



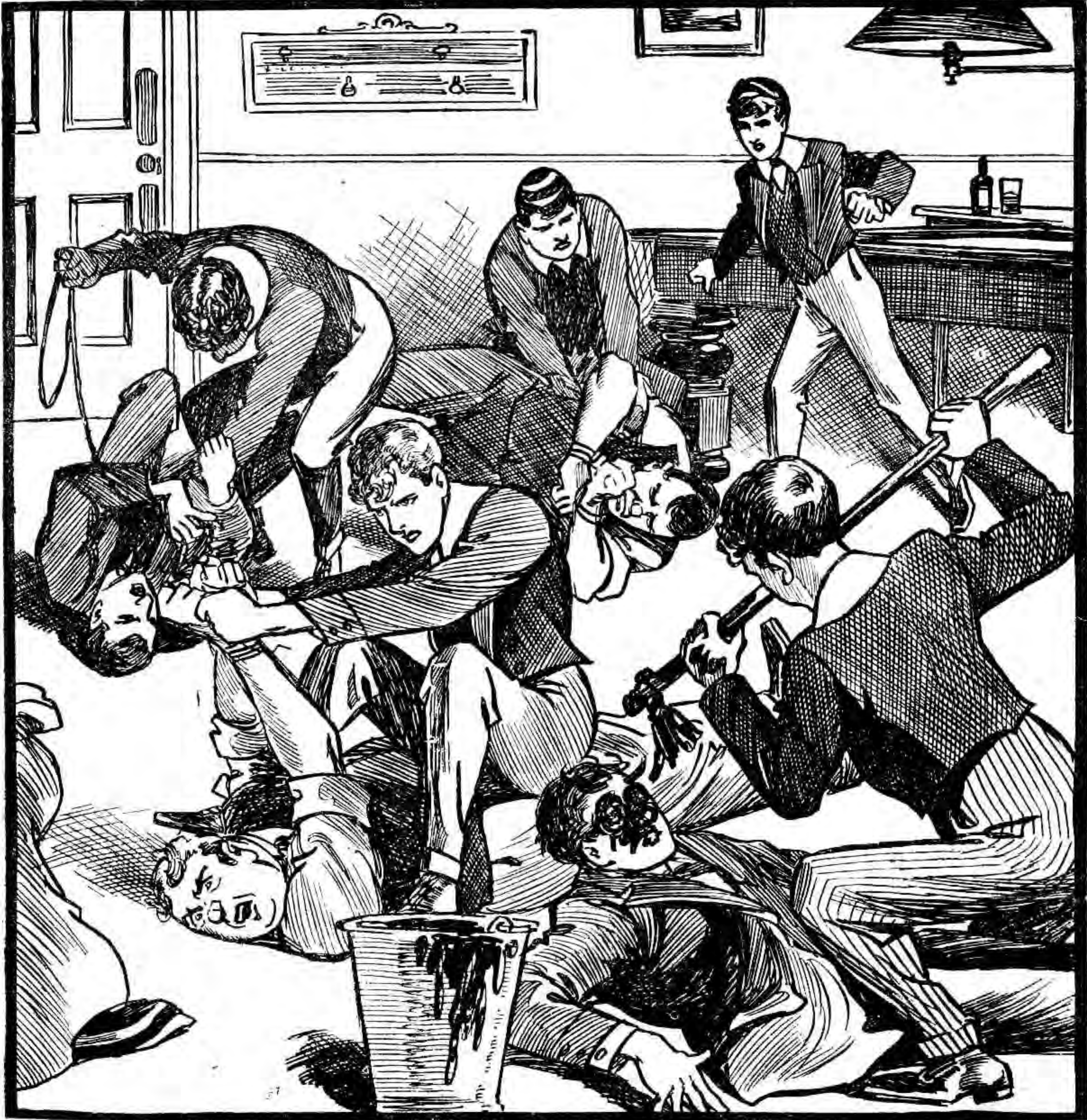

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WALKER OF THE SIXTH!



THE STUFF TO GIVE 'EM!



WALKER OF THE SIXTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Luck for Loder!

"W HITHER bound?" Loder of the Sixth asked that question of Walker. The latter was striding swiftly across the Close in a rain-coat buttoned tightly at the collar. He turned as Loder hailed him.

"Footer," he said briefly, "on Big Side."

Loder threw a disparaging glance at Walker's football boots, and laughed contemptuously.

"So that's the stunt, is it? Clean, healthy exercise for the young—what?"

"Better than dealing cards in a stuffy study, any day!" said Walker.

He was about to move away. But Loder caught his arm.

"Don't be a silly ass!" he said. "You can't pretend you're fond of wallowing on a muddy field. I know better! Come along down to the village like a good chap!"

"The village has no attractions for me," said Walker—"at least, the Cross Keys hasn't. I've no use for that particular kind of side-show, thanks!"

"I'm playing Hawke a thousand up at billiards for a fiver," said Loder.

"More fool you!" snapped Walker. "You'll look an art shade in green by the time he's finished with you. And it'll serve you jolly well right!"

"Then you're not coming?" said Loder.

"No!" "You're going in for the plaster saint bizney?"

"Put it that way if you like. Wingate's got me down to play against Redclyffe next week, and I'm going to get in some practice. The Cross Keys isn't exactly a training-ground. So-long!"

And Walker went on his way.

Loder glanced after him with a frown. Time was when Walker would have welcomed a little flutter in Loder's society. But Walker was an uncertain sort of fellow. Now that the football season had started Walker had made up his mind to justify his inclusion in the First Eleven, and the wiles of Gerald Loder were wasted upon him.

Muttering angrily to himself, Loder swung out of the school gates alone. There were very few fellows in the Sixth whom he could have asked to accompany him. The death of Arthur Courtney some time before had sobered some of the black sheep of the Form; and Loder stood more or less alone.

"Hang that fellow Walker!" he muttered. "I'd counted on him. He could have backed me up with funds in case I came a cropper at billiards. As it is, I shall be stumped if I lose to Hawke."

Whilst Loder went on his way with these troubled reflections Walker got busy on Big Side. Wingate was there, and so were Faulkner and Gwynne and several others—all keen to get into their stride and make the season a success.

From the outset Walker played well. In shooting for goal he was dead on the mark every time; and Wingate, as he watched, felt very glad that he had included Walker in the team against Redclyffe.

"You're going strong," he said when the players came off. "Keep that up, and I don't see why you shouldn't play in the eleven right through the season."

"Good enough!" said Walker.

As he tramped back to the School House through the drizzling rain he was conscious of a healthy glow all over him—a feeling of physical fitness which he had not known for a long time. He could see now that healthy sport yielded more pleasure than unhealthy, and he was glad he had shaken Loder off earlier in the afternoon.

He wondered idly how the cad of the Sixth had fared in his billiard match with that thoroughbred scoundrel Jerry Hawke. Loder was not without skill at the game, yet his unscrupulous opponent would not be likely to leave the issue tamely in Loder's hands.

"The thundering ass!" muttered Walker, referring to his absent school-fellow. "He's in debt already, and he's pretty certain to lose another fiver this afternoon. Still, it's no use trying to stop him. That sort of thing's in his blood. Can the merry Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"

Walker had barely made himself comfortable on the couch in his study when Loder came in. He looked like a fellow who had set out to find trouble and had succeeded. His nose was swollen, one eye was fast becoming discoloured, and there was an ugly bruise on his chin.

The fury in his face did not add to his beauty.

"Great Scott!" gasped Walker, jumping up. "Been wrestling with a grizzly?"

Loder flung himself into the armchair with a savage imprecation.

"I—I've had an argument," he said. Walker grinned.

"I should say you've had more than that. What was the trouble?"

"That rotter Hawke cheated me!"

"Nothing new, is it?" said Walker.

"The man lives by cheating!"

"I was licking him at billiards," explained Loder. "I had a jolly good lead, and should have won hands down, but the marker faked the scores. He was put up to it by Hawke, of course."

"And so—" said Walker.

"And so we had a bit of a scrap. I could have laid out Hawke alone all right; but he didn't play fair. The beastly marker chipped in, and between the two of 'em I had rather a bad time."

"Looks like it," said Walker. "If you've come here for sympathy, though, I'm afraid there's nothing doing. Cheerio! And close the door after you!"

Loder rose painfully to his feet. Walker noticed that, apart from his injuries, he seemed worried.

"Hold on!" said Loder. "I—I'm in the dickens of a fix! Hawke has in-

sisted on my paying him that fiver within a week. If I don't he's coming up here to make a song about it."

"Well?"

"Can't you see what I'm driving at?" exclaimed Loder impatiently. "Can't you offer to help a chap out when you see him up against it like this? If you'll lend me the tin to square Hawke's debt I'll make it good as soon as I can. Be a sport, Walker! Won't you help me?"

"No, I won't!" said Walker flatly.

"Firstly, because I'm pretty nearly broke myself; and secondly, because you got yourself into this mess, and it's up to you to straighten out the tangle. If you think I'm going to shoulder your blessed burdens you're mistaken!"

The note of finality in Walker's tone was so pronounced that Loder knew it would be worse than useless to persist in his appeal.

"Hang you!" he snarled, moving to the door. "Precious sort of pal you are—I don't think! You don't care who sinks so long as you swim! You rotter!"

Walker clenched his hands as if to strike; then he dropped them with a laugh.

"I guess you've been hammered enough as it is!" he said. "Now you can clear out!"

Gerald Loder was not in the humour for another fight just then. With a sullen glare at the unsympathetic Walker he went, slamming the door furiously behind him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"MAULY, old chap—"

Lord Mauleverer, the born-tired aristocrat of the Remove, blinked with sleepy eyes at Sir James Vivian, Baronet, who was prodding him with a cricket-stump. The schoolboy earl, reclining full-length on the sofa in his study, was in no mood for interruption.

"Gerraway!" he murmured drowsily.

"Look 'ere," said Sir Jimmy, still bringing the stump into play, "you're comin' with me this afternoon, old son! There's goin' to be 'igh jinks!"

Lord Mauleverer shuddered. The speech of Sir Jimmy Vivian lacked polish, to say the least of it; and it was not so much the matter of his conversation as the manner of it that got on Mauly's nerves.

"I do wish you'd go away, begad!" yawned Mauly. "You're addin' years to my life, Jimmy! Run away an' pick flowers! I'm tired!"

"Was you ever anythink else?" grinned Sir Jimmy. "You're never 'appy unless you're snoozin' an' snorin'!"

"Really, my dear fellow, I'm sure I'm not addicted to the latter disgustin' habit! Ow! Put that stump away, you young lunatic! You nearly brained me that time!"

"I'm fed-up with waitin' about for you,

Mauly!" said Sir Jimmy peevishly. "You promised me that one of these days you'd take me on an explorin' expeditious!"

"A—a what?" gasped Mauly faintly.

"A squint at them old caves along the coast. I've 'eard them smuggler blokes used to 'ide their loot in 'em. An' you're comin' to show me round now, Mauly, as you said you would!"

"I would, like a shot," said Mauly, "only——"

"Only what?"

"I'm tired. Postpone it till the next half-holiday, there's a good chap."

"That's what you said before. You keeps on puttin' it off, an' puttin' it off, an' we don't get no forrader. For the last time, are you comin'?"

And the youthful baronet brandished the cricket-stump so threateningly that Mauly, scenting danger, jumped up from the couch.

"I'm disappointed in you, Jimmy," he said. "You've forced me, against my will, to commit an act of energy."

"Then you are comin'?" asked Jimmy eagerly.

"Certainly not! I'm goin' to pitch you out into the passage!"

And, before Sir Jimmy had become fully alive to the situation, the cricket-stump was wrenched from his grasp and he was being propelled from the study.

"Ands off!" he panted. "Go easy, Mauly, or I'll dot you on the boko!"

"You will be allowed to do nothin' so repulsive, my infant!" said the exasperated Mauly.

He gave his study-mate a final push, which sent him spinning into the passage, and then, carefully dusting his hands with a silk handkerchief, returned to his couch, having first made himself secure from attack by locking the door.

"Beast!" bawled Sir Jimmy, through the keyhole. "You can go an' chop chips! I'll find somebody else to show me round the caves!"

"I'm glad to hear it, kid!" yawned Mauly. And then, laying his head upon the soft cushions, he resigned himself to slumber.

Sir Jimmy snorted, and walked away in high dudgeon. He would show his independence of Mauly, he told himself, by persuading somebody else to accompany him to the caves.

In the hall he bumped into the Famous Five. They were looking as if they found the world a very pleasant place to live in just then.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Welcome, little stranger! Wherefore that haggard brow?"

"Will you chaps take me down to see the caves?" asked Jimmy. "Mauly promised to take me, but on second thoughts he kicked me out of the study an' went to sleep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see where the joke comes in!" growled Jimmy. "Are you goin' to take me?"

"Sorry," said Wharton. "We are going over to Cliff House to tea. Another time, Jimmy."

"That's what Mauly said!"

"Well, we can't put off the Cliff House girls," said Nugent. "But I tell you what. You can come over with us, if you like."

"Rats! I'm dead nuts on seein' the caves!"

"Oh, they'll keep," said Johnny Bull.

"Go and put some bear's-grease on your hair, and come along with us."

But even Cliff House had no attraction for Sir Jimmy just then. He had set his heart on exploring the caves; and if he could not get anyone to go with him he would go alone. He spent another half-hour in the building searching for a kindred spirit, but drew blank. True,



Mauly mauling the baronet! (See Chapter 2.)

Billy Bunter offered to come, thinking there was a royal repast set out in one of the caves; but Vivian had no use for the society of the Owl of the Remove.

So at length, unable to find a suitable partner for his excursion, Sir Jimmy sallied forth alone.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Missing!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter burst into Study No. 1 without knocking. His little round eyes were gleaming behind his glasses, and it was evident that he was the bearer of important tidings.

The Famous Five, who had tramped back from Cliff House in a driving storm, were gathered round the fire, at which they were roasting chestnuts. Billy Bunter's appearance at that moment was decidedly unwelcome.

"Scat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Bob, old chap——"

"If you call me 'Bob, old chap' again, I'll do the same to you as I'm doing to this chestnut, you fat worm!"

"Buzz off, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "What you happen to have heard through keyholes doesn't interest us!"

"Oh, all right!" said the Owl of the Remove, turning to go. "If you don't want to hear about young Vivian I'll quit!"

"Eh? What's up with Vivian?" demanded Johnny Bull, as Bunter moved to the door.

"Gimme a few chestnuts and I'll tell you."

Johnny Bull rose threateningly to his feet, but Harry Wharton restrained him.

"Here you are, porpoise!" said Harry. "Come and help yourself! And if you've come here with some cock-and-bull yarn you'll be bumped—hard!"

Wharton was concerned for the welfare of Sir Jimmy. It was possible that Vivian was in trouble of some sort, in which case it might be necessary for the Famous Five to take a hand.

"What's wrong with Vivian?" asked Nugent.

Billy Bunter bolted a couple of chestnuts before replying. He also took the

opportunity of slipping half a dozen into his pocket unseen.

"Young Vivian," he mumbled, "is missing!"

"What?"

"He went out at two o'clock," said Bunter, "to explore some beastly caves, or something, and he's not been seen since."

"My hat!"

