

**"THE SCHOOLBOY SLEUTH!"** AMAZING COMPLETE STORY OF SCHOOL ADVENTURE FEATURING . . . **Harry Wharton & Co.**

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# THE SCHOOLBOY SLEUTH!



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Slippery!

**H**ERE comes Loder!"  
"Blow Loder!"  
"Better cut, though!"

It was morning break at Greyfriars School. Harry Wharton & Co. and other members of the Remove, were rather enjoying themselves when Loder of the Sixth appeared in the offing.

It was a bitter December morning. There had been a sudden cold snap and a fall of snow. It was freezing. But the winter weather did not affect the spirits of the cheery Removites; rather, it exhilarated them.

In the secluded spot between the elms and the school wall the juniors had made a slide. With reddened faces, and scarves flying, they whizzed along that slide, with much satisfaction to themselves.

It was a rule—and quite a good rule—that slides should not be made in the quad. People who stepped, inadvertently, on slides were liable to meet with sudden and unpleasant surprises. But the best of rules are broken sometimes. And in that secluded corner there really was not much harm done.

But rules are rules; and Loder of the Sixth was the fellow to make the most of any infraction of the same. So the cheery game had to stop at the sight of the head prefect of Greyfriars coming along the Elm Walk, from the direction of the House.

"Just like that brute to barge in!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, just!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The justfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Cut before he spots us!" said Harry Wharton.

It was rather surprising that Loder

BY

**FRANK RICHARDS.**

|||||

had not spotted them already; for he was in full view as he came along the path under the leafless old elms.

But it seemed to be by chance that the bully of Greyfriars was coming that way, for he was not looking at them, and did not seem to be aware that they were near at hand at all.

Loder was tramping along with his hands in his pockets, a deep wrinkle in his brow, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

Judging by his look, he was buried in deep thought—and not pleasant thought. He seemed quite oblivious of his surroundings.

Which was all the better for the juniors; for had he spotted them sliding, the result would have been lines, or detentions, or whoppings.

"Hook it!" said Nugent.

Reluctantly, but promptly, the Removites "hooked it." There were seven of them in the little crowd—the Famous Five, Vernon-Smith, and Lord Mauleverer. The last-named was not unwilling to "hook" it. Exertion did not appeal to Mauleverer. He would never have joined the sliders, but for the fact that Bob Cherry had taken one of his arms, and Frank Nugent the other, and rushed him along with them. Such persuasion it was difficult for his lazy lordship to resist.

Seven fellows scampered off and dodged among the frosty trunks of the elms. There they took cover, hoping that Loder would go and allow them to resume their game.

It was clear that he was not there on their account; he had not seen them at all. They watched him rather curiously as he came on towards the slide.

It was not often that Loder of the Sixth was seen in a brown study like this. Really, it looked as if he had some trouble on his mind—some deep problem that he was thinking out. Hardly more than a dozen feet from the juniors, he did not see them—and evidently he did not see the slide they had just abandoned, for he was walking directly towards it.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry. "If he steps on it!"

"Quiet!"

There was a suppressed chuckle.

A word of warning could have been called out to any other fellow. But not to Loder! Loder would have rewarded such a friendly call by handing out punishments to the fellows who had made the slide. In those circumstances, the Removites could hardly be expected to give Loder the tip. Only Lord Mauleverer, in whom kindness of heart predominated over caution, thought of doing so.

"Begad! Loder's goin' to come a cropper in a few secs, you men!" murmured Mauly. "Better give him the tip—"

"Shut up, you ass!" hissed Smithy.

"Quiet, Mauly!" whispered Harry Wharton.

"Yaas, but—"

"Quiet, you ass!" breathed Bob.

"We're not giving ourselves away to Loder. He would be jolly glad to report us to Prout for this!"

"Yes, rather!" murmured Nugent.

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Lord Mauleverer, as usual, gave in. Mauly generally gave in, to save argument.

Loder was close on the slide now.

The seven seniors watched in breathless anticipation. It was a ripping slide—as smooth and slippery as glass. If Loder stepped on it—

He did!

Still buried deep in thought, his hands still in his pockets, his brows still wrinkled over his unknown problem, Loder stepped on the slide—without knowing that it was there!

The next moment he knew! Once on the slide, he could not fail to know!

His feet suddenly shot from under him.

There was a startled howl from Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

"Ooogh! What—"

He whizzed!

His hands shot out of his pockets, and his arms thrashed the air. His hat flew off. He made a terrific effort to collect his runaway legs.

But he failed!

His legs seemed to have a will of their own! They seemed to travel of their own accord!

Loder flew!

"Oh, my hat!"

"He's going!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder, hardly knowing what was happening to him, made frantic efforts to keep his balance as he flew. Those efforts only made him fly the faster.

Suddenly he lost his footing and sat down.

But his momentum carried him onward. In a sitting position, he shot along the remainder of the slide, doing about forty!

Whiz!

Crash!

At the end of the slide there was a stack of snow. Loder shot into it! He crashed into it! He nearly buried himself in it! Wild gasps and gurgles came from him as he rolled and floundered in snow.

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

"Ooogh! Woocogh! Gurrngh!" came from Loder.

He sat up blindly, clutching snow from his face, his eyes, his nose, his mouth.

"Cut!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"We mustn't be found near here—"

"Oh crumbs! No fear!"

"Hook it!"

Seven juniors faded out of the picture—the quickest fade-out on record! They fairly raced! And as they went, wild howls and gurgles followed from Loder of the Sixth.

"Urrgh! Wurrngh! Who—what—how—gurrngh!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Letter for Mauly!

**B**ILLY BUNTER blinked up at the letter-rack and grunted.

Several fellows had gathered there to look for letters in break. Some had luck, some hadn't! Bunter was one of those who hadn't. There were still several letters in the rack unclaimed; but none of them were addressed to W. G. Bunter. And the fat Owl of the Remove grunted.

Bunter, as usual, was expecting a postal order! Also, as usual, it hadn't arrived at Greyfriars.

"Your titled relations forgotten you again, old fat bean?" asked Skinner sympathetically.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

He blinked at the rack again. His eyes, and his spectacles, lingered on a letter with a foreign stamp on it. It was addressed to Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter eyed that letter longingly.

Ten to one, Bunter felt, it contained a tip for Mauly; and Mauly, unlike Bunter, was not in need of a tip.

Mauly had lots and lots of cash!

Bunter hadn't! Yet munificent tips came for Mauly—and not even a long-expected postal order for Bunter! It was very rotten!

Bunter reached up a fat hand and took the letter down at last.

Skinner gave him a grin.

"Your name Mauleverer?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"You'd better let Mauly's letters alone, you fat duffer!" said Hazeldene.

"I suppose I can take a letter to a pal!" said Bunter, with dignity. "This is from one of his relations abroad—a jolly old aunt who's staying in the South of France. I heard Mauly speaking about her to Vivian—I mean, Mauly told me about her—we're rather pally, you know. I shouldn't wonder if she's sent him a tip—I mean, I dare say he's anxious to hear from her, and I suppose I can take a letter to a pal if I like."

"Better leave it alone, fathead!" said Squiff.

"Yah!"

With that elegant rejoinder Billy Bunter rolled away, Mauly's letter in his fat hand. Judging by the circumstances that Lord Mauleverer had not taken the trouble to glance at the rack in break, he was not very keen on his correspondence. But if Mauly wasn't Bunter was!

If there was a tip in that letter, and Bunter obliged Mauly by taking it to him, there was a chance of picking up some of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. And the Owl of the

**In the eyes of Mr. Prout, Gerald Loder is all that a dutiful captain and head prefect should be. But in the eyes of Vernon-Smith and his fellow members of the Greyfriars Secret Society Loder is a rotter of the first water!**

Remove was sorely in need of a little loan. He was hungry! True, he always was hungry! But the sharp winter weather that morning seemed to have given a keener edge than ever to his unearthly appetite!

"Seen Mauly?" he called out, as he came on Peter Todd.

"In the quad, I think!" answered Peter.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

Bunter did not want to go out of the House! A sharp wind and a snowfall did not tempt the fat Owl out of doors. Frowsting over the fire in the Rag was more in his line. It was just like that beast Mauly to be out of doors when Bunter wanted to see him.

He rolled out into the frosty air. He blinked to and fro through his big spectacles. Mauly was not in sight.

"Seen Mauleverer?" he called out to Coker of the Fifth.

Horace Coker glanced at him.

He did not answer.

He paused only a moment, to kick Bunter for his cheek, and walked on.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter.

"Beast!"

He wriggled a little as he went on his way in search of Mauly. Coker of the Fifth had rather a hefty kick.

His minor, Sammy of the Second, was in the quad. Bunter called to him:

"Seen Mauly, Sammy?"

This time he obtained the desired information. Sammy of the Second had seen Mauly going off with some other Remove fellows through the elms. Billy Bunter rolled off in that direction.

He went by the Elm Walk, the way Loder of the Sixth had gone a few minutes ago, though Bunter was unaware of that.

He was not thinking of Loder of the Sixth. He was not aware that there was a slide behind the elms; neither was he aware that the fellow he sought was fleeing with six other fellows, leaving Gerald Loder sitting in the bank of snow at the end of the slide. Bunter rolled on by the path through the trees, and suddenly became aware of strange noises ahead of him.

"Ooogh! Grooogh! I'll skin them! Urrgh!"

Loder of the Sixth was standing in the snow, shaking it off his clothes, rubbing it off his features, and still gasping and gurgling. Billy Bunter blinked at him from the distance and grinned. Loder apparently had had a fall in the snow; Bunter did not know how or why. But a moment later he was able to guess—as he stepped on the slide!

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as his feet went.

Loder stared round at him.

"Ow! Wow! Oh crikey! Help!" roared Bunter. His feet flew into the air, and he sat down with a bump that almost shook the county of Kent. "Oh! Ow! Wow! Yaroooop! Who—Hooop!"

Loder's eyes glittered. He strode towards the fat junior—taking care not to step on the slide again.

Seeing Bunter sliding, Loder jumped to the conclusion that he was one of the fellows who had made the slide. Not that the bully of Greyfriars wanted much evidence. He wanted to whop somebody, and Bunter came in handy.

He grabbed Bunter by the collar and jerked him up. In the snow by the slide lay the letter that Bunter had been carrying in his fat hand.

"You young rotter!" panted Loder.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter, wriggling wildly.

"Wow!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Help! Yaroooop!" yelled Bunter. "I say—Whoop!"

"I'll teach you to make slides for a prefect to fall over—"

"Ow! I didn't! I wasn't! Yooop!" roared Bunter. "I never knew it was here—Ow! I was looking for Mauly—Wow! I've got a letter for him—Yow! Leggo!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

A final smack sat Bunter down again. Loder, still not satisfied, landed a kick! Bunter was up again like a jack-in-the-box. He forgot all about Mauly's letter—he forgot everything but the necessity of placing a safe distance between Loder and himself! He fled for his life!

Loder made a stride after him, and landed another kick as he fled. Billy Bunter disappeared through the elms, yelling frantically.

Feeling a little better now, Loder looked round for his hat. Then his eyes fell on the letter Bunter had dropped. He looked at it, paused, and looked again. Then he picked it up. Had it been a letter of Bunter's, Loder of the Sixth would not have bothered his head about it. But he seemed interested in a letter addressed to Lord Mauleverer.

He stood for some moments with that letter in his hand. He gave a quick glance to right and left—a glance over his shoulder. Then he slipped the letter into his pocket and walked away from the spot.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

## The Heavy Hand!

"**P**ROUT!" murmured Bob Cherry. All the Remove sat up and took notice!

Mr. Woose, their new Form-master, blinked over his glasses and coughed, nervously and deferentially.

It was third school.

The Remove were all in their places in their Form-room. They were expecting Mr. Woose to get on with Latin prose. So they were not wholly displeased when Mr. Prout sailed in.

Certainly they did not like Prout. They did not like him barging into their Form-room. But they liked Latin prose, perhaps, a little less. And in Woose's hands Latin prose was very prosy indeed! An interruption to class was never wholly unwelcome, even in the portly shape of Mr. Prout, the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars.

"I have a few words to address to your Form, Mr. Woose!" boomed Prout.

"Goodness gracious!" squeaked Mr. Woose. "I mean, yes, sir, certainly!"

Little Mr. Woose was very nervous of Prout. He was overawed by that portly and pompous gentleman. It rather pleased Prout. He had never been able to overawe Mr. Quelch, the regular master of the Remove. And Mr. Prout, acting as headmaster while Dr. Locke was away, felt entitled to overawe the staff! He had made things so unpleasant for Quelch that Quelch had had to go, and Prout considered little Mr. Woose a great improvement. Woose never fixed him with a cold, calm, penetrating eye when he blew into the Form-room.

The portly Prout faced a silent Remove. Some of the fellows wondered what he was after. Harry Wharton & Co. suspected, rather uneasily, that it might be something to do with a slide! Skinner and Snoop feared that it might have something to do with secret cigarettes. Billy Bunter dreaded to hear that the cook had informed Prout of a missing pie! But it was none of these things, as it turned out.

"Boys," came Prout's deep boom, "I am here to speak on a serious subject—a very serious subject! Since Dr. Locke was injured by a motor accident, and I have taken his place as headmaster of Greyfriars, I have been perturbed—considerably perturbed—by certain lawless proceedings in the Lower School."

"Go hon!" murmured Herbert Vernon-Smith, and there was a suppressed chuckle.

All the fellows knew now what Prout was driving at. That exordium could only refer to the secret society of Greyfriars.

"As it happened," resumed Prout, "that Wingate of the Sixth Form was also injured in that motor accident it was necessary for me to appoint a new captain of the school. I appointed Loder of the Sixth Form, a prefect in whom I have complete confidence."

"Old ass!" murmured the Bounder. "Eh?" exclaimed Prout. "Did someone speak?"

Silence!

"Loder's authority has in certain quarters been contemned," went on Prout. "My own authority has been flouted. Certain juniors have had the impudence—the unparalleled insolence, I may say—to band themselves together in a so-called secret society. The object of this so-called secret society is to bring authority into contempt and to perpetrate unheard-of outrages."

Prout paused to let this sink in.

The Remove gazed at him silently.

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Prout had, it seemed, come there to tell them what all the school knew already. But there was more to come!

"So far," said Prout, his boom deepening, "no discovery has been made, of the identity of these young rascals! They have the impudence, the effrontery, to cover their faces with Guy Fawkes masks when engaged upon their—their depredations! But Loder is convinced, and I share his opinion, that the ring-leaders are to be found in this Form!"

There were plenty of fellows in the Remove who could have stated that Loder's conviction was well-founded!

"Therefore," boomed Prout, "I am here to call upon these boys to stand forth and confess!"

There was a gasp in the Remove. Prout was really asking a lot! It was an assured thing that if the ring-leaders of the Greyfriars Secret Society were revealed they would be expelled from the school. If Prout hoped that any fellow would stand forth and ask for the sack, it showed that Prout had a hopeful nature.

Prout paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he received none. The Remove were dumb.

"Having no doubt," resumed Prout, "that many members of this so-called secret society are in this Form, I shall order this Form into detention for every remaining half-holiday this term, unless confession is made."

"Oh!"

"Phew!"

"Shame!" shouted the Bounder.

"What? What?" boomed Prout. "Vernon-Smith! What did you say?"

"I said shame, sir!" retorted Smithy coolly. "You've no right to punish the whole Form on suspicion."

"No right!" gasped Prout.

"Certainly not, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly. "While you are in the place of Dr. Locke, sir, we have a right to expect justice from you."

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout.

"Silence, silence!" exclaimed Mr. Woose, almost twittering with nervousness. "Wharton—Vernon-Smith—be silent!"

"You need not speak, Mr. Woose!" roared Prout, purple with wrath. "I will deal with those impudent boys, sir! Hand me your cane."

"B-but, sir," stammered Mr. Woose. "Surely you will consider, sir—to punish my Form, sir, on bare suspicion—"

Prout turned on him with a glare that made little Mr. Woose back away in alarm!

"What?" boomed Prout. "Are you arguing with me on this subject, Mr. Woose?"

"Oh! No! Certainly not, sir!" gasped the Squeaker. "But, sir—"

"I am not a man to be contradicted, Mr. Woose!" boomed Prout. "Your predecessor here, sir, learned that to his cost, sir."

"Oh, quite! Quite! But—"

"Will you hand me your cane, Mr. Woose, or will you not hand me your cane?"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Mr. Woose handed over the cane. The Fifth Form master took it and swished it. As master of the Fifth, Prout had never been able to give Quelch's boys the canings he was convinced that they deserved. As temporary headmaster he was able—and willing!

"Wharton! Vernon-Smith! Stand out before the class!"

The captain of the Remove, with set lips, stepped out. The Bounder followed more slowly, with a black brow and gleaming eyes.

"Bend over that form, Wharton!"  
Whack, whack, whack!

"Bend over that form, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder hesitated a moment. But it was only for a moment. Temporary or permanent, a headmaster had to be obeyed. The alternative was "turfing" out of the school.

Smithy bent over the form in his turn. Thrice the cane rose and fell.

Prout handed the cane back to the worried and distressed Woose. Then he fixed a basilisk glare on the Remove. The anger and resentment he read in every face only added to his wrath.

"This Form," he boomed, "is ordered to detention for every half-holiday this term. The sentence will remain in force until the so-called secret society is discovered, its leaders expelled, and its other members publicly flogged."

With that, Mr. Prout turned and marched majestically out of the Form-room. A loud and prolonged hiss followed him as he went.

The door shut with a bang.

"Goodness gracious!" squeaked Woose. "Dear me! We—we—we will now—now give our attention to—to Latin prose, my dear boys."

Very little attention was given in the Remove, either to Mr. Woose or to Latin prose, after Mr. Prout's visit. A buzz of indignation ran through the Form.

Half the Remove, no doubt, were members of the secret society! But it was up to masters and prefects to spot offenders before handing out punishments. They were as wrathful and indignant as the other half of the Form, who were not in the ranks of the secret organisation.

"By gad!" breathed the Bounder, in Harry Wharton's ear. "This is the jolly old limit."

Wharton nodded with a knitted brow.

"So far, only Loder and his gang have been put through it!" muttered Smithy. "But if Prout's taking this line, Prout is going to have something from the secret society."

"He's asked for it!" said Harry.

"Begged for it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The begfulness is terrific!"

"And he's going to get it!" breathed the Bounder. "We've let Prout alone so far—but he's not going to get away with this."

"My boys—silence, silence!" squeaked Mr. Woose. "Please give me your attention—you must give me your attention, please!"

Mr. Quelch would not have put it so mildly as that. Mr. Quelch would have got attention, or he would have known the reason why! But poor little Mr. Woose squeaked and expostulated in vain. It was a great relief to Mr. Woose when the bell rang and he was able to dismiss his excited and indignant Form.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

## Raising the Wind!

**G**ERALD LODER of the Sixth Form sat in his study after dinner.

Any fellow who came along to speak to Loder found that he was "sporting his oak." His pals in the Sixth, Walker and Carne, had come to the door to join Loder in smoking a cigarette. But they found the door locked. Hilton of the Fifth had tapped and gone away. Hobson of the Shell, who had lines for Loder, had arrived with his lines in vain; only a savage voice in the study had told him to clear, and Hobby had marched off with his lines, puzzled and indignant.

Loder had other matters to think of.



In a sitting position, Gerald Loder shot along the remainder of the slide. Whiz! Crash! At the end of the slide there was a stack of snow. Loder crashed into it! "Ooogh! Woooogh! Gurrgrgh!" he gasped. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co., from behind the trees.

A kettle was on his study fire—steaming. Seldom or never, did Loder handle the study kettle with his own hands. That duty was assigned to his fag, Tubb of the Third. But Tubb was not wanted in the study now.

On Loder's table lay a letter—the letter he had picked up from the snow beside the slide. And Loder picked it up, as the kettle began to steam, and held it in the jet of vapour from the spout!

A minute later, the flap of the envelope was open.

Loder's face was quite pale as he drew out the contents. Bully and blackguard as Gerald Loder was, he was ashamed of what he was doing. Secret smoker, pub-hunter, gambler—everything that a Greyfriars prefect ought not to have been—still Loder had some sort of a limit! He was going rather over his own limit now.

But the fact was, that Loder was up against it—seriously up against it.

As head-prefect, as captain of the school, absolutely trusted by Prout, he had full liberty to do as he pleased—and Prout would have been very much astonished to learn of some of the things that it pleased Loder to do! Secret visits to the Three Fishers, up the river, were among them, to play cards and billiards with the shady characters there. A little less freedom of action would have been good for Loder. How he was going to pay the money he had lost at the Three Fishers was quite unknown to him.

