

"THE SECRET SEVEN!" THIS WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE STORY OF AN AMAZING... **SECRET SOCIETY at GREYFRIARS!**

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THE SECRET SEVEN!



—FEATURING HARRY WHARTON & CO., the CHUMS of GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Loder Going Strong!

“STAY where you are!”

“What for?” demanded Bob Cherry warmly.

“Because I tell you to,” said Loder of the Sixth calmly.

“We’ve got to get out to games practice, Loder,” said Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, quietly.

Loder smiled.

“You’ve got to stay where you are and hold your tongues,” he said genially. “And if you say another word I’ll give you six each all round.”

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove did not say another word.

It was no use “asking for it.”

They breathed hard and they looked daggers, but they did not answer the bully of Greyfriars.

It was sheer tyranny, of course; but since Gerald Loder had been captain of the school nobody expected anything else from him.

The five juniors were in Loder’s study. They had handed in lines. Naturally, they had expected to be told to go; instead of which, Loder ordered them to remain.

Why, they could not begin to guess. Loder could not possibly have liked their company any more than they liked his. If anything could have been deeper than their dislike for Loder it was Loder’s dislike for them.

They stood in a row between the table and the window, silent and savage. The days were drawing in towards November, and there was not a lot of time after class for games practice. They did not want to waste it hanging about in Loder’s study. But Loder,

these days, was monarch of all he surveyed, and there was no one to say him nay.

Loder and his pals Walker and Carne of the Sixth were seated at the table; they were all smiling, and seemed in great good humour. Loder had a football list in his hand, and seemed to have been discussing footer when the juniors came in with their impots. Now that Wingate and Gwynne were away Loder was the Great Panjandrum, so to speak, in football matters—which everybody outside his own limited circle of friends regarded as an utterly rotten state of affairs.

There was a footstep in the passage; a fat junior blinked in uneasily through a pair of large spectacles.

“I say, Loder—” he began.

“Come in, Bunter.”

Billy Bunter rolled in. He had lines for Loder. Seldom did a day pass now without a dozen fellows at least having lines for Loder.

“I—I say, I—I couldn’t help that smear,” mumbled Bunter, as he laid his impot on the table. “My sleeve went over it. As for the blots, Toddy jogged my arm—that’s how it was. I—I’ve been careful with it, Loder, really.”

Billy Bunter’s paper looked something like a map, something like a jigsaw puzzle, and something like spilt ink. Evidently the fat Owl of the Remove was in dread of being told to do it over again.

But Loder seemed unusually genial. “Leave it there,” he said, “and stand along with those fags.”

“Eh?”

“Getting deaf?” snapped Loder.

“Nunno! But, I—I say, it’s tea-time and—and—I mean it will soon be tea-time and—”

“Do you want to bend over?”

“Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter. “No fear!”

“Then do as I tell you—and shut up!” Billy Bunter added himself to the row of juniors at the window; he blinked at them through his big spectacles in wonder.

“I say, you fellows, what are we waiting here for?” he whispered.

“Ask me another!” grunted Johnny Bull.

“The knowfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter,” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Loder glanced round.

“Silence there!” he snapped.

There was silence again.

Two more Remove juniors came into the study. They were Herbert Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. Both had lines to deliver.

Smithy, as likely as not, deserved lines; Redwing certainly did not. But it was all the same to Loder. In exercising his powers as head prefect and captain of the school he was not bothered by any ideas about justice or fair play.

It was sufficient for Gerald Loder to have power in his hands for him to exercise it to the full.

Smithy and Redwing stared at the waiting half-dozen; they laid their lines on Loder’s table.

“Wait there, you two,” said Loder, with a gesture towards the waiting row of juniors.

“What on earth for?” demanded Smithy.

“Because I say so,” answered Loder coolly.

The Bunder’s eyes gleamed rebelliously, but Redwing took hold of his sleeve and drew him to the ranks of the waiters.

“What’s this game, you men?” muttered Vernon-Smith savagely.

"Loder loves us too much to part with us, I suppose," answered Bob Cherry. "We're so nice, you know!"

"You silly ass!" grunted Smithy.

"How long are we to wait here, Loder?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Until I tell you to go!" snapped Loder. "Shut up!"

There were eight fellows waiting now, and wondering why. Bully and tyrant as the new captain of Greyfriars was, this was rather a new thing, and they could not understand what the game was.

A few minutes later there was another tread in the passage; this time it was a heavier tread—that of a senior.

Loder, Walker and Carne exchanged grinning glances. This, apparently, was what they had been waiting for.

It was George Blundell of the Fifth Form who entered the study. The juniors gazed at him. He looked red and angry; something, it was clear, was "up."

Loder could hardly have given the captain of the Fifth Form lines. It was not that that brought him there. And it could not have been a friendly call; Blundell was far from friendly with Loder. Moreover, he was plainly in a hostile temper.

He strode up to Loder's table. "Look here, Loder—" he began hotly.

Loder did not "look there." He seemed to be busy with the football list in his hand; he ignored Blundell.

The juniors, looking on, understood that it pleased Loder to treat the Fifth Form man in an off-hand way. Blundell was a great man at games, a tremendous "blood"; much more important, in the eyes of Greyfriars, than Loder—or half a dozen Loders. Nevertheless, the power was in Loder's hands.

"I'm speaking to you, Loder!" rumbled Blundell.

Loder waved a hand at him. "Wait a minute," he drawled; "I'm rather busy."

"I haven't come here to wait a minute!"

"You will, all the same."

"What?"

"I'll attend to you in a minute; be quiet till then."

The expression that came over Blundell's face made the onlooking juniors smile. They liked Blundell, and they loathed Loder, but they could not help smiling, the Fifth Form man was so utterly taken aback. Walker winked at Carne, who laughed.

"Can we go now, Loder?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly.

It was dawning on him why the juniors had been told to remain. It was Loder's intention to humiliate the great man of the Fifth—and to "rub it in," as it were, by having fags present to see the process.

"Look here, Loder—" said Blundell, breathing hard.

Loder laid down the paper in his hand.

"Well, what is it?" he asked carelessly. "Cut it short; I'm busy!"

"About the football—"

"I don't remember asking you to see me about that."

"The match with St. Jim's—"

"Well, what about it?" exclaimed Loder impatiently. "I don't see that it concerns you, Blundell; but if you've got anything to say, get it off your chest."

"You've posted up the list of men who are going over to St. Jim's next Wednesday—"

"I know that."

"My name's not in it."

"I know that, too."

"Well, what does it mean?" Blundell seemed to be trying to keep

his temper, but not succeeding very well. "What does it mean, Loder? I'm in the first eleven—"

"You're not," answered Loder coolly. "Wingate would never have dreamed of leaving me out—"

"Is Wingate here now?" sneered Loder.

"Eh? No. You know he isn't, as he's been at home ever since he was crooked in that motor accident. What do you mean?"

"I mean that it's time you got it into your thick head that there's a new captain of Greyfriars. I mean that you're left out of the first eleven because I don't think much of your footer."

Blundell seemed hardly able to breathe. He was a big fellow, and he seemed to tower over Loder's table as he glared across it at the captain of the school.

"You—you—you don't think much of my footer!" he gasped. "You! What do you know about Soccer? You're a slacker at games, and a funk, too—and a fooling ass! You set yourself up to judge a man's form! You cheeky ass!"

"That's enough!" said Loder. "Another word like that, Blundell, and you'll be whopped."

Blundell started convulsively. "Whopped?" he repeated dazedly.

The juniors held their breath. In theory, at least, any man at Greyfriars was liable to be whopped by a

Now that he has sneaked into George Wingate's shoes as head prefect and captain of the school, Gerald Loder has high hopes of having all Greyfriars at his feet. But he little dreams of the powerful opposition of the mysterious "Secret Seven!"

prefect. But the bare idea of whopping the great and magnificent Blundell was enough to take a fellow's breath away.

Blundell, gazing across the table at Loder, seemed to have difficulty in breathing.

"Whopped?" he repeated. "Who's going to whop me? You! Why, I could take you in one hand and pitch you across your study. And your pals after you, too, by Jove! Whop me!"

Loder rose to his feet, picked up a cane from the table and pointed to a chair with it.

"Bend over, Blundell!" he said icily.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Shindy in the Sixth!

"BEND over!" Loder rapped the words at the captain of the Fifth as he might have rapped them at a fag of the Second Form.

He swished the cane.

Blundell gazed at him.

The juniors gazed at him.

Walker and Carne, hitherto amused by the scene, looked rather serious.

Loder was, no doubt, within his powers as head prefect, but he was stretching them to a rather perilous extent. George Blundell did not seem able to believe his ears. The amazement in his face was almost ludicrous.

"I'm waiting!" said Loder.

"You—you fancy I'm going to bend

over and take a whopping from you!" articulated Blundell, at last.

"I fancy so," agreed Loder grimly, "and I fancy that if you don't you're going to be sacked by the headmaster for defying a prefect."

"The Head's away, as you jolly well know. You wouldn't be carrying on like this if Dr. Locke was at the school, you cheeky cur!"

"I'm speaking of Prout. You don't need me to inform you that Mr. Prout is acting as headmaster in Dr. Locke's absence. If you've forgotten it I don't mind reminding you. Are you going to bend over?"

"No!" roared Blundell.

"Oh crikey!" squeaked Billy Bunter, in great excitement.

Harry Wharton walked to the door.

How this strange scene was going to end he did not know; but he was not going to gratify Loder and humiliate old Blundell by remaining as a witness to it.

"Wharton!" rapped Loder. "Stay where you are!"

Unheeding, the captain of the Remove walked out of the study. It was disobedience to a Sixth Form prefect, and meant trouble; but he had made up his mind, and he went.

Bob Cherry followed him, and after Bob went Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Will you stop where you are?" roared Loder.

Without answering they left the study. A moment later the Bouncer and Tom Redwing walked after them.

The Bouncer slammed the door as he left.

Billy Bunter remained.

The fat Owl of the Remove lacked the nerve to risk Loder's wrath, also, he was intensely curious to see how this was going to end.

He stood blinking through his big spectacles, his mouth open.

Loder made a step towards the door, as if to go after the rebellious juniors. But he turned back. He had to deal with Blundell of the Fifth, and the Removites would keep!

He swished the cane again.

"I've told you to bend over, Blundell," he said. "I'm going to whop you for cheeking the captain of the school. Now then—sharp!"

"You silly idiot!" was Blundell's reply.

"You refuse?"

"Yes, rather!" said the Fifth Form man, with emphasis.

Loder paused a second or two. He was stretching his powers to their fullest extent. He had to remember that Mr. Prout, who was now temporary headmaster of Greyfriars, was master of the Fifth—Blundell's Form. He had to remember, too, that Prout had a very high opinion of Blundell, sharing the admiration with which Greyfriars generally regarded that tremendous footballer.

Loder had Prout in his pocket, as the juniors described it. Still, there was no doubt that Prout would be startled and shocked if he heard that Loder had set out to cane Blundell. It might even shake his confidence in the prefect who was, in point of fact, utterly unworthy of his trust. Loder had to be careful!

He glanced at Walker and Carne.

"Bend him over!" he snapped.

"I—I say!" stammered Walker.

"Take him and bend him over that chair!"

Walker and Carne rose unwillingly to the task.

They understood Loder's game, of course. Prout might shake his obtuse head very dubiously over the idea of caning Blundell for a few hasty words.

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But if he started punching prefects his case was hopeless. No headmaster could allow his prefects to be punched!

That was all very well, but Walker and Carne did not want to be punched, whatever the consequences to Blundell afterwards.

However, they backed up their leader. They approached Blundell on either side, to pin his arms. The Fifth Form man, red as a beetroot with rage, backed away quickly.

"Hands off!" he snapped.
"Look here, don't be a fool!" advised Walker. "You jolly well know that any man at Greyfriars can be whopped—"

"Bend him over!" rapped Loder.
"Oh crikey!" breathed Billy Bunter. He was intensely glad that he had not gone after the other juniors. They had missed this. Billy Bunter would not have missed it for worlds!

Blundell backed towards the door. Enraged and exasperated as he was, he realised that he was playing into Loder's hands by resistance. But not for worlds would he have bent over, like a fag, to be whopped, especially in the presence of a staring junior!

"You rotter!" gasped Blundell. "You cheeky fathead! Now Wingate's gone and you've sneaked into his shoes you seem to fancy that you can do as you like. You're down on all Wingate's friends and trying to shove them out of the footer. Lot you care whether we beat St. Jim's, you cur! You've stuck Price, of my Form, into the eleven, not because he can play footer, for you know he can't, but because he smokes cigarettes with you! Think I don't know? And—"

"Bend that cheeky tick over!" roared Loder, swishing the cane.

Walker and Carne grabbed at Blundell.

They got hold of his arms and hooked him towards the chair. Billy Bunter's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as he gazed on.

"Hands off!" yelled Blundell. With an effort Walker and Carne tipped him over the chair. Loder lashed out with the cane.

Whop!
That did it!
At the touch of the cane Blundell reared up like a maddened bull. He grasped Walker and Carne and hurled them bodily across the study.

Walker landed in the fender, with a terrible clash and clang. Carne thudded on the carpet, roaring.

Then Blundell grasped Loder. In his powerful grasp the bully of Greyfriars was swept from the floor and flung into the fender on Walker.

There was a wild howl from both as they met there.

"Whop me, will you?" roared Blundell of the Fifth. "Get on with the whopping! Get on with it!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. Blundell gave the sprawling seniors a glare of wrath and contempt and stalked out of the study.

"Oh jiminy!" gasped Bunter. Loder struggled to his feet, red with fury. He grabbed up his cane, which had fallen to the floor.

Blundell was gone! Bunter was there! He had been there to witness Blundell's humiliation, and he had, in fact, witnessed Loder being chucked about like a sack of coke! Perhaps it was for that reason that Loder lashed out at him with the cane! Or perhaps he merely wanted to take it out of

somebody, and Bunter was the only available person!

Anyhow, Bunter got it hard! There was a fearful yell in Loder's study.

"Yaroooh!"
Whack, whack!
"Whoooop!"
Billy Bunter bolted for the door. Loder rushed after him and got in one more as he leaped into the passage.

Whack!
"Yarooooooop!"
Billy Bunter did the Sixth Form passage at about 60 m.p.h.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Meeting!

HORACE COKER of the Fifth Form stared.

Coker was quite surprised. He was strolling in the old Cloisters of Greyfriars, his hands in his pockets, his rugged face clouded with thought.

He was thinking!
Fellows who knew him would not, perhaps, have believed it! They might indeed have doubted whether Coker had anything to do it with!

But the fact was, Coker's brain was working at full pressure.

He was thinking of football!
In football, as in other games, Coker did not shine! He had a keen ambition to shine, and a profound belief that he shone! But the sad fact was that he never did!

Wingate of the Sixth, in his days as captain of the school, laughed at the idea of playing Coker. He had indeed promised to play Coker, if the First Eleven ever took up marbles in the place of Soccer! That was no use to Coker! Blundell, captain of the Fifth, declined without thanks the services of Horace Coker in the Form eleven. In games, as a matter of fact, nobody loved Coker!

This Coker attributed to the general denseness and stupidity of fellows who had matters in their hands. Denseness, and a touch of jealousy, accounted for it, to Coker's mind.

Coker was thinking now that there was, perhaps, a gleam of sunshine through the clouds, so to speak. Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth were gone, for that term. Loder reigned in Wingate's place. Certainly Coker liked Gerald Loder no more than any other fellow did! Still, if Loder had the sense to perceive in Coker the wonderful qualities that no one else could perceive, Coker was prepared to back up the new captain of Greyfriars. Horace was wondering whether Loder had the sense!

In the Fifth Form games study nearly all the Fifth were raging over what had happened to Blundell that afternoon. Coker was the only man in the Fifth who did not rage.

Blundell, after all, was a fathead; he refused to play Coker! Serve him jolly well right, therefore, if the new skipper refused to play him! But when Coker stated this view in the games study he found it frightfully unpopular there. In fact, the Fifth Form men had heaved Coker out, and even his pals, Potter and Greene, had lent a hand in the heaving of Coker! This, of course, confirmed him in his opinion. Opposition had that effect on Coker!

Thinking over these matters as he mooched in the dusky old Cloisters, Coker noticed two Remove juniors, Wharton and Frank Nugent, trot among the old stone pillars and disappear. He did not heed them

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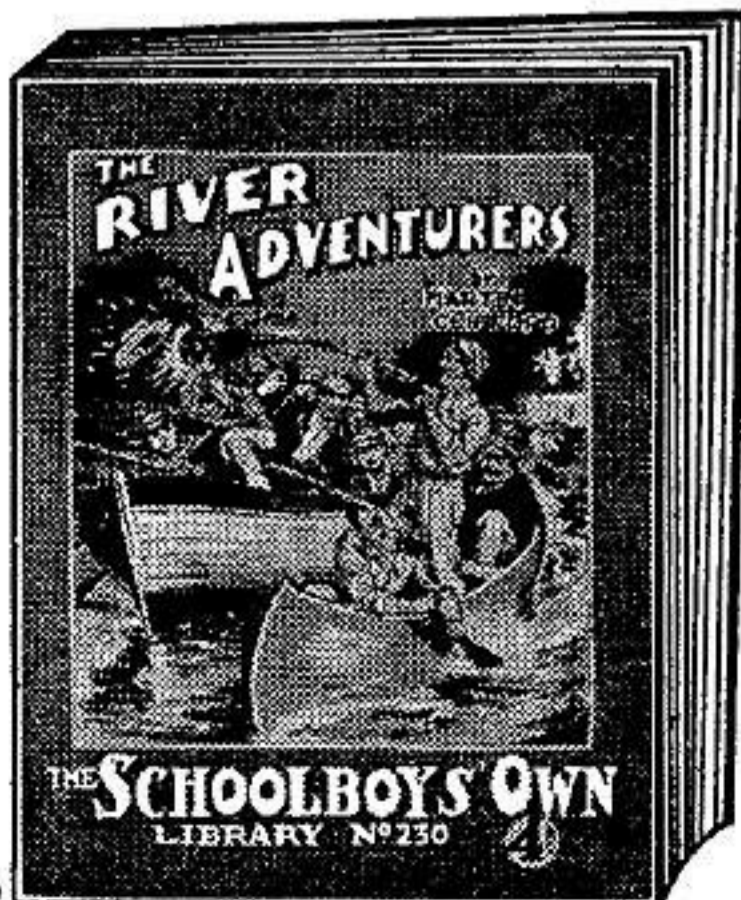
A restful, peaceful holiday on the river—that's what Tom Merry and his six chums of the School House of St. Jim's anticipated when they hired the "old bus" and went a-cruising down the Thames. Possibly it would have been peaceful—but for two things. First they bumped into William George Bunter, of Greyfriars, the fattest and funniest schoolboy in the world; and then their deadly rivals, George Figgins & Co., of the New House at St. Jim's, appeared on the scene. The result—well, it was just a case of renewed feuds, with japes and fights the order of the day! There's a treat in store for everybody who reads this rollicking book-length story of holiday fun and adventure—"THE RIVER ADVENTURERS!"

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specially; juniors of the Remove were far below Coker's lofty notice. But a few minutes later he spotted Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull passing in the same direction. And a few minutes later still Hurree Jamset Ram Singh appeared for a moment, and vanished.

Then Coker stared!
The juniors had not noticed him. The October dusk was falling, and it was always rather dim in the Cloisters.

All the members of the Famous Five of the Remove had come from the quadrangle and disappeared among the old arches of the Cloisters, and Coker wondered what the dickens the fags were up to.

Then there was a patter of feet, and Herbert Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing trotted in, and disappeared in their turn.

Coker stared, and stared! And as he stared Hobson and Stewart of the Shell came along, and vanished. A couple of minutes more and Temple, Dabney, Fry, and Scott of the Fourth Form came in a bunch. After them, at a short interval, Lord Mauleverer of the Remove appeared in the offing, and he also vanished in the direction taken by the rest.

"My hat!" muttered Coker.
No fewer than fourteen juniors, belonging to three different Forms, had gathered in a dim and secluded corner of the Cloisters, and Coker could not help being surprised and intrigued.

He even forgot his football ambitions and his idea of backing up Loder of the Sixth for the moment. He walked along the Cloisters to see what had become of the fourteen juniors, after waiting a few minutes to see whether any more were coming.

But no more came. The tale seemed to be complete with the arrival of the fourteenth man.

The fags were up to something! That was clear to Coker! Minding his own business had never been one of Horace Coker's weaknesses. He determined to see what it was that the fags were up to!

To his surprise, he did not find them in the Cloisters.

He stared round him, amazed.
It was scarcely possible that fourteen juniors were breaking school bounds all at once. They could not have gone on over the wall.

But where were they?
Near the end of the Cloisters was the old ruined tower, of which little but fragments of the ancient walls remained. Greyfriars fellows were not allowed in the ruins except by special leave, for the place was considered dangerous. But Coker concluded that they were there, and he marched off in that direction.

The door under the old arched doorway was shut and fastened. Coker tried it and found it fast.

He was just coming to the conclusion that the fourteen were not there when he heard a voice from within.

