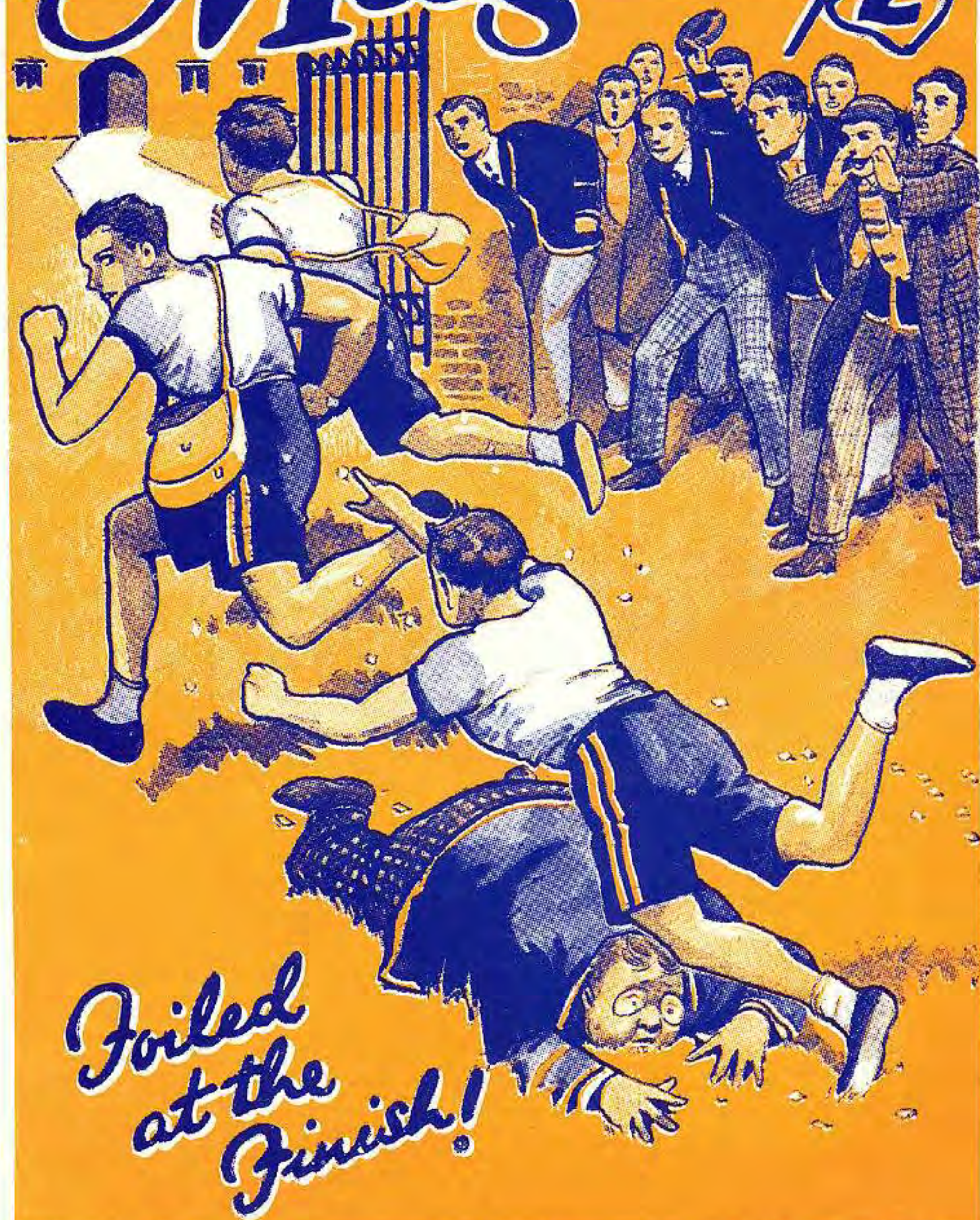


"FOOL'S LUCK!" Extra-Grand Long Complete School Story of HARRY WHARTON & Co. **By Frank Richards**

The Magnet ¹/₂ D



*Foiled
at the
Finish!*



Come Into The Office, Boys!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

HAVE you ever wondered how it is that scientists are able to tell exactly when an earthquake occurs, even though it might be at the other end of the world? What's more, long before the news comes through, they are able to tell, within a small radius, exactly where the earthquake has occurred. This has been puzzling one of my Brighton readers, so he has asked me how it's done. Ever heard of a Seismometer? It's an instrument for

"SPOTTING" EARTHQUAKES,

and there is one at most of the principal observatories of the world. Whenever a tremor of the earth occurs, a small needle sets up a series of vibrations, and the strength of the vibrations show how far away the tremors are. An expert can tell the approximate direction in which the tremors have travelled through the ground. All that remains to be done then is to get into touch with other observatories, and compare the records. Thus "lines of bearing" are obtained, and the spot at which these lines cross on a map of the world is the scene of the earthquake.

Several earthquakes have happened in the British Isles, but, luckily they have only been slight ones. In 1905, a shock was felt in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and Lincolnshire. In 1906 considerable damage was done in South Wales by an earthquake, and in the same year shocks were felt in Scotland.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EARTHQUAKE

occurred in the year 1755. In Lisbon alone most of the houses were swallowed up in eight minutes, and more than 50,000 people perished. Many other Portuguese cities suffered, some being entirely demolished. Spanish towns were also laid in ruins. The same earthquake destroyed half of Fez in Morocco, and killed more than 12,000 Arabs. The island of Madeira was affected, and also Mitylene. This terrific earthquake extended for five thousand miles, and was felt even in Scotland. Some earthquake what?

People in Great Britain don't usually get scared of earthquakes nowadays, but this wasn't always the case. In 1750, for instance, a madman predicted that an earthquake would happen on April 8th. As a result, thousands of people flocked to Hyde Park, in London, and remained there all night, in carriages and tents. But nothing happened, and the people concluded that the whole thing was a hoax.

TALKING of hoaxes, have you ever heard of

THE GREAT BOTTLE HOAX,

which happened in London in 1749? A man advertised that he would actually

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jump into a quart bottle placed on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre. People were so credulous that thousands stormed the theatre, while dense crowds, fighting for admission, besieged the place. Many were injured in the crush, and the pick-pockets reaped a rich harvest. When the crowd found out that they had been duped, and, of course, that no one could jump into a quart bottle, they had their revenge. They smashed up everything they could lay their hands upon, and almost pulled down the theatre itself. It was a very expensive hoax—for the proprietors of the theatre!

FROM John Williams, of Portsmouth, comes this query:

WHO INVENTED BOXING?

It is claimed that the Romans invented it, but in those days it wasn't the comparatively harmless art of self-defence which we know to-day. Roman gladiators fought with lead weights strapped to their knuckles, and frequently fought to a finish—the finish being the death of one of the combatants. Nor were the boxers of ancient Rome just ordinary prize-fighters. One of the most famous was Commodus Lucius Aelius Aurelius, who was Emperor of Rome from 161 to 192. He fought—and won—no less than 1,031 battles. He was so proud of his record that he commanded the world to worship him as Hercules. But the fact that he was not Hercules was aptly demonstrated when a wrestler named Narcissus strangled him to death!

One of the proudest records in boxing history was held by the famous Jim Corbett, who is said to have been the first great exponent of clever "ring-craft." For eighteen years he fought in the prize-ring—and yet he never had a black eye or a bleeding nose in the whole of his career!

I WONDER how many of my readers went to the famous Olympia Circus in London this year? Those who did may have seen the

GIRAFFE-NECKED WOMEN.

A Hammersmith reader asks me to tell him more about them. They hail from Burma, where they are known as Kewawngdu. At a very early age, five brass rings are fastened around their necks, and more are added as years go on. The effect of these rings is to stretch the neck, and when the wearers become women some of them attain a neck-length of fourteen or fifteen inches. The ordinary limit of the number of these neckbands is twenty-one, but some women wear as many as twenty-five. The weight of the brass which they carry is sometimes as much as seventy pounds.

At the back of their necks, a large, heavy ring is fixed—so that the wearers

can be fastened up should occasion demand!

Have you ever heard of

TIGER BAY,

and wondered where it was? "Magnetite," of Worcester, wants me to tell him about it. Well, to begin with, it is not a bay. Secondly, if "Magnetite" had lived in Cardiff, he wouldn't have asked this question. For "Tiger Bay" is the name which sailors give to the dock district of Cardiff, in the Bute Street area. I don't think there is a single deep-water sailor in the whole of the Seven Seas who has not heard of "Tiger Bay"—though how this district received such a curious name is more than I can tell. Perhaps one of my Cardiff readers can enlighten me?

HERE are a few more SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS,

which might interest those of my readers who bear these names:

Johnson, naturally means "the son of John," and it is one of the oldest names. It comes, originally, from the Hebrew "Yehokhanan," meaning "God is gracious." Other variants of the same name are: Jenkins, Jones, Jennings, Jeans and Micklejohn.

Feskett means a dweller by the foss-gate. **Martin** comes from the French, and means "the stem of Mars."

Snell is an Anglo-Saxon name, and means courageous, as well as swift. **Sharp** and **Smart** are also complimentary names, and reflect the character of their original bearers.

Freak is another name of which to be proud, for it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning valour and manliness. **Frick** and **Freke** are variants of the same name.

Keats comes originally from "le ket," meaning "the bold."

Prowse is derived from the French "preus," meaning "valiant," and other names from this source are **Prew**, **Prue** and **Prow**.

Smith: This not only means that its original bearer was some sort of a smith, but also that he lived by a smooth field, called a *smeth* in the olden days. The name "Smeath," therefore, is obviously derived in the same way. There are innumerable derivations of the name, including **Redsmith**, **Shoosmith**, **Shear-smith**, **Scasmith** (meaning *Scythesmith*), **Brownsmith**, and **Naysmith** (meaning *Knifsmith*).

As space is running short, I must tell you what is in store for you in next Saturday's **MAGNET**. First of all,

"THE SCHEMER OF THE REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards,

is just the right type of school yarn you have learned to expect from this talented author. He'll keep you chuckling with delight—and give you some thrills, too. To put it briefly, this yarn is one of Frank Richards' best—and that is sufficient to tell you that you won't want to miss it.

There'll be a "full-of-chuckles" issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," as usual, and then comes the opening chapters of a grand new yarn of stirring adventures on the high seas and under seas, entitled "THE SEA SPIDER!" by Geo. E. Rochester, who has already written many great masterpieces for the **MAGNET**. Of course, I will be sitting in the office, waiting to have a chat with you, answer your queries, and give you what advice I can.

So, looking forward to next week, I'll pipe down now, chums.

YOUR EDITOR,

IT'S HERE, CHUMS—THE BEST SCHOOL STORY OF THE WEEK!

FOOL'S LUCK!



GRAND LONG COMPLETE
SCHOOL STORY of—

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Brilliant of Bunter!

"**S**PLENDID!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Fine!" said Bunter.

"What—"

"I fancy it will be all right for Quelch!"

"What will?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Which was rather mysterious.

There were quite a number of fellows in Study No. 7 in the Remove, and they were all busy—except Bunter.

A large wastepaper-basket stood on the study table; it was half-full of torn fragments of paper, and the supply was being added to every moment.

Beside the basket lay two or three old magazines, some newspapers, and quite a stack of old Latin exercises and such things. Busy hands were reducing them to fragments, to be dropped into the basket. Harry Wharton & Co. were getting ready for a paper-chase on the morrow.

The Famous Five were all there and all at work. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were at work. Only Billy Bunter, reclining in the armchair in an attitude of unstudied grace, was not at work.

Bunter did not like work—he never had!

Several fellows had suggested that Bunter should lend a hand, to which Bunter had replied that he had lines to do for Quelch.

Bunter's lines had to be handed in to Quelch, the master of the Remove, after tea. It was long after tea now, so it was quite probable that if the fat Owl of the Remove did not go down to Quelch's study with his lines Quelch

BY
FRANK RICHARDS

might come up to Bunter's study to inquire after them; it was probable that he would bring his cane with him.

In these circumstances, Billy Bunter had no time to assist in manufacturing "scent" for a paper-chase.

But, although the lines for Quelch prevented Bunter from lending a hand in tearing up scent, the lines did not seem to be getting done. Ever since tea Bunter had been adorning the armchair with his podgy person. No doubt he had intended to do those lines, but laziness supervened.

There was a thoughtful expression on Billy Bunter's fat brow as he watched the busy juniors through his big spectacles.

And there was a twinkle in the little round eyes behind those big round spectacles.

Bunter seemed to have been struck by a happy thought.

"Why shouldn't it work?" went on Bunter. "Quelch is a rather suspicious beast! I know that. But I fancy it will be all right."

Edgar Caffyn, the newcomer to the Greyfriars Remove, is as cunning as they make 'em. His chief object is to stir up trouble between his rich Aunt Judith and her favourite nephew—Horace Coker, of the Fifth. But Caffyn's task is much more difficult than it looks. There's such a thing as Fool's Luck!

—HARRY WHARTON & CO.,
the CHUMS of GREYFRIARS

"What will be all right, you fat ass?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Fathead!" remarked Bob Cherry.

The tearing and rending went on. Billy Bunter, watching, grinned. His grin grew so expansive that it stretched almost from one fat ear to the other.

Clearly great thoughts were working in Bunter's fat mind, but what they were was rather a mystery.

"What about your lines, fathead?" asked Peter Todd.

"He, he, he!" was Bunter's unexpected reply. He seemed amused by the question.

"You won't he-he-he if Quelch comes up with a cane!" said Frank Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, leave those newspapers alone!" said Bunter. "Tear up those old Latin exercises first."

"Eh?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Why?"

"Well, Quelch may come in any minute," said Bunter.

Johnny Bull stared.

"What difference does that make?" he demanded.

"Well, he might look into the wastepaper-basket, you know," said Bunter. "He's a downy old bird, and a bit suspicious."

This was so mysterious that the Remove fellows, suspending tearing and rending operations for a moment, stared blankly at Bunter.

"Wandering in your mind?" asked Bob.

"Got one to wander in?" asked Johnny.

"What do you mean, you blithering ass—if you mean anything?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, nothing!"

Which was not only curious, but—as
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Alice remarked in Wonderland—curiouser and curiouser.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh started on some of the old Latin papers. Billy Bunter watched that proceeding with a satisfaction that was really perplexing.

"Why don't you get on with your lines, lazybones?" demanded Peter Todd. "You'd better have them started, at least, if Quelch looks in."

"That's all right!" said Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"Too late!" grinned Bob, as a well-known step was heard in the Remove passage. "Quelch's coming!"

"The too-latefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and idiotic Bunter will get six whacks bagfully."

"You'll see!" chuckled Bunter.

There was a sharp rap at the door of Study No. 7.

All the juniors rose respectfully to their feet as the door opened, and the angular form and severe face of Mr. Quelch appeared.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You have not brought me your lines."

"I was just going to, sir," said the Owl of the Remove cheerfully. "I just stayed a minute or two, sir, to help these fellows; they're getting ready for a paper-chase to-morrow, sir."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

As Bunter had not torn up a single strip of paper for the scent, that reply to his Form-master rather took away the breath of the other fellows. Still, nobody ever expected William George Bunter to tell the truth. Such an expectation would have been doomed to dismal disappointment.

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "In that case, I will excuse you for not having handed in your lines at the time specified, Bunter. You may give them to me now."

"Yes, sir," said Bunter cheerfully.

He blinked over the study table through his big spectacles.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him in sheer wonder.

They were well aware that the fat Owl had not written a single line of the hundred he had to write for Mr. Quelch.

What his present proceedings meant, therefore, they were quite unable to understand.

Bunter blinked to and fro over the table as if in the full expectation of seeing lines there. He moved two or three books and newspapers. He blinked and blinked and blinked again.

Mr. Quelch watched him with growing impatience.

"I am waiting, Bunter!" he barked.

"Oh, yes, sir! Sorry, sir! I can't find them!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, have you seen my lines?"

"Your—your lines?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap. I say, where can they be? Oh, I—I wonder, if they've got mixed up with those papers we've been tearing up?"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"That must be it!" said Bunter.

The juniors gazed at him. They understood now. That was the brilliant idea that had been evolved in Bunter's fat brain!

That was why he wanted fragments of Latin to be visible among the other fragments in the wastepaper-basket!

If his lines had been done and left on the study table it was quite possible that they might have got mixed with the piles of old papers there and torn up with the rest inadvertently.

They had not been done! But Quelch

did not know that. Billy Bunter considered that it was all safe.

"I say, you fellows, that's jolly careless, tearing up a fellow's lines!" said Bunter. "You might have been a bit more careful!"

They gazed at him, dumb.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch in a deep voice.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I'm so sorry, sir! I—I wish now I'd brought the lines down before I—I started tearing up the scent, sir. They—they've got torn up!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stood silent.

They wondered whether the astute Owl of the Remove would get away with this brilliant wheeze.

It was not for them to give him away. They waited, and said nothing.

Billy Bunter blinked hopefully at his Form-master.

So far as he could see, it was safe as houses!

That little accident to his lines hadn't happened. But it might have happened! How was Quelch to know that it hadn't?

The worst that Quelch could do in the circumstances was to tell him to write the lines over again! But even that was not likely, if Quelch believed that he had done them. And why shouldn't he?

There was a brief silence in Study No. 7. Mr. Quelch's eyes were fixed on Bunter's fat face. The Remove fellows had often compared Quelch's eyes to gimlets on account of their penetrating qualities. Never had they seemed so much like gimlets as now. They almost bored into Bunter.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "You had written your lines—a hundred lines from Virgil!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully. It hardly occurred to Bunter's podgy brain that he was telling untruths. Really, he had no time to think about that. Getting out of a licking was enough for a fellow to think about.

"You left them on this table?"

"That's it, sir! I—I was so anxious to help those fellows get the scent ready for the paper-chase to-morrow, that—"

"And they have been inadvertently torn up?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Well, I can't find them, sir."

"If such an accident has happened, Bunter, it is very careless of you, but I should, in the circumstances, excuse you, and should not direct you to write the lines over again."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"You need not thank me yet, Bunter," said the Remove master grimly. "I am not yet satisfied that such an accident has happened."

"The—the lines ain't here, sir!"

Mr. Quelch drew the wastepaper-basket towards him, and glanced into it. Among the many fragments therein, fragments of writing in the Latin language could easily be discerned.

The juniors watched him breathlessly—Bunter most breathlessly of all. Surely the sight of bits of Latin in the heap of "scent" would be enough for even such a suspicious beast as Quelch!

No doubt it would have been enough, had the Remove master been dealing with anyone but Bunter. But he knew his Bunter!

He proceeded to grope.

Fragment after fragment of Latin

was turned out on the study table. Most of the paper was torn small. But here and there whole words were to be found.

Fragmentary specimens of many hands turned up, for the papers had been collected up and down the Remove from many studies. Every fellow who had any old papers in his study had contributed them to the common stock.

There were samples of Lord Mauleverer's elegant hand, of Vernon-Smith's decided writing, of Bob Cherry's scrawl, of Caffyn's spidery fist, and many others. But no sample of Bunter's hand came to light.

That, clearly, was what Mr. Quelch was looking for.

Billy Bunter felt his fat heart sink. It had been a brilliant idea—quite brilliant! Who could have foreseen that Quelch would carry his beastly suspiciousness so far as to root through a wastepaper-basket stacked with torn fragments of paper? Not Bunter!

Mr. Quelch paused at last.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"I find nothing here written in your hand."

"Pip-pip-pip—"

"What?"

"Pip-pip-perhaps they're at the bottom of the basket, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"Perhaps!" said Mr. Quelch, with growing grimness. "You may look, Bunter."

"Eh?"

"I will wait!"

"Oh lor'!"

"What did you say, Bunter?"

"Oh! Nothing, sir!"

"If such an accident as you have described, Bunter, has occurred, the torn-up lines will be in this basket," said Mr. Quelch. "Find some for me."

"I—I hope you can take my word sir—"

"I am sorry to say that I can do nothing of the kind, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Bunter began to root through the scraps. He had one faint hope left. Among the torn papers was one old exercise of Bunter's own. True, it had nothing to do with Virgil. It was an exercise in the parts of speech. Still, a specimen of a fist was a specimen of a fist! Bunter hoped for the best!

He rooted and rooted.

A fragment was turned out at last, with a scrawl of Latin in Bunter's own very hand!

"There, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gazed at it. On the fragment appeared the words "hic, haec, hoc." Harry Wharton & Co. suppressed a desire to chuckle. If Bunter hoped that three demonstrative pronouns, masculine, feminine, and neuter would satisfy a suspicious Form-master who was looking for lines from Virgil, it showed that Bunter had a hopeful nature.

"Is that a portion of your missing lines, Bunter?" asked the Remove master, in a grinding voice.

"I—I think so, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch in the same tone of voice, which was rather like the grinding of a rusty saw. "Now you will kindly point out to me, Bunter, the verse in the *Aeneid* in which those three pronouns occur one after another."