He had gone in a good deal over his depth. His "friends" were beginning to worry him for payment. Worse than that, from Loder's point of view, they declined to look at any more of his "paper."

Mr. Banks, the bookmaker, refused to book a single new bet from Loder till that sportsman had settled up for a few that he had already lost. Which was

the unkindest cut of all, for Loder was now in possession of a dead cert—one of those absolutely certain winners that couldn't lose if they tried.

A tenner on Gay Goldfish would pull Loder right out of the ditch—if Gay Goldfish got home, as Loder firmly believed that it would. Loder could get four to one—which meant forty pounds, and his tenner back when that wonderful horse arrived at the post yards ahead of all the rest of the field. With that glorious prospect Loder had no cash to lay on the horse, and could not lay a bet on "tick." That glorious chance was going to pass him by—unless he could, somehow, raise the wind!

He could not—and would not—keep Carne. Their luck at the Three Fishers had been as bad as his own. He had succeeded in "touching" Hilton of the Fifth for a fiver—but that fiver had, unfortunately, gone on the billiards table—and he had no doubt that, when the dandy of the Fifth had tapped at his door ten minutes ago, he had called for that very sum.

Loder was aware that Lord Mauleverer of the Remove had plenty of cash—perhaps more than was good for him. He remembered that Mr. Quelch had once insisted upon sending back a tip that had arrived for Mauleverer, and which had come to his knowledge. That was why Loder had picked up the letter dropped by Billy Bunter.

But his fingers were trembling as he unfolded the letter he had taken from the steamed envelope.

It was a long letter, written on thin, foreign paper in a feminine hand—Loder glanced only at the signature. "Your loving aunt, Cecilia!" Mauleverer had innumerable aunts and uncles, all rich, and all affectionate—he was indeed a fortunate youth.

Loder was not interested in the letter. He was interested in a crisp slip of paper that he drew from it,

It was a Bank of England note for ten pounds!

Loder gazed at that crisp slip.

Holding it in one hand, he wiped a bead of perspiration from his forehead with the other.

For several long minutes he sat motionless, the banknote in his hand. Gambling—the desire to get something for nothing—paves the way to dishonesty. But Loder shivered at the thought of keeping that banknote.

He could not—and would not keep it! But why not borrow it for a time—keep it in hand till Gay Goldfish had won? Loder was no fool, and he knew that "borrowing" money without the owner's knowledge was a fancy name for stealing. Yet he dallied with the idea, the banknote in his hand.

But he realised that it would not do. It would be known that he had had the letter in his hands. Bunter, probably, had already gone back to look for it, and failed to find it. If it was not found, Loder would be asked if he had seen it there. It would be guessed that he had picked it up, since there could be no doubt that someone had picked it up.

He shook his head.

"Borrowing" that tenner without Mauleverer's knowledge, would not work! But now that he knew of it, knew for certain that the tenner was in the letter, there were other means.

Slowly he folded the banknote inside the letter again, replaced the letter in the envelope, and sealed the flap down.

Nothing remained to show that the letter had been opened.

Tap!

Loder gave a guilty start.

"Who's there?" he called out savagely.

"Only little me," came the quiet voice of Lord Mauleverer. "Can I speak to you, Loder?"

Loder breathed hard.

He paused a moment or two, then stepped to the door, unlocked it, and threw it open.

"You can come in!" he said.

The dandy of the Remove stepped into the study.

"Sorry to barge in, if you're busy, Loder," he said politely. "But that ass, Bunter, has lost a letter of mine. He took it from the rack in break this morning to bring it to me—and he dropped it when you whopped him, so he tells me. He can't find it where he dropped it. Mind tellin' me if you happened to see it about?"

Loder pointed to the letter on the table.

"I picked it up, and there it is," he said. "I was going to send for you. You can take it."

"Thanks," said Mauleverer, and he picked up the letter. "Awf'ly good of you, Loder."

Mauleverer was a little surprised that Loder had taken the trouble to pick up the letter at all. Certainly he was not likely to have any suspicion of Loder's reason.

"Not at all," said Loder. "I saw it lying in the snow after that young ass had cut off, and I shouldn't be likely to leave it there. Hold on a minute, Mauleverer."

"Yaas," said his lordship.

"That letter has a foreign postmark and stamp," said Loder casually. "It's rather unusual for a Remove kid to get letters from foreign countries. I think you'd better open it in my presence."

"It's all right, Loder—it's from my Aunt Cecilia—I know the fist," said Mauleverer, with a smile. "And our letters go through Woose's hands, you know, now that Quelch isn't here."

"Woose is hardly so careful as Quelch was," said Loder, "and this is a bit unusual, Mauleverer. You'd better open the letter here."

"Any old thing," said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "Mind if I borrow that paper-knife?"

Mauly slit the envelope, little guessing that it had already been opened in that study. He took out the letter and smiled as he showed the signature to Loder! The banknote he held carelessly in his other hand.

"All serene," said Loder, smiling, too. "But what's that—a fiver?"

"Tenner!" said Mauleverer, glancing at it.

Loder's face became very grave.

"So your aunt—is it your aunt?—has sent you ten pounds!" he remarked.

"That's a lot of money for a Remove boy, Mauleverer! I hardly think that Mr. Prout would approve of a junior having so much money in his pocket."

"Oh begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer in dismay. "Think so?"

"Well, it's rather against the rules," said Loder. "I'm afraid I shall have to mention it to Mr. Prout. A prefect has duties to do, you know."

Lord Mauleverer looked at him. He was aware that prefects had duties to do—and he was also aware that Loder never did any of them. Wingate, or Gwynne, or Sykes might have taken this view—but Loder did not care two straws about that duty or any other.

"Look here, Loder, it's not a frightfully large amount," said Mauleverer. "My aunt generally sends me a tip when she writes."

"Rules are rules," said Loder, shaking his head. "You'd better leave the banknote here, Mauleverer—you can take the letter. I'll see Prout and

ask him about it later. I'll make it all right for you, if I can—but I can't neglect my duty as a prefect."

Loder stretched out a hand, in a careless way for the banknote.

Lord Mauleverer did not hand it over.

"If you really think Prout ought to know of this, Loder—" he said.

"Certainly."

"Then I'll go to him—"

"Eh?"

"And ask him!"

Lord Mauleverer slipped the letter and the banknote into his pocket.

Loder stared at him as he turned towards the door.

"Hold on, Mauleverer!" he snapped.

"I've told you to leave the banknote here. You'll do as you're told."

Lord Mauleverer turned back again. He was not a suspicious fellow, and he assuredly did not suspect Loder of ulterior motives.

"Oh, all right, Loder," he yawned.

"Just as you like!" He tossed the banknote on the table and left the study.

Loder pounced on it the moment the door was closed. He crumpled it into his note-case—hitherto empty.

Loder was not going to Prout with the tenner to ask him about it! Loder was going to the Three Fishers with that tenner to see Mr. Banks! Mauleverer would have to wait for his tenner till Gay Goldfish had won. As for what would happen if Gay Goldfish lost, Loder did not think of that! Gay Goldfish was going to win!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Painful for Prout!

**M**R. PROUT came rolling along the Head's corridor with his elephantine tread, and opened the door of the Head's study.

That distinguished apartment was Prout's headquarters, now that he was temporary headmaster of Greyfriars School. And though all the school regretted the absence of Dr. Locke, and hoped that he would soon be able to resume his duties, that hope was not shared by Prout.

Prout was quite satisfied with himself as headmaster. A comparison between himself and the Head, he thought, was very much in his own favour. Prout was very far from looking forward to the time when he would have to fall, like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, from his high estate. The longer Dr. Locke stayed in the nursing-home, the better Prout liked it; and the better it was for Greyfriars—Prout was convinced of that!

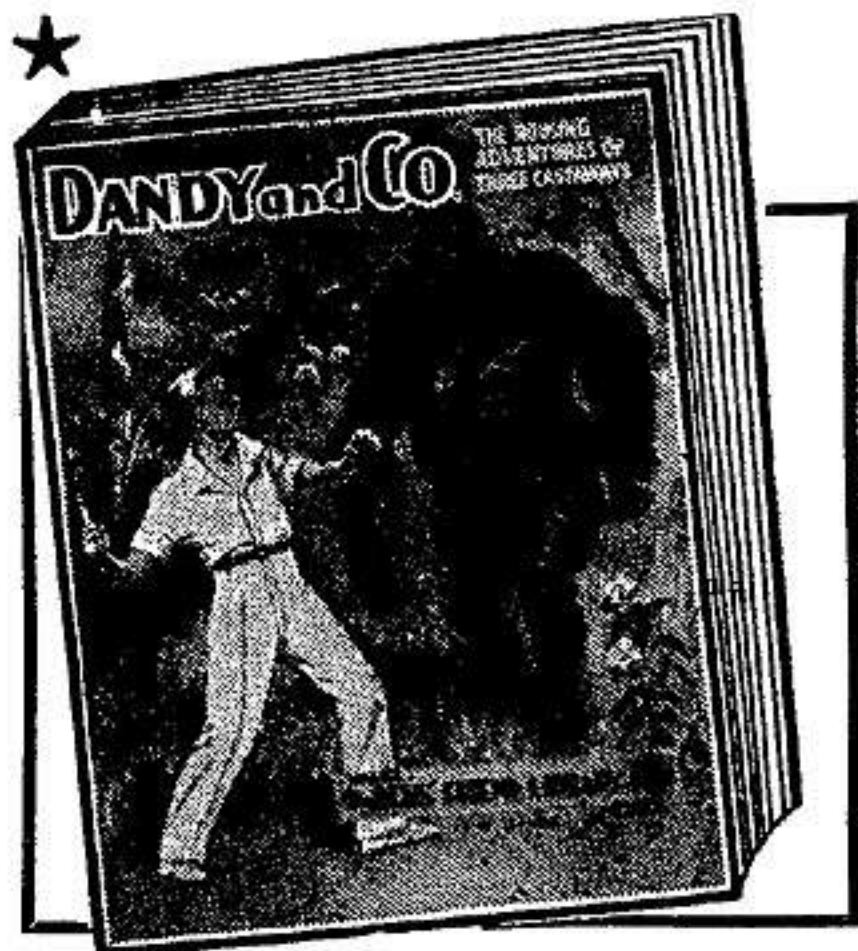
He rolled majestically into the study, shut the door, and rolled across to the armchair by the fire. After lunch with the staff, Prout liked to take a little nap in the armchair by the fire; and for the next half hour he was not likely to be disturbed. Masters and prefects who knew what was good for them, did not barge into the study while Prout was napping!

Prout sank down contentedly into the soft leather of Dr. Locke's armchair.

Outside, in the quad, a bitter wind was blowing; there was frost on the window-panes. But within, all was warm and cosy and comfortable.

Prout placed his feet on the fender, and removed his mortar-board, and the gleaming firelight played brightly on the bald spot on Prout's head.

Cosy and comfortable as he was, however, Prout was frowning. He was thinking of that lawless association of juniors, the Secret Seven, as they called themselves—though it had been



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"Gosh!" murmured Hank. "He may be a dandy but he's a corker, too!" And when the three of them shared the perils of a shipwreck together, landing on an island inhabited by man-apes and pygmies, the Dandy proved himself more of a corker than ever. Here are thrills piled on thrills—a regular dandy yarn, and a corker too! Get it to-day—

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proved that three or four times that number of fellows were concerned in it. Prout had strong suspicions of the Remove—especially of the Bounder. He longed to make a signal example of some member of the secret society by expelling him from the school. But proof was wanting! That lack of proof kept him from drastic measures.

But he felt that the measure he had now taken with the Remove must produce some effect. Detention for all half-holidays was rather severe—but not too severe, for young rascals who had ragged, and even whopped, such a trusty head prefect as Gerald Loder! Very likely the whole Form were in the secret—in which case they all deserved punishment. Anyhow, as the actual offenders kept their identity a secret, the whole Form had to suffer for their sins. Prout was not going to allow his authority to be contemned with impunity. He hoped that his sweeping sentence would produce some effect on that rebellious Form!

That hope was well founded. It was going to produce an effect! But Prout little dreamed what effect it was going to produce!

He was about to learn!  
Having settled down comfortably in the Head's armchair, Prout did not expect to be disturbed. So he was rather surprised to hear a rustling sound in the study behind him.

He sat up and took notice!  
Surely there could be no one in the study! No one was allowed to enter that study, except on business with the headmaster.

Prout stared over the back of the armchair.  
His eyes almost started from his plump face at what he saw.

From various corners of the room where they had been concealed—from behind a screen, from under the table, from the window-hangings, seven figures had emerged.

Their faces were hidden by Guy Fawkes masks. One of them held a sack in his hands—a large, heavy, coaly sack which had evidently once contained coal.

Prout gazed at them, dumbfounded.  
The Secret Seven!

So far, though his prefects had had painful experiences with that mysterious brotherhood, Prout had had none. It had not even occurred to his majestic brain that they would ever venture to deal with him personally. He gazed at them blankly.

"What—" He found his voice.  
"What—"

He rose from the armchair, towering in his wrath.

As he did so, the open end of the coal sack was tossed over his head, and the sack enveloped him.

"Urrrrgh!" came from within the sack.

Prout wriggled wildly.  
Not a word was spoken by the masked juniors. As usual, the Secret Seven worked in silence. But they worked swiftly and effectively.

The sack was drawn tight round Prout in spite of his frantic wriggles. A cord was run round it, and knotted fast, fastening the sack round Prout's portly waist. Inside, he gurgled and spluttered horribly.

Through the sack he heard a chuckle. Then he was released. He heard a sound of retreating footsteps. The young rascals were gone!

Prout stood gurgling—in the sack.  
They were gone! Of course, they had removed the masks as soon as he could no longer see them. With the masks in their pockets, they had only to walk out

of the study. The coast was clear. Nobody came there in napping-time! The young villains had chosen their moment well. They had had the impudence, the nerve, to hide in the study and wait for him—now they had finished with him, and gone! Who were they, he could not begin to guess—but he knew well enough that this was the answer to his sentence of detention on the Remove

"Gurrrrrggghh!"  
Prout struggled in the sack. He floundered wildly, striving to get his arms out.

But he could not get them out. His

**GREYFRIARS CARTOONS**

By Harold Skinner.

No. 25.—ROBERT DONALD OGILVY  
*the Scottish junior of the Remove.*



Here's a lad from the Land of the Thistle,  
A Briton courageous and true;  
(There's only one rhyme, and that's  
"whistle,"  
Which certainly never will do.)

A fine sense of fun he possesses,  
(Who said that the Scots were dense?)  
But though Fishy "reckons" and  
"guesses,"  
He'll never cinch Ogilvy's cents.

arms were safe inside the sack, which was safely tied round him. He was a prisoner in the coal sack—in which much dust of coal lingered. His hair—what there was of it—was thick with coal dust. His eyes and nose, his ears and mouth, gathered coal dust. Coal dust trickled down his neck.

"Urrrrgh!"  
He groped and floundered to the door. He had to get help—he had to get out of this! Luckily the young villains had left the door open.

He barged across the study, groping and floundering to the door. There was a crash as a chair was knocked over—a smash, as his shoulder collided with the glass of a bookcase. He barged into a table, and heard the crash of an inkpot on the floor. Then, luckily, he got to the door and floundered out into the passage.

"Urrgh! Wurrgh! Help! Yurrgh!" came in stifled accents from the interior of the coal sack. "Oooooogh! Oooooch! Help! Urrrrgh!"

But the thick sack muffled Prout's voice. Nobody could have recognised his familiar boom. Gurgling and spluttering, Prout barged and floundered helplessly along the passage.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**

The Secret of the Sack!

"GOODNESS gracious!" squeaked Mr. Woose.

"What the thump!" yelled Coker of the Fifth.

"Who's that bargee?"

"It's a giddy coalman!" gasped Temple of the Fourth.

"What's he doing here?"

"Must be tipsy!" gasped Coker.

Crowds of fellows stared at the strange figure that barged out of Head's corridor. Weird noises had drawn attention to that corridor—but the figure that appeared in sight was even weirder than the noises it made.

It was a very large sack. It had once contained two hundredweight of coal. Now it contained two hundredweight of Prout. But none of the startled and amazed spectators guessed that it contained Prout. No headmaster of Greyfriars, temporary or permanent, had ever shown up before, clothed in a coal sack upside down over his head and tied round his waist. Prout was making history at Greyfriars.

"Goodness gracious, who—who—who can it be?" exclaimed the astounded Woose. "Who—who—who—"

"The who-fulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrrrrgh!" came from inside the sack. "Wurrgh!"

"Well, of all the cheek!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth. "Tipsy, of course—a tipsy coalman, barging about the House—"

"Must be squiffy to be doing this!" said Greene.

"Squiffy as a boiled owl, I should think!" said Potter. "Somebody had better push him out!"

"He's a bit too coaly to touch!" grinned Hobson of the Shell.

"Groooooogh! Hooooogh! Oooooogh! Urrrrgh!"

The strange figure barged on. Every eye was on it—but nobody was eager to put a hand on it. Fallows backed out of its way. Clouds of coal dust exuded from it.

"Urrrrgh! Wurrgh!"

"Here, you get out of this, you ruffian!" Loder of the Sixth arrived on the scene. "Out of it, sharp!"

"Burrrrrrgh!"

"How the thump did the man get in here?" exclaimed Loder. "Did any of you see him come in?"

"Must have been delivering coal," said Walker. "Can't imagine how he got to this part of the House."

"Well, he's got to get out. Take hold of him—"

"No fear!" said James Walker, drawing back. "I'm not handling him. You take hold of him!"

"Here, Coker, you shove him out!"  
 "I'll watch it!" grinned Coker.  
 "Groooogh! Oooogh! Woooooch!"  
 came in muffled tones from within the sack. "Woogh! Release me! Urrgh!"  
 "You tipsy ruffian!" exclaimed Loder angrily. "You'll be run in for this! Better telephone for a constable, I think, Mr. Woose."

"Goodness gracious—yes—certainly!" said the Squeaker. "Undoubtedly! The man may become violent—his proceedings are so very, very peculiar!"

"He is tied," said Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell. "There appears to be a cord tied round him."

"Must be mad!" said Walker. "Why should he want to tie a sack on his head, even if he's squiffy?"

"Groooogh! Oooogh! Help! Release me!" came in muffled tones. "How dare you leave me like this? Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Shut up, you Remove fags!" snapped Loder.

"Shall we get him out into the quad, Loder?" asked the Bounder. "We don't mind making our hands a bit coaly."

"Yes, shove him out," said Loder. "Better get him out of the House—he's shaking coal-dust all over the shop!"

"Groogh! Help! I insist—orrgh, I—"

"Lend a hand, you men!" shouted Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!"  
 "The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a number of the Removites lent a hand. They did not seem to mind getting coaly! Perhaps they knew what was in the sack.

"Urrgh! Wurrgh! Groooogh! Release me at once—wurrghh!"

The wretched occupant of the sack spluttered frantically as he was barged doorward.

A gaping crowd followed.

There was a buzz of amazed excitement on all sides. Certain members of the Remove knew who, and what, was in that sack! But most of the fellows were quite in the dark.

To their eyes, the strange figure was evidently that of a coalman, who had, for some mysterious reason, put one of his sacks over his head—a thing only to be accounted for on the supposition that he was wildly intoxicated!

"Urrgh! Wurrgh! Grrrrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold him!" gasped Harry Wharton, as the figure in the sack was got out of the doorway. "Don't let him fall down the steps!"

"Roll him down!"

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrgh! Gurrgh! I command you—wurrghh!"

"My hat! Those Remove kids are getting mucky!" said Coker of the Fifth. "I jolly well wouldn't touch him!"

"Nor I!" said Potter.

The crowd followed out of the House. Coal-dust was flying in clouds from the sack as the strange figure was propelled along. Some of the fellows began to sneeze.

"Shall we turn him out of the school, Loder?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, certainly!"

"Come on, you men—prefect's orders!"

"Gurrgh! Wurrgh!"

"Shove him along!"

"Open the gates, Gosling!" called out Loder.

Gosling came out of his lodge and stared blankly at the coaly figure in the

sack propelled towards the gates by a crowd of hilarious juniors.

"My eye!" gasped the ancient Greyfriars porter. "Who's that? 'Ow did he get in 'ere? He never got in by this 'ere gate, I know that!"

"Turn him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrgh! Rascals! Villains! Ruffians! Wurrgh! Help! Loder—Walker—Mr. Woose—are you there, Loder? Groooogh!"

"He knows my name!" said Loder blankly.

