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The MAGNET 2^D

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EVERY SATURDAY.

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**SHERIFF'S STAR
and
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PENCIL**

A TYRANT RULES GREYFRIARS!



BY FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Chucked Out!

"NO!" It was not like George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, to speak in such emphatic tones that his voice could be heard in the Sixth Form passage outside his study. On this occasion, however, he did!

Two Remove juniors who were coming up the passage with "lines" in their hands for delivery in Wingate's study stopped outside the door.

Harry Wharton smiled. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Sounds as if the old scout's in rather a bait," murmured Bob.

"It do—it does!" agreed Wharton.

"Shall we go in?"

"Um—better wait, perhaps," said Harry doubtfully.

"No!" came Wingate's voice again, louder and sharper than before. "No, Loder! I've said no, and I mean no! Can't you take no for an answer?"

"Look here—"

The voice of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form was also raised. It came quite clearly to the juniors outside.

Evidently the bully of the Sixth was in a bad temper—nothing unusual on Loder's part. But Wingate also seemed to be in rather a "bait," as Bob Cherry

expressed it, which was decidedly unusual. As a rule the captain of Greyfriars had a very genial and equable temper.

"That's enough, Loder!"

"If you won't listen to a man—"

"I won't!"

Wharton and Bob exchanged glances. They felt a good deal of interest in this "row" between the captain of the school and the blackest sheep at Greyfriars, but certainly they did not want to listen to talk not intended for their ears.

On the other hand, they had been ordered to bring their impositions to Wingate's study at six—and it was exactly six. To walk away with their lines, and be called over the coals afterwards for not handing them in on time, did not seem quite good enough.

So they hesitated, not knowing quite what to do, but aware that it would not be wise to knock and enter while the row between the two great men of the Sixth was going on.

"Will you let me speak?" Loder's

voice was almost a roar. "You call yourself captain of the school, Wingate—"

"I call myself exactly what I am! And it's because I'm captain of the school that you're not playing in the Highcliffe match. What do you care for football, anyhow?" came Wingate's scornful voice. "Have you got bets on the game—or what?"

"I'm keen on playing. I'm a better man at the game than several that you've put in the team—Potter of the Fifth, for instance—"

"Potter mayn't be as good as you at your best," conceded Wingate. "But he can be relied on not to break bounds on the night before a match and turn up sick and seedy for a game."

"That may have happened once—"

"It's happened more than once—but once is enough. Look here, if you want plain English you shall have it! You're not playing in the Highcliffe match—or in any other match so long as I'm captain of the school—because you're a rotten slacker and loafer and black-guard, and I wouldn't be found dead in the same team with you! Is that plain enough?"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The old bean's got his rag out, and no mistake," murmured Wharton. "I—I say, we'd better cut. Can't barge in while that circus is going on."

"But what about the lines?"

"Oh, blow the lines!"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter of the Remove rolled up the passage

—IN THE FINEST SCHOOL STORY OF THE WEEK

with an inky, smeary impot in his fat, grubby hand. "I say, am I late? That beast Wingate said six—"

"No hurry to go in, Bunter," said Wharton hastily.

There was silence for the moment in the captain's study. Gerald Loder apparently was taking his time to digest Wingate's "plain English."

Bunter came to a halt and blinked at the two juniors through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, what are you waiting about for?" he asked. "Isn't that beast in his study yet?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! He is a beast—a rotten beast!" said Bunter. "Look at the way he gave me lines, because I cut footer practice, and I told him I was ill and had a pain and—"

"Well, he gave us lines for knocking Coker's hat off," said Bob. "You were a slacking little fat pig to cut footer, but it's a Remove man's duty to knock Coker's hat off."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bunter broke off with a jump as Loder's voice boomed in the study.

"So that's how you talk to a prefect, Wingate, you hound?"

"You wouldn't be a prefect much longer if the Head knew you as well as I do, Loder! And no fancy names, please! You're asking to be thrown out of this study on your neck!"

"I'd like to see you do it!" roared Loder.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, they're rowing in there—two Sixth Form men, you know—rowing like a pair of fags—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Let's get out of this!" said Wharton hurriedly. And he backed along the passage with Bob Cherry.

Bunter did not retreat, however.

Billy Bunter had no scruples—none whatever—about listening to what his fat ears were not intended to hear. And he was intensely curious. This was "pie" to Bunter! He was hearing things that he was going to retail with great relish to a crowd of juniors in the Rag.

There was a sound of a moving chair in the study. George Wingate had risen to his feet.

"You'd better go, Loder!"

"You rotter—"

"Are you going?"

"You've always been against me—you and Gwynne and North and all your gang in the Sixth. You've put your heads together to keep me out of the school games! I'm not standing it!"

"I don't quite see what else you will do. Anyhow, I'm fed-up with you, Loder! Get out of my study!"

"You cur—"

The study door was flung wide open.

Billy Bunter fairly gasped with excitement as he blinked in through his spectacles.

Loder and Wingate were standing face to face—the latter angry, scornful; the former almost panting with rage. Loder's hands were clenched, and he seemed to find difficulty in restraining himself from planting his fist full in the scornful face before him.

Neither of the seniors observed the fat figure in the passage, blinking in with deep and intense interest.

"That's enough, Loder! Get out!"

"You hound—"

"That's more than enough! You're going!"

Wingate of the Sixth made a stride at Loder and grasped him. Loder spun in his stalwart grasp.

He gave a panting cry of rage and struck at Wingate's face. The sudden blow brought a red mark to Wingate's cheek.

The next moment Loder spun round, his feet torn from the floor, and was hurled headlong through the doorway.

"Whoop!"

Crash!

Bunter had not expected that.

The bully of the Sixth, whizzing through the doorway like a cannon-ball, crashed fairly on the fat junior, sending him flying backwards.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter as he went.

He rolled over on the floor of the Sixth Form passage. Loder of the Sixth rolled over him.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" yelled Bunter. "Gerroff! I say—Yaroooh! Oh crikey! I'm squashed—I'm killed! Whoooooop!"

Wingate stared out of his doorway.

"What the thump—" he ejaculated.

"Yoooop!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the end of the passage, where Wharton and Bob Cherry were watching the interesting scene.

Loder staggered to his feet.

He stood panting, red with rage, his fists clenched, glaring at the athletic figure of the Greyfriars captain framed in the study doorway.

For a few seconds it looked as if he would renew the tussle. But the cool, contemptuous face of the Greyfriars captain seemed to daunt him. He swung away down the passage, unheeding Bunter, who was still spluttering on the floor. But as he reached Wharton and Bob Cherry, his rage blazed out.

Perhaps they were grinning a little. Loder's unceremonious exit from the captain's study had its comic side. But there was no doubt that the bully of the Sixth was enraged by the fact that the juniors had witnessed that unceremonious exit.

He made a sudden grab at them and caught them by their collars.

Bang!

Before they knew what was happening, their heads came together with a loud and ringing collision.

Two yells were blended into one!

The next moment the bully of the Sixth flung them sprawling, stamped on his way into the study, and slammed the door shut.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Loder!

HARRY WHARTON picked himself up.

He rubbed his head, which had a pain in it. He panted for breath. His lines, and Bob's, lay scattered on the floor, and they remained there, unheeded. Wharton's eyes were blazing.

"The rotten bully!" he said, between his teeth. "Come on, Bob!"

He started towards Loder's study.

Wingate had gone back into his room, Billy Bunter tottering in after him with his lines. Wingate had not seen Loder's action in dealing with the two juniors along the passage.

"Ow, wow!" mumbled Bob Cherry, as he rubbed his head. "Oh, my napper! I say, old bean, you've got a jolly hard nut!"

"Come on!" shouted Wharton.

Bob cut after him and caught him by the arm.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "What the dickens—"

"I'm going after Loder—"

"Hold on! He's a prefect, you know—"

"I don't care if he was headmaster! He's not going to bang my head and pitch me over like a sack of potatoes! Come on, I tell you!" roared the captain of the Remove.

He jerked his arm loose and ran on to Loder's door.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

He ran after his comrade. Tackling a prefect of the Sixth Form was a serious matter—an awfully serious matter! But if Wharton was risking it, Bob was not the fellow to hold back. He was at Wharton's heels as the captain of the Remove turned Loder's door-handle and hurled the study door wide open.

Loder of the Sixth, in his study, was sorting out a cigarette, to comfort himself with a smoke. He supposed that he had done with the two Removites.

That was a mistake on Loder's part. He had not finished with them—he had only started!

He glared round as his door was hurled open with a terrific crash. The cigarette dropped from his fingers, and he made a grab at the ashplant lying on the table, knocking over the box of cigarettes.

"Wharton—" he began.

"You rotten bully!" roared Wharton.

Then he charged across the study, straight at the bully of the Sixth.

Loder's hand was on the ashplant when Wharton reached him, and his clenched fist struck, catching Loder on the side of the jaw.

The senior staggered away, collided with his armchair, and sat in it quite suddenly.

Never had Loder of the Sixth been so astonished.

"Take that, you bully!" yelled Wharton.

"Oh crumbs! He's taken it!" gasped Bob.

"By gad!" Loder leaped out of the chair like a jack-in-the-box. "Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—" He grabbed the ashplant with his right and the captain of the Remove with his left. "I'll skin you! I'll—I'll—"

The cane came down with a terrific swipe. Wharton yelled and struggled fiercely. But, sturdy as he was, he had no chance in the hands of a burly senior, and it would have fared badly with him

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had not Bob Cherry rushed to the rescue. But Bob rushed in promptly.

He grasped Loder round the neck and dragged him over.

The big Sixth Former went down on his study carpet with a crash, Wharton sprawling over him, in a sea of spilt cigarettes.

The ashplant dropped from his hand.

"Pile in!" gasped Bob.

"Give him socks!" panted Wharton.

Loder, amazed and enraged, struggled furiously. The bully of the Sixth was accustomed to carrying matters with a high hand, and the penalty at Greyfriars for "punching a prefect" was the sack!

Both Wharton and Bob had rather forgotten that. They were punching Loder, and punching him hard!

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

Loder struggled and roared. He strove madly to tear himself loose and get on his feet. But though he was a good deal more than a match for one Remove junior, the two of them were able to handle him—and they did! They thumped him right and left, heedless of his struggles and yells and howls, and of the important fact that he was a Sixth Form prefect who, in theory at least, could not possibly be punched by juniors!

The uproar in the study rang along the Sixth Form passage—a very unaccustomed uproar in those lofty precincts.

Other Sixth Form men came out of their rooms to stare in on the scene. Gwynne and North and Sykes stood staring in at the doorway. Carne and Walker followed them.

"Great pip!" gasped Gwynne, and he rushed in and dragged the juniors away from Loder by main force. "Faith, and are ye mad intirely?"

"Let go!" shouted Wharton.

"You young ass!" gasped Gwynne.

"Oh crikey!" Billy Bunter blinked in at the door. "I say, you fellows, here comes Wingate!"

Wingate came striding down the passage. The other seniors made way for him, and he came into the study.

Loder, breathless, crimson, furious, was staggering to his feet, gurgling for breath. Gwynne was holding back the two Removites.

"What's this row?" snapped the Greyfriars captain. "What are you juniors doing in Loder's study?"

"Thrashing that rotten bully!" snapped Wharton.

"What!" roared Wingate.

Loder leaned on the table panting.

"I'll take them to the Head!" he gasped. "They shall be sacked for this—kicked out of the school, by gad!"

"Rats to you!" retorted Bob Cherry.

"Silence!" rapped Wingate. "You young rascals, do you mean to say that you've dared to enter a prefect's study and pitch into him?"

"Do you think we're going to let Loder bang our heads together and pitch us about the floor?" roared Wharton.

"Quiet, please! Did you do that, Loder?"

"Find out!" snarled Loder.

"I'm asking you, to find out," said Wingate quietly. "If you did, you've asked for what you got."

Loder glared at him.

"Are you going to back up juniors in attacking a Sixth Form prefect?" he bawled. "We'll see what the Head says about it."

"Certainly, let's see what Dr. Locke has to say about it!" agreed Wingate. "Wharton, Cherry, follow me to the Head's study; and you come, too, Loder."

"You can keep out of this, Wingate!"

snarled Loder. "It's no business of yours!"

"I think it is, as I happen to be head prefect as well as captain of the school! Follow me, the lot of you!" said Wingate.

He walked out of the study, and Wharton and Bob Cherry followed him at once. Loder followed more slowly. The rest of the seniors were left in a buzz.

Wingate strode on, heading direct for Dr. Locke's study. Bob Cherry made a rueful grimace at his chum as he followed on. That Loder had asked for what he had got was certain; but it was not so certain what view the headmaster would take of the matter. Still, Wingate was there to see fair play, and the juniors hoped for the best.

Loder came tramping after them with a scowling brow.

His first thought was to get the culprits before the Head, with a report that they had attacked a prefect, for which the sentence was, or ought to have been, the "sack."

But a little reflection showed Loder that the matter was not so entirely in his hands. Banging the heads of Lower School boys and flinging them along a passage, was not by any means within the privileges of a prefect. Indeed, any prefect who carried on in such a way was not likely to retain his position after it came to the knowledge of the headmaster.

Loder realised that, if Dr. Locke sat in judgment on this matter, the outcome might be worse for him than for the juniors.

The Head's door was in sight when Loder hurried on and tapped Wingate on the shoulder. The Greyfriars captain stared round at him.

"You can chuck it!" said the bully of the Sixth, savagely. "I don't want the matter to go before the Head!"

"And why not?" demanded Wingate contemptuously.

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Loder. And he swung round and stamped savagely away.

Bob Cherry winked at his comrade, and Wharton smiled.

Wingate stood staring after Loder for a moment or two. Then he turned to the two juniors.

"You can cut!" he said curtly.

And they promptly "cut."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Lucky for Loder!

"GAMMON!" said Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner——"

"Rot!" said Herbert

Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Tell us another one, do!" said Squiff.

"I say, you fellows, it's true!"

howled Billy Bunter.

"Bow-wow!" said Peter Todd.

"I tell you I saw it with my own eyes——"

"Not with anybody else's?" asked Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I saw them punching Loder!"

roared Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you they blacked his eyes, and——and broke his nose——"

"And cut his head off?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, you ass——" howled Bunter.

"They might as well, while they were about it!" yawned Frank Nugent.

"Did they leave him dead, or only dying?"

"He was fearfully injured——he couldn't stand when he got up——"

"Go it!" said Johnny Bull. "Pile it on."

"If you fellows don't believe me——"

"The believfulness is not terrific!"

chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was telling his exciting tale in the Rag. Most of the Remove fellows were there after tea.

Bunter had burst in full of exciting news! Punching a prefect was so unheard of at Greyfriars School, that this was really the news item of the term!

When Lower-School fellows punched a high-and-mighty prefect of the Sixth Form, in his own study, it was time for the skies to fall. It was an event—a sensation—a tremendous happening!

So the fat Owl of the Remove naturally expected an outburst of excited interest.

Instead of which the fellows all laughed. Bunter and his startling tales were too well known for easy belief.

The fat junior blinked round him, through his big spectacles, in great indignation. Really it was rather hard not to be believed when he was telling the truth! That was not a thing that often happened!

"I say, you fellows——"

"Keep it up!" said Peter Todd encouragingly. "Did they pick Loder up by his ears and chuck him across the study?"

"No, you fathead——"

"Why not?" asked Toddy. "Why not make it a good one, while you're about it?"

"Beast! I'm telling you exactly what happened!" roared the indignant Owl. "Loder was in a fearful temper because Wingate chucked him out of his study, and——"

"Oh, Wingate chucked him out of his study, did he?" chuckled the Bounder. "This is getting better and better!"

"He biffed into me and knocked me spinning!" said Bunter. "I shoved him off, and said, 'Don't barge into me, you brute!' Those very words."

"Yes—I can hear you saying that to Loder!" chuckled Smithy.

"Then he sprang at Wharton and Cherry like—a—a tiger! He left them lying in the passage——"

"And now you're lying here!" remarked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They rushed after him and mopped him up in his study, and blacked both his eyes——and——"

The door of the Rag opened, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry came in. All eyes were upon them at once.

"This way!" called out Peter Todd.

"Come and listen to Bunter's latest."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Nothing in it, I suppose?" asked Frank Nugent. He noticed that his chums were looking rather flushed and breathless. "Bunter's spinning us a yarn about you fellows handling a Sixth Form Prefect——"

"It's the truth!" roared Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast! I tell you——"

"Wonderful to relate, Bunter's telling the truth for once!" chuckled Bob.

"We've been handling Loder."

"You've blacked his eyes!" yelled Peter Todd.

"Oh! My hat! Not quite!" gasped Bob.

"We've jolly well punched him, though not so much as we wanted to."

"You've punched Loder?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Yes, hard!" answered Wharton.

"I say, you fellows, I told you so——"

"Bunter says Wingate chucked him out of his study——"

"He did!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"I say, you fellows, I told you——"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared a dozen voices.

Every fellow in the Rag gathered round Wharton and Bob Cherry, eager to hear what had happened. To Billy Bunter's deep and intense indignation he was disregarded. There was a buzz of excitement in the Rag, as the two juniors told their tale.

"By gad!" said Temple of the Fourth. "You fellows are for it now, and no giddy error."

"How's that, fathead?" demanded Bob. "Loder dared not take it before the Head. He climbed right down."

"I wouldn't like to be in your shoes, all the same!" grinned Cecil Reginald Temple. "Loder won't be long in finding out a way to make you sit up for it. Sixth Form prefects are rather dangerous animals to rag."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth.

"Oh, blow Loder!" said Bob carelessly. "Loder can go and eat coke! Who cares for a rotter like Loder?"

"Ware prefects!" whispered Hazel-dene.

The two juniors had left the door of the Rag open when they came in. A figure appeared in the open doorway.

It was that of Loder of the Sixth, with his official ashplant under his arm.

A sudden hush fell on the crowd of juniors in the Rag. It was evident that the bully of the Sixth had heard Bob's rather reckless words.

Temple winked at Fry and Dabney of the Fourth. He had prophesied that Loder would not be long in finding out a way to make the Removites 'sit up.' His prophetic words were soon verified!

Gerald Loder strode into the Rag. "What was that you were saying, Cherry?" he asked.

Bob looked at him. "Was I saying anything?" he asked. "I heard every word you said!"

"I didn't know you were listening behind the door, Loder!" said Bob.

Loder set his lips, and slipped the ashplant down into his hand. He pointed to a chair with it.

"Juniors in this school are not allowed to describe prefects as rotters," he remarked. "Bend over that chair, Cherry!"

Bob drew a deep breath. There was a pause! Loder's game, evidently, was to let the shindy in the study drop, and seek a new cause of offence. And he had found one! Now he was wielding his authority as a prefect, and certainly it was against all the rules of Greyfriars School for a Lower boy to speak of a prefect as Bob had done. Loder was, technically at least, in the right this time! He swished his ashplant.

"Bend over!" he rapped. Bob's eyes sparkled.

"You rotter!" he said. "You rotten bully—"

"Are you bending over, or shall I take you to your Form-master?" asked Loder with a savage grin.

The juniors were tensely silent. Loder was a bully and a "rotter," there was no doubt about that. Yet, on the present occasion, he had ample pretext for wielding the ashplant, and there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, would have upheld him.

Bob Cherry realised that, and realised that there was nothing doing! He drew a deep, deep breath, and bent over the chair.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The cane came down hard! Bob set his teeth, and bore it in silence.

(Continued on next page.)