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter was not fearfully well acquainted with that great work of Virgil's. But he knew enough of P. Vergilius Maro to be aware that no such verse could possibly have occurred

in any of the works that the great poet left behind him to bother schoolboys of succeeding generations.

The hapless Owl could only blink at his Form-master, like a fat fish out of water in utter dismay.

Mr. Quelch had his cane under his arm. Now he allowed it to slip down into his hand.

"Bunter! You have not written your lines!"

"Oh lor'!"

"They are doubled, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"You will bring me two hundred lines of Virgil after tea to-morrow."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And I shall cane you for untruthfulness."

"Ow!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry.

"Beast! Ow! Wow!" Bunter wriggled and groaned. "A Form-master ought to take a fellow's word! Wow! Ow! It's ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word! Yow-ow! Quelch's no gentleman—that's really the trouble! Yow-ow-ow-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up cackling," roared Bunter. "What is there to cackle at, I'd like to know! I can't see anything to cackle at."

But it was clear that the other fellows could, for they persisted in cackling, while Billy Bunter wriggled and groaned, and wished from the bottom of his fat heart that that brilliant wheeze had never occurred to his podgy brain.

that strenuous Form. And a brisk run across country in the keen, frosty air was likely to do Caffyn more good than sneaking round corners to smoke surreptitious cigarettes.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Caffyn.

"We're starting in a quarter of an hour," said Harry. "Aren't you joining in the run?"

"No," answered Caffyn curtly.

"Every other man in the Remove is."

"It's not compulsory, I suppose?" asked Caffyn, with a sneer.

"Well, no; but it's a Form run, and fellows are expected to join up. Why not come along?" asked Harry, good-humouredly.

Caffyn's lip curled.

"You don't want me," he sneered.



Grasping the heavy plank, Caffyn moved it inch by inch, so that it was unsafe to tread upon. Coker's face grew red with wrath and indignation, and his fists clenched. "The snipe!" he roared.

Mr. Quelch pointed to the armchair with his cane.

"You will bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"Wow!"

The brilliant idea had proved a frost, after all! In the lowest of spirits, Billy Bunter bent over the chair.

Mr. Quelch swished the cane.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!"

"I trust, Bunter, that that will be a lesson to you not to indulge in reckless prevarication!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yow! Ow!"

Mr. Quelch tucked the cane under his arm again and left the study. There was a chortle in Study No. 7 as the door closed on him.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—wow!" groaned Bunter. "I say, fancy that nosy old Parker nosing into the waste-paper-basket! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've had six! Wow!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Snipe's Little Game!

"CAFFYN!"

Harry Wharton called to the new boy in the Remove after dinner the next day.

Very soon after dinner the paper-chase was to begin, and some of the Remove fellows had already gone in to change for the run. Edgar Caffyn, in coat and hat, was going down to the gates, when the captain of the Remove spotted him, and called.

Caffyn glanced round in his usual half-stealthy, half-sullen way. Wharton came towards him, looking as amicable as he could.

He did not like Caffyn—few people at Greyfriars did. But the Snipe had been placed in Study No. 1 along with Wharton and Nugent, and so they were thrown a good deal together. And little as he liked him, Wharton wanted him to join in the paper-chase. It was a Form run; all the Remove were joining up, even Billy Bunter and Skinner and Snoop. Slackers were not popular in

"Fat lot you care whether I come or not!"

"Not a frightful lot, perhaps, but you're welcome, anyhow," said Harry.

"If you crack up before we get through you can walk home. Lots of fellows will. Bunter won't do the first half-mile. You can beat Bunter."

"Well, I'm not coming."

"You seem to be going out for a walk. Why not change and join in the run across country instead?"

"No business of yours where I go, is it?" snapped Caffyn.

"None at all; only I shouldn't like a Remove man to be sacked for being caught sneaking in at the back door of a pub to play billiards," answered the captain of the Remove contemptuously.

"But please yourself."

"I'm going to!" sneered Caffyn.

Three Fifth Form men were coming along the path to the gates, and they passed just then. Two of them, Potter and Greene, walked on. The third, Horace Coker, stopped, fixing a scornful glare on Caffyn.

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If there was one fellow at Greyfriars whom Horace Coker utterly and thoroughly loathed, it was his cousin, Edgar Caffyn, of the Remove. Having, as he passed, caught the last words between the two juniors, Coker of the Fifth felt called upon to weigh in.

"No good talking to that slacking little snipe, Wharton," he said. "You'll never get him to join up in a run, or a game of football, or anything else decent. He would rather frowst about and smoke."

And, having delivered that valuable opinion, Coker of the Fifth bestowed a scornful snort on Caffyn, hurried after Potter and Greene, and went out of gates with them.

Harry Wharton laughed.

He did not think much, as a rule, of the opinion of Coker of the Fifth. On this occasion, however, he had to admit that the great Horace was right.

Caffyn cast a bitter look after his burly cousin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came trotting up with a cheery ruddy face. "Time to get changed, old chap! You coming along, Caffyn?"

"No!" snarled Caffyn.

"It would do you good," suggested Bob.

"That needn't concern you."

"Well, it does, really, you know," said Bob cheerfully. "You can't suppose a fellow likes to see a weedy snipe loafing about with a pasty complexion. You don't fancy you're ornamental, do you?"

Caffyn's eyes glittered. He would have given a great deal to punch Bob's cheery, ruddy good-humoured face.

"We're the hares—Wharton and I," went on Bob. "We'll give you a jolly good run, Caffyn. Why not come?"

"Go and eat coke!"

With that answer Caffyn lounged away to the gates, and went out. Wharton and Bob Cherry went in to change, and dismissed him from their minds.

But Caffyn did not dismiss them from his mind.

He was, as a matter of fact, thinking of them as he loafed down Friardale Lane with his hands in his pockets, and a scowl on his face.

Apart from his disinclination to exert himself, Caffyn had another reason for not joining in the paper-chase. He had a certain appointment to keep that afternoon.

There was a letter in his pocket from his guardian, Mr. Sarle. And Mr. Sarle, for reasons good to himself, preferred to meet his ward out of gates, instead of coming to the school.

But Caffyn had plenty of time before his appointment with Mr. Sarle. He had something else in his mind first.

His narrow eyes were very watchful as he went down the lane. Coker and his friends were not far ahead of him, and he did not want to run into his Fifth Form cousin.

Loitering in the lane he saw Horace Coker's tall head and broad shoulders disappear in the distance.

He stopped, and glanced up and down the lane.

There was no one in sight; and Caffyn clambered up the grassy bank by the lane, and went into Friardale Wood.

He had come to Greyfriars School only that term; but he had already learned his way about. Threading through the leafless trees and frosty bracken, he headed for the spot where a plank bridge crossed the little stream that ran through the wood.

He trod quickly across the plank, and stopped on the farther side of the woodland stream. There he glanced about him with furtive, stealthy, watchful eyes. It was a lonely spot, shut in by trees.

The Snipe grinned sourly.

He had, of course, heard the discussion of the paper-chase in the Remove. He knew the route that was to be followed.

It led down Friardale Lane from the school gates into the wood, and across the plank bridge, and then on round the old priory.

That was why Caffyn had walked out of gates a quarter of an hour before the run was scheduled to start.

Wharton and Bob Cherry were the hares. They were the two fellows whom the malicious Snipe disliked most in the Remove—almost as much as he disliked his burly, brawny cousin in the Fifth.

When they arrived on that spot in fifteen minutes or so, they were going to have a rather unpleasant surprise—if the Snipe could manage it.

The woodland stream, which ran low in the summer, was full now from the winter snow and rain, and the current ran quite deep and fast, lapping at the thick old plank stretched across.

That plank, resting on stones on either bank, was perfectly solid and safe—if left alone. It was not Caffyn's intention to leave it alone.

After a long, cautious stealthy stare round, the Snipe bent down to the end of the plank, and began to move it.

He grinned as he dragged at it.

He pictured the two juniors with their bags of scent, running lightly along that plank, in the happy belief that it was as safe and solid as ever. A sudden tip of the plank would plunge both of them up to the armpits in icy water.

Which, from the Snipe's peculiar point of view, would be no end of a jest.

But the task he had set himself was harder than he had anticipated. The solid old plank was heavy, and it was deeply embedded in mud. It shifted, but only inch by inch. And the Snipe of the Remove had to shift it a good many inches to effect his purpose.

He breathed hard, panting, as he laboured with the heavy plank. Harry Wharton & Co., starting from the gates of Greyfriars in a merry crowd, little dreamed of the preparations the Snipe was making for them.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Catch!

"THIS way!" said Coker. "Look here—" "Don't be an ass, Potter!" "But look here—" "Don't be a fathead, Greene!" "But I tell you—" roared Potter. "Don't yell!"

Potter and Greene of the Fifth looked at Horace Coker as if they could have eaten him. They knew, from of old, that it was useless to argue with Coker. Coker was one of the fellows who knew.

When a fellow knew, he had no use for argument. Argument only irritated Coker.

The three Fifth Form men had turned from Friardale Lane into the footpath through Friardale Wood. So far, so good. They were going to walk as far as Green Hedges, to see a football match there. Coker of the Fifth had a perfect genius for taking wrong turnings and wrong directions; but on a public highway, and on a public footpath, even Coker could be trusted to follow his nose.

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But that was not good enough for Coker! Coker proposed taking a short cut through the wood.

Potter and Greene had some experience of Coker's short cuts. So they demurred. Whither Coker's short cut might lead they did not know; but it was fairly certain that it would never lead to Green Hedges and a football match.

"The worst of you fellows," said Coker reprovingly, "is that you will jaw! You will argue! If you talked sense it would be different! But do you?"

"Look here, Coker——"

"Don't keep on interrupting me, Potter, old chap! You never give a fellow a chance to get in a word edge-wise! We're taking this short cut," said Coker. "It will save us half an hour."

"And lose us how much?" asked Greene.

"Don't be a funny ass, Greeney! I fancy I know my way about this wood," said Coker. "Follow me! Don't talk! Just follow your leader!"

"But look here——"

"I said don't talk!" Coker pointed out.

And he turned from the footpath and led the way through trees and bracken.

Potter and Greene looked at one another.

It was quite possible to lose one's way in that extensive wood. With a fellow like Coker for a guide it was quite easy.

"Come on!" called back Coker's voice.

Already bracken and brambles had swallowed him from sight.

Potter closed one eye at Greene.

"Like the idea of getting lost, like a Babe in the Wood, Greeney?" he asked.

"Hardly!" grinned Greene.

"Let's keep to the path!"

"Let's!"

And they did!

While they kept to the path Coker went deeper and deeper into the wood, in the happy belief that his friends were following on behind.

Two or three times he called to them, lest they should miss him, like the duffers they were! Receiving no answer to his calls, Coker concluded that the silly asses were sulking because they had had to give way to a fellow who knew better than they did.

But after a time it dawned on Coker that if Potter and Greene were following him, they were strangely silent about it. Then it dawned on his powerful brain that they weren't following at all.

"The silly, cheeky asses!" breathed Coker. He shouted:

"Potter!" Echo answered "Potter!"

He shouted again:

"Greene!" Echo answered "Greene!"

There was no other answer, and Coker snorted and gave it up. If they chose to walk a long way round, instead of taking short cuts, let 'em, and be blowed to 'em! Coker marched on.

Suddenly he stopped again. He had emerged on the bank of a little woodland stream, rippling along among the trees.

Coker stared at that stream.

So far as Coker knew, there was only one stream in Friardale Wood, and that was on the side nearest to Greyfriars School.

It looked as if he must have taken some sort of a wrong direction in the wood and headed back towards Greyfriars, instead of onward towards Green Hedges.

This was very perplexing to Coker.

Coker did not like to admit, even to

himself, that he had missed his way. But it certainly looked as if he had.

He stared at the woodland stream, breathing hard. He was rather glad at that moment that Potter and Greene had not followed him, after all. This would have given them a chance for some of their rotten, carping criticism!

It was useless to stare at the stream. Coker could not stare it out of existence! It was there, and that was that!

Coker turned away from the bank. As he did so he became aware, for the first time, that he was not alone in that lonely spot. A sound of gasping and grunting reached his ears—sounds as of a fellow exerting himself, and getting rather winded in the process.

Coker stared round in surprise. He could see no one! But the sounds came from quite near at hand, a little farther down the stream.

He remembered the plank bridge; it was close by, though hidden from his sight by intervening trees and bushes. It was there that the grunting and gasping was going on.

Greatly surprised, and curious to know what was happening there, Coker pushed through the thickets, and reached the path that ran from the plank bridge.

Then he jumped at what he saw.

A figure on the water's edge was bending over the end of the plank. Coker had only a back view of it, but he knew Caffyn at once.

It was his cousin in the Remove.

Caffyn was grasping the heavy plank with both hands, dragging it, shifting it, sliding it, getting it to move inch by inch.

Perspiration beaded his brow, and he gasped and grunted for breath. There was very little beef on the weedy Snipe. Loafing and slacking and smoking cigarettes in corners did not make a fellow muscular. But if he was not sinewy he was obstinate, and he fagged hard at the task he had set himself.

Coker gazed! He could see what Caffyn was doing—shifting the end of the plank bridge so that it was unsafe to tread upon. It was exactly one of the malicious, monkey-like tricks of the malicious Snipe.

Coker's face grew red with wrath and indignation.

Anybody might have walked over that plank and taken a tumble into icy water after Caffyn had made it unsafe. Coker himself might have! He clenched his big fists.

Caffyn, gasping, panting, grunting, perspiring, worked on. He glanced every now and then across the water, in the direction from which the hare and hounds would come.

They were not in sight yet. But he did not look behind him—in Coker's direction. So he did not see Coker approach; and on the grassy path he did not hear him.

He was apprised of Coker when Coker got within kicking distance.

Then Horace's heavy foot shot out.

Thud!

There was a yelp of surprise and alarm from Caffyn as the boot caught him bending. He was taken utterly by surprise. He sprawled forward over the plank, and plunged headlong into the water.

"Urrrrrgh!"

A gasping gurgle floated back as Caffyn's head and shoulders went in. His feet shot into the air.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

He grabbed at Caffyn's legs, and dragged. The Snipe, streaming water, half choked, and utterly amazed and dizzy, was dragged out and pitched on the bank.

"Groooogh!" he gasped. "What—Oodogh!"

Coker glared down at him.

"You snipe!" he roared.

"Ooogh! Urrrgh!" Caffyn sat up, dashed water from his eyes, and blinked at his Fifth Form cousin. "Urrrgh! You rotter—Oooogh!"

He spluttered for breath.

Coker looked at the plank. It was already unsafe, though not so unsafe as Caffyn had intended to make it. With a heave Coker shifted it back into its original position. Its weight was nothing to the mighty Horace.

Then he fixed his eyes on Caffyn again. There was a deadly gleam in them.

"You sneaking worm!" he said.

"You wanted to make somebody tumble into the water, did you? And you'll be at it again when my back's turned! By gum, I'll give you a lesson about playing rotten tricks! You won't want to play any more tricks like that when I've done with you!"

Caffyn scrambled up. But he had no time to flee. Coker grasped him by his wet collar with his left hand. With his right, which seemed to Caffyn rather like a flail, he smacked.

Smack, smack, smack!

Caffyn's frantic yells awoke the echoes of Friardale Wood for an immense distance. He yelled and howled, and wriggled and struggled. And Coker, warming to the work, smacked and smacked and smacked!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Horace and the Hares!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What the thump——" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

With their bags of "scent" slung across their shoulders, the two hares were trotting cheerfully through the wood from the lane, heading for the plank bridge over the stream. They left a trail of torn paper behind them as they trotted.

The hares had ten minutes start; and they expected to reach the stream by the wood by the time the pack started from the school gates after them.

A sound of yelling greeted their ears as they came through the wood. And as they arrived in sight of the plank bridge they discerned the cause.

On the other side of the woodland stream Caffyn of the Remove was struggling frantically in the grasp of Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was smacking, hard and often. He did not seem to mind where his smacks landed, so long as they landed somewhere on Caffyn. They rang like pistol-shots!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. Coker and——

"And Caffyn——"

"Yow-ow! Yaroooh!" came Caffyn's wild yell. "Leggo!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Come on!" breathed Wharton.

The two hares put on speed, running fast for the bridge. They had no time to waste, with the pack behind already in motion, but they intended to waste a minute or two on Coker.

The feud between the two nephews of Miss Judith Coker was no affair of theirs. And headstrong as Horace Coker was, they liked him a great deal better than the Snipe. But Fifth Form men were not allowed to smack Remove men, especially in this heavy-handed way.

Of the cause of the trouble they, of
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course, knew nothing. But it was Coker's cheerful way to smack offending heads, with or without just cause. Little as they liked the Snipe, they had no idea of leaving him in Coker's heavy hands. They ran to the rescue.

Wharton reached the plank first and shot across it. Bob Cherry was only a few seconds behind. Naturally, it did not occur to them that they owed it to Coker that they got across safely, instead of slipping off a tilting plank and plunging into cold water.

"Stop that, Coker!" panted Wharton, as he came racing up.

Coker glared round at him.

"Don't you barge in, you cheeky fag!" he snapped.

Smack, smack, smack!

Wharton, grasping his bag of "scent" in both hands, swung it round, and landed it on the side of Coker's head.

That stopped even Horace!

He gave a roar, and staggered sideways, and a second crash from the bag of "scent" laid him on his back.

Wharton grinned breathlessly.

"You'd better out, Caffyn!" he said.

Caffyn stood breathless and tottering, dazed and dizzy from that terrific smacking. He gurgled and gasped for breath.

Coker struggled up.

"I—I—I'll smash you!" he spluttered. He leaped at Harry Wharton.

Had Coker explained, all would have been calm and bright! The chums of the Remove, indeed, would have given him their grateful thanks, and most certainly would not have objected to any amount of smacking applied to the treacherous Snipe.

But Coker did not even think of explaining. He had been knocked over! He hurled himself at the junior who had knocked him over.

"Back up, Bob!" gasped Wharton.

"What-ho!" grinned Bob.

He reached Coker, as Coker reached Wharton. His bag of "scent" clumped on the back of Coker's head.

"Yarrah!" roared Horace.

He pitched heavily over Wharton; bearing him to the ground. The captain of the Remove struggled under Coker's hefty weight.

Caffyn, pulling himself together, started off at a run through the wood. The fellows upon whom he had been playing his treacherous trick had come to his rescue, and perhaps, for a moment, there was a spark of shame in the Snipe's breast. But he did not think of lending them a hand in the tussle with the hefty Horace. He dashed away, and disappeared through the trees.

But the two juniors did not need help from Caffyn. Bob, wielding his bag of "scent" with both hands, banged it on Coker again and again, as if he were beating a carpet. Coker rolled off Wharton, who scrambled to his feet.

"Come on!" panted Harry.

Ta-ra-ra-ra! came the sound of a bugle, echoing through the wood. The pack were coming and the hares had been sighted.

Coker, scrambling up again, made a clutch at them, but too late. They scudded off, leaving him clutching.

They had wasted too much time already on Coker. They did not want to be caught at the very beginning of the run. They tore off, dropping handfuls of "scent" as they went, by the winding path through the wood.

Coker panted for breath. Caffyn had vanished, but Coker's towering wrath was now transferred to Wharton and Bob Cherry. His hat had fallen off; he grabbed it up, jammed it on his head and rushed in pursuit.

Wharton, looking back when a quarter

of a mile had dropped behind, did not see the pack. But he saw a Fifth Form man with a red and wildly excited face.

"Oh, my hat! He's after us!" exclaimed Wharton.

Bob glanced back.

"Coker! All right—we'll give him a run! It would take him about ten years to catch us!"

They scudded on fast. After them came Coker, charging. His fixed intention was to overtake those two cheeky juniors, smash them, pulverise them, and spifficate them.

But Wharton and Bob Cherry were two of the best sprinters in the Remove, and they did not think that Coker had much chance.

Again and again, Coker lost them to sight. But for the trail of torn paper, he would have lost them altogether in a few minutes.

But the paper trail kept Coker on the right track. Looking back again, on the tow-path along the Sark, the hares sighted Coker once more.

He was redder than ever, his face crimson as a freshly boiled beetroot, perspiration pouring down it, in spite of the frosty coldness of the afternoon. He puffed and blew as he ran. Coker was not clad for running, in coat and hat and boots, and he really had no chance. But Coker was a stickler. With deadly determination, he barged on, panting, perspiring, but implacable. The two juniors, well ahead, grinned back at him from a safe distance.

"Think he'll burst?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They trotted on, going easier now. They crossed the Sark by the village bridge, and trotted onward, on the other side of the river. Looking back once more, they had a final glimpse of Coker—leaning on the stone parapet of the bridge, gurgling, winded.

Coker was done for! And the hares, grinning, trotted on their cheery way, and saw no more of Coker of the Fifth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Precious Pair!