The Famous Five were on their feet now, and their faces were grave. They recalled Sir Jimmy's expressed intention of going to the caves alone; and they were alarmed for the possible consequences of his excursion.

A fierce storm had been raging for the past hour; and if the missing junior had lost himself, and was at the mercy of the storm, he must be in real danger.

"We must go and hunt for the silly duffer!" said Nugent. "He doesn't know his way about as well as we do; and it's an easy matter to lose one's bearings in those caves."

Harry Wharton nodded, and promptly donned his rain-coat.

At that moment Lord Mauleverer came in. He wore a worried look.

"Any news of Jimmy?" he asked.

"None!" said Wharton. "We're just going to try to dig him out. Coming?"

"Certainly, dear boy!"

Mauly seemed anything but a slacker now. He was anxious and alert. He felt in a great measure responsible for Sir Jimmy, and could have kicked himself for not having accompanied the junior on the expedition. It was always unwise to let Sir Jimmy do things off his own bat. He was apt to meet with trouble when he ventured forth alone.

"There's no time to lose," said Johnny Bull.

"No, begad! We'll get off the mark at once!" agreed Mauly. "I—I say!" he added, his face growing pale. "Do you think the silly duffer went out in a boat, or anythin'?"

"He'd be mad to do that, in weather like this!" said Nugent.

"Yaas; but—but he might have been out when this confounded storm came on. An' if that's the case——"

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Lord Mauleverer did not finish. His anxiety had risen to fever-pitch. Without troubling to get his coat, he led the way from the study.

"Where are you kids going?"

Wingate of the Sixth bore down upon the juniors as they went along the passage.

"We're going to hunt for Vivian," said Wharton.

"There's no need."

"Has he come back, then, Wingate?" exclaimed Mauly eagerly.

The captain of Greyfriars shook his head.

"No; but I have spoken to Mr. Quelch, and he wishes a search-party to be formed from members of the Sixth."

"But we can come, too?" said Bob Cherry.

Wingate smiled.

"I'm afraid not," he said. "It's a very wild night, and we don't want any more kids lost!"

Then, noting the pale, troubled expression of Lord Mauleverer, Wingate added:

"We shall find the kid all serene. You can rely on us. A dozen of us are going to make a close search of the shore."

"If we come with you, Wingate, we should stick together, and it would be all right," said Wharton.

"It can't be done!" said Wingate. "That's final! And now you'd better cut off to bed."

Very reluctantly the juniors obeyed. They felt that they would have made as good a search-party as any of the Sixth; but Wingate's word was law, and, with much inward misgiving, they trooped up to the Remove dormitory.

But no one undressed, and no one was likely to think of sleep until Sir Jimmy was brought back to the fold.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fate of Sir Jimmy!

"ARE you ready, you fellows?" Wingate opened the hall door, and a great gust of wind swept in, bearing with it a driving sheet of rain.

"Oh, bedad! What a night!" said Gwynne.

"Beastly nuisance, I call it, having to chase about the country for a silly young sweep who's lost himself!" growled Loder.

"Well, it's not the first time you've sacrificed your beauty-sleep!" grinned Walker.

Loder clenched his hands, and strode savagely out with the others. A moment later the tall forms of the seniors were swallowed up in the darkness.

If the storm was fierce at Greyfriars, it was terrible on the coast. The seniors could scarcely hear themselves speak.

"Let's keep together," shouted Wingate, "and start searching the caves!"

"Some of 'em will be half full of water by now," said Faulkner. "The tide's coming in."

"Well, we'll do our best, anyway. What's the game, Walker?"

Walker, who was in the act of striding away, turned back for a moment.

"I reckon a boat's the best thing!" he shouted.

"You're mad! No boat could live in a sea like this!"

"Mad or not, it's the only way of approach to some of the caves. There's quite a seaworthy little tub moored not far away, and I guess I'm bagging it!"

"Look here," interposed Gwynne, "if somebody's got to make a dashed fool of himself, let me! I'm a better oarsman than you, Walker!"

But Walker was already lost to sight.

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In a few moments the group of seniors became aware of a dark object that bobbed up and down on the waves. They shouted, but no response came to them amid the roar of the storm.

"The madman!" exclaimed Faulkner. "He'll come to grief for a cert!"

Meanwhile, pulling with strong and steady strokes, and hugging the shore as much as possible, Walker made progress through the angry sea. One moment he was caught up on a crest of seething waves, the next he was dashed down into a valley. But although he came near to capsizing on more than one occasion, he set his teeth and stuck it out.

And presently, faintly on the wings of the storm, came a cry. Walker ceased rowing, and strained his ears for a repetition of the sound.

Even as Walker listened it came again, with great insistence this time.

"'Elp! 'Elp!"

And now it dawned upon the senior's mind that the appeal came from one of the caves hard by. With redoubled vigour he rowed in that direction, and during a temporary lull in the storm he heard the cry again.

"Where are you?" he shouted.

"In this 'ere blinkin' cave, an' up to my eyes in water!" came the voice, which was unmistakably that of Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"Hang on, kid!" exclaimed Walker. "I'll be with you in a jiffy!"

Dimly he could distinguish the entrance to the cave in which Sir Jimmy was a prisoner. It was one of the largest caves thereabouts; and, as Walker well knew, it was only possible to enter the cave when the tide was out. Several times in the past people had been imprisoned in that same cave owing to the rising tide, and had only been rescued with extreme difficulty.

Sir Jimmy had gone into the cave when the tide was low, and he had lingered too long, for the place fascinated him. In the vicissitudes of his former life the sea and all things connected with it had been a sealed book to Jimmy; and now that these things were within his reach he wanted to make the most of them.

He had been in the cave about half an hour, his thoughts full of the days when smugglers had made the place their rendezvous, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was ankle-deep in water. Then, gazing with startled eyes at the entrance, he saw that the waves had come surging in, and that a storm of such violence had arisen that to swim for safety would be impossible.

So Jimmy had remained in the cave, waiting and hoping for rescue; and when he was waist-deep in water, and the situation had seemed desperate, he had shouted for help.

And now he could see a boat battling against the waves that leapt and surged round the entrance to the cave, and he knew that his cries had been answered.

"I'm in 'ere!" he repeated. "Buck up, there's a good feller! I'm all cold an' numbed, an'—"

Sir Jimmy stopped short. There was a grinding crash as Walker's boat collided with a jutting rock at the entrance.

The next moment a tall figure waded into the cave.

"It's all up, kid!" said Walker. "The boat's done for! I didn't turn her in time."

Sir Jimmy groaned.

"Ain't there no way out?" he asked.

"Afraid not," said Walker. "The boat's simply matchwood. I've let it rip. We shall just have to stay here till some-one fishes us out, that's all."

There was a pause.

"Did you come on purpose to look for me?" asked Jimmy at length.

"Of course! The whole of the Sixth are out hunting for you, you young duffer! Didn't you know that this cave got flooded out when the tide came in?"

Sir Jimmy shivered.

"I'd never been 'ere afore," he said. And then he fell silent.

Walker peered narrowly at his companion in misfortune. He saw that Sir Jimmy looked utterly done up—that he would not be able to hold out much longer.

The water was rising—not rapidly, but with a slow persistence that made even Walker feel unnerved.

And still the storm played havoc without, and still the waves leapt and dashed against the jagged walls of rock at the entrance.

Conscious of impending doom, Walker began to think hard. Never had the past risen so vividly before his mind as now. He began to wish he had played with a straighter bat. He began to regret having played the fool, and wasted his opportunities.

But wishes and regrets seemed useless now. It was a dark hour for Walker of the Sixth.

A faint groan escaped the lips of Sir Jimmy. The water was almost up to the junior's shoulders by this time.

Walker, forgetting self, caught his companion up, and held him to his chest, wondering how long it would be before he himself was in the grip of exhaustion.

"Oh, heavens!" muttered Walker. "I—I'm nearly done!"

And then he raised his voice and called for help, as Jimmy Vivian had done before him.

But there was no reply. The storm still raged. The tide was nearly at the full. Walker reckoned that it was but a matter of moments now.

"Help!" he cried again, and waited, straining his ears.

Was it fancy, or could he hear the swift plash of oars? He concluded that his senses must be reeling, and that his imagination was playing him tricks.

But the sound was insistent, and Walker, still tightly clasping his burden, strained his eyes for a glimpse of the boat, if boat it was.

"You there, Walker?" came a voice—the voice of the captain of Greyfriars.

"Yes—and the kid, too!" sang out Walker.

He tried to say more, but his voice failed him.

And then the water seemed suddenly to engulf him. He stumbled dizzily forward, with a strange roaring in his ears. Then he felt himself being hauled out of the depths by willing hands, after which all was darkness and oblivion.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Sequel!

WHEN Walker opened his eyes and looked about him he saw that he was in a snug kitchen, beside a roaring fire.

A short distance away Sir Jimmy reclined on a couch, sleeping soundly.

"Ready to sit up and take a little nourishment—what?" said a cheery voice.

And, turning, Walker beheld the captain of Greyfriars.

"Wingate! What—what's happened?" asked the senior, passing his hand dazedly across his brow. "And where are the other fellows?"

"They've all gone back to Greyfriars," said Wingate. "Once we'd got you and the kid safe and sound in this cottage it wasn't necessary for 'em to stay."

"You—you fished us out of that beastly cave?" asked Walker.

Wingate nodded.

"I—I say! I wish I knew how to thank you!"

"You needn't try," said Wingate, laughing. "I had only a small share in the rescue work."

"But I don't quite see how you managed it," said Walker. "I wonder you didn't come to grief, like I did."

"We were wise in our old age. We buzzed off into Pegg, and commandeered the lifeboat. It was quite a lucky chance that we found you. Loder happened to hear you shout."

"Loder!"

"Yes. He said he reckoned you were stranded in the big cave, and were calling for help. So we pulled like niggers, and just fished you out in time."

Walker fell silent for a long while. He was thinking that he owed his life largely to Loder. If Loder had not heard his feeble shout it would have been all up with Sir Jimmy Vivian, and all up with Walker, too!

The more he thought about it the more clearly Walker became convinced that he was under a great obligation to Gerald Loder.

Of course, Loder had done no more than any other fellow would have done in similar circumstances; but Walker felt very grateful to him.

"Penny for 'em!" said Wingate suddenly.

"I was thinking we'd better be getting back to the school," said Walker.

"But you're not fit—"

"Oh, yes, I am! How's young Vivian?"

"I guess it'll be a few days before he's on his feet again. If you're really keen on getting back, we'll leave him here. He's asleep now, and the longer he sleeps the better."

At this juncture the widow who owned the cottage came in with a pot of steaming coffee and some sandwiches. Wingate thanked her, and asked if Sir Jimmy might be left in her care till the morrow, to which she readily assented.

The hour was late when the two seniors arrived at Greyfriars. Wingate was thoughtful enough to pay a visit to the Remove dormitory in order to assure Harry Wharton & Co. and Lord Mauleverer that Sir Jimmy was in no danger. Walker, meanwhile, went along to Loder's study.

He found Loder asleep in his clothes, utterly worn out. But he stirred when Walker came in, and growled drowsily:

"Who's that?"

"It's only little me!" said Walker.

Loder rolled over and blinked at him.

"You're jolly lucky to be still in the land of the living!" he said.

"I know," said Walker meekly. "I owe you a good deal, old man, one way and another. If you hadn't heard me shout I guess I'd have been food for fishes by now—and young Vivian, too. I thought I'd come along and thank you for—"

"Cut it short!" said Loder. "I don't want your thanks."

Loder was both tired and irritable, but Walker pretended not to notice the fact.

"You still owe Hawke that fiver, I suppose?" said Walker.

"Eh? Of course!"

"Well, in that case, I'd like to—"

"You're going to hand over the five quid?" said Loder, with a new note of eagerness in his voice.

Walker shook his head.

"I'm stumped myself," he said. "But I promise you this. I sha'n't rest until I've raked up the tin somehow."

Loder laughed rather bitterly.

"I'm afraid promises are N.G.," he said. "It's the oof I want. Hawke's only given me till Wednesday night to pay up."

"Oh, rotten!"

Walker's face fell. He could not for the life of him see how he was going to raise the wind in such a short interval.

"Can't you persuade the scoundrel to wait?" he asked.

"No. He's got his back up badly since that scrap in the billiard-room the other day. I can't get him to listen to reason."

"Then I'll tell you what," said Walker. "I'll go down and give the beast a thundering good hiding!"

"That would only get me deeper into the mire!" growled Loder. "The only thing that'll save me now is spot cash."

Walker was silent for some moments.

It was indeed a difficult tangle. The raising of a sum like five pounds came easy to some fellows; but Walker was not very flush just then, and he saw no chance of getting money from his people. He had already squandered his allowance for the term.

The wealthy fellows in the school—Vernon-Smith and Lord Mauleverer, for example—would be almost certain to button up their pockets. Vernon-Smith had little liking for Walker, and would scarcely be inclined to play the Good Samaritan. As for Mauleverer, he could be very generous when he chose; but in the case of Walker it was ten to one that he wouldn't choose.

For some moments Walker sat on the edge of Loder's couch puzzling over the problem, and he was still without a solution when he spoke again.

"You've saved my life to-night, Loder—at least, yours was the biggest share," he said.

"And I mean to show you that I'm not ungrateful. You'll be in a position to pay Hawke that fiver on Wednesday night. I'm hanged if I see how it's going to be raised, but it will be raised, even if I have to put myself in the hands of a beastly moneylender!"

"It's a question of getting the money or getting the sack," said Loder. "I've been in the soup too many times for the Head to give me another chance."

"I know it's an ugly outlook," said Walker, "but I'll do my best."

Yet he felt conscious, as he passed out into the passage, that he had promised something it was going to be very difficult to perform.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Walker Strikes a Bargain!

"WELL played, Walker!"

"Jolly well played, old sport!"

Walker, fit and strong once more after the ordeal through which he had recently passed with Jimmy Vivian, had just been putting up a fine show in a practice game on Big Side.

The Redclyffe match loomed very near now, and Wingate had been putting his eleven to the test. Everyone had displayed good form, and Walker had been in the limelight a good deal. He had put plenty of ginger into his shooting, and his footwork had been good to see.

There was plenty of applause as Walker came off the field, but he was deaf to the plaudits of the crowd just then. The difficult problem of getting Loder out of his scrape was beginning to haunt him.

He slipped on his coat, with the object of taking a tramp through the country lanes to think things out.

As he passed through the gateway leading out into the road a hand fell upon his shoulder. Walker turned, and encountered a sturdy-looking young man, who wore a munitions badge on his coat.

"Who are you?" demanded Walker, a trifle nettled by the hail-fellow-well-met manner of the stranger. "Outsiders aren't allowed here, you know."

"Don't get huffy!" said the other. "I was just admiring your play. You're the real goods—a jolly good shot, and keen as mustard. You don't hesitate to go for your man, either. On the whole, I should feel rather bucked playing on the right wing with you."

"W-what d'you mean?" stammered Walker.

"Simply that I'm on the look-out for a jolly good man. My name's Martin—skipper of Courtfield Ramblers, you know. We're playing the Loamshire Regiment on Wednesday. They're a hot military side, and we shall have all our work cut out to lick 'em."

"But what have I to do with all this?"

"I want you," said Martin impatiently. "We're a man short, and you'll fill the breach nicely. You needn't glare at me like that! It's nothing new for a Greyfriars senior to give a local side a hand. Be a sport, and turn out for us!"

