

"BOUNDER and CAPTAIN!" Grand School Story starring - - Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, INSIDE.

The MAGNET 2^D





BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Pal that Palled!

"SMITHY, old chap!" Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, seemed deaf.

At all events, if he heard Billy Bunter's fat voice, he heeded it not. "Smithy!" roared Bunter.

The Bounder was walking rather fast. Like Felix, he kept on walking.

The Greyfriars Remove had been dismissed for "break." A cheery crowd of juniors streamed out into the bright spring sunshine in the quad.

Billy Bunter, as soon as he was out of the Form-room, blinked round through his big spectacles for Smithy.

Bunter wanted to see Smithy. Smithy, on the other hand, did not want to see Bunter. It had never been on record that anybody ever did want to see Bunter. And of late—in the peculiar state of affairs in the Greyfriars Remove—Smithy had seen altogether too much of Bunter.

Deaf to the voice of the charmer, the Bounder walked out of the House, leaving Billy Bunter to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

"Smithy!" hooted Bunter.

Smithy was gone.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled in pursuit.

Outside the House, Harry Wharton & Co. were already punting a footer about. The Famous Five were to be seen, and plenty of other Remove fellows. But the Bounder seemed to have vanished.

Billy Bunter blinked round with an exasperated blink.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Join up, Bunter!"

"Rats! I say, seen my pal Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's question seemed to entertain the Remove fellows. Billy Bunter, of late, had constituted himself Smithy's pal; and the Bounder, for reasons of his own, did not say him nay. But there was no doubt that the less Smithy saw of his pal the better he liked it.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snorted the fat Owl. "Look here, I'm looking for Smithy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Which way did he go?"

"The whichfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Stop that ball, Bunter!" shouted Bob.

"Rats!"

Bunter, like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, rolled on. He had no time to waste on footer. The school shop was open during morning break. Break lasted only a quarter of an hour. So Bunter had to find his pal before fifteen minutes had expired. It was really urgent.

"Look out, Bunter—"

"Look out, fathead—"

Bunter did not look out. He had no intention of stopping the ball. But—owing to the fact that he did not look out—he stopped it unintentionally.

Crash!

"Oooooooh!"

"Goal!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat down.

He sat down suddenly and hard. For a moment he did not know what had happened, unless it was an earthquake.

But it was not an earthquake. It was

only a whizzing football landing on a fat ear.

"Ooooo! Ow! Yaroooooo!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well stopped!"

"Ow! Wow!" Bunter sat and roared. "Oh crikey! Ow! Who banged that footer at me? Ow! You've cracked my head—"

"That's all right, old bean," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "It's always been more or less cracked."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Ow! Give a fellow a hand up!" roared Bunter. "Can't you help a fellow up after knocking him down, you beast?"

"Certainly! Here goes!"

Bob Cherry stooped over the fat Owl of the Remove and took a grasp upon his ears.

The ears were extensive and gave him a good hold.

"Up you go—"

"Yaroooh!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Leggo my ears, you beast!" shrieked Bunter. "You're pulling them out of my head! Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Stop pulling my ears!" raved Bunter. "I jolly well won't vote for you in the election now!"

"Let me catch you voting for me!" retorted Bob. "I'll jolly well kick you if you do!"

"Why, you cheeky beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo—Ow—ow—wow!"

Billy Bunter scrambled frantically to his feet, and Bob released his crimson ears. The fat junior glared at him with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"All right now!" asked Bob cheerily. "Ow! Wow!" Bunter rubbed his fat ears. "You awful rotter! I've a jolly good mind to mop up the quad with you! I was thinking of voting for you in the Form election! Now I jolly well won't! See?"

"Kick him!" said Frank Nugent. "Boast!"

Billy Bunter dodged and rolled away, still rubbing his ears. The Famous Five pursued the ball, passing the Owl of the Remove by like the idle wind which they regarded not.

Bunter snorted with indignation as he rolled.

By a peculiar concatenation of circumstances Billy Bunter, hitherto the most negligible member of the Greyfriars Remove, had suddenly become the most important fellow in the Form—in his own fat estimation, at least.

Harry Wharton had resigned the captaincy of the Remove, and a Form election was pending.

One election had already been held, and the voting had tied; Billy Bunter, the odd man out, being absent on the occasion.

As the election was to be held all over again on Saturday, and as nobody had changed sides, it was evident that Billy Bunter would be able to decide the result on his own!

Bunter had the casting vote that was needed to decide the contest one way or the other, and in these circumstances Bunter fully realised his own importance.

Bob Cherry and his friends, however, were not the fellows to acknowledge it.

So far from admitting the enormous importance of William George Bunter, Bob seemed more disposed to kick him for putting on airs.

"The cheeky beast!" gasped Bunter. "I can jolly well make him captain of the Remove if I jolly well like; and he pulls a fellow's ears! I'll jolly well show him! Oh, here you are! I say, Smithy!"

He sighted Vernon-Smith under the elms.

The Bounder looked round—or, rather, glared round.

Smithy was rather more tactful than Bob in the matter of vote-catching. He had a due sense of the new and extraordinary importance of W. G. Bunter. He had even submitted to Bunter pulling on to him. But there was no doubt that his pal had, so to speak, palled! A pal like Bunter was liable to pull on any fellow in a very short time.

And Smithy's temper was rather uncertain. On this particular morning it was particularly uncertain, as Mr. Quelch had been ragging him in class. The Bounder was in no mood for Bunter, as his look plainly showed. He was in a mood to give the fat Owl what he had really been asking for for some days.

Billy Bunter rolled up to him, frowning. The Bounder was not in a good temper. Neither was Bunter, after establishing contact with the footer. A football on a fat ear was neither grateful nor comforting.

"Hold on, Smithy! Don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you!" booted Bunter. "Look here, I've been looking for you!"

"Oh, go and eat cake!" snapped the Bounder.

"Dodging a fellow!" exclaimed Bunter, with an accusing blink through his big spectacles. "You jolly well heard me call you, Smithy! If that's what you call pally—"

"You fat owl!"

"Oh, really, Smithy, I can jolly well tell you that you're not going the right way to bag my vote at the election on Saturday!" said Bunter impressively. "The whole thing's in my hands, as you jolly well know. You've got fifteen votes, and Cherry's got fifteen. And if I don't vote for you, where will you be?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith made a motion with his foot.

Doubtless Billy Bunter was a very important person in the present state of affairs. But, somehow or other, his immense importance only inspired both the rival candidates with an intense desire to kick him.

"I can tell you, it will pay you to be civil!" said Bunter, blinking at him severely. "I've been thinking it over, Smithy, and I'm not at all sure that I can give you my support."

Bunter was the fellow to make the most of the situation. His happy idea was to keep both candidates on tenterhooks.

"I'm willing to talk it over," he went on, more amicably. "Let's go along to the tuckshop and talk it over, Smithy. Mrs. Mumble has got a fresh lot of jam tarts in to-day—I mean, I'm willing to give you a hearing, and—and perhaps I may decide in your favour, after all, Smithy. Mind, I'm not making any

For terms the Bounder of Greyfriars has cast covetous eyes on the junior captaincy of the school. Now comes his chance to step into power—but the Bounder is soon made to realise that the job of junior captain is anything but a bed of roses!

promises, but I think I could go so far as to say—

Yow-ow-ow-wooooooop!"

For several days the Bounder had been longing to kick Bunter. Now that longing suddenly got the better of him.

A sudden grasp on his collar spun Bunter round. A boot landed hard on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars.

Bunter flew.

"Whoooooop!"

Bump!

"Oh crickey! Why, you beast—Yarooooh! I jolly well won't vote for you now! Oh crumbs! Ow! Leave off kicking me, you beast!" yelled Bunter, squirming frantically.

Having taken one kick, Smithy seemed to think that he might as well take another, and a few more. The most important member of the Remove squirmed and roared and yelled.

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Stop it! Oh crickey!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up and fled for his fat life. The Bounder stalked away, feeling better. Bunter, on the other hand, was feeling worse. There were drawbacks, after all, even to being the most important fellow in the Remove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Johnny Bull Speaks His Mind!

"It's rotten!" growled Bob Cherry. "The rottenness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That fat idiot—" said Johnny Bull.

"That benighted owl—" said Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded. He agreed with his chums that the peculiar situation in the Remove was rotten; but he did not see what was to be done.

The Famous Five were gathered to tea in Study No. 1.

It was Friday, and on the following day the Form election was to take place. Every man in the Remove was more or less keen about that election. Every man was certain to vote, and it was known how every man's vote would go—with the doubtful exception of Billy Bunter.

It was odd enough and irritating enough that the decision of so important a matter should rest in the fat hands of the Owl of the Remove. But there was no doubt that it did.

"It's rotten!" repeated Bob, as he cracked his second egg. "That frabjous Owl ought not to vote at all, really!"

"Well, every man in the Form has a vote," said Nugent. "But—"

"I'm not at all keen on getting in," said Bob. "I'm only taking it up because Wharton's thrown it over. But I don't think Smithy would be any good as captain of the Form."

"No good at all!" said Harry Wharton. "From what I hear, he has been making promises right and left, and he won't be able to keep many of them. If he does, the football will go to pot!"

"You oughtn't to have resigned!" granted Bob.

"The fellows wanted me to," said Harry quietly.

"They wouldn't have wanted you to if you hadn't put their backs up. If you could have kept your temper—"

Wharton's face set a little.

"Never mind my temper now, Bob," he said. "That isn't the matter under discussion. I've resigned, and that's over and done with. The question is whether a decent man gets in as captain of the Form or a black sheep like Smithy!"

"If you put up for re-election I believe you would get in. The fellows were rather sick with you, but they've had time to get over it. I'll stand down willingly, and leave it between you and the Bounder."

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I'm out of it," he answered. "The fellows cut up rusty because I refused to play Smithy in the Rookwood match. If they were right, I was wrong."

"Well, you were wrong," said Johnny Bull. "We lost the match because you refused to play Smithy. What's the good of beating about the bush?"

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

"Grunt!" from Johnny Bull.

"You fellows all think the same," he said. "Wharton played the goat because he had a feud on with the Bounder. If he doesn't know it, he ought to be told so."

"I've been told so often enough," said Harry. "I'd rather not hear it all over again, if you don't mind, Bull."

"The golden silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, my esteemed Johnny!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Anyhow, it's a good arguing about that," said Frank Nugent hastily. "What's done, is done!"

"The donefulness is preposterous!" "I'm not putting up again, anyhow," said Harry Wharton. "That can be washed out. Besides, I've not really got the time for keeping up with games now. You fellows know how I stand."

I'm swotting for a scholarship examination, and if I don't get through I shall not be able to come back to Greyfriars next term. I've got to go all out to have a chance. I shall have to let footer slide a good deal for the rest of this term. I shan't be able to play in the matches, even if our new skipper asks me—which isn't likely, if it turns out to be Smithy."

"That's rot, too!" said Johnny Bull. Wharton stared at him across the table.

"What the thump do you mean, Bull?" he demanded.

"I mean what I say," answered Johnny Bull in his slow, stolid way. "You haven't told us anything about your quarrel with your uncle, Colonel Wharton, though I suppose Nugent asks me—which isn't likely, if it turns out to be Smithy. But I jolly well know you're in the wrong!"

Wharton started, and his face flushed.

"And how the thump do you know that when you know nothing about the matter?" he snapped.

"Because I'm a fool," answered Johnny calmly. "You've got some row on with your uncle; you've refused to take an allowance from him, or to stay at school at his expense; you've even cleared out of gates to avoid him when he came down to see you. You think you've got a jolly good reason, but you haven't. You're acting badly!"

"Johnny, old man—" murmured Bob.

The flush died out of Harry Wharton's face. He was pale with anger. There was a deep, uncomfortable silence in Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton broke it. "I don't think my family affairs are any business of yours, Bull! The less you say about them the better!"

"I'm your friend, I hope," said Johnny calmly, "and it's a friend's duty to tell a fellow when he's playing the goat and help to set him right. I don't know anything about the matter, except what Bunter got hold of and tattled up and down the Form. But I know this—you're in the wrong, and you're acting badly, and it's up to your pals to tell you so!"

Johnny Bull paused, and looked at Wharton, quite unmoved by the concentrated anger in his face.

"That's what I think, and that's what I've been going to say for some time," he added. "I've got it off my chest now. You're making a fool of yourself! Whatever it is you've got up against Colonel Wharton, you ought to see him and get it off your chest, and then you'll jolly well find that it's all moonshine! And that's that!"

"Confound your impudence!" broke out Wharton, his eyes blazing.

Johnny Bull arose from the table.

"Chuck it at that!" he said. "I'm not going to row with you, old bean—you've rowed with enough fellows lately, without rowing with your own pals, too. If you've got any sense, you'll think over what I've said and act like a sensible fellow. If not, I suppose you'll go on playing the giddy ox, and I wish you joy of it. Now I'll get out before you kick up a shindy, old chap!"

And, with that, Johnny Bull marched out of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton half rose from the table. Frank Nugent's hand dropped on his shoulder and pushed him back into his chair.

The door closed after Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton breathed hard as he

glanced from one uncomfortable face to another. Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh and Frank Nugent did not speak. But he was conscious that Johnny Bull had only uttered the thoughts of the Co.

"So you fellows think—" he began, at last.

"Never mind what we think, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "It's no bizney of ours. But I'd like to see you set right with your uncle again. He's a jolly good sort."

"The good-sortfulness of the esteemed colonel is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh gently.

"You think I've taken the bit between my teeth and acted like a hot-headed fool—for nothing, or next to nothing!" said Wharton bitterly. "Nugent knows whether I have or not. Suppose I told you—" His voice trembled. "Suppose I told you that Colonel Wharton was fed-up—that he looks on me as a burden he ought not to be expected to bear—"

He broke off again, his face flaming. "That's rubbish!" said Bob, at once.

"Suppose I told you that he's written it—that I've seen those very words, in his own hand?"

"My esteemed chum—"

"Well, that's how the matter stands!" said Harry Wharton. "I never meant to tell you—but now you know! Now let it drop!"

"If—if that's really how it stands—" said Bob, rather blankly.

"That's how it stands!"

"But—"

"Oh, let it drop! Do you think it's a pleasant subject to me?" exclaimed Wharton savagely.

There was silence again in Study No. 1. It was broken by the door opening. A fat face looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

For once, Billy Bunter's arrival was not unwelcome. It broke the tension. The fat junior rolled into the study and dropped cheerfully into the seat vacated by Johnny Bull.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1.

BILLY BUNTER grinned. The Owl of the Remove was short-sighted, and he was not specially observant. But he could see that there was trouble of some sort in Study No. 1. Harry Wharton's face was dark and frowning, and the other three fellows were silent and glum.

Bunter had no doubt that he knew what the trouble was. Obviously—to Bunter—the chums of the Remove were worrying about him—his views, his attitude, his intentions, and his importance generally. Wherefore, William George Bunter grinned a fat grin.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right!" said the fat junior reassuringly. "Don't you worry. I'm going to back you up! After all, we're pals, ain't we? I say, what have you got for tea? If you've got anything decent, Wharton, you might trot it out, what?"

Wharton opened his lips, and closed them again.

He was not really the fellow to waste a lot of politeness on Billy Bunter, especially in his present mood. But Bunter, after all, was the man who mattered in the Form election; and Wharton was very keen to get Bob Cherry in—and almost as keen to keep the Bouncer out. So he refrained

from uttering the words that rose to his lips—words that certainly would not have had a pleasing effect on Bunter.

Bunter blinked over the tea-table. Two eggs remained, and the fat junior annexed them at once. There was still a pile of toast, and the distinguished guest annexed that, too, in bulk. He filled his capacious mouth before he spoke again.

"Is there a cake in the cupboard, Franky?"

Frank Nugent glanced at his chums, smiled faintly, and rose from the table. There was a cake in the cupboard, as no doubt Bunter was aware. The cake was transferred to the table.

Bunter smiled genially. This was better! Not, of course, what such an important person deserved; but undoubtedly better than the kicking he had received from the Bouncer.

Bob Cherry stirred restlessly, and grunted. His friends had explained to Bob that he might as well, in the circumstances, be civil to Bunter. Bob had to admit that it was only judicious. But it was irksome. If his fate as candidate for the Form captaincy was in Bunter's fat hands, Bunter was no doubt worth placating. But Bob did not want to placate him; he wanted to kick him.

"I say, you fellows, you can cheer up!" said Bunter kindly. "You look rather like a lot of mourning fowls—he, he, he! I'm not letting you down, Bob, old fellow! I've turned that cad Smithy down."

Grunt from Bob.

"He's mean!" said Bunter, blinking at the juniors through his big spectacles. "Absolutely mean. Bad-tempered brute, too! Actually kicking a chap."

"Did Smithy kick you?" grunted Bob.

"He jolly well did!"

"I hope he kicked you hard."

"Why, you cheeky beast—" began Bunter wrathfully.

"My esteemed Bob," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, "politeness is the prerogative of punctual princes, as the English proverb remarks."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"If a chap can't be civil—" began Bunter hotly.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob. "See you later, you men."

And Bob rose and left the study. There was no doubt that Robert Cherry, of the Remove, was a bad hand at electioneering. He realised that himself, and decided to clear before he yielded to the temptation to kick Bunter.

The fat junior blinked after him wrathfully.

"Nice sort of manners!" he grunted. "If that beast thinks I'm jolly well going to vote for him when he talks to a fellow like that, he's jolly well making a mistake."

"Have some cake, old bean!" said Nugent diplomatically. "It's rather a good cake! Help yourself."

Bunter helped himself liberally.

"Not a bad cake!" he agreed. "Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course. Still, not a bad cake! If you fellows don't want any, I'll finish it."

"Oh, do!" gasped Nugent.

"I will, old fellow!"

Bunter did! It was not a small cake, but it did not last Bunter long. He blinked over the table, like Alexander of old, in search of fresh worlds to conquer.



"Look out, Bunter!" shouted Bob Cherry, as the football sailed through the air in the direction of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter heeded him not, however, and the leather landed full on his fat ear. Crash! "Ooooooh!" roared Bunter, while the footballers howled with laughter.

"Where's the jam?" he asked.
 "Hem! There isn't any jam, old chap! Have some more toast."

"I think you might have had some jam! You know I like jam!" said Bunter. "This is a pretty measly spread to ask a fellow to. You've been on jolly short commons in this study lately—I suppose because Wharton's hard up now! He, he, he! Must be rotten to be hard up, Harry, old chap! I can't say I've ever been through it myself—but it must be pretty rotten! You're looking jolly down in the mouth, too."

"You fat chump!"
 "Oh, really, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton rose from the table and moved to the window. Bunter blinked after him and grinned at Nugent and Hurree Singh.

"Hard lines on poor old Wharton, his uncle turning him down like that, what?" said Bunter agreeably. "Frightfully touchy, isn't he? Fellows make jokes about his temper up and down the Form, you know. Skinner says—"

"Never mind what Skinner says," interrupted Frank hastily, as Wharton made a movement. "So you've made up your mind how you're going to vote to-morrow, Bunter?"