MR. SARLE peered out of the wooden shelter, on the beach at Pegg, caught the bitter wind from the North Sea, and popped back again, rather like a tortoise popping its head back into its shell.

In the summer, the beach at Pegg was crowded, and Greyfriars fellows often came down, as it was only two or three miles from the school.

But in the winter, it was desolate and solitary. A grey sea rolled in, with a never-ceasing boom, on rock and shingle. A sharp wind howled round the towering cliffs of the great Shoulder.

Not a soul was to be seen on the beach. Here and there, a boat lay above high-water mark. Far out in the bay, a ketch loomed against the grey sky, the only sign of life.

Mr. Sarle had the wooden shelter all to himself, on a bitter winter's afternoon. He walked to and fro under its roof, with a squeak of elastic-sided boots.

His cold, hard, thin face was growing more and more irritable.

For good reasons Mr. Sarle did not want to see his ward at Greyfriars School. He was very likely, there, to run into Caffyn's cousin Coker. And he did not want Miss Judy Coker to learn by any chance that he was in frequent communication with her nephew Edgar.

True, as Edgar's legal guardian, he might be supposed to desire to see his ward sometimes. Still, he preferred

Aunt Judy not to know too much. Mr. Sarle was a solicitor, and accustomed to being cautious.

And at the school, too, there was danger of other ears hearing. And what Mr. Sarle had to say to Caffyn could not be too carefully kept secret.

The shelter on the beach at Pegg was an excellent spot for a secret appointment, within easy reach of the school, and quite unlikely to be visited by any Greyfriars fellow, or anyone else, on a frosty winter's day.

But it was cold, and it was comfortless, and Edgar was late! Generally, Caffyn was prompt enough, but this time he was late, and Mr. Sarle grew colder and colder, and more and more irritated, as he waited for his ward.

Miss Coker's legal representative was accustomed to the warm and stuffy atmosphere of an over-heated office. Winter winds on the North Sea did not appeal to him in the very least.

As it was a half-holiday at the school, there was no reason why Caffyn could not get away as early as he liked. It was hardly possible that he had been careless enough to get a detention when he knew that Mr. Sarle was waiting for him at Pegg. Yet he had not come!

Mr. Sarle's thin lips set hard, and his narrow eyes glinted. He was keen, intensely keen, on the scheme for cutting out Horace Coker in Aunt Judy's favour, and getting his ward named heir to the old lady's ample cash. He had set all his cunning wits to work to that end. But at the present moment he was feeling that, more than anything else, he would have liked to box Master Edgar's ears!

But there was a sound of a footstep on the sand at last.

Once more Mr. Sarle put his thin nose out into the wind and looked. The Snipe was coming.

Caffyn's face was dark and sullen as he tramped into the wooden shelter. He seemed in no better temper than his guardian.

"You are late, Edgar!" rasped Mr. Sarle. "You are more than half-an-hour late! I am almost frozen waiting here for you."

"Not my fault!" snarled Caffyn. He flung himself on the bench in the shelter. "That brute Horace—"

"You have kept me waiting."

"How could I help it?" growled the Snipe. "That brute knocked me into the water, and I had to go back and change."

"You should have kept clear of a quarrel with Horace, when you had to come here!" snapped Mr. Sarle.

"He pitched into me for nothing, on my way here."

Mr. Sarle gave a sniff at that. He had no doubt that, on inquiry, the "nothing" would have proved to be a "something."

"Well, you are here now, at all events!" he grunted, as he sat down on the bench.

"Yes, I'm here!" growled Caffyn. "And a fat lot of use, so far as I can see. Old Judy was at the school last week, and I thought it was all right—but that hulking brute is more in her favour than ever."

"So I understand, from her conversation since," said Mr. Sarle. "It is really extraordinary, the good fortune of that stupid, obtuse, obstreperous boy. How anyone can like him is a mystery to me, but there is no doubt that your aunt is devoted to him."

"Old cat!" said Caffyn.

"His reports from school are consistently bad," went on Mr. Sarle. "His parents, I believe, have little hope of him. Indeed, I think they would be anxious for his future, but for the fact



Wharton, grasping his bag of "soent" in both hands, swung it round and landed it on the side of Coker's head. Biff! "Yarcooh!" roared Coker. "You cheeky fag, I'll—" "You'd better cut, Caffyn, while you can!" said Wharton, breathlessly.

that he is Miss Judith's heir, and will be very wealthy some day."

"Not if I can put a spoke in his wheel!" muttered Caffyn.

"It does not seem so easy to put a spoke in his wheel, as you express it," said the solicitor. "He is so headstrong, violent, and quarrelsome, that he has been in danger of being sent away from Greyfriars for that very reason. Since you have been at the school, he has been in more trouble than ever—"

Caffyn grinned.

"I've had some chances, and made the most of them," he said.

"I have no doubt of it. And last week I really began to believe that the game was as good as won," said Mr. Sarle. "Miss Coker was undoubtedly very angry. She would prefer, I think, to believe that the dislike between you is your fault and not Horace's. But finding him quarrelling with practically everybody he meets, what was she to think? Yet—"

"It's fool's luck!" said Caffyn. "There's such a thing as fool's luck. He got another black eye while she was there last week. She turned her back on him and went, and I thought it was the finish. But it came out that he got the black eye pitching into a fellow who called her a frump! So, of course, he became her darling Horace again on the spot."

Mr. Sarle nodded.

"I understood something of the kind from Miss Judith," he said. "Certainly she appears to have taken him more into favour than ever. His aggressive quarrelsomeness has now, it appears, become a sort of virtue in her eyes, and it is useless to play any more on that string, Edgar!"

"I know that chicken won't fight any more!" grunted Caffyn. "But there's nothing else for us to work on. The brute's got no vices—nothing a fellow could find out and give away to a

master. He doesn't even smoke! He's kicked me for smoking."

Mr. Sarle set his thin lips.

"Is he still out of favour with his Form-master?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! Old Prout is fed up to the chin with him."

"Something may be done in that direction," said Mr. Sarle quietly. "I believe that, a term or two ago, Horace was in very serious trouble for uttering threats against his Form-master. If he should carry out such threats, Edgar, I think Miss Judith's patience with the young ruffian would be exhausted."

Caffyn shrugged his shoulders.

"I've heard that story," he said. "They say that Coker threatened to punch Prout, and then Prout got an accidental knock on the nose, and thought it was Coker! But it turned out all right for him, somehow. Fool's luck!"

"It might be managed—" Mr. Sarle sunk his voice very low.

"Think Horace would take a tip from me to punch his beak, just to cut himself out of Aunt Judy's will?" jeered Caffyn.

"Things are not always what they seem!" said Mr. Sarle. "With so stupid and obtuse a boy as Horace, it should not be very difficult to make it appear that something has occurred which has not actually occurred, Edgar!"

Caffyn started and caught his breath.

"You—you—mean—" he stammered.

"Reflect upon my words, and no doubt their full meaning will dawn on your mind," said Mr. Sarle coldly. "A hundred thousand pounds is worth a little trouble, Edgar. It is even worth a little risk, though I do not recommend taking risks. You have to deal with a fool—and you are anything but a fool, Edgar! It should not be a difficult matter for you."

Caffyn sat silent.

Mr. Sarle shivered, glanced at his watch, and shivered again.

"I have my train to catch," he said. "I can delay no longer, Edgar! As you were so late—"

"I've told you it wasn't my fault!"

"Never mind that! I must go now! Think over what I have told you. Keep your eyes open for chances. Take no risks that you can avoid—but remember that there is a fortune at stake."

Mr. Sarle shook hands with his ward with a hand that was like a cold fish and walked away with a squeak of elastic boots. He walked quickly, to get warm, and to catch his train at Friar-dale. Caffyn, when he left the shelter, moved away more slowly—thinking as he went, with a wrinkle in his brow.

Guardian and ward were well matched, so far as unscrupulousness went. But Mr. Sarle was cautious by profession—Caffyn by nature. Both of them stood to gain much if Horace Coker was cut out of Miss Judy's will. Neither was disposed to take risks, but it seemed to both of them that unscrupulous cunning must surely win in a contest with reckless, unthinking obtuseness. What chance had a fathead like Coker against either of them?

Very little, it seemed to Caffyn, as he thought the matter over, walking along the beach. And yet, somehow, he had not succeeded in getting the better of Coker, with all Horace's obtuseness and his own cunning. Was he going to succeed? Was it, as he had said to Sarle, "fool's luck" that stood Coker in such good stead? Or was there something in honesty and uprightness that was bound, in the long run, to defeat dishonesty and baseness?

Caffyn decided that it was fool's luck, and he thought that it was time that that luck failed Coker. It remained to be seen whether he was right.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Under Prout's Nose!

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, frowned.

Prout was taking a walk abroad that afternoon.

He was not in the best of tempers.

He was alone, and Prout did not wholly like being left to his own company, enjoyable as it doubtless was.

Prout liked to talk while he walked; indeed, he was fonder of talking than of walking, and on a ramble he talked more than he walked.

Possibly that was the reason why other masters had had engagements that afternoon, though it was a half-holiday, and had been unable to walk with Prout.

Quelch had to see the Head. Capper had papers to correct for the Fourth. Hacker had something to do for the Shell. Twigg thought it too cold for a walk. Wiggins thought it too windy. Monsieur Charpentier had—or said he had—a cold! Lascelles, the games master, was with the Sixth at football. Nobody was available for Prout—and he took his walk abroad with an immense amount of unuttered conversation bottled up in his portly breast.

Having, in the course of his peregrinations, reached the village bridge over the Sark, Prout was quite pleased to see a little, slight man in black coming from the direction of Pegg.

He knew Mr. Sarle slightly, having seen him once or twice, and knowing that he was Miss Judith Coker's solicitor.

So Prout halted on the bridge, waiting for Mr. Sarle to arrive. It seemed that Mr. Sarle was heading for Friar-dale, doubtless for the railway station. Prout decided to walk with him there. Sarle was alone, and would no doubt be glad of his company; and Prout certainly would be glad of Sarle's. If they had no other topic for conversation, there was Coker, of Prout's Form. They had talked of Coker before, and had found themselves in complete agreement with regard to the great Horace—both of them regarding him as an

egregious and obstreperous youth greatly in need of instruction and restraint.

Prout was preparing an amicable smile for Mr. Sarle when he sighted Coker coming up to the bridge by another path.

That was why Prout frowned.

He hardly ever saw Coker without frowning. The fathead of the Fifth had always been rather a thorn in his side. This term he had been more troublesome than ever.

There was a certain rugged honesty about Coker that disarmed Prout at times. But generally he found it very difficult to keep his temper with Coker.

Coker's aspect at this moment would not have pleased any Form-master. He never looked very tidy. Now he looked extremely untidy.

His collar was loose and crumpled and grubby. His hat was dented. His boots and coat and trousers were muddy.

That was not the state in which a senior boy of Greyfriars should have walked in the public view! Something was due to the school!

Prout did not know that Coker had found trouble with paper-chasers that afternoon.

Coker had found quite a lot.

Having got his second wind, on the bridge, Coker had pursued the hares again, though he had seen nothing more of them.

But though he had seen nothing of the hares, he had seen quite a lot of the hounds!

The pack came streaming on behind Coker, and Vernon-Smith, passing him, had playfully tipped off his hat. Peter Todd, coming up, had kicked it some distance.

These were merely the playful attentions Coker of the Fifth might have expected from juniors in high spirits on a frosty afternoon. But Coker, of course, got excited. He charged and barged among the Remove pack, and they left him for dead when they went on their way.

That fully accounted for Coker's untidy state as he came trailing back towards the bridge, homeward bound.

He had lost too much time to think of getting after Potter and Greene again, for the football match at Green Hedges.

Unaware that his Form-master, on the bridge, was eyeing him with an eye of strong disfavour, Coker tramped on; and sighted the slight man in black coming up from Pegg.

Coker glared.

He disliked Mr. Sarle intensely. He was aware that Aunt Judy's solicitor disliked him, and lost no opportunity of "running him down," as he called it, with that relative. Also, he was Caffyn's guardian, and Caffyn was a snipe! And Coker not only disliked Mr. Sarle, but distrusted him.

Once upon a time Aunt Judy had changed some of her investments, on Mr. Sarle's advice, and incurred a considerable loss thereby.

Coker, not a suspicious fellow, by any means, as a rule, had a suspicion that that loss had, somehow, gone into Sarle's pockets. He was, in fact, prepared to suspect Mr. Sarle of anything and everything.

He was rather pleased to see him now. After his rough luck with the Removites it would be a relief to tell Sarle what he thought of him.

He had told him before, more than once, and had been "jawed" by Aunt Judy for doing so. But he was ready to tell him again.

Indeed, he regretted deeply that Sarle was not a younger man. Had he been, Coker would have liked to punch his nose.

Quickening his steps, Coker met Mr. Sarle, just before the latter reached the bridge. He gave Sarle a grim glare, and Sarle gave him a startled blink over his glasses. With their attention fixed on one another, neither of them noticed the portly figure of Prout on the bridge, staring at both of them.

"So you're here again, Sarle!" jeered Coker.

The lawyer came to a halt, breathing hard through his thin nose.

He had made his appointment with Edgar at a lonely spot, three miles from the school, chiefly to keep out of Coker's sight. Now, on his way back to the station, he met Coker face to face! It really seemed like Fate!

But Sarle was taken aback only for a moment or two.

"Yes, Master Horace," he said smoothly, "I have had some legal business to do at Pegg, relating to the transfer of some property. I'm rather glad, as it has given me the opportunity of seeing you again. I am glad to see that you have recovered."

"Recovered?" repeated Coker. "I'm never ill! What do you mean? Think I'm a sickly, sniffing little snipe like Caffyn, or what?"

"I understood that your eyes had been blacked, in some quarrel, or fight," explained Mr. Sarle. "I am glad—"

"Oh, you've heard of that, have you?" jeered Coker. "I've no doubt the Snipe tells you everything that happens!"

"I trust, Horace, that you are now on better terms with Edgar—"

"Likely, isn't it?" said Coker. "I whopped the little beast only this afternoon, for playing some of his dirty tricks. It's pretty sickening for him to be sent to my school. Aunt Judy would never have done it if you hadn't put your oar in. It was your doing, I know that!"

"My dear Horace—"

"Don't 'dear Horace' me! I've kicked young Caffyn for calling me Horace," snapped Coker. "I can't kick an old fogey like you, but I'd jolly well like to. But you know what I think of you. Your ward is a beastly little



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snipe, and you're another, Sarle. That's what you are—a snipe! A legal shark! Yah!

It was not elegant. Coker never expressed himself elegantly. But it was emphatic. It left no doubt as to what Coker really thought!

A faint flush came into Mr. Sarle's pale face. He took a grip on his walking-stick, and his desire to lay it around Coker was very visible in his looks.

"You impudent young rascal!" he breathed.

His low voice did not reach Mr. Prout, on the bridge; but Coker's stentorian reply did.

"You impudent old rascal!" retorted Coker.

There was a heavy tread down from the bridge. Prout was weighing in.

"Coker!" he boomed.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Coker.

He spun round, staring blankly at his Form-master. Mr. Sarle glanced at the Greyfriars master, recognised him, and bowed politely.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Prout!" he said, in his squeaky voice.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Prout. He glared at Coker, purple with wrath. "Coker! I heard your words to this gentleman—"

"This what?" sneered Coker.

"How dare you?" gasped Prout.

"Upon my word! Mr. Sarle, I can only apologise for the rudeness, the bad manners, of this boy in my Form. You may be assured, sir, that he will be punished for it."

"I thank you for intervening, Mr. Prout," said the solicitor. "I was really apprehensive of violence from this obstreperous boy."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snapped Coker. "I should have punched you if you weren't old enough to be my father. But—"

"Silence!" roared Prout.

"Calm yourself, Horace!" said Mr. Sarle. "Surely, you will not give way to your ungovernable temper in the presence of your Form-master."

"Look here—"

"Silence, Coker! Go back to the school at once!" boomed Prout. "Go into the Form-room and write Virgil until I return."

Coker stared at him.

"It's a half-holiday, sir—"

"Do not dare to bandy words with me, Coker! Obey me this instant, or I will report you to Dr. Locke for a flogging!"

Coker breathed hard and deep. But even Coker had sense enough not to argue the matter further with Prout.

He turned and tramped away over the bridge, and disappeared in the direction of Greyfriars.

Mr. Prout watched him out of sight with a grim frown. Then he turned to Sarle again.

"Mr. Sarle, I can only apologise—the worst boy in my Form—an absolutely ungovernable and obstreperous hobbledo-hoy, sir—"

"I am only too well acquainted with the boy's character, sir, as I am his aunt's solicitor, and come into frequent contact with him," said Mr. Sarle. "I fear that he must be a sore trial to you."

"Obstreperous, ungovernable, unthinking, unreflecting—" Prout broke off the list. "If you are going to Friardale, Mr. Sarle, I was thinking of walking in that direction—"

"It will be a great pleasure, sir!" said Mr. Sarle politely.

And they walked to Friardale together.

Prout had a listener at last! He talked! And as he talked chiefly about the obstreperous and intolerable manners and customs of Coker, of his Form,

his conversation did not, for once, bore his listener.

They parted at Friardale Station, with mutual esteem, and in full agreement on the subject of Horace Coker!

And Mr. Sarle, as he sat in the train going London-ward, was not sorry, after all, for that unexpected meeting with Aunt Judy's favourite nephew. Prout's opinion of Coker was very clear, and it made the way easy for Caffyn, if an opportunity should occur. And surely an opportunity would not be long in coming to so watchful and wary a young rascal as the Snipe of the Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Close Finish!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the school gates.

A crowd of fellows had gathered there.

It was near time for the hares to be getting home, if they had not been caught. But they were not yet in sight.

The run had been a rather long one, and some of the going was hard, and a good many of the pack had tailed off and cut home across country.

Half the pack, in fact, were now gathered outside the school gates, with coats and scarves on, waiting for the finish of the run that they had had to "chuck" at various points.

Bunter came rolling up to them, puffing and blowing.

Bunter had given up the race early, but he had been a long time getting home. Long and frequent rests had been necessary for the fat Owl of the Remove. But here he was at last, red and puffing, and looking as if he had done miles, and miles, and miles.

"Not in yet?" gasped Bunter.

"Not yet," answered Hazeldene.

"I had to chuck it after six miles," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" grunted Bunter.

"You mean after six yards?" asked Peter Todd.

"Or six feet?" inquired Skinner.

"Or six inches?" queried Fisher T. Fish.

"I'll say six inches."

"I mean six miles!" roared Bunter.

"And I shouldn't have chucked it then, only I lost the trail. All you fellows seem to have chucked it pretty early. Did you get tired, Toddy?"

"Not so tired as you did, you fat spoofer," said Peter. "I remember seeing you sitting on a log a quarter of a mile out. I never saw you afterwards."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled in. It was not yet tea-time, but Bunter was more than ready for tea. That run across country had made Bunter hungry—whether it was six miles or yards or feet that he had covered. Having changed, the fat Owl rolled into the Remove passage like a lion seeking what he might devour.

But the studies were deserted. All the fellows who had dropped out of the paper-chase were keen to see the finish and were waiting outside the gates for the hares to blow in—the gates being "home."

Only in one study did Bunter find an occupant—Caffyn was in Study No. 1, sprawling in the armchair and smoking a cigarette. The Snipe of the Remove was thinking over his talk with Mr. Sarle at Pegg, as he smoked. He gave Bunter an inimical stare as the fat Owl blinked in.

"Want anything?" he asked.

"Not having tea yet?" asked Bunter. He did not like the Snipe, but he was prepared to be pally, if the Snipe was going to have tea in the study, and wanted company thereat.

"I'm teasing in Hall! If you've looked in here for a feed, you can get out again!" sneered Caffyn.

Bunter gave a disdainful snort. As there was no tea going in the study, he could afford to be disdainful.

"Yah! Think a fellow would tea with you, you snipe!" he jeered. "I can tell you, I draw the line somewhere. Why didn't you join up in the paper-chase? Too jolly slack, what? I've done six miles."

"Minus five miles and seven furlongs?" asked Caffyn.

"Yah! Frowsting about smoking in a study!" said Bunter contemptuously. "If it were my study I'd jolly soon stop your smoking, Snipe!"

Caffyn reached for a cushion to hurl, and Bunter hastily retired from the door of Study No. 1. He rolled out of the House again, and down to the gates.

More fellows had gathered there now. More and more had dropped in after giving up the chase.

Bunter blinked up the road the way the hares would come. There was no sign of them yet.

"I say, you fellows, they must be crawling," he remarked. "I say, Toddy, don't wait here any longer. Let's go in to tea."

"Rats!" answered Toddy.

"You coming in to tea, Hazel?"

"No!"

Bunter grunted and blinked up the road again. He was quite anxious for the Famous Five to get in.

"Hallo, here they come!" shouted Peter Todd.