Walker hesitated.

"This is so jolly sudden," he said. "Besides, we're playing Redclyffe on Wednesday, so in any case it's impossible."

"Your skipper can find another man in your place."

"You're asking me to give Courtfield Ramblers the preference over my school?" said Walker.

The Courtfield skipper looked nettled.

"That's rather a blunt way of putting it," he said. "Anyway, we're desperately keen on licking the Loamshires. For the last time, will you play?"

Walker was about to reply in the negative, when an idea suddenly leapt to his brain. It was not a very high-minded idea, perhaps; but then, Walker had never been a specially high-minded fellow.

"I'll play," he said slowly, "on condition that you make it worth my while."

"You mean you want to be paid for your services?"

"Yes," said Walker, flushing.

Martin looked curiously at the Sixth-Former.

"How much do you expect?" he asked.

"A fiver," said Walker promptly.

The man from Courtfield rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't think our finances are in a very flourishing state," he said. "Still, I'm game to spring a fiver, on one condition."

"Namely?"

"That we lick the Loamshires!"

"Done!" said Walker. "A fiver if we win—nothing if we don't!"

And so the bargain was struck.

Walker nodded to Martin, and went back to the School House. He had at last hit upon a plan whereby he might save Loder.

But it was not an easy plan to carry out. He would have to play truant from Greyfriars at a time when he was badly needed there. He would have to leave his own side in the lurch, and disappoint Wingate.

It was a big risk, too. For if Courtfield Ramblers lost, Walker would have taken the plunge for nothing, besides incurring the anger of his schoolfellows.

For quite a long time that night Walker lay awake, wondering if he had acted for the best in making that compact with the Courtfield skipper.

If the Sixth got to know that he had played for Courtfield Ramblers there would be no mercy for him. He would be cut dead by them—shunned by the members of his own Form.

Was it worth while, he reflected, to risk all that for Loder?

And then Walker remembered how near he had been to death but a short time since. Once again it was as though

the waters closed over his head—as though willing hands hauled him out of the depths; and James Walker hesitated no longer.

"A fiver if we lick the Loamshires!" Martin had said.

And Walker would make it his business to see that the Loamshires were duly licked.

When he awoke next morning, after a troubled sleep, Walker decided to go along and tell Wingate that he was unable to play against Redclyffe. That would give the captain of Greyfriars time to find a substitute, and would be a more honourable course than to let the team down without warning. So Walker went along to Wingate's study.

"Hallo!" said Wingate cheerfully.

"Ready for Redclyffe?"

"Nunno!" stammered Walker.

"What? You're not feeling off-colour or anything, are you?"

"No; but—"

Walker looked so uncomfortable that Wingate turned upon him sharply.

"There's nothing the matter, is there?" he asked.

"Nothing, except that I sha'n't be able to turn out for the match."

"My hat!"

"I'm fearfully sorry," said Walker, hastening to pour oil on the troubled waters. "I'd play like a shot, only—"

"Only what?"

"I've got an appointment to be elsewhere."

Wingate frowned.

"I was relying on you, Walker," he said. "You've shown topping form lately, and we want a strong team out against Redclyffe, as you know. Can't you put off this appointment?"

Walker shook his head.

"I'm afraid not," he said.

"It must be something jolly important to keep you away from the Redclyffe match. Are your people coming down?"

"No."

"You—you're not thinking of going on the razzle?"

"Great Scott, no!"

"Well, I must say you're very mysterious about it. You're quite sure that you can't play?"

"Quite!"

"Then I must bring in someone else. There will be a weak link in the forward line without you, though."

"I know," said Walker. "I'm beastly sorry!"

And he went out, leaving Wingate puzzled and perplexed. But Walker felt glad, all the same, that he had done the decent thing in warning the captain of Greyfriars that he would be unable to take part in the Redclyffe match.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Stern Struggle!

WALKER slipped away early after dinner on the day of the Redclyffe match. He did not wish to arouse suspicion by being seen on the school premises in football garb.

As he rode hard to Courtfield on his bicycle he encountered Loder, and dismounted.

"You're looking awfully groggy, old man," said Walker.

"So would you if you were threatened with expulsion and goodness knows what besides!" growled Loder. "What about your precious promise? You're calmly going off to play footer somewhere, and in a few hours Hawke will be at Greyfriars dunning me for the money! I don't believe you meant a word you said!"

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"You don't seem to have a great deal of faith in me," said Walker.

"I haven't! I don't believe you care a tuppenny rap whether I get bowled over this bizney or not! Matter of fact, I reckon you're one of a good many who'd like to see me put out on my neck!"

Walker turned red.

"You're a ~~lad~~ to talk like that!" he said. "I said I'd do my best to help you out, and I meant it, and still mean it!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I know you doubt me," said Walker; "but time will prove!"

Loder snorted.

"Five quid—or even five hundred quid—will be no use to me to-morrow," he said. "I've got to have the cash to-night, or it's all up! There are only two ways out that I can see."

"What are they?"

"I could intercept that beast Hawke on his way to Greyfriars, and lay him out—"

"That's unthinkable!"

"Or—I could pinch the money!"

"What?"

"I'm not a thief," said Loder, "and I shouldn't dream of becoming one unless I were driven to the wall. And that's how it stands with me now. I must either give Hawke something to send him to sleep for a bit, or else pinch the

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money from somewhere, and replace it when I can."

Walker caught the speaker by the arm.

"Don't be mad!" he said. "Things aren't so desperate as that yet! Promise—promise me you won't do anything so dashed silly! You'd only make your case a hundred times blacker!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Loder. "I'll try my luck with Vernon-Smith and one or two other chaps who are rolling in money. Don't suppose it'll be much use, though."

"Keep a stiff upper lip," said Walker, "and rely on me!"

And he rode on his way, more determined than ever that Courtfield Ramblers should triumph.

The conversation with Loder had delayed Walker somewhat, and the teams were preparing to line up when he reached the football-ground. But he was soon ready, and took his place next to Martin on the right wing.

"Good!" said the Courtfield skipper. "I was beginning to give you up. Feeling fit?"

"Fit for anything!" said Walker, his face grimly set.

All the same, it was a long time before Walker came into the picture. Right from the start the Loamshires attacked. They were a big, bustling side, their tactics being not to dally with the ball in midfield, but to head straight for goal.

A weak custodian would have caused the Ramblers to be sadly in arrear in the first few minutes; but, luckily, the man between the posts knew his job, and saved more than one dangerous situation.

When at last the home forwards got going, Walker had a far from enviable time. The left-back of the Loamshires was a brawny giant, who smiled good-naturedly at Walker, and shouldered him off the ball every time he gained possession.

Try as he might, Walker could make no headway. The smiling face and the ready shoulder were always there, thwarting all his efforts.

But Walker refused to worry. He knew that this giant must tire in time, and then the order of things would be reversed.

Play settled down into an uneventful groove until close upon the interval, when the centre-forward of the Loamshires raced through unchecked, and scored with an unstoppable shot.

Walker looked rather glum when the whistle sounded for half-time. Martin looked glum, too, for he had expected great things from Walker. But he had not made sufficient allowance for what the Greyfriars fellow was up against.

The game was resumed at a corking pace, both sides playing up desperately. The military team, who were in a better state of fitness, did the lion's share of the attacking; but the Courtfield goalie withstood all the bombardments, and prevented further scoring.

But time was drawing on, and Martin regarded his partner on the wing with a rueful smile.

"You'll never win that fiver!" he said.

"Never's a long day!" retorted Walker cheerfully.

And he rallied to the game.

The burly left-back of the Loamshires had bellows to mend. He was not so nimble as in the earlier stages of the game, and Walker got past him once or twice. And presently, after a pretty bout of passing between Martin and the Greyfriars fellow, the latter scored with a rasping shot which went in just under the cross-bar.

"Good for you!" chuckled Martin. "If you'll oblige us with another like that everything in the garden will be lovely!"

But the Loamshires, annoyed that the score should be made level, pitched into the game with renewed zest, and it was an anxious time indeed for the Courtfielders. Shot after shot rained in upon their goal, and a further score seemed inevitable; but the goalie was both skilful and lucky, and he kept his charge intact.

Then, close upon time, the Courtfield backs sent their forwards away with the ball, and Walker, getting well into his stride, raced ahead with the fixed determination to score the winning goal.

The smiling giant who played left-back for the Loamshires had an equally fixed determination that Walker should do nothing of the sort.

The Greyfriars senior swerved, hoping to work round his opponent; but before he could get clear with the ball the other had intercepted him.

Walker collided heavily with the giant, and, reeling from the shock, fell flat on his face. Meanwhile, the ball rolled gently over the touchline.

"Hard luck!" sang out Martin.

But Walker scarcely heard. All he knew was that he had been robbed of a splendid chance, and that the whistle might sound for close of play at any moment.

When the ball was in play once more the Loamshire giant fastened on to it. Bruised and shaken though he was,

Walker charged full-tilt at the fellow, and succeeded in breaking away with the ball at his toes.

"Shoot, man!" rapped out Martin.

Walker realised that if he bungled this chance he would not get another. The fate of Gerald Loder seemed to depend upon that kick. There was only the goalie to beat; but he was a very agile goalie, and the shot that beat him would have to be a hot one.

But Walker made no mistake. He ran the ball close, and crashed it into the net from point-blank range. And then, while the cry of "Goal!" rang from end to end of the field, the Sixth-Former collapsed. His collision with the full-back had shaken him up badly.

Nevertheless, Walker was conscious of a very joyous feeling. The Loamshires had been beaten, and the problem of saving Loder from disaster was a problem no longer.

"Hurt much?" asked the Courtfield skipper, with concern.

Walker screwed his face into a smile.

"I feel as if I'd been up against an earthquake," he said; "but it'll soon pass off."

"Try some brandy," said Martin.

"No, thanks! I'm not so far gone as that."

A few moments later Walker accompanied Martin to the pavilion, where the five pounds was duly handed over.

"Hope you'll play for us again some day!" said Martin.

"So do I," said Walker. "Ripping good game—what?"

The Sixth-Former shook hands with the Courtfield skipper, and lifted his bicycle down the pavilion steps. As he did so he became aware of a certain fat junior whose little round eyes were regarding him with intense curiosity.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed angrily. "What the merry dickens are you doing here?"

Billy Bunter emitted a fat chuckle.

"Thought I'd come along and see you play for the locals," he said. "He, he, he! You found it worth while, too, didn't you?"

Walker promptly placed his machine against the wall, and, turning, seized the Owl of the Remove in a vicelike grip.

"What d'ye mean?" he demanded savagely.

"Ow! D-d-don't shake me like that, Walker! You'll b-b-break my gug-gug-glasses, and then you'll have to pay for them!"

"What d'ye mean?" repeated Walker, relaxing his grip a little.

"I mean that it's very nice to be able to turn an honest penny by playing for a club outside the school!" said Bunter.

"You—you saw what happened in the pavilion?"

"I saw that Courtfield fellow hand you a fiver," said Bunter. "I happened to be passing at the time, and couldn't help it. But I don't blame you a bit for turning yourself into a hired professional. It's a paying game, and I'd try it myself if it wasn't beneath my dignity! All the same, I don't think old Wingate will approve when he knows."

"You're going to tell Wingate?" rapped out Walker.

"Ahem! In—in loyalty to Greyfriars I think I ought to. Don't look at me like that, Walker! On second thoughts, I'll say nothing about it—provided you hand over a couple of quid."

Walker promptly handed over—not the sum in question, but a smack with his open palm which made Billy Bunter reel and stagger.

"You beastly fat worm!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter's head, in falling, had come into violent contact with the pedal

of Walker's bike. The fat junior lay, squirming and groaning, in the grass.

"If you want helping out of the field, I shall be happy to oblige!" said Walker grimly.

And he began to propel the Owl's prostrate form with his boot.

Billy Bunter leapt up at this, and sped away with remarkable agility, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

And, by the threats which floated back to his ears, Walker knew that his movements that afternoon would soon be common knowledge to all Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Storm in the Sixth!

"I'LL make it warm for the beast!"

Billy Bunter, rather dishevelled in appearance, rolled in at the gateway of Greyfriars, where the Famous Five of the Remove were standing discussing things in general and football in particular.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Who's the beast, Bunt? And how are you going to make it warm for him?"

Billy Bunter halted, brandishing a fat fist.

"It's Walker!" he said. "He's a traitor and a bully and a cad!"

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Nugent.

"Anything else?"

"He doesn't care a scrap for the honour and glory of Greyfriars—"

"You do, don't you?" snapped Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's Walker been doing?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Leaving the First Eleven in the lurch, to begin with," said Bunter.

"We all know he didn't turn out against Redclyffe this afternoon," said Johnny Bull. "But I dare say he had a jolly good reason."

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter. "He had a good reason, right enough! He wanted to make money by playing for a team outside the school!"

"You lying fat rascal!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, seizing the Owl of the Remove by the collar. "D'ye know what you're saying? You're accusing Walker of being a rotten traitor and a cad!"

"Yow! Lemme go! It's true, I tell you!" trilled Bunter. "I saw him with my own eyes get a fiver from the Courtfield skipper! He played for Courtfield Ramblers against the Loamshires, and pocketed a fiver at the finish. I tried to reason with him, and tell him it was a beastly sort of thing to do, but he bowled me over."

"Exactly what we're going to do to you!" said Bob Cherry. "Bump him, kids!"

It was obvious that the Famous Five set no store by Bunter's story. Walker had never been a fellow they liked; but they didn't believe for one moment that he would leave his side in the lurch in order to play elsewhere—and to play for profit at that.

Billy Bunter squirmed and struggled, but he was powerless in the grasp of the incensed juniors. Three times they swung his plump form into the air, and three times Billy Bunter alighted on the flagstones with a yell that awakened the echoes.

When he had landed for the third time, with a bump that shook every bone in his body, Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth came striding on the scene.

The two Sixth-Formers were far from being in a good humour. The match with Redclyffe had ended rather tamely in a draw. Had Walker been playing, the forward line would have been sufficiently strengthened to enable Greyfriars

to win by a good margin; but Walker had absented himself, and the rest felt very sick.

"What are you kids doing to Bunter?" snapped Wingate, addressing the Famous Five.

"Teaching him the error of his ways, Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "He's had the cheek to fake up a rotten yarn about Walker, and he expects us to swallow it!"

Billy Bunter wriggled into a sitting posture.

"It's true!" he yelled. "Walker's a rotter! Walker's a cad! He left his own side in the lurch, and went over to Courtfield to play for the Ramblers! And I saw him get paid for it, too! Five quid, it was!"

Wingate stared down incredulously at the fat junior.

"What are you saying, Bunter?"

"It's a pack of lies, from beginning to end!" said Harry Wharton. "Walker's not exactly a plaster saint, but he'd draw the line at a thing like that!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, we'll soon settle the matter," said Gwynne. "Here's Walker himself."

Walker of the Sixth cycled slowly through the open gateway. His face was pale, and his football garb was besmudged with mud. He dismounted as he met the questioning glances of Wingate and Gwynne and the Famous Five.

"Did you polish off Redclyffe?" he asked.

"No, we didn't!" growled Wingate.