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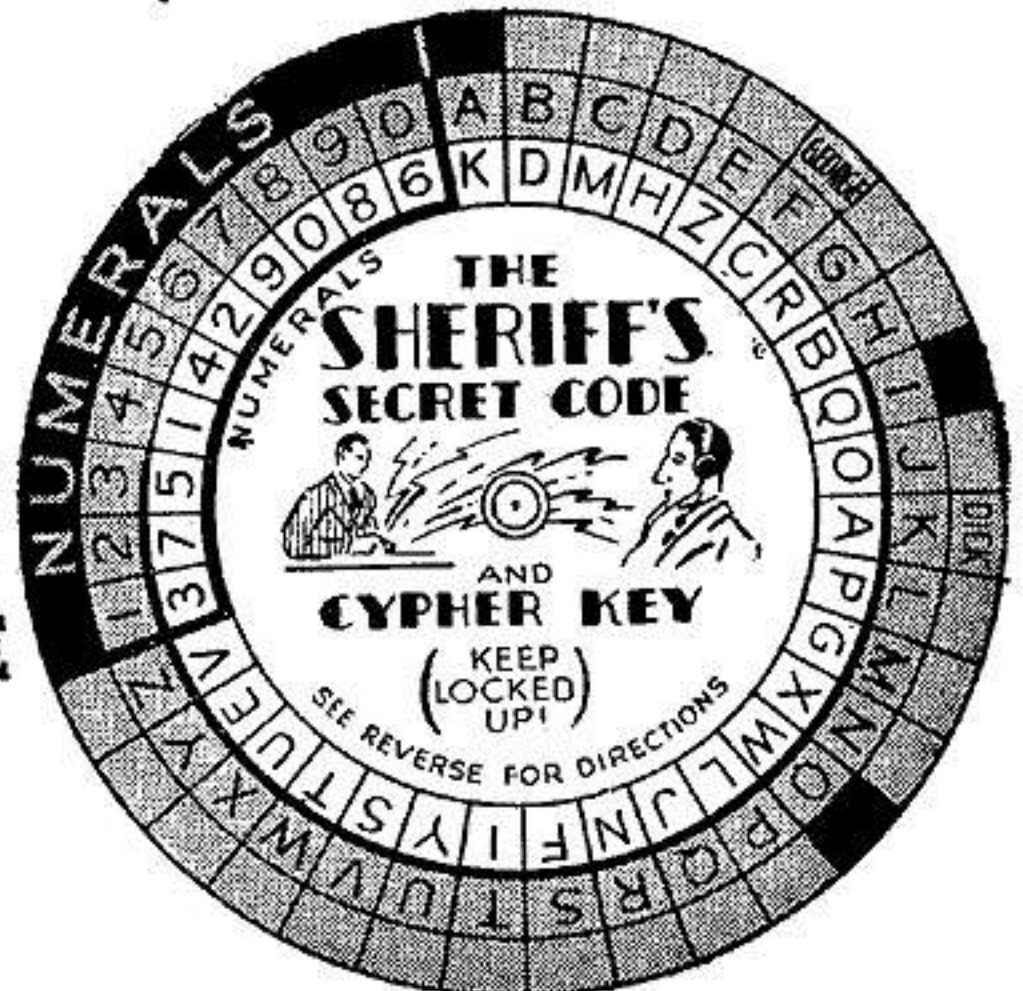
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Swish! Swish! Swish!
 "Six," at Greyfriars School, meant any number of "whops," from one to six. Loder made it a full "six."

And every one was a "swipe."
 Bob was fairly wriggling by the time that sixth stroke had fallen. Loder put all his beef into the last one in the hope of eliciting a yell from his victim. It was all that Bob could do to keep it back. But he did do it, and not a sound came from him.

Loder tucked the ashplant under his arm again. He seemed rather inclined to go on, but even Loder had "his limit." "That will be a lesson to you!" he remarked.

Bob rose to his feet, his face white and furious. He did not speak.

"You can take a tip from that, Wharton!" added Loder, with a glance at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton's eyes were gleaming, and he found it difficult to control his anger and resentment. But he did not answer. He was well aware that the bully of the Sixth was trying to "draw him." Even Loder had to have an excuse for administering a "whopping," and he was trying to make Wharton give him one. The captain of the Remove declined to fall into so palpable a trap.

"Do you hear me, Wharton?" rapped Loder, in his most bullying tone.

"I hear you," answered Wharton quietly.

Even Loder could not find fault with that reply. He gave a glare, rather like that of a wolf with the lamb out of his reach, and stalked out of the Rag.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

"Goal!"

"ACCIDENTS will happen!" said Bob Cherry.

"Um!" murmured Wharton doubtfully.

"And it's getting dusky—"

"Um!"

"Jolly risky, that sort of accident!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The riskfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"And Loder's rather dangerous, just at present," observed Frank Nugent.

"He's been like a bear with a sore head ever since Wingate posted the list for the Highcliffe match. He can't get over being left out and a Fifth Form man put in over his head."

Bob Cherry snorted.

The reasoning of his chums was good, but Bob was not in a mood for calm reasoning.

He was feeling deeply the effects of that savage "six" in the Rag.

The Famous Five were punting a footer about in the quad when Loder of the Sixth came out of the House.

The dusk was falling, and it was close on time for lock-up, but the bell had not yet rung.

Loder was now pacing on the path that ran under the windows of Masters' Studies, with his hands in his pockets and a deep frown on his face.

He did not seem to observe his old enemies of the Remove in the offing. He was thinking of other, and more important, foes—Wingate and his set in the Sixth Form.

All Greyfriars knew how bitterly Loder resented being left out of the team that was going over to play the Highcliffe first eleven on Wednesday. He hardly made a secret of his rage and chagrin. And they knew it still more indubitably since the story had gone round of his "row" with Wingate, and

of his forcible ejection from the captain's study. Billy Bunter had already told that startling tale far and wide.

Perhaps Loder was thinking—and wondering—how he could possibly "get his own back" on the captain of the school. At all events, he was so buried in deep and bitter reflection that he forgot his surroundings, and did not seem to realise that he was displaying a scowling and ill-tempered face to every eye that glanced in his direction.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, glancing from his window, spotted that scowling face, and frowned. That, in Quelch's opinion, was not the sort of expression that a Sixth Form prefect should wear in open quad. And Quelch sniffed as he went away from his window. Loder did not even see him.

Bob Cherry had the football at his feet and his eyes on Loder. That footer—an old one, used for punting at odd moments—was a little soggy, and very damp and muddy. It had collected juicy mud from several puddles in the quad. And Bob could not help thinking how ripping it would be if that footer—by sheer accident, of course!—happened to land in Loder's scowling face. Accidents, as he had said, will happen!

"Give it a miss, old man!" counselled Harry Wharton. "That sort of accident is a bit too palpable. Let Loder rip!"

"I could catch him right on the boko from here—"

"Bow-wow!" said Johnny Bull. "Give it a miss, you ass! You might miss Loder and land it in a master's window."

"Miss your grandmother!" grunted Bob.

The portly form of the Fifth Form-master could be discerned at his open study window.

He was not looking out, however. He was standing with his back to the open window, apparently addressing someone in his study.

Glancing at him, the juniors had a glimpse of Coker of the Fifth standing in the study with an unhappy expression on his rugged face. Coker, it seemed, was getting a lecture from his Form-master—not a new experience for Coker, and not an enjoyable one.

"The old ass isn't looking out," said Bob. "That's all right! Anyhow, old Prout hasn't anything to do with us."

"Old Prout has something to do with everybody and everything!" said Frank, laughing. "He never minds his own business."

"Oh, blow Prout! Look here, you silly ass!" added Bob, as Johnny Bull, to settle the argument, kicked the ball away.

"Come on, Bob!" called out Wharton. "Punt the ball, old man, and never mind Loder now."

"Oh, rats!" snapped Bob, who was not in his usual sunny temper.

However, he followed his comrades, and they punted the ball about. Three or four other fellows joined up—Smithy and Toddy, and Field and Hazeldene and Wibley. The ball ran from foot to foot, and Bob, for the moment, at least, forgot Loder of the Sixth.

But a kick from Vernon-Smith dropped the muddy footer again, ten or twelve feet from the prefect pacing on the path by the masters' windows, and Bob, chasing it, was the first to reach it.

He was tempted—and he fell!

It really was irresistible, and Bob did not stop to think. His foot seemed really to lift the footer of its own accord!

He shot for goal—goal being Loder's head.

But Loder's luck was in.

He was passing Prout's window when Bob kicked. In another second the footer would have crashed on the side of his head, knocking him over on Prout's window-sill.

But in that second, by sheer ill-luck—ill-luck from Bob's point of view, though not from Loder's—Walker of the Sixth called to him from the quad, and Loder stopped and turned his head.

That did it!

The whizzing footer missed Loder's head, so closely that a spattering of mud was left on his face, and shot on its appointed way, right in at the open window of Mr. Prout's study.

That would not have mattered very much if the study had been vacant. But it was not vacant. Prout was standing there, with his portly back to the window.

Bob Cherry stood transfixed.

It all happened in little more than a second, yet the hapless junior had time to realise the awfulness of it before the whizzing football crashed on the back of Prout's plump neck and hurled him over.

Never had a portly gentleman been so astonished as Mr. Prout was at that thrilling moment. Life is full of surprises, but this was the greatest surprise that had ever struck Mr. Prout.

Something—he did not know what—banged on the back of his neck and flung him forward at Horace Coker, who stood facing him.

Coker, in his turn, was astonished.

Coker had often stood facing his Form-master, receiving a lecture on the error of his ways. But never before had Prout suddenly hurtled at him like a cannon-ball and barged him over, as he did now.

Prout crashed on Coker, and Coker, taken quite by surprise, staggered back and sat down with a bump. Prout sprawled over him. The football rolled across Prout's carpet, leaving a trail of mud.

"Great pip!" spluttered Coker. "What the thump— Oh, crumbs! I say, gerroff! I say— Oh, my hat!"

"G-g-g-goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Prout. "What—what—what—"

"I say, you're squashing me!" gasped Coker. "What the dooce—"

Prout staggered up. He rested a knee on Coker to raise himself. There was a squeak from Coker, like the last note of an exhausted soda-siphon. Prout's weight on his waistcoat was no light matter.

"Ooooooogh!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Prout.

He resumed the perpendicular. He groped at the back of his neck, where the mysterious something had struck him. His plump fingers came away wet with mud. He stared dizzily at those muddy fingers, and then at the footer on his carpet, and slowly he understood. Olympian wrath flushed in the portly face of the Fifth Form-master. He barged to the window.

"A—a—a football!" he stuttered. "I—I have been struck—hurled headlong— by a—a—a—a football! I—I— Who—who—"

He glared out.

At a little distance half a dozen juniors were gazing on in horror. Closer at hand Loder of the Sixth, with a mud-spattered face, was grasping Bob Cherry by the collar. He had pounced on him without delay.

"Loder," gasped Mr. Prout, "did you see who—"

"It was Cherry, sir!" said Loder. "I caught him fairly in the act of kicking



In Wingate's stalwart grasp, Loder spun round, his feet torn from the floor. Next instant he went flying headlong through the doorway, to land with a crash on Billy Bunter, sending him flying backwards. "Ha, ha, ha!" came from Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton at the end of the passage.

the ball in at your window, sir! It nearly hit me as it passed."

"Cherry, you—" gasped Bob. "I—I never—" "I never meant—"

"That will do!" said Loder. "Do you deny that you kicked the ball?"

"No, but—"

"Take him into the House, Loder!" said Mr. Prout in a voice shaking with wrath. "Take him to Mr. Quelch's study! I will repair there immediately! Take the young ruffian to his Form-master at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Loder marched Bob into the House. Mr. Prout rolled past Coker and left the study with a purple face.

"Oh, my hat!" said Coker. "This is luck!"

It was luck for Coker, at least. Prout had quite forgotten his existence in the thrilling excitement of this unexpected happening. The lecture had been cut short; the lines that would probably have followed it had not been imposed. Prout was gone—and Coker went, too, with a cheery grin on his face. He strolled back to his study in the Fifth to tell Potter and Greene about that stroke of luck. Bob Cherry, in his Form-master's study, was not feeling so lucky.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Dark!

"**W**OW!" Bob Cherry made that remark at 11.15 p.m.

It was quite unusual for Remove fellows to be making any remarks at a quarter-past eleven at night.

Generally at that hour the Remove were fast asleep in their dormitory.

Bob, as a rule, was a sound sleeper. But circumstances alter cases. On this

particular night Bob found it difficult to woo slumber.

Lightning, it is said, never strikes twice in the same place. Unlike lightning, lickings do. Having had "six" from Loder, Bob had collected another six from Mr. Quelch—and two whoppings in one day, both of them severe, had a rather disturbing effect on Bob.

The result was that he slept ill, waking up several times to hear the deep snore of Billy Bunter and the chimes of the school clock.

"Wow! Ow! Wow!" remarked Bob, twisting uncomfortably in his bed. "That rotter Loder! That ass Quelch! Wow!"

He sat up.

Everybody else in the dormitory was fast asleep. All Greyfriars had gone to bed at that hour. Bob could not sleep.

"Anybody awake?" he yawned.

There was no answer.

He grunted and laid his head on his pillow again.

But it was useless, he could not sleep. Once more he sat up. Finally, he crawled out of bed.

Loder of the Sixth was the cause of that unusual sleeplessness on Bob's part. And Loder, doubtless, was fast asleep himself. Bob felt that to be rather unfair. It seemed to him only fair play that Loder's slumber also should be disturbed. And he was going to disturb it. A "rag" on the bully of the Sixth was rather more entertaining than dimly wooing the slumber that would not come.

Harry Wharton came out of the land of dreams with a jump as he was shaken by the shoulder. He opened his eyes and blinked in the dim starlight that came in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory.

"Oooooogh! Wharrer marrer?" he murmured.

"Wake up!" said Bob.

"I'm awake, you ass! What's the row? House on fire?"

"It's a lark—"

"You fathead! What's the time?"

"About half-past eleven."

"You howling duffer, is that a time for larks?"

"Well, I'm going down to see Loder! I thought you might like to come."

Harry Wharton sat up in bed. He stared at the dim figure by his bedside.

"You're going down to see Loder?" he ejaculated.

"Just that!"

"What on earth for?"

"To wake him up! I'm sure he'll wake up when I biff a pillow on his napper. Stands to reason he will!"

"Oh, my hat! Look here, give Loder a miss at this time of night and go to sleep!" advised the captain of the Remove.

"That's the trouble—can't sleep!" explained Bob. "Loder's not going to sleep, either! I shall feel better when I've biffed him."

"You won't feel better when you get flogged to-morrow for ragging a prefect in the middle of the night, you ass."

"That's all right. Loder's not a cat to see in the dark! Anyhow, I'm chancing it."

And Bob proceeded to get into his clothes.

"My esteemed Bob—" The whispering voices had awakened Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The ragfulness at the witching hour of midnight is not the proper caper."

"Bow-wow!"

"Well, you're an ass," said Harry. "But if you're going, I'm going!" And the captain of the Remove turned out.

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh followed his example.

"No need to call the other fellows," said Bob.

"The other fellows don't need calling, fathead!" It was Johnny Bull's voice this time. "I'm coming."

"Same here!" came Frank Nugent's voice.

"What's up?" It was Skinner who spoke. Several more of the Remove had awakened now. "I say, what's up?"

"We are!" answered Bob. "Feel like coming down and lending a hand at ragging Loder, Skinner?"

"I'll watch it!" chuckled Skinner.

"Silly asses!" said Snoop.

"Wash it out, you men," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "What's the good of askin' for trouble?"

"Loder's asked for it," answered Bob. "Why shouldn't he get what he's asked for? He's going to, anyhow!"

There was a sound of another fellow getting out of bed. It was Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"I'm on!" he said.

The Bouncer was not to be left out of a "rag"—especially such a reckless and risky one as this.

"Better keep clear, Smithy," advised Wharton. "We're going to play the giddy ox because Bob's got his back up, but you—"

"Rats! I'm comin'!"

And the Bouncer came. Six juniors, half-dressed, crept quietly out of the dormitory in their socks, leaving a good many other fellows awake. They took pillows under their arms.

Waking up a Sixth Form prefect with a "pillowing" was undoubtedly a reckless proceeding. No doubt Gerald Loder had asked for it, but it was a risky business to give him that for which he had asked.

But Bob was determined, and his comrades were going to back him up; it was a maxim of the Famous Five to sink or swim together. And the Bouncer joined in from sheer love of risk and excitement.

The House was silent and dark, buried in slumber, as the six Removites crept silently down the stairs.

They reached the Sixth Form passage.

The Sixth did not sleep in dormitories like the other Forms; they had beds in alcoves in their studies. Harry Wharton & Co. crept along the passage and stopped at Loder's door.

Softly and cautiously Bob Cherry turned the handle. The door opened. Inside was blackness.

The window was covered by a blind; not a gleam of the stars penetrated into Loder's room.

"Can't hear him snoring," whispered the Bouncer.

"Quiet!"

"Well, he must be asleep. He won't spot us, anyhow; it's as black as the inside of a hat!" Smithy chuckled softly. "Jerk the bedclothes off him, and when he jumps up all go for him together."

The juniors repressed a chuckle with difficulty. It was not safe to chuckle.

They crept into Loder's room.

Dark as it was, they picked their way easily enough. They had been in Loder's study often enough in the daytime to know their way about. The alcove where the bed was placed was across the room, and without a sound the Removites reached the bedside.

Bob grasped the bedclothes, gave a wrench, and brought them off the bed in a heap.

That was certain to wake Loder, if he was there, and cause him to jump up. The next item was the pillowing.

But to the surprise of the juniors there was no sound and no movement following the jerking off of the blankets and sheets.

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All was silent and still!

If that had not awakened Loder, it was evident that he must be in a very deep slumber! But the deepest slumber was not likely to resist a swipe from a pillow! Bob swept up his pillow and swept it down!

Swipe!

It was quite a crash as the pillow landed!

Still there was no sound from the bully of the Sixth! There was no movement in the bed!

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob involuntarily.

"What the thump!" gasped Nugent.

"He's not there!" gasped Bob.

"Not there!" repeated Wharton blankly.

There was a sudden gleam as the Bouncer turned on a tiny electric torch. The beam of light played over an empty bed!

Loder was not there! He was not in the room at all—at half-past eleven o'clock at night!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Johnny Bull.

Smithy shut off the light and chuckled.

"What a jolly old frost!" he murmured. "Loder's out of bounds, you bet—he's not been to bed at all—bet you he's at the Cross Keys, keeping it up with Banks and his gang."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hark!" breathed Wharton.

There was a faint sound in the passage outside. It came from the direction of the Sixth Form lobby, at the end of the passage.

The juniors' hearts beat as they heard it!

Loder was not there—but he was coming! The blackguard of the Sixth had been out of bounds at night; but even a black sheep like Loder did not "keep it up" after that hour! He was coming in—and six Remove fellows were in the study, to be revealed when he turned on the light! In that startling moment it was the Bouncer who acted with promptness.

He whipped across to the door, closed it without a sound, and turned the key in the lock!

"Quiet!" he whispered.

A few moments more and the door-handle was turned from without. But the door did not open.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Shut Up!

GERALD LODER caught his breath.

Quietly but savagely he twisted the handle of the door. Why it did not open he could not understand. It seemed impossible that it should not open! What on earth could be the matter with it? He twisted and turned it, and pushed on the door!

But it was all in vain! The door remained immovable. Loder ceased his efforts at last, and stood in the dark passage panting.

Breaking bounds at night was a dangerous proceeding at Greyfriars. For a fellow in Loder's position as a Sixth Form man and a prefect trusted by the Head, it meant immediate expulsion if he was discovered.

But Loder was careful and cautious; and as a rule he ran little risk. As a Sixth Form man he had a room to himself, and there was no eye to witness his goings and comings. The lobby at the end of the passage was an easy way of egress and ingress. The fact that his headmaster trusted him made his secret rascality easy.

Still, there was always some danger; and Loder, coming back from his nocturnal excursions, was always wary

and watchful. A master sitting up late might have heard something—a more dutiful prefect might have awakened and spotted him! Wingate, he knew, suspected his manners and customs—more than suspected them, and if there had been proof, the head prefect would undoubtedly have done his duty in reporting the matter to the Head! Loder had to be careful—and he was very careful indeed.

But a happening like this was one that no fellow could have foreseen. Once, on such an occasion, Loder had almost run into Mr. Prout taking a late walk in the quad. Another time, Gwynne had been up, putting in some late study and Loder had had to creep past his door on tiptoe. But such a thing as this—

What could be the matter with the door? It had never jammed before! How could it have jammed? Yet it would not open!

Loder felt the perspiration trickle down his brow.

He had to get into his room.

He could not remain in the Sixth Form passage all night—to be found there in the morning.

Even if a master did not discover him, the captain of Greyfriars certainly would, and that was just as bad.

In sheer terror, Loder envisaged discovery; the revelation of his secret rascality; and the sack to follow.

He gritted his teeth and tried the door-handle again! But it was futile; and it dawned upon his mind that the door was locked—that it must be locked. Obviously, if it was locked it must be locked on the inside; and that could only mean that someone was in the study. Was this some idiotic joke on the part of his pals, Walker and Carne? They were the only fellows in the Sixth who knew that he was going out of bounds that night.

He stooped and whispered through the keyhole.

"Who's there?"

Six juniors inside the study were still as mice.

How this strange adventure was going to end, Harry Wharton & Co. did not know. But they knew that they were not going to let Loder discover them in his study! That meant a Head's flogging for breaking dormitory bounds after lights out.

"Are you there, Walker?" came the whisper through the keyhole. "Is that you in there, Jimmy?"

There was no answer to Loder's anxious whisper.

"Is it you, Carne?"

Silence.

"Open the door, you fool!" hissed Loder through the keyhole. "What are you larking for, you blockhead? Let me in, you blithering idiot!"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Quiet!"