"Goodness gracious—and mine!" squeaked Mr. Woose. "Very remarkable—very, very odd! Who can the man be?"

"Groogh! Release me!" came the muffled roar. "Scoundrels! Wretches! Ooogh! How dare you! Wooooogh! Help!"

"Outside with him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Loder! Is Loder present?" came a desperate shriek from the sack. "Loder, I command you to release me at once!"

"Well, of all the neck!" ejaculated Loder. "You cheeky ruffian, you're going to be chucked out, and you can think yourself lucky if you're not given into custody—"

"Chuck him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrgh! Groogh! Loder, do you know who I am?" It dawned on Prout's powerful brain that his identity was quite hidden by the sack. "Loder! I am Mr. Prout, your headmaster—yurrrrrgh!"

"Wha-at?"

"Who?"

"Great pip!"

"Prout!"

"Pip-pip-pip-Prout!"

"Impossible!"

"Goodness gracious! It—it cannot be Mr. Prout! It is impossible that Mr. Prout would dress himself in a coal-sack—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck him out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hold on!" gasped Loder. A dreadful doubt was in his mind. Headless now of coal and coal-dust, Loder ran to the floundering figure, and grabbed at the cord tied round the sack. "Lend me a knife, somebody!"

"Groooogh! Oooogh! Release me—yooooooogggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's my penknife!" gasped Walker.

Loder cut the cord. The coal-sack was jerked off.

A fat and portly figure was revealed. The Greyfriars crowd stared at it. They fairly gasped at it. Mr. Prout's features were unrecognisable—they were too thickly clothed in coal-dust for recognition. But his portly figure was familiar; his voice, now that the sack was gone, was no longer muffled—it was Prout!

"Prout!" gasped Coker.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The esteemed and ridiculous Prout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Prout!" gurgled Loder. "Sir! I never knew—oh, my hat! What—what has happened—what—"

"Fool! I have been the victim of an outrage!" roared Prout. "Groooogh! I was seized in my study—woooooogh! I—I was—grooooh—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd rocked with laughter! Even Loder could not help grinning! Mr. Prout gave a wild, coaly, infuriated glare round, and ran for the House—fairly bolted for it! He wanted

to get out of sight! Leaving a trail of coal-dust behind him, Prout vanished into the House, followed by a roar of laughter that woke every echo of Greyfriars.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Beastly for Bunter!

"I SAY, Smithy—"

"Scat!"

"Will you lend—"

"No!"

"Mauly—"

"What?"

"A tenner!"

"Lend Mauly a tenner!" repeated Vernon-Smith blankly.

And the Famous Five, who were with the Bounder, stared at Bunter.

It was the following afternoon, which was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. While fellows of other Forms were arranging to spend their half-holiday in ways that pleased themselves, the Remove were looking forward dismally to dismal detention in their Form-room.

The sacking of Prout in a coal-sack had not caused the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars to rescind that sentence.

Indeed, the Secret Seven had hardly hoped that it would! They had made it clear to Prout that if he adopted Loder's tyrannical methods they would hit back as effectively as they hit back at Loder. They had made that quite clear—abundantly clear.

But if it had made any difference to Prout, it had only confirmed him in his determination to come down on the Remove with an iron hand.

Nobody had been punished for that amazing exploit in the Head's study. Nobody could be punished till somebody had been found out—and nobody had been found out.

But Prout, convinced that the young rascals were in the Remove, and that this was their retaliation for detentions, was adamant!

The very next day was a half-holiday, and the detention was to begin! And the chums of the Remove were discussing it rather dismally when Billy Bunter rolled up, and made his rather extraordinary request to Vernon-Smith.

Had Bunter asked for a loan for himself, whether ten pounds or ten shillings, or ten pence, it would not have been surprising. In any case, the answer would have been in the negative. But it was rather astonishing for him to ask for a loan for Mauly—who never borrowed money, and never, indeed, had any occasion to do so.

And if Mauly was departing from his usual manners and customs and becoming a borrower, it was improbable that he would have chosen Bunter as an emissary. So the juniors simply stared blankly at the fat Owl.

But Bunter was in serious earnest. He blinked quite anxiously at the Bounder through his big spectacles.

"You've got lots of money, Smithy," he said. "You're too jolly mean to lend a fellow anything when he's expecting a postal order. But you've got lots. I say, Mauly's good for a loan, you know. Will you lend him a tenner?"

"You blithering, blethering bandersnatch!" said the astonished Bounder. "Mean to say Mauly's asked you to ask me?"

"Well, he hasn't exactly asked me," said Bunter cautiously. "But he's stony—absolutely stony—and he won't have any money till he gets his tenner back from Loder. And he's going to lend me ten bob when he gets it—I mean, I hate to see a fellow like Mauly



hard up. Look here! You lend Mauly a tenner, and he can square when Loder gives him back his banknote—see?”

“Is he potty?” asked Bob Cherry, in wonder.

“Oh, really, Cherry—”

“Well, what do you mean, you fat ass?” demanded Bob. “Loder hasn’t got hold of a tenner belonging to Mauly, has he?”

“He jolly well has!” answered Bunter. “There was a tip in that letter for Mauly yesterday—just as I thought there would be when I took it to him. Loder made him open the letter in his presence, and, as there was a tenner in it, he said he would have to speak to Prout. So he’s kept it till he’s spoken to Prout. And that ass, Mauly, has run out of tin, and he’s too lazy to walk down to the bank. And besides, he can’t, as we’re detained this afternoon, and—”

“Well, Loder’s had lots of time to speak to Prout since yesterday morning,” said Harry Wharton. “Not that Mauly’s likely to keep the tenner. Prout doesn’t love the Remove.”

“The lovefulness is not terrific,” grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

“Silly ass to let a prefect spot it!” said the Bounder, shrugging his shoulders. “Tenners ain’t allowed in the Remove. Prout is sure to tell Mauly that it must be sent back, or left with him till the end of the term. He might stretch a point for some fellows, but not for a Remove man.”

“Think Mauly won’t be allowed to keep it?” asked Bunter, in dismay.

“Not likely! It’s against the rules!”

“Oh, blow the rules!” said Bunter peevishly. “That beast Loder oughtn’t to have butted in. Wooso passed the letter all right, and Loder would never have seen it, only I dropped it in the quad, and he picked it up—”

“If you’d minded your own business it—”

“Oh, don’t be an ass!” said Bunter. Minding his own business had never had any appeal for Billy Bunter. “I say, you fellows, Mauly’s hard-up—stony broke. Look here, Smithy! If you lent him a tenner, you could have it back at the end of the term when Prout let’s Mauly have his tip.”

“Fathead!”

“Well, I’ll tell you what,” said Bunter. “Lend Mauly ten bob, Smithy.”

“Ha, ha ha!”

“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!” snorted Bunter. “Mauly’s going to lend me ten bob when he gets that tip. And if he doesn’t get it—where do I come in?”

Evidently William George Bunter was chiefly concerned about his own whack in the loaves and fishes.

“You don’t come in at all, old fat bean,” grinned Bob Cherry. “I dare say that tenner is locked up in Prout’s desk now, and will stay there till we break up for Christmas. So would Smithy’s tenners be, if Prout knew that he had any.”

“Well, look here, Smithy! Suppose you lend me ten bob?”

“I’ll lend you my boot!”

“Beast!”

Billy Bunter retired rather hastily. He wanted a loan—but not that loan.

As he passed Loder and Walker and Carne in the quad he gave the captain of Greyfriars a glare of concentrated ferocity through his big spectacles.

It was just like that beast to barge in and make himself unpleasant. Billy Bunter would have given a great deal to punch Gerald Loder’s face.

That, however, was one of the happy things that a fellow could dream of, but never venture to do. Having glared ferociously at the back of Loder’s head, Bunter rolled away in search of Lord Mauleverer.

Really it was a pressing matter. There was still time before detention to sample the jam-roll in the school shop. Bunter’s postal order had not yet arrived, and the date of its arrival was still uncertain. But that little loan from Mauly was a sure thing, if only Mauly recaptured the tip from Aunt Cecilia. Mauly had to recapture it, somehow. He was a lazy ass, and did not seem to be bothering his head about it at all. Bunter was going to make him bother. The jam-roll depended on it, and that was important.

“Mauly! I say, Mauly, old chap!”

“Oh gad!” groaned Lord Mauleverer.

He was lounging elegantly in the quad when Bunter ran him down. He cast a hurried glance towards the House doorway; but it was too late; a grubby and sticky hand grasped his sleeve.

“Have you asked Loder about your tenner, Mauly?”

“No!”

“Look here! He’s in the quad—over there with his pals! Come and ask him now!” said Bunter. “He must have spoken to Prout before this.”

(Continued on page 11.)

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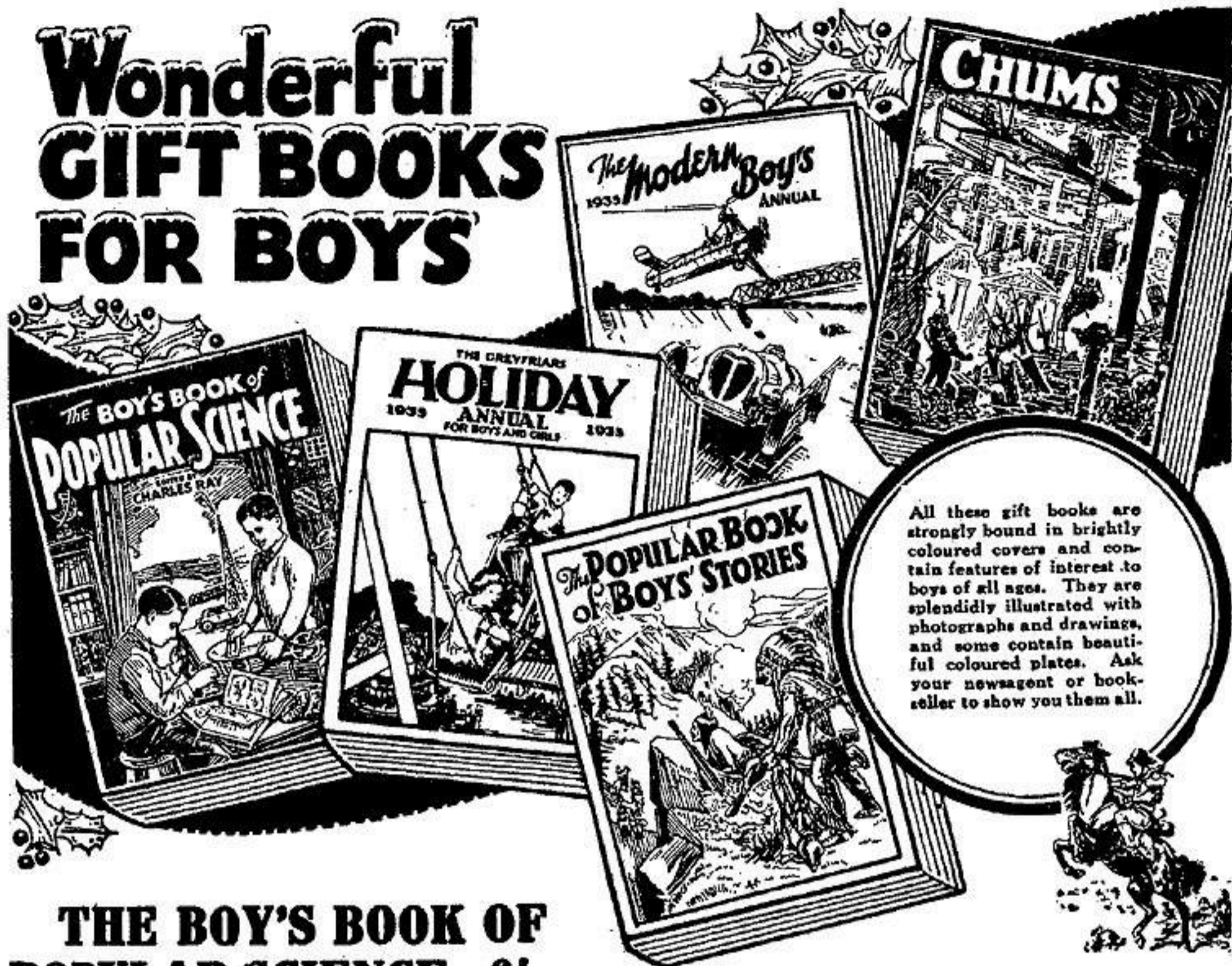


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"You're makin' my sleeve sticky!" groaned Mauly.

"Well, look here! Come and speak to Loder—"

Lord Mauleverer sighed. His lazy lordship generally followed the line of least resistance. It was easier to say "Yes" than to say "No."

"Oh, all right!" he said.

"This way," said Bunter encouragingly.

And he led Lord Mauleverer over to the path where the three Sixth Formers were walking and talking.

Loder's face darkened as Lord Mauleverer came up. He could guess what was wanted.

"Sorry to bother, Loder," said Mauly. "Mind tellin' me if you've spoken to Prout about my banknote?"

Walker and Carne glanced at him rather curiously. This was the first they had heard of the banknote.

Loder breathed rather hard.

The banknote was in his pocket, and was to remain there till it was transferred to Mr. Banks, at the Three Fishers. But he could not, of course, tell Mauleverer that. He had already made up his mind what to say when the junior inquired after the tip from Aunt Cecilia.

"Yes, you young ass!" he snapped. "You know perfectly well that juniors in the Lower School are not allowed to have such sums of money. Mr. Prout will keep the banknote, and hand it to you at the end of the term. Cut!"

Loder walked on with his friends before Mauleverer could make any rejoinder. He did not want Walker and Carne to hear any more.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

"Dished!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Can't be helped. After all, it's against the rules for juniors to sport banknotes. And Prout is a whale on the rules—especially where the Remove are concerned. I jolly well knew what would happen when Loder told him!"

"I say, ask Prout!" said Bunter desperately.

"Fathead!"

"Look here, Mauly—"

"Give a fellow a rest!"

"Smithy would lend you ten bob if you asked him. Then you could lend it to me till my postal order comes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you silly ass?" hooted Bunter. "Look here, Mauly, you cackling fathead! What are you going to do?"

Lord Mauleverer thought it out.

"I'm goin' to kick you for meddlin' with my letter," he said finally.

And he did.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

And he departed. After which Mauly had a much-needed rest from the Owl of the Remove.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Barges In!

**T**AP!

"Come in!" boomed Prout.

Mr. Prout turned a knitted brow and a glinting eye towards the door of the Head's study as it opened. After the amazing happening of the previous day, Prout would hardly have been surprised to receive another visit from the Secret Seven. He would not have been displeased, for a thick cane lay handy on his table, and Prout would have given much to lay it round the young rascals in Guy Fawkes masks, who had sacked him in

a coal-sack. Even yet Prout had a dusty feeling in his hair, and behind his ears.

But it was only Billy Bunter of the Remove who rolled in. He blinked at Prout nervously through his big spectacles.

Prout grunted. He was not pleased with the Remove, or any member thereof. True, he did not suspect that the fat and fatuous Bunter was a member of the secret society. Still, he was a Remove man, and Remove men displeased Prout these days. So he grunted, and he frowned.

"What is it, Bunter?" he snapped.

"If you please, sir—"

Prout raised a plump hand.

"If you have come here to ask to be excused detention. Bunter, it is useless. You may leave my study."

"Oh! No, sir! It's about Mauly, sir—"

"Mauly!" repeated Mr. Prout

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blankly. "What do you mean? What is mauly? What do you mean by mauly?"

"I—I mean Mauleverer, sir—"

"If you mean Mauleverer, Bunter, you had better say Mauleverer. What have you to say about Mauleverer? Be brief!"

"About the—the banknote, sir—"

"The what?"

"Mauly's—I mean Mauleverer's banknote, sir."

Mr. Prout gazed at Bunter. After what Loder had said to the schoolboy earl in the quad, Bunter, of course, supposed that the tenner had been handed over to Prout. Prout, on the other hand, had never even heard of it. It seemed to Prout that the fat junior was wandering in his mind.

"Of—of course, sir, I know Mauly can't have ten pounds," said Bunter hastily. "It's against the rules! I know, sir! But he's short of money, and perhaps you might let him have ten shillings, sir."

"I might let Mauleverer have ten shillings!" repeated Mr. Prout, like a

man in a dream. "Are you in your right senses, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir. Mauly wants ten shillings for a very particular reason, sir—a very important reason! That's not much, sir, is it? We're allowed to have more than ten shillings in the Remove. If you change the banknote, sir—"

"What banknote?" roared Mr. Prout.

"Eh! Mauly's banknote!" gasped Bunter, wondering in his turn whether Prout was wandering in his mind. "The one you're minding for him, sir."

Prout glared.

"You utterly stupid boy! If Mauleverer has told you that I am minding a banknote for him, he must have been jesting—taking advantage of your absurd simplicity! You may leave my study."

Bunter blinked at Prout.

"But, sir," he gasped, "you've got it—"

"Bunter! How dare you—"

"I—I mean the banknote that Loder handed to you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "The one that came in Mauly's letter, sir."

"The boy is insane!" said Mr. Prout, addressing space. "He must be insane! Loder has handed me no banknote, Bunter! If Mauleverer has told you so—"

"But Loder said so, sir!" gurgled Bunter.

"Loder said so?"

"Yes, sir—when Mauly asked him for it."

Mr. Prout's astonished gaze seemed to bore through Bunter. The fat junior wriggled uneasily, in terror of seeing Prout reach for the cane that lay handy. But Prout did not reach for the cane. For a full minute he was too astonished to do anything but stare at Bunter.

Bunter was uneasy; but he was getting indignant, too. Prout was an old ass, of course; that fact was well known to all Greyfriars. But, really, an old ass ought not to have forgotten that a ten-pound note had been placed in his charge! And Prout really looked as if he had never even heard of it before!

"You—you see, sir—" Bunter ventured to break the silence. "As—as Mauly's stony, sir, I thought—I mean, Mauly thought—that you might be willing to change the banknote, sir, and let him have ten shillings! He—he needs ten shillings for a rather particular purpose, this afternoon, sir. It—it's not much—"

Prout found his voice.

"Of what banknote are you speaking, Bunter?"

"Mauly's tenner, sir—I mean, his ten-pound note—"

"I have heard nothing of any such banknote!" boomed Prout. "You have mentioned Loder. If Loder is aware of such circumstances, he should have reported them to me. As he has not done so—"

"But—but he has, sir!" gasped the bewildered Owl. "He's handed the tenner to you, sir. He told Mauly so—"

"Nonsense!" boomed Prout. "Loder has not mentioned the matter to me. You are making some absurd mistake, Bunter, or else you have been deluded. Or," added Prout, his voice taking on a deeper boom—"or else this is some impertinent jest—some prank you are playing on your headmaster, Bunter! Is that the explanation?"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Oh! No, sir! Not at all, sir! Loder gave you the banknote to mind—"

"Loder did nothing of the kind!" roared Prout. "How dare you repeat such an absurd statement, Bunter!"

"But—but he did, sir!" gasped the bewildered Owl. "You—you've got it now, sir!"

"Bunter!"  
"Can I have ten bob out of it, sir—I mean, can Mauly have ten bob—"

"Silence!" boomed Prout. "Unless you are out of your senses, Bunter, I fail to understand you! No banknote has been placed in my keeping by Loder!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "But—but he said—"

"Nonsense!"  
"But—but he did, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He made Mauly give him the banknote yesterday, sir, and said he would speak to you about it, and when Mauly asked him to-day he said you were keeping it till the end of the term, and—"

Snort from Prout.  
"You appear to be under some absurd delusion, Bunter! But I shall certainly inquire into this matter! I will send for Loder! Remain where you are!"

Prout rang the bell for Trotter. The page, as soon as he appeared, was sent to call Loder of the Sixth.

Billy Bunter waited—in a state of utter bewilderment. He rather wished that he hadn't come to Prout now! But who could have foreseen this? Certainly not Bunter!

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### An Unexpected Blow!

"ABSOLUTELY a cert!"  
Gerald Loder made that remark.

He was in Walker's study in the Sixth, smoking a cigarette with his pal Jimmy. The subject under discussion was that magnificent gaudy-rumped, Gay Goldfish, who was going to win at Wapshot, and put Loder on his feet again financially—perhaps!

There was no "perhaps" about it, in Loder's mind. Loder fancied that he knew something about geegees.

Geegees had run away with a lot of Loder's cash. According to the proverb, experience makes fools wise. But it had not had that effect on Loder of the Sixth!

He could hardly have counted the "dead certs" that he had backed in his time—and that had turned out fearfully uncertain at the finish!

