the Remove; and Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, usually turned a blind eye on such signals, like Nelson; but on this occasion the crop was too plentiful to be passed over unnoticed by the discreetest of Form-masters.

Mr. Quelch frowned as he looked at his battered class; and called to Harry Wharton, the captain and head boy of the Form.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

"You have been fighting?"

If Harry Wharton had been inclined to tell an untruth, the latest shape of his nose would have been against him. But he wasn't.

"Yes, sir!" he said.

"Another of the absurd rags, as I believe you call them, which the Remove is so fond of indulging in," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

"Yes, sir."

"All the boys who have been fighting stand up!"

All the Form, with four exceptions, stood up. The exceptions were Bulstrode, Banthorpe, Lord Mauleverer, and Billy Bunter. Mr. Quelch coughed. The number of the delinquents rather perplexed him. Lord Mauleverer, after a moment's thought, stood up also. There was no sign of damage upon the schoolboy earl's face, and Mr. Quelch looked at him sharply.

"You have not been fighting, Mauleverer?" he exclaimed.

"No, sir."

"Then why are you standing up?"

"I was just going to begin, sir," said Lord Mauleverer innocently, "when the prefects came in and stopped the rag, sir."

"You are very candid, Mauleverer," said Mr. Quelch, his stern face relaxing into a smile.

"Yaas, sir," said Lord Mauleverer.

"You may sit down!"

"Yaas, sir! Thank you."

"The rest of you, who have been fighting, will take a hundred lines each," said Mr. Quelch. "I intend to keep order in this Form, or know the reason why. Bulstrode, Banthorpe, and Bunter, I am glad to see that you, at all events, know something of the value of law and order."

Bulstrode reddened. Mr. Quelch's commendation was not a compliment; the former captain of the Remove was feeling a little ashamed of not having backed up his leader. Banthorpe turned pink, too. Banthorpe was a timid little fellow, and he always kept out of the Remove rags. But Billy Bunter blinked with self-satisfaction.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I am very glad to have your good opinion, sir. I trust I shall always deserve it, sir."

"I trust you will, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "If there was any character that Mr. Quelch could not endure, it was a

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"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT."

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ONE
PENNY.

character resembling that of good little Georgie and good little William, who curried favour with their kind teachers. But the coldness of the Remove-master's tone was quite lost upon William George Bunter. Contempt, the Oriental proverb declares, will pierce even the shell of the tortoise; but Billy Bunter apparently had a thicker covering than the tortoise. He had a chance now to spread himself, as Bob Cherry would have described it, and he did not allow it to slip.

"Yes, sir," he said, "you may always rely upon me, sir, to back up law and order. I always try to anticipate your wishes, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir! It is my aim to be a dutiful scholar, sir, and to win the regard of my teachers," said Bunter modestly. "Perhaps, sir, you will now place me at the head of the class, instead of Wharton, sir!"

"I shall certainly do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Quelch.

"But, sir, under the circumstances—"

"Under the circumstances, Bunter, you may hold your tongue."

"Oh!" said Billy Bunter. And he was so surprised that he held it.

Afternoon lessons were painful to a good many of the Removites. Hasty punches, that had not troubled them very much in the heat of conflict, left a legacy of aches and pains; it was difficult to read with one eye shut, and to talk with a swollen mouth. But lessons were got through at last, and the Lower Fourth were dismissed.

They crowded out into the passage, glad to escape from the Form-room. Micky Desmond rubbed a nose, that seemed to have doubled in size during the afternoon, very tenderly. Johnny Bull caressed a darkened eye. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had a blackened eye, also, but it did not show up so prominently upon his beautiful complexion.

"Hundred lines each!" growled Bolsover major. "All except Good Little Georgie & Co.! Poof!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You see—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bolsover. "Look here, Wharton—"

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Wharton.

"I want an answer to the message I sent you, signed by a dozen fellows in the Form."

"I've given you your answer."

"That's final, is it?"

"Quite final."

"You're not going to play Smithy against the Fifth to-morrow?"

"No!"

"What reason are you going to give?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Sha'n't trouble to give any."

And Harry Wharton walked away.

There was a growl from a good many of the fellows. Many of the Removites considered that the Form-captain carried matters with too high a hand; and certainly Wharton's conduct on this occasion bore out the complaint. Wharton was feeling sore and troubled over the loss of his old chum, and the knowledge that Frank Nugent had been driven from Greyfriars by the plotting of Vernon-Smith. But the rest of the Remove did not understand that or make allowances for it.

"That's what we've got to stand," said Bolsover major, looking round. "The question is, are we going to stand it?"

"No!" roared Snoop.

"We shall have to, unless we can give Wharton a fall," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "But I'm going to try. Come up to my study, and we'll jaw it over. I've got a feed on, and we can talk over tea. Will you come, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode hesitated.

"Well, you see—" he began.

Vernon-Smith linked arms with the former captain of the Remove, and drew him away.

"I want your opinion about that matter," he said. "Don't you think I ought to have a look-in in the team?"

"Wharton's skipper," said Bulstrode.

"Who's he going to put in in Nugent's place?" said Vernon-Smith. "Candid, now, don't you think I'm the best candidate?"

"Yes, that's true enough."

"And Wharton is leaving me out simply from personal dislike."

"I—I suppose so."

"Well, is that football?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"Well, no, it isn't."

"No. 1 Study runs the committee," said Vernon-Smith. "But I think it's time there was a change. We don't want Remove footer to become a family concern."

"No, that's quite right."

"You think I ought to be in the team?"

Bulstrode nodded.

"Yes, I must say I think that," he agreed. "If I were

still captain of the Remove, I should put you in, especially for such a tough match as we've got on to-morrow."

"Suppose you tell Wharton so?" suggested Vernon-Smith. "Put it to him as a friend, and a member of the eleven yourself; point it out to him kindly. Don't take any notice of his being ratty; we've all got to put up with his temper."

Bulstrode flushed.

"I'm jolly well not going to put up with his temper, for one," he said.

"Well, don't give him an excuse to fly out," said Vernon-Smith. "Put it to him gently, that the Remove expects him to give the vacant place to somebody who isn't one of his personal chums. It's up to you, as a fellow with a lot of influence in the Form."

"I'll speak to him," said Bulstrode.

"Good! And come to my study after, and have tea with me, and you can tell me what he says."

"All right."

Harry Wharton had gone to his study. Bulstrode made his way to No. 1, and looked in. Wharton was alone. He had shared No. 1 Study with Frank Nugent, and since Nugent had been expelled, he had had the room to himself. He generally went along to Bob Cherry's study for tea, however; he was not fond of solitude. He was writing a letter as Bulstrode came in, but he laid down his pen and nodded cordially enough to his old rival.

"Come in!" he said.

Bulstrode came in, and coloured a little. He felt that he was justified in what he was going to say; and he knew that most of the Remove agreed with him, even some of Wharton's best friends among the rest. Yet he felt strangely uneasy and hesitating under Wharton's keen glance. He hesitated to speak; and his hesitation, and the knowledge that he was colouring, made him angry, and when he spoke his voice was sharper, and his manner more harsh, than he had intended.

"I want to speak to you about the match to-morrow," he said.

"Go it!"

"Have you decided whom to put in in Nugent's place?"

"Not yet."

"You're thinking of somebody?"

"I'm thinking of young Penfold, and Treluce."

"Neither of them is a patch on Vernon-Smith," said Bulstrode.

Wharton frowned. He knew what was coming now.

"And neither of them is a rotten cad!" he said.

Bulstrode shifted uneasily.

"Well, I don't say that Vernon-Smith hasn't his faults," he said. "But caddishness, if he's a cad, hasn't anything to do with footer. You're not wanted to make friends with him, but simply to play him in the team. You needn't even speak to him. Play him, and let us beat the Fifth. You know how Coker & Co. will crow if they lick us, especially with a big margin of goals. We don't want that, any of us."

"I don't think they'll lick us. We've beaten them before, although they're seniors."

"Yes; but Nugent was in the team then, and you were playing Vernon-Smith, too, as a matter of fact! Why not play him again?"

"It's impossible."

"You mean that he won't toe the line, or take orders?" said Bulstrode, with a nod. "Well, I know there was some trouble about that. But Smithy is willing to do everything he can, and to promise to play up and do his level best."

"I can't play him. There are other reasons."

"You mean, that idea of yours that he had a hand in getting your pal Nugent sacked from the school?"

"Yes," said Harry, frowning. "And it's not an idea, it's the truth. We all know it."

"I don't see it. Nugent was discovered hanging round a pub, and he had got himself into bad odour generally. Most of us were sorry when he went; but—to put it quite plainly—we think it's just your dislike of Vernon-Smith that makes you think he had a hand in it. How could he have had a hand in it?"

"He made Nugent believe that his minor, young Dickie, was getting into trouble; and Frank was looking after that young rascal when he got into trouble himself."

"I'm! Well, of course, there's no proof of it, and Vernon-Smith says he never dreamed of doing Nugent any harm, and that he's very sorry for him."

"Hang his sorrow!" said Wharton fiercely. "He can keep that to himself!"

"Well, even if you're right about Nugent, that's got nothing to do with the Fifth-Form match," said Bulstrode. "I've heard

you say, often enough, that personal likes and dislikes have nothing to do with making up a footer eleven."

Wharton reddened. Bulstrode was right so far as that went—Wharton was in an awkward position. But to let his bitter enemy into the team he captained—he could not make up his mind to that. To give the scheming plotter the place of the junior he had ruined—even his duty as footer captain did not extend so far as that. But right or wrong, Harry Wharton's resolution never wavered. The Bounder should not have the prize he had played for. Even if he were put in the team, Wharton knew that that was only another move in the game, the Bounder would not be content with that. It would simply give him a more advantageous position, from which to continue his attacks with more effect.

"Play Smithy!" said Bulstrode. "The whole Form will take it kindly. It will show that there's nothing in what they say about your filling up the team by favouritism."

"They say that, do they?"

"Well, you know they do. And we want to beat the Fifth! There are a good many fellows in the eleven who want Vernon-Smith to play."

"They will have to want, then! He's not going to play. If I put him in, it would only lead to more trouble; he would not be satisfied with that."

"He says he would!"

"He lies—as usual!"

"You mean that you won't play him, though your friends ask you to," said Bulstrode tartly.

"Yes."

"Then I've got no more to say," said Bulstrode very gruffly, "except that there'll be trouble—trouble in the Form, and trouble in the team."

"I can't help it."

"You can help it—by playing Smithy!"

"I can't do that."

"Better say you won't!" growled Bulstrode.

"Well, I won't, then, if you prefer it that way," said Wharton, his anger rising. "So long as I'm captain of the Remove, Vernon-Smith shan't play for the Form."

"That's enough!" said Bulstrode.

And he strode out of the study without another word, and slammed the door after him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Eleven.

THAT evening a crowd of fellows read, with great interest, a paper put up on the notice-board in the hall. It was in Harry Wharton's handwriting, and it gave the list of players selected for the match with the Fifth. Every fellow in the Remove read that notice with interest, but it did not afford the usual satisfaction. As a rule, a fellow was satisfied when he read his own name in the list, and was easily persuaded that his skipper might have good reasons for leaving other candidates out. But that was not the case this time.

The list ran: Newland, Bull, Morgan, Bulstrode, Russell, Penfold, Hurree Singh, Cherry, Wharton, Brown, Linley.

There was no doubt that it was a good team, and one that would give the Fifth-Form players a great deal of trouble.

But it did not give satisfaction to the Remove.

Only two or three members of the team backed up Wharton's selection wholeheartedly. Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Inky, and Mark Linley were with him without a doubt. The other fellows would have been glad to see Vernon-Smith's name there. Even Penfold, who had been given the place Vernon-Smith wanted, was dubious, though he was ready to play when his skipper called on him. Penfold was a keen player and a good footballer; but he was nothing like the form of the Bounder, and he knew it.

Bulstrode frowned as he read the list down. He had expected it, but he felt very sore and irritated that his remonstrance had produced no effect.

"It's rotten!" he said.

"I should say it is!" growled Bolsover major. "Will somebody here say that Morgan's as good a back as I am?"

"Yes," said one voice promptly. It was Morgan's.

There was a laugh.

"And the forward line, too," said Bolsover major. "Wharton and Cherry are all right, and so is Linley; but who'll say that Inky is anything like the Bounder?"

"The unlikeliness is great," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "and the thankfulness of my worthy self is terrific."

"I mean in football, you inky duffer! Then the halves—Bulstrode, Penfold, Russell. I know Bulstrode's the best half in the school, but Russell and Penfold—rot!"

"Rats!" said Russell.

"Well, are you up to Smithy's form—answer that?"

Russell grinned.

"I don't say I am," he replied; "but I'm as good a half as he is, anyway. He plays forward best."

"Yes, but Smithy ought to be put in the front line, and Tom

ANSWERS

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II

THE PENNY POPULAR
—Every Friday—



Dr. Locke raised his hand. There was a hush in the room. "Bull, you have disobeyed my direct commands—you have defied the authority of your headmaster! You know the penalty! You will leave Greyfriars by the first train in the morning!" Johnny Bull panted.

Brown put back at half, instead of Penfold. Wouldn't that improve the team?"

There was a murmur of assent. Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, nodded his head. He was a good forward, but he was a better half. He knew that the eleven, as a footer team, would be better for the alteration suggested by Bolsover major. He was in the front line because Nugent was away.

"Quite right," said Hazeldene, "to say nothing of making a further improvement by putting me in goal instead of the Sheeny."

"Penfold oughtn't to be in the team," said Bolsover major. "Wharton seems to have a special taste for scholarship bouncers—Penfold and Linley. I don't say that Linley isn't a good man, but that blessed young cobbler being put in instead of Smithy—I call that rotten!"

"Rotten!" chorused the juniors.

"He ought to stand out," said Bolsover, encouraged by the backing he was receiving. "I think the Remove ought to call upon Penfold to resign."

"Hear, hear!"

Penfold, who was in the crowd before the notice-board, turned THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

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very red. He had some misgivings himself. Penfold was the son of the village shoemaker, and he had come to Greyfriars with a scholarship, like Mark Linley. That was up against him in the minds of some of the fellows.

"Where is he?" exclaimed Bolsover major. "Ah, here you are! Penfold, you ought to resign."

"Resign!" roared Snoop.

"Stand out for the good of the team," said Hazeldene.

"I'm not going to," said Penfold. "Wharton's told me I'm to play, and I'm going to play. I'm not going to try running the team myself."

"Yaas," remarked Lord Mauleverer, "that's a good idea. Pen. You're the only fellow in the Remove who doesn't want to run the team, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I call on Penfold to resign," said Bolsover.

"Hear, hear! Resign, you blessed cobbler!"

"Rats!" said Penfold indignantly. "I'm going to play, unless Wharton tells me I'm to stand out. I'm not taking any orders from you, Bolsover."

"Why not?" sneered Snoop. "Your pater takes orders."

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT."

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from Bolsover. Bolsover ordered a pair of footer boots from him yesterday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I did," said Bolsover, "and I'll order another pair. Penfold, if you'll stand out of the team. Now, that's a good offer. You'll be helping to keep the shop going."

"He, he, he!" cackled Snoop.

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob Cherry. "What do you want to be such a rotten cad for, Bolsover?"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer, slipping his arm through Penfold's. "You are a sickenin' cad, Bolsover, my dear fellow! Come along, Pen, old man."

And the schoolboy earl walked Penfold away.

Harry Wharton came down the passage, and the crowd of fellows all turned their eyes on him at once. Bolsover pointed to the footer list on the board.

"Is that final, Wharton?" he demanded.

"Yes," said Harry.

"We object!"

"You can go on objecting."

"Are you going to alter it?" bawled Bolsover.

"No!"

"You've got the whole Form up against you?"

"Bosh!"

"Look here! There are fellows in the team here, and they think the list ought to be altered," exclaimed Bolsover. "Speak up, you chaps! His highness may listen to you. What do you say, Bulstrode?"

"I think Smithy ought to play," said Bulstrode.

"And you, Russell?"

"I think Smithy ought to play," said Russell.

"And you, Morgan?"

"Well, I think Smithy might be put in, look you," said Morgan.

"What about you, Tom Brown?"

The New Zealander junior hesitated.

"Oh, pile it on," said Wharton, "I don't mind!"

"Well," said Tom Brown, "I'd rather see a player like Smithy in the team, as it's such a jolly tough match. But I'm sticking to my skipper."

"What do you say, Newland?"

Newland, the Hebrew junior, was silent. He agreed with Bolsover, but he was loyal to his captain.

"Speak up, you blessed Sheeny," said Bolsover. "What do you think?"

"I think you're a cad," said Newland.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quite so!" said Bob Cherry. "I endorse that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you say, Bull?"

"I say rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you, Inky?"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"And you, Linley?"

"I back up. Wharton," said the Lancashire lad quietly, "I know that if Smithy gets into the eleven, he'll only make more trouble."

"Might have expected that from a factory boulder," said Bolsover, with a sneer. "I've only got what I expected from you."

"You'll get something you don't expect, if you don't choose your language a little more carefully," said Mark.

"Well, you've heard all that, Wharton. Here are four members of the team who think that Smithy ought to play, and the others think so but won't say so."

"They can say so if they like," said Harry. "It won't make any difference."

"My hat!" said Ogilvy. "I shall begin to think we're in Russia, and this is a giddy Tsar. Would you like us all to perform the kow-tow, Wharton?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can go and eat coke," said Wharton. And he walked on.

"Well," said Bolsover, furiously, "I think that if the Remove puts up with that, the Remove wants kicking."

"Hear, hear!"

"I ought to be back, and Smithy forward, and Hazeldene in goal, and Ogilvy half," said Bolsover; "but we're all saying nothing about ourselves—we're only asking for Smithy to be put in. And we can't get fair play."

"Shame!"

"I suggest appealing to Wingate. Wingate would soon bring Wharton down off his perch, if he knew how he was going on."

"Hear, hear!"

Bolsover looked round, flushed with success.

"Who'll come with me to put it to Wingate?" he exclaimed. "The captain of the school has a right to decide. Wharton isn't monarch of all he surveys, yet awhile."

"I'll come!" said Snoop.

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"And I!"

"And I!"

"I want members of the team," said Bolsover. "Russell, Bulstrode, Morgan, Brown—"

"I'm not coming," said the New Zealander junior shortly.

"We are!" said the other three together.

"Come on, then! The rest of you come and back us up."

"Hurrah!"

And Bolsover & Co. marched off towards the study of the captain of Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wingate's Advice.

WINGATE was in his study. Courtney of the Sixth was with him, and they were talking football. The First Eleven of Greyfriars was playing away on the morrow, one of the most important fixtures of the season, and the seniors had all their attention taken up with First Eleven footer. First Eleven footer, however, was a secondary consideration with the Lower School.