Two running figures appeared on the road. Wharton and Bob Cherry were in sight, streaking for home. They came scrambling down a bank into the road, and headed for the school gates.

A moment later three pursuing figures hurtled down the bank—Smithy, Redwing, and Johnny Bull. Another moment and Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh showed up. After them came Squiff, Tom Brown, and Micky Diamond. The rest had tailed off far behind.

There was a shout from the crowd at the gates, as the hares came sprinting up the road.

"Go it!"

"Put it on!"

Wharton and Bob were running well, but they were evidently fatigued from the long run. Behind them the Bouncer was covering the ground in great style. Redwing was only a few paces behind Smithy. But the other fellows were dropping to the rear.

"The hares will do it," said Hazel.

"Unless Smithy gets them!" said Toddy.

"Keep out of the way, Bunter!"

Bunter did not heed that injunction. He was not fearfully interested in the close finish. He was thinking chiefly of tea. He stood in the road, blinking at the runners through his big spectacles.

Wharton was seen to stumble over a stone. He nearly fell; but Bob Cherry grasped his arm and hooked him on, and he was running again.

Hardly a moment or two had been lost; but Herbert Vernon-Smith was coming on behind like a deer. His hand outstretched, missed Wharton by only inches as the captain of the Remove shot onward again.

The crowd at the gates watched breathlessly.

It was a matter of yards now, and

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only the Bounder had a chance of getting the hares before they got home.

Wharton and Bob, side by side, pounded on. Fast behind them came the Bounder, going all out.

"Buck up!"

"Put it on!"

"He's got 'em!"

"He hasn't!"

"Thrillin', ain't it?" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Keep out of the way, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Shift, you fat idiot!" roared Peter. "Can't you see you're in the way, you blithering owl? Shift!"

Bunter shifted right into the path of the breathless, panting runners. For a second it looked like a crash. But Bob Cherry, with wonderful presence of mind, gave Bunter his elbow, and the fat junior, with a gasping squeak, rolled on the frosty road.

Then came the crash. But it was Smithy who got it.

Whether the Bounder would have bagged the hares but for Bunter was a question much debated in Remove studies afterwards. It was certain that his clutching hand was only inches off, when Bunter happened.

But Bunter did happen.

As the fat Owl spun over, Wharton and Bob Cherry ran clear of him and bolted into the gateway—home. But the fat Owl was sprawling right in front of the Bounder, who had no time to clear him. Smithy stumbled over Bunter, and came down.

Crash! Bump!

There was an agonised howl from Billy Bunter. The Bounder's crash flattened him out on the road.

Smithy was up in a second, and leaping on. One of his feet was planted on Bunter's waistcoat as he leaped. A horrible gurgle came from Bunter.

But it was too late—the hares were home, and a miss was as good as a mile. Vernon-Smith leaned on the gatepost and panted.

"Near thing, Smithy, old man!" grinned Bob breathlessly.

"That fat idiot!" gasped the Bounder.

"Urrrggh!" came from Bunter. "Wurrgh! I'm smashed—I'm killed! Uuurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith detached himself from the gatepost. He was spent and breathless. But he had still enough breath left to kick Bunter. And he did!

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter bounded up.

"Ow! Whoop! Stoppit! Yarooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter bounded in at the gate, and ran for the House. After him went the Bounder. After both of them went the rest of the fellows, roaring with laughter. Bunter was roaring, too, though not with laughter. Smithy got in three more before the fat Owl dodged into the House and escaped.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

More Brilliance From Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Have you written your lines?"

"Mum-mum-my lines, sir?" stammered Bunter.

He blinked at Mr. Quelch.

Bunter was not thinking of lines. He had other matters to think of.

Hares and hounds had gone into the changing-room to clean up after a rather muddy run. Bunter was waiting

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for them impatiently. Bunter was thinking of tea, and debating in his fat mind which study he was going to plant himself in for that important function. He had decided, definitely, not to try the Bounder's study. He did not want to see Smithy again.

As for lines, really he had no time to think of such trifles. He had, in fact, forgotten that his impot had been doubled owing to the failure of his brilliant wheeze in Study No. 7 the previous day.

It was just like that beast, Quelch, to remind him, when he had far more important matters to think of.

"Yes, Bunter, your lines!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "I trust, Bunter, that you have not forgotten that you have two hundred lines of Virgil to bring to me after tea."

"Oh, no, sir; I—I've been thinking of them all—the time, sir," stammered the Owl of the Remove.

"Are they written yet, Bunter?"

"No, sir. I—I mean yes, sir!" stammered the hapless Owl. "I—I mean, that is to say, I—I've nearly finished them, sir. Only—only a few more, sir——"

"I trust that that statement is correct, Bunter. If you do not bring them to me before six o'clock in my study I shall cane you."

"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch rustled away frowning. Billy Bunter blinked after him through his big spectacles dismally and dolefully.

He had not touched the lines yet. If he was going to get them done before six there was evidently no time for tea, or even thinking of tea; it meant going all out.

Which was simply awful!

On the other hand, Bunter did not want to be caned—very much indeed he did not want to be caned!

"Beast!" groaned Bunter, as soon as Quelch was out of hearing.

There was no help for it. Instead of rooting up and down the Remove studies for the spread he so badly needed, Bunter had to repair to his own study and write lines. He waited no longer for those beasts in the changing-room; dismally he rolled up the stairs.

A powerful voice reached his ears on the Remove landing. He blinked round at Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth.

"I tell you I'm fed-up!" Coker was saying in emphatic tones. "Prout told me to come back to the school—well, I came back. He told me to go into the Form-room and write Virgil—well, I went into the Form-room and wrote Virgil! I tell you fellows I've done hundreds of lines—well, then——"

"But if Prout told you to stay there till he came in——" murmured Potter.

"He should have come in!" hooted Coker. "Does he think I'm going to cut tea and sit in the Form-room, waiting till he chooses to blow in any old time?"

"May come in any minute," urged Greene. "I'd wait, old chap. Prout is pretty shirty with you, anyhow."

"I've waited!" said Coker. "I've waited till past tea-time. I dare say the old ass is winded, and crawling home on his hands and knees! Am I going to sit in the Form-room till Prout gets home on his hands and knees?"

"He will be waxy if he told you——"

"Let him!" said Coker determinedly. "I've had a detention for nothing—merely for telling that sneaking worm of a lawyer what I thought of him! I've written a stack of lines! There they are on my desk in the Form-room for Prout to see when he blows in! If he expects me to sit there till he gets his second wind and crawls in about

midnight he's jolly well mistaken! And I'm jolly well ready to tell him so, too!"

"But——" urged Potter.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Coker. "I'll go back to the Form-room after tea if you like, if Prout's not in by then. But I'm going to have tea!"

"But——" murmured Greene.

"I've got a hamper in the study; it came to-day from my Aunt Judy. Are you fellows going to help me unpack it?"

Potter and Greene were looking rather troubled and doubtful, but at the mention of the hamper their doubts seemed to clear away. They knew what Aunt Judy's hampers were like.

"After all, I dare say Prout's been delayed getting back," remarked Potter. "He can't have meant you to stick in the Form-room till any old time."

"And, after all, if you've done a lot of lines——" said Greene.

"Two or three hundred," said Coker. "Come on, let's have tea—and blow Prout!"

The three seniors went up the Fifth Form passage and disappeared. Billy Bunter blinked after them sadly.

Had Coker decided to return to the Form-room and wait for Prout, as he certainly ought to have done, his hamper would not have been neglected. Bunter, now that he knew about it, would have looked after it for him.

But with Coker and Potter and Greene in the study, unpacking the hamper from Aunt Judy, Bunter had to give up that happy thought.

But another thought came into his fat mind.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He grinned.

Coker, it seemed, had left a stack of lines on his desk in the Form-room. Bunter was badly in want of lines.

He would rather have tackled the hamper, but the hamper was out of reach—and the lines weren't!

Coker had written some hundreds of lines from Virgil. Bunter had to show up two hundred lines from Virgil.

Suppose he borrowed Coker's?

The "fist" was different, but not so tremendously different. Both Bunter and Coker wrote a scrawling round hand that bore only a distant resemblance to a civilised handwriting.

A Remove fellow's lines would not have done. Quelch would have known the fist. But Quelch couldn't know anything about Fifth Form men's fists; he had nothing to do with the Fifth.

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his big spectacles. This was another brilliant idea—as brilliant as yesterday's, which had failed so lamentably. Bunter hoped for better luck this time.

Instead of heading for Study No. 7, Bunter rolled down the stairs again. Once that little affair of the lines was off his fat mind he would be able to devote his attention to the things that really mattered—such as a spread in a Remove study.

It was easy enough to get into the Fifth Form Room unnoticed; nobody was about the Form-rooms on a half-holiday. Coker had left the door wide open when he came out, after waiting so long in vain for Prout.

Billy Bunter rolled in and blinked round him for Coker's desk.

On that desk lay the lines written by Horace.

Bunter pounced on them.

Blinking at them, he could almost have taken them for his own handiwork. Coker's fist looked like that of a careless fag in the Second Form; so did Bunter's. Coker adorned his sheets with blots, smears, and smudges; so



"My dear Horace—" protested the solicitor. "Don't dear Horace me!" snapped Coker. "I've kicked young Caffyn for calling me names. I can't kick an old fogey like you, but I'd jolly well like to. You're a legal shark. Yah!" There was the sound of a heavy tread as Mr. Prout approached.

did Bunter. Coker spelled many of Virgil's words in a way that would have made Virgil jump; so did Bunter. The resemblance really was striking. Bunter hoped that it would be good enough for Quelch.

Suspicious beast that he was, he couldn't suspect that a Fifth Form man had done Bunter's lines for him. That was a thing unheard of!

If he noticed a difference in the fist, Bunter would have to explain it somehow. He had an endless store of prevarication to draw upon.

Coker had written his name and Form, as usual, on the top sheet. But Bunter detached that sheet and threw it away among the desks. There were still a good two hundred lines left.

On the second sheet—now the top—Bunter inscribed his own name and Form with Coker's pen and Coker's ink.

Then he slipped the impot under his jacket and strolled out of the Fifth Form Room.

He was feeling quite bucked now.

Be it said in justice to Bunter that he did not realise in the least that he was playing a scurvy trick on Coker. He was so deeply concentrated on that more important personage, Bunter of the Remove, that he really had no time to think about Coker of the Fifth.

Only a week before Caffyn had "pinched" an impot of Coker's to get him into a row with his Form-master. Harry Wharton & Co. had batted him for it, and Bunter fully approved. He did not realise that there was a strong resemblance between his own action and Caffyn's.

True, Caffyn's motive had been bad and malicious, and Bunter only wanted to get done with the bother of Quelch and the lines so that he would be at leisure to think about tea. The difference was that Caffyn was a rascal, and Bunter a howling ass. That difference certainly was in Bunter's favour. Anyhow, Bunter had the lines.

Armed with that impot, the fat Owl rolled away to Masters' Studies to present himself to Mr. Quelch. This brilliant stunt, even more brilliant than yesterday's, was going to see him through. At all events, Billy Bunter hoped that it was!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Impot!

MR. PROUT came in tired and a little cross.

He had had a long walk.

Prout believed in long walks.

But, in point of fact, Prout had more weight to carry than could be comfortably carried for great distances.

After seeing Mr. Sarle off at Friar-dale Station, Prout had decided to walk as far as Green Hedges, and catch the motor-bus there for Courtfield if he felt fatigued.

At Green Hedges he did feel fatigued. But he did not catch the motor-bus, because it was crammed with people who had been there to see a football match. There was no room for Prout.

So he walked back to Greyfriars. That was why he was so late and so tired and so cross. But tired and cross as he was, Prout remembered Coker.

In the full belief that he would be back in good time for tea, he had ordered Coker to stay in the Form-room till he returned.

Now he was very late for tea; and Coker, probably, was getting hungry by that time; and must have written countless lines.

So, tired as he was, Prout, who was a dutiful gentleman, headed direct for the Fifth Form Room when he came in, to release the hapless Coker. Really he had never intended Coker's detention to last over tea-time.

Still, he soon found that he need not have worried about Coker. When he

got to the Fifth Form Room it was empty!

Prout turned on the light. He did not, of course, expect to find Coker there in the dark. Coker was gone!

Prout gave a grunt. Still, he could be reasonable. If Coker had remained in detention till tea-time, he had carried out the spirit of Prout's order, if not its actual letter.

Prout was prepared to be satisfied if he found that Coker had done the lines. No actual number of lines had been specified; Coker had been bidden remain in the Form-room and write Virgil till Prout came in. Three hundred lines would satisfy Prout.

Not a single line was to be seen on Coker's desk.

Prout breathed hard.

Had that unruly boy gone into detention at all, as ordered? Had he even returned to the school when bidden? Prout began to doubt it.

Prout resolved that if this was more defiance and disrespect from Horace Coker, Horace Coker should feel the full weight of his resentment.

He was fed up with Coker and his antics. He had reached the limit of his patience. A flogging was due—overdue! If this was one more outbreak of defiance Coker was going to be flogged! But he would make sure first. Possibly, barely possibly, Coker had done those lines, and taken them away. It was not likely; but it was possible. Prout was going to make assurance doubly sure; and then—the thunder-storm!

Prout left the Form-room.

He went heavily down the passage. The winter dusk was falling; but it was not yet lock-up. Possibly Coker was not in the House at all—if he had disobeyed his Form-master's orders! Prout's eyes gleamed at that thought.

A number of Remove juniors, looking

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FOOL'S LUCK!



(Continued from page 13.)

very ruddy and fresh, newly swept and garnished after a healthy run across country, were going to the staircase.

Prout called to one of them.

"Wharton!"

Harry Wharton turned round.

"Yes, sir!"

"Do you know whether Coker of my Form is in the House?"

"Coker, sir? I don't know—we've only just got in from a paper-chase," answered Harry.

"We met him in Friardale Wood, sir, early this afternoon," said Bob Cherry. "Haven't seen him since."

The last Wharton and Bob had seen of Coker that great man had been leaning on the parapet of Friardale Bridge getting his second wind! They gathered, from Prout's look, that the happy Horace had landed into trouble with his Form-master since then.

"Perhaps you will kindly go to Coker's study, Wharton—"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Harry politely.

"If Coker is there, tell him to come to my study and bring with him the lines he has written," said Prout.

"Very well, sir!"

The Remove fellows went up the stairs, and while the rest of the Co. went into the Remove quarters, Harry cut across the landing to the Fifth Form passage.

Coker evidently was in his study, for Wharton heard his bull voice before he reached the door of that apartment.

"Prime, what?" Coker was saying.

"Like the cold chickens?"

"Topping!" came Potter's voice.

"Ripping!" said Greene.

Wharton looked in. An open hamper lay beside the table, partly unpacked. Coker & Co. had not finished unpacking it before starting on the good things it contained. They were seated round the table, disposing of cold chickens and other excellent comestibles.

Coker stared at the captain of the Remove.

"Hallo, have you come for the thrashing I owe you, you cheeky young sweep?" he inquired.

"Thanks, no!" said Harry, laughing.

"Message from Prout—"

"Oh! Has Prout come in?" grunted Coker.

"More trouble!" sighed Potter.

"Oh rot!" grunted Coker. "Even that old ass wouldn't expect me to stay in the Form-room all this time. What does he want, Wharton?"

"You and your lines in his study!" answered Harry.

"He must have found my lines in the Form-room, if he went there!" growled Coker. "What does the old ass mean? He must have gone to the Form-room thinking I was still there! Is he blind?"

"Well, from what he said, he hasn't got your lines," said Harry.

Snort, from Coker.

"I tell you he must have gone to the Form-room, as he told me to stay there

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till he came in, and he was ass enough to think I would! I left my lines on my desk—nearly three hundred. He must be as blind as a bat if he's missed them. Go and tell him so."

"I don't think!"

"Look here, cut off, Coker, and don't make Prout wilder than he is already," advised Greene. "Perhaps he hasn't looked in the Form-room at all."

"Well, he ought to have!" growled Coker. He heaved himself up from the table. "I can tell you men I'm getting fed-up with Prout! I shall hit him, one of these days. I don't want to—but I feel that he will drive me to it."

Coker tramped angrily out of the study.

Harry Wharton followed him as far as the stairs with a thoughtful look on his face. If, as Coker said, Prout had ordered him to stay in the Form-room till his return, it was fairly certain that Prout had gone there. Why, then, had he not found Coker's lines on his desk?

Back into Wharton's mind came the recollection of the trick Caffyn had played a week or two ago, "pinching" Coker's impot, and landing him into a row with the angry Prout.

Had the Snipe been at his tricks again?

It began to look like it! On the landing Wharton hesitated—he was hungry, and wanted to join the spread in Bob Cherry's study. But he felt that it was up to him to look into this. If the treacherous Snipe had landed Coker in another row, the Snipe had to be called to order, and without loss of time. So Wharton followed Coker down.

He followed him to the Fifth Form Room. There, Coker turned on the light and tramped across to his desk for the lines.

He stared blankly when he saw that no lines were there.

"Gone?" asked Harry quietly from the doorway.

Coker stared round at him bewildered.

"Prout must have found them and taken them away!" he stuttered.

"From what he said, he couldn't have!"

"Well, they're not here. Are you sure he said I was to take the lines to his study?" demanded Coker.

"Quite!"

"Well, I suppose I'd better go, but I can't take the lines, as he's taken them already," said the perplexed Horace. "Jever hear of such an old ass?"

He tramped away. Wharton, setting his lips, cut away for the Remove. History had repeated itself; Coker's impot, left unguarded, had been "pinched." Coker did not think of that—Coker did not think of anything! But Wharton thought of it, and had no doubt about it. And Edgar Caffyn, the Snipe of the Remove, was going to be called upon promptly to produce those missing lines or take the consequences!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Getting By With It!

BILLY BUNTER stood in his Form-master's study, blinking at Henry Samuel Quelch through his big spectacles.

It was a very uneasy blink.

Quelch had been busy with some papers when Bunter arrived there, and the fat Owl had been told curtly to wait.

That, Bunter considered, was cheek on Quelch's part; though he did not, of course, venture to tell Quelch so!

If a beak was too busy to look at a

fellow's lines, it was up to the beak to tell him to lay them on the table and let a fellow go. Did the gimlet-eyed old Gorgon fancy that a fellow liked standing in his study, shifting from one leg to the other, and from the other to the one?

If Quelch fancied anything of the sort, he was mistaken! Bunter did not like it at all.

But Quelch seemed quite unconcerned about what Bunter liked or did not like! And Bunter, as he waited, grew more and more uneasy. This departure from the usual custom looked as if Quelch was suspicious about those lines.

Bunter wondered if that affair in Study No. 7 had made him suspicious. Quite possibly it had!

But Quelch took up the impot at last, and proceeded to scan it.

Billy Bunter grew more and more disquieted as he did so.

Some beaks did not bother much about an impot. Prout was well known hardly to look at one. So was Capper, the Fourth Form beak. Almost anything would do for either Prout or Capper. But Quelch was always careful in that matter, as in all matters.

But he was overdoing the carefulness now, Bunter thought. He was actually reading the lines, as if he liked reading Virgil!

The fact was, that Mr. Quelch was surprised to see Bunter bring in two hundred lines so soon after being reminded to do so. He had had a strong suspicion at the time that Bunter had not touched the impot. Now he walked in with it completed! That was enough to make Quelch very particular.

Now he was puzzled.

He noticed, of course, that the writing, though an unearthly scrawl, was not quite the same scrawl that he was accustomed to receive from Bunter.

Had it borne any resemblance to any other "fist" in the Remove, Quelch would have known what to think. He would have guessed at once that some other fellow had done Bunter's lines for him.

But that scrawling, sprawling fist bore no resemblance whatever to any hand in the Remove, except Bunter's. It was not quite like Bunter's, but it was more like Bunter's than any other Remove man's.

So the whole thing was puzzling. Fellows in the same Form sometimes lent a hand with lines, on the strict q.t. Fellows in other Forms didn't. If Bunter had not got help in the Remove he had got help nowhere. Yet Mr. Quelch doubted very much whether Bunter had written those lines.

He spoke at last; breaking a silence that seemed to the anxious Owl to have lasted ages and ages.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"Did you write these lines?"

"I, sir? Oh, yes, sir!"

"I directed you," said Mr. Quelch, "to write two hundred lines of Virgil! Here are two hundred and twenty."

The beast had actually counted them! "Oh!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is, sir—"

"What is the fact, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch, his tone implying that he did not expect much in the way of facts from that hopeful member of his Form.

"The—the fact is, sir, I—I got interested in the—the stuff, and—and just went on writing!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

Whatever he had expected, he had not expected that! No doubt there were fellows at Greyfriars to whom the poetic beauties of Virgil appealed. But

it was certain that Billy Bunter was not one of them!

As for any fellow getting so fearfully interested in lines that he forgot when to stop, that wanted some believing!

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on Bunter's fat face. They bored into Bunter. He could almost feel those gimlet eyes penetrating.

