

ROUSING LONG
COMPLETE SCHOOL
STORY OF GREYFRIARS.

SPECIAL 4-PAGE FOOT-
BALL SUPPLEMENT,
Contributed by EXPERTS.

AMAZING
ADVENTURE YARN,
By DAVID GOODWIN.

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The Magnet 2^d

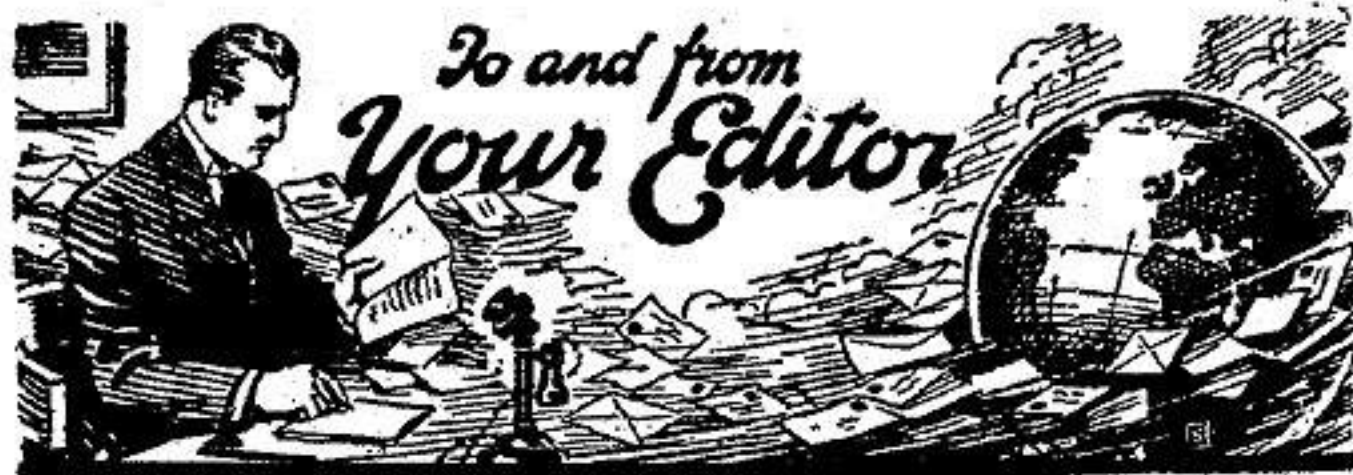
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EVERY MONDAY.



BUNTER DOES THE STAIRS IN RECORD TIME!

(A "moving" scene from this week's remarkable story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

"GOOD OLD DICKY!"

QUITE a number of my chums have referred to Dick Nugent in that spirit, and they'll be saying "Good old Dicky!" with more fervour than ever in three weeks' time, for the first of his amazing "shockers" will appear in this paper dated November 20th. How's that? You've been clamouring for a return of those popular St. Sam's stories for a long time now. The Cricket and Football Supplements have served their turn, and once more young Dicky Nugent, author of many a "hare-raising, breathless, egg-sitting" story dealing with the heroes of St. Sam's will come into his own. I'm going to give an extra bit of room to these coming "shockers," and some of Mr. Chapman's delightfully humorous drawings will help to make this revived feature more of a novelty than ever. Please pass the news on to your pals who are interested, and remember No. 1 of this new series will appear in the MAGNET in three weeks' time.

LIGHT AND SHADE!

Two letters I have just opened, coming from readers living miles away from one another, and both keen readers at that, tell me more than ever how careful an editor must be in his selection of stories. The first correspondent likes the serious yarns of Redwing, Vernon-Smith, Hazeldene, and Skinner & Co. These, he says, are really true to life, and Mr. Richards is at his best when writing them. The Bunter yarns, my chum says, are all right in their way, but they are so impossible. Granted. But even an impossible personage like William George Bunter can be entertaining to us, surely? Now for correspondent No. 2. He states with great enthusiasm his fondness for the lighter, humorous yarns with Billy Bunter "getting up to all his funny tricks." He has—does this correspondent—little time for the serious "meaty" stories of the Hazeldene's temptation and Vernon-Smith's relapse type. Strange, isn't it, that those letters should be lying next to

each other? Each reader, too, is right in what he says, for he is judging by his own individual taste. Yet these outspoken chums of mine assure me, that they read every story, whether it is quite to their liking or not. I like the spirit. It goes to prove that the average reader of our paper is deeply interested in all that goes on within its twenty-eight pages. Of course, I have always realised that the tastes of my readers vary, and have been careful to keep that uppermost in my mind. Yet if we had no other type of story each week but a "serious" one, or, vice versa, a "light 'Bunterish'" one, methinks the MAGNET wouldn't stand so high in the fiction world as it does to-day. After all, there is nothing like variety, you know—more especially in fiction. Still, I'm grateful for those friendly letters.

For Next Monday!

"THE DESERTER!"

By Frank Richards.

That's the title of the next ripping story in the "Bob Cherry" series, and it's a corker all the way! Mind you read it, chums!

"THE BOY WITH THE MILLION POUND SECRET!"

By David Goodwin.

You'll like next week's grand instalment of this fine serial story, boys. It's a thriller!

Look out, too, for another ripping four-page Football Supplement.

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THE DOWNFALL OF BOB CHERRY! From being perhaps the most popular of the juniors in the Remove, Bob Cherry is now the most unpopular! His Form fellows regard him as an outsider, and Bob himself is forced to realise that he is indeed . . .



A Dramatic Long Complete Story of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars,
with Bob Cherry—once a member of
the Famous Five—in the limelight.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Painful!

BILLY BUNTER put a fat face and a large pair of spectacles into the doorway of the changing-room at Greyfriars, and blinked round.

"Wharton here?" he asked.

Some of the Remove fellows, who were changing for football practice, laughed.

Harry Wharton was sitting within six feet of Bunter, putting on his football boots; but the short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not observe him.

"I say, you fellows, is Wharton here?"

"Here, fathead!" said the captain of the Remove.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, Harry, old chap——"

"Not so much 'Harry, old chap,' and buck up and get changed," said the Remove captain. "Little Side in ten minutes, fatty!"

"That's what I want to speak to you about, old fellow," said Bunter.

"No need to speak; get changed."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Cheese it!"

The captain of the Remove did not seem to have a strong desire for any further conversation from William George Bunter.

As a matter of fact, he knew what Bunter wanted.

When W. G. Bunter addressed him as "Harry, old chap," it was obvious that W. G. B. wanted something. He might want an advance, in cash, on a postal order he was expecting by the next post; or he might want somebody to write an impot for him. Or, as in the present case, he might want to slack on a day when games practice was compulsory.

Compulsory practice was one of the nightmares of Bunter's fat existence.

He could keep out of games; and out of the practice that was needed by the fellows who played games. But twice a week came the compulsory games practice in which every fellow at Greyfriars had to join, willy-nilly, unless fortified behind a medical certificate. It was one of Bunter's grievances that

he hadn't a medical certificate exempting him from games practice: he was, so he said, so delicate. But if he was delicate, his looks belied him; certainly he looked anything but delicate. Indeed, one glance at Bunter was enough to show that what he needed was some healthy exercise to reduce his fat a little.

So, on compulsory days, William George Bunter was accustomed to setting his fat wits to work at the highest pressure, seeking all sorts of excuses for not turning up on Little Side.

Sometimes he had a pain. Sometimes he had an ache. Sometimes he retired to the solitude of the box-room and hoped that his absence would not be observed. He was even known to have provoked his Form master into detaining him, preferring detention to "urging the flying ball." But that was a last desperate resource.

On the present occasion, to judge by the agonised expression he had screwed up into his fat face, he had either an ache or a pain, or both.

And the captain of the Remove, instead of sympathising, did not even want to hear about it.

Billy Bunter gave him a blink of deep reproach. Wharton did not even see it, as he had turned away to speak to Frank Nugent.

"I say, Harry——" recommenced Bunter.

"Chuck it, Bunter!"

"I've got a pain!" said Bunter pathetically.

"I know!"

"Well, you beast, you might be a bit sympathetic, if you know I've got a pain!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's only a compulsory practice pain—it will wear off," he said. "Don't be an ass, Bunter. You've got to turn up to-day."

"Buck up, old fat man," said Peter Todd encouragingly.

"Oh, really, Toddy! The fact is, Wharton, I'm feeling really ill," said Bunter. "I've got a pain like a burning dagger."

"Where?" asked Wharton.

"Eh? In—in——" Bunter stammered.

Apparently he had not yet decided where he had the pain, severe as it was. "In—in—in my—my tummy, you know."

"It can't be over-eating, I suppose!" said Johnny Bull gravely. "I noticed that you ate only enough for seven at dinner. Are you losing your appetite, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

Wharton finished lacing his boots and rose. Bunter blinked pathetically at the back of his head, the captain of the Remove not even taking the trouble to look at him, agonized as he was.

Bunter gave a deep groan.

"My hat! What's that fearful row?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

Groan!

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bolsover major.

"Beast! I suppose a fellow can groan when he's in fearful agony."

"I'll jolly well give you something to groan for, if you make that row here," said Bolsover major ferociously.

Bunter blinked at him, and did not groan again. If he wanted to groan, certainly he did not want anything to groan for.

"I say, Harry, I really can't turn up to-day, old fellow," said the Owl of the Remove. "As a pal, you might let me off. What's the good of being Form-captain if you can't let a fellow off games practice?"

"It's my duty to see that you turn up, fathead."

"You've told me lots of times that I'm useless on a football ground, you beast."

"Worse than useless," said Wharton. "You only get in the way, and bother everybody. I suppose you don't imagine that I'm going to roll you down to Little Side for my own sake? It's for your sake, fatty."

"But I say——"

"Can it," exclaimed the captain of the Remove impatiently. "The fact is, Bunter, I've let you off, too often, and Wingate of the Sixth has jawed me about letting fellows slack. Wingate will be on the ground this afternoon, and I don't want another jaw from him, see?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

"That's rather selfish, Wharton."

"Let it go at that," said Harry laughing, "and for goodness' sake, give us a rest."

"I don't see why I should turn up when other fellows don't," said Bunter warmly. "Rotten favouritism, I call it. Skinner's going out this afternoon with Snoop."

"He isn't!" snapped Wharton.

"He says he is."

"Well, I say he isn't! Now dry up."

"And Bob Cherry—"

"Isn't Bob here?" asked Wharton, glancing over the fellows in the changing-room.

"The esteemed Bob is in the study," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "He is occupied swotfully."

Wharton frowned.

Most of the Remove fellows took Bob Cherry's new "stunt" of swotting as a huge joke. His friends, who knew that Major Cherry had "ragged" him after receiving a bad report from his Form master, sympathised with Bob to some extent. But his chums, as well as the other fellows, considered that there was a time for all things. If Bob Cherry wanted to make up for lost time in the acquirement of knowledge, no doubt it was a very laudable desire; but an afternoon when games practice was on, was not the time.

"If Bob Cherry stands out, why shouldn't I stand out?" went on Billy Bunter victoriously.

"Bob isn't standing out," snapped Wharton.

"I tell you he is."

"Well, it's no business of yours, anyhow. Shut up!"

"Sha'n't!" howled Bunter.

Bunter felt that he had scored a point. There had lately been a slight coolness in the happy circle of the Famous Five of the Remove, and all the members of the famous Co. were anxious that it should not develop into a real breach. Wharton, most certainly, did not want to exercise his duties and powers as Form captain over his chum. Bunter was quite well aware of that. But, as he had said, if one fellow stood out of compulsory practice why shouldn't another fellow? There ought not to be two weights and two measures.

"Sha'n't!" repeated Bunter. "I tell you I'm not turning up to-day. I've got a pain. I mean I'm going to swot at Latin, same as Bob Cherry. And I can jolly well say—yaroooooh!"

Bunter had not meant to say "yaroooooh!" He said it involuntarily as Peter Todd tipped him up and sat him down. Bunter sat and roared.

"Ow! Yow! You beast, Toddy!"

"You talk too much, old man!" said Peter Todd affably. "I've told you lots of times that you talk too much."

"Ow! Beast!"

"All the same, it's favouritism—that's what it is," said Bolsover major. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I don't see why Wharton should let his friends off."

Wharton reddened.

"Bob Cherry isn't a slacker," he snapped. "You know jolly well there's a difference, Bolsover."

"I don't see it. I think—"

"Oh, don't tell me what you think," snapped Wharton. "Mind your own bizney, anyhow!"

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

And Harry Wharton left the changing-room, obviously in a very ruffled temper.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Rounded Up!

HARRY WHARTON was still frowning a little when he came down to Little Side. Most of the Remove fellows had turned up there, but there were several noticeable absentees, among them Bob Cherry's. Skinner and Snoop also had failed to turn up; those well-known slackers never appeared if they could help it. Wibley was away, too, and Micky Desmond. And—of course—Bunter!

Lord Mauleverer, who was probably the slackest slacker in the Form, was there, however. His lazy lordship knew how to toe the line when toeing the line could not be helped. Harry Wharton glanced over the juniors and compressed his lips a little. At Greyfriars the Form captains had the duty of rounding up the members of their Forms to games practice, under the general supervision of the Head of the Games, who was captain of the school.

Wingate of the Sixth was liable to come down hard and heavy on a junior Form captain who neglected his duties. Indeed, he had been seen to administer "six" to Temple, the captain of the Fourth, in the middle of the football ground as a warning to Temple to place his duty before the pleasanter business of obliging his friends.

Wharton was undecided whether to go back to the House and root out the fellows who were missing practice. It was possible that Wingate might come on the junior ground, and he had a keen eye for absentees. But for the fact that Bob Cherry was one of the absent ones Wharton would probably have taken the matter in hand at once. Bob, in his new keenness for study, had apparently forgotten that it was a compulsory day, and Wharton was extremely unwilling to be put in the position of exerting authority over him. Bob was generally one of the most strenuous fellows in the Remove, and about the last fellow at Greyfriars to be suspected of slacking. Still, there was no doubt that he ought to have been there.

"Loder to-day!" grunted Johnny Bull, and Harry's frown deepened.

Loder of the Sixth came over to the junior ground, evidently to take charge of the junior practice. All the First Eleven men had the privilege—or otherwise—of taking the lower Forms in practice. But Loder, who was a good deal of a slacker himself, avoided that duty whenever he could. When he did take it on it was always with a bad temper, and he would rag the fellows mercilessly from start to finish, especially the Remove fellows. Loder of the Sixth had plenty of enemies in the Remove, chief among them Harry Wharton & Co. The Famous Five had had plenty of trouble with Gerald Loder, and the Sixth Former had not always had the best of it, prefect and First Eleven man as he was.

Loder had his usual bullying manner as he came up, and ran his eye over the Removites in a disparaging sort of way.

"Don't slack round with your hands in your pockets, Vernon-Smith! Pull yourself together, Bolsover, don't slouch! Good lord, do they expect a man to make footballers out of these clumsy cubs! Where's Wharton?"

"I'm here!" said Harry quietly.

"Oh, you're here, are you?" said Loder. "Are all your men here?"

"Not quite all!"

"Slacking, I suppose. I've never seen such a mob of slackers as the Lower Fourth in this school," said Loder.

agreeably. "Are you still Form captain in the Remove, Wharton?"

It pleased the great man to affect not to know anything about the lower Forms.

"You know I am," said Wharton coolly.

Loder's eyes glinted.

"Don't give me any back-chat, Wharton! If you want six you'd better say so at once. If you're Form captain why haven't you got your men here for practice? Do you expect a prefect to go round hunting for slacking little rascals in the studies and the passages?"

"No."

"Well, get off the field and round them up, and don't come back without them," said Loder.

As Loder represented the Head of the Games on Little Side his word was law on that subject. Wharton turned and walked off the field. Loder sauntered a little distance to chat with his chum Walker, apparently willing to leave over the practice till Wharton came back with the absentees. As a matter of fact, Loder would have caught at any excuse for loafing instead of attending to his duties. The juniors, having nothing else to do till Loder gave the word, waited.

Harry Wharton looked grim as he walked into the House.

Loder was quite within his rights in calling him to order. It was an undoubted fact that the Remove captain should have seen that all the members of the Form were there. Skinner and his friends were fond of describing Wharton as lofty and dictatorial; but, in point of fact, the captain of the Remove was very slow to exercise his authority in such matters, and very often the slackers had nothing but contemptuous disregard to expect from him. Wingate had lately called him over the coals for that very reason, and now Loder had rated him before all the footballers. So the captain of the Remove was feeling—and looking—grim as he tramped up to the Remove passage.

He found Micky Desmond in No. 6, reading a book and eating toffee. Micky gave him a propitiatory smile as he blared in.

"You don't want me this afternoon, Wharton?"

"Three minutes to change," said the captain of the Remove. "After that your name goes to Wingate for a licking."

"I've got a tired feeling this afternoon, dear man," said Micky plaintively.

"You'll have a worse feeling if you're reported to Wingate."

"Dear old chap—"

"Chuck it! Where's Wibley?"

"In the box-room, sorting out some of his theatrical lumber," grinned Micky. "Aren't you letting me off, Wharton? I've really got a tired feeling, and I want to finish this book. Have some of this toffee, old chap. It's good."

"I've told you what to expect," snapped Wharton, and he stamped out of the study.

"Baste!" said Micky, and he went dismally down to change.

Wharton went up to the Remove box-room, where he found William Wibley, the leading light of the Remove Dramatic Society. Wibley was unpacking a box of theatrical properties, and he was too busy to look round when Wharton stepped in.

"Get a move on, Wibley!"

Wibley looked round at that. He waved his hand at the captain of the Remove.

"Don't bother now, old chap."

"Games practice."

"Bosh! I've got my new costume



"Loder's ordered me to fetch you," said Wharton. "I shouldn't have come otherwise." "Oh, give us a rest," sneered Bob Cherry. "Tell Loder I won't come, and he can go and eat coke! Tell him that from me, and I'll take the responsibility if you're afraid of him." "You know I'm not afraid of him," said Wharton hotly. (See Chapter 3.)

here for my part of Hamlet," said Wibley. "I can tell you—"

"Are you going?"

"No!" bawled William Wibley.

"I'll help you!"

"You silly ass! You thumping idiot! Don't rumple those things! I'm not going! I'll punch your silly head! I—I—I—"

William Wibley went out of the box-room in a heap, and picked himself up breathlessly.

"Want any more help?" asked the captain of the Remove politely.

"Ow! Bother you! Ow!"

William Wibley departed for the changing-room, having discovered that his Form captain was in earnest. Wharton had certainly left him in no doubt on that point.

The Remove captain's next call was at Study No. 11 in the Remove. He found Skinner and Snoop there, and a haze of cigarette-smoke. Both of them looked at him unpleasantly.

"Games practice!" rapped out Wharton.

"We happen to be goin' out this afternoon," said Skinner.

"Just startin'," said Snoop.

"I've no time to argue the point," said Wharton grimly. "I've been jawed for letting off slackers, and I'm fed-up. Are you two fellows going down to change at once, or do you want me to bang your heads together?"

Skinner and Snoop decided to go down and change. They went, with evil looks.

Then the captain of the Remove hurled open the door of Study No. 7 and disclosed William George Bunter taking his ease in the armchair there. At sight of the Remove captain, Bunter screwed up his fat face into an anguished expression.

"It's worse!" he gasped.

"What's worse?"

"My—my pain!"

"Get out of that chair!"

"I—I'm too weak!" gasped Bunter. "I'm suffering fearfully, and I can't really move— Yarooop!"

Bump!

Bunter landed on the carpet as the captain of the Remove up-ended the chair. He landed with a roar.

"Can you move now?" inquired Wharton.

"Yooop!"

"I hope you can, because I'm going to kick you till you're out of the study."

"Yow—ow—ow! Whoop! Leave off kicking me, you beast—I'm going, ain't I?" yelled Bunter.

And he went.

Harry Wharton followed him to the changing-room. Five fellows changed there in the worst of tempers, and left the House under the grim eye of the captain of the Remove. Wharton marched his flock down to Little Side, all of them looking as if they could bite him.

"Here they come!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"All excepting Bob Cherry!" sneered Bolsover major.

"Oh, rats!"

Loder of the Sixth, having no further excuse for postponing duty, left off his conversation with James Walker. He rewarded Wharton for his services with a scowl.