Wingate called out "Come in!" as there was a loud knock at his study door. He looked surprised as Bolsover & Co. marched in. Outside, in the passage, excited juniors thronged round the doorway, looking in, and ready to cheer.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Wingate.

"School on fire?"

"More trouble in the Remove," grinned Courtney. "Blessed if the Remove don't give more trouble than all the other fags put together."

"Ahem!" said Bolsover.

"Well, get through with it," said the Greyfriars captain.

"What do you want?"

"We want to make an appeal."

"Well, I'm not a giddy Court of Appeal," said Wingate testily. "Go into the gym. and punch one another, if you've got another row on. I'm fed up with you."

It was not an encouraging reception, and some of the deputation looked sheepish. But Bolsover major was not easily put down.

"We've a right to appeal to the captain of the school," he said. "The captain of Greyfriars and head of the games is head-cook-and-bottle-washer in all matters of sports—and this is a giddy appeal to Caesar, you understand."

"Well, fire away!" said Wingate.

"We're playing the Fifth to-morrow—"

"Like your cheek!" said Wingate.

"We've beaten them once!" came a roar from the passage.

Wingate laughed.

"Well, I hope you'll beat 'em again, if you've got it in you," he said. "But I knew you were playing the Fifth. It's very kind of you to come and tell me again, but you needn't have taken the trouble. Good-bye!"

"Ahem!"

"Shut the door after you!"

"We've not finished yet," said Bolsover. "We're playing the Fifth to-morrow, and we want to get the strongest team we can—"

"You haven't come here to ask me to play for the Remove, I suppose?"

"Ahem! No. Wharton is our footer captain, and he refuses to play the best player in the Form, because they're on bad terms. There are four members of the eleven here—I mean three—and they will say the same. The rest of the eleven thinks the same, but they feel they have to back up Wharton. Now, we've come to appeal to you, Wingate, as Head of the Games. We want you to order Wharton to put Smithy in. If you order him, as Head of the Games, he'll have to do it."

"I know that," said Wingate. "But you know I never interfere if it can be helped."

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"But it can't be helped now. We're booked for a licking to-morrow, just because Wharton can't get on with Smithy. He's playing a scholarship kid in his place—that little bouncer Penfold. I don't say Penfold isn't a good kid, but you know that he's nothing beside the Bouncer—I mean beside Smithy."

"It's a question of filling Nugent's place," explained Bulstrode. "All the team really think that Vernon-Smith ought to have it—and Wharton's given it to Penfold—a kid no older than the fags in the Third."

"That seems rather steep," said Wingate. "Fetch Wharton and Vernon-Smith here, and we'll see about it."

"Trot them in!" called out Bolsover major. And half a dozen fellows rushed off for Vernon-Smith and Harry Wharton. The two juniors entered in a few minutes. Vernon-Smith was cool and quiet; Harry Wharton was flushed, and evidently angry. He had not been able to refuse to come when the captain of the school sent for him, but he came reluctantly.

"Oh, here you are," said Wingate. "You want to play for the Remove to-morrow, Smith?"

"I should like to," said Vernon-Smith modestly. "I think I could do better for the Form than young Penfold. A lot of the fellows think the same."

"You've put in Wharton instead of Smith, Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Why?"

"I think he's a better man."

Wingate wrinkled his brows.

"You think that kid Penfold is a better man than Smith?"

he said.

"Yes."

"I don't understand you. I've seen Smith play, and he's as good a player as any in the Lower School. He's as good as most in the Fifth, for that matter. Penfold is a good kid, but he's merely a fag. You can't think he's up to Smith's form," said Wingate sharply.

"Perhaps not. But there are other points. He will do as he's told, and Smith won't! He will let the other players have a chance at the ball, and Smith will never part with it when he's once got hold of it," said Harry.

"H'm! Something in that!" said Wingate. "A selfish player is worse than a bad player in footer. That's a rotten bad fault, Smith."

"I'm willing to let the whole Form judge," said Vernon-Smith meekly. "I try to do my best, I'm willing to promise to give Wharton every satisfaction. I don't say I've not got my faults, but a fellow can't do more than his best. I admit that I've been a bit too keen on scoring myself, at times—but I've seen the fault, and I've tried to get out of it. I think I've got out of it. The other fellows think so too. That's all I can say."

"Well, that's reasonable," said Wingate, turning to Wharton again. "Smith promises good behaviour in that line, Wharton. Are you willing to give him a chance?"

"No!"

"Why not?"

"There are a lot of other reasons."

"Give me some of them."

Wharton bit his lip. He did not like being called over the coals like this before the Form; but there was no help for it.

"They're all personal reasons, I think," said Vernon-Smith, with angelic patience. "Wharton doesn't like me personally."

"That's got nothing to do with footer," said Wingate.

"That's what we all say!" howled Bolsover.

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up!" roared Wingate. "Don't yell into my study as if it were a giddy footer ground. Silence! Now, Wharton, what have you got to say?"

"I say that Smith is a cad, and I can't trust him. He plotted against Frank Nugent, and got him sacked from Greyfriars. Now he's asking for Nugent's place in the eleven. He sha'n't have it, so long as I'm skipper."

Wingate's face grew hard.

"You're getting off-side," he said sharply. "Nugent was sacked from Greyfriars because he broke bounds, and I myself found him hanging round a pub, and he couldn't explain what he was there for."

"Smith got him there by a trick."

"Is that so, Smith?"

"Of course it isn't," said the Bouncer. "Wharton's potty on that point. He won't admit that his pal was in the wrong; he thinks that the Head and all the prefects are a set of fools twisted round my finger. It's not very complimentary to you, Wingate, or to you, Courtney. You two know how much I had to do with your finding Nugent at the Cross Keys."

"You had nothing whatever to do with it," said Courtney.

"Nothing at all," said Wingate. "You have no right to make such an accusation against Smith, Wharton. You haven't an atom of proof, and there's not an atom of probability either. You are accusing Smith of being something not much short of a criminal, and you ask us to take your bare word for it. I must say I'm disgusted."

"So are we all!" roared Bolsover.

"Shut up, Bolsover. Wharton, I think that, if you can't get over this dislike you have for Smith, you'd better keep quiet about it, and not throw out accusations and insinuations you can't support. You may find yourself in trouble if you're not

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careful. We haven't any libel law at Greyfriars, but we have a birch!"

"Hear, hear!" came from the passage.

Wharton turned crimson.

"You seem to have an idea that Smith is some giddy Machiavellian plotter," said Wingate. "The sooner you get that fool idea out of your head, the better. Now, my advice to you is, stop all this rot, and play Smith in the eleven. If he turns out badly, it will justify you—but he's entitled to a chance. Because he was a selfish player on one or two occasions, is not a reason for barring him out of Form matches all the time—especially when a crowd of your Form want him to play."

Wharton bit his lip, and was silent.

"Now that's my advice," said Wingate, in a more conciliatory tone. "Smith promises to do his best, and to give you satisfaction. Give him a chance."

Wharton did not speak.

"Well, what are you going to do?" demanded Wingate.

"I can't play Smithy!"

"I've told you that I think you should play him," said Wingate sternly.

"I'm sorry."

"You refuse to play him?"

"Yes!"

Wharton's reply came out steady and clear; and there was a hush in the study. Wingate had not commanded, he had only given advice; but the advice of the captain of the school was equivalent to a command when it was addressed to a junior. That Wharton would have the temerity to stand out against the Captain of Greyfriars, even the Bouncer had not believed. But it was so! A spot of red glowed in Wingate's cheeks, and he seemed at a loss for words. He was very angry, and he was wounded, too.

"Order him, Wingate!" came a voice from the passage.

"You're captain of the giddy school, and Head of the Games, ain't you?"

"If I order you, Wharton—"

"If you order me to play Vernon-Smith, I shall resign the captaincy of the Form eleven, and stand out of the match!" said Harry Wharton.

Wingate compressed his lips.

"This obstinacy won't do you any good, in the long run, Wharton," he said. "I sha'n't order you to play Vernon-Smith. It hasn't come to that. But I advise you very strongly to play him; I think he ought to be played. That ought to be enough for you, I think."

"Quite enough," said Courtney sharply.

Wharton shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Wingate," he said.

"There's nothing to be sorry about. Play him!"

"I can't!"

"Very well. I've said all I have to say—at present," said Wingate, with some significance on the last word. "Get out of my study!"

Harry Wharton walked out of the captain's study. The juniors made way for him to pass, but deep groans and loud hisses followed him as he went. He went with head erect, apparently hearing nothing—at all events, heeding nothing. But even his best friends were silent now—even Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull could not help thinking that he had carried resistance too far! As for Bolsover & Co., they were furious.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bulstrode's Idea!

JOHNNY BULL looked into No. 1 Study later in the evening. Harry Wharton was doing his preparation, and there was a frown upon his brow as he bent over his work. He looked up rather wearily as Bull stopped in the doorway of the study.

"Hullo! Are you going to begin, too?" he asked.

"Begin what?" asked Bull.

"Advice!"

"Have you been getting it from the others?" asked Bull.

"Heaps of it," said Wharton grimly. "Even Bob Cherry and Inky think I had better give in, and play Smithy."

"What does Linley think?"

"He's the only chap who agrees with me, so far as I can see. He knows the Bouncer as well as I do, you see."

Johnny Bull paused.

"I know it would be rather a pill to swallow, playing Smithy after what's been said," he remarked. "But—I think I'd do it, Wharton." Harry shook his head. "Wingate has said so, you know. There isn't much use in backing up against the captain of the school. If he chose to order you—"

"I told him what I should do, if he did that."

"You couldn't resign the captaincy just before the match, and stand out of it, Harry. It would be giving the game away to the Fifth."

"I should do it."

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT."

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"The Form would take it very badly."

"The Form can go and eat coke."

"Well, if that's how you look at it——"

"That is how I look at it."

Johnny Bull coughed.

"Well, I wish you'd play him, that's all," he said. "It would save a heap of trouble."

"It would cause more trouble than it would save, in the long run," said Harry. "I know Smithy. This is only a beginning. Besides, he's not going to have Nugent's place, after getting Nugent sacked."

"There will be trouble in the team. There's a meeting going on in Vernon-Smith's study now, and some of the team are there."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"It doesn't make any difference," he said.

"You won't play him?"

"No."

"Are you quite sure about his getting old Franky sacked?" said Johnny Bull, hesitatingly. "There isn't a bit of proof on the point, you know."

"There's proof enough for me."

"The fellows don't think so. And they say that even if it was so, that's no reason for leaving a good player out of the team."

Wharton made a weary gesture.

"It's no good, Johnny. I'm going to leave him out. I wouldn't play him if the Head himself were to ask me."

Johnny Bull whistled.

"Then I suppose there's no more to be said?"

"Nothing at all."

"All serene!"

Johnny Bull went down the passage towards his study with a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow. He wondered whether Wharton was right. True, the Bounder had declared that if No. 1 Study stood out against him, he would drive them from Greyfriars. But could he be held responsible for the expulsion of Frank Nugent? As Bull passed Vernon-Smith's study he heard many voices within; the Bounder's meeting was going strong. Johnny Bull walked on to No. 14, his own study, which he shared with Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. Fish was there, and he was looking very dissatisfied.

"Hullo!" said Bull. "Anything wrong with you, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish grunted.

"Nope. There's something wrong with Wharton, I guess. I've offered him my services for the Fifth-Form match to-morrow."

Johnny Bull chuckled.

"And he's declined?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Well, what the dickens did you expect?" demanded Johnny Bull.

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess I expected even Wharton to know a good thing when he saw it," he said. "I guess I was going to show the fellows how we play footer over there. Wharton makes me tired. He says I'm not up to form for the match."

"Quite right, too. You can't play for toffee," said Johnny Bull, with friendly candour.

"I guess you're as potty as Wharton," said Fisher T. Fish, exasperated. "You should see us play footer over there!"

"Over where?"

"In the Yu-nited States."

"Where's that?" asked Bull, innocently.

"Where's that?" roared Fish, wrathfully.

"Yes. Is it in Canada?"

That question was too much for the American junior. He went out of the study, and slammed the door with a terrific slam. Johnny Bull chuckled, and sat down to his perparation. But he had not got very far with it when the door opened again. It was Bulstrode who came in.

Bulstrode was looking very thoughtful, and somewhat unquiet in mind. Johnny Bull knew that he had just come from the meeting in the Bounder's study.

"Can I speak to you, Bull?" Bulstrode asked.

"Go ahead."

"We've been talking things over——"

"I know you have," said Johnny Bull grimly. "In Smithy's study."

Bulstrode flushed.

"Well, there's no harm in that, is there?" he exclaimed.

"None at all. Pile in."

"We've been talking over Wharton's pigheadedness. He's standing out against Wingate, the Head of the Games," said Bulstrode. "Lots of the fellows don't feel inclined to back him up in doing that. You don't yourself, for instance?"

"I'm backing him up."

"But you don't approve?"

Bull was silent.

"Well, we've come to a scheme," said Bulstrode. "Suppose the members of the team tell Wharton that they won't play unless he does as Wingate wants him to?"

"Impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?"

"It would be chucking away the match to the Fifth."

"The match will be chucked away to the Fifth, anyway, if he plays a dissatisfied team, and a young mug like Penfold instead of Smithy."

"We'll all do our best," said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I'm not going to do my best to back up a pigheaded fellow," said Bulstrode sulkily. "If I were still captain of the Remove, I should play Smithy."

"But you're not captain of the Remove," said Johnny Bull practically.

"I was, though, till Wharton hoofed me out!" said Bulstrode, frowning.

Johnny Bull compressed his lips. That had always rankled more or less with Bulstrode. When he was let alone, he seemed to forget about it, and he always backed up his Form-captain loyally enough. But it was easy for Vernon-Smith to play on that string, and excite all Bulstrode's old sulky jealousy.

"Well, that's an old story now," said Johnny Bull pacifically. "Is somebody trying to make trouble between you and Wharton?"

Bulstrode flushed again.

"Somebody may be trying to point out to me that I'm expected to make a stand in this matter," he replied. "I think I am—and I'm going to do it. I want to know whether you will back us up in making Wharton toe the line?"

"You couldn't do that."

"We can if we all stand together. You know jolly well that you think that Wharton ought to give in. Well, let's make him give in."

"How do you propose to do that?"

"You back us up, and we'll all resign from the team unless he toes the line."

Johnny Bull shook his head.

"You won't?" demanded Bulstrode, frowning.

"No!"

"It would bring him to his senses."

"I'm backing him up."

"Against the whole Form, eh?"

"Well, yes, if necessary."

"Look here, Bull——"

"No good talking!" said Johnny Bull decisively. "I'm backing Wharton up. And I'd advise you to think twice about resigning from the team. If you did, Wharton would never trust you again."

"Hang Wharton!"

"I mean, you'd never have a chance to play again," said Bull. "Not so long as Wharton is captain of the Form, at all events."

Bulstrode grunted.

"He mayn't be captain of the Form so very much longer," he said. "I can tell you that the fellows are getting pretty sick of him. If I were to stand against him now in a new election, I believe I should bag enough votes to oust him."

Johnny Bull frowned.

"You wouldn't bag mine!" he said. "I suppose Smithy has promised to back you up if you do that?"

"Yes."

"The cad!"

"I don't see that he's a cad. He's got no chance of playing for the Form while Wharton is captain."

"He's using you as a catspaw!" said Johnny Bull scornfully.

"If you got in as captain of the Form, you'd stay in as long as it pleased him, and then you'd get the boot. If he could give Wharton a fall, he could jolly easily give you one afterwards, when it suited him."

"Oh, rot!" said Bulstrode—uneasily. "I don't believe he's such a cad as that. It seems to me that he's in the right all along the line in his trouble with No. 1 Study. Wharton has no right to expect us to back up his whims and fancies, and I tell you plainly that I'm not going to do it, for one."

"Look here, Bulstrode," said Johnny Bull, quietly. "I can see that Vernon-Smith has been getting at you and talking you over. If you desert our side, and join that cad, you'll be a rotten traitor—a rotten renegade!"

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"I don't want any of that talk from you!" he exclaimed furiously. "I'm going to do what I think best, and you can go and eat coke."

"You're letting Smithy use you as a catspaw, to get Wharton out of the captaincy," said Bull, getting angry too. "You ought to have more sense!"

"If you want a thick ear——" bawled Bulstrode.

"Well, I do, if you can give me one!" said Johnny Bull, jumping up.

"I'll jolly soon do that!" roared Bulstrode, rushing at him.

In a moment more they were grasping one another, and hammering furiously.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER, Harry Wharton's Resolve.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"What's the row?"
"Bogud, it's a battle royal!"
"Stop it, you asses!"
"Go it, Bulstrode!"
"Pile in, Johnny!"
"Hurray!"

The terrific uproar in No. 14 had brought a crowd of Removites along the passage. The door was flung open, and the fellows crowded round the doorway, looking in with great interest and keenness. Bulstrode and Johnny Bull were fighting furiously, with plenty of energy and very little science. Two chairs had been knocked over by the trampling combatants, and the table was rocking. Books and papers were scattered on the floor. The inkpot was on its side, and a steady stream of ink was flowing over the table and dropping on the carpet.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Biff, biff, biff!
"Oh! Ow! Yah!"
"What's it all about?" roared Bob Cherry. "Stop it, you dumplings!"

"Let 'em alone, Bob Cherry!"
"Let 'em have it out! Go it, Bulstrode!"
"Go it, Johnny! Give him beans."
"The beanfulness is terrific!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Tramp, tramp, tramp!
"I'll smash you!" gasped Bulstrode.
"Smash away!" panted Johnny Bull. "It seems to me that you're getting most of the smashing; but peg away—don't mind me."

"Go it!"
"Hurray!"
"Break away, my dear fellows," said Lord Mauleverer. "Why don't you have the gloves on? You'll hurt one another, you know."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton pushed his way through the crowd.
"Stop it!" he exclaimed, wrenching the combatants apart by main force. "Now, what is all this row about?"

"Mind your own business!" roared Bulstrode. But he did not come on again. His nose was streaming red, and one of his eyes was closed. He was not sorry for the interruption. Johnny Bull panted.

"The rotter is talking about going over to the enemy," he exclaimed. "If he does, I'll give him the licking of his life."
"I'll do as I like!" Bulstrode bawled. "And I'll lick you afterwards!"

Johnny Bull made a forward movement, but Wharton pushed him back.

"Cheese it, Johnny!" he said. "He's not up to your form. Let the silly ass gas if he wants to."

"The gasfulness of the esteemed Bulstrode is terrific."
"Well, I don't mind," said Johnny Bull, dropping his hands. "But I mean what I say, Bulstrode. If you go over to the enemy, look out for squalls. That's all."

"I'll jolly soon show you whether I care for you or not, Johnny Bull!" said Bulstrode furiously. And he strode out of the study.

"Good fight spoiled," growled Stott. "Bull would have been licked in another two minutes if Wharton hadn't interfered."