"If your statement is correct, Bunter, it is very much to your credit!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep, rumbling voice.

"Yes, sir! Thank you, sir! Ma-a-may I go now?"

"You may not, Bunter!"

"Oh, lor'!"

"You had not, I think, written these lines when I spoke to you less than half an hour ago, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"When did you write them, Bunter?"

"This afternoon, sir, while I was at the paper-chase—I mean, before I started on the paper-chase—"

"The handwriting, Bunter, is not like your usual hand."

"I—I'm so glad you've noticed it, sir!"

"What?"

"You—you've told me so often, sir, that I—I ought to try to improve my handwriting," said Bunter hopefully. "So—so I have, sir! That—that's why it is rather better, sir, and—and different!"

"But it is not better, Bunter."

"Oh!"

"If anything, it is rather worse than usual!"

"Oo-o-oh!"

"But it is certainly different," said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I tried to make it different, sir, as—as you're not satisfied with—with my usual hand."

Mr. Quelch looked at the lines again. Who but Billy Bunter could have produced that outrageous scrawl? Nobody else in the Remove.

Had Mr. Quelch been aware that lines of Coker's were missing, he might have guessed. He was not acquainted with Coker's wonderful work; still, he had heard of his scholastic powers.

But Mr. Quelch knew nothing of the latest trouble in Horace Coker's troubled career. The thought of Coker did not come into his mind.

He was strongly suspicious—but he was at a loss! Again he scanned those scrawling, sprawling, ill-written, and ill-spelt lines. Suddenly he snapped out a question—so suddenly that Bunter jumped:

"For what reason, Bunter, did you begin in the middle of a sentence?"

"Eh?" gasped the fat Owl, blinking.

"These lines," said Mr. Quelch, "begin 'atra subegit hiems'—from the seventh book of the *Aeneid*. It is surely very odd, Bunter, to begin in that way. Why did you not begin at the

(Continued on next page.)



Don't argue, it's a waste of time. Let "Linesman" settle your Soccer problems. He's a walking encyclopedia where the great winter game's concerned. All queries should be addressed to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.4.

THE WEIGHT OF THE BALL!

MUCH of the football which has been played in recent weeks has been on heavy pitches—the sort more like "glue" than anything else. That, I presume, is the reason why I have several queries in my post-bag concerning the weight of the ball which should be used. One of the strange things about these football rules is that I can't find anything therein concerning the weight of the ball, which should be used for the big games.

There is a regulation concerning the size of the ball, and it is also agreed that for International games the ball, "at the commencement"—shall weigh from thirteen to fifteen ounces. But that is just about the only thing which I can find in the rules concerning the weight of the ball.

Perhaps that is just as well, and maybe the rule-makers were wise in their day and generation when they decided not to lay down, in the rules, hard and fast regulations concerning the weight of the ball to be used. When the ground is covered in mud, a ball which is normal at the start, quickly picks up the mud, and becomes so like a lump of lead that it becomes very difficult to propel, even if the footballer is very strong in the leg.

Of course, the referee has some authority over the ball. If it picks up so much of the mud which is lying about at this period of the season that it becomes dangerous if it is headed, then the referee can order it to be changed. One of my readers attended the Liverpool v. Middlesbrough match, played a few weeks back, and in the course of the game the referee ordered the ball to be changed. My reader friend asks if the man with the whistle was acting in accord with the rules of the game in allowing this to be done.

The answer is in the affirmative. The referee in this particular game had noticed, so I am informed, that players heading the ball which had

picked up the mud, were sometimes stunned.

Now it is obvious that if players are knocked out in the process of heading the ball, the play has become dangerous, and the referee is instructed not to carry on under such conditions. Hence the referee in that particular game was justified in calling for a new ball.

CORNER-KICK STUNTS!

I HAVE often seen boys playing in a match on heavy grounds when the ball has become almost impossible to kick any distance at all. It has picked up so much mud that it has become almost like a lump of lead. My own opinion is that it wouldn't be at all a bad idea, on muddy grounds, for a rule to be inserted under which the referee could order a fresh ball say, every quarter of an hour. A new ball need not necessarily be used, of course, for the ball which has been kicked about in the mud for a spell would be quite all right if washed.

Just after Christmas we had a case in the Aston Villa v. Birmingham match in which a young player of Birmingham, named Harris, was stunned as the result of heading the ball. He went on playing, but at the end of the game he hadn't the faintest idea of what had happened. It is up to the referee in every match to see that the conditions are such as not to make it dangerous for the players, and if the ball gets so heavy that to head it becomes dangerous for the players, then he should order a new one to be produced.

In one of my earlier talks I said something about corner-kick stunts, and the way in which goals might be scored when the ball comes over from the corner flag. On these corner-kick occasions the odds are, of course, in favour of the defence, because the defenders have only to get the ball away somehow, whereas the attackers, to score a goal, have to guide the ball between the posts.

Several of my readers have written to me concerning corner-kick stunts, asking me for hints as to how the proportion of goals can be increased.

It is a very good thing to send up the tallest member of the side, no matter what his usual position, into the goal-mouth when a corner-kick has been awarded to the side.

Watching the Arsenal the other day, I saw a scheme worked successfully which might well be copied by other teams. Centre-forward Drake, of Arsenal, is a very powerful fellow, and good with his head. When the Arsenal were granted a corner-kick he stood well back, about twenty yards from goal. As the ball came over from the flag he started his run, and, jumping up at the right time, managed to head a goal.

This is quite a good scheme. It is obvious that the player who is moving can get up higher to a ball than one who has to make a standing jump. Such a scheme, however, can only be worked successfully by a big and strong player because opponents are in the way, and have to be charged out of the path of the player who is dashing towards the ball. Nevertheless, I commend this idea as a very good way of increasing the number of goals from corner-kicks.

SCORING FROM THE WING!

TALKING about scoring goals, these are days in which many opportunities occur for the outside wing men who are alive, and who keep an eye on the main chance. The rise of Chelsea in the League table has been due, to a certain extent at any rate, to the goal-scoring of their outside-right, Spence.

In one match he got four goals himself, which is no mean feat to be put to the credit of an outside wing man in a First Division match.

This player Spence dashes into the goal-area when the ball is on the other wing, and is, consequently, in position to accept the goal-scoring chances which come his way.

Spence is the sort of player who deserves to succeed in big football. When he first played for Barnsley, as an amateur, he worked in the pit, and being on night duty had to do his training very early in the morning—between eight and twelve o'clock. After that he got his little bit of sleep. On the match Saturdays he took his two hours of sleep during the morning, after working in the pit all night, and then turned out to play for his club in the afternoon. That's the spirit which makes footballers.

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beginning of a sentence—for instance, at 'Dixerat,' only two lines back?"

"I—I—I—" gasped Bunter.

He could have explained, but he did not want to. Coker, no doubt, had started in the usual way. But Bunter had had to sacrifice Coker's first sheet, which had Coker's name and Form written on it. And the first line on the second sheet continued a sentence from the first.

It was quite a simple explanation—if Bunter could have given it! But, of course, he couldn't!

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch.

"We—we're allowed to begin where we like, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"No doubt, Bunter—"

"The—the fact is, I—I upset some ink on the first page, sir, and—and chucked it away, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.

Bunter breathed more freely! This was quite an inspiration. It was true that he had "chucked away" the first page of that impot—though certainly not because he had spilled ink on it. It had been chucked away because Coker had spilled his name on it!

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"I am not satisfied, Bunter!" he barked suddenly.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Nevertheless, if you assure me that you wrote these lines, Bunter—"

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I hope you can take my word!"

"I should hardly do so, Bunter, if I could believe that any other Remove boy could write such a thoroughly bad and illegible hand and spell with such crass ignorance and carelessness!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"But, in the circumstances—" said the Remove master.

He laid down the impot. He was not satisfied. He was deeply suspicious. But he could not make it out; and if there was any doubt, the fat Owl was entitled to the benefit of it.

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles! He was getting by with it! He could see that! Nothing else mattered. All Bunter wanted was to get safe out of Quelch's study and get back to the Remove and a hospitable study there!

"In the circumstances—" repeated Mr. Quelch, slowly and reluctantly.

"Yes, sir! Thank you, sir! May I go now, sir?"

There was a second's pause. Then the Remove-master nodded.

"You may go, Bunter!"

Bunter almost jumped to the study door. As he did so, there was a scuffling, panting, and trampling of feet without, and the door was hurled open. It collided with Billy Bunter's fat little nose, and the Owl of the Remove gave a startled yell, and sat down on Mr. Quelch's carpet with a bump that almost shook the study.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Snaffling the Snipe!

EDGAR CAFFYN was leaning back in the armchair, in Study No. 1 in the Remove. In the fender were a dozen cigarette-ends and a collection of burnt matches. The Snipe of the Remove was still smoking.

The door opened, and Harry Wharton came in, followed by Nugent, Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The nabob—the last in—shut the door.

Caffyn turned an evil look on the Famous Five.

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They had not come in to tea, he knew that. They were teasing up the passage, in Bob's study; though, apparently, they had not tea'd yet. Their faces were grave and grim.

More than once Caffyn had been given instruction on the subject of making the study as smoky as a tap-room.

The room was thick with smoke now, and he immediately suspected that there was going to be a rag on that subject.

He rose hastily from the armchair, and threw his half-smoked cigarette into the fire.

"Look here—" he began savagely.

"Where are Coker's lines?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

Caffyn stared at him blankly.

That was utterly unexpected.

He had been sitting there, smoking, thinking over his talk with Mr. Sarle, and forming vague plans in his cunning mind for the discomfiture of his cousin in the Fifth. But that was as far as he had got. Certainly he had not yet taken any active measures.

"Coker's lines!" he repeated.

"Yes. Where are they?"

"What the thump do you mean?" snarled Caffyn. "I never knew the fat-head had any lines, and if he has, I don't know anything about them! What the dickens are you driving at, I'd like to know?"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"That won't do!" he said.

"Hardly," grunted Johnny Bull.

"You can't help being a crawling, treacherous worm, Caffyn," said Bob Cherry. "But cough up the lines—quick! Prout's got to have them before he starts on old Coker. What have you done with them?"

"Nothing."

"There's no time to waste, Caffyn," said Frank Nugent. "Coker's up before his beak now."

"What do I care?"

"Little enough, I expect," said Harry. "But we care, if you don't. Last week you pinched Coker's lines, and landed him into a row. We found you out, and got the silly ass cleared before the Head weighed in with a flogging. I told you we should keep an eye on you after that—"

"Like your cheek!"

"Cheek or not, you're not going to play dirty tricks like that at Greyfriars!" said the captain of the Remove. "You've taken Coker's lines again—"

"I haven't!" yelled Caffyn.

"Do you expect us to believe that?" snapped Wharton contemptuously.

"The believableness is not terrific, my esteemed lying Caffyn," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

There was grim disbelief in every face.

Immediately after leaving Coker, Wharton had hurried back to the Remove passage, and called his friends to see Caffyn about it. After what had happened before, they had no doubts—they could have no doubts. The Snipe had been at the same trick again. It seemed perfectly clear to the chums of the Remove, and they were grimly determined that the Snipe should not get away with his trickery.

Caffyn glared at them almost wildly. He realised that something had happened, and that he was suspected of it.

"I tell you I know nothing about Coker or his lines!" he said, between his teeth. "I haven't seen the fool since he was pitching into me in the wood this afternoon, when you fellows came up—"

"Possibly; but you've seen his lines."

"I haven't!" shrieked Caffyn.

"What's put it into your head, you

fool? I've been in this study ever since I came in—smoking, if you want to know!"

"I'll tell you what's put it into my head," said Wharton contemptuously. "Coker left a stack of lines on his desk in his Form-room for Prout. Prout never found them; but they're gone. He won't believe they were ever done if he doesn't see them. Coker's got his rag out with his fat-headed cheek, and he's wild with him. But old Coker's not going to be dished like this, because he's a silly fool! Where are those lines?"

"I never touched them!"

"Somebody did!" said Bob.

"Go and find that somebody, then, you rotter, if you're so anxious about Coker! You won't find him here!"

"I think we've found him," said Harry. "And there's no time to waste. Coker may get a flogging for this!"

"Serve him right!"

"That's your opinion—not ours! Will you hand over the lines you've pinched from the Fifth Form Room?"

"I haven't—"

"Will you hand them over?" roared Johnny Bull.

"How can I, when I haven't got them?" shrieked Caffyn.

"That means that he's destroyed them already—same as he did the last lot," said Frank Nugent. "I suppose he would. He's not likely to bring them to this study, come to think of it."

Wharton's eyes glittered at the wretched Snipe. Last time the young rascal had been batted for his trickery, and warned that an eye would be kept on him. Now the same thing had happened over again. It was scarcely possible, in the circumstances, to doubt who was guilty. And the thought of that fathead, Coker, going up to the Head for a flogging, to gratify the malice of this unscrupulous young rogue, warmed Wharton's anger to white heat. He made a stride towards the Snipe.

"Have you destroyed Coker's lines as you did before?" he demanded.

"No!" hissed Caffyn.

"Have you still got them?"

"I haven't touched them!"

Wharton breathed hard. He looked at his friends.

"What are we going to do, you men?" he asked. "Are we going to let that fool, Coker, get flogged with that rascal laughing in his sleeve?"

"Never!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The neverfulness is terrific!"

"We can't," said Bob. "If Caffyn's destroyed the lines, as it seems he has, he's got to own up."

"I haven't—"

"Understand me, Caffyn"—Wharton turned to the Snipe again—"you'll produce those lines to be taken to Prout! If you won't, or if you can't, you'll be taken yourself to Quelch! If you want the matter to go before a beak, it's your own choice, but we can't, and we won't, let you get away with a dirty trick on a fathead like Coker! Are you handing over the lines, or going to Quelch?"

"I can't hand over what I've not got!"

"Then you're going to Quelch!"

"I won't!" howled Caffyn shrilly.

"Quelch may think as you do!" "Pretty certain, I fancy. But you've left us nothing else to do. You can't, and shan't, get Coker flogged for nothing, as you tried to do last time! You're coming to Quelch with us!"

"I won't!"

"You will!"

"Collar the cad!" growled Johnny Bull.



The door flew open with disastrous results to Billy Bunter's nose. And as the fat junior yelled wildly, the Famous Five burst into the study, with the desperate Snipe wriggling and writhing in their grasp. "What——!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Explain yourselves, boys!"

Caffyn clung to the study table as he was collared. But he was very quickly wrenched loose, and tumbled out of the study.

In the Remove passage he yelled frantically.

"Let go, I tell you—let go!"

A dozen fellows looked out of the studies. Heedless of them, the Famous Five grasped Caffyn, and propelled him to the stairs.

In the midst of the five he descended the staircase, panting and gasping for breath. Wharton had one arm, Bob Cherry the other, and the rest of the Co. surrounded him.

They reached Masters' Studies, and marched Caffyn along to Mr. Quelch's door. As they reached it, Caffyn made a frantic effort. He wrenched himself loose, and strove to run. Five fellows jumped at him at once, and a struggling mass of juniors bumped on the door of the Remove master's study.

It flew open, with disastrous results to Billy Bunter's nose. And as the fat Owl sat down and yelled wildly the Famous Five came panting into the study, with the desperate Snipe wriggling and writhing in their grasp.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

MR. QUELCH jumped up from his table.

Generally Mr. Quelch's movements were leisurely, if not majestic, as became a dignified and middle-aged Form-master. Now he was neither leisurely nor majestic. He fairly bounded.

"What," he stuttered—"what!"

He stared and glared at the breathless mob of juniors that had swarmed into his study.

"Ow! Wow!" came from Bunter. Sitting on the carpet, Billy Bunter nursed his little fat nose with both hands, and spluttered with anguish. "Wow! Oh, my nose! Ow! My boko! Wow!" Judging by the sounds from Bunter, his nose was damaged.

Of course, an opening door could not bang on a fellow's nose without damaging it a little. It was one of those things that could not be helped.

But Billy Bunter seemed to take it very much to heart. He nursed that nose, and moaned.

"Ow—ow! Wow! Oooogh! Oh! Ow!"

Mr. Quelch did not heed Bunter. He glared at the Removites, looking like Roderick Dhu on the occasion when dark lightnings flashed from Roderick's eye.

"Wharton! Cherry! Caffyn! What!" he roared.

"Leggo!" howled Caffyn.

"No jolly fear!" panted Bob.

Johnny Bull shut the door.

"Will you explain this, Wharton?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"Caffyn's come here to—to—"

"I haven't!" panted Caffyn. "I never wanted to come here, sir! I've been forced—dragged here! It's not my fault—"

"Why have you brought this boy to my study, Wharton?"

"He's got something to tell you, sir."

"I haven't!" howled Caffyn.

"Release that boy instantly!" hooted Quelch.

The Famous Five released Caffyn. But they stood between him and the door. He was not going to bolt.

Caffyn panted for breath. He made a step doorward and the juniors did not stir, but they looked grim.

Quelch's voice rang sharply:

"Caffyn, remain where you are!" The Snipe stopped.

"Now, Wharton—if you do not instantly explain this—this amazing and outrageous proceeding—"

"Caffyn's got something to tell you, sir!" said the captain of the Remove. "As he wouldn't come of his own accord, we—we brought him, sir!"

"What have you to tell me, Caffyn?"

"Nothing, sir!" gasped the Snipe.

"Get it out, you cur!" growled Johnny Bull. "If you don't, we shall have to, and it comes to the same thing!"

"Silence, Bull!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Now, Caffyn—"

"I've got nothing to tell you, sir!" panted Caffyn. "These fools—"

"What?"

"These fellows think I've done something, and I haven't!"

"You will explain, Wharton!"

"Very well, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I hoped that Caffyn would own up; but it's got to come out. We can't let Coker take a flogging for nothing!"

"Coker?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "A Fifth Form boy?"

"He's in a row with his beak, sir," stammered Bob.

"His what?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"His Form-master, I mean, sir."

"If you mean his Form-master, Cherry, you should say his Form-master. You should not use absurd slangy expressions in speaking to me."

"Oh! No, sir! Sorry, sir! But—"

"Be silent! I have told you to explain, Wharton."

"Perhaps you remember, sir, what happened last week? Coker did some

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lines for his book—I mean his Form-master—and they were pinched—I—I mean they were taken away and lost, and—”

“I remember perfectly well. But what—”

“Now it’s happened again, sir!” said Harry. “Coker left a stack of lines on his desk in the Fifth Form Room, and they’ve vanished. Coker’s up before Prout about it this very minute!”

“Bless my soul! If that has occurred, it is a very serious matter,” said Mr. Quelch. “But it is a matter that concerns the Fifth Form master, Wharton. It does not concern me, or boys in my Form.”

“It does, sir, as we know who did it!” said Nugent.

“Oh!” Quelch understood then. “You suspect that Caffyn has played a malicious trick on his cousin in the Fifth Form?”

“I haven’t—”

“Silence, Caffyn! Is that it, Wharton?”

“Yes, sir,” said Harry quietly. “We’ve got reason to think so, sir, and he won’t give up the lines. If he did, we’d have taken them to Prout, and it would be all right for Coker. We didn’t want to bring a master into it—but we simply can’t let Coker down!”

“Caffyn, have you purloined an imposition from the Fifth Form Room?”

“No!” howled Caffyn.

“What reason have you to suppose that Caffyn did so, Wharton?”

“He can tell you, sir.”

“Speak, Caffyn!”

“I don’t know anything about it!” gasped Caffyn. “I haven’t been anywhere near the Fifth Form Room. I never knew Coker had lines. How should I know whether a Fifth Form man had lines or not?”

“You knew last time!” grunted Johnny Bull. “You found out then, and you found out now.”

“If Caffyn does not explain, Wharton, you must do so. For what reason did you suspect that Caffyn had taken the lines from the Fifth Form Room?”

Wharton breathed hard. The position was an unpleasant one. But he had no choice in the matter. Coker had to be considered.

“It was Caffyn pinched them last time, sir!” he said. “Now it’s happened again, we know it was Caffyn. Nobody else would do such a dirty trick!”

Mr. Quelch was calm again now. But his face was very grim.

“Coker had a narrow shave last time, sir!” said Bob Cherry. “But he won’t get off this time, unless the lines turn up, or Mr. Prout is told that they were taken. We can’t see Coker flogged for nothing.”

“I should imagine not!” snapped Mr. Quelch. “I should expect any honourable boy to state what he knew, rather than allow an act of injustice to occur. Is Coker with his Form-master now?”

“Yes, sir; unless Mr. Prout’s taken him to the Head already.”

“Is it certain that the lines were written at all?”

“Coker said so, sir!” answered Wharton.

“Are you assured that such is the fact?”

“Oh, yes!” said Harry. “Coker’s an awful ass—I—I mean, he’s not got much sense, but he wouldn’t tell a lie to save his life.”

“Caffyn!” barked Mr. Quelch.

“I never touched the lines, sir!” gasped Caffyn.

