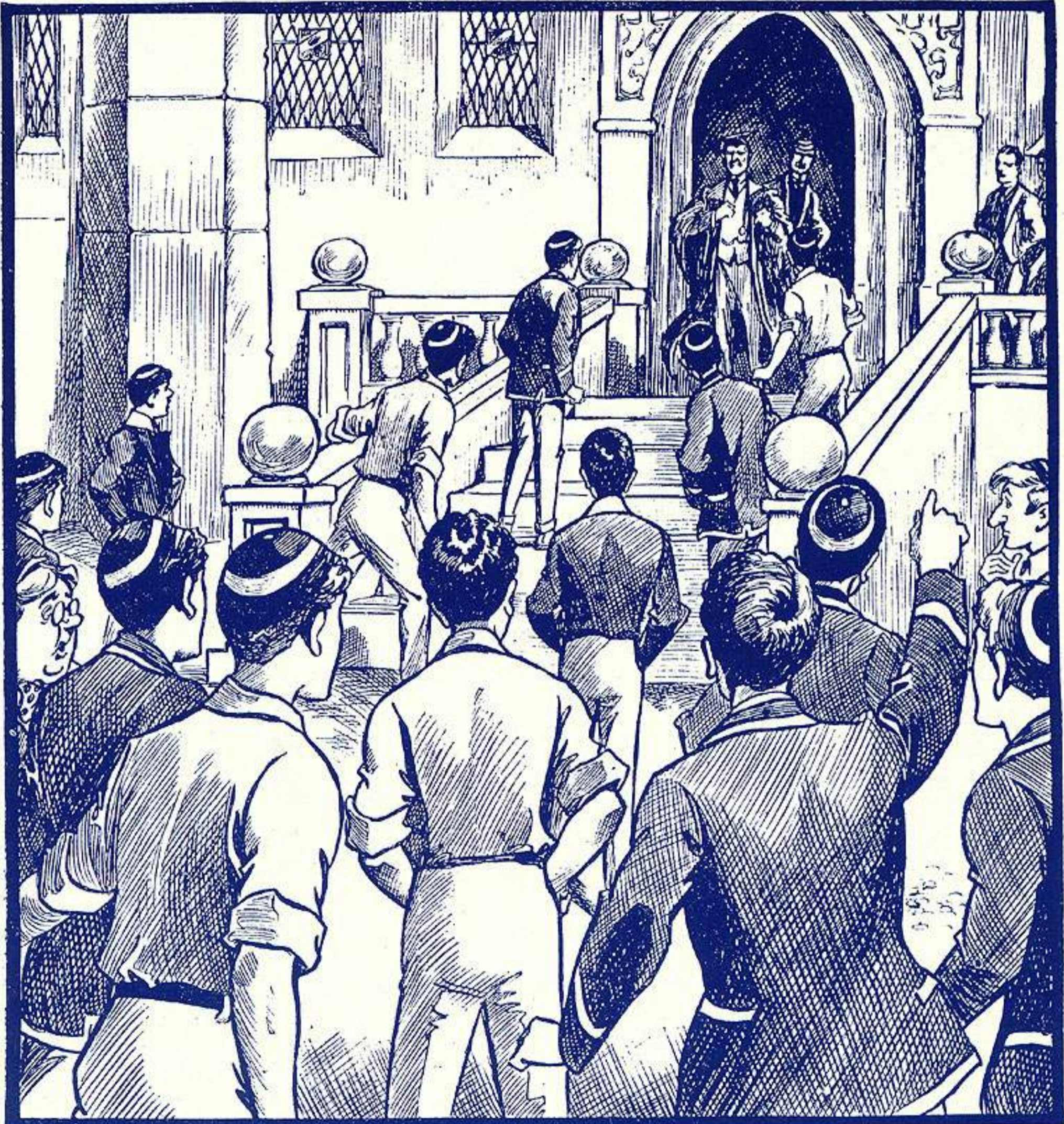


GETTING OUT OF HAND!

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THE TYRANT OF GREYFRIARS!

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GETTING OUT OF HAND!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In Durance Vile!

THE heaviness of my esteemed heart is terrific!"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh spoke very lugubriously.

Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry looked equally disconsolate.

It was tea-time at Greyfriars, and the four chums of the Remove were gathered in Study No. 1.

But Harry Wharton, the leader of the Famous Five, and captain of the Remove, was not there.

He was not far distant, but he was as effectively cut off from his chums as if an ocean rolled between. For Harry Wharton was a prisoner in the punishment-room, and a locked door barred him off from the rest of Greyfriars.

The juniors were despondent as well as indignant.

Mr. Jeffreys, who had taken Dr. Locke's place as headmaster during the Head's absence, was ruling Greyfriars with an iron hand.

There had been wild talk in the Remove and some other Forms of resistance to the new tyrant of Greyfriars, but resistance was not quite so easy.

Canings were the order of the day, floggings were not infrequent, lincs and detentions fell as thick as leaves in Val-lombrosa.

If Mr. Jeffreys had set out to make himself thoroughly unpopular and disliked at Greyfriars he could not have succeeded better.

The four juniors in Study No. 1 munched their war-bread savagely.

Wharton had bread and water in the punishment-room, and his sentence was for three days. To-day was the second day.

Such a punishment had never been inflicted at Greyfriars in recent times. It belonged to a period of the past when life was harder at public schools than at the present day.

Mr. Jeffreys had chosen to revive it, and there was no one to say him nay.

"Our esteemed chum must be terrifically hungry," went on Hurree Janset Ram Singh sorrowfully. "The breadfulness and the waterfulness are shortful commons for a healthful person."

"Against the law, I believe," growled Johnny Bull. "The law doesn't allow chaps to be treated as our grandfathers were treated."

"Jeffreys is a law unto himself!" remarked Nugent. "The beast will have to be brought to order somehow!"

"How?" said Bob Cherry.

Frank Nugent shook his head. He could not answer that question.

The four juniors looked round as the door of the study opened. Billy Bunter's fat face peered in. His spectacles turned upon the tea-table, and he rolled into the study.

"I say, you fellows, it's hard lines on poor old Wharton!" Bunter remarked.

"I'm awfully indignant about it, you know!"

"Br-r-r!"

"I've been thinking of making old Jeffreys sit up with some of my ventriloquial tricks," said Bunter. "What do you fellows think?"

"Br-r-r!"

"Poor old Wharton's only got bread and water," said Bunter. "Horrid, isn't it? I suppose as he won't want his grub here to-day there's no objection to my having it?"

"What?"

The juniors glared at Bunter.

The fattest junior at Greyfriars was hard hit by the food regulations. Apparently Bunter saw in Wharton's imprisonment a chance of spreading himself a little.

He blinked hungrily over the tea-table, which was as frugal as most tea-tables in the third year of the war.

"What I miss most is the sugar," said Bunter. "I'll have Wharton's sugar; if you don't mind, as he won't want it—"

"You fat rotter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Crawl away, you fat snail!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Look here, Bull, you're not going to have Wharton's sugar—"

"What?" gasped Johnny Bull.

"I'm sure Wharton would like me to have it, as we're so pally," said Bunter.

"In fact, I think he was going to say so, only Loder and Carne whisked him off to the punishment-room so quickly! Where is it?"

There was no answer to that question. Bob Cherry made a jump for a cricket-stump, and another jump for Billy Bunter. William George Bunter made a simultaneous jump for the passage.

Then there was a crash, as he collided with a junior who was coming to the door of No. 1.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, as he went staggering. "You fat idiot—"

"Yow-ow!" gasped Bunter.

Vernon-Smith reeled against the opposite wall, gasping for breath. Bunter had fairly winded him.

Bob Cherry lunged out with the stump, and Bunter gave a yelp as he caught it, and dashed away down the passage.

"Come back and have some more, you Hun!" roared Bob, flourishing the stump.

"Yow-ow!"

Bunter's voice died away down the stairs. He did not want any more. Bob Cherry glanced at the Bounder with a grin.

"Coming in?" he asked.

"Yes," gasped Vernon-Smith.

"Trot in, then!"

The Bounder followed him into the

study and closed the door. The Co. looked at him inquiringly.

"Jawing about Wharton—what?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes."

"Something ought to be done," said Vernon-Smith.

"Nothing doing that I can see," said Nugent.

"That's what I've come to see you chaps about," said the Bounder quietly.

"I don't fancy letting Wharton feed on bread and water for three days. All very well in the old times, but it's not quite good enough for Greyfriars at the present day. What about letting his people know?"

"His uncle's at the Front," said Nugent. "Wharton wouldn't have him bothered with it, I'm sure of that."

"I suppose not. We can take the matter in hand ourselves," said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton's captain of the Form, and it's up to us to back him up."

Bob Cherry whistled. The Bounder coloured a little as he noted the expressions on the faces of the Co.

"I haven't always backed him up, I know," he said. "Never mind that! We pull different ways! But against Jeffreys we've got to stand together. The man's a rotter, and Dr. Locke would never have left him in charge here if he'd known. I'm game, if you fellows are! My idea is for the Remove to go on the war-path!"

"My hat!"

"Jeffreys is down on us without reason. Well, we're going for him in return—that's my idea. And the first thing is to see that Wharton doesn't starve. We can get grub to him."

"I've been thinking of that," said Bob. "But how? The punishment-room's locked up, and Jeffreys has the key. He goes there himself to unlock the door when Trotter goes to take in meals and to do up the room. Can't get at a chap through a locked door!"

"There's a window to the room!" said the Bounder.

"And a master's study-window below it," said Nugent. "N.G.!"

"And a roof above it," said the Bounder coolly. "A rope lowered from the roof would let a parcel down to the window, if Wharton knew that it was coming and could take it in quick."

"My hat! I never thought of that!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Good for you, Smithy! One of us can cut along and jaw to Wharton through the keyhole."

"You'll have to be careful; Loder and Carne keep an eye on the room. But they can't be watching it always," remarked Vernon-Smith. "If one of you can get word to Wharton, I'll see about lowering a parcel to the window. I've got the stuff ready."

"Good egg!"

Harry Wharton's chums had brightened up considerably. Bob clapped the

Bounder on the shoulder, with a powerful clap that made Smithy wriggle.

"Good old Smithy!" he exclaimed. "You're the right man in the right place! I'll cut along and speak to Wharton now if the coast's clear." And Bob Cherry hurried out of Study No. 1.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Jeffreys Comes Down Heavy!

HARRY WHARTON, the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, was pacing to and fro within the narrow limits of the punishment-room.

His face was a little pale from confinement within close walls, and his brows were knitted.

The room was bare and dismal. It had seldom been used in late years for its original purpose. There were a few plain articles of furniture; the floor was bare of carpet; the little square window was crossed by iron bars. Wharton could see a patch of the sky from within. By mounting on his chair he could catch a glimpse of the quadrangle.

He had been a prisoner for forty-eight hours.

And he had seen nobody but Trotter, the page, who came to attend to his wants, and Mr. Jeffreys, who always accompanied Trotter, key in hand.

Once or twice fellows had crept cautiously to the room and whispered through the keyhole.

But severe punishment awaited them if they were discovered; and several times Wharton had heard yells outside as Carne and Walker descended upon the sympathisers with ready ashplant.

Wharton's anger was growing every hour. His punishment was unjust. It was one more example of the tyranny of the new Head of Greyfriars. But he was helpless; there was nothing to do but to grin and bear it. Even if it had been possible to appeal to his uncle and guardian, Colonel Wharton, he would not have done so. The colonel was at the Front, and Wharton did not want him worried with his nephew's school troubles.

"Harry!"
The junior stopped his restless pacing as that whisper came through the keyhole. He recognised Bob Cherry's tones, and he stepped quickly to the door.

"Bob!" he whispered back.
"How are you getting on, old chap?"
"Fed up!"
"Hungry?"
"Oh, that's all right!" said Wharton. "Plenty of bread and lots of water. I can stand it."

"Smithy's got an idea for getting some grub for you," whispered Bob. "He's going to lower a parcel from the roof outside your window. You'll take it in—see?"

"Good!" said Harry. "It's jolly decent of Smithy."

"Oh, he's not a bad sort, though he's a smoky bounder," said Bob. "Look out for the parcel, old chap, and keep your pecker up. We're going to make the Jeffreys-bird hop for all this, somehow. Oh, my hat!"

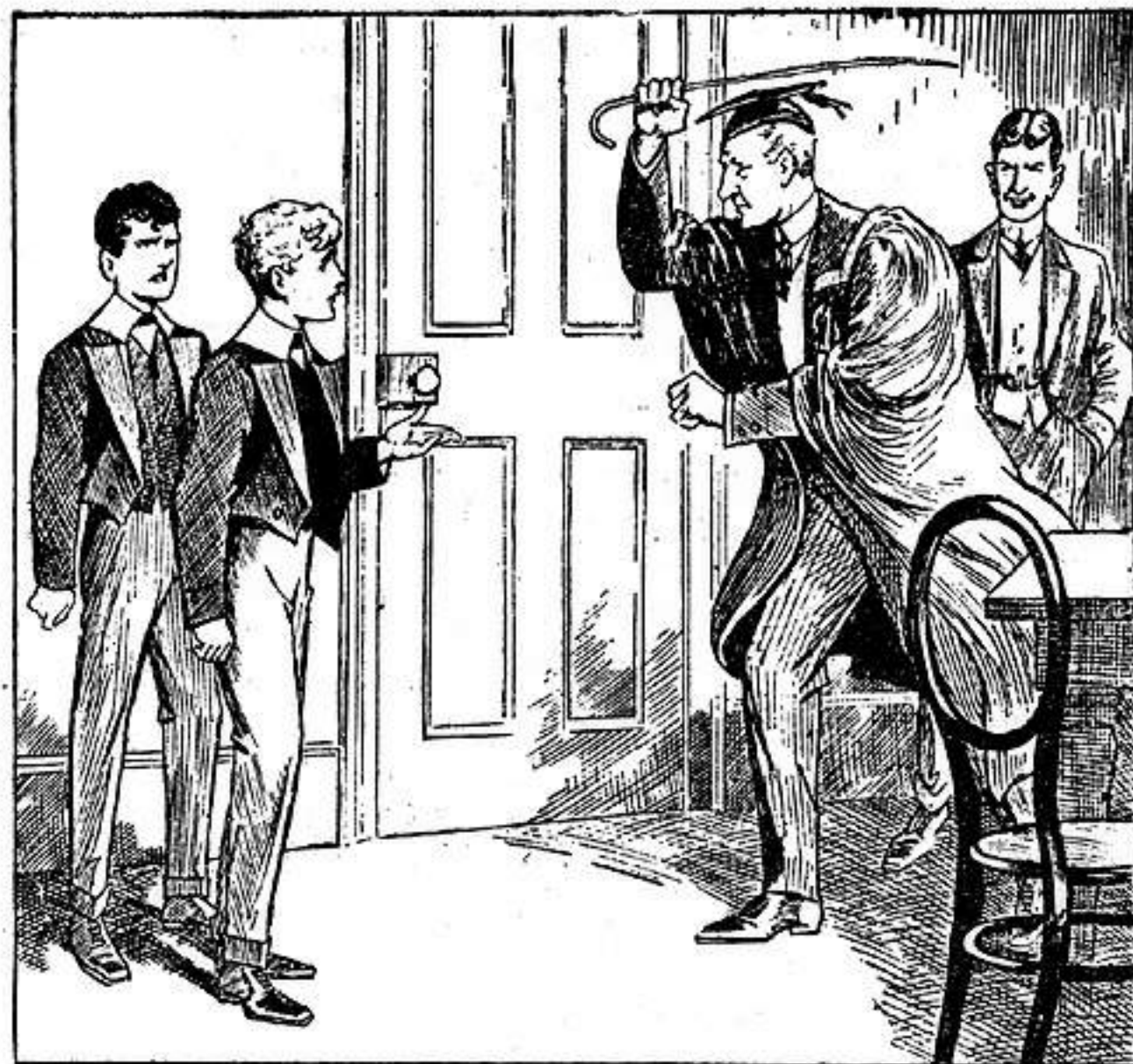
"Cherry"—it was the voice of Loder of the Sixth—"so you are talking to Wharton against Mr. Jeffreys' express orders!"