"Licked!" said Johnny Bull. "If you want to see me licked, Stott, old man, just step into the study and take it on."
Stott backed away. He didn't want that at all.

"Yes, shut up, Stott," said Bob Cherry. "You know you're talking rot. Buzz off, you chaps, while we bandage up the dead and wounded."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The juniors dispersed, the fight being over. Wharton and Bob Cherry and Inky remained in the study with Johnny Bull. Johnny was dabbing his nose with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief was growing very red.

"Put a key down your back," suggested Bob Cherry. "That may stop the bleeding. It often does."

"Grrroo!" said Bull, dabbing away.

Bob Cherry jerked the key out of the door, and jammed it down the inside of Johnny Bull's collar. Bull gave a roar.

"You silly ass! Yow! You're scraping the skin off my back! Yah!"

"That's better than bleeding like a stuck pig, old chap," said Bob Cherry consolingly.

"Ow! Get it out again, you ass! It's jammed against my beastly backbone," howled the unfortunate junior.

"Sorry. It's out of reach."

"Oh, you fathead!"

"Well, I call that ungrateful," said Bob Cherry, in great disgust. "I'm trying to stop the effusion of gore, and—"

"Yah!"

Johnny Bull began to tear off his upper garments to get the key out. The red stream ran down unchecked from his nose, and stained his shirt. Bulstrode had had the worst of the combat, but Johnny Bull had by no means gone unscathed.

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"But what was it all about?" asked Harry Wharton, when Johnny Bull had recovered the key at last and hurled it into a corner of the study.

"Bulstrode's going over to the enemy," said Johnny Bull. "Smithy's been talking him over. Bulstrode's getting his back up once more about the old story that he was captain of the Remove once upon a time, and thinks he ought to be so still. Smithy's working him up to break with us in the hope of getting the captaincy back again."

"The Remove can have him, if they want him," exclaimed Harry.

Bob Cherry chuckled.
"That's the trouble," he remarked. "They don't want him. The Form seems to be getting its back up over this affair of Vernon-Smith; but if there were an election, I'm pretty certain Wharton would come out on top."

"The topfulness would be terrific."

"All the same, we've got to reckon with Bulstrode now," said Johnny Bull. "As a matter of fact, Wharton, you've put a weapon into their hands by sticking out against Wingate."

"Well, we've jawed that out once," said Harry.
"All serene! I'm not beginning again. Buzz off, you chaps, and let me get my prep. done." And with a crimson handkerchief in one hand, and an occasional dab at his nose, Johnny Bull went on with his work.

Harry Wharton left the study, his brows contracted. He felt that his own friends were against him in his firm decision, but the thought of Frank Nugent and his wrongs was in his mind, and he felt that he could not give way. Fisher T. Fish met him in the passage, and dabbed him with his bony forefinger in the objectionable way he had.

"I guess you'd better change your mind, Wharton, and play me to-morrow," he suggested.

"Oh, rats!" growled Harry.

"But I guess—"

Wharton did not wait to hear what Fisher T. Fish guessed. He pushed past the American junior and went to his own study. He closed the door, and stood for some time in gloomy thought, staring into the dying fire.

"I'll stick to it," he muttered at last. "I'll see it through. I won't give way an inch!"

Right or wrong, that was Harry Wharton's resolve; and right or wrong, he did not budge from it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER, Left in the Lurch.

THE next day was Wednesday, a half-holiday. The Form match was in the afternoon, and the Remove were looking forward to it very keenly. The Fifth Form at Greyfriars, as a rule, disdained to play the junior Forms. They had regular matches with the Shell, but lower than the Shell they did not deign to go. But they had played and been licked by the Remove once, and they were keen to avenge that defeat, and Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, had asked for another match. The Remove was only too willing to play them to prove that the previous result had not been a mere fluke, and that they were quite up to playing a senior Form.

Under normal conditions Harry Wharton's eleven would probably have been fully a match for the Fifth team, but under present conditions the result was more than doubtful. Nugent, one of the best forwards in the eleven, was gone, and the team was in a discontented and dissatisfied frame of mind generally. Three members, at least, were on the verge of mutiny, and several more were very much against their skipper in spirit, if not in words.

There were no signs of trouble in Harry Wharton's face that morning, however. He was a little more silent than usual, perhaps, but that was all.

If he lacked confidence in his team he did not say so. He went on his way, and made no sign.

But Bolsover & Co. were not done with him. His refusal to take Wingate's advice had to some extent taken the wind out of their sails. But they were not finished yet. When Wharton sat down at the breakfast-table he found a card on his plate, bearing the inscription in Bolsover major's sprawling hand:

"PLAY SMITHY!"

Wharton snapped the card into halves, and tossed them under the table.

In the Form-room a note was passed along the desks to Wharton, who glanced at it as it reached him. It bore the written question:

"Why don't you play Smithy?"

If he had not been in the Form-room under Mr. Quelch's eye Harry Wharton would probably have replied to the question in forcible terms. As it was, he threw the note under the desk, and sat silent.

After morning lessons were over the Remove talked nothing

but football. They talked it in whispers at dinner, and after dinner they gathered in groups in the passages and the Close and talked it. And the burden of their talk was whether Harry Wharton would give way at the last moment and play Vernon-Smith in the Form eleven.

The kick-off was timed early, for the November afternoons were drawing in. Harry Wharton came downstairs in his football clothes, with an overcoat and a muffler on. He strode away towards the footer ground with Johnny Bull and Mark Linley and Tom Brown and Inky. The other players gathered there. The Fifth Formers were not yet on the ground. Coker, Potter, and Greene were there, but the captain and the rest of the team were not in sight yet. Horace Coker nodded genially to the Removites.

"Ready for your licking?" he asked.

"Quite ready," said Harry Wharton. "Are you playing for the Fifth, Coker?"

"Yes, rather," said Coker.

"Poor old Fifth!"

"Eh?"

"They don't give themselves a chance," said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head. "If they're hard up for a man, Coker, why don't they put in a Second Form fag? He wouldn't do them so much damage, at any rate."

"Why, you—you—stuttered Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene chuckled as well as the Removites. Coker's football was very satisfactory to Coker, and after a match he always had ample reasons to give why he had not taken goals. Blundell never played him in an important match, but Blundell thought even Coker was good enough for the Remove. Coker was persuaded that Blundell had put him in order to make quite sure of beating the junior Form.

"What are you cackling at, you silly asses?" demanded Coker, glaring at his two hilarious chums.

"Was I cackling?" asked Potter innocently.

"Yes, you were," roared Coker.

"Ahem! I was thinking how blue those kids will look when they see you kicking goals," said Potter pacifically.

"Oh, is that it?" growled Coker suspiciously.

"Blue!" yelled Bob Cherry. "We shall look blue, and pink, and maroon, and green, and every other colour in the giddy rainbow, I think, if we see Coker kick a goal! Why, Coker couldn't kick a goalpost!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker snorted, and walked away. He was not equal to the Removites in a slanging match, but he resolved to show them something when the game started.

Nearly every member of the Remove had gathered to see the match. There was an air of expectation about some of them which was not wholly accounted for by the approaching game. Harry Wharton could see that some of the fellows were expecting something to happen, and he suspected one more of the Bouncer's endless tricks. But he did not suspect what it was.

Vernon-Smith was in the crowd. He was not in footer rig, and it looked as if he had given up all idea of playing. Bolsover major and Snoop and the rest were with him. They gave a groan in chorus for Harry Wharton, which the Remove captain affected not to hear. They could not groan him out of the path he had chosen to follow.

It wanted ten minutes to time for kick-off, and Blundell and the rest of the Fifth team were seen coming down to the ground. Bulstrode, Russell, and Morgan came over to where Harry Wharton was standing with his chums. Russell and Morgan were looking troubled, and Bulstrode very sullen.

Wharton nodded to them with more cheerfulness than he was feeling. Although he would not show it, he felt very deeply the unpopularity he had earned of late. It was bitter to him to see his old friends turning against him.

"It's close on time now, Wharton," said Bulstrode abruptly.

"Yes. Kipping afternoon for the match," said Harry.

"The weather's all right," said Bulstrode, his tone plainly implying that he did not consider that everything else was all right.

Wharton merely nodded.

"But the team isn't," added Bulstrode.

"What's wrong?"

"Do you think that kid Penfold is up to playing the Fifth?"

"He's the best man I could get for the vacancy."

"I don't think so."

Wharton bit his lip. It was on his tongue to tell Bulstrode to mind his own business, but he kept back the words.

"Do you think Trounce would do better?" he asked.

"No."

"Then we must be satisfied with Pen."

"What about Smithy?"

Harry Wharton made an impatient gesture.

"Don't begin that again, for goodness' sake," he said.

"That's all been thrashed out and finished long ago."

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THE GEM LIBRARY
—Every Wednesday—

II

OUR COMPANION PAPERS

II

THE PENNY POPULAR
—Every Friday—

"But we must begin it again," said Bulstrode. "The whole Form thinks that Vernon-Smith ought to be in the team."

"We think so," said Morgan.

"I've said all I have to say on that subject," said Harry briefly.

"Well, what I want to know is what are you going to say to the Form if the Fifth beat us?" Bulstrode demanded angrily.

"I don't think they'll beat us, if we play up well. But if they're the better team, they deserve to win."

"They needn't be the better team. You've left out a first-rate player to put that kid in."

"That's settled."

"You mean that you'll risk throwing away the match rather than put your personal enmity into your pocket and play Smithy?"

"I won't play Smithy under any circumstances."

"That's your last word?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Russell, "I consider——"

"It's settled, I tell you," said Wharton, frowning. "If the Remove don't want me for Form-captain they can turn me out. I shan't say a word. But while I'm skipper Vernon-Smith won't play for the Form."

"It's too late for all that," said Bulstrode. "We're just going to play. We can't swap horses in crossing the stream. Play Smithy, and settle that matter afterwards."

"I won't play him."

"Then you won't play me!" said Bulstrode, between his teeth.

"What!"

"I resign!"

"And I resign!" said Russell, flushing.

"And so do I, look you!" said Morgan.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"You resign—just when the match is going to start!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. If you won't play Smithy the game's as good as lost: and I for one don't want to be in a team that's licked before it starts."

"Same here!" said Russell.

"You can't resign!" exclaimed Wharton, hotly. "You can't be cads enough to leave the Form eleven in the lurch."

"Play Smithy, then."

"I can't—and won't!"

"Then you're to blame, not us. We're willing to let the Head of the Games judge!" said Bulstrode. "But one thing's certain; you play Smithy, or we resign."

"I won't play Smithy!"

"Then we resign! Come on, you fellows."

And Bulstrode turned and walked off the ground, followed by Morgan and Russell. He left consternation behind him among the Remove players.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

NIL Desperandum.

B LUNDELL, the captain of the Fifth, lounged over towards Wharton. He nodded carelessly to the Remove skipper. Blundell did not think the match a very important one, and his manner showed as much.

"We're ready, if you kids are," he said.

Wharton bit his lip.

"Would you mind waiting a few minutes?" he asked. "I haven't quite got my team in order yet. I'm sorry."

Blundell yawned.

"Oh, all right," he said. "Tell us when you're ready."

"I won't keep you long."

Blundell nodded and strolled away. He joined Coker and Potter and Greene, and the four talked together and grinned. Their impression was that the junior team had had a bad attack of nerves, and felt doubtful about coming up to the scratch.

Harry Wharton looked round at the gloomy faces of his chums. Bulstrode's sudden stroke had completely dismayed them.

That Bulstrode was becoming a turncoat, and going over to the enemy, they guessed, but they had not expected him to play the renegade in precisely this manner. To leave the team in the lurch on the eve of a specially hard match was unheard of.

"Well, we're dished now, and no mistake!" muttered Tom Brown.

"Dished and done!" said Bob Cherry dismally. "Won't the Fifth crew when they've wiped up the ground with us?"

"The wipefulness will be terrific," said Horace Jamset Ram Singh, with unusual gloom in his dusky countenance.

"Terrific isn't the word!" said Johnny Bull glumly.

"We've got three places to fill!" said Harry Wharton.

"You fellows going to make any suggestions?"

The fellows looked at one another. They all had suggestions to make; but they were very doubtful about how Wharton would receive them.

"Ahem!" said Tom Brown.
 "You see—" murmured Johnny Bull.
 "It's like this—" said Newland.
 "Well, speak out, for goodness' sake," said Wharton irritably. His temper had been sorely tried, and there was excuse for his irritation, but it was certainly ill-timed.
 "Well, I'll speak out, then," said Newland tartly. "I think Vernon-Smith ought to be played."

"I won't listen to that."
 "Harry, old man," said Bob Cherry persuasively, "I don't like knocking under to that awful cad any more than you do. But we must beat the Fifth!"
 "We'll beat them without the Bounder, or not beat them at all."

"Look here—" began Tom Brown warmly.
 Wharton interrupted him.
 "I won't listen to any suggestion for playing Vernon-Smith," he said. "That point's settled and done with."
 "I'm willing to get out, if that's any good," said Penfold timidly.

"It's not any good, and you're not going to get out," said Wharton.

"Penfold ought to get out, and Smithy ought to be in," said Tom Brown sharply. "This carrying personal quarrels into the football eleven has gone too far. I don't think you ought to set yourself up against the whole Form, Wharton."

"I've said my say; you know it by heart by this time."
 "Well, I think you're in the wrong; and if you don't give in—" The New Zealand junior paused, biting his lip.

"Are you going to desert the team at the last moment, like Bulstrode?" asked Harry Wharton bitterly.

"You know I'm not," said Tom Brown savagely. "I'll stick to the team, so long as there is a team to stick to. But you're in the wrong, and you'll be throwing the match away."

"You others think the same, I suppose?" said Wharton.

"I must say I do," said Newland.
 "And I!" said Bob Cherry. "You know I'm your pal, Harry, and I back you up. But I think you're wrong about this."

"What about you, Mark?"
 Mark Linley shook his head.

"I stick to Wharton," he said. "The Bounder has planned all this—he's talked Bulstrode into playing the traitor, and if he wins this point he's got more trouble in store. It's better to resist the beginnings; that's an old saying, and a true one."

Wharton gave the Lancashire lad a grateful look. Mark Linley, quiet fellow as he was, had read the Bounder through and through, and he was not to be deceived. But to the other fellows Wharton's attitude seemed nothing but unreasonable obstinacy carried to an absurd excess.

"Give way to the majority for once, Harry!" advised Bob Cherry.

Wharton shook his head.
 "Well, if you won't, you won't," said Bob, as cheerfully as he could. "Who are you going to play instead of Bulstrode and Morgan and Russell?"

Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought. Blundell called over to him:

"Let us know when you're ready, kids."

"Oh, all right."

"We don't want to stand here all the afternoon, you know," the Fifth Form captain added sarcastically.

"Ask Gosling for some of his whisky-and-soda, and get a little Dutch courage," suggested Coker. And the Fifth-Formers laughed.

"We won't keep you waiting long," said Harry.

"Hallo, hallo! Here's Morgan coming back!" said Bob Cherry. "What do you want, Morgan, you blessed Welsh rabbit?"

Morgan was very red.

"Are you going to play the Fifth all the same, Wharton, took you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Harry shortly.

"Three men short?" asked the Welsh junior.

"I'm going to fill their places."

"You mean to play?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then I'll play if you like," said Morgan. "Bulstrode said that if we resigned you'd have to play Smithy or chuck the match."

"I shall do neither."

"Then I'll play."

Wharton hesitated. It was on his lips to refuse to take Morgan back into the team; but Bob Cherry pressed his arm.

"For goodness' sake don't get your ears up now, Harry," he whispered anxiously. "We're booked for a licking as it is. Don't make it so that we're licked by fifty-nine goals to nil! Please!"

"Very well, you can play, Morgan," said Wharton shortly.

"Now, we want two others. Go and tell Treluce and Leigh that I want them."

Treluce and Leigh came up eagerly enough. They were both passably good players, and at all events could fill the places in the team with some credit.

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 A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

"I want you two for the match," said Wharton. "Get into your things."

"Good!"

And the two latest recruits proceeded to change.

"Ready yet?" yawned Blundell.

"One minute!" said Wharton.

"Oh, all serene. Please take your time."

Walker of the Sixth, who was going to referee the match, was on the ground, looking very impatient. Walker was a Sixth-Former and a prefect, and he did not like being kept waiting by fags.

"If you kids aren't ready, you'd better run away and play," said Walker tartly. "What do you mean by bringing fellows out here and keeping 'em standing like a lot of giddy hens in a farmyard?"

"It's all right," said Wharton in a worried tone. "Keep your wool on, Walker. Some of my team have got their backs up; but we're ready now."

"Time you were!" growled Walker.

Treluce and Leigh joined the Remove players, and they went into the field. Russell came running across to the team as they went on.

"You're playing, Wharton?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Then if you like I'll—"

"Too late!"

"Oh!"

Bulstrode was standing with Vernon-Smith and Co. There was no sign of repentance in his face. He looked on with a scowl as the Remove players lined up.

"They're going to play!" he said between his teeth. "Well, they can get licked without me in the team! I'm not out for lickings."

"Not much doubt about their getting licked!" remarked Vernon-Smith with a grin. "The Remove have never put such a rotten team into the field."

"Hardly ever!" grinned Bolsover major.

"Remove's kicking off," remarked Snoop. "There they go! Now look out for fireworks! The Fifth will wipe up the ground with them!"

"Yes, rather."

The Form match had commenced. Vernon-Smith and Co. looked on with keen interest; and so did the rest of the Remove.

There was not a Remove present who did not expect to see the Form eleven beaten, and they laid the blame for the defeat, in advance, upon the shoulders of one fellow—Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Badly Beaten.

THE ball was in the Remove half from the start. The Fifth attacked hotly, and pressed the attack home. Within five minutes of the whistle, Blundell and Co. were swarming round the Remove goal, and piling in shots. Newland, in goal, did his best, and he received shouts of encouragement from the fellows round the field.

"Buck up, Sheeny!"

"Well saved!"

Then the leather whizzed in from Blundell's foot, and Newland could not save it, and it lodged in the net.

There was a roar.

"Goal!"

Bolsover major glanced up at the clock tower.

"Six minutes!" he said, with a grin. "That looks lively for the Remove, doesn't it?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"It's all over, bar shouting, already," he remarked.

That was the impression of most of the Remove fellows, too. Newland threw out the ball with a rueful look. He had done his best, but he was hardly up to stopping the shooting of the Fifth. The backs had done well, but the halves were very weak.

Wharton was frowning as he went back to the centre of the field. He knew, as well as anybody else, that the team would have been stronger with Bulstrode, Russell, and Tom Brown in the half-line, and Vernon-Smith forward. But it was too late to think of that now, even if he had wanted to change his plans, and he did not.