"The match was a draw. But that's neither here nor there. Bunter declares that you've been playing for a local team. Personally, I didn't believe him; but now that I see you in footer togs it seems there's an element of truth in the story. Have you been playing for Courtfield Ramblers?"

"Yes," said Walker, without hesitation.

"Was that your precious appointment?" demanded Wingate.

"It was."

"Well, I think you're a rank outsider! But I hope you can deny the latter part of Bunter's story, at least. He says you received a sum of money for taking part in the match."

"That's so."

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Now we shall see squalls!"

"The rowfulness will be terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

It was Gwynne who opened the offensive. He advanced upon Walker with gleaming eyes and upraised fists.

"You rotten cad!" he exclaimed hotly. "D'ye call that playing the game? Haven't you any sense of honour, you beastly renegade?"

"I'm feeling too fagged to argue the point just now," said Walker.

"Fagged or not, you're not going unpunished," said Gwynne in measured tones. "Put 'em up, he jabbers, or—"

"I don't scrap with mad Irishmen!" said Walker.

"Well, you've got to scrap with this one, whether you like it or not!" said Gwynne, and, shooting out his left, he struck Walker hard on the chest.

Walker retaliated, of course; but he never really rallied from the effects of Gwynne's first blow. He sought for an opening, but found none, for Gwynne, although in a royal rage, did not fight wildly.

The Famous Five looked on rather breathlessly, and other fellows came up to see what was going on. A scrap in the open between two Sixth-Formers was a rare occurrence.

Backwards and forwards the two seniors swayed, hitting and plunging and panting, and then, leaping back a pace,

"The Slacker!"



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Gwynne shot out his left again, straight from the shoulder.

Walker took the blow on the point of the jaw, and crashed down upon the flagstones with all the fight knocked out of him.

"Going on?" asked Gwynne.

"No, hang you!"

"That's a pity. I was just getting into my stride. Still you seem to have had about enough."

Walker had certainly had enough. His nose presented a very bulbous appearance, one eye was closed, and Gwynne's knock-out blow had made his teeth rattle.

"You needn't expect to play in the eleven after this," said Wingate. "We don't want your sort. Fellows who are mean enough to throw their school over in favour of an outside team, and, what's worse, take money for it, are mean enough for anything. We're playing St. Jim's in a few days, but I shan't ask you to turn out. I don't think anyone in the Sixth will care to associate with you much after what's taken place!"

And Wingate turned on his heel and strode away with Gwynne.

The greater part of the crowd dispersed, too, and their angry exclamations showed Walker that he had none to take his part.

Shunned by the Sixth, and shunned by the school, Walker picked himself up, and went painfully along to the nearest bath-room.

And as he went there arose a murmur which swelled into a roar. Even when Walker had passed into the building the contemptuous word followed him.

"Traitor!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Little Joke!

"NO hawkers—no circulars!" said Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were standing beneath the old elms, discussing the recent affray between Walker and Gwynne, when they caught THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 562.

sight of a man in a flashy waistcoat who paused outside the gates as if meditating entry. It was Mr. Jerry Hawke.

There was no love lost between the Famous Five and the bookmaker from the Cross Keys. Harry Wharton & Co. had met Mr. Hawke before, but not in the role of pigeons waiting to be plucked. Hawke was a scoundrel through and through, and his presence at Greyfriars was not desirable, hence Bob Cherry's remark.

"The man's got cheek to show his ugly clivvy here!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Surely Gosling won't be such a prize idiot as to let him in!" said Nugent.

But Gosling did, though he hardly looked pleasant about it.

The Famous Five stepped forward in a body. Mr. Hawke gave them a sullen glare.

"Stand aside!" he said roughly.

"Stand aside yourself!" growled Bob Cherry. "What do you want here?"

"I'm 'ere on business."

"With whom?" asked Wharton.

"With Mr. Loder. Let me pass, you young rips!"

"This is a school—not a gambling-den!" said Nugent. "Get out!"

Hawke made an attempt to dodge past the Famous Five. But Harry Wharton's grip fell on his collar, and the captain of the Remove was trying to push the scoundrel out into the roadway, when a stern voice exclaimed:

"Wharton! How dare you! Release that person at once!"

Harry Wharton obeyed, and, turning, confronted Mr. Prout, who was pushing his bicycle down to the gates.

"I will not countenance such hooliganism!" said the master of the Fifth. "What has this man done that you should assault him in such a manner?"

"He's an undesirable alien, sir," explained Bob Cherry. "He's got no right to be here at all. May we kick him out, sir?"

"No, Cherry, you may not!" said Mr. Prout severely.

He turned to Mr. Hawke, who affected an air of injured innocence.

"What brings you here, my man?"

"I 'ave come, sir," said the sharper, "to 'ave a word or two with Master Loder. I shan't keep 'im more'n a few minutes, an' I may want to see the 'eadmaster as well."

"Very good!" said Mr. Prout. "I see no reason why you should not pass in."

"Werry good, sir!" said Mr. Hawke.

And, with a malevolent grin at the discomfited juniors, he went in quest of Loder.

Mr. Prout, with a final word of admonition to the Famous Five, mounted his machine and rode away.

"The man's mad!" said Johnny Bull. "Fancy letting a low beast like that have the run of Greyfriars."

"The madfulness is terrific!" said Hurrree Singh. "The ludicrous Hawke wants dotting punchfully on the nose!"

Harry Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"Looks like trouble for Loder," he said. "Hawke told Prout that he might want to see the Head as well. That sounds bad, though Prout didn't seem to smell a rat. Don't you think we ought to warn Loder? I know he's a rank outsider, and all that; but he ought to have a chance."

"Yes, rather!"

The Famous Five went in search of Loder.

They found him at length in the library—a curious place for Loder to be found. He had a book before him, but he was not reading. The juniors noticed that he was unusually pale and haggard, and he looked up with an uneasy start when they came in.

"Get out!" he said curtly.

Harry Wharton ignored the prefect's ill-mannered tone.

"We came along to tell you that Hawke's looking for you," he said.

Loder was on his feet at once. There was a hunted look in his eyes.

"Where is he?" he asked hoarsely.

"We left him in the Close," said Nugent. "He's not likely to come here. I expect he'll go along to your study. We tried to keep the rotter from coming in at the gates, but Prout chipped in and let him through. We thought we'd give you the tip that he was here, that's all."

"Thanks!" said Loder; and he spoke with real feeling for once.

"If you like," said Harry Wharton, "we'll line up outside and keep the rotter from coming in here."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Loder. "Let him rout me out. He'll get precious little change out of me!"

Meanwhile, Jerry Hawke had drifted into the Remove passage.

"Seen anythink of Mr. Loder?" he asked, as Harold Skinner came along.

Skinner stopped short and stared.

"My hat! There'll be a row if anyone sees you hanging around here!" he exclaimed.

Jerry Hawke smiled.

"Set yer mind at rest, young shaver," he said. "One of your kind teachers told me I could step inside."

"What do you want with Loder?"

"A little matter of five quid, what I won off him at billiards."

Skinner gave a low whistle.

"Supposing he can't stump up?"

"Then I shall go along an' see the 'eadmaster."

"You'll get no satisfaction from the Head," said Skinner.

"No; but I shall get Loder sacked!" said Jerry Hawke maliciously.

Even Skinner, rascal as he was, could not repress a feeling of utter contempt for the unscrupulous bookmaker. He was devoutly thankful not to be in Loder's shoes at that moment.

"Where shall I find my man?" asked Hawke.

"In his study, I suppose," growled Skinner, and passed on.

As he rounded the corner of the passage Skinner bumped into Sir Jimmy Vivian, now fully recovered from the ill effects of his experiences in the cave.

"Clumsy little beast!" growled



Skinner. "Can't you look where you're going?"

Sir Jimmy pulled up, panting.

"'Ave you seen Mauly?" he asked.

"No, I haven't," said Skinner, grinning as a sudden idea occurred to him. "But I've seen somebody else who's hunting high and low for you."

"Who's that?" asked Sir Jimmy eagerly.

"A swell relative of yours—somebody from Blucher's Rents!" said Skinner.

"One of the old gang, you know."

For a moment Sir Jimmy's eyes flashed, and he looked as though he would hurl himself at the cad of the Remove. But he checked himself, and said quietly:

"Where is he?"

"In Loder's study."

"Right-ho!" said Sir Jimmy. "I'll go along an' see 'im."

And he went, leaving Skinner chuckling at the prospect of the tangle which would ensue when Loder, Jerry Hawke, and Sir Jimmy met together in Loder's study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

What Sir Jimmy Saw!

SIR JIMMY could not help wondering, as he went along the Sixth Form passage, why his former friend, whoever he was, should have proceeded to Loder's study. It seemed a strange meeting-place.

And then it dawned upon Sir Jimmy's mind that Skinner might be indulging in the gentle pastime of leg-pulling.

"Still, I'll go along an' see," murmured the junior.

He rapped upon the door of Loder's study.

There was no reply. Sir Jimmy rapped again without response; and then, taking the bull by the horns, he walked boldly into the study.

A curious smile spread over Sir Jimmy's features.

"That bloke Skinner was foolin' me," he muttered. "I oughter 'ave known. Anyway, I'll go back an' dot 'im on the boko!"

He was about to leave the study when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

Sir Jimmy paused, irresolute. If Loder were coming, he would certainly make it warm for the junior.

So Sir Jimmy darted back behind the screen, where he crouched low and waited.

The footsteps drew nearer, accompanied by the sound of upraised voices. Then the door of the study was flung open; and Sir Jimmy, peeping through a convenient hole in the screen, saw Loder and Jerry Hawke come in together.

"I've waited long enough," the sharper was saying. "I'm not a 'ard man—I'm anythink but a 'ard man—but I expects straight dealin'. You promised me I should 'ave the fiver by to-night."

"Surely you can let it run a little longer?" said Loder. "Give me till the end of the week."

"Can't be done!" said Jerry Hawke. "Either I gets the money to-night, or I goes to your 'eadmaster an' paints you in your true colours."

"You cad!" said Loder, his hands clenched hard. "Oh, you cad!"

"Fancy names don't 'urt me," said Mr. Hawke, making himself comfortable in the armchair. "By the way, I thought I 'eard a sound as though there was rats in the room!"

"There's only yourself!" said Loder crushingly.

Unmoved by the sarcasm, the book-



"Shoot, man, shoot!" (See Chapter 13.)

maker took out a cigar and lighted it. Sir Jimmy, ensconced behind the screen, felt a strong inclination to choke.

"How long are you going to sit there?" exclaimed Loder, striding up and down in his anxiety.

"Ten minutes," said Mr. Hawke, sending out a cloud of pungent smoke. "An' if the fiver ain't 'anded over by the end of that time I goes straight to your 'eadmaster!"

"What good will that do you? The Head's not likely to take your part. He knows you for a shady scoundrel already!"

Jerry Hawke grinned.

"He mightn't take my part exactly, but it's a dead cert he won't take yours!" he said. "When I tell 'im that that one of us 'ighly-respected prefects comes to the Cross Keys to meet your 'umble, he'll 'ave several sorts of a fit, I reckon. And this'll be your last night 'ere. Think of that!"

Loder did think of it; and the thought made him desperate. He wished he had ignored Walker's advice, and had either stolen the money or downed Jerry Hawke on his way to Greyfriars. Even now, as he watched the rascal calmly smoking his cigar, Loder was conscious of a mad desire to thrash him until he became unconscious, and powerless to do the senior any immediate harm.

But the conditions were not favourable. If a row took place in the study it would almost certainly be heard by other seniors, and interference and exposure would follow.

Was there no way out? It seemed not. Loder had already approached Vernon-Smith and Lord Mauleverer in the hope of raising the wind; and he had been unsuccessful in each instance. He had seldom been in quite such a tight corner as this; and the prospect of expulsion sent a chill through him.

He sat down at the table, and, with his head between his hands, tried to think how, at the eleventh hour, he might ward off the menace which threatened him. And still Sir Jimmy Vivian crouched behind the screen, miss-

ing nothing of the scene that was being enacted in the study.

Sir Jimmy's fingers were twitching. He was longing to leave the imprint of his knuckles upon Jerry Hawke's gloating face. The junior knew that Loder had gone the pace, and had only himself to blame; all the same, he could not help feeling sorry for the cad of the Sixth in his extremity.

Jerry Hawke rose to his feet.

"Time's up!" he said.

He moved towards the door. At that moment Walker came in.

In spite of the hot bath to which he had treated himself, Walker still bore signs of his recent encounter with Gwynne. He looked pale and fagged, too; but, even so, there was a gleam of triumph in his eyes.

"I seem to have dropped in just at the right moment!" he said. "Here's your fiver, Hawke. Now, get out, and don't come putting your oar in here again!"

The sharper took the note which Walker handed to him, and rustled it in his grimy fingers.

"You've about saved your skin this time!" he said to Loder. "Or, rather, young Walker's done it for you. But don't forget to pay up on the nail the next time I beat you at billiards—"

"By cheating!" said Loder scornfully. "Get out, before we kick you out!"

Jerry Hawke promptly backed to the door, keeping a furtive eye on Loder all the time. He didn't like the expression on the prefect's face, and he was devoutly thankful to get clear of the study without sustaining bodily harm.

When the scoundrel had gone, Loder turned to Walker with outstretched hand.

"You were just in time!" he said.

"Hawke was on the point of going to the Head. But—but how on earth did you manage to work the oracle?"

Walker threw himself into the chair which Jerry Hawke had vacated.

"When you saw me out on my bike this afternoon," he said, "I was on my way to play for Courtfield Ramblers, on the understanding that if the Ramblers won I should receive a fiver."

"My hat! Was it a close game?"

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"Close isn't the word for it! It was touch-and-go at the finish, I can tell you! We managed to score the winning goal on the stroke of time!"

"And you seem to have got knocked about a bit in the process," said Loder.

Walker twisted his damaged features into a grin.

"That came afterwards," he said.

"Bunter was spying on me all the afternoon, and he told Wingate and the rest what I'd been doing. Result: I walked into a hornets' nest when I got back. Gwynne knocked me about a bit."

Loder stared.

"They—they thought you were a rotten traitor, I suppose?"

"Exactly!"

"And you didn't explain the facts of the case?"

"Of course not! It might have made things jolly awkward for you!"

"You're a brick!" said Loder.

"You've let yourself in for all this on my account, for no cause whatever——"

"Except that you fished young Vivian and me out when we were both jolly near to drowning," said Walker. "That's cause enough, I think. Here, where are you going?"

"I'm going straight to Wingate to explain the position! I shall tell him why you accepted money for your services!"

"No, no!" said Walker hastily.

"Don't do anything of the sort!"

"But it's only fair——"

"Never mind! I'd much prefer you said nothing. The whole sorry business is over and done with now. I know I'm in bad odour through it, but the fellows will come round in time."

"You're a good chap, Walker!" said Loder, after a pause. "I can't tell you what a load's slipped off my mind since you trotted in with that fiver!"

The two seniors left the study together, and Sir Jimmy Vivian, cramped and dusty, came forth from his hiding-place. Once or twice he had come very near to betraying his presence, and he marvelled at the fact that he had remained undetected.

"My 'at!" muttered the baronet, dusting himself down with his hands. "It was jolly lucky Skinner sent me along 'ere, after all! I think it's up to me to put matters right!"