"Well, I don't see how I can back up that beast Smiddy," said the fat Owl. "He's mean, for one thing; and he kicked me, for another. And you fellows have always been my pals, haven't you?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes."

"The palfulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly, "has been terrific. The esteemed Bunter's ridiculous friendship is a boonful blessing."

Billy Bunter finished the last slice of toast, and rose from the table.

"Well, you're my pals, and you can rely on me," he said. "Of course, I shall expect you to treat me decently. One good turn deserves another, what?"

"Um!"
 "By the way," added Bunter casually, "did I mention to you fellows that I was expecting a postal order?"

"I—I think you did!" gasped Nugent.
 "I—I seem to remember something of the sort."

"The rememberfulness is preposterous."
 "It hasn't come!" said Bunter. "It's from one of my titled relations, you know, so there's no doubt about it. But there's been some delay in the post, and it-it hasn't come. It leaves me in rather a hole."

Billy Bunter paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he did not get one.

"The fact is, I'm actually short of money at the present moment!" continued the fat Owl, blinking seriously at Nugent and Hurree Singh. "It's rather ridiculous—but there it is! I suppose you fellows could lend me the five bob—I mean the ten bob—that is to say, the pound—I suppose you could lend me the pound, till my postal order comes."

Again Bunter paused for a reply. Again there was none.

"Don't all speak at once!" said Bunter sarcastically.

The three juniors in Study No. 1 did not all speak at once. They did not speak at all. They only gazed at Bunter.

"Well, what about it?" asked Bunter. "I've no doubt Smiddy would lend me the quid, if I asked him—only I don't

care to ask the fellow. He would expect me to vote for him, if I did. Still, a fellow expects his pals to treat him like a pal, you know. What about it?"

"Oh, get out, you fat frump!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Bunter blinked at him.
 "I'm not asking you, Wharton! I know you're hard up—you haven't a bean. He, he, he! Franky, old chap—"

Frank Nugent rose, and opened the door.

"Travel!" he said, briefly.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Roll away, you fat chump!"

"If you're too jolly mean to lend a fellow a quid when he's been disappointed about a postal order, you can hardly expect him to back you up, Nugent! I shall have to think again about voting for your man!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "In fact, I hardly think that Bob Cherry is the right man—"

Harry Wharton came across the study from the window. Billy Bunter gave him one blink, and rolled out of the doorway hastily. But he did not roll quite quickly enough. There was a thud as a foot landed on a pair of tight trousers, and Bunter shot into the passage with a yell.

"Yaroooooh!"

The study door slammed after the fat Owl. Evidently that study was done with electioneering, so far as William George Bunter was concerned.

"Owl! Beast!" yelled Bunter through the keyhole. "Yah! Beast! I'm jolly glad you're hard up, and I jolly well

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won't lend you anything when my postal order comes! Yab!"

After delivering that Partbian shot, Billy Bunter rolled away down the passage. He wriggled as he rolled. Billy Bunter had often been kicked, though not so often as he deserved. But he had never found it an enjoyable process.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry's cheery voice greeted him on the Remove landing. "Is this a new thing in cake walks?"

"Owl! That beast Wharton kicked me!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Bob, old chap, you could lick Wharton—"

"Eh?"

"You could jolly well lick him," said Bunter. "I'll hold your jacket, old chap! I'll tell you what, old fellow! You go along and lick Wharton, and I'll jolly well vote for you to-morrow! There!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, staring at the fat Owl. "So Wharton licked you, did he?"

"Owl! Yes!"

"Hard?" asked Bob.

"Yes, jolly hard!"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Bob. "I'll see if I can quack you harder!"

"Eh? What? Yacoooh! Keep off, you beast!" roared Bunter.

Thud!

"Yoooooooooooo!"

"Was that harder?" asked Bob, cheerily. "If not, I'll try again! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

But answer there came none. Bunter was gone.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Buttering Bunter!

MR. QUELCH, the following morning, glanced over his class several times, with a rather grim eye.

That morning there was a good deal of suppressed excitement in the Remove. The Form election was in all minds. Never had the classic tongue of Virgil and Horace appealed less to the Greyfriars Remove.

Even studious fellows like Mark Linley and Penfold, found it difficult to give due attention to the words of wisdom that fell from their Form master's august lips. Even Harry Wharton, who in these days was the hardest worker in the Form, found his thoughts wandering.

Mr Quelch, no doubt, knew that a Form election impended. But he took the view—natural to a beak—that in the Form-room, Form work should fill the minds of his pupils, to the exclusion of all extraneous matters.

Lines fell rather thickly in the Remove that morning. In fact, they fell like leaves in ancient Vallombrosa.

Fellows persisted in whispering to one another; and whatever they were whispering about, it certainly was not Latin grammar.

"Balsover!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Owl! Yes, sir!"

"You were speaking to Skinner.

"Take fifty lines."

Five minutes later:

"Bunter!"

"Owl! Yes, sir! I wasn't speaking.

sir!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "I was only saying to Wibley—"

"Take fifty lines."

"But—but I wasn't speaking, sir!"

protested Bunter in dismay. "I—I never said a word, sir! Wibley will tell you, sir! He heard me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Take a hundred lines, Bunter."

"Oh lor!"

Third school had never seemed so long to the Lower Fourth. Mr. Quelch was dealing with deponent verbs; which had an appeal to few—very few—members of his Form. Those irritating verbs, which are passive in form but active in meaning, bored most of the Remove inexpressibly—especially on election day.

"Mauleverer!"

"Owl! Yaas, sir!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

"You are not giving me your attention, Mauleverer!"

"Owl! Yaas! I—I heard all you fellows were saying—I—I mean, I was listenn' to every word, sir!" gasped his lordship.

"You will take fifty lines."

"Oh gad! I mean, thank you, sir!"

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor!"

"Do not utter ridiculous ejaculations in the Form-room, Bunter!" thundered the Remove master. "Bunter, you are whispering again. You are giving no attention to this lesson, Bunter."

"Owl! Yes, sir! I—I'm rather fond of—of deponent verbs, sir—"

"Bunter. You will define a deponent verb."

Really, that was an easy one! But nothing in the way of knowledge was easy to Bunter.

"Oh, certainly, sir! A—a—a deponent verb is—is—is—"

"Is what?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Is—is—is nominative in form—"

"What?"

"And—and accusative in meaning, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "How dare you, sir? I repeat, how dare you!"

"Oh crickey! Isn't that right, sir?" groaned Bunter. "I—I meant to say, sir, that a deponent verb is—is—is—"
Bunter cudgelled his fat brains, trying to remember what a deponent verb was. "It—it's something-or-other in form, sir, and—and what-do-you-call-it in meaning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, you utterly obtuse boy—"

"I—I—I mean—"

"Bunter, you will write out a hundred times that a deponent verb is passive in form but active in meaning."

"Oh crickey!"

"If there is any more whispering in this class," said Mr. Quelch portentously, "every boy who whispers will be detained for the half-holiday."

"Oh!"

There was no more whispering in the Remove. Fellows almost clamped their jaws shut. Detention for the afternoon meant missing the Form election.

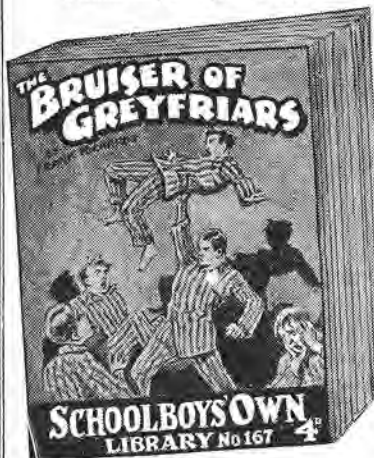
Never had there been a more orderly and circumspect class at Greyfriars School than the Remove during the remainder of third lesson. A pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room, and they hung on Mr. Quelch's words as if they were pearls of price.

But they were glad when it was over. The time for dismissal came at last, and the Remove marched out.

The Bouncer joined Billy Bunter as that fat and fatuous youth rolled down the Form-room passage. Smithy was smiling his most agreeable smile. With the election now so close at hand, the Bouncer was, apparently, prepared to

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acknowledge Bunter once more as a

"Coming out, old fellow?" asked Smithy.

Billy Bunter came to a halt and fixed his spectacles on him. He had not forgotten the kicking of the previous day.

He blinked at Smithy's feet and allowed his blink to rise slowly till it reached Smithy's face. Then it descended again to the Bounder's feet and again ascended to his face.

This was what Bunter called looking a fellow up and down, and it was intended to have a withering effect.

"Who are you calling old fellow?" asked Bunter, with more dignity than grammar.

Vernon-Smith compressed his lips. Several fellows stopped to look on, apparently amused.

"You can keep your distance, Vernon-Smith!" said the fat Owl, with crushing dignity. "I'm done with you."

"Look here!" muttered the Bounder, biting his lip.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"That's enough from you!" he said. "I don't want to have anything to say to you, Smithy! Sheer off!"

And Bunter turned his back and rolled away contemptuously, his very spectacles gleaming with scorn.

Vernon-Smith stared after him. He felt an almost irresistible inclination to assist Bunter's departure with a hefty kick. But he restrained that natural inclination. He felt that he had, in fact, kicked Bunter already not wisely but too well. Obviously, it was more judicious not to kick him till after the election.

At dinner that day Skinner & Co. were very attentive to Bunter. Skinner and his friends were backing up the Bounder for all they were worth. They passed him things, and Skinner even refrained from making a remark when Bunter annexed his helping of pie.

After dinner Skinner and Snoop walked out with Bunter, one on either side of the important Owl.

"You won't be late for the election this time, old man?" asked Skinner affectionately.

"Oh, no. I shall be on time!" assented Bunter.

"You're voting for our man, of course?"

Bunter grinned.

"If Smithy gets in," remarked Snoop casually, "it means an easier time all round. Smithy isn't the man to report a chap for cutting games practice."

"And you know what Cherry's like!" observed Skinner.

"Something in that!" agreed Bunter thoughtfully. "I'm thinking it over. The fact is, I don't think much of either candidate. A pair of rotters, if you ask me. But I'll tell you what. Let's talk it over. I've got an impet to take in to Quelch before the election. If you fellows like to help me—"

"Hallo, there's Skots calling me!" said Snoop, and he walked away.

Skinner hesitated. He was very keen on bagging Bunter's vote for his candidate. But he was not keen on writing out Bunter's imposition.

"I'd be jolly glad to help you, old chap—" began Skinner.

"Good man!"

"Only, I'm afraid Quelch would spot my fist!" added Skinner, shaking his head.

"Well, chance that," said Bunter calmly.

"You—you see—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Bunter airily. "I dare say Toddy will do the

impet for me. Toddy's rather keen on bagging my vote for Cherry."

"Come up to the study, old fellow," said Skinner, making up his mind.

Billy Bunter grinned complacently as he rolled after Skinner.

It was not uncommon for one fellow to help another with an impet, though it was very uncommon for Harold Skinner to do so. But Bunter's vote in the election was worth it.

"I'll do the first six lines, and give you a start, old chap!" said Bunter generously, as they entered Study No. 7.

Skinner scowled. Helping Bunter, apparently, was to take the form of writing ninety-four lines to Bunter's half dozen.

The fat Owl blinked at him.

"If you don't want to help a chap, Skinner—"

Skinner changed the scowl into a grin.

"That's all right, old bean! Let's get going."

Billy Bunter scrawled half a dozen lines. Then he reposed comfortably in the study armchair and sucked toffee while Skinner did the rest, in a colourful imitation of Bunter's almost illegible scrawl.

Skinner was tired of deponent verbs by the time he had finished, though doubtless he was never likely to forget that those interesting verbs were passive in form and active in meaning!

"There you are, Bunter!" he said, at last. "I fancy that will pass all right with Quelch."

Bunter heaved his weight out of the armchair and blinked at the imposition.

"Right as rain!" he agreed.

He picked up the lines and rolled out of the study. Skinner followed him.

"And you're going to vote for Smithy, old man," he said. "Mind you don't forget to turn up in the Rag."

"Eh?"

"You're voting for Smithy—"

"I never said I'd vote for Smithy, did I?" asked Bunter, blinking at him.

Harold Skinner breathed hard and deep.

"Look here, Bunter, now I've done your lines—"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"You fat rotter—"

"If you're going to call a fellow names, Skinner—"

"I—I—I mean, look here, old chap, I—"

"You've helped me with my lines," said Bunter, with dignity. "I hope you don't think that's going to make any difference to my voting in the Form election, Skinner. A fellow has to vote according to his conscience."

"His whither?" ejaculated Skinner. It seemed to be news to him that Billy Bunter had a conscience.

"His conscience, old chap! I dare say you're not quite so particular as I am, Skinner. Most fellows aren't. But I can jolly well tell that I'm not a fellow to be bribed."

"Look here—" hissed Skinner.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"That's enough!" he said. "I shall turn up at the election. I haven't decided how to vote yet. You needn't say any more."

Bunter rolled away with the lines.

Skinner glared after him with an almost homicidal glare. The fat Owl had a narrow escape of having that imposition jammed down his back and his bullet head banged on the wall of the Remove passage.

But Skinner restrained his feelings. Bunter's vote was still, so to speak, on the knees of the gods, and his head was not to be banged—not till after the election!

Until the election was over Bunter had to be buttered. Afterwards—Skinner mentally promised him all sorts of things afterwards!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Makes Up His Mind!

BUNTER, old bean!" Billy Bunter grinned scornfully.

The fat jirkin was loafing in the quad, and the wrinkle in his podgy brow indicated that he was thinking.

Bunter, in fact, had food for thought. It was three o'clock, and in half an hour more, the Form election was to take place in the Rag; after which, Billy Bunter's unusual importance would fade away as suddenly as it had arisen.

Bunter had not yet stated how he was going to vote.

Until the latest possible moment he was clinging to his importance. Both the rival candidates were, in Bunter's fat opinion, hanging breathlessly on his decision; and that was a state of affairs that Bunter liked. He was unwilling to bring it to an end.

Still, at three-thirty it had to end! So Bunter was thinking it out when Peter Todd came along with his most agreeable smile on his face.

There were pros and cons in the case. Bunter liked neither candidate. Both, in fact, were beasts! In the first place he had bestowed his support and his friendship on the Bounder—but the Bounder had been distinctly ungrateful—even to the extent of kicking Bunter.

That had, so to speak, torn it, and Bunter had promptly turned the Bounder down, with the intention of carrying his valuable support over to the other side.

On the other hand, Bob Cherry had kicked him, too!

So far as that went, matters were equal. Both the rival candidates, instead of backing in Bunter's smiles, and acknowledging his vast importance, had kicked him! Both of them, he more than suspected, were yearning to kick him again!

Really, there was not a pin to choose between them! Bunter had not yet made up his fat mind! Plenty of other fellows, certainly, were willing to help him make it up. The Remove were still evenly divided—it had become a point of honour with the fellows, to stick to the side they had adopted; nobody was going to change sides. Which meant that the voting would tie again—unless Bunter voted and settled the matter. All sorts of blandishments had been wasted on Bunter—but the oracle, so to speak, was still dumb.

Bunter grinned a fat grin as Toddy came along and addressed him in affectionate tones, such as he might have used to a long-lost brother. Bunter knew what Toddy wanted. He had not sought out his fat study-mate merely for the pleasure of his fascinating company.

"Chuck it, old man," said Bunter, "I'm thinking."

Toddy forbore to ask him what he was doing it with.

"I've been looking for you, old chap!" he said.

"Well, now you've found me!" said Bunter, with calm dignity.

"You're backing up our man, what?" cooed Toddy. "About time we got along to the Rag! Come along with me, old fellow."

Bunter did not stir.

He was in no hurry to get along to the Rag. Besides, from where he stood, THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,255.

leaning on the trunk of an elm, he had an enjoyable view.

He was facing the window of the school shop!

"I'm thinking it out, Toddy," he answered, without moving. "Can't say I like either of the beasts much! Of course, in some ways, Smithy would make a better Form captain than Cherry."

"How do you make that out, fathead —I mean, old fellow?"

"Well, Skinner thinks that if Smithy gets in, a man will be able to dodge games practice without being reported to Wingate."

"Oh crumbs!"

That consideration, evidently, had a strong appeal for Bunter!

"Still, Cherry's not a bad chap in some ways!" said the fat Owl. "He's a good deal more civil than Smithy, if a fellow drops into his study to tea."

"Oh!" gasped Toddy.

"And—he's not reeking with money like Smithy, but he's a jolly good deal easier to touch for a small loan when a fellow's been disappointed about a postal order," added Bunter thoughtfully.

Peter Todd gazed at him. Bunter evidently had his own original ideas about the qualities that were required in a Form captain!

"Look here, old fat bean," said Toddy, "stuck to your own study! Dutton's voting for Bob, and so am I."

"Well, Dutton's rather a silly ass," said Bunter. "And so are you, Toddy, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

Peter Todd suppressed his emotions. Skinner had refrained from banging Bunter's bullet head on the passage wall. Toddy refrained from banging it on the elm. Quite an unusual amount of self-control was being exercised in the Greyfriars Remove these days.

"You needn't jaw, Toddy," said Bunter calmly. "I'm going to think it out. I may vote for your man. I may vote for Smithy! I haven't made up my mind yet."

"You frabious fat idiot!"

"That's enough, Toddy! You can cheer off."

"I-I mean—"

"I know what you mean!" chuckled Bunter. "Sheer off, I tell you! Your face worries me, Toddy."

Once more suppressing his emotions, Peter Todd cheered off. Billy Bunter grinned after him cheerfully as he went. The fact that Toddy was pining to kick him, and could not venture, in the circumstances, to kick him, had an entertaining effect on Bunter. He was quite enjoying the situation.

He chuckled again as he saw the Bounder coming along. He fully expected blandishments from the Bounder—and he was prepared to look him up and down with ineffable scorn, and leave him on tenterhooks. Rather to his surprise, Smithy passed him unregarding, and walked into the tuckshop.

Billy Bunter's blink followed Smithy as he disappeared within that attractive establishment. He detached himself from the tree-trunk and rolled after Vernon-Smith, into Mrs. Mimble's shop. Smithy was standing at the counter, giving orders on a lavish scale.

"Two of those plum cakes—the large ones."

"Yes, sir!" said Mrs. Mimble in her most honeyed tones. The Bounder was an ever-welcome customer in the school shop; and on this occasion he was evidently spreading himself to an unusual extent.

"Three pots of jam—"

"Yes, sir."

"Six dozen jam tarts—"

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Billy Bunter's eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles.

"Three dozen doughnuts—"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunter.

"Two dozen chocolate eclairs—"

"I—I say, Smithy—"

"A pound of coconut joes—"

"Smithy, old chap—"

The Bounder did not heed Bunter, or seem aware of his presence. He continued to give orders royally; and Mrs. Mimble continued to stack up the goods on the counter, with her sweetest smile.