The Remove kicked off again, and again the ball came into the Remove half with the Fifth forwards. The Remove forwards were in good form, but the halves failed to "feed" them, and the backs were overborne by the Fifth-Form rush. The goal was attacked again in a few minutes. But this time Newland succeeded in getting the ball out to Johnny Bull, who cleared away to midfield, and then the forwards had a chance. Harry Wharton and Co. were on the ball, and they sent it up the field in fine style.

Whiz!

The goalie of the Fifth made a jump at the ball, but he jumped a fraction of a second too late.

Whiz!

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Whiz!

The goalie of the Fifth made a jump at the ball, but he jumped a fraction of a second too late.

It was in the net!
Harry Wharton had put it there, and there was a loud cheer from the juniors.

"Goal!"
"Bravo, Wharton!"
Blundell sniffed.
"That was a fluke," he growled to Bland. "He won't do that any more, you bet your hat."
"I jolly nearly stopped him," said Coker. "If I hadn't slipped—"

"But you did slip," growled Blundell.
"I nearly had a goal myself," Coker remarked. "If I hadn't miskicked—"
"Oh, rats!"
"Look here, Blundell——" began Coker wrathfully.
"Line up!"

The score was one to one, and it fell to the Fifth to kick off. They kicked off, and followed it up with a rush.

Blundell was determined that the score should be well ahead for the Fifth before half-time, and he and his men played their hardest, putting forth more energy than they had considered necessary at first against a junior team.

The Remove fought hard, but the advantage was with the Fifth.

The senior team had the advantage of age and weight, and in previous matches the Remove had compensated for that by their splendid combination. Harry Wharton's team had been accustomed to work together like clockwork. But their combination was gone to the winds now; the team was at sixes and sevens. There were two fellows in it who had hardly any opportunity of practising with the others, and the whole of the half-way line was weak. The advantage the junior team had always possessed was gone, and they had to fight against superior force. The Fifth overbore them, and the struggle was soon hot again before the junior goal.

Newland, in goal, was playing up wonderfully now. He was all eyes and hands, seemingly, and as fast as the leather came in it found a foot or a hand or a head ready for it, and popped out again like a pip from an orange.

There came shouts of encouragement and admiration from the crowd round the field. Even fellows who did not like Newland shouted for him now.

"Bravo, Sheeny!"
"Good old Shylock!"
"Keep her moving!"
"Hurray!"

The backs cleared at last, and the struggle went surging away to midfield. The Remove forwards had a chance again, and they brought the ball right up to the Fifth goal, but the Fifth defence was sound. Coker, who was playing half, charged Bob Cherry, and greatly to his surprise found himself upon his back. He lay there in a state of great astonishment, while the ball was rushed on to goal, but it was cleared away, and went back to the junior half.

The first half ended with the score still one to one, and the players were breathing hard as they went off for the brief rest.

In the interval Wharton made a change in the team, putting Tom Brown into the half line, and Penfold forward. When the

game recommenced the advantage of the change was soon seen. The New Zealand junior was a host in himself, and Leigh and Trelue helped him as much as they could.

But as the second half wore on, it was only too clear that the junior team were out-classed.

The Remove forwards made desperate attempts to break away, but they seemed to be bottled up, and the struggle was almost all the time in the junior half.

Newland was found wanting at last, and the ball went whizzing in.

"Two up for the Fifth!" said Vernon-Smith. "They won't equalise again."

"No fear," said Bolsover major.
"Oh, this is rotten," growled Russell. "It was pretty rotten of us to keep out of the team, Bulstrode. I wish I were here at centre-half!"

Bulstrode grunted.
"I don't want to play a losing game, if you do," he said.

"The team was booked for a licking anyhow."
"Might have had a chance——"

"Oh, rats!"
"Might have had a chance with Smithy in front," said Bolsover major, "to say nothing of myself at back! Wharton's thrown the match away by his rotten obstinacy."

"There'll be trouble about it, too, afterwards," said Snoop.
"You can bet your hat on that!"

"I guess that Wharton ought to be ragged bald-headed," said Fisher T. Fish. "Plenty of good players outside the team, I guess. Myself, for instance——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, Fishy couldn't do much worse than some of them," said Vernon-Smith, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Look at Leigh—he falls down whenever a Fifth chap comes near him."

"Hullo! There goes another for the Fifth!"
Blundell had put the ball in again.

"Three up," growled Bulstrode.
Bolsover glanced at the clock in the tower.

"Ten minutes more to play," he said.
"They'll make it four!"

"Shouldn't wonder."
Temple, Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, were watching the match. They were smiling sweetly, not at all displeased to see their old conquerors taken down by the Fifth.

"Do you chaps call this football?" asked Temple, addressing the Boulder and Co.

"I don't," said Bulstrode. "I call it rotting."

"Oh, rather," said Dabney.
"Why, you could lick that team, Temple, with your lot!"

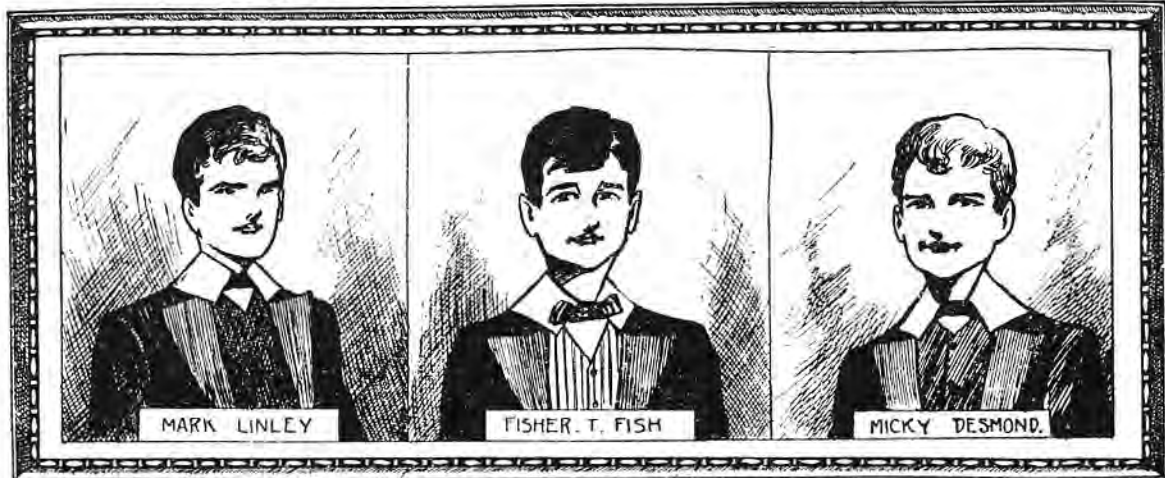
said Bolsover major.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar again.
"Goal!"

Potter had put the ball in the Remove goal.
"Four to one, and another minute to play," grinned Bolsover major. "The Form will feel proud of this giddy match—I don't think."

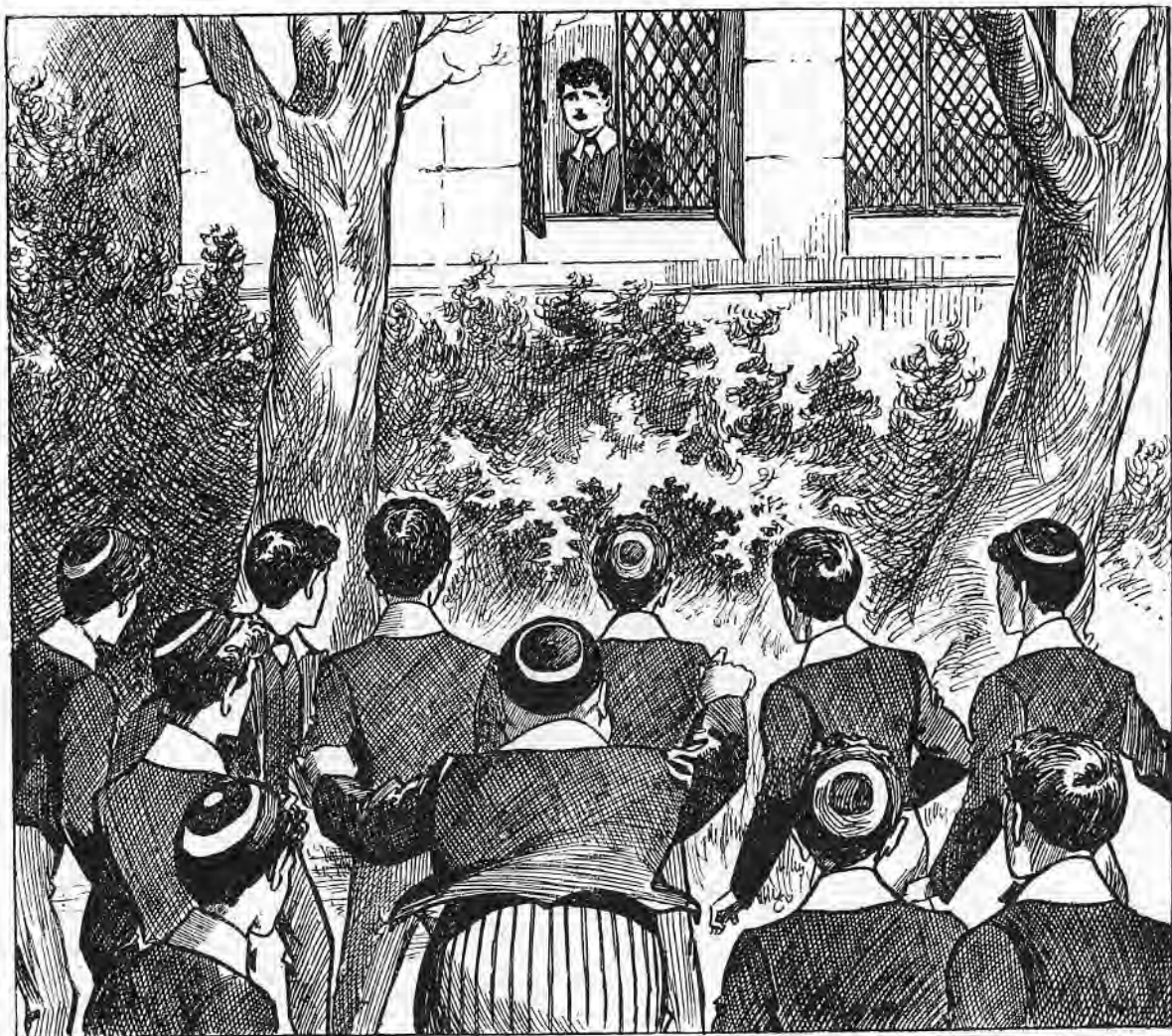
Nobody expected the score to be altered again, but it was. Almost on the stroke of time, Greene slammed the ball in, and

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No. 6.—WINGATE: HAZLEDENE: STOTT.

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A crowd of juniors halted under Harry Wharton's window. "Who is a disgrace to the Form?" Bolsover shouted. Then they yelled the answer altogether. "Wharton!" Harry Wharton drew back from the window. (See chapter 12.)

the Fifth had five to their score. Then Walker blew the whistle.

The Fifth were laughing as they walked off the field. They had intended to give the Remove a thorough drubbing. But they hardly expected to finish up with five goals to one. As for the Remove players, they went off the ground with hanging heads. It was seldom that the Remove received such a licking, even when playing a stronger team than themselves. They had, as the crowd remarked, bitten off more than they could chew, and this was the result. It was like their cheek to play a senior team at all, and they had got what they deserved.

The eleven were in a decidedly bad temper when they rubbed down and changed. Harry Wharton was silent and gloomy. He knew that the blame would be laid upon him, and that was not the worst of it. He felt that he deserved the blame to some extent.

"Oh, this is gorgeous, I don't think!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Rotten!" said Tom Brown.

"Beastly!" said Johnny Bull.

"This is what comes of playing kids like Penfold, instead of good men, look you," growled Morgan.

"I've done my best," said Dick Penfold, flushing.

"Oh, I know that; you've done your best," said Morgan.

"But Wharton didn't do his best—he might have played a good team instead of a rotten one! Five goals to one! Oh!"

"Beastly!"

"The Fifth will grow us to death over this!"

"We shall never hear the end of it!"

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"Five to one! Yah!"

"The yahfulness is terrific," murmured Inky.

Wharton set his lips.

He was prepared for the discontent of an unsuccessful eleven.

"It's no good grumbling now," he said quietly. "We hadn't a chance when Bulstrode and Russell stood out at the last moment."

"Are you going to lay it all on Bulstrode?" asked Morgan.

"You know jolly well why he stood out—because he knew the team was going to be licked, owing to our rotten captain."

"Hear, hear!" said half the team at once.

"All the same, there was no excuse for Bulstrode deserting at the last moment," said Johnny Bull, angrily. "He was a rotten cad to do it, and I'm going to tell him so."

"Oh, rats!"

"It was all Wharton's fault!"

"It was Wharton from beginning to end!"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

And so ended the match with the Fifth.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Ragged by the Form.

AFTER the match, the excitement in the Remove did not die away.

The juniors were angry, and, like the prophet of old, they considered that they did well to be angry.

The Form match had been lost, and lost by a margin that made them feel ridiculous. There would have been no disgrace

in being beaten by a senior team, but to be beaten by five goals to one was absurd.

Even that could not have been so had it could not have been avoided. But all the fellows felt that it could have been avoided.

The Remove would have to put a better team into the field. There wasn't a fellow in the Form who couldn't have made a better selection, according to his own views.

There was a great deal of sharp criticism of Bulstrode's conduct; and the names of cad and turncoat were freely applied to him.

But most of the fellows held the opinion that Bulstrode's desertion did not count for much in the actual result. If he had played, the margin of defeat would have been narrower. That was all. The Remove would have been defeated all the same. And there was something in Bulstrode's contention that he didn't want to play in a side that was booked for a licking owing to the obstinacy of its skipper.

The excitement on the subject grew, instead of diminishing.

The Fifth crowded over their victory, and crowded in the most unpleasant way. They affected to look on the match as a joke, and they pretended that they had only been honouring the Remove in playing them at all. If they had chosen to exert themselves, they could have piled up twenty goals instead of five—so they said. Coker was especially eloquent on the subject. As a matter of fact, the Fifth-Form score would probably have been larger if Coker had not been playing for them. Coker had certainly spoiled several chances. But it was wonderful to hear Coker holding forth about what would have happened if he had put his beef into it.

Harry Wharton went to his study, and stayed there. Some of the fellows had taken to hissing him when he appeared in the Close and the passages.

He was in his study, as dusk was falling, when a terrific uproar from the Close drew him to his window.

He looked out.

A crowd of juniors had halted under his window, and were looking up. Some of them were beating on old cans, and some flapping exercise-books together. There was a roar of voices. In the crowd he recognised more than half the defeated eleven.

"There he is!" roared Bolsover major, as Wharton looked out of the window.

The captain of the Remove drew back.

There was a yell.

"Yah!"

"Show yourself!"

"He's ashamed to be seen!"

"Yah!"

"Shame!"

Harry Wharton, with a crimson face, looked out of the window again.

"What's wanted?" he called out, in a steady voice.

"We've come to give you our opinion of you!" roared Bulstrode.

"Yah!"

"Who threw away the match?"

"Who got his team licked?"

"Who's a disgrace to the Form?"

Then they yelled the answer all together:

"Wharton!"

And a terrific banging of cans and exercise-books followed.

It was evidently a demonstration of the Form. They wanted their skipper to know their opinion of him. There wasn't much doubt about their opinion. The whole of Greyfriars could hear them.

Harry Wharton drew back from the window again. He had expected trouble, but not a ragging like this. His eyes were gleaming with anger. The Removites below the window roared as he drew back from sight.

"Yah!"

"Show yourself!"

"Look us in the face!" yelled Bolsover major.

"He's afraid!"

"Funk!"

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton came to the window again.

"You'd better clear off, you silly asses!" he exclaimed.

"Yah!"

"Who chuckled the match away?"

"Why didn't you play Smithy?"

"Jealous of him!"

"Yah!"

Wharton turned away from the window and sat down in the study. The Removites yelled again, but he did not go to the window. As soon as they were tired they would probably depart. But they showed no sign of getting tired yet. They banged, and roared, and yelled, evidently determined to make their Form-captain show himself again, and listen to the opprobrious epithets they had ready for him.

Whiz!

A cabbage in an advanced state of decay came whirling through THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR"

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the open window, and it dropped upon Wharton's table. A roar of laughter followed.

Wharton started to his feet, red with anger.

Whiz! Whiz! Crash!

It was a stone this time, and a pane of the window flew into fragments.

The Remove had tasted blood, as it were, and they were getting into a dangerous state of excitement.

Whiz! Whiz! Crash! Bang!

The glass of the study bookcase went into atoms.

Wharton ran to the window.

"Stop it, you duffers!" he shouted down to the crowd. "Do you want to get the prefects here, and get a licking all round?"

"Yah!"

"Funk!"

"Who chuckled the match away?"

"Let's go and have him out!" roared Bolsover major. "Give him the frog's march round the Close!"

"Hurray!"

"Have him out!"

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"You're welcome to come up, if you like!" he exclaimed. "As many of you as like! Go and eat coke!"

Crash!

Another pane of glass went, the stone narrowly missing Wharton's head. The stone came from the hand of Bulstrode. There was a swaying in the crowd as Johnny Bull forced his way through, and he sprang to Bulstrode, and grasped him by the shoulder and swung him round.

"Stop that!" he said.

Bulstrode glared at him.

"Mind your own business!" he exclaimed savagely.

"Kick him out!" roared Bolsover major. "He's one of them—he helped to chuck the game away. Throw him out on his neck!"

"I'll ask you to step into the gym with me, Bulstrode," said Johnny Bull, between his teeth. "You lost us the match by playing traitor at the last minute."

"Yah!"

"That's a lie!" said Bulstrode promptly. "The match was lost before it was started, and you know that jolly well!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Will you come into the gym?" roared Johnny Bull.

"No, I won't!" said Bulstrode.

"Well, if you'd rather have your licking here, I'll give it to you here," said Johnny Bull, releasing Bulstrode, and pushing back his cuffs. "Come on!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Clear out, Bull!" shouted Bolsover major. "You're interrupting the proceedings. We're ragging our rotten Form captain."

"Bulstrode's going to take a licking."

"Kick him out!" roared Snoop, keeping behind Bolsover major, however, as he gave that valiant advice. "Throw him out on his neck!"

"Chuck him out!"

"Frog's march him as well as Wharton!"

The excited juniors crowded round Johnny Bull threateningly. Bull took no notice of them.

Bulstrode was his game, and he kept to Bulstrode. But Bulstrode was not feeling inclined to face the sturdy junior in a fight. He had felt the weight of Johnny Bull's powerful arm before, and he did not want to feel it again.

"Will you come on, Bulstrode?" shouted Bull.

"No, I won't! This is a ragging, not a fight, and you're not going to interrupt it," said Bulstrode.

"Shove him out!"

"Roll him over!"

