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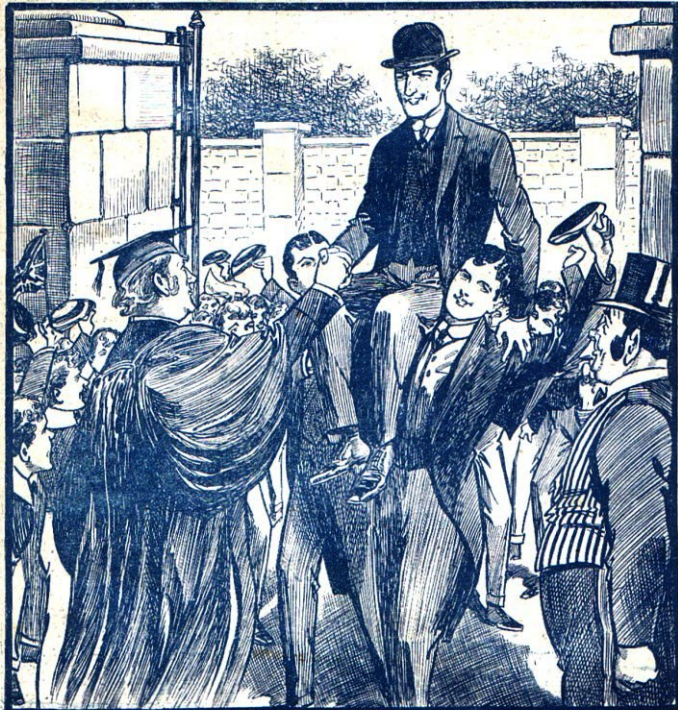
With which is incorporated
The Greyfriars Herald.

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No. 681. Vol. XVIII.

February 20th, 1921.



THE RETURN OF MR. QUELCH!

(A great scene at the gates of Greyfriars when the Remove Form-master comes back. See the Long Complete School Tale inside.)

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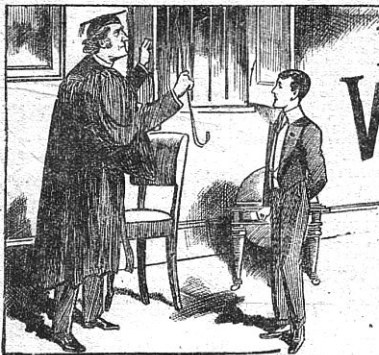
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By Wingate's Aid!

A Magnificent Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., and Wingate of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Quelching Skinner!

"A BREASTLY thief! I always knew he was a rotten outsider!"

That amiable remark in a tone of virtuous disgust was made by Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove, as he stood leaning gracefully against the main gate of Greyfriars School. Forming an interested group near him were Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, Sidney James Stott, William Snoop, Percy Bolsover, and Billy Bunter.

The subject of Skinner's disgust was Mr. Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., late master of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

That morning the whole school had been electrified by the headmaster's announcement that a fifty-pound note had been stolen from his study. Dr. Locke had requested that anyone who had entered his private room during his absence on the previous afternoon should report to him. Two persons had responded to this request—Mr. Quelch and Gerald Loder, a prefect of the Sixth. Now the whole school was agog with the news that the Form-master had been asked to resign by the Head, and had already left Greyfriars. According to Loder, the evidence against him had been conclusive.

Like all news that is bandied from mouth to mouth, the tale lost nothing in the telling.

"I hear that the Head kicked the beast out of his study," said Billy Bunter. "Serve him jolly well right, too! He never knew how to treat the chaps properly. Look how the brass lamped me only yesterday!"

"Well you shouldn't go into class with your face full of peppermints, you fat freak!" said Stott. "What else would you expect?"

"Then the rotter told me to turn out my pockets!" moaned the Owl reminiscently. "Stole nearly a quarter of a pound of bull-eyes, he did, the greedy beast! A chap who'd do that would steal fifty quids as soon as look at 'em!"

"Waal, I guess he's left Greyfriars now," murmured Fisher T. Fish. "It's said he's gone to Friarale to catch the twelve-thirty train. Wharton and a lot

of other silly galoots have hiked down to the station to see him off."

"To see him off?" exclaimed Skinner.

"What the dickens for?"

"To tell him how sorry they are to lose their dear master, I suppose!" sneered Snoop.

"Go! Those crazy guys make me tired!"

"Sickly sentiment, I call it!" said Skinner. "The Head wouldn't throw him neck and crop out of his study and tell him to beat it without ample cause. Take it from me, Quelch took the money all right. As likely as not the beast had been backing horses."

"What makes you think that?" asked Stott. "Quelch was the last man I should have expected to put money on a see."

"He was just the smug kind of hypocrite that would," opined Skinner. "Don't you remember that shady-looking outsider who came into the quad inquiring for him two or three weeks ago?"

"Rather!" said Bunter. "That chap was connected with the Turf. I'll eat my Sunday topper if he wasn't!"

"Of course he was!" said Harold Skinner. "The whole thing's as clear as daylight to me. He plunged heavily at the recent Leamshire race meeting and lost. He hadn't the brass to give up to the bookies. Learning by some underhand trick that there was a fifty-pound note in the Head's possession, he sneaked into old Locke's study and pinched it."

"That's about the ticket, Skinny!" agreed Snoop.

The cad of the Remove thrust his thumbs into the armbands of his waistcoat and smirked genially. Skinner himself had lost a whole month's remittance over a horse called Sulky Sue at the Leamshire meeting. But he had paid up, and the fact gave him a pleasant sense of virtue.

"Well, let's hope the next master of the Remove is a decent chap," he said. "I hope old Locke doesn't intend taking the class for long. We had quite enough of him this morning. Personally, I'd like to see Loder in Quelch's place until a new chap comes. Meanwhile the fact remains, our late infliction, Quelch, was a rotten thief, and has given the Form a bad name."

"You lie!"

The words were rapped out like a pistol-shot. Harold Skinner swung round to face Harry Wharton, who, followed by four other juniors, had entered the gateway. At once the indolent sneer on the cad's face was superseded by an expression of alarm.

As Fish had said, Harry Wharton had gone down to Friarale station to see Mr. Quelch off. The other members of the Famous Five of Greyfriars School—Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Indian junior—had accompanied him. A number of other Removeites, who had remained loyal to their Form-master in the hour of his disgrace, had also made their way to the station directly after morning school. With loud cheers of encouragement, the good-natured fellow had shown the late master of the Remove Form that they, at least, believed in his innocence.

After the train had departed with Mr. Quelch, Harry Wharton & Co. had returned to Greyfriars together. Entering the school gates, the first words they heard were Harold Skinner's scathing remarks.

Wharton faced Skinner with blazing eyes.

"You cad!" he rapped out. "What do you know about the affair?"

Skinner's shifty gaze wandered from the face of his questioner. He seemed to be seeking a means of escape. Bunter, Bolsover, Fish, Stott, and Snoop edged away a couple of paces.

As the cad of the Remove did not reply, Wharton expressed his further opinion of the other's conduct.

"You know nothing about it," he said pointedly, "so my advice to you is to dry up!"

"Nor do you know anything about it!"

"That's true. And because I haven't the full facts I'm not going round telling fellows he's a low-down thief like you are. Personally, I don't believe old Quelch ever took a penny in his life that didn't belong to him. We're out to clear his name if we possibly can. That won't be so easy as mud-slinging, but I think we shall do it."

"About as hard as washing a nigger white, I should imagine!" commented

Skinner. "Meanwhile, I and my friends are entitled to our opinions."

"Yes; so long as you keep your rotten opinions to yourselves," said Wharton. "But, as captain of the Remove, I'm going to jolly well see that Quelch gets fair play. If I hear any more chaps going round making caddish remarks there are going to be some thick cars flying about!"

At that moment the dinner-bell sounded, and the Famous Five strode away to the school.

Skinner and his companions watched them go in silence.

Interfering beasts!

The end of the Remove ground his teeth savagely. Suddenly he discerned a large stone lying near the gate. On the impulse of the moment he picked it up, and sent it whizzing through the air. It missed Harry Wharton's head by a fraction of an inch, and went clattering along the stone quad ahead of the five juniors.

Like one-man the Famous Five swung round on their heels.

"The howling rotters! Who did that?"

Skinner and those with him shifted uneasily.

"Let's pulverise the beasts!" cried Bob Cherry fiercely. "All together, boys! Clang!"

As Harry Wharton & Co. descended in a body on the group of juniors near the gate, Skinner and his cronies made frantic efforts to escape.

"Oh, I say, it wasn't me—really it wasn't!" howled Bunter, in alarm, as he rolled rapidly away.

With a bound like a tiger from his native land, Hurree Singh bore the fat junior to the ground.

"Yow-ow! Lemme go!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur rolled the Owl face downwards, and brought the pain of his hand down upon Bunter's ample anatomy.

Snack!

"Ooooh! Yaroooh!"

Snack! Snack! Snack!

"Yoop! Yow-ow-ow! Help!"

But no help was at hand.

Harold Skinner was rolling on the damp stones of the quad where he had been floored by a swinging right uppercut delivered by Wharton. Fisher T. Fish, Bolsover, Stott, and Snoop were vainly trying to defend themselves from the blows rained on their hapless heads by Bob Cherry, Bull, and Nugent.

At last the Famous Five let up on their victims, and, linking arms, sauntered into dinner. Skinner and his fellow-unfortunates followed afar off, mouthing fierce threats into the empty air.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Manly Wakes Up!

"I WONDER where Manly is?"

Harry Wharton made that remark as the Remove juniors trooped out of the dining-hall.

"Can't make it out," said Bob Cherry. "He didn't show up for dinner at all."

"Maybe he went down to Friarade after morning school," suggested Frank Nugent.

"And stopped to buy some tuck at Uncle Oleg's," added Johnny Bull. "though I didn't see him at the station."

"I expect the esteemed Mauleverer is sleepily reclining in his honourable study," put in Hurree Singh, the Indian junior.

"Let us proceed there and

bootfully awaken him, my worthy chums.

Following this suggestion, the Famous Five proceeded to Study No. 12. A sharp rap on the door elicited no response. Harry Wharton turned the handle. As he did so a muffled snore sounded from the interior of the study.

"You were right, Inky," said the Remove captain. "He's sound asleep."

With that he opened the door and entered the room, followed by the rest of the Co. On a settee, stretched out at full length, was the immaculately-garbed form of Lord Herbert Mauleverer.

Harry Wharton picked up a cushion from an armchair and sent it hurtling across the study. The missile caught the duke of Greyfriars full on his aristocratic nose.

"Oooh!" he gasped. "Wharrior marrer? Is it time to get up?"

With a comical expression of surprise on his face he sat up and blinked at the five laughing intruders.

"It's time you got up, old top!" said Bob Cherry. "It's half-past-one now. At two o'clock you'll have to toddle into afternoon school, my dreamy cherub."

"Begad! You don't say so!"

"But we do!"

"The esteemed and ludicrous Bunter chowfully wolfed your honourable dinner," sympathised the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"What a bore!" drawled Manly. "Really, I'm beastly hungry. Why the dickens couldn't one of those chumps—Delaney or Jimmy Vivian—come and wake me?"

"Probably for the same reason that we couldn't," said Wharton. "George Wingate was at the head of the table. He wasn't in the mood for standing any nonsense. Lucky he didn't spot you were absent, old sport!"

Mauleverer, whose brain still seemed somewhat fuddled with sleep, looked at Bunter blankly. The idea that George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, had superintended the meal, struck him as curious.

"Wingate?" he muttered. "What the thump was Wingate doin' in the Remove hall? Where was Quelch?"

"Quelch? Why, he's gone!"

"Gone? Begad! I remember now. Of course, he pinched a few paltry quids from the Head's strong-box, or something. Beastly bad form!"

"Rats!" replied Wharton. "You've got it all wrong, my sleeping beauty. However, we haven't come here to discuss the shortcomings of our late Form-master. It's about the missing photo we called."

"The missing photo? What the thump are you fellows talking about?"

Lord Mauleverer raised his immaculate form from the settee and stretched himself. Then he crossed to the cupboard and drew forth a tin of sardines and a number of biscuits to consume in lieu of the dinner he had missed.

Harry Wharton waited patiently until the other had commenced his meal.

"See here, Manly," he said, "we fellows don't believe old Quelch took that fifty-quid note. We're out to clear his name if we can. Now, there are a good many rumours flying about as to what occurred in the Head's study, one of which is directly attributed to Loder. It is to the effect that a certain photograph of Quelch talking to a bookie on the Loamshire racecourse furnished a damning piece of evidence against him."

"Great pip!" exclaimed Manly. "I wonder who took it? When you fellows

came over the course with me to see my uncle's horse run, we saw old Quelch hanging about that bookie, Flash Simmons."

"Are you sure you didn't take it yourself, Manly?"

"Eh? Me? What the dickens do you mean?"

"Simply this. You took your new quarter-plate camera to the course. While there you pointed out Flash Simmons as a picturesque racecourse character, and left us to get a snap of him. Are you sure Quelch wasn't in that picture?"

"Positive, dear boy! He pushed off before that. You saw him go."

"Have you seen the print of that picture of the bookie yet?"

"No; as you saw yourself, when I showed you the pictures I took on the racecourse, that one of Flash Simmons was missing."

"But you were going to write to the photographers who developed your films about it?" put in Bob Cherry.

"So I did, dear boy," said the duke, selecting another sardine, "but there was nothin' doin'." They replied that they'd sent all twelve films and prints back to me. QL course, it's all rot; they didn't."

A sudden suspicion took possession of Wharton's mind.

"Look here, Manly," he said. "We want to sift this matter to the bottom. There is a possibility that if a racecourse photograph was used as evidence against Quelch that it was your missing snap!"

"But, my dear fellow, I tell you—"

"I know all about that," interrupted Wharton. "But let us imagine for a minute that you did get old Quelch into the picture without knowing it."