Billy Bunter eyed that sweetest stack with ravenous eyes. Smithy was spending pounds—actually pounds! Evidently there was going to be a spread on an unusual scale; such a spread as had seldom or never been seen in the Greyfriars Remove.

Bunter jerked at the Bounder's sleeve. "I—I—I say, Smithy, old chap—"

he gasped.

The Bounder glanced at him at last.

"Don't bother, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"What do you want?" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"N-n-nothing, old chap! Only—I—I say, Smithy, are you standing a spread, old fellow?"

"There's going to be tea in my study after the election," answered Smithy. "All the fellows who vote for me are coming. We're going to celebrate the occasion." He turned carelessly away from the fat Owl. "Let's see—oh, a couple of dozen meringues, ma'am."

Bunter's fat mouth watered.

Will readers please note that next week's MAGNET will be on sale Thursday, March 24th, instead of Saturday, March 26th.

"And a box of chocolate creams—that big box will do—"

Bunter gasped.

"That's the lot," said the Bounder. He tossed a five-pound note on the counter. "Change that, will you?"

"I—I say, Smithy, I—I'll help you carry the things to your study, if you like."

"Don't bother, Bunter! I want those things delivered to my study at four o'clock, Mrs. Mimble."

"Certainly, sir!"

The Bounder took his change and strolled to the door, still unconscious of Billy Bunter. Bunter rolled after him.

"I—I—I say, Smithy—I—I'm going to vote for you, old chap."

"Are you?" said the Bounder indifferently.

"The—the fact is, Smithy, I—I've always thought you ought to be captain of the Remove," gasped Bunter. "There never was a fellow more suited for the job, old chap! You're a better man than Wharton, any day; and as for Bob Cherry—pah! You're the man, Smithy! I—I—I've thought so all along, old chap."

"Well, if you still think so at half-past three, turn up in the Rag and vote," said the Bounder carelessly, and he walked away to the House.

Bunter blinked after him.

He did not like the Bounder's manners a little bit. The fellow was distinctly cheeky. But he had made up his fat mind.

With that gorgeous spread in prospect for all Smithy's supporters, Billy Bunter was only too anxious for the election to take place, and to record

his vote in favour of the candidate who was so obviously the best man for the job.

The die was cast!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Election!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came into the Rag together. Bob Cherry was looking, as usual, cheery and good-humoured, apparently not worrying about the result of the election. Most of the Remove fellows were already there, and it was certain that not a man would miss the voting. Lord Mauleverer, it was true, had forgotten the important function that impended; but Johnny Bull had rooted his lordship out of his study, and Mauly was there. Billy Bunter was there, too, with the Bounder's party, which seemed to indicate that he had decided, after all, to support Smithy. Billy Bunter was, in fact, now one of the Bounder's most loyal supporters. He was eager for the election to be over, in order that the more important function—the spread in Smithy's study—might follow.

"I say, you fellows, it's time Wingate was here!" Bunter was squeaking, as the Famous Five came in.

"Five minutes yet," said Skinner.

"We're all here, I think," said Bolsover major, with an aggressive glare at the rival party. "If that fat idiot Bunter has made up his mind—"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Bunter's made up his mind—such as it is!" grinned Wibley.

"I'm voting for Smithy!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I've thought it out, you know. Smithy's spread has got nothing to do with it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, I wish Wingate would come in and get it over! What's the good of wasting time?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith strolled over to the Famous Five. They eyed him rather grimly.

"Cheerio, old bean!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob cheerfully.

"Last time we voted for ourselves," said the Bounder. "But—"

"You mean, you voted for yourself," said Harry Wharton curtly, "and we jolly well made Bob do the same!"

"Just as you like. Well, it's rather a rotten idea for a candidate to vote for himself," said Smithy. "I'll cut it out if you'll do the same, Cherry. It comes to the same thing."

"Done!" said Bob at once. "It comes to the same thing, as you say, but it looks better."

"You've got Bunter, after all, it seems!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"I think Bunter's decided to vote for me," he assented. "I dare say he knows who is the right man."

"He knows that well enough, the fat tramp!" said Frank Nugent. "But he won't be voting for him if he votes for you, Smithy!"

"What have you tipped him for his vote?" grunted Johnny Bull.

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"Surely you don't think I would tip a man for his vote!" he exclaimed.

"I don't think anything else!" growled Johnny. "The fat boulder oughtn't to be allowed to vote at all! He jolly well wouldn't be allowed to, either, if Wingate knew that you had squared him!"

"But I haven't squared him, old bean."



"You get on with my impot, Skinner," said Bunter, "and I'll vote for your candidate in the election." Skinner scowled, but set to work, while Bunter reposed comfortably in the study armchair, sucking toffee.

"Oh, cut it out, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, in disgust. "We've heard all about the celebration in your study after the election!"

"There's no law against a celebration in a study, is there?" asked the Bounder innocently. "Aren't you just a little suspicious, old man? Besides, I don't think Bunter will be present at the celebration. I rather think he will not."

"Not?" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Not!" assented the Bounder.

"Then what the dickens is he voting for you for?" asked Bob Cherry.

The Bounder laughed.

"Because he thinks I'm the best man for the job, I suppose. What other reason could he have?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come the jolly old prefects!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Wingate and Gwynne came into the Rag.

The Bounder strolled back to his own party.

All the Remove had come in by this time. The Lower Fourth was a numerous Form, numbering thirty-one fellows altogether. The way the juniors were grouped round the two candidates showed how evenly they were divided. But the division, which had been quite even when the election had been held on Wednesday, was not now quite so even. Bunter, the odd man out, was now counted in Smithy's fold. Fourteen fellows were grouped round Bob Cherry; fifteen round the Bounder. If the fat Owl of the Remove really had made up his podgy mind at last, the matter was already settled, and the counting of votes was only a matter of form.

"Well, here we are again!" said the Greyfriars captain, with a smile. "All here this time?"

"The all-fulness is terrific, venerable Wingate!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"We're all here, Wingate," said the Bounder. "Every man in the Form has rolled up this time."

"Then let's get going!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Same candidates as before — what! — Vernon-Smith and Cherry?"

The matter that was of such thrilling importance to the Remove was quite a trifling affair to the captain of the school. Wingate and Gwynne had kindly come in to superintend the proceedings — chiefly, perhaps, to restrain by their presence any outbreak of nose-punching on the part of the rival candidates and their backers. They certainly seemed unaware that this was a great crisis in the history of Greyfriars School.

"Well, then, hands up for Cherry!" said Wingate.

Fourteen hands went promptly up, and the two prefects counted them, and agreed the number at fourteen.

"Hands up for Vernon-Smith!"

Fifteen hands went up.

One of them was conspicuous by its podginess and grubbiness. It was the fat paw of William George Bunter.

Neither candidate had voted for himself on this occasion. It came to the same thing, as each was prepared to do so if the other did.

"Fifteen!" said Wingate.

"Fifteen!" agreed Gwynne.

There was a pause.

"Fourteen votes for Cherry!" said Wingate. "Fifteen for Vernon-Smith!"

Vernon-Smith is elected captain of the

"Hurrah!" roared the Bounder's party with one voice.

"Good old Smithy!" yelled Hazel-dene. "Smithy's the man!"

"Hip-hip-hurrah!"

"Rotten!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Can't be helped!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If the majority want Smithy, they can have him, with my blessing!"

"That fat villain Bunter!"

"Hurrah!" roared Bolsover major.

"Hip-hip! Down with the old gang! Hurrah!"

"I say, you fellows, we've beaten them!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, we've got our man in! I say, Smithy, let's get along to the study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Smithy!"

"Well, the matter's settled this time," said Wingate. And he left the Rag with Gwynne.

The Famous Five followed them out. Bob Cherry was not looking greatly perturbed, but his friends were disappointed. Johnny Bull paused in the doorway.

"Let's kick Bunter before we go!" he said.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the kickfulness should be terrific!"

"Oh, come on!" said Bob. "Bunter had a right to vote how he liked, duffer! Look here, we've still got time for some footer!"

"I say, you fellows, you're licked," yelled Bunter, as the Famous Five departed — "licked to the wide! He, he, he!"

"Thus are the jolly old mighty fallen!" chuckled Skinner.

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The Bounder's eyes were dancing. The election was over, and he was captain of the Remove. He was not, perhaps, proud of his electioneering methods, but he had succeeded, and the Bounder's opinion was that nothing succeeds like success! It was probable that the enthusiasm of a good many of his followers would diminish when the time came to realise the hopes they had founded on Bunker's election. Certainly a good many of them were expecting things that were very unlikely to come to pass. But the Bounder cared little or nothing. He was captain of the Form now, and that was that! He clapped his chum Redwing cheerily on the shoulder.

"We've done them, Reddy!" he said. Tom Redwing nodded. His face was rather grave. He had loyally backed his chum, but he was not quite sure whether he would not rather have seen Bob Cherry captain of the Remove.

"Well, you're in, Smitty," he said. "I hope it will turn out all right."

"Right as rain, old bean! First thing, you're goin' to get a chance in the footer for what's left of the season."

Redwing's face became graver.

"Only on my merits, I hope, Smitty," he said very quietly.

"Blow your jolly old merits!" scoffed the Bounder.

"Look here, Smitty—"

"Oh, rats!"

The Bounder jumped on a chair.

"Gentlemen, chaps, fellows, and sportsmen of the Remove—" he began.

"Hear, hear!" roared Bolsover major.

"We've won a jolly old victory—"

"Bravo!" yelled Hazel.

"Good old Smitty!" howled Micky Desmond.

"I say, you fellows—"

"I thank you for your loyal support, and I'm bound to say I think that you've elected the right man."

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's going to be a big feed in my study, to celebrate this glorious occasion. Every gentleman present will oblige me by attending."

"Bravo!"

"Gentlemen who have voted for me will be welcome, and gentlemen who voted for the other man will be equally welcome—"

"Bravo, Smitty!"

More voices joined in the cheering this time. It was quite a roar that rang through the Rag. Fellows who had voted against Smitty had to admit that he was, at least, beginning well.

"Good man!"

"Hurrah!"

The Bounder stepped down from the chair amid a roar of applause.

"Come on, Reddy! Come on, you men!"

Quite an army followed the Bounder from the Rag. In the van marched Billy Bunter. There was a happy grin of anticipation on Bunter's fat face. But the fat Owl's happy anticipations were not, alas, destined to be realised. A cheering crowd marched along the Remove passage to Vernon-Smith's study. At the door Smitty paused and fixed his eyes on William George Bunter, with an expression that even Bunker could not imagine was hospitable or welcoming.

"Buz!" he said tersely.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, really, Smitty—"

"Skinner, old man—"

"Here," said Skinner.

"Would you mind slowing Bunker round?"

"Pleasure, old chap!"

"I—I say, you fellows—I say—leggo!"

roared Bunker in alarm. "I say, you beast, I voted for you, didn't I? I say—Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner seized Bunter by one fat shoulder. Snoop grasped him by the other. He was "slewed" round, with his back to Vernon-Smith, and he fairly wriggled with horrid apprehension.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunker.

"I say—look here, Smitty, you beast—I say—Yaroooooh!"

Vernon-Smith's boot landed on Bunker's tight trousers with what a novelist would call a sickening thud.

There was a roar and Bunker flew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Beast! I say, you fellows—"

There was another thud as Skinner's boot landed, and another fearful yell from Bunker.

"Here, give a fellow a chance!"

exclaimed Bolsover major.

Thud!

"Whooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William George Bunter, lately the most important fellow in the Remove, seemed rather at a discount now. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof! The importance of Billy Bunter during the past few days had exasperated all the Remove; there was hardly a fellow in the Form who had not longed to kick him. Now they let themselves go.

"Give him one more—"

"Here, give a fellow room—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yarooooh! Help! Oh crikey! Whooooop!"

Billy Bunter fled for his life. His wild yells faded away down the Remove staircase.

In the Bounder's study, and in the passage adjoining, a numerous and hilarious party celebrated the glorious victory; what time a dismal fat Owl wandered disconsolate, and rubbed the places where many boots had landed.

Billy Bunter had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and he had not bagged the mess of pottage! He had bagged the licking of his fat life, which he had not expected; though certainly he might have expected it. And the

fat Owl, like Rachel of ancient times, mourned and found no comfort.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Smitty!

HARRY WHARTON came into his study after classes on Monday and stared a little as he saw Herbert Vernon-Smith sitting on the edge of the study table, apparently waiting for him there.

He gave the Bounder a grim look.

The Co. had gone out of gates after class; but Wharton, as was usual with him now, was putting in time at "swotting." Mr. Quelch, who was helping him in his work for the Founders' Scholarship examination, had drawn up a Latin exercise which the late captain of the Remove was to work out before tea. It was not a happy task, and Wharton was not looking very merry or bright.

Since the Form election he had had nothing to say to the new captain of the Remove. He wondered, rather sarcastically, how it would turn out. He was well aware that the new skipper was booked for trouble with a good many of his followers when he settled down to business. But it was no concern of his, and he had other matters to occupy his mind. Rather to his surprise the Bounder gave him a friendly nod as he came into the study.

"Swotting!" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry curtly, "and I've no time to spare."

"A few minutes—"

"The fact is, Vernon-Smith, I like your room better than your company!" said Wharton bluntly. "We're not friends, and I don't want to see you in my study."

"Oh, quite!" assented the Bounder, unmoved. "If you'd rather see me later, I'll come along again—"

"I'd rather not see you at all."

"There's no mistakin' your meanin', is there, old bean?" said Smitty agreeably. "A fellow always knows where to have you."

Wharton made no reply to that. He was there to work, not to bandy words with the Bounder. He laid down his exercise and drew a chair to the table.

"I've got something to say, you know," hinted Smitty. "If you'd rather I left it till later—"

"If you've got anything to say, get it off your chest—and cut it short. I've told you I've no time to waste."

"Right! About St. Jude's on Wednesday," said Vernon-Smith.

"That's in my hands now that I'm skipper. It's the last big fixture of the football season, and we want to win it."

"Go ahead and win it, then," said Harry. "I don't quite see how you're going to pull it off with the crowd you've promised places in the team. But I wish you luck."

"I've made no promises," said the Bounder airily. "Some fellows seem to imagine that there's goin' to be a lot of changes; but, of course, as skipper, I'm goin' to pick out the men who can win. Anybody who fancies anythin' else is goin' to be disappointed."

Wharton's lip curled.

"You mean you're going to let down the silly asses who voted for you?" he said. "Well, I suppose you would!"

The Bounder winced a little.

"I've made no promises," he repeated stubbornly. "It follows get silly

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ideas into their heads, that's their look-out. I'm not going to chuck away football matches because Bolsover thinks he can play back, and Hazel thinks he can keep goal."

"You'd better tell them so," said Wharton dryly. "No good telling me." "I want you to play."

"Oh!"

"You turned me out of the Remove Eleven," said the Bounder. "That was the beginnin' of the trouble in the Form. I dare say you see by this time that you made a mistake."

"Not at all," answered Wharton coolly. "I should do the same again."

"Well, you won't have a chance to do the same again, old bean, so that's all right. Anyhow, I'm not makin' the same mistake. I'm not turnin' down a good man because I don't like his manners. I want you to play centre-forward on Wednesday."

Harry Wharton was silent.

He had not expected that; he had rather expected the victorious Bounder to "rub it in." Certainly, most of the Removites expected a lot of changes; Smithy's party had rather loudly announced that the day of the "old gang" was over. It was likely to come as a surprise to them, to learn that the new skipper had asked the chief of the "old gang" to take his usual place in the eleven.

"You won't miss your friends from the team," went on the Bounder coolly. "I'm putting in Johnny Bull and Linley at back—and Field in goal!"

"Hazeldene's been telling the world that he's keeping goal against St. Jude's on Wednesday."

"Has he?" yawned the Bounder.

"Bolsover major expects to play back—"

"Dear me!"

"If you haven't told them so, you're jolly well let them think so!" said Wharton scornfully.

"It's a free country!" said the Bounder gently. "Every man is free to think what he likes. I've got Brown and Cherry and Redwing down as halves—not a bad line, what?"

"Not at all!"

"Front line, my worthy self—I've got a lot of respect for your judgment, old bean, but I'm not leavin' myself out—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Hurree Singh, yourself—if you'll play—Todd, and Orville!" said the Bounder. "What do you think?"

"I think you'll be jolly well scragged by the men you're leaving out, and I think you'll jolly well deserve it."

"That's not the point! You think it's a good team?"

"What does it matter what I think? You're captain."

"I'm not above takin' a hint from my predecessor in office," smiled the Bounder, "and I think it's up to you, as an old hand, to guide my errin' footsteps a little at the start, what?"

"It's a good team. Penfold would be better than Redwing at half, but Reddy's a good man enough."

"Glad you're satisfied," said the Bounder, "and I can count on you to bury the hatchet so far as football is concerned?"

"Certainly. But—"

"Oh, never mind the buts," said Smithy. "I don't want to go on raggin' if you don't! I want to make a success of my job, and even if you're feelin' sore about it you ought to want that, too; you don't want the Remove to be wiped off the field at games."

"No; but—"

"We've had a row," said the Bounder. "I tried to do you a good turn when you were down on your luck, and you chucked it back in my teeth. I've given you a fall in return; you're chucked, and you failed to get your pal in as skipper in your place. Well, we're even now—so let's call it a day and start fresh. What?"

"I've no wish to keep on ragging, certainly," said Wharton. "I'm more than willing to do everything I can to buck things up; I certainly don't want to see the Remove washed out at games. But I had more than one reason for resigning the captaincy. One was that the fellows had their backs up and wanted me to chuck it. The other was that now I'm swotting for an exam I haven't the time for games. Leave me out."

The Bounder opened his eyes.

"You're not chucking football!" he exclaimed.

"Just that!"

"Oh, my hat!"

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"So that's that!" said Wharton. "I'm keeping up games practice of course; a fellow has to keep fit. But matches are another matter. A fellow ought to be at the top of his form to play for his school—and a man can't serve two masters! I shan't have the time, either! Every half-holiday now, till the end of this term, I shall be nugging up this putrid Latin. I'm not losing a chance if I can help it."

"Oh, my hat!" repeated the Bounder. "But—"

"Sorry, if you want me," said Harry. "But there it is! I've not got my back up—I'd play for the Remove under your captaincy, or any other man's—if I were keeping it on. But I'm not."

"You'll be badly missed from the team."

"Thanks!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"That's the lot!" said Harry. He sat down at the table and dipped a pen into the ink. "Sorry—I've no more time to spare."

The Bounder went slowly to the door. He paused there, and looked back at

the late captain of the Remove. Wharton, with his head bent over the exorcise, was already deep in Latin.

Vernon-Smith compressed his lips.

"Look here, Wharton—" he said.

No reply.

"I suppose you know what the fellows will say!" snapped the Bounder savagely. "They'll say you've got your silly back up because you've been chucked out of the captaincy."

"They can say what they like!"