Johnny Bull was shoved and hustled by Bolsover & Co. on all sides. He made a rush through them, and hurled him-elf at Bulstrode.

Bulstrode gave a yell as Bull's heavy fists crashed upon his face. "Now will you come on, you rotten funk!" shouted Bull.

Bulstrode clenched his hands furiously. But before he could speak or act, the sharp voice of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, broke in.

"Bull! How dare you! Boys, cease this instantly."

And the roar of voices died away at once, as the Head strode upon the scene.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head's Menace.

DR. LOCKE surveyed the scene with a grim look.

He was very angry. His usually kind face was frowning, and there was a gleam in his eyes.

The juniors stood silent and scared.

"Now," said the Head, "what does this disgraceful disturbance mean?"

There was no reply.
The Removites looked at one another, but none of them seemed to want to take upon himself the office of spokesman.
"I am waiting for an answer!" said the Head.
"Ahem—" stammered Bolsover.
"H'm!" murmured Bulstrode.
"You—you see, sir—" said Snoop.
"What is this disturbance about?" exclaimed the Head angrily. "The noise could be heard all over Greyfriars."
"We—we were serenading Wharton, sir," stammered Bolsover major.

The Head stared.
"Serenading Wharton!" he ejaculated.
"Ye-es, sir!"
"What do you mean?"
"We—we wanted to show him what we thought of him, sir," said Snoop. "He's lost a match to-day, through playing his own friends in the eleven instead of a good team."

"Yes, rather."
"That's it, sir."
"Indeed!" said the Head. "Well, if you are displeased with Wharton, you must show it in a more orderly manner. Bull was attacking Bulstrode when I arrived."

"Oh, Bull wasn't in it, sir," said Bolsover major. "He was interrupting us. He's going to hammer Bulstrode on Wharton's account."

"Indeed! Is that so, Bull?"
Johnny Bull turned red.
"You rotten sneak, Bolsover!" he muttered.

"Well, the Head asked me," said Bolsover major. "If you'd spoken up for yourself I shouldn't have had to speak."

"That is quite true," said the Head. "Why were you attacking Bulstrode, Bull?"

"I was going to lick him, sir."
"And why?"
"Because he deserted the side just before the match, and got us licked by the Fifth," said Johnny Bull.

"I suppose Bulstrode had a right to please himself whether he played or not, Bull," said the Head severely.

"Oh, yes, sir; but it wasn't playing the game—" "And you have taken it upon yourself to judge him, and to administer punishment, Bull?" said the Head.

Johnny Bull turned crimson.
"Well," he stammered, "I—I—" "Do the other boys consider that Bulstrode acted very badly in leaving the team?" asked Dr. Locke, looking round.

There was a shout from Bolsover & Co. at once.
"No, sir!"
"He did quite right, sir!"

"It was a proper protest, sir," said Snoop. "The whole Form backs up Bulstrode in what he did, sir. Russell acted in the same way."

"So did Morgan, sir!"
"All the team were against Wharton, sir."
"All excepting Bull, sir, and now he wants to hammer Bulstrode because he wouldn't let Wharton ride the high horse over him."

"That will do," said the Head, frowning. "Bull, it appears that the rest of the Remove do not share your views."

"They're a set of asses, sir—I—I mean, they're talking through their hats, sir—that is to say—"

"Kindly be more careful what language you use in speaking to me, Bull," said Dr. Locke severely.

"Ye-es, sir."
"It seems that Bulstrode's conduct is generally approved, and that only you find fault with it. You are forcing Bulstrode to fight you when he does not want to do so. You are acting like a ruffian, Bull."

"Oh, sir!" said poor Johnny Bull. "I—I—" "There has been too much disturbance in the Remove of late," said the Head. "The Form is the most unruly in the school. I really think that you give more trouble than the rest of the Lower School together."

"I'm sure, sir—" began Snoop meekly.
"I will have no more of this!" said the Head sharply.

"Half the boys in the Remove show signs on their faces of recent conflict." Some of the fellows began instinctively to rub swollen noses and bruised eyes. "Bulstrode, to judge by his appearance, has been doing more than sufficient fighting lately," said the Head.

"If you please, sir—" murmured Bulstrode.
"Whom have you been fighting with, Bulstrode?"

"Bull, sir."
"Indeed! And now Bull wishes to fight with you again?"

"Yes, sir."
"You must learn to curb your temper, Bull."

"He's a rotten cad!" growled Johnny Bull.
"Bull!"

"Sorry, sir; but—" "Listen to me," said the Head sternly. "I am determined that order shall be kept in the Remove, if I have to flog or expel half the Form."

"Oh, sir!" gasped the Removites.
"When there is a disturbance again I shall make an example of you."

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of the offenders," said Dr. Locke. "I have been too lenient, I think."

"We—we'll be more careful, if you please, sir," said Snoop.
"Take care, Bull. I shall not allow you to fight Bulstrode. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny Bull, between his teeth.
"You hear me, too, Bulstrode?"

"I will do as you say, sir," said Bulstrode very meekly. He was only too pleased to enter into that engagement.

"Very well! If there is any further aggression, I shall punish the aggressor," said the Head. "And if the case merits it, I shall expel the aggressor from Greyfriars."

"Oh, sir!"
"I warn you, therefore, to be careful. I shall keep my eye on you, Bull. If you do not wish to be sent home, you had better be careful!"

Johnny Bull bit his lip almost till the blood came. He felt that it was unfair that he should be picked upon in this way, when all the trouble was started from the other side. But the Head could only judge by what he saw; and from what he had seen, Johnny Bull was certainly the aggressor.

"Bear that in mind!" said the Head. "There shall be no more of this, which I can only characterise as hooliganism. There is to be no more fighting. The next boy found fighting in the Remove will be flogged; and if it is you, Bull, you will be expelled. So take care, all of you!"

And the Head rustled away. He left the silence of dismay behind him.

"My only hat!" said Bolsover major at last. "The Head has come down heavy this time! Perhaps we were kicking up rather a row!"

"Perhaps we were!" grinned Stott.
"We shall have to mind our p's and q's for a bit," said Snoop.

"Johnny Bull has got his comb cut, anyway. You can go and boil your head, Bull!"

Johnny Bull made a movement towards the sneak of the Remove. Snoop stood his ground. At any other time Snoop would as soon have encountered a Red Indian on the warpath as Johnny Bull when he was angry. But he felt secure now.

And Johnny Bull realised it, and his hands dropped to his sides.

"You cad!" he exclaimed. "You know you're safe, after what the Head has said."

Snoop sniggered.
"Well, you wanted keeping in order," he remarked. "You're a bit too fond of asking fellows to step into the gym."

"Yes, rather!" said Trevor. "You can sing small for a bit, Johnny Bull. You'd better buzz off, and shut up!"

"Yes, clear out, Bull!" said Bulstrode aggressively. "You're not wanted here. Buzz off!"

Johnny Bull clenched his hands till the nails dug into the palms. But he made no reply to Bulstrode's taunt.

He turned, and strode away, and a yell of mocking laughter followed him. Johnny Bull's ears burned as he walked away.

Dr. Locke would keep his word, he knew that, if there were any further trouble before the affair had had time to blow over. Fellows like Snoop and Bunter would be able to cheek him now; and with the menace of expulsion hanging over his head, he would not be able to retort. Johnny Bull's brow was very gloomy as he went into the School House.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Business Proposition.

BOB CHERRY thoughtfully ladled out jam from a jar into a saucer—that being the only available jam dish in Study No. 13. Mark Linley was in the armchair, with a book on his knees, working. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was cutting rounds of bread for toast, and little Wun Lung, the Chinese, was making toast at the study fire. November mist hung over the Close, and hid the old trees; but within the study all was bright and cheerful. But Bob Cherry's brow was corrugated, and Hurree Singh looked unusually thoughtful. Matters had been going badly for the famous Co. for some time, and the loss of the Fifth Form match seemed to be the climax. There was no doubt that Harry Wharton & Co. were very unpopular in their Form just now.

"It's rotten!" said Bob Cherry, at last.
Inky looked round.

"It was a new jar," he said anxiously. "I asked Mrs. Mumble if the newfulness was terrific, and she said that it was only just opened."

Bob Cherry laughed.
"I wasn't speaking of the jam, Inky," he said. "I was referring to the state of affairs generally."

The nabob nodded.
"My esteemed chum is quite right," he said. "The rottenness of the excellent affairs in the Remove is—"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry.
"Exactly, my worthy chum."

"Everything's going to pot!" said Bob Cherry dolorously. "We're beginning to lose footer matches now. That's the worst of the whole rotten bizney."

"Things will come round, Bob," said Mark Linley, looking up from his Xenophon. "The Bouncer won't be able to lead the Form by the nose all the time."

"He seems to be succeeding pretty well so far," growled Bob Cherry. "Inky, old man, run along and tell Wharton and Johnny Bull that tea's ready, will you?"

"Yes, my worthy chum."

And the Nabob of Bhanipur quitted the study. He found Wharton in No. 1 alone. Wharton was looking gloomy and thoughtful. The demonstration under his window had wounded him more than it had angered him, though he was too proud to show that he was hurt.

"The readiness of the esteemed tea is terrific, my honourable chum," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, looking into the study.

"Right-oh!" said Harry. "I'm coming."

Inky went down the passage to No. 14, the study that belonged to Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish. The door was open, and he heard the nasal voice of the American junior as he looked in. Johnny Bull was sitting on the table, and the American was standing before the fire, wagging a bony forefinger at Johnny Bull, and evidently laying down the law.

"I guess you're booked for a holy time, sonny!" he said. Johnny Bull grunted. "You hear me?" said Fisher T. Fish. Another grunt. "If you punch anybody's nose after this, you'll be sacked, the same as Nugent was. And if you're not allowed to punch a nose, how are you going to keep a chap from crowing over you? I want to know!" Another grunt. "I guess it's rotten," said Fisher T. Fish. "That's why I'm going to make you an offer, sonny: a regular businesslike offer. I guess I'm ready to do your fighting for you!"

Johnny Bull stared.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yep!"

"You can't fight!" said Johnny Bull, with a glance at the American junior's thin and weedy form.

"I guess I can keep my end up—some!" said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "You should see how we box over there!"

"Oh, bosh!"

"I guess you're polite!"

"Well, you're talking out of your hat!" said Johnny Bull impatiently. "You can't box for toffee. Bulstrode would make cakes of you!"

"Nope! I guess not. I'm going to make a business proposition. I guess you know I'm cold business from the word go."

"The businessfulness of the honourable Fish is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But he is a slippery, fishy customer."

"I guess," said Fish, without heeding the nabob. "I guess I can tackle Bulstrode, if ness. I guess he'll crow over you now you can't fight him. I guess so!"

"I shouldn't wonder!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I guess I'm hard up lately," said Fisher T. Fish. "I've got a scheme on to make a little raise, but it wants capital. Now, sree, here's the proposition, and you can take it or leave it. Every time you get into a muss you call on me, and I take on the guy, whoever he is. You hand me a dollar—you've got plenty of shucks, I guess—"

"Plenty of what?"

"Shucks—greenbacks—money!" explained Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, I see!"

"I'm willing to lick anybody at Greyfriars for a dollar a time, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "Now I reckon that's a real good business proposition. I'll take Bulstrode on first, if you like, price four bob—one dollar. Is it a trade?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish stared at Johnny Bull. The sturdy junior was doubled up with merriment. Fisher T. Fish had a truly American belief that what any other fellow could do, he could do as well, or a little better. Repeated failures did not make the slightest difference to his excellent opinion of himself. There were lags in the Third Form who could have made rings round Fisher T. Fish; but they might have made as many rings round him as there are round Saturn, and Fisher T. Fish would still have imagined that he was an embryo Jack Johnson. Earthquakes could not have shaken out of Fisher T. Fish his unlimited confidence in himself.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull hilariously.

"I guess I don't spot the why," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific," chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur. "If the esteemed Fish tackles the esteemed Bulstrode, he will get a terrific licking!"

"Nope!"

"Tackle him if you like!" roared Johnny Bull. "Ha, ha, ha! I'll make it five dollars if you lick him! Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish extracted his hands from his pockets.

"Done!" he exclaimed.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll go and rake him out now," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll come back and tell you when I've licked him. Have the cash ready."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull laughed all the way into No. 13, and the door of Bob Cherry's study closed upon him. Fisher T. Fish snorted, and made his way downstairs in search of Bulstrode. Bulstrode was in the junior common-room, with Vernon-Smith and Co. Bulstrode had quite thrown in his lot with the Bouncer now. Fisher T. Fish came up to the group. Vernon-Smith nodded to him pleasantly; the Bouncer was very agreeable to everybody in the Remove at this time, even Billy Bunter. But Fisher T. Fish had come on business, and he walked directly up to Bulstrode, and caught his nose between finger and thumb.

"I guess—" he began.

Bulstrode gave a roar of pain and astonishment.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "What are you up to?"

"I guess I'm tweaking your nose, some," replied Fisher T. Fish.

"Eh? Leggo!"

"Nope!"

Two or three of the juniors dragged the American off. Bulstrode clasped his injured nose, and gasped.

"Have you gone potty?" he demanded.

"Nope!"

"You're looking for trouble, then?" yelled Bulstrode furiously.

"Yep!"

"Then you'll jolly well get it. Shut the door, some of you chaps, while I wipe up the floor with the silly ass!" yelled Bulstrode.

"What on earth's the matter wid ye, Fishy?" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"I guess I'm going to lick Bulstrode."

"Wha-a-a-a!"

"I guess I'm taking this up for Johnny Bull. I'm going to pulverise Bulstrode, and knock him into the middle of next week, for deserting the Remove eleven to-day!" explained Fisher T. Fish. "Bulstrode's going to be put through it, you bet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I don't see where the cackle comes in!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Are you ready, Bulstrode?"

"Yes, I'm ready!" roared Bulstrode. "Here you are!"

He rushed at the Yankee schoolboy. Fisher T. Fish put up his hands: but he might as well have kept them down, for all the use they were to him. Bulstrode knocked him right and left, and hammered him till he roared. When he rolled over, Bulstrode picked him up again, and held him up with his head in chancery to hammer him afresh. Fisher T. Fish roared for mercy, and the juniors, crowding round, roared with laughter.

"Yaroooh! yarooop!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I've had enough! Ow! Yow! I guess I'm not going on with this—Ow—deal—yow! I calculate—yarooop!"

Bump!

Bulstrode let go at last, and Fisher T. Fish fell upon the floor like a sack of potatoes. He lay there blinking dazedly. One of his eyes was closed, and the other was closing, and a red stream came from his nose and mouth. Bulstrode had not spared him. He had given Fisher T. Fish what he would have liked to give Johnny Bull, and Fisher T. Fish looked a complete wreck. He lay and gasped and panted and coughed and blinked. The juniors were shrieking.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Up with you, Fishy!"

"Go for him!"

"You haven't licked him yet!"

"Come on," roared Bulstrode, prancing round the fallen junior. "Get up and have some more! I'm waiting to be licked! Gerrup!"

"Groo! I guess I'm done!"

"But you haven't licked Bulstrode yet, intirely!" roared Micky Desmond.

"I—I guess I'll let him off," mumbled Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode grasped the American junior and opened the door, and with a swing of his arms sent Fisher T. Fish tumbling into the passage. Fisher T. Fish picked himself up. Bulstrode slammed the door after him. Fish did not reopen it. He staggered away, feeling as if life were not worth living, and almost crawled up to the Remove passage.

Tea was going on in No. 13. Bob Cherry & Co. were very cheerful now. Johnny Bull had explained Fisher T. Fish's business proposition, and the juniors were chuckling over it. They could guess what Fish's fate would be if he tackled Bulstrode.

There was a sound of slow and dragging steps in the passage, and the door of No. 13 opened. Fisher T. Fish looked in, but for a moment the juniors did not recognise him, so wrecked was his countenance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's that? Have you been through a mangle, or are you the ghost in Hamlet?"

"Groo!"

"It's Fish!" roared Harry Wharton.

"Fish! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo! Ow! I guess——"

"Have you licked Bulstrode?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ow! I guess you needn't trouble to count out those dollars, Bull," said Fisher T. Fish. And he closed the door and went his painful way. And in Study No. 13 he left the Co. yelling with laughter.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Sword of Damocles!

SNOOP burst into his irritating chuckle when the Remove were in the dormitory that night. Johnny Bull was sitting on his bed, taking his boots off, and he was greatly inclined to hurl one of them at Snoop. He knew that he was the object of Snoop's merriment.

"I've thought of a good idea," Snoop remarked. "A play for the next performance of the Remove Dramatic Society, you know?"

"What, then?" asked Bolsover major.

"The Taming of the Shrew! He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith & Co. chuckled.

Johnny Bull looked up with a glare, and then looked down again. Even Snoop could cheek him now. The Head's menace was like the sword of Damocles over his head. Johnny Bull was not a shrew, but he had been tamed.

"Shut up, Snoopy!" said Bob Cherry. "The Head hasn't threatened to sack me if I lick a rotten cad, to mind your giddy eye!"

"Any chap fighting is going to be flogged, till further orders," said Bolsover major.

"Then Bulstrode's in for it. He's been fighting this evening."

"The aggressor gets the flogging," said Bulstrode with a chuckle. "Fish was the aggressor. All the fellows saw him pull my nose. But I fancy he doesn't need a flogging. There wasn't much left of him to flog when I'd done with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And for once Fisher T. Fish found nothing to reply. The unfortunate American junior was not in a condition to argue. He blinked sadly at Bulstrode through the eye that was only half-closed, and held his peace.

"I've thought of a conundrum," said Snoop.

"Mercy!" said Bob Cherry.

"When is a bull like a stamp?" demanded Snoop.

"Give it up."

"When it's licked," said Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The joke was poor enough, but the expression on Johnny Bull's face was enough to make the juniors roar.

"I've not been licked, you rotten cad!" said Johnny Bull.

"You'll be sacked pretty soon, I fancy," said Bolsover major, with a chuckle. "I never saw the Head in such a wax. He meant every word he said."

"Every giddy syllable," said Bulstrode. "Johnny Bull will have to sing small now. A flogging for anybody else, and the sack for Johnny! We shall be having awfully quiet times in the Remove till this blows over."

"Give us a chance to recover from our deadly wounds," said Russell, rubbing his eye.

"Prevents us from ragging our rotten footer captain!" growled Stott.

Wharton coloured, but he affected not to hear. He turned in, and the juniors got into bed one after another. Johnny Bull was one of the last.

"Buck up, Bull," said Vernon-Smith, "and don't drop your other boot! The first one sounded like an earthquake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Johnny Bull. "I don't want to have to lay hands on you, Smithy. If I do, you'll get hurt!"

"Not so much as you will!" grinned the Bounder. "It will mean the sack, my boy. Not that that would matter much. I don't think there would be a wet eye in the Remove if you got the boot. Go and eat coke!"

"You rotten cad——"

"Cad yourself!"