"All here now?" he snapped.

"We're ready, Loder," answered Wharton, without directly answering the question. Evidently, Loder had not noticed that one member of the Famous Five was not present, and Wharton certainly did not want to appraise him of the fact.

"I say, Loder—" howled Bunter.

"Shut up!"

"I've got a pain!" wailed the Owl of the Remove. "I'm not really fit for games practice, Loder!"

"Got a pain, have you?" said Loder, slipping his ashplant down into his hand. "I think that's an untruth, Bunter. But I'm going to make it the truth. You haven't got a pain yet. You're going to have one."

Whack!

"Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter.

"Still feeling unfit for games practice?" asked Loder agreeably. "I've got some more of the same medicine, if you want any."

"Yow—ow—ow! I—I'm all right now!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I thought I'd pull you round," said Loder, with a nod. "Now, if you inky little scoundrels are all here, we'll get going."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

"Ow! It ain't fair!" howled Bunter.
 "Eh? What do you mean, you fat dummy?"

"Wharton ought to let me off, as Form captain, when I'm not fit," said Bunter. "Tain't fair to let Cherry off, and run me here!"

"Shut up!" whispered Peter Todd.

"Shan't!" howled Bunter. "Wharton could have let me off if he'd liked. He's let Bob Cherry off, and I tell you it isn't fair! Fair play's a jewel!"

Loder glanced round.

"Cherry! Isn't Cherry here?" he demanded.

No reply.

"Is Cherry on the field, Wharton?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"He hasn't come down," said Harry.

"Is he ill?"

"Not that I know of."

"Does he say he's ill?"

"He hasn't said so to me."

"By gad!" said Loder. "So this is how you take the duties of a Form captain, Wharton! You round up these fellows, and let your own friends off when they want to slack—what?"

Wharton crimsoned.

"I'm disgusted with you," said Loder, greatly enjoying his advantage over the captain of the Remove. "This is simply rotten! Rank favouritism—absolutely rotten! Go and bring Cherry here at once!"

"But—"

"That's enough! You'll fetch Cherry of the Remove here immediately; and I shall report you to the Head of the Games for slackness and favouritism. Go and fetch him!"

And Harry Wharton, with burning cheeks, started for a second time for the School House.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Swot!

"VIXDUM perfectum eum bello atrocior domi seditio ex-cepit—"

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose.

"Oh dear!" he murmured.

Study No. 13 in the Remove had a busy look. Books and papers were on the table; some on the floor. Bob, seated at the table, had a smudge of ink on his chin, and a good many smudges on his fingers. "Titus Livius" was propped open before him; a Latin dictionary was at his right hand, a Latin grammar at his left. And the expression on Bob's rugged face might have touched a heart of stone.

Bob had often seen his study-mate, Mark Linley, "swotting." Mark seemed to get on with it very well. But he had gifts that way—and poor Bob hadn't. It was said in the Remove that Mark would read "Virgil" as another fellow might read the "Holiday Annual"—for the pleasure of the thing. Where the pleasure came in was a deep mystery to most of the Remove fellows. To Bob it was deepest of all. And it was not "Virgil" that Bob Cherry was tackling now—it was "Titus Livius." And P. Vergilius Maro, though a troublesome gentleman in his way, was a merry joke to "Livy."

No doubt old Titus was a great historian, and the works he has left behind are very valuable works. But Bob Cherry's chief feeling towards him was that he would have liked to have the gloves on with him for ten minutes or so.

Bob Cherry was "up against it," there was no doubt about that.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

At games, Bob was a strenuous man. At ragging in the Remove passage, or japing fellows in other Forms, Bob was well to the fore. But Mr. Quelch, the master of the Fourth, did not find him so strenuous in class. Even Bob himself recognised that he had not worked so hard at class subjects as he ought to have done. He had dropped a little too easily into the schoolboy view that a school was a place where a fellow did as little as he could, in the way of school work.

Mr. Quelch's view was that fellows came to Greyfriars to learn things. The general view in the Lower Fourth was that they did nothing of the sort if it could be helped. Bob certainly did not quite take that view; but there was no doubt that he had acted as if he did, which came to much the same thing.

And so his last term's report from his Form master had been an absolutely scaring one.

It was no wonder that Major Cherry had been deeply disturbed; that he had taken the view that his son was wasting his time at Greyfriars; and that he had hinted at taking Bob away from the school.

After a rather painful interview with his father, the scales had fallen from Bob's eyes, as it were.

He realised that school life was not all football and frolic. He had honestly promised his father to pull up, and he honestly meant to keep his word.

Hence his entrance in the list of competitors for the Head's Latin prize, and his intention to carry off that prize if he could; or at the very least bag a creditable number of marks in the examination.

But it was uphill work.

The major had approved, and he expected Bob to do his best. It was the major, indeed, who had requested Mr. Quelch to put down Bob's name in the list for the examination. Bob had acquiesced as cheerfully as he could; but his heart had sunk, when he looked into the stuff that had to be "got up" for the Latin prize. The exam was open to the whole Lower School—which included the Shell, who would be after that prize, and, of course, Shell fellows were older than Remove fellows, and more advanced in their studies. To compete with them, any Lower Fourth man had to pull up his socks, and go all out, as Bob said to himself in phraseology more suited to the football-field than the examination-room. Bob did not take Livy in class; but he had to handle Livy in the exam for the Head's prize; which meant that he had to make at least a nodding acquaintance with that unpleasant old Roman gentleman.

Now he was making it; and incidentally capturing a headache, a bad temper, and the danger of a nervous breakdown. At least, he felt like that.

It was quite unlike Bob to stay indoors on a half-holiday. Even snow and rain would not keep him indoors if he could possibly get out of doors. But he had had to change his manners and customs now. On this especial half-holiday, he had determined to put in some hard work at Titus Livius. And in the stress of swotting, he had quite forgotten that it was compulsory games practice that afternoon. Bob would much rather have attended games practice, or anything else out of doors, than have stayed in his study; compulsory or voluntary, he would have gone down to games practice if he could have done so. So that little matter had quite passed from his mind; and Bob, generally one of the noisiest fellows in the Form, was

glad of the unaccustomed quiet that reigned in the Remove passage.

"Vixdum prefunctum cum bello!" groaned Bob.

There was a tread in the Remove passage, but Bob Cherry did not heed it. He was concentrated on Livy.

The door flew open.

Bob glared up irritably. Irritability was quite a new development in Bob Cherry; it had been born of his new manners and customs. Really, when a fellow's brain was almost reeling under Titus Livius, he was entitled to be left in peace and quiet to wrestle with that tough old Roman.

It was Harry Wharton who looked into Study No. 13; and his look was not very pleasant. Loder of the Sixth had ragged him, which was annoying; and he had been accused of favouritism, an unjust charge, but one which went home to his conscience a little. For it could not be denied that he had rooted out Bunter and Micky Desmond, Wibley, and Skinner and Snoop, and taken no heed of the fact that Bob Cherry was cutting games practice. He felt that Bob ought never to have placed him in such a position; and with that feeling in his breast he was not in a very amicable temper.

"What is it?" asked Bob, rather sharply. "I'm hard at it, Wharton—I'd rather not be interrupted."

"Games practice."

"Oh, rot!"

Bob turned back to Livy.

"It's compulsory to-day," growled Wharton. "Get a move on!"

"Bosh!"

"I suppose you'd forgotten—"

"Yes, I had," snapped Bob. "I'm a bit too worried by this blinking stuff, to think about anything else. Blow games practice!"

"It can't be helped," said Wharton. "You can't cut games practice on a compulsory day, any more than any other fellow."

Bob sat bolt upright in his chair, and stared at the captain of the Remove. His rugged face was red with anger.

"You can't let me alone?" he exclaimed. "You generally let two or three lazy slackers frowst about in the studies—you've been jawed by Wingate for it. But you can't give me a rest, when I'm up to the neck in this."

"No, I can't. You see—"

"I don't see," interrupted Bob hotly. "I think you're a little too keen to use your authority, Wharton, that's what I think. Over your own friends, too!"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"Will you listen?" he exclaimed impatiently. "I tell you—"

"You're empowered, as Form-captain, to let a fellow off, if you think fit," said Bob bitterly. "Well, then, let me off."

"I can't! I—"

"And shut the door after you."

Wharton tried hard to be patient.

"I can't let a fellow off without a good reason given," he said. "You know that, Bob."

"Does Bunter always give you a good reason, when he frowsts in the study?" growled Bob. "Does Skinner, who dodges games practice to smoke in the box-rooms? Chuck it!"

"But I tell you—"

"You can let off a fellow to frowst, or smoke, but you can't let off a fellow to work. Is that it?"

"No," said Harry. "If I've been careless, it was my fault, I know that. But to-day—"

"To-day, you're bound to exercise your authority, because I'm worried to death over this rotten stuff. Hang your

authority, and you, too! I won't come!"

"You must come, Bob," said Wharton as quietly as he could. "I've been called over the coals for letting you stay in. Loder's in charge of games practice to-day, and you know what a cad and bully he is."

"Hang Loder!"

"He's ordered me to fetch you, Bob. I shouldn't have come otherwise."

"You're always so keen to obey Loder's orders, aren't you?" sneered Bob. "I seem to remember once that you floored him in your study, prefect as he is."

"If you don't choose to be reasonable, Bob—"

"Oh, give us a rest! Tell Loder I won't come, and he can go and eat coke!" said Bob savagely. "Tell him that from me, and I'll take the responsibility, if you're afraid of him."

"You know I'm not afraid of him," said Harry hotly. "But he happens to be in the right, and if the matter goes before Wingate—"

"Let it!"

"Bob, old man, you'd better come," said the captain of the Remove, with a patience that would have astonished most of the Remove fellows, if they could have heard him.

"Well, I won't."

Bob fixed his eyes on his books again. The captain of the Remove stood looking at him. His own anger was rising fast. He had been placed in a false position already; and he was bound to take the missing Removito back to the football ground with him. But if Bob would not go, he could hardly use such methods with him as he had used with Bunter and Wibley. He had not come to Study No. 13 for a scrap with his chum.

Bob was sorting out words in the dictionary, apparently oblivious of his presence. There was a short silence, but Wharton broke it at last.

"Bob, I tell you Loder's in charge of games practice to-day, and I can't say you're staying in to swot."

"Say what you like, then!"

"Linley's entered for the Head's prize, as well as you, but he's not cutting games practice," said Harry.

"I am!" answered Bob.

"You know you can't."

"Well, I'm going to. You're talking

to me as if I were a slacking loafer like Skinner," said Bob savagely. "Do you think I'd be mugging up this stuff if I could help it?"

"No, but—"

"Well, give me a rest."

"Will you come?"

"No, I won't!"

"I shall have to tell Loder you won't."

"Tell him anything you like!"

Harry Wharton hesitated a moment or two longer; but it was evident that there was nothing to be done. He turned and left the study, closing the door after him. Bob gave an angry grunt and devoted his attention once more to Livy.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Co.!

"WELL?"

Gerald Loder rapped out that monosyllable, as the captain of the Remove came back to Little Side alone.

A considerable part of the time devoted to junior games practice was already gone—which was so much to the good, from the point of view of the slacker of the Sixth. There was no reason why the practice should not have started without the absentees, but any excuse was good enough for Loder.

"Where's Cherry?"

"In his study," answered Wharton.

"Why hasn't he come with you?"

"He's working."

"Working!" repeated Loder.

"Yes; he's going in for the Head's Latin prize, and he's mugging up Latin," said the captain of the Remove. Loder stared at him.

"Swotting, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Is that a reason for cutting games practice?"

"I suppose not," said Harry.

"Well, then why haven't you brought him here?"

Wharton bit his lip.

"He won't come," he said at last.

"Oh, he won't come, won't he?" said Loder, with a grin. "You Remove fags think you can make new rules for yourselves, do you? If he won't come, why don't you make him come?"

Wharton did not answer that question.

"You made Bunter come, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And these other slackers?"

"Yes."

"Then why not Cherry?"

No answer.

"This is a little too thick," said Loder. "Here comes Wingate—just in time to hear you explain."

Wingate of the Sixth was coming over from Big Side. No doubt the captain of Greyfriars had noted that idleness reigned on the junior ground, and wanted to know the reason why. He was frowning as he came up.

"What's the matter here, Loder?" he asked. "Why isn't practice going on?"

"I'm trying to round up these lazy young scoundrels," answered Loder. "I can't get them all on the ground. There's still one missing, and I hear that he won't come."

"What?" ejaculated Wingate.

"It seems that Wharton considers himself entitled to let his friends off games practice," said Loder, shrugging his shoulders. "Some of the other kids complain about it. It doesn't seem fair to me."

"Who's missing?" rapped out Wingate.

"Cherry."

"Cherry! He's not a slacker as a rule," said Wingate, in surprise. "Have you told him to come, Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry reluctantly.

"Well, then, why isn't he here?"

Wharton was silent.

"He seems to have told Wharton that he won't come; at least, Wharton says so," remarked Loder maliciously.

"Is that the case, Wharton?" asked the captain of Greyfriars, with a brow like thunder.

"Yes," said Harry unwillingly. "You see—"

"He refuses to come?"

"Yes. He—"

"Where is he?"

"In his study."

"I'll see to it!" said Wingate curtly. "You fellows can get going. No need to slack about because one man is missing."

And football practice began at last, while the captain of Greyfriars walked away to the House with a grim brow.

Wingate strode into the House, and his heavy footsteps rang along the Remove passage.

He stopped at Study No. 13 and threw the door open.

Bob Cherry, deep in Livy, fairly glared at the opening door. But his expression changed as he saw that the newcomer was Wingate.

The Head of the Sixth strode into the study. His ashplant was under his arm.

"Cherry!" he rapped out. "According to Wharton, you've refused to come down to games practice on a compulsory day."

"So Wharton's reported me, has he?" said Bob bitterly.

"He had no choice about that, as you know very well," said the captain of Greyfriars. "You seem to be swotting here—rather a new departure for you, I think. I dare say swotting will do you good, but there's a time for all things. I shall give you six for refusing to come down to games practice, and you'll come at once. Bend over that chair."

Wingate swished his cane.

Slowly Bob Cherry rose to his feet.

For a moment or two he looked as if he would defy even Wingate, the captain of the school. But the hopelessness of that proceeding was too obvious.

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With a grim, set face, Bob bent over, and the official ashplant swished and swished, and the "six" were duly administered. Wingate tucked the cane under his arm again.

"Now get changed and join up!" he said.

There was no help for it. Quietly, but with burning eyes, Bob Cherry went down to the changing-room.

Five minutes later he joined the Removees on Little Side.

"I say, you fellows, he's come!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

"Thus are the mighty fallen!" sighed Skinner. And there was a chortle from Snoop.

Harry Wharton gave his chum a rather anxious glance. Bob met it with a hostile stare. After that he gave no further heed to the captain of the Remove.

Games practice went on, but the usual cheery look did not come to Bob Cherry's face. He went through it as if it were an infliction, though he showed as good form as ever.

When it was over—after almost incessant ragging and nagging from Loder of the Sixth—Bob was the first to tramp off the field, escaping at the earliest moment he could.

He was in the changing-room, half through changing, when the other fellows arrived there.

Harry Wharton came over to him at once.

"I'm sorry for this, Bob," he said, "but you understand how it was."

"I understand," said Bob curtly.

"I couldn't help—"

"You couldn't help being a little tin god, and throwing your weight about. I know," said Bob.

"What?"

"Bob!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"So that's how you look at it, Bob Cherry, is it?" said the captain of the Remove, through his set lips.

"Exactly!"

"Then there's no more to be said."

"Nothing at all. In fact, the less you talk to me the better I shall like it."

"That's enough, then."

And Wharton turned away.

"Bob, old man!" said Frank.

Bob did not seem to hear.

"My esteemed chum, the sweet reasonableness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

No reply.

"Don't play the goat, Bob," said Johnny Bull. "You know jolly well that Wharton—"

"I've had enough of Wharton," said Bob. "Give us a rest."

"I think you're an ass!"

"Thanks! I think you're a fool!"

And with that, Bob Cherry tramped out of the changing-room, his face hard, and dark, and set. A good many of the fellows exchanged glances; the Bounder smiled, and Skinner whistled.

"Trouble in the happy family circle," sighed Skinner. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, if you have tears prepare to shed them now."

Some of the Remove fellows laughed. Wharton gave Skinner a fierce look, and the too-humorous youth left the changing-room rather hurriedly. After changing, the four members of the Co. went up to the Remove passage to tea. Tea in Study No. 1 had already been arranged.

"I—I suppose Bob's coming!" said Frank Nugent.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Not in my study," he said.

"But—"

"I know it's your study, too, Frank."

But if you want Bob Cherry I'll tea somewhere else. I don't mind."

"Don't worry. Bob won't come," said Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I want him in his present temper. What's the matter with the chap?"

"I don't know, and I don't care what's the matter with him; but I know I'm fed up with him," said Wharton.

And there were only four fellows to tea in Study No. 1, and the breach in the once united circle of the Famous Five was wider and deeper.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Hour and the Man!

"THERE is a tide—"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"There is a tide—" recommenced Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

Dabney and Fry stared at him.

"What about the tide?" asked Fry. "Not thinking of bathing, at this time of year, are you?"

"Fathead! I was saying—"

"Never mind the tide! Pass the marmalade," said Fry.

Temple & Co. were at tea in their study when Cecil Reginald made his rather unexpected remark.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men—" resumed Temple, having passed the marmalade to Edward Fry.

Whereat Dabney and Fry grinned.

They knew now what Cecil Reginald was "at." Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, had taken his class in Shakespeare that afternoon. Temple had not yet had time to forget Mr. Capper's lucubrations on that great man. Temple was quoting from Shakespeare.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune!" said Temple.

"Oh, rather!" assented Dabney.

Fry nodded.

He did not dispute the statement; Temple had William Shakespeare's authority for making it, and no doubt Shakespeare had known what he was talking about. Fry only wondered what Temple was driving at; but he did not inquire, he was busy with the marmalade.

"What I mean is," went on Temple, "now's the time to put those Remove cads in their place. We've had a lot of cheek from the Remove—"

"Oh, rather!"

"You remember they raided this study last term—"

"Cheeky fags!" said Fry.

"We've never punished them as they really wanted," said Temple. "It's bad, on principle, to let fags cheek you, you know, without giving them what they ask for."

Fry winked at the marmalade.

"Now's the chance," said Temple. "We're going to raid the Remove passage after tea and show them who's who, and what's what, and—and—"

"And which is which?" asked Fry blandly.

Temple gave him a rather suspicious look. Cecil Reginald Temple was a great man in the Fourth Form at Greyfriars, and from Dabney, at least, he always received the admiration due to his greatness. But he was never quite sure about Edward Fry. Fry sometimes had a way of expressing himself which hinted that, in his heart of hearts, he did not quite accept Cecil Reginald as a great man at all.

"Look here, Fry—" began Cecil Reginald, rather warmly.

"Go it, old man!" said Fry. "I'm on! Only remember that those cheeky fags will cut up awfully rusty if we raid their quarters, and it may mean no end of a scrap."

"Is anybody here afraid of a scrap with those Lower Fourth fags?" inquired Temple disdainfully.

"Nunno; not little me, anyhow," said Fry. "All serene! Let's raid the cheeky cads and spread the hungry churchyard with their bones."

Evidently Fry could quote from Shakespeare, as well as Temple.

"It's quite time they had a lesson," said Temple loftily.

"Oh, rather!"

"And the present time is—is—is propitious," said the captain of the Fourth.

"Good word!" said Fry. "I came across it in a crossword puzzle."

Temple coloured a little. As a matter of fact, he had come across the word in the same crossword puzzle, and remembered it specially as an effective word for use on special occasions. He went on rather hurriedly:

"Some of the cheeky young rotters have gone over to Cliff House this afternoon, as I happen to know. Wharton and his friends. So we sha'n't have the whole crowd to deal with."

Fry winked at the marmalade again.

He understood now why Cecil Reginald considered that there was a tide in the affairs of the Fourth Form which, taken at the flood, might lead on to the defeat of the Remove. If the Famous Five were out of gates that Saturday afternoon a raid on the Remove passage was a much simpler matter than it would have been with the Famous Five at home.

No doubt this was good generalship on the part of Cecil Reginald.