"You prefer swotting, like that smug Wilkinson of the Fourth, to playing football!" sneered the Bounder.

"It's not a matter of choice with me."

"Oh, rot!"

"Shut the door after you!" said Wharton, over his shoulder.

The Bounder's eyes glittered at the back of the bent head.

"You're letting me down, and letting the Form down!" he snarled. "You'd jolly well like to see us begin with a licking at Soccer, I suppose. It's what I might have expected."

"Think so if you choose."

"As for swotting, what does it come to? Your silly row with your uncle has been the talk of the Form! You've got you, silly back up, but I can jolly well tell you that every man in the Remove thinks you're making a fool of yourself. Your own pals think so, if they don't say so!"

Wharton rose from the table, his face pale with anger.

"That's enough from you, Vernon-Smith! Another word like that and you go out of this study on your neck!"

The Bounder gave him a fierce look. Then, with an angry snarl, he swung out of the study and slammed the door.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover is Wrathful!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old trouble?"

It was Tuesday evening, and prep was over. Bob Cherry was standing in the doorway of Study No. 1, talking to Nugent and Wharton in the study, when Bolsover major came tramping up the Remove staircase, with a crimson face of wrath.

Bob stared at him.

"What the dickens—"

Bolsover major did not answer him, or look at him. He tramped on along the passage, and stopped at the door of Study No. 4. He gave that door a terrific thump that hurried it wide open.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "Looks like a row! You men know what's up with Bolsover?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I suppose the St. Jude's list is up in the Rag by this time," he said.

"Probably he's seen it."

Bob whistled.

"Poor old Smithy! If he's picking out a good team he'll have some trouble with the men who backed him up in the election."

"Serve him jolly well right!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Well, football comes before friendship," said Bob. "But I'm afraid Smithy let a lot of fellows fancy a lot of things, from what I hear. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that an alarm-clock going off?"

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, it's Bunter! Wherefore that horrid cacination, my fat tulip!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,238.

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter had followed Bolsover up, and his fat face was adorned by an expansive grin. "I say, you fellows, there's going to be a row! He, he, he!"

"There's a row already," remarked Bob, "and you're making it, old fat bean, with your chin."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Is the list up, Bunter?" asked Harry. "He, he, he! Yes, rather! You're left out, Wharton! He, he, he! Rather deep of you to make out that you're chucking footer! He, he, he! I suppose you knew Smithy wouldn't play you—"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you fellows, some of the men are wild!" chorled Bunter. "Hazel fancied he was going to keep goal, and you should have seen his face! Bolsover had asked Skinner and his lot to come along to-morrow to see him play! He, he, he! Wibley's told half Greyfriars that he was in the front line! He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chorled.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's let them down all round. Just like he let me down, you know. Asking a fellow to a spread, you know, and then kicking him out, after a fellow had voted for him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'll be scragging Smithy, and serve him jolly well right! He, he, he!" And Billy Bunter rolled on along the passage, evidently interested in the scragging process.

Bolsover major's loud voice was heard in Study No. 4.

"What do you mean, Smithy? That's what I want to know! What the thump do you mean? What?"

Vernon-Smith and Redwing were in Study No. 4. The Bouncer had slipped down to post the paper in the Rag, immediately after prep, and then returned to his study. Possibly he preferred not to be present in the Rag, while his followers were getting over the first shock. No doubt it was judicious to give them time to cool down. Still, the new captain of the Remove could scarcely have expected to dodge trouble. The hopes of his followers had been raised high—and the new captain of the Remove had let them down with a bump.

Bolsover major was almost stuttering with rage. Tom Redwing looked rather troubled, but the Bouncer was as cool as ice. His conscience was not quite clear, perhaps; but Smithy's conscience had never worried him very much.

"Can't you speak?" roared Bolsover major. "What do you mean? Eh? That's what I'm asking you, Vernon-Smith! What do you mean?"

"Make it clearer," suggested the Bouncer coolly. "In the first place, old bean, what are you talking about?"

"I've just seen the list!" roared Bolsover major.

"Anything'n' wrong with it?"

That cool question did not have the effect of oil on the troubled waters. Rather it had the effect of oil on flames. Bolsover almost foamed.

"My name's not in it!" he raved.

"What about that?"

"What about it?" stuttered Bolsover major. "Didn't you tell me you were making a clean sweep of the old gang? Didn't you tell me that you'd had your eye on me, and that you'd settled to play me at back in the St. Jude's game, if you got in? Didn't you?"

"Not in the least!"

"What?" roared Bolsover.

"I said I'd never overlook a good

man," said the Bouncer calmly. "Reddy was present—he can bear me out!"

Redwing was silent and frowning. Bolsover major certainly had asked to have his leg pulled; but there was no doubt that the Bouncer had pulled it with utter unscrupulousness.

"You—you—your rotter!" gasped Bolsover. "You as good as said—" He brandished a clenched fist at the Bouncer. "Taking a fellow in! Pulling a fellow's leg! Bagging a man's vote with rotten lies! Yah!" Bolsover brandished both fists. "Think I'd have voted for you if I'd known you were going to let me down like this? You—your rotten outsider!"

"My dear man—"

"I've a jolly good mind to mop up this study with you! I've a jolly good mind—"

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

"Better travel," he suggested.

"You—you—your rotter! You—you—you—" Bolsover major stuttered. "You've taken me in! You—you—you—" Do you think you're getting away with this? Why, the team you've got down to play is the same old gang, except that you've banged your own pal in, leaving a better man out! Is that what you call playing the game?"

"There's the door," said the Bouncer coolly.

Bolsover major looked as if he would rush at the new skipper of the Remove, smiting right and left. The Bouncer faced him with perfect coolness, and Redwing stood ready to lend a hand. But the burly Removeite stopped short of that.

"You—you—you worm!" he gasped. "You—you rotter! Making a fool of a chap! You've told me a dozen times that Wharton ought to have played me—and now—"

Words failed the indignant Bolsover. He shook his fist in the Bouncer's face again and tramped out of the study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Unpopular!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came down to the Rag, where most of the Remove were now gathered. They expected to find some excitement there, and their expectations were fulfilled. A crowd of fellows were gathered before the paper the Bouncer had posted in the Rag, and there was a buzz of angry and indignant voices.

Hazel and Wibley and Micky Desmond, and other fellows, who had fully expected to see their names in the football list, seemed hardly able to believe their eyes, and their comments were both loud and deep. They seemed hardly able to realise that the unscrupulous Bouncer had deliberately pulled their legs in order to secure their support at the Form election. Certainly, they could not say that Vernon-Smith had made any fellow definite promises. He had not exactly deceived them, but he had allowed them to deceive themselves, which came to very much the same thing.

Fellows whose game was second or third-rate could not be expected to realise that fact very clearly. They had doubted Wharton's judgment in leaving them out of big fixtures; and they had been only too willing to believe that the Bouncer knew better. And Smithy's campaign against what he was pleased to call the "old gang," had naturally led fellows to suppose that he intended

to make a clean sweep of that "gang" as soon as the power was in his hands. Instead of which, Vernon-Smith was picking out men exactly, or almost exactly, as Wharton would have done.

As football captain he could hardly do anything else if he wanted a winning team. But the fellows whose hopes he had raised could not be expected to see that. If everything was going on the same as before, what was the use of electing a new skipper, Wibley inquired. And the answer evidently was, no use at all. So far as these indignant fellows were concerned, Wharton might as well have remained skipper, or Bob Cherry might as well have been elected in his place. The Bouncer was no better than either of them. Either of them would certainly have left Wibley and Micky and the rest out of the St. Jude's match. But so had the Bouncer—as it turned out.

"It's a swindle!" said William Wibley. "That ass Wharton never gave a fellow a chance. Cherry wouldn't have given a fellow a chance—I asked him, and he had the cheek to tell me that he would play me against St. Jude's if they played marbles, not Soccer. So, of course, I backed up Smithy. And now—"

"Well, you're not really much good," said Hazel. "But—but Smithy as good as promised that I should keep goal—"

"You keep goal!" snorted Wibley. "You keep white mice—that's about all you can keep!"

"Faith, we've been spoofed entirely!" said Micky Desmond. "I thought I was playing half—"

"The half-way line's all right," said Wibley. "But—"

"Well, the front line's all right except that Wharton ought to be in it," said Micky. "You wouldn't be much use at St. Jude's, you know."

With regard to one another's claims, there was considerable division of opinion among the disappointed footballers. But they all agreed in condemning the Bouncer. Hazel could see quite clearly that Bolsover major was not wanted at back in a hard game; Bolsover could see that Hazel was not the man to keep goal against St. Jude's. Both were well aware that William Wibley would be little more than a passenger in the front line, and that Micky, in the halves, would be of as much use to St. Jude's as to Greyfriars, or more. But that did not alter the fact that the Bouncer had taken them in, raised their hopes, and disappointed them cruelly.

Smithy, really, had had no choice, unless he wanted to begin his captaincy by capturing a defeat on the football field—which he certainly did not. But that was no excuse for his duplicity—for it undoubtedly amounted to duplicity.

The Famous Five listened to the excited discussion without joining in it. They and the footballers whose names were in the list had to give Smithy their support, for he was doing what he was in fact bound to do as football captain. He could hardly have taken a dud eleven over to St. Jude's to be wiped off the ground. But they had their own opinion of him, and could not help sympathising, to some extent, with the angry and irritated crowd of disappointed fellows.

"Smithy's woke up a jolly old hornet's-nest!" murmured Bob. "He must really have no end of a nerve!"

"The nervefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Smithy will be scalped!"

"I wonder how many votes he would beg if the election were held over again

this evening!" said Frank Nugent, with a laugh.

"Only his own, I think!" chuckled Bob.

"It's rather thick!" said Johnny Bull. "Still, Smithy's done the right thing, so far as the team's concerned. I never expected him to have so much sense, really."

"Smithy's out to win matches, anyhow," said Harry. "That's so much to the good. Those fellows who are grouching now would be grouching to-morrow if St. Jude's mopped them up with a dozen goals to nil."

It was rather late when Vernon-Smith appeared at last in the Rag. Probably he was unwilling to face the storm he had raised, but he came in at last with Redwing. His manner was perfectly

Smithy. "Anythin' gone wrong with the amateur theatricals?"

"Never mind the theatricals now!" hissed Wibley. "You as good as said that you wanted me in the front line to-morrow—"

"You're dreamin', old man!" said the Bounder pleasantly. "Footballers are wanted in the front line to-morrow!"

"Ain't I a footballer?" shrieked Wibley.

"If you are, you've been hiding the fact pretty successfully!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you—"

Words failed William Wibley.

"And what about me?" roared Micky Desmond. "Mean to say that Redwing plays half-back like I do?"

"No fear!" said the Bounder. "If

"I won't!" said Bolsover, with unexpected calm. "But I'll tell you this, Smithy—if you think you can fool fellows all round, and make them look a lot of silly asses and get away with it, you're mistaken!"

"Dear me!" said the Bounder, unmoved.

"That's all!" said Bolsover major. "Thank goodness! I was afraid there was goin' to be more!"

Bolsover major swung away without another word. Smithy's glance followed him rather curiously. Something, evidently, was working in Bolsover's mind—something in the way of retaliation. With all his keenness, the Bounder could not guess what it was. But he cared little.

He had raised a storm; but it was,



"Come on, you fellows," said Vernon-Smith, "we'll celebrate my victory with a study feed!" A cheering crowd followed. At the door of the study the Bounder fixed his eyes on William George Bunter, with an expression that was far from welcoming.

"Buzz!" he said tersely.

cool as he strolled into the Rag, whatever his feelings were. There was an outburst at once.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Wibley.

"Here's the rotter!"

"Here's the cheeky sweep!"

"Look here, Smithy, you cad—"

"Look here, you worm—"

"Don't all speak at once!" suggested the Bounder calmly. "Take it in turns, Anything the matter, Hazel?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Hazel bitterly. "Making a fool of a fellow and letting him down is nothing to you, is it?"

"I can't help it if a fellow makes a fool of himself!" said Smithy cheerfully. "What's bitin' you? Are you really keen on standin' in the goal to-morrow to watch St. Jude's gettin' the ball by?"

"You cheeky rotter!"

"You next, Wib! You're lookin' excited about somethin'!" drawled

he played half-back as you do, old bean, his name wouldn't be in that list!"

"Why, you spalpeen!" gasped Micky.

"If I can't play half, I can jolly well punch your cheeky nose!"

And he made a rush at the Bounder. Three or four fellows interposed and shoved back the excited Micky.

"Easy does it, old bean!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Can't punch your skipper's nose for leaving you out. That isn't Soccer!"

Bolsover major came back into the Rag. Vernon-Smith kept a wary eye on him, but the bully of the Remove only gave him a grin look. Bolsover seemed to realise that punching was of no use in this matter. He spoke to the Bounder, but in a quiet tone.

"I've told you what I think of you, Smithy—"

"Quite! Don't tell me again!"

after all, only a storm in a teacup. He was captain of the Remove, and while he was captain he was not the fellow to let the tail wag the dog, as it were. Fellows who did not like it could lump it—and that was that! But, with all his arrogant self-confidence, Smithy was destined to discover that he had made a mistake.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH had a bright and cheery face the following morning.

The new captain of the Remove seemed satisfied with himself and with things generally.

He was decidedly unpopular with a (Continued on page 16.)

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Book your seats for the charabanc trip to Abbotsford next Wednesday and cheer on your team to victory! Tickets, 10s., including tea. Profits go to charity (the kind that begins at home, so ken!).—Apply at once, O.G.I.L.V.Y., Transport Contractor, Study No. 3.

Greyfriars Herald

No. 90.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

Edited by
**HARRY
WHARTON,
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SLANDER SUIT SENSATION

PREFECT'S PLAINTIVE PLEA

The sudden appearance of a ferocious tripehound caused panic-stricken to break out into Justice Wharton's Court in the Lockshop Division yesterday morning. As a result of the dog's unexpected incursion into legal circles, an important slander suit which was being heard has been postponed sine die.



(A legal authority informs us that *sine die* means "indefinitely." Why they can't say what they mean beats us.)

The case, which promised to be of a sensational nature, was a claim for £49,876 6s. 6d. damages for alleged slander. Plaintiff was Mr. Gerald Loder of the Sixth, and Defendant, Master Dicky Nugent of the Second.

Considerable public attention was focused on the suit, and the Court was crowded when Mr. Loder, a handsome, though somewhat sinister-looking gentleman, entered the Court, and the Defendant, who made for his appearance a few minutes later, seemed at first to be a negro. Inquiries, however, soon elicited the fact that his colour had changed as a result of his writing fifty lines for his Form master.

Mr. Loder, who conducted his own case, said that the facts were simple. All that was necessary was for the Judge to assess the amount of damages.

Mr. Justice Wharton: "Better not be too sure, Loder, old chap! You may collect the kind of damages you won't care for in this Court!" (Laughter.)

Mr. Loder, snarling savagely at intervals, went on to say that the alleged slanders were contained in a scurrilous newspaper known as the "Fags' Fortnightly," the last issue of which had contained the first instalment of a serial called "Boobies of Bluefriars!"

Mr. Justice Wharton: "We all know that, old bean! But where's the giddy slander?" Plaintiff (hoarsely): "Read it yourself and see! The villain of

this absurd school story is a prefect bearing the same name as myself—Gerald Loder!"

Defendant: "Yes; but it clearly says in the paper that all characters are imaginary!" (Laughter.)

Plaintiff: "The Gerald Loder of the story is described as being a 'beastly booby' and a 'fearful scoundrel.' Do you think I'm going to take that lying down?"

Judge: "Is that a conundrum? If so, I give it up!" (Laughter.)

Defendant, who went into the witness-box soon after, rejoined on the clause in the "Fags' Fortnightly" stating that "all characters in the story were imaginary."

He said that it might be thought that the name "Bluefriars" was meant for "Greyfriars." That was not so. It was an entirely new name, invented by himself. (Laughter.)

Master Nugent went on to say that it might also be thought that the Gerald Loder of the story was the same as the Gerald Loder they knew at Greyfriars. But it wasn't so. The fact that the two names were the same was just coincidence. Of course, there were points of resemblance between the two. They were both bullies and scoundrels and—

Before Defendant could say more, Plaintiff made a rush at him, apparently intending to mop up the floor with him.

It was at this moment that a ferocious tripehound leaped through an open window into the Court and commenced a determined attack on everybody present with the exception of Defendant.

The Court was cleared in the remarkably short time of three seconds, and Master Nugent was left in sole possession!

It appears that the dog is a stray mongrel Master Nugent has been looking after lately.

We understand that Mr. Loder intends to take drastic action against his alleged slanderer as soon as the tripehound goes. At the time of going to press, he is continuing his taking occasional sniffs at the mantelpiece and now and again biting chunks off the end of the table!

WANTED!

Instruction in Bricklaying
I knocked down the wall of the Head's garden while on old Coker's motor-bike and I'd like to find out how to put it right again before the Beak finds out!—Apply at once, G. POTTER, Fifth Form Gables, Study.

SHOULD COKER BE ABOLISHED?

FOR AND AGAINST

YES.—By H. VERNON-SMITH.

Of course Coker should be abolished! Any chap who has known him for five minutes knows that!

There are so many reasons for the abolition of Coker that it's difficult to know which to give. Here are a few chosen at random:

1. His face gives sensitive people a pain.

2. His foot held up the traffic when he walks across the quad.

3. He's a menace to friends and foes on the footer field.

4. They were dishing out sawdust instead of brains the day he was born.

5. What he lacks in brains he makes up for in conceit.

6. He's a heavy-handed, light-headed goof.

Let's abolish him!

NO.—By TOM BROWN.

Smithy has called Coker a goof. I admit it.

But even a goof has a right to live.

I'm willing to admit that Coker's about the worst case that ever escaped the attention of the mental authorities.

But does that mean that he ought to be abolished?

Far from being abolished, I consider that Coker ought

HIRE A RELIABLE CAR!

Hire a beautiful Rolls-Ford-Suitor for your outings! Built in 1893, she is still as good as ever. Three wheels still intact; solid tyres; large umbrella applied to keep off rain. Guaranteed to break down not more than ten times between Greyfriars and Friar-dale. For rates, etc., apply Friar-dale Hire Service, Phone, Friar-dale 13.

AEROPLANE LANDS ON LITTLE SIDE

AMAZING SCENE IN FOOTER MATCH

The Form match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth last Saturday afternoon on Little Side was interrupted in a thrilling and spectacular manner. Just before half-time an aeroplane, which seemed to be in difficulties, appeared from the direction of Courtfield, flying low. The engine of the plane sounded quite in order, but something seemed to be bearing the machine downwards and, to the accompaniment of yells from the scattering footballers, it suddenly came to rest right in the middle of the footer-pitch!

Fortunately, nobody among the footballers or spectators was hurt, and as soon as it was seen that the plane had landed, the crowd returned to find out all about it.

The pilot, who had jumped out of the cockpit, was very apologetic.