"Br-r-r-r!"
"Come with me!"

A sound of receding footsteps followed. Harry Wharton clenched his hands hard.

The bully of the Sixth had caught Bob, and he was taken away to the new Head for punishment. Wharton knew how severe that punishment would be. Mr. Jeffreys did not believe in sparing the rod.

A few minutes later there were footsteps in the passage without. A key grated



Caned for his chum's sake! (See Chapter 2.)

in the lock. Wharton faced the door in surprise. It was not time for a meal, and he wondered why he was visited.

The door was thrown open, and Mr. Jeffreys, the new Head of Greyfriars, strode in, his thin, hard face frowning, his little, narrow eyes glinting. Loder of the Sixth followed him in, his hand on Bob Cherry's shoulder. Bob's face was dark and angry.

Wharton looked at them in astonishment. Why Bob had been brought there was a mystery to him. But he was soon enlightened.

"Wharton"—Mr. Jeffreys' voice was harsh and angry—"Cherry has been found speaking to you through the door. I have expressly forbidden anyone to do so. This disobedience is worse in the Remove than in any other form at Greyfriars, and I am convinced that it is due to your evil influence over your Form-fellows."

Wharton's eyes gleamed.
"Cherry will be punished in your presence," resumed Mr. Jeffreys. "You will also be caned, Wharton."

Wharton did not speak.
"Cherry, hold out your hand!"

Bob hesitated for a moment. The long habit of obedience to constituted authority was in danger of breaking down.

But the Greyfriars fellows had not yet reached the point of revolt. Bob obeyed.

Wharton's eyes blazed as he looked on while his chum received four cruel cuts. Bob squeezed his hands hard when the infliction was over, but he made no sound.

"Now, Wharton!"
Swish, swish, swish, swish!

No sound passed Harry Wharton's lips. He would not gratify the tyrant by a single murmur.

"You may go, Cherry!" said Mr. Jeffreys harshly. "And, remember—and tell your Form-fellows—that on every occasion when a boy is found communicating with Wharton, Wharton will be punished as well as the culprit! Go!"

Bob Cherry gave his chum one look, and went.

"I trust, Wharton, that this will be a lesson to you," said Mr. Jeffreys. "It

is my firm intention to break down this spirit of insubordination in the school. So far as severity of punishment can effect this, it will not be wanting."

Wharton did not speak.

"By gad!" suddenly exclaimed Loder.

Mr. Jeffreys gave him a severe glance. Loder pointed to the window.

Outside, against the patch of sky, a dark object dangled into view, evidently a parcel lowered on a rope from the roof above.

Mr. Jeffreys stared at it, seemingly transfixed.

Wharton bit his lip hard.

It was Smithy's parcel. Vernon-Smith, of course, did not know that Mr. Jeffreys was in the punishment-room at that unusual hour. He supposed that the parcel was visible to no eyes but Wharton's.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Jeffreys at last.

He strode to the window and opened it.

The parcel dangled within easy reach outside. Passing his hand through the bars, Mr. Jeffreys grasped it and pulled it in. The parcel was made long and narrow to pass between the bars. The new Head laid it on the table.

Wharton ran to the window.

"Cave!" he called out, hoping that his voice would reach the Bounder on the roof above and warn him in time.

"Silence!" shouted Mr. Jeffreys.

"Cave!" shouted Wharton. "The Head's here!"

The next moment Mr. Jeffreys' grasp was upon his collar, and he was dragged away from the window.

But his warning had been heard. The cord which had lowered the parcel came whizzing down past the window, evidently as a reply. The Bounder was too cautious to call out.

"Loder," panted Mr. Jeffreys, "go to the roof at once and see who is there!"

"Certainly, sir!"

The prefect hurried away.

Mr. Jeffreys waited, biting his lips, for his return. Harry Wharton waited with anxious heart. He hoped that the Bounder had cleared off in time; but he

had little doubt of it. Vernon-Smith could generally be trusted to look after himself.

Loder came back in about five minutes frowning.

"There was no one there, sir," he said. "The trap was open, but the young rascal had got in, I suppose. Wharton warned him by calling out."

Mr. Jeffreys nodded. "Wharton, you deliberately called out to your confederate, in spite of my orders!" he said, his voice trembling with anger.

No answer. "Loder, take this parcel away. It contains food. Doubtless this is not the first time food has been conveyed to Wharton in this manner. As you have eluded your punishment by this subterfuge, Wharton, your sentence will recommence from to-day. You will remain three days longer here upon a diet of bread and water, and I shall see that your friends have no opportunity of conveying food to you."

Mr. Jeffreys followed Loder from the room, and the door was locked on the outside.

Harry Wharton was left alone. The well-meant attempt of his friends to help him had ended disastrously. His imprisonment, instead of ending on the morrow, was to last three days more. That was the severest punishment the tyrant of Greyfriars could visit upon the imprisoned junior's chums, as he well knew.

There was wrath and dismay in the Remove when that sentence was known. The iron hand of the new headmaster had come down heavily. Discontent and resentment were seething in the Form. But to that Mr. Jeffreys paid no heed—except in the way of administering further punishments—and Harry Wharton remained a prisoner.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Does His Duty!

TAP!
"Come in!" said Mr. Quelch. The Remove-master was in his study. He was neither working nor reading. He sat by the study window, looking out into the quad in the sunset, his brows deeply corrugated with thought.

The new regime at Greyfriars troubled Mr. Quelch very much.

There was no power in his hands. He was under the orders of the new Head. It was impossible to communicate with Dr. Locke, who was away ill, and could not be troubled with the bad news from the school. Yet, Mr. Quelch felt that there was a storm brewing at Greyfriars. In every way Mr. Jeffreys had shown himself unfitted for the headmastership of a great school. He interfered incessantly with the masters in their own Form-rooms, and the staff were as dissatisfied as the boys. And Wharton's imprisonment was weighing very much upon the Remove-master's mind. He turned from the window as the study door opened and Bob Cherry came in, followed by Nugent, Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull.

"What is it, my boys?" he asked kindly.

"We want to speak to you, sir!" said Bob, taking the lead. "It's about Wharton."

"Mr. Jeffreys has decided that matter, Cherry."

"But it's too bad, sir!" said Bob. "Mr. Jeffreys has announced that Wharton is to be kept in the punishment-room on bread and water till Thursday, now!"

The Remove-master started.

"Indeed! I had not heard that, Cherry. For what reason?"

"Because a chap tried to get some grub—I mean food to Wharton."

"That was an act of disobedience, Cherry!" said the Form-master severely.

"Well, it wasn't Wharton that did it, sir. He didn't even ask for the grub. Is he to be kept there three days longer, sir? What about his health?"

"You are sure of this, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir."

"The esteemed Wharton's health will suffer, honoured sahib," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The regular grubfulness is a necessity."

"I will think this matter over," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go."

The juniors left the study.

"Quelch will do what he can," said Bob, as they went down the passage. "He's rather a hard nut, but he's not a beast. We'll see!"

Mr. Quelch's brow was darker now. He had felt for some time that the new headmaster's tyranny could not be tolerated for long. Now he knew that the time had come when he must take action.

After considering the matter very carefully and at length, the Remove-master left his study and made his way to the Head's quarters. Mr. Jeffreys was in Dr. Locke's study, and the Remove-master found him there.

The new Head greeted him with bare civility. He did not like Mr. Quelch, in whom he detected a spirit of opposition to his new regime.

"Well, sir?" he said curtly.

"I feel it my duty to speak to you, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, quietly and steadily. "I have just learned that Wharton, of my Form, is to be confined in the punishment-room for three days longer. I hope this is unfounded."

"On the contrary, it is perfectly correct."

"I am sorry to hear it, sir."

"I see no occasion whatever for your sorrow!" said Mr. Jeffreys tartly. "If you have nothing else to discuss with me—" He glanced at the door.

"I must discuss this matter, sir!"

"It is not at all necessary!"

"It is not only necessary, sir, but imperative!" said the Remove-master.

Mr. Jeffreys gave him a sharp, angry look.

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"I protest, sir, against this treatment of a boy in my Form. I feel bound to protest!"

"Very well, Mr. Quelch. You protest, and I note the fact. The matter is closed!"

"Not at all, sir! I beg you to reconsider your decision, and to allow Wharton to rejoin his Form."

Mr. Jeffreys gave an angry laugh.

"I am not likely to do so," he said.

"Really, Mr. Quelch, your conduct is most extraordinary. You appear to forget that I am headmaster of this school, appointed by the governors, with full powers!"

"I hardly think, sir, that the governing body can have been fully acquainted with your methods."

"Your opinion will not influence me, Mr. Quelch!"

"Have you considered, sir, the probable effect upon the boy's health—"

"I consider, first of all, the necessity for maintaining discipline in the school, Mr. Quelch!" said the new Head. "If you do not approve of my methods, your course is clear. You are under no obligation to remain at Greyfriars!"

Mr. Quelch started.

"You wish me to leave!" he exclaimed.

"Not at all. It is not my intention, however, to suffer the slightest opposition, or even argument!"

"I received my appointment, sir, from Dr. Locke, and from Dr. Locke alone should I accept my dismissal!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice quivering with indignation. "You can, if you choose, dispense with my services during Dr. Locke's absence. That is the utmost you can do." He paused for a moment. "Mr. Jeffreys, I cannot consent to Wharton being retained a prisoner in the punishment-room any longer!"

"You cannot consent?" ejaculated Mr. Jeffreys.

"No, sir!"

"Does the matter rest with you?" sneered Mr. Jeffreys.

"It does!" Mr. Quelch's voice rose a little. "Sir, this treatment of the boy—one of the best boys in my Form, and one of the finest characters in the whole school—is illegal!"

"I am master here, Mr. Quelch!"

"No man in England, sir, is above the law. We are not living in Prussia," said Mr. Quelch, his eyes gleaming.

"Since you will not listen to the dictates of humanity, Mr. Jeffreys, you leave me no course open but to insist upon the release of Harry Wharton!"

"You—you insist?" stuttered the new Head blankly.

"I insist!"

"Are you out of your senses, sir?"

"I repeat, Mr. Jeffreys, that I insist upon Wharton's release; and, unless he is out of the punishment-room within an hour, I shall inform the proper authorities of your conduct. You know best whether you desire a public scandal, sir, in association with this school!"

"That is a threat, sir!" gasped Mr. Jeffreys.

"It is my intention, at all events. I will not risk having that boy's health impaired!"

Mr. Jeffreys' narrow eyes narrowed still more, till they seemed like glittering pin-points as they were fixed on the Remove-master.

A long pause followed.

The tyrant of Greyfriars had met his match. He dared not let Mr. Quelch carry out his threat. He knew it, and the Remove-master knew it.

Mr. Jeffreys' face was pale with anger and chagrin. But he had to surrender.

"Very well, Mr. Quelch," he said at last, in a choking voice, "I shall accede to your demand. Wharton shall be released. And you, sir, will leave Greyfriars at once!"

"I am prepared to do so. I shall return when Dr. Locke returns," said the Remove-master quietly.

He left the study without another word.

Ten minutes later, a key grated in the lock of the punishment-room. It was Loder of the Sixth who threw open the door, and he scowled at the imprisoned junior.

"You can cut!" he snapped.

Wharton stared at him.

"Don't you understand, you young fool?" growled Loder. "Clear out!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Gladly enough Harry Wharton cleared out of the punishment-room. He hurried to the Remove passage, where his chums met him in a merry crowd.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

There was a roar of cheering in the Remove passage. Harry Wharton was

marched into Study No. 1 by a joyous crowd.

"Well, here I am," said Harry, still a little dazed. "Blessed if I know how. What am I let out for?"

"It's Quelchy!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We put it to Quelchy, and he must have jawed old Jeffreys. Good old Quelchy!"

"Hurrah!"

Never had the Remove-master been so popular with his Form. But the merry satisfaction of the Removites received a blow later in the evening. Billy Bunter came bolting into the Common-room with startling news.

"I say you fellows," he gasped, "Quelchy's going!"

"Quelchy?" exclaimed Squiff.

"Going?" shouted Peter Todd.

There was a rush to the door. The station cab was rolling away to the gates, with Mr. Quelch seated in it. The juniors watched it in dismay as it disappeared.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, in a low voice. "Sacked! Quelchy's been sacked for getting you out of limbo, Wharton!"

"Only till Dr. Locke comes home," said Peter Todd shrewdly. "Quelchy will come back all right when our proper Head does."

And that was all the consolation the Removites had. They had seen the last of their Form-master for as long as Mr. Jeffreys' rule at Greyfriars lasted.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Form-room!

"**W**HOS going to take the Remove?"

That was the interesting question to the Lower Fourth Form on the following morning.

Their Form-master was gone.

Doubtless Mr. Jeffreys intended to replace him by a master more to his liking. But that would take time. Meanwhile, who was to take charge of the Remove? It was not an easy Form to handle.

The juniors wondered.

They did not learn till they assembled in the Form-room for morning lessons. Then Mr. Jeffreys came in, followed by Loder of the Sixth. A deep silence fell upon the Remove.

"Silence!" rapped out Mr. Jeffreys, though everyone was silent. "Loder will take charge of the Remove to-day, and until a new master is appointed. Loder will act under my authority, and any insubordination will be reported to me. I warn all the boys in this Form that I expect perfect order to be kept here. Loder, you will now take the class."

"Yes, sir!" said Loder.

Mr. Jeffreys quitted the Form-room. He was due to take the Sixth.

The Removites stared at Gerald Loder. The bully of the Sixth—the prefect they disliked most of all at Greyfriars—was in charge of the Form—with unlimited powers!

The juniors knew what to expect.

There was a smile on Loder's face—a smile of satisfaction. His old enemies in the Remove—the Famous Five, and Squiff and Todd, and one or two others—were certain to feel his heavy hand now that he had them at his mercy.

But had he?

The Remove were in a dangerous mood. Loder had been made head prefect in Wingate's place by Mr. Jeffreys. He was the new Head's favourite. He was backed up by all the authority of the Head. But it was not at all certain that he could ride roughshod over the Remove, all the same.

As if feeling his way, Loder was very self-restrained during first lesson. The juniors, who had expected him to begin

with bullying, were surprised and relieved.

In second lesson Loder showed the cloven foot, so to speak.

He took Mr. Quelchy's cane from the desk and began to use it. He began with Billy Bunter, whose howls filled the Form-room as Loder caned him. The Remove looked on grimly. Bunter was undoubtedly lazy and slovenly, and Loder had some excuse, at least. The next victim was Fish, who bungled his construe, as usual. Then Skinner and Snoop and Stott suffered in turn.

The amateur Form-master was evidently selecting the easiest victims to begin with.

But apparently, like Alexander of old, Loder felt the desire of new worlds to conquer. And at last he rapped out:

"Wharton!"

Harry Wharton looked at him.

"You were speaking to Nugent, Wharton."

"I was not," said Harry.

"Don't contradict me!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

Loder's eyes gleamed, and he picked up the cane again.

"Stand out here, Wharton!"

All eyes in the Form-room were turned upon the captain of the Remove. Harry Wharton did not stir.

"Do you hear me?" shouted Loder.

"Yes."

"Well, are you coming?"

"No!"

Loder paused. The answer was short and sharp, and Wharton evidently meant what he said.