"But I didn't—"

"Only for argument's sake let's suppose you did, though," said Harry Wharton soothingly. "Let us, moreover, further suppose that somebody tampered with your packet of prints when it arrived at Greyfriars."

The remembrance of something caused a sudden flash of surprise and enlightenment to cross the faces of the listening Co. They began to see what their leader was driving at. Mauleverer, however, calmly nunched his sardines and biscuits, with merely a bored expression on his aristocratic features.

"This is all tommy-rot you're talkin', old boy, he murmured. "Who the dickens could have tampered with my packet of photos?"

Harry Wharton leaned slightly forward and spoke in a piercing whisper.

"Gerard Loder!"

"This startled even Mauleverer out of his habitual calm. He looked up in thunderstruck amazement.

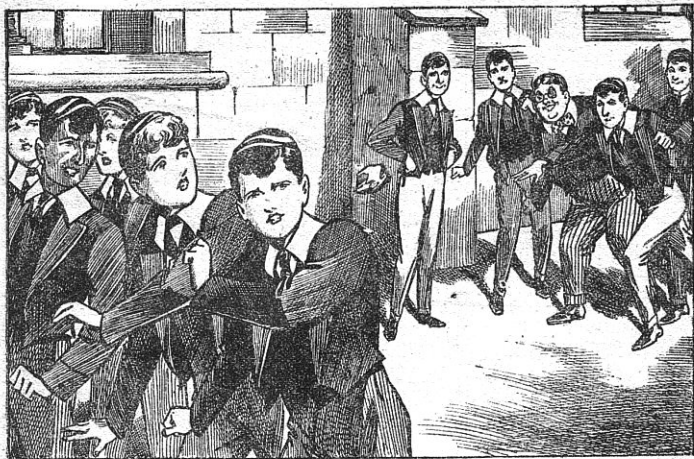
"Loder!" he repeated. "It's impossible!"

"Anyway, he had the opportunity," said Wharton. "Didn't you hand over your packet of snaps to Loder in mistake for one Bagger, the postman, gave you for him? Didn't you keep us kicking our heels in your study while you went to exchange the packets with the cad?"

"Why—why, yes, so I did. But the packet was all right when I got it back."

"You mean it was tied up all right," retorted Wharton. "It would just be the sort of mean thing Loder would do to open another chap's parcel."

"You bet!" agreed Bob Cherry. "And if the rotter saw there was a picture of Quelch talking to a bookie inside he'd collar it and send it to Dr. Locke like a shot. He had ample time to tie the



On the impulse of the moment Skinner picked up a large stone and sent it whizzing through the air. It missed Harry Wharton's head by a fraction of an inch, and went clattering on the stone quad ahead of the five juniors. (See Chapter 1.)

packet up again before your return, Maudy."

"Yes," said Frank Nugent. "And it's well known Loder had his knife into old Quelch. Loder wouldn't lose an opportunity for getting back on Quelch for the row he got him into with the Head for laming into Sammy Bunter the other week."

Just then a rap sounded on the study door, and Trotter, the page-boy appeared.

"The 'Ead wants to see Master Maulverer," he announced.

Maudy looked up in surprise.

"To see me, Trotter?" he said. "Are you sure it's to see me?"

It was obvious from Maudy's manner that he was a trifle uneasy at the prospect of an interview with Dr. Locke. He wondered seriously whether the Head had got wind of the visit he had paid to the Loanshire Race Meeting with Wharton & Co. So did the Famous Five.

Trotter drew a grubby finger down a list of names he held in his hand.

"Yes, you're among 'em, Master Maulverer," he said. "You'd better hurry up. The 'Ead's waitin' in 'is study."

Maudy rose with a sigh of relief. The fact that his name was on a list with a number of others reassured him somewhat.

"I say, Trotter," said Wharton, "what the thump's all the shindy about?"

"Dunno, Master Wharton," replied the page-boy. "All I know is as 'ow I've got to send all the young gentlemen whose names is on this list to the 'Ead."

"Aren't any of us wanted?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No, nobody else what's 'ere," said Trotter, as he moved off on his errand.

"We'll see you after afternoon school, Maudy," said Wharton, as they all left the study. "Hope it's not a laming, old man."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

An Interview with the Head!

IT required but a few minutes to the time for afternoon school when Lord Maulverer, stampered up to Dr. Locke's study. Outside the door of that dreaded apartment were gathered three or four other juniors. Tom North, prefect of the Sixth Form, with his back against the study, seemed to be enacting the role of doorkeeper.

"Hallo, kid!" he said, as Maulverer approached. "You'll have to wait a few minutes. First come first served!"

"What's it all about, North, old chap?" asked Maudy uneasily.

"You'll see."

And this was the only answer any of the juniors could elicit from the good-natured Sixth-Former.

One by one the juniors who had arrived before Maulverer entered and departed from the Head's study. Each were within the dreaded sanctum a matter of a few minutes at the most. None showed signs of physical suffering as a result of the interview. This was distinctly encouraging.

Two other fellows arrived on the scene, sent thither by the errant Trotter. At last, after what seemed to the waiting

Maudy to be hours, Tom North ushered him into the presence of the Head.

Dr. Locke was leaning back in his chair, with his finger-tips together. On the desk in front of him was lying a photographic print, face downwards. He beckoned the Fourth-Former to approach. Tom North left the study, and closed the door.

"I have sent for you, Maulverer," said the Head, "as I am endeavouring to discover the person who took a certain photograph that was sent anonymously to me. I trust that nobody at Gregfrian's was concerned in the matter at all, but I wish to leave no stone unturned in my efforts to discover the photographer. With assistance I have compiled a list of boys at this school who possess quarter-plate cameras. Yes, I understand, are among the number."

"That's correct, sir," said Maulverer, as Dr. Locke paused. "I had a new quarter-plate camera sent me some little time ago."

"Quite so," said the headmaster. "Now, for certain reasons, I do not wish you nor anyone else to see this photograph on my desk. Therefore I shall content myself with asking you a few questions which, I think, will meet the case. On your word of honour I want you to answer each of these questions, unmindful of any possible consequences."

"Certainly, sir!" mumbled Maudy, wondering what was coming next.

"Now, Maulverer," said the Head, "firstly, did you send me an anonymous letter with a photograph enclosed recently?"

The dude opened his eyes to their fullest extent.

"Degad! I should jolly well think The Maudy Library, No. 581.

not, sir—no blurted out. "That is to say, I didn't, sir. I wouldn't do such a dir—I mean, such a beastly trick!"

The faintest semblance of a smile lighted the Head's calm, strong face. "I don't think you would, Maulverer," he said quietly. "However, I must demand from you answers to the same questions I have put to other of your schoolfellows. My second query is: Did you attend the Leamshire Race Meeting last week?"

Lord Herbert Maulverer nearly fell down with astonishment and confusion. He had not expected that abrupt question.

"Come, Maulverer, answer me!" Mauly pulled himself together with an effort, and looked full into the keen grey eyes of his questioner.

"I—I did attend the meeting, sir," he answered, in a quivering voice.

The Head's brow grew black as a thunder.

"Without permission, I presume?" he said, in an ominous voice.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you take any photographs there?"

"I did, sir—a dozen."

"Among the snapshots you took, was there one of a bookmaker on his stand?"

"There—there was, sir."

Mauly drew a silk handkerchief from his pocket and mopped his brow. He felt himself being turned inside-out under the headmaster's relentless cross-examination.

"Now, Maulverer," said Dr. Locke, in an even graver tone, "I am going to ask you another question which, fortunately, I have not had to put to any other boy. . . . While you were on the Leamshire Racecourse did you see Mr. Quelch there?"

Maulverer clasped and unclasped his fingers nervously, hesitating to reply. Dr. Locke remained seated at his desk, his eyes fixed keenly on the junior's working face.

"Yes, I saw him, sir," replied the dude at last, almost inaudibly.

"Then it was you who took this disgraceful photograph!" thundered the Head.

He whipped the print from his desk, and thrust it into the hand of the startled Maulverer.

Mauly blinked at the picture stupidly. It was a quarter-plate photograph, apparently taken on the day of the recent Leamshire race meeting. Flash Simmons was standing on a box. To the right several clients were grouped. On the left side Mr. Quelch stood alone facing the bookie.

Dr. Locke searched the junior's face narrowly, as though seeking to read his very thoughts.

"Did not you take that photograph, Maulverer?" he rapped out sharply.

"I swear I did not, sir," replied Mauly earnestly. "I could not have taken this without being aware that Mr. Quelch was in the picture."

The Head continued to regard the unfortunate junior intently. Long experience had made him an excellent judge of character, and he was seldom deceived by a prevaricating culprit. But honesty was written in every line of Maulverer's face, and he believed the lad, in spite of his previous admissions.

Suddenly another idea suggested itself to Dr. Locke's alert brain.

"With whom did you attend the race-meeting, boy?" he demanded.

Mauly's lips set into a firm line.

"Come, Maulverer!" said the Head sternly. "I demand to know with whom you went to the racecourse?"

"I must, sir!" The words were spoken with a quiet air of finality.

Dr. Locke shifted his ground somewhat.

"Did one of your companions—whoever they were—take that photograph?"

"No, sir," replied Mauly, glad to have an easy question to answer. "I have no idea who took that snap."

"Very well, Maulverer," said the headmaster. "I incline to the belief that you have spoken the truth. I am relieved to find you possess that school-boy sense of honour which prevents you divulging the names of your fellow bounds-breakers."

"I don't believe in sneakin', sir."

"But that does not mitigate against your own offence," said Dr. Locke.

"Knowing that it is strictly against orders for any Greyfriars boy to go to the races, why did you visit the course?"

"I—I wanted to see my uncle's horse, Gay Girl, run in the Selling Plate, sir."

"I sincerely trust you did not fall into the temptation to wager on the result of the race, my boy!"

"I'm not a bettin' man, sir."

"I'm glad to hear it, Maulverer," said the Head. "In visiting the course, however, you committed a very serious breach of the school regulations. In consideration of the fact that you have been honest with me, I shall not mete out the very severe punishment I at first contemplated."

"Oh, thanks very much, sir!" said Mauly, greatly relieved. "May I be gone, then, sir?"

"Indeed," went on the Head unheeding, "I shall content myself with giving you a caning."

"Ow! Begad!"

Dr. Locke rustled majestically across the study and opened his cupboard. Mauly looked with fascinated eyes at the small regiment of canes that were standing to attention inside. The Head selected a favourite old warrior from the ranks. Then, having snatched the air a couple of times to lumber up his arm, he approached the unfortunate Fourth-Former.

"Hold out your hand, Maulverer."

Mauly gingerly extended his fingers. Swish!

"Ow! Begad! O oh!"

"Now the other."

Again the cane descended, this time on the left hand of the luckless dude.

"Ow! Garooch!"

Dr. Locke laid the cane on his desk and pointed to the door.

"You may go, Maulverer," he said. "I trust the minor punishment I have given you will act as an effective deterrent should you again be tempted to break bounds."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Works Things Out.

WRITING with pain, with his hands tucked under his armpits, Lord Herbert Maulverer left the Head's dreaded sanctum. He paused in the passage to get over the worst effects of his caning, and then made his way to the Remove Form-room.

Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, was taking the class. Judging by the lazing and general disorder in the Form, and his own dishevelled condition, he was finding the high-spirited Removees a big handful.

Having satisfactorily explained to the harassed master the cause of his tardy appearance, Mauly squirmed into a seat by Harry Wharton.

"Well, what was the shindy about,

Mauly?" asked the Remove captain, in loud whisper.

"Ow! Groogh!" groaned Mauly. "I've been licked, dear boy!"

"Licked? What for?"

With many self-pitying moans the school dandy explained the whole situation.

"Hard luck, old top!" commented Wharton. "So there was a photograph in the case. That beast, Loder didn't invent the yarn, after all."

"No; it was true enough the Head had the photo sent to him anonymously. He told me so. Luckily for me, I could swear I hadn't taken the wretched thing!"

"What did it look like, Mauly?"

"It was a snap of that rotter Flash Simmons on his stand. A few silly asses were standin' round. Old Quechy, Jearlin' on a walkin'-stick, was wateh'n' the bookie."

A curious light sprang into the Remove captain's eyes.

"Great pin!" he exclaimed under his breath. "That's funny! Are you sure of that?"

"Seen' his believin', dear boy," replied Maulverer. "But what's funny about it?"

"Why," whispered Wharton impressively, "that Quechy should have been leaning on a walking-stick. When we saw him at the Leamshire meeting he wasn't carrying a stick at all. I remember distinctly. Now, how the dickens could he obtain a walking-stick on the racecourse?"

"My sunt! It is a bit funny," admitted Mauly.

A possible solution flashed across Wharton's mind.

"I say, Mauly," he muttered, "isn't it possible to fake photographs?"

Maulverer sat up at his desk with a start. For a moment he forgot the stinging pain in his finger-tips and that he was supposed to be hard at work snuffing French in the Form-room.

"Begad!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't be surprised—"

"Maulverer, why are you not learning so irregular verbs? Take a hundred lines for wasting so time!"

Maulverer's surprise and consternation caused a faint titter to run through the class.

"Ooh! Begad!" he muttered, as he glued his eyes on his grammar.