"All safe here, what?"
It was the Bounder's voice.
"Safe as houses!" came Bob Cherry's reply.

Coker realised that the juniors had not gone in by the door. It was easy enough to clamber in by one of the old dismantled windows. That was the way they had entered.

"Nobody saw any of you fellows coming?" It was Harry Wharton's voice.

"No fear!"
"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"
Coker grinned.

Evidently none of the juniors attending that mysterious secret meeting had seen him in the gloom of the Cloisters.

He left the door and moved round to one of the ancient deep windows. There he was able to look in.

It was very shadowy inside. But he made out the whole party of juniors, sitting on fragments of old masonry.

It did not occur to Coker at the moment that what he was doing might have been described as spying and eavesdropping! Being constitutionally incapable of minding his own business, he was going to know what these young rascals were up to! He would not have been surprised to learn that they were plotting some jape on himself! The Famous Five were rather given to japing Coker. Keeping out of sight,

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By HAROLD SKINNER.

No. 20.—GERALD LODER.

The rascally Sixth Former who at present holds the reins of head prefect and captain of Greyfriars.



He's a terror to fags,
Is Loder,
Don't try any rags
On Loder.
If he catches you out
when you're fooling about
You'll get six on the bags
From Loder.
You'd better steer clear
Of Loder,
Or you'll get a thick ear
From Loder.
It's no idle boast that
for burning his toast
You'll be thrashed for a year
By Loder.

therefore, Coker kept an eye and an ear on the mysterious meeting.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen"—Harry Wharton was addressing his fellow-conspirators—"the meeting has now—"

"Met!" suggested Bob Cherry.
"Shut up, fathead!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Are we all here?" asked Temple of the Fourth.

"Yes; the word was passed round to fourteen members!" said the captain of the Remove. "Fourteen are present!"

Members of what? Coker wondered. This was getting more and more mysterious and interesting! Apparently there were more members, who had not been called to this mysterious meeting.
"The meeting has been called,"

resumed Wharton, "to decide what is to be done in the present emergency."

"Hear, hear!"
"Not too much row!" said Stewart of the Shell. "We don't want all Greyfriars to hear us."

"Nobody's likely to hear us here, fathead!" said Fry of the Fourth.

Coker suppressed a chuckle.
"If you're calling me a fathead, you Fourth Form tick—"

"Blithering ass, if you like that better!"

"I'll jolly well—" Stewart rose.

"Order!" rapped out Wharton. "We haven't come here to rag! Sit down, Stewart! Shut up, Fry! We're up against Loder, not one another."

"Silence all round!" said the Bounder.

"Speechfulness is silver, but silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Quiet! Order!"

"There's no time to waste," went on Wharton. "It's close on lock-up, and if we're missed from the House, the Greyfriars secret society will not be a secret much longer."

"The Greyfriars secret society!" breathed Coker. "Oh, my hat!"

"This meeting of the Secret Seven—" continued Wharton.

"The secret which?" inquired Hobson of the Shell. "What do you mean by seven, when there's fourteen of us, and a lot more as well?"

"I mean what I say! The Secret Seven is the title of this society," said the captain of the Remove. "We're not giving away information to the enemy. The orders of the society will be carried out by seven fellows at a time—but every time it will be a different seven, so—"

"So Loder won't know where to look!" said Frank Nugent.

"Or Prout!" added Johnny Bull.

"We've got to be jolly careful!" said Wharton. "Loder's a bully and a brute—"

"Hear, hear!"

"He's got old Prout in his pocket! Prout's a pompous old ass—"

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Coker, forgetting for the moment that he was keeping "doggo," in his wrath at hearing that allusion to his Form-master.

Coker often alluded, himself, to Mr. Prout as an old, pompous ass! But it was not for cheeky fags to do so, in Coker's hearing, at all events!

There was a general jump in the old tower.

Every member of the secret society bounded to his feet, as Coker's wrathful roar came in at the old embrasure.

"What the thump—"

"Who the dickens—"

"It's Coker!"

"That Fifth Form fathead!"

"Collar him!"

There was a rush and a scramble of the crowd of juniors, through the old dismantled window. Coker was not the fellow to run from fags! Neither did it occur to him, for the moment, that there was any need to run! He glared at the juniors as they swarmed round him.

"You cheeky young ticks!" he roared. "I've a jolly good mind to lick you all round! I've a good mind to—whoop! Yooop! Yaroooooh!"

The rest of Horace Coker's remarks were incoherent, as the juniors swarmed on him, grabbed at him, up-ended him, and bumped him down on the hard, unsympathetic earth, and sat on him to keep him there.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Helpless Prisoner!

"SEND Blundell to me at once!"

Thus Mr. Prout.

Prout sat in the Head's arm-chair in the Head's study—majestic! A much more majestic figure, in his own belief at least, than the Head, who was now away in a nursing-home.

"Certainly, sir!" said Loder.

Loder of the Sixth had made his report of the shindy in his study. He had made it as bad as he could.

But though his outward respectful manner did not change, he was inwardly enraged by Prout's reception of that report.

Prout, certainly, was going to uphold the authority of his prefects, as a head-master should, whether temporary or permanent. Certainly he was not going to allow his prefects to be punched.

At the same time, there was no doubt that he thought a great deal of Blundell, the captain of his Form, and hesitated to deal drastically with so great a man.

In dealing with fellows like the Remove juniors, Loder had it all his own way! Some of them had been cheeky to Prout himself at times! Anyhow, they were only Lower School!

But a man in Prout's own Form was rather different. And it was not as if it had been a fool like Coker, or a slacker like Hilton, or a shady sort of fellow like Price! It was Blundell, captain of the Form, a magnificent footballer and a popular fellow, whom Prout was proud to have in the Fifth!

Prout, it was clear, was going to consider this matter very carefully, before he took drastic action.

Loder left the study, closing the door after him; and did not scowl till he was outside. After all, he told himself, the old ass couldn't very well get out of it. Blundell had punched prefects; and he had to pay the penalty. When he was up before Prout he would have to admit what he had done; and that was that! Blundell was booked!

The light was out in the corridor on which the Head's study opened. It had been on when Loder went in to see Prout; somebody, apparently, had turned it off while he was in the study.

Some fag larking, Loder supposed, and he mentally resolved to find that larkish fag and give him "six."

He groped for the nearest switch to flash the light on. But he did not reach it.

What happened next took Loder entirely by surprise.

The passage, with the light turned off, was black as a hat now Prout's door was closed. Hands suddenly reached from the darkness, and grabbed Loder of the Sixth.

Before he knew what was happening, he was whirled over, and a bag was drawn over his head.

He was swept off the floor, his arms and legs held in many hands, and rushed along the passage.

Dizzy with astonishment, wondering dazedly whether he was dreaming, Loder hardly struggled as he was whisked along the passage.

A door opened and shut.

He knew that he had been carried into a room.

He heard a key turn in a lock.

Then, through the bag over his head, he was conscious of light! The light had been switched on in the room into which he had been carried.

He began to struggle fiercely.

But there were many hands on him—seven pairs, as a matter of fact. He was powerless.

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Wriggling wildly, he felt a cord bound round his ankles, and another round his wrists.

Then the bag was jerked off his head.

He stared round dizzily.

He was in No. 10 class-room, a room that was used by Monsieur Charpentier, the French master for the junior French sets. Its door was just round the corner from the Head's corridor.

Loder, blinking, could hardly believe his eyes as he stared round. He sat on the floor, hands and feet tied. Seven figures surrounded him.

That they were juniors he knew from their height. But what juniors they were, and of what Forms, he could not begin to guess.

Each of them was buttoned up to the chin in an old coat. Each had a Guy Fawkes mask fastened over his face.

Loder gasped and glared.

He remembered what had happened a few days ago when he had been collared in the Cloisters by a couple of fellows got up in masks.

Now it had happened again; but this time there were seven of them!

"You—you—you young scoundrels!" panted Loder, crimson with rage and breathless. "Let me go—at once!"

"Silence!" came a voice from under one of the masks. It was a deep, husky voice, evidently speaking in disguised tones.

Loder opened his mouth for a yell. He was within hearing of fifty pairs of ears, including Prout's, if he had yelled for help.

But the masked seven gave him no chance of that!

A rather chalky duster, folded ready, was shoved into his mouth and rammed home with a hard set of knuckles. The intended yell changed into a gasping gurgle.

"Silence!" repeated the deep voice. "Keep the brute quiet!"

Gurgle from Loder!

He stared round, with glittering eyes, at the seven. He was trying to pick out who they were.

He had little doubt that they were the juniors who had been in his study that afternoon—Harry Wharton & Co., and Smithy and Redwing. All of them were booked for lickings, for having walked out of the study in defiance of his orders. They were getting their own back in advance! Loder felt fairly certain of it. But he could not be sure, and recognition was out of the question.

"Brother No. 1," said the speaker, who appeared to be the leader, "take the gag from his mouth, so that he can answer, but stand ready to twist his nose if he tries to howl out."

"What-ho!" said Brother No. 1.

The duster was withdrawn. A finger and thumb touched Loder's nose, ready to twist.

"Do you know where you are, Gerald Loder?" came the deep voice of the chief.

"You young rascal——"

"Kick him!"

"Ow!"

"Civility costs nothing, Loder!" said the chief. "Incivility gets you a kick! Remember that!"

Loder opened his mouth! One yell— But he did not utter it. The finger and thumb were too near his nose, and it was only too evident that the twist was coming if he yelled. He panted:

"Let me go! I'll have you sacked for this! You——"

"Silence!"

"You young scoundrel——"

"Kick him!"

"Whoo-hoooo!"

"Loder," came the deep, husky voice, "beware! You are in the hands of the Secret Seven of Greyfriars!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Toeing the Line!

GERALD LODER sat and panted. He gave one terrific wrench at the cords that fastened his wrists and ankles. It was in vain. He was a helpless prisoner—at the mercy of the Secret Seven! And they did not seem in a merciful mood!

"I'll have you all sacked for this!" he breathed, almost choking with fury.

"You'll have to spot us first!" remarked Brother No. 1.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"Stop this foolery, you young idiots! Do you think you're acting on the films, or what? Look here! I'll let you off if you chuck it at once!"

"The question is, whether we let you off!" remarked Brother No. 2.

"Yes, rather!" said Brother No. 3.

Loder stared round from face to face. But the grotesque masks gave him no clue. He noted now that on each mask a number was chalked. This, no doubt, enabled the masked brotherhood to identify one another. But it was of no assistance to Loder.

"Loder!" came the chief's voice.

"You young ass!"

"Kick him!"

"Yaroo!"

"You will speak respectfully to the Chief of the Secret Seven, Loder! Otherwise you will take the consequences."

"You young hound!" hissed Loder. "I know you—you're Wharton! I'll see that you're kicked out of Greyfriars to-morrow!"

"Kick him!"

"Wow!"

"Every time you're cheeky you get a kick, Loder! We don't mind. We'll keep it up as long as you do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But we've no time to waste! You will answer my questions, Loder! You've been to Old Pompous about Blundell?"

Loder did not answer. But a boot jamming in his ribs roused him, and he gasped out:

"Ow! Yes!"

"You want to get Blundell sacked! You'd like to make a clean sweep of old Wingate's pals! We know all about it!"

"Nothing is hidden from the Secret Seven!" said Brother No. 4. And there was a chuckle from under some of the masks.

"Shut up, No. 4!" said the chief.

"What is Old Pompous going to do about Blundell, Loder?"

"Sack him!" snarled Loder.

"That doesn't suit us!" said the chief. "Old Blundell's a bit of an ass, but he's not going to be bunked."

"No fear!" said Brother No. 5.

"You got up a row with that Fifth Form man!" went on the chief. "You planned the whole thing. Now you've got to undo what you've done!"

"You silly young ass!"

"Kick him!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"You've got to explain to Prout that you were to blame, and ask him to let the matter drop!" said the chief.

"What have you got to do with Blundell, you young ass?" snarled Loder. "You've nothing to do with the Fifth! Mind your own business!"

"The Secret Seven stand for justice, and——"

"Oh, don't be a silly idiot!"

"Kick him!"

"Oh crumbs! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Will you go to Prout and put it to him?" demanded the chief.

"Eh? Oh! Yes! I—I—I'll go at once!" gasped Loder. "Let me out of this, and—and I'll go, and—and—"

"You promise?"
 "Yes, yes, yes!"
 "Pity we can't take your word, then!" remarked the chief. "It would save a lot of trouble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But we can't, Loder! You see, you're such a rotter—such an out-and-out rank outsider! That's how it is! But you can write it!"

"Write it?" gasped Loder.
 "Yes. You can send a note to Prout. Squat him at a desk, you men!"

Three or four of the masked "brothers" grasped Loder, and sat him up at one of the desks. The duster was jammed into his mouth again. Loder's look was desperate.

A pen was dipped in ink, and paper placed before him. Evidently the mysterious brotherhood of Greyfriars had it all cut and dried. Loder realised that they had planned the whole thing.

"Loosen his right hand!"
 Loder's right was untied.
 He clenched his fist hard. But he unclenched it again. It was only too clear that there was nothing doing in that line! The pen was placed in his fingers.

"Now write!" said the chief. "I will dictate! You'll write exactly what I tell you in your ordinary hand and sign it. You've sent notes to Prout before, and he won't be surprised to get another one—in fact, I fancy he will be pleased to get this one, for I'm jolly certain that he doesn't want to sack Blundell."

Loder gritted his teeth on the duster.
 "Take hold of his ears, Brothers Nos. 1 and 2!" said the chief. "If he doesn't do exactly as he's told, pull!"

"You bet!"
 "What-ho!"
 Brothers No. 1 and 2 seemed quite pleased with the task assigned them. They grasped Loder's ears, evidently quite prepared to carry out the chief's instructions. Loder gurgled.

What Wingate of the Sixth would have done in such extraordinary circumstances, Loder did not know. It was hardly likely that old Wingate would have allowed himself to be dictated to by juniors. But there was a yellow streak in Loder. He was in the hands of the Amalekites and at their mercy, and he had to toe the line.

"Write!" snapped the chief.
 Loder prepared to write. The chief proceeded to dictate:

"Sir,—On reflection, I fear that I was myself somewhat to blame in the dispute with Blundell. May I beg of you to let the matter drop?"

Loder fairly wriggled with rage. He knew how glad Prout would be to receive such a note as that. It would give him the excuse he wanted for letting Blundell off, after he had chucked three prefects about a Sixth Form study. There was no doubt, no shadow of doubt, that Prout would accede to the request in that note. He would accede gladly!

Prout would be relieved. Blundell would be saved, and Loder would feel like a tiger that had lost his prey! All of which would be satisfactory to the Secret Seven, though not to Loder!

He began to scrawl. He gave a horrible gurgle through the duster, as his ears were pulled. The paper was taken away, and replaced by another.

"Now write in your usual fist, old bean," said the chief. "You're not going to be allowed to wriggle out of this afterwards. And sign it."

Loder, suffocating with rage, made no further resistance. The note to Mr. Prout was written in his usual "fist," and signed.

The chief picked it up and examined it carefully. He nodded as if satisfied this time.

"That's all right, Loder! Tie him to a desk!"

Gurgle!
 Loder was tied to a desk. The light was turned off. In the darkness he heard shuffling sounds, the click of a key, a door opening and shutting again. He was left alone.

The Secret Seven were gone. His note to Prout was gone! And Gerald Loder, tied to a desk, gagged with a chalky duster, remained—to stay there till somebody came along to release him.

He could not speak; but if he could have spoken, no words in any known language could have done justice to his feelings!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Prout is Pleased!

"UNPARALLELED!" murmured Mr. Prout.
 It was his favourite word. Prout was worried.

He sat in the Head's study, thinking it over.

He did not want to "sack" Blundell! And it was hardly possible to flog a Fifth Form man, even if a flogging would have met the case.

Yet he had to uphold the authority of his prefects!

He had come down tremendously heavy on juniors who had kicked against Loder's rule. A headmaster could not have two weights and two measures. He had to deal with Blundell.

He had told Loder to send him to the study at once. But the Fifth Form

man had not come. The delay worried and irritated Prout.

There was a tap at his door at last. "Come in, Blundell!" he rapped.

But it was not Blundell who entered. It was Tupper, the House page. He had an envelope in his hand.

"What is it, Tupper?" snapped Prout.

"From Mr. Loder, sir!" said Tupper. He laid the note on Prout's table and waited.

Prout stared at it, took it up, opened it, and read it.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout. The cloud departed from his majestic brow. The difficulty was solved. Prout smiled over that note! He almost beamed!

Had Loder in writing that note specially planned to please Mr. Prout he could not have succeeded better.

Between his unwillingness to "sack" Blundell and the impossibility of overlooking what Blundell had done, Prout had been in a dilemma. Loder's note solved the problem.

Loder begged him to let the matter drop, confessing that he feared that he had been a little to blame himself! Prout was only too willing to let the matter drop.

This incident enhanced his high opinion of Loder! It showed what a very conscientious and dutiful fellow Loder was! That was satisfactory. It was still more satisfactory to be relieved of his difficulty about Blundell!

All, so to speak, was calm and bright! "Thank you, Tupper!" said Mr. Prout, not at all snappish now. "You may go. Tell Mr. Loder that I have received this note, and am much obliged to him."

"Yessir!"
 Tupper left the study. He went along the passage, turned into another, and stepped into a deserted Form-room.

He grinned as he went in. It was dark in the Form-room, but there was a glimmer of starlight from the windows, which revealed a peculiar figure standing there.

It was a junior, with a Guy Fawkes mask on his face. Tupper closed the door after him and grinned at the strange figure.

"All right, sir!" he said.

"You've taken the note to Prout?"

"Yessir."

"You told him it was from Loder?"

"Yessir!"
 "Good man! Here's your half-crown, Tupper! Mind, you don't know who handed you Loder's note, if you're asked!"

"Course I don't, sir!" said Tupper cheerfully. "Bloke in a Guy Fox mask, sir, that's all I know!"

"Exactly! You're an intelligent kid, Tupper! It was a genuine note from

(Continued on next page.)

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Loder to Prout, Tupper, as I told you, but I didn't want to take it in personally for all sorts of reasons."

"Yes, my lord!"

"You young ass! What are you my-lording me for when you don't know who I am?"

Tupper chuckled.

"Sorry, my lord! I mean, sorry, sir! 'Ow could I know who you was when your lordship's face is covered by that there mask? 'Course I don't!"

"Fathead!"

"Yessir!"

"You might wander along to No. 10 class-room, Tupper, presently. If you find anybody tied to a desk there, you can set him loose."

"Oh, my eye!" said Tupper.

"Now cut!"

Tupper cut.

After he was gone, Lord Mauleverer of the Remove took off the Guy Fawkes mask.

Tupper, in a state of great curiosity, proceeded to the French master's class-room, No. 10.

Lord Mauleverer quietly dropped from the window to the quad.

As Tupper approached the door of No. 10 class-room he heard faint sounds from within—sounds that told of wriggling and squirming.

He stepped in and switched on the light.

"Oh golly!" gasped Tupper.

His eyes almost bulged from his head at the sight of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form tied to a desk, with a chalky duster crammed in his mouth.

Loder's eyes glittered at him. He could not speak, but his look was eloquent. It was help at last! How long he had been there, tied up like a turkey in the dark, Loder did not know; but it seemed like years!

"My eye!" gasped Tupper.

He ran to the desk and began to untie the cords. Loder gurgled at him spasmodically, and he jerked away the duster.

The bully of Greyfriars gasped for breath.

"Quick—get me untied!" he gasped. "Don't fumble, you silly little dummy—get on with it!"

"Yessir!" said Tupper stolidly.

Probably Loder's way of acknowledging his services did not spur him on to greater speed.

"How did you know I was here?" panted Loder.

"Young gent told me, sir, as I might find somebody tied up 'ere, so I came along to see!" said Tupper.

Loder's eyes flashed.

"Who was it?" he panted.

"I couldn't see who it was, sir, seeing as he had his face covered up with a Guy Fox mask!" explained Tupper.

Loder ground his teeth! One of the gang, of course—one of the young scoundrels who called themselves the Secret Seven! But which—and who?

"It was the same bloke who gave me your note for Mr. Prout, sir!" added Tupper.

Loder started.

"Did you take a note to Mr. Prout?"

"Yessir!"

"You young fool!"

"Oh, sir!" murmured Tupper.

"What did Prout say?" hissed Loder.

"He looked werry pleased, sir, and told me to tell you that he was much obliged!" answered Tupper.

Loder breathed hard with fury! The note had gone to Prout, then—it was too late to think of stopping that! Indeed, it was clear that his release had been booked not to happen till that note had reached Prout safely.

"Get a move on, you clumsy little idiot!" he snarled. "Are you going to be all night about it?"

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"I 'ope not, sir, seeing as Mrs. Kebble will be wondering what's become of me, and very likely jawing a bloke!" said Tupper surlily.

"Buck up, bother you!"

Loder was released at last! Tupper gave him a rather expressive look. The junior in the mask had tipped the page a half-crown for taking the note to Prout. Perhaps Tupper had hoped that Loder of the Sixth would consider his release worth as much as that.