Johnny Bull clenched his fists and rushed at the Bounder. He knew that Vernon-Smith was deliberately trying to provoke him into a fresh breach of the pence, but he was too angry to consider. There was a sharp voice at the door:

"Bull!"

Johnny Bull stopped dead.

"Oh, my hat!" he muttered. "Just my luck! The Head!"

The Head strode into the dormitory. He fixed the sternest of glances upon the abashed John Bull. Bull stood with his hands dropped to his sides, overwhelmed with confusion. The Head seldom visited the dormitories, leaving the duty of seeing lights out to the prefects; and no one had expected him there, unless, perhaps, the Bounder had had an inkling of his intention.

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EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

Dr. Locke was evidently determined to keep an eye on the Lower Fourth.

"Bull," thundered the Head, "you were about to attack Vernon-Smith!"

Johnny Bull was silent.

"After what I said to you this afternoon, Bull——" said the Head.

"I—I——"

"I warned you, Bull, that if you were the aggressor in a fight again, I should expel you from the school. You are the aggressor here. Vernon-Smith was sitting quite quietly upon his bed. It is fortunate for you, Bull, that you had not reached him when I entered the dormitory. Had I found you fighting, I should have expelled you. I will put a stop to this endless disorder in the Remove."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Very well. I will take your word that you are sorry; but let this be a warning to you, Bull. You will take two hundred lines, and otherwise I shall overlook your intended offence. But be careful. I mean what I have said to you, as you will find. Now go to bed."

Johnny Bull went to bed without a word.

Dr. Locke turned the light out and left the Remove dormitory, closing the door behind him. There was a buzz of voices as soon as he was gone.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I never saw the Head so ratty. These rows in the Remove are getting on his nerves."

"He's looking out for a big offender to make an example of," chuckled Bolsover major. "I fancy Bull will get it in the neck, sooner or later."

"Oh, go to sleep!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, you go and chop chips!" said Bolsover insolently. "You're an ass! You're a silly chump! I could knock you into a cocked hat with one hand! Fathead!"

Johnny Bull breathed hard through his nose with rage, but he made no reply. He was not to be drawn a second time.

"Johnny will have to lie low for a bit now!" chuckled Bulstrode. "Johnny, you'll have to learn to hold your tongue. You're an ass!"

"You're a silly chump, Johnny Bull!" said Stott.

"And a frabjous fathead!" said Snoop.

"And a burbling duffer!" said Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And all the rival Co. found something unpleasant to say to Johnny Bull, and Johnny Bull lay quiet and made no reply. He was quivering with rage. But the sword of Damocles was over his head, and he had to bear it, even if he did not grin.

The Remove fell asleep at last, and Johnny Bull was left in peace.

But when the rising-bell rang out in the dim November morning, the persecution of Johnny Bull started afresh. Snoop sat up in bed and called to him.

"Now then, Bull, up you get! Do you want me to come over there to you?"

The juniors chuckled at the idea of Snoop going over to Johnny Bull. The sturdy junior could have damaged Snoop very considerably with a tap of his heavy hand. Johnny Bull made no reply, and turned out of bed in moody silence.

"That's right," said Snoop. "Obey orders! I'm not having any more of your nonsense, Johnny Bull! Buck up, and mind you wash your neck!"

Johnny Bull breathed fury, but he did not speak. But Bob Cherry dipped a sponge in water, and strode over to Snoop's bed. The sneak of the Remove saw him coming, and squirmed out of bed on the other side, but not quite in time to escape. Bob Cherry got a grip on his hair with his left hand, and squeezed the sponge down his neck with the right.

"Here we go," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If washing necks is the game, I'm on! How do you like it done, Snoopy?"

"Ow—ow—grooch—hoooc—oooh!"

"Blessed if I understand him!" said Bob Cherry, dabbing the wet sponge over Snoop's face. "Is he talking Russian, or Chinese?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerrroochohohohhhoo!"

"My hat! It must be Hindostanee!" said Bob Cherry, dabbing away. "Answer him in the same language, Inky!"

"Yow! Leggo!" shrieked Snoop. "Ow! Leggo, you beast!"

Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's got back to English at last!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Did you say let go, Snoopy?"

"Ow! Yow! Yes! Ow!"

"Is your neck washed enough?"

"Grooch! Ow! Yes!"

"Well, you haven't thanked me yet," said Bob Cherry, pinning the struggling Snoop down among the bedclothes, and squeezing the sponge into his ears.

"Ow! ow! Groo-hoo!"

"Go it! I'm going to leave off when you've thanked me,"

explained Bob. "Until then I shall keep on. I'm not at all tired, and I like obliging chaps."

"Groo-hoo! Thank you!"

"Do you thank me kindly?"

"Ow, yow! Thank you kindly! Groo!"

"All serene," said Bob Cherry, releasing the sneak of the Remove. "If you jaw any more to Johnny Bull, Snoopy, I'll give you another wash!"

"Ow!" groaned Snoopy.

And no more aggressive remarks were addressed to Johnny Bull just then.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Blow Falls.

JOHNNY BULL found Mr. Quelch's eye very much upon him in the Form-room that morning. The junior gave an inward groan. He knew that the Head must have spoken about him to Mr. Quelch. He was getting a bad reputation, and he was getting into bad odour with masters and prefects. After morning lessons, when the Remove went out, Wingate spoke to Johnny Bull in the Close. Wingate's brow was stern, but his tone was kindly.

"You've got to keep your eyes open, young Bull," he said. "I hear that you're growing to be a regular young firebrand, and it's impossible to keep you from fighting. The prefects have been told to keep an eye on you."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"I can't help it," he said; "it's not my fault."

"You can help fighting, I suppose?" said Wingate.

"Not if a chap goes for me."

"It seems to be you that goes for other chaps," said the captain of Greyfriars sharply. "The Remove have been giving too much trouble lately. The other day, I hear, Mr. Quelch gave impositions to the whole Form for it. I don't object to a fight every now and then, especially with the gloves on; but you kids can't expect to be allowed to turn the giddy school into a bear-garden. You'd better be careful."

And Wingate shook his finger at Johnny Bull, and walked away.

Bull thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and strode out into the Close. His brows were darkly knitted, and anger and indignation were struggling in his breast. Harry Wharton joined him in the Close. Some of the Remove fellows hissed Wharton as he passed them, but the Remove captain took no notice of the demonstration.

"I want to speak to you, Johnny, old man," he said. "Has Wingate been at you? I saw him jawing you at the door."

"Only warning me to be careful," growled Johnny Bull. "I'm careful enough. But how is a chap to stand being talked to as Snoopy talks to me, for instance?"

"It's rotten!" said Harry.

"It's worse than rotten!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Every cad who wouldn't dare to stand up to me at any other time is getting on his hind legs now, to have a fling! I shall jolly soon get fed up with it!"

"That's what I want to speak to you about, kid," said Wharton seriously. "You will have to be careful until this blows over. It's the Bounder's game to get you sacked. You remember what he told us before Nugent went—unless we give in and knuckle under, he's going to get us all sacked, one after another, somehow."

Johnny Bull whistled.

"He can't do it!" he said.

"Nugent's gone!" said Harry, with a gloomy brow.

"But—but was that the Bounder's work?" hesitated Johnny Bull.

"I know it was. Poor old Franky fell into the trap, and the Bounder scored," said Wharton. "And if the Bounder can work it, you'll get mixed up in a fight with somebody under the Head's eye, so that he won't have any choice, excepting to sack you or go back on his word. And you know which he'll do!"

"Sack me," said Bull, with a grimace.

"Exactly."

"And you think the Bounder will push them on to rag me," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully, "to make me break out?"

"I'm certain that's his little game."

Bull gritted his teeth.

"Well, it won't succeed," he said. "Only, supposing one of them goes so far as to tap me on the nose, I can't stand that!"

"You must stand anything, Johnny, old man, rather than let the Bounder get you expelled," said Harry. "It's only for a time; and you can lick them afterwards."

"I know. But—"

"You must, Johnny. It's a jolly serious thing to be sent down."

"All right," said Bull, with a gulp. "I'll do my best."

"That's all right."

Johnny Bull did do his best. With the Damocles sword

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"THE PENNY POPULAR"

—Every Friday—

of expulsion hanging over his head, he developed a gift of patience that the other fellows had never suspected him of possessing. Snoopy made insolent remarks—when Bob Cherry was not near—and even Billy Bunter ventured to show the eleven foot. Bolsover major was more overbearing and bullying in his manner than ever, which is saying a great deal. But Johnny Bull wrapped himself up in patience as in a garment, and declined to be drawn.

But the Bounder knew him—knew him better than he knew himself. Inside his cloak of patience, Johnny Bull was simmering with wrath, and sooner or later there was certain to be an explosion.

The peace and order in the Remove that day astonished the prefects. The Remove were the most unruly Form at Greyfriars, and prided themselves upon the fact. But that day there were no noisy meetings in the Rag, no deafening larks in the Remove passage, no rags in the passages. The Removites were showing a lamb-like tameness that was as suspicious as it was astonishing. It came as a relief to Harry Wharton, for certainly the disappointed footballers had intended to rag their unfortunate captain a great deal more, and all ragging was stopped now. It also caused to be put off the suggestion of a new election for Form captain which had been mooted in the Bounder's study. Form elections were noisy affairs, and frequently led to personal encounters. And personal encounters were taboo now. Until the Head had had time to get over the "wax" he was now in, the Removites did not want any more rags.

In the junior common-room, after tea, Temple of the Fourth declared that he hardly knew the place, the fags were so quiet.

The Removites who heard the remark glared at Temple. At any other time the Fourth Former would not have described the Lower Fourth as fags without having trouble on his hands immediately. But just now he was able to do so with impunity.

"Oh, rather!" remarked Dabney. "Troublesome beasts, these fags!"

"Rotten!" said Fry. "I've thought several times that we ought to pass a rule, keeping 'em out of this room. Why can't they stick in their Form-room, like the Third and the Second?"

"Oh, rather!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Temple. "If they ever start their old tricks again, we'll turn 'em out, and make a rule that they shan't be in the common-room at all!"

"You couldn't do it!" roared Bob Cherry, jumping up.

Temple waved his hand at Bob Cherry in a soothing manner, which, so far from soothing Bob Cherry, had a most exasperating effect upon him. Bob started towards the captain of the Fourth, but Harry Wharton caught his arm.

"Quiet, Bob!"

"Are we going to let those giddy worms check us?" roared, Bob Cherry.

"Just at present—yes!"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Greyfriars is coming to something when the Remove allow themselves to be checked by a weedy worm like that!" he exclaimed.

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "Sure, if it wasn't for the Head, Temple, it's a thick ear ye'd be after getting!"

"Quiet, you fags!" said Temple loftily.

"Oh, tare an' ounds—"

"Cheese it, Micky!" said Mark Linley. "Remember the order. Serapping's barred now."

"Sure, and it's rotten intirely!"

Temple & Co. chuckled as they moved away. They were rather enjoying the situation. The fighting Form of Greyfriars had been suddenly tamed. Vernon-Smith & Co. came into the common-room, and Johnny Bull's eyes gleamed at the sight of Bulstrode. Bulstrode, a close chum of the Bounder now, and evidently quite under Vernon-Smith's influence, seemed a different Bulstrode from of old. Until Bolsover major had come to Greyfriars, Bulstrode had had the distinction of being the bully of the Remove. He had been so decent of late that fellows who remembered what he had been said they hardly knew him. But, under the Bounder's influence, all the old bad qualities were reappearing, more offensively than ever. Bulstrode's manner now was as overbearing as it had ever been, and was an improvement upon Bolsover major's, if anything. The former captain of the Remove gave Bull a scornful look as he passed him, and muttered something to Bolsover in which the word "funk" was very distinctly audible. Johnny Bull started up.

"Are you speaking of me, Bulstrode?" he demanded.

Bulstrode looked him up and down offensively.

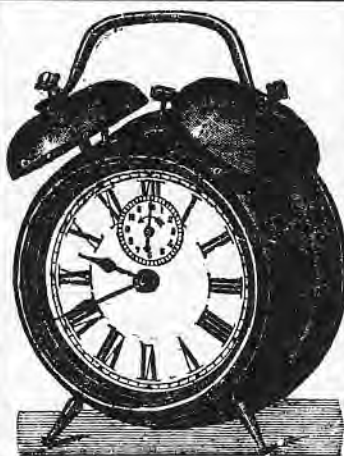
"Mind your own business!" he replied.

"I think that is my business," said Johnny Bull. "As for finking, you know you wouldn't come into the gym when I asked you yesterday. And if it wasn't for the Head's order, I'd wipe up the floor with you this minute!"

"Words are cheap!" remarked Bulstrode.

"Steady on!" murmured Bob Cherry anxiously. "Johnny, old man, do be quiet! Can't you see he's trying to draw you?"

(Continued on page 22.)



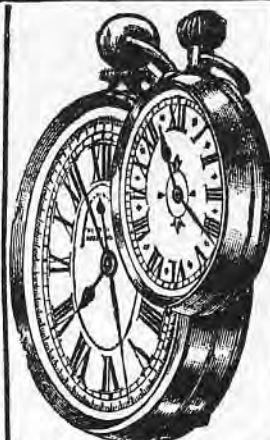
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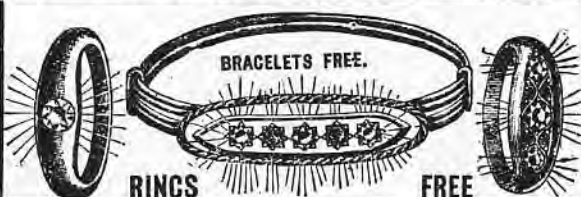
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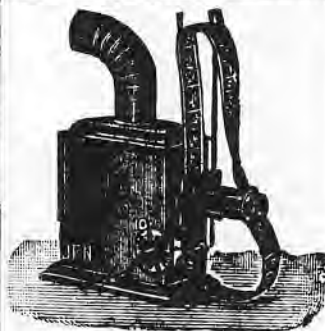
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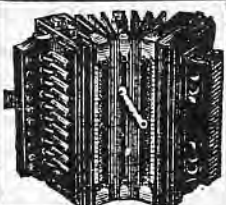


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Bull shook off Bob's detaining hand, and made a step towards Bulstrode. Bulstrode put up his hands.

"If you're looking for trouble, you'll find me ready," he said. "Mind, I'm not picking a quarrel with you, but if you want a thick ear—"

"You—you cad!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, trembling with anger. "You know I can't go for you, because of the Head—"

Bulstrode burst into a contemptuous laugh.

"Any reason's better than none, I suppose!" he said.

"Why, you rotter!" roared Johnny Bull. "You know perfectly well—"

"Oh, rats!"

That was enough for Johnny Bull. The word was hardly out of Bulstrode's mouth when he was rolling on the floor under a heavy right-hander.

"There, you cad!" gasped Bull. "Now you've got what you've been asking for all day!"

"Shut the door!" exclaimed Wharton hurriedly, as Bulstrode leaped up, red with rage, and rushed at his enemy.

The door was slammed, and two or three juniors posted themselves against it. It was clear that there must be a fight now, and the juniors were anxious to keep the prefects out.

Bulstrode and Johnny Bull were at it now, hammer and tongs.

They closed, and whirled round the room, crashing into the other fellows and the chairs, and the table. Chairs went flying, and books rolled on the floor, and the table rocked and reeled.

"Go it, Bulstrode!" roared the Bounder & Co., with the full force of their lungs.

"Shut up, you cads!" shouted Wharton. "You're trying to get the prefects here!"

"Yah! Go it!"

"Pile in!"

"Hurray!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Crash!

Bulstrode went heavily to the floor, the crimson streaming from his nose. He lay gasping, and Johnny Bull stood over him, with heaving chest and flashing eyes.

At the same moment the handle of the door was tried. Micky Desmond had his foot against the door, and it did not open.

"Open this door at once!"

"Faith, it's the Head!"

Micky Desmond sprang away from the door, as if it had suddenly become red-hot. The door was flung open, and Dr Locke strode into the room. Two or three prefects were following him. The din in the common-room had been heard far and wide, as the Bounder & Co. fully intended that it should.

Johnny Bull turned round, and his face went pale. Bulstrode was still lying at his feet, gasping and groaning. Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon Bull.

"So you have chosen to disobey me?" he exclaimed sternly. "You have deliberately disobeyed my commands, Bull!"

Johnny Bull drew a quivering breath. He had no defence to make. He could not even say that Bulstrode had started the row. He had nothing to say, and he knew, by the Head's expression, that nothing he could say would avail him.

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

There was a hush in the room.

"Bull, you have disobeyed my direct commands! You have defied the authority of your Headmaster! You know the penalty!"

Johnny Bull panted.

"I warned you," said the Head, "what your punishment would be! I warned you a second time, and pardoned you. It is impossible to pardon you again, Bull! You will leave Greyfriars by the first train in the morning! And I hope this example will be a lesson to the rest of the Form! I think they need it! Wingate, you will see Bull to the station immediately after breakfast to-morrow morning."

"Yes, sir," said Wingate.

The Head strode away. He left a hush as of death in the room behind him. Bulstrode staggered to his feet. There was a scared look in his face.

"Bull," he muttered, "I—I—I never meant that, I—I swear I didn't! I'm sorry!"

John Bull did not reply. He turned, and walked to the door. His face was white and set. The blow that had fallen upon him was too heavy to leave room in his breast for any feeling of anger against Bulstrode, or even against the Bounder. With white, set face, the condemned junior walked from the room, in grim silence, and he left silence behind him.

Harry Wharton & Co. hoped against hope that the Head would relent at the last moment. But the Head did not relent. Kindest of men as he usually was, he could be stern when he felt that sternness was called for, and he believed that it was called for now. In the dim November morning, Johnny Bull said farewell to Greyfriars, and turned his back upon the old school, and his old chums there. With heavy hearts, Harry Wharton & Co. watched him go—the second of the famous Co. to fall a victim to the Bounder. Vernon-Smith had triumphed again, and time alone could tell whether his triumph was to last!

THE END.

(Next Monday's splendid long complete school tale of the Rivals of Greyfriars, is entitled: "Mark Linley's Last Fight!" By Frank Richards. Our next issue will also contain another grand novelty. A big demand is certain, so readers should not fail to order their copies in advance.)

The Boys' Realm of Sport Adventure

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"HE WOULD GO TO SEA!"

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"THE PENNY POPULAR"
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OUR THRILLING NEW SERIAL STORY. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREW



Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.



Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, and ventriloquist.



Nathan Gore, jewel collector and multi-millionaire, Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the *Kiner Coronation*. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?"