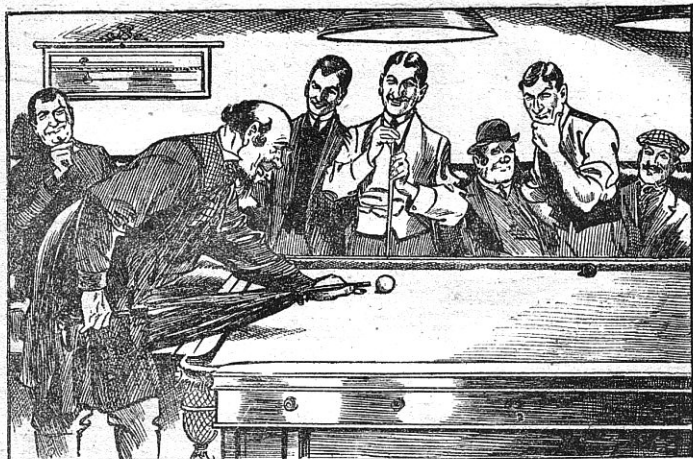
Harry Wharton, too, seemed buried in the book on his desk. But it was not the subject of irregular verbs that was occupying his thoughts. He was busy evolving a new theory in his mind.

Supposing that the picture that had been sent to the Head was a fake, the question arose—who was responsible for it? Loder had had the opportunity for extracting a snapshot of Flash Simmons from Mauly's packet of prints. Moreover, as the junior well knew, the prefect was cunning enough and craft enough to do anything to blacken the reputation of a supposed enemy.

A growing feeling obsessed Harry Wharton that Loder knew far more about the mysterious photo than he cared to say. But how to bring the guilt home to the Sixth-Former was the problem. Even were this done, there was still the matter of the theft from the Head's study to be solved. The whole business was very baffling. Nevertheless, Wharton was more determined than ever to "keep an eye on Loder" as the most likely means of clearing the name of Mr. Quelch.

No sooner was afternoon school dismissed than he rounded up the rest of the Co. and expounded his theory.

"The trouble is, you fellows, though," he said, "that we don't know enough



To the astonishment of Loder and the other spectators the yokel placed his large green umbrella on the table, took careful aim, and sent his ball hang against the red, screwing back into the top pocket. It was a magnificent shot and was loudly applauded. (See Chapter 7.)

about the circumstances of the theft. If some of the buzzes that are flying about are true, the fifty-quad note hasn't been tendered at any bank. That seems probable, otherwise, the number would have been recognised. But it doesn't look as though the Head has heard anything about it."

"I expect whoever pinched it is waiting till the storm's blown over a bit," said Bob Cherry. "Then the bandier will jahn it off on some unsuspecting Johnny—probably a bookie."

"I'm all in favour of a watch being kept on Loder's movements," said Frank Nugent. "But it's going to be jolly difficult and dangerous."

"The dangerousness will be terrific, my worthy chums," murmured Hurroo Singh.

"One or the other of us would have to break bounds almost every night," commented Johnny Bull.

"Just so," said Wharton. "We can do our best to keep our eye on the rotter, but it seems to me as we sha'n't get far without help. Now, I suggest we ask George Wingate to give us a hand."

"My hat!"

"What next?"

"Are you potty, old man?"

"Some hope!"

Harry Wharton waved aside the protests of his chums with a lordly, careless gesture.

"Listen, chumps!" he remarked. "I've got a bit of evidence—there's something fishy about that photo of old Queelch. If we could enlist Wingate's aid, he might form a vigilant committee of seniors, who could keep their peepers on Loder far better than we can. We oughtn't to leave any stone unturned in a serious matter like this."

"And who's going to respectfully ask the worthy Wingate for his honourable

services, my Indigra chum?" asked Hurroo Singh. "Doubtless, the excellent head-perfect would kickfully boot him from his esteemed study."

"I'll ask Georgie myself," said Wharton. "I'll go along and see him now."

"You're a brave chap, Harry," said Nugent. "But you'd better slip a crib under your coat-tails before you go."

And this was the opinion of the rest of the Co.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Vigilant Committees!

IGNORING the advice of his fellow-members of the Famous Five, Harry Wharton made his way to the head-perfect's study. In response, the cheery voice of the Greyfriars captain bade him enter. The junior did so, to discover George Wingate reclining in an armchair, reading. Slooping before the fire, making toast, was Dicky Nugent, his lag.

"Well, kid, what do you want?"

"May I speak to you privately for a minute, Wingate?" asked Wharton respectfully.

Wingate looked rather surprised, and hesitated a moment. Then he turned to Dicky Nugent.

"Stick that toast and the teapot on the table, and heat it, Dicky," he ordered.

The lag hastily set the rest of the tea-things, and left the study.

After the door had closed behind him, Wingate rose from his chair by the fire and stretched himself.

"Have you had tea, kid?" he asked Wharton. "No? Well, help yourself to a chair, and tuck in."

Tea with Wingate was a rare experience for a junior of Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton felt greatly backed by his cordial reception by the great man.

It was obvious that Wingate was in an exceptionally good mood, otherwise, he would not have thus condescended to honour a mere "Remove kid."

The path made smooth, Wharton had no difficulty in broaching the subject upon which he had called. Wingate heard him in silence, and at the end of the junior's plea there was a serious look on his face.

"Great Scott!" he muttered. "It would be awful if poor old Queelch had been the victim of a caddish plot. I am glad you have come to me about this matter, Wharton. In view of the fact that Loder also entered the Head's study on the afternoon the banknote was stolen, I think the closest watch should be kept on his movements. It seems incredible, though, that he should have taken one of young Maulverer's prints, and faked it for the purpose of blackening Queelch's reputation."

"Knowing Loder, I shouldn't say it would be beneath him," said Harry Wharton. "Anyway, I suggest you form a kind of vigilant committee of prefects to shadow him, Wingate. If he really has got the banknote, he's bound to try and get rid of it sooner or later. You senior chaps have got so much more freedom than we Remove fellows, so you could tackle the job."

George Wingate brought his fist down on the table with a bang that made the teacups rattle.

"By George, we will!" he averred. "Now, if you've finished, just trot along and bring Patrick Gwynne and Tom North here. They'll be enough. I'll go along and have a chat with the Head."

A rather startled look appeared in Harry Wharton's eyes.

"Don't worry, kid," smiled Wingate. "I won't bring your name into it. But

there are several things I want to find out if I can. I'll be tactful.

While Harry Wharton went to find the two prefects, George Wingate made his way to the headmaster's private study. He found Dr. Locke at his desk, poring over some papers for a forthcoming examination.

"Yes, Wingate? What can I do for you?"

"Pardon me for raising a very unsavoury matter, sir," said the school captain, "but would you mind informing me whether the fifty-pound note you lost has been traced yet?"

Dr. Locke peered through his spectacles at his head-prefect in blank surprise.

"Good gracious, Wingate!" he exclaimed. "What ever has induced you to come to me with that query?"

"Some information that has come to my ears, sir," replied Wingate. "I am afraid at present I cannot divulge what it is, whence I obtained it."

"That is a very extraordinary statement to make," said Dr. Locke. However, I may tell you that the banknote has not been traced. Fortunately, I had kept a record of its number, so if it is handed into a bank, I shall know it at once. Moreover, I remember making an ink blot on the note, and this will furnish an additional means of identification if needed."

"Thank you, sir," said Wingate. "It appears to be common property all over the school that Mr. Quech was asked to resign because he was suspected of stealing it."

"It is a very painful subject to me, Wingate."

"The whole affair is very painful to all who have the honour of the school at heart, sir," remarked Wingate seriously. "But the facts brought before my notice have made me think that a terrible mistake may have been made in bringing home the guilt to Mr. Quech."

"The theft was not actually brought home to him, Wingate, if that is what you mean," said the Head. "In confidence, I may tell you that appearances were very bad against him. That he attended the Loanshire race-meeting is certain. He was also accused of consorting with shady turf characters, and that he could not deny. I wish, from the bottom of my soul that something would occur to prove me wrong from beginning to end. Until recently I always held Mr. Quech in the greatest esteem!"

"It may sound presumptuous, sir, but I think there is a chance that you can be proved wrong," said Wingate earnestly. "Will you allow me to take the matter up in the way I consider best, sir? To do so I should require absolute freedom all hours for myself and at least two other prefects, probably Gwynne and North."

"Bless my soul, Wingate!" exclaimed the Head. "That is an amazing request! But I feel convinced you have not come to me without very good reason. Therefore I give you carte blanche to act as you think best. You and your fellow-prefects may enter and leave the school at any hour of the day or night, and go where you please. I have absolute trust in you to see that these great privileges are not abused."

"You may rest assured of that, sir," replied Wingate. "There is only one other matter I will bother you with. Would you mind giving me the number of the missing banknote?"

Dr. Locke wrote down the number on a slip of paper and handed it to the head-prefect. Then he unlocked a drawer in his desk and took out an envelope.

"This contains a photograph and an anonymous letter that were sent to

me," he said. "I have endeavoured to discover the sender without result. Perhaps you may be more successful, Wingate. Keep them securely under lock and key."

Greatly elated by the success of his mission to the headmaster, George Wingate left the study. Outside, he opened the envelope and glanced at the contents. As Manleyver had said, Mr. Quech, depicted standing near the bookie in the photograph, was leaning on a walking-stick. The Famous Five swore the master had not been carrying a stick on the day of the races. The captain of Greyfriars could gather no clue from the ill-kept, anonymous letter, which was signed, "A Friend," and conveyed the information that Mr. Quech was in the habit of attending race-meetings.

Reading his own study, Wingate found Harry Wharton and the two prefects, Patrick Gwynne and Tom North, awaiting him. To them the captain of Greyfriars explained the object and result of his visit to the Head.

"Now," he said to the two seniors, "Wharton has suggested we form a vigilance committee. I consider the idea a jolly good one, and I think we three ought to take turns in watching Loder, in view of his connection with the recent rotten affair. Are you chaps game?"

"Rely on me to help, Winny!" said North.

"I'm with you, too," cried Gwynne.

"Good!" said George Wingate. "Now listen to me, Wharton. I want you to keep mum about our taking up this matter. If any other clues come to your notice, come and see me at once. Now trot off!"

And Harry Wharton "troited"—to perfect the arrangements for forming another vigilance committee consisting of the Famous Five.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wingate on the Trail!

ALL unconscious of the vigilance committees formed for his especial benefit, Gerald Asherton Loder, the cad of the Sixth, entered his study wearing a light overcoat and carrying his cap in his hand. His manner was that of an intruder as he carefully closed and locked the door.

This done, he stealthily crossed the carpet and, some difficulty he extracted a dusty envelope from a crack in the floor beneath, and placed it in the breast-pocket of his overcoat. Then he carefully replaced the carpet, unlocked and opened the door, and left the study. As he walked out of the room he bumped up against his crou, Arthur Woodhead Carne.

"Hallo, Carne!" he said. "I was just coming for you. You're ready, I see, so we may as well beat it."

"There's no hurry," said Carne. "There isn't a train from Friarfield to Courtfield for three-quarters of an hour. Anyway, you're surely not going in that?"

"In what?" snapped Loder impatiently.

"Why, that light overcoat. It's blowing a gale from the east. You'll be frozen."

"Maybe I had better wear something warmer, as we shan't be getting back until late," growled Loder. "It won't take me a minute to change."

He re-entered his study, and hastily doffed his light overcoat. Then, picking up a stout, winter garment from the back of a chair, he donned that in its place. Leaving the study, he locked the

door on the outside, dropped the key into his pocket, and rejoined Carne.

Together the two prefects left Greyfriars and swung briskly down the road leading to Friarfield. Before they turned the first bend in the road George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, sauntered through the gates after them.

It needed but little deduction on the head-prefect's part to guess that his two quarries were bound for the railway-station. The little village of Friarfield held no attractions for such as Loder and Carne. They sought their recreation in the gayer atmosphere of Courtfield, the town further up the line.

Acting on this knowledge, Wingate made a short cut to Friarfield, bought a ticket for Courtfield, and took up his position at the far end of the platform. He drew his coat-collar about his ears, and his cap down over his eyes, though he had no fear of being recognised in the evening dusk.

A few minutes before the train drew into the station Loder and Carne arrived. Having seen them enter a compartment, Wingate boarded a carriage in the rear of the one occupied by the other two Sixth-Formers. Disembarking at Courtfield Junction, Wingate shadowed them to Chumkley's, the fashionable restaurant of the place.

"It'm" murmured the head-prefect, as he stood on the opposite side of the street. "I don't suppose those two precious beauties have come here simply for dinner. Still, they are safe enough there for half an hour or so."

Struck with an idea, he proceeded to the shop of a fancy-dress costumer, popularly known as Nobby Clarke. The premises were closed, but a ring at the door brought the old proprietor himself on the scene.

"Good-evenin', Master Wingate!" he said. "What can I do for you?"

"Evening, Nobby!" said Wingate cheerily. "I wonder if you'd undertake a little job in the make-up line?"

The old man's face wrinkled like a withered crab-apple in a knowing smile.

"Ah, some job, I suppose, Master Wingate?" he said. "But there, lads will be lads! Step in!"

From the stacks of clothing of all kinds in the shop Wingate selected a cloth, peaked cap, reef jacket, blue jersey, and a pair of sea-boots.

"Now I want you to make me up as a Peggy Boy fisherman, Nobby," he said. "I'll leave my own duds here. But you must let me come back at any hour and change again. I'll pay you well for your services."

Only too glad of the chance of doing business at any hour of the day or night, the old costumer agreed. He steeled Wingate's face and hands the colour of mahogany, and gave the prefect's chin a rough, unshaven appearance with green-stain. Less than fifteen minutes later the captain of Greyfriars left the establishment looking for all the world a typical specimen of the Kentish fisherman.

Safe from recognition, George Wingate rolled carelessly back to Chumkley's, and propped himself against the wall of a near-by public-house. Soon he had the satisfaction of seeing Carne and Loder emerge from the restaurant.

Arm-in-arm, the two prefects strolled casually to the north end of the town, unaware of the tough-looking individual who slouched along some distance behind them. Their destination was soon apparent. It was a shady little hotel on the outskirts of the place known as the Anne Boleyn Inn.

Loder and Carne entered the rattle-shackled old place, and proceeded at once

(Continued on page 9.)

The Greyfrians HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 9.

February 26th, 1921.

The Staff



EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

This week, thank goodness, we go back to press again!