But hope springs eternal in the human breast! This time, Loder was convinced, he was backing the right horse.

He was quite merry and bright. All he needed was a tenner to put on Gay Goldfish. It would come back—with forty pounds along with it! Then Mauleverer could have his tenner.

Loder tried to think that there was no harm in borrowing it for a day or two. Anyway, there it was!

Risky as it was to telephone to such a place as the Three Fishers, from the school, Loder had taken that risk. He had not found Mr. Banks very enthusiastic at the other end of the wire. Loder owed him too much already, and the bookmaker refused point-blank to do any more business "on the nod." But Loder's promise to bring the tenner over mollified Mr. Banks. He told Loder that he was "on"—but it was quite plain that that depended on the delivery of the actual tenner into Mr. Banks' oily hands.

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"Oh, quite a cert!" agreed Walker. "Some horse, believe me! But what's the use, when we're all as stony as the jolly old Sahara? These chances only come along when a man can't make use of 'em!"

"I think I can manage it with Banks," said Loder carelessly. He did not intend to tell Jimmy Walker how he was going to manage it. "Borrowing" that tenner for a day or two had a ghastly resemblance to stealing it!

There was a tap at the door. "Master Loder here, sir?" came Trotter's voice.

"Yes. What's wanted?" called out Loder.

He threw away his cigarette hastily, and opened the door.

"I've been to your study, sir," said Trotter. "Mr. Prout wants you, sir, in the 'Ead's study."

"Very well!" grunted Loder. It was an unwelcome interruption to an interesting discussion. But Loder of the Sixth went at once, little guessing what awaited him in the Head's study.

But as soon as he reached that apartment he could see that something was amiss. He was on his guard at once. Loder had many secrets to keep, and, obtuse as Prout was, there was always danger of some of those shady secrets coming to light.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Loder in his most respectful tone.

"Yes, Loder!" boomed Prout. "This boy Bunter has made a remarkable statement—an extraordinary statement."

Loder gave "this boy Bunter" a look out of the corner of his eye. Prout did not observe it, but Bunter did, and he quaked. He knew what to expect from Loder after this interview was over.

"According to this boy's statement," resumed Prout, "Mauleverer, of his Form, received a banknote by post yesterday."

Loder started violently. He had wondered a little uneasily what was coming! But he had never dreamed of that.

"The banknote, Bunter states, was for ten pounds," said Mr. Prout. "I need not point out, Loder, that if a prefect became aware of a Lower boy having such a sum in his possession it would be his duty to report the matter to me."

"Oh! Y-yes! Q-quite!" stuttered Loder.

"According to Bunter, Mauleverer placed the banknote in your hands, and he has an extraordinary impression that you handed it over to me, and, indeed, said so!" went on Prout. "As I have heard nothing of the matter, Loder, I have sent for you to inquire—"

Loder's heart thumped against his ribs.

Not for a moment had he expected to hear of that banknote from Prout. Lord Mauleverer had taken it for granted that Loder had placed it in Prout's hands; it had hardly been necessary for Loder to tell him so. Certainly Mauly would never have thought of speaking to Prout about it. As for Bunter, Loder had, of course, not thought of him in connection with the matter at all.

For a moment or two Loder's head swam.

Prout did not observe his confusion. He was not an observant gentleman. He went booming on.

"I have no doubt that this stupid boy has been deluded by some foolish tale," he said. "Nevertheless, please tell me, Loder, whether you have heard of a Remove boy having a banknote for ten pounds—"

"Oh! Yes! Certainly, sir!"

Loder tried to pull himself together. The banknote was in his pocket, and he

could not deny its existence. He had to squirm out of this somehow.

Prout raised his eyebrows. "Is it a fact, then, Loder, that Mauleverer received such a remittance from some unthinking relative?"

"Oh! Yes, sir! The—the fact is"—Loder was cool again now—"the fact is, sir, that as the matter came to my knowledge I told Mauleverer that he could not be allowed to keep such a sum of money, and that I should hand the banknote to you, sir, for safe keeping till the end of the term."

"A very proper proceeding, Loder. But you have not done so—"

"I am sorry to say, sir, that the matter slipped my memory," said Loder. "I was coming to your study yesterday, sir, for that purpose; but the outrage that occurred quite drove it from my mind—"

"I understand that!" assented Prout. "But surely, Loder, you should have recalled it." He shook his head portentously. "Carelessness in money matters, Loder, is a very serious fault."

"I am really sorry, sir," said Loder meekly. "But I have been so busily engaged almost every moment of my time in trying to find out the identity of the young rascals who attacked you, sir, in this study—"

"Oh, quite, quite!" said Prout. "I fully understand! You may leave the banknote with me now, Loder."

"Here it is, sir!"  
Loder was getting off cheaply, and he knew it. But it gave him a bitter pang to lay the tenner on Prout's table.

Mr. Banks was expecting him at the Three Fishers that afternoon with a ten-pound note! Mr. Banks was likely to be disappointed now.

Prout picked up the ten-pound note. He dropped it into a drawer of the writing-table and closed the drawer. Loder's eyes lingered on it till it disappeared.

He left the study. But he did not return to the Sixth. He waited at the corner of the passage—for Bunter!

That fat and fatuous youth was lingering in Prout's study. Now that Prout had the banknote—which it seemed Loder had forgotten to hand over earlier—Bunter hoped for the best. Prout seemed to be considering.

"Bunter," he said at last, "you may tell Mauleverer that he certainly will not be allowed to have such a sum as ten pounds in his hands. Ten shillings, certainly, is a different matter."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter eagerly. "M-a-a-may I—I take it to him, sir?"

"You may not!" said Prout.

"Oh!"  
"You may tell Mauleverer that he may, if he chooses, come to me, and if he can give me an adequate explanation of his desire to exceed his usual allowance, which is quite ample, I will allow him to have a part of this remittance!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Now you may go, Bunter!"

"But, sir, I—I happen to know that Mauly wants the ten bob very badly, sir—it's fearfully important—"

"Mauleverer may come and tell me so himself!" said Prout grimly. "You may go, Bunter."

"But, sir—"

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey! But—sir—"

"Take two hundred lines, Bunter! And leave my study!" boomed Prout.

Bunter got out—in rather a hurry—before Prout made it five hundred lines! Having closed the door, he shook a fat fist at it to express his feelings, and then rolled dismally away down the corridor. Only too well he knew how unlikely that lazy ass Mauly was to go to Prout.



Peter Todd was generous with the paint. He gave a thick coat to the bust of Sophocles, painted the seat of Prout's swivel chair, painted the top of the writing-table and also the drawers in the table. Liberal as he was with the paint, Peter was very careful indeed to get none on his hands or clothes. The slightest clue would be enough for Prout—in the morning!  
 "Looks fine!" murmured Peter, with a grin.

Mauly was not nearly so keen on lending Bunter ten bob as Bunter was on borrowing it! Bunter realised that!

Bunter's visit to Prout, in fact, had produced nothing—except two hundred lines and a threatening look from Loder, who had seemed annoyed about something!

Loder, very likely, would be rusty about it! He had looked as if he would be! Bunter resolved to give Loder a wide berth!

It was rather a difficult resolve to carry out, however, as he ran into Loder at the corner of the passage! The bully of the Sixth was waiting for him there!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say— Yaroooooh!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yarooooo!" roared Bunter.

Loder hadn't his ashplant with him. But his heavy hands seemed like flails as they smote Bunter!

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yoop! Beast! I say— Yarooooh!" roared Bunter. "I say— Yooooop!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yow-ow-woooooop!"

Billy Bunter disappeared, yelling frantically.

That was some consolation to Gerald Loder! But his brow was black as he strode away to the Sixth Form studies.

He had got through safely with Prout; that pompous and obtuse gentleman had not had a ghost of a suspicion. But he had lost the tenner! Mauly's ten-pound note lay in a drawer of Prout's writing-table—where, obviously, it could not be laid on that absolutely dead cert, Gay Goldfish.

Loder, as he paced his study, thinking out that problem, had a strange lingering thought at the back of his mind. Prout had not looked the drawer into which he had dropped the banknote!

No doubt he would look it before he left the study. But if he did not—

The black sheep of Greyfriars tried to drive that lingering thought from his mind. But it recurred and recurred.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face!

"SILENCE!" squeaked Mr. Woose. There was a murmur of voices in the Remove Form Room.

Mr. Woose was not enjoying his afternoon. He was, indeed, feeling rather sore at being placed in charge of a detention class instead of enjoying his usual leisure.

Every face in the Form-room was clouded.

It was a bright, clear winter's afternoon. There had been another fall of snow; and plenty of fellows were enjoying themselves out of doors. A snow-fight was raging between the Shell and the Fourth, and their cheery shouts could be heard by the detained Remove. Latin prose, in detention, was not nearly so interesting as whizzing snow-balls. The only comfort the juniors had was that Prout had been paid in advance, as it were, for that detention. It was comforting to think of Prout's adventures in the coalsack!

"The old ass!" muttered the Bounder. "The cheeky old ass! We'll jolly well make him sorry for this!"

"We've made him sorry already, old bean," said Bob Cherry. "After all, if Prout knew who sacked him yesterday we should get worse than this."

"There's a lot of fellows here who have nothing to do with the secret society!" growled Vernon-Smith. "They're all getting detention. That's

the sort of justice that old ass hands out."

Bob grinned. The Bounder's remark was true enough, but he was not, in point of fact, deeply concerned about the other fellows. It was his own detention that worried him.

"Can't be helped!" said Bob cheerily.

"Well, Prout will be gone to tea with the other beaks in Common-room when we get out of this!" muttered Smithy. "I'll jolly well drop into his study and give him something to think of."

"Better give him a rest, old chap! There's got to be a meeting of the jolly old society before we go on the warpath!"

"Rats!" grunted the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows," whispered Billy Bunter. "I say, Prout put Mauly's banknote in a drawer of his table. I mean, the Head's writing-table, you know. I say, Smithy, he dropped it into the top drawer."

"What about that, fathead?"

"Well, I don't see leaving it there," said Bunter. "It's Mauly's, ain't it? Mauly's going to lend me ten bob out of it—I mean, it's rather rotten for an old pal like Mauly to be hard up when he's got ten quids knocking about. I say, if you're going to the Head's study, Smithy, what about bagging it—for Mauly?"

"You silly ass!"

"Oh, really, Smithy!"

"Silence!" squeaked Mr. Woose. "Really, there must be silence in the class. You really must not talk, my boys. Silence, please!"

But there was not much silence in the class, as the weary detention wore on.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

Mr. Woose was as glad as the Remove when the hour of dismissal came.

It came at last; and the juniors were released. There was a good deal of grousing as they went.

But the Bounder was planning something more effective than grousing. Other members of the Greyfriars Secret Society were thinking of the next meeting of that mysterious brotherhood, when plans were to be laid for making Prout sorry for his new and drastic measures. But it was like the Bounder to take a line of his own, regardless of the others, and of his leader. Smithy was always a rebel against any kind of authority.

When the beaks gathered in Common-room to tea, Prout's voice, as usual, dominated the room. And Smithy, passing quietly down the passage outside the door, paused, to listen to that booming voice, and thus to make sure that Prout was there.

Then he made his way to the Head's corridor.

That corridor was deserted, and the Bounder went down it quietly to the Head's door.

Prout was at tea, at a safe distance; and in his absence nobody had a right to be in the Head's study. Smithy had no doubt that the coast was clear.

He turned the doorhandle silently, opened the study door, and stepped in. Prout was going to find his study in a parlous state when he came back to it, if the Bounder's vengeful intentions were carried out.

But as he stepped into the study, silently, Smithy had the surprise of his life!

A figure was at the Head's writing-table, bending over the top drawer. So silently had the Bounder opened the door that he had given no alarm, and the fellow at the table had his back to him.

Vernon-Smith stared blankly.

It was Loder of the Sixth who was bending over the table drawer, holding it by the handle, and trying to pull it open.

It did not open.

Evidently Prout had locked it before leaving the study. Prout was not so careless as to leave a drawer unlocked when there was money in it.

In sheer amazement Smithy stared. He was not the only fellow who had taken advantage of the fact that Prout was at a safe distance from the study!

What was Loder doing?

The next moment Loder became aware of his presence. As he lifted his head his eyes fell full on the junior standing within the doorway, staring at him with starting eyes.

Loder gave a startled gasp.

To the Bounder's further astonishment a wave of pallor swept over Loder's face. He turned so ghastly white that he looked as if he were going to faint. Every vestige of colour was drained from his face.

He stared at Vernon-Smith as he might have stared at some grisly

spectre. He was scared—scared to the very marrow of his bones. Smithy could see that, though he did not, at the moment, guess why.

But Loder recovered himself quickly. A flush came into his pallid face, and his eyes flashed.

"You—you—what do you want here?" he panted.

The question was rather unnecessary. Loder did not really need telling why the most reckless junior at Greyfriars had stepped silently into Prout's study, in Prout's absence. Smithy had come there, believing that the coast was clear for a rag.

Loder strode across to him.

"You young rascal! I've caught you this time! You came here to play some trick on Prout."

"Guessed it in one!" assented the Bounder coolly. "I didn't know you were here, prying into Prout's desk, Loder."

"I was looking for some papers Prout left here for me," said Loder.

The Bounder grinned sarcastically. If that explanation had been true, the bully of Greyfriars would never have troubled to make it to a junior.

Loder set his lips.

He had had the fright of his life! For one fearful instant when he found that he was not alone in the study he had been the victim of utter terror. That drawer had not been left unlocked, as he had hoped. He was glad of it now; for had it been open, Vernon-Smith would have spotted him in the very act of taking the banknote. As it was, he realised that he had nothing to fear; and his terror turned to rage.

He grasped the Bounder by the collar with his left hand and grabbed up Prout's cane with his right.

"You rotten bully!" breathed the Bounder.

Loder did not speak. By sheer strength he bent the junior over a chair, held him there, and laid on the cane.

It was not "six." It was a savage thrashing, with all Loder's fear and rage and disappointment wreaked in it. Lash after lash descended, and the Bounder struggled and kicked and yelled.

But his struggles were in vain! Not till Loder's arm was tired did he cease to thrash the wriggling, yelling junior.

Then he threw down the cane, and pitched the Bounder headlong out of the study; followed him out and shut the door.

"Let that be a lesson to you, you young scoundrel!" said Loder, between his teeth.

And he strode away, leaving Vernon-Smith gasping and panting, leaning on the wall. It was some minutes before Smithy was able to limp away. He was not thinking now of a rag on Prout. He was aching all over from that savage thrashing. When, at last, he limped into Study No. 4 in the Remove, his chum Redwing stared at him in alarm.

"Smithy—what—" he exclaimed.

"Loder!" breathed the Bounder. He leaned heavily on the table. "I've been through it—Oh! The rotter—the cur—the thief—"

"What?"

"Do you know why he's licked me?" hissed the Bounder. "I caught him in the Head's study—trying to open the drawer that Bunter saw Prout put the banknote in."

"Smithy!"

"He was after the banknote!" snarled the Bounder. "That's why he made Mauly leave it with him—he never forgot to hand it to Prout as that fool Bunter said—he meant to keep it—"

"Smithy, old chap!"

"He looked like a guilty thief when

he saw me in the study—and then—"

The Bounder squirmed with pain. "He took it out of me! If the drawer hadn't been locked he would have had it! I tell you I know."

"Smithy, it's impossible—"

"Oh, shut up, you ass!"

Redwing said no more. Whether the Bounder was right or wrong he was not in a mood for argument.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Peter the Painter!

**S**NORE!

That deep and rumbling sound showed that Billy Bunter, at least, was fast asleep, when midnight chimed out at Greyfriars School.

Most fellows at Greyfriars were fast asleep, as well as the snoring Owl.

But in the Remove dormitory there were several who were awake—very wide awake!

Among them was the Bounder. He was still too sore from his licking to find repose come easily. And there were others—the Famous Five, and Lord Mauleverer, and Squiff, and Peter Todd, and several more.

At midnight's stilly hour they sat up in bed.

"You fellow's awake?" whispered Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

"The awakefulness is terrific."

Fellows crept quietly out of bed. From under his bed Peter Todd sorted out a large can of paint and a large brush. Peter dressed himself in the dark—to the extent of trousers and slippers.

"Mind you don't get any of the paint on you, Toddy!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"I'm not an ass, old bean," answered Peter.

"There'll be a fearful row in the morning," said Nugent, "and if a fellow's found with any paint on him it—"

"If there is, it won't be this little Peter!" answered Toddy.

"Like a fellow to come down with you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Safer alone."

"Look here, leave it to me!" growled the Bounder. "I've offered to take it on—leave it to me!"

"My dear man, you stay in bed," said Peter. "We tossed up for it, and I was the lucky man! I'm not leaving it to anybody!"

"Yaas, for goodness' sake don't leave it to Smithy!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Smithy never knows where to stop."

"You silly ass!" growled the Bounder. "Look here, if you leave it to me I'll paint Loder's study, too!"

"With Loder waking up and catching you in the jolly old act!" grinned Squiff. "You stay where you are, Smithy. The secret society will have to mind its step after this—we can't take risks."

"Oh, rats!"

Peter Todd went quietly to the door. There was hardly a sound as he let himself out of the dormitory.

The other fellows waited rather anxiously for him to return.

But Peter was not anxious. He was quite cheery and confident. He groped his way silently down the passages and stairs in dense darkness.

At that hour all Greyfriars slept. The latest master had long been in bed. But Peter was very cautious.

A fellow out of his dormitory at midnight was booked for trouble if discovered. And a can of paint would have wanted a lot of explaining.

Peter Todd arrived at the door of the Head's study, in a passage black as ink. He had to feel and grope his way. He groped over to the door and opened it.

Within the study was a faint glimmer of wintry starlight from the windows, and a reflection of the snow in the quad.

Dim as the light was, it was enough for Peter's purpose. He set the can of paint on Prout's writing-table, prised off the lid, and dipped in the brush.

Painters, as a rule, need a good light. But the kind of painting that Toddy was going to do could be done in the dusk.

Prout, fast asleep in bed at a distance from the study, might have been dreaming—but if so, he certainly was not dreaming of what was happening. It was likely to provide him with a startling surprise in the morning.

Peter Todd was painting his study. It was white paint, and it showed up quite well, even in the gloom, as Peter laid it on.

That evening, the Greyfriars Secret Society had met, and planned a plan, and plotted a plot. So long as the Remove's detention lasted, they had agreed that attention should be given to Prout instead of Loder.

But in dealing with Prout they were under more limitations than in dealing with the bully of the Sixth. Loder, more than once, had been collared, ragged, and even whopped! But the most reckless member of the secret society did not dream of whopping Prout! Even the Bounder would not have thought of such a proceeding as that. There was a limit!

Prout had to be made to feel sorry for himself without a finger being lifted

against him personally. Painting his study met the case!

There was no doubt that the temporary headmaster of Greyfriars would sit up and take notice when he saw his study in the morning—recking with a new coat of white paint, liberally laid on!

He might even learn that the Remove were not to be deprived of their half-holidays with impunity when he saw his painted study! The secret society hoped so!

Peter was generous with the paint. He had four pounds of it in the tin, and the brush was large. He drew lines of paint down the study walls. He gave a thick coat to the bust of Sophocles on the bookcase. He streaked the bookcase itself like a zebra. He painted the seat of Prout's swivel chair, he painted the top of the  
(Continued on next page.)



If in doubt over any Soccer query, "Linesman" will be only too pleased to help you. Write to him c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

**THE THROW-IN RULE!**

**F**ROM time to time I receive letters from readers which cause me to smile. For these letters I am duly thankful. For instance, in my post-bag there is a question to which I should like to make reference by way of a start this week. The question is this: Is it a foul throw if the thrower raises his heels off the ground?

The sender of that question, who lives at West Worthing, adds that there have been fights about it in the park, and he asks me to give the answer so as to put a stop to the fighting. In passing, may I say that I don't see any reason why boys should fight over the rules of football, because whatever else may be part and parcel of the game, fighting is not.

In replying to the question I have to say that it is permitted, by first-class referees, for players to raise their heels in making the throw, and the rules of the throw-in are considered to have been complied with so long as the thrower has a part of both feet on the ground, either on or outside the touch-line, when the ball leaves his hand.

Having given this reply, I must also admit that the rule is not so clear on this point as it might be. It says that the thrower must stand on both feet, on or outside the touch-line, when throwing. It does not say that he may stand on a part of both feet, but that is the interpretation put on the rule by competent officials.