"You know Mr. Jeffreys has placed you under my orders, Wharton," said the prefect, at last.

"Oh, yes."

"Will you obey me, or not?"

"In anything reasonable, yes. Not in anything else."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I order you to come out here and be caned, Wharton!"

"Rats!"

"What?" yelled Loder.

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove. The expression on the amateur Form-master's face at that moment was extraordinary.

Loder gasped.

"Wharton, you cheeky young hound! Why, I'll—I'll—"

He rushed among the desks, and the cane lashed at Wharton.

Wharton's hand closed on his inkpot. He jerked it from the desk, and the ink flew in a thick stream fairly into Loder's face.

Splash!

"Gurgggg!"

Loder staggered back, smothered with ink, and spluttering wildly. A goodly portion of the ink had gone into his mouth and nose. His face suddenly resembled that of a Christy Minstrel.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

Loder stamped and raved and spluttered and spat, amid howls of merriment from his class.

Wharton stood up, ready for him if he came on again. He had made up his mind. Head or no Head, he did not intend to be caned for nothing, at the sweet will of the bully of Greyfriars!

The prefect was not long in coming on. With an inky face and glaring eyes he rushed at Wharton, grasped him, and dragged him out before the desks.

The junior did not go unresisting.

Twice his fists thrashed into Loder's furious face, and he struggled fiercely as the cane lashed.

"Rescue!" roared Bob Cherry.

Bob was over his desk in a twinkling, and rushing at Loder. Nugent and Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh and Squiff, Peter Todd and the Bounder, were after

him the next second. The juniors had forgotten everything now except that they were up against their old enemy.

Hands grasped Loder on all sides, and he was dragged forcibly away from the captain of the Remove.

"Bump him!" roared Tom Brown.

"Scalp him!" shrieked Rake.

"Ink him!"

"Hurrah!"

A dozen inkpots were forthcoming. As Loder was flung sprawling on the floor, the inkpots were emptied over him, and the prefect enjoyed a shower-bath. He was smothered from head to foot, and sat up, gasping and sputtering, dripping and breathing ink.

"Groooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him some more!"

"Kick him out!"

"Now, then, all together!" roared Bob Cherry.

A dozen boots clumped on Loder. The prefect roared and sprang to his feet, only to be rushed over again, and sent sprawling towards the door.

Micky Desmond dragged the door open.

"Kick him out!" he yelled. "Kick him out, the thafe of the world! All together!"

"Yaroo! Help! Oh! Yah!"

Loder rolled out into the passage with nearly every boot in the Lower Fourth Form behind him.

He collapsed in the passage, gasping.

"Dribble him!" roared Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Loder did not wait to be dribbled. He leaped up, and tore away to the Sixth Form-room, to seek the protection of the Head.

"After him!" shrieked Micky Desmond.

"Hold on!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Stay where you are, fathead!"

Loder had gone.

The Remove remained in their Form-room wildly excited—but more than a little apprehensive. What Mr. Jeffreys would say when he saw Loder was an interesting problem. What he would do was pretty certain—he would come to the Remove-room, and there would be trouble. And the juniors waited for him to come!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

On the War-path!

THERE was a tramp of hurried footsteps in the passage outside the Form-room.

"He's coming!"

The Removites hastily resumed their seats. The Form-room was very quiet as Mr. Jeffreys strode in.

The new Head's brow was black as thunder.

Behind him came Loder, red with rage through the thick splashes and streaks of ink.

"Is it possible," thundered the new Head, "that you have dared to treat thus the prefect I placed in charge of you?"

Silence.

"It is incredible! But I shall reduce this Form to order! This is the very worst Form in the school! Every boy will be caned. I shall cane the whole form. Stand out, all of you!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

A momentary hesitation was perceptible among the Removites. Mutiny was in their thoughts. But once more the habit of discipline prevailed. The juniors came out quietly.

Mr. Jeffreys, with thunderous look, formed them in line, and they marched past him at the master's desk.

Each member of the Remove was caned as he passed.

It was a long task, and Mr. Jeffreys' arm was aching by the time he had completed it.

And there was a dismal groaning and mambling among the Removites.

Mr. Jeffreys laid down the cane at last.

"Loder, you do not seem able to handle this Form," he said. "You may go. Tell the Sixth they are dismissed for this morning. I shall remain in charge here."

"Very well, sir," said Loder.

The prefect was not sorry not to be left in charge of the Remove again. It was clear, even to Loder, that he could not handle them. In fact, they had handled him; and he did not want any more of it.

For the remainder of morning lessons Mr. Jeffreys took the Remove. He made them work hard. And the cane was busy again several times. At the usual time for dismissal he made no sign. The Remove were kept hard at it for half an hour beyond the usual time.

They were dismissed at last, however. Their feelings were deep as they streamed out into the quadrangle, most of them with smarting hands.

"I say, you fellows, this is horrid, you know!" mumbled Bunter. "You ought to have more sense, you know, really, Wharton."

"What?" exclaimed Harry.

"Jeffreys is ever so much worse than Loder," groaned Bunter. "Why couldn't you let well alone? Yow-ow!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, I think Bunter's right," said Snoop. "We've got to toe the line, and it's only making matters worse to kick over the traces."

"Right enough!" said Skinner.

"Shut up!" roared Bob.

And the weaker spirits moved off, grumbling. Most of the Remove were quite with Wharton. The Bounder was keenest of all. The idea of resistance to authority was welcome to the Bounder's somewhat lawless nature. Most of the fellows could only have been driven into resistance to authority by tyranny pushed beyond the limits of toleration. But the Bounder's nature was not like the rest. In troublous times he seemed to thrive.

"We shall have Jeffreys again this afternoon, you fellows," he said. "He knows it's no good shoving a prefect at us."

"What about the Sixth?" asked Bob. "Somebody's got to take the cheery old Sixth."

"Somebody's got to take us, and a prefect can't do it. Wingate could; but Wingate is in Jeffreys' black books—the same with Gwynne. Jeffreys will take us himself, you can bet on that! It's up to us to handle him."

"Phew!"

"What price barricading the Form-room door and keeping him out?" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"We've got to keep order if we can," he said. "Dr. Locke's away ill; and unless we're driven to it we don't want a row here while he's gone. It would upset him no end when he came to hear of it."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"It will come to a row sooner or later," he said.

"If it does, we don't want it to be our fault," said Harry; "and I don't think a majority of the fellows would back us up in a rebellion—yet, at all events. It's a rather serious step—it means the sack for some of us!"

"Jeffreys is only temporary headmaster," said the Bounder shrewdly.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 502.

"He can't expel a chap—not for good, anyway."

"The Board of Governors can, and they have confidence in Jeffreys, or they wouldn't have appointed him."

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"Of course, a chap doesn't want to get the boot," he admitted. "Perhaps the rotter has us there! But my idea is that the Remove should declare war on Jeffreys, and make him sit up. He's down on us, and he's going to give us a ghastly time. We've got to hit back. You know Jacky Fisher's maxim—hit first, hit hard, and hit often."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's right enough," said Wharton.

"But—"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"But you're not prepared for war to the giddy knife?" he said. "Well, I'm going to make Jeffreys sit up for larruping my paws this morning, somehow."

And the Bounder strolled away, whistling. The chums of the Remove remained very thoughtful. If the new headmaster went on as he had started it was very probable that there would be serious trouble—perhaps to the extent of a rebellion in the school. But that was so alarming a step that it required very serious reflection; and certainly it could not be justified unless affairs had become absolutely intolerable. The fact that their own respected headmaster was away ill, too, had a restraining influence upon the fellows. Harry Wharton & Co. were very reluctant to let Dr. Locke hear bad news from Greyfriars at such a time. It was agreed that, so long as they were able, at all events, they should make up their minds to grin and bear it. And the decision of the Famous Five carried weight. It was certain that there would be no rebellion unless Harry Wharton placed himself at the head of it.

The Bounder, however, had less restraint, and his reckless nature seemed to revel in the prospect of serious trouble. For the consequences he cared little—his courage was in proportion to his recklessness. If he had been leader of the Remove the collision between the Form and the new Head would certainly have been precipitated.

After dinner the Remove learned that for the present they were to be taken by Mr. Jeffreys personally.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had taken charge of the Sixth Form, Mr. Capper, of the Upper Fourth, had taken the Fifth, and the Upper Fourth were placed under Walker. Loder, apparently, was not to be given another trial. Walker of the Sixth was a chum of Loder's, but not quite so black a sheep—and possibly Loder's experience would be a warning to him. Mr. Jeffreys, freed from other duties, was able to devote himself to the Remove.

"You kids are goin' to have a rippin' time, I fancy," Temple of the Fourth remarked to Wharton. "Why can't you fags keep order—what?"

"You chaps will keep order," said Bob Cherry sarcastically. "I can just hear you saying to Walker, 'Please, sir!' and 'Oh, sir!' and 'Yes, sir!' and 'No, sir!'"

Temple reddened.

"Of course, we sha'n't stand any rot from Walker," he said.

"Oh, rather not!" said Dabney of the Fourth.

"Walker will know how to treat us properly," said Fry loftily. "We're not a gang of disorderly fags, you know!"

And Temple & Co. walked away with their noses in the air. They didn't like Mr. Jeffreys' ways themselves; but they agreed—among themselves—that the Remove were a set of cheeky fags who wanted plenty of lickings.

Meanwhile, the Bounder had been thinking. Shortly before afternoon

lessons he looked for Billy Bunter. He found that plump youth outside the school shop, blinking in at the window through his big spectacles—like an extremely fat Peri at the gate of Paradise.

Vernon-Smith tapped him on the shoulder, and Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, Smithy, could you lend a fellow a bob?" he asked. "I've been disappointed about a postal-order. Mrs. Mimble won't give me any tick, for some reason."

"Hard cheese," said the Bounder agreeably. "But what about the grub rules?"

"Oh, that's all right! There's still some things that ain't controlled," said Bunter. "You lend me a bob, and I'll manage the rest."

"You're a jolly clever ventriloquist, Bunter," said the Bounder.

Bunter stared. About the only thing the fat junior was any good at was ventriloquism; but he was seldom praised for it. Bunter's ventriloquial tricks earned him more kicks than halfpence.

"Oh, really, Smithy!" said the Owl of the Remove, more surprised than flattered. "What are you getting at?"

"It's so, isn't it?" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather! Most of the fellows are jealous of me," said Bunter, with a sniff. "But about that bob—"

"I'll make it half-a-crown if you like."

"Hand it over!" said Bunter promptly.

"After lessons," said the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy, I'm hungry now, you know—"

"On condition that you do something for me first," added Vernon-Smith coolly.

"Eh? What can I do for you? Some coaching at cricket?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter peevishly.

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Old Quelchy knew all about your voice-chucking tricks," said the Bounder. "But Jeffreys is a stranger here, and, of course, he's never heard of them. He caned you this morning, as well as the rest of us."

"Yes, the beast! I hadn't touched Loder!"

"Well, if you make him sit up this afternoon with your merry ventriloquism—"

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter. "He's too dangerous!"

"Good-bye, then!"

"Hold on, Smithy!" Bunter rushed after the Bounder as he turned away.

"I—I— If you make a point of it—of course, I'd do anything to oblige a pal like you, Smithy—"

"Is it a go?" asked the Bounder.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Make it five bob!" he said at last.

"Done!"

"Shell out, then!"

Bunter held out a fat hand.

"After lessons, and if Jeffreys gets a really high old time," said Vernon-Smith. "Not otherwise."

And he walked away.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. "Smithy's a beast—and Jeffreys is a beast—everybody's a beast! Br-r-r!"

And then the bell for classes called Bunter to the Form-room with the rest of the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Little Ventriloquism!

MR. JEFFREYS entered the Remove-room with a grim brow.

Afternoon lessons began in a thundery atmosphere.

Perhaps it was a compliment to the

Remove to be getting the new headmaster's special attention in this way. If so, it was a compliment they did not appreciate at all. Some of the fellows agreed with Skinner & Co. that the Remove had been too hasty with Gerald Loder. Certainly even Loder was better than Mr. Jeffreys. But the die was cast now.

It was very clear that Mr. Jeffreys did not understand boys. His one idea of rule was grim repression, and severe punishments for the slightest offences. It was really surprising how such a man came to be born outside Prussia. Mr. Quelch had known how to make his Form respect him, and his authority had rested upon the habit of respect and obedience—as authority, to be stable, must always rest. The juniors did not respect Mr. Jeffreys, and their obedience to him was unwilling, wrung from them by harsh punishments. It was all the difference between English ideas and Prussian ideas—indeed, from Mr. Jeffreys' line of conduct, some of the fellows suspected that he had German blood in his veins.

Billy Bunter, as it happened, was the first fellow to feel the pointer rapping on his knuckles. The Owl of the Remove was inattentive—as he often was—but not to the extent of deserving that cruel rap. Bunter sat sucking his knuckles, his round eyes gleaming behind his spectacles. Even the worm will turn, and Bunter was feeling vengeful. Between his desire for reprisals on the tyrant, and the thought of the Bounder's five shillings, the Greyfriars ventriloquist screwed his courage to the sticking point and made the plunge. After all, there was little danger. Mr. Jeffreys was not likely to suspect that there was a ventriloquist in his Form, and if he did he would hardly guess that it was the most flagrant dunce of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith gave the fat junior an expressive glance, and Bunter gave a fat little cough. The Remove fellows knew that cough, and some of them looked at him warningly. But Bunter did not heed warning looks. He was ready for business. He coughed again, and Mr. Jeffreys' steely eye turned on him.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-c-os, sir?"

"Have you a cold?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then why are you coughing?"

"I—I—I—"

Rap!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter.

"Silence!"

The Owl of the Remove sucked his knuckles in silent anguish. His eyes gleamed through his spectacles with the expression of a Hun.

The lesson was Roman history, and Mr. Jeffreys seemed to be doing his best to catch out his unfortunate pupils. He would rap out a question so suddenly as to confuse the unhappy junior upon whom his eye was gleaming, and a failure to answer meant lines, or a rap with the pointer.

"In what year was Carthage finally destroyed?" demanded Mr. Jeffreys, with his savage eye on Micky Desmond.

"1914!" came a voice from the back of the class.

Mr. Jeffreys jumped.

"Who made that ridiculous answer?" he exclaimed.

There was no reply. Most of the Removites guessed that the Greyfriars ventriloquist had spoken, but they were not likely to tell Mr. Jeffreys so.

"Who spoke?" thundered Mr. Jeffreys.

"Bow-wow!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Go and eat coke!"

Mr. Jeffreys fairly gasped. His eyes were gleaming on the class, but for the life of him he could not detect the speaker.

He grasped the pointer savagely. Before he could bring it into use, however, the fat, wheezy voice of Mr. Prout was heard in the passage, the door of the Form-room being open, as usual, in warm weather.

"Mr. Jeffreys! Ahem!"

The headmaster spun round.

"What is it?"

"Kindly come to the Sixth Form-room! Loder is completely unmanageable."

Mr. Jeffreys uttered an impatient exclamation. He was not pleased at hearing a complaint of his favourite, and he was astonished that Mr. Prout should call to him from the passage without showing himself in the doorway.

He gave the Remove a glare.

"I must leave you for a few minutes!" he grated out. "If there is the slightest noise in this room while I am gone—"

Mr. Jeffreys did not finish. He left the rest to the imagination of the juniors, and strode from the Form-room. Somewhat to his surprise, Mr. Prout was not visible in the corridor.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Bunter, was that you?"

"He, he, ho!" came from Bunter.

The Remove grinned and waited.

They were getting a rest, at all events. Mr. Jeffreys strode away to the Sixth Form-room, and strode in. He found the Sixth deep in Greek with Mr. Prout. The latter gave the headmaster an inquiring glance.