The all-verse number of the "Greyfriars Herald" reduced the hard-working members of our editorial staff to physical wrecks. Not for whose handiwork would we lackle another such number! Still, it was a novel journalistic venture, and I hope my chums liked it.

I have got together a number of interesting features for this issue. Toddy's tale of thirteen errors, must take pride of place. See your brains to work, ye clever ones, and see if you can discover the mistakes.

I prevailed upon Mr. Mumble, the gardener, and the devoted husband of the tuckshop dame, to let me publish extracts from his diary. He consented; and I think you will agree that the extracts are really funny. My Fighting Editor laughed so much when he read them that I had to stand him on his head and bounce him!

You will notice that Billy Bunter has taken a hand this week. He doesn't contribute very much to the "Herald" these days—his precious "Weekly" takes up most of his time—but he has now waded in with a "Kooker's Kollum." I can accept no responsibility for the advice contained therein. If you follow Bunter's directions for making a rabbit-pie, and find yourself being poisoned by inches, you must blame me!

Tom Brown, whose Cycling Corner recently evoked roars of laughter, will be giving us something more in a week or two. Brown's a bit of a humorist, and I'm thinking of increasing his salary from five hundred a year to a thousand—pence, of course!

I have found time—and space—this week to reply to some of my numerous correspondents. I would repeat that I am always delighted to hear from my chums, and whenever I see my post-bag bulging like Billy Bunter, it does my heart good!

I will endeavour to reply to all my correspondents in rotation, but they mustn't get waxy if the replies are rather backed, because, you see, we go to press many moons in advance.

When in doubt, difficulty, dismay, distress, despair, or the dumps, and whenever you want to get something off your chest, don't forget to write to

Your Editor and Chum,
HARRY WHARTON.

SOCIETY SNAPSOTS.

By BOB CHERRY.

At the Greyfrians Fancy Dress Ball held last week, Cecil Reginald Temple went as a stuffed peacock. No disguise was necessary!

Billy Bunter went as a prize porpoise. Here, again, no disguise was necessary!

Bolsover major made the hit of the evening. He blacked Odgily's eyes for attempting to flirt with Phylis. Ho-ho-ho!

Bessie Bunter was present at the ball. She represented the family skeleton!

Mr. Paul Prout went on a shooting expedition the other day, taking Mr. Quetch with him. The master of the Fifth opened fire upon a rabbit, which escaped unhurt to its burrow. We regret to state, however, that Mr. Quetch received a flesh wound in the leg!

Lord Maulvevver fell through a cellar-flap in Courtfold High Street just recently. We have always lamented his lordship's inability to keep his eyes open!

Horace Coker is holding a spelling-bee in his study on Wednesday evening. We trusted, Orie, so how it will be a boozee snookess. When in doubt as to how a word should be spelt, kome to Koker!

OUR WEEKLY CARTOON.



HARRY WHARTON REPLIES TO HIS READERS.

Address all communications to: The Editor, The GREYFRIARS HERALD, The Fleeting House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.4.

Gerard P. (Nottingham).—"When is Lord Maulvevver, your Fashion Expert, going to give us an article from his pen?" The Fighting Editor writes a thing like your Supplement started!—"We'll get our Fighting Editor to stick a number of pins into Manly's aristocratic hide, and he'll probably bestir himself, and write an article next week!"

Jimmy E. (Leipold).—"Your paper is a corker, Harry! Long may it in the 'Magpie' tarry! Its contents fairly make us shriek. They're better every blessed week!"—Twinkle, twinkle, Jimmy R. What a ripping bard you are!

"Margaret" (North Finchley).—"I saw in the paper the other day that a man named Wharton was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for burglary. Is he any relation of yours, Harry?"—No, madam! Certainly not! He is probably first cousin to Lady of the Sixth!

Reggie Wilson (Manchester).—"Who writes the weekly linerick in the 'Herald'?" Give him my congratulations, will you, and tell him he's a giddy genius!"—Dick Pogford's the culprit. I have given him your message, and he now finds it necessary to order a larger size in hats!

Madge Chester (Torquay).—"What's become of the Agony Column, Harry?"—No space for it, dear lady. There is such a pressure of other contributions that we are unable to pile on the "Agony."

"Ardent Reader" (No Address).—"Can't you persuade Mr. Frank Richards to introduce a deformed boy at Greyfrians?"—We've got one here already. Johnny Bull was badly crooked this afternoon at Foster. He's just asked me to pass the crutches!"

"Pugilist" (Birmingham).—"My pal declares that Billy Bunter is the best fighting-man in the Remove. He's talking through his hat, isn't he?"—Certainly; and yet there is a certain amount of truth in what he says, for Billy Bunter can possibly "knock in all of a heap" sometimes!

Joe Bates (Liverpool).—"Will you please tell me how to remove a painful corn from my foot?"—Run away and pick flowers, my dear fellow. I'm not a blessed chiropodist!

Billy Summers (Bradford).—"Will you ask old Coker if he'd like to make me a present of his motor-bike?"—We have asked him, and he said you could go and eat cake. After that rude remark, you will probably want to go and eat Coker!

THE MIGHT LIBRARY. No. 60L

MY FAMILY TREE.

Showing that I am in the direct
line of descent from William
the Konkeror.

By **BILLY BUNTER.**

WILLIAM THE KONKEROR

Bill Jones married Bessie Brown

Frank Bunturre-Jones Rupert Bunturre-
Jones (afterwards Lord Bunturre-de-
Bunturre) Flossie Bunturre-Jones

Baron Colney Bunturre,
of Hatch

Earl Bunturre,
of Blunkmshire

Her: Von Bunter

(executed in 1361 for dropping bombs
from a Zeppelin on to Windsor Castle,
in other words, for "high treason.")

Otto Gotfried Bunter

(committed suicide by shutting himself
in an oven, where he "got fried"—
hence his name.)

Colonel Sir Loyne de Beefe Bunter

(fought under Kronwell in the Wars
of the Roses)

Sir Raphael Bunter

(the celebrated painter, who was hung
in the Academy, and afterwards on
Tower Hill)

Dick Turpentine Bunter

(the famous highwayman, who rode all
the way from London to York, and then
astonished the natives by eating a hole
ham. Hence the phrase, "York hams.")

P. O. Bunter, Esq.

(the inventor of the postie-order)

Jabez Wolfe Bunter

(who attempted to swim the Channel, and
was "wolved" by a shark when (away
abroad)

Sir Obese Bunter, Bart.

(Director of the firm of Messrs. Bull &
Bear, Stockbrokers)

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER

(whose name is sure to go down to
prosperity.)

THE MINNER LIBRARY, No. 631.

MY DIARY FOR THE WEEK!



By **Joseph Mible**
(THE GREYFRIARS GARDENER.)

MONDAY.—Worked hard all day in the Head's garden. Joked as I was hammering "molders" of my werry way, I meet William Gosling. He was carryin' a box of begs on his shoulder. I was carryin' a ladder. "Stand clear!" I yells. "You go to Jeriko!" Gosling replies. "If you don't stand aside," I shouts, "I shall hurt into yer with this here ladder, as ever was!" Gosling takes no notice, and then— Bill! Krash! The end of the ladder kollides with the box of begs, an' you never see such a mess in yer life! An' an' box an' Gosling are all mixed up on the ground. "Joseph Mible!" cries Gosling, as kickin' of himself up. "I'll ave the lor on yer for this, as sars as begs!" "It was yer own fault," I replies. "I give yer fare warnin'!" Yab! Go an' dor yer Old Ace Benson!" shouts Gosling. "This was a hint that I was over seventy; an' I sars, says I, to be pink with pashun; I may be showin' in yer years, William Gosling, but I'll show yer that there's life in the old dog yet!" With which I rushes at him, and gives him a fare gooding. I should have left him in an' pieces in the Close if Master Wharton an' a few others hadn't come on the scen and dragged us apart.

TUESDAY.—The Head beln' away goffin', I had a kwiet an' restful day. I took things easy, an' remembered the words of Homer Kyam:

"Here, with a loaf of bread beneath the
bunch,

A punt of ale, some honey, an' a cow
Beside me nooing in the wilderness,
An' wilderness is paradise now!"

WEDNESDAY.—Master Skinner comes up to me, an' he says, says he: "It's a parti-cularly thin day, Mible." "What of that?" says I. "Mebbe you'd like to take an afternoon-off," says he. "If only I could!" says I. "It's easily done," says he. "But have you got to do this afternoon?" "Tried the 'olde round the Head's garden," says I. "Then I'll do it for yer," says Master Skinner, "an' you can go home an' have a kwiet nap." I falls in with this Janucus proposal, hasta Master Skinner the sythe, an' clears off. Late in the afternoon I comes out to see how Master Skinner is gettin' on with the 'olde, an' I finds that there ain't no 'olde left! The yung warmist has backed it all away! I looks round for the yung blaggard, but he's nowhere to be seen.

THURSDAY.—The Head says to me, he says, says he: "Wot's become of my 'olde, Mible?" which it must have blowed down in the pit, sir!" says I. "Rattle!" says he. "You have wantonly destroyed it, an' you will take a week's notice!" I knows away, feelin' werry down in the mouth.

FRIDAY.—I gets told of Master Skinner, an' drags him by the scruff of his neck to the Head's study, an' makes him confess. An' he sets it in the neck far an' proper!

SATURDAY.—Utterly wore out arter an' ard week's work, I tell yer, a gardener's life is anythin' but a bed of roses!

MY FOOTBOWL KOLLUM.

By **Billy Bunter.**

I had rather a garsly egg-sperience last Saturday, dear readers.

Now, I had nothing to do last Saturday, that jellus beast Wharton having left me out of the Remove team threw spite on me, so I consented to referee the match between the 2nd and the 3rd.

Yung Tubb was captin of the 2nd, and Dicky Nugent skippered the 3rd.

Before the game started, I said to myself: "I will make it my business to see that the 2nd Form wins. My miner is playing for them, and I should like to see Sammy in the limeite."

Well, I blue my wide for the game to commence, and away went yung Tubb like a streak of lightning. I thort to myself, "He will score a goal unless I pull him up." And I promptly showed:

"Off side!"

Tubb halted, and glared at me in a most unfriendly manner.

"Off-side, my grandmother!" he roared. "Preslus fino referee you are—I don't think!"

"Look hear," I retorted. "I don't want any check from you, yung Tubb."

"That's the stuff to give 'em, Billy!" chuckled Dicky Nugent.

The ball was set in motion wance more, and my miner—whose nollidge of football is eggertrately limited—picked it up in his hands and through it into the net.

"Goal!" I said.

"What!" screamed Tubb. "You're talking out of the back of yote neck! That was no goal! It was a foul!"

"You needn't try to teach me my job, Tubb!" I said grimly. "I'm no chicken! I was playing football long before you developed into a Tubb—when you were kwite a small barrel, in fact!"

"Har, har, har!" roared the Jellid 2nd Formers.

"That goal won't count!" hooted Puget of the 3rd.

"Oh, yes, it will!" I replied. "And if you kontinue to argue the point, I shall award a further goal to yor opponents!"

"My batt!"

The game proceeded, and after running the length of the field, yung Tubb sent the ball crashing into the net.

"No goal," I said promptly.

"Fih!" Why wasn't it a goal?" demanded Tubb.

"Bekavse I wasn't looking!"

"That was all together too much for Tubb."

"Kollar him!" he cried.

I was seized by meeny hands, and that yung beast Whirate niner got a length of rope, and tak me to one of the goal-posts.

I struggled to burst my bonds, but in vain.

And then the yung vilans started pelting me with all the things they could by there grimy hands on.

Lumps of mud, brick-batta, stones, stiv, juizer-beer bottles, bad eggs, and other missiles came wizzing thro' the air, and smote me in various parts of my anatomy.

"Chick it!" I roared.

"And thee did—harder than ever!"

How long I remained tied to that goal-post I don't no. I was unkonshus at the finish, and with my dying breath I moad a rezerfill-han never agane to referee a fags' football match!

A SPLENDID SHORT SCHOOL STORY.



Bob Cherry's Birthday!

BY PETER TODD.

(NOTE.—This story of Peter Todd's contains thirteen errors—not spelling errors, but contradictions and misstatements. Here is a chance for clever readers to test their powers of observation. The full list of errors will be found on another page. Ed.)

IT was Bob Cherry's birthday. A regular fellow like Bob has a birthday, there is generally something doing. And there is something doing now. Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars presented a very festive appearance. The table was laden with all manner of good things, which had been obtained from Dame Taggles' little shop in the Close. A cheerful fire blazed in the grate, and an appetising odour of fried hippers was wafted through the open doorway.

The Famous Five were present, working industriously.

"I'm glad you asked the girls to come over, Bob," said Harry Wharton, turning a flushed face from the fire. "It's a long time since we had Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis to tea."

"How many people have been invited altogether?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Can't you see that the table's laid for twelve, say?" said Bob Cherry. "Besides the three girls and ourselves, there'll be Mark Haley, Smithy, Tom Brown, and Squiff. That makes a round dozen. Half a piggy, though. What about inviting Mauly?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"No jolly fear!" he said.

"Why? You've no objection to old Mauly, surely?"

"No. I love him like a brother, but he'll bring the number up to thirteen."

"Well!"

"And thirteen's an unlucky number," chimed in Frank Nugent.

Bob Cherry laughed scornfully.

"That silly old superstition is played out," he said. "It's as dead as Queen Anne. And there's no sense in it, anyway. Thirteen's been a lucky number in my case. I was born on the thirteenth day of the month. I had thirteen presents sent me at Christmas time, and when we routed the village team at footer I bagged the thirteenth goal. Whatever you fellows may say about it, I shall invite Mauly to the spread."

"Well, it's your treat, Bob," said Harry Wharton, "and you can invite whom you like; but why not make the total number fourteen?"

