



PERFORMING MAULY!

By
FRANK RICHARDS

Lord Mauleverer was born tired, but when he does "wake up" no one is more surprised than the fellow who set out to reform his lazy lordship.

THE FIRST CHAPTER Waking Up the Slacker!

MAULY!"

No answer.

"Mauly!" bawled Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, for the second time.

Still no answer. If Mauly—otherwise Lord Mauleverer, the genial slacker of the Remove—heard, then, like the celebrated gladiator, he heeded not.

The probability was that he had heard, for although Bob Cherry was standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the Remove passage, his voice carried. Bob's voice had been likened unto the voice of the Bull of Bashan, and his second yell might well have awakened the Seven Sleepers. It elicited no response, however, from Lord Mauleverer.

With a grunt Bob Cherry swung round the stair-rail and started up the stairs three at a time. In three seconds he was at the top. Precisely one second later he burst into Study No. 12 like a whirlwind.

Crash!

"Mauly!" roared Bob.

Lord Mauleverer awoke. He had been reclining gracefully on the sofa, but he sat

up with a jump as Bob Cherry entered. It took a lot to wake his somnolent lordship, but Bob's terrific entry did the trick.

"Ow!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaas!"

Mauly, having recovered from the first shock of surprise, sank back on the sofa and amiably agreed. He was usually willing to agree with anything to avoid an argument. That was Mauleverer's way.

"You frabjous dummy!" hooted Bob Cherry. "This is the third time running you've got Wharton into trouble by not turning up for compulsory footer practice. You knew it was compulsory practice day, I suppose?"

"Yaas!"

"Then why the thump haven't you turned up like the rest?"

Snore!

Bob stared at Mauleverer almost incredulously. His lazy lordship had once more fallen asleep.

"Well, of all the wasters—" gasped Bob.

Then he acted. With a bound he was upon the elegant Removite. The next moment he had yanked Mauly up into a sitting position

and was banging his aristocratic head against the wall.

A series of wild yells rang out in Study No. 12.

"Yarooooh! Yoooop! Lemme go! Whoooop!"

"There!" gasped the most vigorous member of the Remove at Greyfriars, panting from his exertions. "Going to stay awake now?"

"Ow! Yaas! Wow!" groaned Mauleverer. "My napper—"

"Blow your blessed napper! What does your napper matter in comparison with footer practice? You know, Mauly," said Bob seriously, "you've got to pull your socks up."

"Ow!"

"Three times in three weeks you've let us down. It's the giddy limit. Wingate's raging, and Wharton's wild, having to take all the blame. It's got to be altered, Mauly."

"Yaas!"

"In fact, I'm jolly well going to alter it, whether you like it or not," said Bob, with sudden determination. "You want someone to take you in hand, old bean. Well, I'll do it."

"Oh, gad!"

An expression of acute alarm came into Mauleverer's placid features.

"I'll jolly well do it!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "You've been neglected in the past, Mauly; but things are going to change from now on."

"I don't want 'em to change," protested Mauly plaintively.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Probably not. But when I've transformed you from the jellyfish you are to-day into a live, bustling, hustling sportsman—"

"Oh, gad!" exclaimed Mauleverer, with a shudder he could not repress.

"Then you'll find you'll have changed your mind about it and I expect you'll thank me from the bottom of your heart. It's on!" concluded Bob in a tone of finality.

"But—"

"But nothing. I'm not leaving you alone

now until you're a hundred-per-cent he-man. Got your footer clobber?"

"It's in the pavilion, old chap. But—"

"Kim on!"

Mauleverer came on. With the cheerful Bob grasping his shoulders and rushing him out of the study, he had no choice in the matter.

The journey of Bob Cherry and his new protégé down to Little Side that afternoon was a wild and woolly performance. They tore along the Remove passage, rushed down the stairs, raced through the Hall, and fairly flew from the House down to the football pitch.

By the time they arrived in front of the pavilion Mauly hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels, and was only dimly conscious of his surroundings at all.

His meteoric arrival was heralded by a yell from the waiting footballers.

"Here he comes!"

"Slacker!"

"Waster!"

"Where the thump have you been, Mauleverer?" came a stern query from George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars.

"Oh, gad, I was just havin' a snooze—"

"You were having a snooze when you ought to have been here for footer. Mad?" asked Wingate pleasantly.

"Yaas—I mean, nunno! You see, Wingate—"

"I see a slacking ass who badly needs waking up," said Wingate, with a frown. "Wonder to me someone in the Remove doesn't spend a little time in doing it for you."

"All serene, Wingate; I've already fixed it," grinned Bob Cherry.

Wingate started.