If so, he was disappointed!

"What do you want?" snarled Loder. "Get out!"

Tupper got out.

Alone in the class-room again, Loder clenched his hands and tried to think it out. Prout had the note—and was pleased to get it! That could never be undone now! He had to leave Blundell of the Fifth alone!

He dared not confess to Prout that he had written such a note under compulsion—that he had been afraid of the juniors who had collared him, and had obeyed their orders for that reason, for that was what it came to.

A head prefect who toed the line at the orders of a gang of juniors would not have done for Prout, or for any headmaster!

He could imagine the amazement, the wrath in Prout's portly countenance if he made such a confession!

It was not to be thought of!

Prout must have acted on that note already, to the extent of deciding to let the affair of Blundell drop! He was not likely to rescind his decision if Loder told him that he had been frightened into writing the note!

He was more likely to tell Loder that he was unfit to be head prefect of Greyfriars, or a prefect at all!

That little matter of the note written to Prout had to be washed out, obliterated, forgotten! There was no help for that! Prout, once having received it and acted on it, must never be allowed to learn that Loder had not written it of his own accord!

It was intensely exasperating, but there it was! Loder had been beaten by the Secret Seven—they knew it and he knew it!

But vengeance on the seven young rascals remained! He had little or no doubt who they were!

Loder left No. 10 class-room and went to his study for his ashplant—and then started to look for the Famous Five!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sat On by Seven!

"I 'LL smash you!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

"Go hon!"

"I'll spifficate you!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I—I'll pulverise you!" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker heaved like an angry sea. But he heaved in vain. Seven juniors were either sitting or standing on Coker.

He was a hefty and powerful fellow! But he was not equal, like the Brave Little Tailor in the nursery tale, to seven at a blow!

So he heaved, and howled, and threatened in vain!

Coker had forgotten all about the important matters he had been thinking about when he walked in the Cloisters. Urgent as his football ambitions were, he had more urgent matters to think of now.

It was long past lock-up, and he was still out of the House. It was cold in the Cloisters—specially cold in contact

with the hard stone flags! And he was sat upon, and stood upon.

Coker was angry, excited, amazed! The cheek of these fags in handling so great a man as Horace Coker, the ornament of the Fifth Form, was really amazing! They went for him just as if he had been a common mortal!

Neither could Coker understand what the game was. All seven of them were liable to lines, if not to lickings, for staying out of the House after lock-up. They did not seem to care—yet they certainly must have been aware that they were not likely to escape due punishment under Loder's rule.

That they had a purpose to serve by staying out of the House, at the risk of lines and lickings, Coker did not guess. Neither did he guess that they were glad to have him as a witness of their whereabouts. Coker had no idea of what was going on in the House! The seven juniors had!

It was all mystifying to Coker. After his discovery of the mysterious meeting in the old tower Coker had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, so to speak. They had jerked him along into the Cloisters, where Bob Cherry, Nugent, Redwing, and Johnny Bull sat on him, while the rest of the party went back to the meeting-place. This state of affairs lasted about a quarter of an hour, and then Vernon-Smith, Harry Wharton, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came along to join in sitting or standing on Coker. Since then there had been seven on the job.

Coker dimly realised that some sort of business had been discussed and settled at the meeting—out of his hearing. He realised that the other seven juniors had gone back to the House.

He remembered who they were: Hobson and Stewart of the Shell; Temple, Dabney, Fry, and Scott of the Fourth; and Lord Mauleverer of the Remove. Those seven had gone. The other seven remained—landed on Coker! Why, he could not begin guessing.

It was quite useless to tell them that he would smash, spifficate, and pulverise them! He meant every word, but unfortunately he was not in a position to make his words good!

It was very dark in the Cloisters. Nobody was likely to come there after lock-up. Coker had to stay where he was till the Removites chose to let him go. This was the outcome of Horace barging into matters that did not concern him. He had really asked for it!

"Oh, won't I wallop you for this!" groaned Coker. "Won't I smash you! Won't I whop you black and blue! Won't I just!"

"Right, old bean, you won't!" agreed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The won'tfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Coker heaved again with all his strength! It was such a mighty heave that the seven juniors rocked. But Coker sank back again, gasping after that tremendous effort! There was nothing doing!

"Oooooooogh!" he gasped.

"Take it easy, old fathead!" suggested the Bounder. "Nobody asked you to barge in, you know!"

"I'll smash you!" gasped Coker.

"This is where you learn to mind your own business, Horace!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"I'll spifficate you!"

"Useful lesson for you to learn, Coker!" said Harry Wharton.

"I'll wallop you!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes



Roaring like a maddened bull, Blundell grasped Walker and Carne and hurled them bodily across the study. Then he rushed at Loder, swept the bully of Greyfriars from the floor, and flung him into the fender on top of Walker. "Whop me, will you?" he roared. "Get on with the whopping! Get on with it!"

Maully!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as an elegant figure strolled through the deep dusk of the Cloisters.

Lord Mauleverer peered at the dim group and chuckled.

"Still got him?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"Good egg!" chuckled his lordship. "But it's all serene now, you men! You can let him rip!"

Coker was released. He staggered to his feet. He glared at the Removites as if he could have eaten them.

But even Coker had had enough for the present! Even Coker understood that he could not slay seven at a blow—and now there were eight!

"You wait a bit!" he gasped. "I'll wallop you all round! I'll——"

"Kick him out!" said Vernon-Smith.

Horace Coker departed without waiting to be kicked! He tramped away towards the House, boiling with wrath. Having been kept out of the House till long after lock-up he had missed calling-over, and had to report himself to his Form-master. Prout had to know what had happened to him in the Cloisters! Coker had no objection to his knowing! He hoped that Prout would whop the young villains all round.

After he was gone, the Removites drew together, all eyes on Mauleverer.

"Worked all right?" asked the Bounder eagerly.

"Yaas; like a charm."

"You got Loder?"

"Yaas."

"And he did the note to Prout?"

"Yaas."

"And he never suspected——"

"He suspected I was Wharton—called me Wharton——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy he suspects the rest of us, too!" chortled Bob Cherry. "So it will be quite a surprise to him when it comes out that we were sitting on dear old Coker all the time."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Greyfriars secret society.

"I dropped out of the Form-room window to come and tip you fellows," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'll get back the same way! You'll have to take your gruel for cutting call-over."

"That's all right."

The juniors left the Cloisters and followed Coker of the Fifth to the House. Lord Mauleverer cut off to get in at the Form-room window which he had left open for his return. The seven went to the door and followed Coker in.

A number of fellows grinned at them as they came in; Temple & Co. of the Fourth, and Hobby and Stewart of the Shell. They had shed their old coats and masks, and Loder of the Sixth certainly never dreamed of guessing that they were the fellows who had collared him outside the Head's study! Loder of the Sixth was searching for the fellows who had just come in after Coker. They were the fellows Loder wanted!

"I say, you fellows." Billy Bunter rolled up. "I say, have you been out of the House?"

"Just a few!" answered Bob.

"I say, Loder's looking for you!" said Bunter. "He's been up to the Remove passage looking for you."

"What does Loder want?" inquired Nugent.

"He, he, he! He's got his ashplant!" grinned Bunter. "I fancy it's going to be a whopping!"

Loder of the Sixth came striding up. It was not difficult to see that he was in a state of suppressed fury. Like the Alpine gentleman in the poem, his brow was set, his eye beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath!

"Oh!" he panted. "Here you are!"

The seven juniors gazed at him calmly. "Here we are, Loder!" assented Harry Wharton. "Bunter says you want us! We've been out of the House——"

"Don't tell me any lies!" snarled Loder. "I know where you've been!"

Wharton raised his eyebrows. "But we've really been out of the House, Loder!"

"You can tell Prout that! You're going to be reported, and sacked, for what you've done!" said Loder venomously. "Follow me!"

"What have we done?" inquired Bob. "Is it the sack for sitting on Coker?"

"Follow me!" hissed Loder.

"Pleased!" yawned the Bounder.

There was a buzz from a crowd of interested fellows as the Famous Five, Smithy and Redwing, followed Loder to the Head's study. They arrived a minute after Coker of the Fifth, and found him there with Prout.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Witness!

"A HUNDRED lines——"

"But, sir——"

"A hundred lines——"

"But——"

"Do not answer me, Coker!" Prout waved a plump hand, waving Horace THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,394.

Coker away as if Coker had been a troublesome bluebottle. "You will take a hundred lines for failing to attend calling-over, and remaining out of the House after lock-up! You may go!"

"But, sir—" howled Coker.

"You may go, Coker!" boomed Prout.

"But I couldn't help it, sir!" roared Coker indignantly. "How was a fellow to come in to call-over with seven fags sitting on his tummy?"

"Wha-a-t!" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"Seven cheeky little sweeps—"

"What do you mean, Coker? Am I to understand that you were prevented from coming into the House at call-over?"

"I jolly well was!" hooted Coker. "I tell you a gang of Remove kids were sitting on my tummy—"

"On what?" roared Prout.

"I—I mean on my waistcoat—"

"If you mean your waistcoat, Coker, you should say your waistcoat! You should not use coarse and meaningless expressions in speaking to your headmaster! You should— Dear me! What is this?"

Prout waved Coker aside as Loder tapped and entered with seven members of the Remove trailing in his wake.

Coker glared at those members of the Remove.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "Here they are!"

"You may be silent, Coker!"

"But they're the fags who—"

"Silence!"

Horace grunted, and was silent.

"What is it, Loder?" asked Mr. Prout graciously. He was feeling rather pleased with Loder. Had not Loder, by sending him that welcome note, saved him the trouble of solving that difficult problem of Blundell?

"I have to report these boys of the Remove, sir, on a very serious matter!" said Loder. "An outrageous act of violence, sir."

Coker nodded approval.

These seven fellows had sat on him, and stood on him, and generally man-handled him, and kept him away from calling-over! Seeing Loder march them into the Head's study in a body, Coker had no doubt that Loder was reporting them for that very act!

"Dear me!" said Prout. "What have these boys done, Loder? Are you referring to the same matter as Coker?"

Loder glanced at the Fifth Form man. He had no idea whatever why Coker was there.

"The same matter, sir?" he repeated. "If Coker saw them when they made that violent attack—"

Loder's eyes gleamed! The Secret Seven had been masked, and though he felt sure that he had, so to speak, the right pigs by the ears, there might be some difficulty in proving it! If Coker

of the Fifth had seen what had happened, however, all was calm and bright!

"Saw it!" repeated Coker. "Yes, rather! I suppose I couldn't help seeing it, could I, Loder?"

"You saw what these juniors did?" exclaimed Loder.

"Of course I saw them!" said Coker testily. "How could I help seeing what they did?"

"Then you will tell Mr. Prout what you saw!" said Loder.

"What-ho!" said Coker.

The juniors exchanged a grinning glance. They could see that there was a misunderstanding.

Coker was alluding to what had happened in the Cloisters. Loder was alluding to what had happened in Class-room No. 10.

Seven fellows had been concerned in each case. Only as it happened, it was a different seven in each case!

"But what—" said Prout.

"A violent and outrageous attack, sir—" began Loder.

"Jumping on a fellow and sitting on him—" began Coker.

Prout waved a hand.

"Let Loder speak, please, Coker! You may corroborate his statement afterwards! Kindly explain, Loder."

"Certainly, sir! These seven boys seized me an hour ago, sir. The light had been turned off in the passage, and they seized me in the dark."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Prout.

"But—" began the bewildered Coker.

"Silence, Coker, till Loder has finished!"

"They dragged me into an empty class-room and tied me to a desk, sir," said Loder. "I was gagged with a duster."

"Is it possible?" gasped Prout.

"But—" recommenced Coker.

"Silence, Coker! Proceed, Loder!"

"I remained tied to the desk, sir, till found by Tupper, the page. He released me. The boys had their faces covered with Guy Fawkes masks, but I have no doubt of their identity. If they deny the act, sir, no doubt you will question them and make them prove where they were at the time."

"Quite so!" said Prout.

"As Coker says he saw them, sir, he is a witness to what they did! I was unaware that he had seen them; but he says—"

"Quite!" said Prout.

The juniors stood silent. Loder was reporting the Secret Seven for the outrage; but evidently he was not going to mention that he had been forced to write that note to Prout! He dared not confess that! For his own sake he had to let Prout believe that that note had been written of his own accord! But the

outrage remained, for which the outragers, as it were, could be expelled!

"But I say—" began Coker again.

"Wait a moment, Coker!" said Mr. Prout. "You say that the boys had their faces masked, Loder?"

"Yes, sir! But I knew their voices."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Silence, Cherry."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

It was rather difficult for Harry Wharton & Co. to

keep silent. They wanted to chortle badly.

Loder stated that he had recognised their voices! Loder had very little scruple in such matters.

The fellows in masks who had coloured him were Lord Mauleverer, Hobson, Stewart, Temple, Dabney, Fry, and Scott! And he stated that he had recognised the voices of the Famous Five!

This was getting quite interesting! Loder was going to learn, once more, that honesty is the best policy.

"In such a serious matter," boomed Prout, "we must make sure! You are certain that you recognised their voices, Loder?"

"Absolutely, sir!"

"Specify the boys whose voices you are sure you recognised?"

"Wharton especially, sir," said Loder, with a venomous look at the captain of the Remove. "He was the leader! He tried to disguise his voice by speaking in a husky tone, but I knew it quite well! I was also sure of Vernon-Smith's voice, and Cherry's."

"Oh crikey!"

"Silence, Cherry!"

"The others I cannot be so sure of!" said Loder, with an air of being very carefully just and fair. "But about those three, sir, there is no doubt."

"Do you deny this?" demanded Prout, with a stern glare at the seven culprits.

"Yes, sir!" said the seven.

"You deny having had a hand in the attack on Loder?"

"We were nowhere near him, sir."

"Where have you been during the past hour?"

"Out of the House, sir?"

"After lock-up?" exclaimed Prout.

"Yes, sir!"

"Mr. Woose has reported seven of his boys as having missed call-over," said Prout. "These are the boys. But if they were the boys who attacked you, Loder, they must have been in the House."

"They certainly were in the House, sir," said Loder, "though they may have dodged out afterwards, in order to tell this lying tale."

"We shall see. Coker states that he saw them carry out the assault. That should determine the matter. Coker, tell me at once what you know about this attack on Loder?"

Coker gasped.

"Nothing, sir."

"What!" boomed Prout. "What! Only a few minutes ago, Coker, you stated that you saw the attack—that you could not, indeed, help seeing it! Take care!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Coker. "But they attacked me—"

"What!"

"They mopped me up in the Cloisters, sir, nearly an hour ago, and they've been sitting on me there ever since, and that's why I cut call-over."

Loder jumped; Prout stared; the juniors grinned.

"What—what—what!" boomed Prout. "There is some misunderstanding here—some absurd mistake! Do you seriously state, Coker, that you missed calling-over because these boys kept you out of the House?"

"Yes, sir. And they won't deny it!" hooted Coker. "They grabbed me in the Cloisters, and got me down and sat on me, and—"

"Bless my soul! When did this happen, Coker?"

"Nearly an hour ago, sir."

"When did you come back to the House?"

"Only a few minutes ago, sir."

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"And do you tell me that these boys were with you in the Cloisters all that time?"

"Certainly, sir; and they won't deny it! Sitting on a chap—"

"Do you deny this, Wharton?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Coker's a man that wants sitting on, sir," ventured Bob Cherry. "So we sat on him."

"The sitfulness was terrific, honoured sahib!"

Loder stood dumb.

Coker's "evidence" had been given now. It was not what the bully of Greyfriars had expected.

Apparently there had been two "outrages" going on at the same time. Coker had been the victim of one, Loder of the other. And the fact that these juniors had been concerned in the attack on Coker of the Fifth was clear proof that they had had no hand in the attack on Loder of the Sixth. An "alibi" could not have been more complete and convincing.

Seven fellows had handled Loder. Not this seven. That was certain now. Seven others—but who? Loder had not the remotest idea. And he had stated that he had recognised the voices of these fellows, who had been at least

three hundred yards away from Classroom No. 10.

"This—this is—extraordinary!" gasped Mr. Prout. "It appears, Loder, that these seven boys have been out of the House, engaged in some foolish and thoughtless prank on a Fifth Form boy. They will be punished for missing calling-over. But they cannot have been the boys in Guy Fawkes masks who seized you in the House, Loder."

That was clear now, even to Loder.

He was still dumb.

"Coker, you need not take the lines," said Mr. Prout. "You are excused. You may go. Wharton, and the rest, you will take two hundred lines each."

"Yes, sir."

"You are satisfied, Loder, that these seven boys are not the boys in Guy Fawkes masks who seized you in a dark passage?"

"I—I—I suppose so, sir!" gasped Loder helplessly. "I—I thought from what Coker said that—that—"

"We were nowhere near Loder, sir," said the Bounder meekly.

"I believe you, Vernon-Smith. Coker's statement exonerates you, so far as the attack on Loder is concerned."

"But Loder said that he recognised

our voices, sir," said the Bounder. Smithy was not the man to let that pass if he could help it. "May we ask Loder why he said that, sir, when it isn't so?"

"It was untrue, sir," said Harry Wharton.

Prout coughed.

"You must not say that, Wharton. Loder was, of course, mistaken—that is clear now. He could not have recognised your voices, as it is now proved that you were not present. A mistake has—"

"A rather serious mistake for us, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"And it wasn't true!" said Smithy.

"Oh! Um! You need say no more!" said Mr. Prout hastily. "You may leave my study, and I shall speak of that to Loder."

"Yes, sir."

The seven filed out with grave faces. Not till the door was shut on them did they grin.

Loder remained. Great as was Prout's confidence in that trusty prefect, he was both startled and shocked by Loder's reckless statement which had been proved to be unfounded. He did not think that Loder had lied, but he

(Continued on next page.)

ALL FOR THE FIFTH!

"Magnet" Representative Visits a Firework Factory.

WHEN I received an invitation to go and see fireworks being made for the Fifth, I felt a very privileged person, as obviously a firework factory is a place where people are not allowed to run in and out as they like! First of all, I was very politely, but firmly, asked to hand over my matches and cigarettes. This I was most willing to do, as I had no desire to be a modern Guy Fawkes.

To begin with, I was shown a large room where about fifty girls were busily engaged in making the cardboard tubes which later were to be loaded and converted into Roman Candles, Air Bomb Repeaters, Shrapnel Guns, Silver Bullets, Flitter Fountains, and a host of other fireworks with exciting names. And the girls were busy, too! Seldom have I seen such swift and dexterous fingers. The tubes are made of several thicknesses of brown kraft paper, made pliable with a generous coat of paste. The girls roll them on brass rods which are withdrawn when the tube is finished. Long tubes are made and subsequently cut into shorter lengths.

Before the tubes can be filled and become fireworks they have to be plugged. Some have a cardboard disc to seal one end, but not all. I became very nervous at what I thought was the careless way in which a row of girls were pouring gunpowder into tubes and banging it down with sticks and mallets! I must have gone pale, because it was explained to me that I was still on what is called the "Safe Side," and a long way off anything explosive. What I had taken to be gunpowder was nothing more dangerous than baked and powdered clay! When clay is tamped down like that it goes brick-hard and makes a perfect plug, I was told.

SAFETY FIRST!

I ASKED why some of the fireworks were being given their attractive outside jackets before being filled, while others were obviously going off to be filled before being completed

with the gaily printed wrapper. "Come along," said my guide, "and you'll see. Our Works—you cannot really call it a factory, because it does not consist of one big building, but a host of little ones—are divided into two 'sides,' the White and the Black. The workers on the White side wear white overalls, and are not allowed in any circumstances to venture near the Black side, where the workers wear black overalls. Neither must a Black side worker venture on the White side."

"But what is the difference?" I asked.

"It is a difference in the nature of the chemicals used. Broadly, the foundation of all fireworks is either gunpowder, or mixtures in which chlorate of potash or barium nitrate form the principal ingredients. The Black side is the gunpowder section; the White side is the other. Now that answers your point about wrapping. Chlorate of potash and barium powders are clean substances, so we put the wrappers on before filling. Gunpowder, because it contains charcoal, along with saltpetre and sulphur, is a dirty substance to handle, so fireworks containing it are filled first and their outer covers put on afterwards."

By this time we had reached the "Dangerous" part of the works. It is not really so very dangerous, because all sorts of precautions are taken to ensure safety. For example, in some of the huts, neither girl—there are only two workers in each hut—is allowed to have more than half a pound of explosive at a time. She gets it as she wants it from a "service" magazine, which in turn, is limited to 25 lb. Still bigger magazines are allowed to contain 100 lb.; while the biggest of all have 10,000 lb. Of course, as the magazines get bigger, they have to be farther apart, and farther away from the filling sheds. The biggest are away over the moors. The most elaborate precautions are taken against sparks. All tools used are made of brass or hardwood, and the workers wear over-shoes of rubber,

A TRICKY BUSINESS!

THE annual output of the factory I visited runs into very many millions of articles, and the staff works all the year round, principally to provide fireworks for the Fifth.