"I can hear you!" Loder had not heard the words, but he had caught a faint sound of a whisper. "You dummies, are you both there? Let me into my study, confound you! Suppose Wingate should spot me out here at this time of night!"

The juniors grinned in the darkness.

They were not deeply concerned about Loder's danger of being spotted by the captain of the school. Their own danger was enough for them to think about.

"Will you let me in?" breathed Loder.

But answer came there none!

Loder stood breathing rage and fury. He began to realise that it could not be Walker and Carne playing a trick on him. But he was sure that someone was in the study; he could have sworn

that he had heard a sound of whispering.

Who could it be? Who could have known that he was absent from his room that night? Only Walker and Carne knew. Yet someone had got into the study—and locked him out! Somebody, it was clear, was playing a trick on him! Loder had plenty of enemies—the Lower School were against him almost to a man! A too liberal use of his official ashplant did not make him popular among the juniors. And as Loder thought of the juniors, he remembered the two Removites who had "punched" him in that very study the previous afternoon.

"Cherry! Wharton!" he breathed.

He stooped to the keyhole again.

"You young scoundrels! I know you're there! Let me in and I'll say nothing about it!"

The Bouncer chuckled silently.

"Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly!" he whispered.

"We can trust Loder—I don't think!"

"No fear!" murmured Bob.

"Do you hear me?" hissed Loder. "I'll let you off, if you open this door immediately, whoever you are! Let me in."

No answer.

There was a long pause. The juniors wondered whether Loder would get out of the House again and go round to the window and try his luck there. If he did, their way of escape was open, and they would not be long in escaping from the study once they heard him at the window.

But Loder was not thinking of the window. He was aware that he had left it fastened on the inside so it was useless to think of it.

He stood in a state of mingled rage and terror not knowing what to do. But he had to do something. Even that whispering at the keyhole might have been heard, in some study along the passage. He had to get in, and he had to get in at once.

He pressed close to the door at last, bracing his shoulder against it and exerting all his strength. He had a faint hope of forcing it open in spite of the lock. The lock was not a particularly strong one; and Loder was a fairly powerful fellow; and in his present state of desperation he seemed to have the strength of two fellows.

The door groaned under the strain. The wood gave a cracking sound. That cracking sound from the straining panels seemed, to Loder's startled ears, as loud as a pistol shot in the silence.

He desisted from the attempt, panting and gasping from his exertions. For a full minute, he stood listening anxiously, with bent ear, in terror of hearing Wingate's door open. But there was no alarm, and he panted with relief.

He bent to the keyhole again.

"Will you open this door? I know you're there, I tell you?" he whispered. "I can guess who you are! I'll let you off—word of honour!"

Unfortunately for Gerald Loder his word of honour was not regarded by the juniors as an article of any great value. In fact, they were perfectly well aware that Loder, once on the safe side of the door, would immediately forget all about words of honour and such trifles, and think only of vengeance.

"Open the door!" breathed Loder through the keyhole, almost in an agony. "Turn back the key! Do you hear me?"

Vernon-Smith silently groped on the study table and picked up the inkpot that stood there. He stepped to the door, and pitched the contents of the inkpot at the keyhole!

Loder's mouth, outside, was open for another appeal! But he did not utter it! Most of the ink was splashed over the lock, but quite a stream went through the keyhole, and it landed fairly in Loder's open mouth!

"Gurrrrghh!"

There was a wild, spluttering gasp from Loder of the Sixth! He staggered back across the passage, stumbled, and sat down with a heavy bump, choking and gurgling and spluttering.

"Urrrgh! Oooooogh! Oooo-er! Wurrrrghh! Groooooogh!"

"Oh, you ass, Smithy!" gasped Bob.

"Gruuuuuggghh!"

A door opened down the passage. There was the flash of a light, which penetrated under the door of Loder's study. Then a sharp voice called out:

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By Harold Skinner.

No. 17. WILLIAM GOSLING

(The Greyfriars School Porter.)



When old Gossy's not on duty
He takes little drops of ale,
Also port, deep red and fruity,
(So, at least, I've heard the tale.)

He will think that I need muzzling
After this, but all the same
I believe that WILLIAM GUZZLING
Is old Gossy's proper name.

Gosling recently reported Skinner to Mr. Quelch for smoking in the woodshed. Hence this unkindly cartoon.

"What's that? Who's up? What's that row? What——"

"Wingate!" breathed Wharton.

"Oh, crumbs!"

A footstep sounded in the passage. Then Wingate's voice came again sharply.

"Loder! What are you doing here?"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

WINGATE, with a coat thrown over his pyjamas, stood staring down at Loder. He had switched on the light in the passage when he came out of his room. Gerald Loder, sitting on the floor, gobbling ink, was clearly revealed.

For the moment Loder was so busy with the ink that he forgot other and more important things, even the serious

consequences of discovery. He gurgled and gobbled.

Wingate's brows knitted, as he stared at him. Loder was fully dressed, even to his hat and boots, and the latter had traces on them of the mud of Friardale Lane. Obviously Loder had been out and had just come in. And it was getting on for midnight!

"What's this game, Loder?" asked the captain of Greyfriars very quietly.

"Gurrrghh!" Harry Wharton & Co. in the locked study waited breathlessly. It did not seem likely that they would escape undetected now!

Still, they hoped for the best! Hope springs eternal in the human breast! They were not going to give themselves away at all events! They remained as quiet as mice in the study.

"You've been out of bounds, Loder!" Those words recalled Loder to himself. He staggered to his feet and dabbed at his inky mouth with his handkerchief, blinking in the light.

"Will you tell me what's happened?" Loder gritted his teeth.

"You've no right to question me, Wingate!" he muttered. "I'm a prefect, and——"

"And I am head-prefect, and responsible to the headmaster!" said Wingate icily. "Will you answer me?"

"No!" said Loder between his teeth.

"Very well, you will see Dr. Locke in the morning, and I've no doubt you'll answer him!" said Wingate dryly. And he turned away to go back to his room.

"Hold on!" gasped Loder.

"Well?" Wingate spoke over his shoulder.

"You're going to report this to the Head?"

"I've got to."

"You could mind your own business!" said Loder bitterly.

"If I did not make this my business, Loder, I should resign my prefectship. Is that all you have to say?"

"No!" breathed Loder. "I—I've not been out, if you want to know."

"You picked up that wet mud on your boots indoors?" asked Wingate with cool contempt.

Loder glanced down at his boots.

"I—I mean——"

"For goodness' sake don't stand there lying, Loder!" Wingate's voice was cutting in its scorn. "You should be ashamed of it! Haven't you any sense of decency? And you're the fellow who kicked up a shindy about being left out of the football match to-morrow—and this is how you spend the night before the match—breaking out of bounds, getting in at midnight——"

"Prove that I've been out of bounds!" snarled Loder. "I—I was unable to sleep, and—and I've had a walk in the quadrangle—for a few minutes——"

He broke off, under Wingate's contemptuous eyes.

"You don't believe that?" he hissed.

"No!"

Loder clenched his hands.

"Believe it or not, as you like! You can't prove otherwise!"

"I shall not try to prove anything! I shall place the matter before Dr. Locke, because that's my duty! It is for him to decide."

"You'd like to get me sacked, you rotter! You'd like to get the Head down on me! You——"

"That's enough! You'd better go to bed!" said Wingate. "Where did you pick up that ink on your face? Walking in the quad?"

Loder did not answer that. Wingate's glance turned to the study door, where a streak of light was flowing down from

the keyhole. That, and the pool outside the door, told where Loder had picked up the ink. It was puzzling enough to Wingate, who had no suspicion, so far, that there were juniors in the study. But it was clear that someone was there and that ink had been squirted through the keyhole.

"What the thump does all this mean?" demanded Wingate gruffly. "I heard you fall over, and came out! Is there somebody in your study?"

Loder did not speak. He knew that somebody was in the study, but he did not know how long that "somebody" had been there! If that "somebody" had been there a long time, he knew that Loder had been absent for an equally long time, and was a witness to the fact that he had not simply gone out to walk in the quad because he could not sleep!

Loder was yearning to get his own hands on the unknown occupant of his study, but he did not want Wingate to question him.

The Greyfriars captain looked at him, puzzled and perplexed. Then he stepped to the door and turned the handle.

"The door's locked!" he said.

"Go hon!" murmured Bob Cherry inaudibly within. And there was the faintest of chuckles.

"You've got your key, Loder?"

"It's inside."

"Then someone is there?"

"I suppose so!" grunted Loder sullenly.

"Oh!" A light broke on Wingate. "You've been locked out of your study, and that's how you came to give yourself away."

He rapped on the door.

"Who's in here?" he called out.

Loder, still dabbing ink, breathed hard with rage. There was no answer from the locked study.

Wingate rapped again, more loudly and sharply than before.

"Open this door at once, whoever you are!" he snapped.

Two doors along the passage opened, and Gwynne and Sykes looked out. They blinked in the light, and stared at Loder and Wingate.

"What's up?" asked Sykes.

"What's the game?" inquired Gwynne.

"Can't make it out," answered the Greyfriars captain. "Loder has been out, and somebody's locked himself in the study while he was out. Goodness knows who it is, unless it's some junior larking. By gum, if it is, I'll give him six, well laid on!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Nugent.

The juniors had been wondering whether to give themselves up, now that the captain of the school was on the scene. But those words from Wingate decided them in the negative. Nobody in the party wanted "six"—least of all Bob Cherry, who had not yet recovered from a couple of "sixes."

"This way!" whispered the Bounder.

He tiptoed to the window.

Quietly, he drew the blind aside and pushed back the catch. Harry Wharton touched his arm.

"What's the good?" he whispered.

"There's no way into the House once we're outside."

"There's a chance! Leave that to me! There's no chance here. We can't stay in Loder's study all night, can we?"

"Nunno! But—"

"Oh, come on!"

Vernon-Smith silently pushed up the sash and dropped out of the window. He landed in the dark quad.

The Famous Five hesitated a moment or two. Still, it was useless to remain

where they were. Harry Wharton dropped after the Bounder, and his comrades followed. Bob, the last, closing down the sash. The juniors stood in a group under the window in the glimmer of the stars.

"Look here, Smithy, what—" began Harry.

"This way!" said the Bounder.

And the Famous Five followed Herbert Vernon-Smith, scuttling round the House in the deep shadows.

Meanwhile, Wingate of the Sixth was rapping angrily on Loder's study door. Five or six of the Sixth Form had come out now, hearing the din. Walker and Carne were among them; and they gave Loder startled looks. He gave them a black scowl in response. Loder, it was clear, was caught; and his pals were deeply thankful that they had not been caught along with him.

Rap, rap, rap, rap!

"Will you open this door?" shouted Wingate angrily.

"There can't be anybody in the study!" said Walker.

"The door's locked inside."

"Then who the dooce—" said Sykes.

"I don't know—but I'm going to know!" Wingate rapped again. "You young rascals open this door, or I'll force it!"

There was no answer from the study—vacant now. Wingate breathed hard and deep.

"We can't leave it at this!" he said.

"The lock will have to go!"

He drew back and drove his shoulder against the door. Under that tremendous shove the lock gave, and the door flew open with a crash.

Wingate switched on the light within and strode into the study. He stared round him blankly.

"Nobody here!" he ejaculated.

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Loder.

"There's nobody here, but—" Wingate strode across to the window. "The window's unfastened. Did you leave it unfastened, Loder?"

"No!" snarled Loder.

"He—or they—went out by the window!" said the Greyfriars captain. "It must have been some juniors larking—it can't have been anything else. I suppose they knew that Loder was out, and came down to rag his study—his bedclothes are all over the shop! Well, it won't take long to see who's out of his dormitory? Gwynne, North, Sykes, come with me!"

Wingate strode away, followed by the three prefects. Loder was left to go to bed, if he liked. The other Sixth Formers went to their rooms—only Walker and Carne lingering at Loder's door.

"I say, did Wingate catch you out?" whispered Carne.

Loder scowled and nodded.

"That means trouble with the Head to-morrow?" muttered Walker.

Another nod and another scowl!

"Look here, don't let anything out about your pals when you come up before the beak, Gerald!" muttered Carne.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Loder, and he shut his door on the noses of his anxious friends—whose anxiety was all on their own account.

Loder had a bed to make before he could turn in. When he did turn in, sleep was long in coming. He was thinking of the morrow—not of the football match at Highcliffe booked for that day, but of a much less agreeable function—his interview with the Head when Wingate made his report. With that prospect before him, the black sheep of Greyfriars was not likely to sleep soundly that night.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

CLINK!

"What the dickens—"

Clink, clink!

"That's a stone—"

"At the window—"

"What the thump—"

Clink, clink, clink!

A dozen fellows were awake in the Remove dormitory, waiting for Harry Wharton & Co. to return, and wondering how they had fared. If the "pillowing" of Gerald Loder had taken place according to programme, they expected the half-dozen raiders to come bolting breathlessly back. But they did not come, and the dormitory was too far from the Sixth Form passage for the juniors to hear anything of what was happening there. Some of the Removites dropped off to sleep again; but there were a good many still awake when the clinking of pebbles was heard at the window.

Tom Redwing jumped out of bed and ran across to the window. He clambered up, pushed up the sash, and peered out into the dimness of the stars. He was the first to guess what that clinking at the window meant.

Far below, shadows in the gloom, six figures could be dimly discerned, staring upward. The Bounder was in the act of tossing up another pebble when he caught sight of Redwing's face looking out.

He waved his hand.

Tom Redwing waved back, and jumped down from the window. He cut across to Vernon-Smith's box, opened it, and hurriedly groped inside. He knew what he would find there. Although he never shared in the escapades of his wayward chum, he was well aware of Smithy's manners and customs.

"By gum, are they out of the House?" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Chuckling stones up to the window—"

"Silly asses!" commented Skinner.

"That means that they've been spotted at Loder's study. Floggings in the morning, my beloved 'earers!"

"What are you up to, Redwing?" asked Squiff.

Skinner chuckled.

"Smithy keeps a rope in that box! He parks it inside a pullover, to delude his kind teachers if they should happen to squint into the box."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redwing dragged out the rope. He uncoiled it as he ran back to the window. It was knotted at intervals through its length. This was not the first time that the Bounder had used it from the dormitory window. Such a climb needed nerve; but the Bounder had never lacked nerve.

Leaning out of the window, Redwing let the rope slither down. He fastened one end to the leg of the nearest bed.

Barely had the rope slipped down the ivy when the Bounder had grasped it and started to climb.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood and watched him.

They had never thought of that way of escape from the scrape they were landed in; and they were not wholly pleased by it.

Certainly there was no harm in the use to which Smithy was now putting the rope; but they hardly needed telling why he had it in the dormitory. However, there was nothing else to be done in the circumstances, and, little as they liked the ways of the scapegrace of the Remove, they were glad enough that there was a way back to the Remove dormitory.

Smithy negotiated the climb swiftly enough, and disappeared into the high window above. Bob Cherry was the



The muddy football, kicked through the window with all Bob Cherry's force behind it smote the back of Mr. Prout's neck with a mighty thump, sending him crashing into Horace Coker. "Great pip!" spluttered Coker. "What the thump! Gerroff!"

next, and he was equally swift. Johnny Bull followed; then Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and then Frank Nugent. Harry Wharton came last; and before he climbed, he tied the six pillows in a bundle at the end of the rope, to be pulled up.

Then he clambered rapidly up the knotted rope, and slid in at the window, joining his waiting chums in the dormitory.

"Buck up with that rope!" breathed the Bounder. "Some nosey ass may be barging in any minute!"

"They don't know we got out of the House!" said Nugent.

"Fathead, they'll jolly soon find out! I'll bet that Wingate has shoved into Loder's study already!"

"Oh, my hat! Buck up!"

The rope whisked in at the window, which was promptly closed. The pillows were untied, and thrown back to the beds where they belonged. The Famous Five turned in, and Vernon-Smith rapidly coiled the rope, and stacked it away at the bottom of his box.

"Good man, Reddy!" he chuckled. "You've saved our bacon, old bean!"

"Buck up and turn in, Smithy," said Redwing anxiously. "I can hear something!"

The Bounder plunged into bed.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen, remember that we're all fast asleep!" he whispered.

There was a subdued chuckle. Footsteps were audible now, coming up the passage.

Every head was laid on a pillow; every eye was closed. Billy Bunter's snore had not ceased; the fat Owl had not awakened at all. Steady breathing of thirty fellows was added to Bunter's snore.

The door opened.

The light was switched on. Wingate of the Sixth looked in. Gwynne, North,

and Sykes had gone to the other junior dormitories. That the raiders in Loder's study belonged to the Lower School, the Greyfriars captain had no doubt; but whether to the Shell, the Fourth, the Remove, or the Third, he had yet to discover. Probably his suspicions were strongest of the Remove, for it was to the Remove dormitory that he directed his personal attention.

Three minutes earlier, two minutes earlier, he would have found plenty of confirmation of his suspicions. Now, however, all he saw when he turned on the light was a row of beds, containing a row of innocent sleepers!

Not an eye was open, not a head was raised, nothing was out of its place, and nothing unusual was to be seen. Wingate cast a sharp, searching glance up and down the dormitory.

"All you fellows asleep?" he called out.

There was no answer.

Gwynne joined him at the doorway. "Nobody out of the Fourth," he said.

"It seems all right here," said Wingate. "Nobody's missing."

Gwynne glanced in and nodded.

The Greyfriars captain shut off the light and closed the door. The footsteps of the two prefects were heard retreating. When they compared notes with Sykes and North and found that nobody was missing in the Shell or the Third, all four of them went along to the Second. But nobody was missing from the Second Form dormitory.

"Can't have been a Fifth Form man, surely!" said Gwynne.

"Hardly! But it was somebody," said Wingate. "Let's give the Fifth a look in, anyhow."

They gave the Fifth a look in, but nobody was missing in that Form. Then they went back to their rooms. Whoever had been in Loder's study and escaped by the window had evidently

got back into the House somehow. But who it was had to remain a mystery.

Which was not satisfactory to the dutiful prefects, but very satisfactory indeed to six members of the Remove. They had had a narrow escape, but a miss was as good as a mile!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Asking For More!

"L ODER looks happy!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Co. grinned.

Loder of the Sixth, walking in the quad in break the following morning, looked anything but happy.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows were thinking of the first eleven fixture that was to take place that afternoon. Many, observing Loder's gloomy looks, supposed that he was still sulking over his exclusion from the first eleven.

But the Famous Five were aware that Loder had deeper reasons for disquiet than that.

Loder, in fact, was giving the Highcliffe match very little thought now. He had much more serious matters to think of.

Wingate had not yet made his report to the Head. Dr. Locke was away in London that morning, which was a great relief to Loder.

The Head's absence unavoidably postponed the blow. He had left early, and was not expected back till the afternoon.

In the afternoon Wingate would be at Highcliffe with the footballers, so his report could not be laid before the Head till later.

It was a respite—but it was only a respite! Wingate had to make his report. Loder knew that he had to—

and that was that! It was for him to wriggle out of the scrape, if he could.

By dint of hard lying he hoped to be able to pull the wool over the Head's eyes. But it was a doubtful prospect.

That day was likely to be a dismal one for Loder of the Sixth! He was glad of the respite, but he almost wished that the Head had been at home, to get it over. Still, he hoped that there was a chance—a faint chance—of inducing Wingate to hold his tongue. Loder was willing to eat dirt to any extent, to a fellow he bitterly disliked, if it would save his skin. But he realised only too clearly that there was little hope.

As his eyes fell on the Famous Five and he caught the grin on the five faces, he scowled blackly.

His suspicion was strong that they were the very fellows who had been in his study the previous night and caused the disaster.

As a matter of fact, though they had been there, it was to the Bounder that he owed his disaster. But he did not even think of Smithy.

He stopped in his walk and fixed his eyes on the five smiling faces. Never had they seen his face so savage and bitter.

"Which of you young scoundrels buzzed that ink at me last night?" he asked, in low, bitter tones.

"Did anybody buzz ink at you, Loder?" asked Wharton, blandly.

"You know it well enough, you young rascal! Was it you?"

"Not guilty, my lord!"

"The not-guiltiness is terrific, my esteemed and absurd Loder!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur, shaking his dusky head.

"It was one of you!" hissed Loder.

"Off-side, Loder!" said Bob Cherry.

"It wasn't!"

"I don't believe you!"

"You can believe any old thing you like," answered Bob disdainfully. "Let I care what you believe!"

"That's not the way to speak to a prefect, you young liar!" said Loder.

"That's not the way to speak to a Remove man, you old liar!" retorted Bob.

Loder had an ashplant under his arm. In his present mood he was simply yearning to exercise it on somebody. He slipped it down into his hand.

"Bend over, Cherry!" he snarled.

"What for?" asked Bob coolly.