"No room," said Bob, looking round the study. "It'll be a jolly tight squeeze as it is. I'll go along and fetch Mauly."

And he opened the door, and went along to Study No. 1.

Bob's chums felt very uneasy. They weren't as a rule, superstitious. They weren't afraid to walk under a ladder; and if they happened to upset the salt, or smash a mirror, they didn't imagine that some terrible calamity would befall them.

But so far as that mucky numeral, thirteen, was concerned, the Famous Five were decidedly nervous. They had heard of dreadful tragedies which had been caused by thirteen people sitting down to table. And they had a presentiment that if thirteen people attended the banquet in Study No. 1, disaster of some sort would follow.

"Hope Mauly feels too tired to come," said Nugent.

"Same here," said Johnny Bull.

But Lord Maulverer—though he certainly felt tired—had no option about coming. For Bob Cherry yanked him off the sofa and marched him along willy-nilly to Study No. 1. A few moments later the whole of the guests arrived, including Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevelyn, Phyllis Howell, and Philippa Derwent, of Cliff House.

"Many happy returns, Bob," said Miss Clara, with a smile.

"As a matter of fact of you to invite us," said Marjorie Hazeldene, "considering we were here to tea only the day before yesterday."

"Rats! Our Cliff House chums are always welcome."

"Yes, rather!"

"How's the football going?" inquired Phyllis Howell.

"First-rate!" said Harry Wharton. "We beat the village team by twelve to all the other day."

"Oh, how splendid!"

The Famous Five bustled about and made themselves useful.

Bob Cherry jerked back a chair for Miss Clara.

The Cliff House girl sat down, and then, uttering a shriek of alarm, she flung her arms round Johnny Bull's neck for support.

The chair had collapsed beneath her!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, in dismay.



As Johnny Bull reached over for the toast, he tipped Bob Cherry's elbow. A stream of hot tea descended into Phyllis's lap.

"Calamity number one!" growled Harry Wharton.

Miss Clara disentangled her arms from Johnny Bull's neck, and rose to her feet, red and wrathful.

"I wish you wouldn't have collapsible chairs in your study, Harry!" she said, in tones of vexation.

"Sorry, Miss Clara," stammered the captain of the Remove. "But that chair's awfully fragile. It won't stand a great weight."

"Goodness! Surely you don't imagine I'm Bessie Butler!"

"Take my chairfulness, honoured miss," said Harree Singh politely. "I will disport myself on the coastal scuttles."

Miss Clara sat down—very gingerly this time—and then the feed started.

Bob Cherry poured out the tea. And as he was filling Phyllis Howell's cup, Johnny Bull stretched out his arm for the toast. In doing so, he poked Bob's elbow, and a jet of scalding tea descended upon Phyllis Howell's dress.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, in dismay.

Phyllis Howell uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"My costume is ruined!" she exclaimed.

"So is mine!" cried Marjorie Hazeldene, as Johnny Bull, in offering her the toast, tipped the entire contents of the plate into her lap.

"That's three calamities in a minute!" growled Harry Wharton.

And Tom Brown and Squiff, who were perched on the window-sill, gave a chuckle.

"Everything seems to be going wrong!" murmured Squiff. "It isn't the thirteenth of the month, either!"

The Cliff House girls were looking thoroughly annoyed by this time. The clumsy antics of the Greyfriars juniors were beginning to get on their nerves.

"I knew what would happen if thirteen sat down to the table!" muttered Nugent.

Philippa Derwent was the only girl who had escaped calamity, so far. And her turn now came. She raised her teacup to her lips, and made a very face.

"This tea has a very queer taste," she said. "Is it sugared?"

"Yes," said Tom Redwing. "I put in a couple of lumps."

"But the tea tastes like brim!"

A horrified expression came over Harry Wharton's face. He glared across the table at Tom Redwing.

"You champion ass! You put two lumps of salt in the cup!"

"Oh, help!"

"Whatever made you do such a mad thing?"

"It's your fault!" growled Tom Redwing. "You shouldn't keep salt in the sugar-basin!"

The judges felt very uncomfortable by this time—with the exception of Lord Maulverer, who had closed his eyes, and was sleeping peacefully.

Bob Cherry's birthday banquet was progressing anything but favourably.

The climax came when Bob himself started to perform a juggling feat. He picked up three plates, and undertook to keep them all in motion at the same time.

"It takes one doing," he said; "but I'm an expert. I learnt this trick from Toby at the school page, you know."

"I say, Bob, hadn't you better postpone this juggling performance till after the party?" said Harry Wharton solemnly.

"That! I'd do it now. I'm sure the girls are interested."

The next instant the three plates were spinning overhead. Bob Cherry managed to keep them going for a few seconds, and then a startling thing happened. One of the plates crashed against the ceiling, and was shivered into fragments. And the fragments descended in a shower upon the feasters!

The Cliff House girls were the principal victims. And as soon as the bombardment was over, they rose with one accord to their feet.

"I'm gone," said Miss Clara grimly. "I didn't come here to endure a miniature air-raid."

"Well, all go," said Marjorie Hazeldene. "These boys seem to have no idea of how to treat their guests!"

The Cliff House quintette moved to the door.

"I—I say!" faltered Harry Wharton, in great distress. "Don't go! We—we've got to go fully sorry."

"Well, leave you alone with your sisters!" said Phyllis Howell tartly.

"No, no! Be stay, begad!" pleaded Lord Maulverer.

But the Cliff House girls were not to be coaxed into remaining. They flounced out of the study, leaving black condemnation behind them.

When they had gone, Bob Cherry's chums, regardless of the fact that it was his birthday, rushed at him as one man, and urged that a limping which he would remember for many birthdays as come!

THE END.

SHOULD FLOGGINGS BE ABOLISHED?

You'd think everybody would say "Yes," wouldn't you? But such is not the case, as the following replies will show.—Ed.



BOB CHERRY.—No, no, no! I happen to be the culprit!

HURREE SINGH.—If the lickfulness and the flogfulness were abolished, done away with, the amount of misbehaviour would be terrific! No, I thinkfully consider that things had better remainfully stay as they are!

MR. QUELCH.—It would be a great mistake to abolish corporal punishment in schools. Discipline would be at a discount, and the mere giving of impositions would not be sufficient to maintain law and order.

FRANK NUGENT.—Abolish flogging? No jolly fear! Every time a fellow does wrong, he should be awarded a dozen strokes of the "cat." (If it were the kitchen cat, I don't think anybody would object.)—Ed.)

ALONZO TODD.—I am heartily in favour of the abolition of anything which gives pain to the recipient.

MR. PROTTE.—"Spare the rod, spoil the child." (That's most unkind, sir. Draw it mild!)—Ed.)

DICKY NUGENT.—I regret I can't cover this question because I don't no what "abolish" means but when I have looked it up in the dictionary I will let you have my opinion for what it is worth. (Which is exactly nothing.)—Ed.)

WILLIAM GOSLING.—Which I seriously don't think as how flogging should be abolished, because I like hoisting your tips on to my shoulders while Dr. Locke gets dizzy with the birch-rod. It's a pleasant smashum. (But not for the victim!)—Ed.)

OUR WEEKLY LIMERICK,

No. 9.

A heathen Chinese named Wun Lung,
On the branch of an elm gaily swung,
Along came old Protte,
His repeater rang out,
And it left poor Wun Lung with one lung!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(NOTE.—The Editor does not necessarily share the views of silly asses who do not know what they're talking about.—E.J.)

Toddy's Tale.

To the Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."
Dear Wharton,—I am sending you a short story for this week's issue, and I have pardoned over a hundred spelling errors. It is here is a chance for your brainy readers to put their powers of observation to the test.

I have already shown the manuscript to Billy Bunter, who declares that he has located over a hundred spelling errors. It is figured this out according to his own weird and wonderful style of spelling; it isn't surprising!

Yours sincerely,

PETER TODD.

(Many thanks, Toddy! Our Special Investigation Department has since discovered the thirteen errors, and we are publishing them in another column.—Ed.)

Muzzle the Mad Musician!

To the Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."
Dear Sir,—At the present time I am waiting for an important exam, but I find it out impossible to work, owing to the unearthly din which goes on next door.

I thought, at first, that a series of earthquakes was happening; but on investigation I found that the appalling noise was caused by that mad, duffer Hoskins, who seems to imagine he's a Bach, a Handel, or a Mozart, rolled into one. His piano-tumping is the absolute limit, and my nerves are in rags!

Don't you think there ought to be a new Muzzling Order, applicable to mad musicians?

Yours wearily,

PHILBERT JACKSON.

(Shell Form.)

Full List of Errors in the short story entitled "Bob Cherry's Birthday!"

1. Mrs. Mimble—not Dame Taggles—keeps the tuckshop at Greyfriars.
2. Bob Cherry could not have opened the door of Study No. 1. It was already open.
3. Lord Manleverer's study is No. 22—not No. 11.
4. Only four members of the Famous Five were devious: Bob Cherry being scornful of the superstition in question.
5. If four guests arrived from Cliff House, the total number at the feed would be fourteen—not thirteen, as stated in the story.
6. Marjorie Hazelknee says: "It's awfully good of you to invite us, considering we were here to tea only the day before yesterday." Earlier in the story, Harry Wharton remarks that it is a long time since the girls came to tea!
7. If the village team was beaten 12-0, Bob Cherry could not possibly have scored the thirteenth goal, as he previously stated.
8. As Bob Cherry was born on the 13th, and it was now his birthday, Squiff was incorrect in saying, "It isn't the thirteenth of the month."
9. If Tom Brown and Squiff were seated on the window-sill, and Hurree Singh on the coal-scuttle, there could not have been thirteen seated at the table.
10. Tom Redwing was not present.
11. Toby is not the Greyfriars page. He belongs to St. Jim's.
12. As there were four Cliff House girls present, it was a quartette—not a quintette.
13. Lord Manleverer could not have contributed to the conversation. He was asleep.



By Billy Bunter.

What I don't no about kooking, deer readers, isn't worth noing!

If ever yore water should rekwire a kookie-men, tell her to apply to W. C. B., Greyfriars Skool. I can't go out to work, of course, but I'll undertake to kook all the grub at Greyfriars and send it on purr parcel post.

Kookery, so far as most fellows are concerned, is a lost art. You ought to see sum of the feeds they serve up in the Jewnier studides! I wonder all the chaps don't go about suffering from kronik indigestion!

The average fello is an absolute duffer at kooking. And I hope the following hints will help to raise the standard of kooking at Greyfriars. If this ean's about, I shall not have labored in vain!

Hear are the hints, deer readers. And I think yo'll agree that I've got Mrs. Becton fairly becton!

How to make a Rabbit-Pie.

1st Borro Mr. Proot's Winchester respecter, then go and tott one of Nugent minor's tame rabbits. Then skinn the rabbit. If yo don't care about doing the jabb yoreself, hand it over to Skinner. He's an ergesial skinner.

Having skinned the rabbit, dissect it with yore pen-knife.

Meenwhile, get sum flower and water, and mix it into doo. If their is no rold-in available, use the studdy jobber!

When yore rabbit is dissected, put the most tempting porshuns into a dish and feed the remainder to the kitchen cat. If their is no dish available, use an empty toffy tin.

Having made yore crust, lay it over the top of the dish—or toffy tin, as the case may be—and plaie the hole box of trix in the oven. If their is no oven available, put it on the fire.

If you wish yore pie to be hard-boiled, give it six minits. If you wish it to be 'o'e even more thoroughly, leave it in the oven—or on the fire—indefinitely. You will soon no when it is done, by the smel!

In order to carve the pie, borro the hatchet from the wash-bed.

Serve on hot plaits, and add sugar and milk to taste. If their are no plaits available, use sops-dishes. If their is no sops available, use sops-otone. And if their is no milk available, use blue-black ink.

How to make Greyfriars Pudding.

Mix flower and water, as already described, into doo, and roll it out until it is as flat as Hoskins' top note. You have now made yore pudding-crust. Lay it over a basin, leaving a big hole in the centre. Then catch a fat toad, and dropp it into the cavity. After which, put the hole thing into a saucepan, and boil.

This tempting dish is also known as toad-in-the-hole!

How to make a Sossidge Roll.

Give it a jolly good shove!

How to make an apple turn over.

Simply reverse it!

"By Wingate's Aid!"

(Continued from page 8.)

to the billiard-room. Wingate waited for a few moments, and sauntered in after them.

"Hallo, Jigger!" said Loder to the marker. "Where's Simmons?"

"I expects him any time, Mister Loder," replied the weedy-looking youth.

Loder peered round the room at the other occupants. These consisted of two countrymen seated on one of the long leather settees that bordered the room, and a coarse, seafaring man who had just entered.

"Seems to me, Carne, old man," said Loder, "we shall have to amuse ourselves with a hundred up until Flash Simmons and some of the other boys arrive."

At that moment his attention was attracted by a new arrival.

"My hat! What is it?" muttered Loder.

"Must have been left over from last Guy Fawkes' Day!" muttered Carne.

Not without reason did the two seniors make those remarks. Standing on the threshold peering into the billiard-room, was one of the most extraordinary beings they had ever set eyes on. The newcomer was an old yokel, with "country bumpkin" written all over him from the top of his battered and faded straw hat to the toes of his clumsy, hob-nailed boots. He wore a huge smock-collar, a flaming red tie, a dark blue smock, knee breeches, and gaiters. In one hand he carried an ancient green umbrella. His chin was decorated with a long goatee beard, and there was an expression of incipient imbecility on his weather-beaten face.

His eyes, roaming round the room, met those of Loder.

"Is this here a billiards-room, young fellow-me-lad?" he asked.

With difficulty Loder suppressed a strong inclination to laugh outright.

"No; it's a Sunday-school, dad," he said, "though they do play billiards here during the week."

"Will wuzzels, fancy that now!" exclaimed the rustic. "O! allus wanted to see the sort of place they play billiards in."