"I happen to know that the gang have gone over to Cliff House to tea," said Temple carelessly. "They've gone with Hazeldene. Not that Hazeldene matters; he's no fighting-man. Still, it gives us a chance. If we found the whole crew at home we mightn't find it so easy to down them."

"Mightn't be able to do it at all," remarked Fry.

Temple did not heed that remark.

"We'll go in force," he said. "We'll call up all the Fourth. Even Angel will have to play up, funk as he is. Not a man standin' out, you know. We're going to rag the Remove, rag Wharton's study, and turn it fairly inside out, and mop up any of the Lower Fourth who get in our light. See?"

"Good egg!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Let's finish tea first," said Fry. "But it's a jolly good idea, Cecil, old bean. It's time the Remove were put in their place. We've been going to wallop them at football, but it hasn't come off, somehow; but we can rag their studies, anyhow, especially while Wharton and his gang are out. While the cat's away, you know."

"We're going to wallop them at football," said Temple, knitting his brows. "I'm quite determined that this season we shall put them in their place at games. But never mind that now. When you've finished guzzling, Fry, we'll get on with it!"

And Edward Fry having finished guzzling, as Temple expressed it, the three Fourth-Formers left the study and called the Fourth to arms. Most of the Fourth Form were quite ready for the fray—especially when they heard the Famous Five were off the scene. It was, as the sapient Temple said, a rare opportunity for putting the Lower



Wharton and his chums stared round at the wreckage in Study No. 1, in amazement and wrath. "Great pip!" exclaimed Nugent. "Has there been an earthquake?" "This is too thick!" roared Wharton. "We've raided Temple before, but we've never wrecked his room like this!" (See Chapter 7.)

Fourth in their proper place. More than once the Removites had raided the Upper Fourth passage; and it was high time that they learned that they could not check their superiors with impunity.

The Fourth Form gathered to a man for the raid. Even Aubrey Angel—rather reluctantly—joined up. And Cecil Reginald Temple, at the head of his men, marched across the landing which was the debatable land between the rival Forms, where he came upon a member of the Lower Fourth—William George Bunter.

Billy Bunter gave one blink at the crowd of Fourth-Formers, and realised that it was a state of war. He made a jump for the Remove staircase.

Crash!
Temple's boot landed on Bunter's tight trousers as he jumped.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter.
And he rolled.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Kick him out!" shouted Wilkinson of the Fourth.

"Yaroo! Help! Rescue!" roared Bunter, as a dozen boots helped him down the Remove staircase.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter vanished down the stairs, roaring. Bucked by this easy victory to begin with, Cecil Reginald Temple led his men into the Remove passage. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were loafing there, and at sight of the invasion Skinner and Snoop bolted into their study like rabbits into a burrow.

"Back up, you chaps!" shouted Stott.

But Skinner and Snoop had backed out, without any thought of backing up; and Stott was rushed over by the Fourth and bumped along the passage. And then there was a shouting and a trampling of feet as Remove fellows poured out of their studies, leaving tea unfinished, to meet the invaders. And

in a very few minutes a shindy of unusual dimension was raging in the Remove passage—where shindies were frequent and painful and free.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Rough on the Remove!

BOB CHERRY gave an angry snort. Bob's new stunt of swotting was going strong. Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and most of Bob's half-holidays now were devoted to unaccustomed mental labours.

Temple had been well informed with regard to the movements of Harry Wharton & Co. that afternoon. The Co. had gone over to Cliff House to tea with Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends. But Temple did not know anything, so far, about the little rift in the Co., and he was not aware that Bob Cherry had remained behind.

Bob had no time for tea-parties at Cliff House—indeed, poor Bob seemed to have no time for anything in these days, except swotting at his books. His friends—if they were still his friends; which seemed a little doubtful now—had gone without him. Bob had snatched a hasty tea in Hall, and was working at the study table, on the other side of which Mark Linley and little Wun Lung were having their tea. And the sudden outbreak of uproar in the Remove passage made Bob Cherry snort.

It was not very long since Bob had been the leading spirit in any uproar in the Remove passage. But times had changed with Bob Cherry, and he was disposed to grouse about a din in the passage which disturbed him at his work. Mark Linley could dig deep into Latin and Greek with football going on

in the passage, but, somehow, Bob couldn't. Even in circumstances the most favourable for work, Bob found it hard to concentrate his wandering attention upon the classics.

Bump! Crash! Bang!

It was a shindy in the Remove passage—rather a record in the way of shindies, even for the Remove passage, and even for a half-holiday. And Bob, who a week or two before would have rushed out joyfully to take his share in it, sat at his table and snorted.

Mark Linley looked at him, and smiled slightly.

Mark sympathised with his study-mate; he was willing to help him all he could. But he could not help smiling a little; the change in Bob's manners and customs was so complete and so sudden.

The door of No. 13 was hurled open suddenly, and Squiff of the Remove looked in and shouted:

"Roll up, you fellows!"
"Shut that door!" roared Bob.
"Eh?"

"Can't you keep quiet when a fellow's working?"

"You silly ass!" howled Squiff. "Is this a time for swotting? It's a raid of the Fourth! Roll up!"

"Blow the Fourth—and blow you!"

Squiff rushed away without reply; the combat was raging all along the passage, and he was wanted in the fray. Mark Linley jumped up at once; even little Wun Lung, the Chinese, jumped up.

"Come on, Bob!" exclaimed Mark.

"Rats! Rot! Shut up!"

"It's a raid—"

"Bosh!"

Mark rushed out of the study, with Wun Lung at his heels. Bob slammed the door after them.

His heart was in the rag—there was

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no doubt about that. Gladly he would have rushed out and joined in the scrapping, and helped to give the Fourth Form raiders what they were asking for.

But he sat down at his table again with a grim, angry brow; all the angrier because he wanted to follow his study-mates, and felt that he could not do so.

For there was always something—continually something. Last Wednesday afternoon it had been the games practice which had led to trouble with his friends. On Thursday there had been a rehearsal of the Remove Dramatic Society, and Bob's refusal to attend it had led William Wibley—in a towering rage—to cut him out of the caste for the Remove play. On Friday there had been a run across country by the members of the Remove eleven; and in the evening a meeting of the Form debating society.

On Saturday afternoon there was tea at Cliff House, which Bob had cut, and now there was a Form Row. If he gave up his work for a row with the Fourth, he might as well have given it up for tea with Marjorie at Cliff House. There was always one thing or another to stop a fellow who wanted to work, as Bob ruefully discovered now that he had joined the ranks of the workers. And he steadily turned down everything that might have taken him away from his new duty—that of keeping his promise to his father.

So he resumed swotting Livy in Study No. 13, while the combat raged outside, trying to shut his ears to the tremendous din.

Matters were not going well with the Remove in the scrap.

Harry Wharton & Co., the champion fighting-men of the Remove, were not on the scene; and, as it happened, Bolsover major was out of gates, and Vernon-Smith had gone up to Hawkscliff for the afternoon with his chum Tom Redwing. Peter Todd and Tom Brown were out on their bicycles, and had not come in to tea.

So the Remove were in small force, and Temple, Dabney & Co. had things very much their own way in consequence.

Skinner and Snoop were finking in their study; but all the other Remove fellows who happened to be at home had turned up for the scrap, with the exception of Bob Cherry.

Bob certainly was not finking.

But it came to much the same thing in effect; he remained in his study, and did not join in the fray, and his powerful arm and heavy fist would have been extremely useful.

Even Skinner and Snoop came out at last, driven by shame and the knowledge that any Remove man who did not join up was likely to have an unpleasant time afterwards at the hands of his Form-fellows. Bob Cherry, once the foremost man in any fray, was the only fellow in the Remove passage who paid no heed to the scrimmage and remained shut up in his study during its progress.

And the Remove, crowded by numbers, were getting decidedly the worst of it. The victorious Fourth drove them up their passage. They rallied, and drove the Fourth back; but Temple, Dabney & Co. came on again with an irresistible rush, and an attack by two to one was too strong to be resisted. And while the fray was going on in the passage, three or four of the Fourth had gone into Study No. 1, which was nearest the stairs, and were

ragging Harry Wharton's room with reckless hands.

"Back up!" roared Squiff. "Give 'em socks!"

"Pile on!" yelled Russell. "Come on, Skinner, you funk!"

"Come on, Fishy!" shouted Ogilvy. "Get up, and get on."

And as Fisher T. Fish seemed in no hurry to get up, the Scottish junior enlivened him with a hefty kick; and Fisher Tarleton Fish gave a howl, and scrambled to his feet, and joined in the fray once more.

"Thrash 'em!" Temple was shouting. "Thrash the cheeky cads! Down with the Remove!"

"Oh, rather!"

Crash! crash! crash! came from Study No. 1. The raggers in that celebrated apartment were going strong. Wharton and Nugent were likely to receive a shock when they saw their study again.

Numbers told in the struggle that raged in the passage. The Removites, scrapping for all they were worth, were driven right up to the end of the passage—Fishy escaping up the box-room stairs, and Skinner dodging into a study. The rest resisted manfully, but the odds were too great, and they were driven into the studies at last, and the Remove passage remained in the possession of the raiders.

It was sheer joy to Temple, Dabney & Co. to parade the whole length of the Remove passage, victorious for once in their many rows and rags with the Lower Fourth.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip-pip! Come out, you fags!"

"Come out, you cheeky little rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But when the enraged Removites came out, overwhelming numbers drove them back into the studies again, and Temple, Dabney & Co. paraded triumphantly.

There was a sudden shout from Scott of the Fourth, who was keeping "cave" at the landing.

"Cave!"

And the triumphant paraders suddenly ceased their triumphant parade, and rushed away for their own quarters. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had heard the din from afar, and was coming up to inquire—thoughtfully bringing a cane with him.

"Hook it!" grinned Temple.

And the Fourth Form faded away into their own quarters; and when Mr. Quelch arrived in the Remove passage, he found that spot deserted, and quiet and peaceful as any Form master could have desired.

Mr. Quelch shook his head dubiously, and retired.

In the Fourth Form studies there was much chuckling and triumphing, and congratulating. Most of the Fourth had damages to show; but they had triumphed; they had raided the Remove quarters, paraded the Remove passage, and had beaten the Remove all along the line. Cecil Reginald Temple felt that he was a great man; and the Fourth Form admitted that he was.

But in the Remove studies there was gnashing of teeth, if not weeping and wailing.

Only Bob Cherry seemed unconcerned; still swotting Livy, when Mark Linley came back into Study No. 13, rubbing a half-closed eye, and with crimson oozing from a damaged nose.

The "swot" looked up irritably as Mark came in.

"Keep that door shut!"

Mark gave him a very quiet look, and closed the door.

"We've had a licking from the Fourth, Bob," he said. "You ought to have come and helped."

Snort, from Bob Cherry.

"Do you think I've got time for Form rags, with this blinking work on my hands?" he exclaimed.

"I'm working for the Head's prize, too," said Mark. "But I haven't left the Form in the lurch."

Bob started a little.

"Is that how you look at it?"

"I think that's how the whole Form will look at it."

"Well, let 'em," said Bob, compressing his lips. "I don't care! Hang their Form rags! Give us a rest."

And Bob turned back to Titus Livius, though with a clouded brow.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wrathy!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came back cheerfully from Cliff House in the falling dusk.

They were thinking of Bob, as they came in at the school gates.

Marjorie had asked why Bob had not come, and she had been told—what was the fact—that Bob Cherry was swotting for a school prize. But the girl had discerned quite easily that that was not the whole of the reason why Bob had not accompanied his friends to Cliff House that afternoon.

The chums of the Remove had not intended to make any reference to the little trouble that had arisen in the Co. But Hazeldene was not so reticent, and he had cheerfully told his sister that there was a "row" on between Bob and his chums. Which had been extremely uncomfortable for the four juniors.

Marjorie had spoken only a few kind words on the subject, as the juniors left; but they had been sufficient to set the chums of the Remove thinking; and the outcome of their thinking was, that it would be wiser to bridge the gulf that was dividing them from their pal, before it grew wider.

Harry Wharton had not forgotten the bitter words that had been exchanged; he had not spoken to Bob since the altercation in the changing-room on Wednesday. But now he resolved to dismiss all offences from his mind, and to hail Bob Cherry, as soon as he saw him, as if nothing had happened. And his comrades had come to the same resolution.

But those kind and conciliatory thoughts vanished from Wharton's mind, when he came into his study.

He stared round the room in amazement and wrath.

It was almost wrecked.

Hardly a thing remained in its place—chairs and other things were tumbled about, broken crocks littered the floor, the carpet was draped over the window-sill, the fender was in the bookcase, and the clock—in several pieces—lay on the hearth. The Fourth-Form raggers had ragged Study No. 1 not wisely but too well.

"Who's done this?" roared Wharton.

"What—" Frank Nugent followed him in. "Great pip! Has there been an earthquake?"

Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull paused at the door, and looked in. Hazel had gone to his own study.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Johnny Bull, staring at the wrecked room. "There's been rather a rag here."

"The ragfulness must have been terrific," said Hurree Singh.

Wharton's eyes glittered.

"By Jove! I—"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked into the study. "I say, you've got back, have you? Like the look of your study? He, he, he!"

"Who's done this, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

Bunter grinned.

"It was a Fourth-Form raid," he explained. "Temple and his gang are swanking no end, about mopping up the Remove. I'd have booted them out fast enough, if the fellows had backed me up. But with some of them skulking in their studies, what could a fellow do? I handled Temple in a way he's not likely to forget—"

"Can it?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Jolly deep of Temple, to carry out his giddy raid while we were gone over to Cliff House," remarked Johnny Bull. "Well, it's all in the day's work. We raided Temple last term."

"The saucfulness for the goose is saucy also to the gander," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"All the same, this is too thick!" growled Wharton. "We raided Temple, but we didn't wreck his room like this."

"They seem to have overdone it a bit," said Nugent. "We'll make them sit up for it."

"You should have seen the cheeky cads swanking up and down the passage, making out that they were monarchs of all they surveyed!" said Bunter. "I put up a terrific fight—"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed prevaricating Bunter. I thinkfully opine that you were hiding under a table," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I tell you I was the first to meet them!" roared Bunter. "They rolled me down the stairs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter indignantly. "I've got a bruise where Temple kicked me on—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly, cackling asses—"

"Did he kick you before you handled him, or after?" grinned Nugent.

"Anyhow, I wasn't hiding in a study like Bob Cherry!" hooted Bunter.

"Rot! Bob was doing nothing of the kind!"

"Wasn't he?" sneered Bunter. "Ask any of the fellows! Even Skinner and Snoop put up a scrap, while Cherry was cringing in his study with the door shut—locked, I believe. Squiff's got a black eye, and Russell's got a nose you could see a mile off; Ogilvy's knocked right out. All the fellows who were here joined up, excepting Cherry. Even Skinner's got a thick ear. And I can tell you I was knocked right and left, fighting like anything, while Bob Cherry was hiding in his study—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Wharton.

"I tell you he was hiding in his study!" roared Bunter. "All the fellows are talking about it. Skinner's chalked 'Funk!' on his study door."

"He'd better not let Bob know he did it, then!" said Johnny Bull.

Lord Mauleverer looked into the study, with a rueful face. His lordship had a dark eye and a red nose. The shindy with the Fourth had called Herbert Mauleverer from the repose of his study sofa, and he had played up wonderfully well in the scrap. Now he was feeling tired.



"Will you get aside, Wharton, or do you want me to shift you?" demanded Bob Cherry thickly. Wharton did not move. "Well, if you will have it—" Bob came at Wharton with his hands up, and his eyes ablaze, but Johnny Bull and Inky pinioned his arms immediately. "No, you don't!" said Johnny quietly. (See Chapter 9.)

"Horrid, isn't it, you men?" said his lordship. "They were too many for us, or we wouldn't have let the blighters rag your study, Wharton."

"I'm sure of that, old chap," said Harry.

"I say, Mauly," hooted Bunter, "isn't it true that Cherry was hiding in his study all the time, and wouldn't come out?"

"No, you fat ass! He was swottin', I think."

"But he came out to help?" said Harry.

"I—I think not. He's gone on Latin, you know," said his lordship uneasily. "Now he's taken to swottin' he's going the whole giddy unicorn. I really think he wouldn't leave jolly old Livy if the house was on fire!"

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances. Even the good-natured face of Frank Nugent was dark.

"Swotting or funking, it comes to the same thing, if he let the Fourth mop up our quarters without lending a hand," said Wharton.

"It's not like Bob!" said Nugent.

"The likeliness is not terrific. The esteemed Bob seems to think of nothing but the desirable and execrable swotfulness."

Johnny Bull gave a grunt and went on towards his study. He did not express his opinion, but it was pretty clear that his opinion was a strong one.

A number of the Remove fellows gathered round the door of Study No. 1 as soon as it was known that the captain of the Remove had come in. Most of them bore very visible signs of the late affray.

And all of them were indignant and

eloquent on the subject of Bob Cherry. Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish loudly denounced him for funking; all the fellows were deeply incensed against him for not backing up his Form. That was an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Remove. Temple, Dabney & Co. had paraded triumphantly up and down the Remove passage, after defeating the Remove; and there was one Remove fellow—the heftiest fighting-man in the Form—who had stood out of the combat and never cared if his Form were defeated and crowed over. From the point of view of the Removites it was unforgivable.

"It's altogether too thick, you know," said Russell. "Bob can't be a funk—that's all rot—but he left us in the lurch. I didn't even know he was in the House till after it was over; he never showed up at all."

"Too jolly thick!" said Ogilvy. "I kicked Fishy for funking, and all the while Cherry was close at hand and never showed himself."

"I guess—" began Fisher T. Fish. "The captain of the Form ought to take the matter up," said Skinner. "A fellow can't let his Form down like this."

"It ought to be a Form ragging!" said Snoop.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, he's a funk, you know!" said Bunter. "He ought to be shown up, you know. Even Mauly got off his sofa to put up a scrap, while that sneak Cherry was hiding in his study."

"Shame!"

"What are you going to do about it, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976,

Wharton?" asked Harold Skinner pleasantly.

Wharton set his lips hard.

He was quite well aware that Skinner's aim was to make trouble worse; where Lord Mauleverer had tried to pour oil on the troubled waters, Skinner preferred to add fuel to the fire. But, for once, the captain of the Remove felt that Skinner was rather in the right. Bob Cherry's offence had been serious, and Harry Wharton was in agreement with most of the views expressed by the excited fellows in the passage.

But he did not answer Skinner. He was not to be drawn so easily as the cad of the Remove hoped.

"I guess the guy ought to be ragged," said Fisher T. Fish. "I calculate he's a disgrace to the Form."

"Yes, rather!"

"It's up to you, as captain of the Form, Wharton," said Skinner. "You're bound to do something."

"I'm going to clear up this mess," said Wharton curtly. "Any fellow who likes to lend a hand can pile in."

Skinner strolled away. But a good many fellows lent a hand at setting Study No. 1 to rights, while a crowd continued to discuss the affair in the passage outside the study. But there was a sudden hush as the door of Study No. 13 opened along the passage. Bob Cherry, apparently, had finished his swot for the day, and was coming out of the study. There was little doubt that when he opened his study door he would see what was chalked upon it, and the Remove fellows rather breathlessly wondered what effect it would have on him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Loses His Temper!

"FUNK!"

Bob Cherry stared at it.

There it was chalked on his study door in large letters.

Bob stood, quite motionless, staring at that unpleasant inscription.

He was tired and not at all cheerful; an afternoon indoors swotting at a difficult Latin author had tired him out and set his nerves a little on edge. He had intended to take a trot round the quadrangle in the cold, fresh air to pull himself together again. But he forgot that intention now as he stared at the chalked word on his door.

His face, tired and a little pale, grew crimson. He glanced at Mark Linley, who was at the table with his books. Mark also was working for the Head's prize, but swotting was more in his line than Bob's, and undoubtedly he had set about his task more judiciously. In many matters Bob's methods were rather of the "bull-at-a-gate" variety, and it was in that way that he had taken up swotting. It was a case of more haste and less speed, for certainly Bob would have done more wisely to "make haste slowly."

Mark had seen what was chalked on the outside of the door as soon as the door was opened. But he dropped his eyes to his books again at once.

"Look at that!" said Bob, his voice trembling with anger. "Do you see that, Linley?"