And Sir Jimmy went thoughtfully along to Wingate's study, to relate all that he had seen and heard.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Avengers!

"ONCE more unto the breach, dear friends!"

Bob Cherry made that remark quite suddenly while the Famous Five were at prep. So excited was Bob that he shot a shower of ink over Johnny Bull's papers, upon which Johnny had spent a laborious hour.

"You—you ass! You imbecile!" roared Johnny, starting up. "Have you gone potty—pottier than usual, I mean?"

"Silence, dog! It's a wheeze—a wheeze which only the brains of a Cherry could evolve!"

Harry Wharton looked up from his writing.

"Expound!" he said.

"Are you prepared to sacrifice your beauty sleep to-night?" asked Bob.

"In a good cause—yes."

"Well, what about laying Hawke by the heels? The beast had the laugh of us this afternoon, thanks to old Prout; but we want to make it quite clear to him that he can't come nosing around Greyfriars just when he likes. I vote we go along to the Cross Keys after lights."

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out, with tar and feathers, and give Hawke a jolly good doing!"

"Too risky!" said Nugent. "If we were seen going into the Cross Keys——"

"But we sha'n't be seen, fathead! When the Famous Five are on the job, we're as skilful as bushrangers and Red Indians rolled into one! Anyway, we can't let Hawke run away and gloat like this. He's made it warm for Loder, I expect, and we'll make it warm for him!"

"If Loder likes to go to the bow-wows that's his bizney!" growled Johnny Bull. "I don't see that we're called upon to fight his giddy battles for him!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Bob. "If you're funky about going, I'll work the stunt off my own bat!"

"Funky!" snorted Johnny. "You call me funky?"

And he flourished his fists in such a warlike manner that Harry Wharton found it necessary to intervene.

"Pax, my children!" he said. "Don't break up the happy home. We'll go, Bob. But if the expedition proves a failure, you're the merchant who's going to be tarred and feathered—so look out!"

"I'm not in love with the idea myself," said Nugent. "There might be a crowd at the Cross Keys, and in that case they'll make a dead set at us. And I, for one, don't want to be mixed up in a beastly tavern brawl!"

"Have no fear, gentle youth!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I shall be at hand to shield thee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent flushed, and said nothing further. He was not a funk, nor did he wish to be thought one.

"Inky, you dog," said Bob Cherry, "you haven't given your views on the subject. Trot 'em out!"

"I am in the esteemed favour thereof," said Hurree Singh, "so long as we can obtainfully secure the ludicrous feathers and the tarfulness."

"I know where to find plenty of both," said Bob. "So that's settled. Under canopy of night, we will venture forth——"

"Shush!" said Wharton. "I hear footsteps!"

Wingate poked his head into the study.

"Bed-time, kids!" he said.

The juniors noticed that Wingate was looking much more cheery than usual, and they wondered why. They didn't know that Sir Jimmy Vivian had informed the captain of Greyfriars of Walker's loyalty to Loder, and that harmony was restored once more to the ranks of the Sixth.

Late that evening, when lights were out, and there was no sound in the Remove dormitory save the trumpeting snore of Billy Bunter, Bob Cherry stole softly from his bed and proceeded to rouse his comrades.

Bob was very enthusiastic about taking vengeance on Jerry Hawke. His chums were a shade less keen; but, although the night was cold, and the prospect of leaving their beds was unpleasant, they meant to stand by Bob. After all, Hawke was a waster, with a dark and dishonourable record, and, whatever punishment the Famous Five meted out to him, it could not be in excess of his deserts.

"Grooh! It's beastly cold!" grumbled Nugent, turning out.

"Don't worry!" said Bob Cherry. "Things will warm up when we get to the village."

Swiftly and silently the Famous Five dressed, and then proceeded to the woodshed. Here, with the aid of a lantern, Bob Cherry unearthed a bucket of tar and a sackful of feathers.

It was Johnny Bull's turn to grumble.

"Have we got to cart this beastly stuff

all the way to Friardale?" he exclaimed.

"Many hands make light work," said Bob Cherry. "We'll take it in turns, my son."

So the little party set out on their mission. The night was dark, and progress was difficult. In scaling the school wall Bob Cherry very nearly upset the tar on to the devoted heads of his comrades; and a little later Hurree Singh thoughtlessly released a cloud of feathers from the sack.

At length, however, a subdued glow of light showed that they were within sight of the Cross Keys.

"Better go round the back way!" muttered Harry Wharton. "We're more likely to catch 'em napping then."

A few minutes later the Famous Five were stealing up the garden path. They came to a halt outside the window of the billiard-room.

The blinds were drawn, but through a chink in the side Bob Cherry obtained a full view of the interior of the room.

Jerry Hawke was playing billiards with a slim-looking youth, whose face Bob Cherry failed to see until it suddenly came within the circle of light over the table.

"My hat!" muttered Bob. "It's our old friend Pon!"

"And Gadsby, too!" said Harry Wharton, peering over Bob's shoulder. "Seems to be a night out for the Highcliffe nuts!"

There were four people in all in the billiard-room—Ponsonby, Gadsby, Jerry Hawke, and the marker. The latter was a hefty-looking scoundrel, and would probably have a strong objection to being tarred and feathered.

But the Famous Five were out for scalps now. Those who had been reluctant to take part in the adventure were now as eager as Bob Cherry himself. The prospect of including Ponsonby and Gadsby in the list of victims was an appetising one; and, as Bob Cherry pointed out, there would be quite enough tar and feathers to go round.

"We'll take 'em by surprise!" murmured Bob in Wharton's ear. "Say when!"

Harry Wharton gave the word, and on the instant the French window of the billiard-room was burst open, and the Famous Five dashed into the room.

For a moment all was confusion. Ponsonby turned pale, and backed towards the wall. Gadsby, smoking a cigarette, choked uncomfortably. Jerry Hawke swung his cue threateningly.

"Ere, stand off! What's the little game? What's the game, I say?"

For answer, Bob Cherry leapt forward, and, dodging the hasty and ill-timed blow, crashed his fist with great force against Jerry Hawke's unshaven chin. The rascal gave a roar like that of an animal in pain, and toppled backwards, bearing Ponsonby with him in his fall.

But the marker was yet to be reckoned with; and the marker was a man roughened and toughened by many a hard-fought scrap. He hit out savagely, and Hurree Singh and Frank Nugent went down before his fierce onrush like ninepins.

But Johnny Bull was not idle. He dealt a swinging side-blow, and followed it up promptly with another, and the marker measured his length on the floor.

Meanwhile, Ponsonby—who, whatever his faults, was no coward when it came to a hand-to-hand fight—had risen to his feet, only to be knocked down again by Harry Wharton.

The fight was fierce while it lasted, but it did not last long. Gadsby had taken no part in it, and the Famous Five

were masters of the situation throughout. Frank Nugent mounted guard over the tar-bucket, whilst Hurree Singh hurried forth in search of rope.

"Make the beasts secure!" said Bob Cherry, when the Nabob reappeared with a stout coil. "We'll put 'em fairly through the mill!"

"I'll 'ave the law on yer for this 'ere!" spluttered Jerry Hawke. "I'll summon the police! I'll—"

"You'll lie still, like a good chap!" said Bob Cherry, seating himself on the sharper's chest. "Now for the rope, Inky!"

One by one the four victims were trussed up.

And then Frank Nugent, grinning in spite of a damaged nose, staggered forward with the tar-bucket.

"Gerraway!" hissed Ponsonby. "You're not goin' to plaster us with that beastly stuff!"

"Oh, yes, we are—and feathers to follow!" said Nugent cheerfully.

And he got busy with the tar-brush.

"We are going to try and impress upon you, Pon"—splash—"that going on the razzle after lights out"—splash, splash!—"is an objectionable habit"—splash, splash, splash—"and should cease forthwith!"

"Gerooooogh!" spluttered Ponsonby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now for the feathers!" chuckled Nugent. "We'll make him look like a savage chief before we've finished with him!"

The Famous Five piled in industriously, and when their handiwork was complete Jerry Hawke and his companions were totally unrecognisable. Their faces and hair were smothered with tar, to which clung feathers in profusion.

"Grooh!" mumbled the marker. "Let us loose, you young villains!"

"Not this evening!" said Bob Cherry sweetly. "Afraid you'll have to wait till one of your shady pals comes along. It'll give you a chance to do a bit of hard thinking."

And the Famous Five, their task accomplished, turned to go. Their nocturnal raid on the Cross Keys had been successful beyond their expectations; and when at length they regained their dormitory without mishap, and laid their weary heads on the pillows, they felt that they had deserved well of their country.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Friars versus Saints!

THERE was a notice in Wingate's list on the board next morning:

"GREYFRIARS v. ST. JAMES'.

"Walker (VIth Form) will fill the vacant place for the match.

"(Signed) GEORGE WINGATE, Captain."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, as he read the announcement. "I wonder why old Wingate's changed his mind? It's still a fact that Walker left the team in the lurch yesterday."

"And, what's more, played for a local club in order to make money," said Wharton. "I shouldn't have thought Wingate would have overlooked it."

But Sir Jimmy Vivian was at hand to explain.

"Walker's a jolly decent chap!" he said. "He didn't do it to let Greyfriars down; he did it to get Loder out of a scrape."

"Oh!"

And then Sir Jimmy related what had taken place overnight in Loder's study.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Johnny Bull. "I've never thought any great

shakes of Walker, but if he can stand by a fellow like that he can't be altogether a wrong 'un."

"No—rather not!"

"An' he risked 'is life for me when I got stranded in that cave," said Sir Jimmy, shivering a little at the recollection. "Not every feller would do that! An' he wasn't funky, neither."

"Well, I'm jolly glad Walker's back in the team, anyway," said Harry Wharton. "It ought to be a ripping good game, and Walker's showing topping form this season, too."

In the Sixth, which had been so stormy of late, all was going well. Even Gerald Loder, sobered by his recent escapade, became decent for a time, and kept away from the Cross Keys.

As for Walker, he played in the practice games with greater zest than ever; and when the day came for the tussle with St. Jim's he avowed that he had never felt so fit in his life.

The Saints brought a very strong side to Greyfriars. They, too, had been making strenuous preparations for the match, and Kildare, their skipper, confidently expected to lead his men to victory.

The touchline was thronged with Greyfriars supporters, and when the two teams came out there was a great ovation.

"Good old Friars!"

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This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

"Put it across 'em, Wingate!"

"Play up, Walker!"

In Walker's case the encouragement was superfluous. He had quite made up his mind to play as he had never played before. He was fully recovered now from his exertions on behalf of Courtfield Ramblers and his subsequent fight with Gwynne; and he took his place in the forward line full of confidence.

The Saints won the toss—which was a stroke of luck for them, as they gained the advantage of a strong wind.

Then the whistle sounded, and away went the St. Jim's forwards—away and away, keeping in close formation, and leaving the Greyfriars halves standing.

"Ow!" muttered Bob Cherry. "I scent danger."

Before the words were out of Bob's mouth Kildare cleverly feinted past one of the backs, and crashed the ball into the net, giving the goalie no chance.

"Goal!"

"One up for the Saints!" said Harry Wharton. "Doesn't look very healthy, does it?"

"It's only the beginning," said Nugent. "We can't judge yet. Wait till our fellows get going."

But the Greyfriars team was thrown into temporary confusion by that early thrust on the part of their opponents, and for a long time they made but little headway.

The Saints warmed to the attack. They had not expected to score so easily, and

now that they had started the desire for more goals was very strong. They swarmed like bees round the opposing citadel, and after a hot bombardment Darrel steered the ball through a crowd of legs into the net.

"Number two!" said Johnny Bull dolefully. "What hopes?"

The Friars were indeed in a parlous state. To be two goals down in the first twenty minutes was a serious matter.

But Wingate's smile was as cheery as ever when he kicked off from the centre.

Away on the wing dashed Walker, his face set hard. He had a very fine turn of speed, and the hopes of the crowd revived as they watched him swerve past the half and back.

"Shoot!"

"In with it, Walker!"

But the St. Jim's custodian ran out in the nick of time, and took the ball from Walker's toes before the senior could steady himself to shoot. And the next moment play was transferred to midfield again.

Nothing daunted, Greyfriars launched several attacks in swift succession, but without result.

And then, close on the interval, Gwynne was unlucky enough to handle the ball in the penalty area, and Kildare scored the Saints' third goal.

"Carry me home to die!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is too awful!"

At half-time the visitors led by three goals to nil. And now even Wingate was hard put to it to keep smiling.

The crowd regarded the match as all over bar shouting. Some of them left the ground in disgust. True, the Friars would have the wind in their favour during the second half, but three goals was a very big margin to make good, and even the most sanguine of the supporters regarded the match as a dead cert for St. Jim's.

"Shall we sheer off?" asked Nugent. "I haven't the heart to stay and see our fellows get it in the neck."

"Oh, rats!" said Harry Wharton. "A game's never lost till it's won. Let's hang on and see the finish, whatever happens."

And so the Famous Five remained, and afterwards they were glad they did.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Turn of the Tide!

THREE down!" said Faulkner of the Sixth. "What are we going to do about it?"

In the dressing-room the Greyfriars First were holding a council of war. For all their outward cheerfulness they felt the situation acutely.

"Never mind what happened in the first half," said Wingate. "Let's concentrate on the second. The luck's been all against us, so far, but it's bound to change soon."

"If it doesn't," growled Walker, "we shall have the Saints getting into double figures."

"The high gods forbid!" said Wingate, with a laugh. "Come on! Let's get back to the slaughter!"

Greyfriars started the second half at a corking pace. Once, twice they were beaten back, but the third time Wingate forced an opening, and, although hard pressed, managed to send the ball across to Walker, for the latter to score with a lightning drive.

"Good!" panted Wingate, sorting himself out from the legs of an opposing back.

A few minutes later history repeated itself. Again Wingate raced through, and again, hemmed in by the opposing

backs, he managed to get the ball across to Walker.

Walker's shooting was deadly, and the Saints knew it. Two of their half-backs tackled him desperately as he was in the act of shooting. Nevertheless, his shot went home, and crashed into the net.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Walker!"

The crowd, seeing that it was going to be a close fight after all, cheered lustily; but the next moment a strange hush fell upon them, and all eyes were directed towards Walker, who lay very still in the grass, and made no movement.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Walker's crooked!"

And so it proved. The impact of the charge he had received had sent Walker reeling to earth, and somehow his left foot had twisted under him as he fell.

"Oh, rotten luck!" said Harry Wharton. "He'll be out of the game, now."

A couple of seniors hoisted the fallen player to his feet. Walker looked very pale, and limped painfully; but he had no intention of retiring from the game.

"Never mind me," he said. "I shall be all right."

"Hadrn't you better rest a bit?" said Wingate anxiously.

"No jolly fear! I'm going on!"

All the same, Walker was hardly better than a passenger after that. His fine turn of speed was no longer in evidence, and he was able to do little more than cheer his comrades on when they were attacking.

And now came a fierce struggle for the mastery. The Saints were dismayed to find the game going against them, and they tried to reproduce the form shown in the first half.

Kildare and Darrel and Rushden, moving swiftly in line, took the ball the length of the field, and the St. Jim's skipper shot with full force. He had the goalie beaten all the way; but, fortunately for the Friars, the ball cannoned against the cross-bar, and the danger was averted.