*What the thrower of the ball cannot do, and keep within the rules, is to throw the ball in with one foot raised from the ground. This is the most common form of breach of the throw-in rule.*

In answer to another question on the throw-in rule, the punishment for a foul throw—the only punishment—is a throw to the other side. I have been of the opinion that the alteration of the rule, made a couple of years ago, has not been entirely for the good. Before that change

was made the player guilty of a foul throw conceded a free-kick to the other side. It may be argued that the new method provides sufficient punishment, but what I have noticed is that even in first-class football the throwers of the ball are not now so careful to comply with the rules as they used to be when the punishment was more severe.

**"MAKE IT GUINEAS!"**

**A** ROMFORD (Essex) reader writes to me about transfer fees, and particularly wants to know what was the fee paid by Arsenal to Bolton Wanderers for the services of David Jack. Questions of this kind cannot be answered definitely. That is to say, the evidence of the correctness of any answer given cannot be proved, for the simple reason that the transfer fees paid and received by clubs are supposed to be kept secret.

*There is even a rule on the books which says that football club officials must not publish the amounts paid for players.*

All that I can do, therefore, in answering such a question, is to give the information in my possession for what it is worth. I have reason to believe that the amount of the transfer fee paid for David Jack was ten thousand five hundred pounds. That may seem a strange amount—not quite round figures. But the inside story of the "guineas" is interesting. When the negotiations between Arsenal and Bolton Wanderers officials concerning this fine inside-right were being carried out, the figure which Arsenal offered was ten thousand pounds. Thereupon one of the Bolton directors said: "Make it guineas." And that was how the additional five hundred pounds came to be added.

*You may be interested to know that this figure paid for Jack was a record until last summer, when Aston Villa went beyond that amount—up to eleven thousand*

*pounds—to secure the services of James Allen, the centre-half of the Portsmouth team.*

People often ask me whether any footballer can be worth such a tremendous amount of money. The answer is that it depends on the player. I do not think for one moment that Arsenal ever regretted one penny of the sum they paid for David Jack. He helped to make Arsenal a power in football. When they began to be successful, the money came back by way of the turnstiles. Perhaps you don't know, but it is a fact that at successive matches on their ground during the month of October the total amount received by Arsenal was nearly eleven thousand pounds. Think of that—eleven thousand pounds received in the course of eight days!

**HINTS ON TACKLING!**

**I** AM requested by S. G., of Ormskirk, Lancashire, to give some hints on tackling—both from the front and from behind, and also to tell how the sliding tackle is done. Always ready to oblige. Let us take the ordinary tackle first. I put the question of the tackle to Roy Goodall, that fine full-back of Huddersfield Town, and this is what he said:

*The great point to be made in tackling is to keep the eye on the ball, not on the man in possession of the ball. Seize the opportunity to make the tackle, and, having made up your mind, go for the ball firmly, and with determination. In this sort of tackle, strength of leg, or the strength put behind the leg, is often a telling factor.*

Concerning the tackle from behind, this is always a doubtful procedure because it is so difficult to do it without fouling the opponent, and free kicks given away are apt to be costly. So I do not recommend the tackle from behind.

Neither am I keen on the sliding tackle, which means the player throwing out his legs and gliding one boot along the ground in front of the player in possession of the ball. If I made the rules of football I should make the sliding tackle illegal, because it is so dangerous.

A Southborough (Kent) reader is worried because, after making one strong kick at the ball, he suffers from excessive pain in the ankle. I am afraid this problem is out of my power to answer. It seems to me that there must be something wrong, physically, if that is the effect of kicking a football, and the only advice I can give to this reader is to consult a bone specialist.

"LINESMAN."

writing-table, and he painted the drawers in the table. He would have painted them inside, too, had they been open. But they were locked, and he had to keep to exterior decoration.

Had that study still been occupied by Dr. Locke, the revered Head of Greyfriars, nothing would have induced Toddy to decorate it in this remarkable fashion. Wild horses would not have dragged him to such a task.

But the study was Prout's now, in the Head's absence. And Prout had asked for it—begged for it!

If Prout fancied that he could deprive the Remove of all their half-holidays that term, simply because the secret society were on the war-path against Loder, Prout had to learn that he was making a mistake.

Every half-holiday's detention was to be paid for in advance—that was the determination of the Greyfriars Secret Society!

Liberal as he was with the paint, Peter was very careful indeed to get none on his hands and none on his clothes. The slightest clue would be enough for Prout—in the morning! And the fellow who painted Prout's study was booked for the sack, on the spot, if he was found out. Peter knew the risk he was running—and he was very careful indeed.

Four pounds of paint was a good amount, but it was exhausted at last. Peter scraped out the last bit with the brush and daubed it on the clock. Then he placed the empty can and the brush in Prout's armchair.

He looked round the dim study, grinning.

There was rather an odour of fresh paint. White paint glimmered on all sides.

"I think," murmured Peter, "that that will do!"

He crossed the study to the door. He opened it quietly. His work was done, and all that he had to do was to get back to the dormitory and sleep the sleep of the just.

He stepped out silently and closed the door. He had been about a quarter of an hour in the study—fifteen minutes well spent, Peter considered.

On tiptoe Peter crept away down the dark passage.

Suddenly he stopped, catching his breath.

His heart thumped.

There was a faint footfall.

The darkness in the passage was so intense that Peter could not have seen his hand before his face. But he could hear—and what he heard was a stealthy footfall approaching him.

With thumping heart he crouched back to the wall as close as he could, to allow the unseen one to pass him without touching. On tiptoe, in felt slippers, he had made no sound himself, and he knew that he could not be seen.

Who was it?

It could not be Prout! Prout was in bed long ago—besides, if Prout had come to the study for anything at that hour, he would have turned on a light. It was unimaginable that Prout could be stealing along the passage quietly in the dark.

Was it Loder on the watch for some outbreak of the secret society? That was possible, but it seemed unlikely.

Or was it Smithy, not content to be left out, and coming down to take a hand? That was more likely, and Peter was deeply irritated at the idea. It would be like the Bounder to barge in and give him this scare for nothing. Had he been certain that it was Smithy, Peter would have been disposed to

reach out, as he passed, and smack his head as a reward for barging in!

But he could not, of course, be sure—and he was not there to take any chances. He pressed close to the wall, and rather felt than heard, a silent figure pass within a few feet of him.

It was gone!

Breathing more freely, Peter crept on his way. Without a sound, he made his way back to the stairs, and a few minutes later he was in the Remove dormitory.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a faint whisper. "That you, Toddy?"

"Little me."

"You got through all right?" asked the Bounder.

Peter started.

"You here, Smithy?"

"Eh! Of course I'm here, fathead! What do you mean?"

"Then it wasn't you!" gasped Peter. "Somebody passed me in the dark in Head's corridor, and I fancied it was you, barging in—"

"Well, it wasn't!" growled the Bounder. "I haven't been out of the dorm. Imagination, I suppose!"

"It jolly well wasn't!" said Peter, as he slipped into bed. "There was somebody—a prefect on the prowl, it must have been. Anyhow, he never saw me, or heard me, either, so it's all right."

And Peter went to sleep. An example that was soon followed by the other members of the secret society.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Like a Thief in the Night!

**G**ERALD LODER of the Sixth Form stood in the darkness of Head's corridor, his heart beating painfully.

Once, twice, thrice, he had lifted his hand to open the door before him—and had dropped it again. He had come there at half-past twelve at night with a set purpose—but now that he was there, he dreaded, and hesitated to carry it out.

It was not fear of discovery that troubled him. There was no danger of discovery. The whole House was sleeping—or should have been at that hour of the night.

That he had passed within a few feet of a Remove junior in the dark corridor, Loder had no suspicion. But, even had he known it, it would probably not have worried him much, for he could not have been seen in the darkness. Indeed, he might have been rather glad to know that a member of the Secret Seven had preceded him to the Head's study that night. For that mysterious brotherhood was going to be used as a screen for what Loder was going to do!

There was no danger—it was all easy. He had it all out and dried. Yet, for long, long minutes he paused at the door, not daring to open it. Thorough rotter as he was, blackguard as he was, Loder had a limit, though a very wide one, and he hated going beyond it.

He was no thief—but what he was going to do was so remarkably and uncomfortably like theft, that it made him shiver.

But for the banknote coming into Prout's hands, through the babbling of that fat fool Bunter, all would have been plain sailing. He would have "used" Mauly's ten pounds—and a day or two later, either handed the tenner to Prout, or else given it back to Mauleverer, he hardly cared which.

Prout's taking possession of the tenner altered everything. Loder had hoped that he might leave that drawer unlocked; though, as Vernon-Smith had

spotted him, it was rather fortunate that Prout hadn't.

Forcing open the drawer was such a desperate expedient that Loder had jumped when the thought came into his head. But immediately that thought was followed by others.

A "rag" in the study!

What could be more natural?

Only the day before the Secret Seven had coal-sacked Prout in that very room. If it occurred to the young rascals, they would rag the study, as they had already ragged Loder's several times. Indeed, it was very likely to happen, sooner or later, now that their resentment had been turned on Prout himself by the order of detention.

A rag—the room upset, two or three articles of furniture broken—and a Guy Fawkes mask dropped there, as if by accident!

What would Prout think? What would everybody think? That the secret society had been on the war-path again.

It was inevitable that the whole school should think so. Indeed, the young rascals themselves would be puzzled, and some of them would believe that the others had done it. Who was going to guess that it was a "spoo" rag—by the hand of a Sixth Form prefect—Prout's favourite?

A few articles of furniture broken—among them the writing-table. From a broken writing-table it would be easy to extract a slip of paper from a drawer. It was easy!

It was easy, very easy, yet Loder hesitated long, and it was not till he heard the chime of one from the clock-tower that he made up his mind at last, and took his courage in both hands, as it were.

He had to "borrow" that tenner! In two or three days it was going to turn up again—that would be all right! Certainly anyone who knew that he had borrowed it would consider him a thief. But Loder comforted himself with the knowledge that he was only going to keep it a few days—only until he had collected his winnings on Gay Goldfish. He refused to look on that as stealing. But the resemblance was very close and unpleasant, and was the cause of his long and painful hesitation at the door.

But he entered the study at last, and closed the door quickly and quietly behind him.

Then he sniffed!

For the moment, in his surprise, he forgot his object in coming there. He sniffed, and sniffed again.

There was a strong scent of fresh paint in the room!

It was amazing!

Prout had not had the room painted that day, that was certain. But the smell was unmistakable.

For two or three minutes Loder stood where he was—sniffing and wondering. Then he realised that his fingers were wet and sticky. He held his hand up, and peered at it in the gloom.

Wet paint!

It was paint, white and wet! There were big smears of it on the door, which he had touched in closing it. He noticed now that there were two or three smears on his clothes.

He caught his breath.

Glimmering white paint, daubed all over the room, caught his eyes in the pale gleam from the windows. The room was smothered with fresh wet paint.

He understood.

Not only his pretended rag had been planned for that night! There had been a real rag!

Some young rascal had crept down





"You—you say you have preserved a specimen of the thumb-print, sir!" articulated Loder, breathing hard. "Yes—the drawer from the broken table, which contained the banknote. It retains a very clear thumb-print—undoubtedly that of the perpetrator of the outrage. My dear Loder, are you ill?" exclaimed Prout, in great concern. "You are quite white—what is the matter?"

from his dormitory and smothered Prout's study with wet paint!

There was no other explanation of it. And Loder caught his breath with the thought that he might have run into the ragger—might have been recognised by him had he entered the room while the rag was going on.

He had escaped that danger—though he little guessed how narrowly he had escaped! He had passed the ragger in the dark passage, if he had only known it.

"By gad!" breathed Loder. His eyes gleamed.

Nothing could have suited him better than this. What he was going to do in that study would have been taken for a rag of the Secret Seven—there was little doubt about that! But there was less doubt, no doubt, now that it was clear that some of the young rascals had actually been there, ragging!

The paint was a rag. The breaking of the writing-table would be taken as part of the same rag. What could be more certain than that?

Loder grinned.

Those young villains had given him trouble enough. Now, for once, they were playing into his hands!

He lost no more time

Taking a Guy Fawkes mask from his pocket, he dropped it on the floor. That was an infallible clue to the Secret Seven, who covered their faces with such masks when they were on the warpath.

Then he took a chisel from his pocket. The Head's writing-table was a rather ancient piece of furniture. It had some value as an antique; but it certainly was not strong. The room was far enough from the bed-rooms for the risk of sounds being heard to be very slight. But Loder was careful. He had to make some noise, but he made as little

as he could. He jammed the chisel into interstices of the woodwork and wrenched.

"Oh, gad!" he muttered, as he felt more paint adhering to his hands. The ragger had smothered the writing-table with it.

Loder made a mental note to clean off every vestige of it before he turned in that night! For the moment it mattered little, and, anyhow, it could not be helped.

He could not touch the writing-table without smothering his hands with wet paint. And he had to touch it, and keep on touching it, to break it up.

He wrenched and wrenched. It came to pieces even more easily than he had anticipated. There were sharp cracks of the snapping woodwork that made his heart leap and beat. But the sounds hardly went beyond the thick walls of the study and the heavy oaken door.

In ten minutes the table was a wreck, and the drawers lay loose among the wreckage.

Loder groped in the top drawer. That was the drawer where Prout kept cash.

His fingers came in contact with many papers, some of them in little bundles. He turned on, for a moment, a tiny pocket torch, flashing the light into the drawer.

There were bundles of papers in elastic bands. Among them were two bundles of currency notes. Loder did not touch them, or dream of touching them. He quickly found what he wanted—a ten-pound note, placed in an envelope by itself, with the flap tucked in, and marked "Mauleverer." Mr. Prout was an orderly gentleman in his ways.

Loder drew the ten-pound note from the envelope in his painty fingers. The

banknote itself was smeared as he held it.

He had found what he wanted now! It only remained to go—and leave what he had done to be put down to the credit of the Secret Seven!

But he stood hesitating again.

It was not theft—he told himself that it was not theft! He was going to return the money very soon, to its owner. But it was so horribly like theft that Gerald Loder's heart was sick within him.

But again he steeled himself! He had not done all this for nothing! He was not going to lose that chance on Gay Goldfish, which would extricate him from all his difficulties! He was going to "use" the tenner and return it—that was all! When it came back he would contrive that it turned up, somehow, in an unsuspecting way. That would be easy enough. He was going through with this!

He slipped the banknote into his pocket.

He was eager to get off the scene now. But he realised that a little more havoc would make the "rag" look more convincing.

He opened the book-case, and scattered books on the floor. He picked up some of the loose table drawers, and tipped them into the fender. He pitched over several chairs and dropped the bust of Sophocles into the embers of the grate and pitched a shovelful of ashes over the carpet. The study looked now rather like Loder's own study had looked on the occasion when the Remove rebels had wrecked it.

Satisfied now, Loder crept out. With a white face and a throbbing heart he tiptoed back to the Sixth. He

breathed more freely when he was in his own study with the door locked.

He was tired, sleepy, nervy. But there was no sleep for Loder yet. For a good hour he was hard at work removing traces of paint from his hands and from his clothes. Search for the raggers was certainly not likely to be extended to the Sixth; but he could not afford to take the slightest risk.

It was a very late hour when Loder got to bed that night.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Amazing!

"THE Secret Seven!"

Those words were on every lip at Greyfriars the following morning.

Before breakfast all the school knew that something had happened. After brekker, all the school was talking of it.

Prout was seen—with a brow of thunder! All the masters, all the prefects, looked grave and serious.

The wildest rumours were afloat.

There had been a rag—that was a certainty! The Head's study—now Prout's—had been mercilessly ragged during the night. And something was missing!

It was the work of the secret society of the Lower School—there could be no doubt about that! A Guy Fawkes mask had been found in the study, dropped by one of them while ragging there!

And something was missing! There were whispers that money was missing. That rumour, at first, made the Secret Seven smile.

But a little later they ceased to smile. Fellows repeated what they had heard masters and prefects say to one another.

Hobson of the Shell came up to Harry Wharton in the quad with a startled and worried face.

"You've heard?" he breathed.

"It's all serene," said Harry, with a smile. "Prout's study was painted, as per programme. Nothing else."

"Fathead!" said Hobby. "I've had a squint into it! It's wrecked!"

Wharton gave a start.

"Wrecked?" he repeated.

"Wrecked from end to end. Smothered with paint—that was what we settled at the meeting. But—"

"But Toddy never—" gasped Wharton.

"He must have! I tell you the room is a wreck. It's carrying it too far," said Hobson. "All very well for Loder—but there's a limit in dealing with a beak! Prout's an old ass, but—"

"But I'm sure Toddy never—"

"Who did, then, fathead?" grunted Hobby, and he stalked away, frowning.

The Famous Five gathered to discuss this unexpected news. Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth came up with a scared face.

"Did Toddy do it as we arranged?" he asked. "Anybody with him?"

"No. What—"

"Has he gone mad?" said Temple.

"Of course, it's Mauleverer's, but—"

"Eh, what is Mauleverer's?" asked Wharton blankly.

"The banknote! But—"

"The banknote?" repeated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes! I suppose he's given it to him! But don't you see, that will put Prout on the track! He's bound to ask Mauleverer about it."

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "So far as we know, Toddy painted the study as we

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agreed at the meeting and nothing more."

"Hasn't he told you? I've just heard Capper and Woose talking about it—the banknote—" gasped Temple.

"Oh, I know it's Mauly's—that old ass Prout was locking it up till the end of the term. I've heard all about it. But taking it like this—"

"Who's taken it, fathead?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Hasn't Toddy?"

"Of course he hasn't!"

"Mean to say that he hasn't given it to Mauleverer?" demanded Temple.

"Not that we know of."

"Then he'd better! What the thump did he take it for, unless it was to give to Mauleverer? Is he mad?"

"Do you mean to say that Mauly's banknote was taken away from Prout's study?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Everybody knows it by this time—or nearly everybody!" snapped Temple. "And of all the fatheaded silly tricks—"

Harry Wharton & Co. waited to hear no more from Cecil Reginald. They rushed away in search of Lord Mauleverer.

"Did you ask Toddy to get your banknote last night, you howling ass?" gasped Bob Cherry, grasping his lordship by the shoulder.

Lord Mauleverer blinked at him.

"Eh? No!"

"Has he given it to you?"

"No!"

"Then what the thump does it mean?"

The Famous Five rushed off again, this time in search of Peter Todd. They found that youth with an expression of perplexed dismay on his face.

"Toddy, you ass—"

"Toddy, you fathead—"

"Toddy, you esteemed and absurd chump—"

"Pile it on!" said Peter resignedly. "I've had it from Smithy already, and three or four more! Don't ask me what it means! I don't know."

"The orders were to paint Prout's study, and leave it at that!" said Harry Wharton hotly. "Why, you yourself wouldn't think of leaving it to Smithy, because that reckless ass carries a rag too far! And then—"

"Then you go and wreck the study, you fathead!" growled Johnny Bull.

"And bag Mauly's tenner!" hissed Nugent. "You blithering ass, can't you see that that fixes it right on the Remove at once? Only a Remove man would think of getting Mauly's tenner back for him. And what the thump did you want to for—he says he never asked you, and you haven't given it to him yet."

Peter shook his head hopelessly.

"You fellows didn't go down after I fell asleep?" he asked.

"Eh? No. Why?"

"Did Smithy?"

"I don't know—I suppose not," said Harry. "What do you mean?"

"I mean this," said Peter Todd quietly. "I painted the study as we fixed at the meeting. But I never took any Guy Fawkes mask with me—"

"They've found one there, fathead!"

"I tell you I never had one; and if I'd had one, I'm not idiot enough to drop it—and leave it lying about. I never ragged the study—never touched a thing, except with the paintbrush! And I never even remembered the existence of Mauly's tenner, let alone touched it."

The Famous Five gazed at Peter Todd speechlessly.

"You—you mean that?" gasped Wharton at last.

"Honest-to-goodness," said Peter.

"Then—then who did?"

"That's what I want to know. Somebody else ragged the study after I left—very likely the chap I never saw, who sneaked past me in the dark when I was coming away."

"That wasn't a Remove man—nobody went down after you."

"Shell or Fourth, then," said Toddy.

"Hobson, perhaps—"

"Hobby's just asked us who did it if you didn't?" said Bob.

"Temple, then—"

"Temple's just asked us if you were mad."

"Well, I give it up!" said Peter. "All I know is that I painted the study as per programme, and left it at that. Somebody else carried the job a step further—who, goodness knows; but I suppose it was somebody in the Secret Society. The mask looks like it."

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"But—but what's become of Mauly's tenner, then?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "It seems that it was taken! A fellow can only have taken it to give it back to Mauly! And he hasn't had it."

"Don't ask me," said Peter hopelessly. "It's got me beat!"