"Yes, old chap," said Mark, looking up again.

"Perhaps you agree with it?"

Mark shook his head.

"No; and the fellow who chalked that doesn't really believe it," he said. "Wipe it out, and take no notice of it, old man."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

"Take no notice of it!" repeated Bob. "Take no notice of some lying cad calling me a funk!"

"You asked for it," said Mark quietly.

"What?" roared Bob.

"You asked for it; you ought to have backed up the Form in the row with the Fourth, and you know it," said Mark, in the same quiet way, taking no heed of Bob's raised voice and angry face.

"I don't know it."

"Well, you ought to know it, then," said Mark. "We've had rows with the Fourth, and the Shell, before, and with the Fifth; and I've known you to be down on fellows like Skinner for funk-ing."

"So you think I was funk-ing?" breathed Bob.

"I know you were not. But you left the Form in the lurch, and you can't expect fellows to be pleased."

"Is there a law against a fellow working at this school?" asked Bob bitterly. "Why, you've often told me yourself that I was slack with class work, and that I ought to put it on a bit."

"That was right enough; but there are ways of doing these things," answered Mark. "You were wrong to try to cut games practice last Wednesday for that reason; and wrong to leave the Remove in the lurch this afternoon. You must expect fellows to be down on you for it; and the best thing you can do is to take it quietly."

Bob Cherry stared at him grimly. He was not in a mood for taking anything quietly just then.

"So that's your advice?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mark.

"Keep it till I ask for it then."

"Very well," answered the Lancashire junior. "Let it drop! I shouldn't have spoken about it if you hadn't spoken first."

"A fellow can't work in his study—without this!" said Bob savagely. "One day it's games practice, next day amateur theatricals, and another day a Form rag—and a fellow must give up his work for all of them; and at the same time, have his Form master and his father ragging him for being backward in class."

"If I'm at the tail of the list for the Head's prize, a fat lot of good it will be, to tell my father that I was too busy punching Temple's nose, or getting Dabney's head in chancery, to bother about getting up my subject. Why, the pater's going to take me away from Greyfriars if I don't make a good show, and prove that I can do something else as well as play games and rag in the passages. You advise me to take no notice of this! I can jolly well tell you that I'm going to find out the fellow who chalked on my door, and give him the licking of his life."

Mark smiled with a touch of scorn.

"You haven't time for games practice, and haven't time to back up fellows scrapping against big odds; but you've got time to fight a fellow in your own Form. Is that what you mean?" he asked.

"You can put it like that if you like. I'll make the cad cringe for insulting me like this."

And Bob Cherry strode out of the study in a towering rage; which was perhaps—though he was far from realising it—as much due to a dreary afternoon with Titus Livius, as to the insult chalked on his study door.

There was a crowd in the Remove passage, at No. 1 Study end; and all eyes were turned on Bob Cherry as he appeared. Skinner, who was responsible

for the chalking on the door, had discreetly disappeared. Skinner certainly was not one of the fellows who do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame. But he was extremely unwilling to take the credit of having chalked that unpleasant gibe on the door of Study No. 13.

Bob came striding along the Remove passage towards the hushed crowd of juniors, his face in a blaze.

"Somebody's been chalking on my door!" he rapped out.

"Dear me!" said Ogilvy.

And there was a laugh.

"Was it you, Ogilvy?" demanded Bob, clenching his hands, his eyes blazing at the Scottish junior.

"And suppose it might be?" drawled Ogilvy.

Ogilvy had had nothing to do with Skinner's action, and indeed had not approved of it in the least. But he was not to be lectured—and though Bob certainly did not intend it, his manner was decidedly lecturing at that moment. He was much too angry and excited to proceed judiciously.

"I asked you if you did it!" roared Bob. "Can't you say yes or no?"

"Yes, if I'm asked civilly," drawled the Scottish junior. "But if you think you can bully Remove fellows, you're making a little mistake."

"Was it you?" bawled Bob.

"Find out!"

"Then put up your hands, you rotter."

Dick Russell pushed him back.

"Don't be a fool, Cherry! It wasn't Ogilvy, as you ought to know jolly well. Don't be a silly idiot!"

Bob calmed himself a little.

"I want to know who it was," he said. "I'm going to thrash the sneaking cad, whoever he is. Was it you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Anyhow, you know who it was—you're always spying and prying," said Bob Cherry. "Who was it, Bunter?"

"I don't know whether Skinner would like me to tell you—"

"So it was Skinner?"

"I'm not going to tell you, you see, because—"

"I might have guessed it," said Bob Cherry. "I kicked him for funk-ing in a row with the Shell, I remember."

"Like your cheek to do anything of the kind considering the way you played up this afternoon," said Ogilvy.

"I was working—"

"Perhaps Skinner was working, the time the Shell raided us," said the Scottish junior, shrugging his shoulders. "Nobody ever heard of you working on a half-holiday until very lately, I know that."

Bob did not heed him; he was striding away towards Study No. 11, which belonged to Skinner, Snoop and Stott.

"What a storm in a tea-cup!" grinned Hazeldene. "Let's go and see him slaughter Skinner. Skinner's easier for him to handle than Fourth Form chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry kicked savagely at Skinner's door. Vernon-Smith, who had just come in with Redwing, joined the crowd in the Remove passage, and stared at the angry Removite outside No. 11.

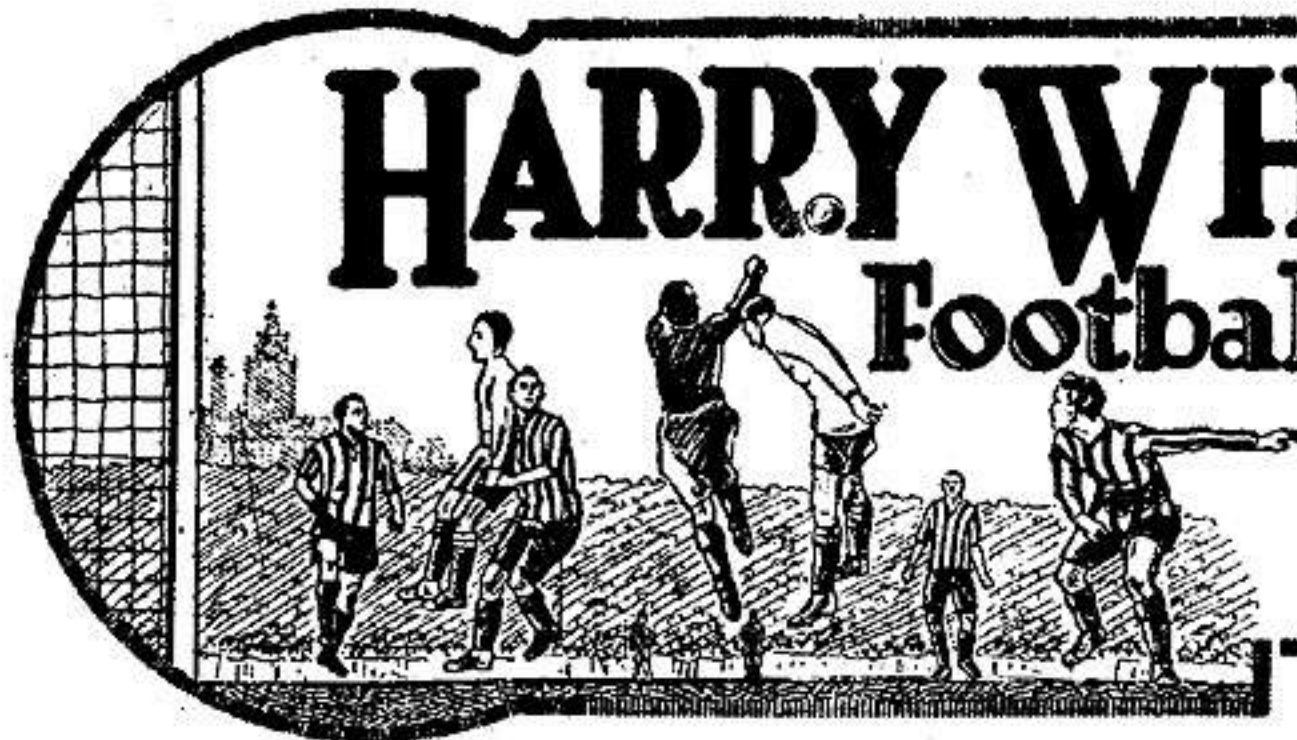
"What on earth's the row?" asked the Bounder.

"Cherry's got his rag out," said Ogilvy. "The Fourth raided us this afternoon, while a lot of the fellows were out, and ragged Wharton's study. Bob was swotting, and didn't take a

(Continued on page 17.)

HARRY WHARTON'S

Football Supplement



No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of football will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost football authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic. **HARRY WHARTON, Editor.**

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Week Ending October 30th, 1926.

Do You Know?



THAT Everton are in possession of a unique record? There are three of the original twelve members of the First Division who have never gone down into the Second Division—Aston Villa, Blackburn Rovers, and Everton. But the Villa and the Rovers have each been saved the drop by an extension of the League after they had qualified for relegation, so Everton alone can boast that they had never had a bad enough record to go down.

That Jack Elkes, the Tottenham Hotspur centre-half, never played a game of football until after he had left school? It was not until he started work that he took up the game. He was then sixteen years of age.

That during Jerry Dawson's twenty years' service with Burnley he has had no fewer than seventy deputies? He regards this as a record.

That one man who was born in South Africa has played for England quite recently? This is Frank Osborne, the Spurs' centre-forward.

That Newcastle United have spent over ten thousand pounds on full-backs in the last three years, and that none of the players purchased—Maitland, Chandler, and Crown—have been able to retain a regular place in the first team?

That during the summer Andy Wilson, the Chelsea International forward, won the Parson's Green bowls championship, and carried off the pairs in partnership with Mr. A. J. Palmer, the Chelsea secretary?

That Parker, the Millwall centre-forward, who is getting a lot of goals, is a very good boxer, and that among the honours he has gained with his fists was the light-weight championship of his garrison during the War?

That Frank Cresswell, who has played for Sunderland at forward this season, is a brother to the Wearsiders' right-back? The newcomer is only in his eighteenth year, and in 1922 gained schoolboy International caps against Wales and Scotland?

That it is the opinion of Dick Pym, the Bolton Wanderers goalkeeper, that when a goalkeeper makes a penalty save it is more the fault of the kicker than the merit of the goalie?

CLUBS and their COLOURS!

WHAT is your favourite colour for a football jersey? I do not suppose that many of my readers, if asked this question, would reply white. (By the way, I am not sure that white is a colour, but if the Editor lets this pass I suppose it is all right.) Yet although few lads would subscribe to the view that there was anything particularly artistic, inspiring, or awe-producing in a white football jersey, it is a fact that white is the most favoured colour of all among the big football clubs.

There are about a dozen of the big football clubs of England whose players are attired in white shirts, and the majority of them have blue knickers to go with the white shirts. This shows a surprising

LACK OF ORIGINALITY,

and it also means that there must be a fair amount of changing when two clubs each of which wears white in the ordinary way have to play a match against each other.

On the face of it, perhaps it doesn't seem to matter very much what sort of shirts are worn by the players, but I do think that it matters when a club has to change because its colours clash with those of the opposing clubs. I have known fellows, accustomed to play in white jerseys, and compelled to change for a particular match, make a perfect pass to another player in a white jersey, completely forgetting that his side had changed their colours for the afternoon. By the way, perhaps you don't know that there is

A DEFINITE RULE

about the changing of colours when two clubs meet which usually sport the same sort of raiment. Nowadays, the home club has a right to keep to its own colours. It was not always thus, as a year or two back the club which was oldest in membership of the League had the right to retain its own colours, but the new system is much fairer. What I can't understand is why so many clubs stick to the white jersey. Why don't they go in for some original colour scheme which would do away completely with the necessity of changing for any match?

Apart from this, the question may be asked as to whether the colours of the jerseys matter. Some people think they do—superstitious people. For instance, just recently there was an agitation to alter the colours of the Plymouth Argyle Club. They play in green jerseys with black bands round the neck and cuffs, and I think they look nice. A lot of folk think

GREEN IS UNLUCKY

though, and the Argyle have certainly been unlucky in their attempts to get into the Second Division, for in five successive seasons they finished second in the League table.

The claret and blue of Aston Villa is famous all over the country, and theirs at one time was a distinctive colour. The outstanding colour of the present, however, is that worn by the Blackpool players—

A TERRIBLE TANGERINE,

as I have heard some people describe it. The amber and black striped jerseys of Hull City look rather well, and so do the black and green stripes of Merthyr Town, while there is something out of the ordinary in the big blue and white squares of Blackburn Rovers.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

How Accidents Happen!

Why it is advisable to keep your wits about you when tackling an opponent.

By THE REF.

FOOTBALL is not a drawing-room game, and those who are keenest to play it hope it never will be. It is a game for strong limbs and healthy bodies—a full-blooded sport. Some little time ago there were very real efforts to get up interest in lady football teams, and I believe that even to-day at some schools the girls are taught and encouraged to play football. But the efforts to establish a big number of women's football clubs in this country seem to have failed, and one hears very little about them in these days, though there are still a few in existence. One of the reasons why women's football did not catch on was that accidents are bound to happen in such a sport, which is obviously more suited to men and boys than it is to women and girls.

VIGOROUS, BUT FAIR!

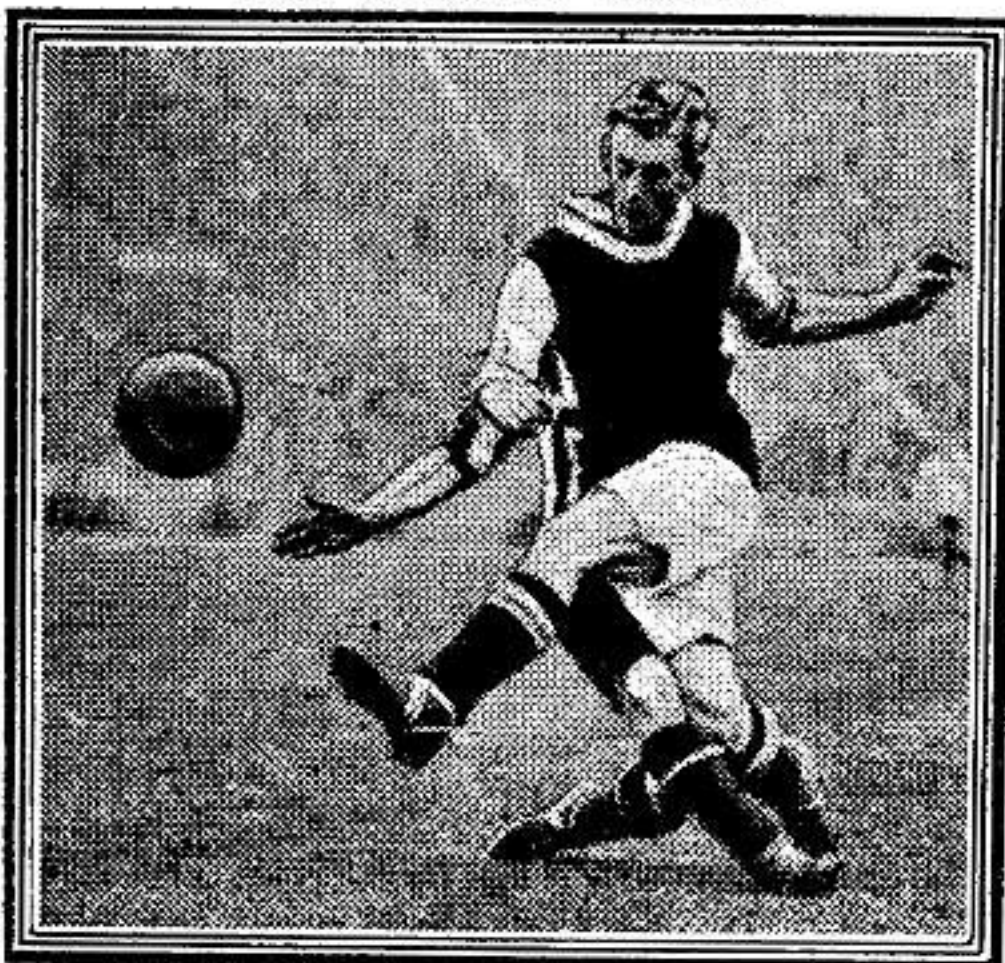
Considering the large amount of football played in this country the number of really serious accidents is very small indeed. Bruises players get in plenty, but the majority of these are of such a nature that the player recovers in time for the next match. It has also to be admitted that some of the accidents are due to excessive and mistaken zeal on the part of the players—to the spirit of reckless abandon with which so many fellows go into the fray. However, for the most part the football is clean and wholesome—vigorous, perhaps, but fair. And yet accidents happen. What are the chief causes of these accidents?

WINTER PLAYS ITS PART!

Now it is usually noted in the early part of every season that there seem to

be more accidents than in later months, and this fact often gives rise to the suggestion that the football is getting rougher. It does not follow. In the early days after a return to football the muscles are not so well tuned up to the requirements of the game as they are later on, and the result is that there are more "pulled" and strained muscles in the opening weeks of a season than there are later on. Hard grounds are also responsible for many hurts, and the wise player will be specially careful on frosty days, for it is when there is frost in the air that shin bones are much more likely to be broken. Broken legs are usually the result of two players

HOW ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.



It is easy to see how this sort of incident might result in a broken leg if the player who is nearest the camera fell on the outstretched leg of the other player.

kicking hard at the ball together, and the leg of one player coming into violent contact with the leg of an opponent. On these occasions it is better to draw back.

SAFETY FIRST!

Injury to the heads of footballers quite frequently come about because of the tendency of some fellows to put their heads down to a ball which they really ought to kick. I would strongly advise all young players not to get into the habit of going down low to head a ball, because sooner or later you will find that instead of your head coming in contact with the ball it has met the boot of an opponent who has been unable to draw back. Mind you, I am not advocating namby-pamby football, but every player should remember that it is not even in the interests of his side that he should run unnecessary risks of getting hurt. I have seen goalkeepers fling themselves at the foot of forwards in such a way that it was obvious the poor goalkeeper would get a bad kick. He has got the kick: his side has been deprived of his services, and thus though his courageous effort may have saved his team one goal, they have lost other goals because they have had to put a deputy goalkeeper between the posts.

RECKLESS TACTICS DON'T PAY!

The player who jumps high in the air to head a ball is always running a risk of a serious injury to his collar-bone, if there is another player near over whom he may fall. That is why it is always construed as dangerous play when one fellow "sets a back" for an opponent.

Cartilage trouble is very prevalent among footballers, but I am afraid this is the sort of trouble which cannot be avoided. Sometimes even the slightest kick on the knee will result in cartilage injury which will necessitate an operation.

The great thing to remember all the time is that it doesn't pay to be reckless. The reckless footballer will not only injure others, but sooner or later he will get badly hurt himself.

Play the game always, and you will find others following your example.

GOAL KICKS!

Some time ago the chairman of Bolton Wanderers facetiously remarked that the club always made a point of signing on the sons of their players as soon as they were born. Seeing that there are now four players on the Bolton staff who are sons of former players it would almost seem as though this was one of the occasions when a true word was spoken in jest.

Many English footballers play cricket in the summer-time, and the question of why Scots do not play cricket was raised the other day in a football club dressing-room. Before anybody could give a serious answer the wag of the party replied: "It is because they can't afford to pay for lunch!"

It is said that in a recent match a

stalwart defender advised Cross, the Burnley forward, to get rid of the ball if he did not want trouble. Cross replied: "You told me that five years ago, and I haven't got into trouble yet!"

People who talk about loud speakers being a modern invention have surely neglected their football history. There are thirty or forty thousand loud speakers at most big football matches.

After being barracked by the supporters of Stoke City so that he was dropped from the team, Rouse was given a "rousing" reception when he turned out again. So everything is now all right.

The supporters of Aston Villa have recently been accused of being of the weather-cock kind. But they are not the only lot to get the "wind-up."

In this new season a lot of clubs are tinkering with what is called the no-back game. Other clubs say that these tactics do not pay because it is a "spineless" sort of procedure.