"How do you manage the difference between a fizz and a bang?" I asked. "And how do you time a firework which goes off in several parts?"

"The difference between a fizz and a bang," I was told, "is partly a matter of chemicals, and partly of manufacture. Very broadly, chlorate of potash and nitrates form the basis of fireworks which are pretty rather than noisy; while gunpowder gives us the big bangs. Gunpowder flashes, or fizzes as you call it, when loose, but if you compress it, you get a bang. Timing a firework of the more elaborate kind is a tricky business, but we use a lot of time fuse in the bigger kinds. An elaborate firework is in compartments, and by varying the length of time fuse between the compartments we are able to ensure that the piece goes off just as we want it to."

I was next shown how "Sparklers" are made. Lengths of coppered wire are securely fitted into frames. These frames are then inverted and the wires dipped in a trough of what looks like thin silver-grey cement, after which the frames are put in hot-air cupboards. The next day they are dipped again, and returned to the cupboards, this time to be thoroughly dried. The grey paste, I was told, is made of a mixture of chlorate of potash, aluminium and steel filings. The potash is to make it burn, the aluminium supplies the necessary heat, and the steel filings provide the sparks.

Finally, I was presented with a big box of "Standard Fireworks," so that I could have a real big display on the Fifth, but not all to myself. I've been peeping into that box, boys, and I've got some kinds I never knew the names of—Devil-among-the-Tailors, Fire Fans, Air Bomb Repeaters, Shooting Star Fountain, Golden Zodiac, Chrysanthemum Fountain, Whizz Wheels, Rising Suns, Lighthouses, Colour Wheels, and a Parachute Floating Light which ascends to a great height, and remains suspended for a considerable time. That shall be the last of all—a grand good night.

Here's wishing you all the jolliest time on the Fifth!

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did think that Loder had taken his own fancies for certainties, which was a rather serious thing for a head prefect to do. And Prout talked to Loder for a solid quarter of an hour on that subject—a heart-to-heart talk that left the bully of Greyfriars perspiring.

When Gerald Loder at last got out of the Head's study, he was longing to knock Harry Wharton & Co. into the middle of next week, and Prout still farther along the calendar.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Luck!

THE Secret Seven.

It was all over the school the next day.

From the Sixth to the Second, all Greyfriars had heard about the Secret Seven, and wondered.

Loder had told his pals, Walker and Carne. Perhaps they had told others. Perhaps the juniors told. Anyhow, everybody knew.

Who were the Secret Seven?

Loder cudgelled his brains over it, and could not guess.

Seven juniors had handled him, in masks, calling themselves the Secret Seven. He had been convinced that they were the Famous Five—Smithy and Redwing. And they weren't.

His own notion in reporting the affair to Prout had made that clear to the temporary headmaster, as well as to himself.

He had many enemies, both in the Lower School and the Upper. There were few of the juniors who would not have liked to handle him. Seven of them had done so. But which?

Loder could not guess.

The leading spirits of the Remove, it seemed, were not in it. He could have sworn that Harry Wharton and the Bounder were the ringleaders.

Yet both of them, it was proved, had been sitting on Coker out of the House when the Secret Seven bagged Loder. Neither of them could possibly have had a hand in it.

Loder was enraged, exasperated, and also uneasy. Having butted into Wingate's place, with the intention of exercising a tyranny of which old Wingate had never dreamed, he had expected to have the little world of Greyfriars at his feet. All he required was the unquestioning support of the headmaster—and he had it. Open opposition to his tyranny was impossible—nobody wanted to be "sacked." And he had never thought of secret opposition—the hidden hand, as it were. He had never dreamed of a "secret society" at Greyfriars.

And that had come into being.

It was history repeating itself. Wherever there is tyranny, there will be secret societies, because then it is the only practicable method of opposition.

Who were they?

Seven fellows—unknown to Loder.

Not the fellows who had the most reason to dislike him. He had himself proved their innocence.

Who, then?

The tyrant of the school had a couple of hundred fellows to choose from, and no evidence against any of them.

He cudgelled his brains over it—in vain!

There was, it seemed to him, only one clue.

They had disguised their faces with Guy Fawkes masks. They had, therefore, those grotesque adornments in their possession. If he could discover them—

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Loder thought that out. The Secret Seven were not done with him. He was sure of that. Having "got away" with their little game, they would try it on again, some time. If that was so, they were keeping the masks on hand, for use on the next occasion. Where did they keep them? If he could find them, and prove the ownership—

Pacing in the quad, after lessons the following day, Loder was thinking this out. He scowled at a party of Fifth Form men who passed him going down to games practice.

Blundell of the Fifth curled his lip as he went by. Bland and Fitzgerald, Potter and Greene smiled.

The Fifth Form men did not know all the circumstances, but they knew that Loder, for some reason or other, had had to give up his campaign against Blundell. That cheery youth, after "chucking" three Sixth Form prefects about a study, had escaped unscathed.

Little did the great man of the Fifth dream that he owed his escape to fags. Loder was not likely to tell him; neither

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were the juniors. The episode diminished any respect the Fifth might have had for the new captain of the school.

Loder gritted his teeth as he glanced after Blundell & Co. But it was a comfort to him to reflect that, in one particular, at least, he had the whip-hand! The school games were in his hands, and Blundell of the Fifth was dropped from the first eleven, like most of the men who had been friends of the former captain of the school. Loder was going to lead a team over to St. Jim's, which was very unlikely to beat the eleven they would meet there. He cared little for that, so long as he scored over his enemies at Greyfriars.

But the bully of Greyfriars soon dismissed Blundell from his mind. The Secret Seven occupied his thoughts.

He went into the House at last, and up to the Remove passage. He could not have said that the Secret Seven belonged to the Remove, but his suspicions centred on that Form.

Most of the Removites were out of the House after class, as it was not yet tea-time. It was a good opportunity

for Loder to spy into their studies, in quest of Guy Fawkes masks.

"He, he, he!"

That cachinnation came from Study No. 7.

The door was open, and Loder glanced in.

Study No. 7 in the Remove belonged to Peter Todd, Tom Dutton, and Billy Bunter. Toddy was out, with the other juniors, but two fellows were in the study.

Billy Bunter sat in the armchair, grinning.

The other fellow was standing before the glass, trying on a Guy Fawkes mask!

Loder's eyes glittered.

This was luck!

"He, he, he!" Bunter was blinking at the junior in the mask and chuckling. "I say, Dutton, that makes you look almost as ugly as you are naturally. He, he, he!"

"Eh?" said the junior in the mask.

"It's like your own face, only more so!" said Bunter.

Tom Dutton of the Remove was deaf. Otherwise, Billy Bunter would probably not have made such personal remarks with impunity. Fortunately for Bunter, Dutton did not hear them.

Loder stepped into the study. He had found one of the young scoundrels, at all events. He was in luck!

Bunter jumped at the sight of him.

"Oh crikey! It's Loder!" he exclaimed. "I—I say, Loder, I—I've done my lines. I—I really have, Loder! I—I was just going to bring them, only—only that ass, Toddy, used them to light the fire with, and—"

"Shut up, you young ass!"

Loder dropped his hand on Tom Dutton's shoulder. Dutton blinked at him through the eyeholes of the grotesque mask.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Come with me!" snapped Loder. "Don't take that mask off. Keep it just as it is. Prout's going to see that."

"Eh?"

"You're to come to the Head."

"Dead?" repeated the deaf junior.

"Who's dead?"

"Oh crumbs! You deaf post! Come with me!" roared Loder.

"Oh, all right. Let me get this off first."

"Keep it on, you young sweep! Prout's going to see you just as you are, and I'm going to take you to his study."

"Who's muddy?"

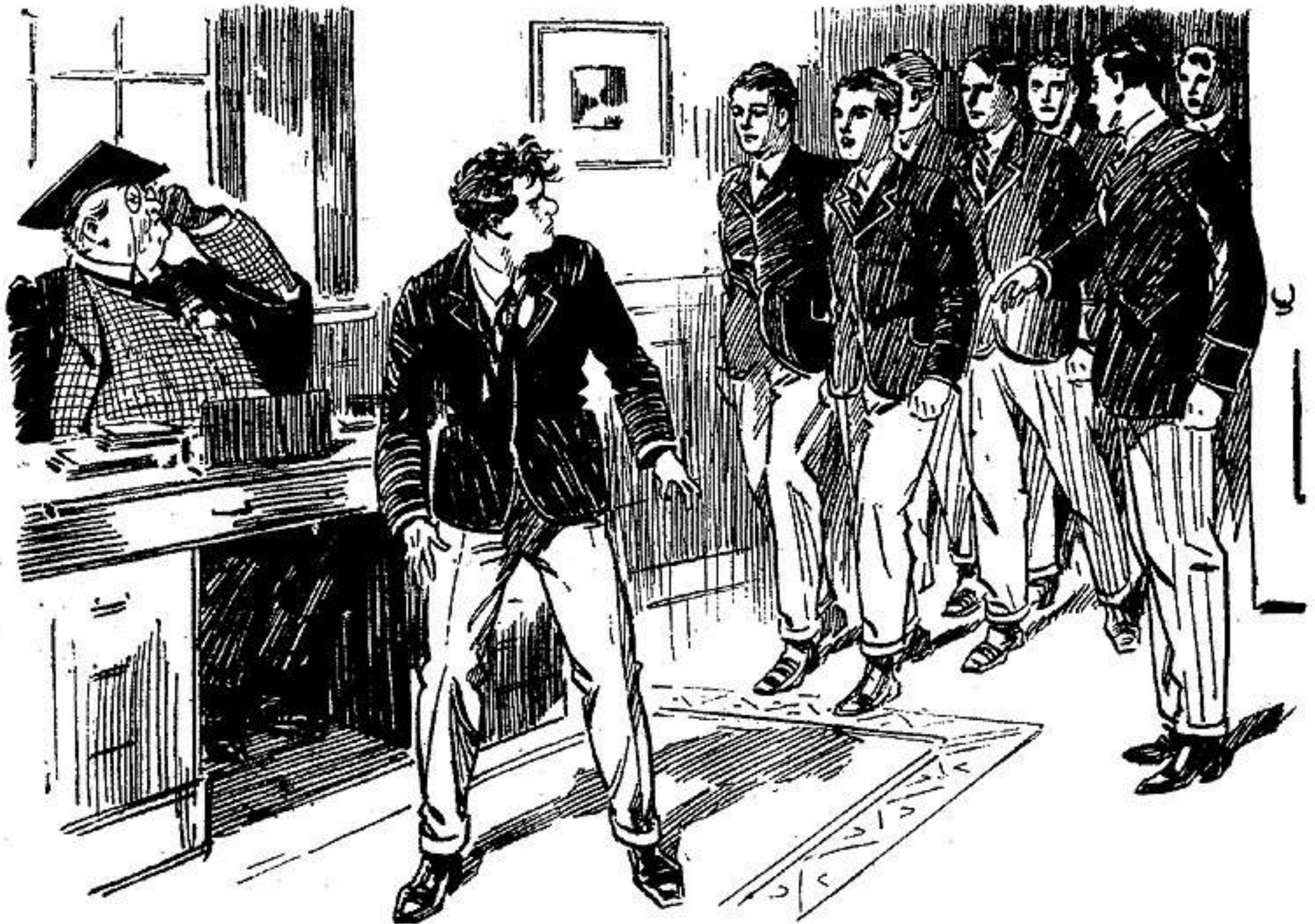
Loder did not answer that question. He hooked Dutton out of Study No. 7 and marched him away down the Remove passage.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He followed on, in sheer wonder. Loder was all sorts of a tyrant, but taking a fellow to the Head for trying on a Guy Fawkes mask in his study was extraordinary. It was against no rules that Bunter had ever heard of.

November 5th being near at hand, plenty of fellows had bought Guy Fawkes masks to wear at the celebrations on that anniversary. That was a trifling matter that Loder had rather overlooked.

In his keenness to track down the Secret Seven Loder was, as usual, jumping to conclusions. In point of fact, he might have discovered about fifty Guy Fawkes masks if he had searched the junior studies. But he did not, at the moment, think of that. He had forgotten all about the glorious Fifth of November, the gunpowder treason, and plot! He was thinking of matters much nearer at hand! And he had not the slightest doubt that he had bagged one of the fellows who had tied him to



"You will take a hundred lines, Coker, for failing to attend calling-over!" said Mr. Prout. "I couldn't help it, sir!" roared Coker. "How was a fellow to come in to call-over with seven fags sitting on his tummy—I—I mean waistcoat?" There was a sudden tap on the door, and Loder entered, with seven members of the Remove trailing in his wake.

the desk in Class-room No. 10, the previous day.

Down the Remove staircase he went with his prisoner, who was in a state of great astonishment.

What Loder was up to Dutton could not guess.

He could only wait and see!

The sight of a fellow in a Guy Fawkes mask, marched along with a prefect's hand on his shoulder, naturally drew attention. Fellows gathered from all sides to stare.

"Who is it?"

"What's up?"

A dozen voices inquired.

"I say, you fellows, it's Dutton!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Loder's running him in for trying on a Guy Fawkes mask! Fancy that!"

"What rot!" said Skinner. "Why shouldn't he, if he wants to?"

"Well, that's it," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, has Loder gone mad, do you think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the dooce is this game, Loder?" asked Walker of the Sixth, meeting the bully of Greyfriars in the passage.

"I've got one of them," said Loder grimly.

"One of the seven?" exclaimed Walker.

"Looks like it, doesn't he?"

"Well, yes, but—"

"But, I say—" began Carne, who was with Walker.

Loder did not heed. He marched Tom Dutton on down the passage and tapped at the door of the Head's study and marched his prisoner into the presence of an astonished Prout!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not so Lucky!

MR. PROUT jumped. He was startled. Even a portly, pompous, sedate middle-aged gentleman was liable to jump at the sudden and unexpected sight of a fellow got up in a grotesque and hideous Guy Fawkes mask.

"What—what—what is this?" gasped Prout, jumping up from his table.

"What—what—Loder—who—what—"

"This is Dutton of the Remove, sir," said Loder.

"Indeed! In the name of all that is absurd, Loder, why have you brought this boy to me in that absurd disguise?" boomed Prout irritably. "I was—was quite startled. It is most—most disconcerting! For what reason—"

"You will remember, sir, that I was attacked yesterday by a number of juniors, disguised in Guy Fawkes masks," said Loder.

"No doubt. But—"

"I have been looking, sir, for any juniors with such things in their possession," said Loder. "I found Dutton with one on, in his study—and I brought him to you just as he was, sir!"

"Oh!" said Prout.

"This is one of the seven boys, sir, who—"

"Oh!" said Prout again.

"If you question him, sir, no doubt he will give you the names of the others," said Loder.

"Certainly, he shall do so!" boomed Prout. "Dutton—if you are Dutton—take off that absurd mask, at once!"

"Did you speak, sir?"

"What? What? Take off that mask!"

"What am I to ask, sir?"

"What! What? Take off that mask, at once!"

"I'm not a dunce, sir!" said Dutton warmly.

"What?"

"Mr. Quelch didn't think me a dunce, sir, when he was here! And Mr. Woose, our new Form-master, has never called me a dunce! I don't know why you're calling me a dunce, sir! What have I done?"

"Is this boy insane?" gasped Prout.

"He's deaf, sir!" said Loder.

"Oh! Yes! I remember that one of Quelch's boys is deaf! Is this the boy? Dutton, take that mask from your face."

"Here, sir?" asked Dutton.

"Yes, here and now!" boomed Prout.

"But there isn't room in your study, sir."

"What? Room for what?"

"A race, sir!"

"A—a—a race!" stuttered Mr. Prout.

"Didn't you tell me I was to race, sir? Do you mean with Loder, sir? There's nobody else here, is there, sir?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout faintly. "Loder, take that mask off the boy's face."

Loder removed the mask, untying the strings. Dutton's rather red and astonished face was revealed. Mr. Prout had wondered whether the boy was insane. Dutton was really wondering the same thing about Prout! What was a fellow to think of a beak who called him a dunce for nothing and told him to race in a study?

"Now, Dutton, listen to me!" boomed Prout, putting a little extra energy into his boom. "I understand that you are deaf—"

"Not exactly deaf, sir; only a little

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

hard of hearing," said Dutton. "I can hear fellows when they don't mumble! A lot of fellows make out that I'm deaf, but I'm not deaf really. Not what you'd call deaf, sir!"

"Loder tells me that you are one of the boys who attacked him in a passage. Is that so?"

"That depends on the passage, sir!"

"What?"

"I can tackle any passage in Virgil, I think, sir! Mr. Quelch used to be satisfied with my Latin, and Mr. Woose thinks it's all right."

Mr. Prout gazed at him.

"Upon my word! Dutton! Listen, boy! I am not speaking of passages in a poem! Did you share in the attack on Loder?"

"No, sir!"

"You deny it?" boomed Prout.

"Oh, no, sir! but I will ask the house-dame if you like."

"What? What?" gasped Prout.

"Ask the house-dame?"

"Yes, sir; she is sure to have some soda—"

"Soda!" repeated Prout. "Soda!"

"Though I don't know about a sack!" said Dutton thoughtfully. "A sack's rather a lot!"

"A—a—a sack!" said Prout dazedly.

"A sack of soda! Does this boy imagine I am speaking to him about a sack of soda! Bless my soul! Dutton, I am asking you about an attack on Loder, not about a sack of soda! Yesterday afternoon Loder was seized in a dark passage. Do you know by whom he was seized?"

Had Prout said: "Do you know whom he was seized by?" he might have got away with it! But Prout, of course, would have perished rather than have terminated a sentence with a preposition. Nothing would have induced Prout to speak slipshod English. But the excellent way he put it led to another misapprehension on the part of the deaf Removite.

"Perhaps he had a cold, sir!" suggested Dutton.

"What?"

"I mean, perhaps that was why he sneezed."

"Sneezed!"

"Didn't you say he sneezed, sir?"

Mr. Prout came out from behind his writing-table, approached Dutton, bent and bawled. Even Dutton had to hear, then!

"Dutton! Did you take part in the attack on Loder yesterday?" Not only Dutton, but half Greyfriars could have heard the question now that Prout put full steam on.

"Eh! No!" ejaculated Dutton, in surprise. "Did anybody attack Loder?"

"Were you not aware of it?" bawled Prout.

"Oh, no, sir! Never heard of it! Fellows often don't tell me things, because they make out I'm deaf!"

"They—they make out! Bless my soul! Dutton, if you were not one of the boys who attacked Loder, disguised in

Guy Fawkes masks, where and why did you obtain that mask?"

"I bought it from a pedlar, sir."

"When?" roared Prout.

"This morning, sir!"

"And why?"

"For the Fifth of November, sir!" said Dutton, in surprise. "Fellows always have them on Bonfire Day, sir. It's next week—"

"Upon my word! That is very true! Loder, had you forgotten that Bonfire Day is near at hand, which accounts for any boy in the school being in possession of a Guy Fawkes mask!"

Loder started! He had! So had Prout, for that matter, until Tom Dutton reminded him. It was many, many years since Prout had celebrated Bonfire Day with crackers and squibs and a mask!

"The boy states that he bought the mask this morning!" said Prout crossly. "In that case, he could not have worn it yesterday! Have you any other reason for supposing that he was one of your assailants, Loder?"

"Oh!" gasped Loder. "No!"

"Upon my word! Have you wasted my time, Loder, and given me the—extremely difficult task of talking to this boy, simply because he had a Guy Fawkes mask in his possession a few days before the anniversary on which such things are commonly worn?"

"I—I—I—" Loder stammered.

"The boy's statement could be inquired into!" boomed Prout. "But it is not necessary—not at all necessary! Probably fifty boys have such masks in their possession! Possibly a hundred! Loder, you have acted very hastily and thoughtlessly in this matter! You have acted very stupidly, Loder! Really, Loder, I expect a little more judgment than this from my head prefect!"

Prout turned to Dutton.

"You may leave the study!" he snapped.

"Loder said the same, sir—"

"What?"

"But I'm not muddy—"

"N-n-not m-m-muddy!"

"No, sir! I can't see any mud, anyhow! If I'm muddy, where is it?" argued Dutton.

"Go!" shrieked Prout. He had had enough of talking to Dutton, at all events. "Go! Go!"

Dutton went.

Loder would have been glad to follow. But Prout had some more to say to Loder! There was another heart-to-heart talk for that zealous prefect! When he got away at last, Loder realised that he had better think twice, if not three times, before he took any fellow to Prout again!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker All Over!

"L ODER'S not so bad!"

"Eh!"

"What?"

"Not so bad!" affirmed Coker of the Fifth.

Generally, in Coker's study, Potter and Greene of the Fifth gave the great Horace his head. He would take it, in any case; so it was easier to give it him, and save argument!

Now, however, the worms turned! Since the affair of George Blundell, all the Fifth Form of Greyfriars agreed that Loder was a cad, a sneak, a bully, a toad, a rank outsider, the limit, the outside edge—in fact, quite a lot of unpleasant things. He was making ducks and drakes of the football eleven, for which alone he ought to have been

boiled in oil! He had nearly landed Blundell, the idol of the Form, in terrific trouble, for which he ought to have been lynched, at least, if not boiled over again! His only friend in the Fifth was Price, who was cold-shouldered by the rest; and Price would not have ventured to speak up in his favour. That was reserved for Horace Coker!