"Smithy—" muttered Bob.

"It would be like him," said Peter, with a nod. "Always barging in and knowing better than any other fellow. But it wasn't Smithy passed me in the dark—he was in the dorm when I got back!"

"Let's ask him."

Vernon-Smith was in the quad with Tom Redwing. The latter was looking worried and anxious—Smithy was grinning in a rather cynical way. He laughed as the worried bunch of juniors came up.

"Reddy thinks I went down after Toddy and ragged the Head's study," he remarked. "What price that?"

"Not if you say you didn't, Smithy!" said Redwing. "But it's just one of your mad tricks."

"Well, I didn't, fathead!" said the Bounder. "I can see that these fellows think the same."

"Well, what does it look like?" exclaimed Harry Wharton sharply. "Every other fellow in the society plays the game and keeps to order—you are always playing some potty jape on your own. It's like you! We want to know whether you did it?"

"I've said that I didn't!" snapped the Bounder.

"Then who the thump did?" exclaimed Bob.

"Toddy, I suppose—"

"I've told you I did nothing but paint the study, Smithy!" said Peter, his eyes gleaming.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Somebody did it!" he sneered. "I've already been round to every member of the secret society, Remove and Fourth and Shell, and nobody knows anything about it—or says he doesn't! Somebody's lying, unless—"

The Bounder paused.

"Unless what?" asked Harry.

"Well, there's Remove fellows who aren't in the secret society, but they're pretty wild about being detained," said the Bounder. "Some of them may have done it on their own, after we'd gone back to bed last night!"

"It doesn't sound probable."

"I know it doesn't!"

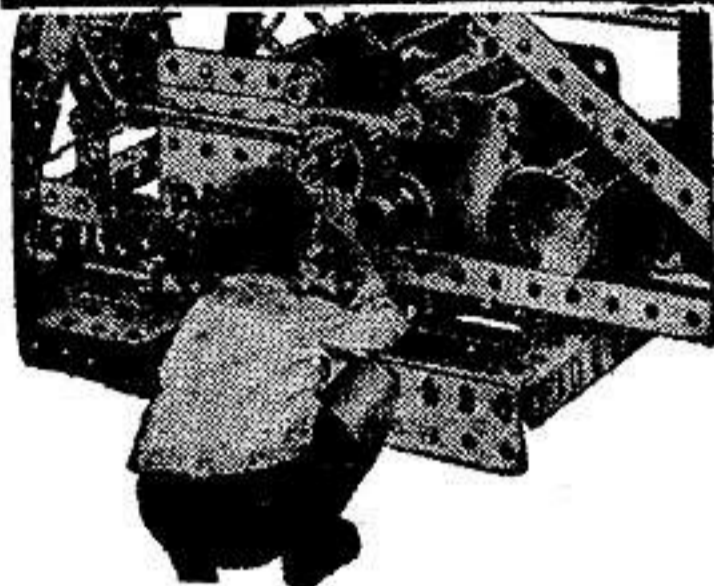
"And if a Remove man bagged Mauly's tenner why hasn't he given it back to Mauly? He couldn't have taken it for anything else."

"Oh, the tenner will turn up all right! Nobody can have taken it to

(Continued on page 22.)

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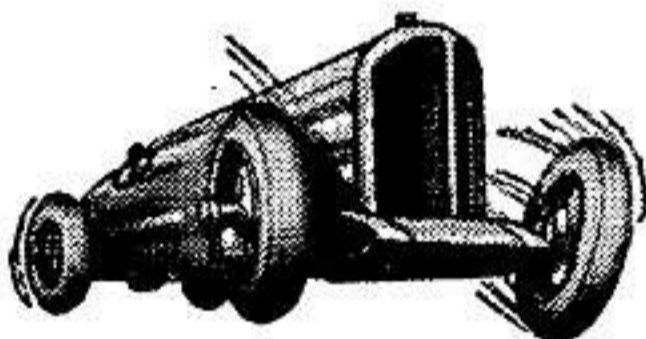
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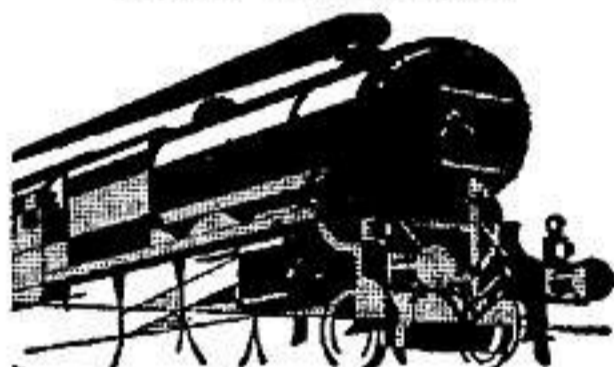
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keep, I suppose!" said the Bounder irritably.

Then, as if struck by his own words, he gave a violent start.

"My hat!" he breathed. "I wonder if—"

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton. "If you're going to suggest that anybody's pinched Mauly's banknote—"

The Bounder laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh.

"My hat!" he repeated. "I wonder—I wonder—" He broke off, and, without saying any more, walked away, his hands driven deep into his pockets and a cloud of deep thought on his brow.

The juniors stared after him.

"What on earth has that silly ass got into his head now?" growled Johnny Bull.

Nobody could answer that question. But Redwing, remembering what the Bounder had said in Study No. 4 the previous day, guessed what was in Vernon-Smith's mind. And his face grew pale as he guessed.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Clue of the Thumb-print!

"I SAY, you fellows, it's sticky! He, he, he!"

"The stickiness is terrific!"

"They've made a jolly old picture of it!"

"Prout must be shirty!"

Before the bell went for class that morning nearly every fellow at Greyfriars had looked into the Head's study.

It was easy enough to look in, for both door and window stood wide open to let the December wind blow in to clear off the smell of paint.

That smell was very strong indeed in the study. The paint was still wet, it was sticky, and it was smelly—very smelly! It was likely to be a long time before that scent cleared off.

The study, of course, could not be used till it had been put in order again—a lot of scraping and scrubbing and re-painting was required. It was learned that Prout had temporarily

gone back to his old study, abandoning those smelly quarters for the present.

The Famous Five looked into the room with puzzled eyes. The Bounder scanned the interior keenly. There was some thought working in Herbert Vernon-Smith's mind, of which the other fellows were not aware.

"It's plain enough," said Smithy quietly. "After Toddy had finished here some other fellow barged in—who didn't know the room had been painted till he found the paint. You can see that he got a lot of it on him—he's left painty finger-prints all over the place."

"That won't help Prout to get him!" said Temple of the Fourth. "Bet you he had a good wash after he cleared. They won't find any paint on him."

"Not unless he's a silly ass!" agreed the Bounder. "And whoever he is I don't think he's that. More rogue than fool."

Vernon-Smith stepped into the study. He moved about the room, examining the traces left by the raider with a searching eye. That that raider had got paint on his hands was very clear, for he had left many traces of his fingers. Almost every article he had touched had traces of the paint from his hands.

Here and there the prints of fingers and thumbs came out with almost startling clearness. Especially on one of the drawers of the broken writing-table were these traces very clear.

The other fellows watched Smithy, wondering what he was at. To their surprise, he took out a little pocket-camera.

The bright winter sunshine, streaming in at the open window, gave plenty of light for a photograph. But why Smithy wanted a photograph was rather a mystery to the other fellows.

"Putting the rag on record, Smithy?" grinned Skinner.

Vernon-Smith did not answer.

He had placed the smeared drawer in a good light and was taking a succession of photographs of a perfectly plainly defined thumbmark on it.

There were eight films in his camera and he used every one of them—the other fellows watching him from the door.

Then he slipped the camera back into his pocket.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Prout!" murmured Bob Cherry.

An elephantine tread came down the passage.

Mr. Prout frowned at the crowd of fellows, seniors and juniors, who were staring into the study. He was in a frowning mood that morning.

What steps Prout was going to take was not yet known. But it was certain that there was going to be a terrific row about that rag in his study.

His eyes glinted at the sight of Vernon-Smith in the room.

"Ah! Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Prout grimly. "I see that you are here! No doubt you are admiring your own handiwork, Vernon-Smith."

"Not at all, sir!" said the Bounder. "I hope you don't think that I'd have had a hand in destroying property like this, sir."

"On the contrary, Vernon-Smith," boomed Prout, "I think it very probable—very probable indeed."

"I assure you, sir—"

"The matter will be inquired into," boomed Prout. "The perpetrators will be expelled from Greyfriars. If you are guilty—"

"I think I can help, sir, in spotting the guilty party!" said the Bounder coolly.

Prout started and stared. So did all the fellows in the passage. Some of

them gave the Bounder grim looks; but he did not heed them.

"Vernon-Smith, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "If you have any knowledge of this unparalleled outrage you—"

"None, sir! But the fellow who broke up your furniture left plenty of clues behind him." Vernon-Smith held up the drawer on which was the distinct thumb-print, perfectly outlined in half-dried paint. "Look at that, sir!"

"I fail to see—"

"Whoever smashed your table, sir, had paint on his hands. He has left a thumb-print here that any detective would be able to trace him by."

Mr. Prout blinked at the thumb-print. Undoubtedly it was a clue, an unmistakable clue, if there had been a finger-print expert to take it in hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave the Bounder ominous looks. It was a mystery to them who had wrecked Prout's study, and they were convinced by this time that it was not a member of the secret society. Every member of that society had denied knowledge of it.

But whoever the reckless ragger was it was not for a Remove man to help discover him. They simply could not understand the Bounder now. He was the last fellow at Greyfriars to "sneak." Yet he was pointing out to Prout a means by which the ragger could be found out.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout. "There is certainly something in what you say, Vernon-Smith! Certainly!"

"May I suggest, sir, that this drawer should be kept as it is, to keep that thumb-print on record?" said the Bounder respectfully. "The paint is nearly dry now. No two thumb-prints are alike, as, of course, you know, sir. I can tell you, sir, that the fellow who made that thumb-print will be fearfully scared if he hears that you've locked it up in your safe."

"Bless my soul!" repeated Prout.

He took the oak drawer from the Bounder's hand. The astonishment in his face made some of the juniors smile. It was evident that Prout's suspicions had turned on the Bounder; but it was the Bounder who had pointed out to him a clue to the perpetrator of the outrage. Prout stood for several minutes in thought, then he gave a slow and ponderous nod.

"I shall act on your suggestion, Vernon-Smith," he said. "I shall lock up this drawer in a safe place. If other means fail, I shall consider whether to have that thumb-print examined by an expert. Vernon-Smith, I am obliged to you for making this suggestion!"

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder meekly.

Mr. Prout walked away, down the passage, with the caken drawer in his hand.

As soon as he was gone, nearly every fellow there had something to say to Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Smithy, you ass—"

"You dummy—"

"You sneak—"

"You toad—"

"Cut it out!" yawned the Bounder. "You know jolly well that I wouldn't give a ragger away. A thief's a different thing."

"A thief!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Whoever broke up that table last night," said the Bounder deliberately, "did it for one reason—and one reason only. It was to get at the drawer that had Mauly's tenner in it."

"Smithy!"

"He got the tenner, and ragged the study to make it look as if it were just a rag! And he would have got away with it clear if the study hadn't been

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Vernon-Smith gripped Loder's hand and pressed his thumb hard on the thumb-print recorder. Then the blue thumb was pressed, hard and firm, on the white cardboard. A distinct imprint of the thumb was the result. The agony of terror on Loder's face was not to be mistaken. "He knows what will happen, now his thumb-print's taken!" said the Bounder.

As it is, he's left a clue—lots of clues!" The Bounder's eyes glittered. "I've got the cur on toast! Prout's got that thumb-print safe! I've got photographs of it in my pocket! When I've got the films developed, I'm going to get the man."

"What bizney is it of yours?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

The Bounder sneered.

"Don't you want your tenner back?" he asked.

"Rats! The tenner's all right."

"Fathead!" said the Bounder.

And without saying more, Vernon-Smith walked out of the Head's study. A little later the bell summoned the Greyfriars fellows to classes.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Whose Thumb-Print?

GREYFRIARS SCHOOL was in a state of unrest that day.

That tremendous "rag" in the Head's study was the one topic. That it was the work of the Secret Seven all the school believed—with the exception of the members of that society.

They know, of course, that they hadn't done it.

Peter the Painter had done his bit. That had been arranged and performed as per programme. But Peter asserted that he had done no more than that; and his word was taken by his friends.

Some person or persons unknown, it was clear, had visited the study after Toddy, and done the rest.

Who?

That was a mystery—unless the Bounder knew! He seemed to fancy that he did!

While the rest of the school took it for granted that the secret society

were guilty, the members of that society were wondering who on earth had done it.

All the Remove were closely questioned by Prout in their Form-room. His suspicions were strong against that Form, and seemed rather to centre on Lord Mauleverer. The unknown ragger had taken away the ten-pound note that belonged to his lordship. That it had been stolen did not even occur to Prout. Bundles of currency notes, in the same drawer, had not been touched. That seemed to exclude the idea of a thief.

Either Mauleverer, or a friend of his, had bagged the banknote for him—that seemed fairly clear to Prout.

Indeed, it seemed clear enough to most of the school.

Prout, of course, consulted his head prefect in the matter. Loder of the Sixth had been out of gates early that morning, on his bicycle, and had not heard of the excitement till his return. Prout would have been startled had he known where Loder had gone and what he had taken with him! But no such idea was likely to occur to Prout!

"I have questioned Mauleverer, Loder!" said Mr. Prout, when they consulted in his old study—the Head's study being still uninhabitable. "He denies having the banknote. It is clear to me—perfectly clear—that it was taken either by him or by a friend of his."

"That certainly seems clear enough," sir," agreed Loder. "It is hardly possible to suppose anything else in the circumstances."

"Quite!" said Prout. "I am disposed to take Mauleverer's word—he is a very honourable lad. But—"

"Perhaps the fellow has not yet handed it to him, sir!" suggested Loder. "He might keep it back for a time,

for that very reason, sir—so that Mauleverer would be able to deny having it when you questioned him."

"Bless my soul! That is very probable, Loder!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Very probable indeed. Some friend of Mauleverer's has the banknote, to be handed to him later."

"That seems pretty clear to me, sir!" said Loder. "Indeed, I shouldn't wonder if the fellow keeps the whole matter dark, even from Mauleverer himself. He may return the note to him, by leaving it in his study some time when the boy is not there, and letting him find it."

"Do you think so, Loder?"

"I certainly do, sir, as he is in danger of expulsion for what he has done," said Loder smoothly. "I think, sir, that if you question Mauleverer again in a few days' time, you will learn that the banknote has been returned to him, probably in a secret and surreptitious way."

Prout nodded ponderously.

"I think you are probably right, Loder," he assented. "I will allow that matter to stand over for a time, as you suggest. But if the banknote is given to Mauleverer, in such a surreptitious way we shall learn nothing from it. And the perpetrator of this unparalleled outrage must be discovered, Loder."

"Obviously, sir, it is the work of the secret society among the juniors—"

"That, of course, is absolutely certain!" said Mr. Prout. "But it does not help us, Loder, as the members of that lawless and rebellious association in the Lower School are unknown to us."

"I shall make every effort, sir—"

"I am sure of it, Loder! I have every confidence in you. As a last resource, I may think of having an examination made of the thumb-prints of the Remove boys."

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

## Smithy Knows!

Loder started.

"I don't quite see, sir—"

"Finger-prints and thumb-prints were left in the paint, in the study," explained Prout. "On the suggestion of Vernon-Smith, I have preserved a very clear and distinct specimen."

"Of—of—of Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes! I was very greatly surprised, Loder, to receive such a suggestion from such a quarter. I confess that I suspected that boy—the most unruly boy in the school. But he can hardly have made such a suggestion if the thumb-print was his own! That, indeed, is unthinkable! Is anything the matter, Loder?" Prout blinked at his head prefect. "You look quite pale."

Loder was hardly breathing.

"You have preserved a specimen, sir!" he articulated.

"Yes; the drawer from the broken table, which contained the banknote. It retains a very clear and distinct thumb-print—undoubtedly that of the perpetrator of the outrage. My dear Loder, are you ill?" exclaimed Prout, in great concern. "You are quite white. What is the matter?"

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Loder. "Nothing! As—as you say, it—it is a—clue! Clue to the—the junior—"

"Exactly," said Prout. "Obviously a junior."

Loder breathed again.

"You keep it in a safe place, I suppose, sir?" he remarked. "If the—the young rascal hears of it, he might very likely make some attempt to destroy it!"

Prout waved his hand to his desk.

"It is locked up in that desk," he answered. "You may be sure that I shall keep it under lock and key, Loder."

Loder's eyes lingered on the desk in the study.

When he got away from Prout the blackguard of Greyfriars went out into the quadrangle to think.

He was safe!

Even if Prout adopted such a resource as an expert's examination of the thumb-prints in the Lower School, he was certainly not likely to extend such an examination into the Upper School.

Least of all was he likely to think of extending it to the Sixth Form prefects—especially Loder, his trusted head prefect.

He was safe—safe! And he needed to be safe, as he had handed over Lord Mauleverer's banknote that morning to Mr. Joseph Banks, at the Three Fishers.

The race was booked for the following day, when Gay Goldfish was going to win, and that tenner would come back, or another tenner in its place, and Loder's huge winnings along with it.

Any tenner would answer the purpose, for it was certain that Mauleverer did not know the number of the note. If he found a tenner, left for him in his study, he would have no doubts. He would think, as everybody else would think, that a pal had bagged it for him, and kept it back till the excitement died down.

In the meantime, Loder was safe.

He had been almost sick with terror when Prout mentioned the thumb-print. He shrugged his shoulders now as he realised how safe he was.

Was he safe?

If he could have looked into Study No. 1 in the Remove, and if he could have heard what the Bouncer was saying to a number of Remove fellows there, Loder would not have felt quite so safe.

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"ROT!" said Lord Mauleverer. The Bouncer gave him a black look.

"It's plain enough for anybody but a fool to see!" he snarled.

"Rot!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked dubious. Tom Redwing and Peter Todd shared their doubts. The Bouncer was absolutely assured. He had worked it out, in his own belief, to the last decimal point.

"Look at it!" he snapped. "Loder gets hold of Mauly's letter—I shouldn't wonder if he knew what was in it, when he made Mauly open it in his presence. Anyhow, he collared the tenner, and pretended to forget to give it to Prout. If Bunter hadn't barged in, Prout would never have heard of it."

"Yaas; but—"

"Then I find him in the Head's study fumblin' at the drawer that Bunter saw Prout put the note in. He lost his temper, and gave me a whopping I haven't got over yet." Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth. "I ask you, men, what does it look like?"

"It looks," murmured Toddy—"it looks—But—"

"The lookfulness is terrific; but the butfulness is also great," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Then there's a midnight rag in

### NEXT WEEK'S SPECIAL FEATURES!

The Greyfriars yarn by Frank Richards is one that I am confident will gain your interest from beginning to end. It is entitled:

**"PUTTING PAID TO PROUT!"**

so the subject of this topping tale needs no explanation. All I need say is, that "Magnetites" are quite justified in anticipating that this story will prove to be extra-specially good!

Of course, there will be another spanking edition of the "Greyfriars Herald" and further nerve-tingling chapters of:

**"CAPTAIN CRIMSON!"**

Be sure and order your copy early—  
EDITOR.

Prout's study, and the banknote's missin'," went on Smithy. "Nothin' else missin'. The banknote couldn't be got at without smashin' the writing-table. And the room was ragged and wrecked to cover it."

"Yaas," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "But—"

"But—" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, you dummies!" growled the Bouncer. "Can't you see, or won't you? Only that tenner was pinched—Loder dared not touch Prout's money! It could be put up that some pal of Mauly's had bagged that tenner to give him—that looked likely enough, and everybody believes it, or nearly everybody. That washes out the idea of a thief. That makes Loder safe!"

"Yaas; but—"

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" exclaimed the exasperated Bouncer. "I tell you it's perfectly clear. I've got some enlargements of the photographs I took of the thumb-print. I've had them made in Courtfield to-day. I made them put the job through quick. And if we get a print of Loder's thumb, we shall find that they agree. And we've got a Sheriff's Thumb-print Recorder. We can do it; and we're goin' to!"

"Yaas; but—"

"Oh, shut up, Mauly, you fathead!"

Lord Mauleverer smiled.

"Let a fellow speak!" he urged.

"You've got it all clear, Smithy, exceptin' one point."

"And what's that?" snapped the Bouncer angrily.

"If Loder pinched the tenner, it will never turn up. That will wash out the theory that a pal of mine bagged it to give it to me. So Loder can't be relyin' on that holdin' water for long."