"Well, Mr. Prout?" rapped out the Head.

"Well, sir?" said Mr. Prout, in surprise.

"What complain have you to make of Loder?"

"Eh? Loder?"

"Yes, Loder."

"None, sir!" said Mr. Prout, his astonishment increasing. "I have no complaint to make at all!"

"You have no complaints to make!" exclaimed Mr. Jeffreys.

"None!"

"Then why, sir, did you come to the Remove Form-room and request me to step here, and state that Loder was unmanageable?" exclaimed the Head.

Mr. Prout jumped.

"I!" he ejaculated.

"Yes; not more than two minutes ago."

"You are labouring under some very extraordinary misapprehension, sir," said Mr. Prout, in his solemn way. "I certainly have not left this class-room since afternoon lessons commenced."

"Mr. Prout!"

"Mr. Jeffreys!"

"You called me here, sir—"

"I certainly did nothing of the kind!" said Mr. Prout tartly.

"I know your voice, I presume? I repeat that you called me here only a few minutes ago!"

"And I repeat that I did nothing of the sort! If you cannot accept my assurance on that point, Mr. Jeffreys," added the Fifth Form master, with crushing dignity, "the Sixth Form will bear out my statement that I have not left this class-room!"

Mr. Jeffreys stood rooted to the floor for some moments. The eyes of all the Sixth were upon him, and some of them were grinning. It was impossible to doubt Mr. Prout's statement, of course, as the new Head saw after a moment's reflection.

"It—it must have been a trick of some kind, then!" gasped Mr. Jeffreys, at last. "Someone called to me from the passage."

"It certainly was not I!" said Mr. Prout drily.

The headmaster strode out of the room, closing the door with unnecessary force.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Prout. "Is it—is it possible that Mr. Jeffreys is addicted to drinking? It really looks like it! Bless my soul!" And Mr. Prout shook his head very seriously and returned to his Greek.

Mr. Jeffreys rustled back to the Remove-room. That someone had played a trick on him was certain, though who it could be was a mystery, as all the boys were supposed to be in class.

He looked in at the other Form-rooms on his way back, and ascertained that no one had been away from lessons. In a very mystified and angry frame of mind he returned to the Remove.

He found them all as quiet and orderly as lambs. He cast an angry glance over the class, as if in search of a victim, but the juniors carefully avoided meeting his eyes, and Mr. Jeffreys had no excuse for using the pointer.

He took up his book again, to resume the interrupted lesson, when a voice floated in at the open window:

"Extry special! Latest news! Great victory in Flanders! All the winners!"

Mr. Jeffreys rushed to the window.

"Go away!" he shouted. "How dare you come here selling newspapers! Go away at once!"

Then he stared blankly. Outside in the quadrangle the old elms met his view, and nothing else. There was no sign of a newspaper-vendor.

Mr. Jeffreys stared out blankly for some minutes, and then turned back into the Form-room with a worried look. He was beginning to wonder whether his senses were playing him false.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

THE Remove were extremely quiet and sedate. Mr. Jeffreys was at boiling-point, and no one was anxious to attract his attention. But it was a case of the wolf and the lamb over again.

Mr. Jeffreys simply had to cane somebody, and in such a frame of mind he was sure to find a victim.

"Todd!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir?" said Peter uneasily.

"What were you laughing at?"

"I wasn't laughing, sir."

"Don't contradict me, Todd!"

"Certainly not, sir."

"I will keep order in this class, or I will know the reason why! Hold out your hand, Todd!"

Swish, swish!

"Ow-yow!" mumbled Peter Tod.

"Silence! If you make those ridiculous noises in the Form-room I will— Bless my soul!"

"Extry special! 'Evenin' Noos,' sir?"

"Bless my soul!" muttered the Head.

"That a vagabond should have the audacity to come here crying newspapers—"

"Latest victory! 'Orrible rout of the Germans! Millions killed and wounded! Only a 'apenny, sir!"

"I—I will not endure this!" panted Mr. Jeffreys. He rushed to the window.

"You vagabond, go away instantly, or I will have you arrested!"

"Extry special, sir! All the winners!"

Mr. Jeffreys jumped round from the window, as the voice came in at the door.

"Did you say 'Evenin' Noos,' sir?"

The exasperated master rushed to the door.

"You rascal!" he shouted. "How dare you come here!"

But the newspaper-merchant was not

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 502.

to be seen in the passage. Mr. Jeffreys passed his hand over his perspiring brow. Where was the man?

He stamped along the passage to the end, but the man was not to be seen. As he came back towards the Form-room he heard a voice in the room itself, and started:

"Keep it dark, young gentlemen! Don't tell the old codger that I'm 'idin' in the cupboard! He looks dangerous, he do!"

Mr. Jeffreys rushed into the room.

"So he is here!" he thundered. "You are all parties to this! It is a plot—I see now that it is a plot! Wharton, I have not the slightest doubt that you have a hand in this!"

"Not at all, sir!" said Harry.

"Where is that man?"

"What man, sir?"

"The man who was here a moment ago. He must have entered by the window while I was in the corridor. He spoke to you."

"I did not see any man, sir."

"Don't lie to me, Wharton!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed, but he was silent. Mr. Jeffreys glared round the Form-room. There was only one cupboard in the room—a large wall-cupboard at the end, where easels and blackboards were kept.

Mr. Jeffreys strode towards it. The door was locked, and there was no key visible.

The enraged master turned to the Form again.

"Does anyone here know where the key of this cupboard is?" he demanded.

There was no reply.

"Did you see anyone enter this cupboard and lock himself in?"

"No, sir."

"He must have done so—he said as much to you all!"

"I don't think that cupboard locks on the inside, sir," said Peter Todd. "Mr. Quelch keeps the key in his study, sir."

"Do you mean to say, Todd, that there is not a man hidden in this cupboard at the present moment?"

"I—I think not, sir! I don't see how he could be there."

"Do you ask me to doubt the evidence of my own ears?" thundered Mr. Jeffreys. "I tell you I heard the ruffian ask you not to tell me that he was hiding in the cupboard!"

"D-d-d-did you, sir?"

"I did! I am assured that you are all in this plot, and that you have induced this—this scoundrel to come here and play tricks upon me!" fumed the Head. "You shall smart for it!"

"What scoundrel, sir?"

"The man hidden in this cupboard!" shouted Mr. Jeffreys. He shook savagely at the handle of the door. "Come out immediately! Do you hear?"

"I 'ear!"

The voice came—at least, it seemed to come—from the interior of the locked cupboard. Some of the Removeites started as they heard it, so natural did it sound. Billy Bunter's fat face was expressionless.

"So you are here!" said Mr. Jeffreys, in a grinding voice. "I knew it! I order you to open that door at once!"

"Go and chop chips!"

"What?"

"Go and put your 'ead under the tap, old gent! It'll cool you."

Mr. Jeffreys gasped.

"Will you come out?" he shrieked.

"No blinkin' fear!"

"If you do not immediately open that door I will break in the lock, and drag you out with my own hands!" thundered Mr. Jeffreys.

"Oh, you're drunk!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 502.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Fair squiffy, an' no mistake! Nice state for a 'eadmaster to get into—I don't think!" came the voice from the cupboard. "I wouldn't send my boys to this 'ere school, I know that! 'Orrid old waster, that's wot I say!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Jeffreys dragged at the cupboard door, but it remained fast, and he looked round wildly for a weapon to break the lock.

It was evident—to Mr. Jeffreys—that the rascal had locked himself in the cupboard, though what his reason could be for such an extraordinary proceeding was a deep mystery. The Remove fellows watched the new Head breathlessly.

Bob Cherry gave Bunter an ecstatic dig in the ribs. Bob was beginning to enjoy his afternoon.

There was a heavy poker in the fender, and Mr. Jeffreys made a dart at it. Poker in hand, he approached the cupboard again.

"Now, will you come out, you disorderly scoundrel?" he roared.

"I don't think!"

Crash, crash!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the excited master rained furious blows on the cupboard lock.

Crash, crash, crash!

The lock was not built to stand usage of that kind. It flew into pieces, and Mr. Jeffreys dragged the door wide open.

"Now, you insolent rascal!" he panted.

He glared at the cupboard. The Remove waited breathlessly. Mr. Jeffreys' expression was extraordinary as he peered among the lumber in the cupboard. For there was no sign of the man whose raucous voice had defied him. He stood staring for some minutes, his face growing pale.

He turned from the cupboard at last. As he did so a voice floated in at the window:

"Extry special! 'Evenin' Noos, sir? All the winners!"

Mr. Jeffreys' eyes dilated. It was the same voice, and now it was outside the house, apparently just under the Form-room window.

"How—how—how did the man get—get out?" stammered Mr. Jeffreys. "I—I must be—be dreaming! Good heavens!"

"Latest noos, sir! All the winners! Did you say 'Evenin' Noos, sir?"

Mr. Jeffreys rushed out of the Form-room, poker in hand. If he had found an enterprising news vendor outside he would certainly have used the poker on him. Fortunately, he did not. The Removeites could stand it no longer, and they burst into a yell of laughter as the Head disappeared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But they were still as mice when Mr. Jeffreys strode into the Form-room again.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Wanted!

A PIN might have been heard to drop in the Remove-room as Mr. Jeffreys faced his class, his eyes glittering at them. It seemed as if the new Head was on the verge of a volcanic outburst, but he restrained himself. The perspiration was thick upon his brow.

"Wharton!" he said, and his voice was quiet.

"Yes, sir?"

"Did you see a man in this room at all?"

"Only you, sir."

"You did not see any man enter that cupboard?"

"No, sir."

"You heard the voice in the cupboard, I presume?"

"A voice in that cupboard, sir? Certainly not!"

Mr. Jeffreys wiped his brow again.

"Did you hear a voice proceed from that cupboard, Cherry?"

"No, sir!" said Bob. Bob had heard the voice proceed from the Greyfriars ventriloquist, but that was his affair. Certainly it had not proceeded from the cupboard, though it had appeared to do so.

"It is extraordinary!" said Mr. Jeffreys.

"What is, sir?" asked Bob innocently.

"Never mind! I—I am not very well this afternoon," said Mr. Jeffreys. "I shall not finish lessons here. You will take French for the remainder of the day."

Mr. Jeffreys quitted the Remove-room. He hardly knew whether he was on his head or heels after the strange occurrences of the afternoon. The Removeites grinned joyously at one another.

"Blessed if the old bounder doesn't wonder if he's wandering in his mind!" chuckled Skinner. "It was great!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows; perhaps you'll own up now that I'm a first-class ventriloquist!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"You'd better keep it dark, though," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Jeffreys would scalp you if he knew."

"I'll bet he finds out, too," said Snoop.

Bunter left off chortling suddenly.

"Eh? How could he find out, Snoop?" he exclaimed.

"Well, you've played tricks on Loder. Loder knows. If Loder hears of this, he will smell a rat at once!"

"Oh, crikey! I—I hadn't thought of that! Smithy, you beast——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's your five bob, Bunter!" said the Bounder. "Keep your pecker up! If Jeffreys comes down on you, I'll own up I put you up to it!"

"The beast may cane me all the same," mumbled Bunter. But he found consolation in pocketing the five shillings.

Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, came in to take the Remove for the remainder of the afternoon in a prolonged French lesson. It was a very welcome change to the Remove. They did not specially enjoy French, but Mossoo was delightful after Mr. Jeffreys. They noted that Monsieur Charpentier gave Bunter a very significant look. Mossoo knew of Bunter's weird gift—he had had ventriloquial tricks played on him—and evidently Mr. Jeffreys had told him of his strange hallucinations in the Form-room; and Mossoo had put two and two together. But it was equally evident that the Frenchman had not betrayed Bunter. Mr. Jeffreys' savage severity made the kind-hearted French master very unwilling to expose the junior to such punishment as would have been inflicted, and so he had kept his own counsel.

Monsieur Charpentier was always kind and genial, but he was even more so than usual this afternoon. The Remove fellows were all very cheerful when they were dismissed at last. Billy Bunter made a direct line for the tuckshop, to expend his new funds upon whatever was obtainable in the eatable line.

He was coming away from the tuckshop, with a fat and shiny look, when Hobson of the Shell bore down upon him.

"Oh, here you are!" growled Hobson.

"You're wanted."

"I don't mind if I do," said Bunter, with a genial blink. "I'll come to your study to tea with pleasure, Hobby, old chap. What have you got in the way of a spread?"

The Shell fellow stared at him.

"I don't ask Remove fags to tea!" he snapped. "Especially fat porpoises!"

"Oh, really Hobson—"

"The Head wants you. Loder told me to find you. Dashed cheek, fagging Shell chaps!" grunted Hobson indignantly. "Blessed if I shall stand much more of Loder's cheek! Fagging me, by gum!"

"What does the Head want?" stammered Bunter, in dismay.

"Blessed if I know, or care either! I know what I want—I want to biff Loder on the nose!" growled Hobson. And the captain of the Shell marched off in great indignation—too indignant on his own account to bother about Bunter or what he was wanted for.

Billy Bunter was quaking.

He had not the slightest doubt that he was wanted on account of the happenings in the Remove-room that afternoon. Mr. Jeffreys had doubtless wondered whether he was the victim of strange hallucinations. But he had thought the matter over since then, and Bunter's queer gift was too well known to remain a secret once Mr. Jeffreys began to inquire. Billy Bunter shivered at the bare idea of facing the heavy-handed tyrant in his study. His fat palms tingled at the thought.

He moved off slowly to the School House. In the hall Loder of the Sixth met him, with a grin.

"You're wanted in the Head's study, Bunter! Look sharp!"

"I—I say, what am I wanted for, Loder?" gasped Bunter.

Loder laughed.

"I've heard about the mysterious voices in the Form-room," he said. "I know your tricks, Bunter!"

"You—you've told Jeffreys?"

"Naturally."

"I—I say, is he g-g-going to lick me, Loder?"

"Ha, ha! I fancy so. Cut off!"

"Ow! Oh, dear! I—I say—"

"Oh, get a move on!" snapped Loder; and he took Billy Bunter by the collar and marched him off to the Head's study.

Mr. Jeffreys received him with a thunderous brow.

The new Head had been puzzled, perplexed, and worried by the strange incidents of the afternoon. But Loder of the Sixth had enlightened him, and his perplexity had changed to deep rage. His eyes were fixed upon Bunter with a terrifying expression.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?"

"You played tricks in the Form-room this afternoon, leading me to suppose that a man was concealed in the cupboard?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I am informed that you have the gift of ventriloquism, and that you have often played such tricks, Bunter."

"Not at all, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Loder's quite mistaken, sir! I—I couldn't ventriloquise to save my life, sir!"

"Loder! You are sure it was Bunter?" asked Mr. Jeffreys, somewhat doubtfully. He would rather have suspected Wharton.

"Quite sure, sir," said Loder. "His tricks are well known."

"It—it's a mistake, sir," gasped Bunter. "Any fellow in the Remove will tell you it's a mistake, sir! They all know I ain't a ventriloquist. I—I've never heard of ventriloquism, sir!"

"You are lying, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! I'm the most truthful chap in the Remove!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Jeffreys selected a cane. Bunter watched him with horror. He knew what was coming, and his nerves would not stand it. His next proceeding was surprising. He made a jump at the door, tore it open, and fled.

"Bunter!" shouted the new Head.

"M-m-my word!" gasped Loder, in amazement.

"Loder, bring Bunter back at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

The prefect hurried after the fleeing junior, and Mr. Jeffreys swished the cane and waited impatiently for his return.