"You blithering idiot!" said Potter.

"You howling ass!" said Greene.

"Not so bad!" said Potter. "Are you off your onion?"

"Not so bad!" said Greene. "Are you stark, staring, raving potty?"

Coker frowned.

"I don't want any back-chat, you fellows," he said. "I think I'm a jolly good-tempered fellow not to kick the pair of you out of the study this minute."

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"I've said," resumed Coker, "that Loder's not so bad! If you'll listen a minute, instead of gabbling like geese, I'll explain. Loder's not so bad! Look what he's done!"

"He's turned old Blundell out of the First Eleven!" roared Potter.

"Yes—that's what I mean!"

"That—that—that's what you mean!" gasped Potter.

"That's it. I never thought much of Blundell, you know! A good fellow, and all that, but no footballer!" Coker shook his head. "He has consistently refused me a place in the Form team. You know that. Well, that shows how much he knows about football!"

"Ye gods!" said Greene. "But what about Loder?"

"He's turned out Sykes of the Sixth," went on Coker. "Well, I agree with him! They're decent fellows enough, and a fellow likes them personally. But friendship isn't football! They always backed up Wingate, when he was here, in keeping me out of the First Eleven. That shows what duds they really are!"

"Oh crikey!"

"He's turned you out, Potter—"

"Do you agree with that, too?" demanded Potter ferociously.

"As I said, friendship isn't football! I'm bound to agree, when I know that the man's right!" argued Coker. "Can you say you play Soccer like I do, Potter?"

"Like you do?" gurgled Potter.

"Yes," said Coker, with dignity. "I ask you!"

"No!" gasped Potter. "Hardly! If I played footer like you do, Coker, I shouldn't expect to be in the Greyfriars First Eleven! I should expect to be asked to play for Colney Hatch!"

"Or Bedlam!" agreed Greene.

Coker's frown intensified. This, of course, was sheer cheek, and Coker was not a man to be cheeked in his own study.

Still, he tried to be patient with his erring comrades.

"Talk sense!" he suggested.

"What would be the good, with you?" asked Greene. "You wouldn't understand."

Coker breathed hard.

"I've said, and I say again, that Loder's not so bad!" he declared. "He's made a lot of changes in the footer, and I approve of every one of them. Every man he's dropped has been against me. Loder's looking for new blood, and I think it's a jolly good idea. I can't say I think much of some of his new men—Hilton, Price, Walker, and Carne, and so on—but if a man's doing his best, I believe in backing him up. Anyhow, he's got rid of a lot of duds, like you, Potter, old chap!"

"Like me?" breathed Potter.

"Yes, and Blundell, Sykes, Bland,

and that lot! He's trying out some new men, which is a jolly good idea. But," added Coker, with a shake of the head, "he hasn't thought of me!"

"You!" said Potter and Greene.

"Me!" said Coker. "I'm a pretty good man at the game, I believe."

"Anybody else believe so?"

"I'm not bothering about that! When a fellow knows a thing, he knows it, and the silly prejudices of a lot of ignoramuses can't make any difference to that! Well, as I said, Loder's not so bad, and I'm going to give him a chance. I'm going to back him up, and offer him my services as a footballer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you laughing at, you dummies? I'm speaking seriously. Loder's got his faults—I've had lots of rows with him myself. I don't think much of the Sixth. I've said so, and I say so again. Still, I believe in being fair even to a Sixth Form man. Loder's got his points. And I can tell you this—they can jaw as much as they like in the games study, but I'm going to back up Loder—and that's that!"

"Fathead!"

"Dummy!"

"Oh, jaw!" said Coker. "Jaw! I'm backing up Loder! And I can tell you this, I'm not letting those cheeky fags get at him! You've heard all that jaw about the Secret Seven and so on! I've got a pretty clear idea about that. I've been thinking over something I noticed in the Cloisters the other day!" Coker nodded his head sagely. "I can tell you, I can jolly well put Loder on their track. There were fourteen of the young ticks, and only seven of them stayed to sit on me! I fancy I know how to put my finger on the Secret Seven!"

"If you do—which you don't—you'd better keep it dark!" snorted Potter. "They're up against Loder, and that's good enough."

"Everybody's up against Loder, except a few blackguards and one silly fool!" remarked Greene.

Coker rose from his chair. He gave his study-mates a glance of lofty scorn.

"Jaw as much as you like! I'm standing by Loder! I'm backing him up! Put that in your pipe and smoke it, and be blowed to you!"

Potter and Greene rose also. They glared at Horace Coker as if they could have eaten him. Coker saw reason for backing up Loder in the fact that he had turned nearly all the good men out of the First Eleven! That, in the eyes of everybody else, was the head and front of his offending! Coker was the man to take original views. It was Coker all over!

But his originality, this time, was altogether too exasperating.

"Look here!" said Potter. "You back up Loder, and you'll get ragged by all the Form!"

"I'd like to see 'em rag me!" jeered Coker.

"You'll see it soon enough, if you start playing the giddy ox to that extent!" hooted Greene.

"Rats!"

"You're going to see Loder now?" demanded Potter.

"I am!"

"And backing him up?"

"Just that!" assented Coker.

"Then you'll live the life of a Soccer ball in the Fifth! And you can take this as a sample! Back up, Greeney!"

"What-ho!" said Greene.

Coker had opened the study door. Potter and Greene rushed on him in the doorway. They swept him out!

Coker landed in the passage with a crash.

Coker's roar was heard far and wide. "Now come back!" roared Potter.

"Come and have another!"

"Lots more ready!" hooted Greene.

Up jumped Coker, like a jack-in-the-box! Back he came, in a charge like that of the Light Brigade!

But he had less luck than that famous brigade. They carried all before them in their celebrated charge. Coker didn't!

Coker mixed himself up with Potter and Greene, and the mixture rolled and panted in the doorway for a couple of minutes. Coker was ejected from the mixture, and rolled in the passage again.

This time he was not in such a hurry to get up. He needed wind. He sprawled and gasped. He gurgled! He guggled!

"That's a sample!" panted Potter. "Lots more! Come on, Greeney! Let's tell them in the games study!"

Potter and Greene tramped down the passage to the games study, where the Fifth Form most did congregate.

Coker sat up. He passed his hand dazedly over his head, as if to make sure that it was still there! It felt as if it wasn't.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker.

He staggered to his feet, still short of wind, gasping. He leaned on the wall and gasped and gasped. When he had recovered a little he started for the Sixth Form passage. He resisted a natural desire to follow Potter and Greene and slaughter them in the games study, under the eyes of the Fifth. Potter and Greene could wait! Still gurgling a little, Horace Coker went off to the Sixth to see Loder.

(Continued on next page.)



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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

And Just Like Loder!

"SOMEBODY must know!" snarled Gerald Loder.
 "Right!" assented Walker.
 "But who?"
 "Echo answers who!" remarked Arthur James Carne.
 Loder scowled.

It was some days since the affair of the Secret Seven. During that time no clue had been discovered to the young rascals.

Loder's first clue, the Guy Fawkes mask, had turned out a frost! Loder was a little more particular about his clues now!

He had had enough of heart-to-heart talks with Prout! He was anxious not to shake that gentleman's confidence in him. But he was determined to run down the secret "gang" who had handled him, and made him climb down in the affair of Blundell. He had had no luck! Now he was discussing it with his friends in his study—but they could not help.

They were keen enough to do so. If the Secret Seven remained undetected, it was likely enough that Loder's friends might suffer at their hands, as well as Loder. They did not feel quite safe while the Seven were secret.

But there seemed to be nothing doing. Once their masks were off, the seven had vanished, as if into thin air, leaving no clue behind.

"Somebody must know!" repeated Loder savagely. "In fact, very likely a good many know!"

"Shouldn't wonder!" agreed Walker. "But they won't tell us."

"Hardly!" said Carne.

"I'm pretty sure that Wharton and his gang have a hand in it, though I can't fix it on them!" snarled Loder.

"But you proved yourself that they hadn't!"

"Oh rats!"

"You see, there's hardly a fag in the school who doesn't loathe you, Loder!"

Carne pointed out kindly. "And there's a couple of hundred of them."

Tap!
 There was a knock at the door, and it opened.

Loder stared round irritably.

It was Coker of the Fifth who stepped in! Loder's eyes fixed on him with a rather deadly look.

He had never liked Coker! Coker was so big, and so strong, and so reckless and unthinking, that even Sixth Form prefects had to be careful with him. The fact that Coker would be sacked if he punched a prefect did not alter the other fact that a prefect punched by Coker would feel as if a sledgehammer had hit him!

Several times since he had become head prefect and captain of the school Loder had considered the idea of making Coker sit up for his cheek! For what Coker regarded as manly independence was regarded simply as cheek by the prefects. It was now in Loder's power to treat Coker as he had started to treat Blundell. In Coker's case, he would get away with it easily enough. Nobody cared what happened to Coker. He was a thorn in the side of Prout, his Form-master, and generally in hot water in the Form-room. Prout certainly would not feel about Coker as he had felt about Blundell! Neither would the Secret Seven, whoever they were!

Loder set his lips.

If Coker gave him an excuse, half an excuse, he would find himself in Queer Street! Loder was fairly itching to lay the ashplant round a fellow whom, in his heart of hearts, he feared! Bringing the hefty and egregious Coker to heel would be rather a triumph for the new captain of Greyfriars!

Loder was all the more keen on it, because of the episode in Prout's study a few days since; when Coker, whom he had supposed to be going to witness on his side, had turned out to be a witness for his victims! He was very keen on making Horace smart for letting him down like that.

If only the hefty Horace gave him an excuse—

Of course, it never occurred to Loder that Horace had come to his study as a follower and supporter! He had no remote idea of Coker's remarkable intention of backing him up!

Loder was no wizard; and could not be expected to guess the mysterious workings of a brain like Coker's.

"Oh, here you are, you men!" said Coker genially as he came in.

That, to begin with, was cheek!

Fifth Form men did not breeze into Sixth Form studies like that!

But Coker, though he was going to back up Loder, wanted it to be clear that he was as good as any Sixth Form man at Greyfriars! It was important, to

Coker's mind, for that to be made clear. "Yes, here we are!" said Loder grimly. "And if you've come here to ask for a whopping you've come to the right shop, Coker!"

Coker stared at him.

"A whopping!" he repeated. "Mad!"
 Loder exchanged a glance with Walker and Carne! They rose to their feet! They had been unwilling to handle Blundell—but they had no such unwillingness to handle Coker! All three of them rather "funked" Coker individually. Three to one they did not funk him; and Loder's authority was sufficient to cover their proceedings. If it came before Prout, Coker could not deny that he had barged into Loder's study and asked for it. It was all right this time!

"Just a whopping!" said Loder, with a sneer. "I'd whop you as soon as any fag, Coker, or any other Fifth Form man, see?"

"You didn't make much of a job of it with Blundell!" snorted Coker. "And I fancy you'd find me as tough to handle!"

Loder & Co. were quite unaware that Coker had come on a mission of peace; and that he was the man—the only man—who could give them some sort of a clue to the Secret Seven! Had they been aware of the latter fact, no doubt they would have received Horace with open arms! It was a case where ignorance was not bliss!

Loder picked up his ashplant! Walker and Carne edged round between Coker and the door. Quite unknowingly Coker was understudying Daniel entering the lion's den when he came to Loder's study.

Coker, of course, forgot his peaceful intentions at this hostile reception. He clenched his fists and his eyes began to gleam.

"What sort of a game do you call this?" he demanded. "What do you fancy you're up to, I'd like to know?"

Loder pointed to a chair with his cane.

"Bend over!" he said laconically.

"Mad?" asked Coker again.

"Bend over!" rapped Loder.

"Mad as a hatter, I suppose!" said Coker. "I came here—"

"Are you bending over that chair?"

"Don't be a silly ass!" roared Coker, losing what remained of his temper, never very patient. "Do you want me to chuck you across the study, like Blundell? I'll do it fast enough if you ask for it."

"Bend him over!" said Loder.

Walker and Carne jumped in together. They had hold of Coker's arms before he could deliver one of his sledgehammer blows. Uniting their efforts, they jerked him to the chair and bent him over the same.

Whop!

Down came Loder's ashplant on Coker's trousers with a terrific whop! The roar from Horace Coker woke all the echoes of Greyfriars.

He struggled frantically.

In the case of Blundell of the Fifth, the Fifth Form man had got the upper hand! But Coker, though perhaps more beefy than Blundell, was hardly so redoubtable an antagonist. In the grip of two Sixth Form men, both exerting themselves, Coker found that he had no chance. He had no doubt whatever that he was a better man than Blundell in all respects. But perhaps that was a mistake on Coker's part! Anyhow, he failed to break loose from the grasp of Walker and Carne, and they held him pinned down over the chair!

Whop! Whop!

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you!"

Whop!

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"Whooooop! Wait till I get at you! Yaroooooh! Oh, you rotten bully! I'll make shavings of you!" shrieked Coker. Whop!

Loder was going strong.

He had a hefty hand with an ashplant; he had had a lot of practice with it. He put all his beef into this! It was sheer joy to him to whop a fellow of whom he was secretly afraid! No more tact in dealing with Coker—no more avoidance of trouble with that headstrong youth—not now that he was head prefect and captain of the school! Coker, perhaps, would mend his manners—after this! A thrashing, in Loder's opinion, was what he had wanted, for whole terms! Now he was getting it!

Whop!

It was a full six; and every one of them a swipe! Horace Coker wriggled and roared and howled and yelled.

Loder lowered the ashplant. "Now you've had your six, Coker!" he remarked genially. "Don't ask for any more, or you'll get them."

"I'll smash you!" bellowed Coker.

Whop!

"I'll pulverise you!"

Whop!

"Yaroooooh! Leggo! Oh crikey!" howled Coker.

"Anything more to say?" asked Loder, swishing the ashplant.

Coker gurgled! But he said no more! Coker's brain was not rapid on the uptake; but he realised that so long as he slanged Loder the whopping would go on. And eight fearful whops satisfied even Coker.

"You can let him go!" said Loder.

Walker and Carne hesitated to let Coker go! They were rather doubtful of what might happen when he got loose.

Loder threw the door wide open. "Chuck him out!" he said. "Listen to me, Coker! I'm letting you off this time with a whopping. Any more cheek and I'll take you to Prout to be sacked. You'll go straight back to the Fifth, if you're wise. Now sling him out into the passage, you men."

Walker and Carne heaved together, and Coker tottered out into the passage. There he rallied. He stood panting, and glaring back into Loder's study.

The three Sixth Form men stood in a row, waiting for a charge.

Perhaps it dawned on Coker that he could not handle three Sixth Form men in a bunch! Perhaps it permeated into his obtuse brain that if he did, it would be his last exploit at Greyfriars School! Perhaps the anticipatory look on Loder's face gave him pause; warning him that the bully of Greyfriars would

(Continued on next page.)



Our Soccer specialist is at your service. If you want an expert opinion on any point in connection with the great winter game, write to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

ITALY ON TOP!

At the moment there's a possibility of an International match in this country between England and Italy, and much interest is likely to be aroused by the event. A reader who has heard of this visit of the Italians, and who has also seen them referred to as the world's champion football team, asks me how it comes about that they are able to claim this high-sounding title.

Well, the Italians can certainly lay some sort of claim to the title, even though that claim may not be entirely justified on actual football merit. Not long ago there was held what was called a world's Cup competition on knock-out lines, and in that competition over thirty countries were represented. Italy came through on top, winners of that world Cup.

The snag, of course, so far as real justification of the title is concerned, is that none of the countries of the British Isles took part in the competition. I don't suppose you would be interested in the why and wherefore, because it is rather a complicated subject; mixed up with what might be called football politics.

The interesting thing about this Italian victory in the world Cup competition, however, lies in the fact that the rulers of that country were so pleased about it that they had special postage stamps made.

And if you should happen to receive a letter from anybody in Italy just now, I should like you to look at the stamp very carefully. You will find that on the picture part of it there are footballers, and also the words "World's Football Champions."

So whatever else we may say about this Italian football team which is coming to play England, they are at least interesting because they have been responsible for adding one postage stamp to the collection of the philatelists. And we all collect postage stamps at one time or another in our short lives, don't we?

POSITION PLAY!

Mention of this coming International reminds me that England has a ready-made team at hand—provided, of course, that the men who played against Wales at the end of September are all fit and well. The form of the England team on that occasion was considered to be quite good, and it may be taken for granted that the eleven players who did duty will be given further opportunities of showing their worth. The more a team of players from different clubs play together the better they ought to be.

It would be something of a novelty if England played two International matches in succession with the same team.

Indeed, it would almost be strange in these days, if England played the same centre-half-back in two consecutive matches. This position has proved very difficult to fill to the satisfaction of the selectors in recent years, and changes have been made almost from match to match.

This leads me to answer a question from a Middlesbrough reader, who wishes to know what I think of the much-discussed problem of whether the centre-half-back should be a third full-back—that is, a stopper purely and simply—or whether he should play his part in the attacking plans of his side. There is no doubt that the reason why there has been so many changes in English International sides recently has been the fact that the selectors have not seemed to make up their minds definitely as to what sort of centre-half they wanted.

We have tried the stoppers purely and simply—such as Roberts, of Arsenal. We have tried the attacking type of centre-half, like Hart, of Leeds, and Cowan, of Manchester City. We have also tried the fifty-fifty type of centre-half. In trying to answer the question as to which type of centre-half my young

friend should try to become, I am in a difficulty. You see, position play is not a one-man affair. That is where so many clubs—senior as well as junior—make a mistake. A certain player is told that he must adopt this or that method—and the remainder of the team are not told to play accordingly.

A TIP!

WHAT I am getting at is this.

If the centre-half of a football team is used solely for the job of holding up the opposing centre-forward, then some other member of the team must do what would normally be the work of the centre-half in attack.

One of the secrets of Arsenal's success with this policeman type of centre-half is found in the methods of Alex James. It is scarcely going too far to say that James is really the centre-half of the team. He picks up all the loose balls in the middle of the field, and uses them in the way the old type of centre-half used to do.

So in respect of the duties of particular players, I would advise the members of every team to have a talk together. The tactics of the team as a whole should be decided.

Position play in football is nine-tenths of the game. The art of getting into position even when the ball is not in your particular part of the field should be studied.

A very old footballer of my acquaintance sums up this matter very tersely.

"If you are not in possession of the ball," he says, "then be in position." I don't think that needs much in the way of detailed explanation. When a colleague has the ball, think about your position; try to get clear of the opposition so that the colleague can pass the ball to advantage. There is one thing better than beating an opponent after the ball comes, and that is to beat him before you receive the ball.

In reply to "Foul," the referee could not give a penalty. Here are the circumstances. A centre-forward takes a shot at goal from short range, but the ball goes over the bar. As soon as it has gone over the bar the goalkeeper, rushing out, fouls the man who shot. Although this offence is committed in the penalty area, a penalty kick cannot be awarded. The ball must be in play at the time. It may be added that a penalty kick can be given for an offence in the penalty area even when the ball is outside the area, provided the ball is in play. I hope that is clear.

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be rather glad of a chance of getting him bunked. Whatever the reason, or collection of reasons, Horace Coker did not charge back into Loder's study!

He bestowed a glare of concentrated wrath and scorn on the three bullies, breathed hard and deep, turned—and tramped away! No doubt he promised himself vengeance at a future date! Just at present, he gave it up and tramped back to the Fifth. Whatever the outcome of that whopping of Coker might be, one thing was certain—Coker had quite dismissed the idea of backing up Loder! Whoever at Greyfriars might or might not back up Loder, it was absolutely certain that Coker of the Fifth never would!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

More for Coker!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

He yelled from the landing into the Remove passage. And it was a yell of high excitement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled back Bob Cherry. "What's up, Bunter?"

"I say, you fellows, they're going to rag Coker in the Fifth—"

"More power to their elbow," grinned Vernon-Smith.

"The ragfulness of the esteemed Coker is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, looks to me as if they're going to slaughter him!" gasped Bunter. "The whole Fifth— And Blundell's got a fives bat, and—"

"Who's going to the circus?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

There was a rush of the Remove fellows across the landing to the Fifth Form quarters to see the circus. It was only a few days since they had ragged Coker of the Fifth themselves in the Cloisters. No doubt Coker had got over that, and was asking for another.

"By gum, the whole jolly family is in it!" remarked Johnny Bull, as the Famous Five arrived in the Fifth Form territory.

All the Fifth, or nearly all, were there, either in the passage, or the games study of which the door stood wide open. And they were all excited. Blundell, the captain of the Form, had a fives bat in his hand, which his expression hinted that he was going to use, hard. Bland, his chum, had sorted out a long ruler. Fitzgerald had a walking-stick; Potter and Greene a cushion each. Other fellows had other things—all apparently ready for Horace Coker. It was really surprising to see the unanimity that prevailed in the Fifth. Except Hilton and Price, who were not to be seen, the whole Form seemed prepared to fall on Horace Coker and slay him.