The Bouncer was silent. That was, indeed, a weak point in his theory, otherwise very complete and convincing.

Harry Wharton smiled faintly.

"What about that, Smithy?" he asked.

The Bouncer grunted, and tapped the enlarged photographs that lay on the study table.

"Stick to facts!" he said. "We can get Loder's thumb-print, and we're goin' to! If it agrees with this—does that make it clear, or doesn't it?"

"Well, yes; but—"

"But what?" snapped the Bouncer. "Isn't it plain? We know that Loder plays cards and backs horses, and we know he loses money. He's got himself into a fix, and this is his way of gettin' out of it."

"By stealing?" said Tom Redwing.

"Yes, you ass!"

Redwing shook his head.

"It won't do, Smithy," said Bob Cherry slowly. "Loder's every sort of a rotter and a blackguard, and a worm and a toad. But I can't believe him a thief—I just can't!"

"There's no thief at Greyfriars," said Johnny Bull, shaking his head.

"Where's Mauly's tenner, then?" sneered the Bouncer.

"Some ass is keeping it dark, I suppose."

The Bouncer looked round from face to face. His look was black and bitter. He had it all clear; he had worked it out like a detective. And he had failed to convince.

Every fellow there loathed Loder of the Sixth; but no fellow there, except Smithy, could believe that Loder was a thief. He was everything short of that, perhaps; but he was not that. They simply could not believe such a thing of any Greyfriars man.

"You fools!" said the Bouncer bitterly. "You're going to keep on fancying that some ass took that note for Mauly, and is keeping it back till the fuss is over. What are you goin' to say when it doesn't turn up at all? Loder will score all right. It's fixed that some junior ragged the study and bagged the banknote; and it will be fixed, in the long run, that it was a junior that pinched it, when it doesn't turn up. And that's Loder's game."

"Rot!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Isn't it clear?" roared the Bouncer.

"Clear enough," agreed the schoolboy earl amiably. "Nothin' in it, all the same. Loder's a bad hat—a very bad hat—but he's not a thief. And he's still less capable of pinchin' and fixin' the pinchin' on somebody else. You're still feelin' that whoppin', old bean, and that's what's the matter with you."

The juniors grinned.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

"Will you back me in—in bagging Loder, and gettin' his thumb-print!" he said. "That will settle it, one way or the other. If it's proved that it was Loder ragged in the Head's study, I suppose you'll admit that he was after the tenner."

"I—I suppose so," said Harry slowly. "He couldn't have had any other motive if he did it. But—"

"Will you back me up, then?"

"Yes; certainly! After what you've said, it's got to be settled, one way or the other. And it's time the brute was handled, for that licking he gave you yesterday."

"Good enough!" said the Bounder. "You'll find that I'm right."

To which the other fellows made no rejoinder; and the meeting in Study No. 1 broke up.

The Bounder, at least, had no doubts. At prep that evening in Study No. 4 a sardonic grin lingered on his hard face.

The "war" at Greyfriars was going to end in the utter discomfiture of the bully of the school; in Loder's disgrace, and in his expulsion, if the Bounder was right. He had taken the banknote; he could only have taken it to spend. It was gone, and Loder was done for. Neither Prout nor anyone else could doubt that the unknown hand that had broken open the drawer had taken the banknote from it. It was only necessary to prove that that hand was Loder's.

And the Bounder was going to prove it.

Once he had Loder's thumb-print, to compare with his enlarged photographs, he had certain proof—to be played before the headmaster. The Bounder had no mercy for a thief.

It was the "sack" for Loder.

That was a cheery anticipation for the Bounder, still feeling twinges from the savage thrashing the bully of the Sixth had given him. Loder of the Sixth was not, after all, so safe as he believed.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Down and Out!

**L**ODER of the Sixth came along from the Prefects' Room, stepped into his study, switched on the light, and threw the door shut.

The next moment he jumped.

Naturally, he had not expected to see anyone in the study. But he did see somebody—in fact, quite a number of somebodies! One glimpse of faces covered with Guy Fawkes masks was enough for Loder—and he turned to grab at the door and tear it open again.

But he had no time.

Seven or eight pairs of hands fastened on Loder at the same moment, and he went down on the floor of his study, and a duster was crammed into his mouth almost before he knew what was happening.

Wriggling in the grasp of many hands, the bully of Greyfriars glared up at the masked juniors in speechless rage.

It was the secret society again, and they had been waiting for him. But it was not a ragging this time!

One of them locked the door; another was holding the duster to his mouth to keep him quiet. Each arm and leg was grasped, keeping him helpless. But it was the action of another of his assailants that caught Loder's enraged eyes and riveted his attention.

That member had taken a folded cardboard from his pocket. Loder could see what was printed on it: "The Sheriff's Thumb-Print Recorder."

He stared at it blankly.

The masked junior opened it, revealing a sheet of blue carbon paper.

"Hold his paw!"

Loder's eyes almost bulged from his head.

The speaker had not taken the trouble to disguise his voice in any

way. It was Herbert Vernon-Smith who was speaking.

Loder struggled wildly.

The terror that gripped him was almost frantic. It was the Bounder who held the thumb-print recorder; it was the Bounder who had suggested to Prout to keep the thumb-print found in the dismantled study. Loder only needed to put two and two together! The Bounder suspected—or knew!

He struggled so fiercely, so desperately, that even half a dozen sturdy juniors had hard work to hold him for some minutes.

But they held him!

He sank back exhausted, gurgling through the gag, unable to resist further, as the Bounder grasped his wrist, gripped his thumb, and pressed it hard on the thumb-print recorder.

Then the blue thumb was pressed, hard and firm, on the white cardboard.

A distinct imprint of the thumb was the result!

Loder's thumb-print was taken!

The agony of terror on his face was not to be mistaken! Under his mask the Bounder grinned sardonically.

"What do you fellows think now?" he asked. "Look at his face! He knows what will happen now his thumb-print's taken!"

Loder shuddered.

From his pocket the Bounder drew the enlarged photographs of the thumb-print taken in the Head's study. He laid them on the table, and the thumb-print of the Recorder beside them. Then he took out a small magnifying-glass.

"Look!" he said.

The juniors were still holding Loder—but it was hardly necessary to hold him now. He was almost in a state of collapse with terror.

All was known! His guilt was clear as noonday! Disgrace, expulsion, ruin loomed before him.

One after another the juniors examined and compared the thumb-prints under the magnifying-glass.

There was a deep silence.

Not a fellow had believed—could believe—that Smithy was right—that the blackguard of Greyfriars had descended to dishonesty. But there was no mistaking the evidence of the thumb-prints!

They were the same! It was Loder's thumb that had left the mark photographed by the Bounder—and now locked up in Prout's study! It was Loder's hand that had taken the ten-pound note from the broken drawer!

"My hat!" Harry Wharton spoke at last. "That does it!"

"They're the same!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"It was Loder——" whispered Nugent.

"The esteemed and disgusting Loder——"

Loder knew all the voices. There was no attempt at disguise now. The juniors did not care whether he knew them or not. They did not fear the bully of Greyfriars now.

"Yaas, it's Loder's jolly old thumb-print!" drawled Lord Mauleverer.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Did I tell you so or not? I knew it was that cur! And he's goin' to be sacked—the thief! By gum, we've got him now!"

"Yaas, but——"

"Not convinced yet, you silly ass?" sneered the Bounder.

"Not quite!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "Take that duster out of his mouth. Let him speak. You needn't be afraid that he'll yell—Loder doesn't

want any witnesses at this stage of the proceedings.

"Hardly!" grinned Bob.

"Let him yell as loud as he likes!" said the Bounder disdainfully. "The more he brings here to see these thumb-prints, the better, before I take them to Prout."

"No hurry, old bean," said Mauleverer.

He removed the duster from Loder's mouth. The bully of Greyfriars was released and allowed to get on his feet.

Quietly the juniors removed the masks from their faces, and slipped them into their pockets. There was no need to keep their identity a secret now. But Loder hardly glanced at them. He leaned on the table, white, weak, overcome with terror and the horror of his position.

If the other fellows pitied him, he had no pity to expect from the Bounder.

Smithy's eyes gleamed at him ruthlessly.

"We're done here!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "We've got the proof we wanted. We're going to Prout now."

Loder groaned.

"That thief is going to be sacked! He's been jolly keen on getting some of us sacked—it's his turn first! Come on!"

"I mentioned that there's no hurry!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "Do let a fellow speak, Smithy! You take more than your share of the chin-wag."

"Look here, you silly ass, if you're thinkin' of lettin' that thief off——" began the Bounder savagely.

"Let Mauly speak!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yaas—it's really my turn, Smithy," said his lordship mildly. "When you told us about this in the study, old bean, I said that it was rot and Loder wasn't a thief! At the risk of borin' you, I'm repeatin' the same remark now!"

"Oh, you're a fool!" snarled the Bounder. "Can't you see that the thumb-prints are the same?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then, you silly idiot——"

"You're frightfully complimentary, old thing, and I could listen to you for hours!" said his lordship amiably. "But do let a fellow speak—it's gettin' near dorm, and if you take up all the time——"

"Look here——"

"I just want to ask Loder a question," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "You had the banknote last night, Loder. I know now that you meant to keep it back when you pretended to forget to give it to Prout. What was the big idea?"

Loder stared at him. The weak-kneed, white-faced, almost cringing fellow who leaned on the table was hard to recognise as the overbearing bully of Greyfriars. Never had a tyrant looked so utterly crushed and beaten. But a faint gleam of hope came into Loder's stricken face as his eyes fixed on Lord Mauleverer.

"I swear I never meant to steal it!" Loder's voice came in a husky whisper. "Prout wouldn't believe me if he saw these thumb-prints and knew that I was the man who wrecked his study last night. He couldn't! But—but I swear I'm no thief! Mauleverer, you at least know I'm not!"

"Yaas." His lordship nodded amiably. "You've sailed pretty near to the wind, Loder! Frightfully near! Plenty of evidence for Prout to sack

(Continued on page 28.)

# CAPTAIN CRIMSON!

## WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

In spite of the activities of Dan Hickerman, an Excise officer, Tom Roke, the most daring smuggler in Essex, succeeds in landing many a rich cargo. While in Dunkirk, Roke is handed a diamond worth half a million of money, to be delivered to a Mr. Percival, of East India House, who is staying at the Black Boar, in Widewater. The stone is duly handed over, only to be stolen during the early hours of the morning by two Asiatics. Anxious to discover the whereabouts of the thieves and thus reap the reward of a thousand guineas, Jack Leonard, son of the local surgeon, and his chum, Billy Jepp, follow the unmistakable footprints which lead them to the edge of a common. Halting their mounts, they scan the stretch of land ahead.

(Now read on.)

## A Man and a Gentleman!

**M**ILES of gorse and heather stretched on every side, rising to a lofty ridge that afforded a magnificent view over half the county, with the town of Chelmsford in the distance, veiled in a blue haze.

It was very wild country, and there were a hundred hiding-places on the heath where a regiment might have lain hidden.

"We'll go on to the Griffin," said Billy, "and inquire if they've passed that way."

Billy and Jack rode on, only to learn nothing had gone by, but the carrier's cart. Returning again to the common they searched the sandy tracks on every side, but not a single trace did they find of those footprints which had filled them with such hopes.

That the two rascals were still in hiding, there could be no doubt. And as long as the sun blazed down from an almost cloudless sky, lean Jung and fat Mozuffur would stay where they were with "The Light of the Moon" for company.

"There's a chaise yonder," said Billy, after they had beaten the bushes in a dozen different directions. "One of ours, too, I recognise the horses, and that's old Reuben driving. Do you know, I've half a mind to send a message to Mr. Falcon, telling him we've traced the rascals thus far, and must have help."

The dust cloud increased, and as the yellow vehicle drew level, Jack and Billy saw that its solitary occupant was Mr. Percival, who was huddled up in one of the corner seats.

The unhappy man's face was covered in his hands and he did not see the two chums, and the short-sighted Reuben had passed by before they could speak.

"I wouldn't care to be in Percival's shoes," muttered Jack. "Just think of



it, losing half a million by one's own stupidity!"

"Think of losing a thousand guineas, lad," said Billy, with a wry laugh. "And that's what we're in a fair way to do for all our cleverness."

The chaise had dipped out of sight, and the words had scarcely been uttered when the two chums swung round in their saddles.

A wild, unearthly shriek had sounded from the common behind them, and not a great distance away.

"They're yonder in that old gravel pit all the time, and they're murdering one another!" cried Jack. "Come on! It can't be anything else!"

Jack soon discovered, however, that he was wide of the mark as he and Billy spurred along the grass-grown cart-track that wound into the disused quarry, and saw for themselves.

Murder was certainly in the air, but of a very different sort, for three men were struggling for life and death, and two of them were Asiatics!

The third, a powerful figure in a plain grey suit and riding-boots, had its back towards them, and as they drew rein at the edge of the bushes, a most extraordinary conflict was in progress at the bottom of the pit.

In his left hand the powerful man gripped lean Jung by the throat until his eyes started from their sockets; while with his right he held fat Mozuffur so high at arm's-length by the wrists that the Bengali could not use his knife, nor yet reach it, despite his frantic efforts. Mozuffur's turban had fallen off, and it was Jung's scream the boys heard.

Both Indians wriggled like eels and fought like cats, but neither of them could break free.

Already the strain was telling on the powerful man, and he swayed a little as Billy dismounted and grasped his long pistol by the barrel.

Mozuffur's head was thrown back, the white caste-mark on the brow plainly visible.

Followed by Jack, Billy stole forward and smote him a heavy blow across the forehead that left him senseless just as Jung sank unconscious under that tremendous grip.

With a gasp of relief, and a startled oath, the man in grey turned to face his rescuers, who gasped in their turn, and fell back, speechless, for the face was covered by a mask of crimson velvet!

Before they could move the man snatched up Mozuffur's turban and thrust it into the breast of his coat. Then, vaulting on to the back of a waiting horse which, in their excitement, the two chums had failed to notice, sped up the sloping track, and vanished with the flash of two white heels against the blue sky above them!

"Odds rabbit it!" groaned Jack, staring ruefully at his loaded pistol. "He's got the diamond, after all! Why on earth didn't I fire?"

The parlour at the Black Boar was full when the crestfallen chums told the story of their disappointment to a crowd of sympathetic listeners.

"Well," laughed Tom Roke, "I say good luck to Mr. Goliath, or whatever he calls himself. I'd rather he had the treasure than that big noise Percival."

"That's the sort of thing you would say, Roke," grunted Hickerman, who was still smarting at his own failure of the previous night.

"And when you returned with help to secure those natives they were gone, you say?" commented Mr. Falcon, to change the conversation.

"Completely, sir; we left a search-party scouring the heath, but if they had discovered anything we should have heard news by this."

"Maybe 'tis here now?" said Jepp, the innkeeper, as Reuben, the old post-boy, came in from the kitchen.

"Summat for ye, Billy," said old Reuben, dropping a bag, that gave out a metallic ring, on to the table. "I nigh fell over it inside the stable door. 'Tis heavy, too!"

Billy cut the cord, and a chorus of astonishment broke from the crowd as



a shower of gold spread over the table-top.

"What's here?" cried Jack, reading the label aloud. "Share this with the grateful thanks of 'Captain Crimson,' whose life is worth more to him than a thousand guineas!"

"Where are your rogues now, Mr. Hickerman?" cried Tom Roke, the smuggler, laughing merrily. "I always told you 'Captain Crimson' was a man, and a gentleman in the bargain!"

### The King Wants Men!

**D**AN HICKERMAN, the Excise-officer stationed at Widewater, twisted his bushy eyebrows into a puzzled frown, and checked his horse in the middle of Chelmsford High Street, for two reasons.

One was because the ride had given him a thirst; the other, that a quite unusual number of seamen, with a sprinkling of red-coated marines, slouched aimlessly up and down in groups of threes and fours. From the latter, Hickerman instantly drew his own conclusions.

The marines were armed with muskets; the sailors had brass-hilted hangars dangling from their shoulder-belts, and each man carried a stout cudgel in his fist.

"Ho, ho!" murmured Hickerman. "The Press-gang, or I'm a Dutchman!" And he beckoned to one of them, saying, in the gruff tone of command that spoke of those days when he also had served in his Majesty's Navy: "Where is your officer?"

"Your honour will find our lootenant yonder; at breakfast with the Captain of Marines," replied the man, pointing to an inn-sign dangling over the cobbled pavement.

Hickerman dismounted, peeped over the blind of the coffee-room window, and saw that there were three figures in the room; two men in uniform at a table, the other, a civilian who perused a news-sheet spread out beside his tankard. Mr. Daniel Hickerman chuckled for the first time for many a long week.

"Egad!" he muttered, like one who has solved a difficult problem. "This should save me a long ride and settle my business for good and all."

When he opened the door with a loud: "Good-morning, gentlemen!" in his bluff sailor fashion, the two looked round, but the solitary man resumed his reading after a brief stare through his quizzing-glass.

"Ha, a rare rib of beef, cooked to a turn," said Hickerman, walking up to the table-end. "If you have no objection, gentlemen, I should like to join you. I take it we all love a wet deck before a long road, eh? Drawer, the largest mug of old ale, well laced with Jamaica, and I see these glasses are empty—if I may be allowed?"

"You are very good, sir," smiled the Naval lieutenant. "You have surely been in the Service?"

"Yes, and still serve the King, though in another way," responded Hickerman, slightly dropping his voice. "How many men have you out there, sir?"

The Excise-officer jerked his head towards the window.

"Eighty 'tarpaulins,' and my friend has thirty redcoats."

"I gather the errand you are on," said Hickerman, with a sly wink. "But which way go you?"

"To Colchester, and failing that, Ipswich."

"Then I can assure you of a hundred stout fellows to be had for the taking, and not ten miles from this!" said the Excise-officer. "Twill be the easiest

capture ever made, and the half of them seamen from the cradle. Tom Roke, the most daring smuggler in Essex, is marrying to-day at two of the clock, and all the world and its wife will be in the church. You'll have 'em like fish in a net, and may clap the darbies on every man-jack as he comes forth, beginning with Roke himself."

"Stap my vitals, I like your scheme, sir, and 'twill spare us a long march this broiling day!" cried the Naval officer. "What say you, captain?"

"I say 'twill be mortal hard luck on the unhappy bridegroom!" laughed the Captain of Marines. "But the King wants men."

"And I've wanted Tom Roke this past six months, the insolent dog!" exclaimed Dan Hickerman. "A dozen times have I been within an ace of his capture, but no eel was as slippery. Everyone in Widewater is his friend. His spies are always ready to give him warning. But five years aboard a man-o'-war will break his spirit, and should teach him to mend his ways."

"Ten miles, you say, to this place of yours?" said the lieutenant, as the drawer came in.

"Ay, and I will take you by a way that will bring us to the town without fear of anyone giving the rogues warning. Here's to success, and long life to us all."

The solitary man at the other end of the table beckoned the drawer, and pointed to his own tankard, at the same time keeping a forefinger on a paragraph in the journal before him, which seemed to interest him not a little.

"Fill me again," he said, "and bring me a-sheet of letter paper, and the wherewithall to seal it. When does the London coach pass?"

"In an hour's time, your honour. They change horses here."

The gentleman nodded, and walking to the window, regarded the passers-by through his quizzing-glass; turning his back on the others with the superior air of one who found his chance companions not greatly to his liking, though, had they but known it, not a word of their conversation escaped his attentive ear!

Even when the drawer had brought the necessary articles, and he returned to the table, the gentleman was still listening the while he wrote.

The letter finished, he folded the six brief lines it contained, sealed it carefully at the lighted taper, and, taking up his hat and riding-whip, walked out with a deliberate step to the inn yard.

The moment he had closed the door behind him his manner changed.

"Have you a man you can trust to deliver this letter at Widewater in an hour's time?" he said to the landlord, drawing him into the centre of the yard by a button of his long-flapped waist-coat.

"I have that, sir—hi, send John Stack here!"

In response to the call, an old post-boy presented himself, knuckling a very wrinkled brow.

"Do you know Widewater Black Boar, John Stack?" said the gentleman.

"Ah, that I do, your honour!"

"And the house of the doctor directly opposite?"

"Dr. Lennard's, sir—white, wi' three gables set in a garden it be."

"Good! Then carry this to that house, John Stack, telling them to give it to Master Jack at once—mark ye, I said at once—you see this guinea? Your master will hand it to you when you return!"

Within five minutes the ancient post-boy was trotting out of the yard, the letter buttoned under his short blue

jacket. Only when he had seen Stack turn the corner did the sender of that letter mount his own horse, and follow in the same direction.