The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord, Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and bring back my diamond." He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and for five months pursues Nathan Gore through Europe, New Zealand, Tenerife, and back to London, never once being able to catch him up. While in London, he hears that Nathan Gore has bought from the Dutch a remote island named Galpin. Lord immediately purchases an island four miles south of Gore's, christening it Ching-Lung. Learning that Gore is fortifying his island, and has actually fitted out warships for his own use, Ferrers Lord arranges a hurried expedition, and in a few hours the whole party are aboard the *Lord of the Deep*, bound for the Island of Ching-Lung. When they arrive they discover that the harbour is protected by forts, and has a great chain stretched across its mouth to prevent ships entering. Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung and Thurston manage to get ashore in a small submarine which they capture, and there find that Nathan Gore's house is guarded by two fierce tigers. They have to run for their lives, and just manage to enter the old-fashioned submarine and escape capture. They have to remain under water until the air in the vessel becomes unbearable, and Thurston's breath comes in gasps, and his throat begins to scorch.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Pirates!

The bay above was crowded with boats pulling seaward, and all the vessels had turned on their lights. The cruisers had moved up closer to the entrance. The chain was lowered, and one of them steamed out of the bay. Sooner or later the submarine would be compelled to rise. The second cruiser followed the first. All the lights were concentrated on the mouth of the harbour. Ferrers Lord glanced sharply at Thurston. They could bear the vitiated atmosphere no longer. He brought the vessel afloat.

They stood gasping when the manhole was raised, and pumping down the air, Ching-Lung was first up the ladder. "Great pup!" he said. "We're right under the quay!"

They were, and motionless, although the screw was working. The cruiser must have dragged them there when she fouled their hawser. The curious accident had saved them. Certain that the submarine would make for the open sea, boats and ships had joined in the chase. The three friends laughed and shook hands. Then they coolly picked the anchor out of the mud.

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

"I'll have three whiffs!" grinned Ching-Lung, screening a match and lighting a cigarette. "I'll give that cockpit time to ventilate. Then we'll say good-bye, dear heart. It's nice and dark here, and it's no good trying to shift till we see them giving up."

"True enough, Ching."

The millionaire piloted the submarine in between two wherries, where there was little chance of even a searchlight making her out. The tide rose higher and higher. Out at sea the search was going on. They lay flat on the deck, awaiting the return of the pursuers.

"Tommy will be getting anxious," said Ching-Lung, breaking a long silence.

Ferrers Lord stood up.

"Come," he said. "They are a long way out now. Prout will be watching."

Again the manhole was closed. In the deep water under the chain lay the millionaire's submarine. Through the glass Prout was keenly watching the vibratograph. It had kept

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT." Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library in advance.

him busy, but, so far, the vibrations had come from surface-moving vessels. Maddock was standing beside him. The instrument had been quiet for a long time.

"She's at it agen, Benjamin!" said Prout.

"Double quick, too!" said Maddock. "That means summat under water. Look at her now, tryin' to count a million a minute! Shall I?"

"By hokey, yes! They'll never see it. I don't want to miss her."

Maddock switched on the light.

"Hooray!" cried Prout.

It was the submarine. The large vessel followed her for ten or twelve minutes.

"She's goin' up, Tom."

The Lord of the Deep rose with her, and drew alongside.

"By hokey, Ben," grinned Prout, "is that a regatta?"

The two cruisers were about half a mile away. They did not fail to see the dome-shaped light on the water. As Ferrers Lord, Thurston, and Ching-Lung emerged from their cramped quarters there was a shot from the fort, followed by two from the cruisers.

"Ere, 'ere, simmer down! Don't make that row!" said Maddock. "We won't 'urt yer!"

"Sink her!" said Ferrers Lord, pointing to the submarine.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Prout backed the Lord of the Deep, and then drove her forward.

"Old tight!" he cried. "There's a bit of straw in the way!"

The ram struck home with a crash. The Lord of the Deep rode on, the plates of the little submarine grating and grinding under her hull, and shells falling round her.

"Ta, ta!" chuckled Maddock, blowing kisses to forts and cruisers. "You'll give yourselves earache if you make that row! Blessed if they ain't shooting peas at us, Tom!" he said, as a seven-pounder shell tossed up a cloud of spray.

"Good-bye!"

The Lord of the Deep dropped out of sight beneath the dark waters of the Pacific.

"Now, lads," said Ferrers Lord, his eyes twinkling, "the deed is done. We are pirates in earnest!"

Ching-Lung burst into a roar of laughter.

"Belay!" he yelled. "Up with the Jolly Roger, pick the cross-bones—if there's any meat on 'em—and crack the skull! I want anybody who'd like to walk the plank? Pirates! You look a treat as a pirate, Ru, shiver my tops! timbers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't forget," said the millionaire, "that the law has never been repealed. After being publicly executed, pirates may be hung in chains."

"Oh, pip!" grinned Ching-Lung. "We slice 'em into sandwich-meat in China. I say, my neck is beginning to tickle. Can you see a sail on the lee-starboard-jibboom-bow, Tommy?"

"By hokey, no, sir!" said Prout. "But I can smell my supper. Take the wheel, Ben, and let me pirate it."

Another Trip Ashore—Barry Gets "Up the Pole," and Gan Sees a Nightmare.

"A desolate-looking place enough," said Ching-Lung, deftly catching the shot-gun tossed to him by Gan-Waga. "A nice spot to call after me!"

And it was desolate. The morning mist was struggling with the newly-risen sun. Through its grey folds and wreaths loomed dull-coloured sand and patches of sickly grass. They had landed on the island south of Loneland, after fighting their way through a boiling surf into the muddy water of a creek.

"It has a whiff of fever about it, too," said Rupert, sniffing the fog. "If ever it gets populated, a fellow who started here as a quinine merchant would make coin. What is there to shoot, Lord?"

"Quail, wild-fowl, and a few pigs, Rupert; and snakes. It is a long time since I visited the place. Oh, there is something else that I never took the trouble to tell naturalists about. The giant tortoise is supposed only to be found in the Galapagos Islands. That is a fallacy. I saw several here."

"I thought the brutes were extinct."

"They soon will be, more's the pity," answered the millionaire. "Since rats escaped from the vessels they have no chance, as the rats devour their eggs. Light your pipes, lads. This mist is not good for your lungs."

"Ut reminds me of pay-soup, flavoured with soft-soap and red paint," remarked Barry O'Rooney.

"Likes yo' faces, Barry," grinned Gan.

"Why, fat 'un, Oi ax?"

"Cos a liddle of hims gooses a long ways! Ho, ho, ho, ho!"

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Barry sat down on the gunwale, and, lifting Thurston's binoculars from the locker, scanned sea, sky, and land, explaining that he was looking for the joke.

The millionaire did not care to make a start until the sun had dispersed the mist. The island was swampy, full of mosquito-infested pools, and intersected by a whole network of salt creeks and natural canals. Rapidly the sun increased in power and sucked up the fog.

"Whoy, bedad!" said Barry O'Rooney. "We've struk Khakiland!"

"Not a bad name for it, Shamrock," said Prout.

It was an excellent name for the treeless speck of land—khaki reeds, khaki bushes, khaki scrub. The monotonous tint was relieved by the blue glint of water, but the whole effect was wearisome and depressing to the eye.

"Ochone!" sighed Barry. "Oi should doie of colour-blindness av it wasn't that Tom's red nose brightened up the melancholy scene!"

Prout joined in the laugh, though it was against him. The thinning fog rolled seaward before a slight southerly breeze. There was a cold bite in the air, too, but the temperature rose quickly. Each man carried a stout pole to help him over places where, unaided, a jump would be difficult, and all wore waders that came up to their thighs.

It seemed an age to Gan, Barry, and Prout since they had set foot on land. Their spirits ran high, and they were ready and eager for any adventure.

"Oi faal," said Barry, "loike Robinson Crusoe did on Friday, when he felt the sandprint ticklin' his fut—Oi mane, when he found the futprint in the sand. Oh, to foind a cannibal haythin, dressed in a pair of earrings and a smole! Oi'd ate him widout taters, salt, or gravy! Can yez see any cocoanuts or breadfruit about, Tommy? When they land on desert oislands, in story-books, they spot 'em at wance."

"Nary a shadder of one," said Prout.

"Thin ut's a fraud, and Oi'll ax for me money back!"

"Forward!" cried the millionaire's deep voice.

He remained for a moment scanning the southern point of Loneland. The glasses showed the buildings of Goretown distinctly. It struck him that the military experts who had advised Nathan Gore to purchase the second island, if he wished to make the town impregnable, were not fools.

A fort, built high on the spot where he stood, armed with long-range heavy guns, could practically blockade the harbour.

In daylight, at least, with good marksmanship, it would be almost suicidal to attempt to run a vessel in or out. Its shells, too, would make Goretown a very exciting place to live in.

There was a queer smile on his lips as he hurried after the others.

"Perhaps," he muttered, "Who knows?"

They had not gone fifty yards before a muddy creek barred the way. It was far too wide to jump at that point, so they were compelled to seek a crossing.

The reeds were tall. They pushed their way through for some distance. With a roar and a rush and a clatter three startled barnacle-geese sprang into the air.

Bang! bang! went Ching-Lung's breechloader, and one bird dropped with a thud.

"Och," said Barry, as he picked up the slain, "'tis a curious thing, that is, intorely! He loiked corn, and yet that last dose of shotorns sames to have gone agin the grain wid him purty considerable, don't ut?"

"You hopeless idiot," Prout said sweetly, "what are you gurgling about?"

"He dafts!" grinned Gan-Waga.

"Oh, am Oi!" said Barry, seizing the goose by the neck and swinging it round his head. "Sthand back and apologise, or Oi'll stroike yez into writhin' corpses at me fate! Sthand at aise! Oies roight and toes turned in! Now, who's daft?"

"We are!" cried Prout and Gan promptly.

"Good!" said Barry. "Thin carry the goose, and yez'll be three of a kind!"

Ching-Lung, Rupert, and the millionaire had gone on. The quick reports of their guns, and a line of wild duck streaming seaward, told that they were finding sport. When the men came up with them, five plump ducks had been added to the bag.

"I say, old chap," remarked Ching-Lung, "why don't we have a drive? The lads can cross and beat those rushes. I expect they're full of birds."

"Very well," assented Ferrers Lord.

Prout, as head-beater, was given his instructions. The reed-bed was about half a mile square. Prout was to go round to the left, Barry and Gan to the right.

They were not to commence until they were in a line with each other, and then they were to advance, beating the bushes as they came, and driving as many birds as possible over the guns.

"I expect it will be short and hot," said the prince. "Choose your own stand, Ru, and a new hat I beat you!"

"The bet is taken, sonny," said Thurston. They had each a spare gun, Prout and Barry having left their behind. Ferrers Lord was contented with the one beautiful, gold-mounted twelve-bore he used with such marvellous skill. Though not a match with the prince with a rifle, Rupert was a deadly shot at birds and ground game.

They took up their positions—"stands," as sportsmen call them—sixty yards apart, and waited for the ring of Prout's revolver, which was the signal to advance.

Alternately wading through shallow pools and leaping narrow creeks, Barry and Gan-Waga reached a strip of fairly firm ground. The two men kept close to the reeds, obeying instructions and making a good deal of noise.

Ducks are hard to flush when they have ample cover, and their intention was to drive the stragglers into the centre of the bed, in readiness for the advance.

"O'ive just thought of a riddle," said Barry. "Troth, Ganus, yez ould blubberhoide, ut's little Oi think yez can answer ut! Why did the duck duck?"

"'Cos him de same as yo!" said Gan, with a grin.

"Loike me? What d'yez mane?"

"'Cos him's a blitherin' goose!" roared Gan. "Ho, ho, ho, ho-o-oo!"

"Not so dusty for a flat-nosed savage," mused Barry.

"That Eskimo is larnin' a bit. Hallo! Here's a jump! Too-ral-oo-ral! Kape the pot boilin'. Here we go up, up, up, and here we go—"

Barry plunged his pole into the ooze, chanting merrily, and sprang. The happy warblings died on his lips. He got half-way across, but the pole refused to go any further.

It stuck upright, and Barry clung to it like birdlime, his hands clasped over the top, and his legs working up and down as if he were running up an imaginary ladder for a prize of a thousand pounds a week for life!

"Hilp! Hilp! Hilp!" he yelled wildly. "O'i'm slippin' and slitherin'! Ow! Oi can't hang on much longer. For the sake o' mercy, help me! Oi—Oi wouldn't dhrop into that sloime for— Ow! Oooh! Oi—Oi'm goin' to dhrop!"

Gan opened his mouth until his face was absolutely invisible, and roared.

"Ho, ho, ho, hoo, ho-o-o-oo!"

Barry's legs worked faster still. The energy he exerted in forty seconds would have carried him up to the dome of St. Paul's if it had been used for that purpose.

"Gan, for the sake of Mar—in Heaven's name, Gan, I shall dhrop in! Ow! Gan, O'i'll give yez thruckloads of candles. Murther! O'i'm—O'i'm—"

"I comin'!" said Gan. "Loo-ral-oo!"

Gan gauged the distance, and planted his pole about two feet to the left of Barry. He found harder ground, and whizzed over.

EVERY MONDAY, **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Timing his flight exactly, he shot out his leg as he soared past the Irishman, and gave Barry a violent dig between the shoulders with both feet.

"Mercy!" bellowed Barry. But he found none.

The pole went over, and he went with it. The splash was tremendous. Jet-black water flew in all directions, and Barry's arms sank elbow-deep in thick, inky-coloured slime.

For a brief space his mind was a blank, and then he found himself sitting neck-deep in the filthy creek, a mass of slime and rage.

Gan-Waga Suffers a Severe Fright.

When he had cleaned the mud out of his eyes and ears, Gan-Waga was vanishing on the sandy horizon. Muttering blood-curdling threats of vengeance, Barry crawled out, shedding water and mud in streams. The sea was not far away. He sat down, and let the waves roll over him. The process cleaned him up fairly well, but it washed sand and small shells in between his under-garments and skin, and the result was not a comfortable one.

"Ut will be me fate to kill him!" growled Barry. "O'i'll swing for him wan of these foine days. Av Oi mate him O'i'll do ut at wance! Arrah! What a shtate O'i'm in! Murther, what misery! The dirthy, haythim rogue! Ochone! To think Oi should live to be kicked into a filthy ould pond by a boat-eared, blob-nosed, bleary Eskimotor-car! O'i'll have the loife of him for ut!"

Barry ended his bathe, and went drearily across the sand to the end of the reed bed. Something white fluttered in the air, and he saw Prout waving the pole to which he had tied a handkerchief. He construed Prout's gestures as meaning him to close up and commence the drive. Then the revolver cracked.

"Hi, hi, hi, hi!" shouted the beaters. "Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi!"

Gan had wisely put as much land as possible between himself and Barry, leaving Prout the central position. Slashing at the reeds with his pole, and shouting and chucking, Gan pushed his way forward. The ducks rose fairly well, and presently the swift crack! crack! of guns gave notice that the shooters had found something worth burning cartridges at.

Gan was rather doubtful about the reception Barry O'Rooney would give him, and he was not anxious to meet that gentleman.

"Musts gets near my Chingy," he thought. "Chingy nots lets him biff me. Didn't me gives hims squelcher! Ho, ho, ho, hoo!"

He chuckled, and watched the ducks streaming towards the guns. Then, seeing a hammock, he sat down to grin. Gan



THE
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was in an open space, and it was dry and sandy. The ground was higher here, and from the top of the hummock he could look over the reeds. Once or twice he saw Prout's handkerchief flash through the air. The shots became less frequent.

Gan turned to continue his journey, and then stopped down, his hair bristling, his mouth open, and his eyes threatening to fall out of his head. Some awful monster barred the way, a nightmare object, a demon shape that turned Gan's blood cold.

It was a giant tortoise!

Gan had never seen a tortoise in his life, though he had seen turtles in plenty. The brute was waddling slowly towards him, its snakelike head wagging from side to side. From nose to the tip of its tail it was probably seven feet long, and the highest portion of its gnarled knotted shell stood four and a half feet from the ground. It uttered a peculiar grunting hiss that, to Gan's dread, was answered. The horrified Eskimo glanced fearfully round, and his teeth chattered.

Out of the reeds on every side the great horrors were crawling, not by twos and threes, but by scores and dozens.

"Oh-mi, oh-mi, oh-mi!" wailed Gan. "Oh-m-m-m-i-i-i!"

The mound seemed a kind of meeting-place. They had been disturbed by the firing from the rest in the reed bed. Of course, they were utterly harmless, but they did not look it. The domed shells closed in on every side, the grunts swelled louder and louder, and Gan, in his ignorance, gave himself up for lost for good and all. They formed up like soldiers in regular ranks, heads swaying and tails wagging, and uttering their peculiar grunting hiss.

"Oh-mi! Goes away!" shrieked Gan. "Helps, Chingy! Ching-y! Ching-y! Bang!"

Gan had remembered his revolver, and fired it. At the sound, heads, legs, and tails vanished into the great shells. Gan was in such a condition of mental dismay that he fancied he must have shot them all off. He closed his eyes. When he opened them none of the awful monsters were to be seen.

"Bad 'nough awful!" he groaned. "I velly sick ill. Oh-mi! Oh-mi! I sees dreamses! Oh-mi! Was them ghostses? Bad 'nough! Dis bad 'nough places. Ow! Dey's comin' backs!"

"U-r-r-r-r!"

Gan jumped round as if someone had stuck a pin in him at the sound. One of the monsters was behind him. It did not show head, tail, or legs, but it was bounding from side to side in a weird, terrifying fashion. Then its head shot out on a long, white writhing neck, and Gan shrieked, rolled backwards down the bank, and fled.

The head was fleshless, the eye-sockets were empty. It was a ghastly skull. In his flight Gan forgot his pole. He tried to clear a pool twenty feet wide, with a bad take-off. Gan soon found out he could not do it. An ear-splitting howl and an echoing splash informed the mosquitoes and others that somebody was getting wet and muddy.

That person was Gan-Waga, Eskimo chief.

The giant tortoise stood up on its hind legs. It wore waders. It took off its shell, and stood revealed as Barry O'Rooney. When searching for his foe, he had found the remains of the reptile.

"Can ut be," grinned Barry, "that he's felled in? Oi must luk into this."

He thrust his head through the reeds in time to see a mud-stained wreck creeping out of the creek.

"Oh-mi! Chingy! Ching-y!"

Gan ran for it again, not daring to look behind him. Barry put his hands to his mouth, and yelled after him:

"Say, Mistor Rubber-face, how many eels have yez catched?"

There was no answer. Gan reeled into the clearing, where the sportsmen were counting the bag. There was dead silence for a second, and then screams of laughter shook the air.

He Shall Have War—Man to Man.

The hot midday sun was tempered by no breeze, and the air shimmered in the heat. The sentries on guard in the south fort at Goretown were half asleep; even the gulls in the harbour were dozing. The sentries were suddenly galvanised by the report of a gun.

With a white flag flying, a little vessel was nearing the harbour. She showed no funnel or smoke. Her motive power, therefore, was either petrol or electricity. The alarm was sounded, and the guard turned out. At a signal a cruiser lowered a boat, and pulled out to intercept her. After some delay, boat and launch entered together, and ran under the forts. It was seen that the men in the launch had been blindfolded, and that a sailor from the cruiser was steering the craft. She was made fast to the cruiser's hawser.