"I'm really awfully sorry, young gentlemen," he said. "I did my best to avoid coming down on you, but I just couldn't help it."

"Engine trouble?" suggested Tompo.

"No; engines are perfectly all right. I think the fact of the matter is that I was overloaded. I am giving joy-rides to the winners of the recent 'Courtfield Express' Lucan Number Competition, you know."

"But where are your passengers, then?" Wharton asked.

"There's only one; but he was evidently a bit too much for this machine! Ah! Here he is!"

A bulky mass, reminiscent of a gigantic jelly-fish, came crawling over the side of the

plane from the passenger's seat and the crowd gave a yell.

"BUNTER!"

It was the jolly old Porker himself! Bunter had been as much "joy-riding" as he was one afternoon and he very willingly agreed to forego the rest. The pilot then came back into his seat



again and took off, vanishing in the direction of Courtfield express speed.

No wonder the plane had to come down! We're thinking of banning the local M.P., asking him to have a law passed prohibiting the transportation of passengers by air.

Bunter says he's a bit of a flier. He's fed-up with rickshaws and aeroplanes, anyway! Yeh!

Architect Designs Futurist Study

REMOVE MAN'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

Hats off to Mr. R. Russell, the celebrated architect of Study No. 3, who claims to be the first man in England to design the futurist study!

On receipt of the news that the study was actually in existence, a "Greyfriars Herald" representative went post-haste to No. 3, to find Mr. Russell standing in the doorway, gazing at his handiwork, with a look of rapture in his eyes.

"So this is the Study of the Future!" remarked the "G.H." man.

"Right on the wicket!" replied Mr. Russell, in the quaint idiom of the circle of Bohemian architects to which he belongs. "Great, isn't it?"

The "G.H." man took a peep inside. Certainly, a remarkable change had come over No. 3. To begin with, there was no door.

He pointed this out to Mr. Russell, who smiled.

"Ah! That's the latest idea in house-building!" he explained. "One of these days we're going to do away with windows, too; but the time for that is not yet ripe. The aim all the time, you see, is simplicity. Everything which is not absolutely necessary is done away with. That's why I've sworn off the mantelpiece."

"Great pip! So you have!"

"Similarly, I've had all the furniture removed," smiled Mr. Russell. "It makes things much more simple without furniture!"

"My hat! But what do you do when you want to sit down?"

"Sit on the floor, of course!" replied the great architect, with a hearty laugh. "Chairs are superfluous in the modern home—like fire!"

"M-n-my giddy aunt! Then you've filled in the fireplace, too! Won't you feel cold sometimes?"

Mr. Russell shrugged.

"What of it? Better to feel cold than to ponder to lowbrow taste in interior design!"

"It's pretty obvious that you're a futurist architect all right, Mr. Russell!" commented the "Herald" representative.

"I see

A FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

SIR HILTON POPPER AT HOME

Don't you think it an awful pity that the English gent, the pride and glory of our land, should be dying out like they are?

We think it's scandalous.

Take Sir Hilton Popper. Examine his fine pedigree, contemplate his gracious polished manners and his magnificent intellect and tell us whether he isn't worthy of the title of a Fine Old English Gentleman.

We sent a reporter along to Popper Court yesterday to interview this grand old aristocrat. Sir Hilton met him at the gates and emitted a hearty greeting.

"Gr-r-r!"

"Good-morning, Sir Hilton!" said our reporter.

"Lovely morning, isn't it?"

"Huh!"

"The kind of morning when you feel it's really good to be alive! How are things with you, sir?"

"Gr-r-r!"

"Glad to hear it, Sir Hilton! What do you think of the cricket prospects this year?"

"Br-r-r!"

"Don't altogether agree with you there, Sir Hilton, but every man has a right to his own opinion! Can you give the readers of the 'Greyfriars Herald' your views on current topics?"

"Bah!"

"They'll be awfully interested to hear that! And what do you think of the present state of Greyfriars?"

"You've done away with the light, too!"

"Naturally! There is no room for crude fixtures and fittings that would spoil the simple lines of the futurist study! My ideal is completely concealed lights throwing a sort of mellow glow across the room. As I can't get those, I'm doing my prep on the floor by the light of a pocket-torch!"

"And do you design other things besides studies, Mr. Russell?"

"G.H." man asked the

"Anything that comes my way!" replied the architect, cheerfully. "I have drawn plans for mouse-traps, chicken-runs, dog-kennels and—ah! Here is one of my clients!"

ORTHER'S DICKSHUNRY FOR SAIL

Owner finds he never knew how to sail, so will dispose of it to the first customer offering two bob, cash. Call, DICKY NUGENT, Herring Friar's Club, Fagland.

"Pah!"

"Thank you, sir! You're almost TOO complimentary! Is there anything more you'd like to say?"

"Bah! Give me a horseshow, Parker!"

He rapped the Fine Old English Gentleman.

An attendant leaped forward with a horseshow, and Sir Hilton grabbed it and

made a lunge at our reporter, tripping over in the process and landing heavily on his nose.

As our reporter hurried away, quite a stream of eloquence was pouring from Sir Hilton's lips. It included such remarks as "Huh!" "Bah!" "Whooop!"

"Poot!" and "Gurrggh!"

As we say, it seems an awful pity that the English gentry are dying out. We're thinking of writing to some of our leading papers about it.

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REMOVE PILLOW-FIGHTING SQUAD

Company Orders

MONDAY. At 10 p.m. sharp, attack in mass formation on the Fourth Form territory. Defeating pillow-fighters will receive no mercy, whatever excuses they make to bolster up their case. Draconic punishment for those who show the white feather!

BY ORDER.

H. Wharton, Captain.

Youthful Author's Health

Inquiries have reached us regarding the report that Nugent minor is not feeling well. We are pleased to be able to inform our readers that he is quite fit at the time of going to press. At the same time, however, we can't help admitting that he's always Diebo.



(Continued from page 15.)

good many of the fellows who had backed him up most enthusiastically in the Form election. But that did not worry him. They were, after all, fellows who did not matter very much. On the other hand, he had won a certain amount of approval, if not popularity, among the opposite party.

He was captain of the Form, and he was going to signalise his election by winning the last big fixture of the season. Only Wharton was needed in the team to make it as strong as any that the Remove had ever turned out. But, with or without the former captain, Smithy was determined that he was going to beat St. Jude's. He was going to play the game of his life, and he had the loyal backing to rely upon from the men he had picked out to play. His disgruntled followers could grumble and grouse as much as they liked; Smithy was prepared to pass their grouching by, like the idle wind which he regarded not.

The Bounder seemed to be walking on air when he came out of the Form-room after class. Bolsover major stopped him in the corridor to speak. "You're sticking to it, Smithy?" he asked.

"Eh—to what?"

"You haven't changed your mind about the team?"

The Bounder laughed. "Not likely!" he answered. "That's all I wanted to know," said Bolsover.

And he walked away and joined Wibley, Micky Desmond, and Hazel, and the four of them went out into the quad together.

The Bounder glanced after them for a moment, and then forgot their existence. He strolled out with Redwing.

"You've got to pull up your socks this afternoon, Reddy!" he said cheerily. "We've simply got to beat them at St. Jude's. It would make a fellow look an awful as if—"

Redwing smiled. "You don't want to begin with a defeat, old man," he agreed. "I wish Wharton was with us."

"Bother him!" the Bounder scowled. "I went so far as to ask him to play, and he refused. Not that I want him—the swot! He's going to mug up Latin this afternoon while we're playing football. I wish the silly ass joy of it! I've got Nugent in his place; I know he's not a patch on Wharton. But we've got to pull it off!"

"Well, we'll try hard. Some of the fellows think you oughtn't to have given me Penfold's place—"

"Rot!"

"I'm more than willing to stand down if—"

"Rubbish!"

"Well, if you think—"

"St. Jude's are a good team," said the Bounder, unheeding. "But they're not hot stuff like the Rookwood men who beat us the other day. We can beat them without Wharton! Let him swot!"

After dinner, however, the Bounder

looked for the former captain of the Remove. He found him on his way to his study, with two or three books under his arm.

Smithy's eyes dwelt on the books for a moment sarcastically. But his manner was as civil as he could make it as he spoke.

"Hold on a minute, Wharton! The brake's coming round at two—"

"Well!"

"If you'd like to back us up to-day, your place is still open."

Wharton shook his head.

"I've given you my answer already!" he said, and he went on to his study before the Bounder could speak again.

"Rotten swot!" muttered Vernon-Smith, loud enough for Wharton to hear. But the former captain of the Remove gave no sign of having heard as he went into his study.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders and walked away. After all, he could win without the help of his old rival.

Hazeldene was coming up the Remove staircase as Smithy went down. There was a dark and sullen expression on Hazel's face, and he gave the Bounder a lowering, sidelong look.

"You're to go to Quelch's study, Vernon-Smith!" he snapped, and passed on without waiting for an answer.

The Bounder looked round after him. "Quelch? Quelch's gone out," he answered. "What do you mean, Hazel? I saw Quelch go out after dinner."

"That's the message," answered Hazel over his shoulder, and he went up the Remove passage and disappeared.

The Bounder gave an angry grunt.

All the Remove knew that Mr. Quelch had gone out for the afternoon; and Smithy had seen him leave after dinner. Apparently he had come back, and wanted to see the Bounder.

Still, there was plenty of time to see Quelch, and have done with him, before the brake came round to bear the footballers to St. Jude's. Smithy hurried away to Masters' Studies.

He tapped on Mr. Quelch's door, and entered. "You sent for me, sir!"

Slam!

The study door suddenly closed behind the Bounder.

He stared round him in amazement. Mr. Quelch was not in the study.

Three Remove fellows were there—Bolsover Major, Micky Desmond, and William Wibley. One of them had been behind the door, and he had slammed it after the Bounder's entrance. Now all three of them were between the Bounder and the door.

Micky was grinning, Bolsover scowling, and Wibley looking grim and determined. The Bounder stared at them blankly.

"What the dickens' game is this?" he snarled. "Where's Quelch?"

"I fancy he's in the train for London," answered Bolsover major coolly. "Didn't you know Quelch was going to London to-day?"

"And sure he won't be back till calling over!" grinned Micky Desmond.

"You silly owls! Hazel gave me a message—"

"And you thought it was from Quelch?" said Bolsover major, with a nod. "Well, it wasn't—it was from me."

"From you, you howling ass? Is this what you call a jape?" snapped the Bounder. "Playing silly kids' tricks—"

He strode towards the door. Bolsover major made a sign to his comrades, and like one man they leaped on the Bounder.

Bump!

Vernon-Smith went heavily to the floor.

"What—what the thump—" he gasped.

Even yet, the Bounder did not guess what was coming. He supposed that it was a rag; though it was amazing that the three should have selected a Form-master's study as the scene of a ragging.

But he was soon to understand. "Hold the cad!" muttered Bolsover major.

"You bet!"

The Bounder struggled savagely.

"You silly fools! Let me go!" he hissed. "What the thunder do you think you are up to? I'll groogh—"

Smithy broke off, perforce, as Bolsover major crammed a folded duster into his mouth.

He gurgled.

"That will shut him up!" said Bolsover. "Mind you don't let him go until I get him safe."

"Urrrrrrrrgh!" came in a horrible gurgle from the new captain of the Remove.

Bolsover major crammed the duster well home, and coolly proceeded to wind a length of twine round Smithy's head, keeping the gag safely in position.

A glimmering of what was intended dawned on the Bounder now. With all his strength, he strove to tear himself free. So desperate was his effort, that for some moments the three had their hands full. But it was in vain, and the Bounder, crimson, exhausted; sank down, with a grip on either arm and Bolsover major's knee planted on his chest.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Held by the Enemy!

"GOT him!" panted Bolsover. The Bounder lay breathless, unable to speak; his eyes blazing. He could guess now what was coming to him. It was not merely for a rag that Bolsover & Co. had trapped him in the study.

He knew that he had fallen into a trap—or rather, walked into it with his eyes open. He was a prisoner, in the hands of the fellows he had fooled and flouted; and in less than half an hour the footballers were due to start for St. Jude's. Only too well the Bounder knew, now, that he was not intended to start with them—that was what Bolsover & Co. had planned. The new captain of the Remove had played an unscrupulous game; and his unscrupulousness had come home to roost.

The hapless Bounder was still attempting to resist, but it was futile. Wibley had one arm, Micky Desmond the other, and Bolsover's heavy knee pinned him to the floor. He would have shouted for help, had it been possible; but Bolsover had taken care of that. The duster crammed in his mouth effectually silenced him.

He glared at the three, maddened with rage. Although he guessed now what was intended, he could hardly believe that the bully of the Remove would dare to carry out such a scheme. But the dogged expression on Bolsover's rugged face left little doubt.

"Put his paws together!" muttered Bolsover.

Vernon-Smith resisted in vain. Micky and Wibley dragged his wrists together, and Bolsover bound them with a twisted duster.

Then, jerking away the Bounder's own handkerchief, he twisted it, and knotted it round Smithy's ankles.

Smithy was a helpless prisoner now.

The three rose to their feet, breathing hard. Heavy as the odds had been against the Bounder, he had given them a hard struggle.

Wibley glanced at Mr. Quelch's clock. "Twenty to two!" he murmured. "They'll be starting in twenty minutes now, you men."

"Smithy won't!" grinned Micky Desmond.

"No fear!" said Bolsover major. "I fancy their jolly old captain will be missing when they go."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet!" muttered Bolsover.

"Quelch's safe till call-over—but some other beak might hear—"

"Better look the door!" murmured Wibley. "If some beak should butt in—"

"Oh, my hat! Look it—quick!"

Wibley stepped to the door and turned the key softly.

The Bounder, his face crimson, was making frantic efforts to eject the gag. Other masters' studies were near at hand—and Smithy would have been glad to bring even a beak on the scene—even the Head himself, in his desperate extremity.

But it was in vain; he was securely gagged, and hardly the faintest gurgles escaped him.

"Got him!" repeated Bolsover. He looked down at the prostrate Bounder, with a sour grin. "I'm not playing at St. Jude's to-day, old bean—after you fooled me to the top of my bent! Well, you're not playing, either."

"They won't see me in the front line!" grinned Wibley. "And I rather fancy they won't see you there, Smithy."

"Faith, we're keepin' you company, old man—and I hope you'll be enjoying it!" chuckled Micky.

The Bounder ceased his useless efforts. He was helpless in the hands of the Philistines; and he knew it. He lay breathing hard through his nose, his eyes burning at the three.

He had no chance of getting loose or getting away. He turned over desperately in his mind what chances he had of being found and released in time for the football match.

Little or none, as he had to realize. Mr. Quelch was gone to London that afternoon, and was not to return till calling-over at the earliest; that, of course, was why Bolsover major had selected his Form master's study for the ambush. No fellow was likely to come to that study during Mr. Quelch's absence.

A beak might drop in, if unaware that Mr. Quelch had gone out for the afternoon; there was at least a chance. But the amateur kidnappers had guarded against that by locking the door.

If the fellows looked for him—

They were certain to look for him when the time came to start for St. Jude's and he did not turn up. But it was equally certain that they would never dream of looking for him in his Form master's study. That was the very last place in which they would think of looking.

Only Hazel knew that he had come there; and Hazel was in the plot. The Bounder writhed with rage as he thought how easily he had been tricked and trapped.

The fellows would never dream of guessing that he was kept away by force. Certainly that was not likely to occur to anybody. They would wonder why he did not turn up—they would look round for him, and they would not find him, or begin to guess what had become of him. And then—

Obviously they would have to go without him, as he did not turn up; and somebody else would captain the team in his place. That was inevitable.

This was the beginning of his captaincy; only one big fixture remained to be played, and he would not play in it.

There was a footstep in the passage.

Vernon-Smith's eyes blazed. Bolsover and Co. exchanged rather uneasy glances, and stood very still.

The footstep passed on.

The Bounder's brief hope died.

"After all, nobody's likely to come here," murmured Wibley. "If they do, they can't get in. Safe as houses."

"We're all right!" said Bolsover major.

"Right as rain!" said Micky cheerfully. "Ten to two! Better stay with the spalpeen till the brake's gone."

"Yes, rather."

The Bounder writhed.

"Wriggle as much as you like, you tricky ead!" said Bolsover major.

"You won't get loose! Wriggle away! Don't you worry about the game at St. Jude's," he added sarcastically.

"They'll get on all right without you. You're not the only pebble on the beach, though you think you are."

(Continued on next page.)



Goal !!!

The score's now even, 2 all . . . the whistle blown for half-time. Half-time for a brief rest and a refresher. That means Wrigley's . . . of course. Nothing like a piece of Wrigley's to refresh you during the game. It keeps the mouth fresh . . . makes you feel alert. Wrigley's helps the digestion, too, and cleanses the teeth. Use it "after every meal."

In two flavours—P.K., pure double-distilled peppermint flavour, and Spearmint, pure mint leaf flavour. Only 1d. a packet, worth many times more for the good it does you.

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

WRIGLEY'S

MEANS BETTER CHEWING GUM



B.M. 33.

Guess what the fellows will do when you don't turn up."

Vernon-Smith glared at him. "They'll ask Wharton to join up," grinned Bolsover major. "Bound to—and he'll be bound to do it in the jolly old circumstances. He couldn't leave the team in the lurch with their skipper missing. If they don't think of it I shall jolly well point it out to them, see?"

The Bounder choked. "So you needn't worry about the jolly old game! Wharton will have to join up, whether he likes it or not—and he's a better man than you any day in the week. So?"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Wibley. "You've asked for this!" continued Bolsover major. "I warned you that you wouldn't get away with your rotten trickery. What do you think now, you cad? Well, I wouldn't have bagged you if it had meant risking the match—you can believe that or not, just as you like! There'll be a better man than you to lead the Remove. See?"

Only a glare of fury replied; the Bounder could make no other reply.

"Hush!" breathed Wibley. "There was a tread in the passage again—a heavy, ponderous tread."

"Prout!" whispered Micky. That ponderous tread could proceed only from Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, or from an escaped elephant. Evidently, therefore, it was Prout. The ponderous tread stopped at the study door; and there was a tap, and the door-handle turned.

Again the Bounder's eyes blazed with renewed hope. There was still time—still time—if only he was found. Prout obviously was unaware that Quelch was gone for the afternoon; he had rolled along for a chat. The three young rascals in the study were deeply thankful that they had locked the door, as the handle turned.

"Dear me!" They heard Prout's fruity voice. "The door appears to be locked! Quelch! My dear Quelch! Are you in, Quelch?"

Vernon-Smith struggled desperately with the gag. But he could make no sound. And the other juniors were very careful to make none. They almost stifled their breathing.

Another voice was heard in the passage, the high-pitched voice of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master of Geography.

"Mon cher Prout—"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bolsover major inaudibly. "Are all the blessed beaks collecting here this afternoon?"

"Vous cherchez le bon Quelch?" went on Monsieur Charpentier. "Mais, ze good Quelch is not viz himself zis afternoon, sair."