Time and again the Saints rushed to the attack, only to be met and beaten off by a defence like a rock.

The ten sound men in the Greyfriars team put forth every ounce of resistance, and occasionally their forwards broke away and peppered the St. Jim's goal.

"Look at Faulkner!" shouted Johnny Bull.

And, indeed, all eyes were glued upon Faulkner at that moment. He had beaten three of his opponents in succession—two of them were on their backs, wondering if an earthquake had taken place—and now he raced on towards goal, with none to say him nay.

"Shoot, man!" panted Wingate.

And Faulkner shot, hard and true.

The goalie got his fist to the ball, but Wingate, meeting it on the rebound, placed it neatly in the corner of the net, and the scores were level.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Faulkner!"

"Good old Wingate!"

The excitement had risen to fever-pitch.

Ten minutes to go, and the score three all!

Those ten minutes were crammed with thrilling incident. Kildare of St. Jim's created the first sensation by breaking clean away and going through on his own.

But Kildare's shot just skimmed above the cross-bar. And a sigh of relief went up from the Greyfriars fellows.

Then the ball was in mid-field again; and now it was speeding towards the St. Jim's goal, with Wingate hard behind it.

The captain of Greyfriars sent in a scorching shot, but the goalie, in desperation, hurled himself bodily at the leather, and just managed to turn it aside.

The minutes were reduced to five, and the crowd hung breathlessly on the issue.

"Come on, you fellows!" sang out Wingate. "We'll win yet!"

Down the field, with the wind behind them, swept the Greyfriars forwards. They were hotly contested every yard of the way right up to the very goal-mouth. Here a scrimmage ensued, and among those mixed up in it was Walker, who for some time past had been able to do no more than limp up and down the field. The St. Jim's team had come to regard him as practically out of the game.

But he was not. The ball came to him from the goalie's fist. It dropped upon his foot, and he lobbed it up. Then, with a deft, quick movement of his head, he headed it fairly into the net!

The whistle sounded, and Greyfriars had won.

"Four to three!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Isn't it great! Shades of my grandmother! But I didn't think they'd pull it off after being three goals down!"

"Same here!" said Harry Wharton. "But it only shows you that nothing's impossible!"

"Buck up!" said Frank Nugent impatiently. "We'll tell old Walker what we think of him!"

"Yes, rather!"

And the Famous Five joined the stream of fellows who were pouring on to the pitch.

In vain Walker attempted to dodge the swarm of fellows that surged around him. He was lifted shoulder-high—but carefully, for all that—and borne away to the dressing-room amid much rejoicing. And foremost among those who applauded him was Gerald Loder!

"You've distinguished yourself, Walker!" said Loder. "And I'm glad—jolly glad! It makes up a bit for the rotten time you must have had just lately."

"Oh, rats!" said Walker breathlessly.

The St. Jim's fellows took their licking like the sportsmen they were.

"It was touch-and-go!" said Kildare.

"And the best team won!"

"Thanks to Walker!" said Wingate.

Greyfriars celebrated their victory in style that evening, so far as war-time conditions would allow. And many a fellow who had shown scant regard for James Walker in the past now drank his health in foaming ginger-pop.

Walker himself felt very happy in spite of his injury. He had done something at last to justify his existence. He felt, too, that the unpleasantness through which he had passed was well worth while for the sake of what had followed.

He had played the game in a double sense. Setting aside the dubious position in which he had put himself by playing for hire while unregistered, he had stood by Loder at a pinch; and that day, by his pluck in sticking to it when practically crippled, he had won the match for Greyfriars.

But sometimes it is easier to play the game on the footer-field than in the ordinary ways of life; and it remained to be seen whether Walker's determination to go straight was of the stuff that endures.

(Don't miss "IN SPITE OF HIMSELF!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

READERS' FAVOURITES.

I have said above that Snoop is no one's favourite. This is correct. I am sure. I am by no means sure that the same could be said with absolute truth about Skinner. There are some queer-minded readers who appear to prefer Skinner to the Famous Five or any of their chums. They consider Skinner a sport! What a strange notion of the meaning of the word!

Who is the biggest favourite of all the Greyfriars characters? Bunter is the most popular, in a sense, I fancy, but not quite in the sense I mean. We should all miss Bunter no end; but we don't admire him. But then, again, it is not the most admirable character that I mean. In some respects Harry Wharton may be considered more admirable than Bob Cherry. He has more feeling, and he is every bit as straight and as plucky. But I don't mind owning that I like Bob the better of the two.

Would the genial Bob come out on top if a poll were taken? I rather fancy so. He would have rivals. There is Wharton, of course. There is the Bouncer; he has numberless admirers. There is Peter Todd—one of my own special favourites. There is the cool and japing Squiff. Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, Inky, Tom Redwing, Maulverer, Mark Linley—all these would get first places in some lists, I fancy.

I have a great mind to take such a poll among readers. It might be run in connection with some simple prize scheme,

though at present I have not quite thought that out. And I am making no promise. We have had to keep off prize competitions for the last two years or so because they entail so much extra work, and extra work under war-time conditions is difficult to get done. But I must see if I can manage this.

NOTICES.

Football—Miscellaneous.

A. Weat, 114, Wellfield Road, S.W. 16, wants to join a good club—winger or centre-forward.

A. Lawson and L. Shipley, 21, Cranbrook Street, Green Street, E. 2, wish to join a club—goal or inside-right—age 16.

—Ellisdon, 5, Bowling Green Road, S.E. 16, wants place in team—5 miles—centre-forward or right-back.

Sidney Brown, 34, Russel Street, Turner's Road, E. 3, wants place in team—anywhere except goal.

Fred Beard, c/o Eolian Co., 135, New Bond Street, W. 1, and his two friends, aged sixteen, want to join a footer club in South Kensington or within three miles—forward positions preferred.

A. Wallington—16—of 37, Luna Street, S.W. 10, wishes to join a club in Fulham, Chelsea, or Battersea—left-back, inside or outside left.

E. H. B., 43, Medfield Street, S.W. 15, wants place in team near home.

YOUR EDITOR.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"IN SPITE OF HIMSELF!"

By Frank Richards.

Snoop is the central figure of next week's fine story—Snoop in a new role!

And yet not exactly in a new role, either. For Snoop has always been a funk—always afraid of getting hurt. And he is still a funk, still afraid of getting hurt, when he begins to show fight.

That sounds rather mixed. But it is not really so. You will understand it when you read the story—one of Mr. Richards' best.

Sidney James Snoop is no favourite with any of us, I know. But I felt, and I think all my readers will feel, a good deal of sympathy with him in his struggle against his cowardice. After all, it's easy to be plucky if one happens to be born that way, and not at all easy if one happens to have been born quite otherwise. It is a real fight that Snoop makes with himself, and it ends in his putting up a real fight in the other sense.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 562.

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

CARDEW'S PIG.

By MONTY LOWTHER.

"I 'VE bought a pig," said Cardew.
"You're always doing some blessed silly thing!" snapped Levison.
Clive snorted.

Those two really have a bit of a handful in Cardew. I don't think the fellow is really mad. But more than that I am not going to say, for fear of getting a reputation for being charitable that I may not deserve.

"Well, I like that, dashed if I don't! Call keepin' a pig silly? Haven't we all been told to be patriotic, an' keep pigs an' rabbits an' things?"

"You can't keep a pig here," said Clive.
"Not in the study, certainly, old bean! One has to draw the line somewhere. I draw it at Baggy—an' other pigs."

"You can't keep it at St. Jim's at all!" Levison said.

"Oh, yaas, dear boy! Taggles is seein' about that for me."

"Then it's going to cost you something," remarked Levison.

We know Taggles. He is not the sort of person who does kind actions just for the sake of doing them. Taggles wants paying. Gin is really a terrible price in these days, I understand.

"Yaas, I suppose so. But there's no dashed merit in bein' patriotic on the cheap, is there?"

"What's the use of a pig, anyway?" snorted Clive.

"What's the use of anythin', come to that? Nothin' in particular, accordin' to the best authorities, I believe. But a pig really seems to be an exception to that rule. Are you aware, Sidney, that you get pork from a pig, bacon from a pig, ham from a pig, likewise tripe, liver, sausages, lard, an' bristles? Those Chicago chaps say they can use anythin' and everythin' about a hog except the grunt."

"If you have all those things you can't have the pig, too," objected Levison. "You would have to kill him to get them. I don't know whether you've ever killed a pig. I never have; but I've seen it done. Messy job! You have to boil the thing—well, scald it, anyway—after you've got through the killing, too. You—"

"Spare me the 'orrid details, I pray you, old top!" said Cardew. "I am sure I can never bear to have unpleasant things like that happen to my pig! I shall get fond of him, no doubt, through trottin' along to scratch his back whenever I have a minute or two to spare. There's something very soothin' about scratchin' a pig's back. An' Clive will toddle alongside with the swill-pail—"

"I'm hanged if I will!" snapped Clive.

"What's the use of talking about what the pig's going to produce if he's to be kept as a giddy pet?" inquired Levison. "Cheaper to buy the bacon and bristles and things. Even at the present price of bacon—"

"I don't know that I want the bristles, not particularly, but I should think you might get them without slayin' poor piggy," Cardew broke in. "It's no good arguin', anyway, because I've bought piggy. The thing's un fait accompli, as our dear neighbours over the silver streak say. Shall I translate, Clive?"

"Rats!" growled Clive.

"No, no; pigs—at least, one pig!" Cardew corrected him. "The question at present before the meetin' is whether both of you are comin' with me to fetch him, or only one, an', if so, which one? I'm goin' this afternoon."

"Then I can't come," said Levison. "I'm booked for the match."

"And I'm jolly well not coming!" Clive said. "You don't mean this rot, you silly, fatheaded chump, and if you did mean it I wouldn't go with you!"

"Then I shall have to go alone," Cardew replied serenely.

"Where are you fetching him from?" asked Levison. He began to see that Cardew

really had bought the pig, and was not merely trying to pull their legs.

"Bearley Green. I bought him of a chap named Otter."

"Long-faced boulder with a rusty-black beard, ears like flaps, and a week or so's dirt on his face?" Levison asked.

"The description is—er—eminently descriptive. But I should amend it in one particular. Mr. Otter cannot carry less than a full fortnight's dirt. No one could imagine him washin' as often as once a week."

"He's had you, I'll bet! He's a shyster," said Levison.

"You have the pleasure of Mr. Otter's acquaintance, dear boy?"

"I know the beast. 'Tain't any pleasure."

"How much?" demanded Clive.

"Ten pounds, old bean."

"It sounds a lot of money."

"Depends upon the size of the pig, I suppose?" said Levison. "Everything's up sky-high now. But at that figure I shouldn't think you ought to have to fetch him. He ought to be sent to you in a gilt coach with six horses. Have you paid Otter?"

"Yaas, dear boy."

"And you have really fixed up with Taggles?"

"Have I not said so?"

"Well, you'd better fetch him, then. I don't think much of Taggles; but he's more decent than Otter. The pig will belong to Taggles in about a week, I guess; but that's better than Otter having the chink and the animal, too. Pity you can't tell us when you think of these mad things!"

"My dear man, haven't I told you?"

"Yes, when it's too late for you to be stopped."

"Are you going to take a wheelbarrow for him, or are you going to drive him here?" asked Clive. "If driving's the game, I understand the best way is to tell the pig in confidence that he's not to head for St. Jim's on any account. Then you may get him to come this way. It's fatal to let him know the truth."

"We are goin' to fetch him in Warren's market-cart," said Cardew coolly.

"Who's 'we'?"

"You an' I, Sidney, dear boy!"

"Hanged if I'm—"

"Oh, you'd better go, Clive!" said Levison. "The silly ass will break the horse's knees and his own neck if he goes alone!"

And Clive went.

II.

"I S that the horse you're going to drive?" asked Clive.

"Yaas, dear boy. What's the matter with him?"

"Looks to me not much more than half broken, that's all."

"Oh, he's all right!" said the farmer. "Mr. Cardew can drive, you know. I've seen him."

"So have I," said Clive drily. "I shouldn't call him a careful driver. But I suppose you know better than I do whether the animal's fit for the job."

Mr. Warren seemed to think he was. Horses may be scarce these days, and the market reports say sometimes that money's a drug in the market; but Clive's notion was that Warren knew very well that Lord Rackness' grandson could be made to pay through the nose for any damage that chanced to the wild-eyed chestnut.

"Softly, lad—softly!" said Clive, who knows a bit about horses.

"Oh, let him have his fling, dear boy!" drawled Cardew. "It's only playfulness, y'know."

"If he's going to lash out like that when he gets between the shafts—"

"He won't do that," said the farmer confidently. "Why, he brought me home from Wayland last market-night when I'd so much aboard that I didn't fairly know whether

I'd got hold of the reins or not half the time!"

"Ah! That accounts for the smashed gatepost, perhaps?" said Cardew. "But we sha'n't get market-merry, Clive. We shall be all right, dear man. Got a pig-net, Mr. Warren? You call them pig-nets, don't you? Kind of thing made up principally of holes, with string round 'em, y'know."

"Oh, a pig-net? Yes, you can have a pig-net, sir. Been buying a pig, have you? I could have sold you one."

"Don't go over the other side to be swindled. Step in here!" murmured Clive.

"Eh? Who'd you buy your pig of, Mr. Cardew?"

"Gentleman named Otter, resident at Bearley Green, Warren."

"Ah, he's had you, I'll go bail for that!"

"It seems the general opinion," said Cardew blandly.

"Well, you can afford it. If you get tired of the pig, you might let me have first refusal of him. 'Tain't likely as I can give you the price Otter will have rushed you for, but—"

"Tha-a-anks, Warren; but I quite anticipate gettin' so fond of piggy that nothin' would induce me to part with him. That the pig-net? Good! Jump up, Clive!"

Clive had to jump up in a hurry, for the chestnut made a break for the gate. He scrambled in, saying things to Cardew.

"You shouldn't distract my attention, dear boy," said Cardew mildly, after the off-wheel had missed the gatepost by the fraction of an inch. "We should have looked quite silly, y'know, if we had uprooted that post."

"We're going to look silly before we've finished!" growled Clive.

"Think so, old top? Well, I fancy I can bear it."

"You'd better let me drive, chump! You're giving him his head a bit too much."

"Not at all. He's takin' it," replied Cardew coolly.

If the young chestnut was not vicious, which Clive doubted, he was unmistakably fresh. But Cardew seemed to enjoy his tricks.

He dashed round the corner of the lane into Rylcombe at the rate of umpteen miles per hour.

There followed a hasty clapping-on of brakes, an agonised kind of hoot from a motor-horn, and a volley of very strong language from the body of a big and powerful motor-car.

The chauffeur looked as if there were things in him that might have found expression if he had been given half a chance. But his master was saying quite all that was necessary, besides much that was picturesque, and not a little that was profane.

The chestnut swerved and slid. Cardew looked as cool as a cucumber. There came a shattering sound as one wheel of the substantially-built cart collided with a wooden lamp standard. Cardew never even looked round.

"Smash for the lamp-post!" said Clive. "And there was old Crump in the offing. We shall hear about this!"

"Doesn't really matter much, does it? They never light the lamps now."

"Do you know who that was in the car, you burbling idiot?"

"Somebody important, no doubt, dear boy, or he wouldn't have a car in these times, or be able to get petrol to run it with if he had."