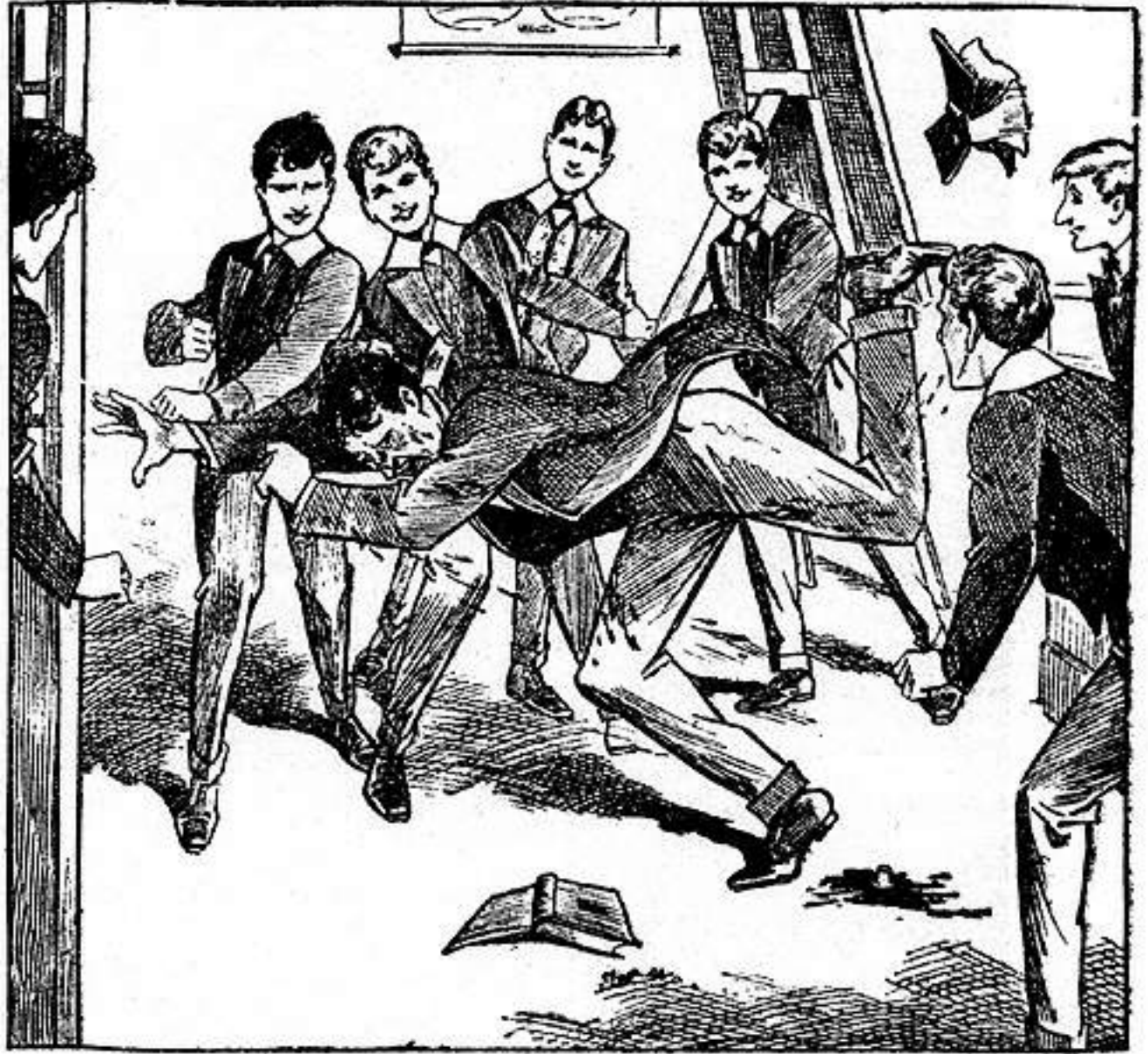
THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Goes Through It!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry caught Bunter by the shoulder as the fat junior came tearing breathlessly into the Remove passage.

"Leggo!" gasped Bunter. "I—I want Smithy!"



A warm time for Loder! (See Chapter 4.)

"Here's Smithy!" said Wharton.

The Bounder came up.

"Smithy!" Bunter gasped breathlessly. "Smithy! The Head's found out! I say, you know, you've got to own up, you know. Loder's after me! Oh dear!"

The Bounder set his lips.

"Don't be a funky fat idiot!" he said irritably. "I'll see you through!"

"By gum!" said Johnny Bull. "Jeffreys will be down on you, Smithy!"

"I know that!"

"He's got to own up!" howled Bunter. "It was all his doing! I—I say, Smithy, you'd better tell Jeffreys you're a ventriloquist, you know, and— and then he'll leave me out. See?"

"Fathcad!"

"Bunter!" Loder came up the stairs two at a time. "You cheeky young rotter, come back!"

"Oh dear!"

"I'm coming with you, Bunter," said the Bounder.

"So you were in it?" asked Loder, with a rather curious look at the Bounder. The two black sheep, senior and junior, had some points in common, and the bully of the Sixth generally let the Bounder alone.

"I was the merry offender," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

"Oh! You'd better come, too, then!"

The two juniors followed Loder, Bunter quaking, the Bounder cool and calm and indifferent. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after them in a very uneasy frame of mind. The Bounder could do nothing but own up, and it was certain that he was going through it now. But there was nothing his Form-fellows could do.

Loder marched the two delinquents into the Head's study. Mr. Jeffreys frowned at Vernon-Smith.

"I sent you for Bunter, Loder!" he snapped.

"I felt bound to come, sir," said Vernon-Smith, before the prefect could

reply. "I put Bunter up to playing tricks on you this afternoon. Bunter wasn't to blame—he hasn't sense enough to be to blame for anything. It was my doing from start to finish."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Jeffreys, between his teeth, his eyes glinting at the Bounder. "That is a very bold confession to make, Vernon-Smith. It appears that it was Bunter who actually played the tricks, however."

"I—I—I—" mumbled Bunter.

"But you, Vernon-Smith, planned the whole thing, I understand. You are a much more intelligent boy than Bunter, and you were perfectly well aware of the seriousness of your action."

"Quite so!" assented the Bounder.

"Very well. I shall punish you more severely than Bunter."

"I expected that."

"You will not be disappointed, then!" said Mr. Jeffreys grimly.

The cane came into operation. Bunter was dismissed with a couple of cuts, and he scuttled out of the study yelping. Then came the Bounder's turn. The cool indifference of the Bounder, and the sarcastic curve of his lips, exasperated Mr. Jeffreys even more than the tricks of which he had been the

victim. The caning of the Bounder was severe—so severe that even Loder, looking on, set his lips a little. Vernon-Smith went through it with grim endurance, only his eyes glinting savagely under the infliction.

Mr. Jeffreys laid down the cane at last.

"Loder!"

"Yes, sir?" muttered the prefect.

"Take Vernon-Smith to the punishment-room, and lock him in. He will remain there for three days on bread and water!"

The Bounder sneered. He understood that now Mr. Quelch was gone the new Head intended to resume that drastic punishment, secure from interference. Loder led him away from the study.

At the end of the passage some of the Remove met them. Harry Wharton looked anxiously at the Bounder, whose face was white and set. It was plain that he had suffered severely.

"Come on!" said Loder.

"Where are you going now, Smithy?" asked Wharton.

"Punishment-room!" said Vernon-Smith. "Now Quelch's gone, Jeffreys is beginning that again. While the cat's away the mice will play, you know."

"Bread and water?" asked Squiff.

"Yes."

"It's a rotten shame!"

"Field!" exclaimed Loder warningly.

"It's a rotten shame!" repeated Sampson Field, raising his voice. "Jeffreys is a low hound, and you can tell him so from me, Loder!"

"Hear, hear!" roared Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Don't go, Smithy!" called out Bolsover major.

Loder grasped Vernon-Smith's arm, and hurried him on. He was rather afraid of being mobbed by the Remove just then. Some of the juniors followed, and saw the key turn on the Bounder.

There was simmering excitement in the Remove that evening. Hardly any of the fellows did their preparation. They gathered in the studies, and in the Remove passage, to discuss the latest act of tyranny. Harry Wharton was silent and very thoughtful. His own incarceration in the punishment-room had left a deep impression on his mind. He knew that Mr. Quelch could only have induced the new Head to release him by a threat of invoking the law. No lesser consideration would have appealed to Mr. Jeffreys. And when the Remove went to their dormitory that night Harry Wharton communicated the result of his reflections on the subject.

Walker had seen lights out, but the Remove did not settle down to sleep. After Walker had gone Wharton turned out at once.

"You fellows going to back me up?" he asked.

"Rath-er!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "What's the game?"

"Smithy isn't going to stay in the punishment-room," said Harry Wharton very quietly.

"Oh!"

"It's up to us to stand by him," said Harry. "It was decent of him to own up for Bunter's sake. He was licked for the trick on Jeffreys in the Form-room—licked in a way Dr. Locke wouldn't have allowed any Greyfriars fellow to be licked. You could see that. Bread and water won't do for us, and the punishment-room is out of date. Jeffreys is piling it on too thick; and I, for one, am not going to stand it! Smithy is coming out!"

"Bravo!"

"I'm game!" said Squiff.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 502.

"The gamefulness is terrific!"

"Better let well alone," said Snoop uneasily. "Jeffreys will be awfully wild, and he may go for the lot of us!"

Snoop was howled down at once. Nearly all the Remove were out of bed now, in a state of great excitement. Wharton had touched the right chord.

"What's the programme?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he hastily dragged on his trousers.

"We're going to have Smithy out!"

"Hurrah!"

"Jeffreys has the key!" remarked Hazeldene.

"That doesn't make any difference. There's a chisel in Johnny's tool-box that will do the trick."

"Good egg!"

"And if Jeffreys interferes we'll bump him!" said Bolsover major truculently.

There was a laugh at that. The Removites had not quite reached the point of handling the headmaster.

"Don't all come," said Wharton.

"No need to make a row. We're going to have Smithy out—that's the point!"

"What-ho!"

Wharton and Bob Cherry and Squiff dressed hastily. It was agreed that the rest should remain in the dormitory. The three juniors crept silently downstairs to the Remove passage. Johnny Bull's cold chisel was soon obtained from No. 14, and with that weapon in his hand Harry Wharton led the way quietly to the punishment-room.

The passage outside was unlighted, and very gloomy. The juniors groped their way along, and Wharton tapped lightly at the door.

"Smithy!" he breathed through the keyhole.

"Hallo!" The Bounder was awake.

"Who's that?"

"Wharton! We're going to have you out, Smithy, if you care to risk it. What do you say?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Done, then!"

The three rescuers set to work.

A handkerchief was rolled round the head of the chisel to muffle the sound, and it was hammered well in between the door and the jamb. The muffled blows echoed along the passage. Whether the sound would be heard below the juniors did not know, and they cared little.

Deeper and deeper the chisel was driven in, the lock cracking ominously. A powerful wrench did the rest. The door burst open.

From the darkness within the Bounder's face glimmered. He was grinning.

"Thanks awfully!" he said. "You'll get into a row for this in the morning."

"We're risking that!"

"Good egg!"

There was no sound of alarm below. The noise had not been heard. Vernon-Smith, with his clothes under his arm, in his pyjamas, accompanied his rescuers to the Remove dormitory. There was a buzz as they entered.

"Got Smithy?"

"Here he is!"

"Good!"

"Here I am!" grinned the Bounder. "There will be ructions in the morning, dear boys!"

"Who cares?" grunted Bolsover major.

"Well, I don't, for one!" said the Bounder, laughing. "The sooner we have it out with Jeffreys the better!"

And the Remove turned in.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Admittance!

CLANG, clang!

Greyfriars School turned out at the clanging of the rising-bell in the sunny morning.

There was suppressed excitement in the Remove dormitory that morning. It could not be long now before the breaking open of the punishment-room was discovered, and the juniors wondered what would follow. Skinner and his set were very uneasy. They had had no hand in the rescue of the Bounder, but they fully anticipated that punishment would fall upon the whole Form, including their worthy selves. Loder of the Sixth looked in while the Removites were dressing.

"Oh, you're here, Smith!" he said.

The Bounder gave him a cool nod.

"Here I am, Loder, old scout! Good-morning!"

"The punishment-room was broken open," said Loder. "I've just found it."

"Quite so!"

"I have to report this to Mr. Jeffreys, of course."

"Report away!"

"You can look out for a record flogging, every fag who had a hand in it!" said Loder grimly.

Whiz!

A wet sponge hurtled across the dormitory, and landed on Loder's nose. The prefect gave a yell.

"Oh! Who threw that sponge?"

The question was not answered, but a boot followed the sponge. Loder dodged out into the passage. The Remove seemed to be in a dangerous mood, and he wisely decided to leave the Head to deal with them.

"Who cares for Loder?" roared Bolsover major.

"So long!" shouted the Remove, as a parting salute to the prefect; and Gerald Loder disappeared without reply.

Vernon-Smith sauntered out of the dormitory when he had finished his toilet, as coolly as though nothing out of the common was happening. Harry Wharton & Co. went with him. The new state of affairs at Greyfriars was drawing the Famous Five and the Bounder together.

At breakfast the Bounder took his place at the Remove table.

Every eye in the room turned upon him curiously. His rescue from the punishment-room was the talk of the school now. But Mr. Jeffreys, who breakfasted in the Head's house, was not present, and the other masters made no remark to him. The Bounder ate his breakfast with a good appetite, seemingly quite undisturbed. The interval till morning lessons was rather an anxious time for the Remove. They were waiting for the thunderstorm to break, and the suspense was a little trying to their nerves.

The Remove went into their class-room at the usual time. Expectation was now at its highest pitch. Mr. Jeffreys was to take the class that morning, so he could not fail to see that Vernon-Smith was at liberty.

There was a breathless hush when the new Head's step was heard in the passage.

Mr. Jeffreys entered.

His eyes singled out Vernon-Smith at once. The Bounder met his eyes calmly.

"Vernon-Smith!"

*Eat less
Bread*

"Adsum!" said the Bounder cheerfully. "Why are you not in the punishment-room?"

"I don't care for it, sir!"

"What?"

"A little draughty, sir, and not very comfortable!" explained the Bounder, with cool self-possession. The Remove gasped as they heard his answer. The Bounder's coolness to Mr. Jeffreys was like a red rag to a bull. "On the whole, sir, I prefer the Form-room!"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Jeffreys seemed dumbfounded for some moments. He looked as if he could scarcely believe his ears.

"Vernon-Smith!" he gasped at last. "Come out here!"

"Certainly, sir!"

The Bounder went out before the class. Mr. Jeffreys' beady eyes glittered at the silent Remove.

"The door of the punishment-room was forced from outside," he said. "It was done by the boys of this Form—I am assured of that. Unless they come forward immediately the whole Form will be severely punished."

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Squiff rose immediately, and joined the Bounder before the class. Nugent and Bull and Inky immediately followed. And their example was followed by a crowd.

Tom Brown and Delarey, Bolsover major and Bulstrode, Russell and Ogilvy, and Peter Todd, and Kipps and Newland, and Lord Mauleverer all jumped up and marched out, and after them came a regular swarm.

Of all the Remove, only half-a-dozen fellows remained at their desks.

Mr. Jeffreys' eyes opened wide as nearly the whole Form ranged themselves round the Bounder.

He had certainly not expected that.

"Were all you boys concerned in releasing Vernon-Smith?" he ejaculated at last.

"Yes, sir!"

"Then you will all be punished! You first, Smith!"

Swish!

Mr. Jeffreys uttered an ejaculation as his cane split. It had evidently been doctored by some enterprising junior. The Bounder grinned. Mr. Jeffreys glared at the split cane, and then at the juniors.

"This—this is a trick!" he gasped.

Silence.