"He is not—what?" asked Prout. "Oh, you mean he is not at home?"

"C'est ça," agreed Monsieur Charpentier. "That good Quelch, he proceed on a journey to Londres. He catch one train, it is already some time ago."

"Oh!" said Prout.

The ponderous footsteps boomed on down the passage. Once more the three in the study breathed freely. Once more the Bounder's hope died away.

"All serene!" whispered Wibley.

"Thank goodness the jolly old door was locked."

"Oh, my hat! Rather!"

"If they caught us here—" murmured Micky.

"That's all right. They won't catch us here."

Two o'clock boomed from the clock tower, at last.

"Time!" grinned Bolsover major. "I'll cut out now—you fellows stay with Smithy till the brake's gone. Lock the door after me, Wib!"

"Right-ho!"

Bolsover major peered warily out before leaving the study. The coast was clear, and he slipped quickly out, and Wibley closed and locked the door after him. Bolsover strolled away; and Wibley and Micky sat on Mr. Quelch's table, grinning serenely at the pale, furious face of the new captain of the Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Man Missing!

"SEEN Smithy?"
"No!"
"Where the dickens is the man?"

Quite a number of fellows were asking that question.

The brake that was to convey the Remove footballers to St. Jude's was waiting. It was time to start; more than time. The Remove footballers, and other fellows who were going with them, were ready. But—inexplicably—Vernon-Smith was not to be seen.

Where the Bounder was, nobody knew or cared till the time came for starting. Now, of course, they cared; but still nobody knew.

Redwing, the Bounder's chum, was assailed by questions on all sides. But Redwing knew no more than any other man. He was quite puzzled by the Bounder's unaccountable absence.

Hazel stood looking on, his hands in his pockets, a sour smile on his face. Hazel could have enlightened the puzzled footballers, had he chosen to do so; but he did not choose.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's Smithy, Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Blessed if I know!" answered Bunter. "I say, you fellows, perhaps he's gone on the razzle!"

"You silly ass!"

"Well, you know the Bounder!" argued Bunter. "He'd rather play billiards at the Cross Keys than footer, any day."

"Dry up, you silly owl!" growled Redwing.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, really, Redwing! I fancy you'll find that Smithy has gone on the ran-dan! If he hasn't, where is he?"

"The wherefulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The esteemed Smithy seems to have performed the absurd vanishing trick."

"Well, he must be somewhere," said Squiff. "He can't have gone out and forgotten the match, I suppose."

"Rot!" said Redwing. "He's about somewhere—"

"Well, where?" asked Sampson Quincy Willey Field tartly. "We can't hang about all the afternoon if we're going to play St. Jude's. Why the thump doesn't the man show up?"

"Can't start without him!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Well, hardly; but why the dickens isn't he here?"

"Goodness knows."

Bolsover major came out of the House and two or three of the footballers called to him.

"Seen Smithy?"

"Smithy!" repeated Bolsover, with a cool stare. "Have you lost him?"

"He's not here!" grunted Tom Brown.

"I say, you fellows, you needn't wait for Smithy!" chorried Billy Bunter. "You'll pass the Cross Keys going over to St. Jude's. Stop there and pick him up."

"Shut up, you silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"Where the thump can the man be?" growled Bob. "Must be off his rocker, I think. Can't you find him anywhere, Reddy?"

Redwing shook his head. He was utterly puzzled and mystified.

"He's not in the study," he said. "I've looked all over the place. I can't find him, or any fellow who's seen him. I can't make it out."

"Look again!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Redwing went back into the House.

"Well, I think this takes the jolly old cake!" said Bob Cherry. "Quarter past two. We shall be late at St. Jude's, at this rate. Is Smithy going to play football, or isn't he?"

"Some skipper!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Smithy can't have gone out and cut the match without telling anybody," said Frank Nugent. "That's impossible! He was as keen on the game as any man here, too. Blessed if I understand it!"

"He never went out!" growled Toddy.

"Some of us would have seen him. He must be in the House."

"Well, what's he up to, then?"

"Oh, ask me another!"

There was a good deal of irritation among the footballers by this time, which was not very surprising. It was a long run to St. Jude's, and nobody wanted to arrive late for the match. But it was hardly possible for the team to start without their captain. On the other hand, it was hardly possible to wait for him much longer if the match was to be played at all. Tempers were rising on all sides.

"I say, you fellows, he's let you down, you know," said Billy Bunter cheerfully. "Smithy's the man to let fellows down, isn't he? He let me down after voting for him—"

"Oh, ring off, fathead!"

"He let a lot of fellows down! Now he's let you down. Look here, you men, you don't want Smithy really. Wash him out and take a better man."

"Wharton's not in the team now, ass!"

"I'm not speaking of Wharton—"

"Who do you mean, then, fathead?"

"Me!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Me!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "I'm willing to play—"

"You frabjous ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "Is this a time for your idiotic jokes! Roll away before I kick you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm not joking—I mean it—"

"So do I!" said Bob, swinging up his foot; and Billy Bunter departed hastily before it could land.

Tom Redwing came out of the House again, looking more worried and mystified than ever. He came alone.

"You haven't found him!"

Redwing shook his head.

"The silly ass!" said Bob, breathing hard. "He calls himself captain of the

Remove, and he clears off without a word when we're starting for a football match. We can't wait any longer."

"We can't go without Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Are we going to play at all?" hooted Bob. "Are we going to get to St. Jude's when they've given us up? My hat! If I knew where Smithy was I'd jolly well go and kick him. He must have gone out."

"Must have," said Johnny Bull. "Some awfully important appointment at the Cross Keys, I suppose. The races are on at Wapshot to-day, too! Perhaps that's it!"

"That's not it, and you know it!" exclaimed Redwing sharply.

his place. He couldn't refuse, in the circumstances."

"Oh!" said Bob, rather taken aback. He had not expected that "tip" from Bolsover major.

As a matter of fact, many of the footballers were already thinking of Wharton. If the Bounder did not turn up—and apparently he was not turning up—the team had to go without him, and a man had to be taken in his place. No better man, evidently, could be found than the former captain of the Remove, if he would consent. That was the doubtful point, however.

"It's nearly half-past," said Frank Nugent at last. "We can't wait any longer. I don't know what Smithy's up

Wharton, and if he doesn't consent we'll jolly well yank him out of his study by his jolly old ears—and that's that!"

And "that" being "that," and half-past two having chimed without any sign of the Bounder, a crowd of the footballers tramped into the House and up to the Remove passage.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton is Wanted!

HARRY WHARTON sat at his study table, deep in Latin, and with a far from cheerful expression on his face.

Hard as he tried to pin his attention



"Look here, old bean," said Bob Cherry, "if you can't make up your mind to skipper our team, we'll help you! Lend a hand, you men!" "Good egg!" With grinning faces, the footballers closed round Wharton, and carried him out of the study.

"Then why isn't he here?" demanded Johnny.

But Redwing could not answer that. He was as mystified as every other member of the eleven.

Bolsover major came sauntering up with his hands in his pockets and a cheery grin on his face.

"Smithy turned up yet?" he asked blandly.

"No!" said Mark Linley.

"You'll be late at St. Jude's, at this rate."

"Think we don't know that?" growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, if you like to take a tip from me—" said Bolsover.

"Take it away and bury it!"

"Keep your temper, old bean!" grinned Bolsover. "My tip is to let Smithy rip, and ask Wharton to take

to, but it's pretty clear that he's not coming."

Johnny Bull gave an emphatic grunt. "Are we cutting the match, or not?" he said. "That's what it comes to. If we're not going, we'd better send a telegram—"

"We're going!" roared Bob. "We're not cancelling a match because that fool Smithy has let us down."

"If we're going, we've got to start!" said Squiff.

"If Wharton will play—" muttered Bob.

"He's sweating in the study!" said Frank slowly. "How the dickens can we ask him? He was turned out—"

"Well, in the circumstances—" said Toddy.

"Look here, if Smithy hasn't turned up at half-past two we're going without him," growled Bob; "and we'll ask

on his task he could not help his thoughts wandering.

"Sweating" was a necessity with him now, and he had made up his mind to it. But it was neither grateful nor comforting. Wharton had always had a good place in Form, and Mr. Quich, as a rule, was quite satisfied with him. But sweating for an examination was another matter, as he had very soon found.

He was not the fellow to look back after setting his hand to the plough. The task he had set himself was hard and weary, but he was determined to carry it through. If he failed it should be by no want of effort on his own part, he was resolved upon that.

But the hard task seemed harder than ever this bright spring afternoon, and

he could not help his thoughts wandering from the grind to the football field. In other circumstances he would have been with the Remove footballers at St. Jude's; captaining the team, enjoying the game, perhaps winning one more victory for Greyfriars. He could not help thinking of it with a heavy heart.

He heard the half-hour chime, and suppressed a sigh. The footballers would be well on their way now, a merry crowd in the brake, and he longed to be with them. He shook himself, as if shaking off troublesome thoughts, and settled resolutely down to work again. Then there came the tramp of many feet in the Remove passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
The door was hurled open.
Wharton sprang to his feet and stared in astonishment at the crowd of fellows in the doorway. He had supposed them to be nearly at St. Jude's by that time. "What the dickens—" he exclaimed. "Haven't you started yet? You'll be late for the match."

"You're wanted, old man!" said Bob Cherry.

"The wantfulness is terrific!"
"Come on!"

"Got a move on?"
Most of the fellows were speaking at once. The late captain of the Remove could only stare.

"Smithy's cleared off somewhere," Frank Nugent explained. "He's left us in the lurch. You'll have to play up, Harry."

"The playfulness must be—"
"Preposterous!" grinned Bob.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton blankly. "Smithy can't have cleared off. That's rot! I can't play this afternoon. I'm not in the team—"

"We want you!" roared Johnny Bull.

"That's rubbish!" said Wharton. "It's for Smithy to say, as he's skipper, even if I were free—"

"Smithy's bunked!"
"Mizzled—"

"Cleared off—"
"Left us in the lurch—"

"Without a word—not a jolly old syllable! Just left us to stew in our juice!" growled Squiff.

"I can't understand that—"
"Nobody here can understand it. But it's happened," said Bob. "We've either got to chuck the match at St. Jude's—which we're jolly well not going to do—or get another man to skipper the team. And you're jolly well going to do it, see?"

"Get a move on!" said Tom Brown. Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I certainly can't take Smithy's place without Smithy asking me, at least," he replied.

"How's he going to ask you, when he's not here—when he's mizzled—bunked, vanished, disappeared!" roared Bob.

"But he can't have—"
"He has!" booted Johnny Bull.

"Well, I can't make that out—"
said Harry. "But—"

"Never mind making it out. Smithy's left us in the lurch and you've got to weigh in. We want you. You can't let us down."

"Play up, Wharton!"
"Play up, old man!"

Harry Wharton opened his lips, and closed them again. The whole team had arrived at Study No 1 by this time, all in a state of excitement, and all urgent. The disappearance of the Bounder, at such a moment, was absolutely amazing. Still, there was no doubt about the fact. The Bounder was not there to lead the Remove footballers. Every voice was raised to call on Wharton to take his old place.

It was difficult for him to refuse. His heart was with his comrades, not with the work that lay on the table.

But he shook his head again.

"If Smithy's missing—and I suppose he is, as you say so—Bob can skipper the team."

"Rats!" said Bob. "We want another man, anyhow. And we want you. And if you play, you're going to play as skipper!"

"Hear, hear!"
"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!"

"We're wasting time," said Toddy. "Come on, Wharton! You simply must!"

"But—but—" Wharton looked at

the unfinished work on the study table. "I'm standing out of games now, you know that. I've got to work—"
"You can cut that—for once."

"You can't let us down!"

"Look here, you've got to play!"

Wharton hesitated. After all, even if he had to swot for that dismal exam, one afternoon might not make a great deal of difference. He longed to be with the footballers, and though he was no longer captain of the Form, though the Remove had practically turned him out, that made no difference to his keenness to back up the Form on the football field. And yet—and yet—he had laid down his programme of hard work, and if he abandoned it at the first temptation—

He was sorely perplexed.

"Are you coming?" bawled Johnny Bull.

"You—you see—"

"I see," said Bob. "You can't make up your jolly old mind. We'll help you. Lend a hand, you men!"

"Good egg!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" exclaimed Wharton. Three or four of the footballers grasped him, and he was propelled to the study doorway.

"Come on!"
"This way, old bean!"

"You silly asses!" gasped Wharton. "I tell you—"

"Quick march!" roared Bob Cherry. With grinning faces, the footballers closed round the former captain of the Remove and marched him along the passage to the stairs. Harry Wharton went. It was useless to resist. In the midst of a surging crowd he was marched down the staircase.

"Made up your mind yet, old bean?" grinned Bob.

"Look here—"

"Do you want to be chucked into the brake?"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. "All right, you ass! I'll come."

"Hurrah!"

"Good man!"

The question was settled. "Swotting" was off for the day, and Harry Wharton took his place in the brake. Bob Cherry waved a cheery hand as the crowded vehicle rolled away.

"Best of luck!" he shouted.

The footballers were off at last. In Mr. Quelch's study, the Bounder, writhing with fury, heard them go.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

"H AVE a good time, old bean," grinned Wibley.

"We'll come back in an hour!" chuckled Micky Desmond, grinning.

"And let you loose—"

"When it's too late for you to butt in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The brake was gone. From Mr. Quelch's study window Wibley and Micky had watched it go.

They grinned down cheerily at the writhing Bounder.

"You needn't worry about the game, old pippin!" chortled Wibley. "Wharton's gone with them—I saw him in the brake."

A glare of dumb fury was the Bounder's answer. That information was of little comfort to him.

Wibley and Micky, with grinning faces, left the study, Wibley locking the door after him and taking away the

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key. They joined Bolsover major and Hazel in the quad, and a few minutes later a sound of laughter floated in at the window to the Bounder's ears. Bolsover & Co., apparently, were hilarious over the success of their little scheme. They had, from their own point of view, paid the Bounder in his own coin. He had left them out—and they had left him out.

Smithy was left alone. The brake was gone; and even if it made good speed, the footballers would be late. It was certain that they would lose no time on the journey. But the rage that possessed the Bounder did not cloud his cool head and his clear judgment. There was still a chance—if he could get loose. If he remained in the study till his kidnappers came back to release him the game was up. But if he could get loose—

Certainly, the Bounder did not want the team to be beaten at St. Jude's. But the thought of Wharton captaining the team in his absence filled him with fury. That would be a precious ending to his long campaign against the captain of the Remove. It was the last big fixture of the football season—and Wharton was there to captain the eleven, after all the Bounder's planning and scheming and plotting. And the Bounder himself, in the very hour of success, was lying here, trussed up like a turkey, laughed at by the fellows he had made use of and let down; and to be laughed at by the footballers when they came back. But if he could get loose—

A swift ride on his bike, by short cuts, and he would beat the brake. He would ride like the wind; somehow, anyhow, he would get to St. Jude's in time, if only for the pleasure of seeing Wharton's face fall when he arrived there.

The sound of laughter was in his ears. Bolsover and his friends seemed to be gathered outside the study window. Judging by the sounds, they were enjoying the situation.

Vernon-Smith bent all his energies to the task of getting free. While Micky and Wibley had been with him, that had been impossible. Now he was left alone, he had a chance.

He wrenched fiercely at the duster that confined his wrists. It was knotted securely enough, and for long minutes he wrenched and wrenched in vain, heedless of the pain the desperate wrenching gave him.

But under his efforts the material stretched and gave at last; not much, but sufficiently to allow him to wriggle one hand loose. Almost exhausted by his fierce effort, the Bounder found his hands free at last.

He tore the gag from his mouth.

For a minute he lay gasping, panting, spent.

Then he was active again. He freed his legs, and staggered to his feet. The perspiration ran in trickles down his crimson face.

He made a leap to the door—and stopped! The door was locked on the outside—the key gone!

The Bounder would not have hesitated to bring masters on the scene—by shooting to be released from the locked study. But he knew that it would not serve his turn.

The door could not be opened till the key was obtained: and that meant delay—long delay. And minutes were precious—seconds might be precious if he was to have a chance of getting to St. Jude's in time for the game. And on that all his thoughts were set.

He ran to the window.

At a little distance outside, Bolsover

GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 23.

This week's poem by the Greyfriars Rhymester is devoted to Percy Bolsover's hero—"Battling" Joe, whose motto is: "A sock in the eye's worth two on the feet."

BURLY, bashing, beefy bruisers,
These are Bolsover's delight;
Chest expanders, weight reducers,
Occupy him half the night,
For, like most unsporting losers,
He must always win the fight.

In each wild and whirling tussle
Bolsy knocks his man about,
Exercising every muscle
With his heavy-handed clout;
Only Cherry and Dick Russell
Can knock burly Bolsy out.

And his hero is a boxer,
Name of Slusher—"Battling Joe"—
Six feet seven in his socks, sir,
Weighing fourteen stone or so.
When he hits, look out for shocks, sir,
Sudden death in every blow!



major, Hazeldene, Micky and Wibley, were standing in a group. Some remark of Bolsover's caused a fresh outburst of laughter.

It was unlucky for the Bounder that they were there, in sight. Likely enough they might try to collar him again, even in the open quad. Not that they could get away with it; but it meant delay—more delay! The Bounder set his teeth, and his eyes blazed. If they laid a finger on him—

He dragged up the window.

At the sound of the opening window, all four fellows stared in his direction. They stared blankly as the Bounder scrambled out and leapt to the ground.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wibley. "He's got loose!"

"Collar him!" bawled Bolsover major.

"Look out!"

The Bounder ran straight at them.

Bolsover major was the only one who had the presence of mind to attempt to stop him. And a fierce drive from Smithy landed on his chest, and sent him spinning.

The burly Removite went down with a crash and a yell.

Vernon-Smith dashed on; the other three staring after him.

With a speed he had never shown on the cinder-path, the Bounder ran, vanishing from their startled, staring eyes.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Hazel. "He—he's gone!" Anyway, he's too late—he can't—

Bolsover major staggered up.



One straight left from Mr. Slusher
Always drops you on the floor;
A twenty-ton hydraulic crusher
Really couldn't hurt you more;
He'll knock you from here to Russia,
Just by way of making sure.

He drinks nothing else but cocoa
While in training for a scrap;
On this diet he gives toco
To some poor misguided chap;
Hands him one upon the boko,
Then goes home and has a nap.

Out of training, he's no longer
Tied to cocoa sweet and hot,
He craves something rather stronger;
Yes—and drinks it quite a lot;
But as we do not want to wrong a
Man like Joe—we won't say what.

Battling Joseph's classic features
Are not pleasant—that's a fact;
He's the ugliest of creatures
To be perfectly exact;
But he's not one of those screechers
Who turn tail when they're attacked;

And he's Bolsy's hero—so
Here's the health of Battling Joe!

"After him!" he panted.

"I—I—I say, we—we can't—"

stammered Micky. "We—we—"

"You fool!" barked Bolsover. "He's headed for the bikeshed—he's going after the brake—come on, I tell you. We shall get him in the bikeshed."