All Widewater was up betimes, and for those inseparable chums, Jack and Billy, betimes meant six o'clock in the morning.

And what a fine morning it was to be sure! Billy's pretty sister Nancy could not have chosen a brighter one for her wedding-day. There was not a cloud in the sky. But they were to come later on—plenty of them!

"What shall we do with ourselves, Jack?" grinned Billy Jepp. "There's oceans of time before the service, and a holiday for everyone at the Boar. Let's go fishing, eh?"

"I'm with you!" agreed Jack Lennard. "Haven't been on the water for an age. We'll dig some bait and get the boat ready before breakfast, and start directly after."

Tom Roke's lugger lay at her usual mooring in the fairway, about fifty yards out from the river wall behind the Black Boar, and the happy bridegroom, with half a dozen of his trusty crew, were decking her with gay bunting in honour of the occasion.

"What, making ready to sail, Tom?" hailed Jack, laughing, as he and Billy sculled by the lugger's stern on their way to the fishing-ground below the island. "I thought you were going to be married this afternoon!"

"And so I be, Master Jack," replied the young smuggler. "I've waited a tidy while for Nancy, and no power on earth shall stay us tying the knot to-day. Where be ye going now?"

"T'other end of Long Swim, Tom," said Billy Jepp. "We'll be back time enough for the wedding, never fear, and don't you dare start without us!"

Tom Roke's good-humoured laugh was good to hear as they pulled downstream.

"I'm glad Hicky's taken himself off for the day," said Billy, as he shipped his scull and dropped an anchor into the still water.

"Didn't know he had," said Jack. "but I'm glad, too. Where's he gone?"

"London, so he said. He rode out of the yard just before you came across, and he was mighty uncivil to mother yesterday when she paid him the compliment of asking him to dance at the wedding. He told her he hoped to see Tom Roke dance at the end of a rope some day, and that it wouldn't be his fault if he didn't."

"Sort of thing he would say!" laughed Jack, baiting his hooks. "If he'd been a decent fellow, he'd have buried the hatchet for once, and let his dragoons line the path to the church-door. Nancy and Tom would have looked fine coming out under an archway of drawn swords, eh?"

"You're right, old chap, but Dan Hickerman hasn't a decent bone in his body, and one of the corporals told me the troopers have had orders not to go near the church, so they've all put their money together and given a day's pay to buy a wedding present for Nancy instead. He couldn't stop them doing that."

"Bravo!" nodded Jack. "Everybody's fond of Nancy, and Tom is a rare good chap. All wish them happiness in their new cottage yonder!"

(With spies always ready to give Tom Roke warning, it will take a better man than Hickerman to catch the young smuggler napping! Be sure and read next week's exciting chapters of this popular adventure story, chums!)

**THE SCHOOLBOY SLEUTH!**

(Continued from page 25.)

you, or for a judge and jury to send you to chokey! What?"

Loder shuddered. "Geegees gone the wrong way?" asked his lordship. "Pushed for cash and tryin' to make yourself believe that you were only borrowin' the banknote? Do I get you?"

"You utter idiot!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Shut up a minute, old chap! I hate to tell you that you talk too much—but you really do! Is that it, Loder?"

"Yes," almost whispered Loder. "I swear it! I—I had to have the money, and—and it's only for a time! I swear I was going to put the money back in your study in a day or two, Mauleverer, for you to find there. I—I know what it looks like—but I swear—"

"My dear man, I believe you, of course," said Lord Mauleverer. "What you've done, Loder, is stealin'. But you persuaded yourself that it wasn't. You tried to make yourself believe that you were only borrowin' the cash! It's weird what a fellow can make himself believe when he wants to! But it won't do, Loder! In the jolly old circumstances, I'm not goin' to lend you that tenner!"

"I—I can get it back—I'll return it—for mercy's sake give me a chance!" groaned Loder. "I—I admit everything—but I'm not a thief—" He finished with a groan.

The juniors looked at one another. Even the Bounder's hard and bitter face relaxed at that utter, despairing surrender of his enemy.

Wharton broke the silence. "You will return the banknote to Mauleverer, Loder?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" breathed Loder. "Anything! And—and I'll see that

Prout lets the matter drop! I can do that! Only—only give me a chance! I—I've been rather a brute to you fellows—I—I know I have—but—but—you know I never meant to be a thief—for mercy's sake don't disgrace me for life because I've been a fool—"

His voice broke. "Let it go at that!" said Harry Wharton.

He looked at the Bounder. Vernon-Smith hesitated a moment. Then he nodded.

"Let's get out of this!" he said. Loder was left alone in the study! He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands!

For a long, long time he sat there. He was going through some of the bitterest moments of his life. He was still shuddering from his narrow escape of utter ruin. But that lesson, bitter as it was, was for Loder's good. He had, as Mauleverer said, sailed very near the wind; he was never likely to sail so near again!

The next morning, in break, Lord Mauleverer found a ten-pound note under the inkstand on his study table.

Loder had not found it easy to get it back from Mr. Joseph Banks, whom he had visited specially after lights out for the purpose.

Indeed, Mr. Banks had positively refused to part with it till Loder gave him a hint of how it had been acquired.

Now it was in Mauly's hands again.

It remained there. Loder's influence with Mr. Prout was as strong as ever, and evidently he had used it. For when Mauleverer reported to Mr. Prout that the banknote had turned up that pompous gentleman graciously told him that upon consideration, he was of opinion that Mauleverer could be relied upon to expend the money judiciously. That,

Mr. Prout added, was the opinion of his head prefect, so it was left at that.

A considerable amount of the ten-pound note was expended in a noble spread in Mauleverer's study, to which every member of the secret society was invited—with the result that the study was crammed, and there was an overflow meeting in the Remove passage.

Exactly what Loder of the Sixth was feeling like towards them Harry Wharton & Co. did not know. Certainly, that day, at least, his ashplant remained idle.

It was probable that Loder, in the long run, was glad that the secret society had butted in and forced him to recover that "borrowed" banknote from Mr. Joseph Banks. For there was a very surprising item of news in the evening paper *Gay Goldfish*, that dead cert and sure snip, had come in seventh!

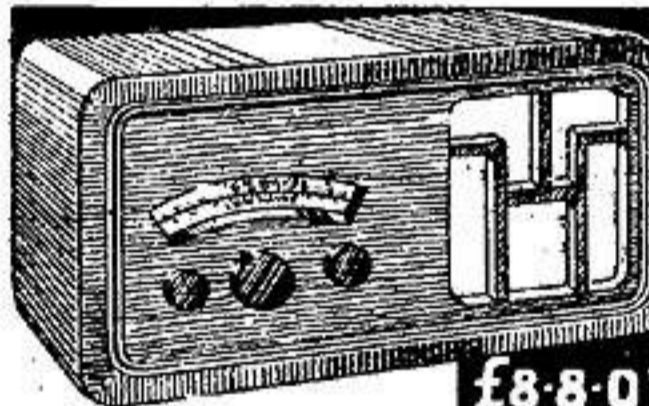
And Loder, when he saw that news, breathed deep with thankfulness that he had not, after all, backed that delusive geegee. But for the secret society and the clue of the thumb-print the "borrowed" banknote would have been gone beyond recall!

Mr. Prout would have been astonished could he have known that his head prefect was feeling thankful to the Greyfriars Secret Society for their latest proceedings!

But Loder was! Prout was still hard on the trail, endeavouring to discover the perpetrator or perpetrators, of that tremendous rag in his study! He was still under the impression that his dutiful head prefect was hard on the trail also. But that was only one of Prout's many mistaken impressions!

THE END.

[Next week's splendid yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled: "PUTTING PAID TO PROUT!" You can make sure of enjoying this wonderful treat, boys, by ordering your copy of the *MAGNET* to-day!]



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## SNOW'S COMING

So make your bookings right now for reserved seats in Tom Brown's horse-drawn sledge! Drop in and inspect it any time you like in the school stables—but don't forget that if anyone damages that sledge, I'll sleigh him!—TOM BROWN, Study No. 2, Remove.



# THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 114 (New Series.)

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

December 8th, 1934.

## WOULD-BE FORM CAPTAINS

Send for my amazing Free Booklet describing how you can become skipper of your Form in twenty-four hours! No ambitious lad should be without this engrossing brochure!—GEO. BULSTRODE, Skippers' and Prefects' Training College, Study No. 2, Remove.

Our Fighting Editor on:

## BOXING'S SENSATIONAL NEW RECRUIT

Here's news to make the most jaded fan sit up and take notice. FISHER T. FISH IS GOING INTO THE RING!

No, I haven't been out in the sun, gone goofy, sat down and dreamed it, or anything of the kind. Fishy is definitely taking up boxing, and, if you doubt what I say, turn up in the gym next Friday evening and see for yourselves!

Needless to say there's a reason behind all this. When the lad from New York staggered into my study, the other evening, knocking at the knees, and told me huskily that he guessed he was gonna take up boxing, I promptly guessed there was a story behind it. There was!

The fact is that Fishy has an Uncle Al who has made a pile out of the Big Fight Racket. Fishy has high

hopes of Uncle Al. And Uncle Al has high hopes of Fishy. Fishy's hopes are centred in Uncle Al's privy purse. And Uncle Al's hopes are centred in the possibility of the Fish family turning out a World Champ!

Uncle Al's hopes haven't troubled Fishy much while the Atlantic has separated him from his uncle. But now things have altered suddenly. Uncle Al is coming to England and he allows he's anxious to see how his nephew is shaping as a scrapper. It's that little circumstance that has led to Fisher T. Fish's sudden decision.

Well, chaps, it's our proud boast in the Remove boxing department that we do our best to make something out of the most unpromising material. This applies to Fishy, too, and we can tell you we're going to do what we can with him. But we

must admit that we've got a hard nut to crack!

Up to the end of last term the only man Fish had fought with any success was Bunter—and that victory was nothing to write home about!

When I got the new recruit round to the gym, on the night of his decision, I tried him out with a rabbit in the shape of Trevor. Trevor accidentally touched him on the chest before they started—and Fishy promptly collapsed with an agonised shriek, and refused to go on for another instant.

Later, I persuaded Fishy to put in some punch-ball practice. Within five seconds the ball had biffed him on the boko and Fishy was counting the stars!

So, you see, we're up



against a pretty tough proposition. But all the same, we're going on with the good work, and, believe it or not, we're determined to make Fishy a boxer or perish in the attempt!

Let you know how we get on next week!

These letters, put in their right order, give the name of a popular schoolboy character. What is the name?

HERR BOCBY

## A NEWSANCE WITH A NEWS SENSE

By DICKY NUGENT

Jack Jolly & Co., of the Fourth Form, were eggsporing the old priory at St. Sam's, when, much to their surprize, they spotted Dr. Birchermall, the Head, hurrying through the ruins with a sinister-looking metal object about the size and shape of a football held at arm's-length in front of him.

Watching with growing mystification, they saw him place it carefully under a large bolder, then light a match and apply it to the taper that hung from it. The Head then dashed away and hid behind a barrier of ruined masonry.

Half-a-minnit later a defening eggsplosion rent the air. Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Grate pip!" gasped Jack Jolly, when the smoke had cleared away and the daybroe had finished falling to earth. "It must have been a bomb!"

"Do you think the Head has become an anarkist?" asked Merry nervously. "Either that, or he has gone potty," said Bright. "I fancy we ought to keep an eye on him after this."

"Let's follow him up," suggested Jack Jolly. "He's making for the tuckshop by the look of him."

The juniors followed Dr. Birchermall at a respective distance out of the ruins and across the quad towards the porter's lodge. Outside that building, to their amazement, they saw the Head don a mask and produce a water-squirt which mite easily have been taken for a revolver. He then ran into the lodge—and a moment later

Jack Jolly & Co. herd a cry from within.

When the three arrived in the doorway they saw the school porter sitting on his chair, bound hand and foot. Of the Head there was no trace; he had already made good his escape through a back door!

Having released the frightened porter, Jack Jolly & Co. returned to the Skool House. What the diakens had come over the Head, they couldn't imagine; but whatever it was, they were determined to solve the mystery!

The first thing that met their eyes on arriving indoors was a gathering of Fourth Formers which was being addressed by Dr. Birchermall. He had, by this time, discarded his mask and water-pistol, and, for reasons best known to himself, was grinning all over his dial as he beckoned them over to join the meeting.

"Come and join the rebels, boys!" he cried. "The Fourth have decided to revolt, and they look to you to lead them to victory!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"The oppressed toilers in the Fourth, as I have just been telling them, have suffered in silence too long," grinned the Head. "The time has come now to rise against the irazy of that boolying Form-master, Lickham!"

"But Mr. Lickham is quite a decent old sport!" eggclaimed Jack Jolly.

Dr. Birchermall frowned. "That's all you know about it, Jolly. A matter of fact



he is a fearful tyrant who would not hezzitate to inflict the most frightful barbarities on his pewsils, but for the restraining influence I eggsert. My advice to you boys is, rise up in your wrath and slay him—metafiggeratively speaking, of course!

"M-m-my hat!"

"Here he comes!" added the Head in a lowered voice, as Mr. Lickham himself came down the stairs. "Now's your chance, boys! Bowl him over and biff him and bump him till he duzzent know whether he's on his head or his heels!"

After what they had seen of Dr. Birchermall in the previous ten minnits, Jack Jolly & Co. did not feel like carrying out that order. But the rest of the Form rushed to obey—they didn't often get an order from the Head to bump their own Form-master, and even though they bore Mr. Lickham no ill-will, the chance was too good to be missed!

Two ticks later Mr. Lickham got the shock of his life

when a cheering crowd of Fourth Formers surrounded him and lifted him off his feet.

"What the thump!" gasped the master of the Fourth.

"Bump him!"

"Down with tyranny!"

"Hooray!"

A series of wild howls came from Mr. Lickham as his anattermy collided time after time with the hard, unsimper-thetick linoleum.

"Yarooooo! Leggo, you rotters! Wooooop!"

And then it was the turn of the rebels of the Fourth to get a shock. Just as they were raising their Form-master for the umpteenth bump, the Head's voice rang out in a stern order.

"Stop! Release Mr. Lickham immejately!"

The Fourth Formers dropped Mr. Lickham like a red-hot brick, and Dr. Birchermall russedled forward. The grin had vanished from his dial now, and his eyes seemed to be farely blazing with anger.

"Boys! Boys!" he cried sternly. "What are you doing of?"

"Bumping Mr. Lickham as you told us to, sir," answered Trew, an answer that drew a snort of rage from the Head.

"How dare you suggest that I gave such an order!" he cried. "I can see what this is—a revolt against authority. Very well. I can assure you that this rebellion will be crushed with rewthless force! Return to your studies at once and remain there till you are sent for. Jolly, Merry, Bright! You seem to be the ringleaders! Follow me to my study and I will birch you black and blew at once!"

"G-g-grate pip!"

The Fourth staggered away to their studies like fellows

in a droom, and Jack Jolly & Co. followed Dr. Birchermall. Arriving in his study, the Head selected his stoutest birch and swished it through the air.

"You first, Jolly!" he said, with an unplezzant leer. Jolly, however, did not intend to put up with this skandalous injustiss.

"Nothing doing, sir!" he said fearlessly. "I'm not going to be wacked just to help you in your cunning skeems!"

A pekuliar eggspression seemed to come into the Head's face.

"Skeems? Mite I ask what you're referring to?"

"Certainly, sir. I'm referring to that bomb you put in the ruins and your attack on the skool porter, in addition to your enourridgement of the Fourth to attack Mr. Lickham!"

Dr. Birchermall started violently.

"Bomb? That bomb was placed in the ruins by an anarkist!" he cried. "As to the attack on the skool porter that was the work of a masked bandit."

"But we saw both insidents and reckernised your fizz at once!" eggclaimed Jack Jolly.

Dr. Birchermall cullered furiously for a few seconds; then, with a sigh, he slowly put away his birch.

"What you say, of course, puts a different complexion on things," he said. "As it seems useless to deny it, I will now admit that I planted the bomb and tied up the skool porter. But mind, this must be strictly ongrty noo, as the French say—nobody else must know!"

"But—but why—"

"You want to know why I acted in this slitley unusual manner?" grinned the Head.

"Well, I will tell you. The

fact is, I have been appointed Special Correspondent at St. Sam's to the 'Muggleton Gazette'!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"I get paid a ginny a column for all news sent in by me which they print," eggplained the Head. "It is quite good payment so long as news is plentiful. But, unforchuntly, nothing sensational seems to have happened this week."

"Oh crikey! So you—"

"So I remedied matters by creating a few sensations myself!" nodded the Head. "Eggssactly! I planted a bomb and tied up the skool porter and started a skool rebellion. And now I've got plenty to write about!"

"Ye gods!"

"Probably they'll give me the whole front page of this week's 'Gazette,'" grinned Dr. Birchermall. "Imagine the headlines: 'Boys Attack Master'—'Skool Rebellion Crushed'—'Bomb Egga-plodes at St. Sam's'—'Masked Raider Attacks Skool Porter'! Why, the number will sell like hot cakes! But you will oblige me grately, boys, if you will kindly keep mum about what you know. Do this, and I will give you a cash present here and now. Look!"

He dived a hand into his trowsis pocket, from which he withdrew three coins.

"Just a little token of my grattitude for saying nothing about the affair to nobody," he said, with a wink. "I know it is somewhat unusual for a headmaster to tip his pewsils—but then the circumstances are unusual, too! Now you may go!"

And Jack Jolly & Co. went—and when they eggsmained their tips outside they found that they had each been presented with the magnificent sum of one haipenny!

## INKY'S BIRTHDAY GUIDE

This week: GERALD LODER

The horoscope of the esteemed and disgusting Loder confirms my worstful suspicions. I am regretfully sorry to say that it is his starful destiny to be a black sheep for the rest of his schooldays and probably an honoured and detestable villain after leaving school.

If Loder would make the esteemed and needful effort he might escape this lamentable and idiotic fate; but the indications are that he will always be too fond of the twistful ways of villainy to turn his esteemed footsteps roundfully in the other direction.

Loder's horoscope warns him to look out bewarefully when he comes in contact with galloping horses. Possibly this meanfully implies that he will at some futureful time be in danger of bodily injury from these esteemed quadrupeds. On the other hand, the danger will more probably come from the honoured and disgusting "bookies" who betfully lay the odds about the esteemed winner!

I might say a lot more about Loder, but little, I am fearfully afraid, that would give him cause for beanful satisfaction; so I think that, like the clamful oyster, I will shut up. There are occasions when, as your charming English proverb says, speech is silverful, but silence is the esteemed thing that goes longest to the well. This is one of them!

## TUBB'S GOOD TURN

George Tubb is an awfully good-natured young sport. We're told that when Mr. Twigg picked up his cane yesterday and said: "Tubb, this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you," Tubb was so sorry for him that he shammed illness and gave him a chance to let himself off!



Hop Hi, Wun Lung's "minor" in the Second Form, has designed a kite which will achieve high altitudes and even loop the loop. Sammy Bunter made one, too—but his caught in a telegraph wire, around which it remains permanently "looped"!



Trotter, the page, is more often seen running than walking. He says he is so used to being always "on the move" that he doesn't think he could "turn over a new leaf" now. Trotter claims he is by no means a "one-sided page," though!



The Remove are proud of the fact that they usually manage to hold their own with the heavier and older Shell team at football. After a draw 2-2 last week, Hobson shook Wharton's hand cordially. Hobson is a bluff sort—but a thorough sportsman!



Dick Rake won a prize in a Court-feld paper's news snapshot competition with a snap of Wingate scoring the winning goal for Grey-friars against St. Jim's. Rake believes in making his camera pay for itself—a future newsreel cameraman?



Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, the New Zealander, are the solid pair of full-backs who defend the Remove goal. Bolsover says they both blunder like "bulls"—but the truth is they are about as easy to pass as a couple of the horny variety!



S. G. L. Field, Remove high jump champion, said it was possible to teach anybody to jump. He gave up, however, when Bunter presented himself for tuition. But even Bunter jumped all right when Bolsover exploded a cannon cracker behind him!

## GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

G. BLUNDELL (Fifth): "I had a shave in a barber's shop and they charged me a shilling. What do you think of it?"

Sounds like a case of a "barefaced" robbery to us!

"ALONZO" (Remove): "Is it true that there are cannibals in England?"

No, but if he doesn't keep away from the kitchen, Bunter will land in the soup before long!

## WHY FEEL THE COLD?

Take our tip and join the Upper Fourth Debating Society instead. In one visit you'll get enough hot air to keep you warm for the winter!