Years ago Sheffield United had a goalkeeper named Foulke, who was 22 stone, and who made a habit of putting all his weight behind his clearances. One day he fisted a ball so hard that it dropped beyond the half-way line. There an opponent kicked it back, whereupon one of his colleagues remarked: "I am sorry you stopped that ball, because I should like to have seen just how far the beggar could punch a ball."

Hugh Gallacher, the Newcastle centre-forward says: "There is nothing I enjoy better than the process of putting the ball into the net." Of course there isn't, but, on the other hand, what are the poor goalkeeper's feelings when Gallacher is enjoying himself?



WHERE THEY MAKE 'EM!

Bright little spots from which famous footballers have blossomed forth.

By CLEM STEPHENSON

(The Huddersfield Town and English International).

ON every hand there is evidence that one of the big problems of to-day is how and where to find the right type of players. If there were enough to go round we should not have such rushes hither and thither by the managers of practically all the big clubs, and a plenitude of first-class material would lead automatically to the abatement of what is called the transfer nuisance. The majority of managers, too, would heave a welcome sigh of relief if they could dispense, once and for all, with the small army of scouts who plough the junior fields in the hope of finding the proper stuff. These scouts, optimists all, I suppose, cause the managers to make fruitless journeys, seeing this player and that. However, the supply at the moment is less than the demand, and so the frantic hunt goes on in the places where they grow footballers.

SCOTLAND ON THE BRAIN!

When I was on the point of writing these notes on the bright little spots on the map which have turned out the biggest proportion of footballers who have made good, a player pal of mine asked me what I was doing. "Writing an article on where they find the proper footballers," I replied. My pal smiled a knowing and somewhat cynical smile, and remarked: "There is no need to write a whole article—one word will do—Scotland. That's the place where they find 'em." There has certainly been more than a hint recently that Scotland is one of the places to which managers of English clubs go continually for the sort of footballers they want. For my part, I have an idea that more than one manager has, if I may put it that way, got Scotland on the brain. I have an idea that, in developing the habit of rushing off to Scotland on the slightest provocation, managers of some English clubs are apt to overlook the material which is growing in their own back garden, as it were. However, that is their business, and they must be presumed to know best.

MEN OF THE NORTH-EAST!

Though it is undoubtedly a fact that Scotland, at the moment, is the common hunting-ground, it is nevertheless true that there are some bright spots in England which have a right to be proud over the number of footballers which have been produced, and who have made good in the highest class of the game. Perhaps I myself am particularly interested in the North-East of England, because it was there that I learned my football. But if there is another corner in England which has produced more footballers than this North-East section, I should very much

like evidence on the point. One of these days, when I have a lot of time, I am going to make out a list of the players who have risen to top rank after spending their early days with Blyth Spartans and Scotswood. Surely such a list would justify the secretaries of those clubs puffing out their chests with pride. On second thoughts, perhaps somebody will prepare such a list for me.

OUT OF THE PIT!

It may be there is some subtle connection between coal and football. Anyway, the mining districts of England have certainly done their share in



An impression of CLEM STEPHENSON.
By Jimmy Seed, of the Spurs.

contributing leading players to the game. It used to be said of old that when the big clubs of the Midlands were hard up for a player they went to the pit-head on the Saturday morning, shouted down the shaft details of their requirements, and up the next moment would come just the player wanted. I don't suppose this yarn is literally true, but on the other hand it is a fact that out of the pits have come many fine footballers. An explanation of this may be that, in the first place, these men were hardy, and in the second place that they were specially glad to give up the life underground for the open-air life of the playing-fields.

THE BARNSELY TYPE!

I do not know whether the district around Barnsley has really produced more than its share of good footballers who were actually born in the neighbourhood. For quite a number of

years, however, it was a common thing for managers of First Division teams who were in need of additional strength to persuade Barnsley to part with one or two of their men. The Barnsley club gained, and well deserved, a reputation for the production of that mysterious type of player who is known as the typical Cuptio footballer.

WORKERS WHO DON'T GET PAID!

I sometimes think that managers of the big football clubs ought to get up some sort of testimonial to a class of people who seldom receive due recognition of their services to football. I refer to the masters at the various schools. It is in these schools that the lads are taught the beginnings of the game, and nobody can tell exactly how much the right type of teaching does to the making of the real footballer of later years. In this matter of school football, West Ham and East Ham have, so far as my recollection serves, done as much as any other schools in the country to provide tip-top clubs with footballers. How many players Syd King, the manager of West Ham, has first seen in schoolboy football I don't know. But one has only to think of such men as George Hilsdon, Danny Shea, and Syd Puddefoot to realise that the schools of that district have done their bit for the game. Walsford is another place where the schools have turned out fine footballers.

LADS OF LONDON TOWN!

I hear so many stories of the high standard of the football which is played by the amateur teams round London, that it seems strange that a greater proportion of the players of these clubs do not make good in the premier Leagues of the land. Possibly, however, the North breeds a stronger, harder type of player than the South. All the same, I think managers generally might pay more attention to the promise of the footballers of London Town.

LEARNING THE WRONG WAY!

By way of summary, there is just one thing I would say about the production of the right type of footballer. That there are youngsters in plenty cannot be denied. I have a feeling that the youngsters, generally speaking, are not taken in hand soon enough. For most of them there is a gap of two or three years between the time when they leave school and the time when they are ready to be signed on by a professional club. In those years when the young footballer plays practically without expert supervision, he is apt to go back rather than forward. I am quite sure that it would pay more clubs to run junior elevens, and to give those junior teams the value of a coach who knows his job.

Those years between the ages of fourteen and seventeen are very important years in the upbringing of the first-class footballer. They are impressionable years—a time when the player is apt to get all wrong in his ideas of the things which should be done, and the way in which they should be carried out. Hence to the lad who wants to get on I would say, when joining a team, have a good look round to see that this team is well managed by people who know.

Clem Stephenson

This Week's Big Games!

Thrilling Tussles for
the week-end.

By OLD PRO.

THERE are few football games which attract so much interest—and certainly none in the North of England—as the meetings between Sunderland and Newcastle United. They are down to do battle for League points, and this tempts me to recall what was in some ways the most memorable football match of all time; anyway, it resulted in the biggest away victory ever gained by any First Division side in the whole history of the sport.

As it happens, I am in a position to tell the whole story from inside of that

NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN

match between Newcastle and Sunderland at St. James' Park. It was in 1908. Newcastle had a great team in those days, but things were not going very satisfactorily, and big changes were made in the side to play a match against Notts Forest at Nottingham the previous week. Now, as it happened, Newcastle United won, and of course the directors, as directors will, decided on that result that their re-arranged team was a good one. The famous players who had been rested, however, knew that it was not a good side, and when one of them learnt that the same team was to play against Sunderland he declared that

"SUNDERLAND WILL EAT THEM."

In this statement he proved himself a very good prophet. Sunderland beat

What the PRO Trains On!

Hints that will be of service to the keen youngster.

IT is scarcely necessary for me to point out that the success or failure of a football club depends to a very large extent on the physical fitness of the men who play in the team. The chief trouble which the trainer of a "pro" team is faced with is the fact that the men have not merely to be worked up into a state of physical fitness, but they have to be kept fit, fresh and eager for the fray, for eight months out of the year. It is easy to get men fit; but it is very difficult to keep men so fit for the whole of eight months that they are able to go through every gruelling game without feeling the strain or without suffering from what might be called the trainer's nightmare—staleness.

TEETOTALERS ON TOP!

Of course you know all about the mid-week training of the players. How they do ball practice one morning during the week; punch-ball exercises another morning; then perhaps a fairly long walk; and the lot mixed with some sprinting. Here, then, I propose to switch off the usual line and tell you what the "pro" trains on, and in telling you this I may be able to drop a hint or two which will be of value to the young footballer.

In the long ago it used to be said of professional footballers that they trained mostly on beer, but those times are gone, and in practically every big club

Newcastle at Newcastle by nine goals to one. At half-time the score was only one goal to nothing in Sunderland's favour, but so completely did they overrun Newcastle in the second half that eight more goals were added in half an hour or so, and Newcastle's only bit of consolation came from a penalty kick. Incidentally, it may be asked whether any player has ever made such a terrible



T. MAGEE,
of West Bromwich Albion.

in these days it will be found that a large proportion of the players are teetotal, or very near to it. I do not know of any club which actually insists that the players shall not touch intoxicating liquors of any sort, but on the other hand there is short shrift, and a quick end, to the player who indulges in too much alcohol.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR!

As important as the drink of the players is the food they eat. Indeed, many trainers are of opinion that this matter of food is the most important item of training. I remember that when Wolverhampton Wanderers, a Second Division team, went to the Cup Final of 1921 they were trained by Elijah Morse,

start in the colours of a new club as Albert Shepherd did for Newcastle that day. He had just been transferred from Bolton Wanderers at a very big fee, only to see his new club go through their most gruelling time. Needless to say, the star players were quickly recalled to the side after that fiasco, but I might add that when they learned the score in the match at Newcastle, for which they had not been picked, several of them so far forgot themselves as to laugh.

Another match of special interest in the First Division this week-end is the Wednesday v. Derby County, for it will be remembered that these were the

TWO CLUBS WHICH GAINED PROMOTION

from the Second Division at the end of last season. When the teams met at Sheffield last season in search of Second League points, the Wednesday players and supporters got a bad shock, for Derby won by four goals to one. Derby has nearly always done well at Sheffield, and only once in the last five seasons have the Wednesday managed to win.

The Villa are getting their fill of

"NEEDLE" MATCHES

just now, and, following on their game against West Bromwich, they now go to the Birmingham ground to play their other Midland rivals. Birmingham have had much the better of these battles at St. Andrews for some time past, and in each of the last five seasons have succeeded in beating the bold "Villains," though on four of these five occasions there has only been a one-goal margin at the finish.

who had later to give up the job because he lost an arm in a motor-bus accident.

Now Morse told me at the time that he was convinced that the Wolves owed their position in the Final Tie of the Cup to the fact that he had been most careful in the choice of the food which the players ate during their training. The men were not taken away to the seaside, but it was an order that they had all their meals together in a Wolverhampton hotel, and the trainer saw to it that not one scrap of food was touched by any player until the trainer himself had sampled it and made sure it was really all right.

SOUND ADVICE!

It is absolutely asking for trouble for footballers to indulge in a big meal just previous to playing a match, and lunch on match-day is usually of the lightest kind—sometimes not more than a little toast and some coffee. Potatoes especially are forbidden at lunch on match-days, because they affect a man's wind.

Smoking is another thing in which no footballer will over indulge if he is really anxious to get on in the game. Cigarettes are forbidden in every dressing-room of the important clubs, and I would advise all my young readers to copy the "pro" in this respect.

Apart from these general principles, it pays every footballer to make a careful study of the effect of the food he eats on his play in general. This is so because in regard to food, as in other things, it is undoubtedly true that one man's meat is another man's poison. We are all made differently, and it is not wise to lay down hard and fast rules, but the items I have set down here refer to things which all-round experience have proved.



(Continued from page 12.)

hand. And somebody chalked 'funk' on his door, and he doesn't seem to like it, somehow."

The Bounder laughed.

"If you've got it right, he ought to have a Form ragging," he said. "I wish I'd been here."

"I wish you had!" said Squiff. "We were fairly mopped up by the Fourth—first time they've ever licked us in a Form row."

Crash!

Skinner's door flew open, and Bob's eyes blazed into the study. Round the doorway gathered the mob of Removees.

Skinner rose to his feet with a very unpleasant tremor. He rather wished at that moment that he had not inscribed his opinion of Bob on the door of No. 13. But for once, Skinner had the general feeling of the Form with him, and that knowledge gave him courage. His heart beat unpleasantly fast, but his manner was quite cool as he faced the angry junior.

"Hallo, what's the row?" he asked. "Do they generally enter a room like that, in the slum you were brought up in, Cherry?"

"I want to know if you chalked on my door, Skinner?" said Bob as calmly as he could.

"Somebody been chalking on your door?" yawned Skinner. "Let's see—there were some Fourth Form men in this passage a while ago. You didn't know they were here—they didn't make noise enough for you to hear with your study door shut—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the passage.

As the din in the Remove quarters had brought Mr. Quelch up the stairs, it was obvious that it must have been heard—very plainly—in all the Remove studies. Certainly Bob Cherry could not have been unconscious of the fact that a shindy was going on outside No. 13, when Temple, Dabney & Co. were there.

"Bunter says you chalked on my door, Skinner," said Bob, breathing hard. "I want to know if it's true before I hammer you."

"Thanks!" said Skinner. "Let's go into it carefully. You're so jolly keen on scrapping, especially when a Form raid is on, that you can't be too careful, you know."

There was another chuckle from the fellows outside. They were finding this conversation rather entertaining.

"Will you answer yes or no, Skinner?" asked Bob, between his teeth. "If you're afraid to own up—"

"Dear man, I'm not a funk," said Skinner easily. "Nobody can say that I stayed in my study while the Fourth were there. Lots of witnesses that I came out and did my little bit."

"Will you answer my question?" breathed Bob.

"Certainly, if you put it plain. What was chalked on your study door? You haven't told me that yet!"

The Remove fellows chuckled.

"The word funk was chalked on my door!" said Bob, his eyes blazing at Skinner.

"My hat! Was it? That looks as if somebody thinks that you knew the Fourth were here all the time, and had your own private reasons for not coming out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob made a step towards the humorous Skinner.

"Was it you?" he demanded.

"Dear man, let's go into it," said Skinner. "There are four fellows in Study No. 13; you and Linley, Inky, and the Chinese. A word chalked on the door might refer to any one of the four. Now, what special claim have you over the other three fellows, to the description?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors in the passage.

Bob's face was a study for a moment or two.

"If anybody chalked 'funk' on my door," went on Skinner, "I shouldn't jump to the conclusion that it was meant for me. I should think it was intended for one of the other fellows—unless I had a guilty conscience, of course, and had been funking. But I suppose that that isn't what you're trying to make out of it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry did not answer. He realised that he was no match for Skinner in a wordy warfare. Besides, he had not come there for words. Skinner was smiling cheerily, much encouraged by the merriment of the crowd outside his doorway. But the smile faded from his face as Bob rushed at him; and he roared as his head went into chancery.

Thump, thump, thump!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Pals Parted!

"HANDS off!"

"Chuck it!"

"Stop him!"

Five or six Remove fellows shouted out at once, and crowded into the study.

Skinner was roaring.

Bob Cherry had quite lost his temper, and he was thumping Skinner's head as if he mistook it for a punch-ball.

Squiff was the first to reach Bob, and grasp him, and drag him away from Skinner. But Russell and Ogilvy were only a second or two later, and then Stott and Micky Desmond lent a hand.

"Let go!" roared Bob.

Unheeding, the juniors dragged at him, and fairly wrenched him away from Skinner.

The latter staggered across the study and brought up against the further wall, panting and gasping.

"You—you rotter!" he spluttered.

"Let me get at him!" roared Bob, struggling with the juniors who had grasped him. "Do you think I'm going to let that cad call me a funk?"

"What did you expect?" snapped Squiff.

"A fellow who backs out of a scrap and leaves other fellows in the lurch must expect to be called a funk," said Russell.

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Bob.

"Chuck the rotten ruffian out of my study, you fellows," gasped Skinner. "If he's spoiling for a fight, he can cail on the Fourth Form chaps. He wasn't so keen on scrapping when Temple was here!"

"Let me go!" panted Bob.

"Rats!"

"Chuck him out!" said Squiff.

Bob Cherry, resisting furiously, went whirling through Skinner's doorway, and landed in the Remove passage.

"What-ho, he bumps!" chuckled Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob lay dazed for a moment or two. Then he scrambled up and was about to charge back into the study, when Harry Wharton & Co. arrived on the scene. The captain of the Remove stepped quickly between Bob and Skinner's doorway. Bob gave him a glare.

"Stand aside, Wharton!" he rapped out.

"Hold on—"

"I won't hold on! Stand aside!" roared Bob.

"You will hold on," said the captain of the Remove coolly. "This sort of thing won't do, and the sooner you understand it, the better."

"Will you get aside, Wharton, or do you want me to shift you?" demanded Bob thickly.

Wharton stood as immovable as an oak in Skinner's doorway. Bob's words really were very unlikely to make him move.

"Well, if you will have it—" said Bob, between his teeth, and he came at the captain of the Remove with his hands up, and his eyes ablaze.

But he did not reach him.

Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh pinioned his arms immediately, and he was stopped and jerked back.

"No, you don't!" said Johnny quietly.

"My esteemed Bob—"

"Let me go!" roared Bob Cherry.

"For goodness' sake stop playing the goat, Bob!" exclaimed Frank Nugent impatiently. "You're making a pretty exhibition of yourself."

"You rotters, I'm going to thrash that cad Skinner!" panted Bob. "Do you know that he's chalked insults on my study door?"

Harry Wharton glanced into the study at Skinner, who was mopping a streaming nose with a handkerchief.

"Skinner's had enough, whatever he's done," he said.

"I don't agree."

"Whether you agree or not, makes no difference. Skinner can't stand up to a fellow of your weight, and you're not going to bully him."

"Bully him?" gasped Bob.

"Yes, that's what it comes to. If you want to call a fellow to account, you can pick out a better man than Skinner," said the captain of the Remove scornfully. "Every fellow in the Form is down on you, if you come to that. You've acted rottenly."

"I have?" stuttered Bob.

"Yes, you have! Don't talk to me about swotting—if you want to swot, you can swot instead of hammering a fellow who can't put up his hands," snapped Wharton. "My study was wrecked this afternoon while you were swotting. Do you think I'd have sat down if the Fourth had been here ragging your study?"

Bob panted.

"Are you calling me a funk, as well as Skinner, hang you?"

"No; but I think you've acted rottenly, and all the Remove think the same," snapped the captain of the Lower Fourth. "It's not for you to put on airs and call fellows to account. You ought to be feeling jolly well ashamed of yourself just now."

"Hear, hear!"

"Right on the wicket!" said Squiff.

"Yes, rather!"

Bob Cherry stared round at the Remove fellows. It was a surprise and a shock to him to find condemnation in every face.

Bob had always been popular in the Remove—one of the most popular fellows in the Form. But there was no doubt that all the Lower Fourth were "down" on him now.

He gritted his teeth.

"You say Skinner can't stand up to me, and that's true enough. There are fellows who can, though. Any fellow who wants to repeat Skinner's words can put up his hands."

"Funk!" roared Bolsover major at once.

Bob turned on him like a flash.

"You can put up your hands, Bolsover!"

"Ready and willing!" exclaimed the bully of the Remove. "I say that a fellow who hides in his study and leaves other chaps in the lurch is a funk, and I'll shout it all over Greyfriars, if you like. Let him go—if he fancies fighting a Remove man instead of the Fourth Form chaps."

Bob Cherry was released.

He rushed at Bolsover major, and in a moment they were fighting hammer and tongs.

But the fight was very soon interrupted. Wingate of the Sixth came up the Remove staircase.

"Stop that!" he rapped out.

And as the combatants did not stop the captain of Greyfriars grasped them by their respective collars and dragged them apart.

Then he brought them together again, and their heads met with a sounding concussion.

Crack!

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

Wingate tossed them away. Bolsover major staggered against the wall, rubbing his head.

Bob Cherry turned on the Sixth Former, his hands clenched, and his eyes ablaze. It seemed, for a moment, that the enraged Removite would hit out at the captain of the school.

George Wingate regarded him grimly.

"Well?" he rapped.

Bob Cherry dropped his hands, panting.

"I needn't ask who's to blame for this shindy," said the prefect. "Cherry, follow me to my study."

"What for?" muttered Bob savagely.

"For a licking."

"I won't!"

"Won't you?" said the captain of Greyfriars. "I rather think you will, you cheeky young sweep!"

And he laid an iron grip on Bob's collar and marched him away to the Remove staircase.

Bob resisted for a moment or two; and then, realising how futile it was, he went quietly with Wingate of the Sixth.

"I say, you fellows, that means six for him!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Ogilvy.

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton went back to his study with a darkened brow. All his conciliatory feelings towards his old chum were gone now. In all the Remove there was no one to say a word for Bob Cherry; once the most popular fellow in the Form.

In Wingate's study Bob received "six," and he took the punishment quietly. He was not seen again by the Remove fellows until evening call-over, when he turned up in hall. Skinner glanced at him rather uneasily there.