"It was Colonel Anketell, the chairman of the Westwood Bench."

"Then I consider he uses most improper language for a magistrate. He ought to be brought before himself to be fined!"

"The old boy's done his bit out at the Front. They sent him back because he wasn't fit for any more."

"Ah! That's where he learned to speak in that beautiful flowin' way, no doubt! Clive, dear boy, this dashed war has distinctly

added to the picturesqueness of the English language, I consider."

"Oh, blow the English language! There's a flock of sheep coming! Slow that beggar down, or—"

"At worst, old top, it only means makin' mutton a little before time," Cardew said blandly.

He was tugging hard on the reins; but all he could do made no practical difference to the chestnut's pace. They were being run away with; but Cardew gave no sign that he recognised that fact.

"Hoy, hoy, hoy! Look out there! You'll be a-killin' of all my sheep!" roared the shepherd.

His two dogs barked madly. The sheep scattered to one side and the other, and then strung out in two long rows, each led by a bell-wether. The chestnut passed harmlessly between them, while the cart swayed from side to side behind him, and Cardew and Clive hung on as best they might.

"Sheep," jerked out Cardew, "ain't—altogether—donkeys! After all—we made—no—mutton!"

"Ass! Let me—get hold—of the reins!"

"Just—as you—like. By gad—he can—go, can't—he?"

"Look out—for—the King's Head—corner!" howled Clive, tugging away.

"Oh, he'll—have—to—do that!" jerked back Cardew.

But the chestnut had not the gift of seeing around corners.

A waggon of hay, going out of Rylcombe, had pulled up in front of the King's Head. Into the back of it the horse charged.

He swerved at the last second, and so avoided a direct end-on collision, which must have meant smash. But the shock was sufficient to send Clive shooting forward, to land at the top of the hay, and Cardew shooting out, to land on his back in a ditch yards away, still clinging to the reins.

Out of the King's Head swarmed publican, waggoner, assorted loafers, and a sprinkling of children. They cackled like a flock of geese.

The chestnut was meditatively eating hay, looking as if no such crime as running away had ever entered his innocent head.

Cardew picked himself up out of the ditch, more than slightly ruffled in appearance, but still captain of his soul, as he expressed it a little later. The ditch was a muddy one, and Cardew came out of it the worse for wear. But all he said was:

"I knew somethin' was bound to happen to stop the beggar before long. Hallo, Clive, old bean! How on earth did you get up there?"

III.

A WARNING hoot sounded. But the hoot would have been of small use had Colonel Anketell's chauffeur taken it for granted that it was going to clear the road.

Cardew could not get the chestnut out of the way in time, owing to the brute's apparent conviction that all that had passed was only a prelude to his taking in a gorge of hay. But the chauffeur was able to pull up in time, though it was with one wheel fairly in the ditch, and the car tilted sideways.

The colonel was the very picture of rage as he scrambled out and faced Cardew.

"You—you—you—" he spluttered.

"Try 'naughty trumpeter'," suggested Cardew mildly.

"Oh, chuck it, you idiot!" groaned Clive, who has more respect for lawful authority than Cardew.

"Boy, you shall rue this! I will make you repent of it! You shall be sorry you were ever born!" hooted the irate warrior.

"I'm not so sure, sir, really," replied Cardew. "I never was a first-rate hand at real repentance; an' other people do enough worryin' about my havin' been born to save me the trouble."

The ghost of a grim smile flickered and faded on the colonel's face.

"Take his name and address, Chart!" he said to the chauffeur. "A summons shall be made out against him!"

The chauffeur drew out a notebook.

"In trainin' for a bobby's job?" asked Cardew. "Don't strike when you get it, that's all! I'm sure you would annoy the colonel. Needn't get ratty; worse things than bein' a copper, you know. Name—oh, Sidney Clive—"

"Here, I say!" protested Clive, aghast.

"Oh, beg pardon! I was givin' my friend's name first, whereas it really isn't wanted at all. I do get mixed up sometimes. Fact of the matter is, I'm so mixed up now that I'm not sure I haven't mislaid my own name."

"Boy, this impudence will not serve your turn!" thundered the colonel.

"Don't get so excited," said Cardew soothingly. "It's very bad for apoplectic subjects. Name—Ralph Reckness Cardew. Address—St. James' College. Age—fifteen an' a bit. Married or single?—single. Occupation—er—shall we say scholar? It's a misdescription, but a pleasant one. Character—middlin', inclined to bad. Past record—not highly favourable, but more so than it would be if all were known. Convictions—none—at present. Will that do?"

The chauffeur grinned, and so did Clive, though he was feeling fairly mad with Cardew. The grim smile flickered over the colonel's face again.

"Ah, I know your name!" the old warrior said. "That will not save you, though! You will be charged with driving furiously, and to the danger of the public."

"Like Jehu, the son of Nimshi," remarked Cardew. "My favourite scriptural character, Jehu is. But it wasn't really to the danger of the public, sir," Cardew looked towards the King's Head. "Queer, too, for I have reason to suppose the brute a confirmed teetotaler."

The colonel snorted angrily. The chauffeur put up his notebook, got out, and, with Clive's help, managed to get the wheel of the car out of the ditch. The colonel got in, with a curt "Thank you!" to Clive. The chauffeur cranked up, and jumped into his seat. The engine whirled, and the car sped away.

"Funny old stick—eh?" said Cardew. "But I was kind to him, as he has seen service in the war."

Clive was carefully examining the horse and cart. The publican, who had driven his flock of children in when the colonel appeared, came out again, and he and the waggoner began to say things.

"Can't make it out a bit," said Clive. "By rights we ought to have busted something. But everything seems all right."

"I am glad to see you beginnin' to look on the brighter side again, dear man," said Cardew.

"Your 'oss have eat a fair whack of my hay!" grumbled the waggoner.

"Be correct, I pray you!" replied Cardew.

"He is not my horse; he is Mr. Warren's horse. I am not sure that I should care to own him; he has a nasty little habit of stopping more suddenly than is conducive to comfort. An' I doubt whether the hay is really yours. However, perhaps this will soothe the moral, mental, and concrete damage."

And he handed over half-a-crown.

"With all respect to the worthy landlord of this hostelry," he said, as the waggoner grinned and pocketed the coin, "I should advise the purchase of a row of houses in preference to gettin' elevated. But I understand that war-time beer has no such effect, so—do as you dashed well please, my friend!"

"Are we going to lead him back, or get in again?" asked Clive.

"Back? What do you take me for, old top? We're goin' to Bearley Green to fetch Pig o' my Heart!"

"But you're in a frightfully damp state, you chump!"

"That's my bizney, I think."

Clive saw that Cardew meant to go, even if he went alone. So Clive went, too.

All the fire seemed to be taken out of the chestnut for the time being. He trotted along most respectably and sedately.

"We ought to be getting near Bearley Green now," said Clive.

"Think so, dear boy?"

"Don't you know? You've been there."

"I assure you I haven't."

"Eh? Where did you see the pig, then?"

"I haven't seen the pig yet, old bean! My affection for the charmin' animal is based on the glowin' report of his owner, whom I met at Rylcombe yesterday."

"My hat! Talk about buying a pig in a poke!" gasped Clive.

"My dear man, should I have known any more about it if I had seen him? They don't teach us anythin' so useful as the elements of pig-buyin' at St. Jim's. There's a native. We'll ask him."

"Hi!" yelled Clive.

The native halted, and awaited their coming up.

"Where's Otter's farm?" asked the South African.

"Well, 'tain't exac'ly what you might call a farm, neither," said the native. "Otter, he's more of a 'iggler than farmer, if you take my meanin'. Pretty good 'and at a bargain, too. 'E 'ad me once."

"That," said Cardew blandly, "was no doubt an easy one. No, don't trouble to think it out now; leave it till you retire to your downy couch, an' ponder over it then. Which is the way?"

"You keep along that there lane to the left till you come to another lane on the right. You don't take that, but jest keep on keepin' along. Then you come to a house with seven poplars in front of it—"

"An' that's Otter's? I see! Gee-up, horse!"

"'Tain't Otter's, then, an' don't you be in such a hurry! Otter's is the next but two on the same side a mile or two further on."

"I thank you! Would it be presumin' to offer you—"

"Oh, I got a mouth on me, same as other folk, an' there's a pub a bit along 'ere!" said the native. "I say, look out for Otter! 'E'll 'ave you if there's the half of a chance."

"Ah! That danger is in the past," replied Cardew philosophically.

And he turned down the lane indicated.

IV.

THEY reached the abode of Otter. Otter came out to them, smelling strongly of beer, onions, and shag tobacco.

"I hope the pig isn't as dirty as Otter," whispered Clive.

"If he's not a great deal cleaner I shall get you an' the dear Levison to give him a bath directly we get him home," replied Cardew.

Clive grunted.

"'Allo!" said Otter.

"Hallo yourself!" answered Cardew. "Lovely mornin' this afternoon, is it not?"

Otter's flaplike ears worked queerly. Cardew sat and gazed at them. They seemed to fascinate him.

"What d'ye want?" asked Otter.

"My pig," replied Cardew.

Otter looked quite hurt. He had already had the money, and doubtless he had hoped the pig would fade from Cardew's mind, so to speak.

"Your pig, eh?" he said, scratching his head. "Well, now! An' what sort of a pig would you like?"

"Exactly the sort you described to me yesterday. A very poem of a pig! A large pig—a healthy pig—a well-fed pig—a clean pig—a pig with a capacity for affection!"

"Oh! Most of mine seem like they 'ave more capacity for grub!"

"I do not object to his possession of an appetite. But I should wish him clean."

And Cardew looked at Otter in a manner that suggested his desire that the pig should be well ahead of the pig-dealer in that respect.

"Well, I dunno. Pigs is dirty by natur'."

"So I observe," said Cardew, looking very straight at Otter.

But Otter did not appear to take offence. They got out, and Otter led the way through his house, which smelt like a pigsty, to the pigsties, which didn't smell any worse because they couldn't.

"I could let you 'ave that one," he said.

There was not so much dirt on the pig he pointed out as on some of the other pigs. But that was only because he was a very small pig. Clive nudged Cardew.

"I should prefer my money back," said Cardew.

"Ah!" said Otter expressively. "Would this one do you?"

The second pig offered was bigger, though not very big, and, being bigger, was naturally dirtier.

"It might, though I cannot say that it strikes me as value for the money. Will he cut up streaky? An' do you guarantee him of an affectionate an' loyal disposition?"

Otter disregarded the second question. Perhaps he failed to understand it. He answered the first cautiously.

"D'ye like your pig-meat streaky?" he asked.

Cardew nodded.

"Ah! Then that's the boy for you. You couldn't get none streakier nor what he is."

"The dear Otter takes me for a fool," whispered Cardew.

"He's on to you, then!" growled Clive.

At that moment there came a sound of clattering hoofs.

Clive rushed off at once. They had not fastened up the chestnut, and he had bolted. Cardew, after a single glance, gave him up, and turned back to the pig. Otter looked disappointed.

"I'll take him," said Cardew. "Is he black or white, may I ask? At present his colour is a mystery."

"What's your fancy in pigs?" inquired Otter.

"White, I think. A pinkish white. Looks more natural."

"Ah! Well, when this chap gets clean—if he ever do—you'll be bound to find 'im jest exactly to your taste."

Otter had had Cardew over the price, of course; and he was quite disappointed because he was not to keep the pig as well as the money. But he was wrong in thinking that he was having Cardew all along the line. It isn't quite easy to make out what enjoyment Cardew gets out of this sort of thing; but the boulder loves nothing better than having people take him—temporarily—for a bigger ass than he is.

Clive came back, looking dismayed.

"No chance of catching him!" he said. "The beggar's clean out of sight, and there's worse than that! He's smashed the shafts, and left the cart behind him!"

"This is goin' to be an expensive pig," sighed Cardew. "Let us trust that his sterling affection an' streaky pig-meat will repay me eventually for all I have lavished on him."

"You burbling lunatic!" snapped Clive. "Look here, better chuck the pig, and cut your loss. We'll never get him to St. Jim's without the cart."

"Where would the British Empire have been had Britain's sons so easily turned it up at critical times?" demanded Cardew sternly. "You surprise me, Clive! Mr. Otter, could you, in the large liberality of your noble nature, throw in quite a short rope with piggy? If I must pay, so be it; but with a lamp-post, a smashed market-cart, an' piggy's price all weighin' on my soul, I'd like to get somethin' for nothin'."

"I'll get you a rope," said Otter. "They're dear these days. But another hob won't break you."

"The rope shall be tied to piggy's leg," Cardew explained to Clive.

"I'm hanged if I'm going along a main road like that!" said Clive hotly.

"Well, dear boy, doubtless there are other ways of gettin' back. I don't mind, I'm sure. Mr. Otter, which is the best way to Rylcombe, avoidin' the main road?"

"I dunno. Wait a moment, though. I got it! You go along this 'ere lane till you come to the cross-roads. Then you turn to the left past a big 'ouse in its own grounds. Straight on to the nex' cross-roads, an' there you takes the left agin—or maybe the right would do you better. But you'll see when you get there."

They fancied afterwards that Otter's directions were prompted rather by a desire to befog them than by one to send them straight. It does sound a trifle suspicious when a fellow says that either the right or left at a cross-roads junction will serve your turn, I consider. But there wasn't much in it, really, for they never got to the second cross-roads.

V.

"THIS friend Clive," remarked Cardew, "is goin' to be a long job."

It certainly looked like it. Piggy had made quite a good start. It is possible that he had no unwillingness to leave Mr. Otter. For a quarter of a mile or so he travelled very well.

Then he began to be troublesome. He wanted to wallow in muddy places. He showed interest in open gates. He testified a preference for any other road than that which they wanted him to go.

In short, he behaved like a pig.

Clive only grunted in reply to Cardew's remark, which was made quite cheerily. It was not the society of the pig which made Clive grunt; and yet perhaps it was, too. What I mean is that Clive's manners had not been corrupted by piggy; but piggy certainly had spoiled Clive's temper.

"The dear Otter might have provided us with a decent bit of rope," said Cardew.

"This is goin' to break if piggy gets frisky."

"You couldn't expect anything decent from that shyster!" growled Clive. "I should think the pig's got swine fever, or something—else he'd never have parted with it."

"Or measles, or chicken-pox, or appendicitis," replied Cardew. "But I really don't think so. He's a healthy pig, I fancy, though dirty."

"Now you've done it, chump!"

Cardew contemplated the short end of the rope left in his hand. He had given a lusty tug to bring the pig back into the right path, and the rope had broken.

"This is where pig-huntin' begins!" he said. In fact, it had already begun. Clive, without stopping to think whether it was at all worth while, was streaking down the road after piggy, who showed quite a good turn of speed.

Cardew ran also. His obstinacy was aroused. He did not really want piggy; he never had really wanted it, indeed. Buying it was just one of his silly whims. But now he felt that his credit was involved in getting it to St. Jim's.

But he did not run far. Clive had stopped, with an expression of horror on his face. Our friend Clive is an essentially law-abiding individual, though he is not tame and too, too good to live. Clive never really enjoys scandalous proceedings. There are times when Cardew does.

"He's bolted into that garden!" said Clive. "My hat! There will be a pretty row over this! Best thing we can do, Cardew, is to cut the brute out, and get back as sharp as possible without him."