"Because I tell you, you young scoundrel! Sharp's the word!"

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Bob.

"You're not going to whop me, Loder, prefect or no prefect! Rats!"

Loder, with gleaming eyes, made a stride at him. The Famous Five closed up, shoulder to shoulder.

They faced the bully of the Sixth in a determined row. It was then that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, taking a walk in the quad in break, spotted the scene, and came up, with a frowning brow.

"What is this, Loder?" he asked quietly.

"I have told Cherry to bend over, sir, and he refuses to obey," said the prefect. "Perhaps you would prefer to deal with him."

Mr. Quelch gave him a very sharp look. Like nearly everybody else at Greyfriars, he had noted that Loder's temper had been rather like that of a bear with a sore head, for the last day or two.

"Certainly, I will deal with him, Loder," he said. "Kindly inform me of his offence."

Loder paused a moment. He had rather overlooked the fact that even a prefect had to have a pretext for

"whopping" a junior. Generally, Loder had his pretext all ready when he indulged his bullying propensities. This time his temper had led him into carelessness.

"Cherry threw ink over me yesterday, sir!" he said at last.

"I did not, sir!" said Bob, at once.

"You deny it, Cherry?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, I do, sir! I never did anything of the kind!" answered Bob.

"And Loder won't tell you that he saw me do it, either, for he knows he didn't."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Did you see Cherry do as you state, Loder?" he asked.

"It was after dark——"

"Did you see him?"

"No," muttered Loder sullenly.

"Then on what grounds are you so positive that it was Cherry?"

"I know it was—one of the young rascals, at least!"

Mr. Quelch's expression grew quite formidable.

"Loder, you were about to punish Cherry, and, on your own statement, you do not even know that he committed the act for which you were about to cane him. Is this how you perform your duties as a prefect?"

Loder began to wish that he had left the Removites alone. Quelch was a tart gentleman, and in the Remove Form-room the juniors did not love his society. But he was a whale on justice!

"It was one of them!" almost snarled Loder.

"You were going to cane Cherry because he is one of five boys, any one of whom may have done the action you mention? Without proof—without any kind of evidence! Loder!"

"I jolly well know——"

"You have already admitted that you know nothing!" barked the Remove master. "Loder, you shall most certainly not cane Cherry. On the other hand, I shall report this incident to Dr. Locke on his return, and acquaint him with my opinion—my very strong opinion—that you are not suitable to carry out the duties of a prefect!"

"Mr. Quelch——"

"That will do, Loder! I am surprised—shocked—disgusted! Your conduct, Loder, is that of a bully, not of a prefect with a sense of duty! I shall most certainly place the matter before the Head! Boys, you may go!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went.

Mr. Quelch, with a glare at Loder of the Sixth, stalked away to the House.

Loder tramped on, with feelings too deep for words.

There were two reports waiting for Dr. Locke now, when he returned—Wingate's report that he had been out of bounds overnight, Quelch's report that he was a bullying and unjust prefect. The two, added together, were likely to have a cumulative effect. He might possibly have wriggled out of one or the other, but he could hardly wriggle out of both!

"He, he, he!"

Loder fairly glared round, as he heard that fat cachinnation.

Billy Bunter seemed amused. He blinked at the bully of the Sixth through his big spectacles, grinning. Evidently the Owl of the Remove was entertained by the way Quelch had taken down the Sixth Form man.

Loder was at boiling point now! He gave a swift glance over his shoulder and saw that Mr. Quelch's back was turned. Then he grasped Billy Bunter by the collar, spun him round, and planted a heavy boot on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter's bellow rang from one end of Greyfriars to the other. He sprawled on his fat hands and knees, out-doing the best efforts of the Bull of Bashan of ancient times. Loder walked quickly on.

"Loder!" It was Mr. Quelch's voice. "How dare you! I repeat, how dare you treat a junior boy—a boy of my Form—in that brutal manner?"

Loder turned and stared at Quelch! He wondered dizzily whether the Remove master had eyes in the back of his head.

"I—I——" he gasped.

Quelch's gimlet eyes gleamed at him.

"I shall report your brutality to Dr. Locke, Loder, immediately he arrives. You may rely upon it that you will not remain a prefect in this school after to-day! Not a word! Silence! Go!"

And Loder went.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Borrows a Bike!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Say on!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Which of you is going to lend me a bike?"

"The whichfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

It was after dinner, and the first eleven were getting ready for the drive across to Highcliffe School.

Plenty of other fellows were getting ready to follow the motor charabanc which was to convey the footballers and all their friends for whom room could be found in the big vehicle.

The Famous Five were going over on their bicycles to watch the first eleven match and to stop for tea afterwards with their old friends at Highcliffe, Courtenay and the Caterpillar.

The same idea, apparently, had occurred to Billy Bunter.

But the fat junior was not going on his own bike! His own bike was in its usual state of disrepair. Bunter wanted to borrow a machine. The fact that the Famous Five were all using their jiggers that afternoon did not matter to Bunter. That was a trifle light as air in the estimation of the fat Owl.

"Well, which?" asked Bunter. "I've asked Smithy and he's refused! Selfish beast, you know—he says he wants his jigger himself!"

"I'm afraid we're all as selfish as Smithy!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "We happen to want our jiggers ourselves, old fat bean."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"What the thump do you want to go to Highcliffe for?" asked Johnny Bull. "You don't care twopence about a football match."

"Well, I've got friends there," said Bunter. "Courtenay will be glad to see me, and the old Caterpillar, you know."

"What on earth's put that idea into your head?"

"Beast! Look here, one of you fellows can stand out and lend me his jigger," said Bunter. "Don't be selfish! If there's one thing I never could stand, it's selfishness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Look here, I can't go over on my own machine," said Bunter warmly. "Both the tyres are punctured—you jolly well know I've asked you to mend those punctures a dozen times at least, Bob Cherry. You needn't deny it."

"Fathead!"



With a desperate bound, Bunter landed on the saddle, drove at the pedals, and shot away. "Bring my bike back, you fat brigand!" roared Lord Mauleverer, rushing after him. Bunter's little fat legs fairly whizzed on the pedals as he put on speed!

"And the chain's loose, and one of the pedals twisted, and a mudguard broken," said Bunter. "You can see that I can't go over on that."

"Jolly likely to go over, I think, if you try to ride a jigger in that state!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass, I mean——"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, don't walk away while I'm talking to you!" roared Bunter. But the Famous Five did walk away, and the Owl of the Remove was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

Bunter snorted angrily. He knew that there would be tea in Courtenay's study in the Fourth at Highcliffe when the chums of the Remove went over. He knew that it would be a ripping tea; the Caterpillar, especially, always did that kind of thing well. Bunter was naturally not going to be left out if he could help it. He was determined to go over when the Greyfriars fellows went. He did not want to "go over" in the sense alluded to by Bob, for which his own dilapidated jigger would certainly have served him well. There was only one thing to be done, and that was to start before the other fellows—on a borrowed bike! If Bunter borrowed a machine before the other fellows went down to the bike-shed, and got away on it, there could be no rotten arguments about the matter.

So that was what Bunter decided to do. And he rolled away to the bike-shed, and inspected the machines there, to make his choice.

He had asked fellows to lend him a machine! They had refused! Bunter felt that he had done all that could be expected of him!

He decided on Lord Mauleverer's

bike for good reasons. It was a handsome and expensive jigger; and Mauly was the best-tempered fellow in the Remove and therefore least likely to kick Bunter for his cheek!

Having decided, he wheeled that handsome bike out, and got it into the road. So far, so good!

But there was still a lion in the path, so to speak. Lord Mauleverer was whole inches taller than the fat Owl of the Remove, and his bike was too high for Bunter to ride with comfort.

By putting the saddle down as low as possible, Bunter could have made it fit, more or less. But this involved a certain amount of work—not much, it is true, but some; and Bunter did not like any work at all. He stood blinking at the jigger through his big spectacles, considering the matter, and he was still in a state of doubt, when Lord Mauleverer came down the path to the open gate.

"Seen my jigger?" called out Mauly. "Some ass has taken my jigger by mistake."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He wished he had got off without waiting to bother about the saddle. He heaved a fat leg up behind the machine.

"Oh, gad! Why, you've got it!" exclaimed Mauleverer, staring at the bike.

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

"Bring that bike back, you fat brigand!"

"I—I say, you can have mine!" gasped Bunter. "It only wants some punctures mended, and the chain tightening up, and the mudguard repaired——"

"Bring that bike here!"

"Beast!"

Bunter ran the bike up the road and hopped about in an effort to mount it.

"You fat villain!" roared Lord

Mauleverer, for once excited out of his usual calm. "Come back!"

Bunter hopped on, making desperate efforts to heave his fat person on the bike that was too high.

Lord Mauleverer rushed after him.

It was neck or nothing now! With a desperate bound, Bunter landed in the saddle, drove at the pedals, and shot away.

"Stop!"

"Beast!"

"I'll scrag you!"

"Yah!"

Bunter put his beef into it. He zig-zagged across the road, and across again. His short little fat legs hardly reached the length, and only his toes touched the pedals and they often whizzed round without even his toes touching them. Still, he managed to get some speed on; enough to beat a fellow on foot! He careered away up the road across Courtfield Common.

Lord Mauleverer halted, panting.

"By gum, I'll—I'll burst him!" gasped his lordship, and he walked back to the gate, leaving Bunter in possession of the bike. The fat junior going strong, disappeared towards Courtfield.

It was a quarter of an hour later that the coach started with the senior footballers. Loder stood staring after it with a glum and gloomy brow as it went. Wingate did not even look at him. He had forgotten Loder's existence, having much more important matters on his mind that afternoon.

A crowd of Greyfriars fellows followed the coach, some of them on foot, some of them on bicycles. Among the latter were the Famous Five, the Bounder, and a crowd of the Remove. Lord Mauleverer stood with his hands in his pockets, watching them off. His bike

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A TYRANT RULES GREYFRIARS



(Continued from page 13.)

was gone, and his lazy lordship was disinclined to walk it, so he stayed behind.

In a merry crowd, the swarm of cyclists shot away after that charabanc, looking forward to watching a good game and a Greyfriars victory on the Highcliffe ground; and little dreaming of what was destined to happen on that eventful afternoon.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

All Bunter's Fault!

HONK! Honk!
"Oh lor'!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He blinked over a fat shoulder.

He was half-way to Courtfield when the charabanc from Greyfriars came roaring on behind him.

Honk! Honk!
The fat junior's antics on a machine too high for him, with his little fat legs alternately diving at whizzing pedals, caught the attention of the crowd of seniors in the charabanc, and caused a general grin.

The driver hooted and hooted on his horn.

Bunter was zigzagging about the road in a way that looked dangerous when there were motors about.

Honk! Honk!
"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He drove at the pedals and shot on, and a yelp of alarm escaped him as a car came buzzing down the road from Courtfield.

Bunter recognised that car.

It was Dr. Locke's car, and the Head of Greyfriars was sitting in it. Bunter caught the gleam of his silver hair under the shining silk hat.

The headmaster was on his way back to the school, and a few seconds later his car would have passed the charabanc on its way to Highcliffe—had not Bunter been there!

But Bunter, unfortunately, was there!

The road was not wide, and Bunter was in the middle of it, careering along on a bike he could hardly manage.

With the big charabanc roaring and honking behind him, and the Head's car coming straight at him, as it seemed to Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove almost lost his head.

He made a desperate shove at a pedal, to drive his bike to the side of the road, out of the way of both vehicles.

But he missed the whizzing pedal, which shot round under his foot, and almost pitched over the handle-bars as he did so.

The next second he was shooting right at the Head's car, and for an

awful instant it seemed that he was heading for a fearful smash.

The Head's chauffeur did the only thing that was possible. He fairly wrenched the car away, missing Bunter by barely a foot as he shot past him, shooting across to the wrong side of the road.

There was a sudden clang and jam of brakes on the charabanc. But it was too late!

Crash!

Crash! Smash!

What happened next was like a nightmare.

Bunter, hardly conscious of his narrow escape, went careering on towards Courtfield, and vanished past a turn of the road, hardly hearing the crashing behind him, and unconscious of what had happened.

But nobody was heeding Bunter now.

From the crowd of cyclists following the charabanc came a shout of alarm and horror. They jammed on brakes and jumped down.

"The Head!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Good heavens!"

Harry Wharton dashed towards the Head's car. It had caught a wheel on the charabanc, and had been hurled right over, landing on its side on the green common beside the road. The charabanc had rocked over and crashed and its numerous passengers were struggling and yelling in a confused heap.

"Dr. Locke!" panted Wharton.

The Head's chauffeur, almost miraculously, had jumped clear. But the old gentleman inside the car had had no chance.

Wharton was the first to reach him, and his face paled with horror at the sight.

Dr. Locke lay crumpled, insensible, with a stream of red running down under his silver hair.

"Help here!" panted Wharton.

The door of the car was got open, and many hands lifted out the headmaster of Greyfriars, and he was laid in the grass.

He did not stir or speak.

It was evident that he was severely hurt.

"Wingate!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Wingate's hurt, I believe!" muttered Nugent, his face white. "A good many of them have been hurt!"

"Look after the Head!" muttered Wharton, and he ran to the charabanc. Many hands were helping the passengers out.

All of them were severely shaken, most of them bruised. Some of them had been more severely damaged.

Three of the Sixth—Wingate, Gwynne, and North—lay senseless, stunned. They lay like logs in the grass where they were placed.

Both the car and the charabanc were wrecked; neither could possibly proceed. But there were other cars on the road, and some of the fellows flagged them as they came up. One of them was Sir Hilton Popper's car, from Popper Court, and Wharton ran to it as it halted.

"What has happened?" barked Sir Hilton, staring out at the captain of the Remove.

"A collision—the Head's injured!" gasped Wharton. "You'll take him on to the school—"

"Good gad!"

Sir Hilton Popper jumped out of the car. With his own hands he helped to place the insensible headmaster in the car, and it raced on towards Greyfriars.

Sykes of the Sixth caught Wharton by the shoulder.

"You've got your bike—"

"Yes."
"Cut off to the school doctor, top speed, and get him to Greyfriars for the Head!"

"Right!"
Wharton leaped on his machine and shot away almost like a flash of lightning.

There were two or three more cars on the scene by this time. Wingate, Gwynne, and North were placed in them, and driven on to Courtfield to the hospital. Some of the prefects went with them.

A buzzing crowd of excited fellows was left, gathered round the two wrecked vehicles.

It was some time before even the footballers remembered that they were due at Highcliffe School, and expected there.

"The game's off now!" said Blundell of the Fifth. "We shall have to let them know at Highcliffe."

"One of these fags can cut across on his bike and tell them!" said Sykes of the Sixth. "Here, you, Cherry!"

"Right-ho!" said Bob.

And Bob pedalled on to Highcliffe to carry the news of the smash, and the information that the fixture had to be scratched.

It was a rather dismal crowd that walked back to Greyfriars. That tragic happening had come suddenly, unexpectedly, like a bolt from the blue, and it clouded every face.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Change of Fortune!

THE game's up!" muttered Loder of the Sixth.

Walker and Carne shrugged their shoulders.

The three black sheep of Greyfriars were gathered in Loder's study. Walker and Carne were smoking cigarettes.

Cigarettes, however, seemed to have lost their savour for Gerald Loder. He stood at the open window, his hands driven deep into his pockets, staring out into the autumn sunshine in the quadrangle.

His face was dark and gloomy.

Many and many a time had the black-guard of Greyfriars sailed very near to the wind; but his luck had always been good—hitherto!

Now, at long last, it had failed him!

From his dear pals, Walker and Carne, he received little in the way of sympathy or help.

Their chief concern was for themselves.

They could not help feeling afraid that Loder when he was "up" before the Head, and all was lost, might let out something to their detriment.

They had been his chief associates in his reckless disregard of the laws of the school; indeed, it was only by chance that they had not been out of bounds with him the previous night, and caught with him.

Loder turned from the window and stared at them with a savage expression.

"I tell you the game's up!" he repeated.

"Well, you've fairly asked for it!" said Walker. "I don't know who played that trick on you last night; but it was some junior, and if you hadn't made them loathe you as you do—"

"So that's all you've got to say!" snarled Loder.

"After all, Wingate's not a bad sort, in his way!" said Carne. "You might

get him to keep it dark. He can't have said anything yet, as the Head's not back."

"Do you think I'd ask him favours?"
 "Yes, I jolly well do, if you saw any chance of getting them!" answered Carne coolly. "If you haven't begged for mercy yet, it's because you know there's nothing doing. Don't get on the high horse, Loder!"

Loder gave him a black and bitter look.

"Then there's Quelch," went on Carne. "What did you want to get his back up for? Just your rotten temper, and nothing else! Quelch has a pull with the Head, and if you'd any sense you'd keep on his right side. Instead of that—"

"Oh, shut up!"
 The fact that he was himself to blame for his misfortunes was no comfort to Loder; neither was it pleasant to have that fact pointed out to him.

Carne and Walker exchanged a glance as the bully of the Sixth turned to the window again and stared savagely out.

They were fed-up with Loder and his

misfortunes, and greatly inclined to clear off and leave him to himself.

Only one consideration deterred them—they were afraid of what might happen when he was up before the Head if his back was up with them. Loder knew enough about them to get them sacked along with him if he chose to give them away. For that rather urgent reason they wanted to keep on the right side of Loder—till he was gone. It was not easy, however, to be in Loder's company without quarrelling in his present mood.

"Look here, something's got to be done!" growled Loder at last. "I'm not going to be turfed out of Greyfriars without a kick."

"Well, what about going to Quelch?" asked Carne. "You can pitch him a tale and apologise and all that. Words cost nothing. You might bar him off from gabbling to the Beak."

Loder gritted his teeth.
 "Eat humble pie to that crusty old stick!" he muttered.

"Better than the boot!" said Walker.
 "It wouldn't make any difference;

Quelch has never liked me," grunted Loder. "I was on his right side once, but—"

"But you got him against you by bullying," said Walker. "If you weren't such a rotten bully, Loder—"

"Shut up!" roared Loder.
 "Well, we're doing no good here" grunted James Walker; "we may as well get out of this, Carne."

"Nobody wants you here!" snarled Loder. "Get out, by all means! I dare say I shall see you again when the Head comes in."

Walker, who was going to the study door, stopped dead.

"Does that mean that you're going to give a man away, Loder, because you're up for the sack yourself?" he asked, between his teeth.

"You're as deep in the mud as I am in the mire," answered Loder sullenly. "You seem to care a fat lot whether I get turfed out or not!"

"You've landed yourself in it! If I got landed I shouldn't gabble about you!" said Walker fiercely.

(Continued on next page.)



If you are in doubt over any Soccer problem write to "Linesman" c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and then watch for his reply in this weekly feature.

WHO SCORED?

GOALS are the things which count in football. Hence the way goals are scored, and the fellows who score them, are always interesting topics. Among my readers is one who follows the goalscoring in big football most closely, and he has recently come across a little problem in this connection.

"I always look at the newspaper reports of football matches very closely," he writes, "and, taking special interest in the goal-scorers, I find that the reports sometimes differ concerning the actual scorers in the same match. Is there no definite way of deciding these points?"

Perhaps I should say, first of all, that I have noticed the same sort of thing. Indeed, after many a match which I have attended I have been concerned in an argument as to which player actually scored a particular goal. On the very first day of the present season there was discussion, and difference of opinion, as to whether Dean or Britton scored a goal for Everton against Tottenham Hotspur. Some people said Dean, others said Britton.

From one point of view it may be important, later on, which of these players scored that particular goal. Dean holds the record for the number of goals ever scored by one player during a season—the total was sixty. Before the end of the season this player may be chasing his own record, and consequently it may become very important whether he scored that goal at Tottenham or not!

The trouble with this scoring business is, of course, that, strictly speaking, it is nobody's business who actually scores so long as the goals are scored. Even referees do not concern themselves with the names of the scorers. The only way

to make sure, in case of doubt, is to ask the players themselves. And even in this connection I can tell you a strange story. I once asked some players which of them had touched the ball last ere it entered the net. They weren't sure themselves.

There is another point about this goalscoring which leads to confusion. This concerns those cases in which players are said to score against their own side.

If a goalkeeper, trying to stop a shot, gets his hands to the ball and it then twists out of his grasp and into the net, nobody ever suggests that he has scored against his own side. But if a full-back, trying desperately to make a clearance, does the same thing—that is, turn the ball into the net—he is debited with scoring against his own side.

There has been something like an epidemic of this "scoring against his own side" business in this season's football. I saw one match in which only four goals were scored, and three of those goals were recorded because players put the ball past their own goalkeeper.

SHOTS THAT SCORE!