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but Bob did not look at Skinner. He was very quiet, and very subdued. Evidently that burst of passionate temper had passed.

Bob came back to his study later, for "Sunday prep" in the evening. He passed Harry Wharton at the door of Study No. 1, and did not look at him or speak to him. Frank Nugent made a step towards him, and Bob stared at him and walked on. As he reached Study No. 13 he met Squiff in the Remove passage.

"Look here, old bean—" began Field.

Bob gave him a stare and went into his study without speaking; and Simpson Quincey Ifley Field reddened, and made a step after him. But he restrained himself and walked away.

In Study No. 13 Mark Linley and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh both looked at Bob as he came in.

He sat down at the table and drew his Milton towards him without a word.

"My esteemed chum—" murmured the nabob.

Then Bob looked at him.

"Don't talk to me!" he said.

"My excellent and ridiculous Bob—" said the distressed nabob.

"You heard what I said?"

"Look here, Bob," began Mark Linley hotly.

"Shut up!"

"What?"

"Don't I speak plainly?" asked Bob Cherry bitterly. "I'll say it again if you don't understand. Shut up!"

Mark compressed his lips.

"Very well," he said.

And nothing more was said in Study No. 13.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Turning Down the Remove!

"CHERRY!"

"Yes, sir!" said Bob.

Mr. Quelch called Bob to his desk when he was dismissing the Remove, a few days later.

Some of the Remove fellows grinned.

It was not uncommon for Bob to be called over the coals by his Form master, and the Remove fully expected to hear Mr. Quelch giving free rein to his sarcastic tongue and scarifying the unfortunate junior in his well-known style.

But there was a surprise in store for the Lower Fourth.

Mr. Quelch gave Bob a very kindly smile as the junior stopped at his desk.

"Cherry, on many—very many—occasions I have had to speak to you severely for carelessness and neglect of your work."

"Yes, sir," said Bob.

"I am very glad, Cherry, to see that there has been a change—a change much for the better."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

"Your construe this morning was good—as good as any in the Form, with one or two exceptions," said the Remove master. "In other matters you have made a great improvement—a very marked improvement. I am glad to see this, Cherry."

Bob Cherry stood silent.

Praise from Mr. Quelch was praise indeed. It was to be valued. But Bob was well aware of the general feelings

of Greyfriars fellows towards a "swot." Although his back was turned to the class, he could see Skinner's sneering grin, and the Bounder's contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, with his mind's eye.

"Sucking up to a master!" was likely to be the general comment in the Lower Fourth. They did not admire scholastic attainments as their Form master did.

Not only slacking fellows, like Skinner & Co., who made a regular scientific pursuit of dodging work, but much better fellows were "down" on anything that savoured of seeking favour in a master's eyes.

Mr. Quelch, feeling that he was bound to give commendation where commendation was due, was quite unaware that he was giving the final blow to poor Bob's popularity in his Form.

"Last term," went on the Remove master, "I had to give you a very bad report, Cherry. Your father was naturally very much disturbed, and I have reason to believe that he contemplated removing you from this school, where he concluded that you were simply wasting your time. Keep on as you have begun now, my boy, and your report will certainly be a much better one this term, and I hope that you will prove a credit to your Form."

"Thank you, sir!" muttered Bob.

And the Remove were dismissed, and Bob Cherry went out of the Form-room with burning cheeks.

There were smiles and sneers on a good many faces about him as he went down the corridor.

Bob did not heed them.

His outbreak of angry temper a few days before had passed, and there had been nothing like it since. He realised his unpopularity, and he realised, too, that it was useless to quarrel with the whole Form. The fight with Bolsover major had gone no further, and Bob had not said a word to Skinner, much to the latter's relief. Neither had he spoken one word to his old chums since the scene in the Remove passage on Saturday afternoon.

The Famous Five were quite estranged now.

From the point of view of the Co., Bob had been headstrong and overbearing, utterly unreasonable, and impossible to get on with. From Bob Cherry's point of view, his chums had let him down at a time when he needed all their encouragement and help.

Those extremely different points of view were not easy to reconcile.

And the breach once made, it widened automatically, as neither side felt disposed to admit faults, or to make the first overture towards reconciliation. And the heavy task of preparing for the Latin examination was still on Bob's hands, and his swotting left him little time to think of other matters.

He had quite cut games practice now, excepting on compulsory days. On those days he could have obtained exemption by a request to his Form master, in view of the approaching exam; but he would not make that request. In his present rather unreasonable mood he thought, or chose to think, that the captain of the Remove was bent on exercising his authority over him, and he was extremely, meticulously careful to play up to exactly the extent required, and no more.

In Study No. 13 matters were extremely uncomfortable.

Bob was not speaking to his study-mates, and prep and other work in Study No. 13 was done in a dismal silence.

Bob Cherry had gregarious tastes; it

ANSWERS

Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

was quite foreign to his nature to be on these Robinson-Crusoe-like terms. The state of affairs in Study No. 13 got on his nerves more than it got on the nerves of Mark, or Hurreo Singh, who had plenty of company elsewhere. Bob, feeling his unpopularity, made himself still more unpopular by growing touchy and suspicious, and he soon found himself left quite alone in the Remove.

That was a good thing, from the point of view of swotting, or "sapping," as it was variously termed at Greyfriars. Certainly he had plenty of time now for work; the fellows left him alone, and left him out of the usual life of the Form; except for compulsory games practice twice a week, his time was entirely his own.

When the Remove fellows made a retaliatory raid on the Fourth Form passage and "mopped up" Temple, Dabney & Co. in great style Bob was not even asked to join in the raid—and, in fact, knew nothing about it till afterwards; when he heard the juniors discussing it in the Rag. Rehearsals of the Remove Dramatic Society, meetings of the Form Debating Club, Sunday walks, and rag-gings in the passages, study spreads, and pick-ups on Little Side went on without Bob's participation.

It was excellent, from the point of view of swotting; from every other point of view it was very unpleasant indeed. And Bob, between the heavy task that lay upon him and a deep sense of wrong and grievance, made not the slightest attempt to alter the state of affairs; the more he was excluded the more he withdrew into himself.

But Bob Cherry was a fellow who simply could not live entirely in his own

society. Had he been Robinson Crusoe on his island, probably he would have chummed with the cannibals, rather than have enjoyed only his own company. Now that he was swotting, Mark Linley, the hardest worker in the Remove, would have been his natural comrade; but he was on estranged terms with Mark—he had no friend left in his own Form. It was for that reason that he found himself getting intimate with Wilkinson of the Fourth.

It was very unusual for fellows at Greyfriars to chum with members of other Forms; but Bob and Wilkinson had tastes in common. Wilkinson had entered for the Head's prize, so they were rivals; but, at least, it was a common pursuit. Wilkinson kept goal for the Fourth and was the best footballer in that Form, which was another taste in common. Wilkinson's people were poor, and he worked hard, in the hope of getting a University scholarship later on, and that was a bond of union between them now that Bob's manners and customs had changed so remarkably.

Bob Cherry walked out of the House, unheeding the sneering smiles on a good many faces.

He looked round in the quad for Teddy Wilkinson.

The Fourth were already out, and Wilkinson was punting an old footer about with a crowd of his Form-fellows.

"Join up, Cherry!" he called out.

And Bob Cherry joined the punters. In the present peculiar state of things he felt more at home with the Fourth than with his own Form.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the House and glanced at Bob. They gave

him only one glance, however, and walked on.

Bob did not heed them.

He was enjoying the punt-about, and he had no eyes for his former chums. When he came in to tea he did not go to the Remove passage; he went with Teddy Wilkinson to Study No. 5 in the Fourth Form passage.

Wilkinson of the Fourth had a study to himself—a small room which no one else in the Form coveted. Teddy was glad to have it to himself; he was almost the only fellow in the Fourth who really worked, and he could get all the company he wanted along the passage.

Bob Cherry glanced round the study as he was having tea there. For some days a thought had been working in his mind, but he had hesitated to speak to the Fourth-Former about it. Now he uttered it.

"We seem to get on pretty well, Wilkinson," he remarked. "I've done some of my work in this study more than once."

"Always welcome, old bean!" said Teddy. "Not quite so much row in this passage as in the Remove."

"I was thinking—" Bob paused.

"Go ahead!"

"I dare say you know I'm a bit of an outcast in my Form since I've taken up swotting for the Latin prize?" said Bob, colouring.

Wilkinson nodded and grinned.

"I've noticed it," he assented. "Swots ain't popular in any Form at Greyfriars. I've had my study shipped more than once just because I mug up Latin. I believe Temple would cut me,

(Continued overleaf.)



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Out on Wednesday
PRICE TWOPENCE



only I'm the only man he's got to keep goal for him."

Bob laughed.

"Well, it's rather unusual, I know," he said. "But why shouldn't I work in your study for the rest of this term? If you don't find me in the way—"

"Not a bit!"

"I'm not speaking to the chaps in my study in the Remove, and it's dashed uncomfy, of course."

"Must be," agreed Teddy. "If I had a study-mate, I expect I should be ragging with him half the time. The fact is a swot isn't always pleasant company for other fellows who don't have to sap."

"Oh!" said Bob. "I—I hadn't looked at it like that. I know I've got to work this term, or else leave Greyfriars."

"Shift your things here, then," said Wilkinson. "I'll be jolly glad of your company; now you're keen on swotting, you'll let a fellow work."

"Done!" said Bob.

After tea that day there was a "moving" job on in the Remove passage. Some of the fellows noted Bob Cherry carrying his possessions away from Study No. 13, and wondered whether he was "changing out." That evening Mark Linley and Hurree Janset Ram Singh saw nothing of Bob, and they wondered.

It was Billy Bunter who brought the news to the Remove fellows after prep in the Rag. Bunter rolled into the Rag with a grin on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows, heard the latest?" squeaked Bunter.

"Your postal-order come?" inquired Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"About Bob Cherry," said Bunter.

"Oh, bother Bob Cherry!" said Russell. "Give him a rest!"

"He's digging with the Fourth!" howled Bunter.

"What?"

"Bosh!"

"He's in Wilkinson's study, and he's taken his books and things there," chirruped Bunter. "Fancy that, you fellows! Never heard of a Remove man digging in a Fourth Form study before."

"Gammon!" said Bolsover major.

"I tell you it's so!" hooted Bunter. "I had it from Dabney of the Fourth. He said he didn't want Remove fags

hanging about the Fourth, and Wilkinson jammed his head on a door. I saw him."

"Cherry didn't come to the study for prep this evening," said Mark Linley. "I suppose it's true."

"Turning down his own Form!" sneered Skinner. "Chumming with the Upper Fourth! I think no fellow in the Remove will ever speak to him while he keeps that up."

"Sucking up to the masters and chumming with an Upper Form!" said Bolsover major. "I'd never have thought it of a fellow like Bob Cherry! You never know a chap till you find him out."

Some of the fellows went along to the Fourth Form passage to learn whether the news was true. They found that it was: Bob and Wilkinson were working together in No. 5.

It was the finishing blow for Bob in the esteem of the Remove. Bob had made himself an outsider in the Form; and all the Form agreed to look upon him, and treat him, as an outsider. And he did not seem to care.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

To Play or Not to Play!

"FOOTBALL'S football!"

Johnny Bull made that undeniable statement.

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

The trouble in the Co. had settled down now as a fixed thing: the fellows had got used to it, and hardly remarked now that Bob Cherry was no longer chumming with the fellows who had always been his fast friends.

If Bob wanted to go his own way, turning down his friends, and even his Form, that was his own business, no doubt; and his former comrades "gave him his head," so to speak.

But there was at least one matter in which Bob Cherry was still deeply concerned; and that happened to be the matter in which the Greyfriars Remove were more keenly interested than in any other.

Football, as Johnny Bull sapiently remarked, was football; his meaning being that in football matters, all personal considerations ceased to count.

The captain of the Remove fully agreed with that as a proposition. But the case was awkward.

St. Jim's were coming over to Greyfriars to play the Remove; and the match with Tom Merry's team was, of course, one of the biggest fixtures on the Remove list. The Remove had lately been beaten by Highcliffe, and very particularly they did not want to be beaten by St. Jim's. The defeat at Highcliffe was generally admitted to be due, in part at least, to the fact that Bob Cherry had been unable to play for his school. Which was all the more reason why he should play when St. Jim's came over.

He was still a member of the Remove football club; he still attended regularly at games practice on compulsory days. There was no reason why he should not be played. Only—he was no longer on speaking terms with any fellow in the Remove, so it was extremely awkward.

Had he been a less valuable player, he could have been dropped out and replaced, no doubt, and no harm done. But he was a very valuable player indeed; in the half-back line he was a tower of strength. He was wanted in the game, and he was wanted very seriously. And all the Co. were conscious of the fact that if he were

dropped, it would be the last nail, as it were, in the coffin of the old friendship.

And they did not want that. Disunited, unfriendly, almost hostile, as the once-united comrades had become, no one wanted to write a definite "finish" to the old friendship. So long as the door remained ajar, there was yet a possibility that the clouds would roll by.

"It's dashed awkward," said Wharton. "It's admitted that we want the chap in the team—we need him. But—"

"But in his present temper, he's as likely as not to refuse to play," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully. "It might interfere with his confounded swotting."

Wharton's brow darkened.

"He wouldn't cut the St. Jim's match for that, I think," he said, with a deep breath. "If he did—"

"Oh, he wouldn't," said Frank Nugent. "Anyhow, you can't drop him, Harry—with no reason to give. He would think at once that it meant bitterness on our side—he would think it was taking advantage of his position—goodness knows what he would think—"

"Blessed if I care much what he thinks."

"Yes, you do, old chap. Besides, he's wanted in the match—we don't want St. Jim's to walk over us as Highcliffe did."

Wharton bit his lip.

"If I tell him he's wanted, as likely as not he will get his back up, and refuse," he said. "I don't like the idea of letting myself down like that."

"My esteemed chum—" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, Inky?" asked Harry. It was the way of the dusky nabob to pour oil on the troubled waters, and Wharton was only too willing to hear a suggestion that might save further friction.

"If I may make a suggestive remark—"

The juniors chuckled.

"If you mean suggestion, go it," said Harry.

"Why not put up the football list with the esteemed Bob's name in it, without speaking to him, just as if nothing had happenfully occurred to cloud the smiling sunshine of friendship with the darkness of hostility?" suggested the nabob.

Wharton considered.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "If we take it for granted that Bob's playing as usual, and put up his name, he can't find anything in that to grouse about. And he will see the list posted in the Rag, and will know that he's down to play without my speaking to him."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

And the nabob's suggestion was adopted.

Tom Merry & Co. were due at Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon; and on Tuesday evening, before prep, the football list was posted on the door of the Rag, where Bob could not fail to see it sooner or later.

The list ran: Field; M. Linley, J. Bull; P. Todd, T. Brown, R. Cherry; Hurree Singh, H. Vernon-Smith, H. Wharton, F. Nugent, R. D. Ogilvy.

Remove fellows scanned the list eagerly when it was up; and Bolsover major growled, as usual, on failing to find his name there, and Hazeldene sneered at Squiff's name for goal; and other fellows had various comments to make, favourable or unfavourable. But it was generally admitted that it was

THE PAPER FOR STAR STORIES!

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"SKIMPOLE'S TELESCOPE!"

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

This week's rousing long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's in our grand companion paper

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"Stop that!" rapped out Wingate, as he came upon the combatants. But Bob Cherry and Bolsover major paid no heed to the captain of the school, whereupon Wingate grasped the Removites by their respective collars and banged their heads together. Crack! "Oh!" "Wow!" (See Chapter 9.)

as good a team as the Remove could have put in the field against St. Jim's. Most of the footballing fraternity could have suggested a few improvements, without agreeing with one another on points of detail, however.

Some of the fellows were surprised to find Bob Cherry's name there, Bob being now practically an outcast in his Form. Some approved, and some disapproved; but all had to admit that a better half-back than R. Cherry was not to be found in the Form.

Skinner, who had only recently recovered from a severe swelling in his nose, sneered at the list, and especially R. Cherry's name in it.

It looked to Skinner like an overture of reconciliation; and Skinner was too pleased to see the Famous Five disunited, to be pleased at any sign of the breach closing.

But Skinner's opinions on football matters were not likely to be listened to.

The Removites read the list and commented upon it, and dispersed to go to their studies for prep. Bob Cherry had already gone to No. 5, in the Fourth, as usual, and was working there with Teddy Wilkinson.

With all his keenness for work, Bob had not forgotten the St. Jim's match—it was rather too important a matter in the Remove for even a "swot" to forget it. He had wondered a good deal whether the captain of the Remove would tell him that he was wanted for the match, or whether Wharton would carry the feud into football matters. Neither was he quite certain whether he would play if requested. That would depend a great deal on the manner in which he was asked; for work and worry and a sense of grievance had developed a new

touchiness in Bob, who had never been touchy till of late.

He got through his prep in Wilkinson's study, and then remained chatting with his Fourth Form friend, half-expecting Harry Wharton to come along to speak to him there. Wharton knew where to find him if he wanted him, and certainly he did not intend to seek out the captain of the Remove. If they did not want him for the St. Jim's match he was quite willing to put in the afternoon swotting, he told himself bitterly.

Finally, however, Wilkinson went along to Temple's study, and Bob went down to the Rag. It occurred to him that the football list was probably posted by that time, and by looking at it he would learn whether he was included or not.

Some of the Removites were still at prep; but there were six or seven fellows in the Rag. Three or four were standing by the door, looking at the football list, when Bob came in, and they were laughing.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

Bob cast a rather dark glance at the Removites, and stopped to read the list. His eyes blazed.

His own name was there, and under it, in capital letters, some unknown hand had written the word "FUNK!"

Bob Cherry stared at it, his breast heaving. The other fellows exchanged glances. Tom Redwing, who happened to be in the Rag, made a step forward.

"Don't take any notice of that, Cherry," he said. "It's a cad's trick. I'd have rubbed it out, only it's done in indelible pencil."

Bob looked at him.

"Thank you for nothing!" he said curtly.

"Oh!" said Redwing.

"Cherry's learnin' fascinatin' manners among his friends in the Upper Fourth!" drawled the Bounder.

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep. Harry Wharton came into the Rag with Frank Nugent at that moment.

Bob fixed his eyes on him.

Wharton, quite unconscious of the addition that had been made to the football list, gave him a nod. He supposed that Bob had read his name in the list, and that was all.

"You'll be ready to-morrow afternoon, Cherry?" said the captain of the Remove, with as much cordiality as he could muster at a moment's notice.

"Shall I?" said Bob.

"You'll be wanted, you know," said Harry.

"If I'm wanted, I'm worth the trouble of asking, I should think," said Bob savagely. "And I don't see that a funk can be wanted, anyhow! I know I'm not playing, at any rate!"

"Look here—"

"That's enough!"

Bob jerked a pencil from his pocket, and under the eyes of the captain of the Remove drew a thick line through his name on the list. Wharton's eyes blazed.

"How dare you alter the football list!" he exclaimed.

Bob gave him a look.

"I'll alter it again if you put my name down!" he snapped.

For a moment the two juniors stood face to face, with their hands clenched, their eyes gleaming. Frank Nugent pushed between.

"Chuck that!" he said. "Look here, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976."

Bob, you know jolly well you had no right to touch the list."

"I'll do as I choose!"

"If you don't want to play to-morrow—"

"I refuse to play to-morrow!"

With that, Bob Cherry walked out of the Rag. A hiss followed him from three or four fellows.

Bob turned back for a second, his face crimson, his eyes glinting. But he controlled himself and walked on.

His name remained crossed out in the list for the St. Jim's match.

Bob Cherry tapped at the door of Mr. Quelch's study, and the Remove master gave him a kindly nod as he entered. Bob had made leaps and bounds in his Form master's good opinion of late, whatever the Form thought of him.

"Well, Cherry?" said Mr. Quelch, very kindly.

"You were kind enough to tell me, sir, that you would give me a little help out of class with my Latin," said Bob.

"Most certainly, Cherry," said the Remove master.

"If you could spare a little time to-morrow afternoon, sir, as it's a half-holiday—"

Mr. Quelch reflected for a moment.

"You may bring your books to my study at three o'clock, Cherry," he said.

"I can give you an hour—from three to four."

"Thank you very much, sir," said Bob.

And he left the study.