"Wharton, fetch a cane from my study at once!"

Harry Wharton left the Form-room. The juniors waited in silence for his return. But he did not return. Three or four minutes passed, and then the truth dawned upon the Remove. Wharton evidently did not mean to return with the instrument of punishment.

"Todd!" almost stuttered Mr. Jeffreys. "Go and fetch a cane from my study, and tell Wharton to come back at once!"

Peter Todd marched out.

There was another long pause. But Peter Todd did not reappear. Mr. Jeffreys was breathing hard with fury. His eyes had narrowed to mere points, and glinted like steel.

The Remove waited silently, wondering what was to happen next. Mr. Jeffreys strode out of the Form-room himself at last.

He had been gone only a minute, when the Form-room door opened and Wharton and Peter Todd came quietly in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Seen Jeffreys?" asked Bob Cherry.

Peter Todd chuckled.

"Yes; we dodged into a study when he came by. He's gone for a cane. What are you up to, Wharton?"

Wharton was turning the key in the lock of the door.

"Locking him out!" said Harry quietly. "We're not going to be caned!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Phew!"

The Remove were quite breathless now. "There'll be an awful row!" mumbled Snoop.

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover major; and Snoop shut up promptly.

There were hurried footsteps without, and the door-handle turned. The door remained shut.

The handle rattled savagely. It was some moments before it dawned upon Mr. Jeffreys that the door was locked inside.

"Open this door at once!" he boomed, as soon as the truth dawned upon his mind.

No answer.

"Cherry, open this door! Field—Bolsover—I command you to unlock this door immediately!"

The juniors maintained a grim silence. The door-handle rattled again savagely. Then the enraged Head knocked sharply on the panels, and his knocks soon became furious bangs. But the door remained fast; not a word came from the Remove.

The assault upon the door ceased at last. Mr. Jeffreys' voice, shaking with anger, came through.

"You shall be punished for this! You shall be punished with the utmost severity!"

"Go hon!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"For the last time, will you unlock this door?"

No reply.

The new Head's footsteps were heard departing. There was silence without. The Removites looked at one another in a somewhat uneasy manner.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, breaking the silence, "we've done it now!"

And the Nabob of Bhanipur remarked that the "donfulness was terrific." There was no doubt about that. The Remove had done it, and it only remained to see what would come of it!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Rebel Form!

IT was an idle morning for the Remove.

Mr. Jeffreys did not return, and the juniors, locked in the Form-room, were left to their own devices.

It was probable that the new Head did not know quite how to deal with this new development.

At all events, nothing happened. The Removites spent the morning hours in excited discussion, and in playing leap-frog in the Form-room.

When the usual hour for dismissal of morning classes drew near there was renewed discussion.

"I suppose we've got to get out," Bob Cherry remarked doubtfully.

"I say, you chaps, we can't be late for dinner, you know!" said Bunter.

"There go the other fellows," remarked Nugent, as many footsteps were heard in the corridors. The Forms had been released.

Harry Wharton unlocked the door.

"Come on!" he said.

And the Remove marched out.

They went into the quadrangle, still without seeing Mr. Jeffreys. It was a Wednesday, and a half-holiday, and the Remove were booked to play the Shell that afternoon in a cricket-match. But they were thinking more of the new Head than of cricket, wondering what step he would take. It was impossible to suppose that he would take the revolt of the Remove lying down.

Dinner came round, and the Remove turned up in the dining-room. The fellows in the other Forms were eyeing them

curiously. It was known to all Greyfriars by this time that the Head had been locked out of the Remove-room. It was certain that a thunderclap must follow; but the thunderclap seemed to be delayed.

"Jeffreys knows he can't handle us, and he's going to let it pass!" Bolsover major declared, when the Remove came out of the dining-room.

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it!" said Bob Cherry. "What about cricket, Harry?"

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Jeffreys can't intend to let it pass," he said. "I suppose he's got some sort of rod in pickle for us. But we're going to play the Shell, anyway!"

Vernon-Smith sauntered down to the gates. He had engagements outside Greyfriars that afternoon. Gosling stepped out of his lodge and stopped him.

"You can't go out, Master Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder halted.

"Why can't I?" he demanded.

"Mr. Jeffreys' orders, sir!" said the porter. "None of the Lower Fourth is allowed out of the gates this afternoon."

Vernon-Smith compressed his lips, and put his hand on the gate. But the gates were locked.

"Orders is orders, sir!" said Gosling.

"Oh, rats!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Open the gate!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere, Master Vernon-Smith, orders is orders, and that there gate ain't going to be hopened!" said Gosling stolidly.

The Bounder strode back into the quadrangle.

"The Remove gated!" he announced.

"Gates locked, and all of us gated! You fellows going to stand it?"

"Well, we're playing cricket," said Bob Cherry. "It won't make any difference to us."

Vernon-Smith's lip curled.

"I dare say it won't; but it will to me. I'm going out all the same, and hang Jeffreys!"

"Hold on, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm afraid it's coming to open trouble between the school and Jeffreys. But there's no need for us to put ourselves in the wrong. Jeffreys is within his rights this time."

"Hang his rights!"

And the Bounder walked away, and disappeared behind the trees close by the school wall. A minute later he dropped into the road from the wall and was on his way to Highcliffe, where Ponsonby & Co. expected him.

Hobson of the Shell joined Wharton.

"I suppose you fellows are playing this afternoon?" he asked dubiously.

"Oh, yes!"

"What's Jeffreys doing about your locking him out of the Form-room?"

"Nothing, so far."

"Then there's something brewing, you can bet your hat on that!" said Hobson.

"I suppose there is. Let's go on with the cricket, all the same."

The junior cricketers went down to Little Side. The new Head's inaction puzzled them, and the impression was growing in the Remove that the tyrant had had his lesson, and intended to draw in his horns, as Bob Cherry expressed it. Harry Wharton did not believe for a moment that the Hun of Greyfriars would be so easily defeated, and it was soon proved that he was right.

Stumps had been pitched, and the Remove team had gone into the field, when Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, arrived on the scene. Mr. Hacker was a somewhat tart-tempered gentleman, and the only master at Greyfriars

who showed any approval of the new Head's methods, though even Mr. Hacker did not wholly approve of them.

"Hobson!" he called out.

"Yes, sir?" said Hobson, stopping on his way to the wicket.

"This match is not to proceed! The Head has forbidden it!"

"Oh, sir!" said Hobson.

"Kindly cease play at once!"

The Shell fellows exchanged glances. They had to obey their Form-master. Hobson and Hoskins turned their backs on the wickets.

"All Remove boys are to go to their Form-room," added Mr. Hacker. "They will remain indoors for the afternoon."

And the master of the Shell returned to the House.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"You're not playing, then, Hobson?"

"Can't, can we, when the dashed Head's stopped us?" said the captain of the Shell irritably.

"Just as you like."

"It isn't as we like—it's as Jeffreys likes, blow him! Come on, you chaps! We can go up the river, at any rate!"

And the Shell fellows cleared off Little Side. The Remove were looking at one another in doubt.

"Are we going indoors?" asked Frank Nugent.

"I jolly well am," said Skinner, who was lounging by the pavilion. "I'm not asking old Jeffreys for more trouble."

Skinner started for the House, and on the way he was joined by Snoop and Stott and Bunter and Fish, and one or two more fellows. They dutifully repaired to the Form-room. But most of the Remove gathered round Harry Wharton, and looked to him for decision.

Harry felt the responsibility that rested upon his shoulders. The Remove were in a mood to follow him, even to the extent of rebellion; and it was easy enough to decide upon a reckless course. It was not so easy to calculate the consequences that might follow.

"Let's stay out!" said Bolsover major. "That's what Smithy would advise, if he were here. I know that!"

Loder of the Sixth came down to the cricket-field. The juniors eyed him grimly.

"Now, then, indoors with you!" rapped out Loder.

There was a howl at once. Loder's bullying tone decided the fellows who were wavering.

"Yah!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Come and fetch us!"

Harry Wharton made up his mind.

"We're not going in, Loder," he said quietly.

Loder blustered at once.

"Get along. I tell you! Now, then!"

He seized by the collar the nearest Remove, who happened to be Squiff. The Australian junior promptly resisted, and Tom Brown, who was close by him, fastened on Loder at once, to his aid. Then there was a rush of the Remove.

Loder was swept over.

"Dribble him to the House!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it! Give him socks!"

Loder sprang up, and ran for it. The Remove was swooping down on him like a pack of wolves.

Johnny Bull's heavy boot caught the prefect in the rear, and Loder staggered forward. Bolsover major got in a kick, and the prefect roared, and bounded away at top speed.

Right for the House went Loder, as if he were on the cinder-path, with the whole mob of excited juniors raging behind him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 502.

A dozen boots clumped on Loder's person before he reached the House.

Wingate and Gwynne were standing near the porch, and they looked on, evidently not minded to interfere. Loder had been made head prefect, and he might manage the fags—in his own way. His way of managing them certainly did not seem very successful.

The gasping Sixth-Former charged up the steps, with the Removes yelling close behind. He rushed into the House.

The next moment the excited juniors would have been swarming in after him. But at that moment the figure of the new headmaster stepped into the doorway.

Loder dodged behind him, and the juniors came to a sudden halt. The shouting died away, and in grim silence the new Head and the Remove looked at one another.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Tyrant's Trump Card!

MR. JEFFREYS stood with darkened brow and glinting eyes, while Loder panted behind him, trying to get his breath. The steps and the quad outside were crowded with the Remove.

"So you have broken out into open riot!" said Mr. Jeffreys, finding his voice at last. "You have dared to assault a prefect—"

"Yah!" came a howl from the rear of the crowd.

"I have ordered you into the Form-room!" said the new Head. "Why are you not there?"

"It's a half-holiday, sir!" said Squiff, with false meekness.

Mr. Jeffreys gave him a savage look.

"Go into the Form-room at once, all of you!"

The juniors looked at Wharton. He did not stir.

"Wharton, you are head boy of the Form. Go into the Form-room!"

No movement from the captain of the Remove! His handsome face was set and his eyes were gleaming.

Mr. Jeffreys breathed hard through his thin nose.

"Do you intend to disobey my orders?"

No answer.

"Very well! I intend to be master of this school, and every boy who does not obey my orders or leave Greyfriars!"

"Oh!"

"I have tried the effect of corporal punishment," said Mr. Jeffreys, in bitter tones. "It does not seem to have been efficacious. Insubordination and disrespect for authority seems to be running riot in this Form—the worst and most unruly Form at Greyfriars! I shall try sterner measures! I shall take down the name of every boy who does not go instantly into the Form-room, and that boy will be expelled from the school!"

"Oh!" gasped the Remove.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips. It was the last resource of the tyrant, and it was a powerful one. For it was not only the punishment, but the stigma of the sentence.

The juniors remembered how Snaith of the Shell had been expelled from Greyfriars for dishonesty. The same sentence put them on the same level with that wretched fellow.

Wharton looked round at his comrades, and he saw doubt and hesitation in many faces now.

There was a pause.

Then Bolsover major moved forward, passed the Head, and disappeared into the House. Bolsover had been the most truculent of all, and he was the first to give in. The threat of expulsion was too much for him to face.

Trevor followed Bolsover major, and Smith minor followed him. The new Head's face was like iron. His eyes rested on Wharton.

One by one, and then in twos and threes, the Removes went in. Harry Wharton still hesitated. But he was thinking of a bronzed, war-worn old soldier in the trenches of Flanders, and of what Colonel Wharton's feelings would be if he learned that his nephew had been expelled from his old school. And it was clear by this time that the resistance of the Remove was broken. Half the Form had already gone in, and there was no attraction to Harry in holding out to the last. Quietly, without a word, he went into the House, and the rest of the fellows followed him.

Mr. Jeffreys, with his jaw set grimly, came after them into the Remove Form-room.

The juniors took their places at their desks in grim silence.

Mr. Jeffreys stood before them, his eyes glittering over the silent, resentful crowd.

"You will remain here until six o'clock," he said. "I mean to reduce this Form to a proper state of subordination! You will find that I am not a man to be trifled with! I have my eye already upon the ringleaders, and in case of further trouble in this Form they will be expelled from Greyfriars on the spot!"

"You, Wharton, and Cherry and Field and a few others—I warn you especially to take care! I will have order in this Form if I have to expel half its members!"

Silence.

"You will be detained for this half-holiday, and for every other holiday till the end of the term," went on Mr. Jeffreys. "You will do German this afternoon. If there is the slightest disturbance in this Form-room I shall return!"

He quitted the Form-room.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath.

Skinner grinned.

"I thought you'd toe the line!" he remarked. "You can't back up against the Head! What's the good?"

"The sack—that's a little too thick!" said Bolsover major.

"He can't sack us!" growled Johnny Bull. "Dr. Locke wouldn't have it, when he comes back—"

"Oh, rot! I know I'm not going home to face my pater, and tell him that!" said Bolsover.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"I don't want to drag you fellows into trouble," he said. "I'm for backing up against that man, and chancing it. But I put it to the vote of the Form."

There was silence.

"It's no good one or two sticking it out, and getting it in the neck," went on Wharton. "He could expel one or two. I don't see how he could expel the whole Form, if we all stood together. The governors would have something to say about that. But I don't want to urge you. I believe it will come sooner or later."

"Better later than sooner, then!" grinned Fish. "I guess I'm staying here!"

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. There was no doubt that Mr. Jeffreys had won that round.

Herr Gans, the German master, came in. There was no more talk. The Remove settled down to German lessons.

Vernon-Smith looked in at Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were having a

late tea, after being dismissed from detention. The Bounder was grinning.

"I hear you've had a merry time this afternoon," he remarked.

"Lucky for you Jeffreys didn't miss you!" growled Johnny Bull.

"That's so. All holidays stopped for the term!" said the Bounder. "That will play the merry dickens with the cricket! Not that it matters much to me, as I'm not in the eleven. But what about you fellows?"

"The dickensfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Smithy!"

"Why should we stand it?" said the Bounder. "What price a barring-out, and telling Jeffreys to go and eat coke?"

"It may come to that!" said Wharton slowly.

"Why not now?"

There was no answer to the Bounder's question, and he laughed.

"I savvy! Because the Remove hasn't got its back up sufficiently to take the merry risk!" he remarked. "My dear chaps, that won't take long. After this, Jeffreys will be a worse Hun than ever, and we sha'n't be able to stand it for long. When you decide on hoisting the

merry revolutionary flag, Wharton, I'm your man!"

And the Bounder strolled away.

"It may come to it!" said Bob Cherry.

"It will come to it!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

And the event was to prove that Harry Wharton was right!

(Don't miss "THE GREYFRIARS INQUISITION!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 38.—WILLIAM WIBLEY.

IT is probable that most of our readers look upon Wibley as a consummate japer.

But he is nothing of the sort.

He is simply a born artist.

An artist, you know, does not necessarily mean a man who paints or draws pictures. In its wider sense it stands for any man who practises any art with real devotion and a firm belief in its great importance. In this sense, not only the painter or black-and-white illustrator is—or may be—an artist; but so may an author be—Mr. Richards assuredly is, for one—or a sculptor, or an actor.

Wibley does not really care most about the jape when he undertakes his impersonations. It is for doing the thing well—for playing the character to the life—that he cares. He throws himself into the part to be played with such thoroughness that for the time being he is someone else, not William Wibley of the Remove. His sense of humour is not nearly so strong as his sense of the dramatic and the actor's vanity which inspires him.

Before Wibley came along—and even since—other fellows have gone in for impersonations. Wharton is really good, second only to Wibley, but with a long interval. For Wharton is merely a capable actor, not a great one. Frank Nugent is no duffer. Bob Cherry, Bolsover major, Snoop, and others have figured in various parts, though not one of the three mentioned has any very pronounced ability. Nor has Coker; yet Coker as a convict, and also as a temporary Form-master, has achieved success—more success than he wanted, in one case!