“These boys believe that you were

guilty on the previous occasion. If such is the case, suspicion rests upon you very strongly. It is my duty to inquire—”

Mr. Quelch broke off.

Billy Bunter had picked himself up. He was trying to shove past the group of juniors at the door, to get out of the study.

The turn affairs were taking was terribly alarming to the Owl of the Remove. Nothing could have been more unfortunate from Billy Bunter’s point of view.

He wanted to get away, and he wanted to get away quick! He forgot even the pain in his fat nose.

“Lemme pass, you fellows!” he breathed. “I say, you fellows, lemme pass.”

Mr. Quelch’s eyes gleamed at him. Then they fell on the imposition lying on the table before him. He gave quite a jump.

“Bunter!”

“Oh! Yes, sir! You—you said I—I could go, sir!” stuttered Bunter.

“Stay where you are!”

“I—I’m late for tea, sir—”

“Remain here, Bunter!”

“Oh lor’!”

Mr. Quelch picked up the imposition from the table.

“Wharton, are you acquainted with the handwriting of Coker of the Fifth Form?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Is that Coker’s handwriting?”

Wharton stared.

“Yes, sir!”

“Then these are the missing lines?”

“I—I—I suppose so, sir!”

“Well, my hat!” gasped Bob Cherry.

The discovery of Coker’s missing lines in Mr. Quelch’s study simply dumfounded the chums of the Remove. They stared at them. Caffyn, equally astonished, stared also.

Billy Bunter groaned. But it was not the pain in his nose that caused him to groan. It was the anticipation of a still more severe pain elsewhere.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alas for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood dumb.

They could only blink at the scrawling, sprawling lines in Quelch’s hand. How that impot, missing from the Fifth Form Room, had arrived in their own Form-master’s study, was an utter mystery to them.

But it dawned upon them that it could not be Caffyn’s doing. If he had “pinched” the lines, as on the former occasion, certainly he would not have taken them to his own Form-master’s study. That was about the last place in the world to which he would have dreamed of taking them.

Caffyn breathed more freely. For once he was innocent, though the juniors had been fully justified in adjudging him guilty. Quite unexpectedly, proof of his innocence had turned up—in his Form-master’s hand.

“You have no doubt that these are Coker’s lines, Wharton?” asked Mr. Quelch.

“Oh, no, sir!” said Harry, at once. “We all know Coker’s fist, sir! There isn’t another like it at Greyfriars, except—” he broke off.

“Except Bunter’s, were you going to say?”

“Well, Bunter’s is a bit like it, sir!” said Harry, smiling. “But it’s not quite such an awful scrawl. Those lines are Coker’s.”

“Bunter!”

“Oh lor’!”

“You brought me these lines as your own, Bunter!”

“Oh crikey!”

Dumbfounded again, the Famous Five stared at Bunter. This was an utterly unexpected development.

“Your name is written on the top sheet, Bunter!”

“Yes, sir!” groaned Bunter.

“Did you take these lines from the Fifth Form Room?”

“Oh lor’!”

“As I had already observed, Bunter, the handwriting is not like your own! I was compelled to be satisfied with your explanation. I should certainly never have supposed that a senior boy would write such a hand. Now, however—”

“They—they’re my lines, sir!” gasped Bunter. “I never went anywhere near the Fifth Form Room, sir! If Coker’s lost any lines, I expect Caffyn bagged them, sir! He did last time, and these fellows batted him for it, sir.”

“These lines, Bunter, were written by Coker of the Fifth Form!”

“Oh crumbs!”

“You have had the audacity, the impudence, the unscrupulous rascality, to abstract another boy’s lines and present them to me as your own!” thundered Quelch. “You have taken advantage of the fact that a Fifth Form boy wrote a disgraceful hand, to palm off his lines as your own work, Bunter.”

“Oh, no, sir!” gasped the wretched Owl. “N-n-not at all, sir! I never knew Coker had done any lines and left them on his desk, sir! I never heard him say so to Potter and Greene—”

“What!”

“They weren’t jawing on the landing when I came up, sir, and I never saw them there, and never heard what they were saying!” groaned Bunter. “Besides, Coker kicked me yesterday—”

“Upon my word!”

“C-a-a-can I go now, sir?”

“Stand where you are, Bunter! Silence!”

“Oh dear!”

“You—you—you utter idiot, Bunter!” breathed Bob Cherry. The Famous Five understood now. Coker’s lines had not been “pinched” by the Snipe! They had been “borrowed” by Bunter! And the fat and fatuous Owl had handed them to Quelch as his own! It was another of Bunter’s brilliant wheezes for getting out of doing his lines!

“Oh, really, Cherry! If your silly asses hadn’t come here—” groaned Bunter.

“Silence!” roared Mr. Quelch.

And Bunter quaked into dismal silence.

“I must see Mr. Prout at once, and explain the matter to him,” said Mr. Quelch. “Remain here, all of you, till I return.”

Mr. Quelch left the study, with Coker’s impot in his hand. The juniors heard him tap at Prout’s door, up the passage, and enter that apartment. They stood looking at one another.

“Well, my hat!” said Bob. “What a go!”

“The go-fulness is terrific!” murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Caffyn gave them a bitter, evil look. “Do you think now that I pinched the lines?” he snarled.

“No,” said Harry quietly. “But we had jolly good reason to think you had, and you’ve only yourself to thank. You pinched them last time, and you’d play the same rotten trick again if you could.”

“And I’m jolly glad we came here, anyhow,” said Bob. “Bunter would have got away with it, and that

Coker would have been in the soup."
"Beast!" hooted Bunter indignantly.
"What does that idiot Coker matter, I'd like to know? I shall get a licking for this—"

"Good! Serve you jolly well right!"
"Oh, you rotter!" groaned Bunter.
"I shall get whopped, and I shall have the lines to do all the same! Well, look here; the least you fellows can do is to do them for me. I shall expect that."

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.
Bunter dodged round Mr. Quelch's table.

"Keep off, you beast! I—I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think Quelch will be waxy about—about my making that mistake with the lines?"

"Just a few!" grinned Bob.
"The fewfulness is terrific."
"It's all your fault!" groaned Bunter. "What did you want to barge in for? Quelch was a bit suspicious at first, but he thought they were my lines all right! If you hadn't barged in—"

"Jolly glad we did!"
"Beast! Now Quelch will make out I haven't done my lines at all! It will be like him! A fellow never gets justice here!" groaned Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows—"

"Here comes Quelch!"
The Remove master came back into his study. Bunter blinked at him in deep uneasiness. There was no encouragement to be drawn from Quelch's face. Never had it looked so grim.

Probably his brief interview with Prout had not been agreeable. It was not pleasant to have to state that a boy in his Form had played such a trick. Injustice had been prevented, which was satisfactory. But there was nothing else satisfactory in the affair to Mr. Quelch. The look in his gimlet eyes as he stepped into the study fairly made Bunter cringe.

"Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch quietly.
"I am very glad you came to me. Your suspicions of Caffyn appear to have been unfounded, but I think I understand the reason for them. I am glad you came."

He fixed his eyes on the Snipe.
"You are exonerated in this case, Caffyn. With regard to what happened last week, that matter has been considered closed, and I shall not reopen it. But I warn you to be careful, Caffyn. I warn you that you will not find despicable trickery to your advantage at Greyfriars."

"I—I never—"
"That will do! You may all go!" said the Remove master.

The juniors turned to the door. Bunter rolled hurriedly after them.

"Bunter! You will not go yet."
"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.
"I think, Bunter, that you do not fully realise the seriousness of what you have done. I shall make allowances for your stupidity. Had I not learned the truth in time and taken the imposition to Mr. Prout, Coker would have been taken before the Head! I was only in time—"

"Yes, sir! Oh, yes, sir! It was all a mistake—"

"Coker would have been flogged, Bunter—"

"Yes, sir! May I g-g-g-go now?"

"An act of injustice would have been committed, Bunter—"

"Oh, yes, sir! M-m-may I—"

"It is clear, Bunter, that you do not realise that you have been guilty of a bad, unscrupulous action—"

"Yes, sir! I mean, no, sir!"

"I shall endeavour to make you realise it, Bunter! Bend over that chair!"

"Oh lor'!"
As the Removites went down the passage they heard a sound of swishing from the study! The whacking of Quelch's cane was accompanied by a series of terrific yells from William George Bunter.

The way of the transgressor was hard!

Quelch was still whacking, and Bunter was still yelling, when the Famous Five went back to the Remove passage, to a very late tea.

It was some time later that Bunter crawled up the Remove staircase, groaning dismally at every step.

But Bunter was not thinking of tea! He had forgotten even tea, after Quelch had dealt so faithfully with him.

He leaned on the banisters on the Remove landing, and groaned. Caffyn grinned at him from Study No. 1, but Bunter did not heed Caffyn. Harry Wharton & Co. were sitting down to a spread in Bob Cherry's study—but Bunter did not give a thought to the spread! He groaned and groaned and groaned, as if he would never leave off groaning.

Bunter had four hundred lines on hand now, instead of two hundred. But it was probable that he would find time, somehow, to write them. He was not likely to exert his brilliant intellect in thinking out more dodges for getting out of those lines! Bunter was fed up with brilliant wheezes—and their painful results!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wild Words!

"THERE'S a limit!" said Horace Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled, and slackened down to hear. Quite a number of fellows were interested in Coker of the Fifth that dim, misty afternoon. Not that Coker minded them hearing.

Coker's bull-voice was audible at quite a distance from Coker. He did not care. When Coker was indignant, all the wide world was welcome to know all about it.

He was indignant now. It was Saturday afternoon, which was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. It was not much of a holiday for Coker, however. He was gated! It was not detention and lines, which was something to be thankful for, had Coker felt in a thankful mood, which he did not in the very least.

Gating meant that he was kept within the precincts of the school. Any other fellow was free to take walks abroad. Coker wasn't! And the reason was absolutely frivolous—in Coker's opinion, at least.

"Good old Coker!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five paused to hear. "Going it again! Let's listen to the band."

And the chums of the Remove stopped to listen to the band! A dozen other fellows were already listening, among them Caffyn. Coker was speaking to Potter and Greene, but he did not care how many heard. In fact, he rather wanted to make public his opinion of Prout and all his works.

"There's a limit!" resumed Coker, "and I can

tell you fellows, Prout's got jolly near it! If he drives me to hitting him—"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" gasped Potter, in alarm. "Suppose a beak should come along and hear you, you awful ass."

"Don't jaw, Potter."

Potter and Greene glanced round anxiously. It was a thick, misty afternoon, and thicker and thicker mists were rolling up from the sea. It was yet early, but the old quad at Greyfriars was very dim. Had a beak been taking a walk out of the House, he might have passed quite near the group without being seen—but he might easily have heard Coker's powerful voice.

And what Prout would think, and say, and do, if he heard a member of his Form talking about the possibility of "hitting him," was awful to contemplate.

But Coker went on regardless. Indeed, telling Coker to shut up was the inevitable way of making him go on more emphatically than before.

"I'm gated!" hooted Coker. "And why? I'll tell you why! The other day I came on that sneaking lawyer, Sarle, and told him what I thought of him! Prout came up! He made out that I was bad-mannered—me, you know! Just because I was telling a sneaking lawyer the sort of worm he was."

"Fancy anybody thinking Coker bad-mannered, you men!" said Bob Cherry. "Amazing!" gasped Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Don't cackle at me, you cheeky fags!" snorted Coker. "I'd mop up the quad with you, as soon as look at you."

"About time we got off, Greeney!" murmured Potter. Potter and Greene were going to the pictures at Courtfield that afternoon. But for the gating, Coker would have gone with them. Now he couldn't!

"Gated!" repeated Coker. "Prout makes out that I can't behave myself out of gates, so I'm gated! Me, you know! Of course, it's only an excuse! The man's down on me—that's how it is! And I jolly well know the reason, too! He makes a lot of mistakes in Form, and I spot them! He makes out that they're my mistakes—but I know better. He's an ignorant man."

"Oh, dear!" murmured Greene.
"The other day he nearly had me up before the Head! And why? Because my lines had been pinched! That old bean Quelch came in with them just in time, and said that Bunter had bagged them. Was Prout pleased?"

Coker paused, but not for a reply. He paused to snort, and re-started after the brief interval.

"No, he wasn't! He had to admit that the lines were done when Quelch shoved them under his nose. But he

(Continued on next page.)

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was disappointed! He wanted me whopped by the Head! He was like—a tiger robbed of its prey."

"Go it, Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "That's ripping! Fancy Prout as a giddy tiger, you men! You don't mean hippopotamus, Coker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now I'm gated," said Coker. "It would be like him to give me lines and detention again! I should refuse! And I've a jolly good mind not to stay in gates! It's a half-holiday—"

"It's pretty thick out of gates, Coker," said Harry Wharton, by way of comfort. "We've just been out to look at the weather, and it's rotten."

"The rottenfulness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

Coker did not heed the Removites. Certainly the weather did not tempt anyone out for a walk or a ramble. But it was all right for the pictures.

"I've a jolly good mind to come, Prout or no Prout!" snorted Coker. "The cheeky old ass—"

"Quiet, for goodness' sake!"

"Shut up, Greene! I'm getting fed up with Prout—right up to the chin! All this because I spoke frankly to a sneaking lawyer, and Prout heard me—as rotten a sneaking worm, I tell you, as his ward, young Caffyn—"

"Thanks!" said Caffyn.

Horace Coker stared round, noticing Caffyn for the first time among his interested audience.

"Oh, you're there, you snipe!" he said. "Keep out of my reach, or I'll jolly well kick you, same as I would that sneaking lawyer if he wasn't old enough to be my father! Look here, Potter, I think I'll come."

"You can't, old chap!" urged Potter.

"Prout—"

"Blow Prout!" hooted Coker. "I tell you I'm sick of Prout! He will drive me into knocking him over one of these days—"

"Shut up, Coker!" gasped Harry Wharton, as a portly figure loomed through the mist from the direction of the House.

"Don't talk to me, you cheeky fag—"

"It's Prout!"

"Oh!"

An awful hush fell on the group as Mr. Prout rolled up. Every eye sought his face. Every eye read there that he had heard Coker's wild and whirling words. Owing to the thick mist, he had not been seen coming out of the House, or even Coker would have been a little more careful. But the damage was done now. Prout had heard!

His plump cheeks were crimson, and his eyes glinted from rolls of fat as he fixed them on Coker.

For a long moment a pin might have been heard to drop!

Prout broke the ghastly silence.

"I heard you, Coker! I heard what you said."

Coker stood dumb. He had not, of course, meant what he had said; it was only "gas," the outcome of intense indignation. But the consequences of uttering threats against his Form-master might be overwhelming.

There was another long silence. Then Prout spoke again. He spoke with dignity.

"I shall take no notice of words overheard, that were not intended for my ears! But I warn you, Coker, to be careful! I warn you to be very careful."

Prout rolled on and disappeared in the mist. Coker still stood very silent. Potter and Greene exchanged a glance and slipped quietly away. It was high time for them to get off to Courtfield if they were going to the pictures. and

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after that incident they were less inclined than ever to let Coker take the risk of disregarding "gating" and come with them. They vanished.

Coker, staring after Prout, clenched his hands.

Prout had not punished him for his wild words. He had let him off, contemptuously, treating him, as Coker looked at it, like some silly little fag who had been talking out of his hat!

"I've a jolly good mind—" breathed Coker.

What was in Coker's mind was very clear in his face. Harry Wharton & Co. moved quickly, to get between him and the direction Prout had taken. If the exasperated and enraged Horace was thinking of making a fool of himself, and courting irreparable disaster, they were the fellows to stop him—even by the drastic measure of up-ending him and sitting on him.

But Coker, restraining his feelings, turned and stalked into the House. Caffyn, with a strange glint in his eyes, moved away from the spot, and the thick mist swallowed him.

Mr. Sarle had warned his precious ward to be on the watch for an opportunity. And it seemed to the Snipe that that opportunity had turned up.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Looking After Coker!

"FOOTBALL'S off!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Bit too thick!" agreed Johnny Bull.

"The thickfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and ludicrous British climate is not putting its best foot foremost to-day."

"Rotten out of gates!" remarked Nugent. "Putrid weather for a half-holiday. What are we going to do?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, roll away, Bunter!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Thick mist having descended on Greyfriars, wrapping the old school as in a clinging clammy garment, the Famous Five were rather at a loose end that half-holiday. But they did not seem to think that Billy Bunter's company would make things any better.

"Oh, really, Bull! What about my lines?" asked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I've got four hundred to do for Quelch now, and to-day's the last day for handing them in. If you fellows were jolly careful to make your fists like mine, it might be all right for Quelch! I'd risk it! I'll do fifty myself!" added Bunter, generously.

"What about it?"

Bob Cherry took the fat Owl by the collar, twirled him round, and planted a foot on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School.

Bunter departed—with a yell!

Apparently nobody was going to write Bunter's lines, even though he was prepared to risk it with Quelch!

"Penny for 'em, old bean!" said Bob Cherry, glancing at Harry Wharton with a grin.

So far, the captain of the Remove had not joined in the discussion which was taking place in Study No. 1 in the Remove—Caffyn not being there.

Wharton was looking out of the study window.

"Prout's still in the quad," he remarked.

"Prout! Bother Prout! What about Prout?" Bob chuckled. "The old bean is taking his usual trot, mist or no mist. Not thinking of biffing him in the fog, are you? Safe enough, but—"

"No, ass! But I'm afraid Coker is." "Just like Coker if he did!" agreed Bob. "He's that sort of a howling ass! Well, if he asks for it he will get it, hot and strong."

"Well, look here," said Harry thoughtfully. "Coker's a born fool, and an irritating ass; but a lot of trouble he's been in lately is due to that cur Caffyn stirring it up for him. He's fool enough for anything; and if he played some mad trick this afternoon he would be playing right into that sneaking Snipe's hands."

"No good talking to him," said Bob. "Though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him."

Harry Wharton laughed. "There's more than one way of killing a cat!" he said. "We can't bray Coker in a mortar; but we can sit on his head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, let's give the fathead a look-in," said Harry. "His pals have gone out and left him on his own. If something happened—"

"Is he really fool enough?" asked Nugent.

"Well, has he a limit, in that line?"

"Ha, ha! No! Let's go and see what he's up to, anyhow."

"We've got to do something," agreed Bob. "May as well rag Coker! Come on!"

And the Famous Five left Study No. 1 and went along to the Fifth Form passage. They arrived at Coker's study.

The door was half-open, and, they looked in.

Coker of the Fifth was standing at the window, peering out into the white clinging mist in the quadrangle below.

There was a dark and gloomy expression on his face, and a glint in his eyes. His hands were clenched.

On the study table stood a rather remarkable object. It was an open tin can, full nearly to the brim with a mixture of ink and soot.

Both had overflowed on the table, apparently in the process of stirring.

Ten eyes fixed on that object! Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged startled looks.

A fellow who mixed ink and soot in a tin can obviously could have only one intention in mind. That mixture was to be mopped over somebody! Who that somebody was, the Famous Five did not need telling.

Evidently, they had arrived in time to save Coker from himself! Black thoughts of vengeance were working in Coker's excited mind—as black as ink and soot!

"He's asked for it!" Coker was muttering aloud. "Fairly sat up and begged for it! The old ass is barging about in the quad—he won't go out of gates in weather like this! Barging about the quad! Asking for it! Just begging for it! It's his own look out! If a man keeps on asking for it—"

Coker turned from the window and stepped towards the table. As he did so, his eyes fell on five faces in the study doorway.

He glared at them.

"Get out of this, you fags! I've no time to thrash you now!" he growled. "Just get out of it, see?"

Instead of getting out, the chums of the Remove came in. If Coker was thinking of catching his Form-master in the mist and mopping that horrible mixture over him, Coker had to be restrained for his own sake. Had he been their worst enemy, they would have stopped him from asking for the sack so emphatically as that. And Coker was nobody's enemy but his own!



"Bunter, you have had the audacity, the impudence, the unscrupulous rascality, to abstract Coker's lines and present them to me as your own!" "Oh, no, sir!" gasped the wretched Owl. "N-n-not at all, sir! I never knew Coker had done any lines and left them on his desk, sir!" "What?"

"What are you going to do with that muck, Coker?" asked Harry.

"Find out!"

"That's why I'm asking you, old bean."

"Mind your own business!" yapped Coker. "Get out of this study, before I take a fives bat to you."

"It is for Prout!"

"Don't yell, you young idiot! Think I want all Greyfriars to know?" hissed Coker. "Clear off and mind your own business, and keep your mouths shut, see?"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob Cherry. "The best thing that can happen to Coker is to be kept busy for half an hour or so; Prout will be in by then." Bob made a sudden grasp at the can of mixture. "Coker will be busy for at least half an hour, if we mop this over him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg!"

"Put that can down!" roared Coker. "Put that blithering idiot down!" said Bob Cherry.

Four fellows rushed at Coker.