The die was cast now!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

BOB CHERRY was the recipient of dark looks the following morning in the Remove Form-room.

His popularity was at its lowest ebb now.

The affair of the Fourth Form raid had not been forgotten, when Bob had, in the opinion of the Remove, let the Form down. Now he was letting them down again, in a much more serious matter—a football match in which the best men of the Form were wanted to play.

That he had reason to be angered by the gibe scribbled on the football list was clear. But that was no reason at all for taking his name out of the list.

Skinner—or some fellow like Skinner—had been responsible for that gibe; certainly not the captain of the Remove or any of the footballers. Bob had acted hastily, unreasonably, in a sudden gust of anger.

Perhaps he realised that himself when he came to reflect. But, if so, reflection came too late.

His appointment with Mr. Quelch was not to be cancelled for any reason whatsoever. He had asked the Form master to give him "extra toot," as the juniors called it, on Wednesday afternoon; and to turn Mr. Quelch down, after his kind consent, in order to play football, was unthinkable. Bob knew that; so if he repented of his haste, repentance came too late.

Of his arrangement with Mr. Quelch, the other fellows knew nothing. Some of them thought that Bob would offer to play before the St. Jim's men arrived—they really could not believe that Bob, as they knew him, would refuse to back up his Form in a football fixture, when it came to a test.

Wharton could not be expected to ask him. Considering the terms he was now upon with his former friend, the captain of the Remove had made a big concession in treating bygones as bygones, and putting Bob's name into the list as if nothing had happened. It was doubtful whether, if Bob changed his mind, the captain of the Remove would meet him half-way. That matter was much discussed by the footballers.

Meanwhile, Bob received dark looks from the juniors, and did not heed them.

He sat like a stranger in the Remove Form-room, a good deal like Ishmael of old, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him.

After morning classes, he went out of the Form-room by himself; and when he came to the Remove table at dinner, he had an air of being quite unconscious of his surroundings. He exchanged a friendly nod with Teddy Wilkinson at the Fourth Form table; but not a Remove fellow received a sign that Bob even knew him by sight. The once free-hearted junior, who had never had an enemy, and had never been anybody's enemy, seemed to have changed out of all knowledge.

Kick-off in the St. Jim's match was timed for three o'clock; and in good time, Tom Merry & Co. arrived from the station. Redwing had been told to be ready in Bob's place; but Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking the matter over still. The captain of the Remove, whom Skinner generally alluded to as "His Magnificence," and who was supposed to be the proudest fellow in the Form, was thinking of making one more attempt to prevent the final and irreparable breach.

"What do you fellows think?" Harry asked, after they had greeted the new arrivals. "There's not much time now; but—Bob Cherry's given no sign—but—"

"His esteemed back is up!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh sadly.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"I'm not much given to caring whether a fellow's back is up, or not," he said. "But there's two reasons—Bob's needed in the match, and I don't want to leave anything undone that it's up to me to do. If Cherry lets us down over this match, I'm done with him, and I suppose you fellows are, too. That being the case, ought I to put my pride in my pocket and give him another chance?"

"I think so," said Nugent quietly.

"The thoughtfulness is terrific."

And Johnny Bull nodded a slow and thoughtful assent.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"I'll try it on, then," he said. "I suppose I shall find him in Wilkinson's study—he's always swotting there now."

"Keep your temper, old man," murmured Nugent.

Wharton laughed rather grimly.

"I'm not going to be the one to cause trouble that can't be mended," he said.

"I'll ask him to play—I can't do more."

And the captain of the Remove walked away to the House; and the footballers, when they learned of his mission, looked at one another.

"Blessed if I ever expected to see Wharton eating humble pie like that," the Bounder remarked, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I'm glad to see it," said Redwing quietly. "I think it's the most decent thing he's ever done. It's not easy for him."

Wharton was feeling that his self-imposed task was not easy, as he went into the House. But he was determined to go through with it.

He came on Bob Cherry just leaving the Fourth Form passage, with three or four books under his arm. Bob was on his way to Mr. Quelch's study, though Wharton did not know that.

"Hold on a minute," said Harry, as amicably as he could.

Bob stopped.

"The St. Jim's men are here," said Harry.

"I know."

"We kick off in three or four minutes."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"You're wanted to play," said the captain of the Remove. "We want you at half, and you know it. We don't seem to pull together as we used to, but that has nothing to do with football. Will you put personal matters aside, as I'm doing, and get into your things quick, and come down to Little Side and play for the Remove?"

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

His appointment in Mr. Quelch's study was a millstone round his neck at that moment. If he had not repented before, he repented now. But it was too late.

"Well?" said Harry.

"I can't."

"Can't?" Wharton's voice rose a little. "What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say."

"You mean that you won't?" Wharton had determined to keep his temper; but this rebuff was too much for him. In spite of himself, his voice rose, and his eyes glinted.

"Put it how you like," said Bob, his anger rising as fast as Wharton's, or faster, for that matter. "I won't, then."

Wharton bit his lip hard.

"I've asked you," he said. "I've asked you, and you've refused. You're letting down the football team, when you know you're wanted, when you know we may be beaten with a new man shoved in at the last moment—as we were at Highcliffe. You refuse?"

"I've answered you."

"That does it, then. You stand out of this match—and you'll stand out of every other match this season, so long as I remain captain of the Form."

And with that, Wharton turned his back and walked away.

Bob made a step after him—his lips opening to speak; but he stopped and closed his lips again, hard.

Wharton was gone; and Bob, with a grim face and a heavy heart, made his way to his Form master's study.

THE END.

Look out for the next powerful yarn in this magnificent series, entitled:—

"THE DESERTER!"

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

—which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET.

DON'T TRY TO FOOL ME OR ——" That's the kind of veiled threat O'Hara hands out to young Tommy Comber, But it doesn't worry Tommy any! He knows that he holds the whip hand so long as he sticks to Comberite powder!

The Boy with the Million-Pound Secret!

DAVID GOODWIN'S
MASTERPIECE!



A Narrow Shave!

THE man's finger never pressed the trigger. The pistol flew from his hand, and he sprang into the air and fell back with a choking cry, as a tongue of pale flame spurted out, a hundred yards down the creek, where a big motor-launch with muffled engine came swinging round the bend of the sea wall.

The other man stared for a moment at his fallen comrade, as if petrified with astonishment; then he spun round and glanced towards the motor-launch, from which came another shot, and the bullet sang past his head. He took to his heels, with a terrified oath, hurrying over the top of the embankment and dashing away across the marshes.

The launch swerved in towards the bank, and a man sprang ashore with a rifle in his hand. The moment he reached the top of the wall this man dropped on one knee; the rifle cracked again, and the runner pitched forward on his face and lay still.

Tommy did not see this. He was too dazed to realise fully what had happened. He was looking at the man who lay opposite him on the creek's bank, as if he could not believe his eyes. He heard somebody shouting:

"Pat! Pat Roche!"

It was the voice of Dr. Shane O'Hara.

"Here!" cried Tommy hoarsely. "This way!"

The launch came gliding up the creek

towards him. O'Hara was standing up in the stern, alone, steering. The boat's bows touched the mud just abreast of Tommy.

"Are you all right?" exclaimed O'Hara. "Are you hurt?"

"I was pretty near done," said Tommy feebly. "Reckon I'm all right now, sir—thanks to you!"

O'Hara stood up, and gave a shrill whistle.

"Merton!" he called. "Merton!"

The man with the rifle came over the river wall and hurried down to the water's edge. It was Merton Haynes. His big, powerful figure loomed up, gigantic in the bright moonlight.

"Get him?" cried O'Hara.

"Quite," replied Haynes coolly. "I haven't been to look at him yet. But he'll go no farther."

"Bear a hand here, then," said Dr. O'Hara. "Here's the boy. They've made a pretty mess of him."

"Ah," said Haynes, "I guessed that was what they were shooting at. You were quite right—we weren't any too soon. Get the boy out first. They don't matter—they can wait."

The launch swung across the creek and took Haynes aboard, and then went back to Tommy. The water was falling fast, and Tommy's head and shoulders were now bare, just at the edge of the tide-way; his white face looked up at his rescuers.

They wasted no words, but got busy

at once. They dug away the half liquid ooze around his shoulders with the blade of an oar, and leaning over the bows of the launch they managed to pass a rope under his arm-pits.

"Not wounded, are you, Tommy?" asked Dr. O'Hara anxiously. "No bullet in you?"

"No!" gasped Tommy, his teeth chattering.

"Good! Heave up gently, Merton. How this beastly mud sticks!"

They got him out of the ooze, somehow. Tommy hardly knew how they did it, but they brought him across on to the bank of the island. He was feeling stupefied with cold and exhaustion.

"Those two chaps," he said—"where are they?"

"We'll see about that presently," said Dr. O'Hara quietly. "Did you say two? Are you sure there weren't three?"

Tommy's head was swimming. He closed his eyes, and thought for a minute.

"Yes, of course," he said feebly. "They lit a fire—but I got away from them. There was another cove—he went for me. I had to cosh him with a fence-pole. Knocked him out, I think."

"Where was that?"

"Over beyond the old fence," murmured Tommy; "expect he's up again now. But I don't know—"

"Never mind about that now. They were trying to have the secret from you—what?"

HOW THE STORY OPENED.

TOMMY COMBER, sentenced to three years' detention aboard the reformatory ship *Bellerophon* for being concerned in the murder of his uncle **JOSEPH COMBER**, a clever chemist, inventor of a powerful high explosive named *Comberite*.

CHUFFER FOSS, Tommy's cousin, a ne'er-do-well, whose false evidence at the trial did much to prejudice the innocent Tommy's chances of acquittal.

DR. SHANE O'HARA, a skilful surgeon, who shelters the fugitive from the *Bellerophon* and fakes his features to resemble those of Pat Roche, his servant, so that Tommy's own pal,

DAN BENNETT, doesn't recognise him until Tommy makes known his identity.

MERTON HAYNES, a friend of O'Hara's.

In return for this service O'Hara has rendered him, Tommy—who knows the secret of *Comberite*—is asked to make this valuable explosive for the doctor and his friend, Tommy himself to take a third share in the partnership. Tommy agrees to the proposal. He meets Dan—who, incidentally, thinks O'Hara and his friend a pair of rogues—and asks him to join him in preparing *Comberite* on *Curlew Island*, which formerly belonged to Joseph Comber. Dan jumps at the chance.

Prior to his leaving for the island, Tommy discovers that he is being shadowed by a stranger whom he nicknames "Baldy." This man finds Tommy too slippery for him, and is himself shadowed to a restaurant in the West End. Here Baldy meets a John Carfax, whom he tries to drug. Comber at once gives Carfax warning, and then slips out of the restaurant unnoticed.

Tommy reaches *Curlew Island*, only to run up against Carfax again. The two are conversing when a bullet whistles dangerously near Tommy's face. The sniper, however, gets away undetected. No sooner has Carfax left than Dan arrives, and he relates a thrilling encounter he has had with O'Hara and Haynes, in which he nearly lost his life.

Tom sets to work on *Comberite*, finds a defect in one of his chemicals, and dispatches Dan to London to buy some more.

That same night, however, Tom is attacked by three masked figures and made prisoner. He effects an escape, but in the confusion that follows he blunders into a mud flat and sinks in the clinging ooze up to his neck. Although his life is at stake, Tom refuses to divulge the secret of *Comberite* to his assailants who have located him, and to help Tom to change his mind, one of the trio takes aim at the helpless lad with his pistol. Before he can pull the trigger, however, another shot is heard.

(Now read on.)

"But they didn't get it," said Tommy faintly. He looked up at O'Hara. "Nobody's goin' to have my secret out of me—no fear! Nobody!"

Then suddenly everything went dark, and Tommy knew no more.

"Boy's fainted—gone unconscious, anyway," said Dr. O'Hara, stooping over him. "Not much wonder. But he'll be none the worse."

"I'll make sure of those three to start with," said Haynes grimly.

"No—get the boy away first. He's worth a million to us. You're the strongest, Merton, carry him across to the bungalow. As soon as you've done it, look round for that third man. He can't have got off the island, their boat is down the creek there; we passed it coming up. Get back here to me as soon as you can; I'll keep watch over the launch."

Merton Haynes wrapped a raincoat round the muddled, unconscious form of Tommy—apparently to keep the mud off his own clothes—and lifting him up as easily as if he were an infant carried him across towards the bungalow. Dr. O'Hara lit a cigar, and remained by the launch.

He waited a considerable time. Presently he thought he heard the sound of a shot, or perhaps two shots, away across the marshes. At last Merton Haynes came back and joined him.

"I found him," said Haynes simply. "He wasn't much hurt."

"Wasn't?" replied O'Hara.

"He is now," said Haynes quietly. "If you want to look after the boy, you had better leave these three gentlemen to me."

"Certainly," said Dr. O'Hara. "You know what to do with them, Merton."

"I know what to do with them," answered Haynes. "There's some rope in the launch, and some spare iron ballast."

"There's a nice deep place, out in the main river towards the Chapman Beacon," said O'Hara. "Sink their boat, too. Haynes, my dear fellow. We've had a narrow shave, but all's well that ends well."

The Return of Dan!

TOMMY gaped and blinked. He could not make out where on earth he was, but a ray of sunshine was shining full on his face, and he felt uncommonly warm and comfortable.

Then he saw that he was in his own bed in the bungalow, his head resting on the pillow, and the sun was shining in through the little window. It puzzled him to find himself alive at all; he had had a sort of dream that the crabs of the creek were making their supper off him. He was still rather stiff and drowsy, and also very empty and thirsty. He could not remember having gone to bed.

At that moment Doctor O'Hara came into the room, bringing with him a mug of steaming hot cocoa.

"Drink this, youngster," he said. "Feeling all right again? You do yourself very well here, I must say. That's a capital ham you've got from Harrod's. Haynes and I have just had our breakfast off it. I left a lot of tinned stuff and biscuit for you, but I didn't think of a ham. Could you do with a plate of it?"

Tommy swallowed the cocoa gratefully, and said he could do with all the ham there was. Doctor O'Hara brought him a large plate of it and some biscuit, and left him alone till he had made a good breakfast. Then the

doctor came in again, and lit a long cigar.

"Now," he said, "if you feel better, we can get to business! I'm afraid you had rather a rough night."

"It looks as if I wouldn't be here at all if it hadn't been for you, sir!" said Tommy.

"That's true enough."

Tommy knew it was true. He owed O'Hara his life. But he looked at those keen, penetrating dark eyes that were fixed on his, and he felt he had got to know a bit more about the truth yet. He had thought that those men who had raided the island and had tried to wring the secret from him, were Doctor O'Hara's men, but it was still a mystery to him.

"Yes, sir," he said; "and I'm grateful. But there are some questions I've got to ask you."

"Certainly," said O'Hara. "But you must tell me first, what you know of those men I tackled last night, and what they did here? Then I'll tell you anything you like."

"All right, sir—listen," said Tommy. He told him everything that had happened since arriving on the island.

Doctor O'Hara listened to that amazing tale with extraordinary calmness. He was a man who never seemed to get excited or to be astonished at anything. But his face grew very hard, and once Tommy thought he heard him swear under his breath.

"You're a queer, plucky little beggar," said O'Hara at last, "and lucky, too! They got nothing out of you? The powder—"

"They found the powder I'd made," said Tommy, "but that's no good to them. I don't know if they got away with it."

"No," said O'Hara softly. "They didn't get away with it."

"And now for my question!" said Tommy. "I want to know who those men are. Who are they?"

Doctor O'Hara paused. He was thinking.

"I suppose I'd better tell you, Tommy. They were after the powder—and it's the second time. Those men—two of them, anyway—came here the night your Uncle Joseph died. They broke open the safe, hunting for the secret. And one of them killed your uncle."

Tommy sat up in bed, gasping. For a moment he could not find his voice.

"Had they anything to do with Chuffer Foss?" he cried.

"Maybe. Anyway, when they found they were beaten, they watched your trial—and they've kept a watch on the island. They guessed what was doing, so they came again."

"Did they know I was Tom Comber?" exclaimed Tommy.

"I don't think they knew that. If they suspected it, they couldn't be sure. But when they heard that explosion yesterday, they must have known you had made the powder and had got the secret. So they went for you. Haynes and I were on our way, to see how you were getting on. And we were just in time to save you."

Tommy's excitement was intense.

"Great powers!" he said fiercely. "These three scoundrels are the men who robbed the bungalow when my uncle lost his life? I say, sir, there was some shooting last night, wasn't there? What happened to those men? They—they aren't killed, are they?"

O'Hara sat back and looked over the top of Tommy's head.

"Oh, no," he said quietly. "Nothing of that kind. But they knuckled under. We had the drop on them."

"Then where are they?"

"They will not give any trouble. Mr. Haynes and I are looking after them."

"Can you prove they killed my Uncle Joseph?"

"I know they must have done so. But I don't say for certain I can prove it. Knowing a fact and proving it in a criminal court are two different things."

"But they must be arrested!" cried Tommy. "They must be brought to justice!"

O'Hara knocked the ash off his cigar.

"You are the escaped convict from the Bellerophon, Tommy," he said dryly. "Can you afford justice? Can you go before the police and tell them this story?"

"But it will prove that I'm innocent!"

"Far from it," said O'Hara grimly.

"It won't prove anything about you except that you've been twice mixed up with these men, besides running away from prison. And some of the money they stole that first time was found on you. You'll go back to the Bellerophon—for a time, at any rate. You may even get a fresh sentence and catch it hotter still. You'll lose your liberty again—and it will be all up with Comberite Powder and Curlew Island."

"I can't help that. We've got to do what's right!"

"Of course we have," said O'Hara gently. "But think again, Tommy. 'Justice' sounds very fine. But will it do you or your poor uncle any good, if you're locked up on the Bellerophon again? You'll be in the soup, as you would say, for good and all. Unless you leave it to me."

Tommy reflected.

"I don't know that I'm so keen on this justice business," said Tommy gloomily. "After all; it did me no good. I didn't get much of it. The police make mistakes. I got two years for a crime I was no more guilty of than you are. I don't see why I should go back to that beastly ship."

"Now you are talking sense! You have a good head on you for a kid."

"But what about these men? I only know what you've told me. They mustn't get off!"

"They won't," said O'Hara, with his quiet smile. "As I told you, Haynes and I will take care of them till the proper time comes. Keep your mouth shut about it. Then they can be brought to justice, if need be, when we have the proofs that they're guilty of the first raid on the island, as well as this one. You'll carry on here in safety, and get the powder made. When that's done you will be rich, and can defend yourself. Don't you see?"

Tommy drew a breath of relief. It certainly was sense.

"All right," he said. "I don't see what else I can do, but leave it to you. After all, you saved my life. And I owe my liberty to you."

"Very well," said O'Hara pleasantly, "and now you're satisfied—eh?"

"No, not quite," replied Tommy. "I want to know who that bald-faced beggar is that was snooping round after me in London like a spy! And what about Mr. John Carfax? And why did the chap try to poison him? I don't like that game. Where does he come in?"

Dr. O'Hara's eyes suddenly narrowed. "Carfax?" he said. "What's this? What do you mean?"

Tommy told him all that had occurred in London, and while he did so he watched O'Hara's face. But the doctor listened without saying a word, though he looked uneasy.

"I don't know this man you call Baldy," he said, "but it's quite plain



"I'm fit enough now and I shall get up," said Tommy, swinging himself out of bed. But O'Hara placed his back against the door, and there was a threat in his dark eyes. "One moment, Comber!" he said grimly. "You fooled the gang very pluckily last night, but don't you try to fool me at the finish!" (See this page.)

he belongs to that gang who were after you last night, Tommy. That's how you got tracked. I only wish we'd got him, too."

Tommy could not help wondering whether O'Hara was speaking the truth. But it sounded all right.

"But Carfax!" said O'Hara. "I've heard of Carfax. He is more dangerous than any of them, except that he's not a criminal."

"Is he a Secret Service chap?" asked Tommy.

"I don't think so. I think he is connected with the police. Perhaps he is after that gang we have just wiped up. He cannot know who you are, Tommy, else he would most certainly have run you in. Steer clear of Carfax, my boy, if you ever come across him. Tell him nothing! You'll be for the Bellerophon quick, if he gets wise to you!"

That was just what Tommy was afraid of. He guessed himself that Carfax was more dangerous to him than any of the rest.