He peered round the place in undisguised admiration. Having taken everything in, he buttonholed Loder in a confidential manner.

"O! say, young fellow-me-lad," he said, "you looks a young chap what knows his way about the world. O! come to town to see a bit o' life. I've understand? O! you plenty o' money, for me old Aunt Primrose Giggelchick has just died and left me her farm. O! want to celebrate, you see. O! allus wanted to try that these game o' billiards."

"Well, you can, dad," said Loder. "You'll have to speak to the marker."

The old yokel looked at the weedy-looking youth indicated, and shook his head.

"O! don't know much about this here game," said he. "Couldn't you young fellow-me-lads let me play w' you?"

The faintest of winks passed between Carne and Loder.

"Maybe you'd like a game of snooker pool, grandpa?" suggested Carne. "That's a nice quiet little game, and not too expensive."

"No; it's billiards O! want to play," said the old bumpkin perversely, "and bust the expense!"

To the open-eyed astonishment of all in the billiard-room, he drew from his

pocket a roll of currency notes and flourished them in the air.

Gerald Loder furtively wiped his brow with his pocket-handkerchief. The sight of so much easy money was almost overpowering.

"I'll tell you what, dad," he said. "Just to oblige you, I'll give you a game of billiards."

"Here, where do I come in?" muttered Carne.

"You can take him on afterwards, you idiot!" hissed Loder. "Of course, billiards is a pretty expensive game, you know, dad."

"They charge ya a lot for usin' the table, do they?" said the yokel. "Never mind, O'll pay."

"No, it's not that so much," said Loder. "You see, we play a hundred points up. If you score the hundred first, I give you a fiver. If I do, you pay me a fiver."

The old yokel discarded his coat like a shod.

"Dirt cheap, O! calls it!" he remarked. "O! allus heard you had to pay lots more'n that."

Again Loder furtively wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Of course, you can make it a tenner, if you like," he murmured weakly.

"Done!" cried the countryman. "But what about this here young fellow-me-lad—your friend? Where does he come in?"

Carne was suddenly struck with a bright notion.

"I'll tell you what, dad," he said. "Just to give the game a flip, I'll back my pal for a fiver that he scores a hundred points before you do."

"That be real generous o' you, young fellow-me-lad," said the bumpkin genially. "If there be one thing O! like better'n another, it is a little gamble. Who! only last Christmas twelve-month O! won a turkey in a raffle. Real luck, O! be!"

Greatly fanning himself, Carne took his seat on one of the settees. Before peeling off his overcoat, Loder's hand wandered into the breast-pocket of the garment. Immediately his face went as white as death.

"Great pip, old man!" cried Carne, jumping up. "What's up?"

"O! I remember!" said Loder, with a half-sigh of relief. "I changed my light overcoat for this at the last moment. I think I ought to get back to the school."

"What did you leave?" asked Carne.

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"Only some money," said Loder, with an effort. "But I intended paying off my debts to Simmons with it. He's hardly given me a moment's rest lately, and he'll go properly off to handle when he finds I'm without the dough again to-night."

"Well, it can't be helped," murmured Carne philosophically. "You'll have to explain matters to him. The money will be safe enough. You locked your study door before leaving the school."

The remembrance of this seemed to afford Loder considerable relief. He divested himself of his overcoat and jacket, and selected a cue from the rack.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
A Quiet Little Game!

NOTWITHSTANDING having left money in his study at Greyfriars, Gerald Loder was by no means without funds. He drew forth a wallet and took two five-pound notes from it. Then, having collected a fiver from Carne, he handed the three currency notes to Jigger, the marker.

"There you are, dad!" he said, turning to the yokel. "Give your stake to Jigger to mind. You can have the lot back when you've won the game."

Carne clanked heartily. But the countryman was quite serious as he handed out his wad of notes again and peeled off fifteen pounds from the roll and handed them to the stakeholder.

The two countrymen on the settee watched the proceedings with amused interest. The fisherman seemed as though he were about to interfere to save this lamb that was about to be fleeced by the astute Loder. But, as though deciding that second thoughts were best, he settled down in his seat to await events.

"All ready, dad?" said Loder. "Well, you can start."

"Do O! hit that little red ball, young fellow-me-lad?" asked the rustic.

"That's the idea! Pot it into one of the pockets or so in if it yurself."

The bumpkin stooped down over the billiard table, and drew his cue backwards and forwards over the fingers of his left hand, as though sawing wood. At last he gave a mighty push. The cue-tip slipped off the white ball, which rolled about six inches.

"Hard luck, dad!" said Loder, repressing a smile. "Here, watch this!"

With that, Loder set to work and compiled a useful fifteen points before he failed at a difficult losing hazard. The old yokel followed. There was a beautiful "leave" on the table.

"These you are, dad!" cried Loder joyfully. "There's the red and my ball close together for you. A fine chance for a cannon!"

"Ay! O! be gosh! good guns!" chuckled the poor old body.

He energetically sawed the fingers of his left hand with the cue for half a minute, and then let fly. The tip of the cue went flying to the ceiling. The ball, as though struck with a battering-ram, leapt clean off the table and I caught the auding Loder a terrific crack in the wrist-coat.

"Ouch!" gasped the injured perfect, as he doubled up.

"Th. ha, ha!" roared Carne and the other onlookers.

The country bumpkin scratched his head ruefully.

"O! be thinkin' this here long stick arrange sort don't suit me going fellow-me-lad!" he muttered apologetically.

"Why the dickens don't you chalk?"

your cue?" said Loder savagely, as the marker picked up the ball.

"Eh?"

"I say, why the blump don't you chalk your cue? What if you think those bits of chalk hanging from those strings are for?"

"Why, for writin' down how many pints you have, of course!" replied the lunkapin promptly. "But this here cue thing is too long for my loikes, young fello-wine-lad! Oi think Oi could do better wif my old gamp."

"You couldn't do worse!" sneered Loder, as he potted the red.

"O'll try it!"

Loder took no notice of the remark. After a pretty bit of play at the spot end of the table he brought both his and the object ball back in baulk, leaving a position that a human would have scratched his head over.

"Then, to the astonishment of Loder and all the spectators, the yokel picked up his old green umbrella and carefully chalked the ferrule of it.

"Ah! This be better!" he remarked. He carefully placed his ball on the table and hit it bang down to the end cushion. All eyes followed it as it rebounded up the table again. A roar of laughter and applause broke out as it struck Loder's ball and cannoned cleanly on to the red.

"Well done, grafter!" cried the countrymen on the settee.

"What a howling fluke!" snarled Loder.

The old yokel said not a word. He rapidly saved his old gingham across his hand and played his ball again. The ball struck against the red sharply and scooped back into the bottom pocket. It was a brilliant losing hazard, that would have evoked applause at a professional match.

Loder stood and gasped. First then Flash Simmons, Jimmy Fowler, and some of his cronies entered the room.

By this time the red ball and the object white were at the top of the table. Playing from baulk, the yokel cannoned neatly, and potted the red twice, thus bringing all three balls together near the spot. Then—tap, tap, tap—he began rolling off nursery cannons while the on-lookers sat too bewildered to applaud. Rapidly the score mounted. Ten—twenty—thirty—forty—fifty—sixty!

Once, when the score stood at sixty-three, he lost position owing to striking his ball a trifle too hard. With a brilliant hose into the top left pocket he retrieved himself. Again he got the balls together.

Loder sank into a chair and napped the perspiration from his forehead. Then he watched the yokel like a rabbit fascinated by the wiles of a snake while the score slowly and surely mounted two points at a time. Seventy—eighty—nearly—one hundred!

"Or thought likley Oi could do better wif that old gamp o' mine," murmured the lunkapin, as he took the stake money out of the hand of the astonished marker.

Loder and Carmo rose from their seats and clung together for support.

"Suung!" they gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the spectators.

"Bravo, grafter!"

"Ay! Them young fello-wine-lad woen't above tryin' to sting a chap they took for a green country lunkapin!" said the billiard wizard.

"You cad!" hissed Carmo.

"You beastly swindler!" snarled Loder. The rustic suddenly pulled off his gutter beard. At once he seemed quite a quite business-man in appearance.

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"Young gentlemen," he said in a crisp voice, quite unlike his previous drawl, "I'm neither a cad nor a beastly swindler. I was just a bit sharper than you were, though—that's all."

"You—you rotten billiards professional!" began Loder, white with rage and mortification. "You—"

Loder's late opponent deftly removed the ferrule of his umbrella and held it up.

"Come, gentleman," he cried, "I'm no billiards professional—only an honest commercial traveller. Here's the secret of my billiards success—Topham's Patent Adjustable Cue-tip! Only half-a-crown! Dirt cheap! Buy the size that suits you!"

From his pocket he drew out a handful of the patent tips, and walked round the room hawking them to the spectators. Then the commercial traveller and billiards shark disappeared to play the same game elsewhere.

Flash Simmons walked up to the two mesmerized prefects.

"Evenin', boys!" he said. "Feel like a little game o' snooker?"

"Gr-r-r!" snarled Loder and Carmo.

"Ere, don't growl at me!" said the hookie. "Tain't my fault you can't beat an old yokel. He, ha! By the way, Mister Loder, 'ave you brought me the dibs?"

Loder's manner immediately became more contrite.

"Look here, Simmons, step outside this crowded place for a moment. I want to speak privately to you. Wait here a minute, Carmo, old top!"

There was a heavy seal on Flash Simmons' face as he followed the Sixth-Former into the hall. Neither knew that a certain individual dressed in seafaring garb had overheard the remark as he had sauntered across the room. Less still did the two guess that he was none other than George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars!

No sooner did Wingate hear Loder's request to Simmons than he slouched out of the billiard room to await the appearance of the precious pair outside. As he passed along the hall, he noticed the half-open door of a boot cupboard. On the spur of the moment he slipped into the darkened retreat to watch.

Gerald Loder and Flash Simmons stepped from the billiard room and walked together down the hall. Nearly opposite the boot cupboard Flash Simmons halted.

"I suppose, Mister Loder," he said, with a sneer, "you've brought me outside 'ere to tell me you can't pay yet? If so, I tell you straight I'm going to sit down afore I go to bed and write a polite note to your reverend pedmaster. The total amount you owes me now for horses, cards, and billiards is fifty-seven quids!"

"I'm not denying it, Simmons," said Loder, in a hoarse whisper, "but I was going to bring the money with me to-night. I put it in my light oversuit. But I changed the coat for a heavier one at the last minute, and forgot to take the money out. I'll bring it without fail next time I'm over in Courtfield."

"Nothin' doin'!" growled Simmons. "I won't give you a last chance! Pony up to-morrow night, or I'll bet your pedmaster know all about your little bettin' capers!"

"But, my dear chap, it's impossible! There's a prefect's meeting at the school to-morrow night, and I can't possibly get right near to Courtfield."

"Meet me at any time you like after nine o'clock to-morrow night near the school. There's an old wood-cutter's shed half a mile down the Fairdale road on the right-hand side, near

the woods. No one will see us together if you'll come there."

"All right, that'll do!" said Loder, greatly relieved. "I'll slip out of the school and be down there at eleven o'clock."

The two then went back to the billiard-room.

Well satisfied with his night's work, George Wingate, who had overheard everything, left the inn. After changing his attire at the costumer's he proceeded back to the school. Loder and Carmo went back by the same train. Both had refused pressing invitations to join in another quiet little game on the green-covered table!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Meeting in the Shed!

"O W! I've seen a ghost!"

Thus Billy Bunter, as he staggered, white-faced, into the school gymnasium at eight o'clock the following evening.

A number of flannel clad juniors, including Harry Wharton & Co., who were amusing themselves among the trapezes, rings, horizontal bars, and other gear, stared at him in amazement.

"A ghost?"

"You're batty, Billy!"

"What kind of a ghost?"

The exclamations arose in a loud chorus.

"A—a real live ghost!" panted Bunter, with a shiver.

"A real live ghost!" said Horace Coker of the Fifth sarcastically.

"I—I tell you it was the genuine article," moaned the Owl faintly. "I see phosphorus—all shiny! Ooo-er! Bring me some ginger-wine somebody—quick!"

Squiff Field, with great presence of mind, darted away, and drew a jug of water from the washing place attached to the gym.

"Ook! Thanks, Squiffy!" gasped Bunter, whose imagination was still running riot. "Ouch!"

This last wild howl was occasioned by Squiffy suddenly tipping the jug over the Owl's head.

"That'll bring you round, old chap," he said soothingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other juniors.

Billy Bunter shook himself like a mousetrap after a bath.

"Oh, you beast!" he howled. "I'll slaughter you for that!"

"Oho yourself, Buntly, old man!" murmured Harry Wharton. "You were telling us about a ghost, you know."

Gratified at least that he had aroused the curiosity of his schoolfellows, Billy Bunter became more tractable.

"It's as true as—as—er—Squiffy's a beast!" he said. "I was on my way back from Uncle Clog's shop in Frimble, when I saw the thing. Gr-r-r! Turning a bend in the road I almost ran into it. Br-r-r! A horrible ghost!"

"The ghost of what, Billy?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Old Quelchey!"

"What?"

"Which?"

"How?"

Bunter's fat face revealed his pleasure at having startled everyone at last. Like the fat boy in "Puckwick," he wanted to make their flesh creep.

"It was the ghost of Quelchey right enough," he said. "A long, tall, gaunt, thin, horrible-looking creature."

"But—but Quelchey's not dead?" gasped Dick Russell weakly.

"He must be," said Bunter, "otherwise how could I have seen his ghost?"

He glared round at the faces of his

schoolfellows triumphantly. To him the logic was unanswerable.

"Are—are you sure it was Queldy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Positive, old chap."

"Then the silly chump must have seen Queldy in the flesh," said Wharton to Bob Cherry.

The Owl of the Remove overheard the remark. His eyes blinked indignantly through his little round spectacles.