Coker's name was on every lip. And the interested juniors soon learned why the whole Fifth had turned out to slay Coker.

"Backing up Loder," Potter was saying. "Said it out quite plain—he's going to back up Loder."

"Shouted it out!" said Greene.

"I'll give him backing up Loder!" said George Blundell. "I'll give him beans! I'll give him jip!"

"Sure we'll rag the baste bald-headed," said Fitzgerald. "Faith, and we'll spifficate him intirely!"

"Frog's march along the passage," said Bland.

"And a dozen from this bat," said Blundell.

"And dip his head in ink," said Smith major.

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"Back up Loder, will he?" said Tomlinson. "He will be tired of backing up Loder when we've done with him."

"He'll be tired of life," said Blundell darkly.

The chums of the Remove looked on from the landing with smiling faces. Why Coker, almost alone in the school, had declared his intention of backing up Loder, they did not know. But it was clear that Coker was not going to get any encouragement in the Fifth in this new idea of his.

They were waiting for him to come back from Loder's study. Whatever his luck had been with Loder, he was going to have the time of his life when he got back to the Fifth.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Here he comes!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!"

All eyes turned on Horace Coker as he arrived. He was not looking happy. He was rather untidy and breathless, and wriggled a little as he walked. He gave the juniors a glare.

"What are you fags hanging about here for?" he demanded.

"Here he is!" roared Blundell.

There was a rush of big Fifth Form fellows, and the juniors jumped out of the way. In the grasp of half a dozen pairs of hands, Horace Coker was upended along the passage.

He roared as he went. He seemed to be taken by surprise.

Coker had come back in a state of burning indignation—the deadliest enemy of Loder of the Sixth. But the Fifth, of course, did not know that. They only knew that he had declared his intention of backing up Loder. Without wasting time in words they proceeded to let Coker know what they thought of that idea.

"Bump him!"

"Rag him!"

"Whop him!"

"Roll him over!"

"Scrag him!"

It was a terrific roar in the Fifth Form Passage.

Coker, yelling wildly, disappeared in the midst of a crowd of excited and wrathful seniors. Every man was eager to get at Coker. Harry Wharton & Co. looked on. Fellows of the Fourth and the Shell came along to look on. The uproar was heard far and wide.

Loudest of all was the yelling of Coker of the Fifth.

Bumped and rolled and whopped, the hapless Horace was left sprawling on the floor in the midst of a wolfish circle. He sprawled and spluttered. Blundell brandished the fives bat over him.

"Now, you cheeky ass!" roared Blundell.

"Grooogh!" gasped Coker.

"Backing up Loder, are you?"

"Oooogh! Urrrggh!"

"Roll him over and pin him down!" said the captain of the Fifth. "I'll give him a dozen to begin with."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Poor old Coker! There won't be much left of him after this."

"The muchfulness will not be terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! Hoooh! Woogh!" gurgled Coker, sitting up dazedly. "Wharrer you at? Have you gone potty?"

"Backing up Loder—what?" roared Blundell.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

"Changed your mind?" grinned Potter.

"Urrgh! Yes. Wurrgh!"

"I'll give you a dozen, all the same, in case you change it again," said Blundell. "Roll him over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Gerroff! Leggo!" raved Coker. "You silly asses! Leggo! I'm not backing up Loder! I'm going to thrash the cheeky rotter as soon as I get a chance! Ow! Will you leggo? Wow!"

"You said you were backing up Loder!" hooted Potter. "You went to see him in his study to tell him so."

"Yes; but— Ow! He collared me—wow!—and whopped me!" gasped Coker.

"What!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Loder whopped you!" gasped Blundell. "Whopped a Fifth Form man!"

"Ow! Wow! Yes!" groaned Coker.

"Ow! Those cads, Walker and Carne, held me, and Loder gave me six! Ow! You see, he didn't seem to understand that I'd called in a friendly way—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And they pitched into me before I could explain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shan't be able to sit down for days!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" howled Coker, staggering to his feet. "I don't see where the cackle comes in. That bully Loder—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fifth.

"That rotten cad Loder—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody was ragging Coker now. The ragers were doubled up with merriment. Evidently Coker, after all, was not backing up Loder. Loder had seen to that. The Fifth roared; the juniors roared. It was quite a Homeric outburst of laughter. Coker glared round. He could not see anything funny in this. He was the only fellow who couldn't.

"Oh, cackle!" he howled. "I can tell you I'm going to smash up that bullying cad, Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only he's got Prout in his pocket, and a man doesn't want to be sacked!" gasped Coker. "But I'll whop him some time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly, cackling blithering idiots, I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker tramped into his study and slammed the door. He had been feeling sore when he got back after his visit to Loder. He was feeling sorer now. His last state was worse than his first! He slammed his door wrathfully on the crowd in the passage, leaving them rocking with laughter.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Seized by the Seven!

GERALD LODER smiled. It was not a pleasant smile. Wednesday had arrived—the day of the St. Jim's match. Immediately after dinner that day, the Greyfriars First Eleven were to take the train for St. Jim's, to play Kildare's team there. And there were few Greyfriars men who expected anything but a sound licking from Kildare's team on the St. Jim's ground.

Which did not seem to worry the new captain of the school. Loder thought of his grudges first and football afterwards, if at all.

He had reorganised the Greyfriars First Eleven, as he chose to describe it. Every man who had been a pal of "old Wingate's" was turned out. Great players like Blundell of the Fifth and

Sykes of the Sixth had been dropped, as well as several others. Their places had been filled by men like Walker and Carne, Hilton and Price.

Loder had made himself thoroughly unpopular in the Upper School as well as the Lower. It was his own fault; but he resented his unpopularity all the same. He liked to make the fellows who loathed him "sit up." And he could not do that more effectually than by playing ducks and drakes with the Soccer.

Standing at his study window he was looking out at a group of seniors in the quad, who were talking together excitedly. Sykes, Blundell, Bland and several other dropped players were in the group. They were evidently excited and exasperated. The fact that they were powerless added to their exasperation. And Loder smiled!

If they did not like him or respect him, at all events they were going to feel his power! He noticed Walker and Carne stroll out of the House, and caught the glare that Blundell & Co. turned on them. And he smiled again! Loder was enjoying himself to-day! Everybody, or nearly everybody, seemed to be in the quad after dinner. Nearly everybody was talking, and all on one subject. Loder glanced over a sea of angry and indignant faces, and his smile broadened.

He did not hear his study door open behind him.

It opened very softly.

Had he looked round he would have been startled by the face that looked in. It was rather a startling countenance. It was, in fact, a Guy Fawkes mask, completely concealing the features under it.

Eyes, through the eyeholes of the mask, flashed swiftly round the study,

and fixed on Loder's back as he stood at the window.

The masked junior pushed the door wider open silently. He made a sign to six other fellows behind him.

Then he trod softly into the study! Loder, still entertained by what he saw in the quad outside, did not turn his head. He was taken quite off his guard! Nothing could have suited the Secret Seven of Greyfriars better!

The whole seven were in the study, and still Loder stood staring from the window, grinning.

The leader closed the door and turned the key.

The click of the key caught Loder's ear, and he spun round from the window. He jumped almost clear of the floor at the sudden and startling sight of seven fellows in grotesque Guy Fawkes masks.

He stared at them, catching his breath! In broad daylight—in the middle of the day—the Secret Seven had reappeared! The St. Jim's match and the deep feelings aroused on that subject had rather driven the Secret Seven from Loder's thoughts. He was reminded of them now.

Were they the same seven? He could not tell! They looked the same, but they might have been any fellows in the Remove, or Fourth, or Shell! He had suspected last time that the Famous Five were among the seven, and he had been wrong! Had he suspected it this time he would have been right! But the masks told him nothing.

They did not speak! They advanced on Loder of the Sixth. He clenched his hands and caught his breath.

The seven were between him and the door. He had a wild thought of tearing open the window and jumping out.

But there was no time!

"Collar him!"

They jumped at him in a bunch.

"Help!" yelled Loder, as he went down, struggling, in the grasp of seven pairs of hands.

It was the only yell he had a chance of uttering.

The next second a handkerchief was jammed into his mouth, and he gurgled into silence.

Silent, furious, he struggled desperately. The seven uttered no word. They reserved all their breath for the tussle, which was fierce enough for a couple of minutes.

Then Loder, on his back, gurgling under the gag, lay exhausted, the seven kneeling on him, pinning him down by sheer weight.

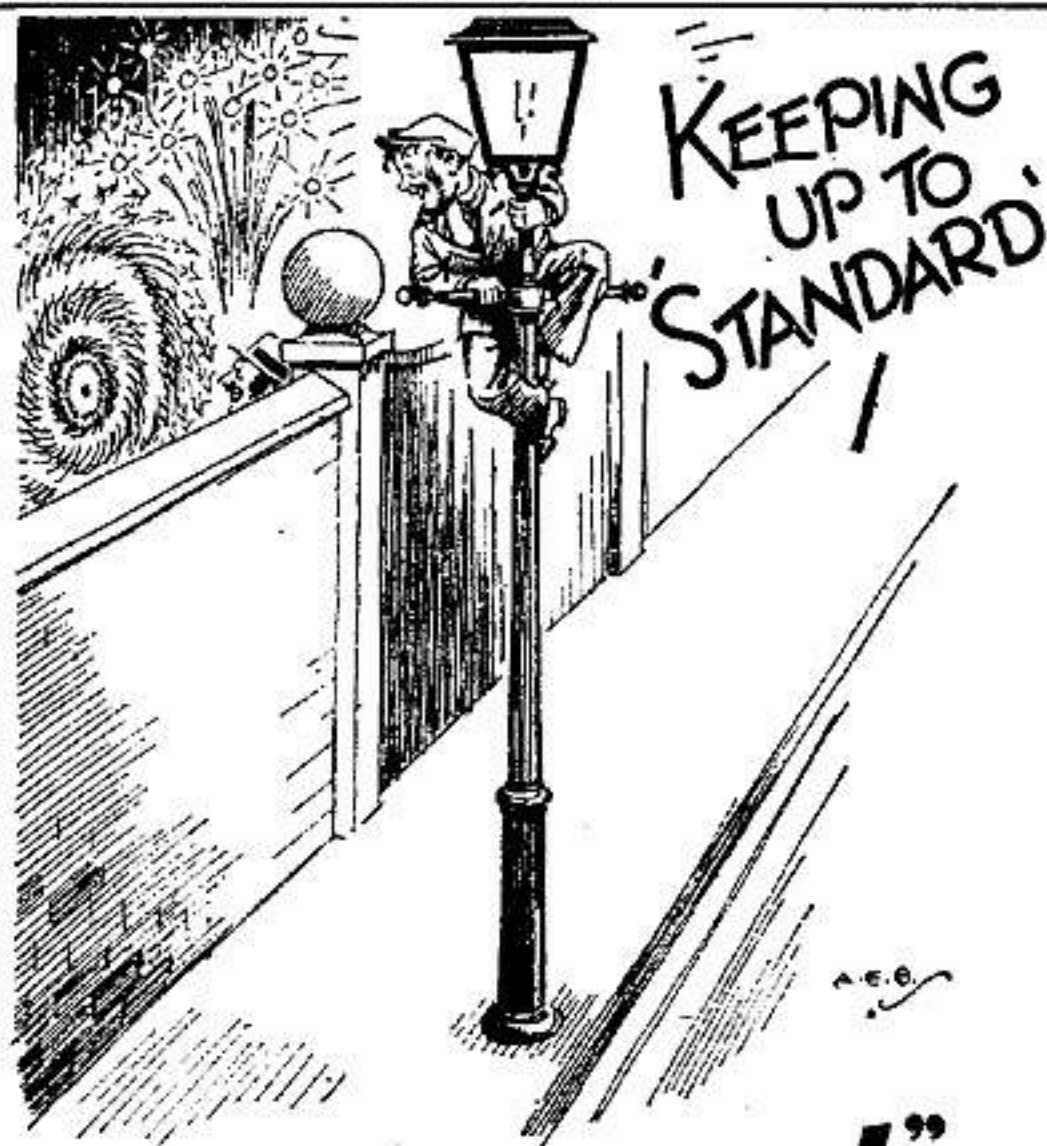
He glared up at them rather like a tiger.

What they intended to do he had no idea. They were taking tremendous risks in tackling him like this in the broad daylight. Any fellow might come to his study to see him any minute. True, they had picked a time when the House was almost empty. But it would be time soon to start for the railway station. Then—

If they left him tied, as they had done a few days ago in the French classroom, he would soon be found and released. What else could they intend?

Whatever they intended they said nothing. Having reduced Loder to utter helplessness, they proceeded to fasten his ankles together with a whipcord and his wrists with another. Then a string was knotted round his head to keep the stuffed handkerchief safe in its place.

(Continued on next page.)



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The door handle turned, and there was a push at the door.

The seven jumped. Loder writhed wildly. If he could but utter one shout! But he could not utter a whisper!

There was a rattle and shake at the door handle.

"You in there, Loder?" called out the voice of Price of the Fifth.

The masked juniors remained still as mice.

Stephen Price waited a moment or two, and then rattled the door handle again. Plainly he was puzzled at finding Loder's door locked.

"Loder!" he called out.

Silence!
"Isn't he there, Pricey?" It was the voice of Hilton of the Fifth. Cedric Hilton, the slacker, and Price, the black sheep, were both in Loder's reorganised First Eleven.

"Seems not!" snapped Price. "Know where he can be?"

"Gone to Prout, perhaps! He's always pow-wow-ing with Prout."

"Well, we've got to start pretty soon!" grunted Price. "Anyhow, he's not there, I suppose, as the door's locked."

The two Fifth Formers went down the passage.

Loder's eyes gleamed with rage. Evidently his Fifth Form friends had no remote suspicion of what was going on in the study.

The seven gave him their attention again.

One of them sorted out a duster, which was tied across Loder's eyes, blindfolding him. They disappeared from his sight.

He gurgled with rage.

No doubt, now that he could not see them, they were taking the Guy Fawkes masks from their faces. They did not want to be thus adorned when they left the study. But he had no chance of recognising them. The carefully tied duster completely blotted out his vision.

Over the blindfolded bully of Greyfriars seven juniors grinned cheerfully at one another. They were the Famous Five of the Remove, with Peter Todd and the Bounder—if Loder could only have seen them!

Bob Cherry winked at his comrades

and there was a chuckle. Loder heard it, and wriggled with rage. This affair, he had no doubt, seemed funny to the seven young rascals! It did not seem funny to Loder!

Harry Wharton went quietly to the door, listened for a moment, and then unlocked it, and peered out into the passage.

Nobody was in sight.

He whipped out, and whipped along to Wingate's old study; unoccupied now that the former captain of Greyfriars was away. He set the door of that study wide open, and hurried back to Loder's.

"All serene!" he whispered.

Loder felt himself lifted from the floor.

He was carried, like a sack of coke, in the hands of Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. He was not a light weight, but the four of them handled him easily enough.

Peter Todd cut along the passage in one direction, Smithy in the other. They were to keep watch during the transit of Loder! A whistle was to be the signal if anyone appeared in sight.

But the time had been well chosen, and only a minute was required.

Loder was rushed rapidly along the passage into Wingate's old study, and Wharton closed the door instantly he was inside with his bearers.

A few seconds later there came a warning whistle from the Bounder. Someone had appeared in the offing. But all was safe now.

Wharton turned the key in Wingate's door.

Footsteps passed the study. The juniors and their prisoner were still and silent. The footsteps died away up the passage.

"Right as rain!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"What-ho!"

Bob produced another cord from his pocket. Loder was sat up against the table, and the cord wound round him and a table-leg and knotted.

He wriggled, but he could only wriggle. He knew that he had been

carried to an empty study—either Wingate's or Gwynne's; he could not tell which. He guessed that he was to be left there now. And in half an hour he had to start for the railway station with his reorganised eleven for St. Jim's. It looked as if he would not start at scheduled time. He could have groaned aloud with rage, had he been able to groan. They had not left him in his own study—he would have been found there. Who would think of looking for him in Wingate's old study?

Harry Wharton opened the door and peered out. He sighted Mr. Lascelles, the games master, passing the end of the passage. He popped back again promptly, and gave Larry Lascelles time to get clear.

Then he looked out again. There was no one in sight. He made a sign to his comrades.

Silently, swiftly, the juniors quitted the study. Wharton lingered a moment behind the rest, to lock the door on the outside and slip the key into his pocket.

Then the Secret Seven vanished.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Most Mysterious!

"L ODER!"
"Where's Loder?"
"What on earth's become of him?"

"Gone out?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Is the man mad?"

"The car's waiting!"

"Where's Loder?"

Quite a number of seniors were looking for Gerald Loder, and inquiring after him anxiously.

The car was waiting to take the footballers to the station. There was a train to catch at Courtfield, and Loder was not to be found.

Obviously, the footballers could not start without their captain, and their captain had disappeared.

Walker and Carne, Hilton and Price, inquired up and down and round about. They went to his study in turns.

He was not there. He was not with Prout. He was not in the prefects' room. He was not to be seen in the quad.

Amazing as such a thing was, it looked as if Loder had gone out of gates and failed to return in time to start with the footballers.

If that was the case, it was difficult to imagine what had become of him. Certainly it occurred to no one that he was tied up like a turkey in Wingate's old study.

His new recruits were getting very anxious. Blundell, Sykes, Bland, and other fellows who had been turned out of the team, were puzzled, but not at all anxious. So far as the fixture was concerned, it did not matter a straw whether Loder turned up or not. He was only going over to St. Jim's to collect a crushing defeat. Indeed, if he did not turn up, it was all the better, for Walker, who took his place, would have to play somebody else, and Walker might have sense enough to play a good man.

"Looking for somebody?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting Walker of the Sixth in the passage near the changing-room.

"Seen Loder?" yapped Walker.

"Loder!" said Bob innocently.

"Can't you find him?"

"No. Have you seen him?"

"Looked in the changing-room?"

"The changing-room?" repeated Walker. "There's nobody there, I suppose. What the thump would he be doing there?"

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Mr. Prout unlocked the cupboard, threw it open, and stared in. "Walker!" he gasped, dragging the sack from the prisoner's head. "Who has done this, Walker?" "A gang of young rascals, sir," gasped Walker, "got up in Guy Fawkes masks!"

"Oh, I heard somebody there as I passed, that's all!" said Bob carelessly. And he strolled away.

James Walker gave a snort and stalked into the changing-room. It seemed improbable enough that Loder was there; but, evidently, he was somewhere, and all likely places had been looked into.

Loder was not in the changing-room. But somebody else was—in fact, seven somebody elses!

Walker of the Sixth was no sooner inside the room than there was a patter of rushing feet, and he was collared and rolled over on the floor.

"Wha-a-t—" he gasped.

He had no time to say more. A sponge was shoved into his mouth. His bulging eyes had a glimpse of seven fellows in Guy Fawkes masks.

But it was only a glimpse. A moment later a sack was drawn over his head.

Like a fellow in a dream, Walker felt cords knotted round his ankles and wrists. He realised what was happening. It was the Secret Seven at work again.

He guessed now what had happened to Loder, but he guessed too late. He also was in the hands of the Amalekites!

He felt himself rolled over. A door opened and shut.

Walker knew where he was—in a large cupboard that opened off the changing room, in which various athletic gadgets were kept. But nobody else was likely to know where he was, for he heard the cupboard door locked on him. Then he was left.

Seven juniors, with Guy Fawkes masks shoved out of sight in their pockets, strolled carelessly out of the changing-room. They met Bob Cherry in the passage.

"All serene?" he asked.

"The serenity is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Looks like a win for us, dear men!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. It was Mauly who had taken Bob's place as a member of the masked seven.

"What-ho!" chuckled the youthful conspirators.

And they sauntered cheerfully out of the House into the October sunshine. They met Carne of the Sixth coming in from the quad.

"Seen anything of Walker?" he called out.

"I saw him in the Sixth Form Room," answered the Bounder.

Carne stared.

"What the thump! He can't be looking for Loder there, I suppose!"

With an angry grunt, Arthur Carne hurried away to the Sixth Form Room.

The conspirators exchanged blissful glances.

"Walking into it!" breathed the Bounder. "I wonder if Carne thinks from what I said that I saw Walker in the Sixth Form Room lately? I saw him there yesterday!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's hope Hobby and his merry men are ready!" murmured Nugent.

"That's all right!" said Harry Wharton. "Bet on Hobby!"

The Form-rooms on a half-holiday were, of course, deserted. Carne did not expect to find anyone there, unless it was Walker searching for Loder.

But he did find someone! He found seven someones! As soon as he stepped inside, the Form-room door was slammed behind him, and he spun round, to stare blankly at seven juniors got up in Guy Fawkes masks!

The Secret Seven!

That they were not Harry Wharton &

Co. was certain, for Carne had just spoken to that cheery company outside the House. Whoever they were, they were waiting for Carne.

They had him down on the floor before he knew what was happening. In a twinkling Hobson of the Shell had jammed a duster into his mouth; Stewart was tying it there; Temple and Dabney, and Fry and Scott, were knotting cords round his arms and legs, and Squiff of the Remove was sitting on him to keep him still during the process. Dizzy with amazement and rage, Carne was rolled into a corner among the Sixth Form desks, and tied to the leg of one of them. A duster was fastened over his eyes.