While on this subject of goal-scoring, I may as well answer a Portsmouth reader, R. Glanville, who tells me that although he often plays at centre-forward he is not satisfied with his shooting. He doesn't get as much power behind the ball as he would like, and at times the direction is not good. There must be many MAGNET readers playing football who suffer from the same complaint, so I decided to put in a hint or two this week.

Trouble number one—lack of power—usually arises because the body is not behind the ball when it is kicked. Too many footballers take their shots with the body leaning back, away from the ball. This means that there is only the leg behind the shot: not the body.

The effort should always be made to get over the ball when in the act of shooting: that is with the head about on the level with the ball. More power can be applied by the player whose body, as well as the boot, is behind it. The secret of the hard-hitting of a ball in any game is timing, with the body all in at the moment of impact. It is so in football.

Moreover, when the body is over the ball, as I have put it, the direction is likely to be better, because the ball will be kicked with the instep rather than the toe. Kicking with the instep means a greater proportion of the boot coming in contact with the ball, and hence keeping the direction more accurately.

Turning from the scoring of goals to the laws of the game, another reader is puzzled concerning free-kicks from which goals can, and can not, be scored direct. Following what might be called ordinary offences—such as tripping, handling, etc., goals can be scored direct from the free-kick—that is, without any other player touching the ball.

But there are certain offences which, though punished by free-kicks, cannot result in a goal being scored direct from the free-kick. Among these is carrying by the goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper carries the ball more than four steps, he is penalised, but a goal cannot be scored direct.

GOOD FOR THE "GOALIE"!

In a previous talk I told you about some ways of practising which are employed by star players of various teams. The other day I came across another method which interested me. I happened to be on the Blackpool ground during mid-week, and there saw the goalkeeper, Wallace, "doing his stuff" between the posts. But the fellow who was giving him this practice wasn't using a football. He was throwing a tennis ball at the goalkeeper from various angles, and the goalkeeper was doing his best to stop the tennis ball.

I was assured by the manager of Blackpool that this was a good idea. It helped the goalkeeper to become more nimble on his feet—a valuable asset—and was also better practice for the eye than trying to stop a football. It stands to reason that if a goalkeeper can stop a lawn tennis ball, he should be able to stop a football. Try it!

"LINESMAN."

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"Oh, chuck it! If you were up before the Head you'd say anything for the barest chance of crawling off!" sneered Loder.

"You can't give your friends away, Loder!" said Carne, with a scared look.

"My friends had better try to help me out of this scrape, then, instead of yelping at me that it's all my own fault!"

Walker sat down again.

At that moment probably nothing would have pleased Loder's "friends" better than to have seen the gates of Greyfriars close behind him for ever, shutting him out with all that he could have told about them.

But that was still in the future—though the near future—and for the present they had to keep, if they could, on the safe side of the sulky, resentful bully of Greyfriars.

There was a grim silence in the study as Loder stood staring gloomily from the window, and Walker and Carne sat staring at his back with far from friendly looks.

Loder's eyes fell idly on a car that turned in at the distant gates. He recognised Sir Hilton Popper's car, but without taking any interest in it.

"That old fool Popper!" he remarked.

"Old Popper? He's a governor of the school!" said Walker. He joined Loder at the window. "He's always barging in, the old duffer! If he's come to see the Head the old bean's out."

"Hallo! Something's up! That's Bancroft of the Sixth in the car with him—and he's holding somebody! What the thump—"

"Is that the Head?"

"Great pip!"

Carne came to the window. The three Sixth Formers looked out, startled and a little excited. Old Gosling had come out of his lodge, and the startled expression on his face was clearly visible. A dozen fellows were running towards the car. A buzz of voices came across the quad.

"Something's happened!" exclaimed Carne.

"I believe I spotted the Head in the car," said Walker. "Old Popper's given him a lift. But he was in his own car. There must have been some accident—"

Loder, catching his breath, ran across to the door and cut out of the study; his heart was beating fast.

If it was an accident to the Head—

Little concern was Loder feeling for the old gentleman himself! An accident to the Head meant the postponement, at least, of the dreaded interview with him. That was the thought in Loder's harassed mind.

By the time he got out into the quad the car had stopped at the door of the headmaster's house. The Head's butler and several servants had come out, and Loder as he approached saw Dr. Locke lifted from the car and carried in. He stood and watched, his heart thumping.

Sir Hilton Popper went into the Head's house. The Sixth Form man who had been in the car with the headmaster came slowly away with a grave, distressed face. Loder hurried to him.

"What's happened, Bancroft?"

"An accident—"

"The Head—"

"His car crashed into a charabanc."

"Oh gad! Is he badly hurt?" For a second Loder forgot himself and thought of the still figure he had seen carried into the house.

"A hard knock, I think," said Bancroft. "He was stunned. I don't believe there's any danger, but it will be a bit tough on him, I imagine, at his time of life. He's still unconscious."

Loder breathed quickly.

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"Anybody else hurt?"

"Three of the Sixth—Wingate, Gwynne, and North. The Highcliffe match is off, of course," said Bancroft.

He nodded to Loder and went on to the House.

Loder stood quite still, a strange mingling of feelings in his breast.

To do him justice, he was sorry for the Head—sorry that the old gentleman had been hurt. He hoped sincerely enough that the injury would prove not to be serious.

But his chief thought was of himself—of his escape. Wingate's report could not be made now. Indeed, from what Bancroft said, Wingate himself had been hurt in the crash. The Highcliffe match—the game from which Loder had been excluded—was off. And Wingate was knocked out.

Wingate knocked out! As the next senior man on the list of prefects, Loder would automatically become head prefect in Wingate's place if he was unable to resume his duties.

His eyes gleamed.

Instead of being reported for the sack by Wingate, he would step into the shoes of the captain of the school and wield chief authority in his place.

It was a change of fortune, with a vengeance!

In the circumstances, perhaps, Loder could hardly be expected to feel sorry that George Wingate was knocked out. At all events, he did not feel sorry! His eyes danced as he walked back to the House.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Top Dog!

THERE were grave faces in Greyfriars School the following day.

From the Sixth to the Second there was hardly a face that did not look clouded.

Even Bob Cherry's exuberant spirits were rather dashed; even Billy Bunter did not devote his whole thoughts solely to meal-times.

The Highcliffe match, important fixture as it was, was almost forgotten. Football for the moment was quite in the background.

In Common-room the masters were, as Skinner described it, like a lot of moulting owls.

The Head was respected by all his staff, liked by most of them. All of them felt deeply the blow that had fallen on him.

Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth, was genuinely sorry, like the rest, but probably he found a little comfort in the reflection that while the Head was on the sick list it would fall to him, as senior master, to carry on.

Prout had "carried on" before in the absence of the Head, and he undoubtedly fancied himself in the role of chief.

In Common-room, even while Prout was decorously grave and concerned, a keen observer might have detected a new gleam in his eye, a new importance in his majestic roll.

Such a keen observer might have detected, too, that some of the other masters paid a rather new deference to Prout.

Generally he was regarded as a bore, and the other beaks were accustomed to dodging his lengthy chats—which were all about Prout.

Now some of them hung on his words and listened to his views as to the voice of an oracle. If Prout was going to wield supreme power even for a short time, Prout was a man to be treated with tact.

It was a general relief to learn that the Head's injury was not grave. But

it was serious enough to make it necessary for him to be removed to a nursing-home, where it was understood that he would remain for some weeks at least.

That left Prout top dog, as the Bounder irreverently expressed it. Curious eyes noted that in this new and important position, Prout, like the young lady at the tea-party, "swelled visibly."

The Head was taken away in the morning. In the afternoon, Mr. Prout abandoned his own study and moved into the Head's.

That was a signal to all Greyfriars that the Fifth Form master was now monarch of all he surveyed.

Prout was a good-tempered and genial man, portly and pompous, easy to get on with, so long as he had his due allowance of flattery. So most of the staff did not worry much over the change of authority. Mr. Quelch liked it least of all.

He was most deeply concerned for the Head, being a personal friend of that gentleman, as well as a member of his staff. And he was the last man in the world to flatter anybody. He anticipated trouble with Prout, and while determining to be patient and tactful, he also meant to make it clear that a junior master had his rights, which had to be respected.

At the first masters' meeting called by Prout, Quelch sat rather like a stone image, and never opened his mouth at all.

These matters were rather high over the heads of most of the Greyfriars fellows, especially the juniors, to whom headmasters and senior masters were great men afar, like the gods on Olympus.

The school was more closely concerned by the fact that three of the most popular fellows of the Sixth were also on the sick list.

Wingate, captain of the school, Gwynne and North, were in Courtfield hospital, and it was known that as soon as they could be moved, they were going home, to remain away at least half the term, perhaps longer.

To the school, Wingate of the Sixth was as much a fixture as the Head himself, or Gosling, the ancient porter, or the fountain in the quad, or the grey old tower that jutted to the sky. He was a part of Greyfriars. Even inky fags of the Third and Second missed him.

As head prefect he had held the scales of justice with a firm and fair hand, as all the Lower School knew, and as Loder of the Sixth had only too much reason to know.

Now Loder was head prefect in his place!

It was a change with a vengeance, and few fellows anticipated good from it.

"The football will go to pot without Wingate!" Sykes of the Sixth remarked in the Prefects' room.

Loder glanced at him, smiling.

"Will it?" he said.

"Not much doubt about that!" said Bancroft.

"I've a few ideas on the subject!" drawled Loder. "I'm even entertaining a faint hope that we may be able to carry on, somehow, without Wingate!"

Loder, at least, was greatly bucked.

Walker and Carne shared his satisfaction. Only a day before they had been wishing that the school gates would shut behind Loder, and shut quick! But all that was altered now!

Loder's danger was past! The Head was in a nursing-home, Wingate in the hospital awaiting removal. There was no "report" to be feared now! That matter could hardly be revived when

they came back weeks later—perhaps not till the following term. Loder's luck, after all, had held good, and he was saved!

And now he was reigning in Wingate's place! Loder's friendship was worth having! Walker and Carne had it, such as it was, and rejoiced in it! With the blackest sheep at Greyfriars head of the Sixth, the lines of the other black sheep looked like falling in pleasant places! Plenty of fellows who had rather given Loder the cold shoulder were very civil to him now. And Loder's idea was that the rest had better learn to be civil, or it would be the worse for them!

Least of all did the heroes of the Remove like the change that had so suddenly, and so unexpectedly, taken place in the situation at Greyfriars.

With their old enemy, Loder, as "top dog," they looked for a troubled term, though they little dreamed to the proportions that the trouble was going to assume!

At tea in Study No. 1 that day they discussed the matter with rather glum faces. Even Bob Cherry could not see a silver lining to the cloud—which showed that the cloud was very dark indeed.

"It's rotten all round!" said Harry Wharton. "That old ass, Prout, in the Head's place—and that rotten bully, Loder, in Wingate's place!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"We'll keep our end up against Loder somehow!" growled Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, get out!" rapped five voices in unison. The chums of the Remove were fed-up with Bunter. If the fat Owl was not exactly the cause of the present disastrous state of affairs, at least he had contributed to it.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" said Bunter. "I say, that beast Smithy kicked me——"

"Good!"

"Even Mauly's kicked me!" said Bunter sorrowfully.

"Good old Mauly!"

"He makes out that I had something to do with the Head's accident!" said Bunter. "So did Smithy! So do the rest! Me, you know! Even Inspector Grimes at Courtfield wanted to see me about it, and made out that I had something to do with it! As if I could help two bad drivers barging into one another on the road! The lucky thing was that they didn't barge into me! Suppose that had happened?"

"No such luck!"

"Beast! I never got any tea at Highcliffe, either," said Bunter. "I had all the trouble of a ride over there for nothing, and I can tell you I didn't enjoy it on Mauly's rotten jigger! I think you fellows might have come on. You might have guessed I wanted you there to see me through! But you always were selfish."

"Chuck over that loaf!" said Bob.

"Mauly makes out that I've damaged his jigger," went on Bunter. "He says there's a pedal twisted! The beastly thing fell over, you know! Not that it was damaged while I had it! The pedal was twisted before I started. I told Mauly so! And I gave him my word that it was all right when I took it back to the shed, too! He didn't believe me! Fancy that!"

Whiz!

Bump!

The loaf flew—and, as it landed on Bunter's chest, Bunter flew!

He sat down in the passage outside Study No. 1 with a bump and a roar.

"Owl! Wow! Beast!" bellowed Bunter.

"Goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Wow!" roared Bunter. "I say—yaroooooh! I won't come to tea with you now—wow, wow!"

"What's this row?" It was the voice of Loder of the Sixth.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"That cur's got an eye on this study, now!" he muttered.

Loder appeared in the doorway. His cane was under his arm, and a lurking grin was on his face.

"Someone here threw something at Bunter and knocked him over!" he said.

"Who threw that loaf?"

"I did!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"Bullying," said Loder, "is a thing that I'm determined to put down now that I am head prefect."

"Wha-a-a-t?" The chums of the

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Remove stared at Loder. That statement, from the bully of the Sixth, was rather startling.

"Who's bullying?" roared Bob Cherry, red with anger.

"Don't raise your voice to me, Cherry! Get up, and bend over your chair! I'm going to give you six for bullying Bunter."

Bob Cherry rose to his feet. He gave Loder of the Sixth a long, long look, and paused. But there was no help for it, and he bent over the chair and took his "six."

Loder tucked his ashplant under his arm, and walked away smiling.

He was tasting the sweets of power now, and he had made up his mind to give that study in the Remove his very particular attention.

"And to think," said Bob, with a deep breath, "that that rotter would have been sacked by now if the Head hadn't got knocked out!"

But it was useless to think of that! The Head was knocked out, and Loder

was not sacked, or likely to be! Loder was top dog now, and there was going to be trouble—lots and lots of it!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble!

"THAT old ass, Prout——"
"Chuck it, Smithy!" muttered Redwing uneasily.

"Rats! Isn't Prout an old ass?" demanded the Bounder.

"I wouldn't tell him so!" grinned Skinner. "Not in the present jolly old circumstances."

But the Bounder was in one of his reckless moods. Another day had passed, and Greyfriars School was settling down to the new state of affairs, with Mr. Prout in the Head's place, and Gerald Loder in Wingate's. Very few were pleased by that state of affairs, but as it could not be helped, everybody had to make up his mind to it.

In the quad after class Herbert Vernon-Smith was airing his views. Smithy had his good qualities, plenty of them; but he was as full of cheek as an egg is of meat. That had not endeared him to Mr. Prout when that gentleman was merely master of the Fifth. More than once Prout had rolled into Quelch's study with some complaint against the Bounder; and it had to be admitted that his complaints were often well-founded. Now that he reigned supreme Prout was less likely than ever to let Smithy get away with cheek.

True, he was a genial man, not given to remembering grudges; and he was far too important to remember the existence of a mere Lower Fourth junior, unless it was recalled to his mind. But Smithy was the man to ask for it.

"That fat old chump," went on Smithy, in a loud voice. He did not seem to care who heard him.

"I guess I'd can it, bo!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "The old guy wouldn't like to hear what you think of him."

"Would any beak like to know what fellows think of him?" grinned Skinner.

"Hardly!" chuckled Snoop.

"But what's the old bean done this time, Smithy?" asked Bolsover major.

"He's given me lines!" growled the Bounder.

"Prout can't give a Remove man lines," said Peter Todd.

"He thinks he can now he's in the Head's place!"

"Oh! That makes a difference, of course—I suppose he can, now!" said Toddy doubtfully. "Quelch won't like it; but I suppose he can do as he likes."

"Well, he can't!" snapped the Bounder. "I know I'm not going to do the lines. He can leave us to our own beak."

"Prout always barges in!" said Bob Cherry. "He will barge in more than ever now! What did he give you the lines for?"

"Just to throw his weight about."

"Oh rot!" said Harry Wharton. "Prout's a pompous ass, but he's not unjust! Draw it mild, Smithy!"

"Smithy wasn't doing any harm!" said Skinner. "We all know Smithy—he never does any harm! Baby-like innocence is his long suit."

There was a chuckle from the juniors. "Well, I was sliding down the banisters," said the Bounder.

"That's against the rules!" said Bob.

"A thing you never do!" sneered the Bounder.

"Lots of times—but I expect to get THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,390.

lines of a back spots me at it," said Bob Cherry. "No good grousing, Smithy, it's all in the game."

"If that old ass thinks I'm going to do lines for him, he's mistaken!" said the Bounder angrily. "That pompous old ass Prout—"

"Vernon-Smith!"

It was Loder's voice.

Nobody had seen Loder coming. He appeared from among the elms, unobserved till he was on the spot.

The Bounder bit his lip hard. He was angry and reckless; but he would hardly have spoken as he had done had he been aware that a prefect was within hearing.

And his resentment was deep and bitter, for he knew that Loder had deliberately skulked among the trees to hear what was not intended for his ears. That was not a prefect's duty by any means.

"What did you say, Vernon-Smith?"

"Nothin'!" snapped the Bounder.

"You were speaking of Mr. Prout?"

"How do you know?" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"I heard you!"

"I didn't know you were listenin'!" said the Bounder deliberately. "If I had, I'd have mentioned what I think of eavesdroppers."

"Smithy!" breathed Redwing anxiously. "Shut up, for goodness' sake."

Loder's face crimsoned. He had been eavesdropping; that was the truth. But though he was not ashamed of his action he was ashamed to hear it described in plain English. He set his lips hard.

"I shall not cane you myself, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "I shall take you to Mr. Prout."

"You can take me to my Form-master, if you want to take me to anybody!" said the Bounder. "I won't go to Prout."

"Won't you!" said Loder grimly, and he grabbed hold of the Bounder's collar and jerked him out of the group of Remove fellows. "Now come with me, you cheeky young scoundrel!"

"Let go, you bully!" roared the Bounder.

He struggled savagely, lost to all prudence now.

But Loder did not let go, and the Bounder had little chance in the grasp of a Sixth Form man. He was whirled away towards the House.

"Quelch's looking out of the window!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Quelch can't barge in!" said Skinner. "Prout's king-pippin now!"

"Bet you he will, all the same!" said Peter Todd.

Peter was right. As Loder reached the doorway with the Bounder wriggling fiercely in his grip he was met by the Remove master, who had come out of his study to intercept him.

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Stop!" he rapped.

"Please do not interfere, sir!" said Loder, with an outward show of respect that was belied by the mocking gleam in his eyes. "I am taking Vernon-Smith to the headmaster, sir!"

Loder knew, by a sort of instinct, that it would annoy Mr. Quelch to hear Prout spoken of as headmaster. A couple of days ago Loder had been afraid of Quelch; but he was not afraid of him now.

He caught the gleam of angry annoyance in Quelch's eyes, and grinned. But he had to stop as Quelch was standing directly in his way.

"Why are you taking Vernon-Smith to Mr. Prout, Loder?" asked the Remove master very quietly.

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"He has spoken insolently of the headmaster, sir."

"In that case, you should report him to me, Loder!"

"As the matter concerns the headmaster, sir, I think I had better report it to him!" answered Loder coolly.

The Bounder, in his Form-master's presence, ceased to resist. But Loder's grip was still very tight on his collar.

"You are in error, Loder!" said Mr. Quelch, in the same quiet tone. "Any offence of a boy in my Form should be reported to me. You may bring Vernon-Smith to my study."

"You will excuse me, sir, but I prefer to take him to the headmaster!" said the new head prefect of Greyfriars.

The gimlet eyes glinted.

"Release Vernon-Smith at once, Loder!"

"Really, sir—"

"Do you hear me?"

Even Loder's cool impudence failed him under Quelch's raised voice and glinting eyes. He let go the Bounder's collar, breathing hard.

"Now, Loder, you may state what is Vernon-Smith's offence, and I will deal with it!" said Mr. Quelch.

Loder breathed hard.

"I shall report this matter to the headmaster, sir, and leave it to his judgment!" he retorted.

"If you have nothing to say—"

"Not to you, sir!"

"Very well; you may go, Vernon-Smith, as Loder has no complaint to make of you!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder demurely, and he went.

Mr. Quelch walked away without another glance at Gerald Loder. The new head prefect of Greyfriars cast a venomous glance after him, and walked away also—to the Head's study! If Mr. Quelch fancied that the matter was at an end he was quite deceived. It was only at the beginning!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Prout Puts His Foot Down!

MR. PROUT sat in the Head's armchair in the Head's study, feeling like a headmaster. He was filling Dr. Locke's place, and felt that he filled it well.

It did not occur to Prout's pompous mind, for a moment, that he was rather like the dwarf who dressed in the giant's robe!

Authority was dear to Prout; and now he had his fill of it! The staff treated him with a new respect! He did not realise that this was because in his new position he could make things uncomfortable for them if he liked.