"I tell you it was his ghost!" he vociferated. "It was all white and horrible, with blood on its head, and ha—"

"I expect the fat worm vomited too quickly to see anything properly," put in Johnny Bull.

Bunter looked scornfully at the speaker.

"So would you have vomited," he said, "if you'd walked right through the thing like I did. Grrrrh!"

"A few moments ago you said you nearly walked into it, you fat fraud!"

"Did I, Wharton, old chap? I—I mean I—or—partly walked through it—or—that is, I—I saw it—"

"Gee! I bet a dollar the ghost didn't see you, Billy!" put in Fisher T. Fish.

"Eh? Why not?"

"'Cause I guess he couldn't have seen you for dust!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Just then Dickie Nugent entered the gym, and approached Harry Wharton.

"Wingate wants to see you, Wharton," he said.

Leaving Bunter to narrate his farther hair-raising adventures to the other fellows, the captain of the Remove followed the fat gnat out of the gym. He found Wingate alone, ensconced in an armchair before a roaring fire.

"Hallo, kid!" was the greeting of the school-captain. "Take a seat. I sent for you as I thought you'd like to know how we're getting on with the investigation. But you must keep everything I tell you to yourself."

"I'll be as mum as an oyster!" said Wharton.

Briefly Wingate sketched the whole of his previous night's experiences. Harry Wharton doubled up with mirth at the description of Loder's game of billiards with the "green rustic," but he became serious again as the other proceeded with his narrative.

"Then you are going down to the woodcutter's shed at eleven o'clock to-night. Wingate?" he asked.

"Yes," said the captain of Greyfriars. "Really it's Gwynne's turn to carry on. But at a meeting of our little Vigilant Committee we both decided to go. Tom North is going to let us in and out of the school."

"My cent!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "There's a chance that the Head's fifty-quad note may be among the money Loder intends handing over to the bookie. Are you going to butt in on their meeting?"

"I don't think it is likely," said Wingate. "We can easily arrange to have a watch kept on all the money that afterwards passes from the hand of Flash Simmons. We know the number of the note, and that ink-blot the Head accidentally made on it will help to identify it anywhere."

"I say, Wingate," Wharton demanded suddenly, "may I come along with you?"

"You may not, kid. Now toddle off, and mind, not a word to anyone!"

Harry Wharton left George Wingate's study, obsessed with a sense of disappointment. He would dearly have loved to have gone on the night expedition to the woodcutter's shed. Not many fellows would, however, for the weather outside was very threatening.

All the local prophets predicted a violent February storm.

He went along to Study No. 1, and threw himself into a chair. For some minutes he carefully worked things out in his mind. Then he brought his fist down on his knee with a bang.

"I'll do it!" he muttered.

With that he went direct to Study No. 12, and woke Masterlover, who was alone.

"I say, Mauly," said Wharton, "I want the loan of your camera, a roll of film, and a strip of magnesium-ribbon."

"Bogud! What a giddy stunt you are up to now!"

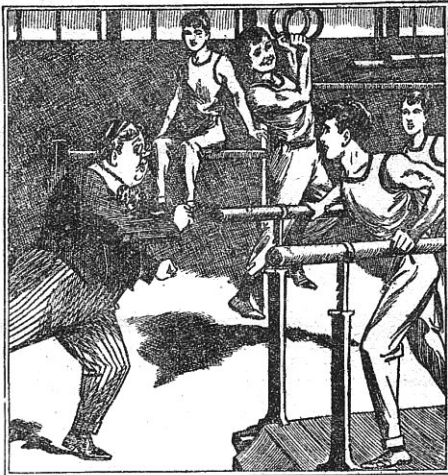
"Tell you later, maybe, old top," said the Remove captain cheerfully. "Hand 'em over."

These articles Harry Wharton had

stood close against the schoolhouse wall. He watched Bob Cherry haul up the rope of sheets, and then stealthily made his way to a certain well-used part of the outer wall that bordered the quad. There he shinned over without difficulty.

With his overcoat collar well about his ears, and his cap drawn down over his eyes, he beat his way down the Friar-dale road. The wind buffeted him, and a few drops of rain flicked his face. Arriving near the old woodcutter's shed, he took up a position behind a hedge to wait. He knew that whoever wished to reach the hut would have to pass that way.

A distant rumbling of thunder sounded towards the northern horizon, and a few pale lightning flashes rent the distant sky. It was an ill-chosen night for any



"Ow! I've seen a ghost!" howled Billy Bunter as he rushed into the gym. The Famous Five stopped their amusements on the bars and ropes, and turned towards the fat junior. "A ghost?" "Yes, a real live ghost!" answered the Owl, looking scared. (See Chapter 8.)

under his coat as he made his way to the Remove dormitory later that night. On his way there he buttonholed Bob Cherry.

"At half-past ten, Bob," he said, "I'm going to rig a rope of sheets and beat it out of the dorm window. I want you to help me."

"What the chump—"

"Tell you later, maybe," replied Harry Wharton. And he went on his way, whistling tunelessly.

A howling gale was raging in the quad when Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry rigged the rope of sheets from the window of the sleeping Remove dormitory.

"I'm afraid you must keep awake, old man," said Wharton. "When you hear a loudful of pebbles rattle against the window, let the sheets down again."

With that he climbed out into the night.

For a moment or two Harry Wharton

out-of-door mission. Just as he was wondering whether the arrangements between Loder and Simmons had been washed out, he heard a footstep on the road.

Soon, by the curious, luminous glare that was reflected in the sky, he recognised the burly figure of the bookie.

Flash Simmons at once proceeded to the woodshed. A few moments later Gerald Loder hurried on the scene, and also went to the shed. Then Wingate and Patrick Gwynne put in an appearance.

The two prefects crept stealthily to the woodcutter's hut, and placed their heads against the cracked boards of the ramshackle place.

Harry Wharton slipped round the other side of the little building. As he did so, a dazzling flash of lightning rent the sky, there was a terrific thunderclap,

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and the rain descended in torrents. As the children drew away Wharton heard the bookmaker address Loder impatiently.

"Come inside the shed," he muttered. "D'you want to get drenched to the skin?"

The two entered the hut together, and the Remoye junior took up his position by the open door. On the far side of the shed were crouching the Greyfriars captain and his lieutenant.

"Now," said Simmons to Loder, "have you brought the dibs?"

"I've got the whole amount here. Have you brought a properly made out receipt?"

"You bet," replied the bookie. "Half a second, and I'll strike a match, then you can count the money out."

Harry Wharton drew Mauly's camera from beneath his overcoat. Above it was fixed a short strip of magnesium ribbon. Then, holding the camera firmly against the door-post, he brought forth a patent lighter of the type used by smokers.

Gerald Loder had opened an envelope, and was extending a crinkled slip of paper to Simmons.

"Take this," he said, "and I'll count out the other seven quids."

At that moment Harry Wharton swiftly opened his patent lighter, so that the tiny flame which was ejected licked the magnesium ribbon. Immediately a brilliant white flare illuminated the interior of the shed, and simultaneously the Fourth-Former pressed the shutter-bolt of the camera. He had taken a flashlight photograph.

Not a second too soon Wharton withdrew the camera round the doorway.

Loder and Simmons, who had been standing sideways to the door, swung round with a start.

"Wh-what the dickens was that?" panted the prefect in alarm.

"Only a particularly vivid lightning flash," said Simmons uneasily. "Come, pony up the rest of the dibs, and let's get away from this place! It gives me the creeps!"

Having accomplished all he wished to do, Harry Wharton carefully made his way from the shed back to the Friarale Road. It was no night for staying out longer than necessary, and he was anxious to get back to the school before any of the prefects arrived there. Soaked to the skin, he reached Greyfriars at last, and the alert Bob Cherry let down the rope of sheets. Having stayed off his chum's curiosity with a meagre amount of information concerning the night's adventures, he turned into bed. Under his pillow reposed Mauly's camera containing the exposed film.

It was not till long afterwards that George Wingate and Patrick Gwynne returned to the school. From their point of vantage on the other side of the shed they had heard all the conversation between Loder and Flash Simmons. From the hedge near the road they saw the precious pair separate, the cad of the Sixth to return to the school, and Simmons to catch the last train back to Courtfield.

"I say, Gwynne, old man," whispered Wingate, "it's all Lombard Street to a China orange that Loder handled that bookie a fifty-quid note. What do you say to collaring Simmons and having a quiz at it? We shall never get another opportunity like this."

"I'm game for anything," replied Gwynne. "Can you remember the number of the missing note?"

"Yes. We won't bust the chap, and if the note isn't the stolen one, we'll simply give it back to the rogue."

To prevent possible complications, in case they were on a wrong scent, the two Sixth-Formers put their school caps in their pockets and tied scarfs round the lower part of their faces. Then, safe from recognition, they tracked Flash Simmons down the road. Keeping close to the hedge, they glided swiftly after their quarry until, on a signal from Wingate, they suddenly leaped upon him.

The bookmaker spun round with a cry of alarm. He saw what he took to be two highwaymen bearing down on him. His knees literally knocked together as he begged pitifully to be spared.

"We won't hurt you, mate," said Wingate, assuming a gruff voice. "We only want to look at some of your belongings."

He put out his hand to grasp the bookmaker's coat, when a swift, avespising phenomenon arrested him. A vivid flash of forked lightning illuminated the storm-swift earth, followed by a splintering crash and a roaring peal of thunder.

"Good heavens! Look out!" Patrick Gwynne yelled that warning not a second too soon. An ancient elmtree by the roadside had been rent asunder by the lightning flash, and was crashing down towards the road.

It was a case of each man for himself. The frightened bookmaker ran one way, Wingate and Gwynne dashed the other. Gathering impetus, the smitten tree thundered on to the roadway, missing the wayfarers by inches.

George Wingate and Patrick Gwynne stopped and faced about. The elmtree—a great, gaunt barrier—across the road. Not a sign of Flash Simmons the bookie could be seen.

For half an hour they searched for the man without result. Then they trudged through the teeming rain back to Greyfriars.

"What beastly rough luck!" muttered Wingate. "Seems to me the best thing to do now is to hire a private detective to watch the rogue. It'll be expensive, though. Egad, I'll have given anything to have had a quiz at that paper money Loder handed the fellow!"

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Confession!

"**B**EGAD! What a rotten picture! What the dickens is it, Wharton?"

That remark was made by Maulvever in a tone of undisguised contempt.

It was the evening following that of the meeting between Loder and Lord Maulvever in the old shed, and Lord Maulvever was enticed behind the locked door of Study No. 1. The place was in darkness, save for the faint illumination of a small red lamp on the table. A pungent odour of chemicals pervaded the room.

The reason for it all was that Mauly had been helping Wharton to develop the flashlight photograph the latter had snapped at the woodcutter's hut. When this weary operation had been completed Mauly held the film to the red lamp, and expressed his opinion on the result.

"Yes, I'm afraid it's a dud, dear boy," he went on. "It's clear enough, but all out of focus. There seem to be two silly asses in the picture, but they've got no heads nor feet."

Harry Wharton examined the film eagerly, and a smile of satisfaction played about his lips. He had not told Mauly where he had taken the photo, nor did he intend to enlighten him yet. As far as he could see, the picture was going to serve the purpose for which he had taken it.

"We'll make a gaslight enlargement of it as soon as we've dried the film," he said.

So early was Harry Wharton to see the final result of his handiwork that he spent over half an hour fanning the film as near to the fire as he dare hold it. Mauly, during this interesting proceeding, slept peacefully in a chair.

When the film was dry, Wharton awakened Mauly with his boot.

"Now then, old top," he said, "get busy and make me a gas-light enlargement! Get a move on, or it'll be bedtime before we've finished!"

For once Mauly did "get a move on," and by half-past eight he put the finished enlarged print into the hands of Wharton, with a yawn of satisfaction. Artistically, the picture could not be described as a howling success. It showed two overcoat-clad headless bodies, white in the centre of the photo a slim hand was extending a white strip of paper towards the fat, upturned palm of another hand.

Harry Wharton obtained a magnifying-glass from his desk and closely examined the picture. As he did so a triumphant light shone in his eyes.

"Eureka!" he exclaimed. "So long, Mauly, old chap! Thanks very much!"

And, leaving the astonished dude of Greyfriars staring in amazement after him, he darted from the study.

With the rolled-up enlargement held tightly in his hand, he proceeded straight to the head prefect's room. There he found George Wingate alone, dozing quietly in his chair, with his feet on the table.

"Hallo, kid!" said Wingate, blinking at the intruder. "What's the trouble now?"

"Excuse me butting in, Wingate," said the Remoye captain. "But I've come on important business. Last night I went to the old woodcutter's shed along the Friarale road, and—"

"The dickens you did, you young scamp!" cried Wingate, starting up. "I'll skin you! Didn't I tell you—"

"I know you did, interrupted Wharton hastily. "But hear what I've got to say. You can lick me afterwards. Last night I went to the shed and took a flashlight photograph of the meeting

of Loder and Simmons. I snatched Loder in the very act of handing the book to the dibs. Look at this!"

Harry Wharton laid the print down on the table, and Wingate stooped over it.

"Now carefully examine it with this magnifying-glass," said the junior.

Wingate did so.
"Good Scott," he exclaimed. "That white thing in the centre looks like a banknote. But what's that black mark on it? A bit nicked out of the negative, I suppose?"

"No," said Wharton deliberately, "that mark is an ink-blot!"

With a hand that trembled slightly, Wingate examined the photograph again. Then he stood upright, a resolute expression on his strong face.

"Leave this with me, kid," he said, "and you scud off to bed. I'm going to act on this evidence."

Parting from the Remove junior in the studies passage, the captain of Greyfriars walked swiftly towards Dr. Locke's study. He had almost reached the door when Gerald Loder emerged from the room.