He dashed away at top speed, and the other three followed.

Herbert Vernon-Smith reached the bikeshed and dashed in. There was a sudden roar as he came into violent collision with someone who was there.

"Ooooh! Yaroooooh! Beast!"

Bump!

"You fat fool!" hissed Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows—yarooooh—ooop—wharrrer you barging a fellow over for yow-ow-ow!" roared Billy Bunter. "I wasn't going to borrow your bike, you beast—yaroooooh!"

Unheeding the fat Owl, Vernon-Smith dragged his bike from the stand. He whirled it to the doorway, and rushed it out.

"There he is!" roared Bolsover major.

Smithy rushed the bike down to the open gate. Bolsover & Co. came up with a rush—too late!

"Get your bikes!" hissed Bolsover. "We're going after him!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wibley. "Look here, he'll never catch the brake now—he can't—"

"After him, I tell you!" roared Bolsover major. "Think we're going to have all our trouble for nothing! Get on your jiggers!"

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They rushed into the shed. Billy Bunter, who was scrambling to his feet, met them in full career. Again there was a heavy bump, and a roar.

"Whoooooop!"

"What the thump—"

"That idiot Bunter—kick him—"

"Yow-ow-ow-wooooo!"

Bolsover major stayed only a second to kick Bunter. It was fortunate for the fat Owl that he had no more seconds to spare!

Leaving Bunter yelling, the four juniors rushed their bikes out, and rushed them down to the gate. Herbert Vernon-Smith was already in the dusty distance. Hatless, just as he had got out of the study, the Bounder was riding as if for his life.

"Put it on!" shrieked Bolsover.

He ground at his pedals, and dashed in pursuit. Behind him, strung out one after another, came Micky and Hazel and Wibley.

The Bounder glanced over his shoulder for a moment. He set his teeth hard. In the Greyfriars quad, the amateur kidnappers certainly could not have collared him and kept him, but outside the school, in the unfrequented lanes, it was a different matter. There they could—and they would—if they succeeded in running him down. Pursuit was hot on his track; and the Bounder drove desperately at his pedals, and his machine fairly flew.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck!

CRASH!
Clatter!
The Bounder sprawled headlong.

He was in the hottest haste; but it was a case of more haste and less speed.

Three miles had flashed under the whizzing wheels. A glance back showed the Bounder that Micky had tailed off, and after him, Hazel. They were not equal to the race, and probably not so savagely determined as Bolsover major. Wibley was still keeping on, but at a great distance behind Bolsover. Only the burly Removite, going all out, had gained a little. Bending over his handlebars, crimson with exertion, Bolsover major was putting every ounce of his beef into the chase. Dropping behind, but still in sight, came William Wibley.

The Bounder turned from the lane he was following. It was a narrow rutty lane a short cut across the green pasture-land to the Lantham road, where he hoped to sight the brake before it reached St. Jude's. But ahead of the Bounder, as he tore alone the lane, a market cart lumbered, brushing the hedges on either side. He had to slow down to avoid a collision; and there was no room to pass till the cart should arrive at a wider space—which meant that he would be overtaken. With swift decision he turned into a rough cart-track across the fields, and rocked on almost as fast as before, over ruts and ridges of dried mud.

Bolsover major pressed on after him; but Wibley, when he arrived at the cart-track stopped. The rough going was too rough for him. But as he stopped and stared after the two juniors fleeing across the field, he saw the Bounder skid and roll over.

Vernon-Smith came down with a crash on the mud, and lay for some moments gasping, the breath knocked out of him. His bicycle clanged down. There was a

chirrup of glee from Bolsover major behind; echoed by Wibley as he resumed the chase once more.

The Bounder staggered up dazedly, Bolsover major was not twenty yards away.

Smithy, setting his teeth, grasped his bicycle and righted it and threw his leg over it again. He was aching and breathless from the fall, but he drove on furiously. There was a clinking and clanking from his machine, the crash had damaged it. One of the pedals was bent, and though it revolved under Smithy's foot, it sagged awkwardly, and lessened his speed. He heard Bolsover major coming closer and closer behind.

"Stop, you rotter!" panted Bolsover.

Vernon-Smith plunged on.

His face was crimson with exertion and rage. In escaping from the study he had supposed, as a matter of course, that all he had before him was a hard ride to St. Jude's, to get there as soon as the eleven. He had never dreamed of this! Never guessed for a moment the depth of the bitter animosity his trickery had aroused in Bolsover's breast. He realised it now.

His damaged machine rocked and clanked and clinked. The burly Removite behind was coming up hand over fist now.

He was abreast of the Bounder at last.

"Stop, you cad!" panted Bolsover. And as the Bounder did not heed, Bolsover major rode close and grabbed at his shoulder.

The result was inevitable. Both bikes went crashing, and both riders went sprawling.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ooooooh!"

The Bounder was first on his feet. But as he grabbed at his machine Bolsover major scrambled up and rushed at him. "No, you don't!" gasped Bolsover.

"Keep off, you rotter!" yelled the Bounder.

"No fear!" grinned Bolsover.

Vernon-Smith turned on him, like a tiger. His face flamed as he leaped at the burly Removite, hitting out right and left.

Bolsover major met him willingly enough. In a moment they were fighting hammer and tongs.

The Bounder was hardly a match, physically, for the burly Bolsover. But his furious attack drove Bolsover back. In his rage there was solace in punching the fellow who had kept him away from the football match; and his punches were hard and hefty. Bolsover major blinked as he captured them; but he stood up to them grimly, and gave back very nearly as good as he received.

They were fighting hard when Wibley came panting up.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wibley.

He stood gulping in breath and watching the fierce affray.

With furious desperation the Bounder pressed his adversary, and Bolsover tripped on a ridge of mud and went down. Instantly the Bounder was springing back to his machine.

But Wibley was in the way.

He did not remain in the way more than a few seconds—Vernon-Smith's whirlwind attack sent him spinning. But it gave Bolsover major time to get on his feet and get busy again. Smithy was almost on his bike when Bolsover grasped him, and dragged him over, machine and all.

Crash! Clatter! Clang!
"Lend a hand, Wib!" gasped Bolsover.

"Ow! Oh, my nose!" groaned Wibley.

But he lent a hand, and sat on Vernon-Smith's chest as Bolsover held him down.

The Bounder panted.

"You rotters! You rotters! Let me go! I'll smash you for this! I'll—"

"Will you?" grinned Bolsover major. "I fancy I'll do as much smashing as you do, you tricky cad! You're not getting to St. Jude's, anyhow."

"Not to-day!" chuckled Wibley.

"Might as well have stayed in Quelch's study, old bean," said Bolsover. "But here you are—and here you stop!"

The Bounder cast a desperate glance round. But there was no one in sight on the lonely cart-track across the pastureland. He was at the mercy of his captors.

Wibley was tired, and he seemed to find his seat on the Bounder's chest a comfortable one. He sat there and reeled, grinning down at Smithy's infuriated face. The Bounder wriggled and struggled, but with Wibley lodged on his chest and Bolsover grasping his wrists he was powerless. The game was up.

"They'll be at St. Jude's now!" remarked Bolsover major at last. "Let's see—it's about seven miles from here. Smithy will butt in by the time they finish, if he walks it. He can walk, it he likes."

"Oh, you rotters!" panted Smithy.

"I like that—from you!" grinned Bolsover. "If there's a rotter here, I fancy his name is Smith! Chuck it, Wib—let's get off, and take the cad's jigger with us."

Vernon-Smith sat up, panting, as the two started back across the field, Bolsover wheeling Smithy's bike as well as his own.

The Bounder staggered to his feet. Spent as he was, he would have made an effort to recapture his bike, had there been a possibility of success. But there was none; and with a black brow he stood gasping for breath, while the two Removites disappeared in the distance.

He was left alone—on foot, miles from anywhere, on the undulating downs. He hated the idea of going back, but it did not occur much use going on. The football match was already starting, that was certain; even if he tramped as far as the Lantham road and picked up a lift, he could not arrive till the game was over, or almost over.

There was nothing doing! Slowly, wearily, consumed by rage and disappointment and bitter chagrin, the new captain of the Remove tramped away—in the direction of Greyfriars.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Goal!

GOAL!
"Bravo, Wharton!"
"Good man!"
Harry Wharton's face was bright and cheery.

Whether he ought to have been sweating in his study, instead of playing football, was a question that the other fellows had settled for him.

Now that he was on the St. Jude's ground, with the Remove footballers, there was no doubt that he was enjoying himself; and he was playing a great game.

St. Jude's were a good team; but the Greyfriars men held them well, and in the first half there was no score for either side. The Remove men missed the Bounder, and Frank Nugent could not flatter himself that he filled Smithy's

place to perfection; but there was no doubt that Wharton was of more value to the side than Smithy would have been. So no one in the team—with perhaps the exception of Tom Redwing—regretted that Vernon-Smith had been left behind, as they had Wharton instead. If it was a choice between the two, the Remove footballers plumped for their former captain every time. Bob Cherry remarked at half-time that whatever had been Smithy's mysterious motive for missing the match, it was all to the good, as it had turned out; and the other fellows agreed.

The second half was hard and fast, and almost up to the final whistle there was no score, till the leather went in from Wharton's foot. Then there was a roar from the Remove men, and from the fellows who had followed them over to St. Jude's.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Our win!" grinned Bob Cherry, as

on as he's started. In fact, I don't know whether we oughtn't to pass him a vote of thanks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better kick him out and have a new election," growled Johnny Bull. "Wharton's our skipper."

"The betterfulness would be preposterous."

But Wharton shook his head.

Billy Bunter was the first to meet the returned footballers as they came into the House in a cheery crowd. Bunter's

"And then Bolsover major——"

"My only hat!" gasped Bob. "Smithy seems to have had a field day! Has he been scrapping with all Greyfriars?"

"The scrappfulness seems to have been terrific!"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, he says they bagged him or something and kept him away from the match or something. But, I say, Bolsover was rather too much for him! He, he, he! And poor old Smithy's simply a wreck! He, he, he! He's in his study. He, he, he!"



"Stop, you cad!" panted Bolsover. Vernon-Smith did not heed, and Bolsover caught him round the waist. The result was inevitable. Both bikes went crashing, and both riders went sprawling. "Oh, my hat!" "Ooooooh!"

the players walked back to the centre of the field after the goal. "They'll never get level now."

"The neverfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is an absurd and ridiculous victory!"

"Better than sweating, old bean, what?" asked Bob, giving Wharton a resonating smack on the shoulder.

"Ow! Ever so much better!" agreed Wharton. "Line up!"

There were only five minutes to go, and Lunn and his merry men of St. Jude's put all their beef into it. But it booted not, and when the whistle went, Harry Wharton & Co. went off the field victors by one goal to nil.

It was a cheery and satisfied crowd that packed into the brake for the return journey to Greyfriars.

"We'll jolly well ask Smithy what he means by it!" remarked Bob Cherry, as they rolled away. "But I think we'll mention that we don't mind if he goes

fat face was irradiated by an extensive grin.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Has Smithy turned up yet?" demanded Bob.

"He, he, he!"

"Is Smithy here, Bunter?" snapped Redwing.

Billy Bunter chortled.

"Oh, yes, rather! He's been scrapping! He, he, he! I say, you fellows, he came in looking like a jolly old tiger! He, he, he! He's been scrapping ever since! He, he, he!"

"What on earth has he been scrapping about?" asked Harry.

"He, he, he! He was just raging!" chortled Bunter. "He mopped up

Hazel——"

"Hazel?"

"Yes, and then Wibley——"

"Wibley?"

"Yes, and then Micky Desmond——"

"What on earth——"

You fellows should see what he looks like! He, he, he!"

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

Tom Redwing hurried away. The rest of the fellows followed him, curious to know what had happened to Smithy. Billy Bunter was left chaffin'.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry tramped into Study No. 4, with a crowd behind him. "Hallo—— Why—— what—— oh, my hat! Have you been under a lorry, Smithy?"

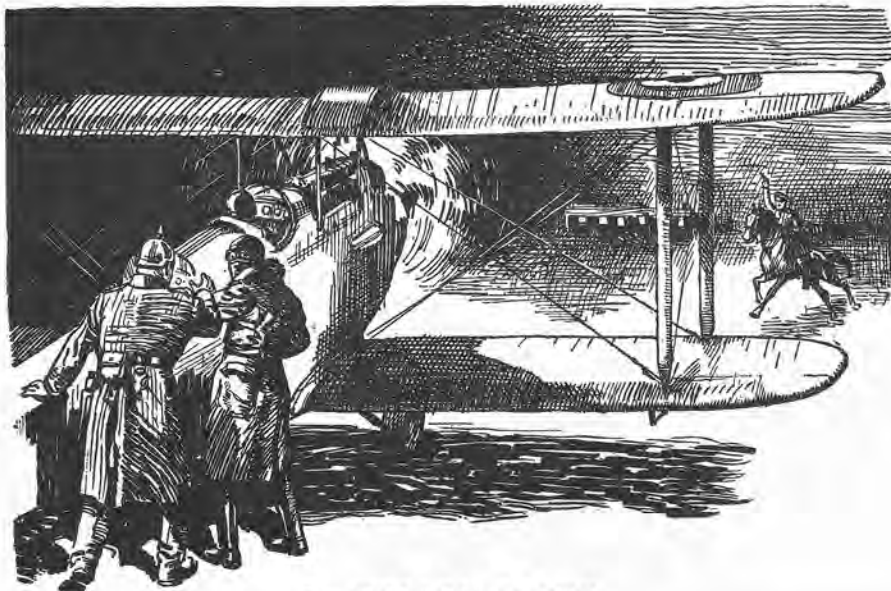
Herbert Vernon-Smith was there. He was in the armchair, but he rose to his feet as the footballers crowded into the doorway.

He looked considerably damaged. The Bounder had returned to Greyfriars breathing vengeance. Apparently he had exacted vengeance, but four scraps, one after another, had been too big an order. The Bounder looked—and felt—a wreck.

(Continued on page 27.)

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WINGS OF WAR!



By HEDLEY SCOTT.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

BRUCE THORBURN, A YOUNG FLYING OFFICER OF 256 SQUADRON, IS SHOT DOWN OVER GERMAN TERRITORY IN HIS FIRST ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ENEMY. HE SETS FIRE TO HIS WRECKED MACHINE, AND THEN UNEXPECTEDLY FINDS HIMSELF BEFRIENDED BY ADOLPH MENILLE—A PEASANT—WHO IS, IN REALITY, FERRERS LOCKE, A BRITISH SECRET SERVICE AGENT. LOCKE HIDES THORBURN IN THE LOFT OF THE FARMHOUSE, WHERE THE YOUNGEST OVERHEARS TWO GERMAN FLYING OFFICERS DISCUSSING PLANS TO LAY A MINE AT THE BRITISH HEADQUARTERS RAILHEAD. THE TWO GERMAN ARE MADE PRISONER, HOWEVER, AND LOCKE AND THORBURN ARE ABOUT TO VACATE THE FARMHOUSE IN THE GUISSE OF THEIR TWO CAPTIVES WHEN THEY ARE CONFRONTED BY A GERMAN LIEUTENANT AND A SQUAD OF INFANTRYMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ORDERED BY THE KOMMANDANT TO SEARCH FOR, AND ARREST, ADOLPH MENILLE.

Full Speed Ahead!

"ZOO!" said Locke, with a sneer. "And are you thinking, ober-lieutenant, that I have the miserable son of a dog in my pocket, that you do not order your men to make way?"

"No, no!" came the quick response. "But my orders are that no one is to leave this farm until Adolph Menille is found."

"Really," sneered Locke, whilst Thorburn's heartbeats sounded so thunderous in his own ears that he wondered he didn't give the whole show away on the spot. "And since when, my pretty soldier, has a highly connected Hauptmann of the Imperial Flying Service to take orders from a miserable lieutenant of foot? Ach! Out of my way!"

"Again a thousand pardons, herr Hauptmann! But I am a soldier, and my orders are—"

"Silence, dog! Orders! Woe betide you when I make my report! Do you know that you are hindering the Fatherland in this pig-snoozing talk of orders? Know, then, we are on a special mission which means victory for The MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,258.

the Fatherland, and that five minutes wasted here may mean another weary year of this accursed war?"

The ober-lieutenant faltered. The Secret Service men of the Imperial Flying Service were great gods in the eyes of the common-or-garden troops. He shuddered to think of the reprimand that would fall on his youthful shoulders if the captain opened his mouth in high places. Yet orders were orders—

"But where is this Adolph Menille, herr captain?" he asked. "If I can lay my hands on him, my orders do not then run counter to your wishes. But the kommandant swore by a thousand pigs that no one, not even the Hauptmann von Wiselburg, nor his companion the Hauptmann von Kauffman, was to leave this farm until the dog of a peasant was under arrest."

Locke smiled, although his heart was beating with almost the same measure of anxiety that troubled Thorburn.

"Your kommandant is one big fool! The all-highest is not so pleased with his services that he would stop twice to think of stripping him of his rank. One word from me to his Imperial Majesty"—here came a stiff salute—"and your doct of a kommandant would be disgraced. Not only that," added Locke,

"but all his blundering officers disgraced with him. In short, ober-lieutenant, while you are delaying the plans of the Fatherland, upon which I and my comrade are engaged, your fool of a peasant, Adolph Menille, is at this very moment in the presence of your doct of a kommandant!"

"What? But herr captain, how do you know that?"

Locke smiled and threw his final shot. "Because, idiot, I sent him there with a special message but a quarter of an hour since. Now stand your men aside!"

"Most certainly!"

The lieutenant nearly fell over himself to oblige. But why, he kept asking himself, had not this haughty, but powerful captain, of the Imperial Flying Service not said as much at the beginning? Now, one word to the high command under which he served, and he, the ober-lieutenant, but lately promoted, would be degraded.

Locke read his thoughts. "Ober-lieutenant—"

"Herr Hauptmann von Wiselburg!"—and a salute.

"You are a good soldier, if an over-zealous one. I will forget your lapse. Good-morning!"

Hardly crediting their luck, Thorburn stalked at the heels of Ferrers Locke. Instinct prompted him to break into a run, but Locke's restraining hand was upon him.

"Keep it up, son," he whispered. "In a moment we shall be galloping like mad for the aerodrome."

"Galloping?"
"On real horses," smiled Locke. "On the horses of the two estimable gentlemen we are impersonating. Surely you didn't think that such important folk would foot-slog two miles to the Haraschel Aerodrome!"

"Never occurred to me," breathed Thorburn. "But I don't mind telling you I shall feel a deal easier in mind when I see Hangar No. 4 with the jolly old De Haviland bus outside it, ticking over."

Locke led the way to the stables, sharply ordered one of the lieutenant's orderlies to saddle up the two horses that were bedded there, and as calmly mounted.

"Ready, Herr Kauffman?" he asked gruffly in German.