It was not the can that was put down! It was the blithering idiot! Horace Coker, grasped by four pairs of hands, staggered over and came down on his study carpet with a resounding bump.

"Pin him!" gasped Wharton.

"You bet!"

Coker struggled fiercely. Already he was angry and excited. And the cheek of these fags in interfering with his lordly will and pleasure gave the finishing touch to his fury. He struggled and heaved, and hit out fiercely in all directions.

But four fellows were too many for even the hefty Horace. Each fellow grasped an arm or a leg, and Coker,

reduced to helplessness, was spread-eagled on his back—all ready for his own mixture.

Bob Cherry tilted the can over his face. There was a trickle of mingled ink and soot.

It splashed on the crimson, upturned face of Horace Coker. It streaked and striped him, giving him a strange resemblance to a zebra.

"Keep that can away!" shrieked Coker. "I'll smash you—I'll—groogh!" Coker had to open his mouth to roar. The mixture trickled into it. He shut it—too late! It was full of mixed ink and soot.

"Gurrrrrrrrgh!"

Coker gurgled horribly.

"Better keep your mouth shut, old man!" advised Bob. "I know it's not in your line, and you're not used to it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, see if you can keep it shut, for once. More coming!"

"Urrrgh!"

More came! Bob up-ended the can. There was about a quart of ink, nicely flavoured with soot. It poured and swamped over Coker's face. He had been redder than a Red Indian! Now he was blacker than a black Hottentot. And still the mixture streamed; over his hair, his ears, his neck.

Coker heaved and rocked! But he was safely held. This was for Coker's own good! It was not nice—but it was better for Coker to get the mixture himself than to hand it out to Prout! On that point there was no possible, probable shadow of doubt; no possible doubt whatever!

But though it was for Coker's good, he did not like it! He hated it! He squirmed frantically in wild efforts to dodge it! Doctors, it is said, do not

like taking their own medicine! Certainly Coker didn't!

But he took it—to the last drop! He swamped and streamed with it! He wallowed in it. And when the tin can was empty, Bob jammed it on Coker's head. It might have been made for him; it fitted him so well. A thump drove it down and fixed it on.

Thump! Clang!

"Whoop!"

"Now," said Bob thoughtfully. "I think we can trust Coker! I think he will be too busy for some time to bother about Prout! What do you fellows think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were laughing too much to answer. But they fully agreed. It was certain that Coker of the Fifth would be busy for some time—much too busy to bestow a single thought on Prout!

"Are you going to thank us, Coker, for taking all this trouble?" asked Bob.

"Gurrrrgh!"

"Is that Dutch or Esperanto?"

"Wurrgh!"

"Perhaps he'll thank us later," said Bob. "I hope he won't be ungrateful. Good-bye, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Almost in hysterics, the chums of the Remove scuttled out of Coker's study. Coker struggled up. He gasped ink—he gurgled soot—he streamed with both. He plunged out of the study after the juniors. They were gone.

"Howly Moses!" yelled Fitzgerald of the Fifth, staring out of his study. "Phwat's that intirely? Is that Coker? Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker gave him an inky, sooty glare and rushed away. But he did not rush in search of the Removitea. He wanted vengeance, but he realised that he

wanted a wash still more! And he stamped away to the nearest bath-room, leaving five or six Fifth Form men staring after him and howling with laughter.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

"O H!" spluttered Mr. Prout. He was taken quite by surprise.

Twice or thrice, as he walked in the quad, the Fifth Form master had had a vague impression of some shadowy figure hanging about in the mist.

He had given it no heed, however, and on that sticky afternoon few fellows were out in the quad; but any fellow had a right to be, if he liked.

The mist was growing thicker, and Prout was thinking of cutting short his promenade and walking back to the House, when the catastrophe came.

Something, whizzing through the air, struck Prout on the back of his portly neck. It pitched him headlong forward, and he spluttered wildly, as he pitched.

Spluttering, he landed on his hands and knees, and the sack that had been hurled at him curled round his head. It was a thick, heavy sack, and it had been hurled with force, and had fairly bowled Prout over.

Dizzy, Prout sprawled on hands and knees, as if he were playing horses in a children's game! The sack, rather coally and smelly, draped over his head.

And as he sprawled there something descended on his shoulders. It was a thump!

That thump drove Prout's portly features into the damp earth. His nose had quite a nasty jar.

Gurgling wildly, Prout sprawled.

There was a patter of fleeing footsteps, but he did not hear them. He disentangled his nose from damp earth, gurgled for breath, and sat up.

The sack dropped from him. He stared round dizzily into white mist. He could see hardly six feet from him. Within that radius there was nobody to be seen. And already the fleeing footsteps had died away.

Whoever had knocked him over had vanished, swallowed by the mist!

Prout sat and gurgled.

He was rather short of wind, at the

best of times. Now most of what he had had been knocked out of him.

But he struggled to his feet at last. He gazed at the coally sack lying at his feet. But what had knocked him over—hurled at his head treacherously from behind. By whom?

Prout did not need to ask that question, or to have it answered. One name leaped to his mind, and to his lips.

"Coker!"

He stood panting for breath, his muddy face growing redder and redder with rage. He had been knocked over!

Hardly half an hour ago he had heard Coker, of his Form, threatening to knock him over! Now he had been knocked over. Purple with fury, Prout breathed rage and vengeance.

"That—that—that young scoundrel! He—he has dared—" Prout choked.

"Upon my word! Flogged—expelled! Grooogh! Coker! That ruffianly young rascal! That—that—that—Coker—"

He rubbed mud from his face, he dusted coaldust from the back of his neck. Plenty of both remained, however, as he started towards the House. And through the daubs of mud on his majestic countenance, his plump cheeks glowed with wrath.

This was the climax! He had been patient with that unruly, obstreperous boy—too patient! This was his reward! This was the finish! Coker was going to trouble him no more! Coker was going to be sacked from Greyfriars before he was half an hour older.

Several fellows were in the doorway, looking out at the weather, when Prout got back to the House. They stared at him, startled by his looks.

"Has anything happened, sir?" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth.

He supposed that Prout might have stumbled over in the mist, and had a fall.

Prout gasped.

"Yes, Wingate. I have been attacked!"

"Attacked, sir?" ejaculated the Greyfriars captain.

"I have been knocked over!" gasped Prout. "Attacked—assaulted—battered—by a boy of my Form!"

There was a buzz of startled voices at once. Fellows came up from all sides, staring blankly at Prout.

"But—but who?" gasped Wingate.

"Coker—a boy of my Form—Coker!"

gasped Prout. "Wingate, give me the aid of your arm to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke must know of this at once. I am somewhat overcome—"

"Certainly, sir!"

Leaning on the arm of the stalwart Sixth Former, Mr. Prout headed for Dr. Locke's study with tottering steps. He tapped on the door with a shaking hand.

The headmaster of Greyfriars gave a start as he came in, and rose quickly to his feet. He hardly needed to ask if something had happened! Only too plainly, something had!

"Mr. Prout!" exclaimed the Head. "What—"

"I have been attacked, sir—knocked over—hurled headlong to the earth, sir, in the quadrangle!" gabbled Prout.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the Head, greatly shocked.

"It is, sir. It has occurred, sir—and the culprit is a boy in my Form—a boy of whose unruly conduct I have often had to complain—"

"Coker?" exclaimed Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir! Coker—"

"You actually saw Coker—"

"I did not see him, sir; I was attacked from behind and knocked spinning, by a sack hurled at me!" gasped Prout. "I was struck on the back, sir, as I fell. Look at my face—it was plunged, sir, in mud!"

"You are sure that it was Coker?"

"Yes, sir! Only half an hour ago, sir, I heard Coker uttering threats to perform this very act of violence, sir. A dozen Greyfriars boys, or more, heard him, also. Attributing his foolish words to his usual unthinking folly, sir, I took no notice of them. But now—"

"Be seated, sir! Pray be seated! Wingate, will you bring Coker of the Fifth Form to my study at once?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Prout sank into a chair, gurgling. Dr. Locke hovered over him, concerned and sympathetic. Wingate hurried away in search of Coker. He ran up the stairs and hurried into the Fifth Form passage.

"Coker here?" he called out. There were five or six Fifth Form men in the passage, and they were all laughing. Wingate stared at them. "This isn't a laughing matter, you fellows!"

"Isn't it intirely!" chuckled Fitzgerald. "Faith, and you should have seen Coker!"

"I'm after him now. The Head wants him," said Wingate. "Where is he?"

"You silly, cackling idiots!" Coker's voice announced where he was as he came down the passage, red and glowing from steaming hot water and soap. "You cackling dummies, what is there to cackle at in a gang of fags ragging a Fifth Form man in his own study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker, you're wanted—" rapped Wingate.

"Well, I can't come!" snapped Coker. "I'm going to look for those cheeky fags, and spifficate them! I'm going—"

"The Head wants you, fathead!"

"What for?" demanded Coker. "That old ass, Prout, has been complaining again?"

"Didn't you expect him to complain, after knocking him over in the quad?" asked Wingate dryly. "Well, he has, anyhow. Come on!"

"Knocking him over in the quad?" repeated Coker. "Has anybody knocked the old ass over in the quad?"

"Yes, you have!"

"I haven't!" roared Coker. "I'd like to, but I haven't. I haven't been out of the House, owing to those cheeky fags—"

(Continued on page 28.)

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CAPTAIN CRIMSON!

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Following the activities of Excise-officer Dan Hickerman and Captain Crimson, a mysterious highwayman, news reaches Widdewater that Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, has landed in Scotland and is making for London. In consequence of this, Jack Lennard and Billy Jepp, two boy chums, join the Dragoons as gentlemen volunteers. They are trapped by a rebel pack under the command of Lord Trimmingham, but manage to escape, thanks to Major Dugdale, who in reality is Captain Crimson, from whom the rebel leader has filched his title. The Jacobites fight a losing battle, and among the prisoners taken are Squire Dashwood and Lennard's uncle, both of whom are saved from the scaffold by Captain Crimson. Meanwhile, Captain Crimson, having come into his own as Christopher, Second Earl of Trimmingham, tempts fate by making known his identity to Hickerman and then vanishing into the night.

(Now read on.)

The Strolling Players!

"**W**HAT on earth was the earl about, tempting Fate to-night when all his troubles are over?" mused Jack Lennard, as he and Billy Jepp made their way across the park. "I tell you, old chap, he startled me out of my life when I heard his voice and saw him at the window!"

"Never mind. We know he's arrived, and maybe he'll tell us more about it," said Billy, wiping his eyes. "I could hardly groan for laughing!"

"Well, your last howl was a triumph, and Hickerman won't forget Dashwood Hall in a hurry!" chuckled Jack. "Let's go to the Black Boar. His lordship is certain to come there, if he's not there already!"

The two young red-coats found quite a bustle in the inn yard as they went to the harness-room to return the lanterns.

"What's going on?" inquired Billy.

"Company o' play-actors come by the wagon," said old Reuben, the head post-boy. "Ye'd think they were really big noises to hear 'em talk! Lot a chattering magpies the women-folk, an' the men aren't much better! They've fitted up the big barn there, and to-morrow they're giving a performance. Rogues an' wagabones, I call 'em, without a crown piece among the whole tribe!"

Be that as it might, when Jack



BY
**MORTON
PIKE.**

and Billy passed through the cosy kitchen they found the "whole tribe" at supper there, and the atmosphere charged with the appetising odour of ham and eggs.

The diners were all too busy to pay much heed to the young dragoons; those tired-faced ladies in their tawdry finery, and the half-dozen men of sorts, eating as though their lives depended on it.

In the snug parlour, however, there was a pompous gentleman holding forth to Dr. Lennard, who sat in his usual corner, an amused twinkle in his kind eyes.

The pompous gentleman wore a suit of grass-green velvet trimmed with copper lace, somewhat white at the elbows, but his well-darned silk stockings might have been cleaner. His manner was commanding, and his rich mellow voice boomed with a curious vibration that now and again brought an answering note from the glasses on the table.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, as the door opened on the scarlet-and-yellow regimentals. "What have we here? Gad, a troop cometh! Come in, gentlemen, come in!" He beckoned to Jack and Billy to enter as though the room belonged to him. "Fresh from the fields of conquest and the paths of glory, without a doubt. I would pour out a libation of red Falernian in your honour, brave boys, but the present state of my purse forbids it!"

He raised his empty goblet to his lips, not without a furtive glance at the doctor.

By the landlord's permission, the orator had just pinned a play bill against the wall, and he saw the surprise that swept over the faces of the two chums as they read:

"The Mystery of the Haunted Hall," a drama in three acts, in which will appear Mr. Benjamin

Brazen, formerly of His Majesty's Theatre, Drury Lane, and his entire company; to be followed by that screaming farce, 'The Missing Earl.'

Jack and Billy looked at one another and burst out laughing. Then, after a puzzled lift of his bushy eyebrows, the stranger joined in with a hearty bellow.

"Ah, my dear lads—laughter and tears!" he cried, with a magnificent gesture of his shabby sleeve towards the bill. "That is the player's life in a nutshell. In youth, quaffing the bubbling wine of success without a care for the morrow; in age, letting fall the senile tear of failure into the dregs of his meagre measure of small beer! I am the Benjamin Brazen, whose famous name you read there in large type, among a dozen others scarcely less famous. We are playing to-morrow for one night only, and if you gentlemen would have me reserve you seats in the front row, the price per seat is two shillings, and I will take it now!"

Jack, still laughing at the recollection of that other "haunted hall," thrust a hand into his fob.

"We shall certainly come, sir," he said.

As Mr. Brazen's fat fingers clutched the money, the pair seated themselves on the polished settee.

"May I be admitted to share the joke?" said Dr. Lennard. "What mad prank have you two boys been up to?"

"Not now, father," whispered Jack. "We shall have another surprise for you to-night, we hope, and 'twould be best all told together."

"As you will, my boy," nodded the doctor, pointing with his pipe-stem to the retiring figure of the actor. "That man is a most amusing study of how not to order one's life. But he has promised to give me a game of chess, which, to say truth, I have

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not enjoyed since Falcon disappeared so suddenly."

There was a sudden sharp click as the latch on the outer door moved, and Billy pressed Jack's arm.

"Is it the earl?" he whispered.

The two chums looked towards the end of the settle which hid the entrance from view.

Mr. Brazen was standing in the kitchen door, the replenished goblet in his hand, and he stared at the newcomer whom he could see from his position.

A familiar figure in a plain grey suit came round the settle-end, limping slightly on his well-known ebony walking-staff—an elderly, white-wigged man, whose strong features beamed with a kindly smile. It was Mr. Falcon.

"Good-evening, gentlemen!" he said.

The three occupants of the parlour were so taken aback that for a moment there was silence.

After an awkward pause, the doctor spoke.

"Good-evening, Falcon!" he said.

There was no welcome in the dry words.

The retired East India merchant stood quite still, his deep-set eyes turning from one to another, inquiringly, while a faint smile seemed to flicker round his mouth.

Before he could speak, however, a strange thing happened. Mr. Brazen, who had been staring open-mouthed at the old man, set his glass down with an unsteady hand, and sent a roar of laughter booming through the room.

"Split my gizzard, if it's not our old friend Dugdale come to earth again!" he bellowed. "Oh, you dog! And looking 'Mr. Prosperous' to the life, too, in the very clothes you

played the part a hundred times with myself as the alderman, and Mrs. Brazen as his housekeeper! Maria—all of you—look at this!"

"Sir, you are misled by some fancied resemblance," began Mr. Falcon, drawing himself up.

But the excited actor had rushed across the room, and embraced him, with tears streaming down his cheeks, as a bunch of female heads appeared in the doorway.

"Benjamin, you old rogue, your eyes lose nothing with the march of time!" laughed Mr. Falcon, wringing the other's hand warmly, as the ladies of the company surrounded him with shrieks of delight and all tried to kiss him at once. "Mercy, fair charmers, you'll set my wig awry; 'tis indeed like old times to be with you again. And how is business, Benjamin?"

"Poor, my boy, poor! We play here to-morrow, and then wend our weary way onwards. True talent like ours is little understood these days. You were wise to leave us. But where have you been hiding yourself all these years? And why do we find you once more, garbed as Mr. Prosperous?"

"Because, after many days, Ben, kind fortune has shone on me at last. I have been to India, and to many other places as well." He looked at the wondering boys, with a quick flash beneath his smile. "Of late, I betook me to soldiering again; in short, I have played well nigh as many parts as I did with you. And now I am going to play chess with my good friend Dr. Lennard—at his house yonder," he added, with an emphasis that was not lost on Jack's father, who rose stiffly, until Jack pressed his foot under the table.

"I am at your service, Mr. Falcon,"

said Dr. Lennard, with a grave bow.

"Then in one moment I will be with you, doctor—I, and the boys."

He then turned to the "delighted mummer who was shifting from one foot to the other like a bear on hot plates."

"How much money do you hope to pocket if you sell all your seats for to-morrow night, Ben?" he asked.

"Ten pounds at most. They sell but slowly, alack!" answered the play-actor.

"Then I will instruct my man-servant to bring you a hundred guineas in the morning for the sake of old happy days, if you will do me the pleasure of accepting them."

Benjamin Brazen, genuinely moved by the unexpected windfall, sobbed tears of gratitude as he seized Mr. Falcon's hand.

"No more, Ben, if you think well of me," smiled Mr. Falcon, as he disengaged himself with difficulty. "Listen! Do me this favour in return, letting none know of it until I give you leave." He whispered some words in Brazen's ear. "Well, what say you?"

"What say I to the most generous patron, the truest friend of my life, but a thousand times yes!" said Ben Brazen. "It shall be as you wish, and I will set about it at this moment! A secret, ay, a secret most profound!"

"Then, meantime, not a word."

Mr. Falcon then turned to the inn-keeper.

"Jeff," he said, "these ladies and gentlemen will continue the supper I have unwittingly interrupted. See to it they have all the wine they wish."

Then, with a parting laugh, Mr. Falcon followed Jack and Billy to the gabled house across the street, no longer leaning on his ebony cane!

ANOTHER GREAT SCOOP FOR

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NEXT SATURDAY'S ISSUE OF THE "MAGNET"!

"I FORGIVE you for thinking me a rebel, Dr. Lennard, since appearances were all against me," smiled the distinguished guest, as he took the hand that pushed the port across the table. "True, I was often in the Pretender's company, but I was fighting for King George all the while, as Jack and Billy here can witness. I owe much to yon poor mummer, Ben Brazen, for he it was who taught me the art of make-up and disguise. But you little know how often I dreaded lest Billy and Jack here should detect Mr. Falcon in the face of Major Dugdale, for I could not alter my nose, could I?"

"No, my lord. Nothing but a surgical operation would change it," said the doctor.

"Perhaps a certain family likeness to my poor cousin, Lance Dashwood, helped me out," laughed the Earl of Trimingham. "I had played Mr. Prosperous so often on the stage that the benevolent Falcon came like second nature. And as for the major, it seems one had only to hold one's head high and put on a military bear-

ing to deceive these remarkably sharp eyes. But that reminds me," and his lordship withdrew a folded copy of the "London Gazette" from his pocket. How does this read?

"John Lennard and William Jepp, gentlemen, at present serving as volunteers in the Viscount Cobham's Dragoons, to be lieutenants in Sir John Ligonier's Regiment of Horse."

Jack and Billy jumped to their feet, stunned by that joyful news after all the amazing happenings of the night. When they found their voices, it was to falter in chorus:

"My lord, we owe this to you!"

"Nay, 'twas but a word in Cumberland's ear; the rest was due to your own good service," said the Earl of Trimmingham. "As for the money lodged for your commissions, Captain Crimson owes you far more than that, for without your help on more than one occasion he might now be dangling from a gibbet on Windyway Heath, red velvet mask and all!"

The earl lit his pipe at a candle and watched the blue smoke curling away with wide eyes that seemed to see other things curling away with it.

"I leave sermons to parsons," he said suddenly. "And, by the way, our parson here should have his fifteen guineas and a letter of thanks from that rascally highwayman by this time. But this I tell you, boys; adventure is the spice of life, which was why I could not resist a last wild gallop to-night as Captain Crimson before I laid aside the role for ever. Fear God and honour the king, Jack and Billy both, 'tis a good motto which will serve you well. And now, doctor, I see the chessmen ready; what about our game?"

The big red barn in the yard of the Black Boar was filled as it had never been filled before.

All Widewater was there to see the strolling players, for Mr. Brazen had not forgotten to spread it abroad that the performance was under the distinguished patronage of the Earl of Trimmingham, and that all the seats were free!

The only empty seat in the house was in the centre of the front row, where two scarlet coats made a gay spot of colour in the glow of the footlights. Everyone was agog to see his lordship take possession of the empty seat, but they were disappointed.

Just before the start, Tom Roke came in fresh from France, and as he squeezed into his place beside pretty Nancy, his wife, he leaned over and whispered to Jack:

"Both safe, your uncle and the squire, and the quickest run I ever made. But what's this about Hickerman they tell me?"