"You mean—"

"I mean I've taken over the job of reforming Mauleverer. I'm going to make a real live wire of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar from the listening juniors. The idea of making a real live wire of the languid earl struck them as rather funny. Even Wingate grinned.

"Wish you joy of your job, young Cherry!" he remarked. "When does the process begin?"

"It began up in his study just now. It's continuing right now. Kim on, Mauly!" finished up Bob, and again he laid violent hands on Lord Mauleverer and rushed him into the pavilion to change for footer.

The pair were followed by a yell of laughter from the rest.

In the pick-up game that ensued when Mauleverer had changed, Bob Cherry kept a very careful eye on his protégé. Bob, as it happened, was on the same side as Mauly, but that little circumstance didn't stop him from charging his elegant colleague on the slightest provocation or even without provocation at all.

Such tactics would, of course, have been impossible in an ordinary game, but a certain amount of licence was permissible at compulsory practice, and Bob Cherry took advantage of the fact, with results that were quite entertaining from the point of view of most of the players.

Mauleverer, of course, was not entertained. That was hardly to be expected. He came off the field at the end of the game looking as though he had just been through a mangle, and almost tottered to the pavilion to change.

Bob Cherry encouraged him with a slap on the back that nearly laid him out altogether.

"Cheer up, Mauly," he grinned. "It's always hard beginning a thing, but you'll soon get used to it."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Mauly.

"I'll look you up after tea and we'll have a trot round the quad. I'm going to wake you



Bob yanked Mauly up into a sitting position, and the next moment he was banging his head against the wall.

up, old bean," said Bob genially, "as you've never been awakened before!"

"Oh, gad!"

That was all Mauly said.

That was all he felt capable of saying for the time being.

THE SECOND CHAPTER Mauly's Win!

TRUE to his promise, Bob Cherry turned up at No. 12 after tea.

He found Mauleverer standing up in front of the fire. That was unusual, for the languid earl spent by far the greater part of his spare time curled up in an attitude of graceful repose on the sofa.

What was more unusual still was that Mauly had quite a concentrated sort of ex-

pression on his countenance. Mauly's expression was usually far from concentrated; in fact, as a rule, it didn't even exist, unless obvious lack of interest in all that was going on could be dignified with the name of "expression." But this time he was full of expression.

The explanation was that Mauly had been thinking.

Bob Cherry had driven him to it.

Mauly knew Bob Cherry well enough to realise that when he said a thing, he meant it. His threat to wake up Mauly as he had never been awakened before was not idly spoken. He really meant to carry it out.

It was an awful prospect for Mauly—so awful that he simply had to think how to deal with the situation. Mauly pondered deeply.

At the precise moment that Bob Cherry breezed into the study the unwonted mental efforts of the leisurely Removite were at last rewarded.

Inspiration came to him. The solution to the overwhelming problem of how to escape a month or more of wild and whirling activity with Bob Cherry appeared before him in a sort of blinding flash. Mauly could have laughed aloud with joy.

The solution involved a day or possibly two days of tremendous physical effort. That, of course, was a drawback, but Mauly was prepared to put up with it for the sake of the undisturbed peace which he hoped would follow.

He turned to Bob with a bright smile.

"Evenin', old bean," he remarked. "Trot round the quad is indicated, I take it?"

"Just that!" nodded Bob Cherry. "And it's no good your trying to dodge it, because—"

Mauleverer smothered a yawn.

"I won't dodge, I promise you, dear man. In fact, I'm ready."

"Good. Then march!"

They marched.

An interested crowd of grinning juniors followed them down to the quad. The news that Bob Cherry had begun his self-imposed task of reforming Mauly had spread far and wide, and most of the fellows were looking forward to a deadly dual between a zealous reformer and a very unwilling reformee, so to speak.

They were disappointed. Mauly came like a lamb.

Furthermore, on reaching the quad., he started sprinting without even a word from his reformer. The crowd couldn't understand it; as for Bob Cherry, he was flabbergasted.

Round the quad. sprinted Bob Cherry and his pupil. And after completing the circle, round again; and yet again.

Bob was surprised and, after a time, a little disconcerted. Twice round would have suited him very nicely. But Mauly didn't stop at that; he kept on keeping on.

It was very gratifying, of course, to find the reformation taking place so quickly, but Bob hadn't intended spending the remainder of the evening running round and round the quad. and after the fifth lap he felt like calling a halt. To have done so, however, would have been to make the whole thing look ridiculous. So Bob Cherry kept on keeping on, too, while an ironical crowd on the School House steps cheered vociferously.

When it got to the tenth time round, Bob felt that the thing was getting beyond a joke.

"Had enough, Mauly?" he panted.

"Not a bit of it, old top! Feel as if I could go on like this for hours!"