"Don't be small-minded, Clive!" replied Cardew, shaking his head. "The people at the house in there, whoever they are, haven't any right to my pig; an' they're dashed well not goin' to have him! Come along!"

"Oh, chuck it, you fathead!"

"Can't be did, dear boy!"

And Cardew bolted through the gate. Clive followed.

Piggy had just made hay of a fine bed of geraniums, and was starting in on another.

"Hi, there! What's that pig doing in my garden? Oh, you scoundrels!"

"The voice," remarked Cardew, "is the voice of our dear old pal the colonel! I fear that he will not love us after this."

Colonel Anketell it was. He appeared now; and there also appeared the chauffeur, two tall footmen—both wearing silver badges—an elderly butler, and last, but not least, a young lady.

Piggy dodged them all. One footman went floundering into an ornamental fountain as the beast rushed between his shapely calves. The butler made a clutch, missed fire, and flopped into a flower-bed. The chauffeur got hold of the pig's tail, but it slipped through his hands. The second footman shaped well, but fumbled the issue at the critical moment, and let piggy past. The young lady grabbed at the tail, but hesitated as her hand almost closed upon it.

"You'd have had him if your pluck hadn't failed, Norah," said Cardew coolly.

"Ralph Cardew!" gasped the girl.

"What! You again, you young scoundrel?" howled the colonel.

The colonel knew Lord Reckness very well indeed, but his grandson only by name. Norah Anketell may or may not have known his lordship, but she knew Cardew all right.

Two grooms, also evidently men discharged from the Army, had come up. The wet footman was slinking off to the house; but there remained his dry colleague, the butler, the chauffeur, and the grooms, besides the colonel himself.

"We can't show fight," said Cardew to Clive. "They look hefty enough; but my personal dignity won't allow me to kick the shins of a man with a silver badge, an' when they pile in on us kickin' shins will be about the limit of our possible resistance."

Clive certainly had no notion of kicking shins. He thought bitterly that it was a pity Cardew's personal dignity had not stopped him a good deal earlier in the afternoon.

"We surrender at discretion, sir," said Cardew. "Please ask your myrmidons not to look so threatenin'. My nerves are not all they might be, y'know."

Piggy had gone now—bolted clean out of the gate. They never saw piggy again. I don't think Clive wanted to see him again.

"Your nerve, at least, is colossal, young Reckness!" puffed the colonel.

"Pardon me, sir! Cardew—Ralph Reckness Cardew!"

"He's always like that, dad!" said the girl,

laughing. "There's no great harm done, you know."

"Silence, Norah! These two boys have already given me trouble this afternoon. Now, young Reckness—er—Cardew—what were you doing with the pig?"

"On the whole, sir, the pig was the really active agent. We were tryin' to lead him home, but the rope I had round his leg broke, an' he did a bolt, which unfortunately led him on to your premises. We naturally followed. That is the tragic story in synopsis."

"What's become of the cart?" snapped the colonel.

"Back in the road somewhere—slightly smashed," replied Cardew.

"And the horse?"

"We are hopin' for the best. Have you studied horses, sir? My notion is that they usually know their way home."

"Ah!"

Clive thought that they would have been all right, even then, but for Cardew's cool way of taking everything, which obviously annoyed the colonel.

"Take them and lock them up in the loft!" snapped the old warrior to his men.

"Oh, dad! You can't, you know!" pleaded Miss Anketell.

"Can't I, by Cæsar? I'll let them see! And you, too, miss!"

"You can't do it legally, y'know, colonel!" said Cardew.

"Bah!"

"It's illegal imprisonment, an' actionable."

"Fiddlesticks! Illegal balderdash!" roared Colonel Anketell.

"Dry up, Cardew!" said Clive.

"It was my duty to protest, dear boy," said Cardew, as they were led away. "I really don't mind much. I need a rest after this fatiguin' afternoon. An' he won't have the nerve to keep us shut up long."

"Don't you let on that, sonny!" said the chauffeur, grinning. "The guv'nor's law is mostly for other folks."

VI.

"THERE'S one consolation," said Cardew, an hour or more later. "If we had piggy here we couldn't eat him. I'm hungry enough to make light of grub regulations; but piggy really was a little too dirty for anythin'. I don't believe I could ever really have loved him."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Clive.

Time dragged on. It was quite dark now in the loft. Below them they heard moving horses, and now and then a sound of munching, which Cardew complained of as making him feel hungrier than ever.

At last the key turned in the lock. It was Miss Anketell who appeared, bearing a lantern.

"You've been a long time, Norah," said Cardew.

"Did you expect me, Ralph?"

"Of course! You wouldn't desert a pal in distress, I'm sure."

"Well, no. But I didn't regard you as exactly in distress, though I think it's a bit rough on your friend. I'm sure you led him into this."

"Disabuse her of that unfounded notion, Clive!" said Cardew imploringly.

"Tain't unfounded!" growled Clive. "All the same, I deserve all I've got, for being such an ass as to come."

"I'm going to let you out," said the girl. "Dad is cooling down; but he hasn't cooled enough to let you go yet. He keeps talking about your grandfather, and how sad it is for him that you're you, Ralph!"

"My grandfather has all my sympathy. Norah, you're a brick! This is one of my two best pals, Sidney Clive. He doesn't look up to the mark just now, owin' to unfortunate pig-drivin' experiences; but when he's washed an' dressed pretty he's a really nice boy, an' right over my head in virtue. Clive, Miss Anketell, only child of our roarin' and ragin' old friend the colonel!"

Clive mumbled something to the girl with the twinkling eyes and mane of black hair. She seemed to understand Cardew, and she shook hands with Clive in the most friendly way.

"Don't waste any time," she said. "Through the gate to the left, and you'll find yourselves in the rickyard. Here's an electric-torch. You'll want it; it's pitch-dark outside. Needn't return it; you may have it for a keepsake—instead of your pig!"

Her silvery laugh sounded as she disappeared.

"Let's feel our way through the rickyard."

said Clive. "If we fight up we may be spotted. I want to get out of this. My hat, you needn't have talked about me like that to Miss Anketell!"

"But it was true, dear boy! Ah, would you?"

In the darkness Cardew had sprawled over something.

Clive had the torch. He flared it at once, and saw that the something was somebody!

The light of the torch revealed the flap ears, black beard, and dirty face of the honest Mr. Otter!

"Pin him down, Clive!" gasped Cardew. "By gad, I thought it smelt like the beast!"

The two of them sat upon Otter, and yelled their loudest. They did not know what he was doing there, but it was easy to guess that he had come with no good intent.

Help came plenty of it—the colonel, the

butler, the chauffeur, the footmen, the grooms, and quite a crowd besides.

"Paraffin—matches—you scoundrel!" roared the colonel. "Set my ricks on fire, would you? Ah, I remember your face now! Didn't I send you down for a month in the summer?"

The colonel's memory had not played him false. Otter had done thirty days in gaol at the instance of the Westwood Bench, and he was trying to get his own back, in his own blackguardly way, on the chairman of the Bench. Everyone knew that Colonel Anketell ruled his brother magistrates, and dictated their decisions.

"You boys—really, I suppose I must overlook your atrocious conduct after this," said the fiery old warrior, when Otter had been marched off to the nearest police-station. "Come in, have a wash you need it—and some grub, and I'll send you back to St. Jim's in the car. Did you let them out, Norah?"

"Yes, dad."

"H'm! As things were, you showed uncommonly good judgment. Young Reckness—er—Cardew, that is—I'll settle the bill for your escapades of to-day. But I won't buy another pig, by gad!"

"Thank you, sir, but I'd prefer to settle myself," replied Cardew. "Oh, by the way, this is my friend Clive. He isn't responsible for anything whatever."

"If he's less responsible than you—"

"Oh, more—much more, in the way you mean. I want you to understand it's not his fault, that's all. He only came to keep me straight."

"Ha!" His success was not striking, by Caesar! But never mind, Clive; I've no doubt you did your best. We're not all cut out for the task of keepers, that's all."

And I think I may as well let the colonel have the last word, for Clive admits he was right!

THE END.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 96.—PERCY ESMOND.

ESMOND is no longer a character in the stories; but it seems worth while to give him a place in the Gallery, though it cannot be said that he was ever very important in his day, after his first appearance on the stage. This sort of thing does happen at times. A new boy comes along, and something interesting occurs in connection with him. After that he sinks into a position of comparative obscurity. But that is only the way of the world. Everyone cannot be frequently in the limelight.

It was not an easy task which Mr. Quelch put upon Harry Wharton when he told him plainly that the new boy he was sending him to meet was one whom the juniors generally would call a funk—naturally timid, though physically quite capable of looking after himself. Mr. Quelch wanted Harry to look after Esmond. Harry, of course, knew perfectly well the feeling in the Remove about funks. It is a general feeling among boys, and among men, too. There are few things the average male being is so bitterly down upon as funk. So it was, so it is, and so, one fancies, it always will be. I am not concerned to defend or to criticise this feeling; I am only stating it. One may find excuses for a funk, but they never seem to stretch quite far enough to make one feel really friendly towards him.

Percy Esmond started badly. On the way to Greyfriars from the station he was chased by Ponsonby. Not by a crowd of Highcliffe fellows—not even by two or three—but by Pon alone! And he admitted to Wharton that he was afraid. Though Wharton had been told about him in advance, that admission came as something like a shock. It was put in a way that he could not get on to. Esmond's point of view appeared to be that being a funk was no worse than being lame or deaf; that a fellow could not help it, and was therefore not to be blamed for it.

The Remove did not at all agree with that theory, and Wharton had no pleasant time in trying to carry out his promise to Mr. Quelch. Among Esmond's foremost persecutors was Bolsover major. Bolsover has a lot of brute courage, which is by no means the highest type of courage. He is about the last fellow at Greyfriars to be able to understand the feelings of a sensitive and timid youngster of the Esmond type. He does not want to understand.

But Bolsover was not the only tyrant and oppressor. Bunter played the bully, and

Esmond stood it. He allowed himself to be blackmailed into standing treat to Bunter. Others came into the tuckshop, and Bunter generously informed them that Esmond was willing to stand treat to anyone. Logically, this should have been so; practically, one supposes, it was impossible. Anyway, Esmond said there was a limit. Not a limit to his cowardice, apparently, but to his resources. A row followed, and Mr. Quelch came upon the scene.

Bolsover and his satellites tossed Esmond



in a blanket. But that was cut short by the appearance of Wingate, with a cane. They schemed something worse, and five or six of them, led by Bolsover, put the funk through what must have been to him an awful ordeal. He ought not to have believed their story of a bottomless pit in the ruined chapel. But he did believe, and when they held him over the supposed bottomless pit—really only a few feet deep, of course—he struggled so desperately that he was dropped. The result was a shock for both Esmond and

the ragers, for they found him completely unconscious.

Esmond did a queer thing after that. He went to Hobson of the Shell, and bribed him to deal with Bolsover. One can only call it a bribe, though no doubt some disgust with Bolsover's cruel bullying helped to influence Hobson. The arrangement slipped up, for it was Bolsover who won when he and Hobson met.

Then Ponsonby sent a white feather, and Esmond refused to go and fight Pon, and they decorated him with the white feather, and marched him up and down before the School House.

But Esmond had to fight Ponsonby after all. Bolsover & Co. got him out of gates, and fairly pushed him at the leader of the Highcliffe nuts.

Then a most surprising thing happened. Once in the fray, Esmond forgot that he was a funk!

He went all out at Pon. He actually felt keen about licking him. Pon hurt him; but the fact that he was hurting Pon strangely evened this. He stuck to it, and Pon was licked!

Bolsover wanted to be friendly after that; but Esmond did not feel like being friendly. His mood had changed completely. Bunter soon found that out. Then Mr. Quelch found it out, and was even more surprised than Bunter. Bolsover said that Esmond was cheeky to the Form-master; but it does not seem that Esmond really meant to be cheeky. Mr. Quelch had told him to make an effort to overcome his timidity; and when he was found with obvious marks of fray upon him he told Mr. Quelch he had been making the effort he had advised.

But it went further than that. Esmond came to Bob Cherry, and asked Bob to give him boxing instructions. He did not tell Bob exactly why he wanted them; he only said that he wanted to get out of the way of finking. But there can be but little doubt that he felt all along that the one way to put himself straight in the eyes of the Remove was to fight and thrash Bolsover. I think he was right, too. Bolsover was the head and front of the persecution; and, however wrong finking may be, persecution is not right.

He met Bolsover, and he won! It was a hard and tough fight; Bolsover is a handful for anyone in the Remove. But Esmond, fit and with quite his fair share of strength and activity, only needed tuition to make him a good boxer; and Bolsover has always been more the rough, tough fighter than the really clever boxer.

Anyway, Esmond won; and from that day there was an end of all the trouble that had arisen from his being a funk. From that day, too, he and Bolsover were good friends, to the time when Esmond left.

NOTICES.

Football—Matches Wanted By:

ROHAMPTON JUNIORS—14½.—W. G. Stevens, 62B, Sherrolds Road, Fulham, S.W. 6.

NORMANHURST—16—5 miles.—H. Francis, 73, Atlantic Road, Brixton, S.W. 9.

BARNSBURY ATHLETIC—14—away matches preferred—5 miles.—W. C. Merrett, 40, Cloudeley Mansions, Barnsbury, N. 1.

MACWOOD ATHLETIC CLUB—15—ground, Wormwood Scrubs.—R. E. Kew, 57, Willow Vale, Shepherd's Bush, W. 12.

NUNHEAD UNITED—15½—16—3½ miles.—R. Isom, 64, Gibbon Road, Nunhead, S.E. 15.

VIOLET ROVERS—17—home and away.—E. Cousins, 1, Perring Street, Devon Road, Bow, E. 3.

HARCOURT VILLA—14—3 miles.—A. Ainscow, 98, Prince Street, Ardwick, Manchester.

FINSBURY PARK ATHLETIC F.C.—15—5 miles—away matches only.—L. Cockerill, 8, Perth Road, Stroud Green, Finsbury Park, N. 4.

RED ROVERS F.C.—16—4 miles.—A. Grimwood, 37, Chapel Road, West Norwood, S.E. 27.

C. E. Reid, 50, Clonmel Road, Fulham, S.W. 6, wants place in Fulham team—16—outside or inside right.

WENDOVER F.C.—16—18—10 miles.—G. Hughes, 92, Paxton Road, Tottenham, N. 17.

CRAWFORD UNITED—15—4 miles.—H. Garrod, 13, Queen Street Buildings, Edgware Road, Marylebone, W. 1.

ACRE JUNIORS—15—16—4 miles.—G. E. Jenkins, 22, Macdonald Road, Hale End Road, Walthamstow, E. 17.

WATERLOWS JUNIORS—16½—ground, Walthamstow.—G. J. White, 123, Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow, E. 17.

EVERTON JUNIORS—15—16.—Geo. Brindley, 102, Hersebell Street, Everton, Liverpool.

CADETS F.C.—16—17.—B. Roberts, 80, Beresford Road, Chapel End, Walthamstow, E. 17.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED—15—16—3 miles; away preferred.—F. Sharman, 72, Hardwicke Street, Barking, E.

BELVILLE UNITED—16½—5 miles.—E. North, 154, Fernhead Road, Maida Hill, W. 9.