Then the mysterious seven removed their masks, put them in their pockets, and strolled out of the Form-room, Temple locking the door after him and taking away the key.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You men seen anything of Carne of the Sixth?" chortled Bob Cherry, as they came out into the quad.

"Sort of!" grinned Hobson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There seem to be a lot of men missin' to-day," remarked the Bounder gravely. "From what I hear, the team are three men short. Weird, ain't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not only weird, but absolutely amazing and extraordinary, to the men of the First Eleven. Loder was still absent, and Walker and Carne, searching for him, had vanished also. And there was no time to be lost if the team were to catch the train at all and get to St. Jim's. The footballers were debating the strange state of affairs, and Blundell, Sykes, and other men

turned out by Loder, were taking a leading part in the debate.

What the captain of Greyfriars fancied he was up to in acting in this extraordinary manner was a mystery to everybody—except to the numerous members of the Greyfriars secret society known as the Secret Seven! What Walker and Carne fancied they were up to, in thus clearing off without a word, was another mystery.

But the footballers, with a train to catch, had no time for elucidating mysteries!

Only Hilton and Price raised objections to Sykes of the Sixth coming back into the team and taking the captain's place. By way of reward for their objections the new captain

promptly turned them out. They were not wanted, so far as football went. Sykes and Bancroft of the Sixth, Blundell and Bland and Potter of the Fifth, filled the places left open by the elimination of Loder & Co.

That eminently satisfactory arrangement having been made, the team got off at last, cheered as they went by all Greyfriars.

"Chance of a win at St. Jim's now!" remarked Greene of the Fifth. "Loder's done the first popular thing since he became captain."

"But what's he done it for?" asked Coker. "Fancy even a slacking rotter like Loder letting the team down at the last minute like this!"

"Pub-haunting, perhaps, and forgotten all about the match!" said Greene. "Anyhow, it's jolly lucky he never turned up."

"It's jolly queer, all the same!" said Coker.

"The queerfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and there was a chuckle from the Removites.

All sorts of rumours were flying round Greyfriars School. Some fellows concluded that Loder & Co. had gone "pub-haunting," and forgotten the match, as Greene suggested. Some even surmised that Prout had somehow found out what sort of rotters they were, and sacked them! But that supposition was considered too good to be true!

The fellows who knew kept their own counsel. Silence was golden for the Secret Seven of Greyfriars!

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

BY the number of appreciative letters I have received from you fellows, it's a dead cert that you are all pleased with our Free Sheriff's Outfit. Good! There's some more good things coming along soon, believe me! Keep your eyes on the MAGNET and you'll see for yourselves!

Now for an interesting "Careers" inquiry from W. H. G., of Birmingham.

HE WANTS TO BE A JOCKEY,

and asks me how boys achieve that ambition. From the details of his weight and age which he gives me, I should imagine that my chum is suitable if he can manage to find a training establishment which will agree to take him. Although a boy who aspires to be a jockey must be light and small, he must also be strong, and be naturally sympathetic to horses. Training and practising take years, for he must start as a stable boy.

Stable boys live together in special dormitories in the stables, and their work consists of cleaning the stables, feeding and watering the horses, making the horses' beds, and, later, eventually grooming the horses. The boys must keep fit with physical exercises and boxing. Later on they are taught how to mount, trot, canter and gallop a horse.

If a boy shows progress he will get his chance to ride as an apprentice, with the advantage of a special weight allowance. When he has won forty races as an apprentice, he loses this weight allowance, but his wish comes true, for he is then a fully-qualified jockey.

The first thing my chum must do is to write to a training establishment, giving full particulars of age, weight, and height, etc. He can obtain the names and addresses of such establishments from sporting reference books.

Here are a few

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE

which I have gathered in response to requests by several readers:

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,394.

MEN EAT RAZOR-BLADES, TACKS AND BROKEN BOTTLES.

This story comes from Fisher T. Fish's country! In U.S.A., circus performers make a speciality of eating razor-blades, tacks, broken bottles, and other similar "delicacies." One who was X-rayed in hospital was found to have hundreds of tacks inside him. No wonder he had an at-tack of Tummy-ache!

THE LARGEST STOP-WATCH IN THE WORLD.

This record belongs to England. On one of the dog-racing tracks there is a stop-watch seven feet in diameter. The large pointer records down to one fiftieth of a second, while a smaller pointer records the number of seconds taken in the race.

THE HIGHEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD.

France is going to try to break the record for this! For the World's Fair, which is to be held in Paris in 1937, a mighty tower, 2,300 feet high, has been planned. There will be a spiral roadway running around the tower, to enable cars to be driven up almost to the top, and there will be a restaurant and an observation platform there. Lifts will carry passengers to the summit.

AUTOGYROS FOR TURTLE FISHING.

The enterprising owner of an autogyro has invented a new sport. He cruises over the sea, and when he spots a turtle, hovers over it. While the pilot attends to the plane, a fisherman in the passenger seat throws a harpoon, and the turtle is then drawn up into the plane.

Ready for next week's programme? Right! Frank Richards' fine, complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars is entitled:

"FOOLED ON THE FIFTH!"

and, as you have learned to expect from this author, it is packed full of thrilling and amusing incidents. Don't miss this topical story, chums! It's a winner!

You'll enjoy reading the nerve-tugging chapters of "Captain Crimson!" too. Don't forget to write to me about this gripping yarn by Morton Pike. I'm always anxious to hear from you and to have your suggestions.

There'll be another special edition of the "Greyfriars Herald," and another interesting Soccer talk by our old friend "Linesman."

Cheerio till next week, then.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who?

"DEAR me!" murmured Mr. Prout.

Prout was toasting his toes before the fire in the Head's study that afternoon.

The temporary headmaster of Greyfriars had heard something of the mystery that was thrilling the school, and he had been thinking over it and wondering what was the explanation of Loder's strange conduct.

It was nearly tea-time when the telephone bell suddenly rang.

Prout sat up and took the receiver. "Hallo!" came a voice. "Is that Prout?"

"What, what? Yes, this is Mr. Prout!" said the Fifth Form master severely. "Who is speaking?"

"Brother No. 1 of the Secret Seven!" came the startling reply.

Prout jumped and almost dropped the receiver.

"W-what?" he stuttered. "What?"

"Getting deaf, Prout?"

"What?"

"Brother No. 1 of the Secret Seven speaking! If you want to find Loder and the other rotters—"

"What?"

"You can root them out now; it's too late for them to barge into the footer. The game's over at St. Jim's by this time."

"Bless my soul!"

"Loder's in Wingate's old study! Walker's in the cupboard in the changing-room! Carne's in the Sixth Form Room! The keys have been put back in the doors! Go it, Prout!"

"Good gad!"

Prout sat with the receiver in his hand, gazing at the telephone. His unknown interlocutor had rung off! But Prout still gazed! He seemed petrified!

It was a full minute before the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars stirred! Then, recovering a little, he rose, replaced the receiver, and almost tottered to the door.

The portly Prout rolled away to the Sixth Form passage. He stopped at the door of Wingate's study. The key was in the outside of the lock.

Prout turned it! He threw open the door!

Then he gazed at a figure that sat by the table, tied to the leg thereof! Loder had succeeded in wriggling off the duster from his eyes, and he was able to see. But he could neither speak nor stir. His eyes met Prout's.

"Bless my soul!" said Prout faintly. He tottered to Loder and fumbled at

the fastening of the gag. He got it away at last.

"Who—who—who has done this, Loder?" he gasped.

Loder spluttered.

"A gang of young rascals, sir—got up in Guy Fawkes masks—seven of them—the same gang as last time—Oooogh!"

Prout got him loose.

Loder staggered to his feet, rubbing his cramped limbs. Prout sailed out of the study. Wrath, deep and intense wrath, was in his plump and portly face. He rolled away to the Sixth Form Room!

The key was in the outside of that door also. The Secret Seven had done as stated by the mysterious voice on the telephone. All was ready for Prout to release the prisoners.

Prout unlocked the door and rolled in. His eyes fell on Carne of the Sixth.

Carne was released.

"Who has done this, Carne?" asked Mr. Prout in a deep voice.

"A gang of young rascals got hold of me here, sir!" gasped Carne.

"Disguised, I presume—"

"In Guy Fawkes masks, sir!"

"The same gang!" said Prout. "The same gang! No doubt about that! Seven boys will be expelled from this school when I discover them! I will have no mercy on them!"

Leaving Carne, like Loder, rubbing cramped limbs, Prout rolled away again, heading this time for the changing-room.

That room was pretty well filled. The juniors had been playing football that afternoon and a crowd of them were changing. There was a general stare at Prout as he rolled in.

Unheeding, he rolled towards the wall cupboard at the end of the long room. Dozens of fellows stared after him.

"The key's not in that cupboard, sir!" said Tubb of the Third. "I wanted something out of it this afternoon and the key was gone."

Prout did not heed.

No doubt the key had been missing that afternoon, but it had been slipped back into its place by some unknown hand since, for it was there now in the lock.

Prout unlocked the cupboard door.

He threw it open and stared in.

"Walker!" he gasped, dragging the sack from the prisoner's head.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Walker in that cupboard!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What on earth is Walker doing in that cupboard?"

There was a rush of fellows to look in. They crowded round Prout, staring at the unhappy Walker.

"Release him, some of you!" said Mr. Prout, his voice deeper than ever.

Walker was released.

He staggered out of the cupboard, under a sea of staring eyes. Some of the fellows in the changing-room had known that he was there! Most of them hadn't! All were deeply interested.

"Who has done this, Walker?" boomed Prout.

Walker could only reply as Loder and Carne had replied.

"A gang of young rascals, sir, got up in Guy Fawkes masks—"

"The same gang!" boomed Prout.

"Undoubtedly the same gang! Walker, those seven boys must be discovered immediately! I shall expel them from Greyfriars."

"Seven at a blow!" murmured the Bouncer, and there was a laugh.

Prout glared round.

"Silence! How dare you laugh! Do you imagine that this is a laughing matter? I will cane any boy who laughs!"

Grave faces surrounded Prout and Walker, as they left the changing-room. Nobody wanted to be caned! Gravity relaxed, however, when they were gone, and there was a roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter met the Famous Five when they came up to the Remove passage to tea. Bunter's fat face was full of excitement.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped. "Heard?"

"Any news?" drawled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, you fellows never hear anything!" said Bunter. "I say, it turns out that Loder and Walker and Carne were in the House all the time."

A POCKET KNIFE IS ALWAYS HANDY!
Tell a joke and win one, like S. Denton, of 13, Cecil Road, Seaforth, Liverpool, who sent in the following winning effort.



Mr. Queloh: "Bunter, why is it you are always late for class?"
Billy Bunter: "Please, sir, they always ring the bell before I get here!"

NOTE:—All jokes and Greyfriars limericks should be sent to: "Jokes and Limericks" Editor, c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite St., London, E.C.4. (Comp.)

"Not really?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Bunter. "I say, some fellows got hold of them, and tied them up! You needn't laugh—it's a fact! I tell you it really happened."

"Sounds rather steep!" said Johnny Bull, shaking his head.

"The steepfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, it's true!" yelled Bunter. "Lots of fellows know! You fellows never get on to what's going on! I tell you Loder and Walker and Carne were tied up like turkeys, and Prout somehow found it out and went and got them. They're in his study now, jawing. I heard old Prout, when I passed his door—jawing like billy-o! I didn't listen, of course—I never went anywhere near the keyhole! Of course, I wouldn't! But I heard Prout say there were seven of them, and he's going to sack the lot!"

"The sackfulness will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who are they?" asked Harry Wharton gravely. "Were you one of them, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Eh! No! You beast, don't you get making out that I was one of them! I don't know anything about it, except what I heard at Prout's keyhole—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, they don't know who the chaps were—Loder thought one of them was you, Bob!"

"Did he?"

"But Walker said he spoke to you just before the seven young villains collared him in the changing-room, so it couldn't have been—"

"That's lucky for me!"

"And Carne said he saw the whole lot of you outside the House, just before the gang got him in the Sixth Form Room."

"Lucky for all of us!"

"Well, yes, rather," said Bunter. "The fact is, I should have thought you fellows had a hand in it, only it's proved you hadn't, you see."

"That's good!" said Bob gravely.

"But who can they be?" asked Bunter. "It's jolly mysterious, ain't it? Have you fellows any idea who they can be?"

"Echo answers who!" said Bob.

"The who-fulness is terrific."

"It was done to keep them out of the St. Jim's match, of course," said Bunter. "Don't you think so? You see, Loder had mucked up the eleven to such an extent that they were bound to be beaten at St. Jim's. The men who have gone over may pull it off, without Loder and his lot to get in the way. I fancy that was the game. What do you fellows think?"

"Sounds probable!" admitted Harry Wharton.

"But who did it?" persisted Bunter.

"Prout doesn't know! He's going to sack them, all seven of them, but he doesn't know who they are, you know, so he can't! Smithy wasn't in it—"

"Not really?"

"No. Carne said he saw Vernon-Smith with you fellows in the quad, just before he went to the Sixth Form Room. I think Prout was a bit suspicious of Smithy, but, of course, that clears him."

"Good for Smithy!"

"And Hobson wasn't in it—Prout found out that Hobby was with his Form-master, at the time Loder was collared! I heard Prout say—"

"You seem to have heard a lot for a fellow who wasn't listening!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five walked on, leaving the Owl of the Remove to retail his exclusive information to other hearers.

It was a mystery!

It remained a mystery!

Prout was puzzled! Loder & Co. were fairly beaten! The secret of the Secret Seven remained a secret! And there were few fellows at Greyfriars who did not wish more power to their elbow! The footballers returned victorious from St. Jim's, having won that great match by three goals to two; which they certainly never would have done had Loder of the Sixth had his way! Indeed, it was, in point of fact, the Secret Seven who had won that match for Greyfriars, by putting paid to Loder. Outside the select circle of Gerald Loder and his friends, every fellow at Greyfriars wished the best of luck to the Secret Seven!

THE END.

(Look out next week for a ripping Bonfire Night yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "FOOLED ON THE FIFTH!" It's full of big bangs and exciting situations. Be wise and order your copy to-day!)

THERE ARE REELS OF THRILLS IN THIS POWERFUL HIGHWAYMAN YARN!

CAPTAIN CRIMSON!

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Owing to the activities of a certain Dan Hickerman, Excise officer, Squire Dashwood, a Jacobite at heart, comes into possession of the famous Trimmingham heirlooms, with which it is hoped to raise money for the Jacobite cause. The squire is robbed of the treasure by a mysterious highwayman who calls himself Captain Crimson. Later, Bart Huggett, a newcomer to the district, picks up a crimson mask and, being seen with it, is taken for the notorious highwayman and shot dead. Following this, the squire writes to Lord Trimmingham informing him of the loss of the jewels. The messenger is intercepted, however, by a mysterious rider, who peruses the missive and then scribbles a note on the back thereof to be taken back to the squire.

(Now read on.)

Startling News!

MR. LANCELOT DASHWOOD'S troubles were all forgotten under the soothing influence of the punch-bowl, and by general request he sung that jolly old ditty, "The Fox Jumps Over the Parson's Gate!" in his rich, mellow voice. The last rousing chorus filled the crowded parlour as Jack Lennard rushed in, made his way to the squire's chair, and whispered in his ear.

The broken seals on the traitor's letter brought a husky oath that stifled the chorus, and Dashwood's face was white as death as he read the words pencilled on the back.

"Neither you nor his lordship are like to see the Trimmingham jewels again. There are two roads—one leads to Tower Hill, the other to safety. Which are you going to choose, fool?"

"CAPTAIN CRIMSON."

And only Jack heard him murmur:

"This means France for me!"

"What's wrong, squire? Zounds, man, have you seen a ghost?" queried half a dozen voices anxiously.

"Yes, I have seen a ghost!" said Lancelo Dashwood, pulling himself up with surprising effort and holding the letter in a candle-flame until it was burnt to ashes. "Boys, the dead have come to life again. We shot the wrong man to-day—he wasn't Captain Crimson, after all!"

A fresh babel burst out, and everyone was too busy voicing his own theory at the top of his bent to notice that the squire had left them by the door leading through the kitchen.

At the end of half an hour Dan Hickerman, unpopular by reason of his calling in on that smuggling fraternity,



BY
**MORTON
PIKE.**

squared his broad shoulders, stood up, and looked round the crestfallen throng in the inn parlour.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, with a slight sneer, "don't forget it was my bullet that killed the man, whoever he be. If Captain Crimson has a twin brother—well, I can't help that! Good-night, all!"

"Got the key of the shed, Parker?" asked Phil Langley of his chums at the Grammar School

"Yes," answered Dick Parker with a gulp.

"Then listen!"

The four excited boarders who were in the conspiracy crowded round the leader of the expedition as he whispered final instructions.

"The rope's tied to the head of my cot," said Langley. "I'll go down first and you fellows wait five minutes and then follow me. I shall be on the school wall by then, and keep your ears open for the signal. If you hear me give a sort of hoot, you'll know old Parslow's coming, and you'll have time to shin up again. But whatever you do, lock the shed door and pull the rope up after you! When you hear another hoot you can lower it for me. Now, come on!"

Langley stole across the bare floor with a pair of woollen stockings drawn over his shoes.

It was a very dark night, and there was hardly a breath of wind to stir the boughs of the trees in the orchard beneath the dormitory window.

There was a goodly store of fruit in the barn where old Parslow, the hated Grammar School Head, kept his apples, and it was that store the four chums had planned to raid—less from the spirit of adventure than from the fact that they were really hungry.

The Grammar School boarders never had enough to eat—all the day boys knew that.

Phil Langley looked out of the dormitory window to make sure the coast was clear. Then hearing nothing, he clambered out, lowered himself to the ground without difficulty, and stole across the grass.

Mr. Parslow's orchard and kitchen-garden had a very ancient brick wall surrounding them, with a wooden door at the far end opening on to the high-road. This door, however, was always kept securely locked.

The deservedly hated headmaster—for even in that flogging age, it would have been difficult to find a more cruel tyrant than Mr. Septimus Parslow, M.A.—was a man of fixed habits.

Every night, on or about the stroke of ten, he would make a perambulation round the Grammar School buildings, let himself in again by the orchard door, pause always at the same spot, beneath the windows of the dormitory, listening for any conversation, and after assuring his suspicious mind that everything was as it ought to be, seek his own dwelling.

Those of the unhappy boarders who chanced to be awake could hear the heavy tread, the tapping of the walking-staff, the halt under the window, and the peculiar, raucous cough he invariably gave as he went on again. It was the regularity of these actions that suggested the apple raid to Phil Langley.

Parker had urged the risk of discovery, especially with the coming of a new usher in Mr. Sturge, whom the boys had not had time to size up as yet, beyond a general feeling that they didn't like him.

But Langley overruled everything in his masterful way.

"Nonsense, Dick. Do you think Sturge is going to look at every bed to see who's in it? He hasn't done it so far and he's been here a week," he had said. "If there's any risk, I'm taking the lion's share, anyhow. Of course, if you're not hungry, don't come."

And Parker had surrendered. Never before had a Grammar School boy been known to set foot inside that

sacred orchard, but Phil Langley had reconnoitred it so thoroughly beforehand from the window, that he was at his post long before the five minutes had passed.

From his position on the wall, Langley would be able to hear the approach of the enemy quite a long way off, allowing him ample time to give warning to the others, the apple barn being almost in the angle of the wall, only thirty feet from where he kept guard.

Moreover, it was scarcely half-past nine, and if four boys couldn't fill two small sacks with apples and get back before ten o'clock with the plunder, well, they didn't deserve to eat an apple as long as they lived!

Langley hoped they would obey his instructions and not take too many apples from the same place.

He knew the boys were there, because the barn door gave a slight creak.

He smiled in the darkness as he thought how nervous his chum Dick had been, when the whole thing was proving so simple!

Why, they had finished already, and there was the creak of the barn door again, telling him that Parker was turning the key!

How long would they take to get back to the dormitory?

Langley worked it all out to a fraction, and was about to get down from the buttress when he heard an unexpected sound that turned him icy cold!

Someone was coming towards him down the broad path that led from the house, whistling very softly as he approached.

Langley guessed in a moment that it was Sturge. The new usher whistled from morning till night. And he was making for the gate within a yard of the spot where Phil was keeping guard.

To clamber from the wall and hide without noise was impossible.

Drawing his legs up, Langley stretched himself out flat on his face along the broad coping of the wall and waited.

The low whistling changed to a hum, and then ceased altogether. The man had reached the wall now, and was standing so close to the terrified culprit that he expected every moment to feel an arm lifted to drag him from his perch. Langley need not have feared, however, for, after a moment of thrilling suspense, he heard Mr. Sturge unlook the wooden door and close it gently behind him.

Langley's courage returned a little, although he was at a complete loss to account for the usher's behaviour, for Mr. Sturge, leaning against the outside of the wall immediately beneath him, not only lit a pipe from his tinder-box without any attempt at concealment, but smoked furiously until the bowl glowed.