"Rupert Thurston did ye say, mate?"

"I did," answered Rupert, pulling the handkerchief from over his eyes.

A row of curious and unprepossessing faces appeared above. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY
—Every Wednesday—

II

OUR COMPANION PAPERS

II

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
—Every Friday—

The owners of the faces were doing a good deal of spitting and tobacco-chewing.

Though the cruiser was practically new, her paint was greasy, and she had a slovenly look that spoke of laziness and neglect. She carried a couple of typical Yankee wire guns, tough weapons, capable of taking dynamite, an explosive that quickly hacks ordinary guns to pieces.

Rupert kept his eyes open. He was not quite certain of the armament of her fore-turret. He thought they were two pom-poms, but could not see. If they were, Nathan Gore had odd ideas. He roughly estimated her crew at four hundred men, and wondered if they were all as dirty as the sample he had met with.

Nathan Gore's tars wore no particular style of dress or uniform. The most popular style seemed to be a ragged jersey, a pair of more ragged trousers, and an old nightcap. There were several woolly-haired negroes among them, and a sprinkling of Riffs, sons, perhaps, of the Barbary pirates, the last of the real corsairs.

Rupert began to get impatient. It was not pleasant to be stared at by such a cut-throat gang. At last, a fat, flabby-featured man ordered the others back with a curse.

"Waal, stranger," he drawled, "what's about the size o' your business in this bay?"

"To see Mr. Nathan Gore," said Rupert curtly.

"You've punched the centre, anyhow. He's comin' aboard the launch. Friend of his?"

"Hardly!" said Rupert.

"Ah, I didn't fancy it a trifle when I asked! That's a neat little tub you've got. Trot up, and wait." The Yankee sniffed the air. "I reckon that cigar is made of terbacca," he added.

Rupert boarded the cruiser. After the broad hint, he was compelled to offer his new acquaintance a cigar. The deck was in a dirty and untidy state. The man informed him that he was Captain Joel F. Hackerden, and invited him to take a whisky.

Thurston soon began to glean information, for the captain was talkative. He would have gleaned more, but a voice shouted:

"He's coming!"

The sides were manned with a briskness that astonished Rupert. In spite of dirt and rags, the men looked smart and alert.

The boat came alongside, and Nathan Gore, wearing a grey frock-suit, stepped aboard his warship. He walked straight below, followed by the captain. Very soon the captain returned, with a cloud on his brow.

"Durned if I ain't got into trouble about yop, stranger!" he drawled. "The boss nearly chewed both ears off me. Guess you can find the gun-room? He'll see you."

The old man was pacing furiously up and down. He did not even glance at Rupert for a time. His beard and hair were longer and whiter, but his eyes seemed to have lost some of the wild, murderous expression.

"My instructions are to please myself whether I wait or not, Mr. Gore!" said Rupert.

The millionaire swung round and halted.

"Then take your choice."

"My choice is to wait two minutes," said Rupert, taking out his watch. "I think you had better, for your sake, listen to what I have to say."

"Then say it. You have just two minutes for that."

"Two minutes will be ample. Mr. Ferrers Lord wishes me to repeat his terms finally. You are to restore the diamond, and an apology from you must appear in every newspaper of note throughout the world."

"Is that all?"

"All!"

"No threats, then?"

"You must decide that for yourself," said Rupert coolly. "Mr. Ferrers Lord does not deny that he sank your submarine, and so committed an act of piracy. If you appeal to your Government, he will retaliate by denouncing you as a thief. If you refuse his terms a second time, it will be a declaration of war. Man to man he will fight you!"

The blood rushed into the millionaire's face, and his sunken eyes flashed undying hate.

"Man to man!" he screamed. "That is all I ask. Man to man, I say! Victory or ruin, crush or be crushed, I'll ask aid from none! Does that cringing dog think that he can beat me? He shall have war—he shall have war!"

(There will be another thrilling instalment of this splendid adventure serial in next Monday's issue of THE MAGNET Library.)

Every Boy Wage-Earner should see This Week's
CHEER BOYS CHEER. 1d.

My Readers' Page.



OUR TWO
COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
EVERY WEDNESDAY
AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT."

By Frank Richards.

In our next splendid long, complete tale of the juniors of Greyfriars School, the Remove Form is still divided into two factions—the followers of Harry Wharton & Co., and those who support Vernon-Smith, the unscrupulous Bounder of Greyfriars. Between the two parties it is war to the knife. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull, the first victims of Vernon-Smith's cunning and relentless machinations, have already been "sacked," and now the Bounder has marked out his third victim.

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT"

is the story of the plucky Lancashire lad's honest, but vain, struggle against the cold and calculated scheming of his merciless enemy. No "Magnet" reader should miss reading this powerful and thrilling school story.

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

OUR LATEST NOVELTY!

On page 3 of the cover in this week's issue will be found the latest idea in the way of picture novelties. When the picture is cut out in two parts, according to the directions given, and the pieces are carefully pasted upon cardboard, which should then be cut round the outer edges, my chums will have all the materials necessary to construct an amusing and fascinating novelty.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER'S WHEEL,

which will be much in request in the family circle during the long winter evenings. "Telling Fortunes" is an old amusement with a fascination all its own, and while it is not claimed to possess actual supernatural properties, "The Magnet" Fortune-Teller's Wheel can be manipulated so as to cause an immense amount of harmless fun. Another Free Novelty will be presented with next Monday's "Magnet" Library, and in view of the extra demand expected, my regular readers are advised to order their copies extra early.

NUMBER EIGHT!

Our latest little companion paper—the youngest member of "The Invincible Trio"—is now seven weeks old. No. 8 will be out next Friday. These seven weeks of "The Penny Popular's" life have been seven weeks of triumphant progress. In that short time the wonderful little paper has won a proud position for itself amongst the crowded ranks of weekly story-papers. As time goes on, and "The Penny Popular" gains for itself new friends, literally by the hundred, I realise more and more how much I owe to my loyal chums of "The Magnet" and "Gem" Libraries, to whose good offices the unparalleled success of our newest companion paper is so largely due. The only way I can repay the generosity of my chums is to make still further efforts to give them really "good stuff" in the three companion papers.

With this end in view, I have done my level best to make No. 8 of "The Penny Pop." a real "bonzer," as some of my Colonial chums would say.

"The Mystery of St. Jim's," a splendid, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., by Martin Clifford; "The Lost Laird," a grand, long, complete tale of Sexton Blake, the world-famous detective; and "By the Tsar's Command," an exciting and amusing complete story of the adventures of Jack, Sam, and Pete, by S. Clarke Hook—these are the contents of No. 8, which I am confidently relying upon to add still further lustre to the already famous name of

"THE PENNY POPULAR."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 251.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale
of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

"MARK LINLEY'S LAST FIGHT."

STAMP COLLECTING HINTS.

Stamps are often spoiled in handling them with the fingers. If a stamp has to be moved at all, it should be touched only with the tweezers specially bought for the purpose. Absurd as it might seem at first sight, large numbers of stamps are ruined just because of this carelessness on the part of the philatelist. However clean the hands may be, they will always retain a certain amount of grease, which will be transferred to anything that is touched. On some things this is not noticed, but stamps are very susceptible to it. A stamp which is worth keeping is worth taking the greatest care of.

To clean stamps—an operation which should be performed before mounting—benzine should be used. This is an all-round cleanser, and does not injure the stamp. In cases where the colours are not likely to run, the specimens may be immersed in the spirits until clean, but generally it is much safer to apply the treatment by means of a soft camel-hair brush.

An unused stamp should be as it leaves the mint for insertion in the album, with its colour and perforation perfect, and its design well-centred. A used stamp should not be mounted unless it is clean—almost as new—lightly post-marked, and with its colour bright, and perforation intact. In the case of a stamp which is not perforated, it should have a good wide margin, and the design should be well centred. If a stamp album is to represent a complete history of the stamps it contains each one or set will have to be carefully and completely written up.

Now, in

"WRITING UP"

stamps, all the particulars of each specimen must be put down beside it. The points of interest which have to be recorded are the date of issue, the artist, the engraver, the printers, the mode of production, all about the paper, its watermark and perforation, and the date of suppression. Most of these particulars can be found in the catalogue, but if any should be omitted, and cannot be obtained except, perhaps, from some doubtful source, they should be left out altogether. The paper and the watermark and perforation can be discovered by studying the stamp and the use of the perforation gauge. "Writing up" is generally confined to collectors who specialise, rather than those who collect any stamp they can get hold of, as there is more scope for complete histories in their collections.

(Another stamp article next Monday.)

A SPECIAL NOTE.

I have received very interesting and helpful letters and suggestions from readers who sign themselves as follows: "The Twelve Gems" (Cheshire), D. W. Hall (nr. Colchester), J. Saunders (Eastwood), M. L. and G. Turner (Liverpool), E. F. W. and friends, "A Clacton Reader," "Borderite," (Carlisle). The above have my very best thanks, and I shall be pleased to hear from all or any of them at some future date.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

E. A. G. (Holloway, N.).—Thank you for your letter. I have not heard of any Magnet League in the district you mention. Why not start one yourself?

W. T. C. (Camberwell).—Thanks for letter. I am sorry I cannot tell you the value of the coins you mention, as your description is insufficient. You could send them to the Editor, The Connoisseur, Temple Chambers, E.C., who could, I have no doubt, give you a fairly accurate estimate of their value.

THE EDITOR.

Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library in advance.

OUR SPLENDID NEW FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

A 'STAR'-TLING AFFAIR.



1. Trott, the tourist, was in rather an awkward position—cast away on an island, with the tide rapidly rising. "Ha!" said he, "A whale in the offing! Good! I will lasso it! And he did so, forthwith.

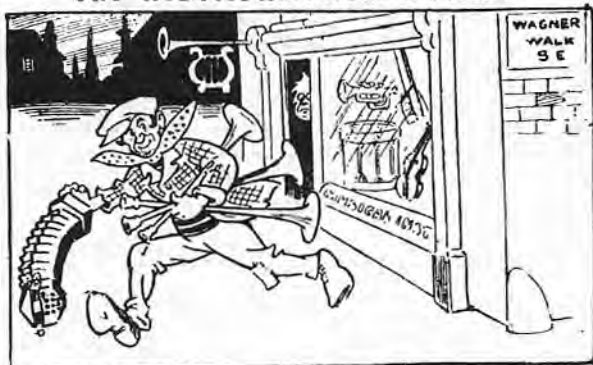


2. And having secured the merry mammal, he proceeded to whack starfish at it—like this. And the creature caught them on its spout, and sent them up. "That'll do it!" said Trott.



3. And it did, too! For the admiral commanding the good ship "Hopscotch" immediately sent the lifeboat out, and brought our old friend back in great style.

AN INSTRUMENTAL PAUSE.



1. "I ought to be able to raise a bit on these 'ere instruments," gurgled the bold Bill Sykes, as he got away with three trumpets and a concertina.



2. But the music merchant came after him rapidly. "If I don't look out, he'll catch me!" cried the burglar. "Stay—an idea!"



3. And he rigged up his spoils to resemble a camera, like this, completely deceiving his pursuer. Smart fellow.

(More Comic Pictures on page 1V: of cover.)

THE FORTUNE-TELLER'S WHEEL.

A Wonderful Mechanical Novelty. For Directions see below.

ANOTHER NOVELTY
NEXT MONDAY!
ORDER EARLY

ANOTHER NOVELTY
NEXT MONDAY!
ORDER EARLY

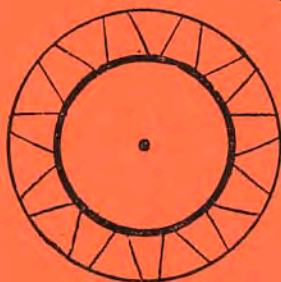
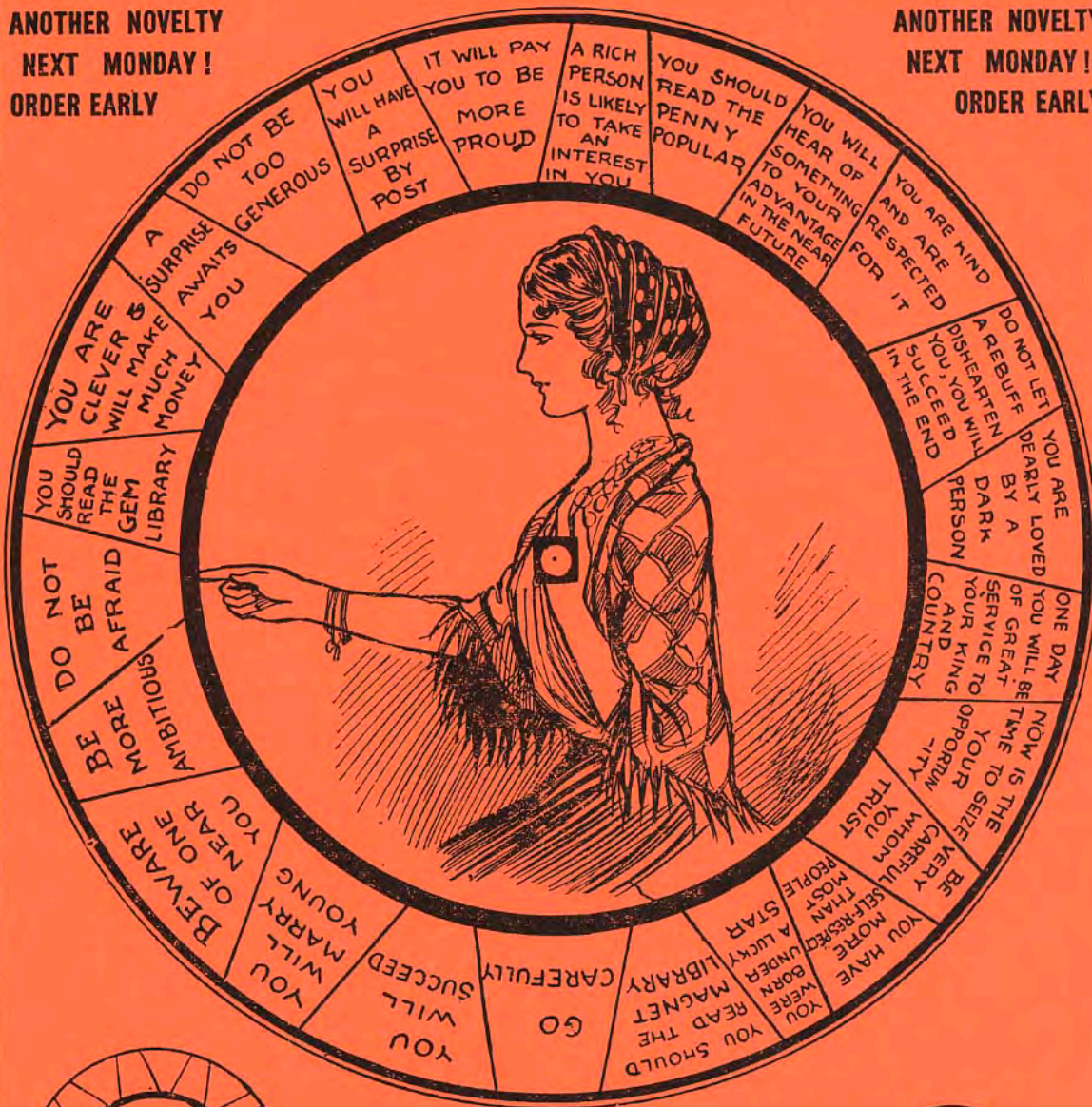


Fig. 1.



Fig. 3.—The Fortune-Teller's Wheel when completed.

Fig. 2.



HOW THE FORTUNE-TELLER'S WHEEL SHOULD BE USED.

First of all cut round the outside thin black line of the Wheel. Then cut carefully round through the middle of the inner thick black line which encircles the Fortune-Teller. The Novelty will then be in two parts, as shown in figs. 1 and 2. Paste each of these parts upon stout cardboard, and then cut very carefully round the outside line of each part. The Novelty will now consist of two solid cardboard discs. Place the smaller disc, bearing the portrait of the Fortune-Teller, upon the top of the larger disc, taking care that their centres exactly coincide; then push a pointed pencil through the top disc, and just far enough into the lower one to make a "bed" or depression in which the point of the pencil can rest. The Wheel of Fortune will then be complete, as in fig. 3. To tell your fortune, the top disc should be revolved smartly by twirling it with the finger of the left hand, while the pencil is held in place by the right hand; when the wheel comes to rest, the outstretched hand of the Fortune-Teller will point to the prophecy which is to indicate your fate!

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FREE ENVELOPES.—To save you trouble & expense, envelopes are included free for all cards that will not go in envelopes of ordinary size.
Dept. 1, The
PAIN BROTHERS, "Presents House," HASTINGS, ENC.

HOOTS, MONI



1. "Hech!" said MacSneeshin, the robber. "It's a braw piggie I've collared the noo! I'll just tak' it hame wi' me as sharp as I can." But the neighbours had spotted him and were following. So when he turned the corner—



2. Old MacSneeshin did the porker up like this, and deluded the other chaps into believing that it was the bagpipes he was playing. Hoots! Toots!

ALL UP WITH TOMMY!



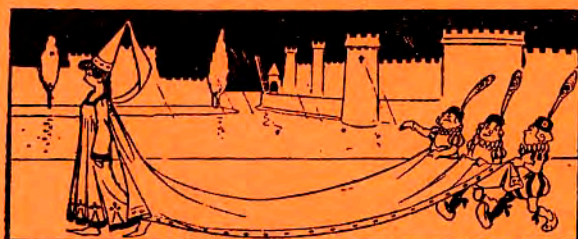
1. "Get out o' that!" roared the lock-keeper to little Tommy, who was angling for tiddlers in the lock.



2. But Tommy retorted with jibes and unmannerly jests. So the old lock-keeper, who wasn't born yesterday—

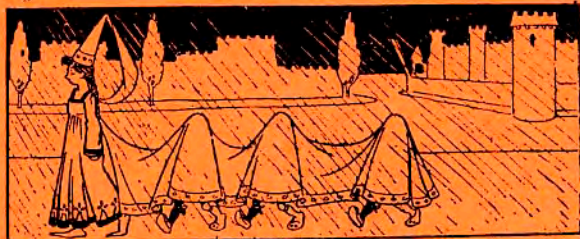


3. Sent the water up to the top of the lock, grabbed little Tommy, and gave him a nasty ten minutes.



1. "Hallo!" said the little pagelets. "Here comes the rain. If we get wet we shall spoil our hats! Come on, lets—

N



2. "Keep ourselves dry like this." And the artful little fellow slipped under Lady Isabel's cloak, and got home nice and dry.

20/11/12