"Ja, Herr Wiseldurg!" answered Thorburn, in a thickly-coated imperfect reproduction of the same language.

The horses broke into a trot. Away in the east the first flushes of dawn were lighting up the darkened sky. Somewhere ahead in the shadows, two miles' distant, lay Haraschel Aerodrome.

Behind them now the age-old farm buildings grew faint and blurred. Another turn in the road would hide the farm which had sheltered them both so successfully. But before that welcoming turn drew near, Locke glanced back over his shoulder. His eagle eye saw that the lamp in the upstairs bed-room had been relighted.

And just as the two horses, spurred into a gallop now, reached the turn in the road, there came to the ears of the two fugitives such a commotion that there could be no possible doubt as to what had happened.

"Gallop!" urged Locke tensely. "Faster, faster! That officious lieutenant has obviously made a search of the house, and found our two captives!"

"Good gad!" gasped Thorburn. "Then the game's up!"

"Not quite," retorted Locke, with a light laugh. "We've exactly a mile start of pursuit. Put on steam!"

Crack, crack, crack!
A haphazard, drawn-out burst of rifle-fire echoed out behind them. Pursuit was already at their heels.

The horses thundered on.

A Bid for Liberty!

THE flashing hoofs of the horses rang a musical tattoo on the road as Locke and Thorburn urged the animals to greater efforts. Ahead of the fugitives lay the dusky outlines of the hangars of Haraschel aerodrome, peculiarly peaceful and quiet in those few moments before the skies blazed to the advent of dawn. Behind, grey and winding, Locke caught a glimpse of the roads as he turned in his saddle, but there was no sign of pursuit. He knew, however, that but a matter of a quarter of a mile in their rear there galloped two exceedingly wrathful officers, determined to prevent their escape.

"This is the best before-breakfast ride I've had in my life," spluttered Thorburn with forced gaiety, as he was jerked hither and thither in the saddle by his galloping steed. "But I prefer a jolly old bus; doesn't jump your liver about so much!"

Locke grinned.

He had formed a great liking for this carefree young flying officer, whose nerve never seemed to desert him in the worst of moments.

"It may be your last ride, young 'un!" he observed lightly. "So get all the fun you can out of it."

The horses galloped on.

Streaks of crimson were beginning to illumine the grey sky when the fugitives reached a spot hardly more than two hundred yards from the nearest building on the outskirts of the aerodrome.

"Ease up!" said Locke. "We don't want to excite unnecessary suspicion."

Thorburn—only too thankful to comply, steadied his mount into a canter, letting Locke take up a position slightly in front, as befitted his seniority.

Suddenly a sentry's voice rang out sharp and peremptory, and Thorburn caught sight of a steel-hatted infantryman with rifle and bayonet held challengingly before him. A moment later the zealous sentry had fallen into a smashing salute as he recognised the two figures in flying-suits. The officer on guard duty for the night had warned his sentries to expect the arrival of the two officers, and had given instructions not to delay or hinder them. All the same for that, Thorburn breathed with relief when that sentry was passed.

His sense of hearing, keenly attuned, could detect the faint rattle of horses' hoofs. Not far behind, now, were the pursuers. He confided as much to Ferrers Locke.

"Don't worry about that, young 'un!" said Locke. "Keep your eyes skinned for Hangar No. 4 and the British plane. Ah!"

He broke off with an exclamation of satisfaction as from a spot to their left came the thunderous roar of an aeroplane engine being given full throttle.

The note of the engine was peculiarly British in tone, Locke told himself. And he was not wrong. In front of a hangar, all ready turned and facing the wind for a take-off, stood the captured British De Haviland plane. Around it a squad of mechanics were putting the final touches to bracing wires. In the front cockpit sat a huge square-headed German, warming up the engine by giving it fitful bursts of power from the throttle. At sight of the two horsemen he barked an order to his men, sprang out of the cockpit, and slammed a terrific salute.

Locke returned it stiffly.

"Is all in readiness, Sergeant Wulff?"

"Everything, herr hauptman!" barked Sergeant Wulff. The engine is running as well as any Englishman engine can."

"It is well."

Two mechanics sprang to hold the horses' heads as Locke and Thorburn dismounted. Instinctively, Thorburn clambered up into the front cockpit, and Locke was about to settle himself in the rear cockpit when Sergeant Wulff saluted and intervened.

"Pardon, herr hauptman!" His voice roared above the deep-throated hum of the engine. "But you are getting in the observer's cockpit!"

Locke bit his lip. He realised that he was the recognised pilot of the expedition, and as such should occupy the front cockpit. But before he could explain away that small detail satisfactorily to the giant who stood between him and the plane there arose a furious shouting from the region of

the gateway, where stood the sentry on guard.

"Stop them!" Exalted German voices rang out on all sides. "Stop that plane!"

Sergeant Wulff was not a particularly bright specimen of the German military machine, but his dual was realised that something was wrong. As there was only one machine on the tarmac—the one by which he now stood—this was obviously the plane that had to be stopped.

"Stop!"

Out on to the aerodrome itself galloped two horsemen.

Crack! Crack!

Two bullets spanged unpleasantly close to both Sergeant Wulff and Ferrers Locke.

The next second Sergeant Wulff wondered what had hit him as Locke's doubled fist came up hard and true to his square chin.

For the next quarter of an hour the hapless sergeant was oblivious of all that happened. When he came to, it was to find himself in the guard-room under arrest for allowing two spies to escape!

In the meantime, Locke sprang for the cockpit of the plane and swung himself aboard, even as Thorburn opened the throttle. Sluggishly the machine began to move off.

Crack, crack, crack!

Three more revolver shots hissed and spanged on the machine itself as the foremost horseman—to wit a person than Captain von Kauffman—dismounted, took hurried aim, then made a flying leap at the tail of the plane, obviously with the idea of hanging on to it.

"Quick, young 'un!" breathed Locke.

But Thorburn needed no urging. He had heard the cries of the pursuers, had seen Locke's desperate blow to the sergeant's jaw, and was but waiting for Locke to get aboard. The engine roared into song, drowning the vicious reports of the revolver shots that spattered all round the plane.

Yet, even as the undercarriage wheels gathered speed, Thorburn knew that something was amiss. The machine was heavy and sluggish—it would never take the air. What the youngster did not know, however, was that a German officer was clinging to it, sprawled across the near-side elevator!

Locke drew his revolver. It went against the grain to shoot down a man in such circumstances, but war is war. Unless Von Kauffman was shifted from the tail of the plane a crash was imminent—and a crash meant possible injury and certain capture.

What justification Locke may have needed came the next second, for the marling officer, clinging desperately with his left hand, poured shot after shot at the two fugitives with his disengaged hand. His aim—as was to be expected—was wild, for the plane was covering the dawn-splashed aerodrome at a speed of thirty miles an hour. But a sudden searing pain in Locke's shoulder told him that one of the bullets had found a target.

Crack!

Locke's revolver spoke in reply. A cry escaped the German, and he let go his hold, for Locke's bullet had buried itself in the arm that clutched the rudder-kinpost.

"He'll thank me later!" reflected Locke, as he watched the German roll over and over on the ground. "for he's only got a Blighty one. In the boob."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,234.

gardens of Berlin he'll be able to say how he nearly prevented the escape of two dangerous Englishmen."

Thorburn felt the advantage of that weight being taken from the tail immediately. The plane gathered speed, and soon its undercarriage wheels were rising clear of the grassy aerodrome. Thorburn whooped with excitement, pulled back hard on the joystick, and roared into a climbing turn with engine full on. When Locke had become accustomed to the sensation, he looked down and found that the plane was now a hundred and fifteen feet above the Haraschel drome.

Thorburn looked round and grinned. "Ta-ta, old sausage-eaters!" he

chirruped. "Sorry we couldn't stay for brekker."

He kissed his hand in farewell, set the nose of the plane towards south-west, and climbed on, gaining height rapidly. Above him the dawn was now breaking in a full majesty of crimson and gold; spelling liberty and reunion with his two chums to the young Scotsman. But to Locke, standing upright in the rear cockpit and gazing down on the Haraschel Aerodrome, liberty was a long way off. Signs of great activity below told him that they were to be pursued once again, for out of the twenty hangars came the graceful shapes of twenty German Albatross machines!

Daredevil Britishers!

THE kommandant of Haraschel Aerodrome was in an ugly temper. His bloated face and dark-rimmed eyes told of an imprudent liking for his beloved Rheinisch wine. His headache and his stabbing liver told him that he had imbibed more than was good for him in the mess the previous evening. Indeed, the kommandant had not retired to his couch until two a.m., and here was his terrified orderly shaking him by the shoulder before dawn had lightened his well-furnished hut.

"Ten thousand curses, Schaffel!" he roared, seizing one of his field boots and belabouring the unfortunate orderly lustily about his close-cropped head. "You wake me at dawn to tell me that a pig of a captain demands audience with me! Ach!"

He raised his ponderous bulk in his bed and gave the orderly another lusty elout.

"I will have you shot for this, you miserable pig!"

"But," began the orderly, "it is a matter of highest importance—"

"Importance?" trumpeted the kommandant. "Is anything of importance enough to wake me at this accursed hour? Begone, dog! Place yourself in the guard-room—you will be court-martialled! Tell the pig of a captain to drown himself!"

The kommandant added a string of curses to his commands and then settled himself on his side. But his eyes had scarcely closed, when the door of his hut opened again and this time a German captain in the Imperial Flying Service stamped in.

It was the Hauptman von Wiseldurg. His breathing was laboured, his eyes were furious with anger, and his face was white and strained.

"What the devil—" began the kommandant, and then realising the importance of his visitor, he held himself in hand. "What brings you here?"

"There will be the dickens to pay for this night's business!" panted the outraged captain when he had told the amazed kommandant of all that had befallen him. "Those pig Englishers must be stopped at all costs—"

"Stopped!" exploded the kommandant, who had now scrambled out of his bed and was hurriedly inserting his bulk into his uniform. "How can I stop them?"

Karl von Wiseldurg shrugged his shoulders.

"You are kommandant of this aerodrome. You have twenty planes at your command; you have a like number of flying officers. There will be court-martials all round if nothing is done."

"Donner and blitzen!"

The kommandant did not stop to button his tunic, but rushed out, roaring orders at the top of his voice.

On all sides came officers and men, in various stages of undress.

"Up in the air at once!" roared the kommandant. "See that British plane! Stop it! Shoot it down! Hurry, you fools! Hurry!"

In a trice the mechanics were rushing to the hangars and wheeling out the planes.

The officers scrambled into their seats, regardless of flying helmets and suits. The kommandant was in a panic; he was in a royal temper. And they knew

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HERE is a question which ought to interest you fellows. It comes from Teddy Barlock, of King's Lynn. He wants to know which is

THE OLDEST GAME IN THE WORLD?

Well, I should say that football is the game which deserves this honour, for not only do civilised people play it, but it is also found amongst savage communities who could not possibly have learned it from white men.

Just recently I was reading an account of a game of football which is played by the Parecis Indians in the wilds of South America. But these particular savages play football with their heads! They have two teams, who line up pretty much the same as our Soccer teams. Then one player "kicks-off" by getting down on the ground and bumping the ball with his head. The next player also heads the ball, and so on, each player raising the ball until it is in the air.

After that the game starts in real earnest, and the two teams keep heading the ball, striving to send it far behind the opposing team. When the ball goes so far behind that no one can catch it and head it back, a "goal" has been scored, and the players "kick-off" again with their heads! A fellow has to be pretty nippy to play centre-forward in a Parecis Indians' team!

There is another tribe of savages, living in the South Sea islands, who play football with a human skull taking the place of the leather!

SCORING GOALS WITH SKULLS,

however, is not a new idea—even in this country! I dare say you have heard of some of the traditional games of football which are still played in the north of England. The ball is kicked off in the centre of the main street, and the townspeople divide themselves into two teams—the Up-towners and the Down-towners. Then the ball is played through the streets and occasionally through houses!

This particular game is said to be a survival from the days when England and Scotland were constantly at war. After a battle the victorious side would play football with the heads of their fallen enemies!

So, you see, the game of football has quite a history attached to it!

I HAVE received a letter from Frank Spillane, of Limerick, who tells me

HE WANTS TO DISGUISE HIMSELF!

He asks me where he can buy a book telling him how to do so. Disguise is a difficult art, and is generally known as "Make-up." By means of grease-paint, cunningly applied, and crepe hair—which looks remarkably like the real thing—it is quite possible to alter one's appearance completely. Naturally, stage and film actors are the greatest experts at this, and several of them have written books about it. There was an article in the "Hobby Annual" a little while ago on this subject, but if my reader missed that, he will doubtless be able to get a book on "Make-up for Amateurs," from Messrs French & Co., 26, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2. Mention the MAGNET when you write to them for particulars.

IT'S NOT TRUE

that I am discontinuing to award handsome prizes for jokes and limericks. On the contrary, I have a large stock of fine real leather pocket-wallets, Sheffield steel penknives, and topping books to give away to my readers. Send in your limericks and jokes right now.

FORWARD the Black Book, with details of next week's stunning stories.

There are lively times ahead for the Greyfriars chums, as you will discover when you read:

"THE 'SWOT' OF THE REMOVE,"

By Frank Richards.

It's a story that's chock-full of good stuff, and once you begin to read it you won't want to lay the MAGNET down until you've finished it. So take my tip and order your copy without delay!

There'll also be a grand "full-of-thrills" instalment of our great flying story, and a laughable issue of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Shorter features as usual, of course.

YOUR EDITOR.

him of old. Woe betide any of them if his orders were not carried out.

The majority of the young German officers hardly knew what it was all about. Up above, scorching for the enemy territory, they saw a British plane. But ah! What of it, they asked themselves—why all this fuss? British planes had come and gone before.

Some of them saw the inert form of the Hauptmann von Kauffman being brought in from the middle of the aerodrome, and wondered mightily. Then they busied themselves with persuading their cold engines to sparkle into life.

All this buzz of activity did not pass unnoticed to the two Britishers above. Yet Thorburn felt no occasion for worry; he had got the start of his enemies, and with luck, would make the Allied lines without trouble. Then the engine, as if in open mockery of his confidence, began to splutter, and the number of revolutions shown on the luminous dial of the counter began to drop.

Locke's ears caught the break in the rhythmic pulse of the engine, and he pursed his lips. With a faulty engine, due perhaps to a dirty plug, their escape was no longer a certainty.

"What's wrong, young 'un?" he bawled in Thorburn's ear.

"Plug!" roared Thorburn laconically. "The confounded thing was made in Germany, I expect! We shall have to fight for it, old sport!"

Locke nodded.

"And we might as well start now," he said grimly. "Turn her round and dive on the drome, young 'un!"

"You mean give the sausage-eaters a taste of pepper with their breakfast!" grinned the youngster, touching the barrel of the Vickers gun that gleamed dully on a level with his head.

"Exactly!" replied Locke, swinging the scarf mounting of the Lewis gun in the rear cockpit. "We can't stand on ceremony now."

Thorburn grinned, set Locke gasping for breath and balance as he swung the plane into a steep bank, and then dived.

The aerodrome grew larger and larger and was a target that a blind man could have hit; yet Thorburn held his fire to the last moment. Not until he was forty feet away from the nearest plane did he press the trigger lever of his synchronised gun. Through his sights he caught a glimpse of running figures as the terrified mechanics rushed for cover.

In five seconds a stream of forty whanging, steel bullets swept a stationary Albatross from propeller boss to tail plane. The pilot, seeing his

danger, had scrambled pell-mell from the cockpit and dived beneath the wing-spur. He shuddered as he heard the furious tattoo of those bullets, and thanked his lucky stars that he was no longer in the cockpit. He thanked them again the next second, for, as the terrifying rattle of the British machine-gun ceased its song, a sheet of flame sprang up from the cockpit of the plane, and in another second the Albatross was a raging furnace, from which its pilot bolted like a hare, singed, blackened, and sick at heart.

Thorburn chuckled grimly and sent the plane straight for the second hangar.

Here the flying-officer had decided to

A SPLENDID PRIZE GOES TO:

Lionel Johnes, Veterinary Research Laboratory, Kabete, Kenya Colony, British East Africa, who sent in this winning Greyfriars limerick:

You've all heard of Coker, the great,
Who is famous at throwing his weight.
He's a short way with legs,
But in one of them he rears

They laded some jam on his pate!

Readers are invited to send in original Greyfriars Limericks. Handsome prizes are awarded for all efforts published.

make a fight of it. As Thorburn's snarling engine note drew near, the German, seated in his cockpit, blazed away with his front gun. His own propeller flew away into a thousand fragments, but he had no time to see the result of his shooting on the daredevil Britisher, for a burst of lead rained upon the plane, and in a trice, like its companion, it was a blazing beacon.

Ratatatatatat!

This time Locke's gun, from the rear cockpit, was adding to the din. In that mad, headlong dive on the lined-up planes Locke had caught sight of a squad of men, the kommandant among them, storming for a machine-gun emplacement.

Even as Locke trained his Lewis on the position, a burst of German lead came winging towards him.

(Although success has attended Locke's and Thorburn's reckless efforts so far, they are still many miles away from the British lines. Will their luck hold good? See next week's rousing chapters, *chums!*)

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BOUNDER and CAPTAIN!

(Continued from page 23.)

"Smithy, old man—" said Redwing. "What the dickens—" exclaimed Wharton.

The Bounder gave the crowd a bitter look.

"How's it gone?" he asked.

"We've beaten them," said Redwing.

"No thanks to you, Smithy!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"I dare say you didn't miss me," said the Bounder bitterly. "Wharton was all ready to butt in. I dare say he played a hand in the trick those rotters played on me."

"What trick?" asked Wharton quietly.

"Four of them—they bagged me and kept me away. They had me in Quelch's study when you started—"

"Oh, my bat!"

"And if you had a hand in it—" snarled the Bounder.

Wharton gave him a glance of quiet contempt, and, without troubling to reply, walked out of the study.

"You silly chump!" said Bob Cherry. "You don't think anything of the kind. We had to drag Wharton to the brake. He played up for us and bagged the winning goal, too, when you let us down."

"I tell you I was collared and kept away!"

"Well, you shouldn't have been," said Johnny Bull, "and you wouldn't have been, but for your own dirty tricks, from what I can make out. And it doesn't matter twopenny, anyhow—you weren't wanted!"

A savage torrent of words from the Bounder replied, and the footballers tramped out of the study and left him alone. It was not a happy evening for the new captain of the Remove.

There was much discussion and a good deal of laughter in the Remove when it was learned what had happened to Smithy. And there was very little sympathy for the Bounder.

"It was a rotten trick," said Bob Cherry, "but Smithy asked for it! In fact, sat up and begged for it—and he got what he begged for! And that, my beloved 'erars, is that!"

And the Remove generally agreed that that was that!

THE END.

(It looks as if the Bounder's booked for a very rough passage in his new position as junior captain of Greyfriars. Watch out next week for "THE SWOT" OF THE REMOVE!" the next ripping yarn in this grand new series.)

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