"Odds rabbit the fellow!" he muttered suddenly. "I told him half-past nine. We shall have Parslow here directly—and everything turned topsyturvy!"

The words and their tone of impatient anger, sent another chill through the unwilling listener. Langley was wondering what it all meant, when the sound of a quick step on the road brought matters to a head.

"Is that Mr. Hickerman?" said the new usher, purposely sending a shower of sparks from his glowing pipe.

"That is my name, sir, but you must excuse me if I don't know you!" growled the newcomer, not too pleasantly.

Langley was puzzled.

"You got my note, at any rate?" was Mr. Sturge's next question.

"I should not be here else, on the darkest night I ever remember," said the newcomer. "But the note told me nothing. Have you news of the smugglers for me?"

"Come close under the shelter of this wall, Mr. Hickerman; I am going to tell you a great deal, and not over-much time left for the telling," said the usher, holding the pipe in his hand now that it had done its work. "No; it has nothing to do with your smuggling folk, Mr. Excise officer—'tis more serious by far! I am a Government man, and your name was given me by the King's Minister. You are to help me arrest a brace of very dangerous rebels, and the matter is one for the greatest caution!"

"Egad!" ejaculated Hickerman. "Who are they? Do I know them?"

"You should do, my friend. One is Mr. Lancelot Dashwood, of Dashwood Hall, and the other Septimus Parslow, Master of Arts, and the head of this school behind us."

Langley heard Hickerman draw in his breath and give a low whistle of astonishment.

"The one does not surprise me, for he is an avowed Jacobite. But Parslow—what has he to do with the Pretender?"

"Ha! He is mighty busy under the rose. I have been through his papers and found enough evidence to hang, draw, and quarter him four times over," replied Sturge. "It may be news to you, but there are arms hidden here, ready to be distributed among the Pretender's adherents when the time comes."

"Tell me," said Hickerman, "what lies behind these whispers we hear of an invasion? Is it all smoke?"

"Far from it. The peril is a real one, and more than half the nobility are concerned. The Tories are for a change of king to a man, and the North will flock to the prince's standard if he unfurls it. I could tell you of great houses where a bowl is set on the table and healths drunk every night to the 'King over the Water.' You yourself have been lately brought here from Sussex to watch the smugglers on the river. Has it never dawned on you that there was a deeper motive? And a whole troop of dragoons placed under your orders!"

"Zounds!" exclaimed the Excise-officer, very startled.

"Yes, 'tis zounds indeed!" said Mr. Sturge quickly. "The time has come to strike, before any warning can be given. To-morrow night Squire Dashwood must be arrested. His own house is full of hiding holes, we understand, but he can be taken at the Black Boar by the waterside yonder, and your dragoons will do it. Here is the warrant!"

From his hiding-place on the wall Langley heard the passing of a paper from hand to hand.

"And what of Mr. Parslow?"

"Him I will take myself, when once you send me word that you have clapped the bracelets on Dashwood's wrists. And, believe me, the doing of it will give me no little joy, for the fellow is a merciless brute, and treats these wretched youngsters shamefully! I have been here only a week, and never a day of it that my blood has not boiled!"

Phil Langley could have shouted aloud, but for the knowledge of the squire's danger; for he was a hero to

the Grammar School boys, who worshipped him.

"Well, Mr. Sturge, you've given me something to think about with a vengeance!" said Hickerman, deep down in his throat. "And, by the way, since you are so well informed of what is going on in Widewater, you may be able to answer another question. Do you know who the mysterious highwayman may be who has set the whole place by the ears this month or more? He calls himself 'Captain Crimson,' and goes about wearing a red velvet mask, robbing folk, and speaking, so they say, like a gentleman of quality. Is he something more, by any chance—another Jacobite spy, think you?"

"There you have me," replied Mr. Sturge. "Beyond hearing mention of his name in the town, I know nothing of the rascal. These other two, Lancelot Dashwood and Septimus Parslow, have claimed all my attention, and as one of them will be coming this way in a few moments we had best part now. Remember, I shall wait word from you to-morrow night, Mr. Hickerman!"

"And you shall have it," said the Excise officer.

Langley heard Mr. Sturge walk away down the road and the door in the wall close gently.

When all was safe he clambered from the wall and made tracks for the dormitory again.

"What's made you so long?" whispered Parker, after hauling up the knotted rope and fastening the casement window.

"Shut up!" was Langley's curt response. "I'm cold—give me an apple!"

And as his chattering teeth bit ravenously into the stolen fruit, a familiar sound came from the orchard below.

It was Mr. Septimus Parslow, M.A., clearing his throat as usual, but he was five minutes too late that night!

Who Did It?

THE household of Dr. Lennard, that excellent practitioner for whom everyone had a good word, breakfasted early, and the morning sun made the room a very pleasant one.

"Jack, my son," said the doctor, passing his coffee-cup to be refilled, "you are getting a great fellow these days. Your shoulders are broader than were mine at your age, and you'll be a man ere long. At the end of this quarter I shall take you away from the Grammar School, where, I have a shrewd idea, you are only wasting your time."

"I'm positive, father!" cried the lad, emphatically. "I wish I were leaving at the end of the week!"

"I dare say you do!" smiled the doctor dryly. "But be patient, my son, two months will soon go by. You will be seventeen then, and if, in the meantime, you would give more thought to Latin and less to the horses in the stables of the Black Boar, yonder, it would please me, and, at the same time, benefit your future."

"Yes, but I love horses, father," sighed Jack.

"So do I, and the sooner you qualify to follow in my footsteps, the sooner will you have a horse of your own. I know all you want to say. We've had that over so often. But I intend you to be a doctor, not a dragoon, Jack, so just make up your mind to be a good lad, and think, for once, that your father knows best, eh?"

They were great pals, those two. To be leaving that hateful school on the hill so soon was the most welcome news in the world, and Jack's sigh ended in a smile.

Naturally, wanting to carry that news to his bosom friend, Billy Jepp, Jack Lennard paid his morning visit, as usual, to those self-same stables. But Billy had gone down the marshes, so the news had to keep.

Consequently, he reached the Grammar School rather earlier than usual, to find Phil Langley waiting for him, bursting with more news of a very different kind.

In a corner of that miserable, gritty space called the playground Phil poured out his story of the night's adventure and what he had overheard.

Jack Lennard's first sensation was one of blank dismay.

"Have you told anyone else?"

"Not a soul!"

"Then for Heaven's sake keep it to yourself," said Jack, looking towards the entrance gate. "The squire must be warned!"

The bell on the school roof had just given its last clang, and one of the ushers was in the act of locking the gate.

"It's too late now," said Jack savagely. "I'll go round to the hall at dinner-time on my way home. This is frightfully serious. It's high treason, you know. But we must save Mr. Dashwood, whatever it costs. As for old Parslow, I don't care how soon they take him, the brute! Come on, or they'll wonder why we're whispering over here. And pull yourself together,

Phil, you're trembling like a leaf. You know Parslow's got eyes in the back of his head!"

"It's enough to make a fellow feel jolly ill, Jack," said Langley. "But what will the squire do when you tell him?"

"He'll have to fly. Tom Roke's lugger sails to-night—unless Hickerman seizes her! Fancy Sturge being a Government spy, and getting a key made to that door! Sure the other one was put back on its nail!"

"Yes. Young Jenkins hung it up. That's all right. But no more risks for me. I daren't think what would have happened if they'd found me on the wall."

"And I daren't think what's going to happen as it is," murmured Jack, as they filed in to prayers.

During prayers that morning Jack Lennard sat motionless, trying vainly to sort things out of the mist which Langley's words had spread over everything.

The squire in danger of his life! Dashing Dashwood, the most popular figure in Widewater, to be loaded with irons and dragged away to the Tower that night! It was impossible—unthinkable! Rebel or no rebel, he must be saved, before it was too late!

Jack wanted to rush out there and then, and warn him!

The clock on the wall said five minutes past nine. Four hours must pass before he would be free, and all that time he must sit in that hateful hall, holding the secret in his own breast. Besides, Hickerman, the Excise officer, with the

warrant in his pocket, might find an opportunity to take his prisoner without waiting for nightfall!

No wonder Jack Lennard felt dazed. The monotonous mumble of words ceased, the book closed with a dull bang. There was the usual shuffle of feet along the rows of desks as the boys settled themselves in their places, and it came as a relief when a door opened sharply and the headmaster entered.

Unlocking his desk, Mr. Septimus Parslow produced the formidable cane, which was his rod of office. Instead of seating himself, however, he remained standing, and the whole school saw in a moment that something was wrong.

The tyrant's thin face was livid beneath the bag-wig, and he drew his lips in and out, as though he found difficulty in finding the words he wanted.

"Silence!" he thundered at last, although one might have heard a pin drop as it was. "Somebody robbed my apple-loft last night. Who was it?"

Jack Lennard saw Jenkins' ears turn very red, but nobody spoke.

"For the last time," demanded Mr. Parslow, "who did it?"

Silence!

"Very well," said Mr. Parslow. "Instead of breaking up at one o'clock the whole school will remain here until the culprit confesses, even if I keep you all in till midnight!"

(Detention or no detention, Jack Lennard is determined to save Squire Dashwood before it is too late! Don't miss next week's nerve-tingling chapters of this powerful story, boys!)

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THE NEW GREYFRIARS HERALD



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Whether I went out of the dormitory or not last night, take jolly good care you support me by saying I didn't. Let me add that if you don't bear me out, there'll be a stretcher needed to bear YOU out!
—BOLSOVER MAJOR, Study No. 10, Remove.

No. 109 (New Series.)

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

November 3rd, 1934.

Bob Cherry asks— IS ALL-IN WRESTLING BRUTAL?

Intrigued by the yarns I'd heard concerning the brutality of All-in Wrestling, I toddled along to the gym t'other evening to watch Bolsover major and Bulstrode fight three ten-minute rounds under All-in rules—if any.

The first phenomenon I noticed was that these two renowned sportsmen had both changed their respective names. An attendant informed me that this was the usual thing in All-in circles. It was necessary to feel ferocious when you went in for All-in Wrestling, and most fellows who took it up accordingly gave themselves ferocious names to make the feeling come to them more easily—and incidentally to scare the lives out of their opponents!

Bolsover major had therefore become Percy the Pulveriser, while George Bulstrode fought under the name of the Human Boa-Constrictor.

The effect of these ferocious names on opponents was evidently considerable, for both fighters fainted from fear of each other before the preliminaries were over.

As soon as they had been restored with smelling-salts, the fight began.

It was soon clear that the Pulveriser and the Boa-Constrictor had become a little worked-up over the alleged barbarities of the All-in game. They circled round each other, shaking with fear, and both gave a howl of terror at the least sign of a move forward on the part of the other.

Eventually the Boa-Constrictor plucked up sufficient courage to step forward and tweak the Pulveriser's nose.

The Pulveriser uttered a shriek of agony and fell writhing to the floor.

The Boa-Constrictor fell on his knees beside him with the evident intention of tapping him on the nose. But before he could put his intention into effect the Pulveriser jumped up in sheer desperation and slapped his opponent on the shoulder.

The Boa-Constrictor at once pitched forward, moaning piteously.

A fight fought at this fearful speed could not, of course, go its full length. Before the end of round one these supermen had between them landed fully half a dozen slaps, several nose-tweakings, and a couple of hair-pullings. The end was inevitable. Just before the gong sounded for the end of the round both collapsed from exhaustion and terror.

Brutal? I should jolly well think it was! Believe me, chaps, the brutalities of All-in Wrestling are worse even than those of ping-pong and ludo!

We shall have to put a stop to it, or there'll be an epidemic of deaths from heart failure in the Remove!

WARNING

Mind how you walk out of the House tomorrow morning, chaps. They've just run short of bread for tea in Hall, and it's a thousand to one they'll make up the deficiency with doorsteps from the front of the House! —BOB CHERRY, Remove Form.

These letters, put in their right order, give the name of a well-known author. What is the name?
TDGNKCINYUE



THE ARTIST OF ST. SAM'S!

By Dicky Nugent

Jack Jolly & Co., of the Fourth at St. Sam's, were seated on the School House steps when a weird figger came trotting across from the direckshun of the Head's house.

The newcomer looked like an artist, for he wore loose-fitting trowsis and a velvet jacket on his body and a berry on his napper.

For a moment the chums of the Fourth didn't reckonise him. Then something familiar about the stranger made them look at him more closely, and they started violently. It was Dr. Birch-

emall, the Head!

"G-g-grate pip!" stammered Jack Jolly. "It isn't Guy Fawkes' day to-day, is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Birchmell frowned. "If you imagine I'm dressed up to represent Guy Fawkes, Jolly, you're quite wrong. What I am wearing at the present moment is my artist's clobber!"

Jack Jolly stared. "I never knew you were an artist before, sir! What sort of an artist are you—a pavement artist?"

"Certainly not!" rapped out Dr. Birchmell crossly. "Then what are you, sir?"

"A landscape painter in water cullers," answered the Head, cullinger slightly as he spoke. "If you will accompany me to my study, boys, I will show you my latest work. I have invited the most prominent of the local residents to come along and see it

this morning. They should be here any minnit now, and as one or other of them is bound to offer me a handsom sum for it, you will probably never have another chance. Come!"

"What-ho!" grinned Jack Jolly & Co.

They accompanied the Head with plezzure, only too anxious to view his artistic effort.

When they arrived in Dr. Birchmell's study, the Head proudly pointed to a picture standing on an easel in the middle of the room.

"There!" he said. "Have you ever seen a painting like it in your life?"

"Ripping!" mermered Bright.

"Marvellous!" agreed Jack Jolly. "What is it supposed to be, sir? A Yorkshire pudding?"

"No, Jolly, it is not!" snorted Dr. Birchmell. "As a matter of fact, it is called 'Dawn'!"

"M-m-my hat!" "Without boasting, I think I may say that it is the most remarkable picture of dawn ever painted—come in, fat-head!" finished the Head, as somebody rapped on the study door.

The door opened, to admit quite a collection of local big-wigs—Sir Frederick Funguss, the Honorable Norman Nitwitt, the Reverend Mr. Bleat, and Mr. Wayham, the grocer from Muggleton.

"Well, gentlemen, here is the masterpiece I promised to show you," said the Head,

after he had eggshanged greetings with the visitors.

"What do you think of it?" Jack Jolly & Co. waited eggshantly as the visitors eggshamed the picture. They were curious to see how these influential gentlemen would regard the Head's eggstrordinary "masterpiece."

For a minnit nobody spoke. Then Mr. Wayham broke the silence.

"Dr. Birchmell," he said, "you have painted the picture I have been longing to see for years. This is indeed a masterpiece! I offer you five pounds for it here and now."

"Done!" cried the Head delightedly. "I am glad to see you appreciate art at its best, sir. Don't you think it's the best picture of 'Dawn' you've ever seen?"

Mr. Wayham gasped. "Dawn?" he cried. "I didn't know it was a picture of dawn! I'm going to use it in my bizness as an advertisement. I TOOK IT TO BE A PICTURE OF A PLATE OF EGGS AND BACON!"

What the Head said to Jack Jolly & Co. never knew. Long before he had recovered his breth suffishantly to speak, the chums of the Fourth were running away down the passidge, busting their sides with lafter.

Jack Jolly & Co. could do a good many things at a pinch, but to remain serious in the presence of the Artist of St. Sam's was simply impossibil!

SILENCE ZONE FOR GREYFRIARS

ANTI-NOISE FANS' EFFORTS

"Our aims and objects?" smiled Tom Brown, the Big Noise of the newly founded Greyfriars Anti-Noise League. "Why, to lessen the nerve-racking din of modern life, of course! We're going to bring Greyfriars right into the Silence Zone, and we shan't rest content till the old school is as silent as a tomb!"

"Whoopee!" howled the crowd of Anti-Noise fans in attendance, thereby drawing a frown from Tom Brown.

"Shut up, you idiots!" he said. "Imagine sheering at an Anti-Noise headquarters! People will think we're not serious if they hear it!"

"But what noises are there to object to, Greyfriars?" asked the "Greyfriars Herald" interviewer. "I haven't noticed any."

"Then it's about time you had your ears cleaned out!" retorted the leader of the Anti-Noise brigade. "This school is one of the noisiest places outside Bedlam."

"But how are you going to set to work?" "You just watch out and you'll soon see!" was the reply.

In less than half an hour he saw enthusiastic members of the League perform the following experiments:

1. Take out the "works" of Hoskins' piano and remove them to a secret hiding-place.
2. Tie a gag round Bunter's mouth while he was snoring in an armchair in Study No. 7.
3. Nail rubber pads to Bob Cherry's boots during the owner's absence from his study.
4. Handcuff Bolsover major.

"Such things as these, of course, are all in the day's work with us," smiled Tom Brown, when our interviewer congratulated him on the League's enterprise. "Just wait till we tackle the bigger problems—some springs for the Remove stairs to lessen the noise when we're throwing Coker down them, for instance, and a silencer for Mr. Prout during the soup course at dinner!"

"It's when we get down to such stern realities as these that you'll see the stuff the Greyfriars Anti-Noise League is made of!"

We await the futuro of the Anti-Noise League with interest—combined with a certain amount of misgiving!

Peter Todd Thunders— ABOLISH PRIVATE ARMAMENT FIRMS

Make no mistake about it, chaps, the private manufacture of armaments should be forbidden.

While private individuals and firms are allowed to pile up profits out of weapons of war how can we expect to get peace?

The more stock they sell the more profits they'll make. Isn't it only reasonable to suppose, then, that they're going to do all that lies in

Then there was that series of battles between the Remove and the Upper Fourth last month, in which more soot was used than in any war within living memory. Who do you think started it? I'll tell you that, too. IT WAS THE FRIARDALE CHIMNEY-SWEEP — and, incidentally, the profits he made out of his soot while it lasted can only be described as a public scandal!

I could give dozens of examples of feuds and wars started by vendors of mouldy fruit for their own selfish purposes. And as to egg merchants with old stocks on their

hands, the revelations I could make of their plots to bring about egg-throwing battles would shock the school if I made them!

Peace-loving readers! There is but one thing for it. Abolish the private armament firms! Let the fellows who fight the battles control the production and distribution of pea-shooters, stale eggs, soot, mouldy fruit, and the thousand and one other deadly weapons of modern warfare. Then perhaps we shall get a little peace!

(Or perhaps, on the other hand, there'll be more fighting than ever!—Ed.)



INKY'S BIRTHDAY GUIDE

This week: CLAUDE HOSKINS

The esteemed Hoskins, as my honoured and preposterous readers will guessfully hazard, was born under a musical star. Whether he plays the piano thumpfully or the tin-whistle blowfully or the big-drum bangfully, Hoskins, like the boy in the esteemed poem who rides the cock-horse Banbury Crossfully, will have music wherever he goes.

From the books of the learned and idiotic soothsayers of my native Bhanipur I learn that a sahib born on Hoskins' birthday will most certainly be artistic and sensitive. When I musefully ponder on the fearsome colours of Hoskins' ties I feel dubiously uncertain of the artistfulness; and the esteemed and horrible din he sometimes makes on the piano does not suggest careful sensitiveness. Nevertheless, when the wise books say it is so, then the must-be-sofulness is terrific, so I takefully accept their word for it.

Perhaps the explainfulness lies in the forecast of the esteemed Hoskins' future. The indications are that he is fated to be misunderstood. If, therefore, he is a genius, I am fearfully afraid that he will be a misunderstood genius!

Genius or not, my honoured and idiotic chums, you may bankfully rely on it that the esteemed Hoskins will be a dreamful musician to the end of his days.

The stars that rulefully order his destiny will never allow otherwise!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



When the water supply at Greyfriars was accidentally cut off, Bunter was the least perturbed of all. "William George" completed his morning toilet without grumbling because of the lack of water—and he looked no grubbier than usual!

Though Percy Bolsover often cuffs fags with impunity, he leaped on Skinner like a tiger when Skinner tweaked the ear of Hubert Bolsover of the Third. Beneath his unpleasant exterior Bolsover major is very attached to his "minor"!

Wun Lung possesses recipes of some wonderful old Chinese dishes which he occasionally prepares for the delectation of Removite. They are really good—though his visitors are always fearful they may be eating rats or mice!

When the Upper Fourth challenged the Remove to a game with giant "Push-Ball" on the sands at Pegg by the Sea, they did not anticipate the "big push" which the Remove team put into it! The Upper Fourth were "pushed" right into the sea!

When Harold Skinner sawed through the leg of Mr. Quelch's wicker chair by way of a "joke," he did not expect to be caught in the act. Skinner soon made close acquaintance with a different—and more painful—sort of "cane," towards his elder brother!

FOR SALE
One hundredweight of charcoal. My fag has been presenting me with it at breakfast-time every day this term. He calls it toast. —Offers to T. NORTH, Sixth Form.

FOUND
On a chair recently occupied by Master Bunter, a concertina. Owner can have same on applying to MRS. KEBBLE, Housekeeper.
N.B.—Perhaps I was mistaken about its being a concertina. On a second examination, I find that it may at one time have been a top-hat.