There was only one fly in the ointment. That rather crusty gentleman Quelch, the master of the Remove, did not seem to realise his Olympian greatness, but treated him exactly as if he were still simply a Form-master. That was rather annoying; and Prout felt that it would not do. He did not want to be unpleasant to Quelch, of course; but the man had to understand that even a temporary headmaster was his chief.

"Come in," said Prout, in his deep and fruity voice as there was a tap at the study door.

Loder of the Sixth entered.

Prout gave him a glance of approving welcome. He had, perhaps, wondered a little how the prefects would take the new command. They were an important body in the school and could have given him a lot of trouble, if they had liked. But so far as the new head prefect was concerned, Prout had been more than reassured.

Loder treated him with the deepest respect, hanging on his words, asking his sage advice, listening to him as to an oracle.

Only in the privacy of his own study did Loder mention to Walker and Carne that Prout was the world's prize ass, and that, like other asses, he would follow a carrot held to his nose. The carrot, in this case, was flattery, which Prout liked in chunks. Loder contrived to make it clear, in his manner to Prout, that he regarded the change in the headmastership as a change very much for the better, which was indeed Prout's own opinion. And his boundless respect, his anxious desire to hear Prout's advice and act on it, pleased "Old Pompous" very much indeed.

"Pray be seated, Loder!" said Mr. Prout graciously. "What is it, Loder?"

Loder appeared to hesitate.

"Speak quite frankly!" said Prout, with a wave of a large, plump hand. "I desire the utmost frankness and confidence from my prefects."

Prout almost rolled those words on his tongue. Speaking of "my prefects" was to Prout what chocolate-cream was to Billy Bunter.

"Well, sir," said Loder, "you've been kind enough to advise me several times, sir—"

"My advice," said Prout, "is always at the service of my prefects, Loder. I like them to come to me for counsel."

"You're very kind, sir. The position becomes a little difficult when a prefect is opposed by a member of your staff, sir, in carrying out his duties."

Speaking of the Greyfriars staff to Prout as "your staff," was really a stroke of genius. Prout almost purred.

"I trust, Loder, that there has been no disagreement," said Prout. "You may rely upon me to judge the matter, and to uphold the prefects in all their rights and privileges. What is the trouble?"

"A Remove boy, sir, spoke of you in my hearing, with such reckless insolence and disrespect that I could not possibly pass the matter over."

Prout frowned.

"His name?"

"Vernon-Smith, sir."

"An impertinent boy," said Prout. "I had occasion to give him lines to-day. I remember. His words, Loder?"

"He declared, sir, in the presence of a crowd of boys, that he would not do lines imposed by you. As for the epithets he applied to you, sir, I cannot repeat them in your presence."

Prout's brow was like thunder.

"Why did you not bring this boy to me, Loder? You should have brought him to me at once."

"I was in the act of doing so, sir, when Mr. Quelch interfered—"

"Mr. Quelch interfered?" boomed Prout.

"He sent Vernon-Smith away, sir. His view is that he alone has authority over Remove boys, and that you have no right—"

"What—what?"

"No right to deal with his Form, sir."

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout.

"I only desire to know, sir, where I stand," said Loder, with an air of great earnestness. "If you desire your prefects, sir, to be under the direction of a junior Form-master, I, of course, can only bow to your decision. I am sure, sir, that you will do me the justice to believe that my only desire is to carry out your wishes."

"Certainly, Loder! I have every faith in you," said Mr. Prout. "I am surprised—indeed astounded—that

Quelch should take it upon himself to interfere with my prefects." Prout rose from the Head's armchair, looking a good deal like a turkey-cock preparing for battle. "I will see Quelch at once—immediately! In the meantime, you will fetch Vernon-Smith to this study, and wait with him here till I return. We shall see," boomed Prout, "whether Mr. Quelch will intervene a second time!"

And the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars rolled out of the study. Loder's face was grave and composed till he was gone. Then Loder winked at his reflection in the Head's looking-glass, and departed in quest of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Prout arrived at the Remove master's study. He rapped on the door and marched in, without waiting to be invited to do so.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet. His look was cold and calm—rather a contrast to Prout's turkey-cock aspect.

"I have called, sir," said Prout, with crushing dignity, "to speak a few words."

Mr. Quelch did not say "the fewer the better." He only thought it.

"Loder informs me," continued Mr. Prout, "that you intervened when he was taking a Lower Fourth junior to my study, to report him to me for insolent expressions referring to myself."

"Such an offence, sir, should be reported to a boy's Form-master," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "That has always been the rule and custom at Greyfriars, sir."

"A prefect, sir, has the right to make a report direct to the headmaster if he chooses so to do!" boomed Prout.

A slightly sarcastic expression flickered for a moment on Mr. Quelch's face at the mention of the word "headmaster."

Prout, not usually an observant gentleman, observed it. He could be observant on matters touching his personal dignity, which was really Prout's most precious possession.

His plump face, already flushed, became almost purple.

"Mr. Quelch, I have assumed the headmastership, at the request of the governors of the school—"

"Temporarily, sir!"

"Quite, sir—quite. But as headmaster, sir, I exact obedience, sir, and respect, sir, from the members of my staff!" boomed Prout. "If you are not satisfied to serve under me loyally, sir, your way is open. I am prepared, sir, to receive your resignation, if you care to place it in my hands."

Mr. Quelch bit his lip hard.

"Otherwise, sir, kindly understand that I decline—I absolutely decline—to allow my prefects to be checked and ordered and directed by a junior Form-master—"

"I will speak plainly, Mr. Prout. Loder is not a prefect in whom I have any confidence. I have found him out to be a bully, and it was my intention to report this to Dr. Locke, and to request that he might be degraded from the rank of prefect. I will explain the circumstances to you, sir, as you now stand in Dr. Locke's place."

Prout raised a plump hand.

"I decline to listen, sir! I have no doubt—no doubt, sir—that any discipline applied to so unruly a Form as the Remove will appear in your eyes as what you are pleased to term bullying. I, sir, have every faith in Loder. I trust him absolutely."

"Really, sir—"

"I have instructed him," boomed Prout, "to take the boy, Vernon-Smith,

to my study. I trust, sir, that you will not think of interfering again."

"If you have given a direct order to—"

"I repeat that I have done so, sir."

"In that case, I have no choice but to bow to the authority invested in you by the governors during the Head's absence."

"I am glad, sir, that you understand that," said Prout victoriously; and he rolled out of the study, and almost banged the door after him.

Five minutes later Quelch, standing at his window, had a view of Loder of the Sixth, marching Herbert Vernon-Smith towards the House with a grip of iron on his collar, followed by a staring crowd of juniors.

Mr. Quelch looked, and turned away with a brow of thunder.

But there was nothing he could do.

This time Loder marched his prisoner to the Head's study, undeterred by Quelch. The loud swishing of a cane was soon heard in that study. Smithy was going through it, at Prout's hands, as no doubt he deserved. And Mr. Quelch, with the bitterest pill of his life to swallow, had to get it down somehow.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Nerve!

"D O N E your lines, Smithy?"
"No!"

"Better get them done, old chap!"

"Rats!"

A licking from Prout in the Head's study, did not seem to have made the B o u n d e r more amenable.

After tea that day several fellows asked Smithy if he had done his lines. They had to be handed in to Prout before prep.

He had not written them, and did not apparently intend to do so. And while a good many of the Remove admired his nerve, and wished him luck, the more thoughtful fellows shook their heads over it.

Smithy persisted in his view that the Fifth Form "beak" had no right to give a Remove man lines, which was certainly true. But as Prout was now headmaster, as well as Fifth Form beak, Smithy's position was obviously untenable. It was as headmaster, not as master of the Fifth, that Prout had given out those lines. And after what had already occurred, it was certain that Prout would not forget that impot. It

would be asked for, and if it had not been written, there would be more trouble.

Trouble, however, did not alarm the reckless Bounder. He seemed to thrive on trouble, as a rule.

Anyhow, he had made up his obstinate mind, and that was that. After tea in the Rag he announced, in reply to many inquiries, that he hadn't done the lines for Prout—that he wasn't going to do them, and that Prout could go and eat coke.

"You're an ass, old chap!" said Redwing. "Quelch can't stand by you in this. Prout's Head now—"

"Prout's an old ass!"

"Mind Loder isn't listening behind the door!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton came into the Rag. He glanced round, and came over to the Bounder.

"Done your lines, Smithy?" he asked.

"Fifteen!" said Smithy.

"Eh? What the thump do you mean?"

"You're the fifteenth chap that's asked me that fool question. I've said 'no' fourteen times already."

(Continued on next page.)

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WELL, now you've got the first two free gifts! And aren't they ripping? But, remember, these only form the beginning of our Sheriff's Outfit—there are three more gifts on their way to you, and until you've got these others as well, your outfit won't be complete. The illustrations on page 5 can only give you a rough idea of what these splendid gifts are really like. Wait till you've actually got them, and if you don't then vote the MAGNET Sheriff's Outfit the finest gift-series ever presented with any paper, I'll—well, I'll eat my Aunt Jemima's Sunday hat, red cherries and all!

"SOLD OUT!"

Now that other fellows have seen the first of our gifts, however, they'll all be making a bee-line for the newsagents' shops to snap up their copies of the MAGNET. Some of them, I'm afraid, will probably be disappointed, through not ordering their MAGNET in advance. But they won't be caught twice; next week they'll be along at the newsagent's first thing Saturday morning, and if you're not careful it will be YOU who is told, "Sorry, sold out!"

There's only one way to avoid that—ask your newsagent to-day to reserve you a copy of the MAGNET regularly every week. You won't have to pay anything for this simple method of safeguarding yourself, so do it NOW!

As announced on page 5, next week's gift is a novel six-shooter. This ripping gift offers its lucky possessors any amount of fun, and while it looks like the real thing, it is perfectly harmless. And the ammunition given with the six-shooter can be used over and over again!

I have prepared an extra-special number of the MAGNET to celebrate next week's great free-gift offer.

In Frank Richards' long complete story, entitled:

"THE HIGH HAND!"

you will read how Gerald Loder sets about getting his own-back on Harry Wharton & Co., and how nearly he comes to success in his "war" against the chums of Greyfriars.

Morton Pike, whom you have already met through the opening chapters of our new serial, "Captain Crimson," in this present issue, is again on the top of his form. No author knows better than he how to recall the adventures of stirring times in the past, and next week's instalment reveals him at his best. "Linesman's" Soccer hints, an extra-good edition of "The Greyfriars Herald," and the rest of our usual weekly features, complete the bumper issue.

I must thank those readers who have made suggestions for future yarns, and I assure them that these suggestions will be handed to Frank Richards, who will do his best to carry them out.

THE EDITOR.

"Well, Quelch has just spoken to me," said the captain of the Remove dryly. "He's heard of this, I fancy. Anyhow, he has just told me, as head boy, to let the Form know that all orders from Prout are to be obeyed, just as if they came from Dr. Locke."

The Bounder sneered. "So Quelch is kow-towing to that fat ass?" he said.

"I don't see that he's got any choice. Anyhow, that's that! It's an order from Quelch now, and you'd better toe the line. Look here, Smithy, don't be an ass," said Wharton earnestly. "There's going to be plenty of trouble this term. Any fool can see that. And if we get landed in rows we don't want to be in the wrong."

"That's common sense," said Johnny Bull, with a nod.

"Anyhow, now it's an order from Quelch that washes out Prout, Smithy," said Redwing. "Get the lines done, old chap. It's only fifty, and you can sit down here and do them."

The Bounder looked sullen and obstinate.

That message from Quelch cut the ground from under his feet, as it were. To continue to refuse to write the lines was now to admit that he was out for trouble, and merely mutinous. Still, he was disinclined to give in.

But a sudden gleam came into his eyes as he thought the matter over. He went to the table and sat down, and dipped a pen into the ink. Redwing, in great relief at seeing his chum in a more amenable mood, as he supposed, brought him a sheaf of impot paper.

Other fellows, however, catching that peculiar glimmer in the Bounder's eye, watched him curiously, guessing that something was "up."

"Go it, old chap!" said Redwing. "I'm going it," said Vernon-Smith. "Prout gave me fifty lines. I'm goin' to write fifty lines. I suppose any old lines will do."

"I'll get you your Virgil—"
"Prout never said lines from Virgil. I'm going to write him some lines from Shakespeare."

"That's not the rule, old chap—"
"Prout's makin' new rules. Why shouldn't I? If he meant Latin lines he should have said Latin lines."

"But he meant—"
"I'm not supposed to be able to guess what he meant, if he didn't say it. I'm givin' him English lines."

And the Bounder began to write. All the fellows in the Rag gathered round, watching him. It was clear that Smithy was planning some jest on Prout, though no one could guess what it was, so far. But they guessed, fast enough, when they saw the lines that ran from the Bounder's pen:

"Man, vain man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep!"

The juniors stared blankly. Then there was a ripple of laughter in the Rag. Even the fellows who were alarmed at the Bounder's temerity could not help laughing.

Those lines, in fact, described Prout with such deadly accuracy that they might almost have supposed that William Shakespeare had Prout in mind when he wrote them.

Prout was "dressed in a little brief authority." And his portly, pompous importance was—in the opinion of the Remove, at least—calculated to make the angels weep.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner. "Good old Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Smithy!" gasped Redwing. "You can't take that to Prout—"
"Can't I?" grinned the Bounder.

"It will make him frightfully wild."
"Go hon!"

"It will mean an awful row, Smithy," said Harry Wharton.

"Let it!"
"You may get a flogging," said Squiff.

"For doing as I'm told, like a good boy?" asked the Bounder, raising his eyebrows. "I don't see it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
In the midst of a grinning crowd, the Bounder wrote those lines over and over again, till the total was complete. Then he rose from the table and looked at his watch.

"Just time to catch Prout in Common-room!" he remarked. "He will be at tea with the beaks now."

There was a shriek in the Rag. Handing those lines to Prout at all was an action of which only the reckless Bounder was capable. But hand them to him in the presence of the whole staff was the climax. What the other beaks thought of the pompous Prout the juniors could guess more accurately than Prout ever dreamed of guessing. This would be "pie" to the other beaks—gall and wormwood to Prout!

"Look here, Smithy, it's too jolly risky!" urged Redwing, anxious for his chum. "Besides, lines are never taken to the beaks at tea."

"I'm startin' new customs—like Prout."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I say, you fellows! He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. "I say, old Prout will be as mad as a hatter! He, he, he!"

"Bet you Smithy won't have the nerve to pull Prout's leg like that, before all the other beaks!" said Bolsover major.

The Bounder gave him a steely look.

"You can follow me, and see, if you like," he said.
And Vernon-Smith walked out of the Rag with his precious impot in his hand. Not only Bolsover major, but nearly all the Remove, followed him, many fellows doubting whether he would have the nerve to carry on to the finish.

But those who doubted him did not know the Bounder. Nothing would have induced him to back out now.

He marched direct to Masters' Common-room, with a crowd of excited juniors at his heels. He tapped on the door and opened it, and marched in; and the other fellows crowded outside the door, breathless with excitement.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Painful For Prout!

MR. PROUT was enjoying life. Tea was over in Masters' Common-room, and the new headmaster of Greyfriars was standing on the hearthrug—portly, plump, important.

All the staff were there, with one exception. Quelch, for reasons best known to himself, was teeing in his own study.

Some of the beaks were standing round Prout, in attitudes of respectful attention. A few were sitting at the table, but looking towards Prout. Only Hacker, the master of the Shell, was still consuming provender, having come in a little late.

Prout was holding forth.

Formerly, when Prout held forth, the other beaks remembered engagements and slid off the scene one by one, or in twos. Prout, though he did not know it, was a pretentious bore.

Everything that Prout had to say he had said, not once, but many times.

For years past Prout's conversational powers had been limited to saying over and over again things he had already said too often.

He had a little stock of stories from his Oxford days, which he had told so frequently that everybody knew them by heart.

It was only necessary for Prout to begin, "I remember, when I was up at Oxford," for a sound of scraping chair-legs to be heard, and a rustle of gowns, as his hearers retreated.

Now, however, all was changed.

A Head—even a temporary Head—was Head! Prout was now in the position of Jove on high Olympus, and the lesser gods could only sit up and take notice when it pleased Jove to speak.

Prout had never known that he was a bore. He was not likely to discover it now, with the other beaks all hanging on his words, as if they were precious drops distilled from the fount of wisdom.

"I remember when I was up at Oxford—" said Prout.

It was the same old formula—the same old game. But there was no retreat now. The whole staff made up their minds to endure it heroically. Mr. Capper suppressed a sigh. Mr. Wiggins stifled a groan. Mr. Hacker, still eating, jabbed his fork viciously into a sardine, perhaps wishing that Prout was a sardine, and jabbable, so to speak.

It was then that Vernon-Smith tapped at the door and walked in, his lines in his hand.

Prout, interrupted, glared at him.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"My lines, sir!" said the Bounder meekly.

"What—what? You should not come here with your lines, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Prout crossly.

"Sorry, sir! As I had to bring them to you before prep, sir, and you were not in your study—" murmured the Bounder.

He came towards Prout with the lines, taking care that the other beaks would be able to see them as he held them out on view.

There was a sudden gasp from Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second. He was the first to spot the lines on the Bounder's paper.

Twigg stared at that paper with such a mesmerised stare that the other beaks standing round Prout all stared at it, too.

Five or six pairs of masters' eyes saw that precious impot before the Bounder reached Prout.

Prout held out a plump hand for it.

"You may give me your lines, Vernon-Smith!" he said. "But do not bring impositions to this room again."

"Very well, sir!"

Prout took the lines. He did not look at them immediately, however, as he was surprised by the extraordinary expressions on the faces round him.

He glanced round the circle. Grins were dawning on those faces—grins repressed with great difficulty.

Capper turned away his face to hide his emotions. Twigg gurgled. Wiggins barely succeeded in changing a chuckle into a cough in time. Monsieur Charpentier ejaculated "Mon Dieu! Ce garçon! Mon Dieu!"

Prout stared.

Why this sudden fit of merriment had seized on the masters he did not know. However, he was soon to know!

He started. His eyes almost bulged from his plump face as he read:

"Man, vain man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before
high heaven,
As make the angels weep!"

For some seconds Prout stood thunderstruck, gazing at those lines. Smithy, having handed them over, was retreating to the door. He had almost reached it when Prout's voice boomed out:

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Come here!"

The Bounder came back. He was perfectly cool under the sea of eyes fixed on him. Prout's face was purple.

He held the lines in his left hand and tapped them with the forefinger of his right, his glare almost boring into the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith! What—what is this?"

"I gave you fifty lines of Latin—"

"You did not say Latin, sir. Sometimes we are given lines in English, sir, in the Remove!" said Vernon-Smith meekly. "As you did not say—"

"How dare you be guilty of this impertinence, Vernon-Smith?" gasped Prout.

"Impertinence, sir!" repeated the Bounder, with a blank expression.

There was a sound of a suppressed chuckle outside the door.

"These insolent lines!" boomed Prout.

"Oh, sir! I did not make up those lines, sir! They are from Shakespeare, sir. Perhaps you have forgotten your Shakespeare, sir! Shall I fetch the book, sir?"

"This is intended as an act of insolence!" roared Mr. Prout.

"Oh, sir!" The Bounder tried to look as if butter would not melt in his mouth. "I—I hope you don't imagine,

sir, that the lines refer to you in any way, sir."

"Vernon-Smith!"

"How could they, sir?" asked the Bounder. "You weren't born when Shakespeare wrote them, sir—at least, I suppose you weren't, sir."

"Silence!" roared Prout.

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

"You may go to my study, Vernon-Smith! I shall follow you there! I shall flog you for this insolence, sir!" boomed Prout. He pitched the lines into the Common-room fire. "Go!"

"But, sir—"

"Go!" roared Prout.

Vernon-Smith went.

Prout glanced round at a circle of faces vainly striving to keep grave. He strode from the room after Vernon-Smith.

He was hardly outside when a sound of irrepressible merriment followed him from the Common-room. The beaks could contain themselves no longer. Even the sour Hacker was laughing over his sardines.

Prout's ears burned as he went. He glared at a crowd of Remove fellows in the passage.

"What are you juniors doing here?" he thundered. "Go to your Form-room at once, all of you—and write a hundred lines each!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Prout strode on. He disappeared after the Bounder. The Renovites looked at one another, grinning.

"A hundred lines each!" said Bob Cherry. "Well, it was worth it!"

"The worthfulness was terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Echoes of laughter reached Prout's burning ears as he rolled on to the Head's study after Vernon-Smith. All the masters and all the Remove were enjoying the Bounder's impudent jest; he knew that.

The Renovites chuckled and chortled as they went to their Form-room to do their lines. They felt that the jest was worth it, as Bob Cherry declared. Only the Bounder, perhaps, doubted a little whether it was worth it—when Prout was done with him!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sacked!