As though detected in some wrongdoing, the cad of the Sixth attempted to slink by the school captain without speaking. Acting on a sudden impulse, Wingate swung round and grasped the other's arm. He had determined to stake all on one throw of the dice, as it were.

"You thief!" he hissed into Loder's ear. "The game's up! Last night you were seen handing the Head's missing banknote to Simmons, the bookie!"

This fierce accusation, coming at a moment when he had least expected it, completely unbalanced Loder, as the white headmaster had hoped. On Loder's face appeared the look of a hunted animal, mottled with that of a sense of nerve-racked guilt. Under that terrible indictment he became weak and haggard, as though the mantle of another twenty years had dropped suddenly over his shoulders.

"Good heavens!" he stammered dazedly. "I—"

He stopped, as though fearful of what he was about to say.

Wingate turned him on the shoulder.
"Listen, Loder," he said, with quiet restraint. "I don't want to act as your father confessor. My advice to you is to make a clean breast of the whole wretched affair to Dr. Locke. Not only have you thrown disgrace upon the school by a despicable theft, but you have allowed an innocent man to suffer in your stead. Mr. Quelch's name must be cleared—and at once!"

A footfall in the passage caused the two seniors to look round. Dr. Locke was advancing towards his study, which was between him and his prefects. Thinking Wingate and Loder were engaged in an ordinary conversation, he merely nodded and passed into his room.

The sight of the austere, black-robed figure of the headmaster brought Loder to a realisation of the corner into which Wingate had forced him. His eyes glazed dangerously. Wingate, however, did not notice the change in the other. The fact that the Head had only just returned to his study set his thoughts running into another channel.

"So you were up in Dr. Locke's study again during his absence, you cad?" he rapped out. "What was the object this time?"

On the words all Loder's pent-up feeling burst their bonds. He spluttered incoherently, then swiftly lashed out his fist full at the school captain's head.

By a lightning movement Wingate avoided the savage blow of the half-demented prefect. Then his strong fingers closed upon the collar of Loder's coat, and, giving a heave, he sent the cad reeling towards Dr. Locke's study

door. Turning the door-handle with his left hand, he gave another violent shove, thereby sending Loder hurtling into the presence of the dumfounded headmaster.

"Good gracious, Wingate! What is the meaning of this disgraceful intrusion?"

With a gesture of contempt George Wingate indicated the shrinking, prostrate form of the cad of the Sixth.

"I have brought the thief who stole your fifty-pound banknote, sir," he said.

For once in his career the headmaster of Greyfriars was rendered speechless with surprise.

Loder staggered to his feet and stood with bowed head. Either as the result of Wingate's advice or through some faint stirring in his own conscience, he decided to throw himself on the Head's mercy. In quivering tones he made his confession, while Dr. Locke stood with his hands clasped behind his back listening in terrible silence.

Loder told how he had lost money on the Turf and at the green tables. Then came that fatal day of the temptation he was too weak to resist.

"I was on my way to your study," he said, speaking in a hoarse, unnatural tone of voice, "to return a book you had lent me. I saw Mr. Quelch leave the place, and thought you were in. So I knocked and entered the room, only to find it deserted. When I laid the book on your desk I saw the corner of a fifty-pound note sticking out from between some letters. On the impulse of the moment I snatched up the note, stowed it in my pocket, and cleared out of the room."

Loder paused and fumbled nervously for his handkerchief.

"And then you went out of your way to throw suspicion on an innocent man?" said Dr. Locke, his eyes flashing scornfully. "You sent me an anonymous letter and a snapshot purporting to show Mr. Quelch at a race-meeting! You handed me a betting-slip, which you suggested the Form-master had dropped! You intimated that Mr. Quelch was associated with a bookmaker's tent!"

"I—I typed the betting-slip on old Quelch's—I—er—mean, Mr. Quelch's typewriter," admitted Loder. "As far as Mr. Quelch being associated with a bookmaker's tent is concerned, that is perfectly true. A Turf character, known as Jimmy Fowler, actually visited him in my study here at Greyfriars."

"And the photograph?"

"That was a fake, sir," confessed Loder, avoiding the steady gaze of the Head. "I obtained a negative snapped by young Maudslover showing a bookmaker on the Loomshire course. By means of that and a snap I had taken unawares of Mr. Quelch watching a football match, a composite picture was made by a photographer friend of mine. Then I posted the faked photo and the anonymous letter in Courtfield."

"With the deliberate purpose of casting the gravest suspicion on an honest man?"

"Not in connection with the theft of the note, sir. At the time I prepared the anonymous letter I didn't even know that money was in existence. I wanted to see him get into trouble for attending race-meetings."

"Why?"

"It—it was to get my own back, sir—for his interference when I was giving my bag, Sammy Bunter, a walloping."

After this there was an ominous silence for a few moments. Loder stood shamefacedly examining the pattern on the study carpet. The Head seemed to be weighing the situation up in his mind.

When Dr. Locke spoke his stern voice rang with the contempt and anger he could barely control.

"So on your own confession, Loder, you are a despicable rogue, a coward, and a thief?"

"A rogue and a coward I may be, sir," he said. "But I am not a thief."

"Not a thief?" thundered Dr. Locke. "Do you dare to stand before me and prevaricate after all that has transpired? A few minutes ago you admitted stealing the banknote that belonged to me!"

"I admitted taking it, sir," corrected Loder, "but I consider I—er—merely borrowed it."

"So you want me to believe that you intended to replace the money?" said the Head with biting sarcasm. "That is the feeble excuse of almost every thief!"

"I know, sir," replied Loder quietly; "but I have already returned your money."

Both Dr. Locke and Wingate started at this unexpected retort on the part of the self-condemned prefect.

"It's true, sir!" insisted Loder. "I wrote to my father, explaining that I had got heavily into debt, and begging for financial assistance to see me clear. At first the governor blankly refused to help me, and threatened to write to you. At last, however, he relented. This morning I received the fifty-pound banknote I had asked for. A few minutes ago I stole into your empty study and replaced the money. You will find the banknote among the letters on your desk, sir."

In a half-sceptical way Dr. Locke rummaged among the little heap of letters indicated. Then his hand encountered the crinkling strip of paper that represented the British Government's guarantee of fifty pounds sterling.

The Head breathed a sigh of heart-felt relief. But this he did, not because of the return of his money, but on account of discovering that the prefect was not the utterly unscrupulous thief he had at first supposed.

"Loder," he said, "I am glad for your sake. You have redeemed yourself to some extent, though nothing can atone for the callous wickedness of the rest of your conduct. You will now return to your study, where you will remain until you receive further orders from me. I shall write a full account of your disgrace to your father. To-morrow you will suffer public expulsion from the school."

As the last words of this terrible sentence burst into his brain Gerald Loder completely broke down. He turned on his heel, and, clutching with sobs, staggered blindly from the headmaster's study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Return of Mr. Quelch!

"HAVE you heard the news, Billy?"

With this excited utterance Sammy Bunter accosted his major after morning school on the day following Loder's confession.

"What if you mean, you fat nuisance?" said Billy Bunter impatiently.

"Why, about that beast, Loder," said Bunter minor. "He's a prisoner in his study. It was he who snatched the Head's money, not old Quelch!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked at his brother suspiciously.

"And Loder is going to be publicly shown up and scolded!" added Sammy Bunter delightedly. "And a jolly good job, too!"

"But where does Carne come in?"

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"You see, Carne had been going to race meetings and suchlike with Loder," explained Sammy Bunter. "Well, late last night old Locke demanded that Loder should put his burglary confession into writing. So the boast did, and in it he sneaked on Carne. Then the Head sent for Carne, and gated him for a month. Poo-bee! You ought to have heard Carne telling the other rotter what he thought of him!"

Naturally, with the two Bunters in possession of the choice news, the school was soon seething with a hundred-and-one fresh rumours. It was even stated as a fact that Gerald Loder was already languishing in a prison cell in Courtfield. Therefore, it came as somewhat of a shock when, following the dismissal of afternoon school, Peter Todd glimpsed the criminal through the half-open door of the prefect's study.

As a number of Removites and other juniors trooped out of the school gates on their way to the playing fields for recreation, two figures were discerned coming up the road from Farringdon.

"Great pip!" cried Harry Wharton. "It's old Quelch!"

"And that recoussey boulder, Jimmy Fowler, is with him!" muttered Bob Cherry.

In a few moments the news that the Form-master was on his way back to Greyfriars was being shouted in all directions. Excited Removites dashed out of the gates to welcome him. Wingate, Tom North, Gwynne, and other prefects hastened on the scene. Dr.

Locke, who was crossing the quad at the time, hurried down to the school gates, to extend his greeting to the man who had been so grievously wronged.

"Welcome back to Greyfriars, sir!" shouted Harry Wharton.

Then Wingate and his fellow-prefects charged through the mob. The school captain and Gwynne hoisted the master shoulder high. In this fashion Mr. Quelch was borne through the school gates into the presence of the Head. Behind followed the man Fowler. To one side Gossing, the school porter, stood saluting, with a smile on his face and tears of joy in his eyes.

The prefects met Mr. Quelch down, and Dr. Locke greeted the returned master with a hand that trembled with emotion. Then Mr. Quelch turned and drew forward the man who was known to a number of boys as Jimmy Fowler.

"Allow me to introduce my brother James, sir," he said.

The surprise of the Head as he shook the man's hand was reflected on the faces of all present.

When the rest of the masters who had hurried down had greeted Mr. Quelch, Dr. Locke took the returned Form-master and his brother off to his study for tea. During the meal Mr. Quelch narrated how his brother had returned from abroad, and had got mixed up with Flash Simmons, the bookmaker. But it was James Quelch who explained how the Form-master had raised money from his own personal investments to free him from his heavy gambling debts.

"I am glad to say, sir," said Mr. Quelch, beaming happily, "that James has at last cut himself adrift from his former turf acquaintances. He has just obtained a lucrative position in a timber office and leaves for Montreal shortly."

"Ah!" murmured Dr. Locke. "Now I can understand your silence when you could have cleared yourself by stating the reason for your visit to the race-course. I admire that pride that seeks to shield a family name."

Then the Head told how, by Wingate's aid, Loder had been forced into a confession of his wrongdoing.

"I regret, Mr. Quelch," he said, "that at calling-over to-night the school will witness one of the most painful scenes in the history of Greyfriars. It is then that this depraved youth will be publicly expelled."

But to the regret of many seniors and several scores of juniors, this interesting event did not materialise. Loder's good fortune was entirely due to the eloquent pleading of Mr. Quelch, the very man he had so deeply wronged. But Loder was not as grateful as he might have been. Instead, Dr. Locke gated him for the rest of the term. This punishment was severe enough in all conscience to such a restless, excitement-loving nature as that of the cad of the Sixth.

Later that evening Mr. Quelch saw his brother off to the station in the head-master's trap. As he entered the school again Billy Bunter diffidently approached him.

(Continued on page 15.)



The Editor's Chat

Address your letters to: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THIN BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of next week's grand long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars. It is full of humour, and contains not a few surprises. One of them is that Billy Bunter, undoubtedly the fattest scholar at Greyfriars, actually begins to get very thin. He complains to all and sundry, and begs for feeds to keep up his strength—and weight. But it is no use, for Billy does get a deal thinner. However, you will know all about it when you read

"THIN BUNTER!"

in next week's issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

NEW CHUMS, NOTE!

Again I am in a position to say that I have made hundreds of new chums during the last few days. My old readers, it seems to me, are doing as I asked them, and are getting me new readers for the

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MAGNET LIBRARY. I wish I could personally thank all readers who have secured for me new chums, but of course that is impossible. So will all my chums who have helped me please consider themselves warmly thanked, and shaken by the hand most cordially. And please carry on the good work!

However, I have a word to say here to new chums who have recently taken to the MAGNET LIBRARY. I want you all to fully understand that if ever you need advice on any subject, I am always most glad to help you to the best of my ability.

No question you care to ask will go unanswered if I can possibly answer it. If you write to me, it is better to enclose a stamped addressed envelope, for you will then be certain to receive a letter in reply within a few hours.

I repeat my old "little bit" for your benefit—"When in trouble or in doubt, write to me to help you out."

That really explains as much as I can write about, doesn't it?

Replies in Brief.

"A South African Reader" (Transvaal).—No, I don't mind a bit if the paper upon which you wrote to me is torn. How could I, when you sent such a charming letter? My girl chums have quite taken to writing charming letters to me! I wish your sister every success in her forthcoming examination. A character you mention in your letter exists only in the imagination of the brilliant author who "made" him. Next time you write, will you put your name and address in the letter, so that I can write to you by post?

Bertie B. (Garden Town).—The reader who told you that the entrance fee in the "Poplets" Competition in the "Popular" was sixpence for two tries is entirely wrong. There is no entrance fee—only a postcard is required.

Peggy P. (Govertry).—I have replied to your letter by post. Yes, the girl reader who made up the model of Greyfriars School, which was given away in "Chuckles," proved herself very clever; but, judging by your letter, there are other clever girls in Govertry.

Your Editor

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but didn't I see you some evenings ago along the Friar-dale road?"

"Quite likely, Banter," said Mr. Quelch. "I had intended going right away, and came up by stealth to have a last look at the old school."

Billy Banter turned triumphantly to his companions.

"There you are, you chaps," he said. "What did I tell you?"

"Why, that you'd seen a ghost, you fat fraud!" retorted Stott.

"Pooh!" said Banter. "I thought you'd have known I was only speaking paragonically!"

Meanwhile, the Famous Five and a number of other Removites were hasten-

ing preparations for a grand concert in Big Hall as a crowning celebration of the return of Mr. Quelch.

THE END.

(Look out for another long, complete adventure of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled "Thin Banter!" By Frank Richards. You will all enjoy reading this fine yarn in next week's issue.)

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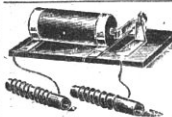
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