"Well, I don't!" said Bob Cherry frankly, coming to a stop and mopping his perspiring brow. "'Nuff's as good as a feast, you know, and this bizney's getting a bit monotonous, Mauly. Let's move in."

"Pleasure!" said Mauleverer cheerfully. "What's the next item in this wakin'-up programme?"

"Looks as if you're taking it philosophically, Mauly! Matter of fact, I had thought of a little spar round the gym. with the gloves on. You're not quite up to my weight at boxing, of course, but you're useful——"

"Done!" said Lord Mauleverer.

They went to the gym.

The crowd followed, reinforced now by Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, who were all quite overcome when they heard of the surprising change in the languid lord of Greyfriars.

The crowd arrived at the gym, and the two principals in the entertainment took off coats and rolled up sleeves and donned the gloves.

"Now!" said Bob Cherry.

He sparred up to Mauly. Mauly, however, didn't spar up to his host. He retreated, instead, retreated round and round the gym, dodging and feinting as he went in an annoying manner.

After him came Bob Cherry, trying hard to touch his elusive opponent. But the harder he tried, the more elusive became his opponent, and somehow he couldn't get home once.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "Why can't you stand still for a minute?"

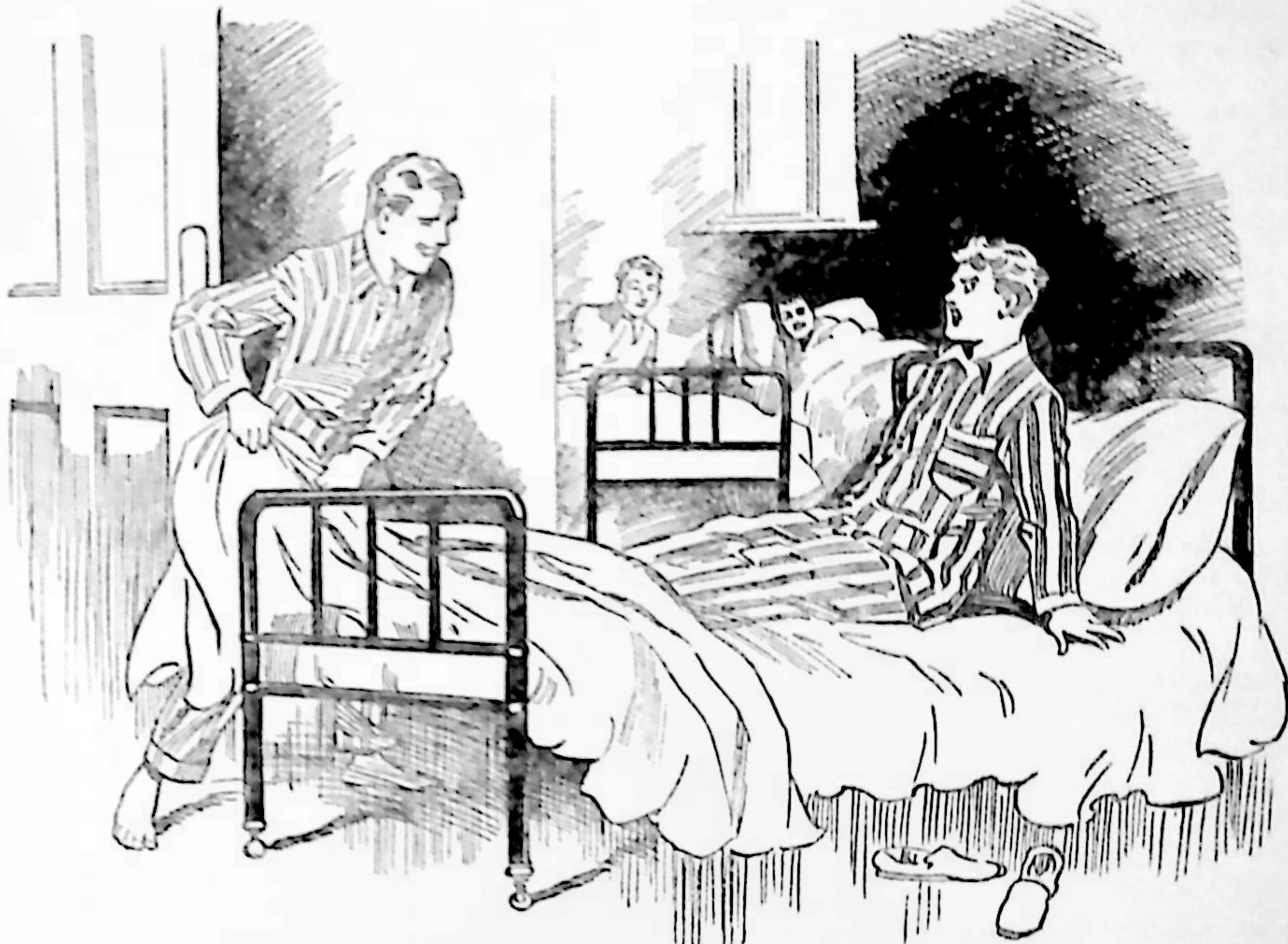
"Because I don't want to be hit, of course, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you footlin' fathead——"

"I thought that was half the battle in boxing, knowing how to dodge your opponent," said Mauleverer innocently. "That's the half I'm learning at present, you see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Mauly crossed to where Bob slept and dragged off the bedclothes.