BOB CHERRY jumped.

"Oh, my hat!" he breathed.

There was a footstep at the door of Loder's study in the Sixth.

That, of course, would not have mattered to Bob—but for the rather unfortunate circumstance that he was inside that particular study!

Bob was standing in the bed alcove. In his hands was a grimy sack—empty! It had contained soot!

(Continued on next page.)

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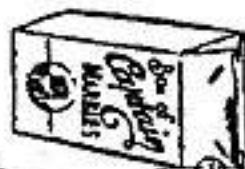
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The soot was now nicely placed in the middle of Loder's bed, nicely covered up by the bedclothes, all ready for Loder to slip into when he went to bed that night!

So far all was well! But it was at that point that Bob's luck failed him. He was turning away from the bed, having got on with the good work and finished it, when he heard Loder's step at the door.

Escape was impossible! There was only one thing Bob could do—and that was to draw the bed curtain shut to screen him off from the study.

He was screened from view when Gerald Loder walked in and switched on the light.

Bob hardly breathed. If Loder discovered him there, with the sooty sack in his possession, the result of that jape on the bully of the Sixth was likely to be more painful for Bob than for Loder.

Loder, however, seemed to have no suspicion that anyone was in the study. He threw the door shut, and sat down in his armchair, and the next moment the scent of a cigarette reached Bob in his hiding-place.

Mr. Prout probably would have lost some of his faith in that dutiful prefect could he have seen Loder smoking in his study!

The cigarette was followed by another, and another! There was a rustle of a paper! Bob Cherry peered out cautiously between the curtains that screened the alcove. Loder, sitting in his chair, had his back to him; the top of his head visible over the chair back. Bob could see the title of the paper he was reading—the "Racing Tipster."

The new head prefect of Greyfriars School was deeply engrossed in that enthralling periodical.

Bob shook a fist at the back of Loder's unconscious head!

Loder evidently had come to stay! Bob could see Loder's clock on the mantelpiece, and it indicated twenty-five minutes past nine. Five minutes more and the Remove had to be at their dormitory!

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bob inaudibly. He rather wished now that he had not

thought of that jape on Gerald Loder, or, alternatively, as the lawyers say, that he had left it till a safer occasion.

It was rather too late to think of that now!

Two more minutes passed, but Gerald Loder was still a fixture! And Carne of the Sixth, who was seeing lights out for the Remove that night, would miss Bob from their ranks in three minutes more!

Bob breathed hard! He was getting desperate now! To steal silently from the room was impossible—Loder would hear him, and turn his head! And if he saw him—

Silently, Bob Cherry stepped through the opening between the bed-curtains, behind Loder's chair. The grimy sack was in his hands—the open end downward!

On tiptoe, he stepped closer to the new head prefect of Greyfriars till he was standing behind his chair!

Cautious as he was, some faint sound must have reached Loder, for he laid the paper on his knees and began to turn his head.

Even as he started turning it, the open end of the sack descended on it, engulfing Loder!

There was a startled gasp from the bully of the Sixth! He fairly bounded. As he jumped, Bob dragged the sack lower over him, and Loder's arms were imprisoned inside. There was a cord round the neck of the sack, and with a jerk Bob drew it taut, and knotted it, while Loder lurched and swayed and gurgled within the sooty sack.

"Urrrgh!" came in choking accents from the sack. "Wurrgh! Grugggh!"

Bob did not stay to listen. One bound carried him to the door—another into the passage—and in a fleeting second he was round the nearest corner.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in great relief, as the breathless junior joined the Remove at the foot of the big staircase.

"Here we are, here we are, here we are again!" chuckled Bob.

"Did you—" began Nugent.

"Hark!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What the thump—"

"Urrrgh! Gurrgh! Help! Wurrghgh!" came a sound of horrible gurgling and gasping, from the direction of the Sixth Form studies.

There was a rush in that direction. From Loder's doorway a strange figure came staggering.

From the top of the head as far down as the knees it was clad in an inverted sack, from which a cloud of soot rose, as the hidden figure within struggled.

"Who? What! Which?" gasped the Bounder.

"Who the dickens—"

"What the thump—"

"Urrrgh! Gurrgh!" Loder staggered wildly along the passage. "Let me out! Get me loose! I'm chook-chook-chook-choking! Gruuugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's Loder!" roared Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrgh! Wurrgh! I'm siff-soff-suffocating! Wurrgh! Will you get this thing off! Yuuuurrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder struggled and wriggled, and wrestled frantically in the sack. But with the cord tied round the neck of it, at his knees, he had no chance of getting out! Half Greyfriars swarmed on the scene, yelling with laughter.

Nobody seemed in a hurry to help Loder. His own pals, Carne and Walker, were yelling like the rest. Mr. Quelch came out of his study and stared on with grim disapproval. Mr. Prout rolled up and regarded the strange object with bulging eyes.

"What—what—what is this?" gasped Prout.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! What—"

"Urrrgh! Gurrgh! Let me out! I'm chick-chack-chook-choking! Gurrgh! You silly fools, lend me a hand! Wurrgh!"

"It—it—it is Loder!" gasped Prout, in amazement.

"Loder, are you out of your senses? Is this suitable conduct for a head prefect? Why have you played this absurd prank, Loder?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrgh! Oooooogh! Ooo-er!"

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

Prout gave them a thunderous glare.

"Go to your dormitory! Mr. Quelch, why are not your boys in their dormitory? Walker—Sykes—Bancroft—release Loder from that—that ridiculous position! He shall explain this to me! He shall explain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go!" roared Prout.

The Removites went roaring. It was quite a long time before eyes closed in the Remove dormitory that night! Chuckles and chorles ran from bed to bed.

No doubt Loder succeeded in explaining to Prout that it was not an "absurd prank" on his part, as that rather obtuse gentleman had at first supposed, for the next day he was as high in favour with the new headmaster of Greyfriars as ever! He had been the victim of a jape, as the juniors called it; of an unheard-of, unexampled, unprecedented, unparalleled outrage, outside the Remove, and the Remove kept their own counsel on the subject. It was going to be a troubled term for the Famous Five, but there was no doubt that Loder was going to get some of the trouble!

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Genial Mr. Jones !

H EARD the news, Jack? The highwayman's been up to his pranks again. Eased our parson of fifteen guineas and his gold seals last night. What do you think of that?"

Jack Lennard, having just come into the harness-room at the Black Boar, whistled softly.

"Phew! Where did this happen?"

"On Windyway Heath. Getting pretty close, isn't it? And the sixth robbery within the week," said Billy Jepp.

"Too close for my liking, Billy. Our folk are honest smugglers here, not gallows birds. Any clue? Can the parson describe him?"

"Yes. It was the fellow they call 'Captain Crimson' again—he recognised him from the colour of the velvet mask he wears," said the innkeeper's son. "I must give Mr. Jones warning, for he talks of leaving us to-morrow, and he carries a fat purse in his breeches pocket."

Jack Lennard seated himself on a wooden cornbin, and frowned thoughtfully.

"I wonder if Mr. Peter Jones has anything to do with this Captain Crimson?" he said. "He's been a bit of a mystery, you know, and they both turned up at the same time. Jones has stayed at the Boar ten days now; the first highway robbery took place the very night after he came, and there's been one nearly every night since!"

Billy Jepp laughed as he hung up the bridle he had been cleaning.

"What's put that maggot into your head, Jack? There's no mystery about the man. He makes no secret that he is expecting a friend from across the water—and now he tells my father that he can wait no longer, but must go back to London unless Ben Quy should chance to run in to-night and bring his friend with him. Mr. Jones is the pleasantest and best customer we've had for long enough."

"That's good hearing, Billy, and I shan't forget it when I go."

The words were spoken in a deep, bass voice, and Jack's ears grew scarlet as he turned to see Mr. Peter Jones filling up the doorway with his square-shouldered frame.

He saw a large man, with a frank, open face, tanned by the weather, though rather pockmarked, as were a

great many faces in those days. His hair, which he wore unpowdered, was very grey, although he could not have been much more than fifty.

For a moment Jack wondered how much he had overheard of their conversation, but Mr. Peter Jones' next remark soon put him at ease.

"I want to bespeak a chaise and pair for to-morrow afternoon, Billy," he said. "Unless, that is, Ben Quy should come in with his lugger in the meantime. I've waited so long for your bold smuggler that there seems as much chance of meeting him in the flesh as there is of seeing the wonderful Hickerman they talk about every night over there," and he jerked his head in the direction of the inn across the yard. "Any news of either of them?"

Billy Jepp laughed.

"None of Mr. Hickerman, sir, that's a sure thing. 'Tis over a month since we heard he was coming to take charge of the Excise at Widewater and going to do such great things. As for Ben Quy, the smuggler, we never know when he is here until we see him. But if you go to-morrow, sir, I warn you to have a care upon the road. There is a rascally highwayman recently come about these parts where none have been seen for five years and more."

"I thank you, Billy, but I have a little persuader which I never travel without. Nay, I have a brace of them," and he drew a silver-mounted pistol half out of his skirt pocket, letting it drop back again, with a confident chuckle. "The chaise for three o'clock, remember, and now to see whether they have brewed that bowl of punch."

Jack Lennard pulled a wry face as Mr. Peter Jones crossed the cobbled yard to the door of the inn parlour which was under the archway.

"Good job he wasn't half a minute sooner! I never heard him coming," he grinned.

"Nor I, but all things happen for the best, as father's so fond of saying," answered Billy. "I hope old Ben does bring the gentleman before he goes. How is the tide?"

The two boys walked to the window. Through the diamond panes the setting

sun gleamed on the winding reaches of the wide tidal river flowing lazily seaward, past the flat Essex marshes where cattle grazed, and where tall, tufted elms flung long lines of shadow across the water-meadows.

There were patches of gold and purple on the wet mudbanks, and some white-winged gulls circled about the big channel posts standing like silent sentinels marking the fairway.

Everything seemed so still and peaceful that a stranger might have thought Widewater the very end of the earth, where nothing ever happened. But strangers do not know everything, and that quiet little town was a veritable hotbed of smuggling, with old Ben Quy, and young Tom Roke, the most daring of them all.

"Free trade," they called it when George II was king, and for long enough after, and that winding Essex river with its countless hiding-places in the creeks was a rare place for "free trade!"

They were all in it, in those days, from the parson to the postboy, the squire included. Even worthy Dr. Lennard, when he found a small cask of Nantz brandy hidden in the garden of his white gabled house, asked no questions, but rolled the keg into his cellar—when it was dark!

"Low-tide in another hour. Ben won't be here much short of midnight, and it's a mercy that Hickerman has not shown his ugly nose, after all, for it'll be full moon at eleven o'clock," said Billy.

"But what about the dragoons?" queried Jack in a whisper, having had a lesson in caution.

Billy Jepp laughed scornfully. "Not much fear of them, old fellow; they'll be all abed and the half of them drunk by that time. Tom's made friends with the troop, and when our Excise Officer does arrive at last the redcoats won't be over keen to help him with his job, I warrant you!"

The Message !

T HE parlour at the Black Boar struck snug and warm as Mr. Peter Jones entered it. The candles were already lit, and a wood fire crackled on the hearth.

"Heigh-ho, gentlemen! But I shall

be right sorry to leave this place and your pleasant company," said the brawny Jones with a smile and a sigh as he looked round the low-beamed room. On the high settle, at right angles to the chimney corner, sat a dragoon officer, his scarlet coat and yellow facings making a bright spot of colour as he lolled, with his jack-booted legs stretched out to the blaze.

"And we shall miss you also, sir, for I have come to regard our game at chess as a thing to look forward to," said Dr. Lennard heartily from his accustomed place, where, every evening found him seated, with a lighted taper beside the long churchwarden with his name written on the bowl, and a tankard forthcoming without any necessity for him to order it.

So far, on that particular evening, all the talk had run on the mysterious highwayman who had disturbed the district of late, but the entry of Peter Jones struck a new note.

"Do you seriously mean to go to-morrow, sir?" said Mr. Falcon, the retired East India merchant who lived at the Abbey, half a mile up the river bank.

"Unless my friend comes to-night I have no alternative," nodded Mr. Jones.

There was an odd little twinkle in the doctor's eyes as he relit his pipe.

Jack's father had been an Army surgeon during the rebellion of 1715, and he had a shrewd suspicion at the back of his mind that Peter Jones' belated friend might be a Jacobite agent; for those gentry sometimes availed themselves of the smuggler's luggers, and rumour had it that the Young Pretender was preparing an adventure against the peace of the realm.

It was so far all hearsay, but the doctor, being a very loyal subject of King George, had made several attempts to draw Mr. Jones, and the closer that gentleman proved about his own private affairs, the more convinced was Dr. Lennard that his suspicions were correct.

Still, he liked the man, and he played a strong game of chess, and his regret at the impending departure was perfectly genuine.

Just then a delicious odour of hot punch and lemons wafted across the parlour, and the landlord, in ample white shirt, and long, flapped waistcoat, brought in the steaming bowl and set it on the table.

"Ha! Jepp, my good friend, not the worst of the memories I shall carry away with me will be the fragrance of your wonderful brew!" cried Mr. Jones, smacking his lips. "Another glass for Mr. Falcon, Jepp, and let Nancy bring the chessmen. The doctor and I must have a last trial of strength before I go."

"With all my heart!" cried the doctor. Then, as pretty Nancy laid the chess-board beside the blue bowl, he began to place the pieces in position.

They were well matched players, and as they settled down to their game nobody spoke.

Mr. Falcon, his hands resting on the silver knob of his ebony walking-staff, watched the board with keen interest, while honest Joe Jepp stood looking on, his pipe in full blast.

"Check!" said the doctor, breaking the silence.

As Dr. Lennard spoke the door opened and Tom Roke, the smuggler, entered. In his short blue jacket and white petticoat breeches, he was a good-

looking young man, wearing gold rings in his ears, and at sight of him pretty Nancy's face brightened.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Tom Roke. "News of sorts for you, Mr. Jones. Ben Quy's lying off Bradwell Point at last."

The chess-player gripped the arms of his chair. He was obviously excited.

"Oh, there's no hurry, sir," smiled Tom. "The wind's blowing dead in his teeth, and he'll wait for the tide to 'make' before he starts to beat up against it. He won't reach the Island this side o' three hours, so you'll finish your game, and to spare."

"It looks as though it will be done long before that," said the chess-player, countering the doctor's strong attack, with a breath of relief. "What, never leaving us so early, Mr. Falcon?"

"Yes. I am afraid I must," said the elderly merchant, rising. "But before I go, I wonder would you grant me a very special favour. To-morrow you will pass very close to the East India House, in Leadenhall Street, and if you would take charge of a packet for me I should count myself your debtor. Is it asking too much of our short acquaintance, Mr. Jones?"

"My good sir, I shall be delighted. I am honoured by your confidence, Mr. Falcon," cried Jones, clasping the old gentleman's outstretched hand warmly. "I promise you need have no fear that the rascally highwayman will ease me of your packet, for I carry a couple of pills which would do the rogue more good than any the doctor ever compounded!" and he tapped his pocket, a little boastfully, perhaps.

"The packet I will send over by my servant in the morning," said Mr. Falcon, rising stiffly by the aid of his walking-staff, for he was slightly lame. "When next you come into these parts I trust you may see this Captain Crimson hanging on his gibbet."

"Amen to that, and good night to you, sir," laughed Mr. Peter Jones, ladling more punch into the glasses, and resuming his survey of the chess-board.

Beyond the red curtain above the wainscot partition dividing the parlour from the common-room, farmhands, sailormen, and dragoons were drinking and talking. Tom Roke drew the end of the curtain aside, making a sign to one of the sailors, who caught his eye and nodded.

It was only a lift of the brow, but the man understood and passed a silent whisper round that there would be work for them that night.

Then the young smuggler, after a quick glance at the dragoon officer, retired to a corner with his mug, until, on the stroke of eight, he walked across the sanded floor to the stable yard. There he stood for a moment looking up at the sky.

The wind had freshened, and great clouds were struggling for mastery with the full moon, which sometimes shone out with extraordinary brilliance and was obscured the next moment.

"Not the best o' nights for 'free traders,'" he muttered, "but we must do what we can," and he smiled confidently as he crossed the yard towards the light shining through the stable door.

Jack was admiring a bay mare which old man Jepp, the landlord, had recently bought for his own riding while Billy held a horn lantern, the

better to show off her points when Tom Roke joined them.

"Ben Quy's off Bradwell Point," he said in a low voice. "How are we going to pass the word to Betty Loop's without these infernal soldiers getting wind of it?"

"I'll go!" gulped Jack, suddenly hoarse with excitement. "Let me have the mare, Billy, and I can be back inside an hour!"

"You could have the mare right enough, old man, but what about this high-toby fellow? Suppose you meet Captain Crimson; how then?"

"Well, I suppose I should meet him, that's all. He wouldn't stop me when he found I wasn't worth robbing. What do you say, Tom?"

"You're a good plucked 'un, Master Jack, there's no denying it, but the doctor's a J.P. and he'd have something to say if it came out that you'd been helping the free traders!" replied Roke. "I should have tipped the wink to one of the post-boys, but they're all over yonder, mixed up with the dragoons."

"The more reason why I should start before the redcoats finish their liquor and think of turning in," urged the eager boy. "I can slip out by the little door on to the marsh, and not a soul the wiser!"

"I think maybe he's right," said the smuggler, glancing cautiously round. "I don't know where Ben means to run in, but if Betty Loop tells the lads to bring the horses as far as Burnt Mill by eleven of the clock we shall know by then and show 'em a light. What do you say, Billy?"

"I'd go with him myself, only someone might smell a rat if they found nobody in the stables," replied Billy. But Jack had already darted into the harness-room, and in five minutes he was off and away!

A Timely Warning!

THE door in the old brick wall of the stable closed gently behind him as Jack Lennard walked his mount over the spongy ground.

When he had passed the last straggling cottage and opened a gate on to the highway, there would be six miles between him and Buckthorpe, but he knew every inch of the lonely road. As he checked the mare, his heart bounded with the joy of that unexpected night ride.

"Steady, little lady!" he whispered, bending down to slip the link of chain from the gate-staple.

Then he put the horse into a canter along the grassy verge of the lane, the strong wind blowing in his face, and lifting the brown hair about his ears.

Away to the left, a light twinkled here and there in the town of Widewater strung out along the crest of a hill above the river; but he was striking inland, and the feathery elms bordering the lane soon hid all sign of human habitation.

For a considerable distance the great tree-trunks made an avenue of the road; a gloomy tunnel, stabbed by shafts of light every time the moon sailed clear of the clouds.

Jack was glad of the moon's help when he reached Windyway Heath, for it showed him the wide stretch of desolate country, overgrown with gorse, and bracken. The lane forked there, one branch crossing the heath to the London road, the other—which he must follow—becoming little more than a sandy track

The chess-players looked up from their game as Tom Roke entered the room. "News for you, sir," said the young smuggler. "Ben Quay's lugger, with cargo of contraband, is lying off Bradwell Point!"

along a high hedge of nut bushes leading to Buckthorpe.

As he came out of the gloom of the lane and into the full glare of the moonshine Jack could not keep back a gasp of relief to see nothing stirring in front of him, and the top of Buckthorpe steeple peeping above the ridge, only a mile and a half away now.

Nevertheless, the sound of his own voice was company as he cried "Hi, hoop, my beauty!" and pressed the bay mare into a hand gallop.

A clump of silver birches showed ahead, near the entrance to a disused sandpit, and it was there that Jack Lennard's back suddenly went all goose-flesh.

"Stand!" came a stern command, accompanied by a curious glint that could only have been the moon on a polished pistol barrel.

As Jack pulled the bay up in her own length, he saw a mounted figure barring the way in the shadow of the trees.

He was no coward, but all the same there was a tremulous quaver in his voice as he blurted out the first words that occurred to him.

"It's no good staying me, sir, for I haven't a penny in my pockets!" he cried.

The other lowered his weapon.

"I do not waste my time easing youngsters of their pence, Master Lennard," he laughed, and the voice was strangely refined, if not friendly. "I want a word with you, young fellow-my-lad, to which you will do well to listen."

Jack remembered the reports that had passed through the town about the strange highwayman; how he was said to speak like a man of education, and had even quoted Latin while he took the parson's purse. He felt his courage returning.

"Now," said the highwayman, "if I might hazard a guess, you are on your way to a certain alehouse kept by one Betty Loop, and your business concerns the Free Traders, of Widewater. Am I right?"

"You are, indeed, sir—but how you should know beats me!"