But all these pale their ineffectual fires before the genius of Wibley. For genius it really is. Some day Wibley should get very near the highest rung of the stage ladder. He has the nimble brain and the mobile face of the actor; he looks and feels the part he is playing.

Not all at once did he win the credit he deserved. Yet it was not long delayed.

He did not guess that amateur theatricals were a craze at Greyfriars; and he was taken in completely by a rehearsal he overheard in the Rag during his first afternoon at the school. So taken in that he went to the rescue of the supposed victim through the window! This might be held a high tribute to the actors concerned; but one is inclined to think that it was rather due to Wibley's readiness to do anything obviously dramatic and striking.

Of course, he told them what an excellent actor he was; and, of course, they discounted his statement. "Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" said Bob Cherry, with his genial sarcasm.

But they soon had proof.

Wibley took them all in as the Cousin George—shabby and uneducated—whom Wharton refused to own as a kinsman. That was good. It was better still when he played Mr. Capper, and took in that gentleman's own Form, and thwarted the designs of Temple & Co. to do down the Remove by giving a performance of that Form's own play in advance of them.

That impersonation put Wibley in his



right place as the leading spirit of the Remove Dramatic Society. No one has less doubt than Wibley that it is his right place. He regards the rest as well-meaning amateurs; some of them not without talent, but none nearly his equal. And he does not mind telling them so.

He has a quite professional knowledge of the proper use of grease-paint—a weak point with the amateur generally—and all the mysteries of make-up. But his biggest asset is his face. No one would call him handsome; but then, no handsome fellow could look like so many different people as Wibley can!

It was not difficult for him to play the part of Douglas Marsh, alias Roland Smale, as told in the story of a few weeks ago; the circumstances were all in his favour, and the impersonation called for less actual acting than Wibley would gladly have given it. Nor was the ruse by which he gave Delarey's friend, Jim Sorrell, a chance of escape one of his best efforts; for the men who took him for Sorrell did not know the deserter.

But in his two impersonations of Mr. Mobbs, of Highcliffe, he was seen at his best. The second failed in the result; but only Wibley could have come so near to success with it. And as it was the appearance upon the scene of the real Mr. Mobbs which bowled him over, failure reflected no discredit upon his acting, though it may have suggested some lack of the elements of strategy in those associated with him. Mr. Mobbs should have been made safe.

He was got out of the way for the first impersonation; and Wibley had full and fair revenge for the assault which the nuts of Highcliffe had made upon him. He looked like Mr. Mobbs. He talked like Mr. Mobbs. But the nuts thought their dear Mobbs must have gone potty when he dropped down

upon them, his pets, the highly connected, caning them, giving them lines, and, to add insult to injury, actually being civil and decent to "outsiders" like Courtenay and Smithson!

That impersonation stays in one's mind as William Wibley's top note.

But there have been many others. Wibley made a first-rate Monsieur Charpentier, and saved the good little French master from heavy trouble. He did good work in a double sense as the snobbish Skinner's terrible Uncle Joseph. He would not consent to the suggestion that he should make up as Mark Linley's father, representing him, of course—for the suggestion came from Mark's enemies—as an utter outsider. But he played Mr. Hooker, Editor of the "Weekly World," with Bob Cherry as Mr. Slogg, Sub-Editor in charge of the force department, to the discomfiture of Bunter and Skinner. And he was General De Courcy, from the Herald's Office, spoofing Fishy's father; and Billy Bunter's uncle, the gallant captain—whose real name was Hunter, by the way, but there was a misprint in the casualty list, and Bunter annexed him; and a police-constable attending to Bunter and frightening him half out of his life after he had embezzled the Chirpey funds; and he was Coker's "fiancee"; and he was the official who came from the Food Controller to deal with Fishy's potato cornering.

Other parts he has played, and nearly all with success. But once he failed badly. Ferrers Locke, the detective, was to have been the victim. But Locke saw beneath the disguise which was meant to transform Wibley into Colonel Cholmondeley, of the Dumdum Fusiliers, and without trial sentenced that bogus officer to a short term of imprisonment—but let him out just in time for dinner.

Wibley is more actor than anything else. In other walks he is without distinction, very much the average boy. But a boy of the right sort, mind you, with decent instincts and a dislike of bullying and meanness and snobbery!

--- FOR ---

"THE TWINS
FROM TASMANIA,"

A Serial of Highcliffe and Cliff
House,

See "THE GEM."

--- FOR ---

"FRANK RICHARDS'
SCHOOLDAYS,"

See

"THE BOYS' FRIEND."

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

THE SLEEPWALKER!

By TOM MERRY.

I.

THIS is Grundy's yarn. He told us it—or tried to tell it—so often that the only way to dispose of it once for all seems to be to put it into print.

It happened at his old school, Redelyffe, and, according to Grundy, it is the story of how an innocent man suffered imprisonment. G. A. G. becomes quite pathetic when he tells of the wrongs of Pshaw.

"It was all the fault of that chump Rabbits!" he says. "Rabbits and I shared a study at Redelyffe. He was a bit of an ass, though a decent sort otherwise. His proper name, by the way, was Eccles, so I christened him 'Rabbits.' Ha, ha, ha!"

We didn't see the derivation of Rabbits from Eccles, and only Wilkins and Gunn laughed.

Eccles, I gather, was one of those chaps who look sillier than they are. He liked plenty to eat; and as he was well supplied with cash, and the war was still in the future, there was nothing to hinder him from having what he liked.

George Alfred and Eccles, whom our prize chump christened "Rabbits"—Ha, ha, ha!—were on their way to the tuckshop.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Grundy suddenly. "The show has changed hands!"

Herlock Sholmes—I mean, Grundy—was perfectly right in his deduction. Mrs. Crumms had gone, and outside the shop was a new signboard, on which was painted in bright gilt letters which glared in the sun:

"P. SHAW,
PROPRIETOR."

"He was a man of very high principles indeed," Grundy told us. "Couldn't stand lying, stealing, or anything of that kind. He went to chapel three times on a Sunday, and attended half a dozen prayer-meetings during the week, and sold Bibles and hymn-books as well as tuck. You never saw another chap like him behind a tuckshop counter."

Mr. Percival Shaw wore a spotless white apron, and a high and clean collar, greased his hair, and parted it dead down the centre. He washed his hands and face at least a dozen times in the day. He had a little snub nose, at the end of which he wore a pair of well-polished gold-rimmed pince-nez. His lips were twisted into an expression of perpetual scorn, and it was not long before the Redelyffians gave him the excellent appellation of "Pshaw."

"I never quite saw where the joke came in," said Grundy, with a puzzled frown. "But the name stuck to him."

To get on with the washing, Grundy and Rabbits—Ha, ha, ha!—entered the shop, and Mr. Shaw slipped the prayer-book he had been reading into his pocket.

"Good-morning, Mr. Shaw!" said Grundy politely.

"Good-morning!" returned Mr. Shaw, with a sniff.

Eccles, or Rabbits—Ha, ha, ha!—didn't bother his head about the morning. He was wiring into whipped creams and cakes.

"Boy," rapped out Mr. Shaw, "put those things down!"

"Eh?" Rabbits stopped eating and stared. "Don't attempt to equivocate! I saw you with my own eyes! A denial!"

"Who's going to deny it?" howled Rabbits. "I'm going to pay for them, ain't I?"

"Bah!" said Pshaw. "Now that prevaricating will be fruitless, you probably will!"

"Excuse me, Mr. Shaw," said Grundy. "Rabbits—his proper name, you know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" is Eccles—will pay you for all he eats, I assure you."

"Stuff!" sniffed Shaw. "I know boys—adults as well, for that matter. In this world, my boy, not one man out of fifty is honest."

"I say, you know," demurred Grundy, "it's

just the other way about. I can mention fifty honest men, and I don't even know one dishonest bouncer. A couple of tarts and an ice, please. Our Head, for instance—"

"Ah, yes, I had heard a great deal of your Head before I came here!" said Mr. Shaw.

"He's as honest as the day! A plate of chicken-sandwiches, if you have them, Mr. Shaw!"

"Humph! Then his staff make a good thing out of him, I warrant!"

"If you mean stealing—a seed-cake, please, and another ice—he's never had anything stolen yet."

"Is there anything worth stealing?" sneered Shaw.

"Well, he's got a safe," said Grundy, with his mouth full.

"For that matter, so have I," said Shaw.

"But has it got a few hundred pounds' worth of silver-plate in it?" grinned Grundy.

"What kind of a gentleman is your Head?" asked Mr. Shaw. "I should very much like to see him. I will give him a call in the near future. Where is his room?"

Rabbits had been listening to all this in sulky silence. He now spoke.

"We can see it from the door," he said. "I'll point it out to you if you like."

Leaving Grundy gorging at the counter, Mr. Shaw joined Rabbits at the door, where he—Pshaw—adjusted his spectacles.

Rabbits indicated a somewhat dirty-looking window on the ground floor of the school. The window was open a little at the bottom.

"Is that your headmaster's room?" said Shaw. "And the window is partly open! Surely he does not leave it thus after night-fall?"

"He does, though," said Rabbits.

"With all those valuables in the safe?" asked Shaw, aghast.

"Of course! He doesn't take them to bed with him!"

"And with so many dishonest people about! Dear me! Goodness gracious! I will most assuredly call on the gentleman in a day or two, and advise him to be more careful about his property in such surroundings."

Shaw strutted into the shop.

"Come on, Grundy!" growled Rabbits. And the two departed.

A few minutes later the pair had a terrific row in their study. Rabbits was a good deal hurt at being accused of lying and stealing, and he imparted to Grundy the fact that the study he had pointed out as being the Head's was really the one which he and Grundy shared, and were now in. His idea was to lock Shaw in that apartment when he made his call on the Head, and shy rotten eggs and other delicacies at him through the window.

Grundy promptly put his foot down on this, and from the ensuing tussle emerged victorious. So Rabbits reluctantly promised to give up his wild scheme.

II.

EVEN I never guessed that old Pshaw was a sannimbulast," Grundy told us.

By "sannimbulast" he meant somnambulist, which is the long way round for sleepwalker. There are some people who, when they get a word wrong, will persist in repeating it continually. Grundy was one of these jossers; but, unlike most of them, he pronounced the word differently every time he said it.

"I was reading a book on sannomballism at the very time it happened," said Grundy.

"It was this way—"

But I prefer my own way of telling it. Rabbits was ratty for some few days after his quarrel with Grundy. It was not until the middle of the night—the third after Pshaw's arrival—the feud came to an end.

It was a sweltering July night—the very

moon seemed hot—and Rabbits was hungry. And there is nothing much worse than heat and hunger—save, perhaps, cold and hunger.

Rabbits hopped out of bed and dragged on a few garments. The fellow in the next bed stirred, sat up, and stared about him. Seeing Rabbits sitting in the moonlight on the edge of his bed, dressing himself, Grundy sprang out also.

As a matter of fact, he was a little sorry about going for Rabbits.

"What are you after, Rabbits, old scout?"

"Grub!" was Rabbits' laconic reply.

"Grub? I'll come down with you, old chap!"

They traversed the silent corridors to their study. The moonlight shone into the room, but left part of it in shadow.

Rabbits stationed himself at the cupboard in a dusky corner, and Grundy, who was not hungry, picked up a book and sat near the window. It was easy to read in the moonlight.

The book was a bit of a classic—Grundy is above such old back-numbers as classics, you know.

"The chap who wrote that," he said, in disgust, after reading half a page or so, "must have been mad, or else drunk!"

He picked up from the table something more to his taste—a book with the title of "The Somnambulist."

This is a synopsis of "The Somnambulist":

Villain puts bomb under hero's bed. Hero, a somnambulist, gets up in his sleep and walks out of the house. He is just about to step over a precipice when his house is blown up—row wakes him—and, finding himself in the act of walking into a fathomless abyss, he discreetly decides to stop. Having now no home of his own, he goes to sleep in the cowshed of a neighbouring farm, when heroine, who is also a somnambulist, and daughter of farmer, walks into cowshed, falls over hero, and wakes him and herself, too, with the result that they fall in love at first sight, etc. They are emerging from cowshed, when they observe the heroine's portly father, another somnambulist, strutting cheerfully over moonlit meadow in his sleep. He is heading for a hut, which is on fire, when hero and heroine, catching him by either arm, save him from a fiery fate. He blesses them both, makes hero his heir, dies off, and hero marries heroine. Charred remains of villain—doubtless a somnambulist—are afterwards found in burnt hut.

I won't criticise. It is not necessary. Grundy was charmed with the story. He had just arrived at the stepping-over-precipice part when the page was blotted out by the shadow of a man who was peering through the pane. He raised the sash, and stepped inside.

"By gum! It's Mr. Shaw!" exclaimed Grundy. "He's a giddy sannombilust!"

The ghostly visitor seemed to start uncertainly, then, with arms outstretched, walked slowly across the room, and turned about.

The moon shone full upon him. His eyes, staring straight before him, were fixed and glassy. The eyes of Rabbits fairly bulged as he stared at Mr. Shaw. Grundy dropped the book, and caught the sleepwalker by the arm.

"Where—where am I?" murmured Mr. Shaw, his eyes losing by degrees their fixed glare.

"You're all right," said Grundy encouragingly, and he coaxed the bewildered-looking man into an easy-chair.

Mr. Shaw passed a hand across his brow.

"You're a sannimbulist, you know," said Grundy. "You've been walking in your sleep."

Mr. Shaw smiled faintly.

"My old complaint," he murmured. "It

BUNTER BROTHERS!

By FRANK NUGENT.

was a trouble of my younger days. It is the open window which has preyed upon my mind. I have been dreaming that burglars entered by it and rifled the safe!"

He looked round the room as if for the safe, and Grundy was puzzled.

"There is no safe here, Mr. Shaw."

"But you said this was the headmaster's room."

"This ain't the Head's study. It's ours; mine and Rabbits'—Eccles, you know; that's his proper name! The Head's study is at the end of the corridor on the floor above."

Mr. Shaw looked hard at Rabbits, and that misnamed youth shifted uneasily.

"Pray don't mention this matter to anyone, boys," he said. "The Head might not be pleased if he knew my weakness. This is not likely to occur again."

"We'll be as mum as oysters, Mr. Shaw," said Grundy. "You can cut off through the window again, and we'll hop back to bed."

III.

UNLIKE Grundy, Rabbits did not drop off to sleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. His mind was busy with two apparently quite unrelated subjects—sommambulism and burglary.

Rabbits simply could not stand Pshaw. And Rabbits was no fool. It was something more than mere prejudice which made him distrustful of Pshaw.

As the clock struck something—he knew not what—he deserted his bed for the second time that night, and went to the window.

He had not long to wait before he saw something. The figure of Mr. Shaw once again crossed the quad in the direction of his and Grundy's study window!

Rabbits thought quickly for a moment, and then shook the slumbering Grundy by the shoulder.

"Shaw's out again!" he muttered to that worthy. He—he's walking in his sleep!"

"My hat!" said Grundy. They went.

When they reached the passage Mr. Shaw was moving along towards the stairs.

"Don't stop him," said Rabbits quickly.

"It may bring on heart-failure."

"But he may tumble down the stairs and break his neck!" was Grundy's whispered exclamation.

"He won't," said Rabbits confidently. "He's going up."

They followed the wanderer upstairs, and a minute or two later heard the creaking of a door farther along the corridor.

"Where's he gone?" demanded Grundy.

"He went into some study."

"And I know which," said Rabbits quietly.

"Follow me!"

Next moment he led Grundy into the Head's study.