"Gone—lock, stock, and barrel!" answered Jack excitedly.

"Thank goodness for that!" chuckled the young smuggler. "Thought the mud smelt sweeter somehow when I came up-stream!"

The wooden planks were very hard, but no one minded that. Pleasures were few and far between in the good year 1746. Everybody had come to enjoy themselves, and they did, in



"Split my gizzard," bellowed Mr. Brazen, "if it's not our old friend Dugdale come to earth again!"

spite of the stifling heat, the feeble lighting of the tallow candles, and the dense crush.

Women screamed and some even fainted at the terrors of the "Haunted Hall," that grim drama with its three murders, its walking ghost, and a terrific thunderstorm.

From their places, Jack and Billy could see Brazen with a large iron tray in the wings manufacturing the thunder, and they grinned at one another as they thought how much more bloodcurdling their own groans had been.

"The Missing Earl" made everyone howl with laughter, and rapturous applause was still filling the barn when Benjamin Brazen stepped before the curtain, his fat hand on his overflowing heart, to announce the great surprise of the evening.

"Kind friends and generous patrons," he began, the mellow voice trembling with genuine emotion, "believe me, words are idle things at best, and they fail me now." He swallowed several beads of perspiration that poured down his purple cheeks. "To prove ourselves not ungrateful for the noble manner in which you have rewarded our poor efforts to amuse, with your gracious permission we are now going to put on a comedy in one act that does not figure on the bill you have already seen. It is called 'The Man from Bengal,' and a gentleman, once an old and valued member of this company, will play his original character of 'Mr. Prosperous' for the last time. Kind friends, we thank you!"

Ben Brazen then bowed himself out of sight.

Jack and Billy fairly gasped. But before either could speak, the curtains were drawn aside on a garden scene with palings and a gate upstage. Through the gate came an elderly figure in a grey suit and buckled shoes, limping slightly on an ebony walking-staff!

"Why, 'tis Mr. Falcon!" shrilled Nancy Roke, and a hundred throats echoed the cry as the entire audience recognised the familiar form of the man whom all the children loved, and who had a kind word for everyone he met.

"Mr. Prosperous" looked round the barn with his gentle smile, and went on with his part amid breathless stillness, drawing both tears and mirth from those who had been his neighbours so long before the comedy was ended, and yet barely half a dozen of them knowing the secret of it all!

"To-night the English stage has lost its brightest ornament!" gurgled Mr. Brazen, when they carried him from the supper-table to bed, overcome from a variety of causes. "Never did he play 'Mr. Prosperous' better!"

"All the same," whispered Jack Lennard to Billy Jepp, "we shall always think of him as Captain Crimson, you and I, for no one ever played that part so well!"

THE END.

("THE SEA SPIDER" is the title of the thrilling story of gripping adventure on the high seas and under seas which is billed to appear in next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy early and make sure of reading the opening chapters.—Ed.)

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FOOL'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 24.)

"You can tell the Head that. Come on!"

Coker snorted angrily. He was anxious to get after Harry Wharton & Co. But if the Head wanted him, he had to go—and he went.

Wingate walked with him to Dr. Locke's study. Coker tramped into that apartment, giving the breathless Prout a surprised stare as he went in. Prout's eyes glittered at him.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Coker, addressing the Head.

"I did, Coker," said Dr. Locke, in a voice of ice. "You are expelled from this school, Coker! You will go immediately and pack your box! You will leave Greyfriars in half an hour!"

Coker almost fell down.

He blinked at his headmaster, with staring eyes, and his mouth wide open with astonishment, like a fish out of water.

"Wh-a-a-at?" he stuttered. "Wh-a-at did you say, sir?"

"I said that you are expelled from Greyfriars, Coker, for a violent and ruffianly assault upon your Form-master—"

"But—but—but I haven't, sir!" gasped the bewildered Coker. "I—I haven't even seen him since he jawed me in the quad, sir. And a lot of fellows were there, sir, and they'll tell you I never touched him—"

Mr. Prout rose majestically to his feet.

"Do you dare to deny, Coker, that after uttering threats to knock me, your Form-master, over, you carried out those threats, only a few minutes ago, in the quadrangle?"

"Of course I do!" howled Coker. "I never did anything of the kind! I wouldn't, either! As if I'd hit a man of your age, sir! I never even hit that rotter, Sarle, though he asked for it! A fellow might say things in a temper, sir, but doing them's a different matter."

Dr. Locke looked hard at Coker.

"I presume, Mr. Prout, that there is no doubt?" he said. "As you did not actually see Coker commit this assault, is it possible—"

"It is not possible, sir!" boomed Prout. "And there is no doubt, no doubt whatever! Coker will not deny uttering the threat!"

"Nunno; but—but that was only—only—only gas, sir!" gasped Coker. "I—I never really meant—I—I—I wouldn't—"

Dr. Locke held up his hand.

"Your threat, Coker, has been followed almost immediately by this attack on Mr. Prout! No reasonable doubt remains, Mr. Prout could not see his assailant, in the mist; a circumstance from which you no doubt hoped to draw advantage. But the utterance

of such a threat, followed by the action itself, may be taken as proof—"

"I should imagine so, sir!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"But I never did it!" almost shrieked Coker. "And I can jolly well prove that I never did it, too! As it happens, I can prove that I haven't been out of the House for the last half-hour."

At that awful moment, Coker of the Fifth was glad that those cheeky fags had ragged him in his study! From the very bottom of his heart was Coker glad!

Dr. Locke paused.

"If you can produce any such proof, Coker—"

Sniff from Prout!

"Lots, sir!" gasped Coker. "Heaps! Send for young Wharton, of the Remove—they ragged me in my study, mopped ink over me—smothered me! Send for the Fifth—half of them saw me, smothered with ink—and laughed fit to kill themselves, too! Send for Tomlinson—he was helping me get the ink off, in the bath-room! Send for Trotter—I made him go and get me a change of clothes! Send for all of them, and they'll tell you—"

Dr. Locke stared hard at the breathless Coker!

Mr. Prout stared hard, also. It was scarcely possible to suppose that Coker was asking for all these witnesses to be sent for, unless they were going to witness in his favour! Even Mr. Prout began to wonder whether he had been a little hasty in jumping to conclusions, certain as those conclusions had seemed.

"Send for them, sir!" gasped Coker. "They'll tell you—"

"Wingate, kindly bring here the boys named by Coker."

"Very well, sir."

A few minutes later, there was quite a parade in the Head's study.

Five Remove fellows, six of the Fifth, and Trotter, the House page, were gathered there. Prout stood silent, amazed, while the Head questioned them.

Their answers proved as complete an alibi for Coker, as any accused man could possibly have desired.

The Famous Five had been ragging Coker in his study, long before the attack on Prout. Half a dozen Fifth Form men had seen him inky and sooty, after the juniors had done with him. Tomlinson, of the Fifth, had been helping him clean up, at the very moment that Prout was knocked over in the quad. Trotter had brought him his change of clothes, before Prout got back to the House. For nearly half an hour past, Coker, of the Fifth, had not been out of anybody's sight for a single instant! He had been inside the House all that time! The evidence was overwhelming and conclusive. Whoever had knocked Prout over in the quad, it was not Coker.

Prout was not keen to be convinced. But he had to be convinced. The questioning over, Dr. Locke looked at the Fifth Form master. Prout nodded slowly.

"But who—?" gasped Prout.

"That must be discovered," said the Head quietly. "But it is clear that it was not Coker, of your Form, sir. Coker, I trust that this will be a warning to you."

"But who—?" gasped Prout.

"But for the fact that these juniors were playing a prank in your study, Coker, you would certainly have been condemned on the evidence of your own foolish and reckless words!" said the Head sternly. "You would have had yourself to blame! Let it be a warning to you to be more careful! You may go!"

Coker went.

In the passage, he fixed his eyes on the Famous Five. They regarded him with smiling faces. They had saved Coker from himself that afternoon. And, all unconsciously, at the same time, they had saved him from the shrewdest blow of his secret enemy. But they did not expect Coker to understand—that, or anything else. They expected, in fact, exactly what happened.

"You cheeky fags," said Coker, "inking a man in his own study—I'll jolly well—"

Coker got no further. He was bumping on the passage floor before he could say more. He bumped hard, and roared. And the Famous Five walked away and left him roaring.

Who had knocked Prout over, in the misty quad, never transpired.

Whoever he was, he had had ample time to get clear, while Prout was following a false scent—and he had got clear!

Harry Wharton & Co. had a suspicion. They gave the Snipe of the Remove searching looks when they saw him again.

But suspicion was not proof; and there was nothing to be done. The Snipe was safe!

But he had failed again! With the fathead of the Fifth playing into his hands, as if he wanted to help him, the Snipe had failed. And he was beginning to wonder whether it was, after all, fool's luck; or whether there was some sort of inherent weakness in cunning rascality that fore-doomed it to failure.

THE END.

(Look out for another exciting yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars, in next Saturday's MAGNET. It is entitled: "THE SCHEMER OF THE REMOVE!" and it's just the type of story you will enjoy. See that you order your copy in good time!)



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SITUATION VACANT

Ambitious lad, desirous of rising to dizzy heights, wanted to climb up to the school flagstaff and yell out a warning when the beaks are coming.—Apply Bolsover's Free Fight Syndicate, behind the chapel any evening.



No. 122 (New Series).

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.



February 2nd, 1935.

FREAKISH FOOTBALLER

Seeks place in Mental Home team or other suitable club. Pitiful at inside-right and worse still in any other position. Good at hopscotch and marbles.—HORACE COKER, Fifth Form. (Inserted free by the Editor—Harry Wharton.)

TWO GAMES ON ONE PITCH

Frenzied Footer In Floods

Spectator who turned up to watch football on Little Sidelast Wednesday certainly got an eyeful, for they had the unique experience of watching two games played simultaneously on one pitch!

This weird affair was the outcome of the torrential rains that fell in the neighbourhood last Monday and Tuesday.

The matches arranged for Little Side on the momentous afternoon were two in number—Upper Fourth v. Shell on one pitch, and Remove v. Dick Trumper's team from Court-field on the other. Of the two pitches, the one reserved for the Remove was far and away the better. The other was completely water-logged. But on the Remove pitch footer of a kind was, at any rate, just possible.

Dick Trumper was responsible for the amazing experiment. When Wingate came along and ordered the Fourth and Shell to give up all idea of playing on their pitch, Trumper felt sorry for them.

"Pity they've got to chuck it," he said. "The poor beggars look quite down in the mouth over it."

We agreed that it was unfortunate for the Fourth and Shell; but what could be done about it, anyway?

Then Trumper came out with his great idea.

"Why not invite them to share this pitch with us?" he asked.

We looked at him as if he had gone off his rocker at first, and a dozen fellows trotted out the obvious objections. But Dick Trumper wasn't put off.

"I know it sounds pretty daft," he said. "But the pitch is so bad, anyway, that the game is bound to be farcical; so it's not like making a rag out of a normal game. Anyway, it will give those fellows a chance to kick a ball about—and will probably cause a bit of fun."

"But what about goal?" hooted Johnny Bull. "Mean to say we'll have two goalies in each goal?"

"Why not?" asked Trumper blandly. "They may crowd up the goalmouth a trifle; but I'll bet they won't make goal-scoring impossible! Can't do more than give it a trial, anyway, can we?"

So the idea was duly put up to the disappointed footballers of the Shell and Fourth. They looked pretty blank when they first heard it; but, like the rest of us, they quickly warmed up to the wheeze when they thought about it. Within a few minutes, forty-four players were lining up, with two grinning

referees and four linesmen to superintend the play! The amazing fact we should like to place on record is, that neither of the two games turned out to be a complete fiasco. The players adapted themselves to the extraordinary conditions remarkably well, and at times the standard of play was almost normal.

Owing to the crowded state of the field, there was less passing than usual—which circumstance produced a number of brilliant solo runs. But sometimes, when play was centred at different ends, quite the usual game was played and normal footer excitement engendered among the lookers-on!



The funniest incidents were seen in the goalmouth, when two sides were attacking the same citadel at the same time. With two goalies jumping about together to keep out two balls, the fun was fast and furious—and the crowning joy came when Wharton, for the Remove, and Hobson, for the Shell, scored simultaneously in the same goal. That masterpiece fairly brought down the house!

Altogether, we owe Dick Trumper a vote of thanks for introducing us to something quite new in footer.

But we don't think four-team football is likely to become really fashionable at Greyfriars just yet!

SHELLITE'S PROBLEM SOLVED

Hobson asks what the dickens he can do to keep warm when the water-pipes in the Shell passage are always cold.

Just think about it, old bean. When the injustice of it dawns on you, it will make your blood boil in no time!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Dick Rake, a keen photographer, made a "movie" with a Baby Cine camera of the Remove victory over the Upper Fourth at footer. Removites crowded into the "Bag" to see the "show" successfully repulsing a party of the Upper Fourth who hoped to destroy the film!

WE MUST NOT BE RUDE

Says H. Wharton

Wingate has just looked into the editorial office to give us a stern warning.

He says we're far too free in our comments on Greyfriars seniors, and that this practice must stop.

We've thanked the old sport and told him we'll do our level best to respect our elders in future. So we must ask our readers to forbear with us if the strong potion in the way of editorial comments we've been serving up in the past is turned into a weak mixture of milk-and-water in future numbers!

Instead of describing Loder as a "low, cunning rascal," we shall have to content ourselves with the quite inadequate description—"low rascal."

Instead of calling Mr. Prout a "blithering, bald-headed bandersnatch," it may be expedient for us to call him simply a "bald-headed bandersnatch."

Whereas, we've been used to giving Coker the title of "champion idiot," the word "idiot" alone will have to suffice.

While to speak of Hobson as a "footling frump," will, of course, be out of the question! "Frumpish footer" must do, instead.

It's going to be a strain on your patience, dear readers, reading these faint ghosts of the phrases we've formerly employed. But you'll have to grin and bear it.

That is, unless we decide to ignore Wingate's warning after all.

THE KIDNAPPED SKOOLBOY

By Dicky Nugent

"Say, I guess that guy's got the appetite of an elephant!"

It was Hyam Knott Poare, the million-dollar skooler of St. Sam's, who made that remark. He had just treated Jack Jolly & Co., of the Fourth, to tea in the tuck-shop, and Tubby Barrell, who had a marvellous nose for a feed, had turned up as an uninvited guest. The amount of tuck Tubby was consuming made the new boy from the Yv Knighted States concerned with anxiety for Tubby's safety!

"Believe me, old chap, Tubby will soon knock your millions silly, if you stand him tea every day!" laughed Jack Jolly. His motto is "Eat not to live, but live to eat." But you'll have to chuck it now, Tubby, or we'll all be late for prep.

"Don't wait for me," mumbled Tubby Barrell. "You chaps go, and I'll follow you. You've paid for all that's left on the table, I believe, Poare!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Year, it's all paid for—and I guess you're welcome to finish it up while we mosey back," smiled the million-dollar skooler. And he strolled off with Jack Jolly & Co., leaving Tubby with the remains of the feast.

By the time Tubby at last rolled out of the tuck-shop, the quad was dark and deserted. The fat junior of the Fourth started to run, for he knew that to be late for prep would earn him a licking from Mr. I. Jollivell Lickham. But he hadn't gone far before a dark figure stepped out of the bushes and brought him to a stop.

"Howdy, stranger!" spoke out a sing-song nasal voice. "Do you happen to know a guy named Poare?"

"Yes, rather!" answered Tubby, with an inquisitive look at the visitor. "What do you want him for?"

"I guess I just dropped in to give him a present from his popper. I

guess I'd like to see him privily for a minnit to hand it over."

Tubby's eyes gleamed in the darkness. Altho not dishonest, Tubby wasn't above helping himself to other fellows' property if he had half a chance, and this seemed an eggcellent opportunity of acquiring something for nothing!

"Well, you haven't got far to look, as it happens," he said. "The fact is—ahem!—I'm Hyam Knott Poare myself!"

The mysterious visitor started violently.

"You're Hyam Knott Poare?"

"That's my name," said Tubby cheerfully. "Now hand over the present!"

"Why, certainly!" grinned the visitor. "Hyer it is, I guess!"

To Tubby's surprise and dismay, the man whipped out a scarf from his overcoat pocket, and noddied it round Tubby's head, completely covering his face!

"Come on, you guys!" he cried, when he had finished.

Several other mysterious gentlemen then appeared, and Tubby felt himself lifted up and carried away.

A couple of minnits later, lying at the bottom of a motor-car, Tubby was being borne off to an unknown destination—and it was borne on him that he had been kidnapped!

There was a sensation in the Skool House that evening when it was found that Tubby was missing. Jack Jolly told Burleigh and Burleigh told Mr. Lickham, and Mr. Lickham told Fossil, and Fossil told the bell for a special calling-over. But no Tubby Barrell appeared.

At last, Mr. Lickham went into the

majestick presence of Dr. Birchmall, the Head of St. Sam's, and told him.

The Head looked awfully worried.

"Bless my sole!" he ejaculated. "Barrell is the last boy I wanted to vanish! His father hasn't paid his skool fees yet, and if Barrell can't be found we may have difficulty in collecting them. The boy must be found at once. You here, Lickham? The boy must be found, and at wunce!"

"I here, sir," mermered Mr. Lickham.

"No stone must be left unturned," said the Head. "Have you turned over all the stones yet, Lickham?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't."

"Then go and do so immediately," ordered Dr. Birchmall. "In the meantime, I will conduct a search myself."

And while his assistant went out in the quad to turn over all the stones he could find, Dr. Birchmall had a look round the place himself. He searched with characteristic thorough-

ness. Starting at the box-rooms, he went through all the suit-cases and handbags, he could lay his hands on, and then worked downwards towards the bottom of the House. He looked up chimbleys, under the stair-carpet, inside duzzen's of desks and drawers, and even turned out waste-paper baskets and dustbins—all to no avail. As a last resource, he eggplored every corner of the cellars—still without finding a trace of the missing Tubby!

When at last he came up from the coal-cellar under the kitchen, his face was black.

"There is something jolly mysterious about this here," he told Mr. Lickham, as they met again in Hall. "Two and two make five, Lickham, as you are aware—and, putting two and two together in this case, I can't avoid the conclusion that Barrell has been kidnapped!"

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



Dick Rake, a keen photographer, made a "movie" with a Baby Cine camera of the Remove victory over the Upper Fourth at footer. Removites crowded into the "Bag" to see the "show" successfully repulsing a party of the Upper Fourth who hoped to destroy the film!

Goosling, the school porter, admitted over 20,000 visitors during the last decade. The figures are supplied by Mr. Quelch. Goosling hasn't kept count—but he says if he had had as many "tips" as he ought to have had, he'd be a millionaire!

Harold Skinner's undoubted gift for caricature might earn him fame by and by if he could remember to be kind rather than cruel. His cartoon entitled "Mr. Magnificent Wharton" remained on the Remove notice board for only a brief period—till Cherry tore it down!

Just to show that he could leap higher in goal than Tom North, Coker of the Fifth made a mighty jump to save a high shot from Wingate—and cracked his head on the cross-bar. Coker was too "stunned" to realise that he had failed to stop the ball!

Napoleon Dupont is naturally Monsieur Charpentier's favourite pupil, and he frequently repairs to "Mossoo's" study after classes for a chat in their native tongue. Listening at the key-hole, however, even Bunter could glean nothing of what was said!

Dapper is the word which best describes Cecil Reginald Temple when he takes his Sunday morning walk. Looking at him the other day, nobody would have imagined that the previous afternoon he and his football XI had been run off their feet by the Remove "flyers"!

DICK RAKE PLEADS—DON'T GET OUR BAND BANNED

I want to make a plea to the members of Bolsover's Comb-and-Paper Band.

For several terms, you have entertained us with mirthful melody.

For several terms, your dulcet droning and regular rhythm and honeyed harmony have cheered us at the close of our day of toil.

For several terms, you have filled the Rag with music without producing a word of complaint, other than from Fourth Formers and others who don't count.

Now, for the first time, this idyllic state of affairs is in danger.

Some of your own supporters are beginning to register dissatisfaction!

Oh, I know that individually you're as good as ever! Tom Brown on the bass comb-and-paper, is at the top of his form; Trevor on the mouth-organ is a joy; and Stott's execution with the poker-and-coal-scuttle is better than ever.

It's not the artists your public complain of—IT'S THE MUSIC!

While you stuck to simple melodies like "Did You Ever See a Soream Walking?" you were great.

But now that you're going on to "hot" music, your patrons are beginning to wonder. "School House Blues" made them goggle. "Punishment-Room Stomp" made them put their hands over their ears. "Tuck-shop Lament" made them cry: "Enough!"

Can't you read the signs and portents? Get back to the tuneful favourites of yore, and ruthlessly cut out these nightmarish creations you're inflicting on us at present!

Unless you do that, and do it soon, I can see only one end to it.

Our band will be banned!