"Ow! What the thump——" cried Bob, sitting up in bed.

The grins of the crowd became chuckles, the chuckles laughs, and the laughs a roar.

"Go it, Bob!"

"It's not supposed to be shadow-boxing, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry, whose complexion had reddened until it resembled the colour of a ripe tomato, paused for a moment to glare at the unruffled Mauleverer.

By the time the sparring bout was over the usually sunny-tempered Bob was feeling quite "touchy." Mauleverer, on the other hand, seemed to grow more cheerful every minute. He was almost beaming as he linked arms with his reformer on the way out.

"Not a bad spar, eh?" he remarked genially. "But, honestly, old bean, I don't feel more than half awake yet. What about a bike-ride after prep.—keen night air an' all

that sort of thing ? " Good idea, what ! " Bob Cherry stared.

" A bike ride ? But, you silly dummy, that means breaking bounds ! "

" Not necessarily, old chap. We can spin round and round the footer-field. Not strictly legal, perhaps, but we might get away with it ; an' think of all the benefit we'll get ! "

" Well, my hat ! " said Bob Cherry.

He was astounded. For a moment doubts began to assail him as to Mauleverer's sanity. But Mauly looked sane enough and Bob dismissed his doubts. After a moment of reflection, he agreed to the startling proposal for a spin round the footer-field in the light of the moon. He had set out to wake up Mauly and if Mauly himself had decided to assist in the process, that was all to the good.

It didn't seem too good, however, after they had been whizzing round the field for twenty minutes or so at breakneck speed. Twice Bob Cherry came a cropper in the dim light. Almost he began to regret having set out to reform Mauleverer.

Almost—but not quite. It required another two hours of the electrified earl to annihilate Bob's reforming zeal completely. And those two hours Mauly gave him with a glad heart.

A sprint back to the house was followed by physical jerks in the Common-room. Mauly insisted. Then came bed-time. But even bed-time did not stop the fun. Mauly wanted gymnastics in the dorm., and then a duel with pillows. If Wingate had not come up with an ashplant he might have carried on all night. But Wingate did turn up and peace descended on the dormitory at last. None was more glad than Bob Cherry. Bob usually did sleep well ; on this occasion he slept as though he could have gone on for ever.

Lord Mauleverer was smiling faintly as he tumbled into bed. He felt he had achieved what he had set out to achieve.

At six o'clock in the morning he knew for a fact that he had. At that hour the rattle of the alarm-clock by Mauleverer's bed

suddenly disturbed the silence of the dormitory and some of the juniors.

Instantly, Mauleverer shot out of bed, crossed to the bed where Bob Cherry slept and yanked off the bedclothes.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed with a yell.

" Ow ! What the thump— "

" Ready, old top ? " asked Mauleverer blandly.

Bob stared at him half dazedly.

" Ready ? Br-r-r-r ! Gimme back those bedclothes ; it's cold ! What d'you mean by ' Ready ' ? "

" Why, ready to carry on ? "

" Carry on what ? " hooted the shivering Bob.

" Carry on reformin' me, of course, old bean ! " answered Mauly, registering mild surprise. " I thought you'd like to get out and see that I have a cold plunge an' a trot round the quad., an'— "

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

The Remove yelled. Their indignation at being awakened so early on a cold and frosty morning gave place to mirth.

Bob Cherry laughed, too, after a while.

" All right, Mauly, " he said. " Give you best ; you win. I'm not getting up yet ! "

Mauleverer held up his hands in pretended horror.

" Dear man, you don't mean to say that you're leavin' me to return to my sin an' laziness— "

" Just that ! " nodded Bob. " I've had enough of reforming you—more than enough ! You can go and bury yourself in idleness for the rest of your life for all I care. Blow you ! "

Having delivered himself of which, the disillusioned reformer turned over on his pillow again.

Mauleverer, with a very tired but utterly blissful look on his face, floated peacefully back to his bed. And in the space of a few seconds he had returned to the Land of Nod with the happy assurance that, thanks to his ingenious little wheeze, it would be a long, long time before anyone attempted again the impossible task of Reforming Mauly !

THE END