Plainly visible in the moonlight was Pshaw, kneeling before the safe.

To Grundy's amazement, Rabbits flung himself upon Pshaw, and the building echoed with his cries of "Help! Help! Help!"

"You silly idiot!" exclaimed Grundy.

"What are you doing? A sommibalast—"

"Help me, you utter ass! Lend a hand!"

The whole school was awake now. Footsteps thundered along the passage, and the next moment the study was a whirling mass of humanity.

The pretended sleepwalker struggled furiously; but he had no chance. Above the din Grundy's bellowing voice could be heard roaring:

"Go easy, you fellows! He's a sommibalast!"

But Grundy roared in vain, and when the sun rose next morning Mr. Percival Shaw looked upon it from the barred window of a prison cell.

Pshaw's story crept into the papers. Not long before his arrest he had held the responsible post of cashier to a firm of engineers. But, in spite of his pretended contempt for dishonesty, he had developed an unpleasant habit of putting the firm's signatures to cheques which he absent-mindedly cashed for his own benefit.

As his victims, though they did not prosecute, refused him testimonials owing to this little weakness, Pshaw was unable to get another job as cashier. So somehow he contrived to get the post of tuckshop-keeper at Redclyffe, where he seems to have got the notion that the jemmy is mightier than the pen.

Grundy is still firm in his faith that Shaw is a sommibalast, though very rocky as to the pronunciation of the word. But Grundy alone believes in P. Shaw. Everybody else says "Pshaw!"

"WELL, I'm blessed!"

"What's up?"

Harry Wharton had just flung open the door of Study No. 1. Bob Cherry was following him closely. The two stood in the doorway, and fairly glared at William George Bunter and his minor, Sammy.

"What the merry dickens are you two boulders doing here?" yelled Bob. "And wolfing our grub, too!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I was sure you meant to invite me to tea; and as Sammy came with a message to me, I thought—"

"Oh, chuck it! Get out! Come on, Harry! Hoof the pair of them out!"

Sammy, a slightly smaller edition of Billy, did not wait for the hoofing process, but fled, with a cake hugged tightly in his arms.

William George resisted, with loud expostulations.

"Look here, you fellows! Yow! Leggo! Wharton, you beast, wait a minute, and let me— Yow! Stop it!"

"Hold on, Harry! Might as well hear what the fat duffer has got to say for himself!" laughed Bob.

With a jerk Wharton landed Bunter heavily on the floor. Bunter gasped, rolled over, and groped for his spectacles, which had fallen off in the struggle. By a lucky chance they had escaped the feet of the juniors, and Bob obligingly handed them to the fat youth. Billy Bunter settled them carefully on his nose, and then, rising to his feet, he gave himself a shake, and blinked at the pair.

"I came to ask you to—"

"No use, Billy! Wharton won't, and I can't, even if I would," said Bob.

Wharton only grunted contemptuously.

"Can't you let me finish? I came to ask you two and Inky and Nugent to tea in my study."

"Then why were you and your beastly minor in our study scoffing our grub?" asked Harry.

"Well, you see, I saw a lot of things on the table, and you were not here, so I—"

"Couldn't resist temptation. I see. Now scoot!" And Bob flung open the door, and pointed the way Bunter should go.

"Look here, you fellows, I don't mind staying to tea with you if you like!" said Bunter generously.

"We don't like! Hook it!"

A shove emphasised Bob's words. Slowly the disappointed porpoise sauntered down the Remove passage. The best-laid schemes at times gang a-gley. While inviting Wharton & Co. to tea, William George had meant borrowing the cash wherewith to purchase tuck. Sammy was as badly on the rocks as Billy, and it was his brilliant brain-wave which had induced the visit to Study No. 1.

"Billy!" Sammy hailed his minor from the door of the study shared by Bunter, the two Todds, and Dutton.

"Oh, that's enough! We shall have to go into Hall to tea!" grumbled the Owl. He hates tea in Hall.

"No fear! I've got a cake. Wharton forgot to give it to me, but I've got it all right. Dutton and Toddy and that ass Lonzy are out. What do you say to making some toffee? There's sugar and butter, and a tin of syrup. We can boil the stuff in the egg-saucepan."

"Suppose they come in before we have made it?" said Bunter. He had painful recollections of Peter Todd's cricket-stump.

"Oh, rats! Don't be a funk! Come on!" The Owl threw caution to the winds, and, with a big chunk of cake in one hand, from which he bit a quarter of a pound or so at intervals, he handed out butter, sugar, and a tin half full of syrup.

Then the fun began. Bunter can cook. That and ventriloquism are the only things he is any use at.

But the egg-saucepan was small, and Dutton and the Todds were due in at any minute; and Bunter, between the cake and dread of Peter's stump, can hardly have been on quite his top culinary note.

"Buck up, Sammy! Hand me over the

sugar and the butter. And you jolly well keep a look-out! You'll catch it if you are caught up here—not that that matters; but I shall get in a row, too!"

As Bunter spoke he was busily stirring sugar, butter, and treacle up together. Then he flattened down the coals, and set the saucepan on top, and squatted down to enjoy his cake and watch the stuff simmer.

The cake soon vanished. The stuff in the tin was still sloppy. It showed no sign of thickening. The Owl grew tired.

"Look here, Sammy, suppose you watch this stuff while I cut down to Hall for tea? Then you can go when I get back."

"Right-ho! Hook it, and look sharp back!" Bunter waddled off, and was soon busy filling up the spaces left by the cake.

Meanwhile, things were happening in the study.

Sammy knelt before the small, bright fire, stirring the precious mixture. He had the poker in his left hand. He was so intent on his job that he did not notice the entrance of Peter Todd, and the first intimation he had of Peter's presence was a hand on his collar which jerked him to his feet.

The poker flew to the left, the spoon to the right, and the saucepan, with its simmering contents, was tipped on to the glowing coals. A big flare roared up the chimney.

"You chump, Toddy! You've set the chimney alight!" shrieked Sammy.

Peter Todd jammed a cushion on the fire, and emptied the kettle on it. There was a smother of smoky steam, and he flew to open the window as Dutton entered the room.

Dutton had collided with Sammy in the passage, and both had rolled over. Dutton had made a grab for Sammy, but that youth deemed it wise to keep out of Peter Todd's way for that evening. He bolted straight to the Third Form-room.

"What's up, Toddy, old man?" asked Dutton. "Phew! What are you doing with that cushion, you silly cuckoo?"

"Did you meet Bunter minor?"

"I should fancy Bunter will mind! It's his cushion!"

Peter glared at Dutton, but he knew it was useless to attempt explanations. The deafness of his study-mate was a sore trial to Peter Todd. But the wet cushion had done its work, and the fire was out.

Dutton surveyed the awful mess with puzzled eyes.

"What's all the rumpus about, Peter?" he asked mildly.

"That little beast Sammy Bunter has used our week's supply of sugar and half a tin of syrup and all our butter, and all the stuff got upset, and— Br-r-r! Just wait till I catch him, that's all!" roared Peter.

"Well, you needn't howl at me. I could hear much better if you spoke quietly. But I can't see why you went giving him all our grub, and then shoved things on the fire and burned Bunter's cushion. You've made a frightful mess of things, and the smell is horrid!"

At that moment Billy Bunter came along. He had done what might be done in the matter of tea in Hall, and had given his minor time to finish making the toffee. He smiled a smile of pleasant anticipation as he neared the door. But one look at the wreck in the fireplace, one sniff of the odour of burnt sugar and wet feathers, and he knew that all his hopes were vain!

Peter grabbed his cricket-stump and rushed at Bunter.

"Look here, you fat Hun, what was Sammy doing in our study?" yelled Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy, old man, how should I know? I have only just come up from tea in Hall."

Bunter looked quite injured. But Toddy knows the Owl's little ways.

"I jolly well know Sammy would not come here and collar our butter and sugar to make toffee in our study unless you put him up to it, so I am going to lick you! If you like, you can pass it on to your minor! Catch hold, Dutton!"

With a grin, Dutton caught hold, and, despite Billy's struggles, took off his duty by Bunter yet once again!

THE END.

BOB CHERRY'S MISTAKE!

By HIMSELF.

WE were discussing methods for getting even with Temple & Co. of the Fourth, in No. 1. We five and Squiff were there, and Squiff was explaining his idea for a jape.

Suddenly the door opened and in walked the Bouncer, holding Bunter's ear between his finger and thumb.

"I caught the fat bouncer listening again," said Smithy, and then he walked out. Bunter made a bolt for the door, but Squiff put out his foot, and Bunter went sprawling. Squiff shut the door, and stood with his back to it.

"Listening again, you fat bladder of lard!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I didn't! I wasn't! I—I never heard you saying anything about japing Temple—I didn't, really! I was only tying up my boot-lace—"

"Oh, bump him!" roared Johnny.

Six pairs of hands were at once laid on Bunter, and he was bumped severely. I opened the door, and six pairs of boots were simultaneously applied to Bunter's fat person, and he scuttled down the passage for his life.

We went back into the study and shut the door.

"That fat ass knows everything now, and he'll spread it over the whole school!" said Harry Wharton.

Wharton's words were soon justified, for a minute or two later there came a tap at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" called Frank.

In walked Cecil Reginald Temple in all his glory.

"I've just learned," he said, "that you fags have been planning a jape on me."

"True, O king!" I replied. And you got your information from a fat ass named Bunter!"

"What if I did?" said Temple. "I warn you that if you play japes on me you'll get more than you bargain for!"

"Oh, clear off!"

"I'm not going yet—"

"Yes, you are!" cried Johnny Bull, and he charged at Temple.

In a moment they were rolling over together. We rushed to the rescue, and Temple was treated like unto Bunter, and he went away in a bigger hurry than he came.

"I've got an idea for curing Bunter of listening," I said.

"You wouldn't cure Bunter in a thousand years," grunted Johnny Bull; "but we'll listen to your idea."

And forthwith I propounded my scheme for giving Bunter a surprise.

"Half a minute, Toddy!"

I had got Nugent to go down to Friardale to buy something, and was waiting for him to come back, when I saw Peter Todd in the passage.

I caught him up, and told him what had lately happened.

"And I want you to talk to Bunter," I said. "Let him think we are going to get up another jape for Temple's benefit to-night,

and see that he comes along at half-past eight, and I'll have a little treat ready for him!"

Toddy agreed, and I went back to No. 1, and found that Frank Nugent had returned with a water-pistol. But water wasn't strong enough for Bunter. We filled it with ink, and put it away, ready for his coming. Wharton, Nugent, Inky, Bull, and Squiff were all in the study, when I took up my place at the keyhole at the appointed time. I heard someone coming down the passage. Someone stopped outside the door. I knew that someone was Bunter!

I pressed the bulb, and s-s-s-s! the ink streamed through the keyhole. I expected Bunter to yell; but it wasn't Bunter!

"Bless my soul! Goodness gracious!" sounded a thunderous voice.

The door opened, and in stalked Mr. Quelch!

"Cherry," he said, "follow me to my study!"

I followed him, trying hard to stop grinning, for the ink had caught him right in the ear. It was streaming down his face and neck, making him look an awful sight.

We arrived at the study, and Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

"Cherry," he said sternly, "I was paying your study when I happened to drop my handkerchief. I stooped to pick it up, and received a stream of ink in my ear. I refuse to be made a victim of practical jokes, and I shall cane you severely!"

And as he said, even so he did!

EDITORIAL CHAT.

For Next Monday:

"THE GREYFRIARS INQUISITION!"

By Frank Richards.

Last week's and this week's yarns are both more than commonly good. But I really think next week's beats either of them. It is an old device that the juniors, now on the verge of open revolt, employ against the tyrannous acting Head; but there is nothing old or stale in the telling of the story. It grips from the first line to the last, and leaves one eager for more. And there is more to come—and that of the very best!

THE "GEM" SERIAL.

Are you all reading it? If not, you are missing a treat. "The Twins from Tasmania" is the sort of story you all like, and your old favourites, the Famous Five and the girls of Cliff House, play their parts in it.

"DISGUSTED" AGAIN!

Mr. "Disgusted" Coleman has weighed in with another letter. I cannot afford space to give it in full; I think his craving for the notoriety of print must get what satisfaction it may out of the appearance of his first letter. But I will reply to it—or, at least, make some discursive remarks about it—as the writer says my last reply was not a reply.

My amiable correspondent, after a polite reference to my "rotten MAGNET," says he withdraws nothing. Did anyone ask him to? He says that what I "so highly ridiculously call 'My Reply,'" has no bearing on his letter, and he demands a less "childish" answer! If I don't give it him, he will at once conclude that I find it impossible to argue with him. I do! If ever I got down to his level of argument, I should feel very sorry for myself. As it is, I feel sorry for him.

Furthermore, he says that "w.p.b." is not plain English. Aspiring authors are apt to consider it not merely plain, but verging on the brutal! He says that part of a sentence

I have used—"He accuses me—or Mr. Richards—I am not sure which"—is ungrammatical. It is not.

He asks me to point out where he was guilty of misspelling. I will do so. No one who knows the French language would say, or write, "bien attendu"—it should be "bien entendu." Further, no one's English is improved by the use of Latin tags from phrase-books. The phrase-books give "fronti nulla fides," as "Things are not what they appear"; but that is a free and idiomatic translation, not a literal one; and I strongly suspect that Mr. Coleman would be quite unable to give a Latin translation of "Things are not what they appear"—it certainly could not be correctly translated "Fronti nulla fides." English studded with foolish foreign tags is essentially bad English; but that is not the only fault of Mr. Coleman's style, as the following quotation will show:

"You endeavour to put into print that about which you know absolutely nothing; I refer to the remarks you made respecting my education. I wrote you a letter devoted solely to criticism of your papers, not your personal life, and then you commence talking rot—going from the sublime to the ridiculous."

This is a very bright example indeed of how not to write English: It is wordy, and it is silly. What Mr. Coleman might have said would run something like this: "You are talking of what you know nothing about when you talk of my education. I merely abused your papers, not you personally." I cannot work in the rest for him, for the "sublime and the ridiculous" are like the flowers that bloom in the spring—they have nothing to do with the case!

It is well to know the difference between criticism and abuse.

Mr. Coleman asks what were public libraries erected for, and answers, to his own satisfaction, it would appear, that it was to encourage boys and girls to refrain from reading such books as those I print. But they are not books, and I don't print them, if we are to trouble about literal exactitude!

He goes on to ask whether a boy brought

up on our papers and nothing else would at twenty be able to sit down and read Dickens, "fully comprehending same." I do not see why he should not. I read "Oliver Twist" at eight, and understood most of it; but for years after that I read boys' papers, and I don't mind confessing that, at nearer fifty than forty, I can read such a story as appears in this paper this week with real enjoyment. Shakespeare and Scott, Dickens and Thackeray, Kipling and Wells, Hewlett and Phillpotts, are all among my favourite authors; but so are Messrs. Clifford and Richards. I know of many cases in which the reading of these papers has been largely educative to a boy; but it would be absurd to pretend that their purpose is mainly educative.

And what is education?

The best part of it is not the learning to "appreciate" the classics. It does not greatly matter if you never read them; anyway, reading other things won't affect that question much. The best part of education is the learning to play the game, to be honest and straightforward and manly, to stand by your friends, and not to be treacherous even with your enemies, to keep your eyes open for good everywhere, and not to be sneering and hole-picking and censorious, to recognise that tastes differ, and that your own taste may not be the absolute criterion—in short, to be broad-minded. There is always a chance that the broad-minded man may grow less ignorant; there is little for the narrow-minded, self-satisfied one.

I have done with Mr. Coleman now. He may write to me again if he likes, but until he can learn what criticism means, and until he has acquired the rudiments of civility, I shall not waste my time in answering him.

Your Editor