"A good deal will beat you, boy, before you are my age!" laughed the highwayman again. "And not the least surprise of your short life will be the thing I am going to tell you now. When you return home, take this message to your smuggler friends from 'Captain Crimson.' Tell them that Mr. Peter Jones is the redoubtable Dan Hickerman, the Revenue Officer, they are expecting, after all, and that forewarned is forearmed! Yes, I thought you would start, and the sooner you are at Betty Loop's, the better. So good-night to you, Master Lennard, and see you make good use of your knowledge!"

Too amazed to find words, Jack stared open-mouthed at the speaker, who, slipping his pistol into its holster again, waved a hand in farewell as he struck across the heath at a quick trot.

The last thing the boy saw was the gleam of the black horse's white heels in the moonlight. Then the gorse bushes hid them, and his own brain began to work rapidly.

"Egad, this is mighty serious!" he thought. "I wish Billy Jepp were here, for I don't know what to do for the best, and Ben Quay's running into danger every minute."

Urging his mare into a gallop, Jack



was not long in reaching Betty Loop's alehouse. Betty's nephew, Dick, met him at the door.

"I have come from Tom Roke," said Jack, and he gave the message, adding on his own account: "Remember, the men must not stir from Burnt Mill without word. There may be danger to-night. Also, Ben Quay's cargo ought to be a heavy one, so bring plenty of helpers."

"Rest easy on that score, Master Jack. I'll see to that; but surely you'll breathe the mare before you go back? There's time and to spare."

"Not for me," said Jack. "I am returning now—good-night!"

And he left Dick Loop staring after him with a puzzled look on his cunning face.

The bay was in a white lather when Jack flung himself out of the saddle in the shadow of the stable wall in Widewater, opened the door, and led her in, after cautiously reconnoitring through the big keyhole beforehand.

"You're soon back," said Billy, as he and Roke came from the harness-room at the sound of hoofs. "What's happened?"

Jack delivered the highwayman's message in a thrilling whisper, and consternation was mirrored in their faces.

"Lud! The dirty dog!" cried Tom Roke. "We must show the warning signal to Ben Quay at once, and Jake Woodcraft shall pull down stream to warn him should he run up this side of the island."

"Wait!" said Jack, catching Tom Roke by the sleeve. "I have a better plan than that. It all came to me on the ride back," and, as he poured out his scheme, their expression of blank dismay gave place to one of admiration and delight.

"Odzooks, 'tis worth the trying, with the 'porters' already on their way to Burnt Mill!" said Roke hoarsely. "Always supposing, though, that he takes the bait!"

"He'll swallow it! Leave that to

me! But we're wasting precious time standing here," whispered Jack. "Set the warning light for Ben, and I'll lead Hickerman off on a false scent."

Off went the trio to the harness-room to light a lantern. Then they passed to the other end of the long stable.

That end of the building faced directly down-stream, and in the middle of the red-brick gable was a narrow opening.

Billy set the lantern inside the opening as he had done many a time and oft, knowing that, while sharp eyes on the water would see and understand, it would be invisible from the marsh.

"Hallo!" cried Tom Roke. "We're only just in time, for yonder be Ben's blue light showing off the tail of the island!"

Then three times he hid the candle flame with his hand, repeating the process again and again, until it was answered from the approaching lugger, whose light turned from blue to white.

"They've seen us, and he'll run up this side of the island. That means he'll drop his hook in the mud off Decoy Point in less than an hour!" chuckled Tom, excitedly. "Now, Master Jack, all rests with you. If you fail, Ben Quay runs a good chance of Chelmsford Gaol to-night!"

Jack's Ruse!

"CHECK-MATE!" cried Dr. Lennard suddenly, and not without a deep breath of relief, for the game had been a long one and the struggle hard. "Egad! You have me on the hip, doctor!" said Mr. Peter Jones, as he pushed back his chair.

As he did so he caught sight of something moving in the shadow between the end of the high settle and the street door, and saw Jack Lennard beckoning him with every sign of impatience.

Mr. Peter Jones rose slowly and stretched out his arms with a yawn.

"Let me have my reckoning, Jepp, when I return in a minute," he said as he went out.

Jack was waiting for him.

"Do you know who 'Captain Crimson' may be, sir?" was the boy's unexpected question.

"Odds life, and have you brought me out here to ask that, Jack? Never heard the rogue's name till I came to Widewater. What—have you seen the highwayman? Can we lay hands on him?"

"He stopped me on the road, sir, and gave me a message," replied Jack, with a perfectly straight face. "Ben Quy's lugger runs a cargo to-night, and Munden Creek is over yonder, Mr. Hickerman!"

"Zounds! What does this mean! How come you by my name, boy?" The man's hand fell heavily on Jack's shoulder.

"'Captain Crimson' gave it me, with the message, sir—and Munden Creek is a good five miles by the river bank!"

The large man seemed suddenly to swell and grow larger with importance.

"Not a word to a living soul!" he cried in a husky whisper. "Government will not forget you, boy, nor shall I!" And, lifting the latch, he went back to the parlour again in three strides, where he shook the sleeping dragoon officer.

"Get your men into the saddle as soon as possible!" he commanded.

The lieutenant, being a rather superior person in his own estimation, and rudely roused at that, looked up at him, ruffled.

"I take no orders from Mr. Peter Jones," he replied haughtily.

"No, but you take 'em from Dan Hickerman, and that's my name!" thundered the Excise Officer, to the

astonishment of the room. "In ten minutes we must be on the road, so look to it!"

Jack, lurking under the archway, rubbed his hands with silent glee as he watched the bustle at the big barn opposite the stables where the dragoons had their quarters. As soon as Hickerman and his party rode off, Jack joined Billy once more at the owl-hole!

"That you, Tom?"

"That's me, Ben." Roke deftly caught the coil of rope tossed to him in the darkness as old Ben Quy brought the Grey Gull alongside Decoy Point within a yard of the spot he had intended. "Much aboard, Ben?"

"Ay, lad, were loaded a'most to gunwale top, an' I hope you've brought plenty o' help. It's brandy and tea for the most part, and I don't trust yon moon, though she's hid her face this last hour. Coast clear?"

Tom laughed.

"Clear enough for a bit. But the news'll keep."

A low whistle from Roke brought the banktop alive with waiting men, and behind them came the muffled trampling of many horses.

Everyone seemed to know exactly what to do, though it was very dark. With surprisingly little noise the ankers of brandy were passed from hand to hand and slung on the horses.

Then came the tin cases of tea. None worked harder unloading than Jack and Billy.

At last the final load was handled, and the string of horses melted away into the darkness, every man the richer

by half-a-guinea and a dollop of tea for his night's work. Last of all, the Grey Gull was towed to her moorings fifty yards from the back of the inn.

Ten minutes later, Tom Roke and Ben Quy, a wizened old man with one eye, were the only occupants of the Grey Gull's parlour when the door was flung noisily open, and an angry booted figure strode in with an oath.

"My name's Daniel Hickerman!" he announced with a growl like thunder.

"Mine's Quy, and pleased to make your honour's acquaintance," said the old man, placidly puffing at his Dutch pipe.

"You'll not be so pleased one of these days. I suppose those are the masts of your lugger over the top of the wall there, and it's about as much use searching her now as trying to lay hands on your accomplice, this 'Captain Crimson,' who lured me on a false scent, the artful scoundrel! I'd give the ears from my head to meet him face to face!"

Old man Quy's mahogany visage wrinkled into a quiet smile.

"When you do, may you have better luck than you've had to-night, Mr. Hickerman," he said, a twinkle in that one eye of his. "We Essex calves may be a bit slow, in a manner o' speakin', but you'll find we're a mort quicker than your dragoons—after dark!"

(Who is this mysterious highwayman, "Captain Crimson"? And for what reason has he befriended the smugglers of Widewater? You'll learn lots more about this amazing character in next Saturday's bumper FREE GIFT NUMBER of the MAGNET. See that you order your copy EARLY!)



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THE S.S.S. SERVICE

Our S.S.S. Private Inquiry Service will supply information about anything and anyone at Greyfriars. Special low rates for reporting private conversations, opening other people's letters, eavesdropping, etc., etc.—Messrs. SKINNER, SNOOP & STOTT, Study No. 11.



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 105 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 6th, 1934.

WHY BE THIN?

A good figure guaranteed by my new, body-building health course. Why be a measly, little, skinny fellow when you can build yourself up into a fine, manly, upstanding chap like me? Full course of instruction in correct eating, sleeping, and figure developing.—W. G. BUNTER, Study No. 7.

GETTING AWAY WITH IT!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Yow-ow-ow! Yarooooo!" The doleful cries came from the lips of Jack Jolly as he staggered into his study in the Fourth passidgo at St. Sam's. Jack Jolly's chums, Merry and Bright and Frank Fearless, looked up simperthetically.

"Has the Head been wacking you, old chap?" asked Frank Fearless. "Ow! Yes!" gasped Jack Jolly. "He birched me nearly black and blew—and calmly told me it was because he had just received a summons for his income-tacks and felt like taking it out of someone!"

"Grate pip!" cried Merry and Bright. Frank Fearless' handsome dial darkened.

"He ought to be made to set up for playing such a caddish trick!" he declared; then, with a sudden grin: "My hat! I believe I know how we can make him sit up, too! You know how keen the Head is on playing leap-frog?"

"He can never resist joining in a game, I know," said Jack Jolly, as he tenderly rubbed his injured anattermy. "But what about it?"

"Just this," said Frank Fearless. "My pater is dew to arrive here in about ten minnits time and the Head is awfully keen on impressing him favorably because he's so welthy. If the pater catches the Head playing leap-frog, the Head will never forgive himself!"

"But how are we to get the Head to play leap-frog?" asked Merry.

"Simply by playing leap-frog ourselves under his winder," grinned Fearless. "He duzzent know the pater's coming, and he'll never suspect we're having him on a bit of string. As soon as he sees us playing, he'll fall for it like a lamb—and won't he feel sheepish when my pater turns up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Not a bad wheeze," acknowledged Jack Jolly, with a rye smile. "I'd like to see the old hunks caught playing leap-frog by a stern martinett like your pater. But I don't feel like playing myself."

"All serene, old chap! You can stand by and watch the fun! Let's trot down and see how the skeem werks!"

The chums of the Fourth went down out of the Skool House, grinning all over their dials. While Jack Jolly stood by, watching, the rest started a vigorous game of leap-frog under the Head's winder.

In less than a minnit, the winder was flung open and Dr. Birchermall's skollerly fizz showed itself.

"I see you're playing leap-frog, boys!" he called out. "Any objection to my joining in?"

"Not the slitest, sir!" shouted back Frank Fearless, with a wink at the others. "You're as welcome as the flowers in May!"

"Good egg!" grinned the Head. "I'll be down in half-a-jiffy—possibly sooner!"

Dr. Birchermall was as good as his word. In half-a-jiffy he was down in the quad, joining in the game with a zest. The quad was soon wringing to his merry quips and harty larfter.

"Tuck in your tuppennies, boys! Make a back there, Fearless! Keep in your elbows, Bright!"



Just when the fun was at its hite, there was a clattering and a banging up the carriage-drive, and a powerful Rolls-Rice suddenly swept into view. From out of the corner of his eye, Frank Fearless reckernised the stern fizz of his respected pater, Mr. Ferdinand Fearless; but he didn't say a word to the Head.

The Rolls-Rice, with a last deffening egg-splasion, came to a stop. A moment later, to his dumbfounded horror, the Head herd the culchered tones of Mr. Ferdinand Fearless. "Dr. Birchermall—sir! What is the meaning of this here?"

"Grate pip! It's Mr. Fearless!" cried the Head, hastily ceasing his horseplay.

For a moment he was agerst, and Jack Jolly & Co. nearly bust themselves larfing at the comical egg-splasion of dismay on his dial.

But that was only for a moment. The Head was not often caught napping for long, and it wasn't long before he found a way out of his difficulty on this occasion.

Going up to Fearless' pater he shook him warmly by the hand.

"Welcome to St. Sam's, Mr. Fearless!" he cried. "Thank heven you have come, sir! You are just in time to break the spell!"

"May I ask what the thump you are talking about, sir?" inkwired Mr. Fearless, in his dignified way. "If I mite say so, Dr. Birchermall, I am simply disgusted to find you playing a juvenile game with my son and his friends. If that is the spell you refer to—"

"It is, sir," broke in the Head eagerly. "As I say, you were just in time to break it. The fact is, Mr. Fearless, I have been hip-notised!"

"What?"

"That yung villan, Jolly, whom you see there," said the Head, jerking his thumb in

(Continued on next column.)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Playing for the Remove against the Upper Fourth, Bolsover major lost his temper and hacked Temple badly on the shin. Harry Wharton called a halt—while the rest of the Remove team "frog's-marched" Bolsover round the field. Remove then resumed with ten men—and won!



When young Jack Wingate was "bumped" in the quad by Dicky Nugent and Co. for smoking behind the woodshed, George Wingate, of the Sixth, passed close, but affected to see nothing. Wingate is very fond of his rather wayward "minor"—but he does not believe in favouritism!



Alonzo Todd is an extremely cautious fellow, and he has already begun gargling to keep away the flu. His cousin, Peter Todd, never troubles trouble till trouble troubles him—and he has surprisingly few troubles—excepting, of course, his study-mate, BUNTER!



When the Remove played the village team run by Dick Trumper on Courtfield Common they found the pitch considerably bumpier than Little Side! Greyfriars settled down swiftly, however, and Nugent headed the deciding goal. Rough luck for Trumper's men—but a gallant win for the Remove!



When Tom Redwing saw a swimmer in trouble in Pegg Bay, he dived in, without hesitation, and succeeded in dragging the swimmer ashore, where he revived him with artificial respiration. Redwing modestly hastened back to Greyfriars, refusing to be regarded as a hero.



Perseverance gained a scholarship for Mark Linley, and the Lancashire lad has the happy knack of carrying his perseverance to the football field. When Greyfriars had only nine men left through injuries, Linley helped to hold the fort, and scored the winning goal two minutes from time!

Inky's Birthday Guide:

This Week: CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE

The first pointful feature that emerges come-outfully from the starful horoscope of the esteemed Temple is his fearful and preposterous vainfulness. The pridefulness of the honoured and fatheaded peacock is feabitefully small compared with that of Temple!

The life of an honoured and idiotic male mannequin would be the esteemed and proper caper for our poshful chum, I fancy. But the stars have ordered differently, for Temple

is destined to cherish the blissful illusion that he is a brainfully powerful Intellectual. Alas! The brainfulness, I fear, is not so terrific as the esteemed and fatheaded Temple fondly imagines!

The esteemed Temple may, at any rate, rely on a happy future. He will always be no-endfully pleased with himself and everything he does, regardless of otherful opinions. Furthermore, apart from his footling pridefulness, he is an esteemed and quite capable fellow, and diefully straight.

(Continued from previous column.)

the direction of the kaptin of the Fourth, "is an accomplished hipnotist, who, when he catches a man unawares, can compel him to do his every bidding!"

"My hat!" said Mr. Fearless in astonishment. "Is that a fact?"

"Honner bright!" said the Head seriously. "Natcherally, as the revered and majestic headmaster of a grate skool like St. Sam's, I wouldn't dream of playing leap-frog of my own free will. But there are times when any man is liable to fall under the spell of a hipnotist. This is one of them!"

"Grate pip!"

"Now that the spell is broken," grinned Dr. Birchermall, "I am a free agent again and can give the disrespectful yung raskal the thrashing he so richly deserves, which I shall do immediately you go. In the meantime, dear Mr. Fearless, I hope you will axcept my egg-splasion of the unforchunit position in which you find me and wipe out the incident completely from your memory!"

"With plezzure, my dear sir!" cried Mr. Fearless, frowning very severely upon Jack Jolly. "Pray conduct me into the House. I will see you later, Frank!"

"This way, sir!" grinned Dr. Birchermall. And he linked arms with the honored guest and led him away, poking out his tang at the crestfallen juniors as he did so.

Once again in the face of unprezidentod odds, Dr. Birchermall had suzzeeded in Getting Away With It!

S. Q. I. Field writes:

MY PUNNIEST STORY

"WHARTON-nuisance!" cried the young lady WALKER from the bunshop, as a BULSTRODE across the FIELD towards her. "I shall have to SNOOP along carefully. I don't mind so long as he KIPPS his distance, but I shall simply hate it if he BOLSOVER the hedge before I get across."

And she walked on as though she'd a LODER trouble on her mind, for she was a nervous lady, and the mere sight of a BULL was sufficient to TURNER GREENE.

But when the BULL started to TROTTER-long more quickly, she was too scared TREMAINE any longer and began to HOP HI up a tree. A moment later, the beast charged so hard that he made the TRELUC.

"I CARNE put up with this!" cried the lady, who was frightened she'd fall DOONE. "This is MORGAN I can endure!"

Just then, a NUGENT named Gerald Tomlin saw her plight from the road and, with a BLAND smile, got out of his CARR.

He runs to the rescue, with a CHERRY smile on his face, HAMMERSLEY BULL with a spanner and makes it BOLTER-way.

"HURREE!" SINGH out he and the lady together, and they soon POPPER-cross the FIELD to safety once more.

So the LASCELLES buns in the bunshop still, while, as for her rescuer, she greatly ad-MYERS him!

MY TEST OF THE "MAGNET" SIX-SHOOTER

By PAUL PROUT, M.A.



By the courtesy of the Editor of the MAGNET I have just been privileged to inspect the six-shooter which is being presented to every reader next week. He asked for my expert opinion on it, and I may say at once that he could not have submitted it to a man more qualified to express an opinion than myself. As one who has shot grizzlies in the Rockies, rabbits in Friardale Woods, and clay pipes at the fair on Courtfield Common, I make bold to say that what I don't know about firearms is not worth knowing!

Let me say at once that the MAGNET Six-shooter fills me with the greatest admiration for its inventor, and for those who are introducing it to the public.

If it were proposed to distribute real six-shooters in this indiscriminate fashion, I should set my face sternly against it. A six-shooter in the hands of a man like myself presents no danger to the public. When I fire at a partridge, I am not in the least likely to hit any of the spectators, providing they stand at the back of me.

But there is no danger whatever in the MAGNET Six-Shooter—yet, at the same time, it provides the youth of this country with an opportunity of practising marksmanship.

I have watched Wharton and one or two other Remove boys at practice with the six-shooter, and already they appear to have become quite accomplished shots.

And now, I will take this opportunity of indulging in a few reminiscences concerning my hunting days in the Rockies.

(Sorry, sir, but all space is booked up for the rest of the Term!—Ed.)

THE PHANTOM UKULELE

By H. VERNON-SMITH

You all know what the music of the ukulele sounds like. There's a sort of divine quality about its dulcet, throbbing, plaintive notes. There's something about its murmuring melody that brings a lump into your throat and makes you think of home and mother. And all that sort of thing.

At least, that's what Dick Rake would have you believe. He brought back a uke from his summer hols, and he hasn't stopped strumming on it since—until last night.

Last night I asked him to step into my study.

"Have you ever heard of the Phantom Ukulele?" I asked him, having closed the door.

"No, but I'd love to," Rake said eagerly. "I'm rather keen on ukuleles since a cousin of mine gave me my one during the vac. Possibly you've heard me playing it?"

"I fancy I have at times," I said, suppressing, with a mighty effort, an inclination to bash him on the napper with the study clock. "But I can't think that your efforts bring out anything like the heavenly strains I hear every evening on this Phantom Ukulele. Listen! It's playing now!"

There it was! The faint but unmistakable throbbing of a uke!

Rake listened in absolute wonderment. "Why, it's—it's marvellous!" he breathed.

"Whoever's playing it is a genius at it! What music! What melody!"

"Great, isn't it? How'd you like to be able to play like that?"

"I'd give almost anything," Rake said. "But who is it? It seems to be coming from outside the House."

"It is. I'll open the window and you'll see."

And I opened the window and Rake leaned out and looked upwards in the direction from which the sounds were coming.

And—would you believe it?—when he reappeared, all his enthusiasm for ukulele music seemed suddenly to have oozed out of him.

The discovery that the Phantom Ukulele was only the noise of a wireless aerial caught up in the guttering and plonking against a nail in the wind seemed to have put him off his stroke completely!

Somehow, I don't think we shall hear much more of Rake's ukulele.

Extraordinary, that a chap's passion for music can be so easily wiped out, isn't it?

KEEP OUT OF THE RUINS—

Around midnight next Monday! I, the Ghost of Greyfriars, will be taking my ghostly walk then—and woe betide anyone who sees me!

(Ignore this ad., chaps! We believe Loder has sent it in just to catch you out of bounds!—Ed.)

UP, THE REBELS!

No more injustice! Down with tyranny! Roll up in your thousands to George Tubb's great rebel meeting in the Third Form-room on Tuesday evening at 7.45, when plans will be discussed for a violent revolution!

N.B.—If you see any prefects or masters about, the meeting's off.