"All the more reason for getting on with it at once," said Tommy, swinging himself out of bed. "I'm fit enough now, and I shall get up."

But O'Hara placed his back against the door, and there was a threat in his dark eyes.

"One moment, Tom Comber!" he said grimly. "You fooled that gang very pluckily last night, and they got nothing out of you; you played your own game. But don't you try to fool me at the finish, or you'll find me more deadly than those fellows who had you up to your neck in the mud!"

"Don't you worry about that, sir," said Tommy coolly, pulling on his trousers. "I've told you all along that I'd play straight with you, as long as you played straight with me. You've

done it, I reckon, so don't cry out before you're hurt. Seems to me there's a lot of crooks in this game; but I'm no crook, and don't forget it. You'll get the goods."

"But Comberite—the powder!" exclaimed Dr. O'Hara. "How is it going? That's what we came here to learn about."

"The powder's O.K., sir," said Tommy. "I made a mistake with the first lot; but I'm running up the field now, and very soon I shall shoot the goal. There's only a little more work to do."

"When shall I know for certain?"

"For a certainty, put it forty-eight hours from now, sir. I'll have the stuff right on the mark by then. But I've got to do it on my own."

"Sure, you must do it alone! I cannot stay here. But you are to let me know immediately you have got it, and I will come and fetch you."

"Where shall I let you know, sir?"

"Telegraph to my London address. Just send the one word, 'Right.' Nothing more."

"Very well, sir," said Tommy; and O'Hara left the room.

As soon as he was dressed Tommy went out, and found O'Hara coming along the path towards him.

"We're off now," he said.

There was no sign anywhere of the other men, and Tommy asked no questions, for he knew they would not be answered. He accompanied Dr. O'Hara down to the jetty, where Merton Haynes was sitting silently in the motor-launch. He gave Tommy a smile and a nod, but did not open his mouth.

O'Hara gave Tommy a grip of his fist and got into the launch.

"Good-bye, my lad—or, rather, au

revoir," he said. "And remember, speed is everything."

Tommy waved a farewell to the launch as it left the creek and sped down the river towards the sea. He guessed it was going to Havengore Island, the mysterious headquarters where O'Hara & Co. hung out. He remembered he had said nothing to O'Hara about Havengore, or about Dan's visit there, when they had tried to ram his boat and sink him. Tommy preferred to keep that to himself. He knew Dan would not want it talked about. O'Hara & Co. didn't know anything about Dan. They had probably thought he was an enemy and a spy.

"If only Dan were here now!" thought Tommy to himself, as he watched the launch fade away and vanish down Sea Reach. Then he turned and looked up-river.

There was a small speck, travelling at a rapid rate down the river from the direction of London. It was a motor-boat, and the next moment Tommy recognised it.

"It's Dan!" he exclaimed. "Good old Dan! By gum, I've got a surprise for him! I wonder if he's got one for me?"

The motor-boat dashed up the creek, Dan standing at the helm, and swung smartly alongside the jetty.

Chuffer Tests Comberite!

DAN sprang ashore, with a big package under his arm, and greeted Tommy joyously.

"Here's the stuff you wanted," he said. "How's business? All quiet on the battle front?"

"Right as rain," said Tommy. "What's doing in town?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

He did not want to make his own report till he had heard Dan's news. Dan took him by the arm, grinning, and marched him off to the bungalow.

"I've had a high old time," he said. "I spent the evening with the mysterious Carfax—the guy you saved from having his dinner poisoned. I've found out all about him."

"Who is he?" exclaimed Tommy.

"I'll tell you. As soon as I'd got your stuff I wrote out a message, and took it round to his house. I said in the note that I hoped he liked his dinner at Frascati's, and if he wanted to have a chat with me I was on the spot. I thought that'd draw him!" chuckled Dan, "and it did. I gave a note to a manservant, and was asked to come up at once. He's got no end swell rooms, and he's a swell himself. I think, though a mighty tough-looking nut."

"I'd signed the note 'D. B.' that's all. As soon as I met him, I could see he didn't know I wasn't the chap who warned him about not drinking the wine that Baldy doped. He never knew you were that bird, Tommy."

"He shook hands with me, very pleasant, and he asked me what 'D. B.' stood for. I told him my name was Dan Bennett."

"Well," he said, laughing. "I'm very much obliged to you indeed, Dan Bennett. You did me a good turn. As a matter of fact, I never had any intention of drinking that wine, anyway. But you're an uncommonly smart young chap, and I thank you. Is there anything I can do for you in return?"

"So I just laughed, and said: 'It depends whether you're a policeman, sir.'"

"Do you think I'm that?" he said.

"No," I said, "I don't. I've seen you around Chatham and Sheerness. And I think, sir, you belong to the Secret Service, and that bald-faced chap is up against you, and would like to do you in if he could. I've got an idea who he is, too. Would you like to tell me a bit more?"

"So there we were, Tommy. He saw I had got a good way into his affairs. He'd got to do one of two things; either explain and put me wise, or else shut up and tell me to clear out. He looked at me for quite a while, sayin' nothing, and thinking it over."

"Well, Dan Bennett," he says at last, "I think you're a sharp sort of chap, and I know you're honest. It's my notion you can be very useful to me—and you can do your country a big service, too. You know a bit too much already for me to get rid of you. Are you game to help me if I want you?"

"Of course, I said I was."

"Well," said he, his eyes twinkling a bit, "I'll tell you all about it."

"Gee!" said Tommy thoughtfully. "I wonder if he saw through you—an' through me, too?"

"I don't think so," said Dan; "though you never can tell with a chap like that. I'm pretty sure he doesn't know you're Tommy Comber. I said nothin' about you, of course. And, apart from that, he's a chap I'd trust all the way. Useful feller to have as a friend. Well, he made a clean breast of it to me. And I'll cut it short."

"To start with, it's very much as we suspected. Carfax is a Secret Service man, and a big bug at that. It seems the Government have got it in their

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 976.

heads to clear all these secret Russian Bolsheviks out, who are makin' a heap of trouble over here, and who don't stick at anything, murder included, if they get what they want. And Baldy is a Russian agent."

"Russian! What, Baldy?" exclaimed Tommy.

"Yes. A spy from this thing they call the Soviet in Moscow. He belonged to the murder gang over there, who mopped up everybody who didn't agree with them, and he used to lead Trotsky's Chinese troops. He's busy gettin' things ready in London."

"Why the dickens didn't Carfax run him in then?"

"Carfax don't do things that way. He wants to get 'em all. Baldy introduced himself to Carfax as a member of the French Secret Service, and said he had special information about these Moscow chaps, and could give him a leg-up. Carfax pretended to be as innocent as a lamb, and agreed to dine with Baldy at Frascati's, and hear all about it. But Baldy knew Carfax was the most dangerous man there is for him and his gang, and wanted to make him hop the twig at any cost. And I'm pretty sure that if it hadn't been for you Carfax would have copped it all right, and he's grateful."

"But how was it Carfax came down here on the island, where I found him when I first got here?" exclaimed Tommy.

"He must have known the gang had been snooping around here, and he wanted to find out what they were up to. I suppose you haven't seen anything of 'em?"

"Haven't I, by gum!" said Tommy; and he related all that had happened during the night, and also what O'Hara had told him.

Dan nearly fell down with astonishment. He was now the more excited of the two.

"I ought never to have left you, Tommy!" he cried.

"Oh, I don't know! It's all right now. But, you see, this gang of Reds is up against Dr. O'Hara and his pals, too."

"And those chaps were the gang that robbed the safe first time, and perhaps did poor old nunks in?" said Dan thoughtfully. "I say, Tommy, do you believe that?"

"I'm not sure," said Tommy slowly. "I'm never quite sure of anything O'Hara tells me. Who is O'Hara, anyway? We don't know. I've always told you I'm jolly sure he isn't Irish."

"Anyway, he saved your life. You'd have been for it if he had not turned up."

"I suppose so. I wonder what he and Haynes have done with those chaps they took prisoners, though?"

"Frankly, old scout, I don't care a button what was done with 'em!" said Dan cheerfully. "They were a mob of thugs, and anything they got they've asked for. It's no business of ours. I wonder if Carfax knows anything about Dr. O'Hara? He didn't mention him; and, of course, I couldn't say anything to him about O'Hara, or you either; it wouldn't have done."

"Well, I want to find out what the connection is between O'Hara and those thugs, as you call 'em. That's the most important thing."

"No, it ain't," said Dan. "The most important thing is to make the powder, and let everything else go hang! And

make it quick, for we don't know what sort of giddy hot water we may find ourselves in if we don't hurry."

"Of course; but that's as good as done. I can finish it to-day, now you've brought the stuff. Let's be at it."

They set to work, both in the highest spirits, for Tommy was sure he was on the right track this time; and when darkness fell they had finished the job. Tommy made several tests with small quantities of the powder, and proved that he had made it safe this time, and it could not go off of itself.

"You've made it safe, all right," said Dan. "But is it too safe? Will the giddy stuff explode at all now?"

"I'll bet my life on it!" said Tommy. "We'll try it soon after daybreak."

Comberite was finished—ready and complete. The great job was done.

There was nearly a pound of the powder. Dan thought it a disappointingly small quantity; but Tommy declared it was enough to shift Curlew Island off the map. They divided it into two equal quantities, which they bottled in two stoppered jars, and one of these, as soon as it was dark, they buried in one of the most remote places on the island out of harm's way. This was for a reserve. The other bottle they took into the bungalow with them.

"If anybody raids us to-night," said Dan, grinning, "we shall all go up in the giddy air together with this stuff here. But we'll keep watch and watch."

They did so, sitting up by turns, with the gun loaded. But the night passed perfectly peacefully, and the dawn broke with a soft, grey light. When they looked out there was a wet sea-mist drifting over the island; it was not very thick, but they could not see more than about half a mile.

"This fog is a bit of luck for us," said Dan, as they sallied out, after a hurried breakfast. "If there are any spies about they're less likely to see what we're doing. The trouble about Curlew Island—though it's a fine, lonely place—is that it's so flat, and there's more of it than you can watch properly. Anybody who's got a boat can land on it before you know they're there."

They took a good look round, but the island seemed as deserted as the tomb. Then Tommy took his jar of Comberite, and they set out for a place at the far end, where grew the only tree on the whole island—a big, gaunt elm. Dan rapidly dug a hole at its foot, while Tommy fixed up his jar with a detonator, and a long fuse to set the detonator off. They packed the jar round with earth and large stones, and Tommy lit the fuse.

"Scoot!" he said, trotting off towards the sea wall. "It's set to burn nearly half an hour, but don't take any giddy chances with Comberite!"

They crossed the island and lay down on the slope of the sea wall, looking back over it towards the elm-tree, which they could see like a giant spectre in the mist. They were now nearly a quarter of a mile from it, and Dan complained they were too far. He wanted to get a better view of the explosion.

"You're plenty near enough, my buck!" said Tommy. "And when it goes off, you duck your head down or you might cop it, even here."

They watched and waited. The time seemed interminable, and as it happened neither of them had a watch. Nothing happened; the island, swathed in fog, seemed as quiet as the grave.

"It's another giddy failure!" muttered Dan. And even Tommy felt his heart sink and sink as the minutes went by. Had he made a mess of it, after all? Was the secret of Comberite's lost science dead along with poor old nunks?

Dan suddenly gripped him by the arm. "Who's that yonder?" he said in a tense whisper. "There's someone crossing the island."

Tommy felt his heart stand still. A dim figure, vague in the mist, was moving across the marsh, away to the eastward of the tree. He raised his head. Was it some enemy, who had landed unsuspected by the boys? He felt sure, even at the distance, that he recognised the outlines of that heavy, slouching form.

"It's Chuffer!" he gasped. Chuffer Foss! So it was. Chuffer who had spied on the island before nunks died. Chuffer whose evidence had sent Tommy to the prison-ship for three years.

"It can't be! Yes, by gum, it is!" gasped Dan. "I say, he's making straight for the tree. He's been spyin'—he must have seen we were burying something there!"

Chuffer was still some two hundred yards away from the big elm tree. Tommy started up. His head was in a whirl. He yelled, and waved his arms. But Chuffer neither saw nor heard him; he was too far off.

Tommy no longer considered whether it was Chuffer or anybody else—the coming tragedy horrified him.

"The stuff'll go off any minute now!" he said hoarsely. "The wretched beggar'll be blown to pieces. We must stop him!"

He ran down the embankment. "Come back, you ass!" cried Dan, appalled. "You'll be blown up, too!"

He was too late to stop his friend. He ran after him. Just then Chuffer almost disappeared in a dip of the ground through which he had to pass on his way to the tree.

A startled cry came from Dan. He was just in time to see a huge column of dust and earth and smoke flung towards the sky and spreading all around, while an enormous smashed-up elm tree went soaring a hundred feet into the air as if it had been a straw. Owing to the distance, there was yet no sound whatever.

Then came a roar like fifty thunderclaps, echoing over the Thames mouth like the Day of Judgment, a great blast of hot wind swept over the marshes, nearly shaking the boys off their feet, and a rain of clods and stones and chunks of wood came falling all around them, and away beyond into the river.

The Vanished Body!

"THAT'S the end of Chuffer Foss!" said Dan thickly. It took the boys several seconds to recover themselves, so stunning had been the explosion, even at that distance. Then, without a word spoken, they both set off towards the spot as hard as they could run.

Comberite had proved its terrible power indeed. Where the tree had stood was a hole big enough to hide a small house in, and the marsh all around looked as if it had been wrecked by an earthquake. A shower of the biggest aeroplane bombs would not have wrought more havoc than that little bottle of powder. But neither of the boys did more than glance at it as they ran past. They were making for the spot beyond, where Chuffer had been seen.

They knew that nothing could have lived, except by a miracle, within two or three hundred yards of the explosion. And when they reached the dip of ground they saw Chuffer lying there.

He looked like nothing more than a little heap of rags. He seemed to have fallen into himself. They found him lying on his face, very still. Dan stooped beside him, and laid a hand on him gently. Presently Dan rose.

"Dead!" he muttered. Tommy was too dazed to say anything. He looked round him. The farther banks of the hollow was torn up by big stones, which the explosion had driven across into the earth with the force of cannon-balls.

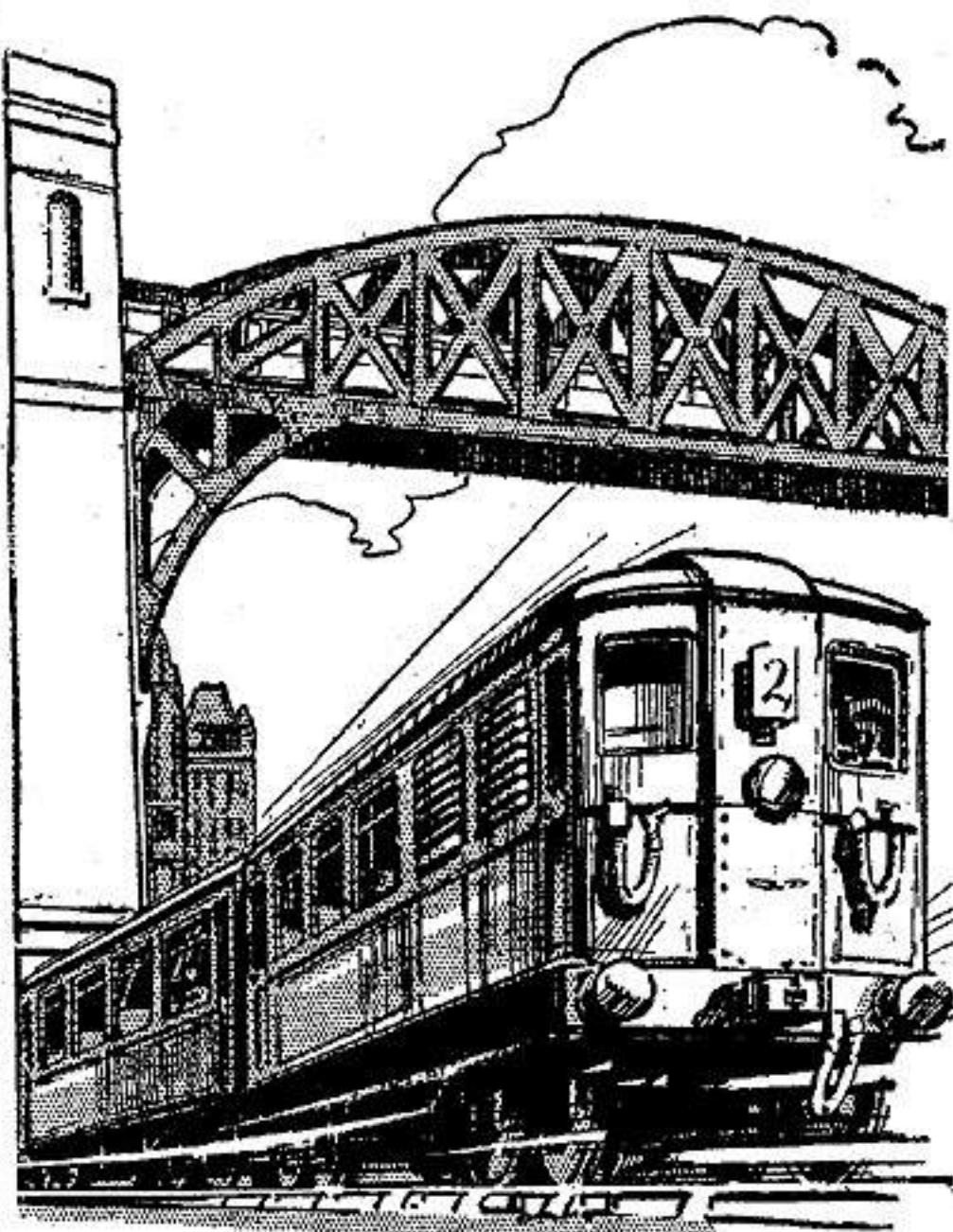
"Poor wretch!" muttered Tommy, with a shiver. Dan said nothing. There was nothing to say about Chuffer now.

"It's awful!" muttered Tommy. "I—I've killed him, in a way. It was my stuff did it—"

"Not your fault, Tommy," said Dan, turning away his head. "I don't want to say anything against the dead. But if he had any hand in the killing of your uncle—and I believe he did—who's going to say he get any less than the law would have given him? That's all. But he's dead, poor chap, and that's the end of Chuffer Foss. And here you are, Tom Comber, still alive and safe. That's what I care about most."

(Continued on page 28.)

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THE BOY WITH THE MILLION-POUND SECRET!

(Continued from previous page.)

Tommy made no answer to this. He stooped beside the prostrate form of his cousin, and laid a hand on his breast, inside his coat.

"Are you sure he's dead?" he said huskily.

"As near as makes no difference," said Dan—"if he isn't already."

"We can't leave him here. Help me lift him. We must get a gate, an' put him on it, an' carry him to the bungalow. Be quick! We've got to do all we can. There might be a chance for him yet."

Dan guessed there could be no chance left in life for Chuffer Foss. But he agreed to everything Tommy wanted, and they set out quickly in search of a gate. They could not carry him without one. There was only one gate on the island, in the fence near the bungalow, and they hurried off through the mist and set to work.

The hinges of the gate were clamped down, and it took them some time to get them free. They did the work as rapidly as they could, and in silence. Nearly three-quarters of an hour had

passed when they came back through the fog, carrying the gate between them, like a stretcher, and reached the hollow where Chuffer had met his fate. And there they halted, and the gate fell to the ground. The boys gazed around them in utter perplexity and dismay.

Chuffer's body had disappeared. For some moments they could not believe their eyes. But there was no doubt about it. Here was the place where he had lain. There was no sign of him whatever.

Dan sprang up on a small hillock from which he could see the marsh all around, as far as the distant river wall which loomed up like a dim line in the mist. There was nobody in sight. Chuffer had vanished off the face of the island.

(Tom and Dan were nonplussed! What had happened to Chuffer was a complete mystery to them. Look out for further startling developments in next week's thrilling instalment of this serial, chums.)



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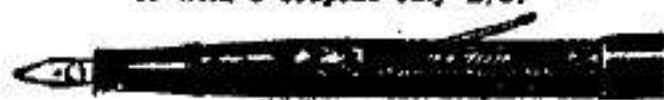
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